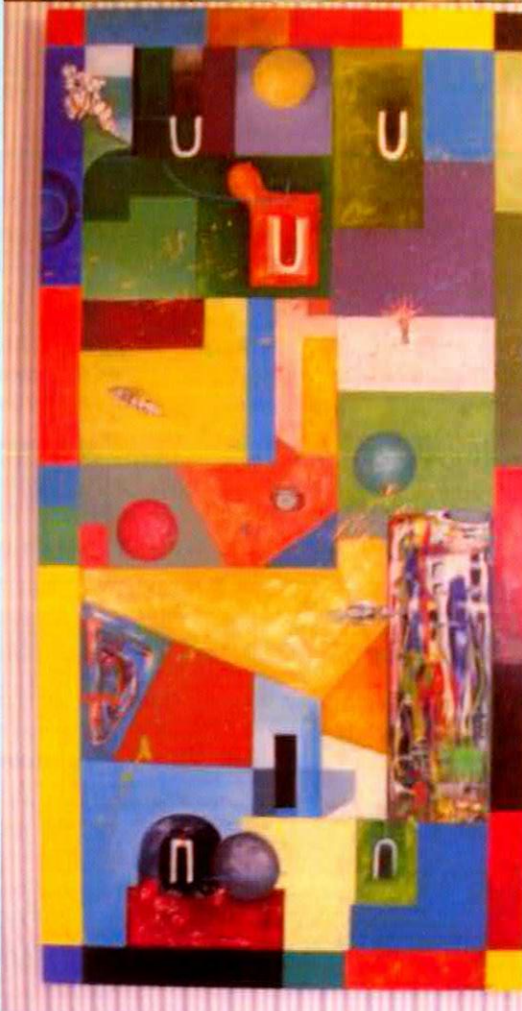


THE CROQUET GAZETTE

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FEBRUARY 2009



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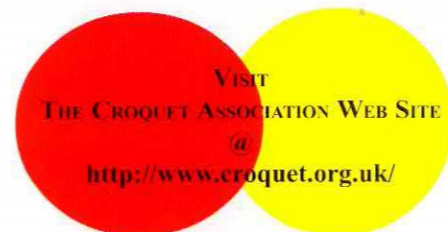
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THE CROQUET GAZETTE



Issue 318 February 2009

Front Cover: Croquet in art: Surreal child by Ann Harper, Prejelen Lady, Player in Bath 1860s, Abstract Croquet Court by Sidney Rowe. All courtesy of Tremaine Arkley

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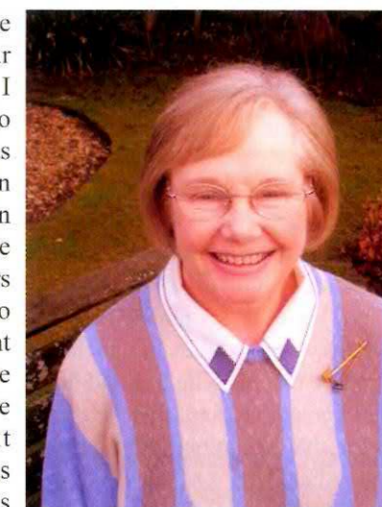
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Chairman's Column

Did you make a New Year resolution? I hope you did and it was to participate as fully as possible in the events put on by the CA, your federation and clubs up and down the country. To all newcomers to croquet, I'd like to reassure you that new talent is welcomed to the tournament scene. If you are not yet a tournament member do not despair, as your first tournament is exempt from a tournament membership fee. For more information on tournaments you can look up <http://www.croquet.org.uk/tournaments>. Hopefully you will enjoy the experience and want to enter more tournaments!



Now is the time to consult the Fixtures Book, recently delivered, and make those decisions to go out and enter competitions to meet up with old friends around the country. Well done to the office for getting the book out for our delight!

November and December saw most of the committees meeting to decide on their aims and put in place those events that will interest you. The remainder will meet before the playing season starts and some will have a second meeting. A new initiative is that each committee has a member who is responsible for informing the Gazette editor and Webmaster about their news. Look out for each of the committees as they take turn to introduce you to what they are trying to achieve on your behalf.

I have been pleased to represent the CA membership at events to mark important occasions. I travelled to Tyneside where I attended their 25th anniversary dinner, bought the book on the history of the club penned by recent CA medal winner Derek Trotman, and presented their annual trophies. The following week I attended the annual dinner of the Nottingham club where I was able to present two CA Diplomas. My most recent visit was to a tea party for 100, it being the centenary celebration for the East Dorset Croquet Club at Parkstone. I also, sadly, attended the funeral of Chris Bennett at Edgbaston, where it was good to see so many of the croquet fraternity and hear Martin Granger-Brown's eulogy on behalf of the croquet world

I must now heed my own words and choose the tournaments I'd like to enter. I have learned from experience that for some clubs the entry form needs to be submitted as soon as possible, though most follow the recommendation of having allocation dates a month or two before the event.

Patricia Duke-Cox

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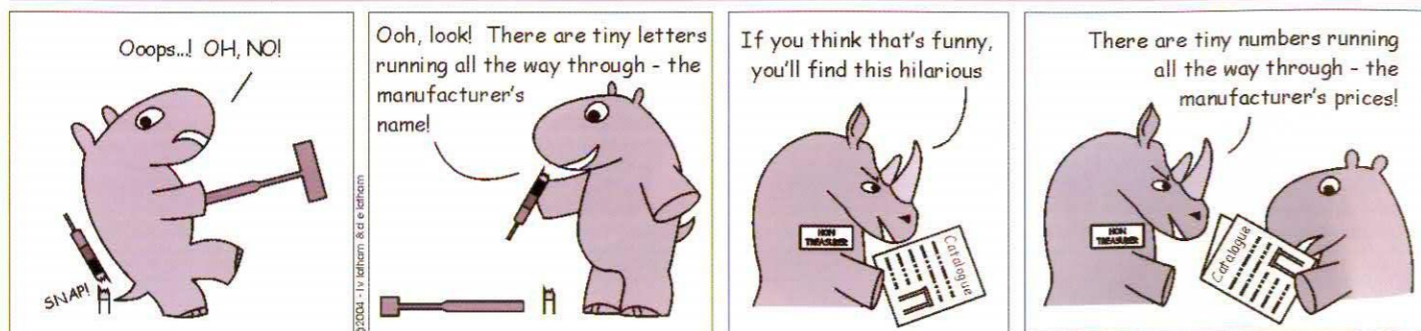
Email contributions, including tournament reports should be sent direct to the Editor, or copied to the Editor if they are being posted to the Nottingham List. Digital images are the easiest to work with, but coloured photographic prints are also acceptable. Please send digital jpeg or tiff format files.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

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

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HOPOPOTAMUS

by Victor



Obituaries

Chris Bennett, who died on 18th October aged 71, was a well-known administrator, promoter and coach of croquet on two continents.

Chris was a keen sportsman and highly competitive from his earliest years. Educated at Stonyhurst College he represented his school at cricket, rugby and athletics. After graduating in law at Birmingham University and whilst working as a solicitor he played rugby for Moseley Vikings, and joined the Territorial Army where he rose to the rank of Captain in the Royal Corps of Transport – something difficult to contemplate by those of us who are aware that he had no knowledge of mechanics and a hopeless sense of direction!

He took up tennis and won many trophies at Edgbaston Archery Tennis Club, of which he also became Secretary. Here in 1965 he met his wife Sue and first discovered croquet - her parents had a lawn in their garden. He quickly became so fascinated by the game that he joined the Edgbaston club the same year. Almost immediately he was selected to play in the Longman Cup and also that year won all three internal club handicap competitions. A minute from the 1966 AGM records "Mr. Bennett played so strongly throughout that the handicappers will have to do something about him."

He won the All England Centenary Handicap at club level and other club competitions in both 1967 and 1968. In 1968 he reached the semi-finals of the former at Roehampton.

After the birth of his two children Chris and his family moved to Solihull and he gave up croquet. He resumed tennis and his success continued at Knowle & Dorridge Tennis Club, where again he became the club Secretary and also Secretary of the West Midlands Lawn Tennis Association.

A more serious involvement was as Secretary of the Solihull Chamber of Trade. But Chris's life was full of fun and his natural ability as a piano player (he could play anything by ear if you gave him the tune) made him a popular party guest - he spent many years as the practice pianist for the Knowle & Dorridge Operatic Society.

In 1986 the family moved back to Birmingham and Chris rejoined Edgbaston, immediately involving himself on the Committee (he held the post of Match Secretary for 20 years). He played for Warwickshire in the Inter-Counties for countless years, captaining the side for some of them.

In 1992 he became involved in the C.A. project at the Bourneville Cadbury Estate to set up a National Croquet Centre – this sadly proved too costly and did not materialise. A similar project was investigated at Solihull where he ran coaching courses remembered by many.

Chris had always been a canny card player and had supplemented his student income through games of poker. He later turned these talents to bridge and, with his partner Ian McClelland (who he later coached at croquet from a beginner to scratch), won many local bridge tournaments. He was active in Andrew Gregory's "Association of Bridge-playing Croquetters" involving players such as Kevin Carter, Debbie Cornelius, David Goacher, Ian Burrigge, Steve Comish and David Magee, all of whom will no doubt have some amusing memories of these events.

After we got together in 1994 I introduced Chris to South



Africa and in the Gauteng province (the greater Johannesburg/Pretoria area) we found only a few players with no proper home. Chris set about finding a permanent club for them and soon after was invited by Country Club Johannesburg (affiliated to Hurlingham) to set up a croquet facility there. This Chris took on board with great enthusiasm and soon discovered that the most talented players were to be found amongst the black staff. Two major croquet festivals were organised at Wanderers Club in 1999 and 2000, of which many British and European players have happy memories – eleven lawns set out on the cricket pitch which had been used for Davis Cup tennis - and some hilarious evening events.

Later in 2000 Chris raised sponsorship to take the three leading black players - Meshack Mazibuko, Victor Dladla and George Mabasa - to Cairo for the World GC Championships and was happy when they finished mid-field.

In 2003 he raised further funds to bring Meshack and Victor to England to play advanced association – by then their handicaps were a respectable 1.5 and 3. A memorable "international" was played at Edgbaston - Reg Bamford captained South Africa with Mark Suter and Andrew Hobbs as the other team members. England was captained by Robert Fulford with Stephen Mulliner, Mark Avery, Daniel Mills and Gabrielle Higgins making up the team. England won by 10 matches to 5. (Chris's idea to invite the then Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Birmingham - in their full regalia on a bakingly hot day - who presented Meshack and Victor with special Birmingham medallions, later became relevant in obtaining the Grant to help the Edgbaston's club's revival.)

The international was followed by participation in tournaments at Nottingham and Bowdon, giving Meshack and Victor a wonderful opportunity to compete against a variety of top players and get a wider understanding of the croquet fraternity.

The scene in Gauteng is now a three/four lawn complex at Country Club, a project which Chris was key in persuading its Committee to endorse at considerable expense, and three other clubs in the Province. He was delighted when, this year, Country Club awarded Victor the permanent post of Croquet Administrator.

In 2001 the Edgbaston club was in severe decline – Chris and I took over the running of the club and after six years managed to get it back on track and celebrate its Centenary with enthusiasm, for which achievement we were both honoured to receive Diplomas from the CA just a week before Chris died.

I have had many accolades about Chris and those which I treasure most are the ones which remember time on the lawn with him being full of erudite banter, caustic wit and tremendous fun. One famous story is when, after his opponent unexpectedly broke down, he stuffed his pipe in his blazer pocket, having to be "extinguished" shortly afterwards when it went up in smoke!

He was a compulsive coach – often having to be discouraged from advising a higher handicapped opponent during a competitive game. He was renowned for his timeless patience and encouragement with anyone, young or old, and regardless of their ability.

It was sad that his play declined in his last few months when he should have been able to just enjoy it. Having for years been 0 – 1 handicap this drifted up and he could not understand why. Too late we now know the cause of this - undiagnosed diabetes, and the consequent affect on his heart.

Chris is deeply missed by his family and his many friends and fellow players in the UK and South Africa. But his legacy, the introduction of so many - myself included - to our beautiful game, is a priceless one.

Esther Jones.

Keith Parsons (1928 – 2009)

We are sad to report that Keith Parsons, one of the founder members of Caterham Croquet Club, has died from pneumonia after a few days in hospital.

In 1986, after taking early retirement from a career in banking, Keith and his wife Doreen joined the newly formed Caterham club. When the first committee was formed Keith was persuaded to be Treasurer. Since then he has been both Chairman and Secretary, until in the last two years he completed the cycle as Treasurer again.

