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ISSUE 309

JUNE 2007



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Emailed reports are welcomed. Attachments may be sent in Microsoft Word format, or text format. Handwritten reports are no longer acceptable due to the illegibility of most. Queries regarding the delivery of the Gazette to members should be directed to the Secretary

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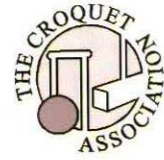
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Front Cover: Rain stopped play. The Home Internationals, Wrest Park, June 16th.

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Photos in this issue by Sophie McGlen, Derek Old, Patricia Duke-Cox, Samir Patel, Tim King, Freda Vitty, Eugene Chang, John Bevington.

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Chairman's Column

During the last 5 years the Croquet Association has given substantial grants to a number of clubs to improve their facilities. On my travels during the past year I have visited some of the clubs involved, and have been pleased to see that much of this money has been well spent. Budleigh's lawns have improved on each of my visits & Southwick's lawns have improved out of all recognition. I am sure that those who played in the Inter-counties this year will agree with this view.

However whilst talking to some CA affiliated clubs, I have discovered a lack of awareness that grants and interest-free loans are available from the CA for clubs of all sizes, subject to being approved by ourselves prior to commencement of the work. The CA is here to help all of its member clubs. If you need help, contact the appropriate Committee Chairperson.

The CA give a number of awards both to individuals and clubs for recognition of outstanding achievements. We felt it would be useful if the awards that are available were published this year in the Gazette and on the CA website. I would hate to think that a well deserving case was missed through neglect.

It's pleasing to see a number of clubs reaching significant milestones. Earlier this

season I had the pleasure of attending Beverley's celebration of their 21st birthday and was pleased to see that High Wycombe will be celebrating their silver anniversary later this year.

The tournament season appears to have got off to a good start with better than expected weather, with the possible exception of the Association Inter-Counties. Nottinghamshire must be congratulated on their 3rd successive win and Sussex on their promotion to the premier division for the 2008 season.

The WCF (World Croquet Federation) have published new rules for International Golf Croquet events. These new rules are currently being considered by our Golf Croquet Laws Committee.

Finally my congratulation must go to our Under 21 International Golf Croquet team who beat Ireland 42 - 12. This was the first ever Junior National Golf Croquet event. It was regarded as a great success and hopefully we will be able to host a return event in 2008.

Jonathan Isaacs

Editorial

I apologise for the lateness of this issue, as there was a technical problem with the Gazette address and I needed to take some time away due to a family bereavement. All being well the August issue will be back on schedule.

Inside this issue is a report on the survey carried out recently by the CA. I think it makes interesting reading, and would welcome any comments readers have on it.

I was fortunate to play some croquet recently, a fairly pleasant experience for my opponents, as I did struggle to remember what to do at times, and even when I did remember, actually doing it was another challenge altogether. I have considered writing an article on 101 ways to destroy a break, but as I am going to play again in August, I think I will hold fire, as there may be more! I guess the point I am trying to get across is that anyone who does not play regularly can't expect to play well, or at least with any consistency. Practice is required to hone the skills and the mind if you want



to be successful or improve your game. If however, like me, you no longer have the time or the inclination to put time and effort into practice, or travel the tournament scene, there is still much to be enjoyed, even if it brings frustration. The one element of this game that continues to hold my attraction to it, is the people who play it. There are so many quirky players. We all have our own outlook on the game, different style of playing, we show our frustrations and celebrations in varying degrees, but we all do one thing together - enjoy croquet.

Gail Curry
Editor

Letters

Thanks

I would like to thank everyone at the Inter-Counties who sponsored me in the Race for Life, raising money for Cancer Research. The magnificent total of £445 was raised from generous croquet players and, along with support from other friends, I achieved a grand total of £717. Particular thanks go to Richard White, Keith Aiton and Ailsa Lines who twisted everyone's arms for me.

Best wishes to you all
Sophie McGlen



Young and old alike

Attached is a photo taken on the Tyneside opening day of the new season showing youth & experience.

Chairman Derek Trotman running hoop 4 while partner David Appleton looks on. Taking it all in are younger members of the club John Moore and James Carr. James's twin brother Jacob is also a member and since joining the club, the average age of the membership has dropped from 63 to 60! Ah, to be young again.... It got me thinking, I wonder which club has the oldest average age, and which the youngest?

Derek Old



The good old days

I was interested to read John Solomon's reference to Col. Albert Saalfeld, whom I met at the Leamington tournament of 1958 or thereabouts. He had come from playing in South Africa and was the lead player in the tournament, winning one of the major trophies.

He was a short stocky man with thick glasses and a squeaky voice. He was related to the English Royal Family and arrived at the club every day with an escort of motorcycle outriders. Charming and without side he gave me a mouldy banana to sit on the head of my mallet to prevent shrinkage of the shaft, apparently a normal practice where he lived.

The tournament was a great success having attracted four

good players from Edgbaston, Saalfeld and several of the circuit tournament players of those days. It was managed (whether intended to be so or not) by the formidable Mills sisters - majestic ladies with immense bosoms covered with ropes of beads and pearls, who gobbled like turkeys but were a class act and prominent contributors to the croquet scene.

Leamington's lawns of that era were the finest I had played on. The tournament was such a success that the Club found itself with money to spend and invested in fertiliser. Unfortunately it was misapplied and the wonderful lawns were terribly burned. It was the end of Leamington's delightful tournaments and sadly of its size and status.

In its heyday Leamington was an important Club. The Town Crier (with bell) would patrol the Parade and Pump Room announcing when Miss DD Steele could be seen in play and it had croquet's first professional in the late 1930's. His name was Leslie A Chackett. He had learned to play on my grandfather's lawn and I have a watercolour he painted of Halesowen Church, given as thanks for his initiation into the game.

A cup had been donated for an annual match between Leamington and Edgbaston. For many years the match had not been played owing to an altercation between the Clubs. I endeavoured to revive the match during my membership of Edgbaston. I hope it is still played.

J. B. Meachem

Well done Nottinghamshire

Congratulations to Nottinghamshire on their hat-trick of Inter-County wins.

Chris Williams's records reveal the following consecutive year runs (3 or more), where the numbers in square brackets give the number of counties competing that year:

- Nottinghamshire (2005, 2006, 2007) [22,22,22];
- Eastern Counties (1990, 1991, 1992) [12,10,11]
- Middlesex (1978, 1979, 1980) [8,8,?]
- Middlesex (1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965) [6,7,7,6,6,6,6,6]
- Surrey (1953, 1954, 1955) [4,8,4]
- Surrey (1933,1934, 1935) [10,13,10]
- Middlesex* (1913, 1914, 1920, 1921) [10,10,7,9]
- Berkshire (1897, 1898, 1899, 1900) [?,?,?,2]

* No competition held 1915 - 1919.
So Nottinghamshire have some way to go to equal Middlesex, but their achievement has to be viewed in the light of the huge increase in both the number and quality of county teams in recent years.

Roger Wood

Why are some mistakes errors and others faults?

The simple answer is that a fault is a mistake in stroke execution, a mistake made in the manner of hitting the ball with the mallet. An error is a mistake that concerns the nature of the stroke, even if it is executed correctly.

The errors are best understood by asking a sequence of questions:

- is the striker entitled to play the stroke - if not, Law 25 applies and the turn ends

Continued on page 9

Beddow Cup Bestowed Back to The Croquet Association

By Patricia Duke-Cox

Many CA members will know little about the Beddow Croquet Champion Cup that was forfeited by the CA when Miss D D Steel won it four times (not consecutively), and claimed it for herself back in 1933, as winners of 3 years or more could do (she had won it in 1922, 1923 and 1931). The CA President from 1933 - 1939 Trevor Williams, donated the President's Cup to replace it but DD immediately won this too, in 1934 and 1937!

