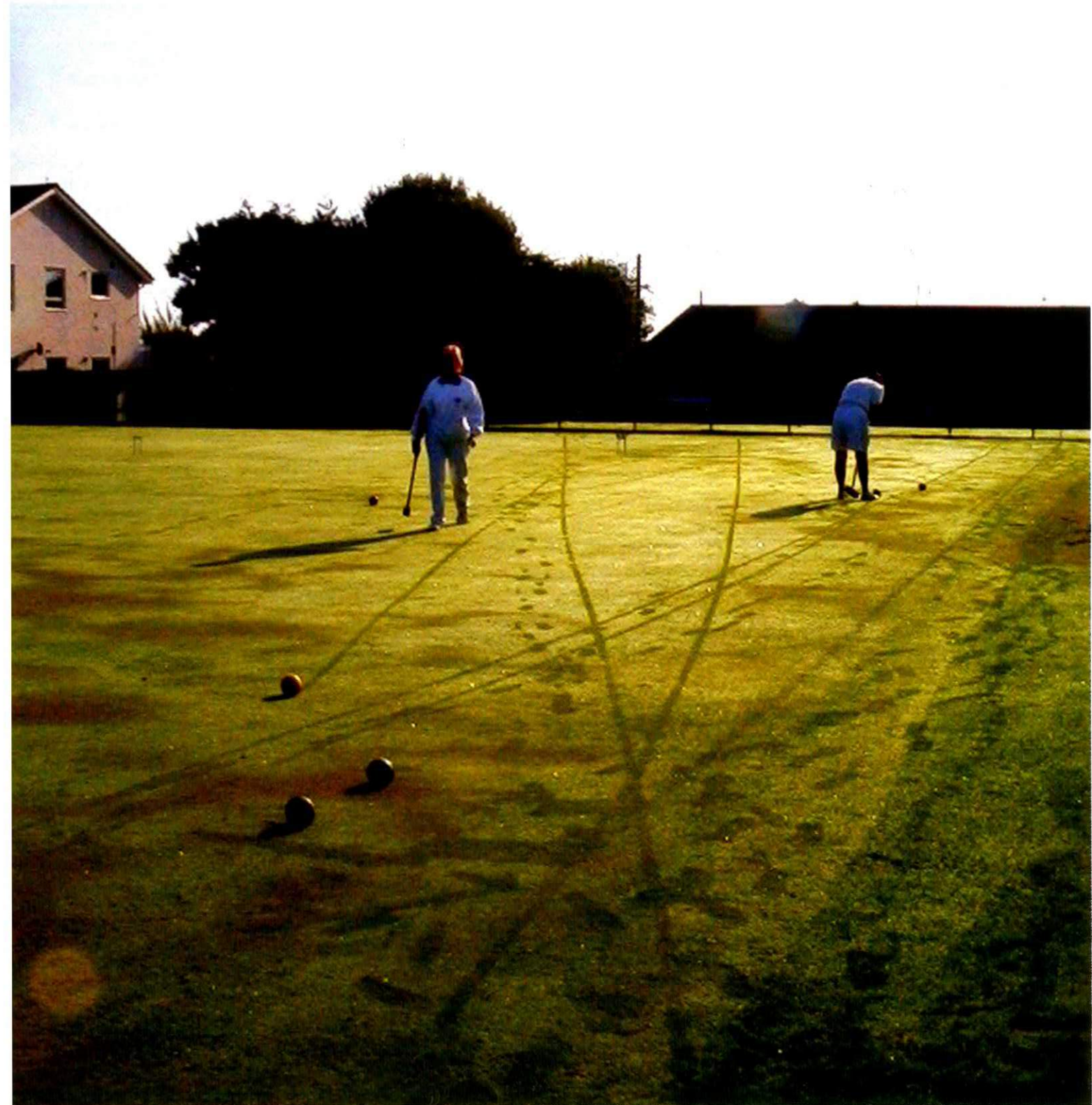




THE CROQUET GAZETTE

ISSUE 291-JUNE 2004



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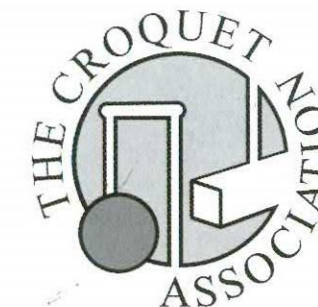
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Publication Schedule

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Advertising

Full details of all advertising rates and data are available at all clubs as well as 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.

Front cover photograph:

An Autumn morning at Budleigh Salterton's Handicap Tournament in September 2003.

Photo by Peter Miller of Sidmouth.

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

Editorial

Since we last spoke, I've been keeping myself busy. After 20 years of commuting to other clubs, the time is right, I've decided, to set something up here in Liverpool. Enquiries from new players are not exactly flooding in, but the trickle over the last year or so tells me that I could make a go of it. But first there's the problem of location. Now, just how hard can that be?

Back in the old days, when the streets of Liverpool were paved with gold, our City Fathers spent their vast wealth on providing parkland for the masses. Some of that green space is pretty run down now; some of it's hilly, or covered with trees; some of it, to the north of the city, is just too close to Southport to be inside the catchment area I'd need to cover.

Down here in leafy south Liverpool, and just 100 yards from my front door, is Calderstones Park. Back when I was small, there was a big tennis club here - six hard and 36 grass courts. It's a sorry sight now. The pavilion fell down three years ago. The hard surface of the main courts is a cracked plateau of tarmac, its white lining long faded. The Council dutifully mark out five grass courts every spring time. A handful of 12-year olds turn up each year to knock a ball back and forth for the month around Wimbledon. Then it sits idle until the next June, each year a bit more neglected than the last.

I've paced it out. Give me a couple of bulldozers and a lot of grass seed, and there's *easily* room for 16 full sized croquet lawns. For a club with a membership of one, that's perhaps a little immodest. Even so, two or three should be an achievable aim, and suit the purposes of a new club.

So I call the Council, and eventually I get through to the Sports Development Office. It's not promising. Frank, the guy I speak to, is moderately receptive. He mutters something about there being insufficient sporting provision for "your sort", as if I'm sat in a silk dressing-gown in my oak-panelled library. Give me a few minutes, and I start to make some progress. Stately home owners have their own croquet lawns, and don't need a municipal club nearby. Council-run bowling greens, tennis courts or croquet lawns are no different from one another, in that their market lies with those who don't have acres of garden. I talk about croquet for women, croquet for those with disabilities, croquet for those on low incomes. OK, says Frank, who's coming round to my side, and who refers me to Gordon, his boss.

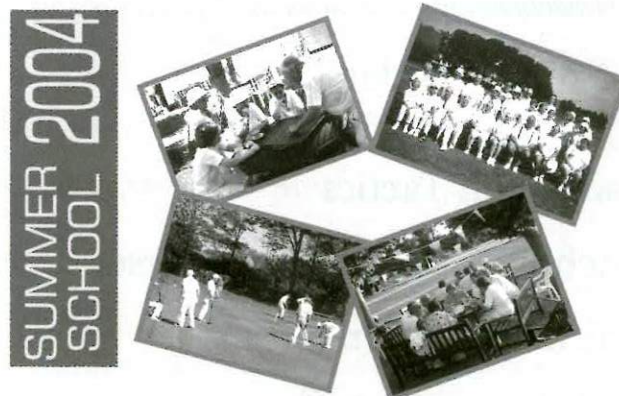
I draft a document and send it off. No specific mention of Calderstones - just a broad shopping list of my minimum requirements, and the sort of market to which the game is aimed. A week goes by and the response is a clear "Sorry, not interested". The thing is this. Liverpool City Council have a clear agenda - attract women (tick), the disabled (tick), youth groups (tick), schools (tick), and those in areas where there's insufficient provision (tick, again). They've made a list of five target sports - tennis, athletics, swimming and so on. Croquet isn't on the guest list, so we can't join the party. Much as Gordon and Frank may want to help me, politics won't allow them to get involved.

Where this gets complicated is in the appearance of a rival for the acquisition of the Calderstones Park tennis courts. Anders Borg is an entrepreneurial Norwegian stockbroker and would-be tennis impresario. For five days in early June (weather-permitting, or course), he shoves up a grandstand - right on top of my croquet lawns - and charges folk to come to his new Tennis International. His stated aim in the press is to develop a tennis academy in the Park, getting local kids into sport. His website's claim is to charge £150 a throw for corporate hospitality, at "Liverpool's most exciting lifestyle event". Decide for yourselves.

Maybe he makes a go of it, and the City Council bring hundreds of disadvantaged schoolchildren into sport. Good luck to him. And if his business interests bankroll the scheme, all well and good. Or maybe he'll be lured indoors by Liverpool's swanky new tennis arena, due for completion as part of the Capital of Culture celebrations in four years' time. What, then, happens to me and my Grand Plan?

The saga could go on and on. I'm naive to think that one phone call is enough for the Council to roll over in submission and swing open the doors leading to a new super-club. But then I'm not so easily daunted as to walk away at the first hindrance, when the argument is far from lost. The ball, as they say, is back in my court.

SOUTH EAST CROQUET FEDERATION



July 26 - July 30 2004

If you enjoy playing croquet and your handicap is 14 or higher and you would like to improve your game, enrol in the Summer School to learn decisive match winning techniques, how to use bisques to set up and maintain breaks, and much more. The school is held at Southwick's club grounds, in an informal and relaxed atmosphere under the direction of friendly CA approved coaches in charge of groups of four. Morning coffee, a superb lunch and afternoon tea is provided, and a barbeque is held on an evening later in the week.

