

THE CROQUET GAZETTE

ISSUE 315

AUGUST 2008

MITSUBISHI

**Robert Fulford
Retains
British Open Title**



CA Contacts

Manager
Elizabeth Larsson
The Croquet Association, c/o Cheltenham Croquet Club, Old Bath Road, Cheltenham, GL53 7DF
01242 - 242318
caoffice@croquet.org.uk

Hon. Secretary
Dr. Ian Vincent,
29, Thoresby Road, Bramcote,
Nottingham NG9 3EN
Tel: 0115 925 3664
E-mail: ian.vincent@cantab.net

President
Bernard Neal
41 Asquith Road, Cheltenham
GL53 7EJ
01242 - 510624
bernard.neal@tesco.net

Chairman of Council
Jonathan Isaacs
Meers Fram, The Hollow, West Chiltonington,
West Sussex, RH20 2QA
01798812028
jonathanisaacs@btinternet.com

Vice-Chairman of Council
Patricia Duke-Cox
171 Witham Road, Woodhall Spa, Lincoln LN106RB
01526 354878
duke-cox@hotmail.co.uk

Treasurer
Dr Roger Bray
Street Cottage, Polstead Hill, Polstead, Colchester,
Essex CO6 5AH
01206 - 263405
rwbray@tiscali.co.uk

CA Council Committee Chairmen

Administration
Dave Kibble davekibble@iee.org
AC Laws
Ian Vincent ian.vincent@cantab.net
AC Selection
Phil Cordingley phil_cordingley@tiscali.co.uk
AC Tournament
Nigel Graves nigel.graves@blueyonder.co.uk
Coaching
Lawrence Whittaker flwhittaker2@waitrose.com
Development
Barry Keen barry.keen1@ntlworld.com
Equipment
Alan Pidcock pidcock@manorh.plus.com
Executive
Jonathan Isaacs jonathanisaacs@btinternet.com
GC Laws
Bill Arliss bill.arliss@ntlworld.com
GC Selection
Tim King tmktmk@ntlworld.com
GC Tournament
Bill Arliss bill.arliss@ntlworld.com
Handicap
Ian Parkinson ianparkinson@aol.com
International
Phil Cordingley phil_cordingley@tiscali.co.uk
Management
Patricia Duke-Cox duke-cox@hotmail.co.uk
Marketing
Jeff Dawson jeff.p.dawson@gmail.com
Publishing
Derek Trotman derek.trotman7@virgin.net

CA Federation Representatives on Council

Croquet North - Charles Waterfield
01642 712551

North West - Barry Keen
01565 632420

Yorkshire - Julian Tonks
01904 791254

East Midlands - Lawrence Whittaker
0116 270 7396

West Midlands & Wales - John Handy
01788 810572

East Anglia - Arthur Reed
01923 445714

Southern - Pat Kennett
01794 322209

South West - Roger Buckley
01934 811735

London & South East - David Mooney
020 8789 7707



THE CROQUET GAZETTE



Issue 315 August 2008
Front Cover: Robert Fulford in play at Cheltenham during the Mitsubishi Open Championship. (Photo by Samir Patel)

Next Issue Published 17th October 2008

Copy Deadline September 5th 2008

Disclaimer

The opinions expressed in the Croquet Gazette are those of the editor and contributors. The Croquet Association is not responsible for statements other than those clearly defined as being made on behalf of the Croquet Association.

CONTENTS

Chairman's Column	3
Editorial	3
Letters	4
News & Information	6
Something A Little Different	8
Solomon Trophy	9
The View From The Bar	10
Notice of AGM Agenda	11
Ballot Paper for Constitutional Changes	11
Proposed amendments	11
Council Election Voting paper	12
Election Addresses of Council Candidates	13
The Last Word on Whites	15
Croquet for the Enabled	15
Championship News	16
Tournament News	20
Coaching for Handicap Play	21
Points of View	22

Publication details

Gazette Editor
Gail Curry
22 Cranbourne Terrace, Stockton on Tees TS18 3PX
Tel: 07752356880
gazette@croquet.org.uk

The Croquet Gazette is published six times per year, in February, April, June, August, October and December.
Publication Schedule
Copy should reach the Editor before the 21st of the month before publication is due. However if you have something that you think

the Editor may be willing to expand this deadline for please contact her direct before making any assumption.

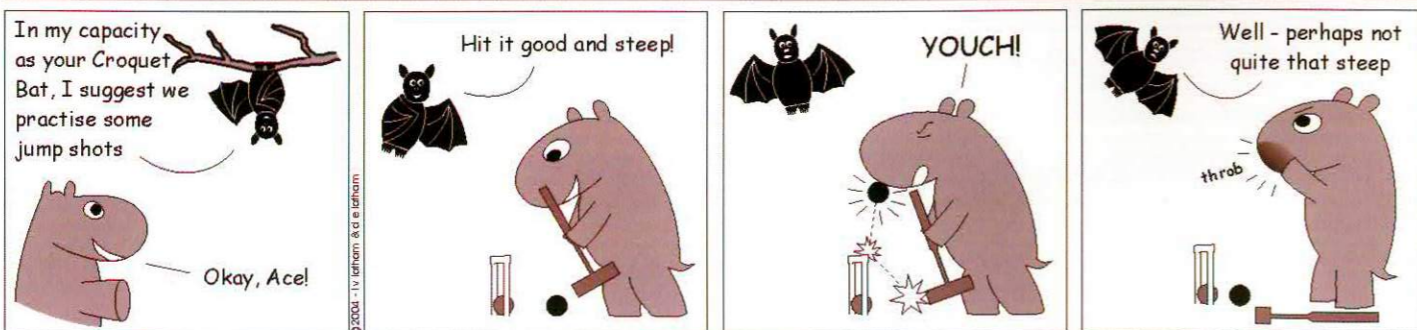
Email contributions, including tournament reports should be sent direct to the Editor, or copied to the Editor if they are being posted to the Nottingham List. Digital images are the easiest to work with, but coloured photographic prints are also acceptable. Please send digital files jpeg or tiff format files. Please accompany all images with a description of the subject of the picture. If you require any material to be returned please enclose an SAE.

Tournament Reports & Results
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 of the Croquet Association and not to the Editor.

The Croquet Gazette is printed by Billingham Press, Central Avenue, Billingham, Stockton on Tees.

HOPOPOTAMUS

by Victor



Chairman's Column



The season is now well underway and I am pleased to report that early indications are that member clubs and individual associate members are on the increase.

The Telegraph, in a recent article, suggested that Croquet is a game suitable for our time – let's hope they are correct and numbers continue to grow.

Our new CA Manager – Liz Larson has settled in well and in June took over the Association's PR activities from ENS, an outside PR agency who have handled our PR for the last few years. The press coverage we have received during the Opens has been commendable.

May I take this opportunity of congratulating Robert Fulford in winning the Opens this year in emphatic style. I spent one day at Cheltenham and was particularly pleased to see that there were a number of younger players starting to make a name for themselves. This bodes well for the sport and our future as World Champions.

The Croquet Academy held its first Golf Croquet Weekend at the beginning of July. The course was very oversubscribed

and a second session was planned for the Academy during the Summer School. The feedback from the course was most encouraging and bodes well for the future of the Academy.

A slightly worrying trend that I have noted during my travels around the tournament circuit has been people not checking that their recorded handicaps at the beginning of tournaments. On a number of occasions this has resulted in incorrect bisesques being allocated to the game and possibly having a detrimental result on the whole tournament. I would urge everybody to check their recorded handicaps at the beginning and ensure the true handicap is shown and being used.

My comments on clothing appeared to have sparked off considerable debate. Only time will tell if our attire changes significantly in the future.

Jonathan Isaacs

Editorial

Ok not a lot of space for me this month and quite a few things to pack in. Firstly congratulations to the GB team for retaining the Solomon Trophy against the USA.

I'd like to draw your attention to the Voting paper on pages 11/12. The paper on page 11 is for constitutional changes, the other on page 12 is for the election of Council Memembrs. The layout may seem a little confusing, but I have done it in this way so that both papers can be printed on opposite side of the page and therefore you will only have to remove one half page, losing little of the Gazette, as I know some readers do like to keep them.

For anyone who doesn't read the Telegraph, there was an item on the sport of 'Crolf', a kind of croquet/golf hybrid - (yep another one, purists fainting by the gazebo

load as we speak). Anyone wishing to read the article can find it on the internet at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/gardening/main.jhtml?xml=/gardening/2008/05/23/garden-crolf123.xml>

There has been a lot of development work in the North, with the formation of new clubs in Durham and at Bamburgh, news of which will follow shortly I hope. In the meantime it would be nice if other federations weren't so shy in sharing their news, as I'm sure there is lots happening, so to coin a phrase 'don't hide your light under a bushel'.

Finally, an item that used to appear, 'Points of View', has returned in this issue. The purpose of this is to voice views in more detail than a letter on any croquet related matter, so if you have a burning issue you wish to express or perhaps open up debate then please feel free to write.

Gail Curry, Editor

Letters

Coal industry croquet

Did you work in the British Coal Industry AND play croquet? If so, we would like to hear from you. The Bretby Croquet Club was formed out of the NCB's Mining Research & Development Establishment (MRDE) at Stanhope Bretby, Burton on Trent, and has survived the rigours of Maggie's purges to live on. Annual sports exchanges between the Coal Research Establishment (CRE), Cheltenham, and MRDE continue (in spirit only?) with an annual tournament at Nottingham croquet club for all croquet players who worked for MRDE or CRE. If you are interested, please contact our Chairman Mike Gibson on michael.gibson@care4free.net.
Tal Golesworthy, Cheltenham CC

More apparent than real

The question of white or non-white dress for croquet matches and tournaments seems to be generating a certain amount of hysteria – an admirable state of affairs, there being so few issues in a game as soporific as croquet which generate any emotional reaction at all. At the risk of spoiling the fun, can I ask whether anyone has ever actually been banned from a match or tournament for not wearing white? At Hurlingham, possibly – and Levens, of course. But apart from those?

Judging purely from my own experience, I have, at various times in my croquet career, turned up to tournaments: with coloured wet-weather gear (because I didn't have white); in a coloured sweater (not possessing a white one); in grey trousers (having forgotten to pack whites); in a red fleece (because I would have been frozen without it).

On none of these occasions did anyone bat an eyelid, and I was given the same welcome I have always been given at any croquet tournament. The point is that wearing whites is the aim. If for any reason you can't wear whites, then provided you make some effort (and the minimum effort is a white shirt, which can be got for a fiver in a charity shop), nobody in practice is going to mind all that much, or be unpleasant about

it. So isn't the whole issue more apparent than real?

There, that's that one sorted out. I hope we can now concentrate on more important issues, such as the editor's tolerance of superfluous definite articles in the Letters section of the Gazette. Now that is something I really am prepared to get hysterical about.

Tom Griffith

Oh I am so glad that one is sorted, thanks Tom. Don't suppose you would be interested in an 'agony column', or perhaps you could send a list of more apparent and less superfluous topics to be discussed in future letters pages. Ed.

Coin tosses at distance

Just a thought regarding the problem of coin tosses over the phone arising when teams meet in the National Inter-Club Championships without any previous history. Using the lottery is a very good way to determine the winner of the toss but I know some 'tosses' have been decided in the past by reference to the lottery bonus ball being odd or even.

Unfortunately this does not give a 50/50 chance because there are 25 odd numbers and 24 even numbers.

To improve matters I suggest one captain says to the other: "If the lowest ball of the lottery (excluding the bonus ball) on <date> is odd then you have won the toss"

By stating 'lowest ball' you exclude balls 45, 46, 47, 48 & 49 which can never be the lowest ball. This reduces the possibilities for the lowest ball to balls 1 – 44 inclusive.

The order in which the balls come out is not important, so the draw does not have to be watched live.

It is a marginally more difficult sentence to grasp – but I think the added accuracy is worth the effort.

