

THE CROQUET GAZETTE

ISSUE 320

JUNE 2009



CA Contacts

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

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

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

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

Vice-Chairman of Council
Barry Keen
20 Grove Park
Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 8QA
01565 632420
barry.keen1@ntlworld.com

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

CA Council Committee Chairmen

Information & Communications Tech Committee Dave Kibble
davekibble@iee.org
AC Laws
Ian Vincent ian.vincent@cantab.net
AC Selection
David Maugham dmaugham@ntlworld.com
AC Tournament
Nigel Graves nigel.graves@blueyonder.co.uk
Coaching
Lawrence Whittaker flwhittaker2@waitrose.com
Development
Pat Kennett pat@elterwater.plus.com
Equipment
Barry Keen barry.keen1@ntlworld.com
Executive
Patricia Duke-Cox duke-cox@hotmail.co.uk
GC Laws
Tim King tmktmk@ntlworld.com
GC Selection
John Spiers john@spiersfamily.org
GC Tournament
Tim King tmktmk@ntlworld.com
Handicap
Ian Parkinson ianparkinson@aol.com
International
Jonathan Kirby pjkirby@googlemail.com
Management
Barry Keen barry.keen1@ntlworld.com
Marketing
Jonathan Isaacs jonathanisaacs@btinternet.com
Publishing
Charles Waterfield cwaterfield@btinternet.com

CA Federation Representatives on Council

Croquet North - Charles Waterfield
01642 712551
North West - Barry Keen
01565 632420
Yorkshire - Julian Tonks
01904 791254
East Midlands - Lawrence Whittaker
0116 270 7396
West Midlands & Wales - John Handy
01788 810572
East Anglia - Arthur Reed
01923 445714
Southern - Pat Kennett
01794 322209
South West - Roger Buckley
01934 811735
London & South East - David Mooney
020 8789 7707



THE CROQUET GAZETTE



Issue 320 June 2009

Front Cover: The SCCC team of Daphne Gaitley partnered by David Gaitley, and Alan Cottle partnered by Avril Rangoni-Machiavelli, who won the Littlehampton Centenary GC Tournament

Next Issue Published 15th Aug 2009

Copy Deadline July 18th 2009

Disclaimer

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

CONTENTS

Chairman's Column	3
Letters	4
Editorial	7
Laws	7
<i>New edition of the Official Rulings and Commentary on the Laws of Association Croquet</i>	
News & Information	8
Competition Result	10
Llanfairfechan Opening Report	11
Commentary on the 2008 Accounts	11
2008 Accounts	12
Recruitment	14
<i>Bishop Monkton CC share their secret weapon and experiences</i>	15
Talking Croquet	17
<i>Gail Curry interviews Prof. Alan Pidcock</i>	
12th WCF World Croquet Championships	
Coaching	18
<i>"Winning not losing" by Colin Irwin (Part 2)</i>	
<i>Break-Builder solution</i>	
<i>Coaching Tips</i>	
Tournaments	20
<i>Reports and results of tournaments</i>	

Chairman's Column

My primary theme this issue deals with our younger players. I sought election to Council with this being one of my areas of interest and am pleased to say that I can report on a couple of items.



First, I'd like to thank Jean Hargreaves of the Bury Croquet Club for accepting the post of Child Protection Officer (CPO) for the Croquet Association and at the same time offer thanks to her predecessor, Pam Mason. The CA has a policy for young people and vulnerable adults and I know many clubs have adopted the model policy the CA provides. I know Jean would be interested to learn which clubs have such a policy and who acts as their local CPO so please contact her so she can build up a comprehensive picture.

Second, I am pleased to report that a bursary scheme has now been agreed by Council. Although aimed primarily at Junior members, the CA is offering a new scheme by which players can apply for bursaries to support their participation in top level events. The working party deliberated for a couple of years on different ways of supporting our young and aspiring members who demonstrate potential for top flight events, including coaching, mentoring, development and financial issues. The approval of a bursary scheme to be implemented this year means that the five Juniors accepted for the first Under-21 WCF Golf Croquet tournament in Cairo in July have a chance to seek CA support for their travel. The International Committee awarded the first bursaries in May for this event and I wish the Juniors every success as the level of play of the hosting nation in particular will be highly competitive.

