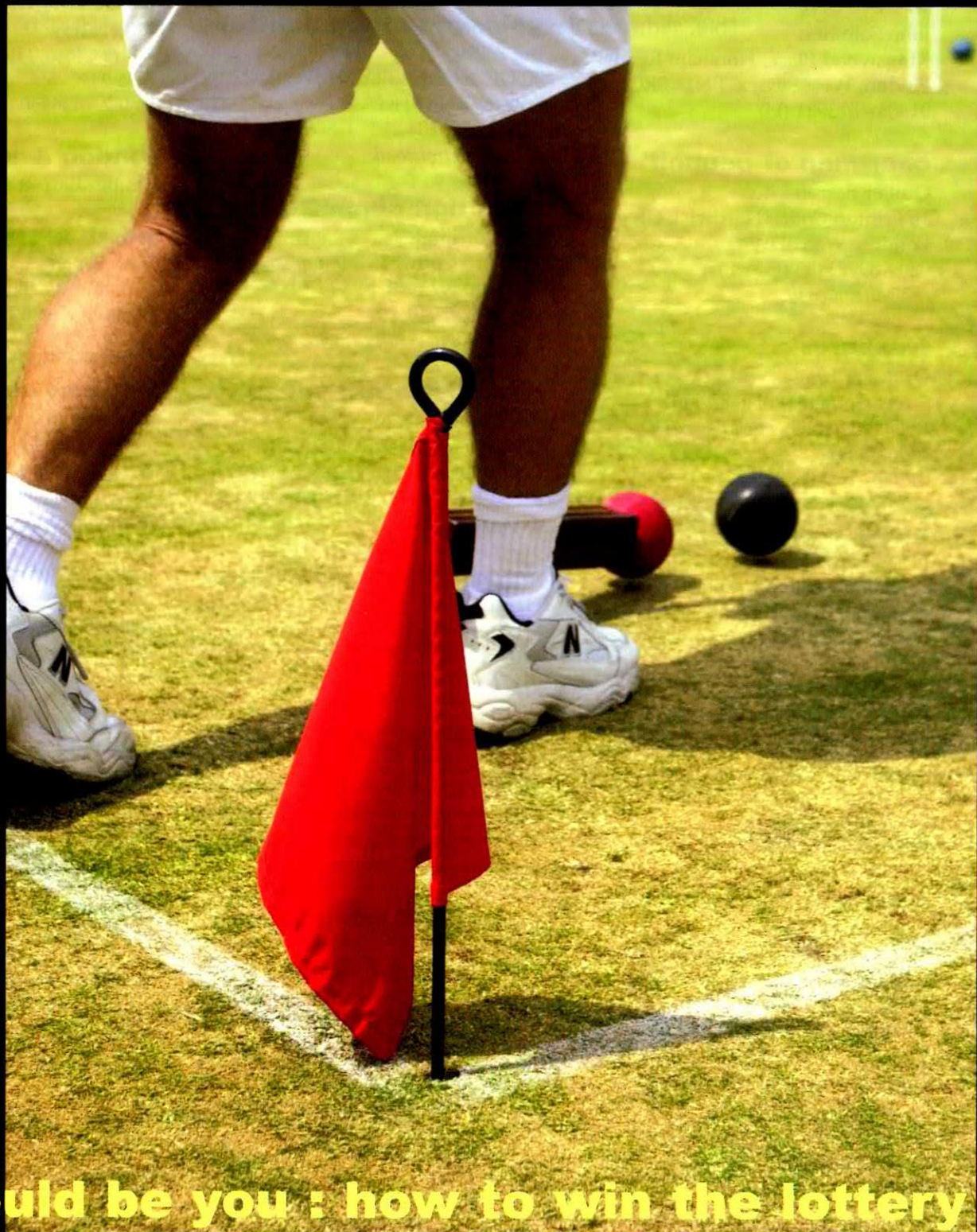


the croquet gazette



issue 276 - november 2001



it could be you : how to win the lottery

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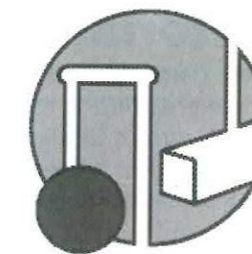
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editorial

When I first started playing croquet, there were barely any clubs in the North of England. Bowdon and Southport were well established. Pendle was just starting. There were two or three clubs in what is now the territory of Croquet North. From a basis of small struggling clubs croquet is now - well - not exactly thriving, but certainly in a healthier state than fifteen years ago.



The September issue of the Gazette was largely preoccupied with the aftermath of the World Championships. I made no apology then for devoting such a sizeable amount to one event, and I remain unrepentant. Major international events further the technique of the game, and improve the standing of croquet among the world at large. They deserve extensive coverage, but we mustn't lose sight of what's happening down at the grass roots level.

This edition is consciously focused on those smaller struggling clubs. For them, two stories have emerged this season from which we may all draw encouragement.

Kington Langley is one of the smallest clubs in the country. For them to gain a place in the Secretary's Shield (the national knockout for winners of the previous year's regional handicap leagues) is achievement enough. For them to win outright is remarkable.

chairman's column

I had better start by coming out of the closet: I rather think I am the first chairman of Council to have a handicap as high as 8. I suppose this can be explained by the change in the composition of Council. Until fairly recently Council members were mostly A-class players who usually had strong views about anything to do with the way in which the Association game was played. Tournaments, how people were selected for major events, handicapping, and of course the laws, were topics that could, and did, easily fill whole Council meetings. Things have now changed, to the extent that we have had to encourage more top players to join Council so that we get a good balance. Council is now much more concerned with the bread and butter issues that directly affect all the CA's members - clubs as well as individuals. And it's these matters that interest me most.



I'm on Council as the representative from the South East Region, elected by the SE Federation. I started playing at

Something of which we should all take note is the story of Blewbury Croquet Club in Oxfordshire. From a basis of no lawns and few members, the club has become the first to pass the rigours of the National Lottery grant procedure. Their account is something which I'm sure many clubs will find invaluable.

It's easy to overlook the work of those working hard to develop the game of croquet. Turning up at the club on a Saturday afternoon, one can forget that the club itself wouldn't have come into being without time, effort, expertise and (not least) money. I hope to look back in another fifteen years and see Blewbury, and many other clubs like it, thriving.

You will notice below that there's a new Chairman of Council. I'd like to extend my personal best wishes to Don Gaunt, who steps down and devotes himself to all matters European in the game, and to greet our new Chairman, Quiller Barrett. I've twisted his arm into writing an extensive autobiography for the Gazette, and I'm sure you'll agree that his experience bodes well for the next couple of years under his tenure.

Finally, an apology. You were all too kind to mention it, but it can't have escaped your notice that the September issue arrived some while into October. With a new editor, new printer and new distributor, delays were, I suppose, inevitable. Hopefully any such teething troubles will have been resolved. I look forward to a much smoother ride.

Ealing CC in 1990, was coached by Ron Welch and soon after I joined Surbiton as well.

But my links with croquet go further back. Before WWII (ouch, that dates me) I'm told that as a toddler I used to follow my grandmother around the croquet lawns in Penarth, South Wales - retrieving balls from bushes and moving her clips on. Then in the 1960's I joined a publishing house that produced a series of paperbacks: Know the Game. I was given Croquet to prepare for press and I came across the names of Ormerod and Solomon. I realized here was a sport that could appeal to me greatly. Incidentally, anyone who still has the first edition of KTG Croquet will see that my proof reading was decidedly suspect: the illustration of the roll stroke appears above the stop shot caption and vice versa ... I hope I didn't put too many people off the game for good.

But in those days all my spare time was spent in the air, flying gliders and balloons, so croquet had to wait. You may be relieved to know that during those years I was run in as chairman of two national sporting associations, and I represented the UK's interests on world aviation federations, equivalent to croquet's WCF. It's not surprising that there are similarities between administering croquet and these other sports. The changes that have up-dated the CA's constitution and made its administration more effective were

very reminiscent of those I had been involved with at the British Gliding Association. Managing such changes is always a bit wearing I find.

I've been on the committee of the SE Federation for many years and it was there I met Stephen Badger who, when he was chairing Council in 1997, invited me to join a CA Planning Group chaired by Bill Sidebottom. This was a mix of Council members and Federation people and it was charged with recommending what should be the goals and objectives for the CA in its second century.

I was elected to Council later in 1997 and the Group's proposals were agreed by Council in 1998 when they asked me to chair a Constitution Working Party to look at how some of the ideas might be implemented. We consulted widely and a year later Council agreed that the Rules of the Association should be changed to include clubs as members. Council's own procedures were altered to enable it to concentrate on broad policy matters, committees were given more autonomy and a management committee was established. When Don Gaunt became chairman in 1999, I was elected vice-chairman of Council and chairman of the new management committee. Don and I worked closely together to help bed down the new ways of working and I'm pleased they are now accepted.

On a personal note, I tried hard to persuade other senior Council members to take on the chairmanship this year, but I failed. So, they will have to put up with a high bisquer in the job for a while.

At the Council meeting in October my first act as the new chairman was to thank Don Gaunt for the tremendous contribution he has made to croquet as a Council member for 15 years, and as chairman for the last two of these. Don, in the chair, was always courteous and effective. He steered through the changes to the Council and committees' ways of working very successfully, and he set an example to us all by improving communications between Council and the Federations and clubs. A hard act to follow.

There are several new faces at the Council table this year. Stephen Mulliner makes a return appearance after some years, having been elected a vice-president at the AGM. New regional representatives are Michael Blackwell, Jolyon Kay, Julian Tonks and Bob Whitaker. Phil Cordingley and David Magee have been co-opted to fill the two vacancies in our ranks. Thanks to them all, and to the many non-Council members who have agreed to be co-opted to serve on our committees, working parties and the new disciplinary and appeals panels.