Keith together with Doreen participated fully in club activities of all kinds, and also competed regularly in tournaments both in UK and abroad, even when health was failing. Keith was always gentlemanly, positive and efficient and his tall immaculately turned out figure always commanded respect. It should be added, however, that he took some time to be convinced of the merits of Golf Croquet. In the early 1990s Keith worked hard with others to get the club a second lawn, and this eventually led to the new lawn being given a grand opening by John Solomon in 1995.

In his later years Keith was diagnosed with prostate cancer for which he underwent long treatment. He faced up to it stoically and did not let it interfere with croquet or his other interests. Keith enjoyed music (piano, organ, singing, as well as music appreciation with U3A). He was an elder of the local United Reformed Church, and an active participant in Probus. All of these activities were not allowed to interfere with the joy Keith took from his family.

Sadly Doreen developed Alzheimer's a few years ago, and although Keith cared for her at home as long as he could she is now in a nursing home. Keith would visit her every day, apart from a few well earned holidays such as croquet trips to South Africa.

Keith will be sorely missed by the club, but we do have the trophy that he presented in his name and Doreen's for Level Play. This will now serve as a memorial to his valuable contribution to what the Minister at Keith's funeral described as a "Dodgy Game". Our sympathies are extended to Keith and Doreen's children and grandchildren in their sad loss.

John Gilbert

Letters

Bear of Rodborough jubilee events

This year sees the Silver Jubilee of the Bear of Rodborough Croquet Club. We are having a number of celebratory events to mark the occasion. We also have a special Jubilee Page to our web site which shows our calendar of events. To visit us, go to www.faydon.com/Bear/Bear.html (Note the capital Bs, they are important.)

How much do you know about bears? Also on the Jubilee page is a quiz that will stretch your knowledge of them to the limit. If anyone can (honestly) get them all, or nearly all, right let me know and I will let the Editor know who was best.

Don Gaunt

Life imitates art

The cover of the December issue showed Terry Mahoney demonstrating his usual sartorial elegance (eat your hearts out you scruffy colour brigade) and it is a good picture of the lady in the background asking for a bisque.

That said, what game is Terry playing? There appear to be two white balls on the court and two yellow clips on hoops; further, what is the out-focus thing in the foreground?

I remain, Sir, bewildered of Tunbridge Wells.

Nigel Gardner

The photo was taken across two adjacent lawns, hence the clips and balls. Well done to all of those who spotted it. Ed

RPM Mallets join the 21st century

Iam a CA and Nailsea member and have been assisting people in buying Ray Puckett Mallets for a while, but now he has joined the 21st century and got a website. I don't know if you have seen his work but his range of heads and handles are second to none. Anyway it makes me sort of redundant, but I would like everyone in the croquet world to be aware of it's existence via the Gazette.

The site is to be found at www.rpmallets.co.nz and is well worth a visit.

Geoff Hughes

Simple maths

At first sight the results of Paul Schofield's trigonometric calculations in the Dec 08 issue seem counter-intuitive: surely it must be harder to make a 19-yard roquet than to run a hoop cleanly from a distance of 1 foot.

An arithmetical approach fully confirms the result, however. A ball passing exactly centrally through a hoop from 1 foot away has 1/16th of an inch clearance on either side, so any deviation greater than that will cause a contact with the wire (though the hoop may well still be made successfully nevertheless). By simple multiplication, this is the same as a 1 inch deviation from 16 feet, or 3 5/8 inches (ie just sufficient to miss) from 58 feet - just over 19 yards.

I can only conclude that a) few hoops are run perfectly cleanly, though we might like to think they are; b) most players find it visually

harder to line up long shorts than short ones; and c) most lawns are not perfectly flat for such large distances - which is why croquet remains such a fascinating game.

Tom Banfield

'The Drawn Game' - yes please

As a discerning reader, I would like to roar my approval to Peter Dorke's suggestion of introducing a drawn game or no result. Whilst it is rarely fun losing, it can be thoroughly soul destroying playing an opponent who is making no attempt to peg out but is merely playing for time because they are in front. However as the rules currently stand they would be foolish to adopt a more aggressive strategy, and risk losing the game, since there is just no incentive to do so. To change this both players need to be given an incentive for the full duration of the game.

A drawn game or no result gives the player ahead an incentive, whilst keeping the player who is behind interested in that their opponent may break down in trying to finish the game at which point they can pick up the pieces. Perversely this gives the player who is behind a dilemma, in that their best strategy may turn out to be to make it as hard as possible for their opponent to peg out but ultimately a no result benefits neither player. As manager of our internal club tournaments, a couple of years ago I introduced in the round robin competitions the scoring system of 2 points for a win, 0 for a loss, with a bonus point awarded for pegging out. This greatly improved the percentage of games that finished within time

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and indeed I would say that it is just about impossible to win one of these competitions without a high number of peg outs. Another alternative would be a 3-0 score if the game finishes in time with a 2-1 score if the game goes to time.

I suggest this for handicap tournaments only. For following Peter's letter was one from Mark Miller about the Pendle B class tournament last May. This was only my second venture into advanced play and I was frankly flabbergasted at not only the number of games which went to time but also that it seemed to be an acceptable strategy. To my mind the advanced game should be being played by people who are relatively proficient at the game, to the extent that their handicaps have reduced to the level that they regularly get "bisqued" out of handicap games. This level of ability should lead to few advanced games going to time since the attitude should be that if I don't peg out then I won't win as my opponent surely will.

For advanced tournaments I strongly favour the no result. Further anyone with multiple games that go to time should be made to stand in a corner with a dunce's, or some such similar croquet-based, hat on.

Lee Hartley.

Croquet Fever, Not by John Masefield (Ha, but end's in Field.)

I must go down to the club again, and knock a ball or two.

And all I ask the good Lord, is make my ball run true.

And the winds blow the falling leaves, and the sunlight gleaming,

And a red mist as balls go rushing by, and I start a screaming.

I must go down the lawns again, for the call of the new cut grass,

Is a wild call a clear call, a call that will not pass.

And all I ask is a clear day with white clouds flying,

And the call as I hit the ball, Damn, I must keep trying.

I must go down to the club again to the vagrant gypsy life,

To hear the tea bell ring, the birds sing, but please don't tell the wife.

And all I ask is a merry yarn as the last ball runs rover,

Just the peg, then there after that, then the game is Over.

Paul Swaffield

Unwanted records and winning margins

Reading Mark Miller's letter entitled 'Unwanted Records' (Issue 317) has, perhaps somewhat perversely, brought to mind an eminently more desirable outcome to a weekend handicap tournament at Sidmouth in September 1995.

Saturday had seen me struggle to accrue two wins +1, +1t; but when Sunday replaced that delightful venue's normally clement weather with driving rain and flooded courts, the unhappy manager had no choice but to declare the contest abandoned.

Consequently, the outcome of each block was decided as things stood; my brace of meagre victories being sufficient not only to attain first place but also thereby to secure a prize. Moreover, this was not the age of the glass and pen, but rather still that of the exciting little brown envelope, and this one, with gratifying rustle and clink, duly dispensed a sum of no less than seven pounds.

Rarely at a croquet tournament can such rich reward have been proffered for so little achievement.

Laurence Latham

How frustrating it must have been for Mark Miller to have played so many games at Pendle and never to have pegged out. This must happen many times to middle and high-bisqued players.

There is surely a simple answer which I have long advocated. All games, except championship events, should be played to 14 points. We only have 6 hoops so why do we have to make them twice? Under advanced laws, with lifts after hoops 3 and 4, a triple peel presents considerable difficulty. But the advantage is that no time limits are necessary as most games will finish in about 2 hours.

Many not-so-young players will not enter tournaments where they are required to play 3 games a day, each of 3.5 hours, probably over 10 hours play a day. Not surprising when you consider we do this for fun! With only 14 points you can, if you wish, play 4 games a day and still get home for supper.

I would urge all managers not only to consider this, but to do it.

John Solomon

Marketing Committee

RECRUITMENT – TO ENCOURAGE OR NOT DISCOURAGE

It's that time of year again when thoughts turn to increasing and sustaining club membership. Once again, plans are dusted down for Open Days, Fun Days, Come and Try Days; old adverts are updated, budgets set and people conscripted; the perennial negative arguments of 'won't work, tried it before' are banished and we are all set for another season.

Marketing is full of surprises, a strategy that exceeds expectations one year will disappoint at another time. Success at one club does not guarantee similar results elsewhere, as one marketing guru wrote: "50% of any marketing strategy is wasted, the problem is we never know which 50%".

However, there must be hundreds of interesting and positive actions that can be taken. Here are ten ideas gleaned from research last season:

Where is your Community?

Relying on adverts, articles and pictures in local Newspapers is a common strategy, however, do not forget the many community newsletters that abound in your area – parish magazines, residents associations, U3A, Mensa, health centres, libraries, sports centres, social clubs, community centres, PTAs, heritage associations, etc. Many of these will willingly print your press releases and adverts for free. The main problem is identifying the various editors and then working within a wide range of tight printing deadlines but the bonus is that recruits in this area often come with friends and partners.

What are you Selling?

You can describe the world of croquet, your wonderful club, excellent facilities, personal and sporting development, friendly members, social events, objectives of the game, etc., all of which sounds good to those of us 'in the know' but can be confusing to others. The unique selling proposition is usually a Beginners' Course or an Open Day, so keep it simple, headline the event, tell them about it, then tell them again. You can always sell all the other features when your public arrives.

Visibility

Can passers by see your club or better still observe people playing. Is there one of those brown "directional signposts" in the road nearby (see your local council for procedures) and at least a club sign (with correct telephone number) on your main entrance. It is not unusual to see passers by passing by, shaking their heads whilst trying to fathom out what is happening on the lawns. Some clubs have attractive weatherproof A Boards describing the game together with convenient leaflet dispensers – the CA can provide leaflets. Marketing is very often about suggestive links working together – media coverage, leaflets and visibility often reinforce each other.

Encouraging means Not Discouraging

Encouraging new members on coaching courses is essential to retain them – this is so obvious it hardly needs stating – however,

thinking of it in terms of 'not discouraging' provides several perhaps unconsidered insights. New members are entering a strange world of procedures, etiquette, jargon, clubhouse peculiarities, to say nothing of existing member predilections and cliques. To some people this is all part of the excitement, but to others it can be nerve racking. Does anyone go out of their way in your club to look after new members? That quiet person watching from the sidelines and who suddenly disappears, could have been a future first class croquet player or maybe a potential club stalwart!

Hoop Running made easy

To rephrase a golfing metaphor – 'roquet for show, hoop run for dough' – running hoops creates the most satisfying (and frustrating) aspects of the game. So why not use extra wide hoops at the start of beginners' courses to build success and create those positive synapses in the head. Achieving success (even when small) will definitely not discourage and is the greatest motivator.

With a little help from my friends

Allocating mentors to new members can be a subversive way of leading recruits along the perhaps daunting path into the croquet world. Choosing mentors with care, perhaps even training them, provides a friendly personal introduction into wider club membership. Mentors can befriend beginners and invite them to the lawns at other times, providing a gentle but positive approach to their novice errors of play and then they

Croquet as a Gift

A place on a Beginners' croquet course may not sound the most exciting event but it really depends on the presentation. As a unique gift, ideal for birthdays or anniversaries (even Xmas), correctly advertised and packaged in an attractive information leaflet, could provide a marketing bonus.

Appealing

Fun Days, Open Days, Come & Try are usually easy to publicise, but the publicity can really benefit if there is an entrance fee and charges for refreshments with proceeds going to well known local charity. For such events it may be possible to attract a 'well known local' to open the event. Don't forget to get everyone's contact details for future marketing activities. Corporate Golf Croquet Evenings can be an excellent method of fundraising – four lawns and one evening per week can generate £1000 per annum easily – you may be surprised to find out how popular a 'unique, fun filled, competitive' evening becomes with groups from local PTAs, Round Table, employers, wine tasting clubs, etc., but again, remember to collect contact details for future marketing.

Every Little Helps

You may feel your membership fees are reasonable, a bargain even, but to the beginner who is unsure if this sport is for them, it often requires careful consideration whether to invest in a second years membership. Why not provide a financial incentive such as first year subscriptions (not usually a full year anyway) includes coaching fees and also provides ongoing second year membership with no extra charge

Beginners Coaching

All kinds of opinions can be generated here, especially the deployment of coaching resources:

- identify new members with croquet potential and concentrate on their development to the exclusion of others?

