

# THE CROQUET GAZETTE

ISSUE 292 - AUGUST 2004



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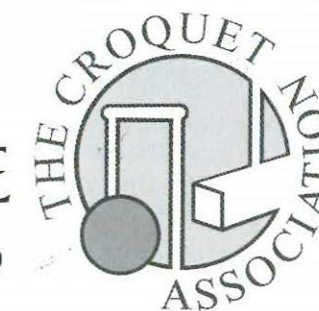
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## Editorial

I had this really strange dream recently. I'm managing a tournament at Bowdon, and the clubhouse is full of Hollywood film stars.

Halle Berry is through in the bar, getting herself a cup of tea. Scarlett Johansson is sat in the corner, pulling out bisques. She's still got that silver spangly dress and diamond tiara she wore for this year's Oscars. She's hardly dressed for croquet, so it's no surprise she's not hit a shot all game. And I'm stood inside chatting to Uma Thurman. If this were real, I'd be demanding an apology for her last film (which was dreadful). But it's a dream, so we're talking about why so many celebrities play croquet. Uma is a very wise woman, and her answer explains everything. But when I wake up, I've forgotten what she said.

I'm not sure my dream doesn't have a moral, somewhere. Croquet has had several of these occasional dalliances with celebrity. Back in the 50's, a publicity-hungry CA appointed Compton Mackenzie as its President. Mackenzie was the bestselling writer of *Whisky Galore!* and (posthumously) the current BBC Sunday night favourite, *Monarch of the Glen*. Although a keen garden player, he was never One Of Us, and his presidency never inspired the vociferous advocacy of the game which would have had new players joining clubs in their droves.

In the mid-1980's, the CA tried a 'Pro-Celebrity' event, in an effort to interest the media. Along come a squad of crusty upper-class actors - Nigel Davenport, Donald Sinden et al - dressed to the nines in their croquet gear. Out come the stripey blazers and the panamas ready to show the press what Croquet is all about.

And here's the problem. Celebrities may interest the media enough to come along and see what's happening. But we have no control over the message which gets across. I could make a pretty good stab at explaining to journalists why the game is different from that vicious, hoity-toity pursuit in *Alice in Wonderland*, but I've not got the bait to draw in those

reporters in the first place.

The Pro-Celeb event died a death, never to be resurrected. Until, that is, this year. And here we get to the point of my dream, and my story.

ENS, the CA's Public Relations agency, decided this year to adopt a new strategy. Croquet, England's most successful sport, has an image problem. Rugby, England's second most successful sport, and also a client of ENS, is riding high on a wave of publicity. Getting sports stars and pundits from Rugby to try their hand at Croquet is a different proposition from what had been attempted before.

The guest list had Martin Bayfield and Chris Eubank (sportsmen), as well as John Inverdale, Des Lynam and Craig Doyle (sports presenters), the intention being to show that ours is not the silly garden game which the public know, but something altogether more sophisticated and competitive. Everyone agreed to turn up for the start of the World Golf Croquet Championship, and face off against the top stars of the game.

Two things went wrong. One by one the celebrities fell by the wayside, through illness or alternative commitments. Secondly, the media seemed unimpressed by the whole thing.

In reality, this is no bad thing. Time was when Croquet couldn't get column inches without gimmicky stunts. The surprising fact of this year's event was that the press were more interested in the championship than the sideshow. Maybe we're too close to see it, but people out there are starting to see our game as an intriguing proposition in itself, without the need to dress ourselves up in layers of artifice.

Perhaps this was what Uma and I were discussing. As she told me, we can get too hung up on seeking the limelight for the wrong reasons. Croquet has a good enough message to communicate to the public without resorting to frippery. We can shout from the rooftops, but we should shout with our own voice.

This will be my last edition from this address, as we here at Gazette Towers are in the process of relocating. Please keep writing, as your correspondence should reach me, wherever I am.

Apropos of my house move, my heart sank the morning the surveyor arrived. I always feel self-conscious as Britain's only croquet journalist, and he turned up just as I was sorting through my archive of old croquet magazines. I needn't have felt embarrassed as he snooped round; it turns out that his son-in-law edits *Cranes*, the magazine for building site enthusiasts. Now I'd love to read one of his editorials.

## Chairman's Column

Although I only attended the opening of the MGM Assurance 6th WCF World Golf Croquet Championships, it was evident that a huge amount of work had gone into preparations for the event. As hosts, we were totally dependent on the sponsors who funded it, the organisers, especially Bill Arliss who masterminded it, the officials and the many members of the Sussex County and Compton club who provided the catering and much practical help before and during it: our thanks to them all. By all accounts their efforts and generosity were rewarded with a standard of play that surpassed expectations and which clearly demonstrated the skills and potential of the game.

Looking ahead to the end of the season (yes, its time to get those club competition games played!), the AGM is back at Hurlingham this year, giving us an opportunity to see the results of the building work that prevented the Club from hosting it for the last couple of years. The meeting is an occasion when you can find out what the the Council and its Committees have been doing on your behalf and express your view on the direction they should be taking. I look forward to seeing you there.

Ian Vincent

## Letters

### World Golf Croquet

The Golf Croquet World Championship Final ends 30 minutes before the start time published in the programme sold at the event. As one of the spectators who spent time and money travelling to Southwick only to see the players walking off the lawns, I would like to know who made this decision, when and why?

Mike O'Brian  
Ashwood, Derbyshire

### An unbalanced view?

The World Golf Croquet Championship is on at Southwick. Hooray, Southern TV have cameras there! Croquet's on the telly! Well, all publicity is good publicity, right.

Sorry, but I have to disagree. Yet again publicity fails to challenge or inform, and instead backs up the tired old stereotypes.

BBC South were kind enough to send cameras to this year's event, the most important in the Golf Croquet world. What did they provide us with? Well, what do you imagine... shot after spectacular shot, yes: 30 yard hoop runs, jump shots, stars knocking the oppo to kingdom come while their own ball stops dead in front of the hoop ...Egyptian croquet gods malletting a ball across a lawn that it barely touches... Bamford slamming 'em into hoop 6 from A baulk... some young talent whipping one over the peg and cramming his black ball into the oblique and barely open jaws ... all to the mighty soundtrack of the Verdi Requiem: 'Dies Irae'.... That would surely have woken people to the majesty of croquet, wouldn't it?

Yes, maybe it would. But we'll never know, because we got something completely different.

What some people fail to realise is that TV news editors are cheats. They pretend that they go out for a day's scouting, that they film yards of footage in order to compile a wonder-

fully balanced view and really 'get at the truth.' In reality of course, this tactic would cost a fortune and take ages to do. No, what news teams do is far more time and cost effective. It's called 'shooting the script.' In the comfort of their offices they first decide exactly what the story's going to be, exactly what they're going to say and (naturally) exactly what shots they'll need. They go out, grab what they need and are back in the studio for a swift edit in order to provide the one minute of footage they'll broadcast. If they hang around for the whole day, it's not in order to research the facts, it's to collect the pics they know they want.

Okay, so my personal vision of a Verdi-inspired report wouldn't particularly 'get at the truth' either. But what we got on Southern TV in June was script-shooting to perfection. They'd decided what croquet was - comfy, cosy, cream teas and whites, what else? - and they took the interviews and footage they needed to show it. Cue the violins' twinklesome rendition of something akin to An English Country Garden, cue Bill Arliss with a cosy, old-folk gleam in his eye, cue the presenter pointing out that players even have hi-tech mallets and that the balls only just go through the hoops. Hey, what'd'y know, this kooky game's world championship doesn't use garden equipment - grin. The interviews didn't help. One of the standard arguments for promoting Golf Croquet as opposed to Association Croquet is just how easy it is for spectators and beginners to grasp what's going on. True enough. But this isn't an argument to be aimed at people who have never even heard of Association Croquet. When Bill Arliss tells the viewers that Golf Croquet is wonderful because it's easy to understand and to learn, what will they reply - 'well, of course it is, Bill. We've played in the garden. It's a piece of cake.'

Piece of cake is exactly what we got from TV's glorious minute of croquet that evening. No spectacle, just kindly-looking folks telling everyone how

simple the game is, lawns, whites and rose-twined crockery. Marvellous. And the slot that the sport was given during Wimbledon the week after wasn't a whole lot better. Sue Barker marvelling at how quaint and arcane it all was, the presenter running a hoop, Tim Wilkins jumping a ball. You can hear the clubs panicking already with all the new members they'll have to turn away.

I don't know what I want from TV croquet, and I'm not in any position to make appeals for change heard. But surely it would be possible to edit together something that challenged croquet's stale image a bit. Maybe we could film a few manufactured wonder-shots... by young sportsmen... get some beer (or at least strong coffee) going on in the background and someone like darts commentator Sid Waddell to wax lyrically about the vision of greatness before him. The film archives could store this and then, if nothing else, there'd be some decent stock footage that could be added to news bulletins, something which might inspire viewers to take up the game. Until that time, I can hear the gramophone winding up An English Country Garden again, I can hear the chink of fine bone china and the delicate sound of mallet on ball - good, well, we don't want to give the public the wrong idea.

Michael Wilson  
Southwick

### We have a lot to learn...

Immediately following the quarter final of the 2004 World Golf Croquet Championship between Reg Bamford and the eventual championship winner Ahmed Nasr, several spectators commented that they had just witnessed the finest golf croquet match that they had ever seen or ever would see. The hit rate was analysed by one watching player as being 98% for most of the match, including not several but numerous successful hits from the

boundaries to opponent's balls at the far hoops - awesome stuff! The joyful leaping of Ahmed when he smashed home the winning point at the 13th hoop from 6 yards to win 7 - 6, 7 - 6 was evidence of the extreme pressure that Reg had put on him throughout the scintillating match.

Ahmed's victory eliminated the main contender to prevent an Egyptian winner of the World title. Although the Egyptians did not sweep the board nearly clean as they did in the previous World Championships in Florida (five out of the first six places with Robert Fulford in 5th place), the dominance of the Egyptian team was clear for all to see. A frequently repeated comment from spectators (and I was one of them!) was "I don't see why they (the Egyptians) have to hit the ball so hard). But the fact remains that the Egyptians reign supreme in the Golf Croquet world and if we are to contend with them in the future, we should surely start by studying their techniques and learning from them.

Most of the Egyptian team have mallets with very light short heads, a wooden shaft and a thick handle to reduce jarring. Excellent for stop shots, they are easy to yield and are used for accurate shots with a double pendulum swing, hands held low and with full force both when hitting away and for hoop running. If we are going to adopt some of the Egyptian techniques, then maybe some of the band of our players who specialise in Golf Croquet should lead the way. The top Association players will have to ask themselves whether they are prepared to use a second mallet for Golf Croquet and incorporate different skills techniques, which might have a detrimental effect on their performance in Association Croquet.

In any event, if the Egyptian approach is taken up in this country, then both at club and tournament level serious consideration will have to be given to the safety of both players on neighbouring courts and spectators. Despite the safety netting used during the Championship at Southwick,

fiercely struck balls bounced at speed over fences and in one instance, onto the railway embankment. There were several near misses from balls travelling up to 40 mph, including one ball from another court which grazed my arm as I stood in one of the shelters and missed by inches the hand of a scorer resting on a wooden upright. As a former Safety Officer, there is no doubting my mind that if the Egyptian style of play were to be adopted more widely, there could be an accident waiting to happen.

Michael Hague  
Woking

### Golf Rankings

I enjoy reading the *Gazette*, even if I do not read all of it all at once. I enjoy tidying-up rather less. You will therefore understand why, when I recently came across issues 289 and 291 in the same pile of papers, I had a good look rather than continue with the spring cleaning. Two articles struck me - or, rather, their inconsistency struck me. The first was an exchange (in issue 291) about selection criteria for the World Golf Croquet Championships, and the second (in issue 289 - I was reading down the pile) was the Tournament Digest for 2003. The last few pages of that digest are taken up with statistics ("World's Best Triple Peelers" etc), including rankings. Clearly, this is where Edward Dymock got his statistics from, when saying why he should have been selected for championship.

I can't help feeling that Bill Arliss's reply to Edward is a little unfair, in one respect at least. Bill picks Edward up for referring to a "Golf Croquet World Ranking": he says that there is no such ranking, the nearest thing being an International ranking (comprising Brits plus a few overseas players). Bearing in mind Bill's eminence, I have no doubt that he is right - but if that is the case, should his criticism not have been levelled at the person who

compiled the Tournament Digest for 2003? After all, if the *Gazette* is intended to be a document of record, it is as well to get the record right.