Ian Vincent has been elected vice-chairman of Council and chairman of the publishing committee. New chairmen of

committees are Phil Cordingley (selection), Patricia Duke-Cox (administration), Hamish Hall (development) and Bryan Judson (management).

One major policy matter was debated at this first Council meeting of the new session: CA membership. Although the overall membership figures remain fairly static, over several years there has been a decline in new Individual members joining the CA. Various reasons for this were put forward and the marketing and membership committees will be taking some new initiatives. You can expect to read more about this later in the year.

John Solomon, in his President's address at the AGM, spoke about the Hurlingham Club's decision to give the CA twelve months notice to move out of its office. After the intervention of Bevis Sanford and Hurlingham's croquet sub-committee there was the possibility of a change of mind by the Club, but in September we heard that their original decision stands. So we must look elsewhere.

Council has agreed that our long-term priority is to have an office at a croquet club. Our starting point is in London because the Secretary and his assistant live there, and it is a good catchment area for us to recruit and retain new staff when the time comes. Neither the Roehampton nor the All-England Wimbledon club is able to offer us space, but Surbiton CC has said it would welcome us - as have Cheltenham and Sussex County. We are most grateful to them and to the other clubs that have offered to help. David Magee is chairing a relocation working party and they are now in the throes of preparing planning applications. We are keeping our options open.

If it looks as though a new building cannot be completed by June 2002, we are making contingency plans for temporary accommodation so that the excellent service Nigel and Janet give to members is disrupted as little as possible. But please bear with us!

Quiller Barrett

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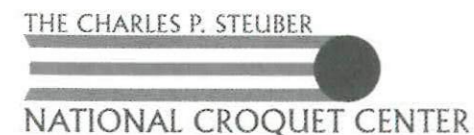


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news and information
croquet festival II

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eight days of the widest choice of games and formats ever seen at a single venue, the Festival celebrates the official opening of the 19,000 square foot clubhouse that is the final element in the building of this unique facility - the largest of its kind in the world.

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hunstanton clubhouse



attended by the Mayor of Hunstanton, Council Officers, the Architect and builders, together with many Association Members representing many clubs.

America's International Croquet Festival II begins on the final day of the Golf Croquet World Championship. In

The host was Chairman David Mattacks and the symbolic ribbon was expertly cut by Treasurer Sarah Hampson.

The fact that the ceremony took place only 11 months after vandals set fire to the old wooden building is testimony to the hard work put in by all of the committee, led by David and Sarah.

However the unsung heroes of the situation are the organisations that supported the club with grants and the very many individual Association members and Clubs who so generously donated. The list is too great to publish here but it is recorded in a fine presentation book kept in the new Club House. On behalf of the Committee and all members a very big THANK YOU to all who helped.

nottingham building society

It's easy to forget the importance of small grants in promoting the game. Here Long Eaton Park Croquet Club in the East Midlands has met with some success from Nottingham Building Society.



The club is 10 years old, and is keen to encourage youngsters into the game. With £200 towards the purchase of additional club mallets they hope to encourage more children to play the game without any financial commitment.

Aside from the obvious cash benefits of such ventures, clubs can use the weight of local businesses to attract much needed publicity for the game.

Pictured above are Trish Cyster, regional development manager for Nottingham Building Society, with Club treasurer David Pinney and young players Adam Redfern (8) and Jordan Ryder (9).

an appeal for bandits

The next Gazette is scheduled to include the UK Ranking Lists for advanced play. As a new departure, the plan is to include a table of the best handicap players. If you've improved by 100 index points (two triggers) or more, send your name, home club and details of starting index and finishing index to the Editor before 10th December.

croquet association diplomas 2001

The Croquet Association congratulates the four club members who have been awarded Diplomas in 2001. CA Diplomas recognize those club members who have been active in club affairs over a long period. The Diplomas have nothing to do with croquet prowess and everything to do with help given to other members.

If your club would like to make a nomination next year it must be approved by the club committee and accompanied by a citation of not more than ten lines. Applications should be signed by a club official on behalf of the committee and sent to the CA Secretary before 1st August 2002.

derek bradley
nominated by the grateful members of cheltenham croquet club

Derek joined the club in 1991 to learn to play croquet and by October 1992 was attending committee meetings as the club's lawn manager. Additionally he became vice-chairman in 1997 and chairman in 1999. Although a hugely versatile club member, willing to roll up his sleeves and stick his arm down any troublesome area, it is his dedication to Cheltenham's lawns that deserves most acclaim. Grass is what the club has most of, what people first see and comment on at length. Derek's forbearance with all the croquet world's opinions on grass management is awesome. No doubt he reflects on such matters whilst sucking on his pipe touring the club's grounds on his regular pre-breakfast inspections. The club owes Derek an enormous thank you.

john grimshaw
nominated by dyffryn croquet club

John, single-handedly, set up the Dyffryn Club in 1986, negotiating for the site, advertising for players and coaching them so successfully that in only its third season the club won two leagues of the South West Federation. After ten years on the committee, John handed over the reins to others but he has continued to give unstinting support to the club and to encourage new players. John also set up the Welsh CA and has been instrumental in getting many international teams to visit the club. Dyffryn and Wales owe him a great debt of gratitude.

len hawkins
nominated by ramsgate croquet club

Len is a founder club member, and has been treasurer since 1983. He became the club's first Grade 1 coach in April 1987 and since then has coached members every Tuesday morning during the playing season. He qualified as a Grade 2 coach in May 1996 and has since helped at other clubs in the area and at CA coaching courses. Len is an extremely

patient and willing coach for whom nothing is too much trouble and he has encouraged many visitors to become members. He became a qualified Association referee in April 1994 and has been the ROT in five CA tournaments.

During the winter Len travels 16 miles to the club at least once a week, putting his hand to whatever needs doing in the clubhouse - and he has cajoled many others to do the same.

bernard smith
nominated by ramsgate croquet club

Since 1987 Bernard has been the mainstay of the winter working parties that have transformed the club's derelict 'listed' building into what we have today. As a qualified electrician he rewired the whole of the clubhouse and even now, into his eighties, Bernard can still be found in the clubhouse, three days a week, carrying out a winter programme of work such as waterproofing, panelling and painting.

During the playing season Bernard assists in coaching members during the week, and juniors on Saturday mornings. A committee member for ten years, he is a real stalwart of the club in all respects.

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letters

warming up

Dear Editor,

The arguments for and against warming up raised once more in the last edition of the Gazette have been well debated. The decision whether to allow it before tournaments is left to managers but warming up seems to be the exception rather than the rule. Bob Burnett in his article added expert medical advice and the new dimension of ageism, as the older you are, the longer it takes for your body to get tuned up for play and for reducing the risk of minor injury.

Maybe the Tournament Committee would wish to look again at its policy and think in terms of making warming up the rule, rather than the exception. The Fixtures Calendar might include permission to warm up as a General Condition for tournaments, with what Bob describes as Jurassic managers giving their veto in the Exceptions for their particular tournament. More competitors would turn up earlier than later for events in order not to be disadvantaged by not having warmed up, which will please managers.

In the meantime I may be tempted when I play my next fresh air shot, to claim that I was merely re-activating my muscular memory!

Michael J Hague
Woking

the new-look gazette

Dear Editor,

Congratulations on a successful debut gazette - but why not a Gazette?

Surely most Croquet players learned English at the hands of teachers of the old school who had strong views on the correct use of CAPITAL letters!

I know there are some trendy people in the graphic design world who dislike upper case, but surely not those

who would approve of your inconsistent usages. Why adopt a different style for "American pioneer Bob Alman" and "bob burnett's advice"? Why "CA" but not "WCF"?

I think you have 3 choices:

1. go the whole hog and have no capitals in headings at all
2. give Bob, Surbiton, WCF and other proper nouns the courtesy of capitals, but stick to lower case elsewhere
3. Use the style we were taught at school, and start each heading with a capital and capitalise all proper nouns wherever they occur, with a possible extension to other non-trivial words in titles as in the previous Gazette.

It goes without saying that I prefer 3, but I would tolerate any style as long as it was used consistently throughout the magazine.

Michael Poole
Stroud

Opinion of readers seems divided on the use (or misuse) of lower-case lettering. I must confess that usage was indeed inconsistent in the last issue - a problem of time and production constraints. Nevertheless, my decision not to upper-case proper nouns was taken for several reasons.

The typography used within the magazine is chosen specifically for compatibility between my computer and the printer, and, taking a longer term view, standardisation for viewing over the Internet (this latter being a point for further discussion by the CA's new Publications Committee). With that in mind, the type selected for titles simply doesn't look right in mixed case. My first concern must be for clarity, and, with capitalisation (as in my earliest prototype), it just looks less readable. Despite my school-days having taught me that "The Croquet Gazette" is the accepted convention, I remain sceptical that "the croquet gazette" is any less valid than, say, "THE CROQUET GAZETTE". As in all matters of personal taste, opinion will continue to be divided, but I hope this answers some of the concerns which some readers may have had. - Ed

hoop-setting

Dear Editor,

I feel that a reply is needed to some comments made in the September Gazette. Namely in the area of hoop settings, and positions, for open tournaments (Letters column and Tournament Committee report).

I have been responsible on my Club Committee for the last three years, with our excellent groundsman, for the presentation of our four lawns throughout the season. We have over one hundred members, playing both Association and Golf. We have the usual internal tournaments, a three/four tier match set-up with other clubs, friendly matches, and all the other types of play which occur throughout the year. We hold three CA Open Tournaments and have hosted the Selectors' Weekend and the Barlow Bowl. I mention all this to show that with ordinary club use alone, it is not the easiest of tasks to get the lawns and hoop conditions up to the standard your correspondents require for their tournaments and other top events. Especially with the vagaries of the English weather.

My limited experience does indicate that you can only move hoop positions twice during a season after the initial fix. This is in an East-West direction, so as to keep the lawn in front of them as undisturbed as possible. Even then the original holes, however hard you try, take a week or so to recover. As for hoop rigidity, I suspect there are not many lawns around the country where a day of rain will permit perceptible movement of the hoop when the crown is pushed with considerable force. I have always felt, like Golf and Cricket, in Croquet you play the lawn as much as your opponent.

