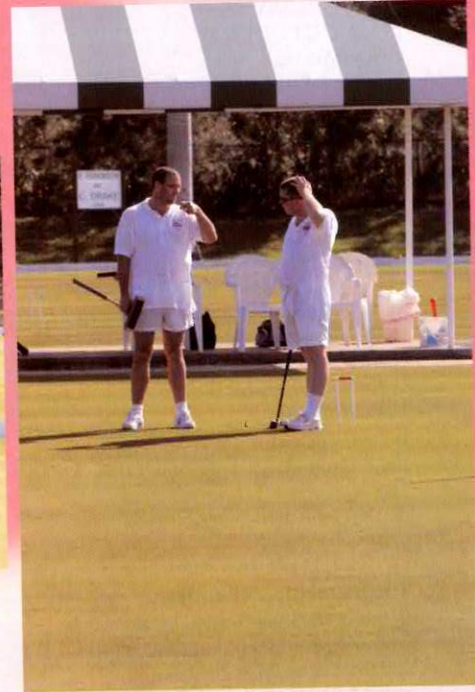


THE CROQUET GAZETTE

ISSUE 289 - FEBRUARY 2004



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Publication Details

The Croquet Gazette is published six times per year, in February, April, June, August, October and December.

Publication Schedule

Copy should reach the Editor BEFORE the 15th of the month before publication is due, unless otherwise informed.

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.

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Tournament Results and Reports

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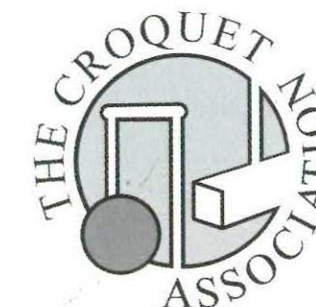
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THE CROQUET GAZETTE

ISSUE 289 - FEBRUARY 2004

Price £3.00



Next Issue Published 21st April 2004

Copy Deadline 15th March 2004

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Front cover photographs:

The winning GB Team in the 2003 MacRobertson Test Series. Clockwise from left - Matt Burrow, Stephen Mulliner, Mark Avery & David Maugham, Chris Clarke & Robert Fulford. All images courtesy of Johnny Mitchell, except Stephen Mulliner by Bob Kroeger.

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

Chairman's Column

Firstly, congratulations to our MacRobertson Shield team for retaining the trophy, winning all their three test matches. From a wider perspective, it was encouraging to see a resurgence in Australian fortunes and the first ever test match win by the USA. It was also, of course, the first time the USCA staged the event and from all accounts they did an excellent job. New Zealand had, for them, a disappointing start, but still took us to the wire in the final test.

For many of you this will be old news, thanks to Jeff Soo's excellent web site and detailed reports provided by our team manager, Phil Cordingley. Both were much appreciated by those who had to spectate from this side of the pond.

Understandably, the newspapers devoted rather more space to the rugby, though the MacRob did get a mention in the Sunday Times. In fact, we had more and better publicity last year than for some time, thanks not

only to Lord MacLaurin's fear that cricket may become "like croquet - a summer sport that was", but also to the largely unsung work put in by Pat Francis, our publicity officer until she retired from the post at the end of last year. I hope we will build on the foundations she has laid in years to come.

Tournament members should receive the 2004 fixtures calendar about the same time as you get this edition of the Gazette (and if not you can search the calendar on the CA web site, www.croquet.org.uk), thanks to the hard work of our Secretary, Nigel Graves, who collates the information provided by the various clubs who hold tournaments. As you look ahead to the summer, I encourage you to think about playing somewhere new this year, either as your first tournament, your first one away from your own club, or for regulars on the tournament circuit, somewhere you've never visited before. You might also like to consider one of the coaching courses.

Going away is a good way of meeting new people, seeing new places and gaining experience of playing in different company and under different conditions. In addition, you may well pick up, or pass on, some ideas about organising a club or tournament that would benefit your fellow members back home. If nothing else, you will have something to talk about when you next play your regular sparring partner!

In deciding where to go, it may be that you have friends or relatives you could stay with, some other reason for visiting a particular area, or don't wish to travel too far. If not, and you are looking for suggestions, try asking more experienced players for their advice. If you want to check whether a particular event would be suitable for you, or to get more information about it, contact the tournament secretary, who may also be able to advise about accommodation if needed.

Ian Vincent

Editorial

If you're sharp-eyed and alert, as every croquet player should be, you'll notice a difference in this month's Gazette. January's been a difficult month for me personally; and with the budget for the magazine being what it is, it's well nigh impossible to provide additional staff to cover for absence when problems occur. So the big difference is that your January Gazette has been relabelled as a February copy.

I don't expect the production schedule will slide quite so badly as this again, but lateness in one month cannot help but impact on the deadline for the next. The plan is to carry on with the six issues a year you're used to, but to shift production by a month for each issue throughout the year.

Hopefully, this shouldn't be such a big deal for most readers. Previously, you received your copies (depending on the efficiency of the distribution

system) in odd-numbered months (January, March, May, July, September and November). Now the Gazette will be published in February, April, June, August, October and December. That gives us four editions during the season and two during the winter (as opposed to three winter issues as we've previously had).

April should arrive just as we start playing, and October just as we're all hanging up our mallets. What's more, it saves the editor the thankless task of working through December, when contributors and distributors are preoccupied with Christmas.

Finally, and a point which ought to be made, the first ever edition of the Croquet Gazette was published in April 1904. The change gets me in phase for what I hope will be a suitable 100th birthday edition in Number 290.

Award yourself an extra point if you noticed the other difference

in this month's mag. There are an extra eight pages in the middle. The pull-out tournament results section produced last year proved very popular with many readers. I've extended it, and given you, amongst other things, full results of the MacRobertson Shield Test Series.

I've moaned before about the lag between news and reporting in the Gazette. The GB victory in Florida is now a full three months in the past, but this is my first opportunity to give it full justice in print. I held back from previews in the last couple of editions, wanting to devote a sizeable chunk of this issue to the event. Sorry for the lateness, but I hope you enjoy reading about our team's triumph, and will join with me in congratulating them on their achievement.

James

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.”

Now that I'm coming up to retirement, I'm happy that I've got extra money set aside. After all, you never know when you might need it.

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Letters

Crikey!

I read with interest the article on Chew Magna and the story of Edwardian Croquet in the September edition of the Gazette.

You might like to know that Croquet is not totally dead there. I recently went into the village post office in Chew Magna, and espied the enclosed greetings card (below). I do not know the artist, Rebecca Lardner, but she obviously has either played or watched Croquet, as the detailing in her card is correct. I would, however, not like to state that the Lady Players shown are typical, nor in fact have I ever met any even remotely similar.

John Shipton
Winchester

I managed to track down Rebecca Lardner, and asked about her croquet experiences.



Apparently - and this came as a surprise to me - she's never touched a mallet in her life. But John is right to guess that she has watched the game being played. She confesses to having seen croquet at her local club at Parkstone, though denies that these ladies are based on real individuals. The one on the left certainly looks familiar to me.

Colour prints of the image (entitled 'Crikey!') are available direct from the artist. Readers wishing to get further details should contact her direct: Rebecca Lardner, 51 High Street, Fordington, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 1LB. -Ed

Sextuple awards

I was delighted to read about the ICA's decision to create a Platinum Merit award for sextuple peels [see article on Page 17 of this issue]. I shall be reminding all my opponents of their opportunity to achieve this award

before we start play. May I also suggest that the CA creates an award for fourth turn finishes and octuple peels.

Chris Clarke
Ely

The CA is to be commended for their recognition of the excellence of the sextuple peel, as they announce the introduction of the 'platinum' award for the completion of this feat. Alas, I am slightly dismayed at the fact that it can only be awarded for the completion of the mark of excellence from the introduction date - what a bummer for badge collectors like myself. Does this mean I have to do the damned thing all over again just to get my badge?

Surely completing a sextuple peel on the opponent (Lionel Tibble on lawn three at Budleigh) in a CA recognised event is enough - why no retrospective award? Give a girl a break!!!!

OK, so Reg and Robert might rasp them out in high style without so much as a bye your leave - but mere mortals such as me only peak once in a lifetime. Must I enter my ever-nearing dotage without a platinum badge, wondering if I will ever reach such a peak of perfection as long as I live?

Please CA I implore you - complete my badge collection before I get too old to remember what croquet is, let alone a sextuple!

Yours in grief for lack of a badge.

Gail Curry
Middlesbrough

An impressive spread

This table layout (facing page) was copied from an 1870's recipe book, and I thought it was most interesting.

Anyone coming to Tunbridge Wells Croquet Club might well get Stone Cream for tea! I'm afraid Pigeon Pie is off!

Miriam Reader
Tunbridge Wells

Croquet Tea for Twenty Persons.

	Tea.	A whole Salmon (cold).	Coffee.	
	Pigeon Pie.	Bread.	Veal Patties.	
Jelly (clear).		Cake.	Biscuits.	
Chantilly Basket.	Toast.	Fruit.	Butter.	Fruit.
	Butter.	Flowers.		Apple Charlotte.
	Butter.	Fruit.	Butter.	Stone Cream.
Blancmange.	Toast.	Bread.	Toast.	Custard, with Cream.
	Cold Chickens.	Lemon Cake.	Ham, garnished.	
		Cold Forequarter of Lamb.		

Championship publicity

There can't be many countries who have won two "world cups" in one month!

Whilst England's rugby union team got all the publicity (quite rightly) for their exploits in Australia - Great Britain's croquet team were first to the "double" by retaining the MacRobertson Shield for a record fifth time in the USA - and what makes these events even more remarkable is that they were both achieved on "foreign soil".

I know that the press publicity for croquet is usually minimal but riding on the back of the rugby train, an arti-

cle in the Guardian (Nov.20) indicated that Australia were 42 - 29 up against England (before the rugby final) in producing world champions and asked "...where were you (Australia) at the croquet?" Robert Fulford, singles and Robert Fulford/Chris Clarke, doubles were quoted as (two successive) world champions for England. As they say - any publicity is good publicity!

Phil Cordingley's reporting on the CA's website of the MacRob progress was excellent and kept us fully informed each day and our team did us proud. David Maugham's "drop goal" to clinch the series also demands an OBE just like Jonny!!