Needless to say, my name did not appear on any of the statistics set out in the Digest - but no error there!

Tim Dutton  
Kennington, London

*My fault, I believe. The ranking list published in last year's Digest was compiled from results made available to Bill Arliss as Rankings Officer. Without the input of results from Egyptian domestic matches, this list cannot truly be called a 'World' Ranking. Effectively, this makes it difficult to rank non-Egyptians alongside Egyptians, but relative positions among other nations should become more reliable as more results are fed into the system. - Ed.*

### Stephen Potter is alive and well...

I was introduced to Stephen Potter's tactics (*Gazette* 291, June 2004) at the tender age of 16. I immediately purchased the Master's books on Lifemanship and Gamesmanship, which proved to be one of the better investments in my life. With the advantage of the arrogance of youth, at the age of 17, I considered myself an expert in this subject.

Picture the scene 52 years later. I was on holiday in Auckland in the middle of February and desperate for a game of croquet. I sought out the nearest club to where I was staying and was received in a very friendly manner. The Epsom-Remuera Club has four excellent lawns, lovely pavilion and attractive surrounds. All I needed now was an opponent. The temperature was 30 degrees centigrade, and I could see that people were a little reluctant to expose themselves to the afternoon heat. Eventually a tiny elderly lady offered to play - marvellous!

I hit in on the fourth turn and exceeded all my expectations by going

round to four-back and achieving a tidy leave. I placed my clip on the hoop and started to walk off the lawn. As I approached the area of hoop one, with a very satisfied smile on my face, my opponent was tottering on to the lawn. She complimented me on my turn and said, "Of course you did miss out hoop six, but you were playing so beautifully I didn't want to interrupt."

I felt destroyed. Had I really missed out hoop six? Did she think I had done it deliberately? Would other people think I was trying to cheat an 85 year old lady? Should I have offered to replace the balls near hoop six?

Although I eventually managed to grind out a close victory, I was exhausted, whilst my opponent was fresh as a daisy.

Perhaps it is time to dust off my copy of Gamesmanship - I might have missed a paragraph or two.

Henry Fellows  
Edgbaston

*The extract from Potter's work in the last edition seems to have provoked a revival of interest in the Art of Gamesmanship. There's further information on Stephen Potter and his time at the BBC elsewhere in this edition. - Ed.*

### The Egyptian Influence

I have just seen David Drazin's article on Croquet at War (*Gazette Issue 283, January 2003*). He may be interested to know that the late Dr Brian R. Sandiford was a member of the Gezira Club [*Cairo*], I believe, before and during the 1939-45 War. On his return to England, he became the Secretary of the Edgbaston Club in Birmingham, with a club handicap of 1 (CA handicap of 2, I think). He won the All England Championships twice.

He was a delightful man and responsible for the revival of that Club. He played with a mallet with a malacca cane handle - very whippy -

and swung over the ball several times before hitting (amazingly accurately) a long shot. This was not regarded as good style in the rather formal 1950s. I played him once in the last club round of the All England in 1959, when I wanted the peg with both balls, and he wanted Rover with one ball only. I thought I could not lose. He lifted his ball to B-baulk and, after some swinging, ran Rover at an angle from the North boundary, came out at an angle near the South boundary, turned round and hit the peg with his next shot! No wonder Croquet survived at Gezira, Cairo.

He was a distinguished man; Head of the Institute of Bacteriology at Cairo, and Head of the Department of Virology and Bacteriology at the United Birmingham Hospitals. After retirement, and by invitation, he was Professor of Tropical Medicine at Kuala Lumpur University.

John Meachem  
Nassau, Bahamas

### Shortest Game

I play at Reigate Priory, a very friendly, long-established one-lawn club. In the singles championship recently I lost -26 to Jamie Burch. The "match"

lasted 28 minutes.

I wondered whether there is any record of fast completed match games.

John Hyde  
Reigate

*This beats my personal best by two minutes, but falls some way short of the record. The late Richard Rothwell reported in this magazine (Gazette 136, August 1975) of his fastest result, at the Budleigh Salterton July Tournament in 1937, in 16fi minutes. The holder of the speed title, though, must be William Prichard who beat his brother Colin in the Championship of Monmouthshire (possibly not a serious event) in 1972. The first game lasted 11 min 6 secs. - Ed.*

### A Vicious Game?

We need to dispel this notion that croquet is a vicious game.

Yesterday I had a good game against Fred. He wired me, so I jumped rover and hit the 'tea-lady'. I rolled him into the middle, split his balls and jawsed him. Fred, who was black and blue, later pegged out.

A vicious game? Not at all; just its jargon.

Kevin Carter  
Winchester



"I jumped Rover and hit the tea-lady"

*Some explanation for those unfamiliar with current slang:*

*According to legend, New Zealand Test players John Prince and Roger Smurfit were playing doubles in an event where one pair had dropped out. At short notice, the two elderly lady club members responsible for teas agreed to participate. Expecting an easy exhibition game, Murfitt cross-wired the opponents, leaving a corner-to-corner shot. The first tea-lady hit, Murfitt shuffled the balls back to the same position, and the second tea-lady hit.*

*The 'tea-lady' shot is that long corner-to-corner shot which a player is forced to take on when cross-wired by an opponent. Much less vicious than the image conjured up by Kevin. - Ed.*

### Automatic Handicap System

I have just rediscovered all my old handicap cards which would appear to support the efficacy of our present handicapping system, so I can now produce a somewhat different perspective to David Mooney's letter in Issue 281. My cards go back to 1992 since when my handicap has gone from 1 to -1. In the 12 playing seasons that have elapsed I have played a total of 318 handicap games winning 185 of them, a winning percentage of 58% that has been relatively constant over all that time.

I have played 222 different opponents at tournaments at Budleigh, Cheltenham, Eastbourne, Hunstanton, Hurlingham, Nottingham, Roehampton and Surbiton. My opponents' handicaps have ranged from -1fi to 20 and my percentage of wins seems pretty consistent across the whole handicap range. I have obviously played a number of opponents more than once but I do not have a 100% record of wins or losses against any player apart from David Maugham who beat me on both occasions that we played.

For those of your readers with a statistical bent, I would append the facts that my mean winning score was +11 and my mean losing score was -17.

These averages are not terribly meaningful though as the distribution of scores is heavily skewed. You will not be surprised to know that I have lost over 25% of my games by 26 but you may be more surprised to learn that my most common winning scores are +2 and +17 (10% each).

David Magee  
Cheltenham

### Croquet in South Africa

The South African National Championships will be taking place from the 22nd to 30th October 2004 in East London (South Africa). This will be the first time that the Nationals have been played in this part of the world, the venue being St. Andrews Croquet Club, which only started playing croquet two years ago. They have gone from strength to strength and now boast some thirty odd members.

The Western Province Championships will be taking place in their usual time-slot in March 2005 with the Association Croquet being played from the 5th to 12th March at Rondebosch and the Golf Croquet being played from 14th to 18th March in Somerset West. The Andy Knox 'Snowbird' tournament will be taking place, as usual, on the preceding Tuesday & Wednesday 1st & 2nd March with the following two days spent in sightseeing and surprise tours.

Carole Jackson (formerly Knox)  
Cape Town, South Africa

### Recycling Appeal

It occurred to me recently that many of your readers will have an old mobile phone or printer cartridge tucked away in a drawer at home or at work. What they may not realise is

that their unwanted items can benefit the Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation.

Old mobiles and empty printer cartridges can be recycled and the proceeds will be used to help fund vital research into the early detection, diagnosis and treatment of lung cancer as well as providing support for sufferers and their families. With 38,000 new cases of lung cancer being diagnosed each year and 80% of those diagnosed not surviving longer than 12 months, lung cancer is the biggest cancer killer in the UK.

But that's not all. Recycling is environmentally friendly too (mobile phones and printer cartridges take hundreds of years to biodegrade). So you can help the Earth and support a very worthwhile cause too!

Please help us continue our vital work with lung cancer sufferers and their families by donating old printer cartridges and mobile phones from home and work. For details just call 08712 50 50 50, visit our website [www.recyclingappeal.com/roycastle](http://www.recyclingappeal.com/roycastle) or simply drop your unwanted items in the post to: Roy Castle Recycling Appeal (EL), 31-37 Etna Road, Falkirk, FK2 9EG.

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## Obituaries

Douglas Strachan



The 1969 Test Team.

(Back): Douglas Strachan, Bernard Neal, Nigel Aspinall, Roger Bray  
(Front): Dudley Hamilton-Miller (manager), John Solomon, William Ormerod, Maurice Reckitt (CA President)

Douglas Strachan died in May after a long illness which he bore with exemplary courage and dignity, supported by his family and friends, and in the countryside he loved.

Douglas had a brief but distinguished croquet career. In 1963 he won the Championship of Ireland, a success that was to be repeated four more times. He was also to win the doubles with his son Mark, then aged 11. In that same year he won the Surrey Cup on his first appearance in that event, which at that time was the second invitation eight, excluding only those who had previously played in the President's Cup. Not surprisingly this was followed by an invitation to compete in the President's Cup in 1964, and he played in that event three more times, the last in 1968.

A Great Britain team was due to travel to Australia in the MacRobertson Shield series in 1969, and Douglas was duly selected. He performed with distinction, winning eleven of his twelve matches; his only loss was to Jack McNab of New Zealand by +3 in the deciding game. I was fortunate to partner Douglas in three of his doubles; fortunate because he was the perfect partner who could

always be relied on to hit the crucial shot.

Perhaps his most memorable feat in that tour was to bring off a very difficult triple peel in the deciding game of a doubles in which he was partnered by William Ormerod. It was memorable because William's clip was on penultimate at the start of the break, a fact of which the Great Britain team was well aware, while William basked in the sunshine enjoying his partner's display of skill.

Soon after, Douglas left the croquet scene, having enjoyed a meteoric rise to the top of the game.

Douglas was a man of integrity with wide interests and many talents. National Service was sandwiched in between his education at Rugby and Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Characteristically, he was appointed Senior Under Officer at Officer Cadet School, was commissioned in the Royal Scots and served in Berlin at the height of the Cold War.

Douglas was extremely musical, and at an early age excelled as a player of the French horn. Only his National Service prevented him from playing in the National Youth Orchestra.

At Oxford he became President of the University Music Society as well as stroking the College eight at the Henley Royal Regatta; all this while achieving a comfortable second in Politics, Philosophy and Economics. Such all round ability drew him to the attention of Guinness in Dublin, and thus began a distinguished career in the brewing industry. Guinness was followed by Grants of St James, and then Showerings in Shepton Mallet. For eight years he was Managing Director of Allied Breweries. He held many directorships and was vice chairman of the Cheltenham and Gloucester Building Society.

His active business life did not prevent him from developing many other interests, and he had extensive knowledge of plants, birds, music, photography and wine.

A memorial service was held in Sherborne Abbey on June 10th. John

Solomon, our President and Captain of the 1969 Test Team, attended with Barbara, and Liz and I were also present. The congregation numbered over two hundred, a tribute to Douglas's immense popularity, especially in the region where he had made his home for many years.

Bernard Neal

David Jenkinson

The members of York Croquet Club and of other clubs in the Yorkshire Federation were saddened by the death of David Jenkinson at the beginning of May. David had been an active member of the club for over ten years, and had reduced his handicap to single figures in that time. He was always keen to play competitively and would travel long distances for a game. David was a country member at Pendle and had the possibly unique distinction of playing for teams in three Federations (Yorkshire, Croquet North and North West) in the same season.

David was Yorkshire Federation League Manager until recently, and was for several years a York committee member, including a period as Tournament and Match Secretary. Throughout his membership David made a valuable contribution to running the York Club, finally managing our September tournament last year despite failing health.

David's strong personality was always in evidence wherever he played and he will be sorely missed by all.

We offer our condolences to Sheila and the family.

Julian Tonks

## Association Croquet Tactics

For Beginners and High Bisquers

No 7 - PRINCIPLES OF PLAY:  
ACCURACY

by Michael Hague

The fifth and final Principle of Play to add to Foresight, Use of the Rush Line, Exploitation of Rushes and Playing Straight Croquet Strokes, is Accuracy. Accuracy separates the sheep from the goats, the A class player from the higher handicapped, the World Champion from the A class player. The more accurate the player, the more exotic and imaginative can be the tactics - multiple peels, ingenious leaves and breath-taking hit-ins. Accuracy turns a three-yard rush into a dolly rush, the eight-foot hoop into a controlled hoop run, the half court roquet into a near certainty.