I accept that the top tournament players have a right to decent lawns, and I and my colleagues around the country will ensure that they do. These players should not become too Prima Donna-like in their outlook. The

lawn with newly moved hoops, beautifully cut and marked out, was not like that yesterday. The ordinary club player who played then had to put up with loose hoops and rabbit runs. The ground staff could do little to correct this, because the forthcoming tournament took priority.

I hope I do not sound anti-tournament, but it's all a matter of balance surely, and trying to make sure everyone, whether +20 or -2, gets an equal crack of the whip. Generally with the ground staff in the middle!!

IMA Groundsrep
Sidmouth

the philosophy of golf

Dear Editor,

I think the Editor has made a good case for re-appraising Golf Croquet (September issue). In his last paragraph he has pointed succinctly to the difference in the philosophy of the two games.

Association Croquet is a highly tactical and challenging game, but whilst maintaining accuracy on the court, the player can concentrate totally on his or her own game when in play. When not in play, there is time for recuperation.

As a Golf player you are in play all the time and thinking two, three or possibly four shots ahead but knowing that all may change immediately your opponent has played. In a singles match which may extend to two hours, the players are concentrating on tactics for the whole time and a series of matches in one day is challenging mentally as well as physically.

There are some analogies of croquet with other games. Snooker comes to mind for Association, as one contestant is playing alone at the table and, provided accuracy is maintained, the other can only sit and wait. The analogy for Golf Croquet is chess, where each player moves in turn and the

game changes after every move. Chess and snooker players might not value the comparison with croquet, but there are similarities in the thinking behind the tactics.

Finally both games might benefit from a change of name from Golf Croquet. Any suggestions?

Jennet Blake
Eynsham, Oxfordshire

reasonable despatch

Dear Editor,

At the risk of setting a hare running, I would be interested to know other players' views on what constitutes "Reasonable Despatch" when playing. At a recent club evening a brief survey of A class players (handicaps 0 to 1.5) revealed an average time per stroke varying between 12 seconds and 50 seconds, surveyed over a broadly similar range of strokes and situations. These times equate to break to 4-back times of between 15 and 58 minutes, allowing a bit of time for the leave.

What do players think is a reasonable time to take a break to 4-back? How long is reasonable per stroke? Does "reasonable" depend upon the nature of the stroke? I think we would all allow longer for a long shot than for a simple croquet stroke or short roquet.

There is clearly a need for some consensus on this issue.

John Watson
Wrest Park

the golden hoop?

Dear Editor,

I think it was Frederick Ashton who advised against nude ballet because "not everything stops moving when the music ends". So it is with croquet: when time is called, play continues.

This is understandable in the

Association game where participation by opposing sides is asymmetric, but the adoption of the same procedure in our local golf croquet league and some club competitions seems to me entirely illogical.

The rule in these games is that at "Time" the hoop in play must be completed and, if a tie then results, the next one also - akin to a football match continuing beyond the final whistle until the losing team has scored.

Is this daft procedure a local aberration or is it in place elsewhere?

Peter Lowe
Tyneside

As I understand it, this rule is in place in both the CA and WCF rules for Golf Croquet. Unlike football with a moving ball, croquet players can play as quickly or as slowly as they like. This allows the unscrupulous player to waste time as the clock runs out and hold a one-point lead. The extension period goes some way to eliminating this tactic. In that circumstance, playing on for sudden death after a tie results is the only sensible way to decide a victory. Timed finishes are always a compromise, and in an ideal world, games would be better if played to their conclusion. Often the imposition of a time limit is a blessed relief. - Ed

Have you booked your Croquet Holiday in Austria?



For further details see p 22 of the September issue No 275 of the Croquet Gazette or contact Michael Hague

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wot, no triple peel?

Dear Editor,

There are a whole lot of small clubs out here (like mine at Lym Valley) whose members' handicaps are never likely to improve much. Therefore, you can imagine that all this waffle about World Championships doesn't cut much ice!

Personally, I often found the Coaching pages of the past very useful and I normally tried to pass on these ideas to our members at tea-time on Club afternoons. The September issue carries a number of references to the sextuple peel and when I commented upon this to our members I was met with blank looks of total astonishment ... especially as one or two thought I had said sex appeal (which seldom intrudes in our games). Could someone be persuaded to give a few coaching notes on how to play even a TRIPLE peel?

Over the past 13 years I have been on various courses and have read sundry books without ever gleaning any information on this, apparently, common achievement. Bill Lamb in his book *Croquet, The Skills of the Game* says, "discussion of the TP is beyond the scope of this book". He goes on to suggest that I should consult Keith

Wylie's *Expert Croquet Tactics*. Part 1 (General) states that, "I assume that you know the manoeuvres of the standard triple and that you appreciate that on an easy court it calls for no more than a few simple strokes". Well, I still DON'T know the manoeuvres, so despite Mr Cotter's claim in the chapter heading "There is no position too difficult for a triple to be achieved", I thought it wiser to put the book firmly back on the shelf.

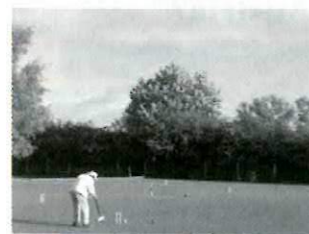
Perhaps someone would like to give us a page of comprehensible instructions to show us how we should execute this elusive manoeuvre and indicate how this fits in with the current tendency towards 14 point games.

W.L. Simpson
Lyme Regis

I'm sorry if some readers found the September issue overloaded with technicalities on the rarefied levels of the World Championships. The aim is to provide a balance of material over time, which may not be possible in a single issue, where some events deserve deeper coverage.

This month, I'm pleased to reintroduce the Breakbuilder series, but welcome the comments about the need for TP coaching. Discussions are in progress with the Coaching Committee about coverage within the Gazette. - Ed.

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invitation events

Many would argue that the British domination of top level croquet is the result of the "strength in depth" among the leading hundred or so players in the country. Looking back through Gazettes from the 1970's, one sees commentaries on the President's Cup which claim that a player played well and "finished with a double peel". One can't vouch for the difficulty of the playing conditions in that season, but it's clear that such an achievement would scarcely merit a mention in passing these days.

It's clear that there are many more players on the scene now, and with this in mind, the Tournament Committee have finally introduced a fourth invitation event, allowing the best 32 available players to play in these intensive events.

The Treasurer's Tankard, as it's been named, was played at Hunstanton - a fitting launch for the new clubhouse. The young Scotsman Jonathan Kirby went into the event as favourite, and emerged as runaway victor, taking an impressive 13 of his 14 games in the all-play-all-twice format. Of the four major events, this proved to be the only one whose result was conclusive.

Nottingham played host to the President's Cup. Fulford looked to be cruising to early dominance but Robin Brown shrugged off 3 defeats and TPO'd in Round 4. Fulford has been vulnerable to this tactic once or twice this year and so it proved again. Still, he ended Day One sharing the lead at 3/4 with Clarke who had his best start in years with three triples and some decent roquets. Maugham looked very good but lost to Fulford and Burrow after a TPO attempt with a short missed peg-out (alleged to be only a yard!).

Robert Fulford and David Maugham enjoyed 4/4 on the second day. Maugham's confrontation with debutant Robin Brown was easily the match of the tournament.

Maugham reached 4-back with Yellow, Brown hit Yellow with Black (via an acorn when aiming at Red) and made 6 hoops, peeled Yellow through 4-b, cross-wired Red and Yellow at 4-b and laid up in Corner 1. Maugham missed, and Brown completed the other two peels on Yellow, did one peel on partner, and pegged two balls out to lead 2-back against 1. Maugham failed hoop 1, and Brown lurked. Maugham hit and 2-balled to 6, stopping when he cross-pegged himself from Black at 6. Jockeying for position, Maugham clawed back to 3-back against 4-back. Brown failed to score again as Maugham won by 4.

After three days, Fulford was pulled back by both Clarke and Maugham and ended the day tied on 9/12 with Clarke. Maugham's chances slipped away, as Ed Cunningham completed the event's only sextuple against him.

Finally, Clarke and Fulford tied on 10/14 and so provided the first play-off since 1989. Clarke took the first of the best-of-three, and had control in the second, but missed a three-yarder while playing a triple. Fulford took than and the decider to win.

At Hurlingham, the Chairman's Salver also resulted in a play-off for first place. All eight players had played well to a greater or lesser extent. The two bottom placed players (in terms of games won), Keith Aiton and Jeremy Dyer, were the only two to complete sextuples. Nevertheless, this is believed to be the first occasion when this feat has been performed twice in the Chairman's.

Michael Heap was learned a valuable lesson against Mark Avery. Peg and peg against one and one, he pegged out one ball. Avery hit and finished in two turns to win +1.

The eventual result was decided in a match between David Goacher and David Harrison-Wood. Each had won 9 of his 14 games, but the play-off game proved scrappy. After four days of perhaps the more consistent quality play, David Harrison-Wood was defeated by 16, allowing Goacher the title.

The Spencer Ell at Southport was without doubt the closest of the lot. The joint holder and favourite Peter Taylor took an early lead after two rounds, but had two successive disasters near rover to leave all eight players on two wins after Round 4.

By Round 6, six players were on three wins, with Sam Tudor one ahead and Chris Williams one behind. Tudor widened his lead before fading in the last five rounds. At the close of the

event, Tim Wilkins and John Gibbons went into the play-off. Wilkins emerged the winner, in an event of a high standard; in the 56 games played, 20 had triple peels executed, just one short of 1998's record for the event.

The Selectors' Weekend was held at Surbiton, and was run as a flexible Swiss over three days. In the semi-finals, David Mundy beat Samir Patel +5 and Paul Castell beat Swiss Champion Peter Payne +11TP. David Mundy won the final +24 -16TP +16.



