

# the croquet gazette



issue 278 - march 2002



**keep off the lawns :**  
*how real is the threat of eviction for clubs?*



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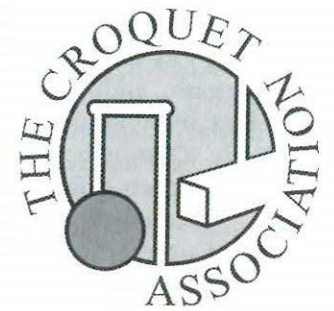
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**publication details**

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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.



## editorial

I'm writing just before the Gazette goes to press, and February has been a good month for British sport. Specifically it's been a good month for minority sports. Having gloried in the success of the British Women's Curling Team scooping Gold in Utah, some useful observations are ready to be made from the media coverage.



Curling, like Croquet, is hardly big business. There are 30 curling rinks in Scotland, one in North Wales, and none at all in England. Playing numbers throughout the country total around 22,000. Canada (so I read in the papers) has 94% of the World's players, and yet our Olympic Women relegated them to the Bronze medal. And they did it with an estimated TV audience back home of over 3 million. By the time of the Final, the BBC was hastily reshuffling schedules to run the event live, cancelling programmes on both of its terrestrial channels.

Give it a month, and these people will be back at their normal jobs. There's nothing wrong with that; part of the fascination of the television coverage was the very ordinariness of the competitors. Like top level croquet players, these were ordinary folk who happen to be quite good at their chosen pursuit. Six-figure salaries and sponsorship deals are probably a long way off, and so it should be, down here away from the commercialism of football.

After the victory, various sporting bigwigs were brought out to confirm how they'd always believed in Curling as a serious sport, allowing them to bask in the team's reflected glory. The heartening news must be the possible turn of opinion formers' interest towards minority sports as a whole. Lottery funding gave the Men's and Women's Curling Teams £200,000 to cover their time off work. For football, cricket or tennis, this sum would mean very little. For us, for curling, or for the countless other small sports played in Britain, it could represent the greatest value for money the funding authorities could possibly make.

Granted, Curling has the automatic television coverage - and prestige - which Olympic status brings. Croquet does not. The debate is not whether curling, or Golf Croquet, or Association Croquet would make good spectator sports. The question is one of public image. As it happens, last month's World (Golf) Championship at Florida's National Croquet Center show Golf Croquet as a natural spectator sport. Curling has made only its second appearance at the Winter Olympics (its status only granted for Nagano in 1998). Even if we see no curling for another four years, its profile has risen, and its image has probably changed for good. Even now, the CA is making approaches to the Commonwealth Games Federation for acceptance. Perhaps the time will soon come when Croquet - both Association and Golf - receives the recognition which we know it deserves.

## news from CA council

by **Bryan Judson, Management Chairman**  
**WCF world championship**

The International Committee have confirmed to the WCF that we will hold the Association World Championships in 2005. Details for clubs wishing to tender for the hosting of this event are given elsewhere in this issue of the Gazette.

### hospitality

The Tournament Committee have highlighted a need to provide a better level of hospitality to teams from other Associations which visit to play International matches. The Committee will look into this.

### appointments

Bill Arliss has been appointed as the CA representative to the WCF Golf Croquet Rules Committee, with the aim of establishing one set of Laws for Golf Croquet for all levels of play and acceptable to all Governing Bodies.

David Openshaw has been elected to the Management Committee of the WCF.

### commonwealth games

The Commonwealth Games Federation Committee will include croquet in their next review of recognised sports.

### lawns advisory group

At its meeting on 24th November 2001, the Management Committee agreed to form a Lawns Advisory Group and this was approved at the December Council meeting.

This Group, known as LAG, will have several functions. These may well be extended in the light of experience, but at present they are :-

- 1) to offer advice to any club contemplating, or actually, building a new court, improving an existing court or setting up an annual maintenance programme.
- 2) to offer guidance on costs, based on experiences of other clubs.
- 3) to liaise with those clubs which have received substantial grants from CA funds to carry out major improvements. This liaison will include visits to the clubs while work is in progress. The purpose of this is to ensure that any problems can be sorted out to the satisfaction of all parties before it is too late.

The members of the Group are John Beech (Chairman), George Noble and Bob Whitaker, plus Hamish Hall or another member of the Development Committee.

The Group will report to Management through the Development Committee.

## handicap committee

by **Douglas Gurney, Handicap Chairman**

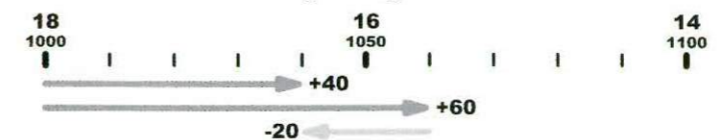
Nominations for the Apps Memorial Bowl (Most Improved Man of last season) and the Steel Bowl (Most Improved Lady Player) close on 1st April 2002. Any Associate can nominate another Associate, and this should initially be sent to the CA Secretary. Included with the nomination should be details of the player's achievements last year.

Before the start of the new season, a Schedule of Bisque Allocation Depending on Lawn Size will be published. This will enable clubs with half- and three-quarters-sized lawns to play all types of game, particularly as there are, at present, no longer national events for Short Croquet. The Schedule should be used in conjunction with the Schedule of Bisesques (Appendix 6 in the Laws Book).

With the help of the CA Office, the Committee is to conduct a survey of handicappers. The present list of official CA and CA-appointed Club Handicappers is well out of date. We need to know if appointed handicappers are still acting as such, and who is acting as a handicapper within a club despite not having been appointed by the Handicap Committee. It is important that clubs return the survey, as without the information we cannot plan a comprehensive allocation of handicappers.

An existing regulation needs clarifying, regarding the possible change of handicap during a tournament. In the example, a player enters a tournament, but during it plays a match unconnected with it, which changes his handicap. If the tournament is for nine days or fewer, he continues to play in the tournament at the original handicap.

A recent letter in the Gazette [Issue 275] highlighted some confusion regarding handicap ranges and trigger points. He gives an example, which I shall use. Bob and Babs each start with an index of 1000, and play six games. Bob wins five and loses one, Babs wins all six. Bob's index increases by 40 points to 1040, but does not pass the next trigger point, so his handicap is unchanged. Babs' index increases by 60 points to 1060, and thus passes the next trigger point at 1050, reducing her handicap to 16. The next week, Babs loses 20 points to have an index of 1040. She must reach 1000 before her handicap changes back to 18.



There is a range of 99 points in which a player can oscillate. That means that should you have a handicap of 16 (index 1050), your handicap will not change until your index is either 1000 or 1100, when your handicap will become either 18 or 14. If this did not happen, the position could arise of a player changing handicap after every single game. Incidentally, hoop score (+26 or +1) is always immaterial for handicap changes. I'd suggest Bill Lamb's *Principles of Handicapping* (paras 5 & 9) for further clarification.


## association laws rulings

by **Ian Vincent, Laws Chairman**

After over a year's use, the 6th edition of the Laws of Association Croquet have had, I believe, relatively few problems for those prepared to interpret them constructively. Inevitably with such an extensive rewrite, there are a few areas where the wording of the laws is ambiguous, incomplete, or just plain wrong. The International Laws Committee (ILC) has issued rulings on Laws 4(e), 5(e), 6(c)(4), 13(b)(1)(A), 16(c)(1), 22(e), 28(d), and 34(c), and a draft ruling on Law 6(f), which are published in section C of the "Official Rulings on the Laws of Croquet" (ORLC).

A new edition of this is currently in draft, which is likely to contain additional draft rulings on Laws 5(a), 5(d), 37(e), 39(a)(3) and the Schedule of Bisesques (which contains four misprints in the column for 18pt games). It may also contain drafts for amendments to enact some of the rulings and make a few minor simplifications to the laws. If you wish to suggest any such changes, please do so by e-mailing [laws@croquet.org.uk](mailto:laws@croquet.org.uk) or by phoning or writing to me. A particular case where I would be interested in views is on the rectification of faults in handicap play (Law 37(h)).

Currently the ORLC is only available on the CA or other web sites. We intend to produce a printed version of the next edition. Until then, those wanting a copy can hopefully find someone with internet access (and a relatively fast printer!) who would be willing to produce one.



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## letters

### an inspiration to youth

Dear Editor,

I enjoyed all your coverage of the World Championships very much [Issue 275]. I do not think you should feel obliged to apologise in any way for the extent of the coverage. The article about Reg Bamford, and Robert Fulford's predictions for the future should inspire the many youngsters who are starting to play the game, it is the very thing that features in all serious sports' magazine articles.

Many many years ago the exploits of John Solomon so eloquently described by Maurice Reckitt in *Croquet* were a source of inspiration to me as a youngster learning the game on the other side of the World. But, there is just one thing I must point out. Keith Wylie did not complete the first sextuple peel in competitive play; in fact I did some two or three months before Keith, in the final of the 1971 Hawkes Bay Easter Invitation Event.

John Prince  
Christchurch, New Zealand

### a matter of terminology

Dear Editor,

In your editorial [Issue 277] you say that "only seven lawns in the country..." As the Laws will confirm, we play in the UK on courts. I hope the following may serve as useful advice.

Croquet players if properly taught  
By those who know their corn  
Know they play upon a court  
And NOT a croquet lawn.

Read the Laws: it there defines  
The ground on which you stride,  
The square topped hoops, the boundary lines  
These, only a court provide.

Bowlers never get the itch  
To call their 'green' a bowling pitch  
So croquet players really ought  
To call their playing field a COURT.

Smokey Eades  
Maidenhead

### new lawns anybody?

Dear Editor,

Himley Croquet Cub lawns are rented on an annual basis from the owner of the land, namely Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council. In recent times our landlord has tried to

discourage us from playing on our current lawns. As I write, the 2002 season is but seven weeks away yet the use of the lawns has not yet been confirmed. Clearly the notion of a long lease is but a pipe dream.