Talking of success, with 76 players in the 2009 World Croquet Championship in Florida, it's good to see 31 from our Domain. Congratulations must go to Reg Bamford for winning the championship. Also to Chris Farthing for being a semi-finalist.

Briefly returning to juniors, do write to the Gazette if your club is actively recruiting juniors. Let us know if you go into schools, make contact with other youth organisations or simply offer taster sessions and how many you recruit and more importantly retain. At my own club we have been into junior, prep, special and secondary schools, held annual events for Scouts, attended district sports events and have done some coaching for RAF cadets at Cranwell. Our success in retaining young players is not high and it would be good to hear from clubs that do have a thriving junior membership.
Patricia Duke-Cox

Publication details

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

The Croquet Gazette is published six times per year, in February, April, June, August, October and December.
Publication Schedule
Copy should reach the Editor before the 10th of the month before publication is due. However if you have something that you think

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

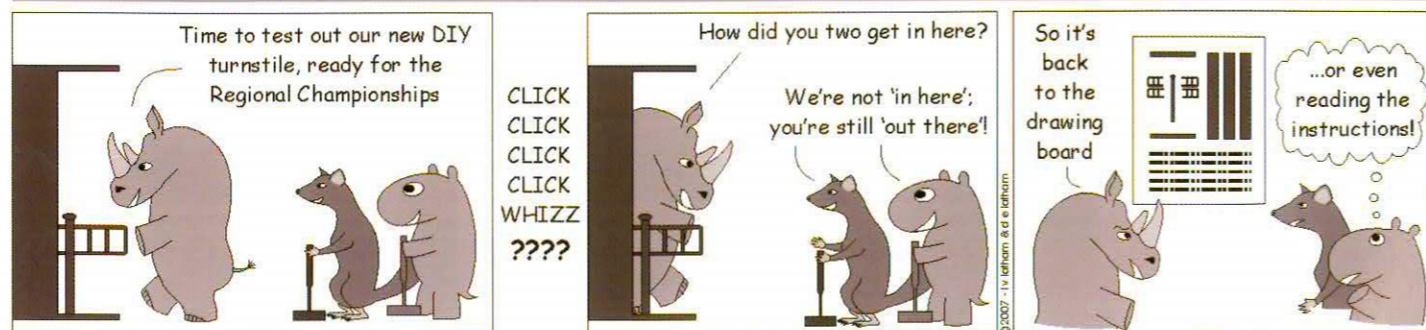
Email contributions, including tournament reports should be sent direct to the Editor, or copied to the Editor if they are being posted to the Nottingham List. Digital images are the easiest to work with, but coloured photographic prints are also acceptable. Please send digital .jpeg or .tiff format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

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

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

HOPOPOTAMUS

by Victor



Letters

Technical Matters

In reply to "bewildered" of Tunbridge Wells, asking "what is the out-focus thing in the foreground?" on the December 2008 cover of the gazette (and assuming they are not referring to Mr Mahoney), it is of course a Wrest Park ball carrier made from 4" plastic pipe. Grey for Dawson, black for Barlow and white for Jaques, (Compton have similar in terracotta). 16" tall, cord threaded through the bottom to hold the balls in, cord handle at the top, holes in the side to indicate whether the contents are primary or secondary colours. "Observant" of Tunbridge Wells will have noticed more grey objects on page 23 of that issue and on the cover of June '07

George Collin, Honorary ball-carrier manufacturer, Wrest Park Croquet Club.

PS Perhaps a series on ball-carrier designs might be even more interesting to some of your readers than the latest variations in the laws of Super Advanced Play?

Yes, technical innovation and invention always encouraged, but so is equality in all other things. Ed.

Obvious solution

The obvious solution to the drawn games problem (Gazette - letters April 09 issue 319) is for all h/c games to be played as **full bisque** games. This would encourage long bisquers to pick up and maintain breaks, in effect, making it a game between two scratch players. It would also give weaker players a huge advantage when they meet real scratch players in tournaments, since they are now used to picking up and playing all-round breaks. And, of course, the games will be over well within the time limit. So which clubs are offering handicap events under the full-bisque system?

Keith Ross

Thirdlies?

A belated letter to let you know that I heard the first Roquet of Spring on the 28th March this year.