- accept some people will only ever develop as 'social players'

and present the course accordingly?

-recognise learning takes place at different rates with different people so need to provide lots of development pathways.

Many clubs have found the following helpful in the early stages of new membership – use short lawns, wide hoops, garden croquet rules, Ricochet (see Oxford website), alternate stroke doubles, maximum three hoop breaks, etc. The essential message seems to be – get people playing croquet as soon as possible in the coaching sessions, not placing too much emphasis on the various croquet shots, just get them into the habit of striking balls with a smooth swing and running hoops. Keep it simple.

Your Choice

It is possible to generate good recruitment, especially from the mature section of the community, but whether those recruits will develop a serious aptitude for the game, prefer a more leisurely existence within the club, or even walk away will depend so much on the club environment and attitude to the various formats of Croquet. For more information there is a wealth of ideas on the CA website under the Technical & Articles section.

The Marketing Committee

January 2009

In the December issue of the Gazette, we ran a competition to find the best description of ‘what is croquet?’. The winner was Dick Knapp, who collects a case of wine for his efforts. His winning entry is as follows.

Croquet: Myth and Reality

People have said to me, “If I had known how much I was going to enjoy croquet, I’d have started it much sooner, even if it meant cutting down on some other activity”. Croquet is an unusual sport because it does not require strength, speed, agility or endurance – traits which most better-known sports require in varying degrees. Like snooker, a sport to which it is closely allied, croquet requires hand-eye co-ordination, concentration and the ability to plan ahead and think strategically. Lest I give the impression that athletic ability is detrimental to the development of a croquet player, I should point out that in the UK we count a former Junior Wimbledon tennis champion among our avid players and in the US the four-times national croquet champion was a world class tennis player and a 2 handicap golfer.

While many think of croquet as a game for older people it’s worth noting that, in croquet, like most other sports, the top players are in their teens, twenties and thirties. It is possible that one of the reasons croquet is weighted towards older players is because many people take it up after they have sustained injuries which prevent them from continuing with their primary sport but, because the competitive spirit burns bright, they turn to croquet as an alternative. There are more than 175 open tournaments in the UK over the course of the season.

Croquet is a game which is stimulating, competitive and fun. So, if you’re looking for an activity which satisfies your competitive instincts, or just fancy a knock around the lawn on a Sunday afternoon, contact the Croquet Association and they will provide you with a list of clubs in your area. Croquet. Try it, you might like it!!

The Laws Committee

Super-Advanced Play

by Ian Vincent, Chairman, AC Laws Committee

Following discussions about the one-sidedness of many games of Association Croquet at the very top level, the AC Laws Committee has proposed that Council shall exercise its power under clause 27(b) of the CA Constitution to authorise the adoption of the following temporary variations of the Laws for the 2009 and 2010 seasons. The first will introduce an optional extension of Advanced Play, to be called Super-Advanced Play, with the intention of making the games between top class players more interactive. The second is an attempt to reduce the dominance of the super-shot opening at the top level with a view to restoring the variety that existed before it became prevalent. The AC Tournaments Committee have proposed that these should be trialled in the 2009 South of England Championship and any other events that clubs wish to advertise them for, with a view to trying them in the 2010 President’s Cup.

“Insert a new sub-law 36(f), with appropriate changes to other Laws to include it in cross-references from them to other parts of Law 36:

*(f) SUPER-ADVANCED PLAY

When a game is played under conditions of super-advanced singles play, Law 36 is modified as follows:

(1) A lift as specified in Law 36(a) is also available if the striker’s ball of the preceding turn scored hoop 4 for itself in that turn.

(2) A lift or contact as specified in Law 36(b) is also available if the striker’s ball of the preceding turn scored both hoops 4 and 1-back for itself in that turn and its partner ball had not scored hoop 4 before that turn.

(3) If the striker’s ball of the preceding turn scored hoops 4 and 4-back in that turn and its partner ball had not scored hoop 4 before that turn, the striker may start his turn:

(A) as in Laws 36(a)(1), 36(a)(2) or 36(b)(2); or

(B) subject to Laws 36(c) and 36(f)(5), by lifting either ball of his side that can lawfully be played, even if it is in contact with one or more balls, and playing it from any unoccupied position on the court (including a position within the yard-line area). Law 36(d) also applies to this case.

(4) Law 36(c) also applies to a lift to position under Law 36(f)(3).

(5) The striker is not entitled to a lift to position under Law 36(f)(3) if he has previously scored hoops 4 and 4-back in the same turn before his partner had scored hoop 4.”

“Insert a new sub-law 36(g):

*(g) RESTRICTED OPENING When a game is played under this sub-law, in the first stroke of the game the striker’s ball must leave the court, or hit a hoop or the peg, or run the first hoop. If it does not, the ball is placed on any point on either baulk-line as the striker chooses and the turn ends.”

Golf Croquet

Golf Croquet Review 2008

by Bill Arliss

As 2008 is my final year as Chairman of the Golf Croquet Tournament Committee and I have now handed the reins over to Tim King, I felt it may be interesting to look back over the way this format of the game has developed over the last decade as well as reviewing the 2008 season. 2008 has been quite a significant year for Golf Croquet (GC) as it marked the final stage of the integration of GC into the structure of the Croquet Association.

If we go back to the late 1990’s, this was really the start of the rebirth of GC within the UK. In 1998 the WCF organised a GC World championship in Leamington and I believe it was this event brought it home to many croquet players in the UK that GC was not just a geriatric pastime. The CA had taken a policy decision that GC must be taken seriously and had formed a standing committee to deal with all such matters. Their terms of reference were extremely broad and the committee dealt with virtually everything connected with GC as every other standing committee put up the shutters very quickly when GC was mentioned. However taking a policy decision and implementing it are two very different matters. Most of the CA Council were staunch supporters of the Association game and if not hostile towards GC were certainly very indifferent. The first GC Committee had extreme difficulty in recruiting Council members and in fact the only member from Council was the Chairman, Syd Jones. By 2000 the growth of the GC game in the clubs was beginning to be noticed and the effect it was having on stabilising many clubs finances ensured that GC was here to stay.

In 2000 I joined the GC Committee as Chairman and from day one our aim was to develop a full GC Tournament programme. In that year the Open Championship and the GC Inter Club were started to join the existing Ascot and Ranelagh Cups plus the fledgling GC Inter Counties and the All England Handicap. The Ascot and Ranelagh were the only events

that had some reasonable history and were the singles and double championships for GC. Unfortunately they were very low key affairs with the finals hidden away at a small club over one weekend. Both the All England and the GC Inter Counties were started by the original GC Committee in 1999 and 1998 respectively. Two club events at Ripon and Ramsgate initially made up the total tournament programme. The lack of a full tournament programme caused difficulties of applying normal tournament membership regulations if players only supported the GC format.

As we now know the growth of GC Tournament play has continued every year since then, both in CA sponsored and club events. A Selectors weekend was started in 2003 with one Eight and increased to two Eights in 2008. A Veterans event was also started in 2007. The biggest growth however has been in the clubs with 19 listed events in 2008. For those whose only interested is in playing golf croquet, there are now sufficient events for a full seasons play at all skill levels. For those who play both formats, the major problem now is deciding which events to support as the size of the GC programme is now leading to the inevitable clashes in dates between the two formats.

As I mentioned earlier, administration of Golf Croquet was effectively separated from Association Croquet at the start of its growth. In hindsight this was a wise decision as I believe it was the single mindedness of the early GC Committees that ensured the development of the GC programme. However as GC continued to gain popularity, both on the lawns and in Council, thoughts were given to a much greater integration of management of GC affairs into the CA structure. In 2007 a working party started to look at the CA committee structure and their proposals were implemented in 2008. Effectively all matters of coaching, handicap, international and development applying to GC were transferred to the terms of reference of the appropriate standing committee. At the same time the Chairman of Council ensured that each of these committees had suitable members who knew, played and would champion GC. The three exceptions were Tournament, Selection and Laws. I suppose logically one might question why the tournament matters were not combined but the simple truth is that the joint programme would be too big for one committee to handle so we have kept separate tournament

committees for GC and AC but with some common members on both to ensure coordination. It is logical to keep separate laws and selection committees as both require either specialist knowledge or experience. Overall it is now fair to say that Association Croquet and Golf Croquet are now very much on an even footing within the CA organisation and there are now ample opportunities to play either or both versions of the game.

The 2008 season started early with the GC World Championship being staged in S Africa at several venues around Cape Town. Thirteen players made up the England squad with seven making the first knockout round. Unfortunately only Stephen Mulliner and Chris Clarke made the next round. Chris Clarke continued until the semi final when he lost to the eventual champion, Ahmed Nasr. As usual the Egyptians showed their strength in depth having five players in the last eight, however an all Egyptian final was ruled out when Reg Bamford unseated Mohamed Nasr in the semi final to book his place in the final. Unfortunately Reg could not make the last step and Ahmed Nasr won the final 3-1.

We started our season in the UK with the issue of a new laws book (the “Gold Book”) which featured mainly the repeal of the dreaded wrong ball law but at the same time brought our handicap ranges into line with the rest of the world. The significant factor about the new laws is that we had adopted the exact wording of the WCF Rules of Golf Croquet as our laws.

The playing season in the UK started with the usual Surbiton tournament at the beginning of April. Saturday produced some fine weather and some excellent games. Unfortunately the only outside activity on Sunday was the building of a snowman by Tom Weston from the 2 inch layer of snow that fell earlier in the morning.

Entries for the GC Inter Club beat all previous years records with nineteen teams taking part. The final was between Ashby and Surbiton in September, the honours going to Surbiton with a 5-2 victory.

The first CA sponsored competition was the Open Championship in June. Normally the Opens have been held at one of the larger clubs but this year due to over booking by Budleigh, the club had to withdraw its offer to host the competition at a rather late stage. Nottingham came to the

rescue and managed to provide us with six lawns. Sixteen pairs entered the doubles which was played as four blocks of four with the top of each block entering a knockout. As last year, the combined strength of Bamford and Mulliner proved too much for all other pairs and they retained their title in a final against John Spiers and Nick Butler. With the limited number of lawns there had to be a quite a lot of double banking in the block stages but the blocks were successfully completed on time and gave us a final eight which followed the rankings. Reg Bamford went on to win his sixth title in the last seven years.

Again because of the lack of lawns, the consolation event was run as a 10-10 Doubles. For those who have not yet tried this variation, it is identical to the normal game except that each side have only ten minutes to play their turns with the elapsed time being kept for each side on a set of chess clocks. Surprisingly players do not have to run around to save time, it is simply a case of making your mind up quickly and playing the shot (without a lot of swinging of course). The event was won by Chris Sheen and Richard Thompson. Myself and Nick Butler claimed the fastest game taking only 5 minutes 42 seconds of elapsed time to win a game 7-4. Although I believe most players enjoyed this experiment, we will return to the normal singles next year for the plate event.

The All England Handicap Final was staged at East Dorset. A wide range of handicaps and ages had reached the final. It was very pleasing to note that youth prevailed and the two finalists were both fifteen years old. The eventual winner was Ryan Cabble from Bristol who beat James Goodburn from Ramsgate. One only has to look at the list of past winners of this competition (archives on the CA web site) to see how many of our present top players started in this competition. The Manager reported that many games were very close and felt that this vindicated the present handicap system. One change we have introduced for next year is to remove the lower handicap limit.

Some four years ago, the CA took over the running of two entry level competitions, the Grass Roots and Centre Stage. These had been started privately but when the organiser became ill, they were in danger of collapsing. I am pleased to say that they are now well established and a

regular part of our overall tournament programme. They are designed for those with high handicaps or indeed no handicap in the case of the former. Grass Roots in particular has proved to be a popular introduction to competitive play with the emphasis shifting from 'friendly doubles' to singles as the various rounds progress. Centre Stage offers a sterner test of singles play and is seen as valuable preparation for tournament play. The Finals of both competitions were held at Northampton in August. The winner of Grass Roots was Trevor Wood of Ilkley U3A and the winner of Centre Stage was Ian Morrison of Lansdown.

The qualification arrangements for the National Singles Championship, the Ascot Cup, were changed again this year. Players can now only qualify for the final by actually winning one of the qualifying club events throughout the season. However this does not always produce the necessary sixteen players for the final and any shortfall is made up by players who have gained place points in the same qualifying tournament. Finishing in the top four, other than first place brings qualifying points which can be totalled through the season. This year produced one of the strongest fields ever for a GC event in the UK with Bamford, Fulford and Beijderwellan as the forerunners. In a close finish at Hurlingham, Rob Fulford just managed to beat Reg Bamford 2-1.