The Treasurer's Tankard for the new Fourth Eight. The beer as depicted is temporary.

finishing positions

president's cup			chairman's salver			spencer ell cup			treasurer's tankard		
1st	Fulford	10	1st	Goacher	9	1st	Wilkins	9	1st	Kirby	13
2nd	Clarke	10	2nd	Harrison-Wood	9	2nd	Gibbons	9	2nd=	Lines	8
3rd	Maugham	8	3rd=	Avery	8	3rd	Kibble	8	2nd=	Magee	8
4th=	Irwin	7	3rd=	Dawson	8	4th=	Tibble	7	2nd=	Smith	8
4th=	Mulliner	7	5th=	Farthing	6	4th=	Tudor	7	5th	Vincent	6
6th=	Burrow	5	5th=	Heap	6	6th	Williams	6	6th	Weston	5
6th=	Cunningham	5	7th=	Dyer	5	7th=	Curry	5	7th=	Jenkins	4
8th	Brown	4	7th=	Aiton	5	7th=	Taylor	5	7th=	Hopewell	4

selectors' weekend

David Mundy 9/11 (Winner) ; Paul Castell 6/10 (Runner-up) ; Samir Patel 7/10 ; Peter Payne 8/11 ; Kevin Carter 5/10 ; Gary Bennett 6/11 ; Louise Bradforth 5/10 ; Ian Plummer 5/9 ; Lawrence Whittaker 4/9 ; Collin Southern 4/11 ; Tom Browne 6/10 ; Jenny Williams 5/9 ; James Dixon 5/11 ; Brian Smith 2/10 ; Nelson Morrow 3/6 ; Dai Morgan 0/10

it could be you

as blewbury cracks the lottery process, jolyon kay explains the long haul

Blewbury Croquet Club (BCC) received confirmation on 20 July that they had been awarded a grant from the National Lottery Fund of £41,961. We were lucky. And we persevered. You need to do both.

BCC was started in 1993, after a demonstration game at the village fete attracted some interest. To begin with they were able to use a patch of former cricket outfield on the village recreation ground (BRG). A modest membership of 20 was built up, of which our star player has a handicap of 8, with a couple of juniors for good measure. But the grass was poor, the ground was sloping and lack of sole use discouraged the loyal wielders of the secondhand mowing machine. So when it was used one night to practice three point turns by a vandal motorist, we gave it up.

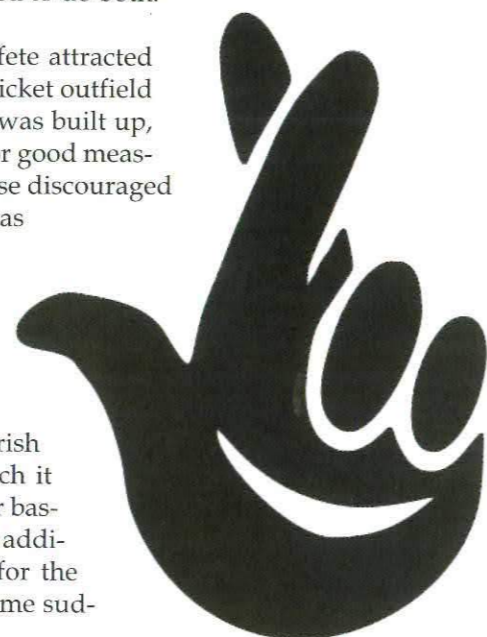
Fortunately we were offered the use, one day a week and occasional weekends, of a private court, only 16 yards wide, to be sure, but in impeccable order, and of another short croquet court in a neighbouring village. At the same time we enquired of the village Parish Council (BPC) of the possibility of having land of our own, on which it would be worth building two new courts. This and similar requests for basketball, skateboard and other facilities alerted the BPC to the need for additional land for recreation. At the same time, the only possible site for the expansion of the BRG, engagingly called Ticker's Folly Field (TFF), came suddenly on the market.

A Trust was set up and borrowed £30,000 from 30 villagers to buy the field, until such time as the BPC could arrange to buy it, which, with the help of a grant from the Vale of White Horse District Council (the Vale), they did in 1996. The enterprise won much favourable publicity in the local press. BPC then set about a project, with which the BCC was closely concerned, as were the village football, cricket and tennis clubs, to reorganise the whole recreation ground, including two croquet courts, and to build a new pavilion. A lottery grant was sought to fund it, but refused because of the need to follow Sports Council guidelines for the pavilion design, for which there was not space in the proposed arrangement. The BPC redesigned the project, but it mushroomed; the guidelines were quite inappropriate for a village pavilion. And opposition to the modern design proposed by the project consultants was enough to scupper it.

Back to the drawing board. After a decent interval to allow for the elections, the BPC invited the sports clubs to go each their own way; the BPC would build and pay for a car park and make land available for other projects. It would be left to the sports clubs collectively to do whatever they wished with the pavilion.

The BCC was first in the field. With the advice of the Vale's Leisure Department, we prepared a new Development Plan, setting out the proposals for the courts and describing how the Club would be run and financed. The estimate of the capital cost, at that stage, was some £40,000. We asked the BPC for £1000. Embarrassed by the sight of TFF with no sports facilities on it, they agreed. This was the key to a grant of £1500 from the Vale to employ consultants to help us prepare a lottery bid. They also offered £10,000, if our bid was successful, from their fund to support lottery bids. They told us there was no prospect of grant money that was not linked to a lottery application. They recommended four consultants, from whom we chose PMP Consultants, of Godalming, whose proposal seemed most in line with our needs and financial constraints. On the advice of the BPC's landscape consultant we also asked Reading Agricultural Consultants (RAC), of Aston Tirrold, to prepare a specification for us to go out to tender for the preparation of the courts. RAC, who started out to advise farmers, found that the advice they wanted was how to build golf courses on their land - so they became sports consultants.

Preparing the technical specification took time. Despite having John Beech's booklet 'Croquet Lawns, Their establishment, improvement and maintenance' and the Oxford University website, as well as an old paper by R F Rothwell, to draw on, we found a shortage of basic information available on what it takes to build a croquet court, and in particular, how level it needs to be. We based ourselves on a bowling green specification and relaxed it as much as we thought prudent.



THE NATIONAL LOTTERY®

The specification was a shock. The quality of our soil was very poor, and we were advised to level subsoil, then topsoil, and then to spread 8 inches of a sandy growth medium over the whole. We were also advised that the porosity was such that we would need drainage and a soakaway. Otherwise, if the courts were dried by the sun faster than the water drained away, we should get caking and cracking. When we received the tenders we selected the lowest, from White Horse Contractors, and discussed with them modifications, 5 inches of growth medium for 8 and sowing rather than turfing, to reduce the price to within range of our budget.

Meanwhile PMP were helping us put our bid together. They selected appropriate parts of our Development Plan and used their template to feed it into the draft application form. They urged us to stress the partnership elements of our proposal. The Sports Council, now Sport England, had taken a similar line at a briefing meeting we had been invited to attend.

Partnership is a portmanteau word. We showed partnership with our local authorities, who were providing land and money. Their Sports Development Officer post was temporarily in abeyance, but we were to get useful help from them later. This was an essential element. We showed partnership with our local community, since we co-operated with the other sports clubs in the management of the BRG. We also had promises of financial support from a number of local Trusts and Funds. We showed partnership with the village Youth Club, whom we had interested in playing on a mini-mat we had borrowed for our annual winter party. We showed partnership with eight local schools and five local U3A groups when we persuaded them to write letters of support on the basis that we should make our facilities available to them when we had them. We described our proposals to bring the game to the four market towns in our catchment area. We found one commercial sponsor to put up £1000. Lastly the Club had saved up £2000 over the years and we undertook to raise a further £8000 from our members. For a club with only 24 members this was brave. And as essential as the local authorities' support was that of the CA and the SCF, both of whom offered £500.

PMP also stressed that we should do well to keep our bid down to below 60% of our total project cost. They explained that bids that looked as if they were designed to screw the maximum support from the lottery fund were viewed with disfavour. Though the project cost, including groundsman's equipment and playing equipment, was now up to £71,748, this we managed to do. We were also advised to alter our constitution to make clear we were a club open to all would-be members. This we did, though later, under pressure from Sport England, we made it clearer still.

Our application also included a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats), proposals for attracting

the Sports Council's target groups - women, over 50s, young people, the disabled, ethnic minorities, - capital and revenue budgets, a week's programme, a Sports Development Action Plan, a map of other clubs in the area, pledges and finally a description of how our proposals fitted in with the CA's own Development Plan. This last was not easy. The CA Planning Group's paper 'Look to the Future' did not include the objective 'Increase the number



of two-court clubs' which would have been ideal, but we made bricks with what straw we found. We also provided plans of the site, a drawing of the shelter (made to a high specification both to be vandal-proof and because we are in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and evidence of planning permission. We submitted our application just before Christmas 2000. We then sat back and waited.

We learned in March, well within the 4 month deadline that Sport England set themselves to reply, that the Panel had agreed in principle to our proceeding to stage two development. Stage two development is a process whereby Sport England act with us to fine tune our application to make it grant-worthy. From now on, Sport England were on our side. But first, the panel wanted them to satisfy themselves on two points - dealing with vandalism and fitting in with the management of the BRG generally. Sport England asked to meet us to discuss these points. Unfortunately the Sport England personnel could not manage any date earlier than 7 May, so 6 valuable weeks were lost. We attempted to satisfy them in writing, but they wanted a meeting.