Whilst holidaying in Paris when

England won their trophy, it was so exhilarating to be an Englishman abroad feeling on top of the world! and looking down from the Arc de Triomphe seeing all those French drivers trying to sort out the traffic mess - I had to smile at their antics - what a month!

I wonder if our Press Officer alerted the BBC about the successful Great Britain team's achievement in winning the MacRobertson Shield, for their Sports Personality 2003 programme?

Having watched the programme, and seeing some old footage of Cassius Clay (Mohammed Ali) playing croquet against Harry Carpenter it would have been a natural link to highlight the successful Great Britain's win this year. All the euphoria about the England rugby world cup win and England soccer (1966) world cup win together with our MacRobertson team would have been a terrific piece of TV - after all, the Australians were beaten twice in the space of one month by GB/England.

Derek Watts
Tyneside

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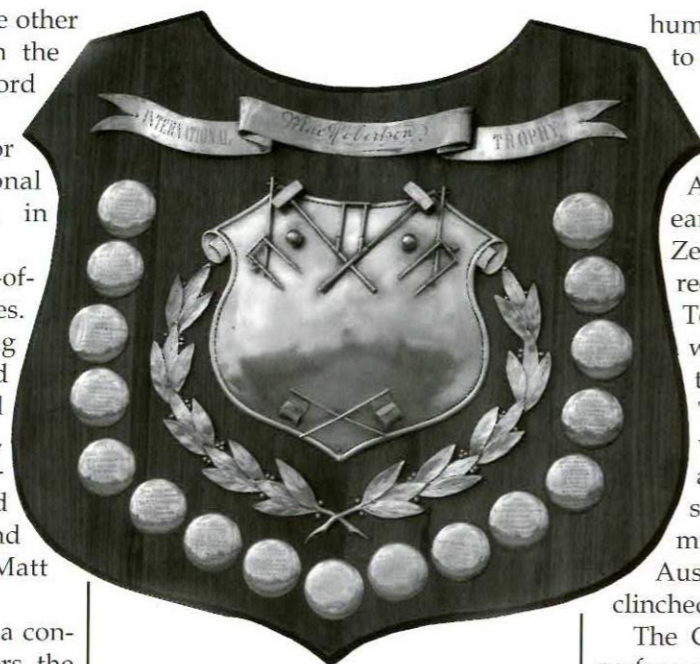
MacRobertson Shield : GB emerge victorious

Great Britain beat each of the other three Test nations to win the MacRobertson Shield for a record fifth consecutive time.

The Test Series took place for the first time at the National Croquet Center in Florida in November 2003.

Each test was a five-day best-of-21 mixture of singles and doubles. GB arrived as favourites, having a team comprising two World Champions (Chris Clarke, and the reigning Robert Fulford), three highly experienced veterans (Stephen Mulliner, David Maugham and Mark Avery), and the impressive newcomer Matt Burrow from Jersey.

Florida conditions provided a considerable challenge for the players, the breeze and the reasonably quick pace of the lawns appearing to make up for the forgiving hoops. The weather gave the players its own challenges; a bright and sunny first day ceded to showers and wind, and by Day 6 the heavens had opened. The first round of tests was finished, but players



arrived to start afresh to find the courts almost completely covered by standing water. Local conditions were such that, despite lightning and flooding of the nearby motorway, play could start by 11.30, even with persisting drizzle. The remaining days gave the players, at various times, excessive

humidity and strong crosswinds to contend with.

With a 7-2 advantage after two days, the Australians established an early lead against the New Zealanders. The Kiwis barely recovered for the rest of the first Test. The USA, by contrast, were fielding their strongest team to date, and held the GB Team at bay until Day 3, when the holders steamed ahead with a clean sweep of six wins in singles. By the middle of the fourth day, both Australia and Great Britain had clinched their first match victory.

The GB Captain Robert Fulford's performance was certainly worthy of note. Playing Jerry Stark, the impressive US Captain, Fulford had peeled and pegged out Stark's forward ball. Stark's two-ball break to finish collapsed at Hoop 5. Fulford was faced with a croquet stroke from mid-South boundary, sending the object ball to Hoop 2, getting a rush behind his part-

Test Matches 1 & 2, November 1-5

MATCHES WON							MATCHES WON						
	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Total		Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Total
Australia	3	4	2	4	2	15	Great Britain	2	2	6	2	3	15
v.							v.						
New Zealand	0	2	1	2	1	6	United States	1	1	0	1	3	6

Test Matches 3 & 4, November 6-10

MATCHES WON							MATCHES WON						
	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Total		Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Total
Australia	1	2	1	2	0	6	New Zealand	0	2	2	1	4	9
v.							v.						
Great Britain	2	4	2	4	3	15	United States	3	1	4	2	2	12

Test Matches 5 & 6, November 11-15

MATCHES WON							MATCHES WON						
	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Total		Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Total
Australia	3	3	1	2	2	11	Great Britain	1	2	4	1	3	11
v.							v.						
United States	0	3	2	4	1	10	New Zealand	2	1	2	2	3	10

Final Placings

	Test Wins	Matches Won	Matches Lost	Match%
1	3	41	22	65%
2	2	32	31	51%
3	1	28	35	44%
4	0	25	38	40%

ner ball in Corner 1. Surely the Shot of the Series, this gave him the easiest of finishes.

Among the rest of the British players, Matt Burrow alone was perhaps slow to settle in, though showed enough of his natural talent to justify his selection and promise great future success. Mark Avery and David Maugham showed devastating form, both singly and as a doubles pairing, as they finished the first test with a near unblemished record against the home team.

Australia had been sent home from the 2000 Test Series in Christchurch without a single victory. Bruce Fleming led from in front to give his revitalised team a sound win against New Zealand. By the start of the Second Test, most watchers predicted the winner of the GB-Australia match would be lifting the Shield on Day 15.

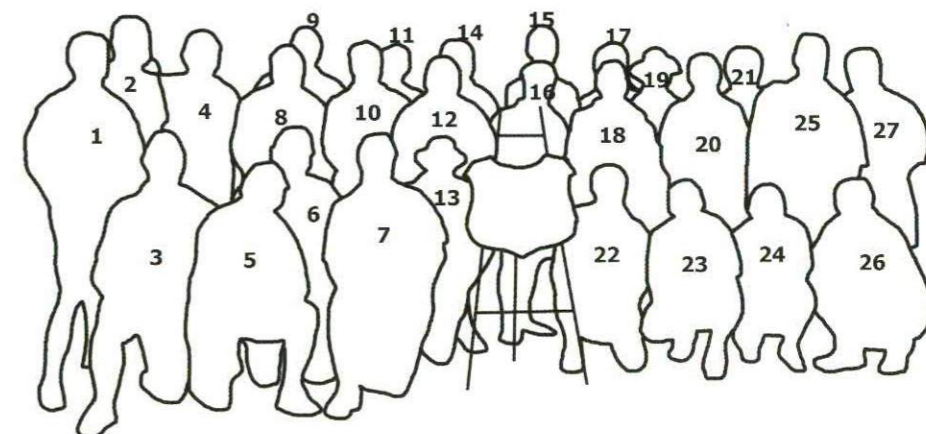
The four teams in this round were much more evenly matched to their opponents. Two matches stood out for the spectators. Matt Burrow was playing Australia's Simon Hockey and had peeled Hockey's forward ball out of the game. Once Matt had crept round to penult (against four), he chose to peg out his forward ball and hope his lead was unassailable. Hockey hit, and scraped round to 4-back. Burrow ran a three-yard rover, Hockey took the same hoop by seven yards, Burrow missed a 15 yarder, and Hockey finished with a +1 win for the match.

Jerry Stark entertained the spectators with an adventurous finish. Against New Zealand veteran, John Prince, he ran penult, accidentally roqueting the ball he'd just peeled. Rather than laying up wisely, he took on the straight rover peel (from 13 yards). The ball sailed through cleanly, but left him with no easy chance of a peg-out. He lined up from 12 yards, and hit centre peg anyway.

By the ninth day, Great Britain has clinched their second test victory, with Chris Clarke overcoming Bruce Fleming to leave Australia unable to catch up. USA had led New Zealand



Photos: Shield - Johnny Mitchell; Team shot - Martin Murray



Australia : 1. Meatheringham 2. Hockey 3. Forster 4. Latham* 5. Fleming 6. M.Clarke 7. Bassett
GB : 8. Cordingley* 9. Avery 10. Maugham 11. Burrow 12. Fulford 13. Mulliner 14. C.Clarke
NZ : 15. Garrison 16. Bulloch 17. Wislang 18. Prince 19. Parkinson 20. Bryant 21. Jones*
USA : 22. Taves 23. Rosenberry 24. Fournier 25. Stark 26. Drake 27. Louw

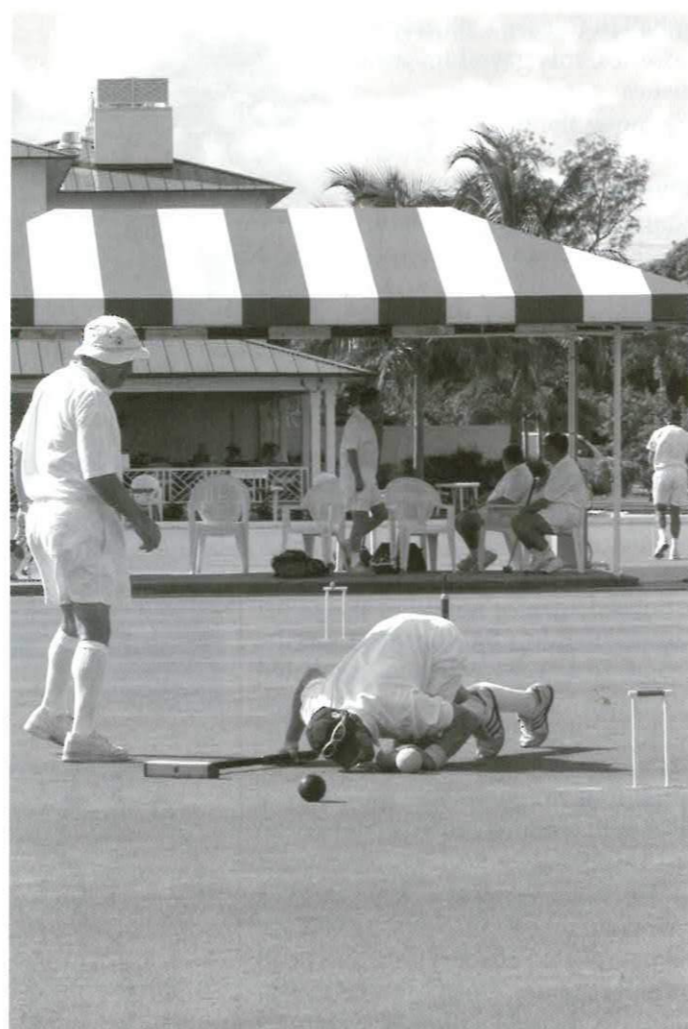
* denotes non-playing manager/coach

from the off, but a faint glimmer of hope remained for the underdogs until the final day. Jacques Fournier tripled out against Greg Bryant to give the States the necessary point, to take the US's first ever Test win over the Kiwis.