Peter Wilson

Alternate stroke experiences

Following use of Alternate Stroke advanced doubles as a training (and fun) use of the mini-carpet during the winter, I organised the first Tyneside Team Championship at Newcastle this week (1 July). Three teams of four, from Tyneside, Belsay Hall and Middlesbrough clubs, played two rounds of Alternate Stroke Advanced Handicap Doubles, for a new trophy. Using 2.5-hr time limits, on the hottest day of the summer so far, I can report that the experiment has merit, but also has pitfalls.

Because of the handicap range of the 12 players, we really had to use bisques, and we found that the time limit was too short – only one game of the six actually finished. Although one or two lifts were conceded, there were only one or two decent breaks, so the advanced element was a touch superfluous. One of the tie-break elements was peeling, but only three were achieved all day, by the Middlesbrough pairs, who won the cup.

There was little problem in remembering either to alternate, or whose turn it was, but having four on the court all the time exacerbated the double-banking situation. The games were significantly slower than traditional handicap doubles, and harder work, as there is no rest while partner goes round. Whether four A-class players can make the format work more effectively is still to be tried, but we all enjoyed it, and expect to hold the second edition at Middlesbrough next summer.

Bruce Rannie

The Pedants' Revolt

Thank you, Peter Lowe, for taking a first timid step down the road of pedantry. But why so half-hearted? Why not go all the way, and insist on strict adherence to rules of accident?

Come, ye pedants, don't be coy; It isn't only hoi polloi.

We surely ought to give a voice To (much neglected) tois pollois.

But why leave those two all alone? There's any number tòn pollón.

And – since we won't play fast and loose – We must remember tous pollous.

Tom Griffith

They said it could not happen twice.....

But it did! In the space of 8 days, I played in 2 Doubles competitions, at 2 different venues, where the opposition played with false handicaps. Each time, the bisques given proved to be essential to the opposition win. But, 2 different rulings: the first, the decision, made by the tournament manager, an examining referee, was that the game was forfeit as it is the responsibility of each individual player to check that their handicap, on the tournament board, is correct, before accepting bisques. In the second, the manager, despite being informed of this, at first decreed that the match result must stand as it was, then, as he realized that in a block,

couple play couple, event, this would mean that the other players would have an unfair advantage, ie. by giving at least 2 bisques less than the first people to meet the offending couple, he decided to ask, by telephone, later that evening, a ruling from an examining referee. This man stated that, should the offending game be vital to the result of the competition, it should be played again, this time with the correct handicap difference. My partner and I were informed of this decision the following morning when we arrived to play the remaining matches in the block. It seemed impractical, due to time, but we accepted those terms. At the end of the day's play, the match was crucial as, we had beaten our nearest competitors, and, had we been given the first match, would, on the who-beat-who rule of the tournament, have been the overall winners. We were fully expecting to be asked to replay that first match, but, to our surprise, were not asked to do so. Is there any point in asking for a ruling, informing the injured party that that decision would stand, and then not following it? The whole business was compounded by the fact that the tournament manager had made the mistake on the handicap sheet, and, it was realized when we were 3/4s into our match. Surely, as there were still 2 unused bisques on the lawn at that point, we should have been told, and the remaining bisques, which proved vital to their +3T win, could have been removed?

I also note on the CA website, under Tournament Croquet, Regulations, P5 Handicaps b) it states.....

Every player bears the responsibility for ensuring that he plays with the correct handicap. If a player plays, in a handicap event, at a handicap higher than that which he is entitled.....he may be disqualified in American, Swiss or Egyptian events and his record is deleted from the event. As an alternative to disqualification, the Tournament handicapper, may allow the player to continue to play at his incorrect handicap, if it is in the interest of the Tournament, but the player may not win any prizes.

I take this to mean, either disqualification and forfeiture of the match or, to equalize the bisques given by the other competitors, the offending couple could play out the rest of the tournament with the false handicaps. Perhaps it is time that, having 2 disparate rulings for the same problem, by 2 examining referees, a decision should be made which is standard and written into the rule book so that there can be no such

confusion again. If not, I fear that our lovely game will be taking a retrograde step to the 'Foot on ball and whack Grannie into the rhododendrons' of popular belief.

Avril Rangoni Machiavelli

Sticky situation

I may have created a new croquet record. I was playing in the Edinburgh Croquet Club's Veterans Tournament on June 19th, and at one point my opponent had one ball jammed in the jaws of hoop 5 and the other one in hoop 6. I then stuck in 1-back. Not just three balls stuck in hoops, but three balls stuck in consecutive hoops.

Can a statistician tell me what the odds against this happening are?

I. Howard Wright

Rewarding achievement

I read with interest the letter from Tony Backhouse about the lack of a badge for an Association Referee. Croquet is the only sport I know that does not always reward the successful achievement of an award. It is an achievement to have passed the Association referees examination, and I would like to have a badge noting my success. It does make it easier for players to see where there is a referee if they are playing in a tournament, and for newer players to ask about some aspect of the laws they are unsure of.

Frances Low

Ongoing development

Having had no response to two emails I sent to the CA I was interested to read Tony Backhouse letter (June 2008) about the lack of response to his various communications.

A few months ago I wrote to the CA asking what the Development Committee does because I was dissatisfied with the response to a question I raised at the AGM about the development of artificial surfaces for playing croquet. I am concerned the future of croquet is being jeopardised by the cost of building and maintaining lawns. For croquet to flourish it has to be more generally available and I cannot see that happening with the present state of affairs. It must be in the interests of the Association to put some money into developing alternative materials for playing croquet, which could include different balls and mallets if that is needed to create the correct 'behaviour' of the ball on surfaces other than

grass. A brainstorming session might help.

I gather an attempt was made at Bury St Edmunds to create an artificial lawn but this was not entirely successful. However, having made this effort I would expect the Development Committee to build on the experience and continue investing in development rather than write it off as a failure.

A reply would be most welcome.

Sue Edwards

Is Croquet alive and well in South Korea?

My brother recently visited his son in South Korea and while there had a trip to Jeju, a small island off the coast, where he came across this scene. There were actually some people playing when he arrived, (in really strange garb according to his accompanying letter) but they had stopped by the time he had got his camera ready.

Is this the 'pitch' on which gateball is played, or is this a local form of croquet? We are intrigued by there only being two hoops on view and an off-centre peg. Any ideas?



Whilst writing, would it be a good idea to have a lost property section in the Gazette, we occasionally find left-behind items of clothing at Winchester which no-one seems to claim – presumably because they cannot remember where they left them!

Rita Nunn

Yes quite happy to aid the absent minded, or should that be the absent whited? see page 7.

Seeding KO Stages

In his letter in issue 314 Jerry Guest raises the subject of seeding the KO stages of major events. This topic was addressed to a limited degree in a recent report of the WCF Ranking Review Committee (of which I am a member), that is published on the WCF Website. The committee intends to address the issue more specifically in due course however I thought it might be helpful, as someone who supports

the current process, to write with my personal views on the matter. To address all the questions Jerry raises specifically would require a considerable amount of space however I hope the following general comments are helpful, particularly with regard to why it is reasonable to seed both the blocks and the KO according to ranking.

It seems that at the heart of the argument is whether to seed the KO by block results or according to rankings. In my opinion the best way to look at the relative merits of the two systems is to imagine the block as a primitive form of ranking system. It is only able to take account of the few games played within that block, it cannot make comparisons between players in different blocks and it is such a poor ranking system it is unable to distinguish between players on equal wins and a single result has a significant impact on the relative ranking of the players. In contrast the croquet world has a well developed ranking system that is able to cope with all the factors I have just listed. Why choose to use a clearly inferior ranking system for seeding (i.e. block results) when such a good alternative is available?

I think it is also important to consider why blocks are used as a preliminary stage. I believe that primarily it is to ensure that all those who have travelled to the event get a reasonable amount of play before being eliminated from the main event. Having taken the decision to use blocks it is then important to ensure that they represent a fair contest in determining who qualifies for the KO, hence they are normally quite reasonably seeded using the World Rankings, to ensure each block is of approximately equal strength. Having determined the qualifiers from the blocks the tournament "proper" (the KO) then begins. Seeding is now widely accepted throughout most international sports and helps ensure a balanced draw with each fraction being of approximately equal strength, giving each of the players a relatively equal path towards winning the event. It helps to remove the luck of the draw. However this is only achieved if the correct (strongest) players are seeded, this may well not be the case if block results (a poor form of ranking system) are used when a few "upsets" may lead to some relatively weak block winners. In such a scenario a fraction of the draw can become significantly weaker than other fractions and luck of the draw can again become a significant factor in determining the winner. The reason for seeding both the blocks and the KO by ranking is to ensure that the event

is as fair as possible to all players, this is particularly important given how infrequently such events are held.

Nonetheless I do agree with you on one point and that is that some "reward" should be offered to "surprise" block winners. Personally I think any block winner who does not find themselves in the top half of players for the KO draw (i.e. outside the top 16 in a 32 player KO) should be elevated to the bottom of the top half (i.e. 16th position) to gain the advantage of an easy first round draw as you request. An alternative view I have heard advocated is

that all block winners should have 50 points added to their grade for the sole purpose of determining the KO seedings. The reason I support such ideas, despite them being slightly at odds with what I have written above, is that by giving players already qualified an additional incentive to try and win the block (rather than merely qualify) the number of dead games in the block stage is significantly reduced, helping to overcome one of the significant weaknesses of the block format.

Ian Burridge

News & Information

New club launched in rural north Yorkshire

A small village in rural North Yorkshire has created a stir by forming its own croquet club – introducing a game previously associated in the minds of many locals with vicarage lawns and cucumber sandwiches.

Bishop Monkton Croquet Club has already attracted 22 founder members, and rents a corner of the village playing fields where it has created two full-size lawns and a practice area. The club is now actively seeking new members.

The club was officially opened on May

combined an 'open day' when villagers were invited to come along and give croquet a try. A number turned up and received basic tuition before venturing out on to the lawns.

Club Chairman Richard Field said the launch of the club was another auspicious day for Bishop Monkton, a village already known as a go-ahead and caring community. Two years ago, he recalled, when the village needed a new village hall and there was no Lottery money forthcoming, the community rose to the challenge and itself raised a staggering £400,000 to build it, using



England ladies open golf croquet champion Sam Curry prepares to cut the ribbon to launch the new club, with members and guest looking on.

31 by England ladies open champion Sam Curry, from the nearby Ripon Spa Hotel Croquet Club, who cut a red ribbon and, with her partner, hit off the first balls. The event

volunteer skilled local craftsmen to undertake much of the work.

The area allocated to the croquet club was until a few months ago rough pasture,

but after careful preparation and regular mowing, it has become an admirable swathe of green. It is hoped later it may be possible to improve the ground further and bring it up to competition standard.

The club already has plans to start a members' ladder, and also hopes to meet local clubs for one or two 'friendlies' later in the season. Among the guests was Keith Smith, president of the Ripon Spa Hotel Croquet Club, who has offered to provide further tuition for members later in the season.

Bishop Monkton is one of 10 croquet clubs affiliated to the Croquet Association in Yorkshire and Humberside.

Golf Coach Training Course at Ripon Spa, 18/19 October 2008

There will be a Golf Croquet course to train prospective coaches over the weekend of 18/19 October at Ripon Spa Croquet Club.

The course will be led by Jennet Blake and James Hawkins and we hope all northern clubs will encourage one of their members to attend the weekend and start training to become a qualified CA coach. The course will give everyone a good basis for coaching their own club members and

prepare them to be eligible for the award of a yellow 'Club Coach' badge. With further experience, players can be awarded a white 'Golf Croquet Coach' badge to enable them to coach throughout the CA domain.

The cost of the course will be £10 for CA members and £16 for non-CA members. There will be no requirement to stay overnight at the Best Western Ripon Spa Hotel, but the Managing Director (Samantha Curry) will offer special rates to anyone who wishes to stay at the hotel. Tea and coffee will be available for a nominal charge during the weekend, but lunch can be taken in the hotel bar or in the city as food may not be brought into the hotel.

If you would like to attend the course or want further details, please contact Jennet Blake (jennet@themitchellhouse.com), James Hawkins (0151 722 4207) or Samantha Curry (01765 602172, croquet-in-ripon@hotmail.co.uk) as appropriate.