For more details, prospectus and entry form, contact Daphne Gaitley, 38 Monks Close, Lancing, West Sussex, BN15 9DB. Tel 01903 767174 or email daphne.gaitley@virgin.net

Letters

Sport England and the CCPR

Thank you for arranging for the arrival of the April 2004 issue of the Gazette almost exactly to the day 100 years after the first issue appeared.

I must point out an error - or at any rate a conveyed misleading impression - in your article about past editors and in particular about Lloyd Pratt.

The Sports Council and the Central Council for Physical Education were and still are quite separate bodies and independent of each other. In 1969 the Government agreed to make grants for the development of sports and games, and in this initiative it and we were advised by the CCPR. This non-government body was set up largely by the efforts of the Duke of Edinburgh, but the money came originally from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, later the Department of the Environment. The current Sports Council was not established by the Government until 1972, (after Bryan Lloyd Pratt's time) when it was provided with funds for the furtherance of sport development, and we dealt directly with them thereafter.

The CCPR have always been most helpful to us though they have never had any money to give us, have not been trammelled by government directives and politics, and I like them always to get full credit for what they do.

Alan Oldham
High Wycombe

An alternative glossary

One of our Croquet Club members, Arthur "Clem" Clements, thought up the enclosed list of alternative croquet terms. I wondered if readers might find it entertaining.

TAKE OFF Necessary action before retiring to bed
RUSH Getting out of the theatre before the National Anthem
RUNNING A HOOP A 'hoop' is a medieval term for a jousting tournament. The hoop was always run by

the Squire who would designate his mistress to "Run the hoop"
BLUE RED BLACK YELLOW The colours of the National Flag of the Pacific Island of KRO KAY
HALF WAY The meeting place of a monetary agreement after a long argument
ROQUET Sir Isaac Pitman (of Pitman's shorthand fame) advocated the letter 'C' to be redundant, as the necessary sounds could be covered by S and K as in Sity and Kokonut
TOUCHING BALL Capt. Albert BALL VC DSO 2 bars MC was a distinguished World War 1 airman, and his colleagues would always touch him on the head as a good omen before taking off on their next mission
MALLETT A long-handled hammer-shaped instrument used for making holes in turf
FOUR BALL BREAK A corruption of Fire Bell Brake, which was an alarm system fitted to the East German Brabant car alerting the driver of an impending disaster
PEG OUT The last hoop in a life long tournament

Penny Benifer
Preston LTCC, Brighton

Clothesmanship

You may not know that the 'Roquetetta' picture (Gazette 290, Front Cover and Page 19) was used by Stephen Potter in *Gamesmanship* (Rupert Hart-Davis, 1947).

I am sure you would find it very funny indeed, as are the three sequels, especially *Lifemanship*. I can remember first reading this while waiting for a haircut, and had to put it away until I was by myself!

Collin Southern
Woking

Potter's work contains much useful, if unethical, advice for those wishing to win games without resorting either to good play or explicit cheating. A fuller discussion is on Page 14 of this edition. - Ed.

Recruitment & publicity

When reviewing our efforts to publicise croquet and croquet clubs, please consider that Budleigh has just had 40 new members apply since April 1st and has just completed a most enjoyable B class 3 day event over the holiday with a good number of spectators enjoying the games and taking tea on the terrace. Budleigh now has the highest membership it has had since the LTA tennis tournament finished in 1973 and (probably) the highest croquet playing membership ever. All from adverts and leaflet stuffing into morning papers at 5am!

How many people caught the Martha Lane Fox news item which claimed that since leaving Lastminute.com she has had two job offers? One of these was to publicise lawn bowls throughout the nation. She did refuse it, but we should take notice of the enterprise this involved.

As I have before remarked lawn bowls takes a bit of beating when it comes to TV time and in other ways. They have excellent brochures and other publications in the hands of Sport England and they have flourished mightily in the waters in which we croquet clubs fish. This TV time is so important and they have recognised this and modified their game formats especially for the purpose. Simple to understand but full of tactical nous and skill. Croquet needs the same innovative treatment and a little expert thought and leadership applied to get it.

Roger Bowen
Budleigh Salterton

Pendulum Style

From your front cover (Gazette 290, April 2004), it seems that Lord Tollemache and C.E.Pepper were using "the pendulum style" in 1911. From the picture of Pepper, it would seem that this is the same as used by Fulford etc, who, as I thought, was supposed to have invented it.

Clearly, it would seem to have been

well known before 1911. Is there any early evidence of what constituted "pendulum style" in 1911?

Collin Southern
Woking



The images referred to were from a series of cigarette cards, reproduced on the cover of Issue 251 of the Gazette (September 1997), which, incidentally, was the first issue of the magazine to have a full colour cover.

Only those with the strongest of reading glasses would have made out the accompanying text on April's cover. Details for CE Pepper (above right) from the reverse of the original card read, "This player ... has a style of his own, and not to be recommended; it appears to be a mixture of front play, and pendulum style."

Cyril Corbally (above left) is claimed on the reverse of his card to be "the originator of pendulum style." Whether this was the same as what a modern commentator might describe as the pendulum style of Robert Fulford is a moot point, and one for historians to discuss. - Ed.

February in Florida

The format of the English Croquet Week in Florida is being revised. Next year beware, the Yanks will be better prepared! British born Mike Jenner, the National Croquet Center's new General Manager, is running an Association Tournament for Americans later this year that he hopes will raise the standard of play and give the Brits a better run for their money next year!

He is very keen to recruit as many top flight US players to the club next

February to play head to head against the best Brits. To encourage this, next year's tournament will include a top class event that will run in parallel with other class and handicap events suitable for most players. There are also plans for an "awayday", playing at another local club plus an evening social for all players to meet and mix during the tournament.

Next year, two options will be available, both departing in early February: a one week trip including 5 days of croquet or a 10 night stay to include 6 or 7 days of croquet plus some leisure time. Both packages will include flights and accommodation. If you want to have a winter break in the sun and gain a competitive edge before the 2005 season, this is an ideal opportunity.

Final details were still being worked out at the time of going to press. If you would like more information, call 01825 740262 or e-mail enquiries@diplomatic.co.uk for further information.

Nicky Evans
Diplomatic Travel

Championship Selection

As the 6th ranked English Golf Croquet player in England at the end of 2003, I should just like to make it universally known that I have always been available for selection into this summer's World Golf Croquet Championships. The first five preceding me in the rankings have all been selected, plus the remaining two members of the Golf Croquet Selection Committee who did not qualify via that method. Two further players have also been selected who are below me in the rankings making four in all whose ranking is no bar.

To quote WS Gilbert, "Fallacy somewhere, I fancy".

Taking 2002 and 2003 together, I am recorded as having played 38 qualifying games, of which I have won 26, which qualifies me for a world ranking of 23 (and there will be 64 competitors in the forthcoming championship). Of

the first 30 players in world rankings, only 15 have played more games than I have. Would the other 14 players be denied their world status because of having played too few games?

Besides that I have 5 wins out of 6 unrecorded, because the results were not sent in. Nevertheless, this was not a Mickey Mouse competition, as there is a nice mini Pidcock mallet as an annual trophy to show for it.

Edward Dymock
Blackheath, London

Bill Arliss, Chairman of Selectors, replies:

As the instigator of the Golf Croquet ranking system I would be quite happy if my system could do the work of the selection committee. Unfortunately life is not as simple as mere statistics, and we have to have a five man committee to do the job. They consider many factors, the ranking system being only a small part. As only one of the committee, I cannot answer for the others, but quite obviously the committee felt that with Edward's comparatively limited number of games, which did not include an Open Championship, there were others more deserving of a place.

Had Edward felt that the Selectors were wrong, then he could have taken the opportunity of entering the Qualifier. That is what it is there for and it was scheduled at one of his own clubs.

I must challenge one of his statements. There is no such thing as a Golf Croquet World Ranking, as many of the top international players are not included. It is described as an International ranking, Brits plus a few overseas players.

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Obituary

John Cameron Grant
1934 - 2004

My introduction to croquet was through John Grant in October 2000.

I was out for an early morning run in Ponteland. It was a long straight road about a mile from home and I could see someone walking towards me in the distance. As I got closer I realised it was John Grant, a neighbour of mine for some 30 years, and he raised his hand to stop me. "Don't want to stop your run," he said, "just thought I should let you know the Millennium Lottery Grant has come through and we should have the indoor carpet for Dalton Village Hall shortly. I will let you know when you can come and have a try." This was John in his element, as I was to discover over the next four years.

John had been chairman of Belsay Hall Croquet Club since the founding chairman, David Price, moved to Norfolk in 1996. He was latterly also a member of Tyneside Croquet Club so he could take part in even more competitive play each season. John was Belsay's representative on the Croquet North Federation's Committee, for many years its Development Officer. In this position he realised the potential of a little used but modern village hall not far from Ponteland and Belsay. It was ideally suited as an indoor croquet facility, with one problem though, money! He knew the situation; he was Treasurer of the Hall Committee!