Against this background, we have been actively looking at other locations. Without exception all the sites we have so far explored would need to be levelled and grassed. It is likely that we would have to secure a grant before we could proceed, but prior to applying for a grant we need to cost and schedule a proposal. Do you know of a croquet club that has developed new lawns "from scratch" within recent times? If so, we would be grateful if we could make contact and find out what is the competitive price for topsoil, a JCB and a driver for a day, the right quality grass seed or turf? Is it possible to develop a lawn from seed - what type of seed - what type of soil? What kind of drainage systems need to be put in place? - and so on. My telephone number is 01902 374697.

P Robertshaw  
Himley Croquet Club  
Wolverhampton

*The Lawns Advisory Group (details elsewhere in this edition of the Gazette) would deal with this type of enquiry. It has been set up with the objective of giving authoritative advice on the maintenance of courts.*

*The CA shop sells an excellent little leaflet 'Croquet Lawns, Their establishment, improvement and maintenance'. It should be in every club library, as it succinctly deals with not only the construction of a new court, but there is also a general guide on essential maintenance, month by month.*

*The establishment of a flat court will depend upon a level subsoil. If the area to be prepared is basically level, that is, no variant higher or lower than 6 inches, and the topsoil is good quality and free of large stones, it is possible to level the topsoil only. Obviously this is the cheapest method of preparation prior to seeding or turfing. The work is best done in reasonably dry conditions.*

*The largest cost element in building a court is labour. We will be advising Himley direct on their individual needs.*

- Hamish Hall, Development Committee Chairman

### gateball: the path to recruitment?

Dear Editor,

The article on Gateball [Issue 277] provides a fascinating insight in to the world of a related, but very different, sport. Whilst agreeing with the report's conclusions that Gateball (GB) could be used as a means of expanding the activities of croquet clubs and widening the membership across the age groups, I seek to introduce an alternative approach for UK clubs.

continued ▶

Dear Editor,

You will presumably already have noticed that the CA's tournament committee have decided to change the format of the Opens this year by introducing single game block play. Apparently this is in order to cater for the needs of those players who would otherwise get knocked out early and have to wait until later in the week for the Plate to start. There are some people, and I am one (by no means the only one) who are appalled by this decision. Apart from the technical point that under the CA's own designation system the Opens is no longer better than a C Class Championship, that does indeed reflect an horrendous reduction in the status of the event. The playing of matches, ie best of three or more games, is a better test of who is the better player. That was the logic for requiring that tournaments seeking championship status should consist of best of three or more matches throughout.

But surely the Opens is only copying the format used in the World Championship, I hear you ask. Yes, that's true, but there is a very good reason for the World Championship to be run in the way that it is that simply doesn't apply to the Opens. That is that the players in the Worlds come from all over the world, and it is reasonable to let them have more than just one match before knocking them out. Remember that the first World Championship was run as a knockout throughout, and the only complaint about that was that it was a long way to come (for some players) for just one match.

If the only reason for using blocks is to provide more games at the start of the week then there must be other ways of doing that without compromising the status of the event. In every other championship losers get consolation event games straightaway. Why is that not possible in the Opens? Presumably it is because of the format of the Plate. If that is the case then it seems to me that the status of the CA's premier championship, which used to be (and would still be) the world's premier open championship, has been sacrificed so as to preserve the format of its consolation event. How bonkers is that?

Keith Aiton  
Newark

*The Tournament Committee have for some years been concerned that the traditional format of the Opens is unattractive to players who lose in the first round. Increasing the number of plate games was tried, but did not stem the decline in entries. Following the World Championship, which used blocks to ensure a reasonable minimum of play for overseas visitors, a number of players expressed their approval of the format and suggested a smaller scale version should be used in the 2002 Open Championship.*

*The Committee being aware that others held the view that major championships should be the best of three throughout, a question-*

continued ▶

It seems that the average UK club has a small membership already fragmented into groups; many players below handicap 2 don't like to play in handicap competition; the growing force of social Golf Croquet players don't want to learn the Association code; and Short Croquet as a starter game seems to have lost its way. Introducing a significantly different game (GB) into most small clubs could be counter-productive.

New Zealand seems to have had great success recruiting youngsters by adapting Gateball as Kiwi Croquet (KC). KC borrows the fast-moving team elements of GB, a smaller court (quarter size), three wide hoops, numbered balls, and numbered bibs for players. The principles behind the rules of KC are as for GB, except that "touches" and "sparks" are restored as roquets and croquets. While I agree that the former are more acceptable terms for youngsters, I fear that progression to Croquet would be hampered by teaching quite opposite techniques to those used for Croquet.

At Pendle we sought to introduce juniors to croquet last season. Mini-carpet taster sessions over the winter for Year 6 children in four primary schools gave us five junior members last year. They were keen enough to play at our club once a week all season. At first we borrowed one of the CA Kiwi Croquet sets. Although it was great fun, it was soon clear that the games were sufficiently different to impede rapid transition into Croquet. The mallets, roquets, croquets and continuation shots were good, but four red and four yellow balls, undersized and unmilled, seemed obscure. So, we acquired our own Kiwi set, with full-sized half-weight milled croquet balls, in standard colours, but numbered, as for KC. With this set, not only did our juniors play Kiwi, they soon were keen to play Golf Croquet and Short Croquet using the lightweight equipment, which they handle easily, but playing through the standard club hoops. We felt this was an effective method of introducing Croquet to our juniors without diverting them to an alternative sport to get them to use our club.

The expenditure of £185 on a Kiwi Croquet set was mistakenly recorded by our accountant as "Kwick Croquet". This slip seems a suitable name. The ten-year-olds find "Kwik Krokey" fast, exciting, boisterous and great fun. It could be used in schools and youth clubs, and the skills and tactics learned by such new players would be more naturally transferable and lead potential talent into Croquet and its clubs. Kwik Krokey could even become cool!

John Beech  
Barnoldswick

*Editor's note: The article on Gateball in Issue 277 listed members of the CA Gateball Working Party, from which John Beech's name was inadvertently omitted. Also, as the new Chairman of the Development Committee, Hamish Hall has replaced Bill Sidebottom.*



naire was prepared on the subject and circulated to all participants in the 2001 Selection events. The replies to the questionnaire showed a majority in favour of experimenting with the new format and this information persuaded the Committee to introduce the format as a trial in the 2002 event.

It is the intention to obtain as much feedback of opinion as possible both during and after the event so that the Committee is in a position to consider all aspects of the matter before deciding on how the 2003 event will be played. We are particularly anxious that the 50 players from the British Isles who played in the 2001 World Championships let us have their views and reasons for entering or not entering an event run on the proposed format in future years. Ian Vincent and Phil Cordingley as the Committee's Directors of 'A' class events will be co-ordinating this exercise but if you are not approached or wish to make a personal submission on the subject please send it to the CA office.

- Derek Trotman, Tournament Committee Chairman

### hoop-setting

Dear Editor,

There has been much discussion about Omega hoops being easier to run, and the CA Equipment Committee has performed comprehensive tests that have demonstrated their playing characteristics are identical to other new hoops made from similar materials (which is the norm). Alan Pidcock should be praised for the time and effort he has spent on this matter. It is now accepted that running a current production hoop is easier than running an older hoop. In fact, roll a ball in the general direction of the hoop (missing the near wire) and the hoop does the rest. Those who still fail a large number of (new) hoops need to aim more carefully!

The editorial [Issue 277] hints at a solution: in easy conditions hoops can be set narrower. However, even setting a negative clearance (the static ball being gripped) has little effect on the dynamic; modern hoops can still be run easily without great force and from quite improbable angles! Peeling is a dream - you don't even need to line them up very carefully (just make sure you miss the near wire).

I'm sure there is wide support for the replacement of bent, corroded and generally ancient hoops with equipment that meets the requirements of the Laws. However, since it has been demonstrated that these excellent new hoops are easier to run, something has to change to restore the balance. Experiments show that this is not simply a matter of changing clearance between ball and hoop for different hoop types.

Current hoops have indeed made the game easier for those who can shoot hoops and the skill of those who get close and in front has been devalued.

Don Gugan's article [Issue 277] makes a fundamental error by supposing that hoop clearance makes a significant difference: the constitution of the ground has the major effect. In his reference to a handicap event where players had problems running hoops it would have been interesting to see if widening them made a significant difference, or was firm ground the real 'problem'?

In my experience, established high bisquers have an uncanny ability to run long angled hoops and typically break down because they fail to get near enough in the first place. It is true that there are many blobbed hoops from bad hoop running position in both handicap and advanced play, but the game is trivialised if there is no such thing as a bad hoop running position: being the right side of the hoop should not be a position good enough to be confident of running it.

In his article Don attacks the view that easy hoops spoil the game but presents no evidence to support his view. I think that they do, and believe this view is shared by a great number of players: if hoop running is trivial then the test of skill is devalued.

The overall effect on handicap play in the long term may be seen as minimal since the automatic system will reward those who have a go at the hoops and penalise those who do not, which is arguably a good thing. If hoops are easier to run then obviously handicaps will come down since the basis of the handicap system is the 'conceptual scratch player' and the number of bisques awarded to a player represents the number of additional turns required to make two all-round breaks.

These hoop innovations must not be suppressed, but allowance must be made at clubs where there is a mixture of hoops - some easy, some 'normal'. Managers should be encouraged to mix players around as much as possible (and stop the practice of the manager always playing on the easy lawn!).

Surely hoop clearance was determined originally by a setting that was just difficult enough when using a particular hoop? As the game has got easier there has been a drift downwards in hoop clearance, as Don points out, but there is generally little complaint. I completely agree with Don that if there is widespread disregard for the hoop setting regulations then it is time to change them, and that change should be in line with common practice and the views of the players who express a preference.

As regards Don's negative attitude to experimentation with hoop clearance, it is foolish to carry out instructions without thought because "that's what the rules say": progress comes through change, and change is best carried out a step at a time.

Dave Kibble  
Bristol

## obituaries

### LWD ("Tony") Antenen

The Association has learnt with great regret of the sudden death of Tony Antenen on 25th January 2002 after he had suffered two heart attacks.