When it took place their party consisted of our case officer, her boss and (very helpfully) a regional representative. We fielded four of our Project Team and a local Councillor-Chairman of the BRG Management Committee. They quickly pronounced themselves satisfied on the two points at issue. They then produced a document called an Action Plan. This listed the things we still had to do to qualify for

a grant. They explained that during this phase they would be working with us to fulfil the Action Plan. We found the Action Plan an intimidating document, and their explanations of it at the meeting confusing. Its status was unclear. It did not seem to take greatly into account our own Application. Sport England explained that we were 'nearly there' but what we still had to do we did not understand. The Action Plan called for, for example, 'firm commitments from potential users'. Yet we were then well over a year from having any facilities. We gained the impression that we had been given a standard draft that had been barely modified in the light of what we had already done. After the meeting Sport England redrafted the paper, but it was not a great improvement, though it was now accompanied by useful guidance notes. But it did take into account that we needed an early response from the panel in order to enable us to catch the grass-sowing season in September. This meant submitting the response by 10 June in time for the monthly Panel meeting on 16 July.

Here our Sports Development Officers at the Vale turned up trumps. They met the Regional Officer from Sport England and then had a meeting with us at which we went over the ground again. They explained the jargon and held our hands as we devised 'pathways through the sports development continuum', developed a Health and Safety Policy, and guessed how many male/female members of varying ages we should have by 2005. As we developed the documentation needed for the Action Plan's fulfillment we were able to clear elements of it by email with our case officer as we went. This was very helpful, and we were able to build up a good relationship with our case officer. We submitted our further supporting documents by the deadline.

They were:-

- Pledges from our members to contribute £8000 to our project.
- Final Revenue Forecast, with details of the Concessionary Pricing Scheme put to the Committee for agreement by the AGM in September.
- Copy of the Minutes of the relevant meeting of the Committee with copies of the Sports Development Plan, Managing the Facility, Marketing Plan, and Changes in the Rules to be put to the AGM.
- Final draft of the Lease to be put to the Parish Council by the Chairman at their July meeting.
- Copy of the minutes of the Blewbury Parish Council and of its Finance committee confirming payment of the £500 grant for 2001.
- Three tenders for the main contract works, with the covering letter from Reading Agricultural Consultants describing the tendering process that we adopted and the letter from the selected contractor confirming the variations developed at a meeting with them.
- Quotation from our builder for the shelter construction
- Letter from HM Customs and Excise confirming our

VAT status.

- Quotation from the CA for playing equipment (with later revision).
- Drawing of the shelter.
- Letter of comfort from the Chairman of the Blewbury Parish Council about a strip of land to be purchased from the Oxfordshire County Council.
- Letters of support from organisations with whom we had developed our contacts since submitting our first stage application.

The Action Plan had included some tasks with longer timescales, such as adopting a Child Protection Policy, which we shall be able to do when one of our members has been on a Child Protection Course, being organised by the local authority, in October. We have also had to make further changes to our constitution, at our AGM in September, in particular to ensure that no members benefit if we have to wind up the Club, and that as far as possible the facilities continue to be used.

On 18th July we learn that we are to be awarded the grant we have asked for. Because only 90% of the money is paid over as we go along, we shall have some tricky cash flow problems to handle on the way. But at last we can open the champagne. We need to co-ordinate publicity with the regional office of Sport England, and start placing contracts. Lots of decisions still remain to be taken. How and if to irrigate, what mower to buy, what line marker, how large a soakaway we shall need, omega hoops or not; and, of course, who goes on the Child Protection course! Only now do we learn of the range of Club Development Programmes run by Sport England for people like us. We start booking them nevertheless.

Our contractor tells us that because of the poor weather he cannot start work until October, and we shall not be playing much croquet on our new courts until 2003. We shall amuse ourselves during the winter by speculating on whom we shall invite to perform the opening ceremony.

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coaching break builder 4

The fourth Break Builder tip, written by Keith Aiton and first published in the Gazette in the summer of 1987, set this puzzle. This time you are playing Yellow in the fourth turn, and you are prepared to use two bisques to get the break started. Red is on the West Boundary south of Corner II, and the opponent balls both on the East Boundary, with Blue north of Corner IV and Black a short distance further up. What do you do?

As always, before constructing a break using bisques, you should picture where you need the other three balls. In this case, we need a pioneer for Hoop 1, a pioneer for Hoop 2 (next-but-one, thinking ahead), and a pivot. Of these the most immediately important is a good placing for the pioneer at Hoop 1.

solution:

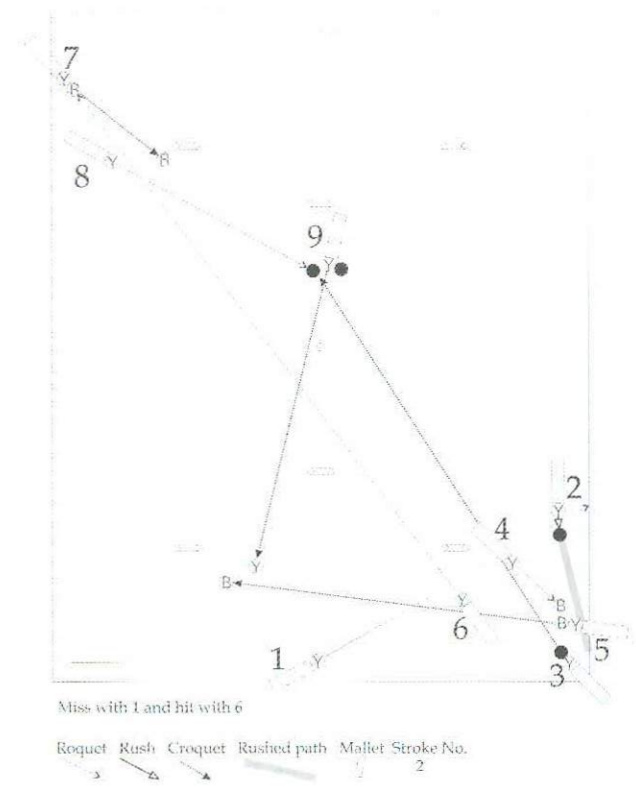
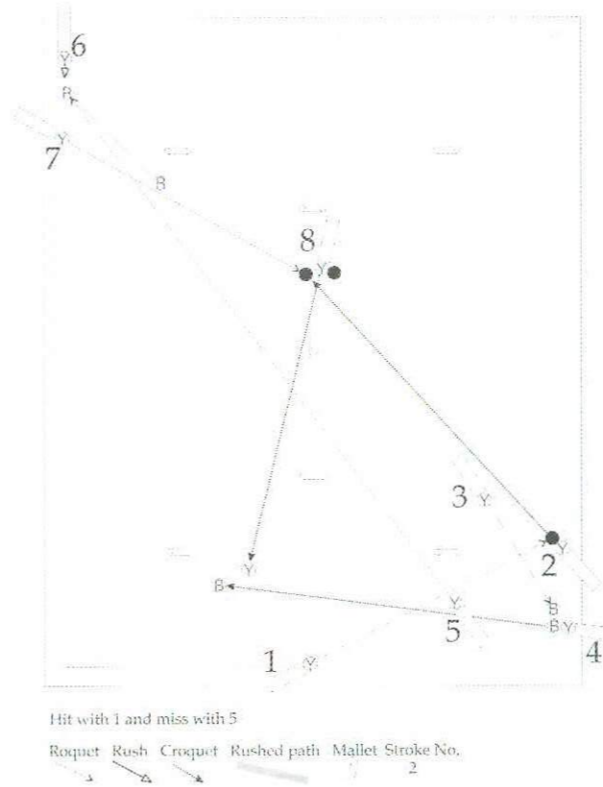
Shoot at Black from A-baulk. If you miss, take a bisque and rush Black into Corner IV. You should be trying to set up a perfect four-ball break, so avoid the temptation of taking a dolly rush on Blue to Hoop 1. Even if that comes off, neither Black nor Red is in a helpful position. Stopshot Black as far towards the peg as possible, keeping Yellow close to Blue. Roquet Blue, and stopshot it as close to Hoop 1 as possible. Shoot at Red. If you miss, take a second bisque and rush Red a few yards

down the West boundary, past or level with Hoop 2. A thick take-off from this point will move Red towards Hoop 2 whilst Yellow either going to Black, or down to Blue near Hoop 1.

In either case if you hit the long shot, then you have apparently saved a bisque, but you are not in such a advantageous position because you have not set up the short rush. In Corner IV, you can stopshot the Black towards the peg, nearer Hoop 6 than otherwise, making sure you can return to roquet Blue, and that croquet shot setting up the Hoop 1 pioneer is the same. However you could deliberately use the first bisque by playing the continuation shot to give you a rush on Black to the centre, and take off from there to give a decent rush on Blue to Hoop 1. After that, getting to Red is as before. If you hit Red from a distance, again you have saved the second bisque, but getting to either of the opponent balls from Corner II whilst pushing Red near to Hoop 2 is practically impossible. In this case rolling both to near Hoop 2 is the simplest option, continuing by playing the one-ball shot to the pivot, and taking the bisque from there to tidy up both pivot and Red before taking off to the Hoop 1 pioneer.

summary

Yellow shoots at Black.
 Take the bisque if necessary, stopshot Black into the middle.
 Yellow roquets Blue.
 Stopshot Blue to Hoop 1, Yellow coming into the middle of



the lawn.
 Yellow shoots at Red.
 Take the bisque if necessary, thick take-off putting Red by Hoop 2, getting to Black.
 Yellow roquets Black.
 Take-off to Blue near Hoop 1.

The four-ball break exists for two bisques.

You may wonder how you can guarantee a rush on the Black on the East Boundary - it's all about the angles. Shooting from A-baulk at a ball on the East Boundary that is not in the corner will nearly always result on your ball being replaced on the yard line further north, because of the Law that says the striker's ball comes onto the lawn at 90degrees from the boundary line at the point it touched that line. Pythagoras will show that you have got to miss by a long way on the right of the Black ball for the resulting angle still to be nearer the corner! Similarly when shooting from the middle of the lawn to the Red outside Corner II, you have to miss a long way left before the ball is replaced with the rush towards the Corner rather than down the line.