He'd already successfully applied for Lottery money to put double glazing in the Hall a year or two earlier to reduce the electric heating costs. This experience prepared John to make an application for funds for the indoor carpet, so that greater use could be made of the facility by local (and not so local) residents, and some much needed revenue could be generated. This he successfully accomplished. Not many people realise this was a sole effort!

He booked the hall for Wednesdays

and Thursdays so the carpet could stay down for two days. John invited club members from Belsay Hall and Tyneside CC to play association croquet on Wednesdays and golf croquet on Thursday afternoons. Thursday mornings were for beginners, like me, who had been largely recruited by advertisements in the local library and on local village notice boards. Over the two winters before he took ill with acute myeloid leukaemia, John introduced more than twenty 'new' people to croquet, many of whom joined the local C.A. affiliated clubs. This initiative has continued, with his guidance, and has had a strong following over its four years of existence.

John, a trained musician who spent all of his working life writing film scripts and producing films, initially in Scotland where he grew up, and then in the North of England, also co-wrote a book on the history of his Church of Scotland in Newcastle. He became hooked on croquet after he took early retirement in 1992.

On joining Belsay Hall CC shortly afterwards, he began to eat, sleep and drink (to) the game! His dedication to the sport was unparalleled and the same dedication was infectious. Following the groundwork done by David Price, John continued to build the club. It grew in numbers and strength. John was Club Handicapper, arranged coaching, leagues, tournaments, the Annual Dinner and Presentation of Awards event and produced the Club's annual handbook. He organised trips to other parts of the country for club members to take part in competitions. He was even asked by a package holiday company to go and investigate the possibility of 'Croquet Weeks' in Spain.

As Croquet North's Development Officer John attended CA Development Committee meetings in London for a number of years.

Sadly his physical involvement in croquet came to an abrupt and untimely end early in 2002 with the diagnosis of leukaemia and the essential chemotherapy treatment that ensued. However, with the same determina-

tion and dedication he had displayed for croquet he set about investigating his illness and how best he could assist the doctors and consultants control the leukaemia. No stone was unturned. John sought advice and information from all sources, (including Harley Street - "Not very helpful" I remember him telling me after that visit to London) and established a strict dietary regime to minimise the work his body had to do to process his food intake - toxins were out! No alcohol and as pure food and drinks as possible. With no good white cells in his bloodstream he had little immunity to infection so he avoided people contact as much as possible and we all made sure we went no where near him if we had any sort of illness. This approach combined with regular blood transfusions worked for over two years. We gather this was something of an exception - but he was rather a special person!

Unfortunately at the beginning of March this year John, becoming weaker through having to have stronger chemotherapy drugs, started to react to these drugs and succumbed to the treatment on the 18th March. All who met John remember him as the perfect gentleman of croquet.

This perfection persisted throughout his illness, his spirits were always high and although he was under no illusion of the seriousness of the disease he continued to help in the 'behind the scenes' running of the Belsay Club. He managed to come to a couple of committee meetings before deciding it was in the club's best interests for him to stand down as chairman at the beginning of the 2003 season.

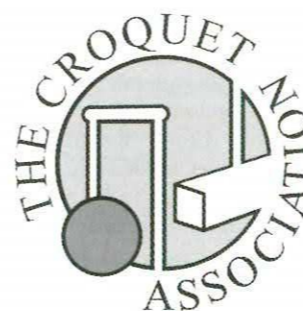
He was awarded a 'Certificate of Achievement' in the Services to Sport category by Castle Morpeth Sports Council in January 2003 and a Croquet Association Diploma this past October. Both deservedly earned.

John, we salute you, you will be greatly missed by us all.

Phil Errington

The Croquet Association - Financial Statements

for the year ended 31 December 2003



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 2003, together with the accounting records maintained for that year. I obtained such further information as I considered necessary to assist me in my 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 2004

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2003

	2003		2002	
	£	£	£	£
Income from:				
Subscriptions:				
Individuals		36,849		36,387
Clubs		22,115		21,890
Levies		12,941		12,688
Surplus of income from -				
Commercial activities		17,036		15,462
Tournaments and coaching		3,966		5,799
Advertising and royalties		5,177		1,995
Investments		5,649		6,524
Appeal & Sponsorship		7,324		13,820
Total Income		111,057		114,565
Expenditure on:				
Publications	21,034		18,991	
Marketing & Development	5,373		2,796	
Grants to Clubs and Federations	18,207		11,226	
International activities	8,719		694	
Central administration costs:				
Salary costs	31,727		34,696	
Office overheads	5,962		7,315	
Depreciation of office building	2,704		-	
Office services	4,706		4,657	
Council members' travel expenses	2,130		3,441	
Accountancy	8		6	
Sundry expenses	1,192		1,540	
Total Expenditure		101,762		85,780
Surplus for the year before taxation		9,295		28,785
Provision for Corporation Tax				
year ended 31st December 2002	1,890		1,652	
adjustment for prior year	(274)		343	
		1,616		1,995
Surplus for the year after taxation		7,679		26,790
Net transfer from/(to) special funds		(6,921)		(26,284)
Surplus/(Deficit) for year transferred to General Fund		£758		£506

Comments on the 2003 accounts

Building and moving to the new CA Office in 2002 has had an effect on the CA's accounts rather like an earthquake and its aftershocks, making it difficult to compare this and the previous years' Accounts. In 2002 the cost of the building created a new fixed asset in the Balance Sheet of nearly £54,000, which will be written off over 20 years. It has also created a new expenditure item in the 2003 Income & Expenditure Account of £2,700. The President's Appeal to help restore the CA's depleted reserves raised £13,800 in 2002 but only a residual £2,900 in 2003. The move has also affected Salaries and Office Overheads.

Stripping these effects out, income for

the year was relatively buoyant. The CA is very grateful to Lincoln Unit Trust Managers for their support in 2003, which boosted both sponsorship and advertisement revenue, and to the late Eddie Hunt who bequeathed £1,000 to the CA. Jeff Dawson produced another excellent result for the CA Shop. But the surplus on Tournaments fell, mainly as a result of increased lawn fees.

The largest single increase in expenditure was the £7,300 cost of the MacRobertson Shield team (well below budget), followed by an extra £7,000 for development grants to clubs. The former was covered by transfers from the International Fund and Duffield Bequest. The latter is a consequence of Council's decision to provide much greater support

for Croquet at its grass roots. Grants totalling £17,000 were given to Bristol, Enfield, Llanfairfechan, Pendle, Rother Valley, Sidmouth and Sussex County. This is the highest ever annual expenditure on development grants and it is noteworthy that it has been met from revenue without recourse to the Development Fund. But it is likely that leaner times are ahead. Council has therefore set aside a further £7,500 into this fund in order to help sustain the grants programme in future years.

A more detailed analysis of the Accounts is available on request from the CA Office (please send a stamped addressed envelope). This fuller commentary will also be distributed at the AGM in October.

Roger Bray, Treasurer

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2003

	Note	2003		2002	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets	1				
Office Building at cost			51,053		53,758
Croquet and office equipment at written down value			1,770		4,259
Trophies at valuation			10,000		10,000
Investments at cost	2		28,836		28,836
			<u>91,659</u>		<u>96,853</u>
Current Assets					
Stocks held for resale	1	10,999		11,506	
Loans to Clubs & Federations		4,000		2,000	
Debtors & prepayments		5,422		6,360	
Cash at bank and in hand		144,381		138,237	
		<u>164,802</u>		<u>158,103</u>	
Current Liabilities					
Subscriptions received in advance		3,507		1,991	
Creditors & accrued expenses		10,772		18,104	
Provision for taxation		1,596		1,954	
		<u>15,875</u>		<u>22,049</u>	
Net current assets			148,927		136,054
Net Assets			<u>£240,586</u>		<u>£232,907</u>
<i>Financed by:</i>					
General Fund					
Balance at 1 January 2002			93,019		92,513
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year from Income & Expenditure Account retained in General Fund			758		506
			<u>93,777</u>		<u>93,019</u>
Special Funds	3		146,809		139,888
			<u>£240,586</u>		<u>£232,907</u>

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS - 31 DECEMBER 2003

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


	2003 £	2002 £
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	<u>£40,438</u>	<u>£39,400</u>

3 SPECIAL FUNDS

	Development £	Benefactors £	International £	Duffield Bequest £	Total £
Balance at 1 January 2003	67,000	22,173	29,964	20,751	139,888
Transfers from/(to) General Fund:					
Investment income (net)	-	748	1,011	835	2,594
Donations & Appeal	-	4,124	-	-	4,124
General allocation (net)	7,500	-	(4,520)	(2,777)	203
	<u>74,500</u>	<u>27,045</u>	<u>26,455</u>	<u>18,809</u>	<u>146,809</u>
Balance at 31 December 2003	<u>£74,500</u>	<u>£27,045</u>	<u>£26,455</u>	<u>£18,809</u>	<u>£146,809</u>

Editor's note: Previous Gazettes have featured the accounts in the same edition as the agenda for the Croquet Association's Annual General Meeting. The agenda for 2004 will appear in the August edition, along with minutes for last year's meeting.

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A New Four-Lawn Club

Janet Davies, Secretary of Chester Croquet Club, describes the long haul towards expansion



Left: Chester's Chairman, Alan Stubbs, addresses the crowds at the rainy opening ceremony. Club Secretary Janet Davies is on the left. Right: CA Secretary Nigel Graves opens the new lawns by running Hoop 1.

