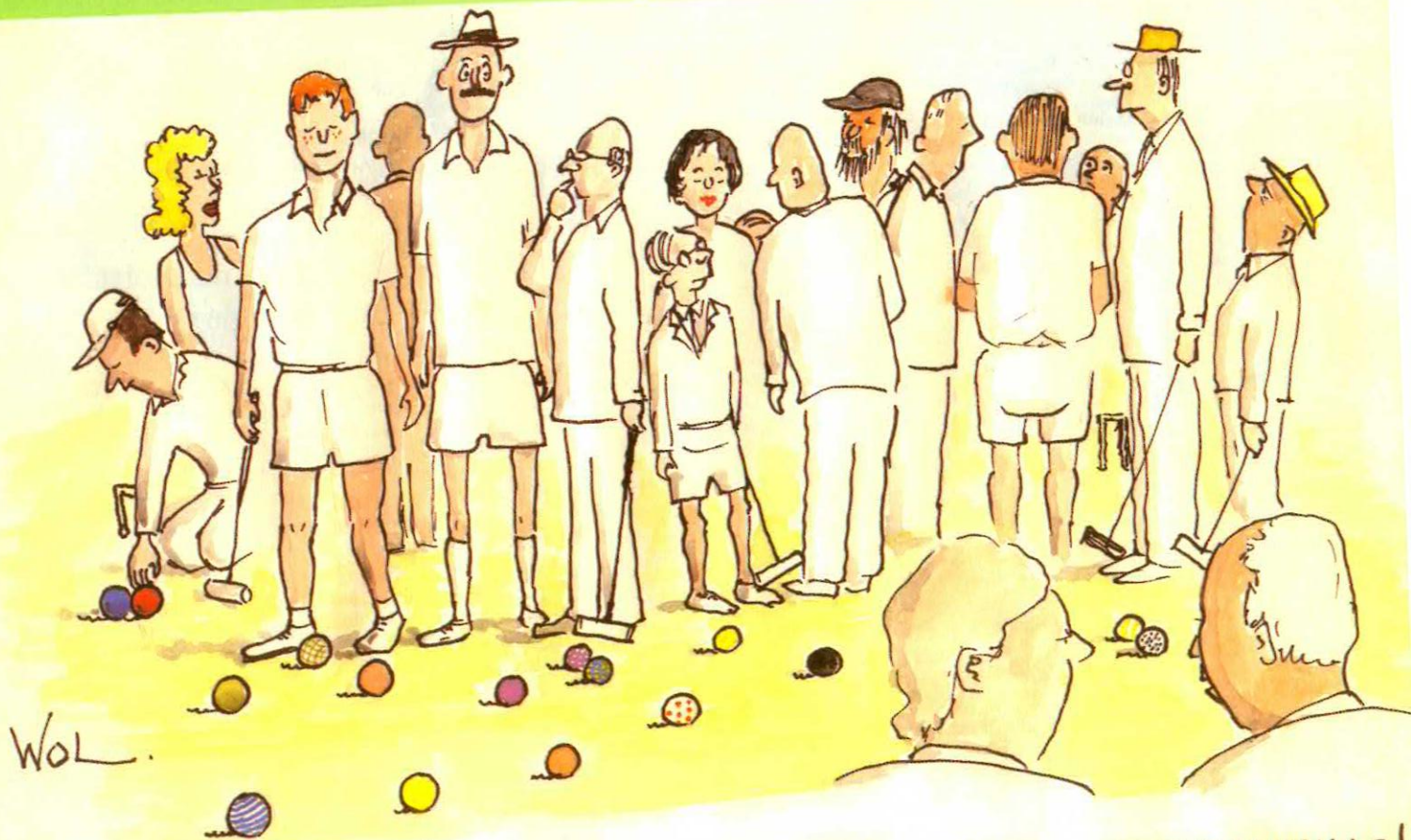


THE CROQUET GAZETTE

ISSUE 286 - JULY 2003



IT'S TAKEN ME TEN YEARS TO GET USED TO DOUBLE BANKING!

Inside:

Aunt Emma - A refined tactic?

Eddie Hunt, the CA's longest serving member, dies

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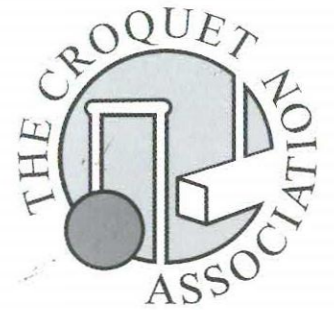
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THE CROQUET GAZETTE

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Publication Details

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

Publication Schedule

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Advertising

Full details of all advertising rates and data are available at all clubs as well as via the CA Shop 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.

Cover picture by Roy Wallis

Visit the Croquet Association website at www.croquet.org.uk

Chairman's Column



I have recently visited two clubs for the first time: Dyffryn and Ramsgate. Both are thriving and are well managed with lots of members joining in to help organize tournaments, coach beginners and do all the behind-the-scenes jobs that are so necessary.

Dyffryn is near Cardiff and the club's lawns are in a magnificent setting in front of a large mansion, surrounded by beautiful formal gardens that are open to the public. Well worth a detour if you are in the area.

End of the line for Pendle?

In March 2002 (Issue 278), the *Gazette* reported on the impending eviction of Pendle Croquet Club from its current site.

Pendle have been based at Nelson and Colne College since the club's formation in 1985. With the landlords wishing to redevelop the College, they were finally given notice in November 2001 to quit the site by 31st December 2002. When the time came, the move was delayed, and Pendle have enjoyed continued play on the existing site for the whole of this season.

As for developing a fresh site, there's a local benefactor on board, who's keen to see the club settled into a new home, and the Club managed to search out a number of possible solutions. However, the first proposal turned out to be too costly to develop, and plans fell through. The sponsor pulled out of the second plan at Victory Park in Barnoldswick, when it transpired that there was no prospect of building a pavilion or toilet facilities.

The Ramsgate club is on the seafront and their clubhouse is tucked away under the Esplanade, looking out to sea across the superbly kept lawns. When I was at the club the flags were flying, you couldn't miss the sponsors' banners beside the scoreboards, and the lawns were teeming with referees and ball boys and girls. It was the weekend of the Ramsgate Golf Croquet International that had attracted three players from Egypt as well as entries from Belgium, Germany, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa and the USA, plus some of the best from the UK. Reg Bamford won the event, beating Khaled Younis from Egypt in the final that was played in a howling gale. Watching long shots that were crosswind, I could see the ball deviating downwind by up to a couple of metres. It was more like bowls and presented the players with the unusual problem of aiming way off their target to compensate.

The CA has volunteered to hold the next WCF Golf Croquet World

Championship at Southwick in 2004. It will be a great pleasure to welcome our friends from overseas again and I know our organizing committee, chaired by Bill Arliss, will strive to stage a championship as successfully as Ramsgate did this year.

But - back to where I started - members of both Dyffryn and Ramsgate have in past years received CA Diplomas to recognize the significant contributions they have made to help their fellow club members. This is the time for club committees to nominate members, who need not be CA Individual Associates, for these Diplomas. Don't be backward in showing your appreciation for any exceptional effort made by a member in your club: send a citation of not more than ten lines to the CA Secretary before 1st August (or very soon afterwards). Presentations will be made at the CA's AGM in October and details will be published in the *Gazette*.

Quiller



ties. Finally, the Club came up with a plan to move to a former playground in Barrowford. Pendle Council owns the land, which is currently used as pasture for grazing horses and sheep. There's cash in the bank for the development, and the Council Officers had recommended that the Club take over the tenancy with a 25 year lease.

All seemed set for the plan to go ahead, and for Pendle Croquet Club to be relaunched with five new lawns and a custom-built clubhouse. At the end of April, though, 200 local residents presented a petition against the re-siting

of the Club.

The reasons cited were that a new development would rob the area of green land, restrict public footpaths, and present problems with on-street parking.

Pendle Club claim the opposite - the new facility would preserve existing footpaths, provide parking for both croquet players and locals, and would keep the land from building development for at least the 25-year period of the lease. The damage seems to have been done: faced with such overwhelming negative opinion, the Council were forced to back out.

This leaves the Club still with no long-term solution to its problems. Nelson College is still some way off starting work on the current site, and it now looks like business as usual for croquet throughout 2004. Whether Pendle Croquet Club is comfortably settled into new premises beyond than remains to be seen.

Alan and Margaret's story

My daughter asked me the other day

“Dad, what did you do when you wanted to put some money aside for the future?”

to which I replied

“When I was about your age, I put some money into an investment - a unit trust. I invested a little every month and I didn't even miss it.”

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THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION NOTICE OF MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of The Croquet Association will be held at the Victory (Services) Club, 63/79 Seymour Street, London W2 2HF, on Saturday 11 October 2003 commencing at 11.00am.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on Saturday 13 October 2002.

These were published in *The Croquet Gazette* issue no. 285, (May 2003). Copies will be available at the meeting and will be sent to Home Members on written request to the Secretary.

3. Chairman's Report.

4. Accounts for the year to 31 December 2002 and Treasurer's Report.

These accounts and a brief commentary are published in the current issue of *The Croquet Gazette*, no. 286, (July 2002). Copies will be available at the meeting and a more comprehensive report will be sent to Home Members on written request to the Secretary.