The cup was not seen again until 1978 when Tom Anderson (Wrest Park Croquet Club) in Bedfordshire spotted a small advertisement in the local free newspaper - FOR SALE "Bedford Croquet Cup". The vendor was an antique dealer in Tom's village who had bought it as part of the house clearance sale after the death of DD's sister, Evelyn. The dealer was moving away and thought it more saleable in the county - he was planning to get it melted down for the price of the silver. After viewing and valuation and realising its significance, Tom and Judy Anderson and great croquet friends John and Pandora Wheeler decided it must be saved from destruction and purchased it for £350. They have safeguarded it until now, showing it wherever possible and particularly at the museum at Wimbledon when the CA celebrated its centenary in 1997. On reading that Patricia Duke-Cox, who was standing for re-election for Council as an independent candidate, was interested in the history of the CA along with its archives and artefacts, they made contact with her.

They have donated the cup to the CA together with some history and with information found in The History of Croquet by D M C Prichard (1981), an item from Lawn Tennis (Croquet section) for 1901, and a copy of a letter from the niece of D D Steel to Colonel Prichard about the Steel family, their circumstances of genteel poverty, and their eccentric life style.

After friendly negotiations and acceptance by the CA Council, it has now been restored to its home. The Tournament Committee considered its place in the trophy scene and recommended it be used as the main trophy for the Inter-Club Championship, which will have the finals in Bedfordshire in 2007. This has proved an acceptable and meaningful outcome for the donors who belong to Wrest Park.

It does have conditions attached, but the CA is happy to comply with these. The winners cannot keep the cup. The existing Inter-Club Shield, and a Scroll will be handed to the winning club, but the Beddow Cup will be mounted on a plinth to record the donation, and the names of the winners. It cannot be sold during the lifetime of the donors and should this happen in the future, the Wrest Park Croquet Club should receive a proportion of the sale. The cup is to be available to view by anyone interested in it.

The Champion Cup was originally presented by Mr A E Beddow, for competition between the ten best selected players, and played to the American block system. It is solid silver, Hallmarked 1901, Sheffield, Mappin Brothers, about 80cm high, and has a beautiful relief of a croquet scene. This shows a gentleman playing, a lawn with hoops, clips, peg etc, and with ladies in fashions of the time, and a small tent in the background. There is an inscription above the scene "NON VI SED ARTE" - "not by



Judy Anderson, John Wheeler and Tom Anderson with the Beddow Cup

force but by skill" (alternatively "not by strength but by guile").

The lid has crossed mallets and laurel wreath. The cup came with its "BOX" - actually a heavy wooden cupboard with double doors and a brass plaque in the top. It originally had velvet inside and ribbons to suspend the cup. The mice had found it first! It is a most prestigious trophy and can be viewed at the CA office at the Cheltenham Croquet Club.

In token of their appreciation, the CA Council agreed at their March meeting to include the names of the donors in the Benefactors' Book. Thus Tom and Judy Anderson, and John and Pandora Wheeler will have their names read out at the next CA AGM and subsequent meetings.

To complement the trophy it was hoped that the CA would win the Champion's medal for 1903 that was auctioned on the e-bay internet site. However it was won by an overseas buyer at a price beyond that agreed by the CA Executive committee.

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Older, Wealthier and with a bit to Think about

Kevin Carter reports on the latest survey of Croquet players

In 2002 the CA Marketing Committee organised a survey of croquet players, which was generally considered to be successful. Besides providing a lot of useful information about players - their backgrounds, attitudes and opinions - which was potentially important in formulating strategy and plans, it enabled croquet to better 'package' itself when the CA or clubs were applying for grants or seeking sponsorship.

A report was produced and circulated, and a summary paper, *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise*, was published in the Gazette.

It was decided to conduct a similar survey five years on. The objectives of the 2007 survey included:

- a refreshing of the data in the 2002 survey, for ongoing use, to attract sponsors and serve as a foundation for strategy and plans;
- to measure what has changed in the intervening five years;
- to focus on what its Associate members want from the CA - both to satisfy existing Associates and to obtain clues of how to increase membership numbers.

1600 paper questionnaires were mailed out with Fixture Books to Associates in early January and a further 350 were sent to non-Associates. This time an online option was also provided, available on the CA website.

By the end of February 716 responses had been logged (an excellent 37% return rate) and analysis was started. In fact, the final figure was well over 800. 68% chose to respond by mail and 32% online. 102 of the responses were from non-Associates.

Analysis was undertaken in two stages. The first, called 'Primary Analysis', considers the responses to each question in turn. Tables and graphical representations were generated to present the results. The second stage is referred to as 'Secondary Analysis'. Here specific issues were addressed, by considering several responses together and, in some cases, additional data from outside the survey.

Throughout the analysis, but particularly in the secondary stage, the data was interpreted with a degree of subjectivity, conclusions were drawn and recommendations were made. All of the opinions expressed in the report and in this summary are those of the author (Kevin Carter) and do not necessarily represent the views either of the CA as a whole or of the CA Marketing Committee.

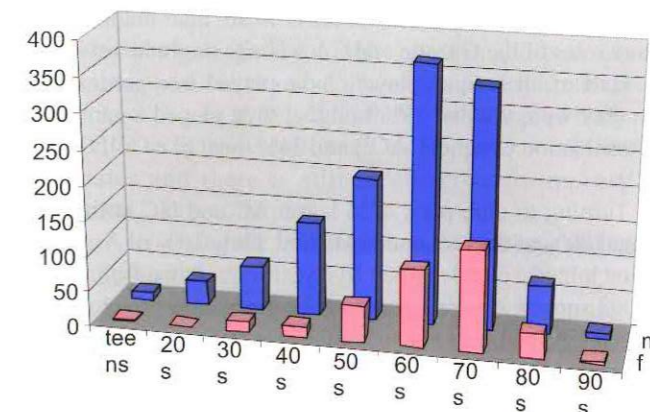
The Profile of a Croquet Player

Being able to provide a well-documented profile of the croquet-playing population has proved to be, over the past five years, a very useful aid in attracting sponsorship and securing grants. For this reason it was important to refresh the key parameters, even though we suspected that most of the data would change very little.

71% of Associates are male and 29% female. As can be seen in the chart, players in their 60s and 70s dominate croquet. Only 8% are aged below 40. The pattern among non-Associates is slightly different, with a roughly 50-50 male/female split but a similar age profile.

57% are graduates. 62% are retired and 43% of Associates

CA Associates by age and sex



are, or were before retirement, qualified professionals - doctor, lawyer, teacher, engineer, accountant, etc. (the national figure for 'Professional Occupations' is 12% of the working population). Managers, both senior and middle together, account for a further 24%, with technical specialists at 11%.

The median level of earnings for those in employment is a little over £50,000 pa and 58% of those retired have incomes in the £25-50,000 range.

The 2002 survey revealed 47 millionaires among those who responded to a question on net worth. However, this was considered misleading since it included the value of their home, which could make a huge difference, especially in London and the South-East. So, this time the question was split into two:

- net worth including home, where 18% of respondents were shown to be millionaires (the median was about £500,000);
- net worth excluding home and mortgage, where 8% had savings and investments exceeding £1 million (the median was about £200,000).

These figures for earnings and net worth are of great interest to potential sponsors and advertisers.