Westminster Park has been the home to croquet players in Chester since shortly after the foundation of the city's Club in 1977. There were two lawns within the park, a Sports Park run by Chester City Council, and devotedly maintained by Chester City Council's groundsmen. A mile or so south of the centre of town, the facility has always suffered from being just too far away from the tourist trail, and consequently has seen itself drop lower on the Council's priority list.

While the lawns' turf was good, the site was not. The lawns were on a decided slope (from S to N) in part of the cricket outfield, with no barrier to protect players or lawns from cricket balls, footballs, dogs being walked, mischievous small boys with or without bicycles, golfers taking a short cut from the golf course (and practising the odd drive en route), and biting April winds from Wales. The pavilion, shared with three bowling clubs, was separated from the lawns by a thick beech hedge. For all day events a tent was erected, as equipment could not be left unguarded over lunch.

So from time to time the Club's officers suggested to the Parks Department that it would be a good idea to move the lawns to a better site within the Park. This suggestion always fell upon deaf ears, with the

standard of parks maintenance in decline throughout the city.

Then the Parks Department discovered three things.

Firstly, lottery grants for large sports projects were to be had, if matching funding could be found (and no matching funding was needed for small projects for independent bodies).

Secondly, there was a tennis club nearby, with courts needing refurbishment. They had no money, but owned a site which was greatly desired by developers.

Thirdly, the bowls and croquet pavilion was destroyed by fire at the beginning of May 1996. This brought the Council a large capital sum from insurance (no one seems sure where this has gone; since 1997 the croquet and bowling clubs have been sharing a rented Portakabin on the site of the old pavilion).

So in 1999 Chester City Council applied for a large lottery grant to improve the facilities in Westminster Park. This would provide a clubhouse and courts for the tennis club, public multi sport courts, new lawns for croquet (but only 2.5 lawns), and a new pavilion to be shared by bowlers and croquet players with direct access onto crown greens and new croquet lawns. The old croquet lawns would become cricket outfield once again. Matching funding would come from the sale of

the tennis club's site for residential development and perhaps from the insurance money from the fire.

In late 1999 the City Council were told that their lottery application had failed. They decided to rescue something from the ruin of their hopes by going ahead with the tennis project anyway, financing the project with the matching funding. They also suggested to the Croquet Club that we should apply for a Millennium 'Sport for All' Lottery grant to fund new lawns. The Club decided to proceed

The Sport For All grant was only available for independent organisations and was limited to projects of a total cost of up to £5000. As there was now no prospect of a pavilion, the whole area previously earmarked for lawns and pavilion could be used, which would give 3.5 lawns. Indeed this was essential, as applicants need to be able to claim a substantial improvement in facilities.

The work would involve weed killing, ploughing and harrowing the new site (which had been churned, compressed and pockmarked by fifty years of football), before seed was sown and the lawns brought to a playable condition. 100 yards of hedge were also needed along one side of the lawns (not to protect players from marauding dogs and children - perish the thought - but to keep the

Club's older members safe from the wintry west winds. This would let the Club extend its season by about 4 weeks) and 100 yards of fence with base boards to keep the public, walking down a footpath on the far side, from being hit by stray balls.

The newly appointed Parks Manager (Chester had not had a Parks Manager for over two years) wrote the estimates. Promises of grants were obtained for £500 from the Croquet Association and £100 from the North West Federation of Croquet Clubs (plus a great deal of good advice from the Development Officer). The Club arranged to commit £500 of its own funds to the project, and in April 2000 submitted a very carefully worded application for a further £3000, with a reference from Chester's Sports Development Officer.

At the end of June 2000 they heard that the application had been successful, and in July cheques were received. That was the easy part of the project.

The hard part was about to begin.

The real problem was that the Parks Department were organising the work. Although the money was in, the Chester Club did not have direct control of the project. And in a city, which has an enormous number of green spaces, and is visited by vast numbers of tourists, new croquet lawns in a park only seen by Chester residents come a long way down the list of priorities. So it was all very slow. The timetable below shows the pace of nearly four years of progress.

It all ended happily after all. The lawns have become available in the nick of time, as during these four years membership has increased from about 35 in 2000 to 53 last September. And the 2004 coaching course for beginners, the first to use the new lawns, has around 20 participants. Had the lawns not been ready, members would feel distinctly crowded by now.

But it's not all finished yet. The Club still need a pavilion.

Editor's footnote:

For almost as long as I've been on the North West scene, Chester's fortunes have been far from healthy. An arson attack in 1996, which destroyed the clubhouse and all the Club's equipment, nearly forced the club towards extinction. Recovery has taken a great deal of time and effort.

Roger Croston, the current President, had been looking for new lawns since as long ago as 1993, but it's taken 11 years for that to become a reality. At the gala opening in May, Alan Stubbs, the Chester Chairman, praised the efforts of Janet Davies, whose determined and obsessive efforts have seen this project through.

It's fair to say that this project would probably never have got off the ground without Janet's inexhaustible drive. The new lawns must surely give the club the impetus it needs to create what promises to be a major force in Croquet in the North of England.

Timescale to Completion

Jul 2000	money received
Aug 2000	project milestones and payment schedule agreed with Parks Manager
Aug 2000	first weed eradication carried out; first stage payment made
Oct 2000	heavy rains make work impossible
Feb 2001	hedge and fence installed along cricket field boundary; 2nd stage payment
Apr 2001	2nd application of weed killer
Jun 2001	area of lawns ploughed
Oct - Mar 2002	worries about lack of progress; liaison with Councillors and with officers of the Friends of Westminster Park (a newly formed pressure group)
Apr 2002	harrowing and seeding of lawns; 3rd stage payment made
Jun 2002	stone picking by scouts and by club members
Jul 2002	first cut of lawns; 4th stage payment made
Aug 2002	second cut of lawns
Sep - Apr 2003	little progress & more worry
May 2003	fence and baseboard installed along boundary with footpath; 5th stage payment made
Jun 2003	3.5 lawns marked out as a trial. Possibility of squeezing in a 4th lawn.
Jul - Oct	lawns being played occasionally, but not yet cut really short. Old lawns still available
Oct 2003	6th stage payment made
Nov 2003	Confirmation received that Lord Mayor of Chester booked to open the new lawns at a grand ceremony on 5th May 2004. Parks officers informed of this
Winter 2003/4	Equipment updated; two complete sets of hoops & balls bought
Mar 2004	Invitations to opening ceremony sent out
28 Mar 2004	Four new lawns marked out and ready for new season
28 Apr 2004	Message received from Lord Mayor's office to say that he will not after all be available on 5th May
5 May 2004	Lawns ceremonially opened by Nigel Graves, secretary of the CA, who presents the last stage payment to Parks Manager and runs a hoop, watched by about 60 people.

The Art of Gamesmanship

Advice for the luckless player from the game's archives

The time pressures of the modern weekend tournament, and the advent of the Supershot player, leave many participants in the game unable to savour some of Croquet's finer points. Stephen Potter, croquet player and best-selling author of the Gamesmanship series of books, appreciated better than most that winning is less about tactical know-how and technical expertise, and more concerned with the psychological war between sparring players. This extract from Gamesmanship is one of several he wrote which Croquet players may find relevant.

The Second Rule of Gamesmanship: IF THE OPPONENT WEARS, OR ATTEMPTS TO WEAR, CLOTHES CORRECT AND SUITABLE FOR THE GAME, BY AS MUCH AS HIS CLOTHES SUCCEED IN THIS FUNCTION, BY SO MUCH SHOULD THE GAMESMAN'S CLOTHES FAIL.

Corollary: Conversely, if the opponent wears the wrong clothes, the gamesman should wear the right.

"If you can't volley, wear velvet socks," we Old Gamesmen used to say. The good-looking young athlete, perfectly dressed, is made to feel a fool if his bad shot is returned by a man who looks as if he has never been on a tennis-court before. His good clothes become a handicap by virtue of their very suitability.

It is true that against the new golf-club member, inclined to be modest and nervous, a professional turn-out can be effective. A well-worn but well-cut golf jacket and a good pair of mackintosh trousers can, in this situation, be of real value. (My own tip here is to take an ordinary left-hand glove, cut the thumb off, make a diamond-shaped hole on the back, and say "Henry Cotton made this for me - he never plays with any other.")

Counter-Gamesmanship

But the average gamesman must beware, at this point, of counter-gamesmanship. He may find himself up against an experienced hand, such as JKC Dalziel, who, when going out



Clothesmanship: wrong clothes in which Miss E. Watson beat Mrs. de Greim in the Finals of the Waterloo Cup Croquet Tourney, 18th August 1902.

to golf, used to keep two changes in the dickey of his car - one correct and the other incorrect. One golf-bag covered in zips and with five woods, twelve irons and a left-handed cleek; a second bag contained only three irons and one wood, each with an appearance of string-ends tied round their necks. Many is the time I have scoured London with him to find a pair of odd shoe-laces. His plan was simple. If he found, at the club-house, that his opponent was rather humbly dressed, he would wear the smart outfit. If the conditions were reversed, out would come the frayed pin-stripe trousers, the stringy clubs and the fairisle sweater.

"And I don't want a caddie," he would say.

Of course, in his correct clothes, he would automatically order a caddie, calling for "Bob", and mumbling something about "Must have Bob. He knows my game. Caddied for me in the Northern Amateur."