You may also wonder whether it is worthwhile trying to roquet the ball under these circumstances, when it seems to give a more productive result when you just miss. My view is that, to get your eye in at the start of a game, it is easier to aim directly at a ball than at a point away from the ball, and anyway, when your opponent sees you hit that first long shot, he must get a little bit concerned, and set the leave at the end of his turn a little more defensively, giving you the psychological upper hand!

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tournament round-up

secretary's shield

4:3 - the story of kington langley's 2001



Kington Langley's winning team : (L to R)
 Tony Treglown, Jane Hull, Brian Shorney, Alex Shipp

season

by Tony Treglown
 Kington Langley became only the second South West team to win the CA Secretary's Shield outright, since it was first played for in 1979, when the village team beat the mighty Bowdon (6 times previous winners) in the final at Cheltenham on 6 October.

It was fitting that the result was a close 4:3 victory as this was the score in all but one of our competitive matches played with a team of 4 this year (and we won 7 of the 8 4:3s). All this from a pool of only 5 players willing and able to play in SW Federation and CA matches. Not only that, but Club Chairman Eric Bevan was forced to pull out of the pool after the first few matches of the season because of illness. It got worse: Jane Hull and Brian Shorney, together with Eric, were involved in a serious road accident on their way home from a weekend tournament at Nailsea so we were forced to play a team of 4 which included 2 walking wounded in our last 4 matches. And all our CA matches had to be away fixtures because we only have 1 fi lawns. So, we were quite pleased with our season which was our first season as an affiliated club.

We warranted 130 column inches in the local, North Wilts, newspaper.

This was supposed to be a piece on the final, so, here goes:

The teams:
 Bowdon: Brian Morley (2), Andy Keeble (3), Sheila Sandham (10) Lorna Frost (11)
 Kington Langley: Tony Treglown (4 fi), Alex Shipp (5), Jane Hull (10) Brian Shorney (10)

Morning session:
 Sheila Sandham allowed Alex a total of 8 shots as she used her bisques to despatch him +26 in double-quick time. Tony, frightened by the unknown Bowdon team players' standards seeing Sheila trounce Alex on their double-banked lawn, started defensively against Andy Keeble. He had the luxury of bisques left as he pegged out +19. Jane and Brian (mis-typed - or was it? - as Brain in the local newspaper piece) had been undefeated in the doubles all season, but struggled to time against the strong Bowdon pairing. Their score was level until the last turn when Jane secured the win by 2. Lunch score 2:1 to Kington Langley.

In the afternoon four singles, Alex played Andy Keeble and looked likely to put his morning reversal behind him with a quick fire win by forging a big lead (one ball on peg, one on rover). However, Andy made a fighting comeback and almost brought the game back level before Alex eventually made the final hoop, after four attempts, and pegged out to give Kington Langley a 3:1 lead. The other three singles saw Brian Shorney play Sheila Sandham. Sheila was still playing faultless croquet and gave Brian very few opportunities as she again pegged out to win in fairly quick time. 3:2 to the village team. Jane was unable to repeat her morning heroics against Lorna Frost and eventually went down 10T. Tony Treglown met the Bowdon team's best player, Brian Medley, in a game which was to prove to be the match decider.

After three and a half hours, when time was called, Tony was in play. He had clawed a lead of 4 points and knew that Brian had one more turn. Tony put one ball in each of the four corners of the lawn. Showing his class, Brian hit in across the full width of the lawn to the obvious delight of his watching team mates. He then managed to extract the other two balls from their corners and made 2-back, approaching perfectly on a take-off from hoop 3. Brian then put the

balls in position to go on and win the game - and the match - and went for 3 back. Nerves were tight, breath was held and he went for it. He missed. It was all over:

Kington Langley had won 4:3 and were champions to the delight of their small band of supporters. Cameras flashed as the shield was presented and the champagne was cracked.

The village team must be the smallest club ever to win the prestigious shield.

Footnote: We suffered only one 3:4 defeat in 2001. It was against East Dorset in the Longman. They also pipped us 3:2 (because they couldn't raise a team of 4!) in the SW Fed final. Maybe we might get our revenge in the Secretary's Shield in 2002? Watch out Parkstone!

other national team competition results

Inter Club Championship :
 Winners Surbiton
 Runners-up Cheltenham

Mary Rose Championship :
 Winners Bowdon
 Runners-up Wrest Park

Longman Cup :
 Winners Watford (Cassiobury)
 Runners-up Woking

all england handicap national final

by Daniel G Mills

Sixteen players from around the country came together for this enjoyable and exciting weekend on the superbly conditioned lawns at Roehampton.

Douglas Gurney managed efficiently, ably assisted by Paul Macdonald as handicapper, and Nigel Aspinall as Referee of the Tournament.

After Day One, Martin MacKay (Chelmsford) and Ben Ashwell (Wrest Park) led the field with 3 wins out of 3. Martin (handicap 11) won impressively by 24 against Nailsea's Peter Dyke (7), leaving a bisque standing. Ben's win against Bowdon's 11-handicapper Sheila Sandham was excellent. Another six players remained in contention with two wins out of three.

On Sunday Ashwell beat MacKay with a tense +6(T), then lost to Vic Forrington of Cheltenham by 26. MacKay beat Forrington +4 with a superb last turn, but Ashwell's victory against Vi Lester of Colchester gave him the tile, a handicap cut to 8 and his silver award.

One point of interest is that on at least three occasions, players attempted to peg out one of their balls when not entitled to do so. Maybe this is something for club coaches to remind new players about?

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**three-legged race 2001
compton, 5 - 7 october**
by Roy Wallis

In spite of the dire forecasts, The first two and a half days of the 8th Three-legged Race Tournament were pleasant and warm, and a good entry ranged from -1.5 (David Harrison-Wood - fresh from his South of England Championship success) to 18 (Tim Smith - who had stepped in after David Mundy's scheduled partner was unable to play). On the first day, Barry James sat and watched as David Harrison-Wood began, first, a sextuple, and then, a triple. Both failed, but Barry, in spite of losing, thoroughly enjoyed his adversary's technique. The manager was a little fazed by the non-appearance of one player, but a session of phoning brought in reliable stalwart, Kay Poland, who was on the court and playing within 20 minutes. The Friday also saw a notable win for the near-beginner Mike Cockburn partnering Arthur Nelson over the formidable pair, John and Frances Low.

On Saturday morning, Frances Low awoke with what John described as a school virus and more hurried phone calls were made, though fortunately from the manager's bed. Fourteen-year-old Craig Oakley agreed to play in Frances's stead, and distinguished himself well. John and Craig beat Barry James and Hilary Smith in their doubles match and then Craig made a nine-hoop break using only two bisques in his single-ball game against Barry, and beat Hilary by 23 in his handicap game. Some discussion by the handicappers present followed - not least influenced by a challenge by David Harrison-Wood to a short game, adjusted from an assumed handicap of 10, which was won by the youngster. He was reduced on the spot from 16 to 12, and responded, "Good. Now I'm the same as my Grandad." (Grandad is Syd Berry).

The highlight of Sunday morning was David Harrison-Wood sticking in hoop 4 (as R O T, he had adjusted the hoops - meticulously, as always) and

having to take a bisque. This was greeted by loud cheers, as many of the players had been watching. And then, even worse, he was beaten in the advanced game by John Low by a single point. Sunday afternoon was miserable with high gusts of wind, heavy rain and a severe drop in temperature, though Mike Cockburn managed to qualify for his CA bronze medal. The positions depended heavily on the games between the holders and David Mundy/Tim Smith. If the former won both singles, they would win and D H-W and Jane Mathews would be runners-up; if they lost both, they would be runners-up and David and Tim would win. David won his by 26, leaving Tim and Martin to fight it out in appalling conditions - and a fight it was, going nearly into dusk and nearly to time. Those who remained to watch did so from the thigmoradiative atmosphere of the clubhouse. In the end, Martin won and he and Celia were the trophy winners and David and Tim the runners-up.

**sidmouth handicap weekend
15-16 september 2001**
by Deborah Latham

Collins 1998 Millennium English Dictionary defines croquet as "a game for ... players who hit a wooden ball through iron hoops with mallets in order to hit a peg". Hmm. Think I prefer the 1964 Reader's Digest Great Encyclopaedic Dictionary: "Croquet ... has come to afford opportunities for a high degree of skill!"

This particular 'opportunity' is always oversubscribed, with many visitors becoming 'repeat offenders' (yes, guilty!). New faces this year included Deborah Forrington, unable, despite a rapidly descending handicap, to prevent the wily Sheila Blenkinsop from winning their block; Paul Pristavec, also a block winner; and David Foulser, in the sort of form that enabled him to win all three block games with 3-ball breaks. Those familiar with Sidmouth could have put money on the remaining

block winner being John Toye! Last year he managed this fixture, but this time Ron Selmes undertook the task, leaving John (-1) free to concentrate on facing Dave (-1 fi) in the final game, while Paul and Sheila squared up to each other (in the politest possible way, naturally!). Two very contrasting games - despite Dave's form, John swiftly won +17, while Paul patiently whittled away Sheila's lead to win +1. The winning margin doesn't affect the amount of silver polish needed, though!

One of the most delightful aspects of playing at Sidmouth is 'spectator watching' - observing the public perambulating along the road which runs from the seafront alongside lawns 2 to 4 : stopping, staring, after a few moments deciding it's all beyond them, and wandering away ... Thus two elderly gentlemen were recently overheard in this exchange: "Have you ever played that game?" "No. Don't know much about it." "I know there's more to it than just hitting the balls through the hoops ..."
A man of perspicacity, sir! We who do play it, concur.

**not quite the war of the roses
the pennine cup**
by Mike Evans

It is popularly perceived that England has a north/south demographic divide.

Those who live in the North are aware that the great barrier of the Pennines inhibits travel and general intercourse twixt those that nestle either side of it. Those on either flank think nothing of going north to Scotland or south to London. Rarely if ever east or west.