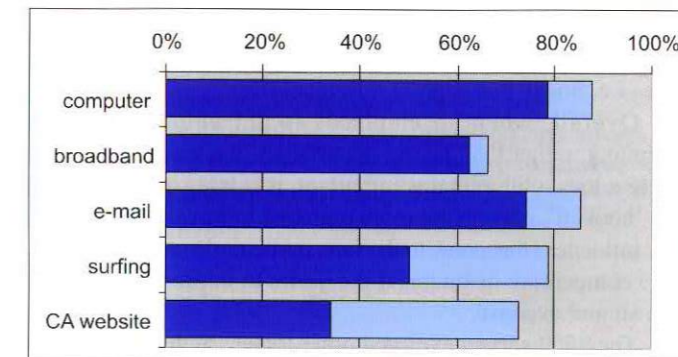
This was seen as a good opportunity to check on the success of the CA's Legacy initiative. 7% of Associates have left money in their wills to a club and 3% to the CA. A specialist in this field who has advised the CA says these figures are excellent.

42% of those who take a daily newspaper read the Telegraph and 22% the Times, with similar figures for Sunday newspapers. Saga magazine is by far the most read magazine.

Adoption of communications technologies

(dark = 'frequently' and light = 'occasionally')

80% have access to a computer, most of which have internet access. There has been a substantial increase in viewing of the CA



website: 35% do so frequently and 40% occasionally. We are nearing the time when the CA should rethink how it routinely communicates with members - over 80% are on e-mail - and the relative roles of the Gazette and CA website might be reviewed.

Half of all croquet players have played in a garden, 40% when they were youths. 76% said that they played a game most like Association Croquet ('AC') and 24% most like Golf Croquet ('GC').

Turning to club play, 42% learnt AC and GC at the same time and 80% of the remainder AC first. Only 10% of Associates had first joined a club less than five years ago, down from 19% in the 2002 survey. A later question asks Associates how long they had been CA members and again the 'Up to five years' category had dropped from 38% to 32%. This is a major, and worrying, change. It is examined in more detail in the Secondary Analysis.

On average each Associate has introduced at least 1.8 new players to croquet, most often friends, spouses and children. In fact, the average per player is likely to be rather higher.

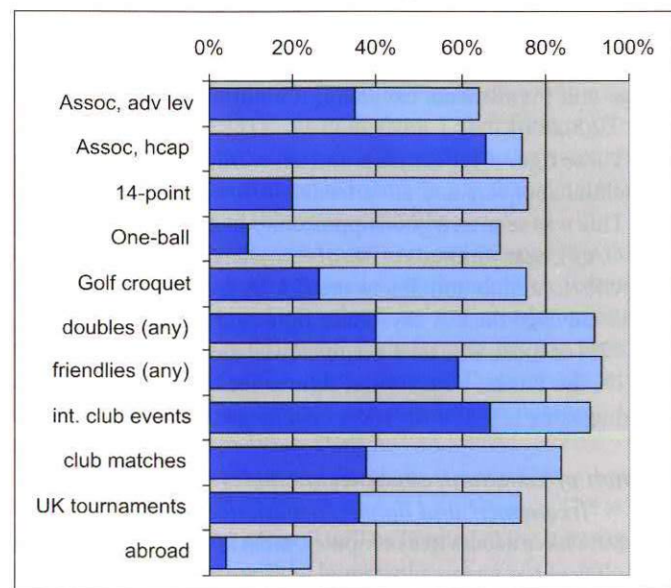
The graph below shows the frequency with which various types of croquet are played by Associates (dark shows "frequently" and light "occasionally").

AC handicap still dominates, despite GC having risen slightly over the last five years.

The popularity of friendlies and internal club events ahead of UK tournaments is also noteworthy.

However, a similar analysis for non-Associates shows GC slightly ahead of AC handicap.

The single greatest factor influencing players to take up croquet is the availability of a local club. The majority of



respondents cited this as a reason, and as the single greatest influence it scored twice as highly as any other factor. Closely linked to this is the availability of croquet at school, university or work - i.e. 'local' in a slightly different sense.

Overall, when an emphasis is put upon reasons for continuing, rather than taking up, croquet, we see a shift. While having a local club remains important, it is less so - presumably once 'hooked', players are more prepared to travel. Now it is the 'soft' influences that come to the fore, particularly croquet's appeal to the competitive instinct and the desire to improve, along with fresh air and exercise.

The 2002 survey explored other issues, such as what types

of people are most likely to take up and stick with croquet (answer: gardeners, hikers and ex-players of racket sports, but not participants in team sports). Rather than repeat these questions this time they were replaced by others.

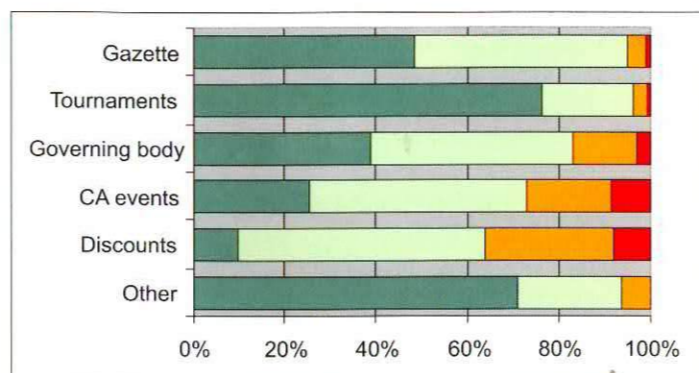
How can the CA do better?

In this new section we began by asking respondents what they considered to be the benefits of being a CA Associates.

Benefits of being a CA Associate - for Associates

In the chart below the four bands, left to right, represent 'Strongly Agree', 'Fairly Agree', 'Fairly Disagree' and 'Strongly Disagree'. It is clear that being able to play in tournaments is by far the strongest reason, with getting the Gazette second ('Other' is based on small numbers).

On the whole, Associates see their membership as representing



good value for money (70% say 'Good' or 'Very good').

The overwhelming number of respondents think that communications with the press, radio and TV are handled poorly. This is of course an assumption, based on their seeing relatively little success. Some of the comments reveal a quite remarkable level of naivety - for instance, "I think the CA ought to make sure the top events are televised next year". This perception is a major problem, which almost certainly affects quite seriously the attitude of both Associates and non-Associates towards the CA, including how good is the value obtained from subscriptions. It also ties in with a strong entreaty to spend more on marketing.

Detailed questions on the contents of the Gazette and CA website revealed widespread overall satisfaction with both and many specific likes and dislikes which might be taken on board by the Publishing Committee.

What has changed in the last five years?

The first issue addressed in greater depth was to see what had changed in the last five years. It confirmed that the greater availability of GC has led to its increased popularity among non-Associates. It may well have been the main reason for a 39% increase in non-Associates in Affiliated clubs - now at 2907, compared to 1640 Associates, a figure which has held steady for many years (and there are also about 1100 non-Associates in non-Affiliated clubs).

	2002	AC hcap	GC	2007	AC hcap	GC
Assoc	1088	304		1082	426	
non-Assocs	873		895	1134		1512
totals	1961		1199	2216		1938
				5-year growth	13%	62%

In the tables above we see that in 2002 the number of Associates playing AC (handicap) frequently was more than three times greater than the number playing GC (given that there is an overlap, with some playing both frequently). In 2007 this ratio had

reduced to 2½. Looking at non-Associates, in 2002 the ratio was 1:1; in 2007 it had become one third greater in favour of GC.

Mainly because of the substantial growth in the total number of non-Associates in this five year period, we see both figures for the total number of players rising: AC by 13% to 2216 and GC by 62% to 1938.

Besides these changes in numbers of players, the past five years have seen little in the way of major changes to croquet and the CA. Predictably, the adoption of communications technologies has changed; CA coaching is on the increase, as is playing croquet abroad.

AC and GC

More analysis was undertaken to compare 'AC players' and 'GC players' (each being defined by a subset of those who play the one variant significantly more than the other). It was found that 'GC players' include more women (32% against 23%) and fewer graduates (38% against 60%). Age profiles, employment, wealth and croquet backgrounds were all very similar.