Croquet, claimed Potter, comes some way down the pecking order of sports, something which sets the croqueteer at a great psychological disadvantage in a head-to-head clash. All is not lost, though, for the croquet player encountering some-one of much greater sporting prowess:

Much exaggerated praise has been churned out in honour of gamesmanship and its part in the building of the British character. Still, if we study the records, they do reveal not a little of courage in the overcoming of apparently hopeless odds. I am thinking, of course, of G Tearle - not the actor, but the croquet-player. And indeed, some of the prettiest effects of gamesmanship are to be seen when an expert in, say, croquet, plays golf, it may be, off the same handicap, against a real expert in, say, rugger - a man who really has played rugger, twice capped for England. The rugger man certainly starts with a tremendous advantage. His name is a legend, his game is glorious. Croquet is considered, by the lay world, to be piddling. The two meet on the common ground of golf; and even golf, to the rugger man, is considered fairly piddling. Yet I have seen Tearle, not only break down this view but reverse it, so that in the end the Rugger international would sometimes even be heard claiming that he came from croquet people, but that his character "was not suited to the game".

Tearle by long practice actually made capital out of croquet. And let me add that Tearle's triumph demonstrates once again that it is in these long drawn-out reversal tactics that training and the proper diet stand you in such good stead.

Gamesmanship seemed to become a lost art over the next 40 years. Issue 190 of the Gazette (March 1987) bore a letter, signed simply "Odysseus, Eire", which brought the subject back into the consciousness of croquet.

Dear Sir,
I can only express my horror at the crude tactics described in Mr Jim Townsend's anecdote.

Readers will remember that the lower-handicapped pair actually interrupted their opponent to urge expedition. The correct way to make inexperienced players play faster (and eventually, to crumble) is of course to play SLOWER YOURSELF. A useful ploy

in this process is the Corner-cannon Dither, which has an inimitable effect of suggesting the passage of a significant space of time.

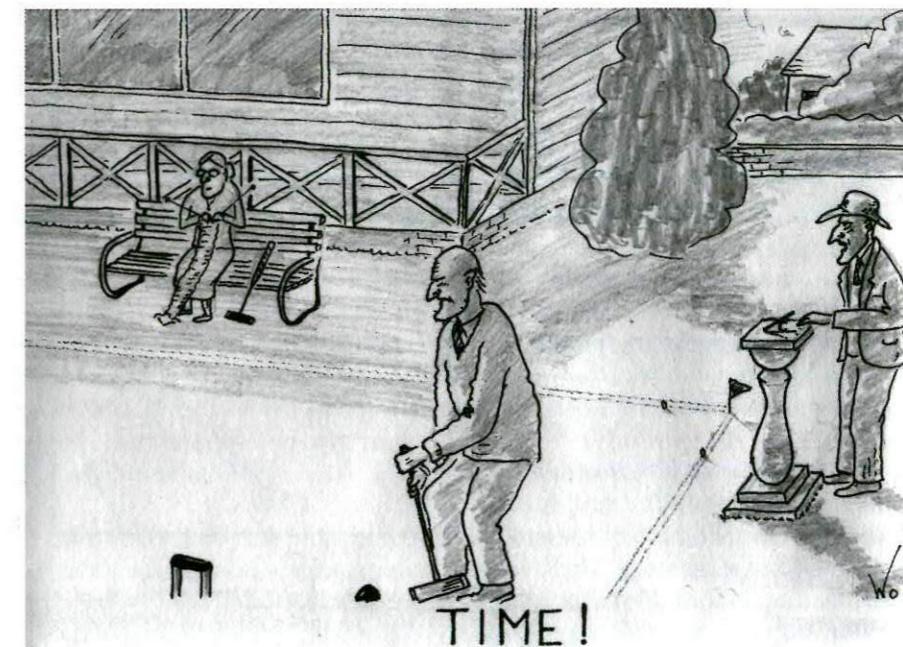
The striker, having achieved a Cannon situation, looks helplessly at his partner but does not speak to him. Partner should then wave him on impatiently, saying 'Oh, whatever you like,' whereon the Striker fiddles with the balls for a short time, trying several different arrangements, and then, raising his head, says to the opponents 'I'm awfully sorry...', in the appropriate intonation. Even if the turn soon ends, the effect of this on the opponents' play is striking.

I was surprised at the claim that 'Croquet is happily (sic) one of the few games where the scope for gamesmanship is limited'. Although limited by Civil and Criminal Law, as well as by the Laws of the game, the possibilities are still immense. The Newspapermanship of Read [Terence Read, a top 1980s Irish player] is a spectacle to gladden the eye of the devout gamesman. Read, conceding bisques, waits until his opponent has the innings - sometimes, I suspect, actually GIVING AWAY the inning under the mask of an Uncharacteristic Lapse (q.v.) - whereupon he sits buried behind the paper (often The Financial Times) while the high-bisqued opponent goes round. Indeed the act of perusing a newspaper is sometimes called "Reading". When the Striker looks up for a bisque, or slyly peeps up to judge the effect of a particularly fine stroke, he is horrified to find Read apparently totally indifferent to the outcome of the game.

Inexperienced gamesmen who try to achieve this effect usually chat with spectators or pretend to be asleep - tactics which invariably rebound upon themselves. Another feature of Newspaper Play is the implied threat of loud rustling at a vital moment, and the realisation that the Paperman is above so obvious a ploy is itself even more distracting!

Spectator Play

There was a time when it was thought



"The correct way to make opponents play faster, is of course to play slower yourself."

quite clever to have a 'claque' of onlookers who talked among themselves, sipped drinks and laughed - sometimes noiselessly - while one's opponent was in play. In these enlightened days, this view has been overturned; it is, of course, vital to control the behaviour of the people who are watching your game, but you must ensure that they chat during YOUR turn, and preserve a sepulchral silence while your opponent is playing. A deathly hush, with perhaps an innocent 'Shsh! He's going to shoot' s the victim places his ball for a short lift, is more effective than any giggle yet brought before the public. In general, if a player knows that someone is trying to avoid distracting him, he will begin to suspect that there is some special reason for their consideration, and this uneasiness will soon blossom into a nagging doubt in his own powers of concentration.

The same principle underlines one of the Masterplays of Croquet. You find yourself sitting (always sit, or even lie down, when not in play) at the side of the court and now in your opponent's line of aim. Whether he is far away or fairly near, you have a ploy, equally devastating in both cases, to fill the bill. In the former event, you rise hurriedly and sidle along the boundary some distance to

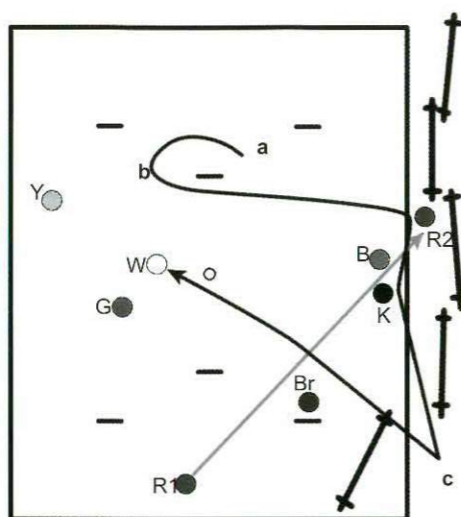
the RIGHT (oppo's left), where you stand, stooping slightly, with your unblinking eyes fixed on his every movement. The alternative, typically when the object ball is on the yardline at your feet, is to freeze in your chair, sitting bolt upright and staring at some distant object, while your opponent plays. After he has missed, get up, express condolence, and do not fail to remark on how much more distracting it is to have somebody moving out of the way just before you shoot.

Odysseus' wise, if unethical, advice struck a chord with many readers, and a further letter appeared in the following edition of the Gazette (No 191, May 1987).

Double-Banking, the trump suit of Croquetship, is the one area where the Queen of games pre-eminently wields her sceptre. Other games bring you in contact with your opponent, and with your respective partners, but where else do you find yourselves in the midst of an entirely separate, extraneous, and eminently distracting, sporting encounter? In Golf, indeed, you share the course with other matches, but a distance of several hundred yards from the other players somewhat limits the lively exchange of social amenities. (J. Streamlyne made

what capital he could of being exaggeratedly polite to other pairs and to foursomes when he was passing, until silenced by the capable counter of T. Mumsman. Mumsman, after tolerating Streamlyne's platitudes for 5 holes, suddenly on the 6th tee, produced a pair of small Semaphore flags, and attempted, in vain, to communicate with a distant, retreating party. Thereafter, the more threat of the flags, lurking in Mumsman's bag, took a full 50 yards off Streamlyne's famous drive.)

Politeness Play is the cornerstone of Doublebankmanship. You must at all costs be more considerate of the other game than your opponent. The playing begins long before the game itself, when you suggest to the Manager that YOUR game could start at the third hoop, and progress in reverse, to avoid a pile-up. Say to your oppo.: 'We don't mind taking secondary colours, do we?', especially when your game is more important than the other. In fact, the more trivial the other game, the more considerate you should be. In play, never walk in a straight line from point a to point b - when following your last shot or retrieving a ball, describe a wide arc, as if to keep out of the double-banker's line of sight.



The Black line shows the route of Pink (in hand) after rushing White to the Peg. The Grey line shows the route of the Red ball.

At point (a), Pink rushes White, and proceeds in normal arc.

At point (b), Red misses Blue and Black, and Pink goes considerably to retrieve the ball at R2.