After ten days of continual play, the final Tests could have given any result. GB were bound to finish in the top two, and New Zealand, without a victory to date, couldn't place higher than third. A disastrous run by the Brits could have given the overall title to either the Americans or Australians,

though either of these could equally have finished in last place.

Day 1 of this round saw a return to form from an out of sorts New Zealand side. Toby Garrison, their young captain, suddenly found some of the form which had been lacking so far. His results were impressive indeed for this Test. He took both his singles matches (to the British Numbers 1 and 2, Fulford and Clarke) without dropping a game, and won all three doubles with Dennis Bulloch conceding only one game, by a single point. Fulford had given him an



Above left: Australia's Stephen Forster gives partner Steve Meatheringham the position for a perfect leave.

Above right: Stephen Mulliner looks on as Matt Burrow lines up for the rover peel.

Facing page: Mark Avery, GB's top performer, escapes from trouble, watched by referee Colin Irwin

unusual leave in their singles match - Robert laid up in Corner 3, wired from Toby's ball beyond the hoop. Garrison jumped clean over 4-back to hit and win, to much raucous applause from the spectators.

Fulford's other singles match was against John Prince. This marked Prince's 100th match in the MacRobertson Shield. His career in the event started forty years ago when he was a teenager. On arriving for the game, the players lined the walkway leading to the courts with a double row of raised mallets, in a show of honour for one of the classiest players in the game. Fulford refused to show much sentimentality, despatching Prince in a swift two game finish, with a sextuple peel and a fifth turn triple. Prince failed to take croquet in the

match.

The match which secured the title for the British team was, curiously, in the other Test between USA and Australia. Australia needed a 16-5 win or better to overtake the Brits on points. Jerry Stark denied them this, with a +26tp, +26tp shut-out against Martin Clarke.

The final day saw both Tests poised to go either way. GB led NZ 8-7, and the US and Australia were level on 9 wins each. As is becoming the custom in the MacRobertson Shield, it was David Maugham who took a last minute triple to clinch the deciding match for Great Britain. And so, Britain ended the Series with the narrowest of wins to emerge as undefeated champions.

Australian renaissance

This was by far the best showing of an Australian team for many years. The win against the USA went right to the wire, with Fleming as captain taking the victory. Even so, their New Zealand win showed that the game is certainly picking up in Australia.

After their ignominious loss at Christchurch in 2000 (they failed to win a single test), the ACA resolved to reform its approach to international competition. Croquet in Australia is largely state-governed. The vast distances make it very difficult for selectors to assess players from throughout the country. Allowing for the development of raw talent, many of their

rising stars will not see international play until the next Series, when Australia play hosts. With widescale reform of top-flight domestic events, the future for Australian croquet looks bright.

Bruce Fleming proved a popular and successful captain in this Series, but he's not complacent about the team's performance. "On some occasions our play was too conservative. I believe that to play better than our opponents we needed to raise the tactical stakes, and to play more aggressively. Largely we achieved this but occasionally we fell short of the required standard.

"I think this failure reflects a standard of tactical knowledge and experience, which is lower than that necessary for success at the highest levels of the game. This deficiency is evident in Australian croquet generally and has to be addressed before we can bridge the gap and reach the standard set by the Great Britain team."

Our own Chris Clarke agrees that Australia pose the greatest threat to future British dominance. "I thought that they'd be difficult to beat in America before we travelled, but they will be much stronger at home [in 2006]. Their top three players are all world class."

If strength in depth is the key, GB still have the edge. As Clarke says, "We have one top player and then eight or nine others who have the combination of ability and experience to do well." How much pressure the next Aussie side can exert remains to be seen.

Home Advantage

This was only the third time the USA were competing in the MacRobertson Shield, and the first time they hosted the event. Stark, Jacques Fournier and John Taves are all veterans of the previous Mac in New Zealand. The newcomers, including recent South African emigre Wynand Louw, showed the team had some serious intent. So is there a home advantage?



Photos by Johnny Mitchell

Most players in the USA, and most members of the National Croquet Center where the Mac took place, are strangers to International Rules. The USCA game dominates, and this presents many problems for Association players.

There are relatively few Association tournaments around the country, and distances are so vast that few of the top players meet during a season. Many play both formats of the game. Stark, for example, had played only one of his team-mates in the season prior to this Series. Whilst John Taves performed well throughout the Series despite coming straight from a two-year sabbatical, it's hard to see how an American could achieve the level of match-fitness of David Maugham's 150 games in a season.

While there's not quite an indifference among spectators to the performance of the home team, there is surely not the level of enthusiasm which each of the other teams might enjoy amongst club members on their own turf.

Nevertheless, it's heartening for the game to see a US squad finally coming of age with some truly world class players. Perhaps the home fixture will provide the catalyst to kick-start the USA's emergent second flight towards MacRobertson aspirations.

Prince the Veteran

It was surely a disappointing run for the New Zealanders. On another day, the results could have looked different. The British team were always

looking stronger than the others, and second, third and fourth could have been decided in any order. NZ undoubtedly suffered from the absence of a couple of key players, including Bob Jackson, whose family commitments kept him away.

Despite the fresh influx of the likes of Toby Garrison, and the absence of some of the old guard, it's John Prince who remains a constant presence in the New Zealand team. 40 years on and 100 matches later, he recalls how times have changed. "The big difference is the change in format from three short 9-match tests against each nation to the single 21 match test. If you got away to a bad start in the first at least you had a chance to wipe the slate clean and start afresh in the next!

"Apart from the players getting younger, there are far more first class players than in the past, MacRob's are

more frequent and there are many other International events. This is all good for the game. The standard required to win at the top is higher than ever."

An abiding memory? "Perhaps my first MacRob, in 1963 and my match with John Solomon which I won. During the NZ Champs that followed I defeated the legendary Humphrey Hicks in the semis and the colourful Bryan Lloyd-Pratt in the final of the Men's Championship, to win my first national title, at aged 17. 1974 was my first trip to the UK. I played and beat Nigel Aspinall in all three tests and enjoyed winning the British Doubles with Gordon Rowling. 1979 was very special, leading NZ to victory in the series played on our home courts. Then again in 1986 with my old mentor Ashley Heenan as Manager, NZ regained the shield on British soil. But,

most of all the strongest memories involve all the wonderful people I have met during every MacRobertson contest far too many to name."

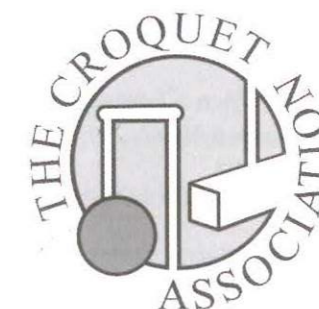
GB: Future Strength

Great Britain is clearly the side to beat. Everyone involved seems to agree that the British grasp is based on the English tournament infrastructure. Licking its wounds since 2000, Australia has started to turn its fortunes around. New Zealand did the same between 1982 (last place) and 86 (champions). Any team could challenge for the top spot over the next two years, but with UK talent emerging and gaining experience as at present, it's clear that the smart money remains with GB.

MacRobertson Shield : Personal Records

		Matches Won			Games Won			Games Lost			Win rate			Triples (or better)		
		Singles	Doubles	Total	Singles	Doubles	Total	Singles	Doubles	Total	Singles	Doubles	Overall	Singles	Doubles	Total
Avery	GB	5	8	13	11	16	27	2	6	8	85%	73%	77%	8	5	13
Bassett	AUS	4	5	9	8	13	21	5	11	16	62%	54%	57%	8	5	13
Bryant	NZ	2	2	4	4	7	11	8	14	22	33%	33%	33%	2	2	4
Bulloch	NZ	4	4	8	9	10	19	5	11	16	64%	48%	54%	1	0	1
Burrow	GB	1	4	5	4	9	13	10	11	21	29%	45%	38%	1	2	3
Clarke C	GB	3	5	8	7	12	19	7	8	15	50%	60%	56%	4	7	11
Clark M	AUS	3	7	10	6	15	21	7	6	13	46%	71%	62%	1	0	1
Drake	USA	2	4	6	5	10	15	9	12	21	36%	45%	42%	3	0	3
Fleming	AUS	3	7	10	7	15	22	7	6	13	50%	71%	63%	6	8	14
Forster	AUS	4	3	7	9	8	17	7	14	21	56%	36%	45%	4	5	9
Fournier	USA	3	4	7	7	10	17	6	12	18	54%	45%	49%	6	5	11
Fulford	GB	5	5	10	10	12	22	3	8	11	77%	60%	67%	9	2	11
Garrison	NZ	2	4	6	6	10	16	8	11	19	43%	48%	46%	3	2	5
Hockey	AUS	3	5	8	8	13	21	8	11	19	50%	54%	53%	5	3	8
Louw	USA	3	3	6	7	7	14	6	14	20	54%	33%	41%	2	2	4
Maugham	GB	5	8	13	10	16	26	4	6	10	71%	73%	72%	9	3	12
Meatheringham	AUS	0	3	3	0	8	8	12	14	26	0%	36%	24%	0	0	0
Mulliner	GB	5	4	9	10	9	19	4	11	15	71%	45%	56%	6	3	9
Parkinson	NZ	3	2	5	7	7	14	7	14	21	50%	33%	40%	4	1	5
Prince	NZ	2	4	6	4	10	14	9	11	20	31%	48%	41%	1	3	4
Rosenberry	USA	1	3	4	6	7	13	10	14	24	38%	33%	35%	3	1	4
Stark	USA	5	5	10	10	12	22	5	11	16	67%	52%	58%	8	3	11
Taves	USA	2	5	7	6	12	18	9	11	20	40%	52%	47%	3	2	5
Wislang	NZ	2	4	6	6	10	16	9	11	20	40%	48%	44%	2	2	4

THE CROQUET GAZETTE
TOURNAMENT DIGEST 2003



This is the second annual tournament digest. The first was produced in the March 2003 Gazette, after the last Association World Championships. This year we include full game-by-game results for the MacRobertson Shield Series, which are too bulky to fit in the main section of the Gazette, but which are given on Page 3.