Lost Property

The following items left at Winchester Croquet Club:

White Jerzees long sleeve sweat shirt - size small;

Mid-blue Oswald Bailey Country Clothing waterproof jacket with hood - size

extra large.

If anyone can remember leaving these articles (they have been hanging in our hut for some time), please ring Rita Nunn on 01794 515005, and we will try and arrange to reunite owner and item.

Opens Survey

The tournament committee would like to collect the views of current and potential players in the Open Championships on matters of format, timing and venue. To this end, a survey will be published on the CA website which we would like to encourage as many players as possible to complete. The survey will close on 1 October.

Please note that the deadline for copy has been changed to an earlier date, to enable earlier production and delivery of the issue. If you submit items after the deadline, they may not be considered until the following issue.

The Croquet Association Commercial Assistant

The Croquet Association is integrating its shop activities into the Cheltenham office over the winter and a Commercial Assistant is required to run them.

Most sales are made online through the website, and some by telephone or post. The Commercial Assistant's main role is to maintain the day-to-day running of the shop, including fulfilling orders and maintaining adequate stock levels.

Located in Cheltenham, the post is part-time (five four-hour afternoons per week), and reports to the CA Manager. Salary by negotiation.

The Role:

- Run the CA Shop, both online and in person.
- Assist the CA Manger in budgeting, identifying new stock lines, relationships with suppliers.
- Determine and maintain stock levels. Pick, pack and dispatch goods. Deal with problems/complaints. Order replacement stock. Upload shop information to website.
- Maintain records (online and cash) of receipts and payments .
- Provide advice to customers on buying croquet equipment.

The Person:

- Proven experience of a retail or sales environment, especially online sales.
- Proven experience of all aspects of retail sales and demonstrable success in maximising profitability.
- Proven experience of retail administration, with strong IT knowledge, to include Microsoft office applications. An understanding of web applications would be useful.
- Proven experience of maintaining administrative records.
- Knowledge of croquet is an advantage.

Interested candidates should send their CV with a covering letter to the CA Manager, Elizabeth Larsson by **30th August 2008** at The Croquet Association, c/o Cheltenham Croquet Club, Old Bath Road, Cheltenham, GL53 7DF

Something a little bit different..... Croquet Holiday in Corfu & Greek Open Tournament

by Michael Hague

The Easy Jet aircraft bringing the majority of the 16 players and 5 non-playing spouses to Corfu in the after-math of a local May storm, landed with a violent application of the brakes followed by a full reverse of engines which threw many passengers against the seats in front of them. The pilot apologised for the fright, giving the weather and the shortness of the runway as an explanation (didn't he know about the length of the runway before he landed?).

Arriving in the evening our initial impression of the four star Kontokali Bay Hotel was extremely favourable but when we drew back the bedroom curtains the next morning, the stupendous view of the bay encircled by mountains took our breath away. A few hundred yards to the north could be seen the croquet courts nestled up to the Gouvia Marina with its restaurants and swimming pool.

The weather quickly settled back to blue skies with comfortable temperatures of around 22 degrees centigrade although the guided excursion to the mountain villages in the south of the island did see a bit of rain but that was the only occasion during the 10 day holiday.

The second Greek Open Tournament had a leisurely mid-day start on day one with the AC handicap doubles tournament. Unfortunately Mike and Sylvia Steer had flown from Manchester via Athens and had been forced to turn back to Athens due to the turbulence over the Corfu airport. They arrived the next evening, a day late. It was thus that Sylvia Hague was coerced into playing to make up the numbers, having never played a game of croquet in her life. To everyone's amazement she won her first two games and only lost the third -1 on time after she had run all her hoops, all very much due to the patience and skill of her partner, Rita Nunn, who had intended to skip the doubles and have a restful two days to start her holiday! This success contrasted with another player who took four and a half hours to score Hoop 1. No names, no pack drill but thank goodness she shows more talent when painting her willowy croquet players.



12 yr old Carien, Corfu's star player

Kevin Carter managed all the croquet with diplomacy, flexibility and calm efficiency, allowing players to mix a few hours of sunbathing on the hotel's beautiful beach with their matches and to have long lunches at the Blue Café adjacent to the courts, Greek salads (big enough for two) or maybe Sangrika (four cheeses melted into a creamy mass) soaked down with a demicarafe of the local white wine (very drinkable and better, most thought, than the red).



Players enjoying a break from croquet

The singles handicap tournament was spread over two days with a free day for individual tours of the island or sightseeing and shopping in the historic town of Corfu a mere six kilometre hotel bus ride away or just hanging out on the beach. Groups got together to explore the local restaurants in

the evenings, popular dishes being whitebait, prawns and mousaka at about a third of UK prices. The ladies seemed keen to join in the Greek dancing with the waiters. I can't think why! Most things were within walking distance but some hired bikes to get around, five of whom managed to fall off including Liz Taylor Webb (twice!) and for the second year running, Rupert Webb. The most badly hurt was Ivor Nunn who managed to fall off and badly gash his leg on the first day and before he had even left the bicycle shop!

The two lawn (three by the 2009 season) croquet club is founded and developed by Tony Blok of Hurlingham with his delightful partner, Annemiek Boon. At the weekend twelve of the Corfiot members of the club joined the visitors for some light hearted Golf Croquet and for the Prize Giving Dinner on the last night. John Cosier and Rupert Webb swept the board for the main events, winner and runner-up respectively of the singles and jointly the doubles with Graham Roberts and Diana Stevens closely following in second place. The Golf Croquet prize for the visitors was won by Ivor Nunn and the WAGS prize went to Joan Monro. Amongst several special prizes was one for Liz Taylor-Webb for having been the most acrobatic cyclist. But the most popular winner of all was 12 year old Carien Papikinou who managed for the second year running to outplay all her fellow Corfiots including her ebullient father, Stelios.

As we had a late flight the next day, a 22 metre schooner was organised for a fabulous trip up the north east coast, including a swim in the warm sea and lunch at the best restaurant on the island. The visit had been a perfect blend of competitive croquet and fun and relaxing holiday activities. Mike Steer summed it up by explaining that normally at a tournament, he played all day and then returned to his B&B and a pub supper. "I have never been part of a large croquet playing group before and having such fun." Well, Mike will be pleased to know that similar Association Croquet tournaments are planned for May and September in 2009 plus in September 2009 a week of Golf Croquet. For more information, visit www.corfucroquet.com.

The Solomon Trophy

GB v The USA
2nd - 6th July 2008, Heaton Park
Report by Elizabeth Larsson and Ian Lines

GB beat USA 21-6 to retain The Solomon Trophy

For those readers who are unfamiliar with the the Solomon Trophy, it is a series of international test matches between the US and Great Britain which were begun in 1988, alternating annually between England and America, but not contested in the same year as the MacRobertson Shield test matches among croquet's big four, played approximately every three years. The trophy having been donated by John Solomon.

Since the Solomon began in 1988 the American team has never prevailed and the relative strength of the teams, as measured in the world rankings, has always strongly favored the Brits. Nevertheless, the games

Croquet Federation. After two rounds of play, both doubles, GB took a 5 - 1 lead, Ben Rothman and Paul Bennett recording the first win for the USA. The most notable shot of the day was Paul Bennett's 'Aspinall peel' to finish his delayed tp, which was remarkable as he had only been shown the shot for the first time by USA travelling reserve Jim Bast earlier that morning, who himself had only been taught how to play it the previous evening by Colin Irwin at Bowdon.

On the second day Great Britain won 9 out of 10 of the completed singles matches on the second day of the competition to take the score to 14-2 in this 27 match tournament, and so GB retained the Solomon Trophy.

On the third day Great Britain won 2 out of 3 of the third round doubles, and one of the two unfinished second round singles, taking the current match score to 17-4 in GB's favour, with just the final 6 singles matches left to play. Players and spectators

of whom helped make the event a great success.

The final day of the Solomon Trophy at Heaton Park saw the USA win two of the six third round singles games, making the final score 21-6 to Great Britain.

Danny Huneycutt and Ben Rothman from the USA have both played extremely well throughout the tournament, and were involved in all the USA's match wins in singles and doubles, but Great Britain's strength lower down the order proved decisive.



Keith Aiton, GB Captain

In the final match against Stewart Jackson, Keith Aiton completed a sextuple (finishing with a straight quad!), followed by his first ever tournament octuple!! There was some debate as to who else other than Rob Fulford, Reg Bamford and Bob Jackson has ever achieved this feat?

It was a good end to an excellent tournament, for which thanks should be recorded to Bury Croquet Club and all those involved in every aspect of the event (including Jonathan Kirby for managing the event so efficiently). The excellent lawns at Heaton Park certainly also help make a strong case for Heaton Park to be involved in hosting the next MacRobertson Shield in 2010.

Finally, congratulations to all the Great Britain team of (in playing order): Keith Aiton (capt), David Maugham, Ian Lines, Jonathan Kirby, Tony Le Moignan and Ian Burridge, and also thanks to the American team for helping to make the Solomon Trophy such a fantastic tournament.



The Players l to r: Ben Rothman, Tony Le Moignan, Ron Lloyd, David Maugham, Danny Huneycutt, Jonathan Kirby, Paul Bennett, Ian Burridge, Stewart Jackson, Ian Lines, David Bent, Keith Aiton.

are traditionally conducted in a properly rigorous and serious manner, and players from both sides usually report a high level of enjoyment and trans-Atlantic camaraderie.

The tournament was opened by Brian Storey, Secretary General of the World

enjoyed a day of almost uninterrupted sunshine at Heaton Park, ending with an excellent tournament dinner in the pavillion, at which thanks were recorded to Bury Croquet Club, Heaton Park, the lawn/hoop setters, the groundsmen, caterers from the bowling club and several key individuals, all

Full results (Great Britain names first):

Doubles Round 1
Keith Aiton & Tony Le Moignan beat Ben Rothman & Paul Bennett +26tp(A), -18, +26tp(A)
David Maugham & Ian Burridge beat Stewart Jackson & Dany Huneycutt +25tp(M), +26tp(M)
Jonathan Kirby & Ian Lines beat Ron Lloyd & David Bent +26tp(K), +26tp(L)

GB lead 3-0

Doubles Round 2
 Keith Aiton & Tony Le Moignan beat Stewart Jackson & Danny Huneycutt +26tp(A), -26, +17
 David Maugham & Ian Burridge beat Ron Lloyd & David Bent +25tp(B), +17tp(B)
 Jonathan Kirby & Ian Lines lost to Ben Rothman & Paul Bennett -11, -26tp(B)
 GB lead 5-1

Singles Round 1
 Keith Aiton lost to Danny Huneycutt -13, +6tp, -25tp
 David Maugham beat Ben Rothman -25tp, +21tp, +17
 Ian Lines beat Stewart Jackson +26tp, +9
 Jonathan Kirby beat Ron Lloyd +25, +26tp
 Tony Le Moignan beat Paul Bennett +10tp, -24tp, +8tp
 Ian Burridge beat David Bent +3tp, +23tp
 GB lead 10-2

Singles Round 2
 Keith Aiton beat Ben Rothman +11tp, +26tp
 David Maugham beat Stewart Jackson +26sxp, +16tp
 Jonathan Kirby beat David Bent +25tp, +25tp
 Tony Le Moignan beat Ron Lloyd +26tp, +17tp
 Ian Burridge beat Paul Bennett +8tp, +11tp
 Ian Lines lost to Danny Huneycutt +17tp, -17tp, -25
 GB lead 13-3

Doubles Round 3
 Keith Aiton & Tony Le Moignan beat Ron Lloyd & David Bent -17, +26tp(A), +26tp(A)
 David Maugham & Ian Burridge lost to Ben Rothman & Paul Bennett -13, -19
 Jonathan Kirby & Ian Lines beat Stewart Jackson & Danny Huneycutt +7tp(K), +16tp(K)
 GB lead 17-4

Singles Round 3
 David Maugham lost to Danny Huneycutt +26tp, -26tp, -26tp
 Ian Lines lost to Ben Rothman -2, -26tp
 Jonathan Kirby beat Paul Bennett +25tp, +25
 Tony Le Moignan beat David Bent +26tp, -26tp, +26tp
 Ian Burridge beat Ron Lloyd +26tp, +25tp
 Keith Aiton beat Stewart Jackson -19, +24sxp, +18ocp
 GB win 21-6

Further details as well as links to the excellent TV publicity are available at www.croquet.org.uk as well as more detailed reports at www.croquetworld.com.