Tony was born in Morecambe, Lancashire in 1931, joined the Army at an early age and served in Borneo, Korea and as part of the UN peacekeeping force in Cyprus before retiring with the rank of captain in 1979.

He then worked briefly for the Coates Group before joining the Commonwealth Telecommunications Bureau where, as Secretariat Officer and Senior Project Officer, Tony travelled extensively and was involved with various training and development activities.

Tony came to us in September 1990 in order to succeed Brian Macmillan as Secretary of the Association. He arrived at a time when the development activities of Chris Hudson were changing the world of croquet. Initially Tony found it difficult, not being steeped in the traditions of croquet, to understand how to deal with the somewhat idiosyncratic manner in which the CA is organised and the peculiar byzantine ways by which Council conducted its affairs. He had a deep sense of order in his personal life and liked 'everything to be just so'.

Tony was a very sociable person. He really liked people and appreciated the importance of good communications. This quality was of great value to the CA at that time, and with my encouragement he early on initiated a programme of visiting croquet clubs to find out how they operated and to establish personal contacts with their members.

Rugger was Tony's main sporting interest and he maintained this interest keenly throughout his life; it was a great strain on his loyalties when an international match at Twickenham happened to coincide with an important CA meeting at Hurlingham. I tried hard to interest him in playing croquet, but the solitary nature of the game did not appeal to his gregarious nature, nor with his impish sense of humour could he take to playing it seriously for any length of time.

Tony retired at the end of 1996 from his position of Secretary upon reaching the age of 65 but continued to be seen renewing his croquet friendships at the Surbiton club from time to time.

A Remembrance Service was held at the Church of St Mary Bethany in Woking on 6th February 2002, attended by his family, his many friends and by members of the Royal British Legion, when many tributes were paid to Tony's soldierly and other qualities. The CA and the Surbiton and Woking clubs were represented at the service and all join in

expressing their condolences to Tony's family, in particular to his two sons, Simon and Peter.

Alan Oldham

### Bob Vaughan

Bob Vaughan, who died on January 6 at the age of 70, had been chairman of the Crake Valley Club at Greenodd, near Ulverston, for many years. Back in the late 80s, when Bob took up croquet, he was already a tennis member at Crake. Although the club goes back over a hundred years, the croquet section by that stage had gone. The club generally was in a very bad way: tennis struggling; croquet defunct.

Bob set out with great enthusiasm to bring back croquet. He gathered together a small group of enthusiasts, and they began around 1990 to work on the lawns. They relaid drainage pipes, unblocked culverts and reclaimed an overgrown lawn. The quality of the turf was gradually improved by feeding, top-dressing and hand-weeding. Bob and one or two other members under his leadership were there in all weathers.

All this hard work was repaid as croquet re-established itself. The club began to play League matches and to organise its own internal competitions. As the only registered club in Cumbria at that time, great distances had to be covered to make contact with other clubs. The nearest club was 60 miles away. It took great persistence to keep going.

In 1996 Bob had the bright idea of staging a record-breaking 24-hour event. The plan was to throw down a challenge to any club to play continuously against Crake for 24 hours for the record number of hoops that could be scored. Croquet North accepted the challenge, and on a memorable day in June, 1997, with floodlights installed, the two teams battled it out. Crake emerged victorious under Bob Vaughan's leadership, and entered the Guinness Book Of Records. In 2000, the challenge was repeated, with Bob again in the team. This time Crake defeated Southport and Birkdale and retained their record.

By now the club was holding its own open tournament, and taking a full part in croquet in the North West. In 2002 it will have three full-size lawns.

None of this would have been possible without leadership of a high order. Bob Vaughan provided that leadership continuously for all those crucial innovative years. It is another record that will be hard to beat, but this time a record of service and achievement worth far more than a place in the Guinness Book. For Crake he will be irreplaceable.

Neil Williams



## "a cuckoo in the nest?"

*is Golf Croquet the future of the game, or a dangerous usurper?*

The jury is out on the relative merits of Association and Golf Croquet. The jury in question in this instance is that hotbed of opinion forming, the Nottingham List. For those who don't subscribe to this service, the List is the Internet-based discussion forum dedicated to British croquet. Since the conclusion of the Golf Croquet World Championships in Florida last month (covered in some detail elsewhere in this edition), much energy has been expended in debating how Golf Croquet and Association Croquet can coexist.

Since the World Croquet Federation and the CA embraced Golf Croquet as it is played in Egypt, there is no doubt that the game has grown in popularity both in the UK and abroad. Preliminary results of the CA's recent survey of clubs seem to show that Golf is now the preferred code among beginners. There was a time when Golf was regarded as a transitional game for newcomers to try before graduating to Association. The question on many lips is whether this newer development should be welcomed.

The argument follows several strands. Firstly, there is the matter of terminology. If the List mirrors public opinion at large (a matter for endless debate in itself), there seems to be a consensus that 'Golf Croquet' is not a very good name for the game. It clearly isn't Golf, and - without the croquet stroke - can hardly be called Croquet. Although the two games are played with similar equipment on the same playing surface, several respondents from each side recognise that the current situation is becoming confusing.

Stephen Mulliner, a wise authority and eminent player of both formats, suggests renaming Golf as "Hoopball". Other suggestions include Match-Play Croquet, Pro Croquet (which - claims the author - reflects the high standard of the best Egyptian players, but - claim his detractors - not necessarily that of the rest of the Golf Croquet playing world), and Egyptian Croquet.

Whether or not a name change comes into common usage, the increase in the public profile of both codes resulting

## information

### gateball

With the interest generated by the article on Gateball in Issue 277, Southport Croquet Club and the CA's Working Party for the game are planning a demonstration day. This will take place at Southport on May 18th, at 2pm. Any interested parties should contact John Haslam on 01704 547875.

### change of address

Address details of Pete Trimmer, Dorset Inter-Counties Captain, have changed since publication in the last issue. Players wishing to put themselves forward for selection for the Dorset Association Counties should contact:

[pete.trimmer@engage.gknplc.com](mailto:pete.trimmer@engage.gknplc.com)

from Golf Croquet's rise concerns some. Australia's John Riches (always an outspoken member of the discussion group) suggests that Golf could overtake the Association game, with its more immediate spectator and media interest. A solution would be to adjust the Laws of Association to make the game more readily understandable to outsiders. Dumb down for the masses and convert our croquet clubs into football pitches, say his opponents.

Rob Edlin-White from Nottingham Croquet Club asks whether it's worse for the sport to accept a ceiling on popular appeal while retaining Croquet's essence, or to lose its direction in an attempt to promote wider interest: "I believe we could gain wider appeal for croquet as it stands ... by committed evangelism to people who are likely to enjoy the game for what it is ... If we try to attract the sort of people who want to change the game into something quite different or lay a cuckoo egg in our nest, the game as we know it may suffer". This, of course, doesn't deny Golfers access to clubs run by, and for, Associates. Here's Una Landreth from New Zealand: "There's room for any kind of mallet ball game using the same kind of hoops and lawns. Sooner or later [some] will go on to Association Croquet but, even if other stay with Golf all their lives, [they] are keeping your club going with their subs, and will spread the mallet game with their enthusiasm."

The last word must go to Roy Ware at Ramsgate, whose figures speak for themselves: "To keep Croquet going costs money. Clubs have a lot to learn when it comes to promoting the game, whichever version, so even if you only attract one person through publicity it is another prospective member. At Ramsgate we have a very successful and keen junior section consisting of fourteen 10 to 13 year olds (and an overall membership of over 100 for four lawns) ... Golf Croquet has taught them the basics of hitting the ball correctly and running hoops. By the summer several of them will have progressed to both games. Let's be a bit more constructive and promote Croquet - or whatever name you want to give it - to everyone's advantage."

### golf croquet refereeing

The referees course published in the January Gazette is for Association referees only. A Golf Croquet Referees course will be run at Southwick in April, date to be announced. Please contact Bill Arliss [address on Page 2] if you are interested. Courses may be arranged at other venues if there is sufficient interest.

### apology

Bill Arliss' review of Golf Croquet in Issue 277 gave the winner of the All England Handicap as Marcus Oliver. This should, of course, have read Marcus Evans. Apologies for the error.

## world underwater croquet championships

*Dominica - 30 January 2002*

Polo has a water-based version of the sport; hockey has an underwater equivalent too. So why not croquet? Ted Stevens reports on what is believed to have been the first ever under water croquet tournament.

The rules for the game were devised by the crew of a 65 foot racing yacht as they cruised around the Caribbean. And the tournament itself was held at the end of January in about four feet of water off the coast of the idyllic island of Dominica. When the idea was first hatched about a week before the tournament took place, we were all slightly drunk. But over the ensuing days, our heads cleared and the initial slightly crackpot concept was developed and nurtured. And by the time we were at Prince Rupert's Bay, near Portsmouth in Dominica the original idea had been carefully developed and tested so much that we felt it might just work.

The Rules were loosely (very loosely!) based on the land-based version of the game. So there were six "hoops" and a central "pin" configured in the normal way. There was a "ball" and a "mallet" too. But here the similarity ended. Our hoops were in fact six people standing chest-to-neck deep on the sandy bottom of the beach, with their legs forming the hoops. Our pin was the oar of the dingy, rammed into the sand so that the handle was just visible above the water. The ball caused us more difficulties than any other item of equipment as we needed something that floated just above the sand, but wouldn't bob up to the surface.