Feedback was favourable for the last edition of this supplement, and the number of pages has been accordingly doubled to eight. Particularly popular with many players were the statistics for the best peelers in the game. This year, that feature has been expanded and extended, and includes data from 2002 for comparison. This and most of the other ranking tables now include last year's position in brackets.

The roll of honour listing winners of major tournaments and CA sponsored events is as comprehensive as possible. Unfortunately, results were not available for all events. Further apologies to those involved in club events, but there just isn't the space to reward all successful players with a mention.

Golf Croquet Championships

Inter Club
Final
Hurlingham bt Auckland 4 - 3

Ascot Cup
Final
Chris Sheen beat Ivor Brand , 7-6,4-7,7-6
Ranelagh Cup
Final: Nelson Morrow & Tom Weston beat Roy Ware & David Dray

Open Championship
Final: Reg Bamford bt Stephen Mulliner 7-5, 7-3

Selectors Weekend (Hunstanton)
Winner: Nelson Morrow 13/14
Runners-up: Roy Ware, Chris Sheen 9/13

European Championship
Mark McInerney by Evan Newell 7-2, 5-7, 7-3

Lancashire Open
Winner: David Dray

Ramsgate International
Final: Reg Bamford bt Khaled Younis 2-0

Handicap, team & other CA events.

Peel Memorial Handicap
Men's Champion
Philip Eardley
Women's Champion
Mary Knapp
Mixed Doubles
Hugh Smorfitt & Anne Stephens

All England Handicap (Association)
Farooq Malik

Students Championship
Singles Event
Michael Blackwell

Club Events
Inter Club
Final
Cheltenham bt Bowdon 5-2
Mary Rose
Final
Bristol bt Roehampton 4-3
Longman Cup
Final
Nottingham bt Watford (Cassiobury) 4-3
Secretary's Shield
Final
Tyneside bt Bowdon 4-3

Selection Events

President's Cup (Surbiton)

	MB	SM	CC	MA	PT	CI	RF	DM	Won	TPs	Posn
Matt Burrow		+16tp -17	+12 -3	+17tp +16	+17tp -8	-3 -26	+18tp -15	-12 +26tp	7	5	3=
Stephen Mulliner	-16 +17tp		-9 +15	-3 -1	-5 -4	+20 -15	+18 +8	+13 +25qp	7	3	3=
Chris Clarke	-12 +3tp	+9 -15		+5 +25	+19 +25tp	-26 +14	+26 -11	-15 -5	8	2	1
Mark Avery	-17 -16	+3 +1	-5 -25		-22 -17	+25tp +23tp	-26 -4	+25tp -17	5	3	8
Pete Trimmer	-17 +8	+5otp +4	-19 -25	+22 +17		-17 -26	-21 +26tp	-26 +20	7	1	3=
Colin Irwin	+3 +26	-20 +15	+26 -14	-25 -23	+17tp +26tp		-24 -24	+24tp +26	8	3	2
Robert Fulford	-18 +15tp	-18 -8	-26 +11	+26tp +4tp	+21 -26	+24 +24		-12 -26	7	3	3=
David Maugham	+12 -26	-13 -25	+15tp +5tp	-25 +17tp	+26tp -20	-24 -26	+12 +26tp		7	5	3=

Play-off

Clarke bt Irwin +17 +16

Chairman's Salver (Parkstone)

	JG	DHW	DG	RB	JD	RB	ED	DF	Won	TPs	Pos
John Gibbons		+17tp -3	+26tp +8	+17tp +22	+26tp -3	-3 -26tp	+6 -15tp	+3 +26tp	9	5	2=
David Harrison- Wood +3	-17tp	+24	-3 -17	+12 -19	+8tp -17tp	-12tp +26tp	+10tp +14	-15	7	3	4
David Goacher	-26tp -8	+3 -24		+10tp -12tpo	+13tpo +26tp	-25tp -21tp	+25 -14tp	-24 +2	6	3	5=
Robin Brown	-17tp -22	-12 +17	-10tp +12tpo		+25tp -17tp	-16 -17	-25tp +17	+26tp +26tp	6	4	5=
Jeff Dawson	-26tp +3	-8tp +19	-13tpo -26tp	-25tp +17tp		-17 -26tp	-2 -16tp	+22 -15	4	1	7
Rutger Beijderwellen	+3 +26tp	+12tp +17tp	+25tp +21tp	+16 +17	+17 +26tp		-17tp -25tp	+26tp +17	12	7	1
Ed Duckworth	-6 +15tp	-10tp -26tp	-25 +14tp	+25tp -17	+2 +16tp	+17tp +25tp		+13tp +3	9	7	2=
David Foulser	-3 -26tp	+15 -14	+24 -2	-26tp -26tp	-22 +15	-26tp -17	-13tp -3		3	0	8

Spencer Ell (Nottingham)

	TW	DK	DM	DG	DM	JW	RW	CW	Won	TPs	Pos
Tim Wilkins		+10 +9otp	+4 +4	+20 +3	+14 +16	+12 -16	-20 -21	+9 -4	10	0	1
Dave Kibble	-10 -9otp		-14 +17	-6 +15	-12 +3tp	+5 tp -17	+8 -20tp	+13 -10	6	3	6
David Magee	-4 -4	+14 -17		-7 -6	-13 +3	-23 -17	-3 +4	-7 +6	4	0	7
Don Gaunt	-20 -3	+6 -15	+7 +6		-13 +5	+11 +8	-23 tp +18	-6 +13	8	0	3=
Dave Mundy	-14 -16	+12 -3tp	+13 -3	+13 -5		-16 -24	-26 -19	-3 -26	3	0	8
Jenny Williams	-12 +16	-5 tp +17	+23 +17	-11 -8	+16 +24		+12 +5	-6 -14	8	0	3=
Richard White	+20 +21	-8 +20tp	+3 -4	+23tp -18	+26 +19	-12 -5		+12 -5	8	2	3=
Chris Williams	-9 +4	-13 +10	+7 -6	+6 -13	+3 +26	+6 +14	-12 +5		9	0	2

Treasurer's Tankard (Nailsea)

	ME	PT	CP	LT	PC	CJ	PS	JG	Won	TPs	Pos
Marcus Evans		+13 +7	+14 -2	+2 +16	+14 +17tp	-4 +24	+9 +2	+24 -5	11	1	1
Peter Taylor	-13 -7		-13 +11	+15 +24	-10 -16	+14 +26tp	-8 -9	-16 -13	5	1	6
Chris Patmore	-14 +2	+13 +11		-19 +19	+10 -14	-18 +8	+18tp +10	+22 +2	9	1	2=
Lionel Tibble	-2 -16	-15 -24	+19 -19		+20 -7	-15 -5	+10 +5	-7tp -22	4	0	7=
Phil Cordingley	-14 -17tp	+10 +16	-10 +14	-20 +7		+19 +6	+5 +2	-9 +18	9	0	2=
Cliff Jones	+4 -24	-14 -26tp	+18 -8	+15 +5	-19 -6		+8 +4	+10 +12	8	0	4
Paul Smith	-9 -2	+8 +9	-18tp -10	-10 -5	-5 -2	-8 -4		+12 +26	4	0	7=
Jerry Guest	-24 +5	+16 +13	-22 -2	+7tp +22	+9 -18	-10 -12	-12 -26		6	1	5

World's Best Triple Peelers

Table with columns: Rank, Name, Total Games (Played, Won, Triples), Games with peels (2003, 2002), Wins with peels (2003, 2002), Sextuples* (2003, 2002). Lists top 60 players.

Figures quoted are for games with triple peels or better (quadruples, quintuples or sextuples). Bracketed figure gives 2002 ranking. * Sextuples were also recorded in 2003 by Toby Garrison [NZ] (ranked 65 in this table) and by Ian Lines [E] (ranked 69)

UK Association Croquet Rankings

Table with columns: Rank, Name, Grade, Pld, Won, Index, %age. Lists UK Association Croquet Rankings from rank 1 to 120.

Data as at 2nd January 2004. Bracketed figure gives 2002 ranking position. * D Nick replaces D Nicholson in previous ranking lists.

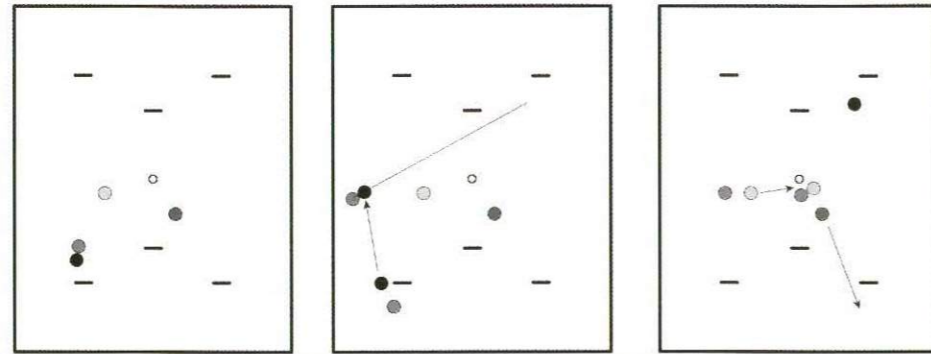


Figure 4. The break has all but collapsed at 2-back. Both the 3-back pioneer (Red) and the pivot (Yellow) are out of position. Blue can salvage the break by getting a good rush on Yellow towards Red. 2-back is approached to give a rush on Black to the left of Yellow. Black is sent to 4-back, and a straight rush on Yellow towards Red gets the break back on course with another straight rush on Red to the next hoop.

as a pioneer but more importantly SB (Blue) will end up with a Dolly Rush on Yellow. Yellow is then rushed as close as possible to Red and a straight Dolly Rush is set up on Red. Red can now be rushed with a good chance of accuracy to south of 4-back for the hoop approach to 4-back. Thus we have used the Double Dolly, two dolly rushes to get us back on track with our 4BB.