M C Percival Mallets

The new proven TM range of mallets are available with proven Carbon fibre or ash handles, mallet weights are adjustable by +/- fl to 3ozs from any base weight. Handles are adjustable for angle, removable and interchangeable. all mallets are made to your specification.

A new range of hard wearing synthetic grips available in various colours, lengths from 2 to 18 metres. Alterations or repairs are undertaken to any mallet (over 350 completed so far).

Contact Michael Percival, The Laurels, Heath Road, Hessel, Suffolk IP30 9BJ Telephone 01359 270 200 M o b i l e 07780677943 Email: michael@croquetmallets.co.uk Web: www.croquetmallets.co.uk

The View from the Bar

A Summary of Discussion topics from the Nottingham List by Nick Parish

The croquet email list-server, known as the Nottingham list, is described on the CA's webpage as croquet bar-room chat and news, which is a very good description. All croquet topics imaginable, both Association and Golf, are discussed by contributors from all over the world, although UK players dominate and most of the topics are of greater interest to the better players. Much of it, like most bar-room chat, certainly doesn't bear repetition. However interesting threads do crop up from time to time and I'll be summarising some of those in this column.

There has been lots of debate about the competition format of blocks followed by a knock-out (as in the Worlds, and the Opens until last year). As a result, often a player may qualify from one block with a record inferior to someone from another. Louis Nel's suggestion was for a seeded knock-out, with losers from the early rounds going into a Flexible Swiss consolation, with later losers going into a different consolation event. The key was that the consolation events should have a name, a good trophy and carry sufficient prestige to be really worth winning, so that players would still feel it worthwhile entering, despite the risk of being knocked out in the first round of the main event. Others felt this would be very difficult to achieve in practice. However this year's Opens has abandoned blocks in favour of a Swiss format initially – players play until they have achieved six wins (and qualified for the knockout) or six defeats (and are eliminated and sent off to the Plate). As well as the fairness point, this also means there are no "dead" block games between two players who have both qualified or both been eliminated. There was much interest in this ingenious format – did it work as well in practice as it did on paper?

The consolation event for the Golf Opens this year was 10/10 – a form of speed croquet, played in this event as doubles. This sparked a lively debate – many felt that it



Nick has played croquet for ten years and is a member at Parsons Green.

was an inappropriate choice of game to be played as the consolation event for a very prestigious Golf event, especially as it was different to the main game (and doubles rather than singles). Others pointed out that it had been advertised as such in the Fixtures Book, and that as consolation games were perceived as less important, it made sense to try out something new. Interestingly enough this debate attracted a number of mainly or solely Association players, all of whom felt choosing 10/10 to be a strange decision (to put it mildly).

Finally, Pendle Croquet club are considering changing from Barlow balls, and asked whether using Dawsons was essential to attracting players to play in their tournaments. The overwhelming response from list members was that it was a very important factor. A few days later Pendle started an appeal for the money to buy the new balls, so they obviously took the responses seriously.

To subscribe to the list, go to <http://nottingham-lists.org.uk/mailman/listinfo/croquet>. You can receive emails individually or as a daily digest (the latter is particularly useful when certain notable contributors share their views).

NOTICE OF MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Croquet Association will take place at the Hurlingham Club on Saturday 11th October 2008 commencing at 11.00 a.m.

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence.**
2. **Minutes of the previous meeting held on Saturday 13th October 2007.**
 The minutes are in the documents section of the members' area of the CA Website and will be sent to Home Members on written request to the office.
3. **Chairman's Report.**
4. **Accounts for the year to December 2007 and Treasurer's report.**
 These accounts and brief commentary were published in the Croquet Gazette. Copies will be available at the meeting and a more comprehensive report will be sent to Home members on written request to the office.
5. **Election of Treasurer.**
 Dr R. W. Bray offers himself for re-election.
6. **Election of Reporting Accountant.**
7. **Changes to the Constitution.**
 Changes to the Constitution, proposed by Mr. J. Isaacs and seconded by Mrs P. Duke-Cox, together with a ballot paper, are published in this edition of the Croquet Gazette.
8. **Election of Honorary Secretary**
 Dr. I. G. Vincent offers himself for election subject to the changes to the Constitution being approved.
9. **Election of Council Members.**
 The following five members of Council retire by rotation under clause 18 (a)(i): Mr. W. H. Arliss, Mr.P. Cordingley, Mr. N. R. Graves, Mr. D. J. Kibble and Mr. D. W. Trotman. Mr. C. L. Sheen resigned during the year. Messrs Arliss, Graves and Kibble seek re-election under clause 18(a)(i) and the following have been nominated under clause 18(a)(ii): Mr. B. P. E. Fisk, proposed by Mr. G. K. Gale and seconded by Mr. J. F. Death; Dr. P. J. Kirby, proposed by Dr. F. L. Whittaker and seconded by Mr. S. N. Mulliner; Mr. D. B. Maugham, proposed by Mr. P. Cordingley and seconded by Mr. C. Irwin; and Mr. J Spiers, proposed by Mrs. P. Duke-Cox and seconded by Mr. D. K. Openshaw.
 There are therefore 7 candidates for 6 positions and a ballot will be held. Election addresses and a ballot paper are published in this copy of the Croquet Gazette. All ballot papers must reach the CA office no later than the first post on 2nd October, 2008.
10. **Benefactors' Book.**
 The names of benefactors will be read.
11. **Presentation of Apps and Steel Memorial Bowls.**
12. **Presentation of Council Medal to Mr. D. W. Trotman.**
13. **Presentation of Croquet Association Diplomas.**
14. **Presentation of Coaching Awards.**
15. **Any Other Business.**
16. **President's Closing Address.**

Dr. I. G. Vincent
 Hon. Secretary
 14th July, 2008

THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION

BALLOT PAPER FOR CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

Mr. J Isaacs and Mrs. P. Duke-Cox, on behalf of the Council of the Croquet Association, propose and second the following four sets of changes to the Constitution of the Croquet Association. If you wish to vote, either as an Individual Associate or on behalf of a Member Club, please indicate your agreement or otherwise to each set of changes by placing an "X" in the appropriate boxes, sign and return this ballot paper to the CA Office no later than 1st October, 2008. You may also vote for these motions (but not for the election of Council Members) at the AGM on 11th October, 2008.

A) Definition of "Croquet"

In Favour of the Motion Against the Motion

B) Restructuring

In Favour of the Motion Against the Motion

C) Timing of Nominations and Notices of Motion

In Favour of the Motion Against the Motion

D) Allow Council to make Nominations and Propose Motions

In Favour of the Motion Against the Motion

Name of Individual Associate or Member Club:

Name of Officer (if on behalf of a Club):

Signature:

Proposed Amendments to the Constitution of the Croquet Association for consideration at the 2008 AGM

A) Definition of "Croquet"

These amendments are to add a definition of "Croquet" to the Constitution:

1. In the introduction "GENERAL AND DEFINITIONS", the following definition be added before the definition of "The Domain":
 "Croquet Association and/or Golf Croquet as defined in the current laws including all forms of play described therein and in the current regulations for tournaments."

**THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION
ELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS**

Ballot Paper

There are seven candidates for the six vacancies to serve on Council for three years from October 2008. Individual Associates of the CA resident in England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man are eligible to vote.

You can vote by placing an "X" in the box next to the names of up to the six candidates of your choice. Election addresses provided by the candidates are published below. If you require more than one ballot paper per household you may photocopy or download one from the website. Each ballot paper must contain your name and signature.

- W. H. Arliss***
- B. P. E. Fisk, prop. N. K. Gale, sec. J. F. Death**
- N. R. Graves***
- D. J. Kibble***
- Dr. P. J. Kirby, prop. Dr. F. L. Whittaker, sec. S. N. Mulliner**
- D. B. Maugham, prop. P. Cordingley, sec. C. Irwin**
- J. Spiers, prop Mrs. P. Duke-Cox, sec. D. K. Openshaw**

* These are members of Council retiring by rotation, who have expressed their wish to continue on Council.

You ballot paper must reach the CA office no later than first post on 1st October 2008.

The results will be announced at the AGM on 11th October 2008

Name

Signature.....

The election addresses of the candidates follows the proposed amendments, to allow for the voting papers to be printed back to back.

Proposed Amendments Contd. from page 11

and that consequently "croquet" should be changed to "Croquet" throughout.

B) Restructuring

These amendments are to replace the appointed post of Secretary by those of an elected Honorary Secretary and an appointed Manager; and that of Treasurer by an Honorary Treasurer:

1. In the introduction "GENERAL AND DEFINITIONS", replace the definition:

"The Secretary The Secretary of the Association appointed in accordance with Clause 21 below"

by:
"The Office The Association's office, c/o Cheltenham Croquet Club, Old Bath Road, Cheltenham GL53 7DF, telephone: 01242

242318, e-mail caoffice@croquet.org.uk..

2. Replace sub clause 3(b), which currently reads:
"(b) The name and address of a candidate for election as an Individual Associate shall be given to the Secretary. Pending the decision of the Council as to election, a candidate may play in Calendar Fixtures as an Individual Associate upon depositing his subscription with the Secretary."

by:
"(b) Applications for election as an Individual Associate, giving the name, address and other contact details of the candidate, may be made via the Association's web site or sent to the Office. Pending the decision of the Council, a candidate may play in Calendar Fixtures as an Individual Associate upon depositing his subscription with the Office."

3. In Clauses 4 and 7, which deal with resignations, sub Clause 11(b), which deals with payment of subscriptions, sub Clauses 13 and 15(c)(2nd occurrence), which deal with registration of e-mail addresses, and sub Clauses 18(a)(vii) and 19(c), which deal with return of voting papers, replace "Secretary" by "Office".

4 Replace sub clause 12(a)(i), which currently reads:
"(i) fifteen Council members (exclusive of ex-officio Council members) who shall be elected solely by the votes of Individual Associates; and"

by:
"(i) the President, Vice-Presidents, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer; and
(ii) fifteen Council members elected solely by the votes of Individual Associates; and"
and renumber sub clause 12(a)(ii) to (iii).

5. Insert a new sub clause 12(c):
"(c) The Officers of the Association shall be the President, Vice-Presidents, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Council, the Honorary Secretary and the Honorary Treasurer. The President and Vice-Presidents shall be non-executive."

6. Insert a new sub-clause 12(d):
"(d) No member of Council shall be paid by the Association except as follows:
(1) Reasonable expenses properly incurred when acting on behalf of the Association may be reimbursed.
(2) The Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer and, if a member of Council, the Independent Examiner, may be given honoraria determined by other members of Council.
(3) Payments may be made for specific tasks undertaken on behalf of the Association over and above that generally expected of Council members, as determined by Council."

7. Replace sub clause 16(c), which current reads:
"(c) If an Individual Associate or Member Club wishes
(i) to propose a candidate for the office of President or Treasurer; or
(ii) to propose a motion at an Annual General Meeting, except on a question arising out of the Report and Statement of Accounts, the election of the Treasurer and members of Council or the appointment of the auditors,
they must give written notice thereof to the Secretary by 1 August preceding the Annual General Meeting."

by:
(c) If an Individual Associate or Member Club wishes
(iii) to propose a candidate for the office of President, Honorary Secretary or Honorary Treasurer, or
(iv) to propose a motion at an Annual General Meeting, except on a question arising out of the Report and Statement of Accounts, the election of the Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer or members of Council, or the appointment of the Independent Examiner,
they must give written notice thereof to the Honorary Secretary by 1 August preceding the Annual General Meeting.