Because of the surge in GC already noted we find that 'GC players' are on the whole newer to organised croquet - half have been members of clubs for less than ten years. 'GC players' are also less competitive than 'AC players'. This and their newness to the game could explain why so few are interested in tournaments and becoming CA Associates.

Referring to the animated debate between supporters of AC and GC, one wonders whether some internal competition between the two factions might be healthy. Perhaps AC advocates should stop whingeing and instead go out to convert more of these new players to their own ranks!

CA Recruitment

The final issue examined in greater depth was recruitment, both of players by clubs and Associates by the CA. Since 2002



Louise Bradforth on her way to winning the Women's Championship

there has been a 20% increase (about 800) in new croquet players to the game and we believe that this has been brought about principally though the increased promotion of GC.

This has been good for clubs but it should be a source of concern for the CA that only 29% of the country's club croquet players now choose to belong to the sport's national body.

Little else has been done to improve recruitment of Associates and there is still much scope to improve club recruitment. We recommend:

1. Using the information in this survey (and the last) to target potential recruits.
2. Creating additional benefits of becoming a CA Associate.
3. Selling the benefits of becoming an Associate to those club players yet to join.
4. Being careful not to erode the benefits of becoming an Associate, by giving away concessions.

The full Survey Report can be obtained by downloading it from the CA website.

Letters Continued from page 5

- if he is entitled, has he struck the correct ball with his mallet
- if not, Law 26 applies and the turn ends

- if he has struck the correct balls, are all balls in the correct positions - if not, Law 27 applies but (excepting Law 27(d) - purporting to take croquet from a dead ball) the turn does not end

If the question was really "why are some errors forgiven while others, including faults, are not forgiven", the answer is that "serious" errors (i.e. Law 25, 26 and 27(d)) are fatal errors and the turn ends, "trivial" errors (Law 27(i) - balls misplaced in minor ways) are treated leniently as a matter of pragmatism and "middling" errors (i.e. Laws 27(e) to (h)) are treated leniently as a matter of policy.

The game would be unplayable if the striker's turn was ended if he played whenever a ball could be shown to be a millimetre out of position. That is why I describe the policy to treat such errors leniently as pragmatic.

There is a case for making "middling" errors fatal and this was suggested in 2000 but rejected by all four countries. The example usually given is that it would be unfair if a striker took off to two distant balls and hit one of them but was unsure which ball was roqueted and made the wrong choice. Another is where the striker does not notice that his ball has glanced a ball in a long take-off.

Speaking personally, I believe the error laws would be simplified if these errors were made fatal and the striker could protect himself by the simple expedient of checking with his opponent before playing the next stroke. However, I do not expect a change in policy any time soon.

Faults apply directly to lawful strokes and have always been fatal in that the turn ends. They also apply to strokes which constitute non-fatal errors via Law 27(j).

Stephen Mulliner

News & Information

Impass Regulations

The CA Tournament and Laws committees are pleased to announce that the Tournament Regulations have been further updated for 2007 to include a new regulation to cover Impasses. While these are likely to only affect a small proportion of A-class games, its inclusion is felt to be necessary to avoid the current uncertainty. The new regulation becomes effective on 1st July, and is available from the CA Website. Managers of tournaments starting before then may wish to adopt this regulation but should be sure that players are aware of this.

Website Photo Library

The CA website now hosts a Photo Library. While the number of photographs is currently low, the aim is to add to these over time. All images are high resolution, so are ideal for publicity purposes or for club recruitment.

The Photo Library can be accessed via the "Technical and Articles" section of the website.

Any comments on this, or other features of the CA Website, should be sent to webmaster@croquet.org.uk

Official Rules for Garden Croquet Published

The first ever official Garden Croquet Rules have been produced jointly by the World Croquet Federation and the Croquet Association.

The aims behind this initiative are to help promote a version of croquet which is similar to Association Croquet but which is simple to learn and simple to play. The rules are designed to be played on lawns of variable quality and particular lawns where the grass is relatively long and the ground not necessarily flat. These are the first set of rules which provide a world-wide standard version for garden or backyard croquet.

David Openshaw President of the WCF said, "I believe that these rules will help to promote Association Croquet. More players who play croquet in their gardens will enjoy the tactics of Association Croquet. This will in time lead to more garden croquet players making the leap to more serious croquet and join their local croquet club".

The basic rules are for a 14 point game played on a lawn of 17.5 metres by 14 metres. How to start the game is simplified. Compared with Association Croquet there are fewer faults and errors. For example it is not a fault to fail to move or shake the ball in the croquet stroke. The rules are also expressed in as simple a way as possible. The aim is to provide a fun game to play in the garden. As players become slightly more serious then there are official variations to the rules which allow garden croquet players to play a game very similar to Association Croquet.

David Openshaw added, "I hope that many of the worlds manufacturers of garden sets will adopt these rules as their standard version. It is also important that people searching the internet for croquet rules can more easily find these rules. They are already available on the WCF website and the CA website. We also intend to have these rules translated into many other languages".

CA Juniors v CAI Juniors at Newcastle, County Wicklow – why and how it happened, by Patricia Duke-Cox

It was the result of a conversation between Syd Jones, a past CA Council member, and Harry Johnston, the current President of the CAI that I was approached in September 2006 with a view to getting young players from each Association to compete against each other.

Being the Chairman of Development and a member of the Golf Croquet committee Syd thought I might like to take on the project. Since three of the CA juniors had written letters in the

to plan.

I approached all 13 junior members of the CA. Because the CA has a clause whereby juniors can be over 21, as long as they are in continuing education, some were over the age of 21. The Irish were not daunted by this as they had past pupils they could involve. Thus the CA v CAI Juniors competition was born.

Of the 13 CA juniors approached, 11 responded. Some were unavailable on the choice of dates, one rejected the notion of playing Golf Croquet. Thus 6 members were willing and able to make the team.

Relevant CA committees (Development, Golf, International, Management) were informed of the plans and it was agreed that the CA would sponsor the travel of the juniors. The Irish families hosted the competitors, and the two accompanying adults. They



(L-R):English Team: Eugene Chang, William Gee, Rachel Rowe, Jack Wicks (c), Marcus Evans, Tom Brant
Irish Team: Kieran Murphy, Louise Ireson, Ben Harris, Daniel Johnston, Fiachra Carrol, Andrew Murphy (c)

Gazette in August/September 2005 despairing at the lack of action, the timing was opportune and in fact all three competed in the tournament.

Harry Johnston knew that a local teacher, Russell Harris, was teaching croquet in his school, East Glendalough School in Wicklow Town, under a scheme that encouraged trying new activities. It was suggested an under-21s match might be arranged. Golf croquet was the preferred format, although Association was not ruled out. Some dates were suggested and I took the suggestion to the Golf Croquet committee who encouraged me to continue

also provided a convivial Bar-B-Q.

This being the first junior tournament, I ensured relevant paperwork was prepared. All competitors completed a medical consent form with home contact details, were advised to get a European Health Insurance card and the CA Child Protection Officer was informed. I had a CRB certificate for my work with young people aged 16 – 24 that was deemed sufficient. I also bought a trophy, in the form of a salver that was inscribed and gave the school two books on Golf Croquet which they appreciated.



Patricia Duke-Cox, Vice Chair of the CA, presents Jack Wicks with the trophy.

The tournament began with doubles, all playing all and no time limits. There then followed the singles with the team being divided into two groups, and all-playing-all within their group. The following day the same format was repeated providing 54 games in total. The CA juniors won 24/27 games the first day, but the CAI juniors showed their mettle the next day as they won 9/27. All games had points won by both teams and whilst many were won 7-5, there was only one 7-1.