Some High Bisquers find that when they try to rush a ball a long way, the SB does not hit cleanly and climbs or even jumps over the roqueted ball. In which case, check your technique. Take up your normal stance. Then move your feet back 3 or 4 inches pulling the top of the shaft of the mallet back towards you, raising the toe of the mallet off the ground as you would do for a stop shot. But the similarity to a stop shot ends there. Pull the mallet back slowly and then let it swing smoothly forward with a good follow through. No extra force is required and remember it doesn't matter if you hit SB more than once; you are playing a roquet and double tapping is not a fault. Using this technique, SB will not lift marginally off the ground but will keep low and transfer all its energy to the target ball.

Anyway understand the Line of Rush, look for it and use it to set up easy rushes. Approach the target ball if possible along the line of rush and not from right angles to it so that the margin of error and the chances of success are maximised. Now that we

are clear on the Line of Rush, we can turn in the next article to the Third Principle of Play - Exploit the Rush.

Brush up on the Laws

No 4 - By Michael Hague

Before posing Question No 4, may I acknowledge the assistance given by Jeff Dawson, an Examining Referee who has double checked the answers and made much appreciated suggestions, especially about the logic behind some of the Laws.

Question

Many players are not clear about when a double tap is legal and when it is not, and thus when a straight single ball drive at another close-by ball should be watched. What is the answer?

Answer

Laws 28(a)(8) and (d). A fault is not committed if a second hit, re-touching or maintenance of contact is caused by I) a ball being legally roqueted II) the act of pegging out the striker's ball

III) interference by a ball pegged out in the stroke

When roqueting it rarely matters where the striker's ball ends up anyway as once the stroke is completed, the striker's ball becomes ball-in-hand. However, if the second contact occurs after the ball has hit another object

(such as a hoop upright), a fault is committed, even though a roquet was made (there has been a ruling on this).

For example, in a Hoop and Roquet situation (Law 17(a)(2)) if the striker's ball at the start of the running of the hoop was clear of the hoop on the non-playing side and then completes the running of the hoop in order, it is deemed that the contact occurs after the striker's ball scores the hoop point so that a roquet is made. Thus the striker is not faulted if he double taps his ball going through the hoop and roqueting a ball on the far side. However if the striker's ball touches the hoop upright and then re-touches the mallet before hitting the ball to be roqueted, that is a fault and is penalised in the normal way. So if there is a danger of this happening it should be watched. Even if the striker's ball makes the roquet, but then hits the upright before a second hit on striker's ball occurs, this will be a fault as the double tap was not directly caused by the roquet. (Hence if the sequence of impacts on the striker's ball is by the mallet, the roqueted ball, the upright and finally the mallet then it is a fault. If it is by the mallet, the upright, roqueted ball and lastly mallet, it is not a fault as the roquet was the last impact of striker's ball before the mallet hit it a second time).

A double tap is a fault in all other strokes and situations other than those quoted above. A misunderstanding often arises when the continuation shot is used to move the striker's ball and a dead ball in the same direction, for instance in a straight scatter shot or a peel where the ball being peeled with a croquet shot lodges in the hoop. If the two balls are within say two feet of each other, a double tap can easily occur; within six inches a double tap is probable unless a stop shot is played. The shot will need watching. The test is usually whether or not the striker's ball advances more than a very short distance without jumping or a lot of top-spin being applied. If it does, a double tap fault has almost certainly been committed.

Review: The Kevin Brereton Coaching Videos

by Michael Hague

The Coaching Committee has for over a year given thought of producing a series of videocassettes for coaching purposes. It was realised from the start that it would not be a quick and simple task. The tapes would have to be carefully thought through, well scripted and probably professionally filmed and produced. No estimate was worked out but a cost of £5,000 was bandied around. My personal view was that the money would be better spent on a good recruiting film to interest as wide an audience as possible ranging from schools and universities to the WI and the U3A. Croquet is a game of skills that are not learnt from films but by hands-on practice and repetition. At best films can only be training aids to provide background and understanding of the principles on which the game is built. They tend to get outdated rather quickly. So when Jeff Dawson mentioned that he was getting a few sets of Kevin Brereton's old tapes for sale in the CA shop and accepted my offer to review them as a coach and player, I approached my self inflicted chore with a strong measure of scepticism.

Kevin Brereton is an accomplished Australian croquet player with long experience of coaching a number of sports including croquet. His scientific approach to his explanations to the game is a reflection of his university education (holder of three degrees) and of his professional experience in secondary and further education. There are six Brereton tapes available for purchase from the CA shop; two are on stroke making, one on using bisques, one on Sports Sciences and two on tactics. The first four are of 30 minutes duration, 60 minutes for basic tactics and 90 minutes for peeling. The videos were filmed during the 90's with a young looking Robert Fulford giving the demonstrations for the lessons on tactics.

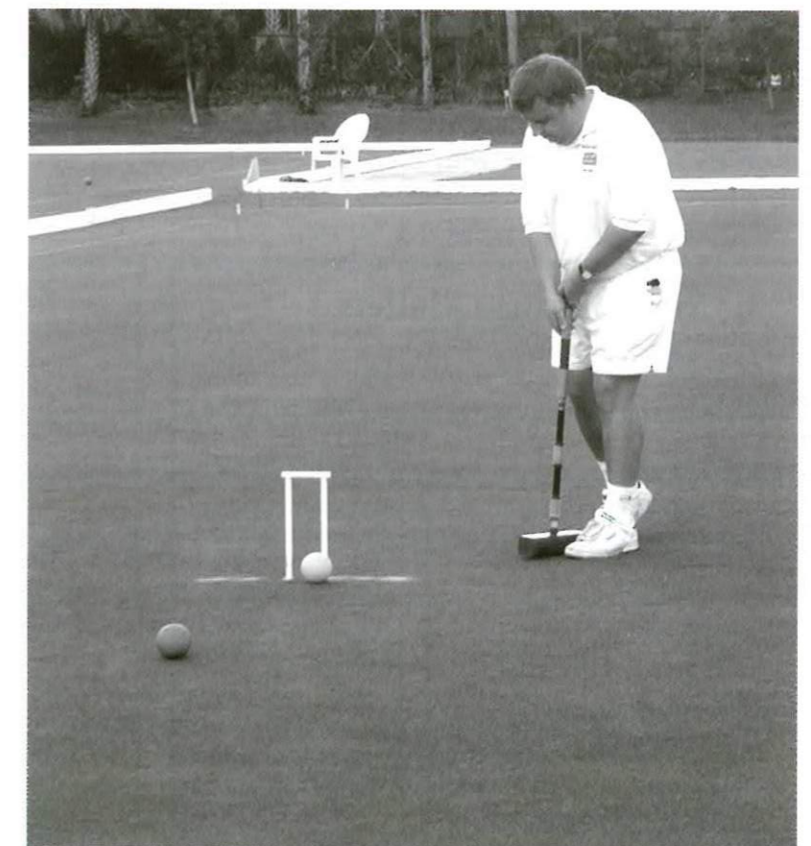
In general terms the videos are of home movie standard of filming but with good animation. The commentaries are detailed and explanations clear but Kevin reads from a script that



results in a rather flat and lifeless presentation. In fact in one tape, he has the script below the level of the camera so that his eyes are disconcertingly hooded. What is put over is by no means out-dated and is often refreshing in its different approach to the techniques demonstrated and the explanation of them. There are the odd variations in terminology such as the pivot being referred to as the "loose" ball and

"loading the hoop" and one might be a little surprised to see a referee removing a bisque but there is nothing so profoundly different as to diminish the excellent understanding and wealth of information offered.

The first tape, *Stroke Making Part 1*, deals with single ball strokes while Part 2 covers the croquet strokes, wiring, peeling and pegging out. Explanations are technical in places, looking at the biomechanics of shot making and scientific explanation of the mysteries surrounding such as splits and pull. However, overall the material covered and the way it is displayed are very clear and no coach would fail to benefit from a broadening of their understanding of the basics nor to re-act to some of the thought provoking ideas included. The video on Using Bisques both offensively and defensively relies mainly on animation and could be useful back up for an emergency wet-weather programme during a coaching course. However to teach the sub-



"It all looks so easy with Robert Fulford's impeccable touch" (photo courtesy Bob Kroeger)

New Platinum Award for Sextuple Peel

by Bruce Rannie

ject, a magnetic board might serve a knowledgeable coach better.

Tactics Parts 1 and 2 are combined on one tape and use both computer generated animation and on court demonstrations, taking the viewer through the basics starting with hoop control, 2, 3 and 4 ball breaks, picking up the 4th ball and onto peels. Needless to say, it all looks so easy with Robert's impeccable touch. The tape reminds one how difficult it is to film a game of croquet and get enough clear coverage of the court to follow the changing layout of all the balls. Nevertheless the tape gave a comprehensive and clear explanation of the framework of the game and of the role that each ball plays in various tactical situations.

Tactics Part 3 is a must for anyone entering the higher levels of croquet play and is developing the tactical technique of multiple peeling. Do not be put off by the excessive noise of passing traffic and windy conditions blighting the sound track of this tape as Robert Fulford's running commentary is still clearly audible as he gives a series of demonstrations of a whole range of skills and techniques which made up the art of peeling. The accu-

racy of his stroke play, his controlled hoop running and spot-on rushes are breath taking but he does deal with actual problems as they occur. It is fascinating how successfully he can improvise when his skills are so honed. Watch out for striker ball running rover and at the same time jumping partner ball previously peeled to well clear of the hoop! Each variation of the peel is titled and time-indexed so that both coaches and self-learning players can easily refer back to a particular technique. The tape ends with guidance on progressive practices to develop the art.

