

# THE CROQUET GAZETTE

*ISSUE 316*

*OCTOBER 2008*

**Advanced Play At  
Cheltenham July  
Week**





**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  
rvbray@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 316 October 2008

Front Cover: *The flag being retrieved when the shackles on the flag and the halyard came adrift in the wind on the first day of play at the July week at Cheltenham. Gordon Weir.*

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**CONTENTS**

<b>Chairman's Column</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Letters</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>News &amp; Information</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>A Favour Returned</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Publicity - What Success?</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>CA Photo Library</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>News &amp; Information Contd.</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>The View From The Bar</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Technical Matters - Ball Marking</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Book Reviews</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Golf Croquet Events</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Association Croquet Events</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Editorial</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Champion's Challenge</b>	<b>22</b>

**Publication details**

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

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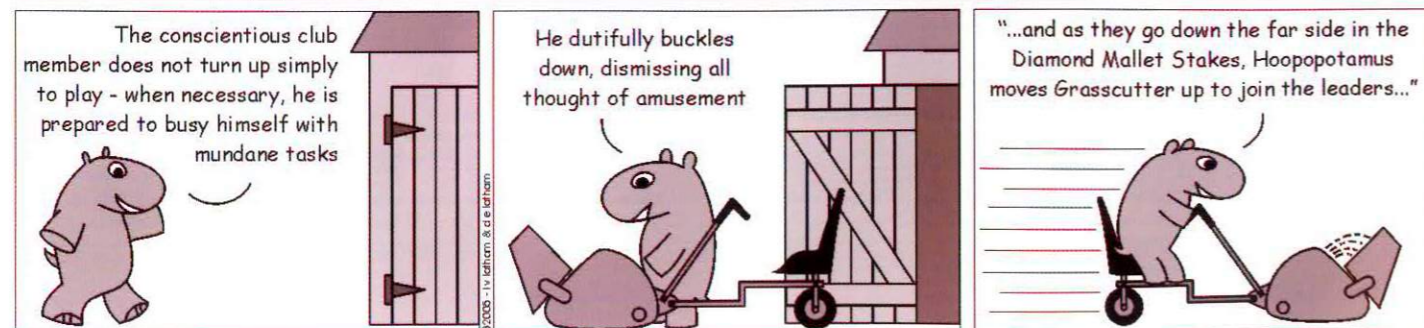
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**Tournament Reports & Results**  
Emailed reports are welcomed. Attachments may be sent in Microsoft Word format, or text format. Handwritten reports are no longer acceptable due to the illegibility of most. Queries regarding the delivery of the Gazette to members should be directed to the Secretary of the Croquet Association and not to the Editor.

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**HOOPOPOTAMUS**

by Victor



**Chairman's Column**



As my period as Chairman comes to an end in this month, this is my last column.

Reflecting on my time in office, the first thought that comes to mind is the fantastic support that I've received from the other members of Council. The membership sometimes need reminding that all these people are volunteers who have given up a considerable amount of time for the good of our game. A big thank you goes to every one of them.

I've greatly enjoyed my term in office and hope that I've managed to take the Association forward during my term. The internal structures of the CA have been changed to give Association and Golf Croquet balanced representation. The office structure is in the process of change to reflect not only our future IT requirements, but also the need to absorb the CA Shop, bookkeeping duties and the fixtures calendar. To achieve this phase we need to appoint a Commercial Officer to assist Elizabeth Larsson, our recently appointed CA Manager.

Elizabeth has been a great help to me during her first 6 months in office and is already making her mark on the office's activities. Plans to extend the office are currently being submitted to the local planning authorities at Cheltenham and if successful will give us the room to integrate the shop's activities.

The clothing debate appears to have run its course. To date no formal motion regarding attire has been put to the Association. One or two members appear to taken the law into their own hands, wearing what they may regard as smart coloured clothing whilst others have been critical of their attire. I would urge those

members who want change, to put their motion forward for debate in the correct manner. I personally do not believe that UDI tactics are the right way forward.

Changes to both Golf and Association Laws were implemented at the beginning of this season. There are signs that our members are getting used to the changes, especially the new Golf Croquet handicap system. I hope we will now have a period of stability without the need for further change for a few years.

In August Beverley Croquet Club hosted a special event where the Rt Hon John Prescott was presented with a mallet especially made by Alan Pidcock to honour his services to Croquet! Unfortunately I was unable to attend, however my Vice Chairman Patricia Duke-Cox represented the CA. I am told the event went extremely well and my thanks must go to the event organisers for pulling off a PR coup. The proof of this came a few days later when the media ran a series of articles about croquet resulting from complimentary comments John Prescott made in Edinburgh during a speaking engagement.

The Croquet Academy has had a very successful first year with well over 150 players receiving formal training at Southwick. The Academy can genuinely claim to be a truly international organisation, as the first year's activities will finish late September with a visit from the Norwegian Croquet Federation for a weekend course covering both Association and Golf Croquet.

I wish my successor the very best of fortune and hope that you all continue to enjoy our marvellous game.

Jonathan Isaacs



## Letters

I would like to respond to Sue Edwards' letter in the August Gazette under the title of ongoing development. I was surprised when she stated she had no response to her emails to the CA and how dissatisfied she was with responses to her question at the last AGM. I now hope to address those issues since I was one of those who responded then.

Her question concerned artificial surfaces so that play can continue throughout the year. I initially responded with an outline of how the Federation of East Midlands Croquet Clubs has designed lawn equipment that can be used on Astroturf. Although the Equipment Committee have not published their response on the information supplied by the federation or given it approval, anyone interested can approach me for it. The federation has played on two different types of Astroturf, one at a football club, the other at a hockey club, with a reasonable degree of success for croquet in the winter period. The idea of using an all weather surface that exists already in all parts of the country seems a sensible and more cost-effective use of resources to my mind.

Dr Bray also responded to the question and offered information on the project of laying an artificial surface at the Bury St Edmunds club a decade ago. After the meeting, Mr Trotman, a past chairman of the Development committee spoke to Sue and sent her information on the Bury project.

With a CA development fund of about £100,000 the Development committee is restricted to using only a quarter of this in any one year and has to consider the requests for development grants from as many of the 170 member clubs that wish to apply. As a development project, this might be something the WCF should look at instead of the CA but I'd be pleased to hear what the general membership think.

Patricia Duke-Cox

### Artificial lawns

I would like to take exception to the letter from Sue Edwards (issue 315) regarding the 'attempt' to create an artificial lawn at Bury St Edmunds. This was more than 'an attempt', but agree that it was not entirely successful. Let me elaborate.

The past president of BSE, Bryn Lewis and I were the instigators of the lawn and over a period of three years, developed, designed, raised finance and supervised the construction of the lawn and all equipment. It took eighteen months to find the correct carpet for the lawn, going to various venues: tennis, bowls courts and five-a-side football. We took timed shots, studying the characteristics and speed of the ball on these carpets. The carpet we chose, in close collaboration with Derek Trotman of the CA, was woven in Australia.

We experimented over eighteen months with the hoop design, to produce the characteristics of a standard hoop in soil, but set in concrete. They had to be removable and adjustable in width. The set-up worked perfectly, except for one thing. The carpet ordered, was not the one supplied and fitted by the contractor. It would appear that the contractor was insolvent at the time of our contract and presumably was unable to get the correct carpet, so the one fitted, unbeknown to us, was from Italy and not to our standard. It is essential that the carpet is omni-directional (the pile being neutral in all directions). However, the Italian pile was definitely in one direction, meaning that as the speed of the ball diminished, the pile took over, and the ball veered to one side. Therefore the accuracy of the lawn, laser set for an overall flatness of 6mm, was wasted. All of this information is in the hands of Derek Trotman and Alan Pidcock of the CA.

It is a great shame that this one mishap killed off the great advantages of using artificial lawns for croquet.

The big advantages are more than just an artificial lawn:

- ◆ All year round play – Boxing Day matches
- ◆ Elimination of almost all maintenance, just an occasional sweep to remove leaves etc.
- ◆ No white line marking, as it's woven into the carpet
- ◆ No standing water (drainage pipes under fully drainable carpet to soak away)
- ◆ Snow can be swept away and play continued immediately
- ◆ The use of stainless steel for all equipment, means that it can be left out all year round
- ◆ As the lawn is man-made it is very flat and stays flat, and would last for more than twenty years.

◆ As well as a full-size lawn, ours can be split into two half-size lawns, with two sets of equipment enabling two separate games.

The big question of course, is cost. The BSE lawn cost £45,000 including equipment, but this was a 'one off'. With a layout of four lawns, the cost of the construction equipment on site would be spread. With the cost of grass lawn maintenance at today's high cost, this outlay could be recovered in a few years.

I believe the CA should form a new club with four artificial lawns as a place of excellence. This could be funded by the Lottery, British Sport etc. It would bring a new standard to the sport.

Ronald Rawden

### Coin tosses at distance, part 2

In the last issue I suggested a method of using the lottery for determining a coin toss. Several people responded and pointed out an error in my logic and backing this up with mathematics. The refutation boils down to pairing the numbers, so 1 has a better chance of being the lowest ball than 2 does and 3 is better than 4 all the way up to 43 having a better chance than 44.

There were some gallant attempts at getting it right using the lottery, notably Jon Palin's "the sum of the seven balls (including bonus) is odd you have won the toss" which he calculated as a 49.9988% probability.

But after some encouragement, he went on to suggest an absolutely accurate suggestion:

"If the Thunderball itself in the Thunderball draw is odd you have won the toss".

Peter Wilson

### Golf Croquet Handicap Play

A player awarded 'extra turns' in golf croquet should not be allowed to play any extra turns to assist in scoring their seventh point in a 13 point game, and certainly should not be allowed to play any 'extra turns' when playing for hoop 13, or hoop 19.

If a player has 'extra turns' in hand after their sixth point, either they have had good fortune, or one or other of the players has the wrong handicap.

'Extra turns' are given to make the players equal, not to guarantee a win for

the higher handicap player.

S. R. Longbottom

Your letter regarding Golf Croquet Handicap play has been passed on to me as Chair of the GC Laws Committee.

You state that additional turns should not be used in the last turn of a 13 or 19 point game but give no reason behind this view. As the law stands at present, an additional turn can be used at any time during the game unless time has run out. I totally agree that additional turns are given to try to make players equal but I fail to see how using one on the last hoop in any way guarantees a win. Why should an extra turn have different validity on the last hoop to any other hoop.

After initial handicaps have been set, all future handicaps should be based on the player's actual performance in handicap games. We look on additional turns as a specific number of advantages to gain a hoop point if the additional turn is used wisely. The number is based on a 13 or 19 point game, not a 12 or 18 point game and in theory should result in the player winning 50% of their handicap games. To say that a handicap is wrong because an additional turn has not been used before the last hoop is just not true. The laws give no indication as to when the extra turns should be used and players can use them all at the beginning, all at the end or spread out evenly throughout the game. There appears to be no logic why they should be suspended on the last hoop. It is up to the higher handicap player to choose the right opportunity to use their additional turns. The last hoop may be that opportunity if the player has been skilful enough to save an extra turn.