Several experiments were conducted with different spheres before we bought a dayglow coloured ball about three inches in diameter and weighed it down with a shackle from the sail locker. This worked really well - the bright colour meant it was visible and as it was semi-buoyant it "floated up" about three inches above the sand, while the shackle's weight keep it "grounded". And the mallet? Well, we had an ex-international croquet player on the boat (Andrew Hope, who has played for Scotland and Britain), but he hadn't foreseen the possibility of a game, so he hadn't packed his mallet. So, in desperation, a mallet-shaped broom was press-ganged into action. Our crew of 12 were then subdivided into various teams, or assigned key tasks. At any one time six of them were strategically positioned as hoops. Another acted as a time keeper (more on this shortly), and the international sailing referee that was on board acted as an umpire. From the motley crew we then managed to configure the following "international" teams:

- Two of the crew were half German, so they formed a team to represent the Fatherland;
- One was from Cornwall, and another from Ireland, so they paired up to form a Celtic team;
- Our Scottish croquet player linked up with another Scot to represent the land north of the border;
- The only American on the boat linked up with a Welshman to form a unique US/Cymru team;

- And two Cowes residents created a team from the Isle of Wight.

The game was played as follows. The members of the each team took it in turn to steer the ball through the legs/hoops using the mallet, until they finally reached the pin. They were allowed to use a snorkelling mask (but no snorkel) and each team was timed, to see who could compete the course the fastest. As the game progressed we discovered that it was very difficult to hit the ball a long way with the mallet, so a series of short flicks were more effective for quickly covering the ground between the hoops.

The umpire followed each team (the umpire was allowed a snorkel) to ensure the ball made it through the hoops, and that no skulduggery was taking place. And the result? Well, surprisingly the land based international croquet player seemed to be no better able to play this version of the game than anyone else. So the team that were eventually victorious was the duo from the USA and Wales - 71 year old Don Oglesby from Arizona and Martin Jones, a nimble 53 year old from Gloucestershire. Their winning time was a shade over three and a half minutes. Second place went to the Scots, with the Celtic team coming third. Unlike most other sporting events, the Germans trailed in a feeble fourth. And the team from the Isle of Wight were disqualified for using a snorkel. Everyone really enjoyed the tournament, though the locals who lined up along the beach were completely mystified. Could Underwater Croquet become an Olympic sport within the next 20 years? We all thought there was a possibility!



**A question of degree - Woking's comparatively dry lawns at their 2001 Midsummer Tournament**

[Note: This is not the first such event. A fully submerged event, for which participants were equipped with diving gear, was held at Loughborough University in November 1999.]



## notice to quit

### the rise (and fall?) of Pendle Croquet Club

Norman Hicks and John Beech discovered Croquet in 1984, and played each other regularly on the lawn at Woodlands, Barnoldswick. Eventually they invited friends to play, who all got hooked! One day Barbara Warrington said, "Why don't we form a club and find some lawns, instead of invading this private garden every Saturday?"

In December 1985, "Croquet in Pendle" was formed with 13 founder members, but with nowhere to play.

The sequence of events that were to develop the club into an important tournament and competition centre within 13 years at very little cost were quite remarkable.

In January we were invited by the Principal of Nelson and Colne College to base the new club at the College, and he would make land available for two full sized lawns.

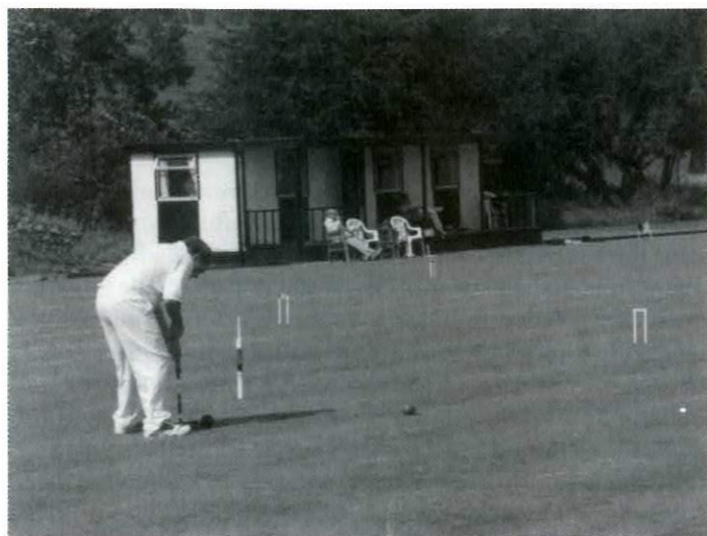
We enjoyed rent-free facilities for two years; bought a mower and maintained our lawns by voluntary work; bought an old static caravan for use as a club house; joined the Federation leagues and won the Apps Heley Award and the Short Croquet League (we were all bandits of course!) in 1987.

The membership grew to about 30, and the club was buoyant and enthusiastic. Lancashire County Council (then owners of the College) decided that we would pay rent from 1988 under the provisions of a user licence - no security of tenure, but a gentlemen's agreement that they would never terminate the arrangement.

The Great Reforming Education Acts came in the late 1980's and the Tories swept away the power of LEA's and made colleges quasi-independent, putting the power in the hands of governing bodies. The "gentleman" with whom we had the agreement was removed. The new brush threatened to sweep away the croquet club, and lay car parks on its lawns. The club persuaded the college to consider replacement land for four courts, on one of its other sites and was half-promised this land if their car park plan were to proceed.

On the night of August Bank Holiday 1994, arsonists torched our caravan, and the club then decided to seek to move to the half-promised site. In planning to build a better pavilion, there was the hope of getting a long lease. The college, however, had changed its mind. There were to be no car parks on our lawns after all, and they would like us to stay where we were please. That said, we wouldn't have another caravan, and we couldn't build a pavilion in that location.

The outcome of our further negotiations was reasonably successful. The college would allow us to have a new pavilion with two additional courts, shared with hockey, on the same campus as our original lawns, but in a different loca-



tion. The pavilion would need to be portable in case they decided to move us. So we became a four-court club, and started to run CA tournaments in 1995. We asked for a lease but were told that the old County Council licence would have to suffice.

In 1996, we learned that the college intended to redevelop the hockey field and we would have to move "within a few years".

In August 1997, we were told of an imminent building project and we would lose Courts 3 and 4, and would have to remove our pavilion from the campus within a few months. The club then started to search for new land with security of tenure in order to secure a future for itself. At the same time it entered yet more negotiations with the College to move within the campus, should the Club not be able to secure an alternative venue. We looked seriously at two sites where we could have got long leases, but the costs proved prohibitive. By November 1997, the College had promised us other land on the same campus with "a proper lease" and the club decided to stay, because there was no viable alternative.

So at the end of November 1998, we moved the pavilion to its present position, erected a fence to demarcate the new three-court area, and started work to get the turf into playable condition for the Easter Tournament. This all happened with remarkable success, mostly - as ever - by voluntary labour. So by the beginning of the 1998 season, we had achieved five-court status almost by default!

Our membership grew to 50 with the encouragement of Golf Croquet, and the acquisition of a mini carpet, courtesy of an Awards for All grant.

Our tournaments became increasingly popular, and we began to run more of them. We had five good courts, all with shelter, new sheds to house new mowers, other equipment, and our carpet. Still there was no promised lease.

The whole thing had been developed on a shoestring. Original setting-up costs, including a "clubhouse" were less than £1,000. The 1995 pavilion and two new lawns cost £6,000, and the 1998 move and five new lawns including fencing cost a further £7,000.

We continued to press for a 21-year lease, and in 1999 were offered a two-year rolling lease. After more negotiations the offer was "improved" to a five-year lease. It was then a case of "take it or leave it". We took it reluctantly but the real shock was to come when the College's solicitor sent us the draft document for agreement. The lease was for five years, with a notice to quit clause of 12 months, and the lease would be exempt from the Landlord and Tenant Act. After protesting about the terms of the lease, we were told to agree or they would issue notice to quit immediately under the original licence. We took legal advice and were told by our own solicitor that we had no choice. Eventually we signed the documents and a new "gentlemen's agreement" suddenly appeared. "We like having you here and you can consider the club settled. The only reason for us ever wanting you to go would be in the event of major changes in the way FE is run, and that is not likely."

In November 2001, we were informed that the solicitor would be issuing notice to quit on 31 December, requiring us to move by 31 December 2002.

However, nothing is ever certain at this College. Nelson and Colne College is spread over several sites, and their project is to relocate everything to the main campus, to land part of which is occupied by the Croquet Club. Of course it may not be feasible. They may not be able to get planning consent (it's a flood plain), and they may not be

## annual general meeting

At the next AGM, which will be held on Saturday 12 October, four members of Council will have completed their terms of office, three of whom have indicated their wish to stand for re-election.

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

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

able to raise the money (one site being sold is within a green belt, and may not be suitable for redevelopment).

I thought that the news given to our AGM in November could prove to be the final straw, and that we would disband. As it turned out, the meeting was very upbeat and resolved to seek with urgency a new permanent home for the club.

Pendle Borough Council offices are being very helpful and have already offered land, but on both available sites the costs may be beyond us. Even if we were to secure a Sport England Capital Lottery grant, we would need to find 40% of the total cost. We were devastated to find that our assets valued at about £23,000 would not be able to be brought into the equation. So if our project were to cost £100,000 for a new four-court club, how would we find £40,000 cash? So at present we are searching for land that would be less costly to transform into croquet lawns.

As soon as land is identified we shall launch a relocation fund and any help from other clubs or from players who would like to see Pendle survive would be most welcome.

In the event of us not being able to relocate by the notice date, the College has been asked to allow us until their contractor needs us off, or we are able to move.

So, although uncertainty surrounds the 2003 season at Pendle, the club is working hard to achieve continuity and hopes that it may continue to provide playing facilities and to run tournaments.

### Manor House Mallets

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

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e-mail [pidcock@manorh.u-net.com](mailto:pidcock@manorh.u-net.com)  
The Manor House, 1 Barn Croft, Penwortham, Preston PR1 0SX



## applying to the sport england lottery fund

Roger Bowen explains Budleigh Salterton Croquet Club's experience in 2001

At the end of April 2001 the club's completed lottery application was delivered to Sport England. It was a bulky and thoroughly researched document and it carried with it the hopes of members that this would be the means of renewing 100 year old playing surfaces and installing a full automatic irrigation system by 2004.

In September the reply came. The application was refused. In common with two other major clubs there was no support for croquet to come from the £110 million Sports Lottery Fund. Why was this and what lessons are there to be learned by other clubs in future?