8. Replace sub-clause 16(f), which currently reads:
"(f) If a vacancy exists in the office of President or Treasurer and there are no nominations, or the nominees refuse to stand or withdraw, the Council shall nominate a person before the Annual General Meeting without prior notice. If no nominee is elected, the Council shall fill the vacancy as soon as possible thereafter."
by:
"(f) If a vacancy exists in the office of President, Honorary Secretary or Honorary Treasurer and there are no nominations, or the nominees refuse to stand or withdraw, the Council shall nominate a person at any time before the Annual General Meeting without prior notice. If no nominee is elected, the Council shall fill the vacancy as soon as possible thereafter."

9. Replace Clause 20, which currently reads:
"**20 GENERAL MEETINGS: ELECTION OF TREASURER**
The Association shall elect a Treasurer at each Annual General Meeting who shall be an ex-officio member of Council if not a member already. If a vacancy in the office of Treasurer arises during the year between Annual General Meetings, Council shall appoint a substitute to hold office until the next Annual General Meeting."
by:
"**20 GENERAL MEETINGS: ELECTION OF HONORARY SECRETARY AND HONORARY TREASURER AND APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER**
The Association shall elect Individual Associates to the posts of Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer and appoint an Independent Examiner of the Accounts at each Annual General Meeting. If a vacancy in any of these positions arises during the year between Annual General Meetings, Council shall appoint a substitute to hold office until the next Annual General Meeting."

10. Replace Clause 21, which currently reads:
"**21 APPOINTMENT OF SECRETARY**
The Council shall appoint a Secretary to hold office on such terms and conditions as it may from time to time determine."
by:
"**21 APPOINTMENT OF STAFF**
The Council may appoint a Manager and such other staff on such terms and conditions as it may from time to time determine."

11. Replace all other occurrences (except in sub Clause 18(b) when referring to Federation Secretaries) of "Secretary" by "Honorary Secretary".

12. In clause 23 (Council Quorum), replace "seven" by "eight"

C) Timing of Nominations and Notices of Motion
Nominations for officers and notices of motion can currently be made until 1st August, which does not give sufficient time to publish the Agenda with the required notice in the Gazette. It is proposed to change this to 1st June.

1. In Clause 16(c), replace "1st August" by "1st June".
Currently, there is a conflict between the Constitution and Council Standing Orders as to when Council Members coming to the end of their term need to declare whether they are seeking re-election. It is proposed to change the date in the Constitution to be 1st March.
2. In Clause 18(a)(i), replace "1st June" by "1st March".

D) Allow Council to make Nominations and Propose Motions
The current constitution allows Individual Associates and Member Clubs to make nominations and propose motions to the AGM, but there is no explicit power for Council to do so. It is proposed to add one.
1. In Clause 16(c) insert "Council, " before "an Individual Associate".

Election Addresses of Council Candidates

Bill Arliss

Bill is a retired engineer who took up croquet in 1989. He was asked to join Council in 1995 and after serving on the Coaching Committee and chairing the Tournament Committee became CA Chairman in 1997 on the sudden death of Stephen Badger. During his period as Chairman, he supervised the major changes in the CA structure with the introduction of the Management Committee.

After giving up the chair of Council, Bill turned his energies to the promotion of Golf Croquet and as chair of the Golf Croquet Committee has led the development of the Golf Croquet tournament calendar from a few events in 2000 to the present full tournament programme and at the same time has also played in three world GC Championships. He has taken a deep interest in the laws of the game and as well as chairing the GC Laws Committee has been the CA's representative on the WCF GC Rules Committee.

He plays and enjoys both formats of the game and is very mindful of the fact that players of both formats have to work together harmoniously, if all the benefits from the additional players brought in through Golf Croquet are to be realised. To this end he has been deeply involved in recent changes to the CA structure that will allow both Association and Golf Croquet to be handled in an identical manner in all the standing committees..

Brian Fisk

I served on Council for 3 years from 2002 until 2006. I chaired the Coaching committee for 2 years during which time we produced the latest edition of the Coaching manual. I also served on Publishing, Handicap, Management, and Tournament committees and was director of two CA tournaments, the Peels and the Southern Week.

I am a CA handicapper and serve on the Southern Federation as Handicap Officer. As the Federation Coaching Officer I also serve on the CA Coaching committee and this year have been

their representative on the Coaching Academy committee where I have also helped with coaching. I am a grade two coach and a referee.

I belong to three croquet clubs, Cheltenham, Hamptworth, and Littleton. I have served on the committee of the latter for over six years currently as coaching officer.

I manage two tournaments, the Six Lawns and the Parkstone June week and regularly play in a number of tournaments each year. I am also the organizer and captain of the Hampshire Croquet team at the Association Inter-Counties event.

I have worked for IBM in software development since I finished university 32 years ago and plan to retire next year which will give me much more time to devote to all aspects of croquet.

If elected to Council I would continue to work in the areas of coaching, handicapping, and tournaments with the aim of making further improvements in the development of croquet in the UK.

Nigel Graves

I was first co-opted on to Council in March 2005, on my retirement after five years service as Secretary of the Association. Later that year my membership of Council was confirmed by election.

During my time as Secretary I attended all meetings of Council and the Management Committee, and a large majority of the meetings of principal standing committees, thereby acquiring a thorough understanding of the working of the Association. I also undertook the compilation and editing of the Fixtures Book, a task which I have continued to perform since my retirement.

Since joining Council I have served on both AC and GC Tournament Committees, also on the Marketing, Publishing and Administration Committees, as well as the Management and Executive Committees. For the past two years I have been Chairman of the AC Tournament Committee.

Whilst there is always a need for new people bringing fresh insight and ideas to Council, continuity and experience are also of great importance, and these are what I believe I can offer.

Dave Kibble

For longer than I care to remember I've served on the Publishing Committee as CA Webmaster maintaining and adding features to the website; I would like to continue this and my major ambition is to create better access to the fixtures programme, both in support of streamlining its production and on-line tournament entry. On the coaching committee, I introduced the platinum badge and the first sextuple coaching workshop and have done much to develop coaching support. On Selection I introduced a written policy to ensure transparent fairness. Council's main role is to set the policy for the CA, and I want to make sure that happens.

Jonathan Kirby

Many people will know Jonathan Kirby as a player and as a regular contributor to the "Nottingham Board" email list. He has not been on the CA Council or its committees before, and is keen to support croquet in the UK by taking on this role. He will bring a knowledge of croquet around the world, the people involved, and the laws and regulations.

Jonathan took up croquet as a student in 1999 when he was

20, learning in Cambridge and Edinburgh. He later spent a year in Manchester where he played at Bowdon, and then moved to Oxford. More recently, he spent a year in Chicago, and while there got to know many of the people on the American croquet scene. He is now back in Oxford, working as a research mathematician at the University of Oxford.

One of the top Association Croquet players, Jonathan played for Great Britain in the MacRobertson Shield in Australia in 2006 and won a bronze medal at the World Championship in Cheltenham in 2005. He has also played many times for Scotland, and is a strong supporter of team events. However, one place you will not have seen him is at the Inter-Counties, as he is one of the few top players not qualified for any county. Jonathan has played croquet throughout the UK, and round the world. Aside from the Mac in Australia, and several trips to America, he played in the World Championships in New Zealand this year, and has also played in Ireland and Jersey. Apart from playing, Jonathan also supports croquet as a coach, a referee, and as the chairman of the World Croquet Federation's ranking committee. He has attended the last two meetings of the WCF Council as the Scottish delegate.

David Maugham

I'm David Maugham. You all know me or know of me, and there's nothing I can say in 300 words that will change your minds about me. Vote for me or not. It's up to you.

John Spiers

I am proposed by Patricia Duke-Cox (vice-chairman of ICA Council) and seconded by David Openshaw (President WCF).

I first picked up a croquet mallet in 1960 on a family holiday but it was not until 2003 that I finally joined a club. I am still a relative newcomer to croquet and have much to learn but I have played at more than 25 clubs in the UK as well as in Italy, Egypt and South Africa. I have had the privilege of captaining teams that have won the Longman Cup, Mary Rose and GC Inter Club and of playing in the GC World Championships earlier this year.

My own tardiness in joining a club encouraged me to help devise and sponsor the National Garden Croquet Classic in 2006 which led to over 100 newcomers playing at croquet clubs. More recently I have been helping the WCF to arrange the GC challenge between Egypt and the Rest of the World, which will feature 12 of the world's top players.

I have an open mind on actions that should be taken by the Council but I would certainly like to see more youngsters playing croquet and an English GC World Champion. Personally I enjoy playing both Association and Golf Croquet but I recognise that each club has its own preferences and these need to be respected. I believe that my record of establishing and selling a successful business demonstrates that I can get results.

Final word on Whites

Roger Wood, Overseas Correspondent



Although Lewis Carroll probably did much to popularise croquet in the 19th century, I have to agree with your editorial comment that the Alice in Wonderland image that is so often invoked today by those dismissive of our sport only adds to the public's entrenched view of croquet as being both quaint and comic. Many would doubtless wish to join you for "five minutes in the shrubs with Lewis Carroll and a flamingo". I would urge you to consider appropriate dress for the occasion - perhaps the attached photograph (a window display recently spotted in Agent Provocateur at Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas) might offer some suggestions. You will realise immediately that I was attracted to it by my instant recognition of the quality of its croquet content. Readers of a traditional persuasion will be pleased to note that the central character is wearing regulation white.

David Barrett

New designs added to the exclusive POWERFLEX Croquet Mallet Range for 2008

High Tech' materials as specified by NATO are used in POWERFLEX Mallets, which enable Players to achieve great control and added distance when hitting shots.

Jump shots and Stop shots are said to be easier. With the EXTRA BONUS that POWERFLEX also helps ease any problems with aching wrists and fingers.

2008 Designs @ 2007 Prices
£135 and £160 dependant on length of head

plus £10 P&P (UK) For details contact:



David Barrett, 61 Heywood Hall Road, Heywood, Lancs
OL10 4UZ Tel:01706 368214 Mobile: 07957 103417
Email: davidbarrett.db@tiscali.co.uk

Croquet for the Enabled, the story of Pearey House Croquet Club

David Turner, Croquet North Development Officer

Pearey House, Preston Park, North Shields, Tyne and Wear is the Tynemouth Blind Welfare Society. The manager of the centre Jon Bramlet contacted Croquet North to ask if we could help set up croquet as an activity for their clients. Croquet for the blind!? Well as Development Officer for Croquet North I of course responded. Jon explained that Pearey House was a large Victorian House with a big front lawn large enough for a croquet court. Mr Pearey, whose son was blinded in the Great War, established the Tynemouth Social Committee for the Blind in 1924 and donated Pearey House to it as a centre for the blind.



The next Tuesday I set off for North Shields with some trepidation wondering what I was letting myself in for - I had visions of bells on sticks being rung inside hoops and balls with buzzers fitted inside. However when I arrived I found that the group I was going to work with were all playing bowls on a indoor carpet. If they can play bowls I thought, then they should be able to play croquet. I gave them a short try indoors and arranged with Jon to set it up as a Croquet Club so that I could officially help them out as Croquet North Development Officer.

Most of the people attending the Tuesday social day at Pearey House were older people suffering from Macular Degeneration, which is a medical condition predominantly found in elderly adults. This causes the center of the inner lining of the eye, known as the macula area of the retina, to suffer thinning. This can result in loss of central vision, which entails inability to see fine details, to read, or to recognize faces. However, the good news for other older players, is that it does not necessarily prevent you from playing croquet, well not so with this group. In fact it turned out that it was other infirmities of old age that prevented some of them from playing on the lawn.

A week or so later I returned with croquet equipment and set up a court on the newly cut lawn. It was only the people who

had difficulty walking very far or who needed a walking stick that were unable to join in and we had a very enjoyable session.

I left Pearey house a set of equipment on loan from Croquet North. The only modification that we needed to make was to substitute the black ball for a white ball in the set of first colours that I left with them. I returned a few weeks later to help out on an introductory course that the Welfare Centre was holding for some newly diagnosed clients and again we had a very enjoyable session.