I assume you are asking the GC Laws Committee to consider a change in the laws but I would suggest that you will have to find a more logical reason for such a change before it is given any consideration.

Bill Arliss

Chairman, GC Laws Committee

### Organic lawn care

Following one or two conversations this year with various lawn managers and then receiving the photo above, which demonstrates the effects of mistakenly applying the wrong treatment to a lawn, I am curious to know to what extent the treatments we apply to our lawns are organic or at the very least environmentally friendly. I'm not sure if the

relevant committee have this information, but I think it would be good to know which treatments are available that fall into either of those categories, so that green choices could be made where possible when looking after our lawns.

Daisy Root



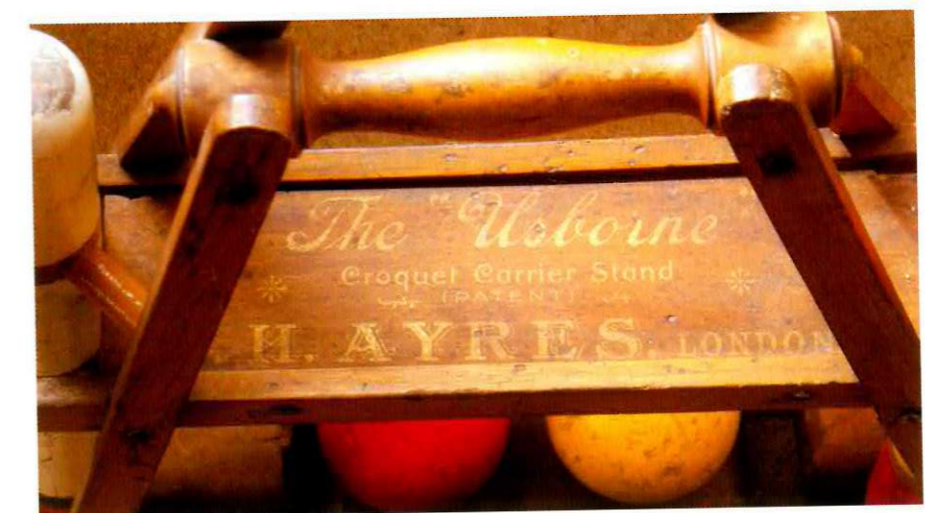
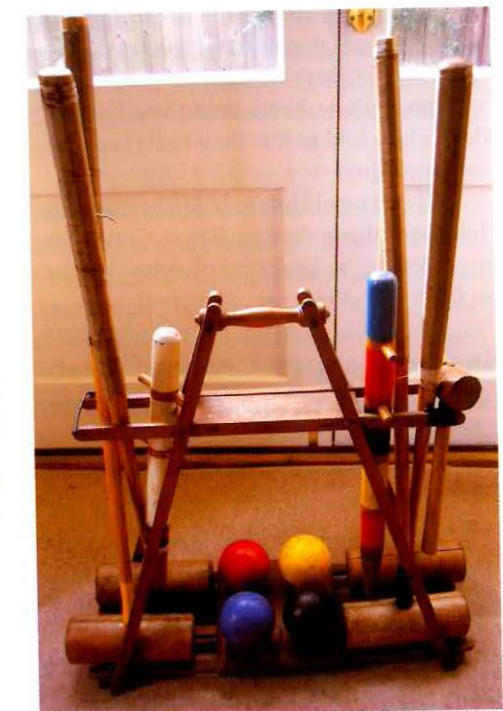
The sad sight of the effects of the wrong weedkiller having been applied to a lawn, which resulted in play being suspended for the remainder of the season - a costly error. Photo by Paul Swaffield

### A little bit of history

I thought readers might be interested in a little history. I enclose 2 photographs showing a family croquet equipment carrying stand, probably over a 100 years old. Since my grandfather - WG Lawrie - won the Scottish Open in 1878 (aged 14!), it is very likely he played using this family heirloom.

The photos show the complete set and the detail painted on the stand by the makers.

Julian Lawrie





## News & Information

### Help break the £1000 Target

In April 2009 we shall be holding the finals of the fifteenth CA Charity One-Ball Championship, at Winchester. It is 'charity' because for everybody who participates in heats and/or the finals at least £3 is donated to Cancer Research UK. In 2008 we had sixteen heats around the country, 216 players took part and £900 was raised.

The target for 2009 will be to burst through £1000 and we would like to encourage more clubs to hold heats. One-ball is a superb game for the winter or as a half or one day event to open the next season (we can include heats held over Easter). Many clubs told us that their heats last year were great fun.

If you would like to hold a heat at your club then please contact Kevin Carter for more details, at kevin@profundus.com or on 0118-971-2948.

### Sussex County Croquet Club launches winter tournament programme

Sussex County Croquet Club are launching a winter one day tournament programme. The tournaments are "speed" orientated and will include catering and fully stocked bar facilities.

The programme consists of 6 events:  
 Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> November 10/10 Golf Croquet Doubles (level play)  
 Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> November Association Alternate Stroke Speed Doubles  
 Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> December "Santa" One Ball  
 Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> January Team Association Speed (Teams of 4)  
 Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> February Team 10/10 Golf (Teams of 4)  
 Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March Inter Club Golf (Teams of 4)

Further details can be found on the club's website:

www.sussexcountycroquetclub.org.uk  
 or contact Pamela Mason, 57 Wayland Avenue, Brighton BN1 5JL Tel: 01273 503527

Continued on page 9

## John Prescott, a favour returned

Report by Michael Evans, photos by Colin Fletcher

Readers will recall that The Right Honourable John Prescott MP received (for him) unwelcome and adverse press coverage when playing on a croquet lawn at Dorneywood in Buckinghamshire. The extensive property is owned by a trust, which allows its use by cabinet ministers. At the time Mr Prescott was taking a break from a working session that preceded it. Unfortunately he was Deputy Prime minister at the time. Tony Blair having departed the country some two hours previously the press took the view, somewhat unreasonably some might think, that Mr Prescott should have been sitting with his finger on the proverbial button at all times at 10 Downing Street. No doubt Sir Francis Drake had a cooler head to face the Spanish Armada after his famous Bowls at Plymouth Hoe.

Be that as it may the fact that John Prescott was wielding a croquet mallet (donated he indicated by Kenneth Clarke MP a decade or so earlier) was unwitting but excellent publicity for Association and Golf Croquet.

To return the favour, albeit unintentional, the Council accepted an offer



John Prescott thanks Alan Pidcock for the mallet.

from Professor Alan Pidcock to make an extra special mallet for presentation to Mr Prescott. Until he retires at the next election he is MP for Hull East, and by fortune the nearby Beverley Club play on the lawns in the grounds of Rowley Manor Hotel, set in an idyllic situation, with excellent facilities.

Accordingly on Wednesday the 6<sup>th</sup> August at a luncheon at Rowley Manor, Patricia Duke Cox the Vice Chairman of Council accepted the mallet from Alan and presented it, with gratitude from all



John Prescott in play at Rowley Manor, enjoying a game of Golf Croquet with Alan Pidcock

members of the Association, to Mr Prescott. One side of the mallet has a beautiful engraving into the wood, in a copper plate hand, of the details of the presentation. The other side is similarly engraved " for services to croquet at Dorneywood May 2006". Patricia indicated that the Chairman Jonathan Isaacs was sorry he could not be present but had sent a letter expressing his gratitude and poking a bit of fun (2 bags, sorry Jags) which Mr Prescott was clearly delighted by.

Responding Mr Prescott said he was delighted to receive the mallet. He was pleased the Association had had some welcome publicity out of the event at Dorneywood, which was more than he could say as to himself. He was still mystified as to what the fuss was about, as even the Prime Minister takes a break occasionally. The playing of croquet like any other sport or leisure activity was to be encouraged as a very important way of easing

## Publicity—What Success?

Report by Alan Thwaite of Tyneside CC

Tyneside Croquet Club has found it difficult to recruit new members at a rate greater than the number leaving. The two lawns in Exhibition Park are not able to be used to their capacity and the City Leisure Services department has asked the Club to take on a third lawn in order to help the authority retain the 'Green Flag' status of another park. This being so the committee decided it was absolutely necessary to make a very big publicity effort during April, May and June of this year. The effort was focussed on the five Tyne and Wear areas: Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Sunderland together with south-east Northumberland, an area with a population of about 1.5 million.

The CA document 'Getting and Retaining Members' was used, two members 'brainstormed' a list of possible publicity targets and looked at approaches for each target type. All age groups were included, particularly younger people. Because the club has two of triplet brothers, who have played for England juniors, we hoped this would encourage younger people.

Five main things have been attempted in addition to general publicity: more publicity directly 'on site' at Exhibition Park; indoor croquet at a major city-centre attraction; a croquet competition at the Lord Mayor's Mansion House; free evening play 5.00—7.30 Monday to Friday during the first week of June and the provision for specific groups to visit the club.

Some publicity was easy to gain and

the pressures of the frenetic pace of modern life. He charmingly mentioned one or two other stories against himself, which endeared him to all present.

After the lunch Mr Prescott had an opportunity to use his new mallet on the Beverley Club lawns, where he ran hoops and made roquets under the guidance of Alan Pidcock. He did appear to have a flair for the game, making some firm roquets and running at least one well angled hoop. John's wife Pauline also tried her hand at the game with some success. Mr Prescott pointed out that what they play at Dorneywood is a version of Golf Croquet, but added that he looked forward to playing Golf Croquet to the correct rules and learning about Association Croquet, which Alan had demonstrated through part of a break. The Beverley Club presented him with a copy of "Know the Game" and indicated he was welcome to learn more at any time at the Club.



The sign and case erected on the club pavillion

was seen. Distribution was made to educational and other establishments which worked to a limited extent. For Newcastle schools, adult education and similar services, hand delivery—very time intensive—or expensive posting was used. Posters were sent to local University of the Third Age (U3A) groups and local colleges, partly by mail.

The five Tyne and Wear authorities have magazine style booklets that are delivered to every house in the relevant area. Newcastle 'City Life' published an article and Gateshead 'Council News' a small advertisement (and, on their own initiative, an extra, display item); in both cases this was free. North and South Tynesides also said they would do it but, again, not Sunderland.

Attempts have been made to provide a list of events and regular reports of results to the 'Evening Chronicle', which covers the whole area. An attempt to place free advertisements in the 'freebie' weekly newspapers for each area was at first apparently successful but then discovered, too late, that, because our lawns are in Newcastle, free entries would only go in the Newcastle edition, a fee was required for the others. BBC Radio Newcastle was contacted and gave an interview to a Club member before a weekend Mansion House tournament. Another attempt to make an announcement using the BBC Radio Newcastle 6.30 am - 10.00 am weekday programme, which includes 'local sport', failed.