The juniors who gallantly represented the CA were Jack Wicks (Captain), Marcus Evans, Eugene Chang, Tom Brant, Rachel Rowe and William Gee. The CAI juniors were brothers Andrew & Kieran Murphy, Danny Johnston, Ben Harris, Louise Ireson and Fiachra Carroll.

The CA juniors showed their appreciation not only with their success, but also by their comments. I was touched when they sent me a basket of flowers, wine and chocolates the day after we returned. The CAI also appreciated the effort and forwarded their local press report. All parties hope to repeat the tournament and moves have already been made to seek a suitable venue for next year. If more juniors join the CA it might be necessary to bring in the Selection committee unless we increase the field of entry!



Keith Aiton on his way to winning the Men's Championship

Coaching Notes

by Keith Aiton

These notes are intended for coaches of groups or individual, players who aspire to A-class croquet or better.



II. Break Play

Throughout this section I shall be talking about the first break and assume that it is going to 4-back. What is there to say about break play? The first point to make is that it doesn't matter how, the only question is whether the ball gets round to 4-back. Having said that there is undoubtedly a template for the ideal break, which, if followed, will increase the chances of the break making it round. I am reluctant to prescribe exact ball placements for every stroke of the break. What I will do is state some guiding principles.

You should be aware of the position from where you prefer to play the croquet stroke approaching a hoop. This will help you determine where each pioneer should be placed, on the principle that in the roquet immediately before the croquet stroke approach you do not want to move the roqueted ball very far. When playing the croquet stroke approaching a hoop you should be able to obtain a rush in any direction after running the hoop. In particular you need to have enough room to play a stop shot obtaining a forward rush after running a hoop. The distance in front of the hoop from which this approach can be played will vary depending on the type of mallet that the player is using. With a good stop shot the approach can be played from as close as a foot and a half in front of the hoop. With some mallets it is difficult to play the shot from

as far away as three feet.

After running a hoop it should be possible to take a rush towards the pivot and play a stop shot sending a pioneer to the next hoop but one and obtaining a rush on the pivot towards the pioneer at the next hoop. By rushing the pivot beyond that pioneer you can play another stop shot sending the pivot back into the lawn to a place that will suit the croquet stroke sending out the next pioneer, and so on. This is the basic pattern of a well controlled four ball break and should be familiar to every player.

Players aspiring to play at a higher level should learn some variations on this theme which will help them play better controlled breaks and will help when making a good leave. For example, after making hoop 3 it is possible to send the next pioneer to hoop 6 rather than hoop 5, rush the pivot beyond the hoop 4 pioneer and then send the pivot as a pioneer for hoop 5. This is useful as it means that the pioneers for hoops 5 and 6 will be sent out from closer to those hoops than would be the case generally if the "standard" pattern were maintained. Similarly, after hoop 5 you should send the next pioneer to 2-back, rush the pivot short of the hoop 6 pioneer and then send the pivot as a pioneer for 1-back.

Placement of pioneers can be refined by thinking about where the croquet stroke immediately before roqueting the pioneer needs to be played from. There are two obvious examples, but players will no doubt think of others as they play. The first example is that the hoop 6 pioneer should be a little to the west of hoop 6 rather than to the east. The reason for this is that when sending the pivot as a pioneer for 1-back (see above) it will be more accurate to do so from, say, three yards south of hoop 6, rather than from five yards further to the east. The second example is that the pioneer for 2-back should be to the east of the hoop rather than to the west. The reason is that sending a pioneer to 3-back going to that pioneer at 2-back is made easier, ie more accurate.

What I have been talking up to now has been the perfectly played break. Of course in a real game not everything goes according to plan. In order to reduce the chances of breaking down the player should develop a sense of impending danger and plan to escape from it. For example, you have just run a hoop but failed to obtain the rush you were hoping for. The pioneer at the next hoop is not a very good one. In those circumstances it would make sense to put more effort into obtaining a rush on the pivot and placing that ball as a pioneer at the next hoop but one, rather than putting a pioneer there immediately but with no rush on the pivot.



James Death in play at Cheltenham

Inter-County Championships

Hat-trick of wins for Notts

Sussex County & Compton 26-29 May

Report by Sue McKay

Nottinghamshire made it a hat-trick of wins when they retained the Inter County Championship over one of the coldest Whitsun weekends on record.

Cheshire were leading at the end of Day 3, but with a bye in the last round they could only wait to see whether Nottinghamshire would equal their 9 match wins, as the holders had a superior game tally. Nottinghamshire played Essex in the last match and Keith Aiton produced a speedy triple to put them one up. On lawn 2 Robert Fulford stopped at hoop 3, but then tried to run hoop 1 again when he next got the innings. He later attempted a quadruple peel but failed at 2-back, leaving James Death a straightforward triple to clinch the title for Nottinghamshire. The team of Richard White (captain), Keith Aiton, Gary Bennett, Dean Bennison, James Death, Gordon Hopewell and Patrick Hort dedicated their win to their team-mate Beatrice McGlen, who was unable to play this year due to serious illness.

Sussex and Lancashire, both relegated last season, met in the last match to decide the Second Division title. The Sussex team of Roger Wood (captain), Bill Arliss, Rutger Beijderwellen, Paul Castell, Alan Cottle, Jack Davies, Mark Hamilton and Ian Vincent won 2-1 to secure first place on 8 match wins.

Lancashire, Middlesex and Warwickshire were tied on 7 wins each, but Warwickshire lost out on promotion on the number of games won.

The wooden spoon was won this year by Devon, who came bottom of the Second Division, but the surprise team at the bottom of the First Division was Gloucestershire, who only managed one match win, despite having six minus players in their team. The teams promoted last season - Suffolk, Glamorgan and the Channel Islands - are all 'yo-yo' teams and might have been expected to be relegated as well. Suffolk duly obliged, with only one win going in to the last day, when they achieved a good 2-1 win over third placed Surrey.

Glamorgan managed to stay in the First Division with four match wins, but the Channel Islands were relegated; Matt Burrow had been suffering with an injury which flared up again leading into the final day's play, and he had to go for treatment, leaving Richard Griffiths to play a game on his own against Essex. Permission was granted for Tony LeMoignan's wife Paula, an 18 handicap, to play in their last match against Avon, and she was partnered with Kevin Garrad on Lawn 2, where she was not at all fazed by double banking with the Fulford/Willard v Death/Hort match to decide the championship. This lawn truly was the place to be for the spectators, as Roger Tribe of Avon had to leave early for family reasons and Marcus Evans played on his own against Paula LeMoignan and Kevin Garrad in a fascinating game to watch. Paula played well above her handicap, even peeling Kevin through a hoop, but in the end superior tactics and a wonderful turn from Marcus, in which he scored six hoops with his ball and four peels with the 'dead' ball, allowed Marcus to peg out having done 12 peels.

Praise must go to Alan Cottle, the new Lawns Manager at

Southwick, for the splendid condition of the lawns, helped by work over the winter and the acquisition of a new mower. Indeed for the first time the Southwick lawns were playing much faster than the lawns at Compton, especially on the first day. The Compton groundsman broke his ankle over the winter and work was delayed, with the result that some of the lawns had only just had their first cut. The unexpected slowness of the Compton lawns might have been part of the reason why play did not finish there on Day 1 until 20:40. David Harrison-Wood had a long turn after time was called, and two games in the Essex-Avon clash had exciting finishes after time, with David Goacher producing a triple peel and Robert Fulford achieving a +1T win by going round, doing the 4-back peel and pegging out.



Richard White, Captain of Notts, accepts the trophy from John Solomon.