To date the croquet club is still going strong and though Pearey House CC is unlikely to be able to compete in the Croquet North league we have demonstrated that Croquet is a suitable activity for some disabled people.

Rain might stop play, but helicopters?

Ron Sherwin, Groundsman, Purley Bury CC



The photo was taken following the landing of an air ambulance helicopter on our croquet lawns while I was mowing on Monday 7 July. The ambulance crew attended a workman injured after falling from scaffolding at a nearby house. I heard the helicopter overhead, but with the noise of the mower never imagined that it was about to land, despite shouts attempting to warn me from the bowling green groundsman next door to our club.

It was only when I turned the mower round when I reached the end of the lawn that I saw the helicopter landing about 30 yards away from me, which had presumably been waiting for me to get out of the way! I had to continue mowing as I had already been delayed by rain, and needed to have the lawns ready for play in the afternoon, hence the unusual picture taken by one of our club members.

The local press eventually arrived on the scene after the helicopter had departed, and asked for our pictures, one of which they later published in the Coulsdon & Purley Advertiser. Dents were left on the lawn, but I was able to put them right later!

Championship News

Mitsubishi British Open Championship Cheltenham, 6th - 13th July 2008

Robert Fulford, successfully defended his Open title, to record his eighth win in the singles Championship, beating Samir Patel 3 - 0 in the best of five final.

The Croquet Association is fortunate to have a multiyear title sponsor in Mitsubishi Motors and have justified that sponsorship by garnering impressive major media for the Open this year.

The doubles event was played as a knockout event, while the singles was played under a new system, the Burrige Swiss, which required players to win 6 games to qualify for the knockout stage.

Detailed shot by shot reports of the Semi-finals and Final can be found on the CA website.

Results Main Event

KMH Aiton bt PC Trimmer -26tp +26tp +9tpo, MN Avery bt B Rothman +17tp +26tp, J Le Moignan bt K Chambers +26 +9, JH Wicks bt IG Lines +13 +26tp, SR Patel bt JF Death +14tp +26tp, RJ Brown bt DH Huneycutt +14tp +26tp, RI Fulford bt D Harrison-Wood +10 +23tp, ET Duckworth bt DK Openshaw +16 +12, AS Le Moignan bt IJ Burrige +14tp +6tp, RL Bamford bt D Mundy +16tp +26qp.

KMH Aiton bt MN Avery +26tp +26tp, JH Wicks bt J Le Moignan +11tpo -20 +2, SR Patel bt RJ Brown +26tp +26, DB Maugham bt D Bent +25tp +26tp, RI Fulford bt ET Duckworth +3sxp +26sxp, BW Cumming bt SN Mulliner +13tpo +26tp, PJ Kirby bt PT Bennett -25tp +25tp +26tp, RL Bamford bt AS Le Moignan -26tp +26sxp +26sxp.

Quarter-Final

JH Wicks bt KMH Aiton -26tp +26tp +16tp +26tp, SR Patel bt DB Maugham +13tpo +8tp -26tp +26tp, RI Fulford bt BW Cumming +26sxp -26tp +16sxp +26sxp, RL Bamford bt PJ Kirby +24tp +26sxp +17tp.

Semi-Final

SR Patel bt JH Wicks +26tp +25tp +26tp
RI Fulford bt RL Bamford +26sxp +24tp +26sxp

Final

RI Fulford bt SR Patel +16qp +17 +26tp

Doubles

JF Death & RI Fulford bt DA Cornelius & MR French +25tp(D) +26tp(D)
N Butler & J Le Moignan bt D Harrison-Wood & JD Hector +15 +2
IJ Burrige & PJ Kirby bt AB Hope & M Murray +26 +19tp(B)
K Chambers & CJ Patmore bt GSJ Tudor & JH Wicks -26tp(W) +26tp(P) +16
IG Lines & CN Williams bt RL Bamford & AS Le Moignan +13 +14
DJ Goacher & DH Huneycutt bt J Hopgood & MA Stephenson +11tpo(H) +22tp(H)
PT Bennett & B Rothman bt L Bradforth & SR Patel +23 +26tp(R)

JF Death & RI Fulford bt N Butler & J Le Moignan +21qp(F) +12tpo(F)



Samir Patel, with the Ayres Cup

ET Duckworth & PC Trimmer bt D Bent & R Lloyd -15tp(B) +26tp(T) +26tp(T)
IJ Burrige & PJ Kirby bt K Chambers & CJ Patmore +11 +17tp(B)
MN Avery & SN Mulliner bt JE Guest & RS Jenkins -6 +26tp(M) +16
IG Lines & CN Williams bt BW Cumming & LS Jackson +25tp(L) +15tp(W)
DR Foulser & D Mundy bt GW Noble & IG Vincent +3 +26tp(F)
DJ Goacher & DH Huneycutt bt PT Bennett & B Rothman +25 -20tp(R) +15tp(H)
KMH Aiton & DB Maugham bt PL Emmett & AK Gregory +25 +26qp(A)
Quarter-Final
JF Death & RI Fulford bt ET Duckworth & PC Trimmer +10tpo(F) +3tp (F)
MN Avery & SN Mulliner bt IJ Burrige & PJ Kirby +12tpo(M) +26tp(A)
DR Foulser & D Mundy bt IG Lines & CN Williams +8 +26
DJ Goacher & DH Huneycutt bt KMH Aiton & DB Maugham +13tpo(G) +17
Semi-Final
JF Death & RI Fulford bt MN Avery & SN Mulliner +1 +26tp(D)
DJ Goacher & DH Huneycutt bt DR Foulser & D Mundy -25 +10tp(H) +14
Final
JF Death & RI Fulford bt DJ Goacher & DH Huneycutt +26tp(D) -14 +16tp(D)

Plate Draw

DJ Goacher bt AB Hope +15, R Lloyd bt M Murray +3tp, DA Cornelius bt GW Noble +17, PL Emmett bt J Hopgood +22, DD Trimmer bt JD Hector +26tp PT Bennett bt DJ Goacher +3, CN Williams bt AK Gregory +17, JE Guest bt DR Foulser +26, RS Jenkins bt N Butler +16, GSJ Tudor bt L Bradforth +5tp, CJ Patmore bt IG Vincent +26tp, RF Knapp bt MR French +16.

DA Cornelius bt R Lloyd +15tp, K Chambers bt PL Emmett +25, PT Bennett bt DD Trimmer +16tp, CN Williams bt D Mundy +5tp, RS Jenkins bt JE Guest +26, B Rothman bt GSJ Tudor +14, CJ Patmore bt MA Stephenson +23, RF Knapp bt DH Huneycutt +11.

Quarter Finals

K Chambers bt DA Cornelius +10, PT Bennett bt CN Williams +26tp, RS Jenkins bt B Rothman +23tp, CJ Patmore bt RF Knapp +26tp.

Semi Finals

PT Bennett bt K Chambers +17, CJ Patmore bt RS Jenkins +10tp.

Final

CJ Patmore bt PT Bennett +26tp

Plate Process

GSJ Tudor bt PL Emmett +7tpo, CN Williams bt RF Knapp +26tp, DA Cornelius bt N Butler +5tp, MA Stephenson bt AB Hope +25, GSJ Tudor bt PC Trimmer +26sxp, JD Hector bt IG Vincent +26tp, R Lloyd bt DR Foulser +14, MR French bt AK Gregory +26tp, RS Jenkins bt GW Noble +25, L Bradforth bt DJ Goacher +16, CJ Patmore bt DD Trimmer +1, M Murray bt JE Guest +26.

CN Williams bt DA Cornelius +2, GSJ Tudor bt MA Stephenson +19tp, SN Mulliner bt JD Hector +7, D Harrison-Wood bt R Lloyd +4tp, RS Jenkins bt MR French +25, L Bradforth bt J Hopgood +19, IG Lines bt CJ Patmore +5tp, JF Death bt M Murray +4tp.

Quarter Finals

GSJ Tudor bt CN Williams +26tp, SN Mulliner bt D Harrison-Wood +10, RS Jenkins bt L Bradforth +25, JF Death bt IG Lines +24.

Semi Finals

SN Mulliner bt GSJ Tudor +25, JF Death bt RS Jenkins +5.

Final

JF Death bt SN Mulliner +12sxp

Play off

CJ Patmore bt JF Death +26tp -26sxp +19tp

Veteran's Championship

Budleigh Salterton, 16th - 21st June

Report by Hamish Hall

A combination of watered lawns and longish grass produced sluggish courts, some more so than others, with the result that there were only 4 TPs in the entire week. But the Rothwell cup was in contention right up to the final round. Could Roger Jenkins beat Don Gaunt, who had only lost to Alan Lynton, who in turn needed to win against Martin Granger Brown, whilst if Cliff Jones overcame Roger Hayes, the final outcome might have had the result decided by the Sonnerborn Berger

method on quality of wins. Happily for the Manager, Roger beat Don 24TP and Martin had a longer close run game winning by 5, thus becoming the outright winner with 6 wins.

The Over 75s Pidcock Trophy was retained by Janet Overell on the who beat who rule, with Richard Wainman and Hamish Hall all having four wins. Possibly had Gordon Weir not set out to win all his games with a triple, the result would have been somewhat different! Classes C and D each had 12 entries, with two blocks. In the final for the Felixstowe Cup Richard Jackson beat Robert Bateson three on time - par for the course, as only two of their 11 games had finished with a peg out.

The D Class handicap singles was an all Sidmouth affair, with Julie Horsley scraping through 1 on time against Peter Miller,



Martin Granger Brown, Rosemary Bradshaw, and manager, Hamish Hall, at Budleigh.

who had been in the Open handicap in the morning final against Rosemary Bradshaw, but suffering a similar fate, 3 on time.

The Doubles was the usual war of attrition with Dennis Moorcraft partnering Richard Wainman, overcoming Richard and Pat Jackson, who carelessly called for their final bisque after time was called!! An error that could have cost them the game. In the Y, the local crowd were hoping that six bisques would enable Jack and Barbara Thompson to win through against the Rothwell and Meredith cup winners. Alas, they remained in form, and Martin and Rosemary took home the Gilbert spoons.

Winners

The Rothwell Challenge Cup (The Veterans' Championship) was won by Martin Granger Brown, with Don Gaunt as runner up.

The Pidcock Trophy (over 75s championship) was won by Janet Overell, with Richard Wainman as runner up.

The Felixstowe Cup (advanced singles) was won by Richard Jackson, with Robert Bateson as runner up.

The Strickland Cup (handicap singles) was won by Julie Horsley, with Peter Miller as runner up.

The Meredith Cup (unrestricted handicap singles) Rosemary Bradshaw, with Peter Miller as runner up.

The Longman Trophies (Sussex Trugs) for handicap doubles was won by Dennis Moorcraft and Richard Wainman, with Richard and Pat Jackson as runners up

The Gilbert Spoons (handicap doubles) was won by Martin Granger Brown and Rosemary Bradshaw with Jack and Barbara Thompson as runners up.

British Open Golf Croquet Championship

Nottingham 12th - 15th June

Report by Stephen Mulliner

Reg Bamford beat Stephen Mulliner 7-2, 7-6 to retain the British Open Golf Croquet Championship title.

The final was a repeat of three previous finals (2002, 2003 and 2006) and started off with Bamford in more or less perfect form and Mulliner unable to hit with anything like the same frequency. Result 7-2 in about 30 minutes. The second began with Mulliner running 1 from 5 yards at an angle to within 3 feet of 2 and Bamford promptly clearing that from 25 yards. However an uncharacteristic missed clearance from C2 by Bamford gave Mulliner a 2-0 lead. Bamford took 3 with an accurate placement after 2 and a Mulliner miss from 14 yards but seemed destined to lose 4 when Mulliner jawed with Y with B 8 yards NNE and K 18 yards N of 4. However, he produced a superb Barnes Wallis jump to clear Y and make it 2-2. After four consecutive clearances by both players before 5, Mulliner took it with another angled 5 yard hoop but lost the 6th after being the first to miss another series of clearances. Accurate positional play by Mulliner at 7 forced Bamford to try a jump from the boundary but, for once, he missed and Mulliner took both 7 and 8 to lead 5-3. Hoop 9 saw a lengthy exchange of clearances before Bamford ran it with K from the boundary from 3 yards W of C4, albeit only by 3 yards. Mulliner placed Y bang in front of 10 but Bamford promptly cleared with B from the South boundary. Mulliner then placed R almost bang in front of 10 - only to leave a double for K from which Bamford ran 10 for 5-5.