5. Election of Treasurer.

Dr RW Bray offers himself for re-election.

6. Election of Reporting Accountant.

7. Election of Council Members.

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

Messrs DJF Gurney, RF Hoskyns and DW Trotman by rotation.

A further vacancy arises from the resignation of Mr HM Hall, and there were two unfilled vacancies last year.

Messrs RF Hoskyns and DW Trotman seek re-election under Rule 18(a)(i). Three other nominations have been received as follows:

Dr JC Ruddock proposed by Mrs MW Currie and seconded by RA Welch;

Mr BPE Fisk proposed by Dr IG Vincent and seconded by DJ Magee;

Mr JP Dawson proposed by WR Wood-Roe and seconded by G Cuttle

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

8. Benefactors' Book.

The names of the Benefactors will be read.

9. Presentation of the Apps and Steel Memorial Bowls.

10. Presentation of Croquet Association Diplomas.

11. Any other business.

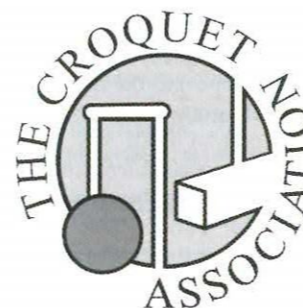
12. President's Closing Address.

Nigel Graves
Secretary
1 July 2003

The Croquet Association - Financial Statements

for the year ended 31 December 2002

Accountant's Report



In accordance with Council's instructions I have examined the attached accounts for the Croquet Association for the year ended 31st December 2002, together with the accounting records maintained for that year. I obtained such further information as I considered necessary to assist us in our review.

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

Marian Hemsted
Chartered Accountant

21st February 2003

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2002

	2002		2001	
	£	£	£	£
Income from:				
Subscriptions:				
Individuals		36,387		36,951
Clubs		21,890		22,175
Levies		12,688		11,835
Surplus of income from -				
Commercial activities		15,462		14,612
Tournaments and coaching		5,381		6,150
Advertising and royalties		1,995		3,222
Investments		6,524		9,395
Appeal & Sponsorship		13,820		6,021
Total Income		114,147		110,361
Expenditure on:				
Publications	18,991		19,696	
Marketing & Development	2,796		4,926	
Grants to Clubs and Federations	11,226		10,700	
International activities	694		4,466	
Central administration costs:				
Salary costs	34,696		29,871	
Office overheads	7,315		3,986	
Office services	4,657		3,086	
Council members' travel expenses	3,441		4,136	
Accountancy	6		650	
Sundry expenses	1,540		1,353	
Total Expenditure		85,362		82,870
Surplus for the year before taxation		28,785		27,491
Provision for Corporation Tax				
year ended 31st December 2002	1,652		1,573	
adjustment for prior year	343		-	
		1,995		1,573
Surplus for the year after taxation		26,790		25,918
Net transfer from/(to) special funds		(26,284)		(26,748)
Surplus/(Deficit) for year transferred to General Fund		£506		£(830)

Comments on the 2002 accounts

From a financial perspective 2002 was dominated by the building of, and move to, the new CA Office. The building cost just under £54K. This is shown as a new fixed asset in the Balance Sheet. The cost has been met from the Benefactors' Fund (£25K) and general reserves. Members of the Association responded very generously to the President's appeal, which netted nearly £14K in 2002 (with a further £3K received in the current year) which has helped to replenish the Benefactors' Fund.

The move to the new Office has had a distorting effect on the Income & Expenditure Account chiefly in an increase in salary costs due to transitional staffing arrangements. But office costs also

increased and these are likely to remain higher in the current and future years, mainly as a result of writing off the building asset over the next 20 years. Several other factors caused fluctuations in the I&E Account which are explained in a more detailed analysis available on request from the CA Office (please send an SAE). This fuller commentary will also be distributed at the AGM in October.

If one extracts the 'exceptional' effects in income of the appeal (in 2002) and sponsorship (in 2001), the surplus for the year after taxation (but before transfers to and from special funds) fell by about £7K to £13K. This is a reasonably comfortable margin which is unlikely to be matched in 2003.

The establishment of the Office on secure terms at Cheltenham has relaxed the

need to maintain substantial reserves. Council has therefore agreed to make another significant allocation to the Development Fund in furtherance of the policy introduced in the previous year to direct much greater support to the development of Croquet at its grass roots. Note 3 shows that a net total of £42K has been transferred to the fund in 2002 (cf. £18K in 2001), £8K having come from the closure of the inactive Enterprise Fund. This is in addition to over £11K being given in grants to clubs and federations. Council has also decided to extend the use of the Development Fund so that it can support marketing, coaching and other development activities as well as grants to clubs.

Roger Bray, Treasurer

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2002

	Note	2002		2001	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets	1				
Office Building at cost			53,758	-	
Croquet and office equipment at written down value			4,259	1,438	
Trophies at valuation			10,000	10,000	
Investments at cost	2		28,836	28,836	
			<u>96,853</u>	<u>40,274</u>	
Current Assets					
Stocks held for resale	1	11,506		7,826	
Loans to Clubs & Federations		2,000		3,600	
Debtors & prepayments		6,360		4,732	
Cash at bank and in hand		138,237		170,099	
		<u>158,103</u>		<u>186,257</u>	
Current Liabilities					
Subscriptions received in advance		1,991		2,921	
Creditors & accrued expenses		18,104		15,995	
Provision for taxation		1,954		1,498	
		<u>22,049</u>		<u>20,414</u>	
Net current assets			136,054	165,843	
Net Assets			<u>£232,907</u>	<u>£206,117</u>	
<i>Financed by:</i>					
General Fund					
Balance at 1 January 2002			92,513	93,343	
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year from Income & Expenditure Account retained in General Fund			506	(830)	
			<u>93,019</u>	<u>92,513</u>	
Special Funds	3		139,888	113,604	
			<u>£232,907</u>	<u>£206,117</u>	

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS - 31 DECEMBER 2002

1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Accounting convention

The accounts are prepared under the historical cost convention.

Fixed Assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life:

Office Building	5% per annum from 1 January 2003 (the building was completed only in the last quarter of 2002)
Croquet & Office Equipment & Fittings	33% per annum

Trophies are included in the Balance Sheet at valuation.

Stocks

Stock is valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

2 LISTED INVESTMENTS AT COST

	2002	2001
	£	£
10,395 6.75% Treasury Stock 2004	10,026	10,026
15,409 4.125% Index Linked Treasury Stock 2030	18,810	18,810
	<u>28,836</u>	<u>28,836</u>
Market value of investments at 31 December	£39,400	£38,385

3 SPECIAL FUNDS

	Development	Enterprise	Benefactors	International	Duffield Bequest	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Balance at 1 January 2002	25,000	8,000	32,036	28,595	19,973	113,604
Transfers from General Fund:						
Investment income (net)	-	-	1,135	1,014	778	2,927
Donations	-	-	14,002	-	-	14,002
General allocation	52,000	-	-	355	-	52,355
	<u>77,000</u>	<u>8,000</u>	<u>47,173</u>	<u>29,964</u>	<u>20,751</u>	<u>182,888</u>
Transfers to General Fund:						
General allocation	(10,000)	(8,000)	(25,000)	-	-	(43,000)
Balance at 31 December 2002	<u>£67,000</u>	<u>£-</u>	<u>£22,173</u>	<u>£29,964</u>	<u>£20,751</u>	<u>£139,888</u>

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ASSOCIATION CROQUET TACTICS

For Beginners and High Bisquers

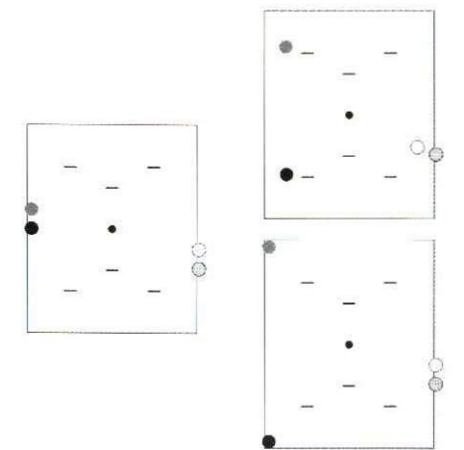
No 1 - AUNT EMMA

by Michael Hague

This is the first in a series of articles on tactics aimed at Beginners and High Bisquers and their coaches. The subjects for discussion will be Principles of Play, Breaks and Break Building.

The aim and syllabus of the SECF Summer School last year at Southwick were fine tuned to focus more closely on the 4 Ball Break (4 BB). The majority of the students, some of whom started the five day course as virtual beginners, finished with a reasonable understanding of the 4 BB and were able to play it according to their individual skills levels.

For a shorter course restricted, say, to a weekend or a limited series of lessons, it may be better to have a more limited aim for newcomers to the sport. He or she will have to master eventually as many different strokes as there are golf clubs in a full set. Some such as schoolboys learn to do them in a remarkably short time, needing practice and experience more in judging the strength of the shot than the mechanics of the particular stroke once taught. Such fast learners can be



(Left) Position at start of Red's turn.
(Top right) Red's desired outcome: Red has a rush into the lawn on Yellow, Black and Blue are at Red's next two hoops. Ideally, Black should be away from Blue's hoop and vice versa, to avoid giving oppo the chance of a break if he hits.
(Bottom right) An example of classic destructive Aunt Emma play: Red has no rush, and oppo's balls are placed uselessly out of play.

moved swiftly onto the 4 BB and hone their skills in playing the actual strokes whilst at the same time becoming thoroughly familiar with running the hoops in order using the 4 BB technique.