We all strive to improve the accuracy of our strokes; those who practise regularly are likely to succeed in doing so. But even then, most of us have our limitations and cannot realistically aspire to reaching the dizzy heights of those at the very top. The High Bisquers may thus be tempted to shrug shoulders at the principle of Accuracy and think 'Not for me yet'. But in fact there are many ways in which a High Bisquer can quickly improve Accuracy, for instance by:

- Learning to maintain concentration
- Identifying the overriding aim of each shot
- Minimising avoidable and unnecessary risks and errors
- Assessing risk and percentages, and knowing limitations.

We will discuss each of these.

### Concentration

It is difficult to teach players to concentrate. They must be crystal clear that the most important shot in any game is the next one and trained to stalk every shot, even the simplest hoop and the shortest roquet. How often do we see players missing a short roquet after making a long hit in or a difficult hoop, or after a pause in play when double banking, or at penult and rover as tension mounts? They are not

as David Openshaw calls it, 'staying in the present'. This means thinking only about the current shot and not about what a good or bad shot they have just played, or worrying about what sort of leave to end up with on going through penult.

If there is a nagging doubt in the mind that you have not quite got the right line of aim for a hoop run, or someone has distracted you by moving in the periphery of your vision, then stand back, re-focus and re-stalk. If your opponent irritates you by unnecessarily interfering during your break, consciously force the negative thoughts from your mind. To quote David Openshaw again, 'Develop the right kind of thoughts by looking at something that calms you such as trees or the sky. And then focus on the success of your next shot.'

### Overriding Aim

High Bisquers with their more limited striking skills have at times to compromise when playing a croquet to ensure that they do not break down prematurely. One or the other ball involved may not end up in the perfect position. In playing a croquet, the striker must be quite clear as to which ball is the more important to get right, and focus on that ball throughout the stroke. An obvious example of this is the hoop approach, where the SB (striker's ball) must always end up as close to the hoop as is safely possible. It is fatal to stop shot the pilot ball well clear of the far side of the hoop for a good rush only to have SB overrun to a position from which the hoop cannot be run. How often does a player, when doing a Rover Peel, concentrate on the ball being peeled, only to have SB end up with an impossible position for running rover? If the balls are correctly aligned for the peel, the front ball will run the hoop; SB is still the ball to focus on.

Sometimes, such as when croquetting a ball to be a pioneer, the focus can be on the croqueted ball, but usually it has to be on SB. If we look at Figure 1, the focus for the drive or stop shot can

be on the croqueted ball, Black, going to Hoop 3. Here SB has only to come to rest within easy roquet distance from the pivot for the break to continue on to Hoop 2.

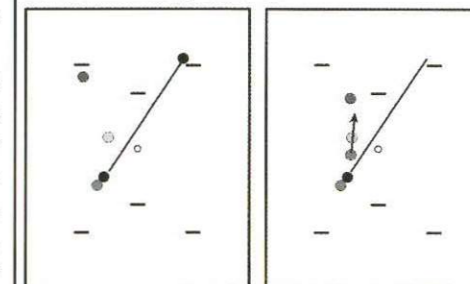


Figure 1 (left) : Red is well placed at Hoop 2 - Blue can concentrate on placing Black well at Hoop 3.

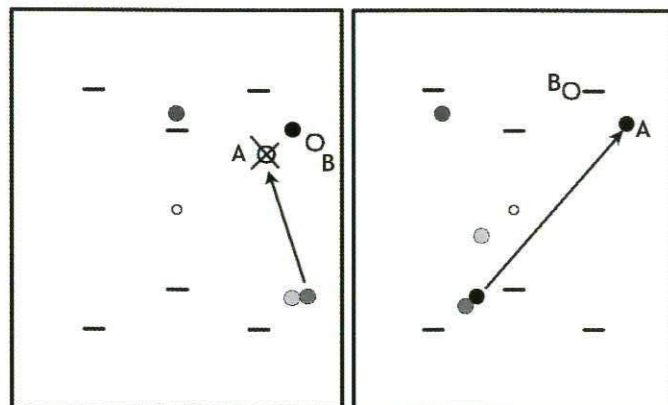
Figure 2 (right) : Red is out of position near Hoop 5. Concentrate on placing Blue well, to give an accurate rush on Yellow towards Red.

In Figure 2, we have a similar situation except that this time Red, which should have been the pioneer at Hoop 2, is well out of position. The plan is to dolly rush it to in front of Hoop 2. To set up the dolly rush we will need to rush the Yellow pivot close to Red. This time when we drive or stop-shot Black to Hoop 3 our focus is entirely on SB to ensure it ends up with a rush on pivot towards Red. Our Overriding Aim is to make sure we run Hoop 2; if the pioneer at Hoop 3 is a little bit out of position, we can deal with that later.

### Avoiding Risks and Errors

We have discussed at length in this series of articles the importance of thinking ahead and maximising the use of simpler, straight shots over manageable distances by applying the Principles of Play and setting up the 4BB. This alone helps to minimise risks and errors. Even so, the High Bisquer will look back on almost any game and remember mistakes that with hindsight were totally avoidable. If they were avoidable with hindsight, then they were avoidable with Foresight. Eliminate them and one's handicap starts to move in the right direction. Let me give a few examples.

In Figure 3, Blue has a long take off to Black that needs to be pushed near-



Figures 3 & 4: Bad errors are often avoidable.  
 (3) - Blue needs a simple take-off to Black at 4-back. Playing this to (A) on the left of Black leaves no chance of improving the position. Had Blue gone towards (B), there's a straight rush to tidy the position up.  
 (4) - There's no need to be this far out in sending Black to 3 (A). Take a moment to check the balls are correctly aligned. As long as the peg's not in the way, (B) is just as easy a point to play for.

er to the next hoop (4-back) for an easier hoop approach. High Bisquers may not always judge the strength of a shot, which comes with practice and experience. But for anyone to get the direction so wrong that SB ends up on the wrong side of the target ball, that is a crime. From the left of the target ball, the position cannot be improved however accurate the judging of the distance. The striker has not taken the trouble to put the two balls touching each other and/or aimed using the arrow to the correct spot. If any High Bisquers reading this do not know how to aim the SB in a takeoff, they should find someone in their club who does, and practise what they are told. If balls are not touching in any kind of croquet stroke, the results can be distorted and costly.

Similarly in Figure 4, to play a straight croquet to place a pioneer at Hoop 3 and end up so off line as illustrated, is equally sinful even though SB ended up with a good rush on pivot. The balls provide a perfect aiming device: centre of SB - point of contact with ball being croqueted - centre of croqueted ball - target hoop - all in one line. Aim the front ball of the croquet at the target with similar care and technique as used to line up the balls out of your mind; its direction is certain. Just concentrate now on the strength of the shot.

When playing a croquet, always have an exact spot for one or the other of the balls to end up on. Do not for instance just roll up hopefully to a

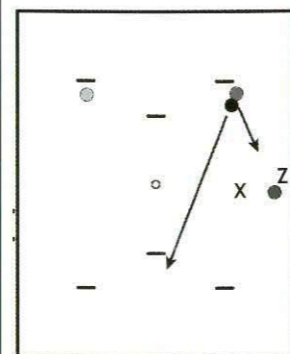
hoop; rather pick a spot in front of the hoop and focus to get SB on it. It is remarkable how quickly one's success rate improves if one does so. Similarly when hitting a continuation shot off court for a leave, pick a precise spot to go off. It's good practice and avoids that last stroke of your leave resulting in SB being yards nearer to your opponent's ball than you had intended. When giving a contact in Advance Handicap games, having successfully left the other three balls well separated on the boundaries it can be fatal to hit the final continuation shot in the general direction of corner 1 or 3 instead of concentrating on hitting the flag. Just aiming at the corner often results in the ball going off just outside of the corner, giving the opponent a dolly rush to start setting up a break.

*Assessing Risk and Percentages :  
 Knowing your Limitations*

The High Bisquer should always be looking to increase margins of safety and reduce percentages of error. For instance, having established a break and especially if bisques have been invested to do so, the High Bisquer should play conservatively, ensuring the opportunity to continue the established break, trying not to use more than one bisque if he breaks down e.g. by missing a roquet. Remember the advantages of having an opponent's ball as the orbiting pivot; partner ball will be the pioneer/pilot at every other hoop where more risk can be taken with hoop run-

ning with less potential penalty for failure.

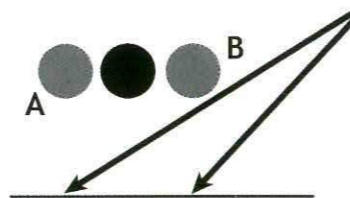
A conservative approach means respecting your own limitations. In Figure 5, Blue has just scored Hoop 3 and is going for Hoop 4 but the 4BB is coming apart. Striker has decided to play a split half roll sending Black to Hoop 5 and Blue to Red close to the



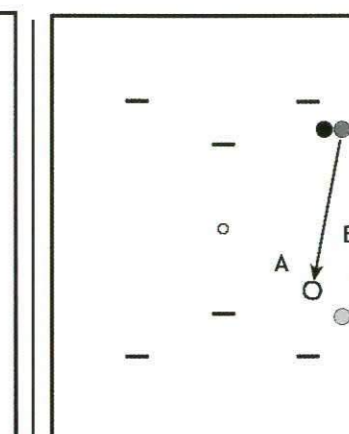
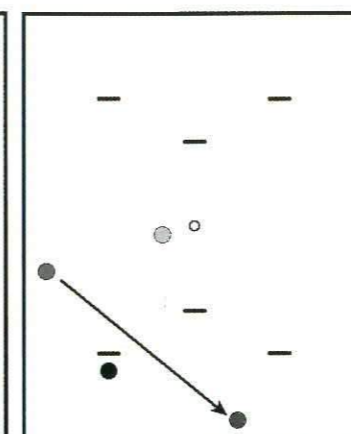
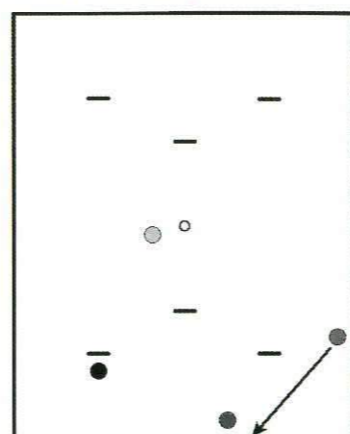
yard line. A skilled player might try to get some form of rush on Red by going close to the yard line at the spot marked Z, and improve Red's position with a cut rush towards Hoop 4. The High Bisquer may do better by going to the area marked X, within easy roquet distance of Red. This eliminates any danger of going off south of Red and having to take a bisque for a roquet, followed by a difficult hoop approach. If the hoop approach fails (which is more likely than not), a second bisque will be needed. Going to X will allow the break to be re-established using only one bisque if the hoop approach fails, instead of probably two.

In Figure 6 (opposite page), at the start of turn you see the opportunity to set up a 4BB by roqueting Red on the southern boundary, sending it with a split roll to be Pioneer at Hoop 2, with SB going to Black already at Hoop 1. I would suggest this is not the simplest of plans for a High Bisquer. The probability of roqueting Red from that distance is low. Blue having missed Red closely on the left or the right will end up on the west side of it. After taking the bisque, the split roll to follow is not an easy shot. A better solution is to send Blue off carefully to the east of Red, take the bisque and rush Red well south of Hoop 1. Now a straight stop shot will send Red to be pioneer at Hoop 2 and drop SB off near Black at Hoop 1.

In Figure 7, we have the same situ-



Left: You're shooting at a yardline ball from an angle. A near miss from the right leave the striker's ball at (A). Deliberately aiming wide sees the striker's ball come back on at (B). In Example 6 (below left), this would give a nice rush to Black for a bisque. In Example 7 (middle), you can shoot at the yardline ball in comfort - your ball comes on to the right of the object ball in any case, giving the rush over for just one bisque. Figure 8 (below right): here's the importance of pre-planning, and picking an exact point. Play the take-off to point (B), and you've a longish shot at the opponent's two balls. Fix point (A) as your target - from square-on you've a much better target to aim at.



ation except that Blue is starting from the west boundary. In this case, you can have the same plan but you may shoot at Red: from that angle, a miss on the right or the left will leave SB on the east of Red, with the desired rush to south of Hoop 1.

Finally Figure 8 reminds us that when taking off to roquet balls in contact or laid up for a rush, we should make sure that the continuation shot will be at a double target. From position A, the probability of a roquet is 20% greater than from position B.