Local tourist information centres displayed posters and leaflets (A5); a number of local pubs did the same as did some local authority swimming and leisure pools. One enthusiastic member managed to get a local bus company to display posters in their buses. Three of the region's largest hospitals took and displayed a number of posters for

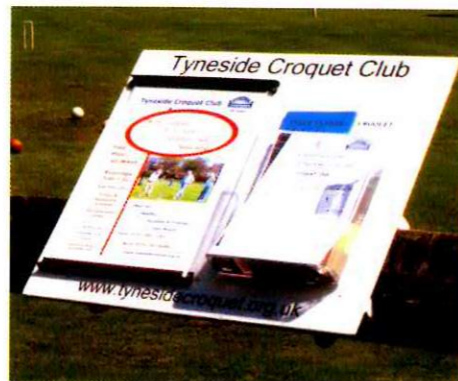


patients and staff (four club members have, between them, six new hips and/or knees!). Doctors' and dentists' surgeries, with captive audiences, were not as receptive. A pharmacist club member managed to arrange for distribution of over 60 posters to local chemists.

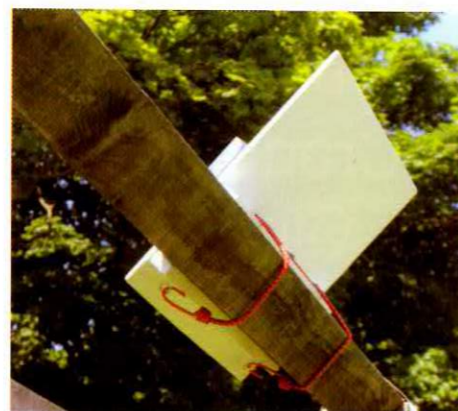
The two universities, which face each other in the city centre, have been tried unsuccessfully on previous occasions so were not approached.

Positive responses to publicity for staff came from Fenwicks, John Lewis and Marks & Spencer in Newcastle and Debenhams (at the MetroCentre) agreed to put a small notice in an information leaflet distributed, in pay-packets, to all staff. Gateshead MetroCentre said they would include mention of the Club in a 'corporate magazine' to all 7000 or so staff who work there.

The Club's website includes information about events forthcoming and past—but such sites are only of use to those who already have the word 'croquet' in their brain. Standing at the Exhibition Park entrance produced disillusionment: so few people walk; more cyclists whizz through the gate at speeds that make contact impossible.



The display board which hold leaflets about the club and about the game, which is attached to the fence rail by a simple elastic strap.



## CA Photo Library

by Samir Patel

Some readers may not be aware of the new(ish) Photo-Library which has been set up on the CA website. The library attempts to provide a resource of good quality croquet pictures within the CA community and outside (e.g. publicity, marketing, etc).

The Photolibrary can be found in the "Technical and Articles" and "News and Press" sections of the website, or at the following link: <http://www.croquet.org.uk/index.asp?section=tech&page=%2fphotolib%2fphotolib.asp>

The library contains a large number of images of many top (and some not so top) players, some clubs and also pictures from some recent major tournaments. Images from the library can be used by clubs in any publicity material whose main purpose is croquet club recruitment. Note that copyright in the pictures remains with the photographer who should be credited and notified, out of courtesy. Many might like a copy of the finished item. Any commercial arrangements (e.g. use in books) should be made directly with the photographer(s)

concerned.

We would like to expand the library with good photos which you have taken. The following gives an idea of the types Marketing & Publicity need for the game:

- ◆ Top 50 (say) UK players (also leading Overseas players)
- ◆ Head & Shoulders, Grip-n-Grin, Action Shots (faces should be visible)
- ◆ Major events or Internationals
- ◆ Mac, Worlds, Solomon, Opens
- ◆ Intercounties, Inter-club, Eights
- ◆ CA Championships
- ◆ Action/Thematic Images (high-quality croquet-related images)
- ◆ CA reference and Members' interest:
- ◆ Clubs (clearly showing clubhouse and lawns - ideally with people in play)
- ◆ Championships and CA tournament winners - preferably in action
- ◆ General:
- ◆ Historical interest (from more than 20 years ago?)
- ◆ Croquet action shots, serious or light-hearted

We must know who owns each photograph (normally the photographer) and

Last year the park authorities gave the Club permission to erect a 'Tyneside Croquet Club' sign on the pavilion and we've taken the liberty of enhancing this with a lockable water-proof A4-size aluminium display cabinet into which we can put posters about events. In addition a simple but effective display board has been made for Club and CA leaflets and notices. This can be fixed to the lawn boundary-rails while play is in progress.

What has been the result of all this effort so far? We cannot be certain, but the initial evidence provided by the free try-it week suggests that our gain was only marginally greater than our closed season losses. However, mainly due to 'word of mouth contacts' a number of additional potential members have now turned up at the club and joined the coaching sessions we are running as a follow up to the try-it week. If they all join it will represent a 20-25% increase in the membership. An 'all-season' approach is still continuing.

Now you know what we have tried. What has your club done, have we missed a few tricks that would have new members flooding in? If so we would love to know how you do it. Please tell us—and other clubs in a similar position.

that any necessary permission to publish has been given. This is also important where pictures include named young people. Be aware that whilst you keep copyright in any photos uploaded to the site, you are giving permission for the images to be used for certain purposes (please look at the copyright statement on the website).

There is a need to maintain a minimum standard within the photo-library. Samir Patel is happy to moderate and select photos. If you wish to submit photos please contact [webmaster@croquet.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@croquet.org.uk) in the first instance. Advance warning is required; otherwise e-mail spam filters might block your subsequent e-mail!

High resolution JPG format is preferred, say at least 4 Mp (ideally as produced by the camera, with minimal editing other than cropping - so no PhotoShop masterpieces!). Whilst not necessary, image files can be given useful names (but the obvious 'RobertFulford.jpg' isn't very helpful since someone else is likely to have used that before!) and photos must be rotated appropriately.

**One or two good photographs are to be preferred over a dozen mediocre ones, with the emphasis on quality &**

**breadth, rather than quantity & depth.** The present photo-library can be used for reference, so please focus on showing **new subjects and players.**

Once photos have been accepted and uploaded, the submitter will be expected to visit the website to enter the following information about the photo. This information needs to be entered by the author as soon as possible after upload.

- ◆ Event - where the photo was taken; e.g. "Open Championship"
- ◆ Players - a list of the people in the photo; (group photos should be named L to R, back row first); e.g. "Robert Fulford, Samir Patel..."
- ◆ Venue - where the photo was taken; e.g. "Cheltenham"
- ◆ Event Date - when photo was taken - be as specific as possible; eg 25 July 2007
- ◆ Author - who owns the photo (normally whoever took it). This should be a CA member and be in the same format as their CA Entry.
- ◆ Date of Upload
- ◆ Comments - this should be suitable for use as a caption. It is quite likely to duplicate some of the information above, but should be as descriptive as possible. Examples: "James Death & Keith Aiton of Nottingham with the Interclub trophy"; "Stephen Mulliner lining up 2-back peel during a sextuple attempt in the first round of the Western Championship in 2005"

## News & Information

Continued from page 6

A number of South Eastern clubs expressed interest in a winter tournament programme with an emphasis on some one day "fun" events. SCCC decide that as they have the facilities available it was worth developing a programme for the coming winter on a trial basis.

Providing the tournaments are supported SCCC plan to make them an annual event.

### CA World Championship places

If you are a CA member and eligible to play for England in a WCF event please indicate your availability for one of

our places via the CA website Members' area. Alternatively you may send a letter to the CA Office (telephone and email notification are not accepted).

Event details: 9-17 May 2009, West Palm Beach, Florida, USA

### Bath Gazettes – a yard of croquet history for sale

The recent offer to bid for back copies of the Croquet Gazette owned by the Bath Croquet Club did not realise their advertised reserve price. Dating back to original issues for 1904 it has been agreed to offer them again to the croquet fraternity.

This is an excellent opportunity to obtain key historical records of the CA's activities. There is now no reserve price and any reasonable offer will be considered. More details concerning the issues for sale can be seen in the April Gazette, issue number 313, page 7.

Anyone wishing to make a bid should place it in a sealed envelope marked "Bath Gazettes" and send it to the CA Vice-Chairman, Mrs P Duke-Cox at 171 Witham Road, Woodhall Spa, Lincoln LN10 6RB by 15 November 2008.

### Fixtures Book - Allocation, Close and Draw Dates

As we reach the end of the 2008 tournament season, clubs will soon be turning their attention to the 2009 fixtures book so now seems timely for a reminder of what the allocation, close and draw dates are intended to mean, particularly given some of the confusion that occurred this year.

For Clubs:

\* Allocation Date - This is the date on which entries are first considered. The tournament secretary should hold all entries received before this date and treat them as though they arrived together. If the tournament is oversubscribed, the Manager and current Trophy Holders have priority, with other entries accepted randomly (or by grade for championship events) unless indicated otherwise in the fixtures book entry. The CA recommends that the allocation date is 8 weeks before the event for most events (4 weeks for championships).

\* Closing Date - After the allocation date, entries are accepted until either the tournament is full, or the closing date is

reached. Subsequent entries may either be rejected or placed on a waiting list. This is normally 2 weeks before the event. Entries received after this date are subject to acceptance by the manager, and the club may impose a 50% late entry surcharge.

\* Draw Date - This is the date on which the manager will create the draw (if appropriate). It is provided for information, and means that players will know if they are going to get a late start, who they will be playing in the first round etc.

The above is intended to provide guidance to clubs and standard definitions for players. Note that it does not limit what a club can do through its fixtures book entry. If you want to hold a ballot for places 1 week before the event, simply set the allocation date to that date (although players might find it difficult to arrange travel/accommodation!). Conversely, should you wish to simply take all entries in order of receipt, set an early allocation date, such as 1 January (although this is equally discouraged).

For Players:

\* Allocation Date - To stand the best chance of getting into an event, ensure your entry is received before this date. There is no need to rush and enter everything on the day your fixtures book arrives, since all entries received before the allocation date are treated equally. If you have entered before this date, you should expect to be informed whether your entry has been accepted or not soon after the allocation date (before this date, the most you will get is confirmation that it has been received).

\* After the allocation date, you can still enter events, but entries will be accepted in the order in which they are received until the event is full. If you enter after the closing date, you may be charged an extra 50%.

\* The manager will create the tournament draw on (or soon after) the draw date. After this date, the manager may inform you about any late starts, or who you will be playing in the first round. If you hear nothing, you should assume a 9.30 start unless otherwise indicated in the fixtures book.

Finally, always remember to check the fixtures book entry for any special conditions, such as about hours of play (by default from 9.30 to dusk), special lunch arrangements or local laws/regulations.