Others, and in my experience possibly the majority, want to get on and play the game with their peers. In the context of a short course or limited series of lessons, they are confused and frustrated by being introduced to the 4 BB before they have reasonable control over their ball placement, including by simple split shots. I have thus come to the conclusion that there is a place in the development of the average beginner for teaching (and standby for the howls of the purists!) how to Aunt Emma!

Going back to Mama

The technique of Aunt Emma is of course to start a turn with an easy hit in (a roquet) or rush on her partner ball and taking off to break up her adversary's balls if left joined up. If possible, she uses them to score at least one hoop or alternately she might leave her opponent's balls on the hoops she wants next, so that at the start of her next turn, she will have a ball at one of them (called a pioneer). When she sees that there is no further opportunity to make progress without taking risks, she ends her turn by "going back to Mama", her partner ball, in order to repeat the whole process in her next turn. Played between peer beginners, the Aunt Emma tactics can be relied on to break down frequently enough to allow the innings to switch from one opponent to the other. Skilled Aunt Emmas on the other hand do not break down, are excruciatingly boring to play and should be avoided at all costs!

But back to the Beginner. To use Aunt Emma's tactics effectively at the start of the croquet learning curve, the exploitation of the opponent's joined up balls has to be learnt and practised. There are four playing ploys to do this, obvious to the experienced player but not at all so to the newcomer.

Give yourself an easy start

Firstly we have the Setting up of the Dolly Rush, so called because a child could use it. Striker roquets one of the joined up balls and uses the croquet to set up a very short (two feet or less) and thus accurate straight rush on the other. Even such a simple, short croquet must be practised; if the striker's ball is only two or three inches off the desired rush line, instead of being a straight rush with a good chance of success it becomes a cut rush with a much lower probability of accuracy or even a rush which cannot be exploited at all. The Dolly Rush once established, striker can send his opponent's ball to the next hoop and use the ensuing croquet and continuation shot to run it.

Placing the opponent's balls

The next playing ploy is the Stop Shot and Croquet. Having roqueted one of the joined up balls, it is croqueted away using a stop shot so that the striker's ball stops near enough to the second ball for it to be roqueted. That in turn is croqueted to an advantageous position. No other options being available, striker's ball returns to Mama.

This technique may be used aggressively by using it to place the opponent's balls on each of striker's next hoops. Unless the opponent gets a lucky hit-in or uses a precious bisque, there will be a ball at one of striker's hoops at the start of his next turn.

The Stop and Croquet used defensively sends opponent's balls to their own respective hoops so that even if the opponent manages to hit in, his ball has to work itself all the way back to where it was at the start of the turn in order to run its hoop.

Whether in the attacking or defensive mode, it is advisable to stop shot to the nearer target first so as to reduce the danger of striker's ball stopping too far away for safety from the second ball. If the intention is only to leave the opponent's balls well apart, then consideration should be given to simply taking off from the second ball and

getting close to partner ball so that the continuation shot can be used to set up a useful rush for the start of the next turn.

Create space for the Stop Shot

The third ploy is the Rush, Stop Shot and Croquet where striker sees the opportunity to rush one of the joined up balls in the opposite direction to where it is to be croqueted and away from the second ball. Now more space has been created between the two joined up balls, allowing a stop shot or even a drive bringing striker's ball safely back within easy roquet distance of the second ball. The tactical objectives of the Rush, Stop Shot and Croquet are the same as for the Stop Shot and Croquet; the former has the benefit allowing a greater margin for error.

The rush to the hoop

If the joined up balls are well into the court, of course the first three ploys may still be used but now a fourth option can be applied, that is the Rush, Croquet and Rush. Let us take the situation that Red going for hoop 2 is joined up near the boundary level with hoop 4 and opponent's balls are joined up halfway between hoops 2 and 3, three yards in from the northern boundary. Red takes off from Yellow pushing it a little nearer to hoop 4 and ending up within easy roquet distance between Black on the left and Blue on the right. Red can now rush Black a short distance west to create space from Blue before carefully croqueting Black back to near hoop 3 but concentrating on positioning Red for a rush on Blue to hoop 2. That achieved, striker will have balls at hoops 2 and 3 and near hoop 4.

If after taking off from Yellow in the above situation, Red had arrived just to the right of Blue, Blue can be rushed West beyond Black before being croqueted back to hoop 3 with concentration being on Red going to a position to rush Blue to hoop 2. If after the initial take off from Yellow, Red

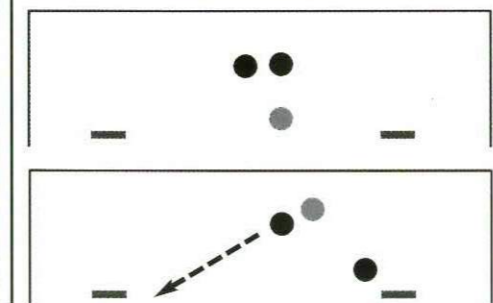
ends up to the left of Black, then a very gentle roquet on Black is required, followed by a stop shot towards hoop 3 but all focus being on setting up a rush to hoop 2 on Blue. Depending on where Red arrives in relation to Black and Blue so the shots are adjusted but they are variations on the same theme - getting a pioneer to hoop 3 and more importantly a good rush to hoop 2.

Taking full advantage of joined up balls is an important and necessary technique not only for applying Aunt Emma tactics but also for Association Croquet tactics generally. Once learnt and then practised first on the magnetic board and then on court, the Beginner is ready for supervised games when the format of the game including the start and finish, some of the laws and etiquette, bisques and some guidelines regarding attacking and defensive play can be introduced as appropriate situations occur and assimilated by the players.

At the same time the beginner is playing and hopefully improving the various strokes. Once he or she has made reasonable progress in this regard which may be months or only weeks later depending on how much the individual practises and plays, then is the time to advance to the 4 BB which will be the subject of the next article in this series.

Using Aunt Emma's techniques of splitting the opponents to set up a break:
1. Initial position: Red has taken off from the far end of the lawn to Blue and Black.
2. The desired outcome: one opponent ball goes to Hoop 3, and Red has a rush on the other to Hoop 2.

A good player can usually rely on using two joined up balls to give a useful rush. If they're in from the boundary, as here, there is often also the chance of getting the remaining ball out as a



Brush up on the Laws

No 1 - By Michael Hague

The veneer of civilisation is thin. One has only to witness the violent behaviour of some soccer supporters, the mob instincts of a riotous crowd in Northern Ireland or the aggression and rudeness of the young male white van driver to be aware that good manners and self-control are easily abandoned and usually with impunity. In our society where standards seem to be on a slippery downhill slope, croquet stands out as one of the last bastions of civilised behaviour.

A fundamental reason for this is that players participating in a match, whether on or off the court, act as joint referees (Law 48 (a)). Both sides are on their honour to own up to any fault or error committed. It follows therefore that croquet players if they are to meet their responsibilities as joint referees, have a greater need for knowledge of the laws of their game than in many other sports. That is the thinking behind this series of questions to test, and if necessary to teach, some aspects of the laws of Association Croquet, of which all players should reasonably have an understanding without necessarily knowing the finer points.

So here is the first simple question. A player **forestalls** play when, in order to discharge his or her duties as a referee of the game, the player issues a request to a striker to cease play in a manner capable of conveying the request to a person with normal hearing. When must an adversary NOT forestall?

Answer

Law 23(b). The adversary must NOT forestall or warn the striker if he suspects or becomes aware that the striker is about to:

- (1) run a wrong hoop
- (2) play a wrong ball
- (3) purport to take croquet from a dead ball unless another error has already occurred.

These are all errors that result in end of turn. The law exists to avoid possible resentment should a player fail to forestall striker (e.g. was not watching).

Letters

Becoming a coach

In May I attended one of the CA's courses for becoming a coach. This course was run, at Southwick, by Michael Hague, ably assisted by Bob Whitaker and Daphne Gaitley. For both preparation and execution, this course exceeded any professional training course which I have experienced in a lifetime in international business. It was simply superb, and I commend it most highly to CA members.

There are, of course, those who neither wish to help others, nor to improve their own game. It would be wasted on them. For all others beyond the beginner stage, it will give you both the know-how and the confidence to coach others: it will also inevitably improve your own game. It is suitable for highish bisquers, who are commonly better suited than 'A' class players to coaching beginners. They do, after all, have a passing acquaintance with things going wrong on the court. 'A' class players can have difficulty in understanding

how a short roquet can be missed.

Croquet is fortunate to have available the expertise and commitment of Michael and his aides. Make full use of it!

John Crowe
Chairman - East Dorset Tennis & Croquet Club

Having served on the directing staff for two of the five Coaching Qualification Courses to date, it's worth stressing that these courses are not just suitable for the highish bisquers as recommended here. It's designed to teach methods of instruction for potential coaches of any skill level, as testified by the several A and B class players who have already attended. Whether going for a Grade 1,2 3, or Golf Croquet assessment, the coach has to know not only the skills and tactics at the appropriate level but also how to teach them. Ed.