This year for the first time a second Selectors Eight was staged at Tunbridge Wells. The first eight was held at Pendle where Ian Lines won the Musk Cup. Nick Butler won the second eight and the new Kate Jones Memorial Trophy presented by Tim King in memory of his sister who tragically died earlier in the year.

Entries for the GC Inter Counties took another massive step forward with thirteen entries. We had taken a long look at possible formats and come to the conclusion that if we could obtain all eleven lawns at Southwick, we could accept a maximum of twelve teams and so a ballot was held between the three new entrants to allocate the last two places. Suffolk were the unfortunate team. Unfortunately Devon had not done their homework properly and had to withdraw at the last moment due to lack of players but a CA Select side was quickly formed and the playing schedules were maintained. To ease the congestion in the tournament programme, the event had been moved to September and Southwick laid on

a special buffet dinner on the Saturday evening which was thoroughly enjoyed by all and looks like becoming a permanent feature of the event. The eventual winners were Surrey. I believe that this tournament has now reached the same stage as the AC Inter Counties where it is not just another major tournament but has become a yearly festival of Golf Croquet where a very large majority of the GC tournament players meet at one venue.

I would say that the GC Tournament programme has now reached a plateau and we will have to look very carefully before we introduce new events. With many players now playing both formats, the problem of scheduling dates for events becomes much more of a problem if we are to prevent clashes between major AC and GC events.

As retiring Chairman of the GC Tournament Committee, I would like to sincerely thank all those players, especially our GC Tournament Committee, who have helped to develop the full programme of GC events that we now have.

Report of Council Meeting

By Ian Vincent, Hon. Secretary

Council met on Saturday 24th January at Hurlingham. The Vice-Chairman, Barry Keen, chaired the meeting for the first few items as Patricia Duke-Cox was stuck in a train.

John Spiers was welcomed to his first meeting.

Roger Bray, the Hon. Treasurer, reported that the outcome for 2008 was expected to be a surplus of approximately £1,000, though that includes about £7,000 of investment income (net of tax), so the underlying position is less rosy. Some expected expenditure did not materialise, so the outcome is better than budgeted, but substantially worse than in 2007 due to costs associated with the restructuring.

A provisional budget was agreed for 2009, but the estimate for commercial

income is very uncertain and may well have to be revised downwards. The office extension is treated as a capital item, and is currently expected to cost £52,000.

A bursary scheme for juniors was approved in principle and should be operational this year.

John Solomon is retiring as a trustee and was thanked for his service. Colin Irwin will replace him.

The main business was to consider a set of recommendations from the International Committee for Council's policy towards the World Croquet Federation, which was set up about 20 years ago. They were presented as a set of motions, with background information for each. The first two were general in nature, re-affirming support for the WCF and seeking to increase its effectiveness. The others covered topics such as drugs policy, the MacRobertson Shield and a World Team Championship, and stewardship of the Laws. The motions are published in full on the CA website.

News & Information

Limited Edition Croquet Figure

The Peg Out, is the first in a series of fine ceramic figurines celebrating the sport of croquet, from The English Ceramics Company. It is exquisitely modelled by renowned ceramic artist, Adrian Hughes, who has created models for leading brands such as Royal Doulton, Minton, Country Artists and Border Fine Arts. The figurine is hand made in Stoke-on-Trent, the heart of the Potteries, using the traditional skills of the craftsmen and women who have produced the highest quality figurines for the leading collectable brands in the industry.

The fine china figurine, to be produced in a limited numbered edition of 250, is hand painted using under-glaze colours to give the distinctive character of the piece. This is a fantastic opportunity to own an exclusive English sporting figurine.

For further details see the advert on page

WCF Ordinary General Meeting

WCF Member Associations have been formally advised that the next WCF Ordinary General Council

Meeting will take place on Tuesday 12th May 2009 at the National Croquet Center, West Palm Beach, Florida, USA at 8.00pm. A buffet meal will be served to delegates at 7.00pm.

The agenda for the meeting is as per WCF Statutes (Article 107).

To service the meeting, the following WCF Statute timetable applies:-

- The "End Date" is 12th May 2009. (Article 108.2)

- The last date for all notice of resolutions to be made by a member association together with any supporting documentation, must be received by the WCF Secretary-General by 13th March 2009. (Article 109.2)

- In turn these will be circulated to all members associations by the Secretary-General by that date. (Article 109.4)

- Member associations may then respond outlining arguments for or against the proposals made, including any amendments to the Secretary-General no later than 2nd April 2009. (Article 109.5)

- The Secretary-General shall then give notice of these documents (together with a voting paper to full voting members) no later than 12th April 2009. (Article 109.5)

- Full voting member associations shall advise the Secretary-General of the names of their delegates, or any possible substitutes, who will represent them at the meeting no later than 12th April 2009 (Article 110.2)

- Full voting member associations may vote by "post", by sending it to the designated returning officer(s), no later than 5th May 2009 (Article 110.3)

Advice

The tight schedule is as per WCF Statute. All member associations have been encouraged and requested to ensure that they have adequate procedures to:-

- ensure that any notice of resolution is made promptly and no later than 13th March 2009;

- consider any notices of resolution made and notified to them by 13th March 2009 for response no later than 2nd April 2009;

- designate voting delegates by 12th April 2009.

Non voting members

Although voting can only be undertaken by Full member associations, all other member associations have been encouraged to send a delegate to observe the proceedings and otherwise participate in the proceedings. All Croquet Enthusiasts

Any croquet enthusiast anywhere, who wishes to propose any change to WCF

Statutes or the way in which WCF does things, should send details of their proposal to their respective WCF member association. In turn, it is they alone who will decide whether to support such a proposal for eventual notice as per the above timetable.

Laws of Croquet Translated

In this time of financial strife and reduced investment world-wide, it is refreshing to see that the World Croquet Federation (WCF) Development Programme continues to reap more dividends for players around the world.

With a modest backing of £500 (GBP) from the WCF, the Finnish Croquet Association has organised the complete translation of the Laws of Association Croquet, the Rules of Golf Croquet and a brief synopsis of the game into the Finnish language. They are available via the **WCF web site and the Finnish CA.**

With the language being closely related to Hungarian it may actually serve more than one set of players and enthusiasts.

The translation was made possible through the Finnish CA who provided the expertise and with kind permission of the CA (of England), the Australian CA, Croquet New Zealand and the United States CA, who retain the copyright of the Laws of Association Croquet.

WCF World Championship 2009

The WCF Wild Card selection process for the above event has now been completed. All selected players have been invited and WCF awaits confirmation of participation from two.

WCF has also established a "reserve" list from which further selections will be made in the event of any withdrawals prior to the Qualification Tournament closing date of 13th April 2009.

The Qualification Tournament, for those players that are unsuccessful in securing a direct entry or selection via the wild card process, will take place at the National Croquet Centre, West Palm Beach, Florida, USA from 4th to 7th May 2009 inclusive.

The cost of entry is \$70 (USD) per player. Entries should be sent to:-

United States Croquet Association
700 Florida Mango Road
West Palm Beach, Florida 33406, USA
Phone: +001 (561) 478-0760
E-Mail: tournamentusca@aol.com

The closing date for entries is Monday 13th April 2009.

Talking Croquet

Tremaine Arkley - Part 2

Interviewed by David Appleton

In the second part of Tremaine Arkley's conversation with David Appleton he talks about his collection of croquet art and memorabilia, including his exciting plans for it.

DA Tremaine, it has been interesting hearing about the progress of Association Croquet in the United States and your own part in that, but I suspect we would not be talking at such length if that was all you had done. Let us move on to your interest in collecting croquet memorabilia and particularly croquet art. What got you started?

TA When Gail and I travelled in England and the Continent before my croquet days we visited museums. Then later, playing croquet in England, I wondered if there was any art related to croquet. It was a passing thought that, as it turned out, became a major interest in my life – some would say an obsession.

To begin with, my driving force to collect croquet art was a wish to save the history of the sport. I don't know where this collecting drive came from. Maybe I have a collector's gene, as both my parents were collectors, or maybe it was my tendency to cheer on the underdog, the unrecognized. I had a horrible feeling that much of the art of this obscure sport would be lost if not put in one place. Nobody was doing this in a single-minded effort and I felt it was important enough to try. I knew I could not collect everything but I hoped I could acquire a significant amount.

DA What were the first items you acquired?

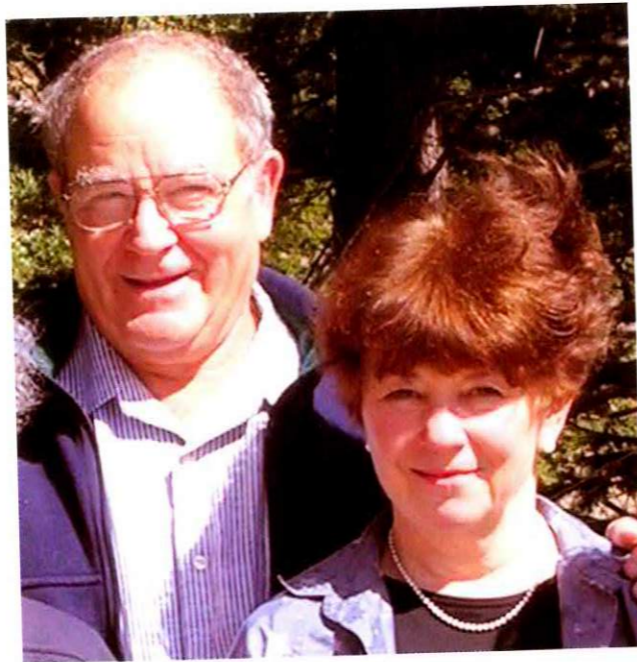
Our first introduction to croquet art came from Colin and Chris Irwin who were selling prints of Hadham Hall showing a court on the lawn. We bought one and then I started exploring what else was available.



The Print of Hadham Hall

TA I bought a watercolour of cats playing croquet on the beach and quickly developed relationships with a few gallery owners in London and later in New York City. I slowly started buying croquet art: mainly paintings, drawings, prints and illustrations. This was around 1988.

I soon discovered that there were major 19th century artists who had painted croquet images – Renoir, Winslow Homer, JJ Tissot, Manet, Monet, Berthe Morisot and others – but these were



Tremaine & Gail Arkley

already in major museums and private collections. OK, I thought, much to my financial relief these have been saved, so I kept focusing on what was available.

I also discovered that, except for Richard Pearman of Bermuda, no one was seriously collecting croquet art and there was not much on the market. It made my decisions easy since there was not much to choose from. It was not like baseball, tennis or golf art where one had hundreds of choices. So I waited until something became available, checked it out, and if it was not over-painted or damaged we added it to the collection. I then had it matted and framed to museum standards for preservation purposes.

DA How did you find the items?

TA I spent an inordinate amount of time on the telephone contacting auction houses, galleries and likely individuals all over the world, making friends, developing relationships. This was before the use of the internet was common.

Chris Beetles from London was very influential in helping me develop the collection with his sound advice and ability to locate some rare and hard-to-find pieces. He has a gallery in St James's on Ryder Street and is one of the foremost dealers in 19th and 20th century art. He and his wife Carol are now very good friends of ours. I also had a lot of help with many American illustrations from Walt Reed, the owner of Illustration House on West 25th Street, New York.

Since I was the only person who was asking about croquet art I went to the top of their lists as a potential customer. I also discovered I could negotiate favourable prices when they realized I was not interested in resale but more concerned with establishing a collection for historical purposes. Thus I was not competing in their field of art dealing. I was always gratified when, as time went by, my sources told me of others looking for croquet art and they had had to tell them that they already had a primary customer, therefore discouraging potential competition.

DA Is there a particular focus for your art collection?

TA At first I let what was available on the market dictate the focus. I was interested in any piece that had croquet as the subject. I had no idea what was going to be available. It soon became apparent that one theme was English paintings from the 1860s to

the 1890s featuring women. They were the dominant figures and shown positively. The middle of the 19th century, during the initial croquet craze, was when women were finally liberated from the stuffy confines of the Victorian parlours to the outdoors where they could mingle with men, often without chaperones. We began to document an important part of the early women's movement in the paintings and prints of that period.

Many of the painters were English with solid reputations and a strong exhibition record in England and elsewhere. Most would be considered minor painters today. Examples would be Philip Calderon, Charles Green, Heywood Hardy, George Elgar Hicks, Clement Lambert, Benjamin Leader and Alfred Perrin.