The heavens opened on Day 2 and by Bank Holiday Monday Lawn 4 at Southwick was unplayable for the first session. Monday was also incredibly cold, with a huge wind-chill factor, and the chubbiness of the players was due not to the catering, excellent though that was, but to the number of layers of clothing they wore. In the final match at Compton, in freezing rain, Nottinghamshire played Glamorgan. Dean Bennison had gone to peg and later failed to achieve what he wanted and executed a powerful scatter shot, his own ball crashing into the peg in the process. Not only did he fail to appreciate that he had pegged his ball out, but his partner and both his opponents, shivering on the sidelines, were equally oblivious, even although they had all seen the ball hit the peg. As Glamorgan were on 3 and 3 at the time they were probably quite glad that the spectators were powerless to alert them that the game could be prolonged!

As usual the doubles format of the Counties seemed to reduce some minus players to the level of mere mortals and cause higher handicapped players to produce spectacular performances, but in the end talent prevailed. Richard White started his game for Nottinghamshire against Yorkshire by going to 4-back on turn 3, then Keith Aiton performed a fifth turn triple and was in the club house before some games had scored a hoop. Peter Trimmer of Dorset performed a sextuple on the last day. Indeed many players

SOUTH EAST CROQUET FEDERATION

Summer School 2007

Mon. 23rd July – Fri. 27th July

At the Sussex County Croquet Club

If you enjoy playing croquet and your handicap is 16 or higher, enrol in the Summer School to improve your game by learning decisive match winning techniques, how to use bisques, set up and maintain breaks, consolidation of basic skills and very much more.

The school is held at Southwick's superb club grounds in an informal and relaxed atmosphere under the direction of friendly CA approved coaches in charge of groups of no more than four. Morning coffee, an excellent lunch and afternoon tea are provided, and a barbecue is held on an evening later in the week.

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

seemed to raise their game on the final Tuesday, perhaps due to the reappearance of the sun.

Wiltshire enjoyed their debut at the Counties and did not disgrace themselves, achieving wins over Devon, Kent and Hertfordshire. Hertfordshire had started off like an express train but fell away to finish mid table. This was perhaps a good thing, as it was discovered just before the Championship that Paul Stephenson, having played last year for Essex, was an ineligible player, and had Hertfordshire finished in the top three they would not have been promoted.

Thanks are due as usual to Chris Williams for managing the event and to all the catering and ground staff at Southwick and Compton for making this such a successful and enjoyable festival of croquet.

Selection and Availability

All players are reminded to register their availability by the closing date of 16 July for the following events:

- Eights (5-9 Sep)
- World Championship (2-10 Feb 2008) in New Zealand
- European Championship (21-23 Sep) in Jersey
- GB v Ireland Team of 6 (22-23 Sep)

Selections for all of the above will be announced on 1 August. You can register your availability in the members' section of the CA website, or by letter or email to the CA Office. Please don't be bashful; if you are available for something then register that fact and leave it to the Selectors to decide - there's no shame in being available for something you don't think you will be selected to play in. In the case of the Eights, remember that if you are not available for the event the Selectors decide you should be in then you cannot play in a lower event - so it's best to tick all the boxes! Please also note that the Selectors will assume that you are not available unless you have registered on the website or to the office.

Dave Kibble

Chairman of Selectors (Association Croquet)

National Student Championships

17/18 June, Oxford

by Eugene Chang

Twelve players from four universities gathered in Oxford over a wet weekend to contest the Student Team and Individual trophies. Players varied widely in ability, ranging from internationals to beginners who had just been taught the four-ball break on their journey to Oxford using Jelly Babies to represent balls!

The singles trophy was duly won by Marcus Evans of Nottingham who was simply too good; his shooting and break control were far superior despite some spirited hit-ins from his opponents. The real surprise was in the other half of the knock-out draw, where last year's beginner Rob Wilkinson shocked third and second seeds Eugene Chang and Conor Broderick respectively

to reach the final with some very accurate and consistent breaks.

The team (doubles) competition generated several spectator-friendly games, with one featuring cavalier but spectacular tactics from Trinity College Dublin; catching up against Oxford's peg and rover, a Trinity player went to peg and pegged out both his opponent's ball and his own by accident, leaving 1-back vs rover. Oxford eventually scraped home +3 after some good shooting from the other Trinity player, then easily defeated Nottingham B to reach the final against Nottingham A on Sunday morning.



The players in the team final: L-R, Tom Whiteley, Rob Wilkinson, Marcus Evans, Ed Keene

Oxford began the final strongly with Tom Whiteley going to 4-back on the fifth turn, only for Marcus to hit in and complete a TPO. The subsequent three ball ending was fascinating to watch, with Marcus trying to shepherd his junior partner around and achieve a rare +TPO win. However, a fired up Rob Wilkinson had other ideas and hit in frequently against the odds. The tactical inexperience of the Oxford players was apparent as they shot aggressively on every turn rather than take position. Indeed when Nottingham left themselves cross-wired at 4 and Rob near his hoop at 2, Rob was overheard saying to Tom: 'But we HAVE to shoot, haven't we?!' and proceeded to hit.

Despite Marcus and Ed's best efforts, Rob managed to finish +8OTP with ten minutes remaining and Oxford retained the Edmund Reeve Cup.

This was all the more impressive given that Tom and the third Oxford player Harry have only been playing croquet for 6 weeks; Tom was down to 8 already and Harry to 14 only due to a 2 week exam break! Hopefully these students and others will keep playing and that there is enough local competition for them.

The consolation Golf Croquet event was won by Enda Coyle of Trinity College Dublin. Social events included the annual visit to the Indian restaurant on Saturday night followed by a sample of Oxford's finest nightlife. Well done to the eventual winners of the tournament for leading the charge on to the dance floor!

Many thanks to Oxford University Croquet Club for hosting the tournament, to Rob Wilkinson for managing it, and to Bernard Neal for driving down to Oxford to present the trophy.

Egyptian Golf Croquet Coaching at Ripon Spa Hotel

by Freda Vitty

At the Yorkshire Open 2006 at Ripon Spa Hotel, Khaled Younis was approached by several players and spectators for croquet advice and he was very generous in response. Samantha Curry, never one to miss an opportunity, mooted the idea of running a coaching course in 2007, when Khaled would come to England to provide the professional input. A number of croquet players and spectators signed up there and then and Freda Vitty was asked to organise the event. Like Topsy, it grewed! David Openshaw asked if, after Ripon, Khaled could go to Roehampton and run a course there and play an exhibition match against Reg Bamford and this was added to the Egyptian's itinerary.



Khaled Younis demonstrates the stance and grip



Amir Ramsis, acts as Khaled Younis's interpreter

So for four days in June, Khaled Younis, three times World Champion and Amir Ramsis, President of the Egyptian Croquet Federation and Committee member of the WCF, provided Golf Croquet Coaching at Ripon for levels ranging from absolute beginner to those players who regularly play competitively.

The first two days provided some of the worst June weather ever in North Yorkshire, with rivers bursting their banks, roads blocked and even a landslide! Proving croquet stops for nothing short of an earthquake in England, the players played on undaunted. The Egyptians, who had left Cairo in temperatures of 35C, borrowed umbrellas and were on court most of the day providing advice, guidance and training to players of varying abilities. Despite the weather, the players felt they had made real progress.

Most of the Friday people were reassigned to Saturday or Sunday, as the worst floods ever hit Yorkshire. One of the hotel's public rooms was taken over for indoor tuition for those participants who chose to continue. One of these was Derek, a local doctor, who has recently taken early retirement. He is the newest member of Ripon Spa Hotel Croquet Club and had only ever played for one hour prior to this. He attended on the first day in the rain and came back on the second for more in even worse conditions. By the end of the second day, he was able to play a creditable game Egyptian style against yours truly. Those of us with more experience were left wishing we had had such good habits instilled in us from the start. Keep it up, Derek, and I predict a future for you on the National croquet scene.