CA Skills Register

The May Gazette carried articles on the 2003 Conferences, as well as a

report on what action the Development Committee was taking in response to the expressed needs of member clubs.

Associates may reflect upon my exasperation at receiving only 14 replies to my circular, and, even more frustrating, the pitiful number who have agreed that their name be entered on our skills register. I am reminded of my Latin master - You can take a horse to water...

Whilst it is true that the CA Committees will not normally meet before October, nevertheless it would be sensible for them to be aware of individual club's needs, so that they can plan on how best to respond. I hope to have a more encouraging progress report for the September Gazette. My address is still on page 2. Why not respond simply to say that you have no need for any assistance?

Hamish Hall
Chairman, Development Committee

Fun days

I am writing in response to the Chairman's request in Issue 284 for ideas on introducing and retaining members.

A few years ago I organised a number of "fun days" which proved very popular. They proved an excellent chance to get all members of the club together and to introduce new members and occasional players into the club. Members who were rarely seen were keen to come along and often brought friends.

Consequently I produced a pack to enable other clubs to organise their own events. The pack (which costs £20 payable to charity) includes: An Organiser's Booklet with chapters on marking out courts, advance preparations, arranging teams, possible timetables, explaining the rules to players, bisque allocations, scoring, adding puzzles, etc.

Rules sheets
4 packs of "Chance" cards for Flamingos
Photocopyable masters of pocket rules

for all the games to give to players. Photocopyable masters of entry sheets, team sheets and a results sheet.

Following a recent fun day purely for golf croquet players, I also now include additional details (pocket rules for the four games, notes, etc.) for a golf croquet players fun day.

If anyone would like more information they can give me a ring on 01534 780751 or check our website (www.mnlg.com/jcc).

Martin Hodge
Jersey Croquet Club

Roadside Amusements

It must be at least twenty years since my mother-in-law wrote of a journey following a summer holiday: "We saw a notice by the side of the road which read 'Pick your own strawberries', so we returned home and did just that!"

I was reminded of this whilst motoring to the Nailsea Advanced Weekend along the tortuous B3130 from Clevedon. A large sign pointing down a lane read "Pick your own farm". As I don't presently have a farm, this imperative appeared to be an invitation to choose one! How wide a selection was available, I wondered, and would there be a charge?

On the return journey a more worrying sign was seen in Tickenham, the village next to Nailsea. "Rabbit runs for sale!" it proclaimed. The very idea! No such purchases had been made by our Nailsea friends, I should add, with many hours being expended by Peter Dyke and Marcus Evans in moving the hoops in the heavy clay. But the thought that rabbit runs could be deliberately purchased is disturbing. Are these the Weapons of Mass Destruction of which we read in the newspapers? What sanctions can the CA organise to ensure that this establishment is closed down?

Lawrence Whittaker
Leicester

Editorial policy

Could you kindly provide clarification on the current editorial policy regarding tournament reports?

First of all, the format: the instructions for tournament reports under 'Publication Details' refers to emailed attachments of wordprocessed files, and specify that "hand written reports are no longer accepted", but it is not entirely clear from this what the status of printouts of wordprocessed files is. Are the latter still acceptable, from those of us who do not have private email addresses?

I raise this, having submitted several such which have not been published, because it is not clear whether this is connected to another issue: the dearth of club tournament reports generally. Subsequent to the November 2001 issue, July 2002 alone has contained even the briefest roundup of club tournament reports, something that was a fundamental feature of the Gazette for decades. Quite aside from the pleasure of reading reports by those writes who are able to entertain as well as inform (I used always to read any report written by Robert Prichard or Peter Dorke, for instance, even if it was not about a tournament which I had attended, simply because they wrote so entertainingly!), tournament reports kept us up to date with what friends and acquaintances were achieving at venues elsewhere.

Seeing their own names or those of friends in reports made readers feel more connected to the croquet network and aware of the experience of playing croquet outside their own locality. The only tournaments which currently receive reporting coverage seem to be Championships, be they Association or Golf Croquet - a level of events in which, I venture to suggest, by far the greater percentage of club players do not and probably may never participate. To me - and perhaps to others? - Championship reports may hold some degree of interest, but do not feel particularly personally relevant. In conversation at tournaments I have encountered many

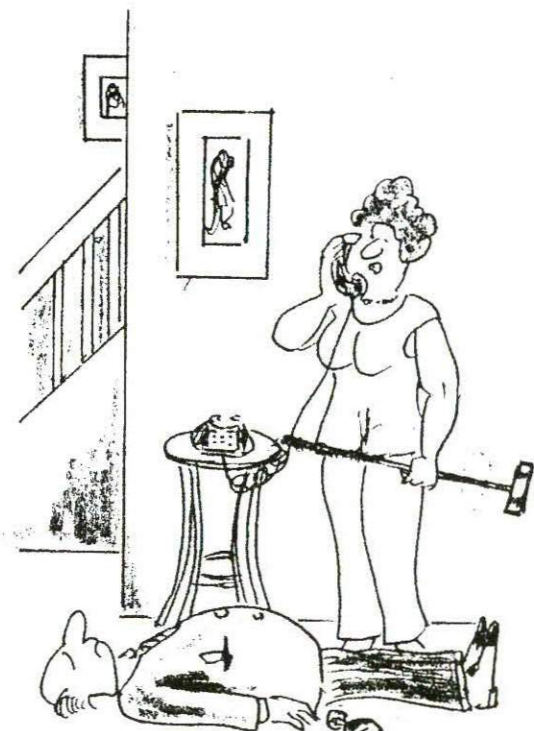
expressions of regret that club reports are no longer published.

I'm not decrying the full or even multi-page articles on specific aspects of croquet which these days fill the Gazette. They are generally interesting and informative, and increase my awareness of aspects of the world of croquet with which I might never become personally acquainted. What I mourn is the fact that they seem to appear at the expense of those one-column descriptions of tournament exploits and venues which helped me to follow the croquet careers of those I do not know, used to know or see more often than I do now, or those I have not met but can in this manner come to know by repute.

So if it is now editorial policy not to include club tournament reports in the Gazette any more, perhaps this should be specifically stated, so that when, as happens occasionally, an individual is approached at a tournament with the hopeful enquiry "Are you writing the tournament report? I do hope so - I always enjoy reading your reports!", they would be able to reply in keeping with said editorial policy...

I acknowledge that this situation is likely to be a result of financial constraints, but is there no way to have the best of both worlds? Perhaps one extra sheet of A3, providing four more pages in the Gazette, to provide space for club reports? Or, just as all CA members are issued with a Fixture List at the outset of the season, a similar format (i.e. non-glossy, small print to conserve space) annual supplement summary of those reports resulting from the tournaments laid out in the Fixture List? Would "8 out of 10 croquet players who expressed a preference" like to have access to such a document, if they were asked? If so, surely financial or other constraints would not be insuperable, and those of us who enjoy writing and/or reading club tournament reports could still have access to this source of information.

I apologize for the length of this letter (it is, of course, my bid for a full-page Gazette article, in disguise!), but I



**I may be ten minutes late for the match...
my husband's just dropped dead...**

feel the absence of club reports raises a considerable number of issues. I have obviously expressed my views only from within my personal croquet context, and others are undoubtedly going to feel differently, but perhaps other readers have solutions or observations they would like to put forward?

Deborah Latham
Taunton

To tell the truth, I've been much less strict about the handwritten stipulation than my predecessor, but have been too remiss to amend the instructions for contributors. Rest assured that failure to print tournament reports comes not from my reluctance to accept handwritten or typed copy, but for a much more mundane reason - cost.

With a limitless supply of funds, the Gazette would appear much more frequently, or have many more pages, or both. As it is, there are 24 pages, and six issues a year. Although the size of the magazine has grown little over the last few years, the amount of tournament activity has. As recently as the late 70s, there were about 20 tournaments taking place around the country. This year the CA Fixtures Book lists something just short of 200. It's clearly not possible to publish reports for all events. Well, at least not on paper. Those with access to the Internet will see that the CA's website features results and reports of all tournaments as soon as they become available. This is scant consolation to those without computer access, but it does at least provide some sort of record for those with the wherewithal and the inclination to browse the site.

In fact, this highlights a major difference between the two media. Electronic reports can be published instantly and accessed at once. Printed ones cannot. Looking at editorial time, printing and distribution as a whole, it takes something like three weeks to a month to produce each issue of the Gazette. Newspapers and glossy magazines can manage a swifter turnaround if they can afford to print in-house, but the Gazette can't. How this affects topical material (including tournament reports) is that any submission received by me will be at least one month out of date by the time the magazine is read, and possibly as much as three months

late. Although it's certainly not a written editorial policy, a club which holds its annual tournament always in the third week of an even-numbered month will have to submit one heck of a good report to make it into print, by virtue of the fact that the writer can't submit the report fast enough to make the deadline. Consequently, the lack of tournament reports in, for example, the May edition of the Gazette arises from the simple fact that the season has barely started when that issue goes into production.