Budleigh's application amounted to a project spend of £84,000 over the three years of which the club agreed to fund £33,000 from other sources. In fact, following an intensive fund raising campaign, the club's share was already either in the bank from donations and enterprises or promised as grant aid by local authorities and the Croquet Association. The split of cost was 56% to playing surface renewals and 38% to irrigation with 6% to minor works such as facilities for the disabled.

The idea of making an application to Sport England was first conceived during late 2000. By this time the outcomes of two similar applications were known. Cheltenham was refused a grant because its constitution was seen to be non-conforming and because the proposed new facilities would not increase active participation in the sport. Sussex County (Southwick), at much the same time, were refused because the number of young people in membership did not conform and because the work proposed was maintenance and not renewal of facilities.

Budleigh was determined not to allow these same factors to influence Sport England's decision and went to considerable lengths to demonstrate this. Knowing that only part of Sport England's strategy addresses sporting achievement and that there is a good measure of political influence involved, the application documents were prepared particularly carefully. Several factors soon emerged.

Sport England has a regional organisation supported by, or answering to, a London head office. All applications for grants go first to a central clearing agency and then are issued to assessors for comment. A case-handler is assigned and eventually the annotated documents are issued to the regional office for background research and comment. It is unusual for the applicant to be further consulted unless there is information of a specialised nature not clearly enough described. The whole process takes around 16 weeks to run its course from acknowledgement

of receipt to decision. An appeal process is available to the applicant at the end of this time.

As may be expected, from what has become an extensive bureaucracy, the application document, issued by Sport England, is voluminous and exhaustive and is accompanied by seven or more explanatory books each dealing with a different aspect of the application process. Regional day and evening courses are available in most parts of the country which explain and present this information in even greater detail. A regional help system is in existence, which has two levels. On a small-group basis an application can be discussed during which presentational suggestions are made. On a one-to-one basis a draft application is considered by a Sports England consultant, who is often a prominent retired sportsman or woman. The process is highly organised and professional. The methodology is highly developed.

The applicant soon realises that gaining an understanding of the basic qualifications which admit the lottery bid to the first formal stage is a daunting task. This difficulty is freely confessed by the Sport England staff. They point out that there are certain target sports and communities which have an easier ride through the process. Soccer, rugby, hockey, cricket, tennis, swimming and athletics are examples as are young people, racial and other minorities and economically disadvantaged groups. If membership of one or another of these does not figure prominently in the bid there is some explaining to do. Government also changes the priorities for these groups with regularity, which makes comprehension even more difficult. An example of this occurred recently when a change in minister resulted in the emphasis changing very swiftly to encompass several political rather than sporting aims.

Croquet is not very well understood by non-participants. Few croquet players have been recruited by Sport England and it is likely that some bizarre views of the sport will be encountered. One memorable phrase comes to mind "Yes. Croquet is played by well-off pensioners, isn't it?" Consequently, it is very unlikely that a croquet bid will be successful unless the regional Sport England office is well aware that it is coming and has discussed its content before it arrives. Great importance, too, is attached to support from the community surrounding the club. A difficulty which soon emerged is the absence of a nationally agreed policy for croquet within Sport England. Aims and objects have therefore to be developed and argued from first principles.

continued ▶

“ The applicant soon realises that gaining an understanding of the basic qualifications which admit the lottery bid to the first formal stage is a daunting task. ”

In Budleigh's case the outcome of the bid was really very predictable. There were three reasons for refusal. The club is too wealthy to receive a grant and can afford, by applying all its reserves, to do the work unaided. There was no unfulfilled demand for croquet in the club's catchment area and therefore the facilities created would not result in more playing members joining the club. Much of the work was required because the club had not attended properly to maintenance in the past.

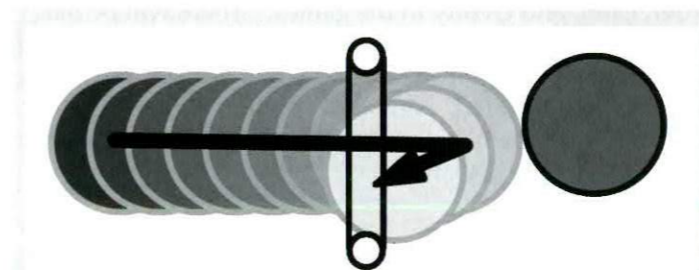
What lessons are there to be learned by other clubs contemplating bids? The more obvious suggestions are the corollaries of the above reasons. Do not develop accounts which show reasonably healthy reserves (necessary for survival in hard times) unless you are prepared to risk committing them to supporting the bid; ensure that the club has a waiting list of members who cannot be accommodated on existing courts; though the rules appear to admit renewal of playing surfaces, it is evident that Sport England do not give credence to this, so go instead for the creation of completely new surfaces. Other tongue-in-cheek suggestions

## Q & A

### queries on the laws of association croquet

Q. My ball, Blue, went through its hoop, hit Red on the far side, but then fell back into the middle of the hoop. Has Blue scored the hoop and/or made a roquet?

A. Blue has not scored the hoop and will only have made a roquet if Red was live.



**Blue completes the running of the hoop, hits Red and falls back into the jaws. The hoop is not scored, even though Blue had to clear the hoop completely in order to reach Red.**

This situation looks as though it is covered by Law 17(a) [Hoop and Roquet], but in fact it is not. That law only applies if the ball "completes the running", which is a reference to Law 14(c) [Hoop Point], which states that a ball does not complete the running if it subsequently moves back into the hoop. Law 16, the one governing ordinary roquets, is therefore the only one that applies.

must include the siting of new surfaces in disadvantaged areas, seeking out racial minorities as members and recruiting a good proportion of children of school age.

Has the exercise been a waste of time for the Budleigh Salterton club - an outcome that could have been foreseen before the ink was dry on the application form? Most certainly not! The whole discipline of working through the club's finances, membership, cost of surface renewal and organisation has been thoroughly beneficial. To be particularly recommended is the emergence of a Sports Development Plan (one of the subjects of the SE publications) which addresses all aspects of croquet - membership, coaching, referees, playing surfaces and club finances. Finally, as a footnote, the club has raised, in 2001, over £50,000 in various ways and has now spent all this sum on the grounds. Another Lottery application is now planned to finish the project, but this time the bid will have no playing surface content. We will soon see if the lessons learned have been put to good purpose!

This may seem harsh in the case where Red was far enough behind the hoop that Blue must clearly have run the hoop before hitting it, but, it avoids any doubt in more marginal cases. For the same reason, Law 17(a) gives both the hoop and a roquet if Blue does end up having run the hoop, providing that Red was clear of the hoop on the non-playing side.

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## WCF golf croquet world championship

Bob Alman files his daily diary from Florida's inaugural event

8th February

The fifth Golf Croquet World Championship is America's first - and it's also the first world championship of any kind to be held at the new National Croquet Center in West Palm Beach, Florida.

Another "first" excites the imagination of all those who believe that the burgeoning popularity and respectability of Golf Croquet within the world croquet community is essential to the future health and growth of the sport: for the first time in the history of this world championship, the top-ranked players in "Association" croquet are also competing - and competing with a will!

Reg Bamford is coming off a phenomenal string of important victories that catapulted him into the Number One spot in the world rankings, displacing Robert Fulford - but only by a hair. Both Fulford and Bamford are competing seriously for this world title - along with Stephen Mulliner, who arrived four days before the beginning of the championship to practice on the National Croquet Center lawns. Virtually every player who has ever done well in past golf croquet world championships will be here competing - including America's Mik Mehas and England's Stephen Mulliner. Not even to mention 20-year-old Jacques Fournier, America's top-ranked player in the "Association" game, who was a finalist in last year's USCA National Golf Croquet Championship, won by Egyptian Yasser Esmat.

Few would deny that the Egyptians are strong favourites to win the championship they have virtually owned since its inception in 1995. But this is the most formidable challenge they have faced.

9th February

It's Friday evening before the championship play begins, and perhaps as many as half the players have already put in some practice play on the lawns - lawns which have been universally praised for their flatness and evenness of texture. If you miss a shot on these lawns, you may not blame the terrain.

Back to the list of "firsts": This is the largest golf croquet world championship ever played, with 56 players in eight blocks of seven, playing matches of best-of-three 13-point games. Block play extends through Wednesday. For the first time, all play is in matches, not in single games. Everyone will get a full measure of play at this championship, and the results will be played down each segment of the elimination ladders until every player achieves his or her just final place - from First to 56th.

Such a spectacle has never before been seen in America, and much is being made of it in the press releases being sent out from the National Croquet Center.



How well the press responds can be judged tomorrow (Saturday), when the press and invitees are welcomed to the official Opening Ceremonies - not quite on the Olympic scale, but fairly impressive by croquet Standards. After the games are pronounced open, the action will shift to Court 4, where a demonstration game between two of the world's top players will be presented with play-by-play commentary.

Many South Florida volunteers have come forward to help with various aspects of the event - including 30 volunteer referees. If the tournament has a weakness, it is probably in the shallowness of the available pool of experienced referees. Chief Referee Gary Weltner has announced that the main role of the newly-trained referees will be to maintain order, calm, and civility in the games. There will be many points when play will cease while the rulebook is consulted (there are 50 copies courtside) and while difficult refereeing issues are adjudicated. Although passions always run high in world championship competitions, all the officials of these games have declared that calm, order, and reason will prevail, at any cost.

So far - on the last practice day - high good humour prevails, and some rain clouds threaten. The forecast is for exceptionally fine croquet for the next eight days.

10th February

The big story in the championship so far is the weather.

The Opening Ceremonies have been a soggy affair. The day started with a threat of rain which by 11:00am had turned into a light mist. Four hundred people were expected for the Opening Ceremonies, but by noon, when the rain began in earnest, it was increasingly obvious that the RSVPs would most likely not brave the elements for an outdoor event whose highlight was a demonstration game by the top players in the world.