At point (c), Pink kindly moves the check-boards for a player on the next court.

At point (W), Pink should return to point (c) to move the board back; it might be in the way of Blue/Black.

This style of play may seem extreme, but remember that the player is fighting back after his opponent forced him to take the more popular colours.

It is not a bad thing, when addressing the balls for a routine croquet shot, to ask the NON-PLAYING double-banker if you may mark a ball, which is several yards from anywhere your balls might go. When he refers you to the PLAYER in the other game, say; it isn't really strictly necessary to move the ball - you will be careful. O. Budward, having thus made a good impression, would without a qualm leave an opponent's ball in the jaws of a hoop for 25 minutes, while he tottered round on an unlikely-looking 3-ball break. His opponent it was, of course, who had to share the bench with the waiting-double bankers!

Such advice cannot be countenanced in this magazine. The only way to achieve long-term success at Croquet is to practise stroke-play and to gain tactical experience through competition. But, for the naturally indolent or unscrupulous player, with insufficient time to acquire the expertise to win on merit, Gamesmanship represents a valuable weapon.

Le Croquet : Tissot's great masterpiece

James Hawkins details some of the background to the work



Social documentary is a common thread running through western art since the 19th century. At the height of the croquet craze in the 1870s, many artists adopted the game as a suitable subject for depicting life in Victorian society. One of the most celebrated images is *Le Croquet* by the French artist, James Tissot.

Born in Nantes in 1836, Jacques Joseph Tissot cut his teeth in the Parisian art world, where he mixed with fellow artists Whistler and Degas, and the poet Baudelaire. Baudelaire was instrumental in the move to jettison the subject matter of much art to that date - classical mythology, mediæval legend and historical epic scenes - in favour of something which reflected everyday life.

France saw a period of political upheaval in the 1860s, and Tissot, now rich and successful, fled for London in 1871. He bought a big house in St John's Wood, adopted the anglicised name of James, and produced many of his greatest paintings. And the Victorian public lapped them up.

In 1877 he started a relationship with a young Irish divorcee, Kathleen

Irene Kelly Newton. Kathleen had married young, to one Isaac Newton. By 17 she was pregnant by another man, Captain Palliser. Now divorced, she and her daughter moved into Tissot's house. She was 23, 18 years his junior. A second child was born, almost certainly fathered by Tissot.

So scandalous was Mrs Newton's past that she and Tissot lived a reclusive life away from the tutting of Victorian society. Withdrawing into the private world of his own garden, this area became the focus of much of his subsequent art.

Le Croquet dates from around 1878 (scholars remain unclear of the exact date). Tissot had become greatly influenced by Japanese printmaking, and we can see that here in the unusual perspective technique. The painting is ordered into four flat layers, superimposed on one another; the distant fountain, the two girls lounging in the background, the nearer girl with the mallet, and the framing tree and the dog in the foreground.

It's not known who the croquet-playing girl is. Some sources claim it's Kathleen Newton herself. Tissot painted her obsessively, but almost all of those images are in semi-profile. There is certainly a likeness, though it's difficult to say for sure who this girl is. If it is Newton, why would Tissot choose to show her in such a sexualised pose?

Victorian dignity would not allow the wearing of so short a skirt, at least not in a woman of Kathleen's age. The way the croquet mallet is held is even more telling. Held behind the back, it forces the chest forward, leaving the torso exposed. With her head cocked on one side and gaze pointing straight out at the viewer, her mind seems set on something far less innocent than a game of croquet.

Malcolm Warner, the American art historian and specialist in British Art, has claimed that the English "...suspected that [Tissot] might be teasing them, subtly toying with Victorian codes of respectability - and they may well have been right."

"Above all," Warner points out,

"Tissot deals with the manners and customs of modern love: the drama of attraction and flirtation, body language and eye contact, the signs of availability, the many degrees of prostitution, the workings of passion, its frustrations, rivalries and cross purposes, the sorrow of separation and loss - all of these in the particular forms they took in Paris and London in the later Nineteenth Century."

All of which begs the question, who is the painting for? It's hard to believe any right-minded croquet-loving patron of the 1870s would commission a painting of Tissot's semi-clad girlfriend in the artist's own back garden. Perhaps this is the key to the reading of the work. Here we are, as viewers, peering into Tissot's own private kingdom. The tree, the dog, and a pile of clutter act as a barrier stopping us move closer. Beyond is the girl, whether it's Kathleen Newton or not, blocking our path. And beyond her is the brilliantly sunlit north London paradise which is Tissot's garden. It's as if Tissot is giving us an enticing glimpse of his private life, but at the same time barring us from entry.

James Tissot's affair with Kathleen Newton was to prove short-lived. Her health deteriorated over the next few years, with the onset of tuberculosis. One of the last images of her, *A Summer's Evening*, dates from 1882. She's sitting back in a chair, looking out over the garden, though it's clear - as, by this stage, it was to both artist and subject - that her illness was terminal. She died later that year, aged just 28.

Tissot immediately returned to Paris, though his creative powers remained undiminished. His attention turned to spiritualism and religious art, the focus of his work from now until his death in 1902. Even so, it's his documenting of Victorian life for which he will be best remembered.

Le Croquet by James Jacques Joseph Tissot is part of the permanent collection of the Art Gallery of Hamilton, Ontario.

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ASSOCIATION CROQUET TACTICS

For Beginners and High Bisquers

No 6 - Principles of Play:
Using Straight Shots
by Michael Hague

Avoid split croquets

When we are manoeuvring two balls with a straight croquet shot - be it a stop-shot, drive or half-roll - we have only to concentrate on the correct strength to ensure that both the croqueted ball and SB arrive in the right areas. There is no problem with line. With a split shot, we have to get right the distance and line for each ball. To my simple mind, the split shots are thus twice as likely to go wrong and should only be played by the High Bisquer when there is no alternative.

As with rushes, not only do we use straight shots when the opportunity presents itself, but we also strive to set them up. This may explain why people from certain professions such as architects, draughtsmen, computer technologists etc. whose mental powers are trained and adapt at thinking in straight lines, are often found in the higher echelons of croquet players.

Create straight croquets

So let us look at a few examples to show how we can create straight line shots to our advantage. We will start with the situation where we ended in the last article, ready to roquet the pioneer at 2-back with the pivot south east of peg (see Figure 1)

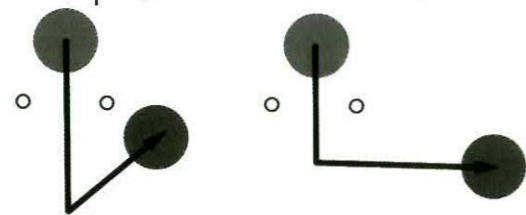
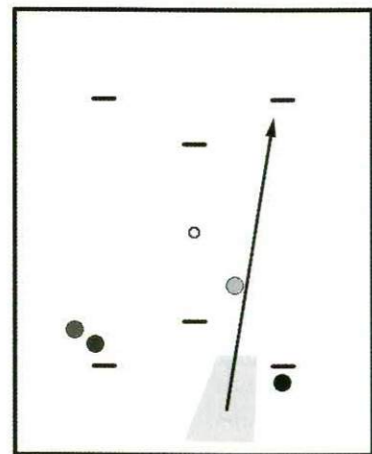


Fig 1. Yellow, as pivot, is out of place (left). To provide a straight drive to 4-back stopping near yellow, the croquet stroke needs to be played from the shaded area. Striker should make sure of rushing Red towards this area. Keeping Red close (above left) when approaching 2-back leaves the rush pointing in the wrong direction. Send Red wide (above right), and the rush is much easier.

and not where we would normally expect it to be in a well controlled, conventional 4BB i.e. south west of the peg. We take stock of the situation, bringing into our tactical appreciation the three Principles of Play we have discussed to date - Foresight, Use of the Rush Line and Exploitation of the Rush to which we now add the fourth - Use of Straight Shots.

In working out tactical solutions, it often helps to work the problem backwards. A diagram of the court using Smarties as the balls will help the reader to follow the discussion below. As we play the next leg to Hoop 3-back, the pilot ball used to navigate Hoop 2-back will be sent to 4-back as the pioneer on the next but one hoop and in the same shot, we aim to drop off SB as usual near the pivot. We want to use a straight croquet shot. So we run an imaginary line back from 4-back through the pivot to a point on the southern boundary. That pinpoints the area from where to play a straight croquet shot to achieve our aim. Now we have to consider how we get our pilot at 2-back to that area on the southern boundary. Of course the answer is to position our pilot ball on the hoop approach wide to the south east of 2-back so that after running the hoop we can rush it to the area on southern boundary we have identified.

Why go to pivot from the southern boundary with SB and not straight to the pioneer at Hoop 3-back? You can if you want to. It will depend on the

quality and accuracy of your shots. Going to the pivot will probably give you a greater margin of error, especially if your hope to be able to adjust the position of the pioneer at Hoop 3-back in order to have an easier hoop approach. It may also allow you to focus more on placing an accurate pioneer at 4-back rather than concentrating on the SB getting in the right place by the pioneer at 3-back.

Applying the Principles

Now let us apply as appropriate the four Principles of Play discussed so far, to a number of different scenarios. We will look again at the situation where we have run 1-back but the intended pioneer for 3-back is well short. To run Hoop 3-back we will probably have either to position another ball as the pioneer before tackling 2-back, or to set-up after running 2-back a dolly rush on the wayward pioneer to rush it to a better position for the hoop approach to 3-back. The solution will depend on where SB ends up in relation to the pivot ball when the poor croquet was played after running 1-back, and of course on striker's individual ability to play certain shots accurately.