# The View from the Bar

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

The list has been dominated in the past month or so by discussion of proposals to change the advanced game. Among the very top players (handicap -1.5 or better) the games are often not at all interactive – the player who wins the opening takes the first break to 4-back (or 1-back), and if the lift is missed then finishes with a triple peel (or sextuple peel). Many people believe that change is needed so that if you lose the opening, you get more than one 18 yard (or 35 yard) lift shot. A variety of remedies have been suggested, with four commanding most attention.

1. Change the lift hoops to 1-back and 3-back, and the rules so that a contact lift is conceded if you run both hoops in the same turn with the same ball regardless of whether it is the first ball or second ball (main proponent Reg Bamford). The advantage is the players have to do quads rather than triples, and that if they fail then they concede a contact, whereas currently a player who doesn't complete the peels but doesn't break down can still get to (say) peg and rover with a leave requiring his adversary to hit a last 18 yard lift shot. Opponents

argue that a quad is not significantly harder than a triple for the top players, and that this proposal would strongly inhibit improving players from attempting peeling finishes, since failure would be penalised by conceding a contact.

2. Change the rules so that it is end of turn if the striker's ball leaves the lawn (several proponents including Stephen Mulliner and Keith Aiton). This would mean that hoops could not be run off the lawn, making it slightly more difficult to keep a break going. Objections to this idea are: (a) it would have very little effect, especially on the top players who rarely need to run hoops off the lawn; (b) it means that straight hoops longer than a yard become a lottery, because if you run the hoop perfectly without touching a wire you may go off the lawn and have your turn end, whereas if you run it slightly less well and catch some wire you get a better result despite a worse shot. Others reply that a lottery is what you deserve if you leave yourself hoops longer than a yard.

3. Introduce a new hoop setting, based on a submerged plate, which by making the hoop firmer in the ground will make it harder to run and thus lead to more breakdowns (main proponent Stephen Mulliner). One such hoop is already in testing in various locations. Most contributors are supportive of this initiative for use at the top level, although there is some scepticism whether it is feasible to invent a workable hoop. The only objections have come from those who are opposed on grounds of expense and practicality to changing equipment solely for a few top competitions.

4. By far the most talked about solution is the CAMEL (CAMpaign for an Extra Lift) (original proponent David Maugham). This introduces an additional lift after hoop 4. As well as conceding a lift for running any one lift hoop in a turn, and a contact for running two lift hoops, running all three lift hoops in one turn would concede a "lift to position" whereby the opponent could lift his ball and place it anywhere on the lawn (possibly including



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

in a hoop or inside the yardline). This rule-change would make initially going to 4-back much less attractive because it would concede a contact. It would also significantly increase variety, since a player who picked up a break could choose one of several options rather than the current, almost universal choice of going to 4-back. There have been few arguments against it, although some have argued that it would inhibit the sextuple because going to 1-back would concede a lift and therefore the standard sextuple leave (laying up in corner 3 with opponent cross-wired at hoop 1) would no longer be possible.

So what now? Enthusiasm for options 1 and 2 has waned somewhat and they are likely to pass the way of many bright ideas aired on the Nottingham list. Work on option 3 will continue but no concrete changes look imminent. However there is considerable enthusiasm for option 4, and we may well see the CAMEL trialled at a championship next year. It's worth emphasising that CAMEL is the (possible) solution to a problem that exists only at the very upper echelons of the game – the normal advanced game is likely to continue for many years to come for us lesser mortals.

To subscribe to the list, go to <http://nottingham-lists.org.uk/mailman/listinfo/croquet>. You can receive emails individually

# Technical Matters

## Ball Marking

by Ian Vincent

A player in a recent tournament suggested that I should write something about marking balls, having seen bad practice on a number of occasions. Two questions seem to arise: when and how should balls be marked? I hope that the thoughts below are relevant to players of all standards, of both Golf and Association Croquet, not just to referees.

### When to mark

A ball may need to be marked for a variety of reasons, but most cases are because it may have to be replaced in its current position. The only exceptions that I can think of are when a ball is on a hoop upright and the line of centres is marked to show the direction it will move if the striker's ball hits the hoop rather than the ball when attempting to roquet it, or to mark the critical direction of the swing when refereeing. The most common examples of balls being marked are when a fault may be committed, or if a ball may interfere with, or be affected by, a double-banked game.

It is not necessary to mark every ball that could conceivably need to be replaced; time may be saved by assessing how critical its position is and how likely it is to need to be replaced. Thus if, in either form of the game, a ball may be moved if the stroke is clean, but is unlikely to be disturbed if a fault is committed, it may not be necessary to mark it. Similarly if, in Golf Croquet, you are attempting a hard clearance in the direction of a double banked ball some yards away in open court, or in Association Croquet you are sending a pioneer to a distant hoop with a double banked ball nearby, and again not in a critical position, you may decide just to get on with the stroke and reconstruct what would have happened but for the interference if the unlikely collision does occur. Note, however, that in Association Croquet you cannot replay the stroke under these circumstances.

Sometimes, when double-banking, you shouldn't mark a ball at all, but rather wait if it is critical to the other game and likely to be moved before too long. Another possibility, if the ball could be critical to the other game but is unlikely to be disturbed by yours, is just to mark but not remove it.

Others examples of balls needing to be marked include when a ball is about to be wiped, picked up to see if it is affected by special damage, or moved to maintain relative position with a ball moved to avoid such damage, or an obstacle just outside the court preventing the striker having a free swing. Yet others are if the striker might accidentally move the ball when placing his ball against it for a croquet stroke (when in a critical position such as the back of a hoop), or if the ball is needed as a test ball, to check for wiring or the width of a hoop, or if the game is to be pegged down.

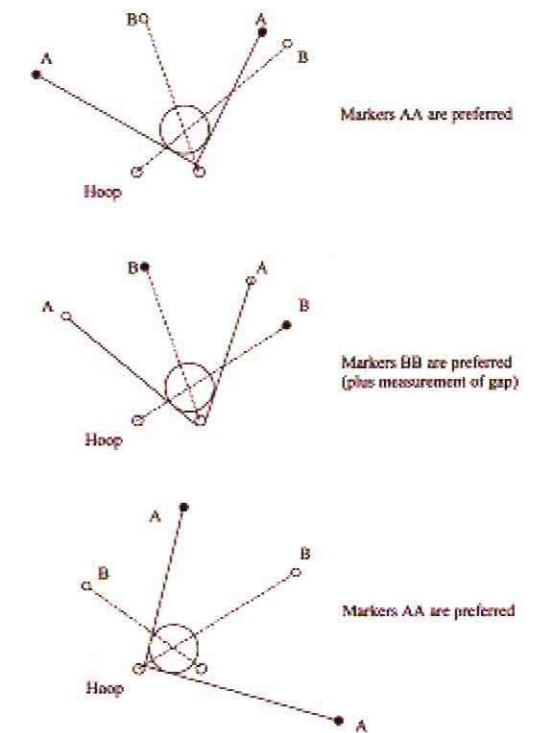
### How to mark

The best method for marking a ball depends on how critical its position is: the art is to minimise the time taken to mark and, if necessary, replace the ball sufficiently accurately. If its position is not critical, a single marker placed at the edge of the ball furthest from the peg should be enough, as golfers do when marking balls

on a putting green. This is much more accurate than picking up the ball and then placing the marker underneath it. Note that it is better to be consistent and always use the peg, rather than a nearby hoop, as a sight-line, to avoid mistakes as to what was used when replacing the ball.

If greater precision is required, two markers can be used, either one each side of the ball or to locate the position of the ball along two different lines, which should be as close to being at right angles as possible (so that replacing it on one line does not move it off the other). Personally, I was taught to mark the centre of the ball against the centre of a hoop upright, though in some cases a better right angle can be achieved by marking the edges (see the diagrams below). Consistency is useful to avoid mistakes, but you need to ensure that the markers won't be in the way of the

MARKING THE POSITION OF A BALL - EXAMPLES



balls or the striker, or give him an aiming point.

As well as using markers, any critical aspect of the position (e.g. whether in the jaws) should be noted and reproduced when the ball is replaced. Seeing how many fingers you can insert between the ball and the wires may help to visualise the position of the ball, but only do this when you have already marked it, in case you disturb it!

Larger markers, coloured for each ball, are traditionally used when pegging down a game, as they need to be found hours or days later (if you find any, don't helpfully pick them thinking they have been abandoned!). If a ball is on the yard-line the marker is normally placed just outside the court on the line perpendicular to boundary. Games should not normally be pegged down with balls in hoops or in a critical position.

Finally, two things to avoid. The first is coins: even with the credit crunch they are liable to be forgotten and cause very expensive damage to a mower. The second is screwing the ball into the ground to create a depression: yes, you can replace the ball in it, but the subsequent stroke could well be affected. If you don't have any markers, ask another player or improvise with clips or twigs. Incidentally, markers are now available from the CA shop if the club does not keep a stock.

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## Book Reviews

### New Books by John Riches and Wayne Davies

Review by Carolyn Ribone, Editor of Croquet Australia

John Riches, the National Coaching Director of Croquet Australia, together with USA professional croquet coach Wayne Davies, recently completed two new booklets. These booklets added to the previous booklets, Croquet: the Teaching of Tactics, and Croquet: Cannons, are guaranteed to contain ideas that may never have occurred to most players, and which can bring about a noticeable improvement in your ability to win games.

These are intended mainly for players who have reasonable command of the basic strokes and are capable of playing breaks.

The booklets, aimed at a specialist market, consist of between 25 and 45 pages, and almost every page has colour diagrams and offer good value for money.

#### Croquet: Openings

By John Riches and Wayne Davies

This booklet covers all the common openings, and some uncommon ones as well, with explanations of how to answer them and what to do if the opponent replies in various ways.

The openings are considered from a percentage viewpoint, as all you can hope to achieve in an opening is maximize the percentage chance of getting a break established before the opponent does. There are colour illustrations to assist the reader in following the various moves. The text includes suggestions from some of the world's top players who were kind enough to read it and comment upon it.

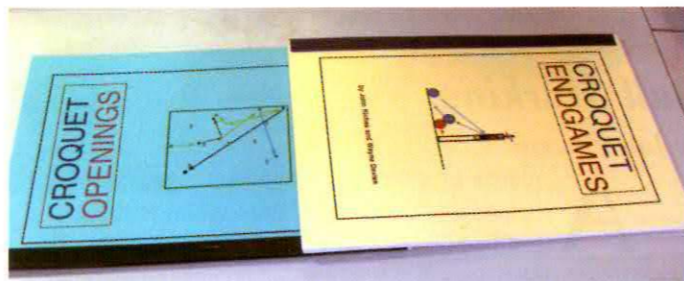
#### Croquet: Endgames

By John Riches and Wayne Davies

Many players seldom get to play endgames, especially pegged out games where you have two balls against one, or one ball against two, or a single each. Therefore they often fail to realise that in endgames percentages can be different and the tactics that apply earlier in the game may no longer be correct. This booklet does not attempt to cover all possible endgame tactics, and does not deal with triple or sextuple peels, but it does contain many ideas that players frequently overlook, and which can help you win games you might otherwise have lost.