The final tape is entitled "Sports Sciences and Croquet" and covers the biomechanics, physics and physiology of croquet, much of which is covered in more simple terms in earlier tapes. Frankly I found it all just too technical for me but others with a more scientific aptitude might appreciate viewing it and thereby deepening their knowledge and understanding.

So what are my conclusions? Tapes are excellent for coaches and players not only as a training aid but also to deepen the understanding and knowledge of the great number of

skills and techniques that make up the fascinating game of croquet. I would not recommend them to beginners until the end of their initial training and then of course only those covering the basics. They all include a great amount of detail and need to be seen several times to absorb the information given. I would see coaches showing their pupils parts of a tape at a time, preferably after careful selection and using a remote control for re-runs.

I would be surprised if we could better these tapes without throwing a lot of money and time at the project, using professional commentators and cameramen and researching and writing a very well-structured script. The fact that Kevin Brereton appears to have produced his set of tapes over a decade speaks for itself. I would not expect any improvement on his tapes to be significant or to justify the investment of the time, finance and effort. So well done and thank you, Kevin. My club is certainly buying a set of your videos for our library and I would recommend others to do the same. In the meantime should we not take a serious look at the feasibility of producing a good, short tape for recruiting purposes?

you are conceding bisques most of the time, or are taking the first steps into the Advanced game. This award is given for achieving a twelve hoop-point break, sometimes with one or two peels, without using bisques either to set up the break or to continue it, while winning the game.

The Gold Badge is for your first Triple Peel in qualifying competitions. The manoeuvre is by definition a winning one, as it comprises peeling your first ball through four-back, penult and rover, while playing the appropriate break with the second ball, and pegging both out for the victory. It is more often seen in Advanced Play, as one of the standard tactics to avoid giving one of the lifts or contact, but it is also used by the experienced player faced with a fence-ful of bisques in a Handicap Tournament. Naturally bisques cannot be used to hit in, or to set up the break, or to carry it out, but that does not preclude qualification in a game in which the player has previously used bisques.

The new Platinum Badge is for your first Sextuple Peel in qualifying competitions. Again this is awarded for one done on partner ball, pegging both out for victory - one done on opponent, and this being the first one, is so unlikely, and so improbable as a sensible winning tactic, that it will not qualify. Usually Merit Awards are given to recognise the first time the feat is achieved. Because this new Award is being introduced to players some of whom may have achieved one or more sextuples previously, the usual conditions are relaxed so that the claim may be made by any player achieving one on or after the start date, whether or not this is actually the first one he or she has ever done.

The aim of the CA Coaching Committee is always to encourage enterprising play. Many members have won their first badge after attending one of the Regional Bronze

or Improvers Courses - both concentrate on setting up and maintaining breaks, and positive use of bisques. The National Silver Course and the Silver-Gilt (Introduction to Advanced Play) Course both concentrate on the kind of break management and tactics that naturally lead the player to win the Silver Badge. The National Gold Course is designed to prepare players to achieve the Triple Peel and therefore obtain the Gold Badge. It suggests tactics for the standard triple and the delayed triple, and covers the attacking leaves after the first ball has reached four-back, in order to make the lift shot as difficult as possible for the opponent. A workshop covering the Sextuple Peel will be run for the first time this summer - this will go into the mechanics of the usual break required, the leaves required to set up the situation, and the difficulties that may follow if things do not go exactly to plan. It will be interesting to see how long it takes people who attend to claim their Platinum Badge.

Details of all of the courses on offer in 2004 are in the Fixture Calendar, are listed in newsletters to Clubs, and can be found on the CA website. So why not get your new season off to a winning start by seeing what the CA Coaching Courses can do for you? And if you are a badge-collector and sextupler, then do it again, and make your claim.

Manor House Mallets

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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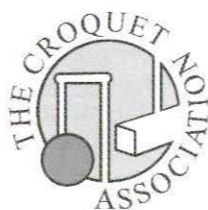
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Obituaries

Gerald Barker

Gerald William Barker, a member of Plymouth Croquet Club, died on 11th November 2003 at the age of 75 years.



Gerry, as he was fondly known, had been a member of the club for about ten years. He was a man with such a warm and friendly disposition, who worked so enthusiastically and tirelessly for the Club that he is going to be sorely missed. He served for the maximum term of five years on the Committee; was the club linesman for a number of years; captained two of the Club's league teams; was involved in recruitment and coaching of new members and, together with his wife Marjorie, organised the club's annual golf croquet tournament.

Born in Devonport, Gerry perhaps not surprisingly set out on a career in the Royal Navy. After completing artificer training in HMS Fisguard, he served in the engineering branch of the Navy and his sea time included a posting to HMS Vanguard, the last of the fleet's battleships. He was selected for commission but the required medical revealed that he was suffering from tuberculosis, and that brought his naval career to an abrupt end. After his hospitalisation and recovery he took up teaching and he taught in Plymouth schools, until his retirement in 1987. For the last 15 years of his teaching career he taught at a school for disabled and special needs children, something for which his warm and caring disposition made him eminently suitable.

Gerry was a man with many interests. He was a great lover of music and

he composed numerous pieces including two military marches, the copyright of which he has presented to the Fisguard Association. These marches have been used at a passing-out parade at HMS Fisguard, and on special occasions at Fisguard Association functions. He also composed a special "D-Day" song which was performed publicly in Plymouth to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the D-Day landings. Gerry was much interested in local history, particularly the township of Devonport where he was born, and he had a number of local history books published and put on sale by no less than WH Smiths. With his wife Marjorie he was also a keen walker and of course croquet player. He was awarded the CA Bronze merit badge at a Parkstone Tournament a couple of years ago, and his name appears on a number of the Plymouth Club Competition Trophies.

Gerry will be greatly missed at the club but we will not forget him. He did so much for the club and gave so much of himself, but more than that he was such an interesting, warm-hearted and friendly person it was a joy to know him.

John Shepherd

Stuart McKendrick

I was very saddened when I heard of the death of Stuart McKendrick in early January. After I discovered croquet at university in 1999, I went along to the Bush club near Edinburgh (now the Meadows club in Edinburgh) and he was one of the regulars who would be there every week at the club night. Stuart always had a smile on his face, unless it was a scowl which would turn into a grin when you realised he was pulling your leg. Club nights with him around were always amusing even if you were standing around in the cold and damp watching your opponent go round. (There was no shelter at Bush and it was mainly a dedicated few who turned up on Scottish September nights; Stuart was one of those.) I can't do justice to the way he turned a phrase, but I particularly remember his "corner cannelloni".

Stuart was the handicapper who cut my provisional handicap a couple of days before my first tournament after I beat him +26 with bisques standing. A couple of years later he beat me +25 in a handicap tournament with a bisque assisted triple peel, and a bisque standing. He seemed very pleased to have got his own back! Later that summer he beat me in a level game in the Edinburgh tournament. He was obviously delighted to have won as I think he told everyone there, but by no means was he a bad winner - he was far too kind a person for that. My own disappointment at losing the game didn't last long in the face of that. Ultimately we play the game because we enjoy it, and if I could give that much enjoyment each time I played I would have a lot of very happy friends, and be very happy myself too.

I knew that Stuart was working on triple peels, and when he achieved one last summer I'm sure that all the croquet players in Edinburgh would have shared in his triumph. I was hoping, even expecting, to play with him on a Scottish team soon, and I'm very sorry that that won't now happen. I'll miss him as I'm sure everyone in Scottish croquet will.

Jonathan Kirby

Neil Williams

Neil Williams, who died on Christmas Eve, was one of the most significant figures in the development of croquet in the North of England.

His involvement in the game dated back as far as the late 1960s, when he was one of the triumvirate (with Ena and May Hawkins) which kept the ailing Southport Club alive. He acted as Club Secretary for several years, and without his enthusiasm and commitment to recruitment the club would surely have folded. Even after he left the area, he retained his membership of the Club, and was awarded the title of Honorary Vice-President, in recognition of his work.

In 1970, he joined Bowdon, and competed in the Club's winning

Longman Cup team that year. His handicap was 4 by that stage, but his main effort remained in the administration of the game. The following year he assumed the role of Croquet Secretary. By 1972 his duties also encompassed that of Honorary Secretary. In that capacity he was responsible for recruiting Chris Hudson, who later became National Development Officer, editor of the *Croquet Gazette*, and President of Bowdon.

Neil served his time on CA Council, and took responsibility for the creation of the Federation of Northern Croquet Clubs. The Northern Federation, as it then was, stretched from Southport in the West as far as East Riding CC at Hull, and up towards the new Tyneside Club. Only the support of the Fed enabled many clubs to develop and thrive. Within ten years, there was sufficient croquet taking place for the Federation to split into three and reform as Croquet North, the North West, and the Yorkshire Federations.

By the 1990s, Neil was living in the Lake District, where he was instrumental in the re-emergence of Crake Valley CC. Yet more recently, he founded the Kendal Club. Vandalism caused the Club to relocate, and he was at the front of negotiations to secure the grounds of Levens Hall, for the newly renamed Westmorland Croquet Club. Until the time of his final illness, he continued in the post of Chairman.

Ill health plagued Neil for many years. His playing career was certainly inhibited by his long struggle with Crohn's disease, but he made a welcome return to the game more recently. He was appointed Chairman of the North West Federation, and took an active role as Regional Coaching Officer. He was a charismatic and lucid coach, and saw to it that all clubs in the region should have the opportunity of top quality instruction.

Many readers of the *Gazette* will recall his writings over a period of years. His articles were constantly

interesting and challenging. As I took on the role of editor he was a valued mentor, critic and friend.

Last season he was awarded a CA Diploma for his work, which was featured in the November edition of the *Gazette* shortly before he died.

Bernard Neal, whose association with Neil stretches back to the 1970s, pays this tribute, "Neil was a Far Country member of Cheltenham for many years, and whenever he played in our tournaments we always enjoyed his company at the club. Like many others, I found his recent series of interviews, *Talking Croquet*, extremely interesting and perceptive. Neil had a rare knack of drawing out illuminating comments from his subjects, and he never allowed his own thoughts or opinions to intrude. Croquet has lost a modest and unassuming person who has contributed much to the game, and he will be sorely missed."