There is also a large part devoted to the 19th Century English School, by which I mean unsigned pieces or those with unidentified monograms. They can be spectacular pieces including a collage under glass in its original walnut frame: there are pugs in the foreground with a croquet ball and a woman croquet player running a hoop, gazing out at a hot air balloon in the sky floating over Gopsal Hall, in the background. The background is watercolour but cloth, silk and feathers are used for the woman's outfit and hat, while the mallets have been cut out from paper and painted.

We also found many 19th and 20th century cartoons including all the early *Punch* croquet cartoons. We are especially fond of John Leech's 1862 piece *A nice game for two or more* which we have in large and small prints.



John Leech's 'A nice game for two or more'

It became obvious to me that croquet cartoons were a metaphor for satire, both political and social, as well as other cultural comments. The beauty of croquet was that the cartoon image did not have to be set on a croquet lawn, all it required was some reference to croquet to make the point, unlike tennis or golf which were restricted, in most cases, to where the game was played.

DA What else is in the collection?

TA The body of the collection is fine art: oil paintings, watercolours, pastels, pen & inks, illustrations, cartoons and a variety of other media. We also have over 3000 prints and other paper items including newspapers, magazines and advertisements. The photography collection is a recent addition with over 1000 items including a nice American segment. The croquet books include all the major first editions, many author-presentation copies, and some very rare one-of-a-kind books with outstanding illustrations.

DA Any particularly special books?

TA When I started collecting I added most of the first edition books to the collection plus duplicates when I found them.

Many are inscribed or presentation copies from the author. I have all the majors including H.F. Crowther Smith's and Tollemache's various books and an autographed copy of *Notes on Croquet* by R.C.A. Prior. A particular favorite of mine is *Expert Croquet Tactics* by Keith Wylie with a very long and humorous note to me by Keith. He also sent me a long personal letter included with his paperback edition.

I have Maud Drummond's personal copy of Dr Leonard William's classic *Croquet* including the author's amazing obituary she glued inside the front cover. I bought Maurice Reckitt's signed presentation copy of *Croquet Today*, including his note: "Don't leave all your thinking till the end of the break", and eight signed photos of players in the book. At the 1989 World Championships at Hurlingham I mentioned this purchase to Betty Prichard and she told me she always wondered what happened to that book after it was borrowed and never returned to the CA office!

During my collecting period I met David Drazin and realized here was the major croquet book collector and I happily pulled out and left it to him! His goal of saving that part of croquet history through the books and periodicals was in good hands. He also saved me a lot of money! From time to time I picked up little rare gems with croquet illustrations. I also buy the first edition books where I have the original croquet illustration.

DA What is your oldest item?

TA The oldest piece is an 1857 watercolour painted at Charts Edge in Kent by a young woman named Kathleen Fry whose descendants still live there.

Interestingly women are featured in a great many of the early pieces, usually in dominant poses or roles, while cartoons often show men as buffoons and otherwise make some sharp social criticisms.

DA Who are some of the illustrators in your collection that those of us in Britain might recognize?

TA We have five illustrations by Ernest Shepard – best known for his illustrations of Winnie The Pooh – from *Punch* in the 1930s, and three by William Heath Robinson – equally famous for his silly contraptions – one entitled *Roof Croquet* from his book *How to Live in A Flat*.



E.H. Shepard - 'aunt Emily made one mighty swipe' (1961)

We also have items by Leonard Leslie Brooke (the father of one of your Home Secretaries) from the book *Johnny Crow's Party* and a caricature, the subject of which is still unidentified, by Edmund Dulac (a Frenchman who worked in England for most of his life).

Other names you might recognize are Edward Ardizzone (who wrote the *Little Tim* stories), Quentin Blake (best known for his work with Roald Dahl) and the famous cat illustrator Louis Wain.

DA What have you from magazines and newspapers?

TA We have all the major prints from the 19th century. These are the ones mainly found in *London Illustrated News*, *The Graphic* (a British weekly illustrated paper which ran from 1869 to 1932), *Punch*, *Harper's* and other popular periodicals of the day. We also collected vast numbers of 19th and 20th century advertisements featuring croquet in some form, and a huge numbers of prints from a variety of other magazines, newspapers and trade cards.

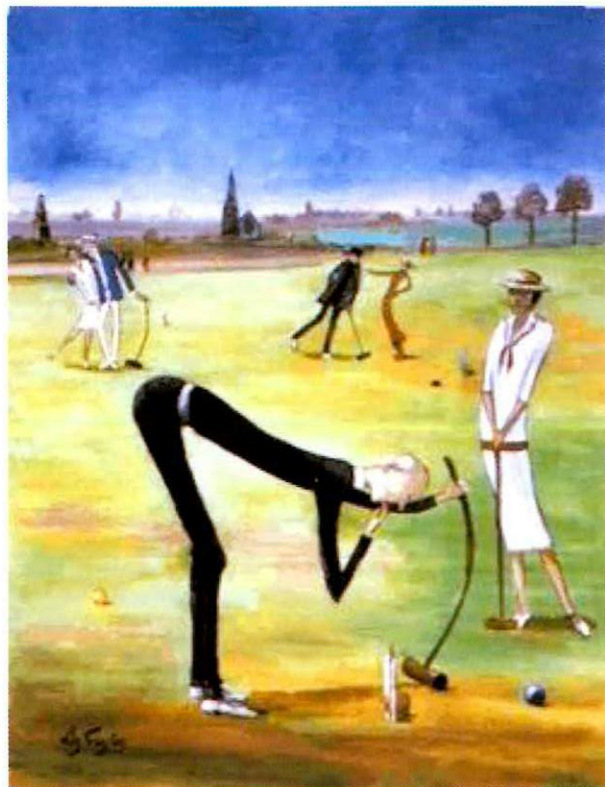
There is a particularly interesting series in *The Graphic* showing the courts at Sheen House in Richmond from the 1890s, featuring many women players in elegant outfits at the Championships.

DA You said you also have photographs.

TA They are interesting in that many show croquet in a variety of everyday locations. Granted there are stylized upper class pictures at grand houses, but the bulk show people in rural locations playing croquet or posing for the camera surrounded by equipment on rudimentary courts. There are also many of children with or without their parents, and lots show croquet lawns at holiday resorts, spas and hotels.

I have a solid collection from the USA, many back to the American Civil War and others in rural settings and backyards. I began to realize that croquet was a very popular activity for a wide range of social classes.

DA Are all your images historical or do you also collect contemporary croquet art?



Liz Taylor-Webb 'Did the earth move said the Bishop?'

TA I do. When I started I was fortunate to meet Liz Taylor and acquired from her some lovely paintings and original card illustrations including one transaction at Hurlingham from a personal boot sale during one British Open! I also bought

watercolours from John Prince in New Zealand including all the months of one of his croquet calendars which was a satirical series of players from England and elsewhere.

I have also been buying some modern surrealistic paintings and a quantity of outsider or primitive croquet art. One is so weird I keep it stacked against the wall at the farmhouse in Oregon. It is by a woman, Ann Harper, who is a painter and a therapist.

DA is it so very strange?

TA It shows a young woman on a croquet court, thin and sick with a bald head, looking very ill. She is holding a mallet, ready to hit a ball in front of her. There is another ball in the background. In the air a barn owl is flying away from her. Upon closer inspection the croquet balls are rolled-up baby barn owls. The colours are subdued sickly pastel tones. It is about 2' x 2 1/2' unframed oil on canvas.



The Surreal Child by Ann Harper

DA Do you ever commission a painting?

TA Rarely. I am hesitant to do so because then I am obliged to purchase the piece even if I cannot stand it. However, in 1988 Natasha Ledwidge illustrated the cover of AE Gill's *Croquet, the Complete Guide* published in London. I contacted her and bought the original, which I loved. I call it *Hoity-toity croquet!* I then asked her to do me a series of five pastels which she completed in 1993. These have yet to be exhibited and are outstanding humorous pieces including *Nymphs croquetting* and *Napoleon in his study*.

Matt Wuerker, a well known American political cartoonist did a great satirical drawing for *Z Magazine* and I asked him to do some additional pen and inks for me. We collaborated a bit and he came up with some biting political pieces including the caricature of the 1993 USA MacRobertson Shield team and *Crow Kay*, a dressed-up bird set on the lawns of Hurlingham.

DA Do you have a favourite painting in the collection?

TA My favourite is *Le Croquet* by Louise Abbéma painted in 1872 when she was 14 years old. The painting is on long-term loan to the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, DC. She was a lifelong friend of Sarah Barnhardt. This painting has been widely exhibited including in some first-rate Impressionist shows.

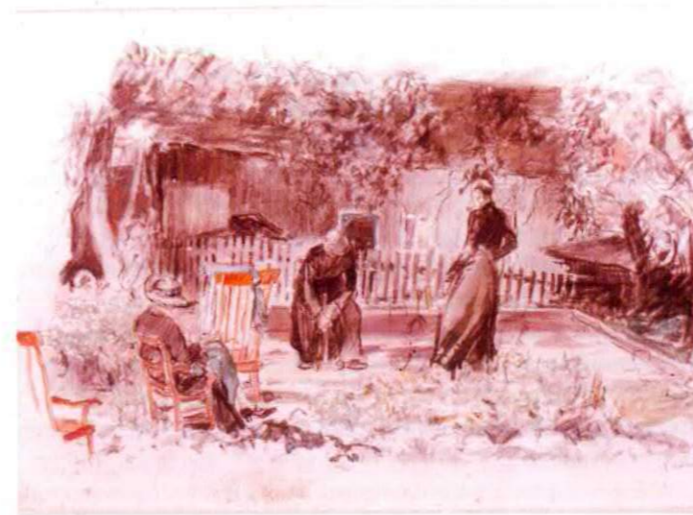


Louise Abbéma, *Le Croquet*

DA Tell me about some of your American pieces.

In America there was a period when members of the literary Algonquin Round Table used to spend summers at Alexander Woollcott's retreat on Neshobe Island in Vermont. This gang included Harpo Marx, Dorothy Parker and many others; over the years they had many fierce croquet games on the island. We have an original drawing of the famous incident of Dorothy Parker playing croquet on the island, nude except for a garden hat.

A few years back I made a trip to Neshobe Island with a friend who knew the owner who had purchased the island from Woollcott's handyman who had inherited it from Woollcott. Everything was in original condition including the infamous croquet court. We located all the croquet equipment in a shed, including Harpo Marx's mallet. The owner was in the process of selling the island and we all expressed concern we would lose this piece of croquet history with the sale, so my friend's foundation accepted the donation of all the equipment.



George Wright - *Monsieurs le Cure et le Abbe playing croquet (1921)*

The island was subsequently sold to a family who maintain it as a non-profit concern dedicated to preserving the history of the island rather than commercially developing the property. We plan to give them the original Dorothy Parker drawing to be hung in Woollcott's stone house on the island.

I have an oil painting set in the south during the Civil War period showing a plantation owner and his family playing croquet with women slaves in the background carrying bales of cotton on their heads, and I have many American cartoons and pieces from a group of Westport, Connecticut artists of the 1920s.

DA You are going to make a donation of the Dorothy Parker drawing and lately you have been giving away other parts of the collection. Are you breaking it up?

TA As part of my goal of saving the history of the game through art I started to identify certain pieces that could be returned to their places of origin. I was not interested in selling pieces of art; I am not in that business. Recently I donated two pieces where I felt they belonged.

The first was to the Scottish National Portrait Gallery in Edinburgh: an oil painted on canvas in 1864 by the Scottish artist William Crawford. It shows some of the children of a prominent Edinburgh family playing croquet in front of a cornfield. This large 4 1/2 x 5 1/2 piece will be the cornerstone of a room the gallery is remodelling to be devoted to Scottish sports.

The second was an oil painted on wood in the 1890s by George Howard the ninth Earl of Carlisle. It is of four of his children playing croquet on the court at one of his properties, Naworth Castle in Cumbria. This year we met and spent the day at the castle with the current owners Philip and Elizabeth Howard and learned that the ninth Earl's wife's favourite sport was croquet! I was very pleased when Philip put the painting on the original easel used by the artist in the old library that looked out over the original croquet court which is still extant! It was quite a homecoming for the painting.

The next day we met the curator at Castle Howard, another of the Howard family's properties, where we were shown some early photographs of croquet and sketches of croquet done by the ninth Earl. They are in the process of cataloguing his vast inventory and plan to identify the croquet items now that they have been made aware of croquet!