Figure 2 presents five possible scenarios, with the striker's ball landing in one of the numbered positions.

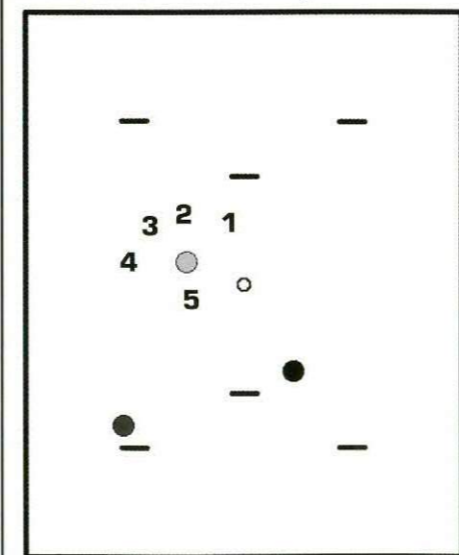
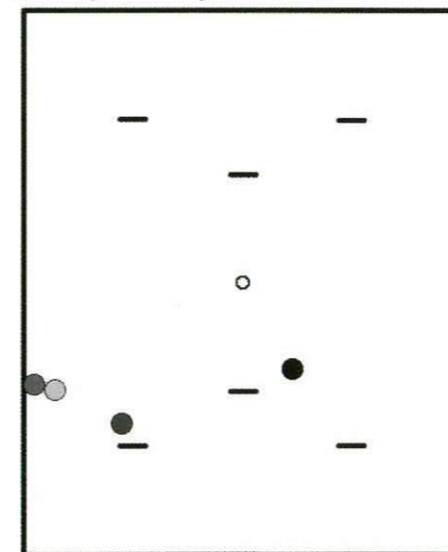


Fig 2. Black is out of position at 3-back. Depending where the striker's ball lands, a difference course of action will be necessary.

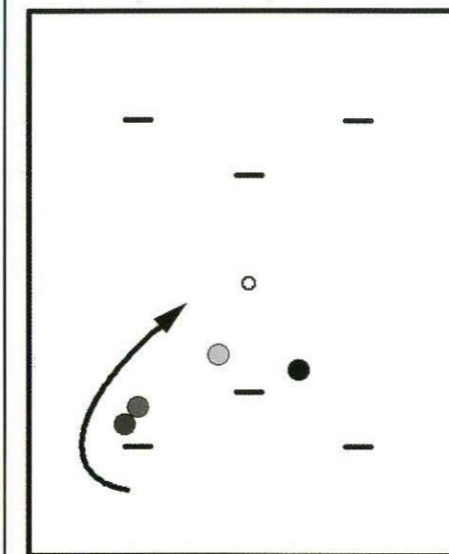
In Scenario 1, SB has come to rest leaving a rush on pivot to the southern half of the Western boundary. Exploiting this, we rush Yellow to the Western boundary from where we can straight drive it to become our pioneer at 3-back (see next diagram). SB automatically drops off near the pioneer at 2-back. Note how useful it can be to know some of the distances between key points around the court. 2-back is 7 yards from the Western boundary and 3-back 21 yards; clearly a 1 to 3 ratio straight drive croquet could be played with utmost confidence, concentrating on the strength of the shot to position an accurate pioneer at 3-back but knowing that SB will come to rest within easy roquet distance of the pioneer on 2-back. Black has taken over the pivot position and we have otherwise an identical layout of balls as we had for the opening situation portrayed in Figure 1.



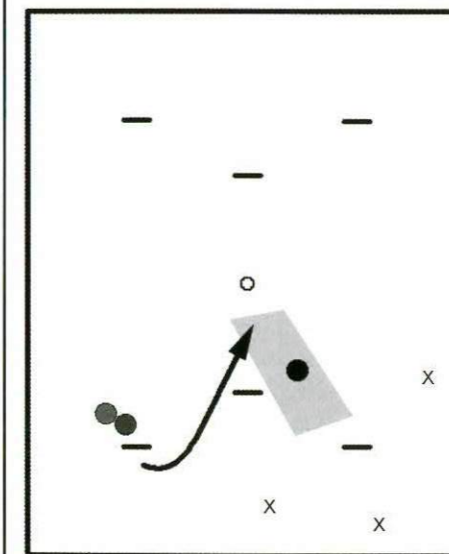
Scenario 1: A straight rush and a straight drive brings the break back on course.

In Scenario 2, SB (Blue) has ended up where we had intended, with a straight rush on the pivot (Yellow) to the south. Exploiting this rush, we send Yellow to short of Hoop 5 and take off to run Hoop 2-back with Red as the pilot. On the hoop approach (see diagram) we position pilot on the west side of the hoop. Once through, after a short rush on Red, we can send it with a straight stop-shot or drive to Hoop 4-back as a new pioneer. SB

drops off on the west side of pivot (Yellow). Yellow can then be rushed as close as possible to Black so that a dolly rush can be set up to send Black reasonably accurately to 3-back.



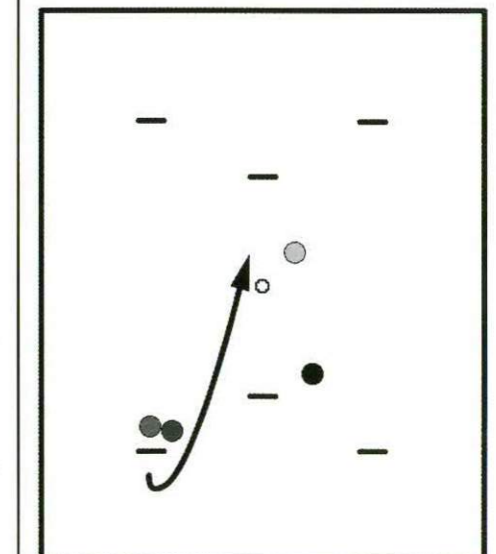
Scenario 2: Place Blue (Striker's Ball) and Red as shown for the hoop approach. The safest route placing Red at 4-back is along the arrow, so play for a rush back and to the west. Blue comes in near Yellow, which can be rushed close to Black for 3-back.



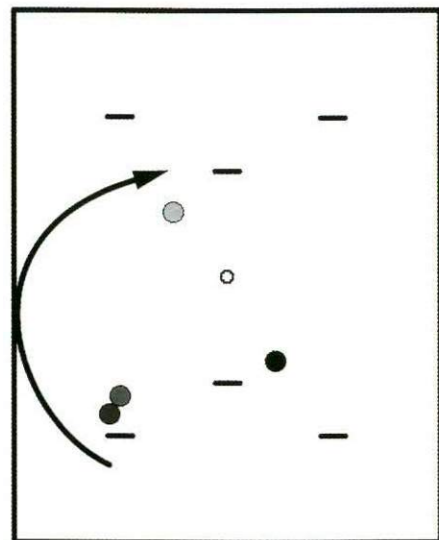
Scenario 3: The danger of being greedy with a rush. Striker had a straight rush to 3-back, but only the most confident of players should take it on. A mishit landing at any of the spots marked 'X' could be disastrous. Be happy to aim for anywhere in the shaded area. Blue can approach 2-back with a rush pointing out towards this area, and play the drive, landing somewhere near Yellow and Black. Hitting one to get a rush on the other should be easy.

In the third scenario, SB has stopped with a straight rush on the pivot (Yellow) towards Black. This time we can make the best of the rush by sending the pivot as close as possible to Black, take-off from Yellow to the pioneer at Hoop 2-back and run the hoop. This time we have to put the pilot ball wide to the east of 2-back so that we may rush it parallel to the southern boundary to a position from where a straight half roll or drive will position Red as pioneer on 4-back and drop off SB on the left of Yellow. With a short rush and take-off, we can now set up a straight dolly rush on Black to 3-back for an easy hoop approach.

In Scenario 4, SB has stopped leaving a rush due east. Exploit this by straight rushing pivot onto the line of rush of Black to 3-back. Take off to the pioneer at 2-back. On the hoop approach, position the pilot so that after the hoop has been run, it can be rushed NW. After the rush, it can be sent with a straight drive or stop shot to 4-back as the pioneer but concentrating on getting SB to stop north of Yellow. Yellow can then be rushed south to Black to set up the dolly rush to get it to 3-back. Should we fail to get the rush on Yellow to send it back to Black, at least Yellow in on the line of rush of Black and we can take off from it with a good chance of getting a rush on Black towards 3-back.



Scenario 4: Rush Yellow on to the line of 3-back and the Black ball, then come through 2-back with a rush back towards the peg.



In the final (and worst) scenario, SB has ended up south of the pivot. With no rush to exploit, some would prefer to do a split roll sending the pivot ball to 3-back or close to Black or near Hoop 5 with SB going to the pioneer at 2-back. To avoid the split/passing roll, one could roquet pivot and take off to 2-back. On the hoop approach, pilot is positioned on the right of the hoop, so that once the hoop is run, pilot can be rushed NW to a position for a straight drive or half-roll to be pioneer at 4-back. Focus will be on SB so that it gets a rush on Yellow to send it SE to set up a rush on Black to 3-back. As long as SB ends up on the

northwest side of Yellow, it should at least be possible to rush it onto the rush line of Black as discussed in the previous situation.