JDH

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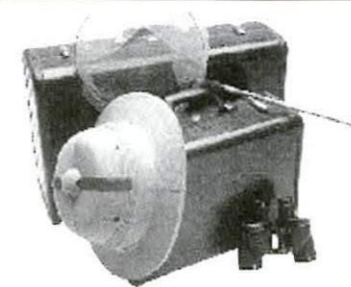
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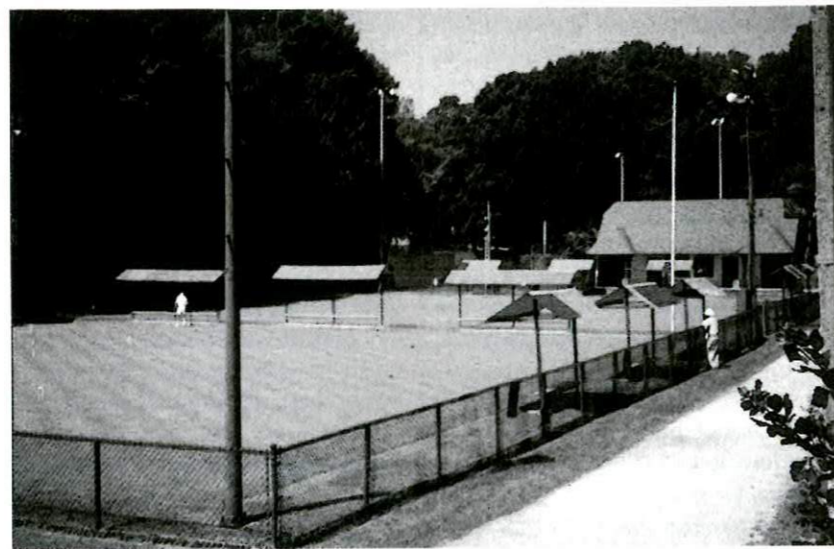
A Canadian Experience

Tony Backhouse has a first taste of sequence and deadness under American Rules Croquet

Towards the end of August, my wife and I stayed for a few days with old friends in Toronto. So it happened that one Saturday, I found myself, much to my surprise, leaning on the fence surrounding two bowling greens, watching a game of croquet American style. As I had hoped, I was soon engaged in conversation and shortly afterwards, I was sitting with the players enjoying a slice of their cake and a glass of white wine while they had their lunch. In the afternoon, I kept the board for a spell before taking the place of one of the players. The following day, I joined Mary (from Toronto), Mary-Ann (from Minnesota) and Phil (from Toronto and Florida) for a day's play. In my experience, this is typical Canadian hospitality. I had no whites and no mallet but, despite lowering the tone, I was welcomed with open arms.

For those with little or no knowledge of the American game, with the following major exceptions, the rules are the same as ours. However the exceptions change the whole character of the game into one of over-riding caution. It is no insult, just a statement of fact, to state that, at this level, one is forced to emulate Aunt Emma.

- The game is started by the each ball in turn one mallet's length in front of Hoop 1. Until one's ball makes the hoop, it is dead.
- The balls are played in colour order.
- One may only roquet and take croquet from another ball ONCE between hoops. Once roqueted, a ball is therefore dead to your ball until you have made the next hoop.
- If, in roqueting a ball, it goes off the court, your turn ceases.
- Once off the court, balls are replaced nine inches off the line, the mallet's head being used as the measure.
- Your turn ceases if you hit a dead ball
- When any ball makes Hoop 1 Back, the opponent can elect one of his balls to go clear on the board, i.e. it becomes live on all balls.
- Ideally one person keeps the board. This shows against each ball which of the others are live and which are dead.



There are other detailed differences, but these main points indicate why the character of the game is so different. One should only roquet one's partner ball if one is almost certain of making the next hoop from it. Constant reference to the deadness board is necessary, remembering also the colour sequence. Hence Black might shoot gently at Red if it is dead to Red but Red is not dead to Black. Similarly a colour that remains live to both opponent balls but dead to its partner ball will almost certainly lie up in a corner until an improved situation materialises. The only other possible move would be to take a Golf Croquet style approach to one's hoop if any danger ball (an opponent ball to which one is live) is not threatening.

The North Toronto Lawn Bowling and Croquet Club seemed well equipped, the lawns being of high quality, true and fairly fast. Clubhouse, rest rooms, lounge and kitchen area have all been supplied by Toronto City which owns the land. The use of the lawns alternates between bowls and croquet, the players also using a local cricket ground (sic) during the week. The hoops and centre peg have spikes rather than carrots, about eight inches in length and a quarter of an inch in diameter. When setting up, the holes from previous use are almost impossible to find. Lines are not whitened but a cord on a large wheel is quickly run out and hooked

around fixed cup hooks on the wooden lining to the "gutters" around the greens. Secondary colours consist of the same basic colours but with a thick white stripe around each ball. Most of the equipment used is made by the American branch of Jaques.

I much enjoyed learning something of the rules and practice. My impressions were that, at least in the games I played, play tended towards the cautious. However I had no chance to put a more adventurous policy into practice. Handicaps, although they were not used, seemed much in line with those at home. Mary's is 5 and she was clearly the best player on the court. Phil's is 8 (the same as mine) and we were certainly of very similar ability. I thought also that observance of Rule 28(a)(14) was somewhat lax, i.e. there were a number of occasions when I am sure the roqueted ball did not move on the croquet shot but no-one ever protested. However I left after two and a half games (we were interrupted by the groundsman and his mowing machine) equipped with e-mail addresses and buckets of goodwill. Should any other CA member be proposing a trip to Toronto in its fairly brief summer season, I would be happy to pass their details on to Mary. For those planning to go but preferring to see how things are, the Club is in Lytton Park just east and south of Avenue Road and Glencairn Avenue.

What happened next?

The CA's outgoing Press Officer, Pat Francis, gives a review of publicity work since September 2002

In September 2002 I took up my new role as public relations officer for the CA. With prompting from James, my exposure in the *Gazette* was a good starting point for some initial ideas. Inevitably things didn't quite work out as anticipated!

On the positive side I did plan the events I was going to focus on and put these against other sports action, both to assess the competition but also to see if croquet could benefit.

My aim was to raise croquet's profile as a serious competitive sport - and as far as England is concerned, a very successful one. I also wanted sports editors to think of croquet when they wanted an example of sporting excellence.

Much of the work was background research. Press releases were sent out regularly, always tailored to relevant targets and usually with supplementary information on croquet. Often they appeared to be ignored, by some papers, but eventually this steady drip feed did seem to get through. National coverage was 75% for events I had either targeted or been involved in setting up.

In addition, croquet received considerable unsolicited benefit from other sports. Notably with our Wimbledon champion in Bernard Neal, and thanks to Lord MacLaurin's gaffe we even made the front page and the leader column of the *Daily Telegraph*.

A highlight of the year was Charles Randall and Phil Shephard-Lewis from the *Daily Telegraph* covering the final of the British Opens at Cheltenham. Granted the report may have raised a few issues but none that croquet can't handle.

One potentially useful spin-off from the coverage was the interest expressed by Sky News, which could be relevant in the forthcoming MGM Assurance 6th WCF World Golf Croquet Championships.

The *Sunday Times* has also taken croquet seriously, printing a detailed interview with Robert Fulford, and most recently dubbing him "king of croquet", emphasising the point that

it's not only the England rugby union team who can beat the Aussies!

Most disappointing was the lack of take-up on the first England v South Africa match in Birmingham. However, thanks to Esther Jones's determination the *Birmingham Post* was eventually persuaded that this was a good story and their coverage was excellent.

Apart from this instance, the majority of the media in the regions was very responsive. The use of the Commonwealth Games bowls green for croquet struck a chord in the North West which Geoff Young and Colleen Firkin were able to exploit.

Getting national coverage has been frustrating at times so its very encouraging to know that so many clubs have excellent relationships with their local media. I feel that these contacts are likely to be the most beneficial to the development of the game and I've been happy to help when asked.

Nationally, I concentrated on the press, mainly because the major events (i.e. the World Championship and the MacRobertson Shield) were held in New Zealand and America respectively, making it difficult to provide relevant and rapid coverage for radio and television.

While on the issue of the MacRob you may be interested to know that press releases were sent out both at the beginning and at the end of the tournament with interim results emailed. I also rang the national broadsheets with the results just to make sure they got the message and some of them did!

One of the things I have learnt is that while croquet has a lot to offer players, so far as the national media is concerned it's winning that counts. We are very fortunate that this country is home to the top players in the world and this gives our sport a tremendous boost. Thank you Robert and the MacRob team.

On the other hand croquet is a minority sport. I think the image is slowly changing but more players would boost the interest in the game and thus make increased media attention more likely.



The mallet master An 81-year-old professor is the greatest Wimbledon champion the nation has ever produced. As Tim Henman crashed out at Centre Court in July, the octogenarian was in training to win his 38th title. By David Allsop. Portrait by Quintin Wright

Bernard Neal's long-running success in the Club Championship at Wimbledon prompted articles in the *Times*, the *Sunday Express* and November 2003's *Saga Magazine* (courtesy *Saga Magazine*)

When we moved to the Cotswolds I expected to have plenty of time on my hands. However, I now find myself struggling to fit in all my interests including playing more croquet.

It just remains for me to say thank you for all the help I've received and wish Rebecca Hopkins, who will take over from me, the best of luck.

Inter County Championships Organisers

The County Organisers for the two championships are listed below. If any players would like to be considered for their county teams in 2004, please contact the appropriate Organiser. In the case of the Association Inter Counties, the Channel Island have not managed to raise a team for 2004 but as the Tournament Committee felt that the full playing schedule should be maintained for this year, they have decided to introduce what is effectively two CA Select teams in the second division. The first, known as the CA Select will be for players resident in England and the second, known as Europe, for players resident outside England. This latter category can also include players

from Scotland or Wales providing they are not qualified for Glamorgan. This second team will provide an opportunity for players resident on the Continent who are members of the CA to play in one of the flag ship tournaments. Whilst all the results of the CA Select and Europe teams will count towards the final placings, neither of these two teams will be able to claim the second division championship or to gain promotion to the first division. Northampton and Oxfordshire still have a County Organiser but do not have an entry for the 2004 championship. I am sure Lionel Tibble of Mark Gooding would be pleased to hear of other players who are qualified for that county with a view to re-enter-

ing in future years.