Quite contrary to this norm, Northumbrian and Yorkist croquet players, used regularly to rise before dawn, to embark on a return journey, betimes in excess of 300 miles, to confront their Lanco/Cestrian counterparts and vice versa. This on

inevitably rainy Sundays, as part of the erstwhile Northern Confederation League.

Sadly, due to pressure on lawns at Bowdon and Pendle, and a reluctance of their members to travel, when there is so much quality croquet on their doorstep, the demise of that much loved league was inevitable. This was especially disappointing for the Eastern Clubs as they were deprived of the regular opportunity to play at the multi-lawn, prestigious western venues. Sympathetically both Bowdon and Southport offered annual 'friendly' fixtures to mitigate this loss. Friendlies between Yorkshiremen and Lancastrians, Geordies and Scousers!

Thus was the Pennine Trophy conceived. In a 'rapid response' spawned by a generous offer from the Chairman of Southport, John Haslam, nurtured by Neil Williams (North West Federation Chairman) and his caucus in a comfortable womb at Bolton Abbey, an embryo format developed. It progressed, through a brief gestation, with every expectation of a successful confinement. This was scheduled to occur at Southport on or about 5th/6th August. In the event, labour at Southport was intense but rewarding.

Contrary to forecast the match commenced in glorious sunshine. Teams of six were to play 27 games over the two days, thus avoiding a draw and providing for a possible early finish on the second day if one team had built an unassailable lead. A good mix of handicap and advanced, doubles and singles, ensured an enjoyable and varied match. On Saturday, mixed handicap doubles (i.e. one advanced and one handicap player on each side in each game) produced a lead by West Pennines of 6 games to 3. The only drubbing occurred when East team captain, Colin Fletcher, confessed on fifth turn (on behalf of his partner, Mike Evans) that the croqueted ball failed to move on a take off, which he claimed would have been the start of

an all-round break. Mike assured the opponents (John Wilkinson and Ray Belcher) that he was about to admit it. John's reaction was to steer his ball smoothly to rover, and construct a leave which enabled Ray to finish East off with a competent rover peel and peg out. To quote the Editor at a Bowdon tournament, "As minus 26's go, that was a close game". [An event in which I failed to take croquet for the first nine hours of play - Ed.]

Sunday was a yet more glorious day. West started six games clear of the Easterners, on 11-7. The margin in each of the six had been less than five points. Of the nine games remaining, therefore, West needed only three to seize victory. Two of these were in the bag, when East Pennines' Margaret Garner edged ahead of Margaret Dalley +1T, to force the third round. John Wilkinson overcame a tired but still brave Margaret Garner to place West at 14 games to 8, with only five to play. Congratulations therefore go to West Pennines on a convincing inaugural victory.

East Pennines are already planning revenge in 2002. This opportunity will probably be at East Riding or Beverley. My heartfelt thanks to all those who planned and made this an exceptional event. Hopefully it will survive longer than the 30 or so years of the Northern Confederation League.

**the challenge and gilbey tournament
30 august - 2 september**
by Bob Whitaker

This tournament returned to Budleigh Salterton for the first time since 1969, some 22 years ago.

32 players competed, managed by Hamish Hall, in a very flexible Swiss format modified by pressure for additional games by rapid winners and for play on different lawns!

The weather, like the lawns was variable, but there were some outstanding

games. Event 1, the Gilbey Goblet, was won by Bryan Judson who beat Mark Homan by +6. The semi-finals were between Ian Birdseye and Mark, and Donald Gugan and Brian. The latter was one of the tournament highlights; Donald for penultimate and rover was on his last Wharrad turn, when he blobbed penult. Bryan hit in on his last turn, being for 1-back and 3-back. He made a six-hoop break, peeling his other ball through 3-back and 4-back to win by +1 on time - a brilliant and controlled break by a 6 handicap player. Bryan later said that he'd attended a silver coaching course, on which coach David Magee had emphasised the importance of precision croquet, a thought constantly in Bryan's mind during that break!

Event 2 was in four blocks. Chris Clarke won the Roehampton Cup with six wins from six games, including four TPs. Cliff Jones made a fighting stand against Chris, peeling Chris through 4-back and penult, before failing 1-back himself. Chris won by 17, but Cliff had spoiled Clarke's successive run of 18 wins with TPs or QPs. Brian Smith's luck ran out when he missed the lift and let Chris in. Chris failed hoop 1, Brian hit, ran hoop one, marked a double-banked ball and then played the wrong ball! The runner-up for the Roehampton Cup was David Mundy.



Nigel Graves receives the Stevenson Cup from Alan Oldham

Jim Potter beat Michael Rangeley to win Block B for the Council Cup. Budleigh's Peter Jones beat Brian Judson by +2 for Block C and the Recketts Cup. In Block D, the Stevenson Cup final had Secretary Nigel Graves and Vice President Alan Oldham on four wins each. Nigel took the final against a very tired Alan by +7.

centenary doubles

southwick, 7 - 9 september

by Brian Kitching



To celebrate the Sussex County Croquet Club's Centenary at Southwick a special 14 point doubles tournament replaced the usual mid week handicap tournament over the "long weekend" of 7th to 9th September. There were twenty eight entries, making fourteen pairs and seven teams identified as Reigate, Purley Bury, Cheltenham, Compton and three from Southwick (A, B and C). The support for this celebratory event was less than was hoped for due in part to clashes of dates with other neighbouring clubs with tournaments at Worthing and Tunbridge Wells.

Four games were played each day, each of 1 fl hours, but with the sun and wind making playing conditions difficult there were rather few peg-outs, most in the first session when there was some dampness around and the lawns were more predictable. However except from for two brief showers on Friday the weather was fine and sunny but with a cool wind on Sunday.

The result was in doubt until the very last series of games when Pauline and John Davey of Purley Bury defeated Jack Davies and David Gaitley of Sussex B, giving them both 9 out of 12 wins, with Pauline and John winning the game against Jack and David and therefore the tournament. Suitably engraved tumblers and pen & pencil sets had been specially commissioned as trophies that were presented to the winners and runners up by the Tournament Secretary Myra Gosney.

The team trophy was also won by Purley Bury, to whom had been loaned Bill and Pam Arliss of Southwick, having a combined total of 16 wins, leaving Jack Davies and David Gaitley, Ken Mason and Lilian Clay playing as Sussex B in second place with 15 wins.

A further award was made to Richard and Brian Wainman of Cheltenham, who were 6th overall, for running the most hoops and winning more pegged out games than any other pair.

John Solomon who, with Barbara, had gone two days without a win, and who had commented that they would get the wooden spoon, were denied even that trophy by winning two games on the Sunday, leaving the said wooden spoon for the writer and the three different partners who had joined him on the various days.

The usual excellent Southwick provisioning was this time in the hands of the Club Secretary, Pam Mason, assisted by several others, and Hyacinth Coombs dispensed varieties of nourishing liquid refreshments with her usual quiet efficiency. Bryan Teague organised a very well attended and much appreciated barbecue for the Saturday night.

The 14 point doubles format seemed to please the great majority of players. There was a lightness of atmosphere and great fun to be had combined with the seriousness of play. Perhaps this was due to the constantly and quickly changing points position every 1 fl hours or so, and the fact of having one large American Block which allowed everyone to meet and play each other.

The tournament prize giving was concluded by John Solomon who thanked Bryan Teague for managing an excellent and well run tournament, with which sentiments all the players concurred.

nottingham week

a novice's view

by Patricia Duke-Cox

The Nottingham week is an interesting mix of both handicap doubles and singles games for all abilities. It is open to club members and visitors.

I entered this year with some trepidation after enjoying a week at Southwick's summer school in July. This was an excellent grounding for what lay ahead.

There were six competitions which catered for players with minus handicaps through to 20 (mine!). There was an excellent opportunity to mix the 31 competitors, most of whom had entered three of the competitions, and we felt honoured that the reigning world doubles champion Chris Clarke attended.

The championship was well managed by Ian Vincent with a relaxed attitude to accommodate those who were unable to attend every day. The weather was kind, hot even. I was impressed by the ability of the minus handicap players to hit in, roquet across the lawns and stop in front of hoops.

In my ignorance I had not realised how the competitions were organised, and I began the week badly. Fortunately my class competition was a 2-life event, and as I had been knocked out by my first game in the process I was fortunate that the draw section allowed me to continue. I began to get my act together and found I had got a chance to achieve.

time for a new mallet?

You may have seen Len Hawkins' letter about his round bottom in the July Gazette (p.13). Apart from his stop shot problems he did extol the RPM mallet's qualities, particularly describing the swing as "fantastic". If you would like more information about these excellent New Zealand mallets, contact Ron Welch on Tel/Fax: 01843 869326 or email rwelch.croquet@care4free.net

All my bisques helped of course, and I suddenly found myself in the semi-final with the prospect of playing Philip Brabazon, who until that day remained unbeaten. I watched his game against my fellow club member who beat him to a place in the final. Then came my turn. It proved to be a totally different style but as Philip took his first ball to peg I took my opportunity to go round and peg him out. It was my saving as he struggled to get round. However as dusk fell and time was called I pegged out thus allowing me to contest the final with my compatriot. When I won the next day, I could hardly credit my achievement as I collected a magnificent trophy.

The handicap doubles was an education in a different style of play. My partner, Lawrence Whittaker, helped tremendously and we survived the first round to meet Chris Clarke and Tony Whiley in the second. This pair proved to be the eventual winners of this competition and it was a joy to watch their progress as quadruple peels were performed. Chris was generous with tips and advice for his part-

ner which was much appreciated.

The Robin Hood competition (handicap singles) allowed mixed ability players to compete until, with at least five games and possibly seven completed, the final 8 were determined. The final of this competition saw Philip Brabazon, who had been winning most of his competitions all week, achieve his goal and win this trophy by beating the Ian Vincent.

The week's results were as follows (winner/runner up).