It is valuable reading for any player who can make breaks; and players even at international level will find in it many important tactical ideas they are unlikely to think of for themselves when under pressure in a tense endgame situation.

*Editorial footnote:* I have contacted John Riches and unfortunately the books are not going to be directly available in the UK, however if you wish to purchase them through a friend or relative in Australia, then the booklets cost \$32 (Aus) inc P&P



within Australia, can be ordered from John Riches, Unit 18, 85 Winzor St, Salisbury, SA 5108.

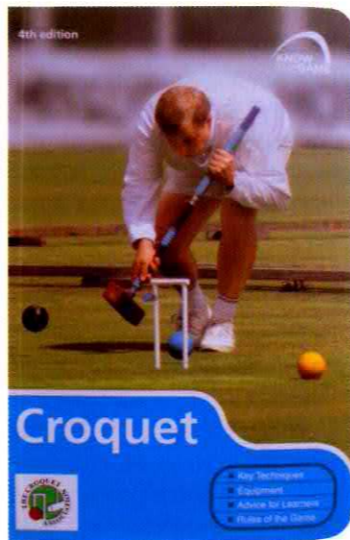
However, having contacted John, I have learned that Wayne Davies, Johns co-author (an Australian who now lives in Nantucket, USA), is going to publish a book containing almost everything John has written on croquet, including the older booklets, the recent series of 5 booklets, and about 100 magazine articles. When it becomes available, his book will cost approx US\$50, and will be reviewed in due course.

For anyone who has not read any of John's booklets, I can recommend them, and some of the earlier works are available to purchase from the CA shop, and on the Oxford Croquet Website [www.oxfordcroquet.com](http://www.oxfordcroquet.com) where Ian Plummer has many interesting articles from various sources, and it is an excellent place of reference to improve your tactical understanding during the winter months.

While on the subject of reading material, this seems a timely point to remind readers that having been out of print for almost a year, a completely new edition of 'Know the Game - Croquet' this longtime favourite book is now available from the CA shop.

Ian Vincent has revised the content to reflect changes in croquet and coaching practice. The latest edition has a new design and structure: an introduction and the basics that apply to both Golf and Association are followed by sections on both variations of the game covering strokes, tactics and laws. It is 64 pages long, and is an ideal introduction to the game if you are just starting to play, or want some tips on how to improve.

The new edition is very fully illustrated with many new photographs of contemporary players. It is available for £7 inclusive of postage costs, or there is a 10% discount for orders of 10 copies or more.



## Golf Croquet Events

### Egypt v Rest of The World

Roehampton 9th - 10th August 2008

Report by John Spiers, photo by Tim King

For some time there has been a desire to try and replicate the format of the MacRobertson Shield in the Golf Croquet arena. However, the strength of Egyptian players means that there is currently no prospect of a team based on players from just one country stretching them significantly. It was therefore decided that the Rest of the World was the appropriate opposition. Stephen Mulliner and Reg Bamford did a great job of putting together the strongest possible team, containing the six highest ranked non-Egyptians. Chris Clarke flew in from NZ, Sherif Abdelwahab from the USA to join UK residents Stephen, Reg, Rob Fulford and Rutger Beijderwellen. On the Egyptian side Amir Ramsis also delivered the goods, bringing over the Nasr brothers, Ahmed El-Mahdi, Khalid Younis, Helmi Abdelgayed and Yasser Esmet.

The format was based on the Mac with nine doubles matches and twelve singles, each decided on a best of 3 basis. The event was based at Roehampton who did a superb job in preparing the lawns and making all of the other arrangements.

The Egyptians arrived in the UK on the Friday and opted not to practice. In contrast, the RoW team were hard at work at Surbiton. The event began with three doubles matches. Clarke & Fulford were first to finish with a comprehensive win. By mid-morning the weather had deteriorated to a steady downpour with occasional gusty winds, exactly the conditions that the Egyptians dreaded and RoW began to build a commanding lead. Sherif Abdelwahab came back strongly to beat Khalid Younis while Reg Bamford resisted a brief flurry from Mohammed Nasr to win his singles match. By close of play the score was 8-4 to RoW, who seemed almost home and dry. In contrast the Egyptians were away and wet but still seemed in good spirits.

Sunday began with blue skies and a gentle breeze, which helped the Egyptians to find their true form and by noon they had overcome the 8-4 deficit to draw level. Bamford & Beijderwellen steadied the fast sinking RoW ship despite losing the first game of their match. Then Abdelgayed & El-Mahdi narrowly beat Mulliner & Abdelwahab to make it 9-9. At this point the odds were in favour of the Egyptians but Rob Fulford pulled off a memorable win against Mohammed Nasr, straight after suffering a crushing doubles defeat. El-Mahdi began to hit peak form against Mulliner, twice making clearances from over 30 yards, one of them to remove a ball in the jaws! Stephen battled hard to take the second game in the match but eventually lost 2-1.

That left the final match as the decider: a rerun of the 2008 World Championship final between Ahmed Nasr and Reg Bamford. This time Reg was on excellent form and Ahmed unusually wayward with his shooting. Reg emerged as a reasonably comfortable winner, 7-2, 7-4. The Rest of the World therefore become the first holders of the Ramsis Cup. Bamford was their



top performer with 5 wins out of 5. For the Egyptians Yasser Esmet stood out with two singles and two doubles wins - his long range shooting was spectacular.

Egyptian shooting has long been admired but it would be quite wrong to classify them simply as super shots. Their touch play is often first class and the tactical nuances of Younis and El-Mahdi are highly impressive. The fact is that in conditions that were unusual for them, they took this match to the wire. However, it was apparent, not for the first time, that some Egyptians react quite badly to adverse climatic conditions. In some cases an already aggressive shot selection policy seems to become even more extreme when the going gets tougher.

The match was played with a superb sense of sportsmanship on both sides and the crowd enjoyed a sporting spectacle that compared well with many other activities in terms of excitement and skills on display.

#### Results

##### Saturday

A Nasr & K Younis bt. S Abdelwahab & S Mulliner 7-6, 4-7, 7-3  
M Nasr & Y Esmet lost to R Bamford & R Beijderwellen 2-7, 4-7  
H Abdelgayed & A El-Mahdi lst to C Clarke & R Fulford 2-7, 4-7  
H Abdelgayed lst to S Mulliner 5-7, 7-3, 5-7  
K Younis lst to S Abdelwahab 7-3, 4-7, 4-7  
Y Esmet bt R Beijderwellen 7-3, 7-6  
A Nasr & K Younis lst to C Clarke & R Fulford 6-7, 7-6, 3-7  
M Nasr & Y Esmet bt S Abdelwahab & S Mulliner 7-6, 7-6  
H Abdelgayed & A El-Mahdi lst to R Bamford & R Beijderwellen 4-7, 6-7  
A Nasr bt R Fulford 7-5, 7-6  
M Nasr lst to R Bamford 6-7, 7-3, 1-7  
A El-Mahdi lst to C Clarke 6-7, 4-7

##### Sunday

H. Abdelgayed bt C Clarke 7-6, 6-7, 7-4  
K Younis bt R Beijderwellen 7-6, 7-4  
Y Esmet bt S Abdelwahab 7-4, 7-4  
A Nasr & K Younis lst to R Bamford & R Beijderwellen 7-6, 2-7, 4-7  
M Nasr & Y Esmet bt C Clarke & R Fulford 7-3, 7-4  
H Abdelgayed & A El-Mahdi bt S Abdelwahab & S Mulliner 3-7, 7-5, 7-6  
M Nasr lst to R Fulford 6-7, 4-7  
A El-Mahdi bt S Mulliner 7-3, 3-7, 7-2  
A Nasr lst to R Bamford 2-7, 4-7

## National Golf Croquet Doubles

Surbiton 2nd - 3rd August 2008

Report by Nelson Morrow, photo by Tim King

The National Golf Croquet Doubles was held at Surbiton Club on the 2/3<sup>rd</sup> August. A strong field of 22 players (+ 2 'no shows'), consisting of 9 players who had previously won the title, battled their way through the blocks, playing best-of-3 matches to find the top two to play a semi final and a final.



The early games saw all matches completed in 2, but the later rounds, when abilities were more evenly matched, saw many long 3-game matches. No pair won more than 3 matches except for Chris Farthing and Samir Patel who did not drop a game in the block matches.

Last years winners Ivor Brand and Richard Thompson could not produce last year's form and were unable to make the play-offs.

Nick Butler and John Spiers won their block and preceded to beat Tim King and Roy Ware 5-7 7-5 7-4 in the first semi final. In the other semi final Chris and Samir quickly saw off Pierre Beaudry and Mark Hamilton 7-2 7-3.

In the final, the first game saw a long battle over hoop one which was eventually won by Chris & Samir. This set the mood for the first game, which they won 7-2. The second game saw John taking the first hoop and Nick the second hoop (from hoop one). Nick's form continued for the rest of the game with consistent clearing and long hoop running, giving them the game 7-2.

The stage was set for a great third game. It started well with well-fought hoops but unfortunately the form Nick and John found in the second game evaded them and Chris and Samir won 7-4. After a thrilling 2-¼ hour battle, two more names were added to the Ranelagh Cup. The final placing after play- offs were:

1. Chris Farthing & Samir Patel
2. Nick Butler & John Spiers
- 3= Tim King & Roy Ware
- 3= Pierre Beaudry & Mark Hamilton
5. Bill Arliss & Derek Old
6. Ivor Brand & Richard Thompson
7. Don Beck & David Mooney
8. Nelson Morrow & Freda Vitty
9. Tom Weston & Jonathan Wood
10. Keith Webb & Richard Brooks
11. Mary & Dick Knapp



Samir Patel in play at the National Golf Croquet Doubles, executing a jump shot.

## Ian Lines retains Musk Cup

**Pendle & Craven 16th - 17th August, 2008**

Report by Tim King, photo by David Walters

The Musk cup is the premier selection event for Golf Croquet run by the CA, for the top available eight players.

This year the weather unexpectedly held off with almost no rain for what was forecast to be a relatively foul weekend and Ian Lines prevailed with greatest consistency to retain the trophy, with Nelson Morrow as runner-up. Musks Limited continued their sponsorship of the tournament, presenting a £100 cheque to the winner.

### Results

Round 1  
Richard Thompson beat David Dray: 7-6, 7-3, Derek Old beat David Walters: 7-6, 7-6, Ian Lines beat Nelson Morrow: 5-7, 7-4, 7-5, Tim King beat Chris Sheen: 7-5, 4-7, 7-3



Ian Lines and the Musk Cup, with manager Abdul Ahmed.