Where there is a strict editorial policy is in the inclusion of championship reports, for which results are (or rather, are intended to be) included as a matter of course. The Gazette exists as the CA's official journal, and there is an onus on me to include details of all the CA's events. Most of these are A-class events - the Eights, the Men's & Women's, the Counties and so on - but there are a few handicap tournaments and a growing number of Golf Croquet events. Obviously this makes tournament coverage top-heavy towards these fixtures, and it's often difficult to cater for the needs of a readership which finds page after page of championship results unpalatable. So, although the Opens receives automatic coverage, the four regional championships, for example, do not. The supplement produced in March's issue (No 284) which provided a four-page listing of winners of major events seems to have met with some approval, and I plan to repeat this each year in future.

Old Gazettes provide interesting reading on this matter. As long ago as 1985, there was a correspondence under Chris Hudson's editorship about the inclusion of tournament reports. The philosophy then, as now, was that, if handicap tournaments are played in a spirit of sociability rather than competitiveness, their reports should reflect this. My own rule of thumb, put simplistically, is that reports for serious events should report the facts, and those for less intense competitions should reflect the spirit in which they are played. I'm pleased to say that, finally, some reports (including one from Deborah) have crept back into this edition.

It's clear that Chris Hudson thought long and hard about the nature of the magazine, even going so far as dropping the word 'Gazette' and renaming it, simply,

CROQUET. The current policy of moving away from tournament reports towards features is not a new one, and evidently there was a move to provide something for non-tournament players as much as 18 years ago.

Playing in tournaments, I've had a couple (that is, specifically, two) of complaints that features should not be allowed to elbow out tournament reports at all. The argument is that improvers are encouraged by having their successes reported, and the rest of us can follow their progress. I'm afraid I don't buy this argument at all. The end of Chris' tenure in 1991 also marked the end of his term of office as National Development Officer (a full-time post funded by the Sports Council). Since then membership of the CA has been static. The number of clubs has barely increased. What has changed is the cross-section of membership we now have. Tournaments are busier, and there are many more people playing within clubs who are failing to join the CA. A "Gazette" (in its strict sense as a publication of listings) may serve the interests of the CA's current tournament-playing membership, but it scarcely provides much interest of the wider potential membership of those who have a social, rather than competitive, interest in the game. As a coach, referee, handicapper and one involved in development, I can talk at length about the benefits to joining the CA. Maybe it's an egocentric view, but I would like to reach a stage where people join the Association in order to receive the magazine, as well as to support the other, less visible, work the CA undertakes.

I do miss the reports by Robert Prichard and Peter Dorke from the Glory Days of CROQUET, back when I first joined the CA 17 years ago. There's no wilful intent on my part to wipe all trace of the tournament scene from the pages of the Gazette. The possibility of a supplement (like the championship one in March) to cover all club tournaments has been mooted. Whether this materialises, and what format it would take, are yet to be decided. Demand is something which is very difficult to guess, with the limited feedback I receive. Fortunately, plans are underway to create a survey to gauge members' views on their preferred content for the magazine. - Ed.

Obituaries

Eddie Hunt

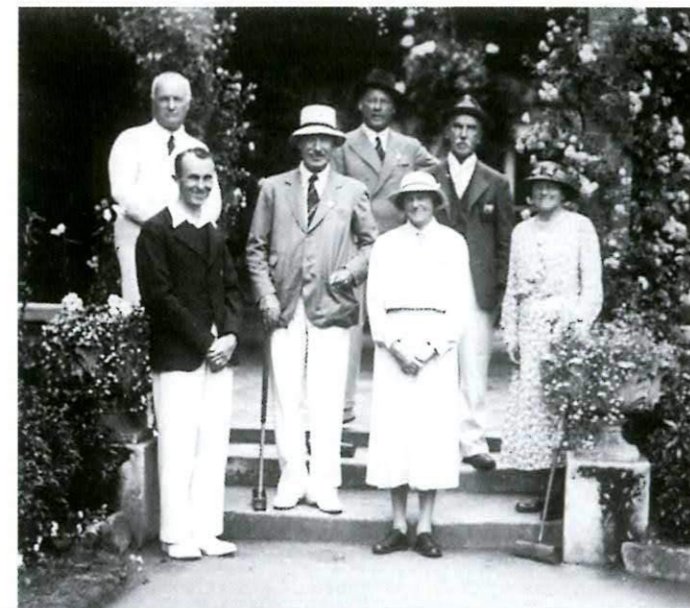
Edward Mills Hunt was born in Drysdale, Victoria in 1908, but soon after, moved to Sandringham in metropolitan Melbourne where his father, a baker, opened Hunt's Bakery on the present site of the Sandringham library in Waltham Street. Eddie, as he was known in the croquet world, could remember being in his pusher and pausing with his mother, to gaze through the fence at ladies in long frocks and big hats, playing croquet on the green sward. Many years later, Eddie remembered saying to mother, "I want to see the ladies playing with the coloured balls!"

Later Mrs Hunt joined the croquet club and eventually became their President. When Eddie was 19, he decided that he would like to play too. The minimum joining age was 21, but because of his mother's position, he was accepted as a member and showed early aptitude for the game.

At the age of 21, he was playing croquet in England and won the prestigious South of England Croquet Championship. The trophy he won he later donated as the perpetual trophy awarded to the winner of the Division 1 championship at Sandringham.

In 1932-3, at the age of 23, he and his partner won the Victorian State Doubles Championship. Then in 1935, the first big international croquet tournament was held, in Australia, and Eddie was selected to represent his country. In those days, Victoria was the centre of croquet down under and, not surprisingly, all of the team members were Victorians. The matches were played at the courts in Warleigh Grove, North Brighton. Australia won 4, England 3 and New Zealand 0. Sadly no photos of the 1935 team can be found. Even more sadly, that was the last time that the Australians were to win that triangular tournament, the MacRobertson Shield, though, except for the war years, it has been competed for every four years since.

Reflecting on those early days in a recent interview, Eddie said, "Of-course, you must remember that the



Participants from the England vs Australian test in 1937.
J A McMordie (E), Eddie Hunt, Lieut Col. W B Du Pre (E Capt), C F Coleman (E),
Miss A B Morrison (A), J C Windsor (A) and Miss DD Steel (E)

series was usually won by the home team in those days because players had to travel by ship, which was very slow, and competing countries could not always send their best players."

In 1937, Eddie was again selected to represent Australia in the MacRoberston Shield, this time in England. There were aspects of this tournament that rankled with Eddie for the rest of his life. The Australian croquet authorities had accepted a last-minute suggestion by the English authorities to set the hoops (tightly) at 3 11/16". The Australians were not used to such tight hoops. "In that very dry year, the courts were brown and very very fast. Well, we didn't stand a chance." The result: England 5, Australia 0.

After the 1937 MacRob Shield in England, the Australian team travelled to Ireland to play against the Irish team, whom they defeated 4 to 2. This match must have impressed Eddie greatly, because he spoke of it often. Asked if he remembered the names of the Irish players, Eddie did, but the name that made his eyes shine was that of the legendary Duff Matthews.

The members of the first Australian croquet team to play against England were made honorary members of the English CA and were posted compli-

mentary copies of all CA publications for life. When Eddie brought the latest edition of the *Croquet Gazette* to the club recently, he commented with a wry grin, "They made me a life member in 1937. Little did they realise I would live so long." [It's worth noting that, at 66 years, Eddie was by far the longest serving Associate the CA has ever had. Ed]

In 1939, Eddie won the State Singles Championship, a feat he repeated in season 1952-3. In 1956, he won the Australian Gold Medal and captained the Victorian State Team. Even when he was in his 80's, Eddie continued to play in the top level class, and in his last season, 1996-7, he played in the Sandringham team that won the Division 1 pennant. He was then aged eighty-eight.

In 1980, a disastrous foreshore fire destroyed the Sandringham Croquet Club club-house and the records and honourboards were lost. As a tribute to Eddie's outstanding career the new building was named the Eddie Hunt Pavilion.

In the *ACA Gazette*, Dec 1997, it was reported that Eddie Hunt would be ninety in 1998. Victorian croquet players felt that a special dinner should be held to honour him. "Oh, I don't want all that," Eddie said. When asked

about his long and successful life in croquet, he said; "You know, it doesn't matter what the activity, to be really good you have to be born with a special something. Without that, it doesn't matter how much you practice you'll never make it to the top. And if you are blessed with it..." He shrugged and gave his shy smile. Clearly he was one of the blessed.

Ken Hopkins

Reg Forth

Many croquet players, particularly in the North, will be saddened to hear that Reg Forth passed away on 25th April, alert but frail well into his 97th year.

Reg was Chairman of the old Norton Hall croquet club for many years (where players including Ralph Bucknell, Eric Knowles, Colin Snowdon and John Davis honed their skills). On one occasion David Appleton brought four students down from Tyneside, only to realise that Reg was older than the team's combined ages!

Reg introduced Norton players to his Edinburgh friends, both at Lauriston Castle and often in the Edinburgh summer tournament (with

Peter Thompson, Bill Masterton and Charles Waterfield). Peter remembers him at Carol and Jimmy Rowe's during the tournament, helping out with the catering at the traditional Thursday night party; the following morning standing in the rain at Fettes, with a gale blowing and large drops of rain collecting on the end of his nose, determined to hit something! His other favourite 'away club' was undoubtedly Hunstanton.

Reg gave enthusiastic support to establishing a club (briefly) at Teesside Airport, then in 1988 at Ormesby Hall, and which moved after 10 years to become Middlesbrough CC; furthermore he was the founding Chairman of Croquet North when that Federation was formed in 1992. John Davis recalls that Reg played, as a mere stripling of 80, for the winning Teesside team in the Secretary's Shield against Ipswich.