DA I can confirm that the Portrait Gallery is thrilled to have the Crawford and have let me have a sneak preview of it. I look forward to seeing it in pride of place when the renovations are complete. But what do you have in mind for the items you don't send back to their original homes?

TA What to do with the collection in the long term was the question that continued to worry me as I was collecting and accumulating such a large volume. I quickly discovered it is not easy to donate something like this. Museums generally do not want it and if interested will only take the cream of the crop.

However, one particular dealer friend in London said that the volume after a period of time takes on a life of its own and acquires value in its historical content. So I made some attempts to find a home for the collection. Urged by my friend Foxy Carter and other members of the Croquet Foundation of America (CFA), the Newport Art Museum in Rhode Island agreed to house a Croquet Hall of Fame room and establish the room for exhibitions of croquet art over the years. This was the time when the power of the CFA shifted to Newport away from Palm Beach.

The Newport Art Museum extensively remodelled the room

then held two croquet exhibitions in 1993 until 1995 with great reviews in the New York press. A future show was planned bringing some of the pieces held in major museums including some Winslow Homer oils.

With a museum now attached to croquet art we adjusted our family trust and bequeathed to the museum the bulk of the croquet collection. It seemed like a sweet logical deal.

But politics in the CFA caused them to withdraw support for the Newport Art Museum and the Croquet Hall of Fame room. Everything went south as part of the mega croquet centre being built in West Palm Beach. This centre was without a professional museum environment, climate control, a professional curator or any person qualified to handle a large collection. It became an amateur social operation again.

I still worked with the Newport Art Museum and curated two separate croquet art exhibitions there from 1999 to 2001 while the mega centre was being built. They still had the lovely refurbished croquet room while waiting for the move to happen. We hoped we could work something out with the museum but finally the CFA closed the door and left the museum.

money to help fund the centre, I decided to step away from the current situation in the USA and try to find a future home for this still growing croquet monster elsewhere.

It seemed to be growing daily.

DA *When did you start thinking about England as a possible site for the collection or part of the collection?*

TA I always had great relationships with people in England (and the rest of Great Britain and Ireland). Throughout my playing years in England I discussed the collection and recent acquisitions with many people who were interested in what I was doing and appreciated my long-term goals.

In 1997 the CA held a croquet art show at the Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum as part of the Centenary celebration and we loaned some excellent pieces which complemented the outstanding show. At the dinner at Wimbledon I was awarded a lifetime achievement award by the CA for my contributions to the sport. I was overwhelmed, gobsmacked I believe the expression is.

During this time Bernard Neal tried to establish a section at the All England Lawn Tennis Museum to formalize the sport at Wimbledon. Despite his efforts and the good intentions of the museum staff nothing came to fruition. However we subsequently donated to the museum some specifically tennis- and croquet-related pieces.

When John Solomon retired as President of the CA we decided as a fitting tribute we would donate to the CA in his honour some select pieces including trophies from the collection. We made some small donations during the British Open in 2008 and continue to work with the CA on this bequest including some future long range plans for a CA croquet art gallery or museum.

DA *Have you identified the pieces that will be part of the Solomon Collection?*

TA Sort of. Recently I sent Chris Williams the CA Archivist a list of items we have identified to donate, and asked for his response. We are still determining what will follow. But this will be a thoughtful process as the CA, except for the office in Cheltenham, does not have a secure place to store and display art. We are all working to resolve that problem as they plan to expand the clubhouse at Cheltenham.

One particular piece we are giving is by HF Crowther-Smith, a 1930 watercolour of HT Pinckney-Simpson, a well known English international croquet player, and a second watercolour of his wife holding a riding crop, dressed in jodpurs, jacket, hat and tie.

We are also donating a dry-point etching by JJ Tissot of his well known croquet oil painting of his mistress and her children at his house in St. John's Wood, completed in 1878.

Gail and I, with the help of Bernard Neal and the Cheltenham Croquet Club, are working on a plan where a later endowment from our Trust will help with the construction of an appropriate place to house and exhibit pieces from the Solomon collection and other items the CA owns.

DA *What about the balance of the collection since only a small part is going to the CA?*

TA I am going to break some news to you. Except for pieces earmarked to the CA and a few elsewhere, the collection will go in its entirety to the University of British Columbia's (UBC) Library's Rare Books and Special Collections section of their main library in Vancouver.

DA *That's very interesting indeed. Why Canada, why UBC and why their library and not a museum?*

TA A museum is not the best place to donate such a large and diverse collection of art as I mentioned earlier. Museums

are notorious for selling off parts of collections to buy other pieces and storing art out of sight for years. Generally museums are not research institutions. University libraries are. I also believe there is a lot to learn from the history of croquet, especially through the art, and this information needs to be accessible.

The Arkley family has a long relationship with UBC, the second largest research university in Canada. My father was born in Vancouver, BC, and graduated in 1924 from UBC as did his three siblings. He and my mother, from Seattle, both book and NW Indian art collectors, donated to the UBC Museum the art and to the Library what turned out to be the largest collection of children's historical literature in Canada. They also included an endowment and scholarship to the School of Library Science. In the 1970s my father was awarded an honorary Doctor of Law by UBC for his support of the University over the years.

As the person in the family managing this endowment, I had the contacts with UBC and the opportunity to mention to the development office our croquet collection and our interest in finding it a home. They were hesitant but expressed some interest. I was told that the University Library is offered lots of collections but they turn down most as they have become more discriminating. They do not want to be burdened with low quality items they then have to store.



Ada E Swanwick - 'The cats' strange croquet and tea party' (1960s)

After I described the materials in the collection and some of the history of croquet, the Rare Books and Special Collections librarian and the development officer for the library made a trip to Oregon and later Seattle to look over all the materials including the books, paper and paintings, illustrations, and the rest of the fine art including sculptures, and over a thousand 19th and 20th century photographs.

They were cautiously interested but told me that first the collection had to be vetted by UBC faculty and administration to see if it had any research interest or potential.

Later I was told by UBC that the Women's Studies program was very interested in the role that women played in the early history of the sport, documented though the art, prints and books. Other areas of interest included croquet as an image in the history of cartooning from the 1850s to the present, outdoor and other 19th century costumes, the sport as played by all social and economic groups documented in the prints and photographs and a few other areas.

When UBC accepted the collection I felt as if a huge load had been removed that I was unaware I had carried around for years. I

had finally found a place where this collection would be preserved and available for research and study. I was getting it off my hands.

When I was in the midst of collecting, having acquired at that time less than 1000 pieces, I began to worry about what I was going to do with it. One horrible fantasy was that I would be forced to put two doublewide trailers on the farm behind the barn and open a Croquet Museum! Sort of like a Corn Museum or Hubcap Museum. I could see it heading into the realm of a crackpot collecting venture.

DA *How will this collection be made accessible to the public?*

TA The problem with many donated collections is to find the staff, resources and time to inventory, catalogue then digitize all the materials. Sometimes collections linger in library storage rooms before the cataloguing begins. We felt that the process should start immediately to get the collection out to the public.

So we made available to UBC a fund to start the process, including eventually setting up a web-site where the items will be available to view worldwide. In the future our Trust has long range plans to continue acquiring additional materials for UBC and to assist with the management of the collection.

DA *What consequences will the donation have for the UBC Library?*

TA With the donation in hand the library immediately looked at expanding to other sports and during this period acquired the largest golf book collection in Canada.

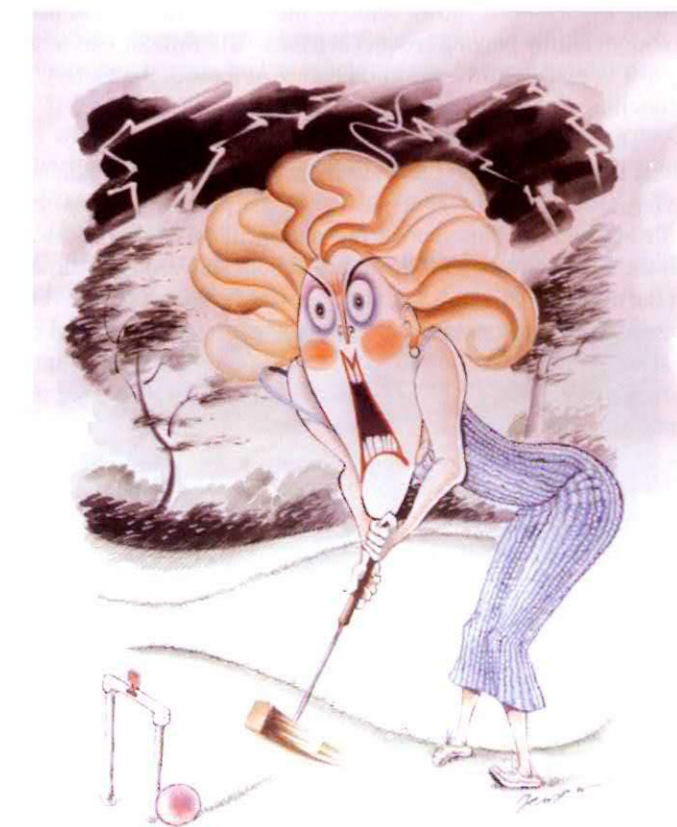
When large collections find homes at libraries and become available worldwide, other collectors then start donating their pieces to the library, which enhances and builds up the collection. That is how collections grow. Collectors are always looking to place their pieces somewhere and now they will have a home established for their croquet collections.

When all of this comes to fruition UBC will have the finest croquet collection in the world, larger than any public or private library, and an information network available to the public worldwide via a web-site on the internet. We plan to aid in the digitization of these materials and development of the site. It is all very exciting and we are pleased to have created and to be in the process of leaving a legacy of croquet to the world.

DA *Tremaine, thank you for your time and congratulations on what you have managed to achieve. I look forward to accessing the UBC web-site and seeing some of the items you have described. Those of us who are fascinated by anything to do with this great game of ours have reason to be extremely grateful to you and Gail.*

Coaching Courses

Readers are reminded that in addition to the Croquet Academy courses listed elsewhere in this issue, there are other Coaching courses in various parts of the country. Details may be found on the CA website and towards the back of the Fixture Book, which also includes an application form.



John Jensen 'Fergie causes a storm on the croquet court' 1995
This caricature of the Duchess of York was published in the store magazine for Thomas Goode's luxury-goods shop in England

I made some contacts with the CFA and USCA then about providing some interesting American pieces for their site but they told me they were not interested. It seemed a shame, but later I saw that some lovely 19th century prints donated earlier to the CFA by Foxy Carter were being sold on Ebay.

Not wanting to subject my donated collection to amateurs who might sell the donated pieces to the market or friends to raise

The Croquet Academy

News from the Academy

by Jonathan Isaacs

Twelve months ago the Croquet Academy ran its first course at Southwick. The idea started as a desire to create a centre of excellence for Croquet Coaching in the UK.

Three main parties were involved - The South East Croquet Federation (SECF), the Sussex County Croquet Club (SCCC) and the Croquet Association (CA).

All three parties agreed it was a good idea. The SECF have worked with SCCC for many years running successful courses such as the Association Summer School & SCCC had the lawns, coaches and infrastructure to further develop their training facilities. The CA saw the need to support and develop a centre of excellence.

The joint venture was born, starting with a course on managing tournaments. From there a full range of courses covering both Golf and Association Croquet were run successfully through the summer season with many courses oversubscribed. The Academy even ran a tailor-made course for the Norwegian Croquet Federation.

The Academy is run by a small committee of volunteers representing the parties in the joint venture. Following a review



The Coaching Staff at the Academy

of their first year's activities, they have decided to expand the number of courses run with the introduction of two Golf Croquet Courses. The first is aimed at beginners and improvers and to be held in April and the second, a Golf Croquet Summer School, is aimed at existing players wishing to take up or improve their golf croquet tournament play.

In addition the Academy is hosting two one-day Master Classes. Rutger Beijderwellen plans to hold a one-day course on advanced tactics for aspiring and existing A class players. David Openshaw, the current President of the World Croquet Federation, will run a one day workshop on improving tactical tournament play. This course is targeted at 0 - 4 Association handicap players.

On 21st March a special one day seminar will be held in London giving clubs guidance on how to make the best use of Public Relations to promote their club on a local basis. The course will be lead by Liz Larsson, Manager of the CA. Liz has had a successful career in Public Relations and has offered to prepare a special course on this topic.