Nevertheless, the Opening Ceremonies happened on schedule - not outside, but repositioned in the Festival Tent and adjoining Utility Building. Sixty singers from the Masterworks Chorus of the Palm Beaches positioned themselves on risers at one end of the tent, adjacent to a brass quintet from Palm Beach Atlantic University. At precisely 1:50, the Resurrection Brass started playing, and at 2:00pm USCA President Dick Brackett welcomed the crowd which numbered a little more than 200 - including players, musicians, and guests.

The musicians played well within the large tent, accented by a rainy staccato on the tent top above. After a 20-minute concert, WCF President Tony Hall introduced the players, each country preceded by a brass fanfare. At the end of the ceremony, Dr. Edward Eissey, president of the Palm Beach County Sports Commission (a sponsor of the World Championship) conferred his blessings on the event, praised the Youth Development Programme of the USCA, and predicted a great future for croquet in Palm Beach County.

The Sun-Sentinel News was present, and as the skies briefly cleared, a Channel 25 newscrew showed up to photograph the demonstration game and interview Jacques Fournier and Bob Alman for the evening news.

Although the affair - from the standpoint of publicity and promotion - must be declared a disaster, the people at the Opening Ceremonies pronounced it a highly enjoyable experience. The rain drove everyone under shelter for the food, the drink and the socialising. It's hard to beat the shelter of a big tent in a heavy rain for a party atmosphere.

Most of the players were present for the Opening Ceremonies, but a few didn't come in until late last night, for various reasons. These included World Number One Reg Bamford and World Number Two and many-times world champion Robert Fulford. They arrived in high good humour this morning. They know that they will be watched closely in this tournament. They know that their performance is one of the main points of interest in this world championship. How will they do? I asked them - and of course, they were both guardedly optimistic, and suitably modest. Like the champions they are, they expect to win. We shall soon see how the Egyptians and the Americans respond to this challenge.

11th February

The rain was intermittently heavy overnight, but no water was falling from the sky at the scheduled start of the block games at 9:00 AM on Sunday morning, so they started on time. The forecast was for a "70% chance of rain" for Sunday. That possibility was realised by 10:30, when a light mist again began to fall, soon followed by heavier rain as the skies continued to darken. By noon, monsoon-type

rains had engulfed the facility, and the "Dry Retention Basin" at the eastern edge of the National Croquet Center began to fill to the brim. I have been here for almost 17 months, and this is by far the most rain I have seen. The "islands" in the retention basin are entirely obscured. A neighbour told me he hasn't seen anything like this for 18 years.

A Sun-Sentinel photographer was on hand to do advance work for a writer to appear later. That now appears doubtful. Channel Five (the NBC affiliate) was also scheduled to do some shooting, but we're not counting on seeing them today. No matter - they'll come later in the week. Today, the big story, after all, is the weather. The best coverage we can expect today in the press is pictures of flooded lawns.

Most of the 9:00 matches were completed this morning, and the 11:00am and 1:00pm matches will be held over for the end of the days on Monday and Tuesday, according to Event Manager Archie Peck. The schedule - which calls for two-out-of-three matches throughout the championship at every level - is not endangered. If bad weather continues, the tournament managers have several fall-back plans to ensure that a fair result is achieved in the blocks and in the play-offs to follow.

13th February

The block play ended today, with most top seeds performing up to expectations.

The Egyptians topped five of the blocks - Salah Hassan, Khaled Younis, Yasser Esmat, and Walid Salah, all proven champions; and Egyptian Hisham Abdel Gawad, who defeated top seed Robert Fulford by the narrowest of margins in their block.

14th February

The biggest news of the day, perhaps, was the upset of Robert Fulford by Mohammed Enan of Egypt in the elimination ladder. He didn't make it to the final 16. Neither did Mik Mehas, who was upset in the elimination ladder by Johnny-come-lately Richard Knapp playing in his first golf croquet tournament.

World Number One Reg Bamford was undefeated in his block.

The net point scores are the most hopeful sign that someone besides an Egyptian might actually win the fifth Golf Croquet World Championship. Stephen Mulliner won the block net points high score with 38, narrowly followed by Walid Salah and Robert Fulford, who tied with 37. Reg Bamford, though undefeated, got to play only five games because of a player who withdrew in his block, but still racked up an impressive 31 net points. So far, the people



who have said that Bamford and Fulford can win in any form of the sport can still make a good case.

**15th February**

By winning their blocks, eight players did not have to play on Thursday, having won places in the final sixteen, beginning play midday Friday. They are listed below, with their opponents who have successfully fought their way up the ladder:

Salah Hassan	vs	Ahmed El Mahdi
Hisham Abdelgawad	vs	Sherif Abusbaa
Paolo de Petra	vs	Jacques Fournier
Yasser Esmat	vs	Mohammad Kamal
Khalid Younis	vs	Sherif Abdelwahad
Reg Bamford	vs	Richard Knapp
Walid Salah	vs	Mohamed Enan
Stephen Mulliner	vs	Ihab Abdelwahab

These midday games on Friday will produce the quarterfinalists, who will play on Saturday at 11:00am.

The tournament is moving along surprisingly well, with few disputes and disruptions - and despite the fact that most of the referees have had little experience and the ballboys are wholly absent. (The first ballboys - from nearby Forest Hill Highschool- are being trained for the Saturday and Sunday games.) Our worst fears have definitely not been realised. I asked Tony Hall, WCF president, how he accounts for this. He replied unhesitatingly, "The rain." The flood on Saturday during the Opening Ceremonies and the even bigger flood on Sunday - the first day of play - drove everyone under shelter in Festival Tent and the Utility building, engendering a sense of camaraderie that mixed well with the wine and hors d'oeuvres served in abundance for a crowd half as large as expected.

It's a good explanation. Whatever the explanation, it's a vast relief. If the weather holds, this event will live up to its promise.

The elimination round of 16 started with four of the games at 11:00am. Salah Hassan (Egypt) defeated Ahmed El Mahdi (Egypt); Sherif Abusbaa (Egypt) defeated Hisham Abdelgawad (Egypt); Paolo de Petra (Italy) defeated Jacques Fournier (USA); Yasser Esmat (Egypt) defeated Mohammed Kamal. These winners advance to the quarter finals, played on Saturday at 1:00pm.

Only one of the 1:00pm matches has completed at this time (2:20pm). Reg Bamford defeated an inspired Richard Knapp, who in the second game had a lead of 5-2 against the South African. But that's as far as he got. Bamford won the match in two games, putting out the third of five Americans still alive in this championship. (Nationalities sometimes get confusing here: Bamford actually lives in London and works barely a stone's throw from the home of American Dick Knapp and his British wife.)

American hopes hinge on the Abdelwahab brothers, both in tough games: Sherif against Khalid Younis (Egypt) and Ihab against Stephen Mulliner (England), who racked up more net points than anyone in block play.

The weather is holding nicely following last weekend's record-breaking deluge. The courts are thronged with spectators. Parking may become the biggest issue of Saturday's activities. It's the practice day for the Golf Croquet Corporate Challenge, and several visitor groups are scheduled to appear.

The lawns are showing signs of wear after five days of brutal use. Some brown areas are growing along the boundaries of the central courts, and the hoops have been repositioned every day. Each day, they sink lower and lower into the turf, as a consequence of being loosed by hard shots from every angle, then pounded down to make them firm again.

**16th February**

There will be no dark horse winners in the 2002 Golf Croquet World Championship.

Saturday's 11:00am best-of-three quarterfinals ended with an all-too-predictable result - four seasoned Egyptian champions in the semifinals, including both former golf croquet world champions.

Salah Hassan was world champion in 1997 and 2000 (the last world championship held). He will play in the semifinal against Sherif Abusbaa, who has won many major tournaments in Egypt, from 1986 to the present.

Khalid Younis won the other two world championships, in 1996 and 1998. He will play against Walid Salah, who has been the Egyptian Men's Singles champion six times.

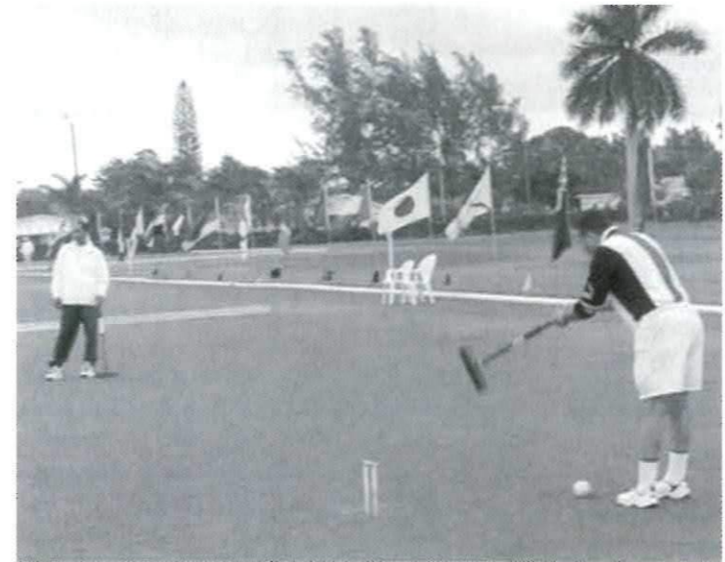
The semifinals were originally scheduled for Saturday afternoon but were rescheduled for the finals day after steady rain left some courts with standing water.

By far the most-watched match today was the one between World Number One Reg Bamford of South Africa and Egypt's Khaled Younis. The significance of the match was only heightened by the fact that by the time their second game got under way, Bamford was the only non-Egyptian in contention.

Both the games were long. Each hoop was hard-fought. Both games were accompanied by much applause and shouted encouragement from the opposing partisans. Croquet has, indeed, become a spectator sport.

In both games, Bamford approached the 12th hoop down one, 6-5. He had to win both the 12th hoop and the final and deciding 13th.