In the course of his long ICI career he spotted the talents of one John Harvey-Jones, giving him his first 'real' job! Many of us got to know Reggie (and to respect his canny croquet skills) well into his retirement - in which good company, excellent wine (about which he was an expert), three home-grown apples a day and an

abiding love of the game kept him going for so many years.

Charles Waterfield

Joyce Taylor

A stalwart of Southport & Birkdale Croquet Club, Joyce Taylor who has died aged 87 years, was a sports-woman all her life. Joyce, as a law student, represented Liverpool University at Tennis and Hockey, and subsequently at County Level. In 1980 she re-kindled her memories of garden croquet played at the age of 6, and joined the Southport Club, becoming a canny and successful player.

On the occasion of the Club's Centenary celebrations in 1994, Joyce researched and then implemented demonstrations of the many hoop and peg settings from the past.

Joyce's winter months were never wasted. She travelled the globe each spring, coming back with tales of mishaps and adventures.

A tireless worker for charity and voluntary causes, Joyce was involved in the Duke of Edinburgh awards scheme, the WRVS, the Civil Defence, and St. John's Ambulance. A fabulous life - we shall miss her.

Paul Stoker

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The originators of carbon fibre shafted mallets now offer a comprehensive range: from the 'Basic' (£82.50), the well established T-series (£130), and the 2000 mallet at £150 (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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Lincoln Unit Trust Managers Inter County Championship

Sue Mackay reports from the 2003 event at Southwick

Gloucestershire won the Lincoln Unit Trust Managers Inter County Championship on a sunny Whitsun weekend with 8 match wins. Their team of Louise Bradforth, Dave Foulser, Don Gaunt, Dave Kibble, Paul Smith and Brian Wainman had to beat Avon in the final game to be sure of victory, so interest was maintained right up till the end. Avon needed to win by 3-0 to take the championship on games won, so when Gloucestershire's Dave Kibble pegged out it was certain that the trophy would be going to Cheltenham.

In a very close game on the next lawn Marcus Evans (Avon) pegged out one ball as time was called to level the scores. With his last turn Paul Smith of Gloucestershire hit in from corner 2 to corner 1, took off behind a ball two yards off the east boundary, rushed towards rover, made a very angled rover, hit the 6 yard return roquet and took off to the peg. Appropriately enough Paul's partner in this crucial +1T victory was Don Gaunt, author of the book *Plus One on Time*. The win ensured Gloucestershire outright victory on matches won. Nottinghamshire were looking very strong until they lost to Cheshire on the last day, but they finished in second spot with 7 match wins.

The second division championship also had what amounted to a final, with Sussex and Lancashire, both on 8 wins, drawn against each other in the last round. The Sussex team of Bill Arliss, Rutger Beijderwellen, Paul Castell, Jack Davies, Barry James, Colin Prichard, Ian Vincent and Roger Wood beat Lancashire 2-1 to ensure outright victory with 9 match wins, losing only to Dorset. The Dorset team were also promoted to the first division next season along with Sussex and Lancashire. Pete Trimmer of Dorset achieved triple peels in four successive matches.

Interest in the relegation battle was also maintained right up to the last match. Suffolk had not had an easy time of things and were clearly in last place, their single match win being at the expense of Middlesex.



Northumberland were the champions in 2001 and the runners-up in 2002, but were unable to find their form until the last day, when they suddenly pulled off two 3-0 victories against Essex and Middlesex. Sadly this was not enough, and with only four match wins in total they were relegated to the second division along with Suffolk and Glamorgan.

Glamorgan were probably everyone's favourites for relegation at the start of the tournament, but they confounded the form book by winning their first two matches. The first match on Lawns 1,2 and 3 was a nail biting affair. David Goacher and Marcus Evans (Avon) had got lost on their way to the tournament and arrived at 10am to find their balls in two of the games long since deemed on to the lawns. Due to the late start the games were the last to finish, and two of them went to a golden hoop. Chris Williams of Glamorgan needed to peel 2-back and go to the peg to go one ahead. He ran rover and rushed a ball to four feet in front of 2-back, where he made a long straight peel but left himself a six yard roquet, which he missed. With the scores level David Goacher then missed a 4 yard roquet, and Chris pegged out to win +1T. On the adjacent lawn James Mackay (Glamorgan) had pegged out Alex Leggate (Avon), but Roger Jenkins of Avon kept hitting

in and was fast catching up with Garry McElwain. As time was about to be called James pegged himself out to level the scores, and a cat and mouse game ensued as Roger and Garry both attempted to approach 4 back from opposite sides of the hoop. Garry eventually hit and ran the hoop with barely time to snatch a bite before the next match was due to start. On the Sunday afternoon Glamorgan triumphed over Middlesex for about half a second: John Evans ran the golden hoop in the deciding game, only to see it roll back into the jaws.

The Counties of course would not be the Counties without its fair share of incidents and its mixture of brilliant and truly awful play. Spectators at Compton on the first day were treated to the sight of Reg Bamford doing a triple peel for Middlesex whilst double banked with Robert Fulford doing a quadruple peel for Essex. David Tutt of Hertfordshire, however, was completely unfazed by being up against the World No.1 and the World No.2 and pulled off wins against both of them. Hertfordshire, promoted last season after several years of receiving the wooden spoon, finished in a very respectable 6th place in the top division.

On the Monday evening Andrew Cowing of Middlesex went round to 3-back against Gloucestershire and then

ostensibly went to the toilet. In fact he had to rush off to catch a plane back to Switzerland, leaving his partner Phil Cordingley to attempt the quadruple peel. Gloucestershire looked on bemused as Phil persisted with the quad attempt even when it was clearly no longer on, but it was only when he eventually finished his turn and laid up the rush for himself rather than his partner that Gloucestershire realised they only had one opponent. Berkshire and Devon, both languishing at the foot of the second division, met each other in the last match on Lawns 10 and 11 at Southwick. At one point all the clips in both games were either on hoop 3 or 4-back, and there seemed to be a constant stream of referees going to that hoop. It transpired that two balls from different games were both stuck in critical positions in the hoop. Berkshire's opponents were sometimes amused to find that they were playing against a partnership of Martin Burger and Joe King - perhaps next year they should get BurgerKing to sponsor them!

Stephen Mulliner played for Surrey on the Sunday for the first time in many years and lost all three of his games, and 15 year old Jack Wicks from Colchester was playing for Essex. Jack recently gained his bronze, silver and gold merit award badges all in the space of four weeks. Lancashire's David Nicholson has overcome the problem of there being three David Nicholsons in the CA by paying £5 to the CA to register the pseudonym Dave Nick.

Unsurprisingly in a competition solely devoted to doubles play there were the usual complaints of slow play and couples taking far too long to decide on their shot. There could be no complaints at Compton on Bank Holiday Monday. All matches in the Northumberland vs Nottinghamshire game were completed in under two hours and Lawn 5 was completely clear by 11am. Offers of a quick game of one ball were even heard. For the first time at the Counties a five minute warm-up was allowed, which was ended at Southwick by the sounding

of a klaxon and at Compton by the chiming of the town hall clock. This had the advantage that it got virtually all the players out onto the lawns by 9.30 on the first day, something which is normally very difficult to do.

Thanks are due once again to both Southwick and Compton for the superb catering, and to all the hoop setters and behind the scenes workers who helped to make this such a memorable event. Thanks also to Chris Williams for managing the event and to Ian Lines for managing the first two days at Compton. The fact that Chris was the manager and hence able to park in the club car park should have given most people a clue as to the owner of the red Mini Cooper, registration CR03UET!



The final league tables are as follows:

	Matches Won	Games Won
Division 1		
Gloucestershire	8	21
Nottinghamshire	7	17
Avon	6	18
Surrey	6	18
Essex	5	15
Hertfordshire	5	15
Cheshire	5	15
Middlesex	5	14
Northumberland	4	15
Glamorgan	3	11
Suffolk	1	6
Division 2		
Sussex	9	21
Lancashire	8	21
Dorset	7	22
Bedfordshire	6	21
Kent	6	18
Warwickshire	6	17
Yorkshire	4	12
CA Select	3	8
Devon	2	9
Berkshire	2	8
Channel Islands	2	8

Tournament Round-up

Budleigh Salterton May Week Report by Hamish Hall

Congratulations to Budleigh. The immense work and expense on improving the courts is showing signs of paying off. Whilst the abnormal rain had caused the new irrigation system to become redundant, there are encouraging signs that five of the courts are materially improved, with the prospect of courts 5 and 10 being playable later in the season.

Budleigh had at last responded to the request that the programme should include a level event for the B class players, and without doubt, this class produced the most closely fought contest of the week, appropriately brought to a climax in the final between Rodney Parkin and Margaret Pena. In his time turn, Rodney well behind, hit the lift, made considerable progress before picking up the 4th ball at 4 back, peeled rover, but was only able to peg out one ball. Margaret, on penultimate, hit in, but also only managed to peg out one ball. Poor Rodney failed to recognise that he had a lift, and lost -1.

A reasonably strong A class saw Cliff Jones, (who managed his inaugural May tournament with exemplary colour coded charts, and customary good humour) overcome David Harrison-Wood -6 +26TP +5. Five TPs were completed in the week, with both Martin Granger Brown and James Tuttiett completing the peel, but failing the peg out.