Fortunately I was carrying my Grundig P64/Z with me at the time and

immediately sent the tape to Prof Wunbach for analysis. He was able to confirm that I had indeed heard the rare sound of a third set of balls. Incidentally what name do we give to this set of striped balls - Thirdlies? The good Professor explained that he had developed a method of identifying the type of ball from sound (I gather he uses a machine which is a bit like a Snickometer in Cricket) to which he has attributed the following codes. Primary balls make a "clunk" sound; secondary balls are designated as "click". He has visited many countries to identify the phenomena - he says that he has heard clunk, click every trip! He has never personally witnessed a third set sound but has allocated the sound code "clack" to this group.

Rumour has it that he will be seeking development funds from the CA in order to continue with this very important work.

Prof. Wunbach is keen to hear of any other recordings of the third set.

Slim Keabright

CA membership

Well done to Don Beck for raising the issue of Club members joining the CA as tournament members when for whatever reason they will not play at other clubs.

I was disappointed with Patricia Duke-Cox's reply, having raised this issue with her last year. She may well be "happy to pay" but, bearing in mind the financial difficulties that some find themselves in at present, others may not be.

There may be many reasons why some Club players cannot go to other tournaments; possibly finance; accommodation and travel for a weekend away is expensive; possibly family reasons - a woman with children, who works full time would probably find it impossible. One day she may be free to travel but meantime we should try and encourage her to maintain a tournament standard. Is it unreasonable for her to want to play in tournaments at her own Club. I suggest that one tournament per year at one's home club should be considered. The CA would still get the tournament levy from the entry fee.

It was suggested that tournaments could be run by our local Federation. One of the advantages of a Club's affiliation to the

CA is the publicity offered by the Fixtures List, thereby encouraging a wider field of players. On an average of sixteen players the CA would miss out on a steady income.

It would be interesting to know how many non-tournament members there are and what are the advantages to this. To pay £40 to enter one tournament at your home club plus the entry fee of possibly £10 makes this an expensive venture and difficult for those of us trying to encourage a higher standard of play in our home clubs.

Valerie Harding

Response from PDC

I am sorry to learn that my reply to Don Beck disappointed Valerie Harding. As CA Chairman who listens to club members and seeks to bring their views to our national committees, I thought I had acted as she desired. That she is disappointed that our elected committee members have not agreed with her I can understand, but with only 3 members raising this topic, all of them golf croquet players, I see no reason to debate it again.

If club members want to play the game at minimum expense then they will decide to play in their club, or perhaps venture into local federation events and only pay club fees. The tournament membership equates to 11p/day (less if paid by direct debit). I find being a tournament member offers so many more opportunities to play at a range of levels that it is well worth paying.

Regarding non-tournament members, the advantages are that you get the Gazette and keep in touch with tournament round ups, coaching tips, news and views. This helps both newcomers by whetting their appetite for what is in store should they want to compete, and for those retiring from the game providing continuity of fellowship. The number of non-tournament members is in the order of 16%. This is probably a higher percentage than previous years because of the incentive that new members attract a £10 rebate for their club after their first year. I had assumed we were discussing players who had no individual CA membership status, just club membership.

I indicated in my last reply that the committees considered what is right for all our members - both Association and Golf Croquet players. Many small clubs are unable to hold fixtures that can go into the Fixtures book and all their members must travel and find accommodation if they wish to improve their standards. A local club

member of a hosting event already benefits with neither of these costs. What an enviable position to be in!

A balanced perspective on age?

Congratulations to Reg Bamford for his third World Championship title. Having beaten a teenager in the semis and a finalist in his twenties it was the first time that the title has been won by someone who has reached their forties.

The lack of more aged World Champions in our game is perhaps surprising, as croquet involves not only the ability to play stokes well but also a fair degree of understanding, patience and the ability to view probabilities and potential risks and rewards in a balanced way. It is difficult to imagine that exhaustion has a significant effect until much later in life.

Perhaps it is the need for balance in play which leads me to hope that in general, croquet players may take a more balanced approach to their game than those involved with other sports. Footballers like Bill Shankly for instance, sometimes semi-joke that their game is far more important than life or death.

Rather than putting ridiculous levels of effort into preparation for the Worlds, Reg only played the Coles tournament (as usual) this year and, I guess, put in a little practice before turning up to do his best and doubtless enjoy the competition.