We have given the Principles of Play a good airing. It is now time to move on and use them. In

the next and last article in this series we will do so, to establish a 4BB with bisques. My first question to you will be "What is a bisque used for?"

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## THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at the Victory (Services) Club on Saturday 11 October 2003

Present:  
 JW Solomon (President) - in the Chair  
 RQ Barrett (Chairman, Council)  
 Dr IG Vincent (Vice-Chairman, Council)  
 Dr RW Bray (Treasurer)  
 Prof. Bernard Neal (Vice President)  
 AJ Oldham (Vice-President)  
 NR Graves (Secretary)  
 and 31 Associates

### OPENING ADDRESS

The President welcomed all those present to the Meeting and thanked them for their support.

### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Rutger Beijderwellen, Don and Faith Gaunt, John Grant, Hamish Hall, James Hawkins, David and Eileen Magee, Bruce Rannie and Greta Stringer.

### 2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 12 October 2002 were signed as a true record of that Meeting.

### 3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman had distributed the following report before the meeting, and questions were invited.

#### *Council's Report to Members at the 2003 AGM*

After last year's AGM, Council agreed the principal tasks that our committees would try to accomplish in 2003. Here is our end-of-term report on these tasks and other work: we have had successes, but in some areas it is taking us longer than we anticipated to get results.

**Administration** - *keeping up with information technology*

A Health and Safety policy has been agreed. An IT sub-committee has reviewed the CA's hardware and software. It has already made some recommendations and work should be completed shortly.

**Coaching** - *trying to cut the cost of some courses*

A number of successful courses were held including Advanced, Silver, Bronze and for Improvers, as well as Coaches Qualifying Courses for both association and golf croquet. In 2004 we hope to be able to offer more qualification courses, funded partly by the CA so that the cost for coaches attending

them can be reduced. The revision of the Association Coaching Manual and work on drafting an equivalent one for golf croquet are both behind schedule.

**Development** - *major grants being taken up*

Tangible evidence of Council's intention to assist four-lawn clubs in their development was illustrated with our approval of a major grant and loan to Sidmouth as they embark on levelling and relaying three of their courts. A major grant to Taunton supported their application to the Lottery, which has enabled them to build three courts at a new sporting complex. We have also assured Pendle that top priority will be given to their application for financial assistance when their endeavours to find a new ground reach fruition. Smaller grants were made to Bristol and Sussex County. The survey of Federations was updated and we know of the needs of those clubs that responded to the questionnaire sent to all clubs as a follow-up to the Club Conferences. A Skills Register of members has been started and the CA can already offer a limited consultancy service to clubs seeking advice about any aspect of recruitment or how best to develop the club and satisfy their members' needs. We intend to expand this service. The CA is now a member of the Sports Turf Research Institute and some clubs have taken advantage of its inspection service. The lawns at Budleigh Salterton have improved significantly this year (grant-aided by the CA). So far no appointments of Regional Officers, financed directly from the CA, have been made. We welcome enquiries from any member interested in helping to develop croquet in their region.

**Equipment** - *croquet balls officially approved*  
 There are now CA-approved balls, in both colour sets, manufactured by Barlow, Dawson and Sunshiny; also Willhoite first colours are approved. Progress has been made with a new ball approval protocol but completion is still some way off.

**Golf Croquet** - *the attractions are increasingly being recognized*

Most clubs now recognize that the golf game is an attractive variant of croquet for many of their members. The automatic handicapping system for the game is now run in and operates well if clubs follow the published guidelines for setting initial handicaps. There is still scope for more competitions. Entries are unbalanced at north/south venues and we are finding there is little demand for tourna-

ments offering a mix of golf/association games. A top-level event has been introduced (Selectors Weekend) to encourage our players to prepare for international competition. Work to publish one set of golf croquet laws for all levels of play worldwide continues via the World Croquet Federation Rules Committee. It seems unlikely that international agreement will be reached in the short term as national governing bodies are reluctant to compromise on long-established rules of play. The CA has set up a committee to organize the 6th WCF World Golf Croquet Championships based at Southwick from 20th-27th June 2004.

**Handicapping** - *an eventful year*

The Handicap Guidelines and Procedures has been revised. Copies have been circulated to member clubs and handicappers, and it is also available on the CA website. The list of handicappers has been updated so that only active handicappers are included. Procedures and criteria for the appointment of handicappers have been agreed and new handicappers are being appointed. We hope that there will be a registered club handicapper in each member club by the end of 2003. In response to players' concerns, the CA is monitoring the operation of the Automatic Handicapping System (AHS) for the association game. The CA and the World Croquet Federation are working together to provide a mechanism whereby national handicaps can be converted, so enabling players to include handicap games overseas within the AHS. We continue to consider how best to handicap the one-ball game.

**International** - *preparing for major international events*

The preparation of the MacRobertson Shield GB team included two of the doubles pairs playing together in the 2003 Opens, and a weekend of doubles and team discussion at Roehampton. All members of the team will prepare by playing in the President's Cup, which has been moved to October so that it is close to the MacRob itself. The CA will host the WCF World Golf Croquet Championships at Southwick in 2004 and we have presented to the WCF detailed proposals for the 2005 WCF World Association Croquet Championships which will be held at Cheltenham. The CA has nominated David Openshaw for the position of President of the WCF. No special coaching has been given to juniors this year.

**Laws** - *reviewing the role of assistant referees*

The Basic Laws of Association Croquet publication has been written and will be published shortly. The role, training and examination of assistant referees are being reviewed. Self-training material for new referees is being prepared for publication on the CA website. We plan to recruit more examining referees.

**Marketing** - *Shop sales up and lots of help for clubs to recruit members*

A leaflet promoting CA clubs has been produced for distribution by Jaques and other parties, including the CA Shop, that are in contact with potential club members. A booklet titled *A guide for new croquet players* has been developed and will form part of the membership canvassing kit we aim to make available for clubs in 2004. The CA Shop continues to thrive under Jeff Dawson and turnover is running well ahead of the equivalent amount last year. Our newly appointed Press Officer, Pat Francis, is working with Federations and clubs to improve publicity about croquet at regional and local levels. We have started work on producing a leaflet advertising the benefits of CA membership for individuals and clubs. Individual Associate and Club membership of the CA are both down a little on last year: 1575 and 114 respectively. In 2003 Lincoln Unit Trust Managers sponsored the CA Fixtures Calendar and some prestigious CA tournaments.

**Publishing** - *website and Gazette improvements*

Improvements have been made to the CA's website: the CA Shop is now fully on-line including accepting credit card payments; search facilities are more flexible; the history/news/technical sections have been reorganized following user feedback, and archives for 2001 and 2002 are in place; there are more down-loadable forms. Publishing selected *Gazette* content on-line is still planned but is dependent on volunteer effort available. The *Gazette* editor, James Hawkins, has started to produce pull-out Tournament Digests and readers have welcomed this. Readership surveys are planned for the *Gazette* and website. Don Gaunt is preparing a new booklet for CA publication in 2004 covering alternative and entertaining croquet games.

**Tournaments** - *what to do with the Ladies?*

The CA Fixtures Calendar was again published on schedule due to the sterling efforts of Nigel Graves. The Open Championships

were held at Cheltenham very successfully; the Cheltenham club will also be the venue for the Opens in 2004. In general, CA tournaments are being well supported; however, entries for the various Ladies events are still poor and we are considering what action to take. We have yet to address how to encourage more entries to the initial qualification rounds of the All England Handicap Championship as entries remain fairly static at around 300 competitors.

**CA Conferences** - *useful for members and Council*

Two club conferences were held during the year - at Cheltenham and Huddersfield. Council members also attended Federation meetings in the South East and East Anglia. These occasions provided opportunities for members to discuss with Council the various initiatives being planned to develop the game. Our President, John Solomon, suggested the conferences, and the feedback they provided to Council members was very useful. It is helping us to compile the CA's Strategic Development Plan, a necessary document if we are to give proper help to clubs trying to obtain funds from third parties. We hope to repeat the conferences every two years.

**Chairman retires**

I am now retiring after six years on Council - two of them in the chair. I take this opportunity to thank everyone who helped the Council to achieve quite a lot in, I hope, quite an enjoyable way.

### 4. ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR TO 31 /12/2002 & TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer presented the Accounts for the year to 31 December 2002, and gave a brief report. The Accounts were approved nem. con.

### 5. ELECTION OF TREASURER

There being no other nomination, Dr RW Bray was duly re-elected as Treasurer.

### 6. ELECTION OF REPORTING ACCOUNTANTS

Proposed by WH Arliss, seconded by Dr IG Vincent, Marian Hemsted was re-elected as Reporting Accountant for the current financial year nem. con.

### 7. ELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

There having retired under Rule 18(a)(i) Messrs DJF Gurney, RF Hoskyns and DW

Trotman by rotation, and HM Hall having given notice of his resignation from Council, there being two unfilled vacancies last year, the number of vacancies on Council was six.

Messrs Hoskyns and Trotman sought re-election under Rule 18(a)(i). Three other nominations had been received as follows:

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

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

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

As there were five candidates for the six vacancies on Council no election was necessary, and the meeting declared these five people elected to Council.

### 8. BENEFACTORS' BOOK

The Secretary read the names in the Benefactors' Book.

### 9. PRESENTATION OF THE APPS AND STEEL MEMORIAL BOWLS

The Apps Memorial Bowl for the most improved male player of 2002 had been awarded to Rutger Beijderwellen of Sussex County Croquet Club. The Steel Memorial Bowl for the most improved female player of 2002 had been awarded to Greta Stringer, of Nailsea & District Croquet Club. Neither recipient was able to be present to receive the award.

### 10. PRESENTATION OF CROQUET ASSOCIATION DIPLOMAS

The Secretary announced the award of the Diploma to the following:

Whitford Harris Taylor Auckland	
John Grant	Belsay Hall
Jolyon Kay	Blewbury
Mike Sandler	Bowdon
Joyce Goodhart	Budleigh Salterton
Mary Goodhart	Budleigh Salterton
Bunny Porter	Budleigh Salterton
Dennis Porter	Budleigh Salterton
Alec Coleman	Caterham
John Gilbert	Caterham
Bill Mell	Huddersfield
Donald Beck	Medway
Roy Ware	Ramsgate
Neil Williams	Westmorland
Pam Overton	Woodhall Spa



Those present at the meeting received their diplomas from the President.

**11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Alan Oldham reported that he had recently visited Brian Macmillan, the Association's first Commercial Agent, who was now living in a nursing home suffering from mild dementia, and found him in good spirits.

**12. PRESIDENT'S CLOSING ADDRESS**

The President thanked Quiller Barrett for his service to the Association both as a member of Council and as its Chairman for the past two years. He commended the work of Council and thanked its members, particularly those who chaired committees, for their

efforts. He urged more members to come forward to assist in the administration of the Association. He thanked those present for attending the meeting, which provided them with the opportunity to participate in the affairs of the Association. He then expressed his wish to retire before the next Annual General Meeting from the position of President of the Croquet Association which he had been proud to fill for the past 21 years. A vote of thanks to him for his prolonged and distinguished years of service was proposed and carried by acclamation.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 12.15.

**Notice of Meeting**

The Annual General Meeting of The Croquet Association will be held at the Hurlingham Club on Saturday 16 October 2004 commencing at 5 p.m.

**AGENDA**

1. Election of President to succeed John Solomon Council propose Professor Bernard Neal, who has expressed his willingness to serve.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on Saturday 11 October 2003. These are published in the current issue of *The Croquet Gazette* no. 292, (August 2004). Copies will be available at the meeting and will be sent to Home Members on written request to the Secretary.

3. Chairman's Report.

4. Accounts for the year to 31 December 2003 and Treasurer's Report. These accounts and a brief commentary were published in *The Croquet Gazette*, no. 291, (June 2004). Copies will be available at the meeting and a more comprehensive report will be sent to Home Members on written request to the Secretary.

5. Election of Treasurer.

Dr RW Bray offers himself for re-election.

6. Election of Reporting Accountant.

7. Election of Council Members. The following five members retire by rotation under Rule 18 (a)(i): Messrs AG Fathers, J Isaacs, DK Openshaw, Prof. A Pidcock and Dr IG Vincent. One further vacancy arises from the resignation of Dr JC Ruddock, and there is one further unfilled vacancy.

All retiring members seek re-election under Rule 18(a)(i).

One other nomination has been received as follows:

Mr IC Parkinson proposed by AJ Oldham and seconded by WH Arliss.