Hoop eleven was a length contest which Bamford seemed to have won when he almost-jawed B and cleared Y with K to just NE of 12. From here Mulliner ran 6 to send B to the N boundary and leave Y a foot N of 11! B was sent back to a foot N of B, However R laid a near-perfect block on K lying on the E boundary and Bamford missed to the W boundary. Mulliner played a careful hampered hoop stroke with Y to SE of 12 to lead 6-5 and Bamford over-hit his lag with B so that it was open to Y. Mulliner sent R into good position and Bamford followed with K into similar position. Y cleared B from 8 yards to the middle of the W boundary but Bamford promptly cleared R with B. Mulliner missed K with R and Bamford ran 12 with K to make it 6-6. Y was sent to 4 feet N and slightly E of 13 and Bamford missed with B from N of 4 to the N boundary. Mulliner sent R to 3 yards N of 13 and Bamford now produced the key clearance with K on Y from S of 12, sending it to 3 yards W of C3 while K came to rest 5 yards N of 13. Mulliner went for the hoop but missed. Bamford now cleared R with B and Mulliner missed K with R from near 12. Bamford now made no mistake with his 5 yard 13 to win 7-6.

All four seeds, Reg Bamford, Stephen Mulliner, Jack Wicks and Ivor Brand, had reached the quarter finals undefeated and were joined by Dick Strover (after a play-off with Ray Mounfield), Carole Jackson (SA) (after a play-off with Nick Butler), Pierre Beaudry and, the surprise package, Tom Weston.

Bamford despatched Weston 7-0, 7-1 while Wicks and Strover had much closer victories over Jackson (7-5, 7-4) and Brand (7-5, 7-5) respectively. Match of the round was undoubtedly Mulliner v Beaudry who had contested a superb semi-final in the 2007 European Championship which Mulliner won by the narrowest of margins. Beaudry plays Solomon grip and, on form,



Reg Bamford with the Delves Broughton Cup. (photo by Tim King)

is a formidable shot and long hoop-runner. The first two games were shared 7-5 but Mulliner got off to a good start in game 3 and finally triumphed 7-3. The semi-finals went according to form with Bamford beating Wicks 7-2, 7-3 and Mulliner beating Strover 7-4, 7-4. Such was the increase in pace of play by single banking and the higher quality of play to be expected of the later stages that semi-finals were completed by lunchtime.

The Doubles event saw singles finalists Reg Bamford and Stephen Mulliner retain their title, beating J Spiers and N Butler 7-6 7-4.

The consolation event was 10-10 Doubles managed by Bill Arliss and its inventor, John Spiers. Given the need for rapidity in play, the emergence of Richard Thompson, partnered by Chris Sheen, as one of the winners was a tribute to Richard's rapid adaptation to this new form of play. Bill Arliss and Nick Butlet managed the fastest game with a win in 5.42 minutes. Several of the players were new to 10-10 but all seemed to enjoy it.

Twenty-eight players contested the 2008 at Nottingham Croquet Club using the club's 5 lawns plus an extra lawn borrowed from the bowlers. Despite the slowing effect of double -banking on Golf Croquet, the 84 best-of-3 block matches were completed in two days.

Bill Arliss conducted the presentation and thanked Nottingham for providing the venue and excellent catering and Stephen Mulliner for managing - equipped with pre-printed orders of play and even Ian Vincent's wide-screen TV as an extra monitor so competitors could see their block progress (an idea taken from the AC Worlds at Christchurch).

Seniors' Championship

Southwick 14th 19th July

Report by Ian Vincent

The 2008 Seniors was played at Southwick, having been at Budleigh for the previous three years. It attracted 51 entries, under the able management of Julie Horsley. The week started with four rounds of XY handicap doubles, leaving just the finals to complete by Tuesday lunchtime. The rest of Tuesday was devoted to the big handicap, which was also a knockout. The five

class events were then played as American blocks, followed by play-offs between the block winners or, for classes with a single block, the two highest placed players in the block.



Jonathan Isaacs, 'The Godfather', with one of his trophies. (photo by Ian Vincent)

Tournament News

The Six Lawns Handicap Tournament

11-13 July 2008

by Liz Potter

Three clubs, Hamptworth, Winchester and Littleton, joined together to host this three-day tournament, managed by Brian Fisk with the help of Pat Kennett, Peter Fry, and Richard Stevens. The format was to be American blocks, each of eight players, for the first two days, at different venues on each day. We needed to fit seven games into this time: to achieve this, games were maximum of two hours, 18-point (hoop 5 start) with bisques from a base of 2. The manager would then rank all the players, despatching the top eight to Hamptworth, the middle eight to Winchester, and the bottom eight to Littleton for the last day. This gave each entrant a one in three chance of playing at all three clubs.

The organisers posted us all an itinerary showing where we were supposed to be each day and which pub we should head for at night. Several maps accompanied the timetable, plus an emergency mobile number should we get lost or confused.

Friday morning at Hamptworth Golf and Country Club was bright and sunny, and we completed two rounds before lunch.

The afternoon was punctuated, and then dominated, by an increasingly ferocious rainstorm. Our only shelter by the lawns was an octagonal hut with lots of rustic charm but not much space and as we had managed to acquire four spectators, it was like being on a tube train in the rush hour.

There was a mixture of bright sunshine and overcast conditions, though with a buffeting wind on finals day. Given that it was the anniversary of the floods that swamped the Midlands last year, it could have been worse, though recent downpours had left the lawns looking greener than usual at this stage of the season. However, the banging to be heard from the vicinity of lawn 3 was due to the erection of a replacement fence, not over-strenuous roll strokes.

The catering was well up to Southwick's traditional high standards and it was complemented by beer on tap from the Dark Star brewery, supplemented by an impressive selection of bottles. On Thursday evening we were treated to an Italian evening, hosted by Christine and Jonathan Isaacs.

The Chairman (of both the Club and the CA Council) was clearly not letting the pressures of office get to him, as he won both the Big Handicap and the play-off for the B Class against Colin Hemming. The A Class final was between Don Gaunt, who was undefeated in the event and is now back to -1 1/2, and Paul Castell, who would have won the peeling prize had there been one.

It was sad that Fernando De Ansorena was unable to play due to a fever, as a trophy he had presented was being played for by the C Class: Brian Kitching beat Barry Gould, who won the consolation Egyptian, in the final. The D class was won by Neil Coote, beating the Manager, and the E Class by Pat Jackson. There were also new trophies for the Doubles, which was won by Gene Mears and Sharon Theobald; the Hemmings won the Y.



Spectators enjoying the final at Hamptworth. (photo by Brian Fisk)

The Hamptworth block, having furthest to travel, arrived at the pub rather late and damp. Fortunately Richard Stevens had organised a welcome drink and the food service was quick and efficient.

After this things began to get muddled. Many of us were hitching lifts, either in deference to the fuel crisis or because we weren't good with maps. However as everyone seemed to be in a different block from their hosts/wives/flatmates this was becoming a logistical nightmare. Players had left mallets etc in other people's cars and couldn't remember whose and whether they needed to retrieve them or not.

Saturday our block played at Littleton. Two of us were unbeaten and one had yet to get going. However, on the smaller and slower lawns of this village club those who had done badly the day before soon began to do better. We ended with Bryan Judson on 6 wins and three players on 4 apiece to give the manager

something to think about.

By the time we got together that evening, Brian Fisk had analysed the results and had allocated each player to a club for the next day. Accordingly the top eight met at Hamptworth the next morning to play in the knock-out for the trophy. Brian had arranged a draw which, as well as seeding the players, ensured that in the first round everyone played an opponent they had not met before.

One entrant, Keith Mackenzie Ross (Winchester), had won 7 games out of 7 and was clearly the favourite. The other contenders were Bryan Judson, Ivor Nunn, Brian Christmas, Anne Stephens, Liz Potter, Pat Kennett and Ian Emmitt. Keith soon defeated Liz, but Pat proved stronger opposition and the game nearly reached time before Keith was able to peg out. Meanwhile Brian Christmas (Shrewsbury) won his first game on Lawn 1 and his second on Lawn 2, to not only reach the knock-out final but achieve the distinction of having played on all six lawns during the course of the tournament.

By now other players had arrived from Littleton and Winchester to watch a closely contested final game between Keith, a rapid improver playing off a handicap of 12, and the more experienced Brian, playing off 6. Eventually Keith was victorious, to win his first trophy.

CA v Swiss CA
Cheltenham 28th-29th June
Report by Klim Seabright

The CA team retained the Eatough/Darby trophy at Cheltenham during the weekend of the 28/29th June by 14 points to 6. The fixture included, for the first time, Association and Golf Croquet in the form of Advanced, Handicap Advanced and Golf Croquet. The combination seemed to work well and all enjoyed a full weekend of croquet as well as a most enjoyable social programme.... eating!



Photo: The winning team: Bryan Judson, John Timberlake, Dave Mundy, Carol Smith and Klim Seabright. Bernard Neal presented the trophy to the winners.

It appeared that the CA team might overpower their opponents and the second day started with the CA team needing only one point to retain the trophy and two points to secure the outright win. The Swiss team fought back on Sunday morning with three good wins before Dave Mundy sealed the rubber with a GC win, quickly followed by Association wins for Carol Smith and Skipper Klim Seabright. The full results can be seen on the

CA Website.

Results

(CA names appear first)

Association Advanced
C. Smith bt D Underhill +15
K Seabright bt D Davids +12
B Judson lost to N Eatough -22
J Timberlake lost to D Underhill -10
B Judson lost to D Davids -16
J Timberlake lost to N Eatough -7
C Smith bt D Davids +17
K Seabright bt N Eatough +5
B Judson lost to D Underhill -17
Association Adv (H'Cap)
D Mundy bt N Eatough (+15);
D Davids (+14) and D Underhill (+14)

Golf

J Timberlake bt D George (7-6, 7-6)
C Smith bt D George (6-7,7-4,7-2)
K Seabright bt D George (7-6, 7-2)
D Mundy bt N Eatough (7-5,7-6)
C Smith bt D Underhill (3-7, 7-6, 7-6)
B Judson lost to D Davids (4-7, 6-7)
B Judson bt D George (7-6, 7-5)
D Mundy bt D George (7-5, 7-2)

Champions Challenge

*By Chris Clarke,
World Champion 2008*



You are playing a level game. It doesn't really matter what handicap you are, but you are playing an opponent of similar handicap. You play your first ball to the east boundary level with hoop 4 and your opponent goes 6 inches north of corner 4. What should you do next and why?

You can send answers to me by email at chrisd4clarke@hotmail.com and I will announce who gave the best answer in the following gazette. I will have one "winner" from A-class players and another "winner" from higher bisquers.

If anyone has any questions for Chris, please forward them to the Editor, either by email/telephone or post - details on page 2.

In the Next Issue

- RECRUITMENT - ONE CLUBS EXPERIENCES
- GOLF CROQUET - EGYPT V THE REST OF THE WORLD
- COACHING
- PHOTO LIBRARY DETAILS
- BOOK REVIEWS - NEW TITLES FROM JOHN RICHES
- RESULTS OF CROQUET WORLD ONLINE PHOTO COMPETITION
- TOURNAMENT RESULTS
- AND MORE

Coaching For Handicap Play

Constructive Bisque-Taking

by Bernard Neal

This item appeared in the Winter 1983 issue of the Gazette, and is slightly edited here.

How and when to take bisques? There is no simple answer, since many factors are relevant, including the opponent's ability, confidence in one's own ability, state of the game, condition of the lawn and so on. This article discusses what to do when you have several bisques. It is based on the view that bisques should be converted to hoops scored, and that the best way of making several hoops is by a 4-ball break. It follows that one or two bisques should be used first to set up the 4-ball break and then further bisques as necessary to make the break.