Brief details of the 2009 prospectus are as follows:

Further details can be found in the CA Fixtures Calendar & on the Academy Website: www.thecroquetacademy.com



Participants at a course run at the Academy in 2008

Dates	Course	Course sponsor	Ideal handicap range
21/22 March	Association Silver Course	CA	8 - 11
21/22 March	Association Silver Gilt Course	CA	4 - 8
21/22 March	Association Laws Course	CA	NA
21 March	Using PR to develop your club	CA Marketing	NA
28 March	Masterclass - Improving tactics (Rutger Beijderwellen)	Academy	Below 1
4/5 April	Association Beginners/Improvers	SECF	18 & above
11 April	Masterclass - Improving your game (David Openshaw)	Academy	0 - 4
15/16 April	Golf Beginners/Improvers	SECF	6 - 12
25/26 April	Association Bronze Course	SECF	12 - 18
25/26 April	Association Gold Course	CA	Below 4
6/7 June	Coaches Training Course	CA	NA
4/5 July	Golf Summer School	SECF	2 - 6
27/31 July	Association Summer School	SECF	16 & above

Centenary of Championship at Carrickmines

One Hundred Years of Championships at Carrickmines

By Simon Williams

The Championship of Ireland came to Carrickmines one hundred years ago. The reason for the move is well-documented in the Croquet Gazette: there had been a crescendo of complaint about the condition of the courts at Fitzwilliam L.T.C., where the event had been played for the previous ten years. The demands of a full tennis season at the home of Irish tennis left the courts unfit for serious croquet competition. But the new lawns - seven of them - at Carrickmines were preserved specially for this tournament by the motherly care of Miss Barrett and her committee. Carrickmines's 'own' tournament, the Championship of County Dublin, was played in May 1909, and the Irish Championship on its customary week, that of the August Bank Holiday. Later, with Ireland's independence from the United Kingdom, the date of the holiday was changed to the start of August, and the tournament, after flirting with a September date, eventually

rejoined it!

Originally a traditional 6-day week tournament, pressure of entries forced it to extend to a second weekend in the 1990s. More recently, it has been divided to give each event specific dates within the week, but this seemingly benign plan failed to attract more entries. This centenary year, the Championship events will begin on the Wednesday - the other events running from the first Saturday - and the whole event will finish with the traditional tournament dinner and prizegiving - so often the occasion of riotous celebration - on Saturday night.



There is a gracious tradition of hospitality associated with the week: the late Dr Steen's house at Carrickmines crossroads was for many years the scene of a lavish garden party, and such Club members as Yvonne Marrinan, Padraig & Ann Thornton, Nial & Edwina McInerney, Joe Cunningham and Colin Rogers must be thanked for continuing this pretty custom. In busier years the lawns at Newcastle, Co Wicklow have been pressed into service, and our hosts - notably Harry Johnston - have generously followed suit. The tournament committee make it their business to promote these festive occasions, as well as holding a barbecue and a trip (mainly for the benefit of visitors) to Fox's pub for dining or a raucous 'session', according to taste. Side events include a table tennis draw, chess, backgammon, telly, and pints of Dublin's most famous export.

In 1999, the old wooden clubhouse was replaced, and the occasion was marked in appropriate fashion by our visitors from England, Scotland, New Zealand and the U.S.A. The Club House shook to where its foundations should have been under the applause for popular (i.e. Irish) winners. The new Club House has the added attractions of warmth and a unique view over the lawns from a height, although this means that one can no longer climb straight into the bar through the window.

Trophies: a "potted" history

Although the Championship of Ireland was first contested (according to Col. Prichard) in 1861, the earliest surviving trophy is from 1899, and was won outright, by virtue of four straight wins, by Herbert Corbally (brother of Cyril) in 1936. The replacement was a handsomely-chased salver, which was in its turn won outright by that croquet colossus, Peter Duff Mathews, in 1948. The Duffer generously re-presented it as a perpetual trophy - saving future committees a headache when Terence Read later won it nine years in a row! There is no plate trophy, but a smaller salver for the runner-up. This was presented in 1971 by David O Connor in memory of his friend Leslie Webb, who was drowned in the far East, while attempting to save another swimmer. Leslie had been runner-up to David in the previous championship. Many illustrious names adorn this salver, including K.F. Wylie and R.I. Fulford, attesting to the difficulty of raiding the honours of Ireland! The Doubles Championship dates from 1990, and the trophies commemorate Anne Healy (nee Hobbs).

The Founder's Cup (handicap singles) is one of four matching cups in a celtic-revival design ordered in 1928 to celebrate Mrs Wilson (nee Barrett), who headed the group that set up the Club. Two of the others are played for at mixed handicap tennis, while the fourth was won by the Australian team against Ireland in 1934, and is now - as the "Eire Cup" - contested by the various State teams in the Interstate Championship, one of Australia's highest honours. The Stonebrook Cups (another interesting celtic drinking cup design) were presented by Col Cooke, who also gave the equally glorious Coronation Bowls for the Co. Dublin event,

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to the All-Ireland Croquet Club of Kenilworth Square. When this club folded in 1919, the cups were "permanently lent" to Carrickmines. Another interesting trophy is the candlestick played for by the highest handicaps. This was the memento given to Mrs Evadne Bell when she won the Irish Ladies Championship in 1906, and re-dedicated in 2000 by her grandson, Even Newell.

From the beginning, the Irish Championship was supported by the top players from England, including Mr and Mrs Beaton, C.E. Willis and D.L.G. Joseph. Viscount Doneraile (nominally Irish!) presented a boundary-ball tester made by Ayres, which still does service, to "the Irish Associates of the Croquet Association". Other illustrious winners have been J.C. Windsor (Australia), Jean Jarden (New Zealand), Stephen Mulliner and Aaron Westerby. Regular Irish players, Simon Williams (5 titles), Ronan McInerney (4), Edward Cunningham (2) and Mark McInerney (2), account for most of the other recent years.

The final of the championship – along with the ever-popular Handicap Doubles – is the focus of Irish players' season (if spectators) and ambitions (if contenders). Finals are often grim affairs with nerves proving the deciding factor, but the 2004 final between Mark McInerney and Robert Fulford would have to be the outstanding croquet occasion in the memory of most people who saw it – a real, five-game ripper.

The Championship of County Dublin started in 1909. The main trophy was sponsored by the Dublin and South-Eastern Railway, whose track ran by the Club. 2009 will see the reopening of this track as a light rail line connecting the no-longer rural Carrickmines with the centre of Dublin. Many other changes have swept over the neighbourhood in recent years, but the expansive view of the Wicklow hills is still much the same as the one that delighted the reporter of the first Championship of Co. Dublin.

Tyneside Celebrates Silver Jubilee

Tyneside's Jubilee bash at the Lord Mayor's pad
by Alison Heywood - Hill

As this was the Silver Jubilee members past and present were invited to attend which resulted in 60 attending the Dinner and it was nice to see so many old friendships being rekindled. Derek Trotman, our chairman, gave a welcome address as dinner was served. It was timely that earlier in the month he had been presented with only the eighth Council medal awarded by the CA for services to croquet. Derek is one of the founder members of our club, as Dave Turner's rendition of the Northern folk song, The Lambton Worm testified:

"Wel aal the fowk from roond about
In clogs and wi' their shawls
Picked up a mallet for a chance
T' play with Derek's balls.
They soon disprooved t' silly myth
That ye needed dosh
To play crowkay an t' be guid
Ye had to be reet posh!"

John Prescott would be proud.



Derek Trotman addresses those gathered to celebrate at the Mansion House

Tyneside Croquet Club's activities were encapsulated in one room; there was a table of the Scottish contingent, with stalwarts Bruce Rannie and David Appleton in attendance and two tables of new members.

Patricia Duke-Cox gave a heart-warming address looking both at the history and development of the club's future with an increasingly strong and solid membership. Her own recent appointment is set to see some major changes in croquet in the UK.

Chairman Derek Trotman spoke about the success of the club this year, not least the increase by a quarter in the membership. He reminisced with the past players the highlights of our club and by popular demand has written and produced a booklet on the first 25 years of the club.

Trophy presentations are an integral part of our annual dinners and this year saw the Handicap Doubles Cups presented to Nora Burbridge and Jacob Carr. James Carr was awarded the Brian Kennedy Rosebowl for his success in the Handicap Singles; the Advanced Singles Rosebowl was presented to David Appleton. Colin Green, representing the emerging talent in the Beginners Tournament was awarded a crystal glass for winning the Taylor Golf Mallet Tournament. Jacqui Old and Peter Lowe received the Ivy Court Plaque and John Moore won the Roger Russell Cup.

One of the highlights of the evening was Margaret Trotman, Sheila Watts and Alice Fleck's routine from The Mikado: "Three Little Maids Are We" or as it was sung "Three Little Maids Who Make The Tea". The ladies provide some wonderful croquet lunches and they based their song on the trials and tribulations of providing refreshments for croquet competitors - when the club was at Cochrane Park and the lawns some 250 yards from the nearest water tap.

"Oh! Three little maids who fetch and carry
Water from the lavatory
For every Tom and Dick and Harry
Three little slaves are we
Three little slaves are we.

Three little maids are playing croquet
Hitting balls to make a roquet
Into the bushes hokey pokey
Who wants a cup of tea?
Not me, not me, not me."

One member described the three maids song and dance as the

The View from the Bar

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

Unsurprisingly in the close season, perhaps the most interesting news is from Australia where wunderkind Robert Fletcher is taking the croquet world by storm. Robert only played his first ranking game a little over a year ago. In that time he has shot up the rankings and is now ranked fourth in Australia and 31st in the world. In the Australian Open in December he was undefeated in the block stages and then defeated the world championship runner-up Stephen Mulliner in straight games on the way to the final, where he was narrowly defeated 3-2 by Peter Landrebe. He then went one better in January in the Victoria Open, beating Kevin Beard 2-0 in the final. As a result he's now been selected as one of the Australian entrants for the World Championships in Florida in May. Pretty good for a 15 year old. (Yes, it makes me sick too.)

There has been plenty of discussion about one-day tournaments – is there a demand for an Association Croquet tournament that could be held in one day, and if so, what format might work? The consensus seems to be that success would require shortened games, no more than two and a half hours and perhaps only two hours, and probably draconian shortening of meal times – there has been some suggestion that lunch would be taken while sitting out during a game. It does sound as though there might be some demand for such a tournament, but with the difficulties of completing all the games in one day (especially if a game has a long turn after time), another suggestion has been to hold a tournament over two successive Saturdays. This might appeal to those with family or other commitments preclude taking a whole weekend out.

And other than that it's been very quiet, with the exception of interminable discussions about the nature of change in croquet, whether all change is bad, and whether things will get better or worse if nothing is changed. You wouldn't thank me for repeating those discussions. Trust me.

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

Merit Awards

Report by John Handy

The Croquet Association congratulates to all those who achieved an award during the year and in particular the three who achieved the Platinum Award. Also a special mention for Elmyr Hughes who achieved both Bronze and Silver in the same game at Heaton Park in September. Hopefully, for the rest of us, his handicap is now rather lower than it was at the start of the year.

A total of 65 Awards were made during the year, showing that the standard of play in clubs throughout the country remains high and has benefited from the various coaching courses run by the



Patricia Duke-Cox, Freda Vitty and Margaret Trotman enjoying the celebrations

highlight of the evening. Now that all has been revealed, tea will not be drunk in such a cavalier way next season. I read in the local newspaper that the ban on dancing at the Mansion House was lifted only this week. How easily our prestigious night could have ended in a raid, and we are defenceless as Alan Thwaite and Derek Watts recorded it all for posterity on photos and video. They did a sterling job of catching the perpetrators in the act and the DVD will be on sale in due course.

All of this seamless activity was organised by Sheila Watts. Every year she organises a venue and a menu to satisfy the entire croquet club. No mean feat. As if this wasn't enough, she organised, and starred in some of the entertainment. All this, and association croquet competition success from a mere tea girl.

I recommend that you take on Tyneside at croquet or the arts at your peril for we have talent and we know how to use it.

David Barrett

New designs added to the exclusive POWERFLEX Croquet Mallet Range for 2009
High Tech' materials as specified by NATO are used in POWERFLEX Mallets, which enable Players to achieve great control and added distance when hitting shots.
Jump shots and Stop shots are said to be easier. With the EXTRA BONUS that POWERFLEX also helps ease any problems with aching wrists and fingers.
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OL10 4UZ Tel:01706 368214 Mobile: 07957 103417
Email: davidbarrett.db@tiscali.co.uk

Association. More courses, details of which are shown in the Fixtures Calendar, are planned for 2009. They are aimed at players at various levels of play, but they are all designed to improve the participant's own standard, to help them make the most of opportunities in every game, and of course, to get the most enjoyment from playing.