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

8. Motion Of The Council That Rule 29, which currently reads:

**29 BANK ACCOUNT**

*A bank account shall be maintained in the name of the Association. All cheques shall be signed by at least two persons nominated by the Council from time to time.*

be replaced by:

**SUBSCRIPTION RATES 2005**

Council has approved the following subscription rates for 2005:

CATEGORY OF MEMBERSHIP	Sub
Full - Single (T)	£30
Joint (T + TS)	£48
Non-Tournament - Single (N)	£18
Joint (N + NS)	£25
Junior (J)	£7.50
Overseas (O)	£30
Member Club (per capita)	£6.35

**29 BANK ACCOUNTS**

*The Council shall maintain in the name of the Association such bank accounts as it deems necessary. The person or persons authorized to operate these accounts, to sign cheques and make other payments in respect of them shall be as determined by the Council from time to time. These provisions shall be reviewed by the Council at least once a year including immediately following the Annual General Meeting. The persons so authorized shall keep account of all receipts and disbursements for which they are responsible.*

9. Benefactors' Book. The names of the Benefactors will be read.

10. Presentation of the Apps and Steel Memorial Bowls.

11. Presentation of Croquet Association Diplomas.

12. Any other business.

13. President's Closing Address.

Nigel Graves  
Secretary  
1 August 2004

**Committee Reports**

*CA Coaching Committee*

Three successful coaching qualification courses were held this year. Two have already been reported in the *Gazette* (Issue 291, June 2004): for Hurlingham, where 17 CA members were successful in obtaining their Club Coach certificate and badge, and for Middlesbrough on the same weekend when 11 players from North West Federation, Yorkshire Federation and Croquet North attended and also were awarded their certificates and badges. The third coach qualification course was held at Cheltenham on Saturday 22nd and Sunday 23rd May, organised by David Magee, which was unfortunately very poorly attended. However, three CA members obtained their certificates and badges at this course.

*Coach of the Year 2003*

Daphne Gaitley was named Coach of the Year for 2003. Daphne, a member of Sussex County Croquet Club, has been coaching for 5 years and is also extremely active in East and West Sussex in assisting other clubs within that Federation. Daphne is an excellent instructor who inspires her pupils with her enthusiasm and lively approach and the standard of her coaching abilities was recognised when she was selected as a member of the directing staff for the 2003 Coach Qualification course. Daphne followed Michael

Hague who was nominated Coach of the Year for 2002. Michael Hague has been the prime mover in the introduction of the new Coach Qualification course, having written most of it and delivered the original courses at Surbiton, Southport and Cheltenham. This course is now accepted by the Croquet Association as an essential part of learning how to coach, whether for Association Croquet or Golf Croquet. All who have participated in these courses are better skilled in putting over the material to their students.

The Coaching Committee would like to receive nominations from Clubs and Federations for Coach of the Year for 2004. Names of prospective nominees, with details of their qualifications and experience, should be sent to the Chairman of the Coaching Committee. From September, this will be Brian Fisk, who takes over as Chairman when I retire from Council later this year. Brian's address is 7 Woodfield Drive, Winchester, Hampshire SO22 5PY. His telephone number is 01962 865458 and his email address is [bfisk@dircon.co.uk](mailto:bfisk@dircon.co.uk)

Bob Whitaker  
Chairman, Coaching Committee

*CA Publishing Committee*

1. Publication of the *Gazette* has changed to even-numbered months; the February issue contained an extensive

MacRob report and a pull-out 2003 results supplement. The Centennial edition appeared almost 100 years to the day.

2. A Reader Survey, covering both magazine and website, has been issued and data are being analysed.

3. The 'interactive' Fixtures Calendar was successfully introduced, with facilities to link with diary-management software. The next stage will be serious consideration, by all committees involved, of on-line tournament entry and payment.

4. 'Advice for Clubs' has been added under the expanded Technical & Articles section.

5. Committees have been asked to submit news and/or Minutes to the website, but few have chosen to do this.

6. Basic Laws are on website (Association and Golf) and available in booklet form from the Shop.

7. Publication is imminent of *Alternative Croquet* (Don Gaunt), a compendium of many game variations.

8. Assistance (mainly by Samir Patel) was given setting up and maintaining the Golf Croquet Worlds site, also linked from the CA website.

Charles Waterfield  
Chairman, Publishing Committee

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## Tournament Round-up

*Inter Counties Championship*  
Report by Sue Mackay

Cheshire won the 2004 Inter Counties Championship with eight match wins, losing only to Avon and to Gloucestershire. Their team of Colin Irwin, Ian Lines, David Maugham, Brian Storey, Lawrence Whittaker and Jenny Williams had done enough to secure victory by the start of the final day's play, and they had six 3-0 wins. In a double triumph for the north, Lancashire, with David Openshaw playing for the first time in many years, were runners up with seven wins. The second division trophy was won convincingly by Suffolk, who had a total of nine match wins. Their team of Peter Allnut, Mark Avery, Steve Comish, Phil Eardley, Martin Leach and Mike Percival lost only to Glamorgan. At the presentation the twelve winners as well as the manager, Chris Williams, and the tournament organiser, Bill Arliss, were presented with bottles of wine from Bellingham, the sponsors of the event, and all the players had a chance to sample the Bellingham wines at a wine tasting on the Saturday evening.

With Jenny Williams of New Zealand now qualified for Cheshire, she and David Maugham proved a hard first pairing to beat, with David performing a quintuple peel on the first day and numerous triples. At Compton on the third day, however, he was heard to say on pegging out that it was the best triple he had ever done. Patrick Hort of Nottinghamshire had stuck in penult using David's ball; from having to roquet a ball in the jaws of a hoop, and with the other two balls in corner 2 and corner 4, he managed to dig out a standard triple.

Cheshire's first match was against Sussex, last year's Division Two champions. Sadly for Sussex they will be back in that division next season as they failed to register a match win, but their deciding game against the eventual champions on the first morning was a cliff hanger. Colin Irwin did a TPO on Ian Vincent, leaving Lawrence Whittaker to 2 ball it round while Bill Arliss practised for the upcoming World Golf Croquet Championships by attempting to blast balls through hoops

from long distances and incredible angles - he almost made it! Meanwhile at Compton Hertfordshire were playing Dorset on lightning fast lawns, which made controlled play extremely difficult, and the victory eventually went to Hertfordshire +1T, -1T, +1T. This result later proved to be crucial, as at the end of the competition three teams were tied on four match wins for the other two relegation places. A somewhat depleted Middlesex had eleven game wins and so will be in the second division next season along with Sussex. Hertfordshire and Dorset were tied on twelve games each, and so Hertfordshire stayed up by virtue of that +1T win on the first day.

To add insult to injury, in the last match Dorset were double banked with Hertfordshire at Southwick. Peter Trimmer of Dorset was watching John Gibbons of Hertfordshire do a triple peel, when he saw John Irish peel penult, roquet the escape ball and then, forgetting he had done an Irish peel, run penult again. Peter was naturally unable to say anything and John's opponents didn't notice because they were talking to Peter and had their backs to the lawn! In the light of the subsequent games tie with Dorset this must have been particularly galling. Plus One on Time will not be Dorset's favourite phrase. In their second match against Avon in the deciding game they were one ahead after time was called and Alex Leggate came on to take the final shot. He shot from B baulk at a ball halfway down the lawn, missed completely and ended up running hoop 4, which was his hoop! This levelled the scores. He then dribbled 10 yards to his partner ball and just hit it, took off to hoop 5 and ran a 45° angled hoop to win +1T.

Division Two had something of a new look to it. This year Northumberland and the Channel Islands were unable to raise a team; instead a team from Norfolk played for the first time, and thoroughly enjoyed themselves with three match wins, and three members of the old Channel Islands team formed the nucleus of a CA Europe team with players from Spain and Belgium. There was also a CA Select team from England, largely

made up of local players from Southwick and Compton. The CA Select team and a severely depleted Berkshire team only managed one win apiece, but the CA Europe team had eight wins and finished as runners up to Suffolk. Captain Fernando Ansorena was rarely without a smile on his face. Fortunately for Glamorgan, who finished fourth behind third placed Yorkshire (both on seven match wins) the CA Europe team were not eligible for promotion, which means Glamorgan gained promotion despite having to play both Sue Mackay (9) and Liz Williams (20) on the last day.

The weather was kind, especially on the Bank Holiday Monday, but torrential overnight rain meant that the Southwick lawns were flooded on the final morning. Fortunately the club is now well equipped with sweeping implements and players who arrived early were pressed into action to clear the puddles. The rain then had the decency to hold off for the rest of the day. Thanks as usual are due to the Sussex County and Compton clubs for the use of their lawns, and for the superb catering. Special mention should go to the good ladies of Compton this year, who coped admirably with the Water Board shutting off the supply following a dramatic leak. They served lunches in the cricket pavilion but managed to produce the teas lawnside with the minimum of fuss. As usual the Counties was a wonderful festival of croquet.

*Men's and Women's Championships*  
Report by David Magee

The Men's and Women's Championships returned to Hurlingham for the first time in nearly a quarter of a century and the Club certainly put on its best bib and tucker to celebrate the occasion. If you have never been to Hurlingham you certainly should make a point of entering one of the Club's tournaments as the place is a delight. Their legions of ground staff ensure that all the flower borders are always at their best and if you get despondent with your performance at any time there are plenty of quiet shady

areas where you can go and contemplate the meaning of life, the universe and everything. Anyway, enough of the advert and back to the Championships. This year the Singles events have been separated from the Doubles Championship which will be held at Nottingham at the end of July. This meant that the Championships were reduced to four days for the Men and (strangely) three days for the Women. The loss of the courts on the cricket square at Hurlingham from Friday onwards meant that the event had to be multi-venue, using the courts at Roehampton and Parsons Green which certainly tested the manager's ability to keep abreast of things.

This year the Mens Championship was sponsored by Simon Carter and the prize money on offer had attracted a strong field of seeds with all eight ranked in the World's top 50 and which included the current World Champion and two former champions. Thursday saw the start of some quick play. Chris Clarke returned from Roehampton before lunchtime to report his win over Edward Dymock and also to report that he was not the first to finish. Stephen Mulliner in his inimitable fashion had rushed in, recorded a very quick win over Martin Haggerston and rushed away again. In contrast Reg Bamford did not turn up at all. Three hours of frantic phone calls and a great deal of good-natured patience from Cliff Jones, his prospective opponent, saw the match start four hours late. Having had to forfeit the first game Reg was a break down before he finally got going to record a win. On Friday all the Championship matches were played on the front lawns at Hurlingham and the standard of play rose in response to the superb conditions with the peels beginning to flow in abundance. The day also saw a significant upset early on when the number 1 seed, Robert Fulford, lost in straight games to David Openshaw, never having taken croquet. Dennis Bulloch, the New Zealand Open Champion and sixth seed, also lost to Chris Daniels who is beginning to make his mark on the tournament scene. However, Chris quickly realised the scale of the mountain he has yet to climb when he was beaten quite con-

vincingly by Chris Clarke in the quarter-finals. Peter Trimmer, last year's champion, also won his quarter-final but his match against Stephen Mulliner was a much closer affair, as the score +7. +5 indicates. Reg Bamford was now well into his stride. He had beaten Nick Parish with a triple and a sextuple in the previous round and even a failed sextuple did not prevent him from winning against Phil Cordingley. The most gripping quarter-final match was that between David Openshaw and Jeff Dawson which in the twilight of the evening eventually turned on David conceding a lift shot because of a hampered back swing to allow Jeff to run out the winner. Saturday saw some lovely play with Peter Trimmer beating Jeff Dawson in three straight games, all with triple peels to reach the final for the second year running. Reg Bamford had more of a tussle with Chris Clarke losing the second game but still recording three sextuples to set up the prospect of an exciting final.

By now the Du Pre was well underway with everyone fighting for the four slots in the knock out which would conclude the event on Sunday. Having to split the pool of players between Hurlingham and Roehampton meant that no one had any clear indication as to which players were leading the field. Tea time on Saturday saw everyone regroup at Hurlingham and the realisation that there was still all to play for. Stephen Mulliner was the first to seal a place with some good wins followed shortly thereafter by David Mundy, last year's winner. The other two places were only going to be decided by the results in the final round of games and once again it was time for will I, won't I, should I, shouldn't I. In the early evening Robin Brown and Dennis Bulloch had to make a decision as to whether to play each other to secure a definite place for one of them or to hope that Andy Davies lost his last match which would mean that they both qualified. Andy eventually won his match to secure his place so Robin and Dennis had to play and Robin had a good win to make up the quartet.