Much to the delight of the locals, Bunny Porter won the Pat Turner Cup with 6 wins out of 7, and David Clarke from Sidmouth won the other class event by a similar margin.

The doubles was won by Margaret Piper and James Tuttiett, and being the rogue he is, Cliff awarded the Golden Bisque to Jack Thompson, who has taken on the job of Ground Secretary (and very much involved in all the improvements) in recognition of no wins!!

Rain, wind and meagre sun had not dampened an enjoyable week.

English Open Golf Croquet Championships

In the English Open Golf Croquet Championships played at Southwick, June 13-15, Reg Bamford retained his title by defeating Stephen Mulliner in the final by 7-5, 7-3.

The singles event started as three block of three with the first three in each block going into a final knockout. The block results were in order of placing:

Block 1, Reg Bamford, Bill Arliss, Ivor Brand

Block 2, Evan Newell, Stephen Mulliner, David Hopkins

Block 3, Derek Old, Sam Curry, Chris Sheen

The recent summer weather produced dry ground which got quicker as the tournament progressed and produced very firm and unforgiving hoops. As a result some of the quarter finals developed into long 'shootouts' which lasted over three hours for the best of three but provided some very interesting viewing for the spectators.

The first day was taken up by the doubles event which was run as a five round Swiss for the ten pairs of play-



The status of Ramsgate's International Golf Croquet Championship grows annually. Now an invitation event, this year's final saw the World's top two players in the final. Reg Bamford (No 2), in play, emerged victorious in testing conditions as Egypt's Khaled Younis looked on.

ers. The Sheen brothers, Chris and Roddy repeated their success of last year and finished with five wins from five games.

The consolation singles event for the Hobbs Mallets Champagne was won by David Dray from Ramsgate, the youngest competitor in the competition.

Coupe des Lacs

(Belgium vs Italy vs Switzerland)

Report by Jonathan Lamb

It was hot. Very hot. Out in the Orchard, under the mulberry tree with their backs to the cornfield, a few players would sit and wait for the occasional breeze like extras in a Visconti film, but over in the long grass next to the farmhouse the only respite was under a morello cherry tree, laden with fruit, up into which John Swabey would clamber occasionally to shake down a purple shower.

The lawns were flat. Very flat. Pale green Oregon grass on sand, set in a slight hollow, like a pool of grass against the darker green of the trees; two lawns side by side, not quite as fast as they looked, but true.

The hoops were tight. Very tight. Perhaps this was the reason there were so few successful peeling breaks: Paolo de Petra came nearest to a triple, but broke down after rover. Peter Payne tried a quad in the Sunday game against Jonathan Lamb, who was execrable. Man of the match was Charles-Eric Vilain XIII, winning every game, including a three-ball finish under immense pressure in the doubles game against Italy. Swiss newcomer Danny Davids did well to take a game off Andrea Pravettoni.

The dinner was good. Very good. A seafood platter, followed by one pasta dish, then another, then a mix of grilled fish and prawns with endless carafes of cold white wine, then sorbet, then coffee and limoncello. There was no singing. For those sitting near Lamb and Weiner this also was good. Very good.

The outcome was eight wins each for Belgium and Italy, and two for

Switzerland: Italy winning on points, but a good result for Belgium all the same, as their total handicaps were much higher. Those of the Swiss were higher still.

Cheltenham Spring Bank Holiday Weekend, 24-26 May 2003

Report by Deborah Latham

If you are suffering from work-related stress, information anxiety syndrome, or any of the other conditions inflicted on us by the current pace of life, which hurtles us through the days faster than does the hamster on its wheel, which, according to certain sources, is reputedly the real source of power behind the star ship Enterprises's warp engines... may I recommend to you playing in this tournament? Reason - because it is managed by Martin Kolbuszewski. When, exuding an almost dazzling aura of calmness, he says - as he did on the Saturday morning - "I'll sort it all out", you are sublimely confident that not only will he do so, but you are going to achieve unprecedented heights of relaxation and enjoyment of the ambience while he does.

Besides that, this being Cheltenham, you could look forward to Eileen Magee's by now legendary lunches every day - which, philosophers will argue, are in themselves sufficient reason for being...

Martin exercised a positively tantalizing degree of managerial reticence on the first day; even by the end of the first morning, nobody was completely sure what the format of the tournament was. (Since it is well known that croquet players can't read, Martin didn't give us anything which might have initiated even the most abortive attempt to do so!) But that's the wonderful thing with Martin - you can be curious, but you don't really mind, because you are confident that it's going to be great, no matter what it is. What it actually turned out to be was a knockout format with a Hands Ladder; you could be in both at the same time, because if, say, you succeeded in winning your first two

knockout games, then elected to play a third or even a fourth that day, the subsequent games were in the Hands Ladder, so you got as much play as you wanted without it affecting the results of the main event.

At the quarter-final stage the remaining hopefuls had still included Vic Forrington, Laurence Latham, Terry Wood and Jean Powell, but in the semi-finals it was Jonathan Wood who won against Nick Saxton, while John Seddon did likewise against Deborah Latham, to meet in the final. Unfortunately for John, as it transpired, Jonathan is still at that stage of his croquet career which sadly some of us never experience - the stage where it never even occurs to him that he's going to miss!

Since Jonathan proved to be somewhat acquisitive - not only did he win the knockout, but also shared with

Mike Hoggett the title of 'player who has played the most games' (12 apiece), and got a handicap reduction, and technically won the Hands Ladder as well! - it was deemed to be a fairer division of the spoils if the runner-up in the latter event was awarded the prize for that, and the beneficiary was John Morgan. John, of course, ranks equal with Eileen in contributing to the tournament experience at Cheltenham, since he oversees the running of the bar! And despite being overheard to mutter earlier in the tournament something to the effect that "it's the short, easy shots that get you, every time!" - today's great discovery, folks?! - Ray Meads acquired his Silver Award.

Stress? Anxiety? At one of Martin's tournaments, we're hard put to recall the definitions of the words...

British Men's & Women's Championships

Pete Trimmer (below) from East Dorset (Parkstone) CC proved the surprise winner of this year's Men's Championship at Cheltenham.



Trimmer defeated Dave Kibble, and seeds Chris Clarke and Stephen

Mulliner in each of his first three rounds before meeting Robert Fulford in the final.

Records show that the pair have played 15 times before, and that all 15 games had gone to Fulford. However, in the first of this best-of-five final, Fulford took the first break to 4-back, Trimmer hit and followed, Fulford missed, and Trimmer finished with a triple.

Game 2 saw Fulford start with a six-hoop break and a standard lay-up for a sextuple (Trimmer crosswired at 1, with a 40-yard shot at Fulford's balls). However, the orientation of the balls left Fulford having to place Trimmer's black on the playing side of Hoop 1. To deter Pete's shot at the hoop, Robert left the ball five yards clear and at a 35 degree angle. Pete took the hoop on anyway, ran it gently, hit blue and went to 4-back. For good measure, he peeled red through a couple of hoops to cut down its manoeuvrability on a possible sextuple attempt. The leave was poor, but Fulford missed the shortish shot, and Trimmer finished with a second triple.

The third and deciding game finished with another triple, this time without Fulford taking croquet, giving Trimmer the title.

Pete had won the South of England Championship in 1997, but this was by far his best performance.

The Women's Championship followed a much more traditional course, with long-time winner Gail Curry emerging from retirement to reclaim the trophy, against a slightly disappointing entry of just six competitors.

David Openshaw and Kathleen Priestley retained the Mixed Doubles beating David Goacher and Rosemary Gugan, and Dave Mundy won the Du Pre Cup for the consolation event.

The Livery Company enters the fray

By Michael Hague

Twenty four members of the Founders' Company came to Southwick in May for a two day course sponsored by the South East Croquet Federation to learn some basic strokes, play some Golf Croquet and a little Association. The Sussex County Croquet Club gave its usual warm welcome to the visitors and Bryan Teague just for a change from being lead coach, groundsman and general odd-jobs man, donned his chef's hat and co-ordinated some excellent nourishment, an essential feature of any Livery Company activity. Don Mears, Daphne Gaitley and Gordon Drake formed the coaching team.

The course saw the Hawkins tube in action as a training aid [see Gazette 279, May 2002]. The tubes are taken from rolls of Christmas wrapping paper. By swinging along the boundary line and keeping it in view during the stroke, it forces the student to swing from the shoulder. Repeated at the start of each training session, muscle memory is quickly established. The tubes fit neatly into the mallet sleeve to give added protection to the shaft when travelling and can be used for a couple of minutes to re-activate muscle memory at the start of a day's competitive croquet. The idea behind the Hawkins tube is not too dissimilar from Reg Bamford's swing machine but is cheaper and easier to carry around!



Michael Hague (left) instructs students at Southwick how to achieve a consistent swing, by use of a cardboard tube.