Understand and apply the Principles of Play

The six situations examined have all demanded Foresight, they have all set up and used Rushes and Straight Shots and made use of the Rush Line, almost exclusively. Some players may have confidence in their split croquets and would handle these situations in a different way. But be assured that all players employ the Principles of Play whether consciously or instinctively. High Bisquers have to understand them thoroughly and learn how to apply them with imagination and flair to the situations with which they are presented.

Our fifth and last Principle will be Accuracy.

- Scenario 5:** Striker has several options, none of them straightforward:
- (i) a big split shot sending Yellow to 3-back, going to 2-back (a very difficult shot);
 - (ii) a thick take off, putting Yellow to the position in the previous scenarios;
 - (iii) ignore Yellow for the moment, and go all-out for a rush towards Black - a recipe for prolonged stress, as the break becomes less and less controlled;
 - (iv) the following manoeuvre:
- Here, striker needs to come out of 2-back, getting to the far side of Yellow, to rush it back towards Black. There's a spot on the boundary, pretty much due west of Yellow, where there's a chance of a straight drive to 4-back. Approach 2-back sending Red to the right, for a rush up the West boundary. Hopefully, Yellow is rushable back to Black, and the break is saved.

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Coaching Qualification Courses



Left: Reading Room at Hurlingham with Michael Hague at the magnetic board; Right: David Collins on the lawns with a group of aspiring club coaches

Hurlingham

Seventeen CA members were successful in obtaining their Club Coach certificate and badge at Hurlingham recently including Eugene Chang who at the age of 18 is the youngest to attend a Coaches Qualification Course. He hopes to form a croquet club at Imperial College when he starts his university training in October.

The CA has developed a standard method of training coaches and three courses were scheduled across the country this year in April and May. The course covers planning, administering and delivering coaching material according to the skill levels and knowledge of the game of the individual coach and can be applied to both Association and Golf Croquet.

The ability of the coach is not an issue and the candidates at Hurlingham had CA handicaps ranging from minus figures up to 20. The aim of the course is to set a standard of delivery of the skills and tactics of croquet and accredited club coaches can progress, according to their handicap to become Grade I, II or III coaches.

All found the course interesting,

challenging and informative. Many felt that their own play will have benefited in addition to their being able to be more supportive within their club.

The Hurlingham course was ably managed by Michael Hague with experienced Directing Staff including David Collins, Daphne Gaitley and Keith Collins.

Patricia Duke-Cox

Middlesbrough

Over the same weekend, James Hawkins led another course in the North East, assisted by Charles Waterfield and Bruce Rannie. Staging was by Croquet North, hosted at Middlesbrough Croquet Club, using two half lawns and the pavilions on their Prissick site.

Eleven players, from North West Federation, Yorkshire Federation and Croquet North attended both days, participated fully and successfully, and have been awarded certificates and their Yellow Club Coach Badge. They came from six different clubs in the three regions.

The course was based on the CQC material prepared by Michael Hague, and went very well, with two syndicates, one of six and the other of five

players. There was slight time pressure on the Sunday, bearing out Michael's advice not to have more than five in any syndicate, but the situation was satisfactorily retrieved.

There was a comprehensive feedback session immediately prior to handing out certificates and badges, and there were many positive and no negative remarks. The three coaches all enjoyed the weekend too, which is another good sign about the success of the course in general, and this particular session.

Now that the CQC has been running for a few years, it becomes more obvious at every session that the CA should have initiated such a course many years ago. Even longstanding coaches, and ex-teachers, appreciate the emphasis placed on the method and techniques that the classroom sessions show, and the practical sessions which can also bring new ideas from others into their repertoire to freshen it up. Whether we will ever achieve the idea that all coaches have to re-qualify on a regular basis is a moot point, but assisting on this course as Directing Staff is as good a way of going on a refresher course that any coach could find.

Bruce Rannie

Chairman's Column

Brush up on the Laws

No 6 - By Michael Hague

The centenary edition of the Croquet Gazette reminded me of the thanks we owe not only its editors, both present and past, but also the many people who have contributed articles, tournament reports, letters and pictures over the years, without which there would have been nothing to edit. As readers, I ask you not only to return the survey that was enclosed if you have not already done so, to give your thoughts on the direction the magazine should take over the next few years, but also to consider writing something for it, to get its second century off to a good start.

Our President, John Solomon, announced his retirement at the AGM last October, having served for many years. His successor will be elected at this year's AGM, but I am very pleased that Council have nominated Professor Bernard Neal, a former Open Champion and one of our Vice-Presidents, to succeed him. Any other nominations, proposed and seconded and with the consent of the nominee, must be received by the Secretary no later than 31st July, so that a postal ballot can be organised if necessary.

Finally, may I extend a warm welcome to overseas players in the MGM Assurance 6th WCF World Golf Croquet Championship, which is being held at the Sussex County and Compton clubs from 20th-27th June. Spectators are welcome, so why come down and see how the game is played at the top level?

Ian Vincent

Poor understanding of the law regarding wiring may result a failure to take full tactical advantage from entitlement to a wiring lift. When is a player entitled to claim a lift?

Answer

Law 13. When a wiring lift is first considered, three things must be established:

- that the relevant ball (i.e. the wired ball) belongs to the striker
- it is the start of a new turn
- and most importantly that the adversary was responsible for the position of the ball by having played or deemed to have played or roqueted it or caused it to move or shake, including by being replaced after rectification of an error (often forgotten!).

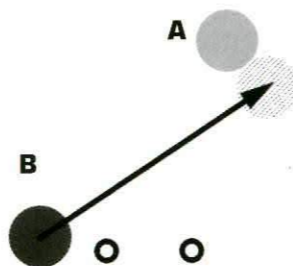
There are then three ways in which the relevant ball may be wired and a lift claimed:

- If any part of a hoop or the peg would impede the direct course of any part of it to hit any part of the target ball. Usually this means that the relevant ball cannot directly hit both the left and right extremities of the target ball. A ball may thus be wired even where another ball is close by which you could hit centre-ball, if you cannot clip one of the extreme edges of the target.
- If any part of a hoop or the peg (but not the peg extension, which may be removed) would impede the normal swing of the mallet *before* its impact with the relevant ball. That the swing may be impeded after the point of impact, or if the hoop or peg interferes with the striker's stance, is irrelevant.

What is often not understood is that *every* part of the whole end face of the mallet head must be able to hit the centre of the relevant ball to drive it to roquet the target ball on either side of it.

iii. If any part of the relevant ball lies within the jaws of the hoop. Again, the fact that the relevant ball just in the hoop can easily roquet one or more other balls is irrelevant to the issue of whether or not the ball is wired.

It should be remembered that if a ball remains wired, it can be lifted at the start of any subsequent turn during the game as long as the adversary remains responsible for its position. This can be particularly useful for a ball left in the jaws of a hoop, when it may be a useful tactical play if the adversary is unlikely to hit in on his next turn, not to take the lift immediately, but to send partner ball to or near to a baulk line so that at the start of the striker's subsequent turn the lift may be taken and a useful rush set up.

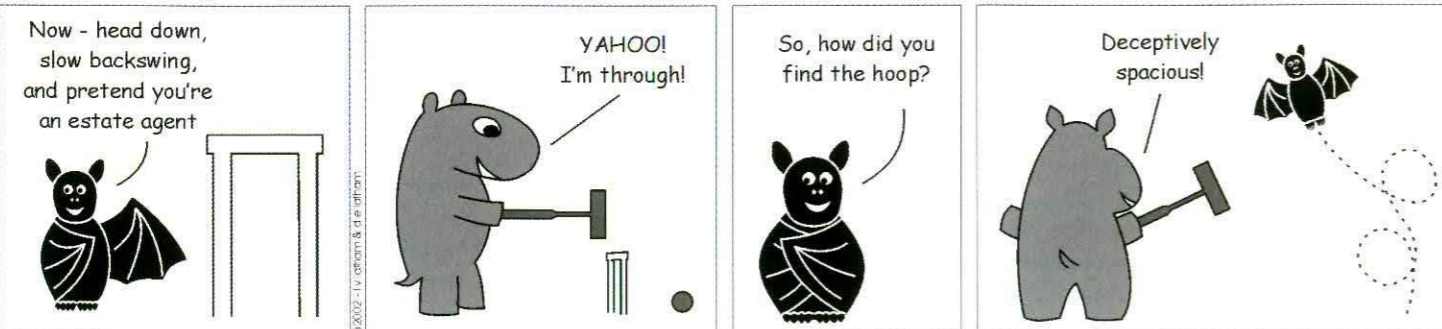


A technical wiring.

Ball B can (just) pass to right of Ball A, leaving A open. Although A can hit the centre of B easily, it is wired from B's side by the hoop. If (a), (b) and (c) above are satisfied, A can take a wiring left, though, of course, A might opt for the shorter, wired, shot in this case.

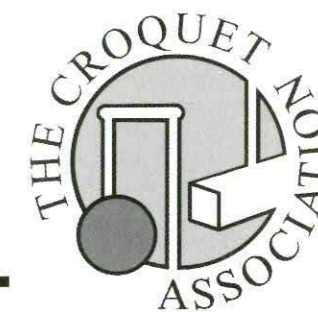
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by Victor



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