I have deliberately left any mention of the Women's Championship until now because I am forced to ask Where

were all the top ranked female players? They were certainly not at Hurlingham so we ended up with five women contesting the Championship. I find it incomprehensible that players turn down the opportunity to add their name to a Roll of Honour that lists many of the best players in the history of our game. I wonder if the absentees would be prepared to write to the *Gazette* and explain their reasons as, in fifty or a hundred years' time, there will be no footnote to say that someone would/could have won the event in a certain year, had they bothered to enter. Even more perverse is the apparent fact that the shortened duration and changed format mentioned in the Fixtures Book was as a result of a survey amongst those women who were not present! Anyway, to return to the actual event. Liz Fleming had a comfortable passage to the final beating Eileen Magee and Chris Osmond on the way. At the other end of the Draw, Sam Symonds had a much harder struggle and it was only when Deborah Forrington accidentally pegged out her forward ball that Sam was able to bring her greater experience to bear to win the first game +2. She then went on to win the match in straight games.

Sunday brought the prospect of a feast of croquet to be enjoyed along with liberal refreshments provided by the sponsor of the Mens Championship. The final of the Du Pre was the first to finish with Stephen Mulliner beating Robin Brown. Typically, he then had to rush off (to fly to Edinburgh) so he could not wait for the presentation. Meanwhile the main finals continued to enthral the spectators. In the Womens final Sam Symonds won the second game to take the match into a third but Liz Fleming came through as Champion with a final triple peel. In the Mens final Peter Trimmer won the first game but Reg Bamford came back strongly to take the next two games with sextuple peels. Peter refused to lie down though and won the next to take the match to a decisive fifth game. However Reg proved to be too strong and took the final game with his seventh sextuple of the Championships.

## The MGM Assurance 6th WCF World Golf Croquet Championship

Report by Bill Arliss

Those who had forecast a possible end to the domination of the Egyptian players in world Golf Croquet had not allowed for the emergence of a new star in the Egyptian camp. Ahmed Nasr, 23, burst on to the Golf Croquet scene and took the world title, with a three straight wins over New Zealander, Dennis Bulloch on the final Sunday. Currently serving with the Egyptian army, Nasr gave an awesome display of high accuracy and high speed shooting that no other player was able to counter.

The event started early on Sat 19 June with the Croquet Association Open Doubles Championship. The WCF had decided that they did not want a doubles competition as part of the world championship so the CA held their normal doubles event prior to the staging of the main event. In view of the support for the doubles from many overseas players, the WCF would do well to reconsider their thoughts on this format before the next world championship. The doubles event was run as a single 13 point game knockout but with one trial exception: players had to win by two clear points. When scores reached 6-6, play continued on the 19-point route until one side were two points in front. The nineteenth hoop was regarded as the 'golden hoop' and 10-9 victories were accepted.

On the form book it certainly appeared that the two seeded pairs of Mulliner and Bamford from the CA ranks and Mik Mehas and Sherif Abdelwahab from the USA should have been the firm favourites. However the English pair of Bill Arliss and Derek Old managed to despatch the Americans in the second round, only to find themselves put out by England's Samantha Curry and John Moore in the following round. The final contested between Curry/Moore and Bamford/Mulliner resulted in a relatively easy victory for the Curry/Moore partnership by 7-3.

The Organising Committee were very fortunate to obtain a title sponsorship for the event from MGM Assurance, a Worthing based compa-



Dennis Bulloch, Ahmed Nasr and Khaled Younis receive their winners' medals

ny. Not only did MGM provide excellent financial help for staging the event, but also provided a new permanent trophy for the Championship. In addition several local companies sponsored individual lawns which paid for the hire of the lawns and the referees' expenses.

The Southwick members had done themselves proud in preparing for this championship. Each of the ten lawns to be used had been provided with a large scoreboard, which was manned for every game in the championship. The scoreboards also had a secondary purpose as flagpoles for the country flags used in the opening ceremony, considerably adding to the general colour around the grounds. That ceremony had included a parade of all the



The opening ceremony

competitors behind their national flags, this year representing 19 separate countries.

The full perimeter of the croquet lawns was surrounded by one meter high safety netting. Even so, several balls were not contained - two went over the six foot wooden fence by lawn 10, one over the wall by the railway and one we think over the wall by the road never to be seen again. At least two of these incidents were down to our new world champion.

Play in the world championship proper started at 9.30 on the Sunday morning. Initial games were organised on an American block basis with eight blocks of eight players, giving all players seven best-of-three, 13-point games, which were completed over the next four days. Due to the number of games to be played, four lawns had to be used at Compton and two blocks were transported to Compton each day. A large training programme for golf croquet referees had been run locally prior to the championship, resulting in about 80% of all games being played with a 'Referee in Charge'.

Whilst most of the block games went in accordance with expectations, there were a few very notable

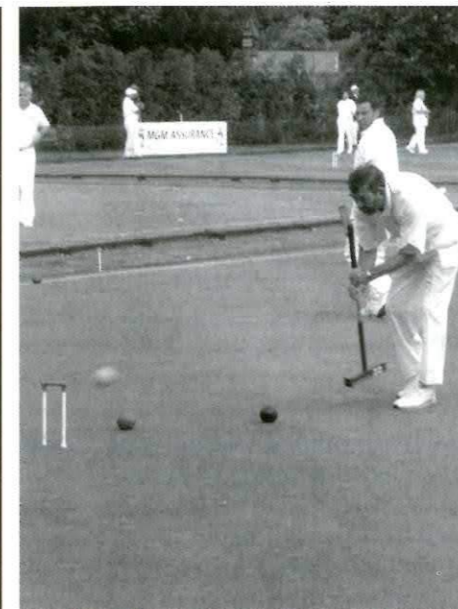
exceptions. In block A, Khalid Younis, the reigning world champion was beaten two straight by our own David Hopkins. Unfortunately David was later beaten by Sherif Abusbaa from Egypt, allowing Khalid to maintain first place in the block on net games won. In block B, former world champions Salah Hassan finished in first place with six wins losing one match to Italian, Paolo de Petra. Marcus Evans from Nailsea also recorded 6 wins to take second place.

Block C also provided two players with 6 wins, with the first place going to Reg Bamford over Egyptian Hazeem Mahmoud. Egyptian Walid Salah made no mistakes in block D with seven wins, whilst American Stewart Jackson claimed second place on net games from two other players with four wins.

In block E, eventual champion Ahmad Nasr finished top but again with only six wins, losing to England's Roy Ware. New Zealand's Dennis Bulloch also recorded six wins but lost on net games. In block F, Mohamad Nasr, the twin brother of champion Ahmad Nasr had a 100% record, with Mik Mehas of the USA second on six wins. In block G, England's Derek Old played superbly well to gain seven wins, the top Egyptian lady player, Mrs Naheed Hassan, finishing in second place. In the final block Mrs Monal Ali Mohsen, the second Egyptian lady player recorded seven wins including a three-game victory over England's Stephen Mulliner who finished second.

The format for the final knockouts was that the top four in each block would enter a knockout competition, with the second and first placed players in the block not entering the knockout until the second and third rounds respectively. The bottom four in each block also entered a second consolation knockout event for the Plate, run on similar lines to the main knockout.

Regrettably the weather worsened during the block play and some short periods were lost due to rain. This was not the worst problem as the gales also moved in. On Thursday morning,



England's Roy Ware, the only player to secure a win against Ahmed Nasr.

most players arrived at the club to find the two marquees that had been used for entertaining by our main sponsors had moved somewhat. One was in the tennis courts and one up a tree at the back of lawn 7. It was 36 hours before the wind abated sufficiently to recover the latter tent. It was reported that Games Manager, Cliff Jones was around when the damage occurred and, in trying to hold things down, got some first hand experience in paragliding until he decided to let go; luckily no serious injuries.

The seeding committee's views were not too far adrift, as the top eleven seeds were all still present at the start of round 3. However three of the non-seeded players reached the last eight after completion of round 3. This left a quarter final line up of Dennis Bulloch and Salah Hassan, Derek Old and Mark McNerney, Reg Bamford and Ahmad Nasr, Hazem Mahmoud and Khalid Younis.

The most surprising result in the quarters was the defeat of Salah Hassan by Dennis Bulloch from New Zealand. Salah has won the world title twice, but was beaten by sheer persistence and very accurate shooting by Dennis. Although Dennis has been playing Association Croquet for over 30 years and has a record second to none in that format, he only played his

first Golf Croquet tournament earlier this year. He has none of the flamboyant shoots of the top Egyptians but certainly managed to hold his own with conventional shots and good tactical play. In the bottom half of the draw, Ahmad Nasr showed his real potential by a 2-0 victory over Reg Bamford, but it was still quite close at 7-6, 7-6.

The semi finals matched Dennis Bulloch with Ireland's Mark McNerney, and Khalid Younis with Ahmad Nasr. Yet again Dennis's steady play managed to overcome Mark's fast and furious style in two straight games 7-5, 7-6. In the second semi final the reigning champion Khalid Younis showed that he had not lost many of the skills that has brought him three world titles but in the end lost in the third game 6-7, 7-6, 4-7.

Ahmed started the final in a very aggressive way with many successful long hoop attempts and long distance clearances. As these succeeded his confidence grew and he raced through the best of five final 7-4, 7-3, 7-1 in 75 minutes. There is no doubt the the Golf Croquet world will hear a lot more about this young man and it is difficult to imagine how he can be beaten by what we would consider a conventional style of play. He has the ability to precisely position a single ball but most of his shots are played at extremely high speed, including all his hoop running. His style has to be seen to be believed. When he lines up a shot he appears to be at least 30 degrees off target, and when he makes the shot his whole body uncoils, generating terrific mallet head speed.

Meantime the plate had been progressing and England's Don Beck emerged the winner with a victory over Egypt's Mostaffa Eissa in the final.

For those interested in the statistics of the event, a total of 368 of which 357 were completed. All were best of three matches played with no time limits. Approximately 30% of the games went to three and the average time per game was 40 minutes whilst the average match took 92 minutes.

Photos by Brian Kitching

# The England v Turkey International

Geoffrey Cuttle finds croquet in remote rural Turkey

It was a considerable surprise when we discovered, among the details for our holiday at Kaya Koyu near Fethiye in Turkey, that there was a croquet club in the village. Indeed, one of the "jaunts" that Tapestry, the tour company, offered was a Croquet Dinner there. Even more of a surprise when we arrived this May was to discover that the terrace of our cottage actually overlooked the club, and very inviting it was too.

Through our rep we rapidly made contact with John Laughland who runs the club and we were invited to join them for a special club afternoon. Special because it was a visit by a BBC television team filming for a travel programme to be shown next October and intended to include some shots of John and his club among the many attractions of the region. Half a day's filming - so I guess good for ten seconds or so when it comes out.



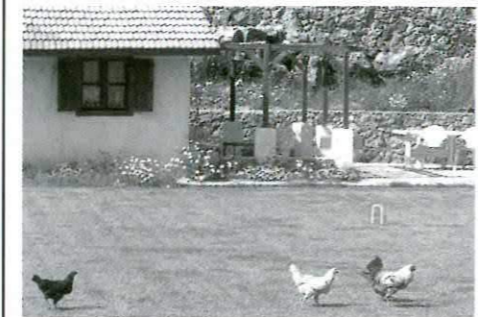
It was an enjoyable afternoon - John and his partner Bea are excellent hosts - and he arranged for me have access to the clubhouse and lawn throughout our stay. The lawn itself is virtually full size (using 6 metre units rather than 7 yard), bounded by a meticulously levelled flush concrete retaining wall that both keeps the soil in and acts as a permanent boundary line. The club house extends most of the length of the South boundary and provides a delightfully shaded social venue, whilst a helipad (only used once) adjoins the East boundary. A large field abuts the West side, generally occupied by two goats and a sheep whose eruclatations provided a cynical

commentary when I was practising, and there is a large olive tree overhanging Corner two where a dozen or so chickens roost at dusk. During the day the chickens like to promenade from hoop to hoop, though not generally in proper order. To complete the menagerie, two genial village dogs (brother and sister) usually join in as well as soon as they notice anyone playing. At night, permanently mounted flood lights provide excellent coverage.