Round 2  
King beat Old: 3-7, 7-3, 7-5, Morrow beat Thompson: 6-7, 7-4, 7-3, Walters beat Sheen: 7-6, 4-7, 7-6, Lines beat Dray: 7-2, 7-6

Round 3  
Sheen beat Thompson: 7-4, 7-4, King beat Dray: 7-2, 7-6, Lines beat Old: 7-2, 7-5, Morrow beat Walters: 7-2, 1-7, 7-6

Round 4  
King beat Morrow: 7-5, 7-4, Lines beat Sheen: 0-7, 7-2, 7-3, Walters beat Dray: 7-6, 4-7, 7-2, Old beat Thompson: 7-2, 1-7, 7-3

Round 5  
Walters versus Lines, incomplete: 7-6, 3-7, Sheen beat Dray: 3-7, 7-4, 7-5, Thompson beat King: 7-3, 7-4, Morrow beat Old: 6-7, 7-6, 7-4

Round 6  
Old beat Sheen: 7-5, 4-7, 7-4, Lines beat Thompson: 7-5, 7-5, Morrow beat Dray: 7-4, 3-7, 7-4, Walters beat King: 7-5, 7-6

Round 7  
Old beat Dray: 1-7, 7-6, 7-2, Walters versus Thompson, incomplete: 5-7, 7-6, Morrow beat Sheen: 4-7, 7-6, 7-4, Lines beat King: 7-3, 5-7, 7-3

## All England Golf Croquet Handicap Final

**East Dorset 20<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> Sept, 2008**  
Report and photos by Freda Vitty

After the club heats and the regional finals, 12 players with entry handicaps of 4 to 8 went through to the finals at East Dorset Club. 3 players dropped out leaving 9 who played in an all-play-all block, one 19 point game.

In full sunshine and comfortable temperatures and on beautifully presented

lawns, there were many close games, validating the handicap system. By Saturday evening, last year's winner, Richard Harris (5) was out in front with Ryan Cabble (4). Close behind was another 15 year old, James Goodbun (3) from Ramsgate with 3 out of 6 wins and Brian Roynon (8), from the same Bristol Club as Ryan, was on 3 wins out of 5.



The finalists back row left to right: Colin Davies, Richard Harris, Anne Brookes, David Smith, Jan de Swarte, Paul Guram, Brian Roynon. Front row James Goodbun and Ryan Cabble.

All was to play for on the Sunday morning, with several vital games between the front runners with Colin Davies (4) coming though to contest 4<sup>th</sup> place. By the end of the block games, all 9 players had won at least 2 of their 8 games. Block results saw Ryan, James, Richard and Colin through to the semi-finals where Ryan bt Colin 10-5 and James beat Richard 10-4.

The final was best-of-three 13 point games between the two youngsters. The games were played in excellent spirit and at a good pace. The spectators, who included all of the other



Ryan in play against last years winner Richard Harris.

contestants, family, friends and some local players, were treated to a display of spectacular clearances, accurate hoop running and attacking play. The difference between the players came down to James's slightly higher error rate and although Ryan did not use his extra turn in either game, James was always aware of the threat and was perhaps forced into taking more risks. The final result was 7-5, 7-5 to Ryan, whose handicap is now also 3 as a result of his success.

The weather, lawns, hospitality and friendliness of all players contributed to an excellent weekend, which saw the culmination of a season-long competition. My thanks go to all the players who made it a pleasure to manage the finals and to all of the people who ran and played in the earlier heats.

There are a number of names on this trophy that continue to appear on the National and International scene. We can now add Ryan and James to the growing list of young players who are having an impact on the National scene. We need to encourage and nurture this talent, which should ensure the future of the game.

### 2009 CA SUBSCRIPTION RATES

As notified on page 10 of the April 2008 Gazette, subscription rates are to be raised in 2009. The new rates are as follows. (Figures in brackets are the discounted rates for payment by direct debit.)

Individual	
Standard	£40 (£35)
Standard composite	£60 (£55)
Junior	£10 (£10)
Non-tournament	£26 (£21)
Non-tournament composite	£34 (£29)
Overseas	£35
Club (per capita)	£7

Rates were last raised in 2007. The increases in individual rates (bar the Junior) are broadly in line with the rate of inflation, as measured by the Retail Prices Index from July 2006 to July 2008; most are less than this. The increase in the club rate is less than half the rate of inflation.

Roger Bray, Hon. Treasurer



Chris farthing in play at the National Golf Croquet Doubles

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## Association Croquet Events



Student Championship Players with CA Vice-President Left to right: Andrew Hope, Joel Taylor (Camb), Rachel Rowe (Warwick), Robert Wilkinson (Ox), Harry Fisher (Ox), Tom Whiteley (Ox), Edward Keene (Nottingham), Rob Hurling (Nottingham).

### Student Championships

#### Oxford University 13th - 14th June 2008

Report and photo by Ian Plummer

Robert Wilkinson (Oxford) defeated Tom Whiteley (Oxford) in the Student Singles final and won the Dudley Hamilton Miller trophy. Rachel Rowe (Warwick University) was in 3rd position.

In the team event, Nottingham University entered three teams and were runners up to Oxford University, who retained the Edmund Reeve trophy. Andrew Hope, Vice-President of the Croquet Association, presented the trophies. He said that there were far too few young people playing but he welcomed seeing such enthusiasm at the Championships.

The Oxford Club thanked Andrew for presenting the trophies and for his encouragement and also thanks to Robert Wilkinson for managing the event.

#### Results

##### Team entries:

Nottingham A (Rob Hurling & Edward Keene) Nottingham B (Alec James & Neal Bacon) Nottingham C (Martin Court & Mark Morphew) Oxford (Robert Wilkinson & Thomas Whiteley)

Nottingham A bt Nottingham C +2, Oxford bt Nottingham B +25

Oxford bt Nottingham A +24

##### Singles results:

Rachael Rowe bt Joel Taylor +6

Neal Bacon bt Alec James +5

Harry Fisher bt Martin Court +24

Rachael Rowe bt Mark Morphew +18

Thomas Whiteley bt Rob Hurling +24

Robert Wilkinson bt Neal Bacon +25

Joel Taylor bt Alec James +24

Rachael Rowe bt Harry Fisher +12

Thomas Whiteley bt Neal Bacon +25

Neal Bacon bt Rob Hurling +16

Harry Fisher bt Joel Taylor +7

Robert Wilkinson bt Rachael Rowe +18

Joel Taylor bt Neal Bacon +6

##### Final playoff results:

Robert Wilkinson bt Harry Fisher +18

Thomas Whiteley bt Rachael Rowe +7

Robert Wilkinson bt Thomas Whiteley +18

### The Challenge and Gilbey

#### Sussex County 28th - 31st Sept 2008

Report by Nigel Graves, Photo by Julie Horsley

For the first time for many years this annual tournament was held at Southwick, and attracted a large entry. There were 34 players in the handicap event, competing for the Gilbey Goblet, which was played as a single-life knockout with a managed Egyptian consolation event. The final was between Robert Bateson (hcp 5) and Jim Field (Hcp 2). Robert seemed to have the game won as he approached rover with Jim's clips on hoops one and two, but the rover peel went wrong, and he could only sit and watch as Jim completed a couple of all-round breaks to win by +3. The consolation event was won by Brian Shorney.

There were a total of 40 entrants for the four Challenge Cups. The Stevenson Cup (D Class) was won by Michael Hamilton, with Anne Stephens as runner up. Myra Gosney, with five wins in a five round Swiss, won the Reckitt Cup (C Class), with Chris Osmond as runner up. The Council Cup (B Class) went to John Low, again with five wins in a five round Swiss; Jim Field was runner up.

There was a strong entry for the A Class, including a former world champion, John Walters, returning to croquet after a gap of ten years and not finding life easy. Block winners were Tom Weston and Dave Mundy, who saw off a strong challenge from Rutger Beijderwellen. The best-of-three final between the block winners was won by Dave Mundy +18TP-14 +26, enabling him to retain the Roehampton Cup for a second year running.

Beside the four Challenge Cups, a prize was offered for the fastest game of the tournament. The prize had to be duplicated



Nigel Graves presents Dave Mundy with the Roehampton Cup

when there was a tie on 52 minutes between Tom Weston in his defeat of Jack Davies and Janet Overell in her defeat of John Gosney. In her game Janet took her first ball to peg, conceding contact. John failed to get a break started, failing hoop one against Janet's back ball, which she promptly took round to win the game and her Silver Award.

The Southwick lawns were in excellent condition, apart from some dodgy boundaries, and the catering and beer were of the highest standard. Of particular note was the French dinner provided on Saturday evening, although the quality of the Club Chairman's spoken French pointed to a need for intensive coaching.

The first two days were played under overcast skies, but fortunately the rain stayed away. Saturday brought bright sunshine, ideal for a flying display from nearby Shoreham Airport, including a fly-past by five Spitfires which induced waves of nostalgia among some of the more elderly players. Sunday started with thunder and rain, but the lawns remained playable, and by mid-morning the skies had cleared. As the tournament drew to a close a heavy mist started to descend, but it was insufficient to damp the spirits of the participants, who departed well satisfied with an event which had been so ably managed by Julie Horsley

### Pendle and Craven Advanced Weekend

#### 7th - 8th June 2008

Report by Ken Jones

I was finally persuaded to venture north into the wilds of Yorkshire to play croquet at the Pendle and Craven Club in Earby last year. Articles in the *Gazette* over the previous three years detailing the trials and tribulations of finding a new location for this Club made me think I would find a ploughed field somewhere near a cemetery. The second part was true, but my return visit this year shows that the lawns themselves have made incredible progress in the last two years.

The clubhouse is well established with a bar at one end and facilities to support the excellent catering at the other. To a long-standing member from Edgbaston, the provision of proper toilet facilities and electric lighting is something of a novelty - Edgbaston has just celebrated its centenary and we only switched on the power for the first time last year! Pendle and Craven Club really has matured very rapidly and should be on the 'must visit' list for all who venture to the north of England.

Saturday morning saw nine of us assembled in the sunshine. An unexpected haemorrhage of players crying off in the final few days had reduced the expected 13 to a number which could be accommodated comfortably on three lawns with much single banking. Numbers of four in the A class and five in the B class were reversed by lunchtime as Tom Griffith won his first B class game and then announced his correct handicap. At least your correspondent benefited by ending no lower than fourth in the lower block on Sunday afternoon.

At the top end the overall tournament was being sewn up by Ian Lines, also managing, with scores of '+lots(tp)' appearing with metronomic regularity throughout Saturday. Ian continued in similar vein on Sunday to end with 6/6 wins and five triples. The separate A and B class trophies were won by Ian Parkinson and Mike Porter respectively, both in much more closely fought contests. The rest of us sat and marvelled at Ian's play, then tried rather less successfully to play good croquet against each other for an average of seven games each throughout the weekend.