Bamford had a good chance in both games down to the final ball. The first game was especially interesting. A dance lasting perhaps 15 minutes at Hoop 12 finally allowed Bamford to score and end up a few feet in front of his partner ball, pointed straight toward Hoop 3 - the last point to be scored. Younis shot to position. Bamford rushed his partner ball just exactly far enough, but too far to the side for a guaranteed shot into the hoop. Younis shot to position with his partner ball. Bamford had to choose whether to go for a difficult side-angle hoop or knock one of Younis' balls out of position, leaving Bamford at a distinct disadvantage in the next rotation. After long deliberation, Bamford chose to go for the hoop and the win with a hard shot, and he missed. So the game went to Younis, 7-6.



The second game seemed almost a replay of the first, except that Bamford could not engineer the clever solution he found in game one. He would have to rely on his excellent long shot to knock Younis out of position at the final and deciding wicket. So after Bamford ran Hoop 12, Younis predictably took position at 13. Bamford shot, and missed. Younis took position again. And again, Bamford shot, and missed. Bamford legendary shooting accuracy had failed him. Game and match to Younis.

A throng of Egyptians rushed onto the field to embrace their champion. They knew that the 2002 championship had just been won by an Egyptian - maybe not Younis, but definitely one of the four survivors of the elimination, now all Egyptians. Bamford's threat to the Egyptians' supremacy in this game had been faced down, just barely.

But Bamford will be back. He told me in a private interview that he loves the game and he knows his lack of experience in the tactics of the game is his major problem. He intends to play a lot more golf croquet. Expect to see him going for the gold in the next Golf Croquet World Championship.

**17th February**

Former World Champion Khaled Younis (1996, 1998) defeated the reigning world champion Salah Hassan (1997, 2000) in a best-of-five match that couldn't have been closer. The finals started at 1:00pm as scheduled and ended shortly before 6:00pm, barely before sundown, in front of perhaps the biggest crowd of spectators to see a croquet tournament in Florida. Each of the five matches went to the final point. Clearly, either player could have won by a hair's breadth.

The Saturday quarterfinals were, to many, the climax of the event. That was when all the non-Egyptians were eliminated from contention - American Ihab Abdelwahad, and South African Reg Bamford, ranked Number One in the world in Association croquet.

Despite the inexperience of the native referees and some terrible weather, the first world championship at the National Croquet Center appears to have received generally good marks all round. For the staff, we hardly have time to rest on any laurels we may have won - the International Croquet Festival begins play here tomorrow and continues for another week.

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## championship results

February 2002 marked the first outing for both Reg Bamford and Robert Fulford, Association's One and Two, at a major Golf Croquet event. The Egyptians managed each of the top four places, but Reg took Younis (the eventual winner) to a close result.

February is about the worst time of year for the British (or British-based) players to contest an event like this. The Egyptians play all year round, while we are several months out of practice. Even so, the results show a promising attack from the Europeans.

Mulliner, Fulford and Bamford excelled in the block stage, putting in among the best performances (one of Bamford's opponents withdrew, leaving him shorter on points). It's surprising, perhaps, to see the strong Italian showing. Paolo de Petra has been on the Association scene for many years; he first showed up at the Worlds in the UK in 1994, has adapted to the intricacies of the triple peel, and gave an impressive display (along with his Italian colleagues) in the World Team Championship. Here, at Golf, he won his block (against the favoured US player Mik Mehas), and reached the last 16 where he eliminated Jacques Fournier, America's top young star and semi-finalist from last August's Association Worlds.

Mulliner is already suggesting a Dream Team of Associates (Mulliner, Bamford, Fulford and Maugham, with Ireland's Ed Cunningham and Mark McInerney) to take on the Egyptians at Golf. Only time will tell if the North African dominance is on the wane.

Player	Country	Matches	Games	Points
<b>Block 1</b>				
Salah Hassan	EGT	5	10	21
Don Beck	ENG	5	10	17
Evan Newell	IRL	4	8	3
Bill Martin	USA	3	8	6
Salib Erian	EGT	2	7	12
Jim Houser	USA	2	4	-11
Alexander Kirsten	GER	0	1	-48
<b>Block 2</b>				
Khaled Younis	EGT	6	12	-41
Ahmed El Mahdi	EGT	5	10	34
Ihab Abdelwahab	USA	3	8	8
John Moore	ENG	3	8	-1
Chris Sheen	ENG	3	7	10
Len Canavan	USA	1	2	-28
Adalat Shourab	PAL	0	0	-64
<b>Block 3</b>				
Stephen Mulliner	ENG	6	12	38
Sherif Abdelwahab	USA	5	11	32
Roy Gee	USA	4	9	19
Andrea Pravettoni	ITA	3	9	8
Ken Shipley	CAN	2	6	-18
John Jeffrey	ENG	1	4	-26
Marion Hof	GER	0	0	-53
<b>Block 4</b>				
Yasser Esmat	EGT	6	12	33
Jacques Fournier	USA	5	10	19
Mohamed Enan	EGT	4	10	19
Bill Berne	USA	3	8	13
Tom Weston	ENG	2	4	-24
David Underhill	SWZ	1	2	-29
Gianni Leoncini	ITA	0	1	-31
<b>Block 5</b>				
Walid Salah	EGT	6	12	37
Sherine Hamdy	EGT	4	9	12
Richard Knapp	USA	4	9	6
Charles von Schmieder	IRL	3	8	-1
Derek Old	ENG	2	5	-16
David Bent	USA	1	5	-15
Roy Ware	ENG	1	3	-23
<b>Block 6</b>				
Reg Bamford	RSA	5	10	31
Mohammad Kamal	USA	4	8	18
Sherif Nafee	EGT	2	6	5
Norman Eatough	SWZ	2	4	-16
Tony Hall	AUS	1	3	-20
Peter Just	USA	1	2	-17
Hassan Ghoneim	USA	0	0	0
<b>Block 7</b>				
Hisham Abdel Gawad	EGT	6	12	30
Robert Fulford	ENG	5	11	37
Owen Edwards	AUS	4	9	4
Edoardo Lualdi	ITA	3	7	1
Mark Najarian	USA	2	7	-10
Rana Al Almi	PAL	1	2	-27
Bill Mead	USA	0	2	-35
<b>Block 8</b>				
Paolo de Petra	ITA	5	11	27
Mik Mehas	USA	4	9	31
Bill Arliss	ENG	4	8	8
Sherif Abusbaa	EGT	4	8	6
Ivor Brand	ENG	3	8	-14
Dick Brackett	USA	1	3	-17
Kevin Ham	WAL	0	2	-43



Younis celebrates his third World Championship title

## coaching

### break builder 6

The sixth Break Builder tip, again written by Keith Aiton and first published in the Gazette in the autumn of 1987, set this puzzle. Yet again you are playing Yellow in the fourth turn, and you are prepared to use two bisques to get the break started. Red is next to Hoop 3, just on its west side, and this time the opponent balls have Blue four yards east and four yards south of Corner II, i.e. northwest of Hoop 2, and Black a short distance north of Corner IV on the East Boundary. 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

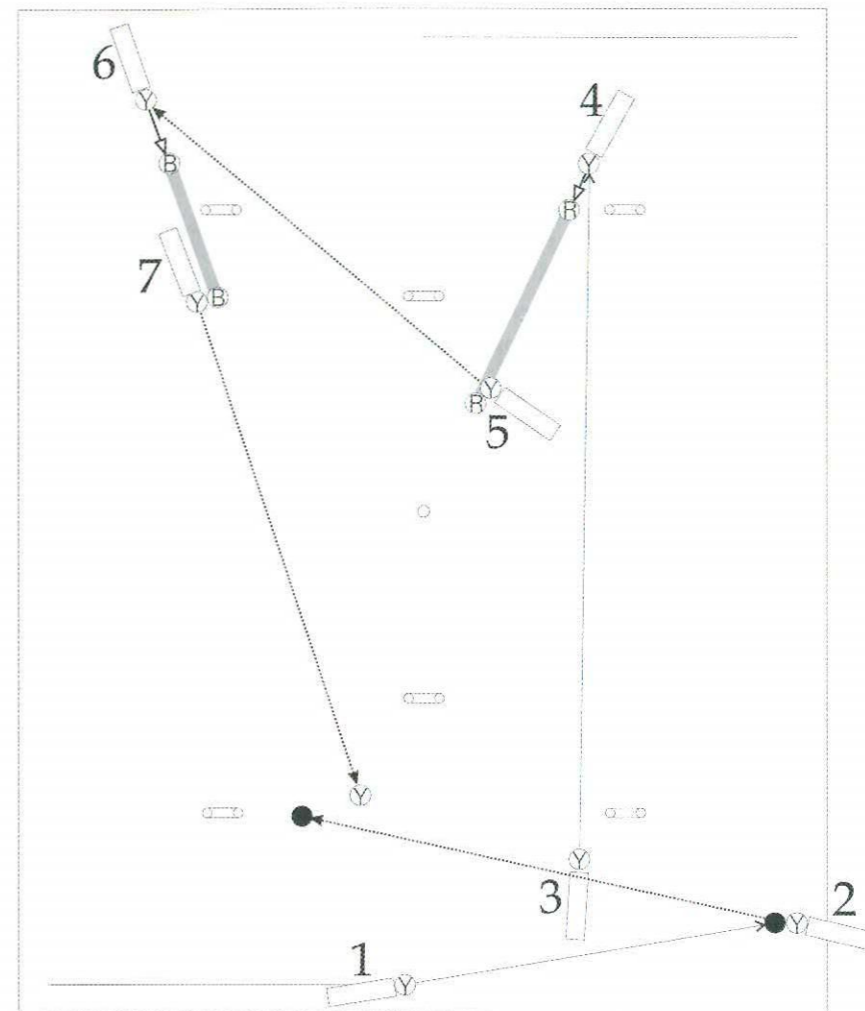
(You may be wondering how the first three turns of the game have left the balls in these positions - all that Keith Aiton would vouchsafe was that Blue (in Turn 1) and Red (in Turn 2) took the same shots as in Break Builder 5, so we have to guess where the other clips are! One suggestion may be that Black has hit Red on the third turn, made Hoop 1 off Blue, and rushed it towards hoop 2. The speculative approach to Hoop 2 with a take-off from behind has failed to give a runnable position, and he has retired hurt to the Fourth Corner.)