The detailed results for 2008 were Platinum 3, Gold 11, Silver 28 and Bronze 23. This compares with 4, 13, 29 and 27 in the previous year. Individual achievers were as follows:-

- PLATINUM.**
 Jamie Burch. Men's Championship, Budleigh Salterton, June
 Sam Tudor. Open Championship Plate, Cheltenham, July
 Jack Wicks. Chairman's Salver, Nailsea, September
GOLD.
 Paul Bennett. Open Championship, Cheltenham, July
 John Daniels. Medway Advanced Mid-week Tournament, August
 Mark Fawcett. Roehampton Summer Tournament, May
 Nathaniel Healy. County Dublin Championship, Carrickmines, June
 James Hopgood. Colchester B-Level Weekend, May
 James Le Moignan. Open Championship, Cheltenham, July
 Martin Leach. Ramsgate B-Level, September
 Nigel Polhill. Championship of Surrey Plate, Surbiton, June
 Peter Thompson. Sussex County Advanced Weekend, May
 David Walters. Bowdon June Weekend.
 Robert Wilkinson. North of England Championship, Bowdon, August
SILVER.
 Derek Blow. Nottingham September Handicap Weekend.
 Alwen Bowker. Cheltenham 92nd July Tournament.
 Kath Burt. East Dorset Mid-Week 50+ Handicap, August

- Jacob Carr. Pendle & Craven Easter Tournament, March
 Neil Coote. Sussex County August Tournament.
 Terry Foster. Budleigh Salterton August Tournament.
 Nigel Grant. Ramsgate B-Level, September
 Amanda Hames-Keward. Cheltenham October
 Elmyr Hughes. Heaton Park Handicap Weekend, September
 Ray Hall. Budleigh Salterton Handicap, May
 Pat Jackson. Challenge & Gilbey, Sussex County, August
 Richard Jackson. National Seniors' Championship, Sussex County, July
 Brian Lewis. South West Championship, Budleigh Salterton, August
 Peter Miles. Budleigh Salterton August Tournament.
 Ron Minshall. All England Area Final, Surbiton, August
 Robert Moss. Cheltenham 92nd July Tournament.
 Andy Myers. East Dorset Handicap Weekend, June
 Janet Overell. Challenge & Gibley, Sussex County, August
 John Palin. Colchester B-Level Weekend, May
 Brian Pollock. Sidmouth June Mid-Summer Tournament.
 John Reddish. Budleigh Salterton August Tournament.
 Rachel Rowe. Nottingham May Handicap Weekend.
 Paul Schofield. Sussex County August Tournament.
 Nick Steiner. Colchester over 50s Tournament, August
 Sue Strong. Woking Autumn Handicap Tournament, September
 Chris Sturdy. Sussex County Advanced Weekend, May
 Tom Whiteley. East Dorset Handicap Weekend, June
 David Williams. East Dorset Handicap Weekend, June
BRONZE.
 Howard Bowron. Pendle & Craven Midweek 50+ Tournament, July

- Tess Burt. East Dorset June Week.
 Ryan Cabble. All England Area Final, Budleigh Salterton, August
 James Carr. Pendle & Craven Easter Tournament, March
 Pat Francis. Cheltenham "Over Fifty" Handicap, June
 Myra Gardner. Colchester Midweek Handicap, July
 Michael Greagsby. Tunbridge Wells Late Season Handicap, September
 Charles Harding. All England Area Final, Pendle & Craven, August
 Richard Harris. East Dorset Mid-Week 50+ Handicap, August
 Mike Hills. Wrest Park May Tournament.
 Michael Holland. Woking Mid Summer Handicap, June
 Elmyr Hughes. Heaton Park Handicap Weekend, September
 Tony Jennings. All England Area Final, Budleigh Salterton, August
 Simon Jones. All England Heat, Blewbury, July
 Robert Padgett. Cheltenham "Over Fifty" Handicap, June
 David Perkins. "Millennium Cup" Weekend Handicap, Bath, June
 Martin Pulsford. The Peel Memorials, Surbiton, May
 Margaret Russell. Sussex County August Tournament.
 Graham Saunders. Northern Week, Bowdon.
 Nick Steiner. Spring Weekend Handicap, Colchester, June
 Richard Stopforth. "Millennium Cup" Weekend Handicap, Bath, June
 David Woodhouse. Annual Tournament, Nottingham, August
 John Wright. Ramsgate Handicap Weekend, July
 Awards Achieved in 2007 but omitted from that year's list.
SILVER.
 Jon Diamond. Tunbridge Wells B-Level Advanced, September
 Melanie Foster. All-England Area Final, Pendle & Craven, September

CA Shop Update

CA SHOP NOW BASED IN CHELTENHAM
 by Liz Larrison

The CA Shop is now based at the CA Office and a new member of staff, Ted Isaac, is running it on a day to day basis. Although new to croquet, Ted is keen on sport, particularly tennis, cricket, rugby, football. He has sales experience as a publican and in the insurance industry.

The shop moved from Jeff Dawson's house at the end of October, and stock is currently stored in cupboards and the Cheltenham Croquet Club office – as the club has generously allowed us to effectively take it over for the past few months! Although an extension to the CA office is currently being built and is due to be completed by the end of February, working conditions are very cramped in the office at the moment. Despite that, we are still providing a full service to online and telephone customers. As the CA shop is now part of the office, CA members are welcome to call in, but it's advisable to contact the office first as all members of staff work part time. Generally the shop is open



Work in progress at Cheltenham

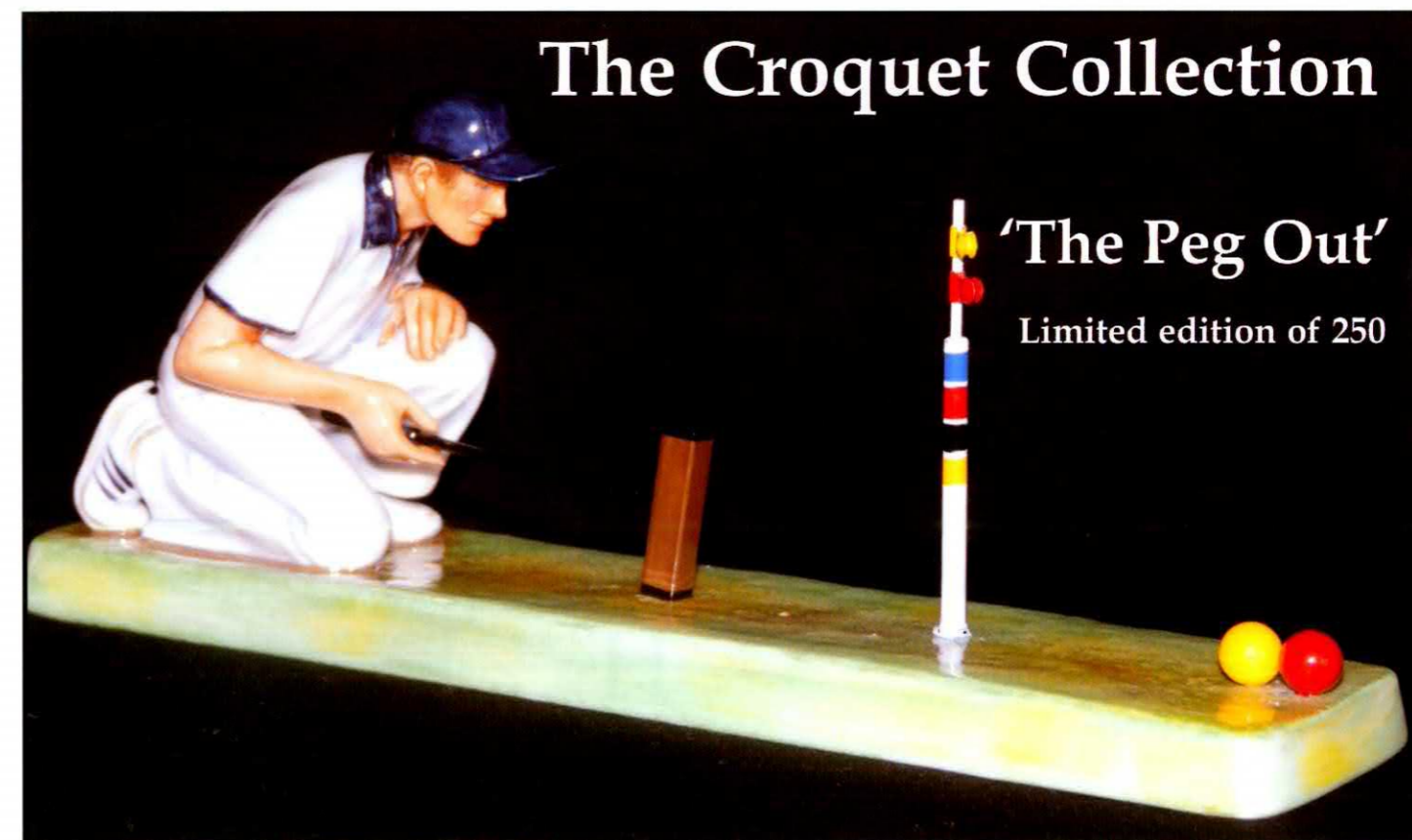
from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

In addition to working with the builders and preparing for the great day when we can move stock into the extension, preparations are also in hand to ensure adequate stock levels for the spring when the shop gets busy with players and clubs updating their kit and preparing for the season ahead.

We stock all the old favourites, so do look at the website for details!

www.croquet.org.uk

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The originators of carbon fibre shafted mallets now offer a truly comprehensive range, from the 'Basic' at £87.50, the well established T-series (£137.50) to the 2000 mallet at £160 (inc. head wrap). All have heads of fine hardwood with screwed and glued double faces, inlaid sight lines and a high quality finish. Sustainably managed timbers.

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Revolutionary 2001 model £230

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

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The Croquet Association

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

CLOTHING

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

Breathable wet weather jacket	£40.00
Breathable jacket & trousers	£56.00
Fleece jacket	£26.00
Fleece reversible gilet	£27.00
White trousers	£30.00
Pullover	£29.50
White shorts	£26.00
White cap with CA logo	£5.50



ODDS & ENDS

Timer	£10.50
Silver Earrings (mallet or hoop & ball)	£12.00
Hoop setting feeler gauge	£3.00
Canvas ball carrier bags	£15.00
Croquet Girl cards (pack of 8 - blank)	£4.50
Lawn reparer	£3.50
Croquet Posters - B&W prints	£6.00ea
CA Ball markers (pack of 10)	£1.00

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Email sales@croquet.org.uk
Or visit our website, www.croquet.org.uk
Or telephone 01242 242318

The shop is based at the CA offices at Cheltenham Croquet Club, Old Bath Road, Cheltenham, GL53 7DF and is normally open between 9am and 5.30pm, but if you are planning a trip, it's wise to contact us beforehand.



BOOKS

A wide variety of croquet publications are available, including:

Basic Laws of Association and Golf Croquet	£2.00
The Laws of Association Croquet	£4.00
The Laws of Golf Croquet	£2.50
A guide to Golf Croquet	£5.00
Golf Croquet Tactics	£11.00
How to play Croquet	£4.50
Alternative Croquet	£7.00
Croquet by John Solomon	£9.00
Plus One on Time by Don Gaunt	£10.00
Croquet Management by Gaunt & Wheeler	£11.50
Lawn Management by John Beech	£5.00
Croquet: Technique by John Riches	£7.00
Croquet: Error Correction by John Riches	£7.00
Croquet: Next Break Strategy by John Riches	£9.00
Croquet: The Mental Approach by John Riches	£9.00
Croquet: Lessons in Tactics by John Riches	£9.00
Croquet: Finer Points by John Riches	£10.50

DVDs AND VIDEOS

Learn Croquet (DVD) Association	£22.00
Mastering Golf Croquet (DVD)	£19.00

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

COMPLETE CROQUET SETS

How about getting a set for the back garden? We sell a wide range of sets at low prices and our voucher scheme entitles members to a **£20 discount** on their first set!

CLUB EQUIPMENT

This is an ideal time to check over your club equipment, and replace anything necessary. As always, we sell all the equipment your club is likely to need, including:

BALLS - Dawson and Sunshiny
HOOPS - Omega, Aldridge and Jaques
Corner flags, yardline markers, pegs, clips, gauges.