By Saturday, the sun was out, temperatures were up and the brollies that had been used previously to keep off the rain,

were being used by the Egyptians to provide shade!

Khaled was very quick at assessing players' skills (or lack of) and spotting problems. He suggested changes or small adjustments, which produced remarkable results in some cases. [Note: I spotted Jennet Blake make a successful jump shot - a stroke which was not in her repertoire previously as far as I am aware.]

Personally, I benefited from tactical advice and learned that no matter at what level one plays, there is a need to get the basics right; every Egyptian practice session starts with taking two balls around every hoop, going for a close placement and running hoops from 1 to 2 yards. Then more practice, practice, practice.

Khaled has seemingly unlimited patience and a positive approach to coaching, showing a real sense of humour. Phrases such as "Don't stand up", "More follow through", "Not bad" (a poor result), "Very nice" (good attempt) and "More excellent" (got it right) will remain with participants for a long time to come.

We look forward to this being an annual event and next year Khaled has offered to add on a coaching session for local schoolchildren free of charge. Many thanks from me and all who took part in making this new venture not only a great success but also proving that serious learning can also be a lot of fun. And well done, Samantha, for initiating another Croquet First.

Tournament Round-Up

Southport advanced 21/22nd April

WHO THE BELL STOLE?

by Peter Dorke

Many years ago I seized the opportunity afforded by the unexplained and inconvenient absence of Eddie Bell from a Southport tournament to head my report of said tourney "Mersey sans damn Bell". Southport A 2007 was marked by the absence of a far more important item, viz: the club bell. A gift to headline writers but a pain in the posterior to the Quarryman, Dave Nick, whose amiably efficient management was punctuated by the dull clanging of spoon on cooking pot. Hence, I was sorely tempted by "Summoned by Saucepans" as an alternative banner, but was afraid it might end up on the rugby page. (Of the Gazette? Are you insane? Ed.) Be that as it may, somebody has nicked (pun intended, but only joking? Dave, honest) Southport's bell and they want it back.

Despite a rumour that vegetarians would be banned from future tournaments, the food was well up to the club's superb standards and stoked the fires of players of all dietary persuasions. Details of the excellent chestnut roast were handed to me under plain cover with the words, "This recipe is secret: show it to anyone else and I'd have to make you eat it." Which is genuinely funny and a change from the so-called "Northern Humour" with which the

Southport Heavy Mob batter each other into submission. I shall not horrify you with details of the Quarryman's "dog-collar" witticism, but this was one occasion when it was better *not* to be there.

The croquet - which was your usual boring stuff, on the whole - was enlivened by the vicious power struggle between the Mr Big of Southport, John Haslam, and the Management. Dave Nick's easy style was in stark contrast to the approach favoured by Mr. Haslam: "Ve haf vays off making you play". The pot was stirred vigorously by the mischievous Richard White, who suggested that a better organized tournament could have been achieved if Mr. Nicholson's dog had been given the job. Not that he had any serious cause for complaint, as he carved a brisk path through the Main Event, to give David Maugham a fright in the final, taking the first game of three.

The real croquet was, naturally, played in the Swiss, which was settled, as time was short, by a one-ball between the Manager and Ian Lines, the Quarryman running out the loser, with such haste that he went off home without the paperwork so vital to the smooth running of the CA. This was the opportunity for a spicy helping of Haslamic scorn and a reassertion of the Big Man's supremacy.

Southport's lawns have improved a lot since last year and a little rain on Sunday did nothing to spoil the fun. Much of that commodity was had: I commend in particular the good humour and daring, nay reckless, play of messrs Askew and Sandler. Other entertainments included a never-to-be-forgotten Chinese meal with karaoke and the sight of Mr. Robert Burnett's face as he was parallel-Lined by the two players of that ilk. Wot larks!

Hunstanton Over 50s

15 - 17 June 2007

by Jonathan Toye

A delightful three days spent at Hunstanton for there Over 50s tournament. 21 entrants - an extra player arrived on the first morning - but ably sorted and managed by Ian Storey. Sunshine against all predictions, although we did experience a half hour of monsoon on Saturday, (witnessed in splendid isolation from the shelter on Lawn 5 by your correspondent as everyone else covered in the Clubhouse).

Excellent food and a friendly, relaxed atmosphere. Umpteen games played, as everybody was so keen to get on to Hunstanton's immaculate sward (very well

kept by groundsman Jeff Race who takes a personal interest as his own game improves on an exponential basis).



Patricia Duke-Cox, winner of the Hunstanton over 50s, with manager, Ian Storey.

The devious Egyptian points system meant that we never really knew who was going to win until the last game on Sunday. Chris Donovan was in the lead at the close of Day 1, with Terrey Sparks lurking. Terrey surged into pole position on Day 2 with Patricia Duke-Cox and Jonathan Toye close behind. On Sunday afternoon it looked as if Terrey would retain the trophy that he had won in 2006 but the doughty David Tutt had other ideas.

After an hour's play the bisques were gone and Terrey had one ball on peg the other on rover, with David on hoops 1 and 2. In a fascinating comeback, following the croquet player's motto of *nil desperandum*, David crept up and overtook his opponent to win by 3, knock Terrey into second place



Winners from the John Beech Memorial Tournament, held at Pendle over Easter weekend: David Turner (low bisquer) David Maugham (overall winner and most games played) Robin Delves (High Bisquer), with Roger Schofield, the event manager.

and present Patricia D-C with another Jane Neville-Rolfe Salver.

Veterans

Championship

Sussex County, 18-23 June

Richard Hoskyns

The tournament was very lucky with the weather; Southwick avoided virtually all the rain that was forecast, at least during playing hours. The lawns were in a good condition and the club provided their usual excellent lunches and teas.

The Rothwell Challenge Cup (Veterans' Championship) was won by Roger Jenkins (Bristol) who was undefeated with 7 wins, including 3 TPs. Martin Granger Brown (Bowdon) was the runner up with 6 wins (his handicap coming down to -1/2).

The Pidcock Trophy (over 70s' Championship) was won by Janet Overell (Sussex) who played excellently to win all her 5 block matches; Roy Edwards (East Dorset) was runner up with 3 out 5 victories.

The Felixstowe Cup (advanced singles for those not in the two championships) was won by John Morgan (Cheltenham) who was undefeated in the 5-round Swiss; Neil Chalmers (Norwich) was the runner-up.

The Strickland Cup (handicap singles for those not in the above events) was won by Barry Gould (Guildford & Godalming).

The Meredith Cup (unrestricted handicap singles) was won by Nigel Graves (Surbiton), with Martin Granger Brown as runner up.

In the X doubles, The Longman

Trophies (The Sussex Trugs) were won by Gerald Gooders and Gene Mears (Sussex), with Martin Granger Brown (Bowdon) and Tony Whateley (Glasgow) as runners up.

In the Y doubles, the Gilbert Spoons, were won by John Morgan and Jean Powell (Cheltenham) with Roy Edwards (East Dorset) and Janet Overell (Sussex) as runners up.

Ramsgate Golf Croquet championship

9-10 June

by Freda Vitty

From Group A Bill Arliss with 11 wins qualified outright. Tim King and Freda Vitty both had 10 wins; on "who beat whom" they were equal with one win each in their match, but on hoop count, Tim went through. [As a point of interest, both Tim and Freda were on the Committee that approved this method worked out by John Moore of settling ties in blocks and agree that it gives a satisfactory result.]

In Group B, the order was clear with both Nelson Morrow and Richard Thompson finishing their block with 11 wins each, but as Nelson had taken both games from Richard, he qualified top.

So the semi-finals were to be Bill Arliss playing Richard Thompson and Nelson Morrow playing Tim King.