The Golf Croquet Inter Counties Championship is still developing and entries will not be finalised until later in the year. The list below includes several Organisers for Counties that are not likely to field a full team. Please get in touch with the appropriate Organiser if you would like to play in this event. The Golf Croquet Committee will be happy to accept joint county entries to increase the scope of this event.

If any county Organiser changes his email address or telephone number please email changes to arliss@mistral.co.uk immediately.

Bill Arliss
Tournament Director

Association Croquet Inter Counties

COUNTY	NAME	TELEPHONE	EMAIL
Avon	Ray Ransom	0117 9682255	rrbr17928@blueyonder.co.uk
Bedfordshire	Howard Bottomley	01525 374697	h.bottomley@btinternet.com
Berkshire	Joe King	0118 948 1004	jwking@lgc.com
Cheshire	Colin Irwin	01565 722556	Colin@irwin-ce.freemove.co.uk
Devon	Brian Smith	01395 516652	Brsmith2@onetel.net.uk
Dorset	Peter Trimmer	07745 842772	pete.trimmer@ukes.aerospace.gknplc.com
Essex	Michael Heap	01708 728136	michael@roundhouse38.fsnet.co.uk
Glamorgan	Chris Williams	01633 400853	chris@butedock.demon.co.uk
Gloucestershire	David Foulser	01242 580295	davesvolvo@aol.com
Hertfordshire	John Gibbons	01442 261146	john.gibbons@fsmail.net
Kent	John Hobbs	01892 852072	hobbsmalllets@aol.com
Lancashire	James Hawkins	0151 724 2140	james@croquetgazette.fsnet.co.uk
Middlesex	Tom Brown	020 8337 4629	thomasnbrowne@aol.com
Norfolk	Jonathan Toy	01366 382280	Jonathan.wndis@btclick.com
Northampton (No team entered)	Lionel Tibble	01604 493929	Anglion@btinternet.com
Nottinghamshire	Richard White	07932 603366	richard@bandits.org
Oxfordshire (No team entered)	Mark Gooding	01865 717499	mark.gooding@merton.ox.ac.uk
Suffolk	Steve Comish	01394 385551	s.comish@btinternet.com
Surrey	George Noble	020 8940 1427	karin.n@netcomuk.co.uk
Sussex	Roger Wood	01424 210632	RogerWood@ntlworld.com
Warwickshire	Andrew Gregory	01223 573560	akgregory@talk21.com
Yorkshire	Peter Thompson	0046 8 6418663	peter.thompson@skanska.se
CA Select **	Roy Wallis	01323 416722	roywallis1@compuserve.com
Europe **	Mrs Sarah Burrow	01534 732167	burrow@itl.net

Golf Croquet Inter Counties

COUNTY	NAME	TELEPHONE	EMAIL
Buckinghamshire	David Bourne	01494 716493	bourne2gates@aol.com
Devon	Roger Bowen	01395 442360	Roger_bowen@budleighs.freemove.co.uk
Dorset	Tom Weston	01202 513064	topturntom@hotmail.com
Essex	Chris Sheen	01206 271429	chris.sheen@lineone.net
Hampshire	Chris Crowcroft	023 8060 1174	Christopher@crowcroft.freemove.co.uk
Kent	Roy Ware	01843 861109	Roy.ware@btinternet.com
Lancashire	Alan Pidcock	01772 743859	pidcock@manorh.u-net.com
Middlesex	Tom Coles	0207 394 4050	thomas@e-z.co.uk
Northumberland	John Moore	0191 266 6473	ajmhhn@ic24.net
Oxfordshire	John Munro	01491 651709	
Sussex	Bill Arliss	01273 728204	arliss@mistral.co.uk
Yorkshire	Sam Curry	01765 602172	spahotel@bronco.co.uk

News & Information

Golf Croquet

The CA is introducing two golf croquet competitions to encourage beginners and intermediate players. Both are continuing the tournaments organised by Syd Jones over the last four years. Clubs are urged to encourage a group entry for either the Grass Roots competition (minimum 8 players) for absolute beginners where they play their early rounds as doubles or Centre Stage (minimum 4 players), a singles competition. Look out for the flyers with more details.

Pendle Croquet Club

Previous worries about the demise of Pendle Croquet Club have proved unfounded. Facing eviction from their current home at Nelson College at the end of this playing season, the Club has seen several potential developments fall through at late stages. It's pleasing, then, to report that a new five-court site is now being levelled and prepared for 2005. 2004 tournaments will run as scheduled, but the prospect of this new venue is an exciting one for future years. Expect full coverage in a later edition of the *Gazette*.

New Press Officer

ENS Ltd are in the process of taking over the PR function from Pat Francis who will be spending more time enjoying croquet in the future!

Pat has done considerable background work this year to raise the profile of the game and this is showing itself in the increased amount of PR that

we are seeing in the media.

I have expressed our thanks to Pat for her excellent input in what can be at times a thankless task. I am also pleased that Pat will continue to be a member of the Marketing Committee.

ENS is a PR company headed up by Rebecca Hopkins. Rebecca has a first hand knowledge of Croquet with her late father being a keen club croquet player. Her PR company is heavily involved in sport especially Rugby. She joins us at a time when both English /British sports are doing particularly well.

Rebecca's contact details are:

Rebecca@ensltd.com
ENS Limited
42 Fullerton Road
London SW18 1BX
tel/fax 020 8871 3865

John Isaacs
Chairman, Marketing Committee

Pat Francis' review of the last year can be found on Page 21 of this edition.

Alternative Croquet

Towards the end of 2002 the CA commissioned Don Gaunt to bring together a collection of fun and alternative croquet games. This is now nearing completion. Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this book, not only those who have sent in specific games, including some of their own invention, but those who have given ideas and suggestions.

It is necessary to consider the possibility of copyright claims, and inventors will be asked to give permission to publish. To this end, here are the

names of the games that are anticipated will be included.

Please note that it is not yet too late to send in new games.

The following games are claimed as invented by the person named. If anyone disputes this, please make contact with Charles Waterfield, the Publishing Committee chairman, whose details are given on Page 2 of the *Gazette*.

Eros, Gokay, Tom Weston's Handicap - Tom Weston; Hand Croquet, Interactive Croquet, Tag - Don Gaunt; Race to the Peg - Peter Olson; Leeps and Poohs - Andrew Bennet; Hendra Croquet, 8-ball Contraflow Croquet - Malcolm Daines; Taking the Bisque(t) - Brian James and Tony Miller; Getting in the Washing - Martin Hodge.

The following games have been sent in but not claimed as invented by the person named. If anyone (including the person named) claims copyright, please make contact with the publishing chairman.

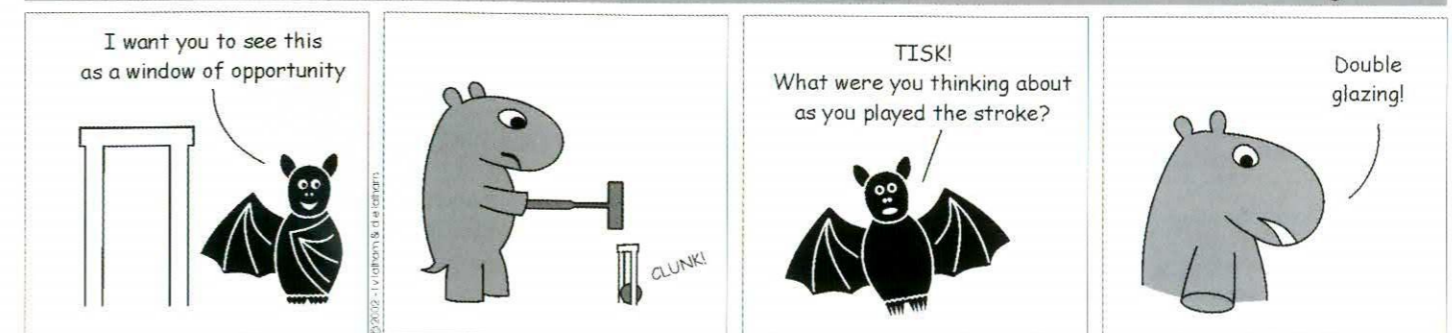
4-hoop Max, Time-share - Charles Waterfield; Four or more ahead take a bisque, Scarborough - Wendy Davidson; Friendly Croquet - Courtney Lindsay; Letchworth 1-ball - Duncan Hector; Optional Lift and Rush Croquet - John Hanson; 2-wicket Croquet - Michael Wright; 3-2-1 - Source unknown.

The following games have, it seems, been played for so long that no-one knows who invented them. For these also, please make contact with the publishing chairman if you wish to claim copyright.

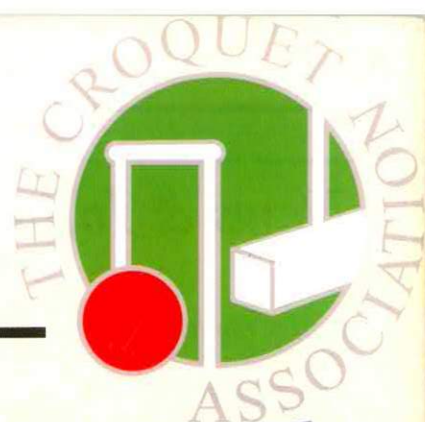
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Challenge & Gilbey book by Alan Oldham	£3.00
Lawn Management by John Beech	£2.00
Croquet: Technique by John Riches	£7.00
Croquet: Error Correction by John Riches	£7.00
Croquet: Next Break Strategy by John Riches	£9.00
Croquet: The Mental Approach by 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 Breerton in the 1990s

Single ball strokes 30min	£12.00
Croquet strokes 30min	£12.00
Tactics parts 1 & 2 60min	£14.00
Tactics part 3 - Peeling 90min	£16.00
Using Bisques 30min	£12.00
Sports Sciences & Croquet 30min	£12.00

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 low prices, and our voucher scheme entitles members to **10% discount** on their first set!

Club Equipment

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:

Balls - Barlow GT, Dawson and Sunshiny

Hoops - Omega, Aldridge, Townsend and Jaques

Corner flags, yardline markers, pegs, clips, gauges.