However, not all players take such a balanced view on how important the game of croquet is in the tapestry of life.

As Reg started his match in sun-drenched Florida, my father, in his eighties, was half way through a long day of croquet back in rain-drenched England, with players who, I suspect, take the game more seriously than Reg. Up at 6am that morning, he had been driven across the country to play golf-croquet for his club.

He been asked several weeks earlier whether he would be willing to represent the club, to which he'd replied that he didn't normally play away now, as he found all the travel and constant play tiring. 'We really can't find anyone else', he had been pressed. 'Well, the trouble is, I need a rest after lunch these days,' my father resisted, 'and I doubt they'd allow a siesta!' 'I'm sure that can be arranged, I'll sort it out. It should be possible for you to sit out for a game,' he was reassured. And so he had agreed to play.

But when the day arrived and lunch had been eaten, with the rain still pouring

down, there was no opportunity granted for a rest. And then, when finally my father thought that he had finished his play for the day, he learned that there were more games than he had expected. So on he pressed through 6 matches that day, losing his last three singles before the return journey.

I did not know of the event until two days later, when I phoned mum for a chat. 'I'm very concerned about your dad,' she started, 'he's incredibly tired and can't walk properly after being exhausted by croquet on Sunday.' And so the story had emerged, to my horror.

Fortunately, by the fourth day after the event, my dad was very much back to normal and showing no further signs of exhaustion. 'There's no need to write anything to The Gazette,' he insisted, 'the organizer really is a very nice chap!'

I don't doubt that the organizer is nice. I write this simply as a quick reminder to the many nice people in croquet, who do a great deal to organize matches and drive people to them, that at the end of the day, we play this game simply for enjoyment. Usually, it does not result in World titles or vast sums of money for premierships clubs. So if scratching a game or two is necessary to reduce the stress on an elderly player, then scratching is, quite surely, far more important than football.

Anon

Further consideration?

I recently managed an internal club golf competition contested exclusively by high bisquers and was subsequently mildly censured by a club official for intervening during a game when I observed a clear foul shot (striking the ball with the corner of the mallet head). While I now realise that my action was contrary to accepted procedure and accept the criticism under existing protocol, I feel that in games between players with limited knowledge of the golf croquet laws, the convention that the calling of foul play (or a request that a shot be watched) be left entirely to the participants is inappropriate and warrants further consideration by the CA.

Peter Lowe

Is it possible?

Old age means that I have relatively recently become relegated to the role of spectator on our Club afternoons. This has placed me in a unique position of being able to watch play more

closely than ever before.

Sitting in line with the striker, I have once or twice noticed what appears to be a "swerve" shot, as it would be called in snooker. The shots undoubtedly resulted from a minor mis-hit, but if it can happen accidentally then it would seem it should be possible to execute such a shot by design. I have always thought that the application of "side" was not possible with a mallet, but I am beginning to wonder. We can apply top and bottom for rolls and stop shots so what do our experts think about "side"? A micro analysis was undertaken with regard to "double-tapping" and I wonder if any other abnormalities were ever noticed?

Bill Simpson

Further delving in the Forest of Dean

I am able to tell you that whilst, fortunately, I am no relation to Klim Seabright, there are - as he hints in his article - a very large number of nuts, loonies and other crackpots living in the Forest of Dean, many of whose relatives probably invented croquet. A cursory amble through the pages of the West Gloucestershire telephone book for instance, reveals any number Greens, some Malletts, twenty-three assorted Balls, loads of Whites, a family of Plimsoles, Herbert & Doris Boater, a Mr & Mrs Hoope, dozens of Cannons, four Poles and a Gaspard Roque (probably foreign). As a matter of fact though I hesitate to mention them as likely past originators of the game, there are also a Mr & Mrs Cheeter, a few Crooks, a Ron Swindles, a V Sharpe, and divided by only eight forested miles at the villages of Netherend and Milkwall respectively - a Mr Bosche, and a Ms Schott who, with the interest of the sport in mind, might one day come together to remind us of past triumphs. I am told by a keen local player (Stoat CC) that, dated 1897, a fierce altercation I recorded in their ancient 'minute' book when, in a mixed singles match, a fight broke out between the two players which resulted in an assault on the female with a mallet, during which her male opponent shouted at her "That'll teach 'ee to tangle with me chum".