The match between Nelson Morrow and Tim King had a tight first game with Tim always having the edge, winning 7/5. In the second game, Tim's confidence in his long shots grew and Nelson's usual accuracy failed him, the game going to Tim 7/2.

The match between Bill Arliss and Richard Thompson had two very close games, both ending on hoop 13, the pair

taking one game each; the third game resulted in an easy 7/1 win for Bill, who got an early lead and put the pressure on Richard, who lost the edge usually given him by his meticulous lining up and straight hitting.

The final was set for a battle of the giants, two big hitters, Bill Arliss and Tim King. Both played with a mix of aggression and on certain occasions, a delicacy of touch. There were the now expected spectacular clearances and long hooping, with only the odd mistake. The first game went to Tim 7/6 and, at 6-all in the second game, Bill had an uncharacteristic miss to clear Tim's blue with yellow and Tim stepped up to run hoop 13 with his blue from about 3 yards and win by 2 games to 0.



Start of the final between Bill Arliss and Tim King

Worthy of special mention is Ramsgate's President, Dennis Shaw, a man of "mature years" and seemingly boundless energy. He was there from early morning, helping to set hoops, played both days taking a game from Bill Arliss, Charles-Eric Vilain and Freda Vitty amongst his 6 wins and was still on his feet at the end of day 2 to present the trophy to the winner.

Also a star was Valerie Harding, Chair of Ramsgate, who stepped in at the last

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minute as substitute, finishing sixth in her group.

The weather for the whole weekend was good; Evelyn Martin managed the tournament and produced a seeded schedule of play which left everything to play for in the last four games in both groups on Sunday morning, keeping us all to task, with everyone playing 10 games on the Saturday. As usual, the catering team at Ramsgate did us proud and it was an altogether enjoyable weekend, with several spectators appreciating the very good croquet and the friendly spirit.

Tim was delighted to win his first major championship, having had several second spots. In accepting the trophy from Dennis, he made a very gracious speech thanking everyone on behalf of the players for their help and hospitality, which the author of this report would like to endorse. Well done, Tim and well done Ramsgate CC.

Chris Clarke won the 39th Championship of Surrey

by Samir Patel

In an expert display, Chris Clarke won the Championship of Surrey, completing a TP in all 11 games he played (winning 10 of them). He beat Robert Fulford in the final (+26tp +25tp +17tp) to win the trophy for the first time. Last year's winner, Rutger Beijderwellen, was beaten 3-2 by Fulford in a close semi final (-26tp +25tp +8qnp -26tp +22), while Clarke dispatched Jeff Dawson (+14tp -9otp +7tpo +26tp) in the other.

The lawns were playing at 10 seconds, despite significant rain, but the wet ground ensured that the hoops put up little resistance. The main event saw 37 triples (or better), whilst the whole tournament saw peeling turns in over 50% of games (68/132) from 19 of the 24 players. The beer was in excellent condition, and didn't run out.

Early running had been made by George Noble, racing into the Quarter Finals before lunch on the first day with two "three-tp" matches against Dick Knapp (+10tpo -8tp +26tp) and Sam Tudor (+17tp -26tp +26tp). Gary Bennett provided the biggest early upsets, beating Chris Patmore (+5 -1t +17) and then Samir Patel (+26 +5) before being dispatched by Clarke.

The plate was won by Samir Patel, beating Chris Patmore (+25tp), Robin Brown (+24tp) and Jenny Williams (+6tpo). Since both the main event

and plate were over by lunch on Sunday, the Manager embarked on a Z and Omega, which were won by Chris Patmore and Chris Farthing respectively after numerous failed sextuples.

Tournament Results

John Beech Memorial Handicap

Pendle 6th - 9th April

Overall Winner and most games played:

David Maugham

Low bisquer: David Turner

High bisquer: Robin Delves

Sussex County Advanced

14th 15th April

Stephen Mulliner bt Rutger Beijderwellen +9qpo, +26tp

Consolation event: David Parkins

Budleigh Salterton B level

27th - 29th April

Winner: Paul Miles

Runner-up: David Parkins

Western Championship

Parkstone 5th- 7th May

Quarter finals: R. Fulford bt S.N. Mulliner +26sxp, -12tp, +3sxp; K Aiton bt P Trimmer -26tp, +21tp, +16; E Duckworth bt D Goacher -9, +15, +17; D Maugham bt R Beijderwellen +17tp, +26tp. Semi-finals: Aiton bt Fulford +26tp, +26tp, +25tp; Maugham bt Duckworth +10, +14, -17, -26tp, +26. Final: Aiton bt Maugham -26tp, +16tp, +14tp, +26tp.

Plate event: S Patel bt D Goacher +26tp, +24

Sussex County Spring Bank Holiday

5th - 7th May

Handicap

Winner: Brian Kitching 5/6. Runner-up: Alan Knight 5/6

Advanced

Final: Tony Le Moignan bt Sarah Burrow -17, +23, +21.

Consolation event: 1st Gavin Carter, 2nd John Gosney, 3rd David Gillett.

Colchester Spring Handicap, 5th - 7th May

1st George Winder, 2nd Ron Atkinson, 3rd Geoff Youd

Bowdon May Handicap, 5th - 7th May

Winner: David Holland. Runner-up: Michael Steer

Ramsgate Advanced, 5th - 6th May

1st Julie Hudson, 2nd Paul Miles, 3rd Robert Alexander

Nailsea Handicap, 5th - 6th May

Final: Mrs Bowker bt Mrs Bradshaw +17.

Consolation event: J Gregory.

Northampton Advanced

12th - 13th May

1st Paul Swaffield, 2nd Charlie Askew, 3rd Dave Mundy.

Guildford & Godalming Advanced

Winner: Nick Harris. Runner-up: Nick Butler.

Pendle & Craven B Level, 19th - 20th May

Winner: Peter McDermott. Runner-up: Tom Griffith.

Bristol Handicap, 19th - 20th May

Final: David Gillett bt Nigel Ames +4

East Dorset Handicap, 1st - 3rd June

Bishop Cup: Pat Oxley. Runner-up: Nigel Hames-Keyward

Halse Cup: Andy Myers

Nailsea Advanced, 2nd - 3rd June

A class: Final: K Chambers bt M Evans

Consolation: B Ashwell

B Class: J. M. Lacey

Isle of Wight Open, 2nd - 3rd June

1st R Beijderwellen, 2nd C Askew, 3rd J Davies.

Bowdon Advanced, 2nd - 3rd June

Winner: David Maugham. Runner-up: Colin Irwin.

Consolation: Ian Lines.

Woking Mid-Summer Handicap

8th - 10th June

1st Nicholas Furse, 2nd Alan Edwards.

Handicap changes

Pendle Handicap 6th - 9th April

Walter Sanders 15 to 16

David Turner 5 to 4.5

Alice Fleck 9 to 11

Robin Delves 11 to 10

Roger Schofield 2.5 to 3

Sussex County Adv 14th - 15th April

P Quinn 2 to 2.5

M Hamilton 4.5 to 4

B Kitching 5 to 6

A Jardine 2.5 to 3

Woking 28th - 29th April

Richard Danby 2 to 1.5

Nailsea Handicap 5th- 6th May

Mrs A Bowker 14 to 12

N Grant 10 to 9

J Gregory 10 to 9

A Willis 10 to 9

Ramsgate Adv 5th- 6th May

Miss J Hudson 3 to 2.5

Bowdon Handicap 5th - 7th May

David Holland 22 to 14

Diana Williamson 8 to 9

Pendle & Craven B Level, 19th - 20th May

Dennis Graham 2.5 to 3.5

Ryde Adv 2nd - 3rd June

Miss J Hudson 2.5 to 2

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