Many thanks to Ian for the friendly, relaxed management and to Roger Schofield and other club members including the splendid catering crew for the warm welcome throughout the tournament. A most enjoyable weekend - I'll see more of you there next year!

### Ryde Festival of Croquet

#### 5th-8th June 2008

Report and photo by Klim Seabright

I leaned down towards the serving hatch (I refuse to say "Check In") at Lymington Ferry Terminal and uttered, to the apparent twelve year old, the words I had been longing to utter for the last forty years "I've got a ticket to Ryde".

"no you ain't mate" came the response "It don't go there".

"Haven't, haven't" I offered by way of friendly correction.

"We don't go to Havent never mate" said the NVQ!

I explained that I had bought the "endowment linked ticket" and hoped that, when the policy matured, it would cover the rather high cost of the crossing. Someone, who shall remain nameless, explained that the best bet was to book a midnight ferry but turn up at about six in the evening when it was possible to get an earlier departure having paid significantly less than the true fare.



Cliff Jones reflects on the game on lawn 2 at Ryde

I moved the car gingerly towards the gaping blunt end of the ship and a member of the crew waved me on with a look that said "amateur". I was off to compete in the Ryde Croquet Festival.

The croquet players were amazingly restrained towards Richard Wood, he being a highly regarded meteorologist, since the forecast was completely wrong! It was supposed to be wet and gloomy but lots of sun tan lotion (I refuse the term Sun Block) was required throughout the four days.

Driving up the hill from the town to the croquet club one needs to keep an eye out for a place called Play Street Lane because the club is off this rather unusually named street. I did wonder, had I ventured a little further, if I would happen upon other such places like "Stand in the Corner Street"; or "Milk Monitor Mews".

In an attempt to protect my place for next year, I'm not going to tell you about the warm welcome at Ryde Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club; nor about the work which has gone into making the lawns some of the best to play on. There is no way that I am



prepared to go into the excellence of the catering; and you will have to bribe me to find out about the Tournament Dinner! It is only I know that the club has recently been host to the Selectors' Weekend and has also made the "long list" of invitees for the next Mac.

No Tournament is complete without a good manager and in this case the "yellow jersey" (except on the day it was Red – see later) of the croquet world, Cliff Jones, was there to offer his usual expertise at running multi-events. He was also playing and I would like to know how his shots are so accurate when, at the moment of his roll-up, his vision must be obscured by the smoke from one of his roll-ups?

On the third day Cliff tried some subtle psychology by turning up in his Wales shirt. It seemed to work because he made the final of the Handicap event, losing to Paul Castell in a fairly straight-forward game.

The Isle of Wight Championship was won by Paul Castell who is noted for his rather unusual side stance which seems to combine "sideways" with the "third" position in ballet! He explained that it had come about because when playing as a child it was the only way he could handle an adult size mallet. Paul has been in blistering form recently and not only ended as Champion but he won every game played and now has a handicap of -1.

The Alternate Stroke Doubles competition was won by Richard Wood and Peter Miller. They appeared to be the only couple who understood the second round game played with 6 balls and nominating which ball to roquet or something(!?). They enjoyed their success but stated that they wished to be left alone to complete their dissertation on the "The Place of the Six Ball Alternate Stroke Doubles in Modern Society".

In the Handicap event Paul Castell overcame Cliff Jones (+19)

The B class event was won by the Darth Vader of Hamptworth (the gloves, the gloves!) Richard Stevens who managed to overcome local knowledge in the shape of Roy Tillcock.

Congratulations also go to Marie Young who came top of the C Class event.

Oh! All right then...if you promise not to tell anyone, I'll let you know why you should sign up for the Isle of White next year.....

### Eastern Championship Hunstanton 25th - 27th 2008

Report by Richard Hilditch

Each day saw excellent sunny conditions throughout. We were treated to freshly cut lawns each day from the player groundsman Jeff Race (what a boon to a club). The first day was a bit humid not allowing the lawns to dry out but later in the weekend we started to get some quicker bits on the lawns but not enough to stop a fair bit of peeling. Indeed Stephen Mulliner proved true to his word in taking on sextuples at every opportunity, completing 2 and breaking down on several more. In the semi finals Jamie Burch seemed to start his match with David Maugham assuming that he had already got far enough in the event, but later on recognised that it was OK to try and win, however Maugham proved far too reliable for him. In the other semi-final Jeff Dawson was able to hit back whenever he made the odd mistake and overcome Keith in a hitting contest. The final straw was when Keith tried and failed a risky 2-back in a 3-ball game with Jeff on

the same hoop, it looked like he was allowing for whole match tactics. The final saw Jeff unable to recover from not getting in during the first two games allowing Maugham to retain his trophy (his 8th win in this event that he has nearly made his own).

Results:

David Maugham bt Ailsa Lines 25tp 25  
Ed Cunningham bt George Woolhouse 15stp -5 19  
Mark Avery bt Jeff Race 21tp 22tp  
Jamie Burch bt Martin Stephenson 26tp 19tp  
Keith Aiton bt Duncan Hector 26tp 7tpo  
Ian Burrige bt Jonathon Hills 11qpo 20tp  
Jeff Dawson bt Andrew Gregory 8 17  
Stephen Mulliner bt Jerry Guest 26sxp 26tp  
Qtr-Finals: Maugham bt Cunningham 22tp 14tp 26tp; Burch bt Avery 26qp 21tp -17 -5tpo 16tp; Aiton bt Burrige 3otp 26tp -8 13tpo; Dawson bt Mulliner -17 14otp 6tpo 9  
Semi-finals: Maugham bt Burch 20tp 12tpo 9tpo; Dawson bt Aiton 17 26tp 7otp  
Final: Maugham bt Dawson 26tp 26stp -26tp 16tp  
Plate  
1st Mulliner 10/14 =2nd Gregory 4/8 =2nd Lines 5/9



David Maugham and Jacob Carr being photographed for the Northern Echo, at the Tyneside event.

### Tyneside Advanced Weekend 2nd - 3rd August 2008

Report by Gail Curry, photo by Derek Watts

Ten players gathered from a wide range of destinations, from Woking to Edinburgh, ably managed by David Maugham. The lawns we suitably impressive, being neatly mowed just before play on Saturday. The weather forecast was for showers, with sunny interludes - about as accurate as the first shot of the day. The first games got off to a start in sunshine but as lunchtime approached so did the thunder and black sky from the west. The ensuing downpour and lightning show sent all of the players running for cover - lawn 1 having the safety of the pavilion, lawn 2 the metal-framed gazebo - but we did have a journalist held captive in there and did our best to break his predetermined ideas of croquet - but then he was going to Sunderland in the afternoon, poor chap, so we were gentle with him.

The combined playing experience of the tournament was getting scarily high, with several of us in excess of twenty years - and still just as fallible on the easiest of shots. However there were some less experienced players, the youngest of whom was 16 year old Jacob Carr, playing in his first advanced event and, not being too fazed by the company or the competition. Most

games were finished within the three hour time limit, the one notable exception being the Gail Curry (yes had to be didn't it) and James Hopgood. There were four minutes remaining and James was a fair way behind, requiring to go to the peg and do one peel to draw level. He successfully managed this going almost twenty minutes after time was called. Gail hit the lift and pegged the peg ball out - but couldn't count and was informed by the 'crowd' that it was now level - oops! The players managed to get into an 'impasse' position, both requiring penultimate. The manager couldn't cope with the 'faffing about', so set the limit of 5 more turns each then it would go to golf croquet rules. On the final turn of Association, James took on a long hoop but bounced off to the side and then Gail hit and finally put the end to the story to win by the infamous +1t.

David Maugham successfully defended his title, but in doing so lost the first game of this event for some years to James Hopgood, who held his nerves to complete a turn after David broke down on a peeling turn at Penultimate.

The tournament was relaxed and good humoured, we were well catered for by Sheila Watts, and the event is commended to anyone for consideration next season.



The Jacksons with their trophies at Southwick

### Report on "SODAS" Tournament Sussex County 26th - 27th July 2008

Report by David Gaitley photo by Paul Castell

This new tournament, the brainchild of Paul Castell, was launched over the weekend of 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> July, and enjoyed gloriously sunny weather. The format was simple - eighteen point doubles games with both players of a side taking their turn on the lawn together, each playing alternate shots in their break. Hence the name, an acronym of "Sussex Open Doubles Alternate Strokes" tournament. The pairings and conduct of the games proved extremely interesting as there were classic odd couples, mentors and pupils, autocrats and dissidents, providing scenes of seamless unity, marital harmony and discord, cooperation and divergences of opinions, all making this inaugural event lots of fun.

The games were played in two American blocks, six pairs in each block. All playing all for a pair of genuine old Soda Siphons, newly adorned with elegant bases and silver collars, making them

highly original and unique, a refreshing departure from the traditional cups.

After some unexpected results in the block games, the final was played as a single 14 point game between the binary star pairs of John Constable and Myra Gosney, and husband and wife team Richard and Pat Jackson. Both teams had opportunity of victory right to the very last shot, when the Jacksons pegged out, winning by a single point!

The event proved to be popular and entertaining, and Paul hopes that it will become a regular feature in Southwick's tournament calendar. As he said, "Anything to make handicap doubles even more enjoyable!"

### Tomkinson Shield Advanced Weekend Edgbaston 16th - 17th August 2008

Report by Kevin Carter

Brian Storey took this year's Edgbaston showpiece in B style, with seven wins from seven games, the last four of which were TPs.

Three years ago Edgbaston took a brave decision. Its annual advanced level weekend suffered from variable quality and was often short on numbers. The committee decided to restrict entries to those with handicaps between -0.5 and 3 ... a tournament for 'A-class hackers'. Players around scratch have few opportunities to win pots but Edgbaston saw this niche and went for it. The result has been a full tournament every year and one which is great fun.

The club has also invested in it lawns, which are now very flat and fair. Unfortunately the recent moist weather meant that for this year's event they were also very green and played quite slowly, along with hoops that had 'give'. However, the benign conditions led to lots of speedy games. The manager, Andrew Gregory, recorded 30 games of a flexible Swiss on the club's three lawns on Saturday, before many of us went off for a local curry.

The winner was easy to predict overnight, Brian Storey having 5 from 5. After Sunday morning's first game only Kevin Carter (4/5) was challenging him and the manager organised a 'Best-of-2' play-off (Brian having already beaten Kevin on Saturday). It started at 1pm and was over at 1.50: +26TP to Brian. In so doing he rendered himself ineligible to defend the trophy next year since, after sixteen years of being stuck on -0.5, he finally crossed the threshold to -1. Another notable effort was seen from Ken Jones, who ended a sixteen game losing run by trouncing Martin Granger-Brown. Ken is the club's current president and Martin the previous. [Shouts of "Fix"!]