John Meachem

Guidance Required

The incomplete guidance in the GC Rule Book on dealing with a ball which is out of play is likely to cause confusion and inconsistency in dealing with balls which are in play.

Para 6c states that a ball is out of play

if more than half of it crosses the boundary (defined at 2a as the inner edge of the marked boundary line) and can be then placed in situ where it crossed the boundary or removed and its position marked depending on the request of any player; unless (as stated in 6g) it obstructs another ball when it is removed.

Clearly a ball which is out of play can protrude onto the playing area and the following questions are pertinent.

1. Is a ball which is deemed out of play placed on the boundary at the point at which it came off (ie with less than half of its circumference in play)?

2. If a ball deemed out of play (whether coming to rest or placed as described in 1) is touched by a ball in play is that ball also out of play? I find no reference to this situation in the Rule Book.

How these situations are dealt with and the discretion left to players regarding whether an 'off' ball is removed or placed at the point where it left the court can affect the course of play: in particular, the success or otherwise of a legitimate attempt by an opposing ball to block the direction in which an 'off' ball can be played (for should the balls touch, the blocking ball is removed from the playing area).

I should be grateful for clarification from the GC Laws Committee.

Peter Lowe

Time for a change?

Is it not time that the rule about the other ball 'must move' was changed?

A group of us talking about this admitted, almost to a man (and one woman), that there had been times when they had not noticed nor could not be certain whether it had moved or not.

The policing of this rule is almost impossible to implement. The striker is within 30 centimetres of the ball and if he can't be certain how can anyone else, especially an opponent some 25 metres away?

Very few of us like to challenge the striker and calling a referee can normally only be done after two or three dodgy shots.

Apart from these obvious difficulties in 999 cases out of a 1000 it makes absolutely no difference whatsoever.

Yes, the ball must be touching but 'must be moved' even if shimmering and staying exactly where it was?

Owen Bryce

CROQUET ART

I am a new member of the CA and I thoroughly enjoyed reading my first copy of the Gazette. In particular, I was delighted to read the interview by David Appleton with Tremaine Arkley in the February edition, Issue 318.

Your members may be interested to know of a connection between this article and my club here in Edinburgh. The Meadows Croquet Club runs a Winter Activities Programme (to keep us going through the long dark winter!). The last activity that I organised was a visit to the National Galleries of Scotland's new storage facilities for works of art not on show in the main galleries. Also, the Scottish National Portrait Gallery has just closed for refurbishment, and the paintings and artefacts have had to be placed in secure and special conditions to preserve the works.

We were given a tour of this interestingly designed building by Daniel Herrmann, one of the Curators of the National Galleries of Scotland. He gave us a most illuminating and enjoyable talk on painting and sculpture, and the necessary conditions that have to be maintained to preserve the art. Daniel had arranged that we view an oil painting by the Scottish artist, William Crawford. This painting, dated 1864, is of the children of a prominent Edinburgh family playing croquet. We were all thrilled to see this work of art, as this is the painting that Tremaine Arkley has kindly donated to the Scottish National Portrait Gallery. David Appleton stated that this painting will be "the cornerstone of a room in the gallery devoted to Scottish sports".

As Daniel had no knowledge of croquet, we explained the background and style of playing this wonderful game and invited him to join us at the Meadows Croquet Club. He said that he had learnt from us, so it was a Win-Win situation for all concerned!

Alison Morag Ross

Golf It!

Golf Croquet means four balls, Blue Red Black and Yellow, Which must follow each other, fellow by fellow. If you play the wrong one you cannot then score and, unless you're a single, you'll get no turn more.

It's easier by strokes but it's not quite the same As playing to win an Association game, Because you don't get just to act on your own, And your damn good position can, by another, be blown!

Scoring is easy, and the tally not moot,
Just wait for the cheer as you pass through a hoop,
But, your opponent has now first shot at the next
And, if hampered by wire, you're more than just vexed.

Oh no! Hoop number three has been blocked by the Red,
Your Black's out two yards, a position you dread.
But, never say die, just give it a thump
And, with luck, through the hoop it will jump!

There are six hoops laid out on the green
And you can make them all twice and go for thirteen.
However, before with quick thinking the maths you deride,
Know that with six each you'll need one to decide.