The Croquet Dinner on the Saturday night was a great success. Recognising that apart from myself the eight visitors had no real croquet experience, John and Bea started them off with a local rules variant approximating to Golf Croquet. Since those rules totally ignored the laws about playing for the next hoop, he was able by judicious advice to ensure that every visitor scored at least one hoop, and the party then retired to the clubhouse for drinks and the first buffet of more than twenty different mezes prepared by Bea. Then while she prepared the meat dishes for the second buffet, John and I organised two games of floodlit doubles association croquet. Finally we retired for more wine, the second buffet and eventually dessert. Not high quality croquet, but thoroughly enjoyed by everyone and at least one or two visitors sufficiently taken that they might follow the game up in the UK. Everyone who attended received an illuminated "Certificate of Good Sportsmanship" issued by "The Ancient and Royal Kaya Croquet Club" signed by its Captain and President, John Laughland.

The only real drawback is the quality of the grass, which I guess is largely a matter of climate but also because, to keep the lawn green through the hot summer, John cannot mow it as short as we would in the UK. This makes it very slow - I measured 6-7 seconds from end to end - and it was actually quite difficult to hit that far. A tealady would have to be an Amazon just to reach the distance from Corner 3, let alone hit anything. And the clover patch between hoops 3, 4 and 5 added

an unusual variety to the surface and was much enjoyed by the local bees. But once one had mastered the lawn, everything else: the spacious club house, the hospitality, the glorious scenery, and above all Bea's cooking made it a unique and memorable croquet venue.



For our last day John and I agreed a match. In the same presumptive spirit that he named the Club, we nominated this to be The England v Turkey International. As a concession to the importance of the occasion, John agreed to play a full 26 point game and accepted eight bisques (both alien concepts in Kaya). He also watered the lawn which, on top of the clover, added an interesting variation to the surface around hoop 3, all of which may have delayed our progress. Eventually, with England eight hoops ahead and Turkey eight bisques still standing we deemed the match an honourable draw and retired to the Club house to finish the bottle. It is resolved that a decider will be played when we return next year, which is our firm intention. Kaya, one of the deserted villages abandoned when its inhabitants were sent to Greece in 1923, is a delightful and still relatively unspoilt part of Turkey with wonderfully friendly people and, even without its croquet, well worth a visit.

### Contacts:

For those interested in Kaya and the Club, there is some rather idiosyncratic information in the About and Photo pages of John's donkey's web site: [www.donkeymabel.freesevers.com](http://www.donkeymabel.freesevers.com)

Anyone interested in how to get there and the travel company we used can contact me at [Geoffrey@cuttle.co.uk](mailto:Geoffrey@cuttle.co.uk)

# Taming the media

ENS, the CA's PR agent, have the tough job of keeping Croquet in the public eye

It's been a busy season for the CA's Public Relations agency. ENS were appointed this year to handle the increasing demands of the role, and the resulting activity seems to have produced some good results for the game.

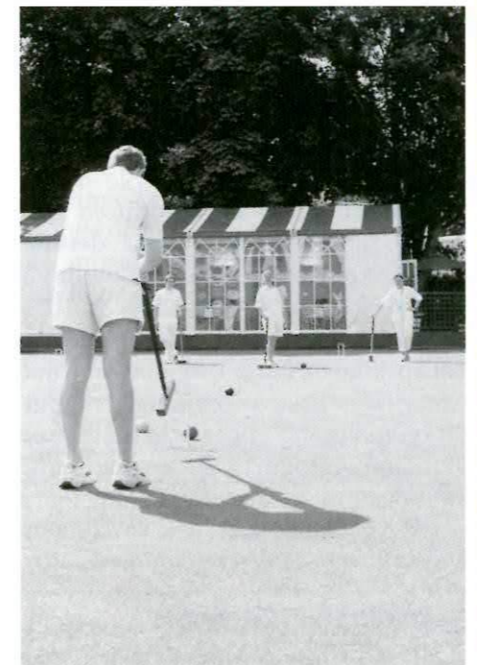
Now is a critical time in the game's development. The generation of children born during the baby boom of the 1940's are now nearing retirement age. This is fertile ground for recruitment, and the Croquet "brand" needs to have the exposure to bring newcomers into the game.

The flagship event for the CA this year has been WCF World Golf

Croquet Championship, hosted by Southwick and Compton in Sussex. Considerable local coverage has strengthened recruitment drives, as well as building positive relationships with local councils, for whom the prestige of a major event is a great fillip.

Local radio reporting was extensive, but ENS also managed to have the Championship mentioned on national radio, plugged by both Terry Wogan and Ken Bruce on BBC Radio 2. Regional TV covered the start of the event, with a three minute piece on BBC South Today (BBC ONE), shown throughout the day.

Away from the terrestrial broadcasters, Transworld Sport ran a feature. Transworld is broadcast on various Sky Sports channels, before repeating on Channel 4. David Painter, the cameraman for TWS, is no stranger to Croquet, having covered the 2001 Association Worlds at Hurlingham. He has carved a lucrative niche role for himself, travelling



**Croquet:** Egyptians maintained their stranglehold on golf croquet when Ahmed Nasr, from Cairo, won the World Championship at Brighton. Nasr cruised to a 7-4, 7-3, 7-1 victory in the final over New Zealander Dennis Bulloch, a top player of the association version.

Left: Tim Wilkins and Samantha Symonds in play during Wimbledon fortnight  
Above: The Daily Telegraph reintroduced croquet reporting to its results section  
Right: Southwick's pro-celebrity event may have proved disappointing, but it failed to mar the extensive pre-publicity

# It's 'hoop, hoop, hooray' for star croquet players



It may not have the glitz and glamour of West Palm Beach, but Southwick is the quintessential English setting for the world championships of a most British pastime - croquet.  
The MCM Association WCF golf croquet world championships are being held at Sussex County Croquet and Tennis Club Kingston Lane, from June 15 to 27.  
The organizers of this year's championships, last held in West Palm Beach, Florida, are posing on the best of English hospitality. Measured lawns and stashed croquet wickets are the order of the day at the competition, but do not be fooled with the notion that this is a quiet game reserved for the tranquil soul with a few hours to spare.  
Croquet is fast, tactically vicious and addictive.  
It is played with four coloured balls, six hoops and a mallet and the object is to be the first to pass through a series of hoops in a specific order.  
However, hoops may just trigger the ball and a regular barrage of English abuse coming in from 20 yards away, it is a far cry from the pastime of polite society.  
The single rule aims that even the quietest and calmest of the spectators are allowed to cheer and yell to the players.  
The championships are open to the public and admission is free.  
Worshiper croquet players can say their hand is in the sport, since the exhibition taking place in a pre-celebrity match is simply named as the match of the players, who are coming from as far afield as Egypt, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand.  
All distances measured during the competition will go to the Chestnut Tree House children's hospital, near Hove.  
The pre-celebrity match takes place on Saturday, June 19, at 2.30pm, with participants such as former England and British Lions rugby player Martin Bayfield, opera promoter John Greenwood, former boxer Chris Eubank, Katie Price, Don Lynam, Astor's Lord Croft and Craig Doyle expected to take part.

the world filming every minority sport, from dike-vaulting and sheep racing to worm charming. Croquet is one of his more serious and reverential subjects.

Later in the week of the Worlds, Tim Wilkins and Sam Symonds were invited to play at Wimbledon. Their opponents, Sue Barker and John McEnroe, declined to appear, but their game (of Association) was broadcast for three minutes during the prime-time of the BBC tennis coverage.

Time was when media attitudes to Croquet were jokey and derogatory. Now journalists and broadcasters seem readier to embrace the game for what it is.

JDH

**CROQUET DINNER**  
at the Hurlingham Club  
on Saturday, 16th October 2004  
at 7 p.m.

The Dinner will be held to mark John Solomon's retirement as President of the Croquet Association. The Annual General Meeting will be held at 5.00 p.m. to allow members and their guests the opportunity to attend the meeting before the Dinner.

Come and celebrate John Solomon's contribution to the game as one of the leading players of all time and as our President since 1982. Dinner will be preceded by a multimedia review of John's career and of our successful defence of the MacRobertson Shield.

Tickets will be limited to 100 and are available from the CA Office at £45 each to cover a three course meal, coffee and wine and soft drinks.

# Croquet in Advertising

James Hawkins looks at the game's image in post-war America

Few things act as a better indicator of social history than advertising. Marketers sink vast sums into reaching an audience, and their endeavour is to strike a chord with the as much of their target group as possible. So Croquet's elitist, aristocratic image seems to be at odds with the populist needs of advertising.

The game's always had an immediate recognition factor - everyone knows what Croquet is - but that recognition (these days, at any rate) comes with all those uncomfortable preconceptions of class. With just a split-second in which to grab the viewer's attention, no advertiser would surely touch Croquet with a bargepole.

It's a great surprise, then, to see so much advertising memorabilia featuring the game. Most of what survives is print advertising in magazines, and most of that comes from the USA, in that first decade after the War.

These were times of increasing prosperity. Families were settling down, consumer spending was up, and leisure time was on the rise. Croquet fitted well into this environment. In the eyes of advertisers, the game became a symbol of aspirations towards domestic bliss. We see images of family barbecues, family picnics and family garden parties. Now that beer producers were marketing their wares to the stay-at-home family man, the idyllic representation of Croquet was ideal.

The United States Brewers Foundation churned out hundreds of ads, aimed at getting bottled beer drunk at home. Their "Beer belongs ... enjoy it" campaign of 1948 featured many domestic scenes, two of them incorporating a game of backyard Croquet. (Croquet comprised a tiny section of the output of the series, which ran for another decade. Later examples include No 53: "Dad tries out the ukelele", and No 106: "Showing off the new kitchen".)

Taking their lead from that campaign, Anheuser-Busch, the manufacturers of Budweiser Beer, kept Croquet in the public eye, with a series of adverts which ran until 1952.

Soft drinks advertisements, though



Beer belongs...enjoy it

There's nothing like it... absolutely nothing



These two magazine advertisements are relatively common on the Internet. Left: Croquet on the Lawn, Number 20 in the United States Brewers Foundation "Beer Belongs..." campaign (1948); Right: An early Budweiser colour ad (1950)

fewer have survived, portray the same domestic scene. One early instance is the 1947 Seven-Up campaign (see front cover) - children play a game while the adults enjoy the family gathering. Colour printing was becoming common in the late 1940's, but colour photography in print was rare. Where other ads used commercial artists for illustrating, this example stands out for its early use of photographic images.

Croquet lent itself to several whiskey advertisements of the era. Schenley Reserve (1948) is a good example ("Schenley wins in any test/'Cause Sunny Morning Flavor's best" ran its slogan, though its implicit encouragement for breakfast-time drinking might raise eyebrows now).

Adverts of the time are run through with a secondary theme of nostalgia. As a young, rapidly expanding country, the United States had little in the way of tradition. By 1950, Croquet may have become an aspirational pursuit for nesting families, but it also carried the imagery of an old game.

Brands like Budweiser wanted to show their age and experience. Their centenary in 1952 was marked by another Croquet campaign, featuring whiskered gentlemen in blazers and

boaters engaged in play. No matter that Croquet wasn't introduced into North America for another decade. Facts were bent even further by Royal Crown Cola in 1945 (opposite). In 1831, the story goes, Cyrus McCormick of Rockbridge County, Virginia, invented America's first mechanical reaper. When the going got tough, he relaxed by playing croquet. By analogy, millions of shrewd Americans know that a quick cola break improves productivity for the war effort.

Perhaps the copywriters were stretching a point here in order to tell a good, if spurious, croquet story. But this misty-eyed nostalgia was not to last into the next generation. In 1969, Canadian advertisers produced a startling piece under the title "The Good Old Days?" (not illustrated here). A glum-looking Victorian woman stands forlornly with croquet mallet and billowing skirts. The advert, for Tampax, highlights - in considerable detail - the improvements in feminine sanitary products over the course of a century.

Pre-war adverts featuring croquet had concentrated on the game itself: croquet sets for sale, and outfits for ladies to wear. The consumer boom had seen a much less literal use

of imagery, and Croquet was popping up in advertisements for all manner of products - soap, dog food, sticking plasters, vitamins, cars, fashion and shaving foam. The heyday of magazine advertising seems now to have run its course, and it's difficult to see where Croquet would fit in with current thinking among marketers.

That's not to say that the game's vanished from the advertising radar. Anchor Foods sank some money into Croquet in the late 1980's, in order to help launch a new product. The accompanying TV campaign showed the family butler serving Anchor's sophisticated new fruit cordial at the country house croquet party. The product failed to catch light, and was soon withdrawn.