**1 - 3** Shoot at Black from A-baulk. If you miss, take a bisque and roquet Black. With the croquet stroke, put Black as pioneer for Hoop 1. With the continuation shot, send Yellow close to Red, and take a bisque.

**4 - 6** If you can rush Red towards the peg, or near to Blue, then do so, but it is all right to leave Red near to Hoop 3 for use later. In any case, with the croquet stroke, ensure Yellow finishes north of Blue to give a rush on Blue towards Hoop 2.

**7** Take off from Blue to Black at Hoop 1.

The four-ball break exists for at most two bisques, although if Red is still at Hoop 3, there is some work to be done after Hoop 1 to create a reasonable pivot, and get to the ball at Hoop 2.



As the play is the same whether the first stroke hits or not, a hit is shown. The third stroke misses red & gives the rush towards the peg (see point 2).

Roquet Rush Croquet Rushed path Mallet Stroke No. 2

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## croquet sales

It's not often that you associate the words 'dynamic' and 'caretaker', but during the last two years David Collins has shown how the two ideas can be combined. David took over the CA sales function known to most as the CA Shop in a caretaker capacity in January 2000 when health problems forced Brian Macmillan to retire. Since then not only has David kept the shop running with style, he managed to increase sales by 13% in 2000 and a staggering further 42% in 2001.

Profit from commercial sales represents an increasingly significant proportion of CA income, enabling us to plough more money back into the sport. We would all like to thank David for his superb efforts, and wish him good health and happiness during his retirement.

We are equally fortunate to be able to welcome Jeff Dawson, who has now taken over the sales function. Jeff will be known to many of you as one of England's leading croquet players, and is a member at Woking Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club. Due to the need for the CA to move away from Hurlingham, Jeff will be running the sales operation from his own base near Woking. Moving the shop in this way will undoubtedly make it more difficult for some, who preferred to be able to pop in to be able to see the products while they were visiting Hurlingham club, but it will also have many benefits. For one thing Jeff and his wife Ann will be available throughout the week to answer enquiries, so the shop's opening hours will not be as limited as they



David Collins (top), who is retiring  
Jeff Dawson (below), the CA's new Sales Agent

have had to be in the past. If you are in the Woking area (only just off the M25), it will also still be possible to arrange to call in and view or collect equipment.

Jeff wants to use his expertise to help develop the shop, and would like to see it become the first point of call for anyone needing croquet related goods. The main focus initially will be to develop the web site, so that more information and pictures are available for the items sold. In the longer term he hopes to bring the site into the e-commerce world, enabling on-line ordering thereby hopefully streamlining the shopping process. He would also like to add comparison information to make choosing the right equipment easier. Where the shop cannot itself sell items, he would like to ensure it provides links to other suppliers who can, so that it provides a comprehensive focus for all croquet needs. To this end he would be very interested in hearing from any croquet or related suppliers who would like to have a link from the site.

Jeff is also eager to hear your views on the shop, and what you would like to see from it. Please send any thoughts to him at [sales@croquet.org.uk](mailto:sales@croquet.org.uk), or ring him on 01483 776971. I am sure you will all wish him well in his appointment, and by supporting him help the CA realise its aim of increased investment in the future of our sport.

## WCF world association croquet championship 2005

Following the success of the 2001 event, the CA is preparing a bid to hold the 2005 WCF World Association Croquet Singles Championship in England. If successful, we will be inviting affiliated clubs to act as host.

### host club selection timetable

The draft timetable is:  
1st April, 2002 Invitation To Tender (ITT) document published;  
April - June, 2002 Discussions with interested clubs;  
1st July, 2002 Selection of Shortlist;  
31st December, 2002 Deadline for Detailed Responses;  
31st March, 2003 Announcement of successful bid.

The purpose of the shortlist is to avoid wasted effort by interested clubs where it is obvious that their bid is unlikely to be successful. Hopefully everything else is self-explanatory.

### responsibilities of host club

Working in conjunction with the CA World Championship Organising Committee, the Host Club will be responsible for providing, to an agreed budget and method of finance,

the following officials, facilities and so on:  
Raising sponsorship;  
Playing facilities (for a minimum of 64, and preferably 80, singles entries);  
Facilities for CA Officials, Sponsors and Press;  
Administrative Officers (Accommodation, Transport, Entertainment, Catering).

The Host Club will not be responsible for the following, which will be provided by the CA:  
Press Officer, Programme, Tournament Direction, Tournament Management and Refereeing.

### benefits

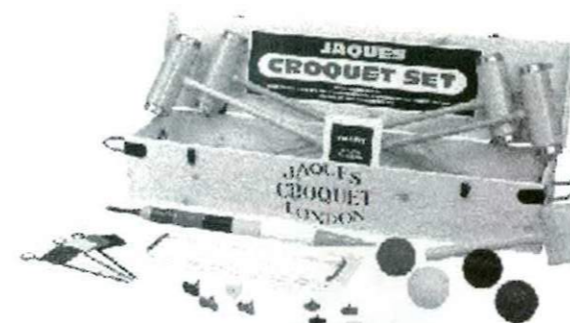
This is an excellent opportunity not only for your club members and local community to witness top class international croquet at first hand, but also to gain significant amounts of both local and national publicity, and to raise club funds.

Phil Cordingley,  
Chairman, CA World Championship Organising Committee

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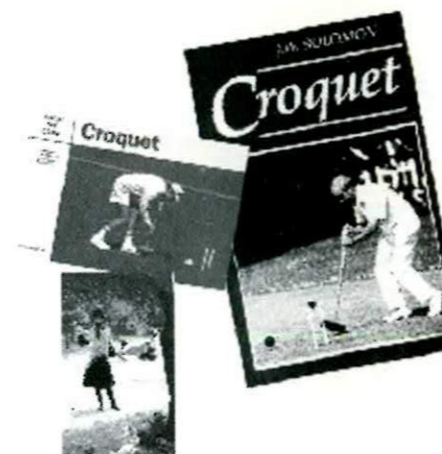


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Know the game	£5.00
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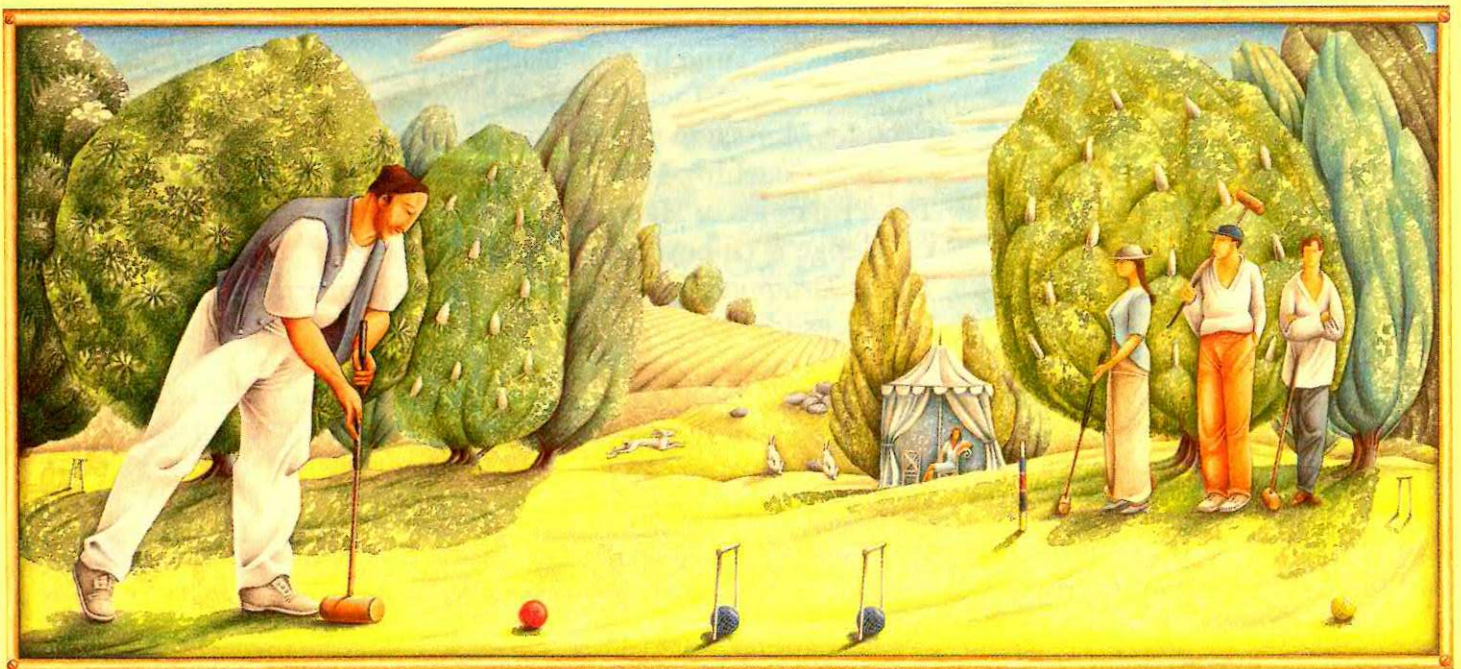
John Jaques II won a place in sporting history - and a Gold Medal - for introducing croquet into England at the Great Exhibition in 1851. His display there attracted such wide attention that the game speedily became the vogue and over the years has developed into the absorbing sport enjoyed by so many world-wide.

To commemorate the 150th anniversary of this event, the company has introduced a special Limited Edition 'Great Exhibition' set which includes Association Hoops, 16oz balls and fine quality mallets, all at a very competitive price. Only 150 of these sets are being produced!

The company also manufactures a complete range of sets and mallets for all standards of play, ranging from £60 upwards. View these on our website: [www.jaques.co.uk](http://www.jaques.co.uk)



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



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