There's a rule now to frustrate a 'hoop hanging' cheat,
Who advances his ball the next hoop to complete.
There're two penalty spots you can require him to lay
If he gets an advantage beyond the halfway.

Expert and novice at every stroke learn
But the novice can play at least one extra turn
For positional advantage, it can't get you more,
As playing a 'bisque' won't allow you to score.

Don't tread on a ball or cause one to move,
Or double tap, crush, or try to improve
A stroke through a hoop by push or bad habit,
Or not on the face at the end of the mallet.

Convivial talk from partner's allowed,
But not from another - and never the crowd.
Choose what suits you, wide stand or a stoop,
Just play smoothly, see the ball through the hoop!

All ages and both sexes engage in the running,
Often Gents with the power and Ladies the cunning.

What an interesting game in the sunshine to play,
Why, surely everyone, must enjoy Golf Croquet.

Tony Lee

Please send all tournament reports and photos to news@croquet.org.uk

this ensures that your contributions go to the website and the Gazette.

If you upload your own news or tournament reports please remember to forward to the Gazette.

Editorial

Well here we are approaching mid-summer. Feels like

Easter was only last week. Perhaps that is just wishful thinking. I have kept to my promise of returning to play. My first venture being to Cheltenham, for the Coles in May. I haven't hit a ball since last summer, some would call me ill prepared, others stupid, but as I intend to enjoy myself I thought it would be interesting to go there cold and see what I could do. Turning up on the first morning and seeing the draw sheet told me I was probably going to be in trouble, as I'd drawn Reg Bamford in the first round. We knocked a few balls around and I realised I was in trouble. I couldn't remember which hand went at the top of my grip, I couldn't get my feet in that 'comfortable place', and my mallet, well my mallet felt a bit like the shovel I had been using up until lunchtime the previous day, digging a path out. A few years ago that would have filled me with all sorts of negative thoughts, but not now. Reg duly dispatched me to the consolation event, but I wasn't put off by my performance. I've played for 23 years this year. Some of it must have stuck, surely? Well that's what I told myself anyway. Gradually with each game the mallet became less shovel like - I never did take a divot by the way, and eventually I got into that rhythm, that groove and auto-pilot was even being considered by the final day. My results weren't great, but I enjoyed playing, the company was excellent, and Cheltenham made me very welcome - so in reality nothing has changed in my time away, and that's a good thing in my book, so I will continue to play.

I'm sure we would all congratulate Reg Bamford on his win at the World Championships. Having had the opportunity to talk to Reg at the Coles before he departed for America, it was clear to me that he meant business and I think anyone with an inclination to place a bet, would have been hard pushed to deny themselves the possibility of a sure thing.

Reg has kindly agreed to be interviewed for the Gazette, so if anyone has any burning question for the World Champion, please let me have them by the end of June.

I think it's also fitting that we offer our congratulations to Chris Farthing for reaching the semi-finals. I understand that Chris celebrated a 'significant birthday' during the event. I'm sure he will remember his significant birthday more positively in future years, than he would perhaps otherwise.

On a slightly different note I'd like to thank Sydenham Croquet Club for making me feel so welcome a few weekends ago on a visit to London. A friend of mine is interested in taking the game back up after a gap of almost 30 yrs. We checked the CA website for the nearest club, found Sydenham, contacted them and they responded quickly and courteously. Special thanks go to Bill and Alice for their warmth and two very pleasant games of golf croquet, which they deservedly won. Sydenham might be a very small cub, with only one lawn and only play golf croquet, but if that is a sample of the kind of welcome new players receive then I think our sport is in good shape. I know my friend was impressed.

Gail Curry



Laws

New Edition of the ORLC

A new edition of the Official Rulings and Commentary on the Laws of Association Croquet (ORLC) has been published, dated May 2009. It is available to browse, with links to the Laws themselves, on the CA web site at:

<http://www.croquet.org.uk/association/6th/orlc>

and a PDF version for printing on A4 (or as an A5 booklet if you can read small type) is at

http://www.croquet.org.uk/association/6th/orlc/orlc_a4.pdf

The previous draft ruling on Law 15(c) has been promoted to official status. It deals with the rare case of roqueting a ball after it has been pegged out in that stroke by a combination peg-out: the turn ends in the same way as when a ball is pegged out by being rushed onto the peg.