Yet more recently, the beleaguered Abbey National rebranded itself with a series of cuddly TV ads, to show the world that everything was fine in retail banking. Computer graphicked images of dog walking and kite flying accompany soothing music. Blink and you'll have missed the woman playing croquet. And now Abbey has been devoured by Banco Santander, you'll not see it again.

Clarks Shoes are more on the ball, and know that the eccentricity of croquet doesn't mix with mainstream advertising. Last year they ran a cam-

paign featuring the San Francisco Extreme Croquet Club (see Gazette 284, March 2003). You'd have to have been sharp-eyed to catch their series of point-of-sale posters and Internet content. Boring old Association Croquet would have been a bad proposition for them, but allying their own boring old brand with something so self-avowedly off-the-wall certainly did them more good than harm.

It's one of the unexpected knock-on effects of the Internet age that a



How croquet improved the McCormick reaper

strange cottage industry has been born from the buying and selling of vintage advertisements. Vendors buy old magazines by the dozen, and cut out the interesting adverts. Websites such as eBay (www.ebay.com) act as intermediary for the online auctions which ensue, though croquet makes up such a small niche market that supply far exceeds demand.

A new collector after vintage advertising material shouldn't have to look very hard, as fresh lots appear on eBay almost daily. With a weak dollar, items priced at \$2.50 seem attractive indeed to British purchasers. Alas, there's no easy pricing formula. Budweiser ads seem very common, reflecting the media-buying power of a major brand, and the large print run of the titles in which they appeared. Collectors should be prepared to pay around \$10 for some ads (such as my Schenley Whiskey ad), purely because Coca Cola collectors will be bidding for the reverse side. But it's now my prize possession.

Here I've let it slip - I'm addicted to the collecting game. I guessed there'd be only a handful of items out there, but, two months later, I'm knee-deep in memorabilia. As high art, perhaps, two talking cows on a 60-year old advert for health drinks may not amount to much. I can't get enough.

### Manor House Mallets

The originators of carbon fibre shafted mallets now offer a comprehensive range: from the 'Basic' (£85), the well established T-series (£135), and the 2000 mallet at £155 (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.

Hollow head with brass plate extreme end-weighting (£20 extra)

**Revolutionary 2001 model £215**

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For details or discussion, contact Alan Pidcock,  
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e-mail pidcock@manorh.u-net.com

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## Gamesmanship revisited



The recent feature on gamesmanship (*Gazette* 291) seems to have rekindled much interest in the works of Stephen Potter (above).

Potter became famous in the 1950's and 1960's for his *Gamesmanship* and *One-Upmanship* books. Before that, in the 1940's, he was known as the writer and producer of Feature programmes for BBC Radio. During the dark hours

of the blackout throughout the Second World War, families listened to Potter's output, whose themes were sometimes patriotic, sometimes informative, and other times satirical. Of the 230 programmes for which he was responsible, topics ranged from literature and natural history to his biography of Winston Churchill on VE Day, and his regular 'How' collaborations with Joyce Grenfell.

He kept regular, detailed diaries of his day-to-day life. These provide a unique insight into the workings of the BBC immediately before, during and after the war, as well as giving an account of life on the Home Front, and experiences during the blitz in London and Manchester.

The diaries form the basis of the book *Stephen Potter at the BBC*, which his son Julian Potter has recently com-

pleted. Sixty years on, Julian acquired photostats of his father's diaries from the University of Texas, and saw that there was much new to be told about the BBC in the war years. These accounts have been supplemented with his own research at the BBC archives in Caversham (where many wartime files have only recently been released).

*Stephen Potter at the BBC* was published in April this year, and is available direct from the publisher: Orford Books, 14 Ferry Road, Orford, Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP12 2NR, or from [www.orfordbooks.co.uk](http://www.orfordbooks.co.uk)

*Gamesmanship* and *One-Upmanship* are currently out of print in the UK. Both were recently republished in the USA, and are available to buy online at [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)

### Brush up on the Laws

No 7 - By Michael Hague

#### The Umpire

For most tournaments, referees on call are also participants and are often in short supply. Called away from their game, such competitors can lose focus. Thus it is annoying for them to be summoned when the issue could have been settled by other players on the court in question acting as umpires. Technically an umpire is a suitable person nominated by the Tournament Referee but at my club players are trained to act as umpires once they are ready to enter tournaments, and it is common practice at many tournaments for any players to act as umpire. The necessary instruc-

tion takes 20 to 30 minutes. So the question is:

**What powers and duties are bestowed on an umpire?**

#### Answer

**T**ournament Regulations for Refereeing R7. An umpire is confined to five decisions of fact:

a. To watch and decide whether:

i. a ball hits another (may be required when the ball is in the jaws of a hoop or sitting very close to an upright)

ii. a ball is moved or shaken (e.g. a long fine take off from a corner ball, or a missed roquet at a ball by a hoop

which may still move the ball though impact though the upright)

iii. a ball hits the peg (e.g. when pegging out is attempted from a distance)

b. To decide whether:

i. a ball has run a hoop (i.e. has cleared the playing side) or is in a position to do so (i.e. not started to run the hoop)

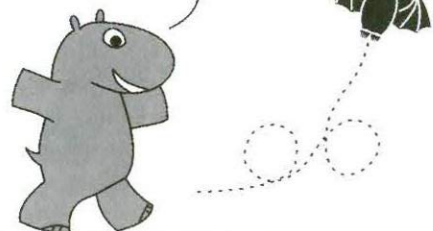
ii. a ball is off the court (i.e. if any part of it would touch an imaginary vertical inside edge of the boundary line).

Remember that to call a Referee the mallet is held up vertically; to call an umpire the mallet is held up horizontally.

## HOOPOTAMUS

by Victor

YIPPEE! The Great Hoopopotamus becomes Club Champion!



Soon my name will stretch impressively across this lovely shiny silver trophy!



The local engraver charges by the letter

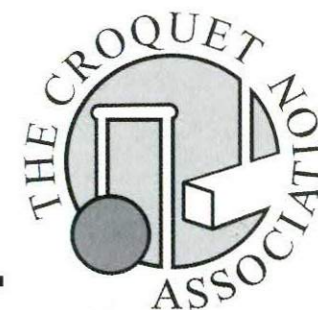


At school I was sometimes called "H"



## The Croquet Association

# CROQUET SHOP



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A comprehensive selection of mallets, including **Pidcock**, **Apercival** and **Hobbs** mallets, as well as the **Hogan**, **Jaques** and **Townsend** mallets we have always sold. The popular Hogan mallet at £71 + delivery is still our best-seller. Come to us for the widest variety and impartial expert advice.

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Hard leather case, 9.25 x 38 x 2.5"	£69.00
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Padded blue cover for longer mallet head lengths	£28.00

### Clothing

A wide range of white clothing and wet weather gear is available, including:



Breathable wet weather jacket	£34.00
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Fleece reversible gilet	£23.50
Roll-up sports windcheater	£29.00
White trousers	£27.00
Pullover	£25.50
Ladies cardigan	£29.00

### Odds and Ends

Timer	£8.00
Silver earrings, hoop and ball or mallets	£12.00
Hoop setting feeler gauge	£2.50
Canvas ball carrier bags	£10.00
Croquet Girl cards - pack of 8, blank inside	£4.50
Croquet posters - b&w prints, 4 designs available	£6.00ea
Ball markers, pack of 10 assorted plastic markers	£1.00

### For more information

Call Jeff Dawson on 01483 776971  
Email [sales@croquet.org.uk](mailto:sales@croquet.org.uk)  
Or visit our website [www.croquet.org.uk/shop](http://www.croquet.org.uk/shop)  
We are based at:  
112 Potters Lane, Send, Surrey GU23 7AL  
Callers welcome by appointment only, please

### Books

A wide variety of croquet publications are available, including:

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

### Videos

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

Single ball strokes	30min	£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

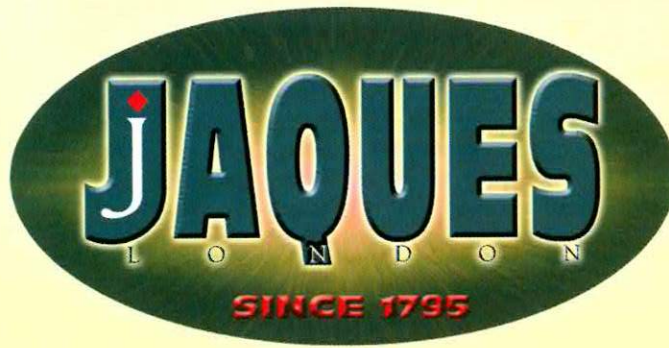
All book and video prices include P&P to UK addresses

### Complete croquet sets

How about getting a set for the back garden? We sell a wide range of sets at rock bottom prices, and our voucher scheme entitles members to **£20 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.



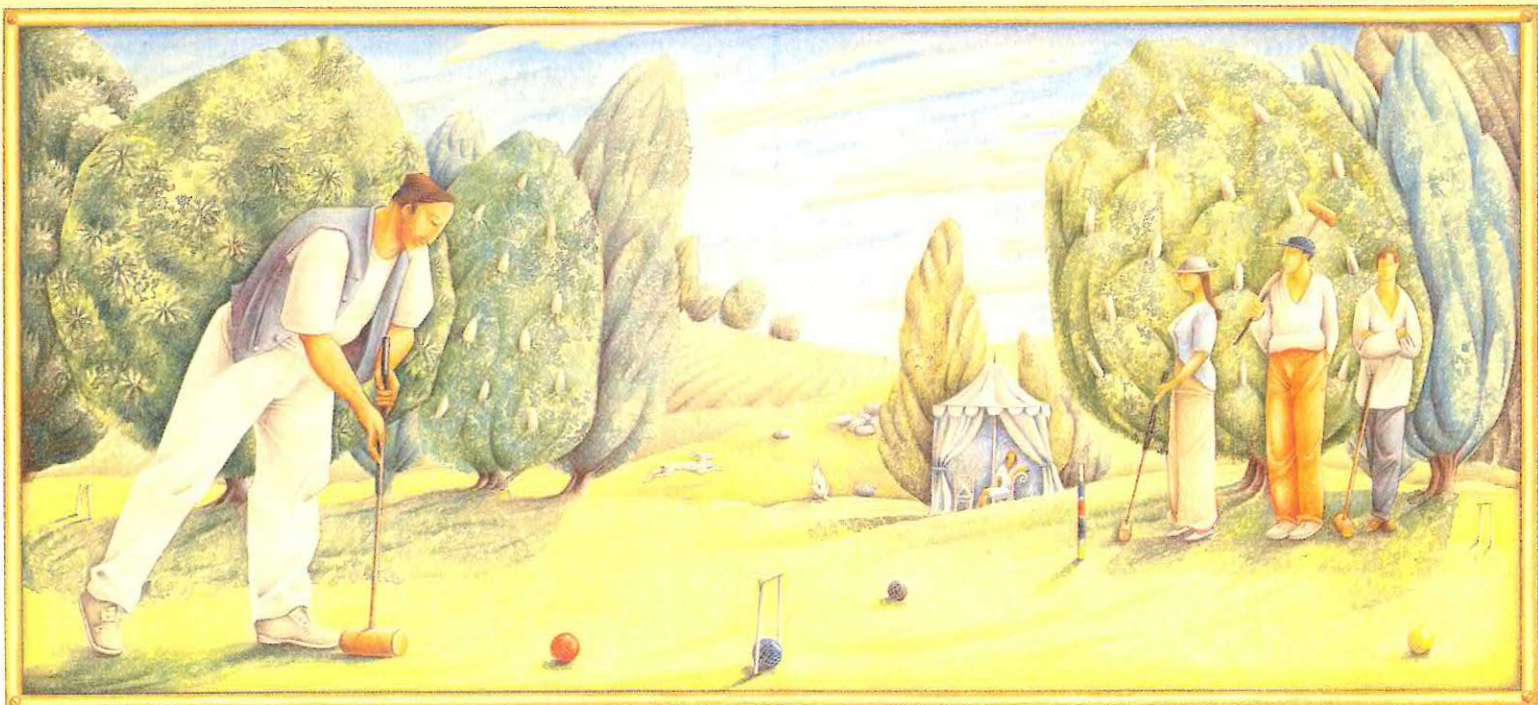
John Jaques II won a place in sporting history - and a Gold Medal- for introducing croquet into England at the Great Exhibition in 1851. His display there attracted such wide attention that the game speedily became the vogue and over the years has developed into the absorbing sport enjoyed by so many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

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

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