Opens: James Death /Chris Clarke - 26QP, +17TP, +26TP:

B Advanced Level Singles: Rick Davis / John Filsak

C Level Singles: John Hansen / Dennis Graham

D Handicap Singles: Patricia Duke-Cox / Tony Whiley

Handicap Doubles: Clarke & Whiley / James Death & John Hansen

Robin Hood: Philip Brabazon / Ian Vincent

At the prizegiving Chris spoke on behalf of the visitors who had been

able to see a team of members providing the refreshments at lunch and tea time throughout the week. A barbecue provided an excellent social time for many and thanks were offered for the hospitality shown by the club.

With so much going on and using 7 lawns it was not possible to see it all. To anyone wishing to make a start in the world of Association Croquet, all I can do is to urge you to make an entry to a competition such as this in your federation and look forward to good company, helpful advice, a lot of enjoyable games and hopefully a sense of achievement at the end of it.

Happily I can also report that I managed to secure my bronze badge for running 10 hoops and winning during this competition and so did Tony Whiley, whilst Dennis Graham earned his silver badge. But I learned after the week was over that I had sinned by not buying one of my opponent's a drink when I won, and he was the President of the club! I also found that my handicap was cut from 20 to 16 at the end of the competition.

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The CA Council met on 13th October 2001, after the AGM. This report is based on unconfirmed minutes of that meeting; some decisions from recent committee meetings are also included. If you would like further information on any item, please contact the CA Secretary, Nigel Graves.

AGM

All the Council's proposed changes to the Rules of the Association were agreed. Stephen Mulliner was elected a Vice-President.

council elections

The following were elected: Chairman of Council and the Executive Committee, Quiller Barrett; Vice Chairman, Ian Vincent. Chairmen of the other principal committees: Development, Hamish Hall; Golf croquet, Bill Arliss; International, David Openshaw; Management, Bryan Judson; Marketing, Jonathan Isaacs; Publishing, Ian Vincent; Tournaments, Derek Trotman.

The Selection Committees were also elected. Association croquet: Chairman, Phil Cordingley and David Kibble, Stephen Mulliner, David Openshaw, Lionel Tibble - plus David Maugham who is available for co-option. Golf croquet: Chairman, Phil Cordingley plus four members from the Golf Croquet committee.

development

Council has authorised grants to several clubs from the CA's Benefactors Fund that over many years had reached £30,000. Subject to certain conditions Budleigh Salterton, Cheltenham, Southport and Sussex County clubs will benefit over the next three years. The Marketing Committee will take initiatives to replenish the Benefactors Fund.

equipment

Barlow GT and Dawson 2000 International (both first and second colours) have received approval.

Hoop running tests have been carried out on Omegas, comparing them with high quality 'traditional' hoops. The Tournaments Committee is considering the conclusions.

international

Council congratulated David Openshaw and his many helpers for the excellent organization of the 2001 World Championships held in London.

It is hoped to arrange Association croquet matches with Canada and Egypt.

Priority will be given to developing players with the poten-

tial to help us win the MacRobertson Shield in 2003.

laws

The first edition of the 'Official Rulings on the Laws of Croquet' (ORLC) has been published on the Internet.

management

The Management Committee has reviewed the Council's objectives for 2000/1 and concluded that committees have been generally successful in achieving them. Objectives have been agreed for 2001/2.

A Relocation Working Party has been set up, chaired by David Magee, to plan the CA's office move. At the time of writing the future location has not been decided but priority consideration is being given to building an office at either the Surbiton or Cheltenham clubs.

Arrangements are being made to appoint a successor to David Collins who wishes to stand down as the CA's Commercial Agent. David has shown there is plenty of scope to increase sales revenue, from which all members benefit.

Following members' approval of changes to the CA Rules at the AGM, Council has approved the appointment of individuals to pools from which the Executive Committee may select panels to consider any disciplinary issues, or matters that go to appeal. Disciplinary Panel Pool: I. Bond, H. Hall, R. Hilditch, C. Irwin, B. Judson, W. Lamb, D. Magee, D. Openshaw, R. Rogers, D. Trotman and I. Vincent. Appeals Panel Pool: W. Arliss, Q. Barrett, R. Bray, D. Gaunt, S. Mulliner, B. Neal, A. Oldham, R. Rogers, J. Solomon and L. Wharrad.

A new Publishing Committee has been established, responsible for the magazine, website and for overseeing all other CA publications. There is no longer any requirement for a separate Magazine Committee.

In 2002 the per capita rate for the Club Membership Fee will be £6.

marketing & membership

New publicity leaflets for Association and Golf croquet have been well received.

Plans are being developed to recruit more Individual and Club Members of the CA.

tournaments

The Hurlingham Club has confirmed that it will continue to offer the CA the use of lawns for major croquet events without any charge.

In 2002 the rate per day the CA will pay for a lawn (including balls) has been increased to £20. A guidance note is being issued to clubs regarding the CA's lawn marking, mowing and hoop setting requirements. There will be some

increases in tournament entry fees.

A sub-committee is being set up to deal specifically with matters affecting tournament managers.

wanted : CA sales agent

In recent years CA sales have grown significantly: annual turnover now exceeds £70K and our website continues to attract many non-member customers. David Collins, who has been responsible for sales since Brian Macmillan retired, now wishes to hand over the reins to someone who will continue this CA success story.

Currently based at Hurlingham, with a CA-employed assistant to help, CA Sales could operate from anywhere in the UK - at a club or elsewhere. Requirements are croquet and sales know-how, space for holding some stock and basic office facilities. The CA provides accounting support, and telephone and computer equipment if needed.

The CA expects the Sales Agent to:

- buy, sell and arrange delivery of croquet-related merchandise
- increase sales to benefit CA members

and the Sales Agent will have an option to sell advertising space in The Croquet Gazette and other CA publications

The CA believes there is considerable scope for further growth and is able to provide marketing expertise if required.

A nice little earner . . .

The Sales Agent is remunerated by commission based on profit from revenue generated, with a monthly amount guaranteed.

If you would like to discuss the exciting opportunity the CA now offers please contact the Chairman of Council, Quiller Barrett, 16 Frinton Court, Hardwick Green, London W13 8DW, tel/fax 020 8998 5453, email rqb@dircon.co.uk.

publication details

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publication schedule

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advertising

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

specific questions and queries

Specific questions or queries 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.

Both black and white or colour prints of photographs can be used. Slides are no longer accepted. Photocopies of pictures or print-outs of digital images cannot be used. If using digital photography please send in jpeg or tif format files. Resolution of scanned images must be at least 300 dpi. 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 and reports

Emailed reports are welcomed. Attachments may be sent in Microsoft Word format, or any other PC-based word processor. 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.

disclaimer

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



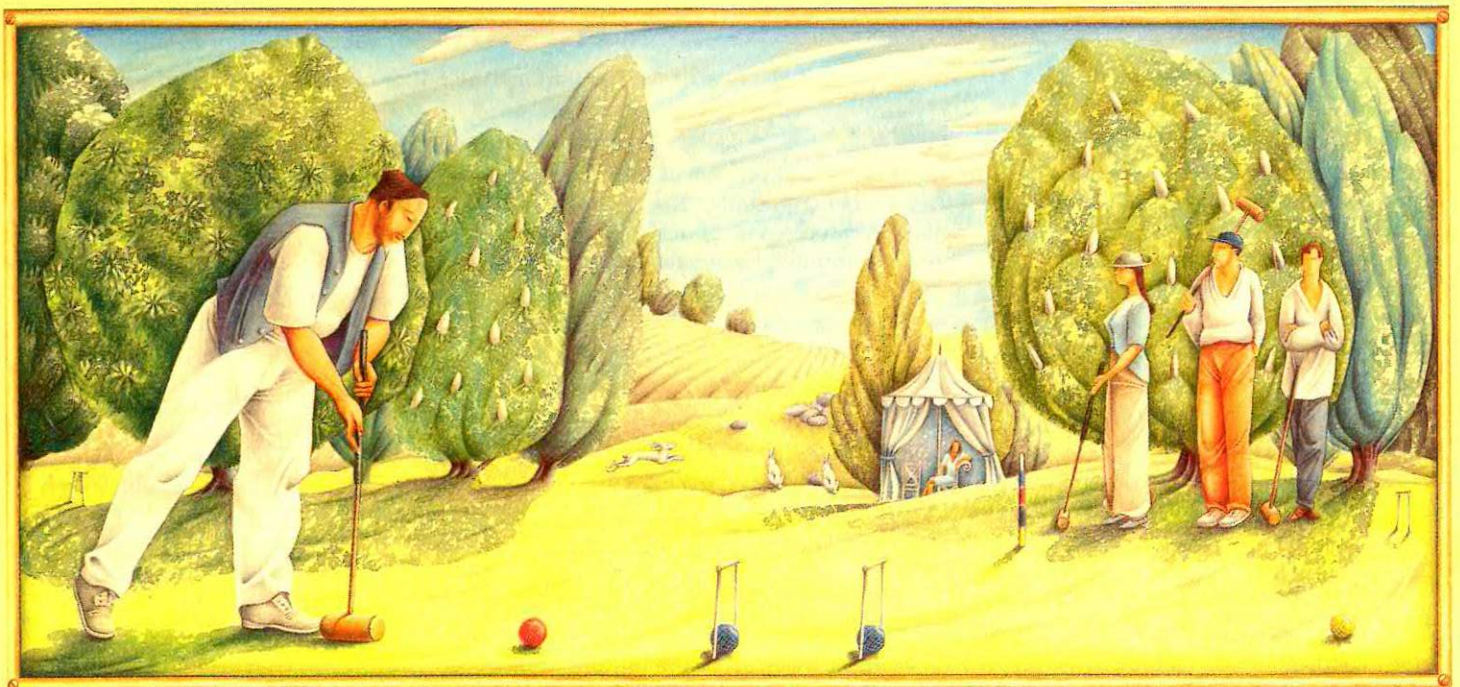
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