There are four new draft rulings, which should be used as guidance until confirmed or withdrawn. The first states that if the striker plays one of his adversary's balls at the start of a turn, he becomes responsible for the position of that and both his own balls for wiring purposes. The second allows the striker to play a stroke in the knowledge that a ball has been moved to assist double bankers, provided that he expects the outcome of the stroke to be unaffected (this is common practice to speed up the game, but theoretically illegal under the laws as written!). The final two are to do with interference with a ball. A ball is only prohibited from scoring a point or making a roquet for the remainder of the stroke in which the interference occurred (not as a result of interference in previous, or between, strokes). The provision that the turn ends only if the striker's or croqueted ball would have gone off the lawn but for the interference does not apply to interference by natural forces (e.g. wind or gravity) and end of turn precludes any replay.

A number of changes have been made to the commentary, which is by far the largest section of the document. It answers many questions you may have: for instance, is a puddle an outside agency? In particular, the commentary on Laws 22 and 24 (which deal with the general treatment of errors, including strokes in error and compound errors) has been revised and reference made to the summary of the limit of claims that was published on the website last year. The commentary on Law 33, interference with a ball, has also been extended.

News & Information

Nominations for CA Diplomas

Nominations by clubs of members who have performed exceptional service are invited for the award of CA Diplomas. Diplomas were first awarded in 2000 and are intended primarily to recognise the work done by the many volunteers who do so much "behind the scenes" to provide the facilities, service and organisation that we all enjoy, but so easily take for granted.

Nominations should be sent to the CA Office by 1st August, together with a short (approx 100 words) citation that will be published when the awards are announced. Diplomas are normally presented at the AGM (which this year is at Hurlingham on 17th October), but arrangements can be made to present them locally if the recipient is unable to be there.

Ian Vincent

Hon. Secretary

Most Northerly and Most Dramatic?

With the Association's most northerly club now in its second year, croquet on the Castle Green is becoming a regular feature village life in Bamburgh, Northumberland. Club members are also asking if there is a more dramatic setting for a croquet club anywhere than under the magnificent keep built by Henry II? The club plays both golf and association croquet and is catering for an enthusiastic group of players new to the game.

Chairman Jamie Edgar said "We are delighted that Bamburgh has joined the 160+ clubs in England and Wales that participate in the sport which is increasing rapidly in popularity in the northeast. We are proud to be the northern-most club in the Croquet Association!"

The club has all levels of players with a large number of beginners who enjoy the social afternoons and fun of the game.



Bamburgh Croquet Club members (from left to right) Chris Baldwin (Local rep), Alan Hawke (Club Coach), John Woodman (Treasurer), Seonaidh Edgar (Secretary) and Jamie Edgar (Chairman) prepare to spend another enjoyable afternoon under the magnificent setting of Bamburgh Castle.

Club coach Allan Hawke will be organising a tuition course for both styles of the game on Sunday afternoons.

Further information can be found on the club's website at www.bamburghcroquetclub.org.uk or by telephoning 0131 336 2585.

Merit Awards

In previous years the winners of badges of the CA merit Award scheme have been published annually. Starting with this issue, they will be published in each issue.

2009 Merit Awards

SILVER

Malcolm Daines. Bowdon May Weekend. 3 May 2009

BRONZE

Christine Dyer. Surbiton Weekend Handicap Tournament. 10 April 2009.

Adam Moliver. Cheltenham Easter Tournament. 10 April 2009.



Littlehampton Centenary Tournament

Littlehampton held their Centenary GC Tournament on Sunday 10th May 2009. It was brilliantly organised by Lilian Holdsworth, supported by her husband, Michael, and many other club members too numerous to mention individually by name. We were greeted on arrival and our every need was catered for. The courts were beautifully set out and looked great. The games, which we thoroughly enjoyed, were quite a challenge. After the morning session we all had a picnic lunch, beverages were offered throughout the day, and in the afternoon there was a magnificent celebratory tea.

The event was won by SCCC (pictured above) - the team: Capt. Daphne Gaitley partnered by David Gaitley and Alan Cottle partnered by Avril Rangoni-Machiavelli. The Littlehampton team was a close second. The Centenary Trophy was presented by the Mayor of Littlehampton. The weather was kind to us and we all had a really wonderful time. Congratulations to Lilian and the club for an excellent tournament.