Andrew Gillett, the Clerk of the Founder's Company, no doubt thinking that that his team would now have a head start, issued a challenge to other Livery Companies and a tournament was fixed at Surbiton in June between his Company, the Haberdashers' and the Apothecaries'. Each team consisted of two pairs playing two doubles games of Golf Croquet in the morning and Association after luncheon. Alec Thomas of Surbiton and Andrew put together an outstanding one and a half hour banquet and needless to say, the champagne and wine flowed. Surprisingly the afternoon matches started almost on time and the standard of play did not deteriorate noticeably from that in the morning. The winner of the prizes for Golf, Association and the overall Team Championship went to the Apothecaries', all of whom had started their croquet in the early 70's at the Saint Thomas's Hospital sports ground at Cobham where coincidentally the SECF is assisting this season a group of medical students to reform the long defunct Croquet Section. However the main reason for the superiority of the Apothecaries' was more probably due to the fact that their team was given some intensive coaching just prior to the tournament on the astro-turf practice court of the neighbour of Dr Jeremy Cornish, by one Steve Mulliner.

Both the Southwick course and the Surbiton competition went very well and several participants of both events who came from all over the country, asked for information with a view to joining a club. The new CA pamphlet "A guide to joining a croquet club" proved to be a very useful handout. It is hoped to repeat the two day course next year and the Inter Livery Company Challenge Cup now being manufactured, will be opened up to probably six Companies. The SECF looks forward to providing assistance to the Livery Companies next season and hopes that many of their members will be inspired to take up the sport more fully.

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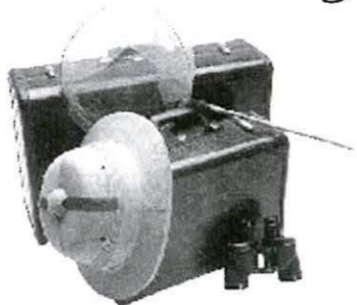
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News & Information

Golf Croquet World Championships 2004

The Croquet Association have been asked by the WCF to host the 2004 championship and we will shortly be submitting our proposals to the WCF for approval. Our proposals are to run the championship in conjunction with our Golf Croquet Opens at Southwick on 20-27 June 2004.

In view of the number of international players involved in the championship, the numbers of home-based players who can be accepted for the event will be limited and the primary choice will be made from the Golf Croquet rankings.

To qualify for the rankings that will be used for the selection for the championships, a player will have to have played at least 10 games in 2003.

Bill Arliss
Chairman, Golf Croquet Selectors

Merit Awards

With immediate effect, players wishing to claim a Gold, Silver or Bronze Merit Award have a simpler process to follow. No SAE is necessary, as all that is now required is the completed Application Card, with the addition of the full name and address of the claimant on the reverse.

In response, the appropriate badge, and an A5 certificate on light card, will be sent to the address provided.

This is to ensure that the certificate arrives in reasonable condition, and that return envelopes used are sturdy enough to take the certificate and the

badge. (Any SAEs sent will be returned unused with the badge.)

There is no change to the requirements for qualification, open to Associates who win a recognised competitive singles game, completing one of these three feats for the first time:

BRONZE AWARD - ten hoops in one break, using bisques as needed.

SILVER AWARD - twelve hoop points, including peels if appropriate, in one break, without using bisques either to set up, continue or to complete any leave after the break.

GOLD AWARD - triple peel.

Full details are on page 15 of the 2003 Fixtures Calendar.

Canterbury Croquet Club

At the Chartham Hatch Croquet Club's annual meeting, at Polo Farm, Canterbury, on May 8, members unanimously agreed that the club should be renamed the Canterbury Croquet Club.

The club was founded by the late Maurice Copus OBE in 1990 and games were played in his garden at Hatch House, Chartham Hatch, until 1995 when the club moved to its present headquarters at Polo Farm, headquarters of Canterbury Hockey Club, one of England's premier hockey clubs, as well as cricket and tennis clubs.

Since golf croquet was introduced membership has grown steadily and now stands at 35.

The club has again entered the South East Croquet Federation's B and U association leagues and its golf croquet league.

On the weekend of June 7-8, six members of the Dublin croquet club

Herbert Park were due to play in an association and golf tournament against club members at Polo Farm. Last year the Chartham Hatch side defeated the Irish side for the first time and it was on their Dublin courts. This was partly due to the fact that the Hatch cut down on drinking stout...

Although these matches are deemed friendlies national pride is at stake and no quarter is given.

Cassiobury Croquet Club Watford

With some reservations Cassiobury club with two courts ventured the start of the season with a 6 week 2 hour introductory course into golf croquet. This was advertised in a free fortnightly magazine, response was overwhelming and a waiting list compiled.

A reporter from the local paper came to the first lesson and wrote a very good article but we had to refrain from issuing a telephone number as we could not cope properly with any more recruits.

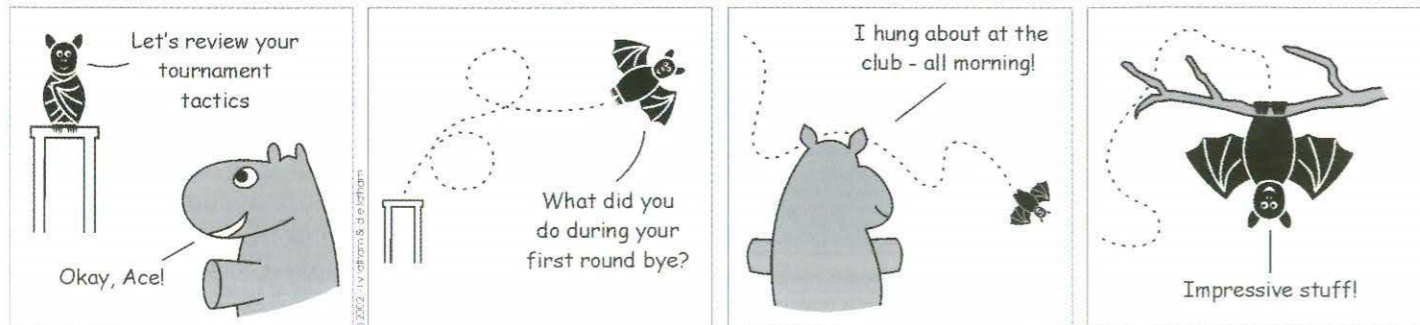
Of the 18 on the course 17 have joined the club increasing the membership by 56%. Eight have formed a golf croquet section and the rest would like to also proceed with Association. One reoccurring comment throughout the course was the friendliness of everyone and that they felt welcomed to the club. We realise that it is important to keep this good rapport so as the club may prosper.

Anyone wishing to know details of the course content please email:

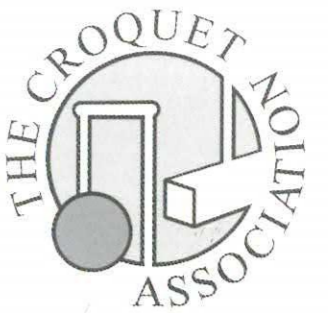
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HOPOPOTAMUS

by Victor



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Hard leather case, 9.25 x 38 x 2.5"	£69.00
Hard leather case, 11 x 39 x 2.5"	£72.00
Blue cover with Croquet logo	£19.00
Padded blue cover with croquet logo	£23.00
Padded blue cover for longer mallet head lengths	£27.00

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Breathable wet weather jacket	£33.00
Breathable jacket and trousers	£46.00
Fleece reversible windcheater jacket	£35.00
Fleece reversible gilet	£27.00
Wet weather 'bomber' jacket	£33.00
Roll-up sports windcheater	£28.00
Pullover	£18.50
Ladies cardigan	£28.00

Odds and Ends

Timer	£8.00
Croquet Girl cards - pack of 8, blank inside	£4.50
Croquet posters - b&w prints, 4 designs available	£6.00ea
Ball markers, pack of 10 assorted plastic markers	£1.00
Ball marker plastic holder, with 4 markers	£1.00

For more information

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Books

A wide variety of croquet publications are available, including:

The Laws of Association Croquet	£4.00
The Laws of Golf Croquet	£2.00
A Guide to Golf Croquet	£5.00
Know the game	£5.00
Croquet - The Skills of the Game by Bill Lamb	£10.00
Croquet by John Solomon	£9.00
Plus One on Time by Don Gaunt	£10.00
Expert Croquet Tactics by Keith Wylie	£14.00
Croquet Management by Gaunt & Wheeler	£11.50
Croquet Coaching Manual	£11.50
The Principles of Handicapping by Bill Lamb	£2.50
Challenge & Gilbey book by Alan Oldham	£3.00
Lawn Management by John Beech	£2.00
Croquet: Technique by John Riches	£7.00
Croquet: Error Correction by John Riches	£7.00
Croquet: Next Break Strategy by John Riches	£9.00
Croquet: The Mental Approach by John Riches	£9.00
Croquet: Lessons in Tactics by John Riches	£9.00
Croquet: Finer Points by John Riches	£10.50

Videos

Imported from Australia, these videos were made by Kevin Brereton in the 1990s

Single ball strokes 30min	£11.00
Croquet strokes 30min	£11.00
Tactics parts 1 & 2 60min	£13.00
Tactics part 3 - Peeling 90min	£15.00
Using Bisques 30min	£11.00
Sports Sciences & Croquet 30min	£11.00

All book and video prices include P&P to UK addresses

Complete croquet sets

How about getting a set for the back garden? We sell a wide range of sets at rock bottom prices, and our new voucher scheme entitles members to **10% discount** on their first set!

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This is an ideal time to check over your club equipment, and replace anything necessary. As always, we sell all the equipment your club is likely to need, including:
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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!

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