### Ramsgate Handicap Doubles August 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008

Report by Richard Godfrey  
'triumph over adversity'

ADoubles this year the well-drained lawns quickly recovered and all seemed set fair for the start of the tournament next day. However a hungry fox digging for worms had other ideas, greatly enlarging several hoop holes on lawn 1 during the night and leaving his characteristic calling cards nearby. Expert emergency repairs by the tournament manager, Ron Welch, soon had the hoops securely standing again, admittedly surrounded by





Ron Welch, with the winners, Nigel & Amanda Hames-Keward from Nottingham and Club President Dennis Shaw (R.O.T.) is on the right.

rather large patches of barren earth, and play started on time in bright breezy conditions.

Ten pairs played 5 matches each over the weekend, with double banking on one of the 4 lawns. Players came from as far away as Nottingham and Brussels. The forecast on August 9<sup>th</sup> was for heavy rain, and there was much speculation about when it would arrive. But arrive it did soon after lunch, accompanied by a strong blustery wind and a sharp drop in temperature. Many players huddled in the tea room, some undoubtedly relieved to see their partner (or even their opponents) playing long breaks thus giving time to warm up a little. The gloom was lightened by some interesting finishes to several of the games, including one lengthy two ball tussle. In another one pair had both their clips on the peg within 45 minutes, but then had to wait nearly 2 hours while their opponents skilfully used bisques to frustrate the peg-out.

The following day dawned bright and clear, but the Ramsgate fox had been back to create even worse havoc on lawn 1, again miraculously repaired in time for the start of play. Other visitors included a noisy group of adolescent seagulls, who seemed to settle just where the balls needed to go, and were reluctant to shift until threatened with loud shouts, flapping of arms, and even



attempted mallet injury. A number of slippery grey seagull calling cards also appeared to add to the hazards on the grass. Before long a howling force 8 gale started to blow balls, mallets and hats about. The more successful players quickly learned to aim to windward to allow for a curved path to their target. Despite all these tribulations there was some good croquet. The final was a tight and skilfully fought match in which Nigel and Amanda Hames-Keward (Nottingham) prevailed +9 over Michael and Ann Poole (Ramsgate). Throughout the tournament members of the Ramsgate club provided warm hospitality and excellent refreshments.

**Pendle & Craven August Handicap  
23rd – 25th August 2008**

Report by Liz & Peter Wilson

Two weeks of cloud and rain finally gave way for the start of the tournament. Conditions were damp underfoot for the morning but improved over the bank holiday.

A cosmopolitan field of twenty players with handicaps ranging from minus a half to twenty four gathered for the flexible Egyptian event.

Games were played without time limits on the first two days. A handicap base of six was used throughout the tournament. This combination encouraged attacking play and only a couple of games reached the fourth hour.

A special mention should go to Will Gee (-0.5) from Nottingham who was more than happy to play whoever the draw dictated despite large handicap differences. Despite taking Saturday afternoon off, Will played ten games and conceded 108 bisques. He topped the leader board until the last round. Will even managed a smile after losing the game of the tournament. Betty Bates (18 Fylde) took her ball to peg on the third turn and finished on the fifth. A magnificent achievement taking advantage of a rare miss from Will. It was the fastest game until Rachel beat Will two minutes faster.

Finals day could not have been better from a manger's point of view. The draw for the morning naturally fell into place and set up a photo-finish for the last round as follows: Will had to play last year's overall winner, Rachel Rowe (8, Ashby) while last year's high handicap winner, Arthur Rowe (10, Ashby) played Betty. John Smallbone (6, Watford) was also in contention for the low handicap trophy.

Arthur beat Betty to take the overall winner's trophy back to Ashby where no doubt it will be at the other end of the mantelpiece from last year. He followed his 'Double Swiss Gambit' (That is losing the first two games) with seven straight wins and a handicap trigger. Rachel beat Will and had to wait for the result of John's game, which was drifting towards time. Having put up a good fight John lost that one, and so Rachel won the low handicap trophy one index point ahead of Will. Betty's consolation for losing the crunch match for the overall trophy was to collect the high handicap trophy. Her first tournament win, I understand she is opening up a new mantelpiece with it.

**Compton advanced weekend  
2nd - 3rd August 2008**

Report and Photo by Roger Wood

Compton Open Weekend: Eastbourne's sunshine was notably absent for the weekend, being replaced by dull skies and a little midday drizzle on both days; lawns - rather



Jack Davies longish peel in the final game against Mick Belcham, to win the Cowbell at Compton

patchy showing variable pace, a complete contrast to the green of last year; hoops - standard 1/8-inch clearance and firm.

With several late withdrawals it was touch and go whether 16 players would start - luckily Mick Belcham and Compton newcomer Mike Cockburn sprang to the rescue. It was also good to be able to welcome two other newcomers: Southwick's Brian Kitching and Medway's Philip Mann. Pre-competition interest centred on Kevin Carter's challenge (backed by the promise of hard cash) to Rutger Beijderwellen to attempt octuple peels throughout the weekend in order to give the rest of the field a chance. Although in imperious form (peeling finishes in all but one of his games, including a sextuple against David Parkins) Rutger declined the gauntlet and opted to learn to play cribbage instead. Much to the manager's amazement and delight both best-of-three semis were completed on Saturday evening, a rare occurrence - even rarer, the final finished before lunch on Sunday!

Philip Mann produced a first round upset by beating Paul Castell and then Mick Belcham to reach a semi-final where he gave a good account of himself against Louise Bradforth who proved too strong for him. In the other semi Martin French (good to see him back after a gap of almost 20 years; COWbell winner in 1987, COWhorn winner in 1988 and 1989) only managed a single point while watching Rutger's triples.



Anyone for Crowquet? - Spotted at the 5th Gosfield Scarecrow Trail. More than 200 scarecrows were on display across the village raising money for Braintree District Mencap. Sent in by Sylvia McCallum

In the best-of-five final Louise fared somewhat better. The first game saw Rutger take yellow to 4-back in the fourth turn but his NSL left the H4 ball a narrow target which Louise just missed. Rutger could not establish a break and hid in corner 4. Louise hit from H1, made H1 but was obliged to lay up near H2. Rutger sent red to corner 4 whereupon Louise, ignoring it, made a gritty 3-ball break to 4-back finishing with an approximate OSL. Rutger lifted to B-baulk, made a double of the balls on the east boundary near H4, hit and finished with a standard triple. In the second Louise had her chance when Rutger's intended seventh turn triple came to an abrupt halt as the 4-back peel didn't touch the sides and went off the boundary, but she stuck in H3 and Rutger finished. The third game saw some initial sparring before Rutger again went to 4-back in turn 10 with a NSL and finished in his next turn to win the COWhorn for the third time.

Having lost his first round knockout game to Martin French, Jack Davies sailed serenely through the Swiss without further defeat, dispatching his only possible rival for the COWbell, Mick Belcham, in the last round. Paul Castell was the only other player to complete triple peels; Martin Leach came oh-so close to his first triple in a tournament but sadly missed the peg out from 6 yards!

Mike Cockburn became the unwitting recipient of the COWpat on Kibble Kountback.



Dave Nick, Ian Lines and Bob Burnett at the end of a successful weekend at Southport.

**Southport advanced weekend  
13th - 14th September**

Report and photo by Ian Lines

Ian Lines beat Bob Burnett in the final of the Southport September Advanced Weekend to retain The Sandiford Salver for the fifth year in succession.

The early rounds all went with seeding, although both semi-finals went to three, and Tom Griffith had a particularly good win against Ian Lines in the first game of their semi-final. In the first game of the final, Bob failed hoop 3 on 5th turn after a supershot/corner 2 opening, and Ian won +24tp on 8th turn. The second game was also going Ian's way until he fell 2mm short on a 10cm roquet after hoop 3 starting a tp (well, it was uphill!). The innings then changed hands a few times, with some good shooting by both, but Ian eventually prevailed +5.



The consolation event was played as a flexible Swiss, and was deservedly won by Dave Nick with 7/9 wins.

The players enjoyed glorious Southport sunshine all weekend, although the lawns were still a little heavy after last weekend's deluge. The hoops were well set to about a 1/32", and the slight undulations in the lawns made conditions a little tricky.

As always, the catering provided by Southport was excellent and thanks should be recorded to all those who helped and set the courts.

## Editorial

Due to some 'technical difficulties', I have changed my email address, which is now [gail.curry@croquet.org.uk](mailto:gail.curry@croquet.org.uk) but anything sent to the [news@gazette](mailto:news@gazette) or [results@gazette](mailto:results@gazette) will also find me. The change over was thankfully simple, the ensuing backlog of messages that had been secretly gathering on a server somewhere then decided to arrive on my desk at once, all 431 of them - I shall let you imagine my response to that one. For anyone who has sent something to me within the last month or so and hasn't had an acknowledgement yet - please don't panic, I'm getting there, a bit like a handicap 24 who's run out of bisques, but I'm getting there. Unfortunately due to this rather time consuming problem, I have been unable to include the winners from the Croquet World Online photo competition, but will correct that in the next issue.

Gail Curry  
Editor

## Champions Challenge

By Chris Clarke,  
World Champion 2008

Many thanks to all the readers who sent in their responses. It was good to see such a wide variety of answers since it shows the difficulty of what should be a seemingly easy position with only two balls having been played.

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?

Let's look at the options for K.

1. Shoot at R - this will probably leave a double if missed and gives no immediate break prospects if hit. Most players hit a 13 yard shot slightly less than half the time.

2. Shoot at U - this is less likely to leave a double, but gives little break opportunity if hit. You will be able to make a "dream leave" (leave partner a rush to an enemy ball say 8 yards WNW of the peg) if you hit which is very powerful. Your oppo will still have to hit a 13 yarder and so you are favourite to gain the innings. The downside of this option is that if your opponent hits Y at R, it is easy for him to send R to hoop 2 going to your two balls and obtain a dolly rush to hoop 1 for an immediate break. This option is my second choice and is better if you are confident of going round after all 4 balls miss.

3. Go to corner 2 - this is the most defensive option. The reason that I don't favour this line of play is that your opponent gets to take his 13 yarder for the innings 4th turn and even if he misses, you still have to hit your 6 yarder. This combination of probabilities, means that RY has just about won the opening.

4. Shoot at the double from B-Baulk - this is no shorter than taking a single ball from A-



Baulk. If you miss into corner 4, you will leave a nice target for Y at R and K from A-baulk.

So, given that none of the above is my preferred line, what is the answer?

I like playing K 2 to 3 feet North of R. This guarantees no double is left from A-baulk. It does concede the first shot (a 13 yarder) to your opponent, so if you are playing one of the best 10 shots in the world, it is less attractive. However for 99% of games, it is likely to be optimal. The question of "why" is the next champions challenge.

Let's consider that Y shoots and hits 4th turn - what do you do next. Then imagine Y misses 4th turn - what does K do next?

Congratulations to Michael Hampson and Pete Trimmer who gave the best high and low bisquers answers to the first challenge.

You can send answers to me by email at [chrisd4clarke@hotmail.com](mailto: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.

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