The first example is taken from an actual match. Blue, for hoop 1, was laid up close to that hoop with Black. Yellow was on the boundary near corner 4. Red, at hoop 2, shot at Yellow and missed. Blue roqueted Black but did not make the hoop; instead, Blue took off to Red and Yellow, roqueting Red. In the croquet stroke, Red was sent a few yards into the lawn with a stop shot. Blue then rushed Yellow to near the peg and took croquet off it. In the final stroke of the turn, Blue played to a position just south of Red, and then took a bisque to roquet it; in

the croquet stroke, Red was hit to near hoop 2, Blue finishing near Yellow; this was roqueted, and Blue then took off to Black at hoop 1. The break was now established. If Blue had begun this sequence of moves by making hoop 1, a 4-ball break could only have been established from that position using only one bisque by playing much more difficult shots than those actually taken.

The second example supposes that the receiver of bisques has a very strong opponent and has decided that it is imperative to make a break as soon as possible. He wins the toss and, correctly, makes the strong opponent, Red and Yellow, start. Red is sent into corner 4 and Black is played to the middle of the lawn. Yellow then shoots into corner 2. Blue, playing fourth, now wishes to make an all-round break, and is prepared to use as many as three bisques to set it up. The method suggested brings Yellow into the break after hoop 1 has been made. Blue begins by shooting at Red in corner 4. If the roquet is missed, a bisque is taken. In the croquet stroke, Red is sent to hoop 1, Blue staying near hoop 4 and then being played to near Black in the continuation stroke. Another bisque is taken; Blue roquets Black, takes off to Red and makes the first hoop. Red is then roqueted again, and sent to hoop 3 in the continuation stroke, Blue finishing near Black; a further roquet, and Black is sent to hoop 2 with a stop shot. Blue then shoots at Yellow in corner 2. If the shot is missed, Blue is replaced in contact with Yellow. One more bisque is taken and Yellow is croqueted to the middle of the lawn, with Blue ending up near Black; the 4-ball break is now established. Further bisques should be taken whenever any balls get out of position; for example, suppose that Blue, now for hoop 3, fails to rush Red close to the hoop and after the croquet stroke is not

able to run the hoop. Yellow is near the peg, and Black is a badly-placed pioneer at hoop 4 - being in fact nearer hoop 5. In the last stroke of the turn, many players will play Blue into its intended position to run hoop 3. But it would be far better to send Blue close to Black, taking a bisque to roquet it and, in a thick take-off, sending it to hoop 4 with Blue going to Yellow: a further roquet, Blue takes off to Red, makes hoop 3 and can now proceed with the break, all balls being where they should be.

Bisque-taking is a fascinating art, and handicap games between good bisque-takers and cunning bisque-givers involve very subtle tactics beyond the scope of this article. However, to conclude, the following thoughts may assist the bisque-taker:

- 1) Be alert for the possibility of setting up a 4-ball break using one or two bisques.
- 2) Use a bisque to restore the break position as soon as it deteriorates.
- 3) Remember that an attempt to save a bisque by trying to run a hoop from a distance or at an awkward angle may cost two bisques if the hoop is missed and the ball lodges against the wire.
- 4) Similarly, if during a break there is a missable roquet (5 yards plus), shoot softly so that if it is missed your ball stays close to the target and a bisque can be taken.
- 5) Consider very carefully where to go in the last stroke of a turn before taking a bisque; the best place may be far from obvious.
- 6) Consider shooting at a ball close to the yard-line and taking a bisque if the shot is missed, if a useful rush is then obtained.

Manor House Mallets

The originators of carbon fibre shafted mallets now offer a truly comprehensive range, from the 'Basic' at £87.50, the well established T-series (£137.50) to the 2000 mallet at £160 (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 £230
3000 model with D-shaped ends £265
Mallet bags (£27) Head wraps (£7.50)

For details or discussion, contact Alan Pidcock,
Tel & Fax 01772 743859
e-mail pidcock@manorh.u-net.com
The Manor House, 1 Barn Croft, Penwortham,
Preston PR1 0SX

The John Hobbs Mallet

The mallet that adjusts to your grip.

You set the handle to whatever angle best suits your style of grip and swing.

Optional curved bottom to 12" heads
Easily dismantled for airline travel.

Light aluminium shaft, nylon shock absorber, variable weight heads - see web site:
<http://John-Hobbs-croquet-mallets.mfbiz.com>

John Hobbs, Lewins, Mayfield Road, Rotherfield, E. Sussex TN6 3LS
Tel: 01892 852072 email Hobbsmallets@waitrose.com

Points Of View

Please Stop the 'Burridge Swiss', is Pete Trimmer's 'Point of View'

An experiment was carried out this year with the qualification format for the CA's premier event, the British Opens. Rather than the recent norm of block play, the so-called Burridge Swiss (BS) was tried. To qualify, players needed six wins from eleven rounds. After the first round, the system paired winners against winners and losers against losers, with players (largely speaking) then playing others on an equivalent number of wins at each stage. When players reached six wins or could no longer reach the qualification requirement, they were removed from the system, resulting in no 'dead-games'.

Loosely speaking, the system worked, with players like Fulford and Bamford (and Aiton) qualifying and players who were generally thought to be less able often not managing to qualify. However, these requirements are also met using block play, so the question remains of whether the system is better or worse than the format of previous years.

The question is not easy to answer, as there are many possible ways to assess the quality of a format.

For instance:

- ◆ Do the players enjoy the format?
- ◆ Does it maximise the probability of the best (say) eight players qualifying?
- ◆ Is the system 'fair'?
- ◆ How flexible is the format to problems such as rain delays?
- ◆ How many players can the system deal with?
- ◆ How easy is it to manage?

On two of these counts, my impression is that the BS is a superior system: it is more able to cope with limitations on rounds (e.g., due to rain delays) and may be able to cope with a slightly larger number of players. Often, it may allow an additional round to be played which would not have been scheduled with block play, which is certainly a plus.

However, on every other count, I believe that the BS is worse than block play.

Having talked to the manager (David Maugham, who did an excellent - if somewhat stressed - job of implementing the system), it is clear that the BS requires considerably more effort than block play.

I talked to many players throughout the event. Excluding Ian, who suggested using the system, I was unable to find anyone who had played the Opens before (using block play) who preferred the new system. I did find several people (including myself) who preferred the old system. The main reasons were:

- 1) lack of transparency and wanting to see what they were 'up-against' in terms of a line-up of players,
- 2) the sense that due to the stochastic nature of wins and losses, some players would have an easier run at gaining their six wins than others.

The second point was quickly drawn out by a result in the first round, in which Robert Fulford lost to James Le Moignan. Seeding committee aside, I expect that most players would, having lost in the first round, expect to have had more of a chance against Mr Le Moignan than Mr Fulford.

I raised my concerns over the format with Mr Burridge, also pointing out that a player might reach 5 out of 11 games (and fail to qualify) having played only qualifiers in every round, whilst another player might reach their 6 wins having played largely non-qualifiers. He suggested that we leave the analysis until after the event, and focus largely upon the last round, which we all thought would be rather exciting. As it was, very few players were still involved by the last round (there were only 5 matches), so rather than being exciting, many players had drifted off and the round felt quite void to almost all but the players involved.

However, it produced results which we are now able to study. To keep this brief, I will simply focus on two players, Jerry Guest and Kris Chambers, who met in the last round. Here are their opponents in decreasing order of ranking index:

Jerry's opponents		Kris' opponents		
Player	Index	Player	Index	Differ
Robert Fulford	2645	T. Le Moignan	2411	+ 234
James Death	2611	Ben Rothman	2407	+ 204
Stephen Mulliner	2607	Robin Brown	2316	+ 291
David Openshaw	2545	Nick Butler	2260	+ 285
Danny Huneycutt	2470	J. Le Moignan	2124	+ 346
Stewart Jackson	2397	Jerry Guest	2123	+ 274
Peter Trimmer	2387	Dick Knapp	2087	+ 300
Kris Chambers	2379	Martin Murray	2085	+ 294
David Goacher	2369	George Noble	2047	+ 322
Debbie Cornelius	2214	Dave Mundy	2022	+ 192
David Foulser	2182	Andrew Gregory	1985	+ 197
Average	2437	Average	2170	+ 267

We see that at every level, Jerry's opponent is almost always over 200 points higher in index than Kris'. To my mind, this is not even close to fair. A player more easily irritated than Jerry might request that the CA return their entry fee.

To highlight the difference, take a player such as myself (who does not always qualify out of their block) and pitch them against each opponent as though they had met them in block-play. Beating players with a lower index than mine (as listed), I would get 4.5 wins in Jerry's 'block', well short of qualification. Using this rough measure in Kris' 'block', I would get 9 wins.

It will be clear to any player that this discrepancy would not occur in block play. I have often heard players talk about 'the block of death', or 'the soft block', but never in my experience has the contrast been as high as that shown above.

In light of the above, I request that we use the BS no more for our premier event.

Finally, I would like to point out that one of the arguments against block play, that of 'dead games', is often not as valid as it first appears. I have heard players say that they thought they won because the game was dead for them (as opposed to their desperate opponent), so they were able to relax. Equally, I've heard the winner say that they thought they'd won because their opponent, for whom the game was dead, had relaxed and didn't care about the outcome. These are arguments in hindsight, where whichever way the game goes, the outcome could be put down to it being a dead game. Thus, the common argument against blocks is not a strong one.

The Croquet Association

CROQUET SHOP

Expert advice, discounted prices, rapid delivery on most items



CROQUET MALLETS

A comprehensive selection of mallets, including, **Pidcock, Percival, Hobbs, X-Act, George Wood** and **Jaques**. The popular George Wood Original mallet at £79 + delivery is still our best seller. Come to us for the widest variety and impartial expert advice.

Also a range of hard and soft mallet covers to suit most mallets, including both padded and unpadded.

Standard blue cover	£20.00
Padded blue cover	£24.00
Large blue cover up to 12" head, 40" shaft	£24.00
Large padded blue cover up to 12" head, 37" shaft	£28.00

CLOTHING

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

Breathable wet weather jacket	£40.00
Breathable jacket & trousers	£56.00
Fleece reversible windcheater jacket	£37.00
Fleece jacket	£26.00
Fleece reversible gilet	£27.00
White trousers	£30.00
Pullover	£29.50
White shorts	£26.00



ODDS & ENDS

Timer	£10.50
Silver Earrings (mallet or hoop & ball)	£12.00
Hoop setting feeler guage	£3.00
Canvas ball carrier bags	£15.00
Croquet Posters - B&W prints	£6.00ea
Ball markers (pack of 10)	£1.00
Croquet Girl cards (pack of 8 - blank)	£4.50
Croquet Christmas cards - 10 pack	£8.00

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Call Jeff Dawson on 01483 776971
email sales@croquet.org.uk

Or visit our website 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:

Basic Laws of Association and Golf Croquet	£2.00
The Laws of Association Croquet	£4.00
The Laws of Golf Croquet	£2.50
A guide to Golf Croquet	£5.00
Golf Croquet Tactics	£11.00
How to play Croquet	£4.50
Alternative Croquet	£7.00
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
Lawn Management by John Beech	£5.00
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

DVDs AND VIDEOS

Learn Croquet (DVD) Association	£19.00
Mastering Golf Croquet (DVD)	£19.00

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

COMPLETE CROQUET SETS

How about getting a set for the back garden? We sell a wide range of sets at low prices and our voucher scheme entitles members to a **£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** - Dawson and Sunshiny
- HOOPS** - Omega, Aldridge and Jaques
- Corner flags, yardline markers, pegs, clips, gauges.

JAIQUES CROQUET LONDON

The Finest Quality Croquet for 150 years.
'We taught the world to play.'

05



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.

www.jaques.co.uk gameon@jaques.co.uk

ESTD 1795
LONDON

JAIQUES
LONDON

Jaques New Championship Hoops.
Officially approved by the
Croquet Association for tournament play.