Croquet players' favourite shop



Jon Watson spotted this shop, and added it if only!

Silver Jubilee Celebrations and a Big Surprise at The Bear of Rodborough CC.

by Robert Moss

Twenty-six years ago, the Croquet Association set a challenge to Local Authorities to form new clubs around the country and in Gloucestershire, this request was passed to Cheltenham Croquet Club who had a member, Norman Gooch, living near Stroud. Norman called a meeting, with the result that The Bear of Rodborough Croquet Club was established on 29th April 1984. The three founder members are still members of the club today: Norman was Chairman for the first eleven years; Rosemary Danby has been secretary for all twenty-five years and Nick Hurst has been lawn manager, mower, roller, liner and hoop setter up until the present day.

Rosemary's husband, Richard, was one of the first members recruited and held the office of Chairman for twelve years after Norman.

The club has planned a year of celebrations, but the main focus was on a Gala Dinner and weekend of matches between Bears and visitors. Invitations were sent to past members; to clubs The Bears play in their matches; to clubs who have entertained them in their summer visits; and to supporters - many of whom are CA Officers. Bernard and Liz Neal were guests of honour and Bernard entertained the guests with his usual warmth, eloquence and witty panache.

In his speech, current Chairman, Robert Moss, said that "... if you judge a club by the number of its lawns and the number of its members, the Bear of Rodborough Croquet Club would be one of the smallest in the country but if you judge it by its ambition and the warmth of its welcome, it must be up amongst the greatest" and Bernard Neal, said "... the club punches well above its weight". With only one lawn and membership limited to the low twenties they still manage to field three league teams and often four. Additionally, they go on an annual away visit alternating between clubs in Britain and abroad and in recent years they have visited Italy, Austria, Ireland, Scotland, France, the Isle of Man, Cornwall and Ramsgate, and this year they are invited to Llanfairfechan.

A summer barbecue, an annual dinner and a programme of winter social events bring the club together regularly at other times.

In its small membership the club has the full range of ability

from handicaps of -1 to 24; two members having been voted "Coach of the Year" by the CA; three qualified referees; three members currently holding CA offices; and now a CA Diploma holder.



Bernard Neal President of the CA with the three chairmen of The Bear of Rodborough CC. L to R; Richard Danby, Bernard Neal, Norman Gooch and Robert Moss.

It is usual for clubs to make nominations for a diploma and for these to be presented at the CA AGM in November but a special request was made that secrecy surround Rosemary Danby's nomination so that it could be presented at the club's Silver Jubilee Gala Dinner and be a complete surprise to her and, indeed, to the club membership. After Bernard Neal had made his speech and the vote of thanks had been proposed, the chairman rose to give what everyone thought was to be a closing remark. However, he announced that a secret had been kept and that an award was to be made. He went on to describe the various awards the CA makes, finishing with a description of the diploma. It was then he turned to Rosemary, announced she had been nominated for a diploma for exceptional services to the sport and, after reading the citation, he invited Bernard to present the diploma.

It was worth keeping the secret for six months just to see Rosemary's expression!

Croquet World Online's 2009 Photo Contest

The croquet world's only independent magazine has announced its fourth annual Photo Contest, accepting entries between July 1st and August 15th.

The contest is wide open, with few restrictions, and is introducing a new category in 2009 Series. That is, if you have a croquet-related "time lapse" or "before and after" presentation, it will be considered if it contains no more than four images. The major restriction is the number of entries allowed per photographer, which is five. Croquet World acknowledges the difficulty of choosing between many excellent photographs. If you can't choose your best, the editors suggest you ask a friend for advice.

GUIDELINES FOR ENTRY

* Any croquet-related still photograph is eligible for submission.

* There are no rules against manipulating ("photo-shopping") for improved effect.

* "Mixed media" are okay: For example, a photograph of a painting or drawing or including a painting or drawing or statuary would be acceptable in the "art" category.

* Photo Series, not to exceed four related images.

* Web resolution images (low density) are preferred over large, dense files.

* Jpeg formats are preferred.

* Descriptive text about the photograph may include information on technical processing, circumstances of the shoot, and even anecdotal material. The judges will regard favorably anything that broadens the viewer's understanding and appreciation of the photograph or the photographer's intention.

Categories are created by the judges from the entries received, in order to ensure that every croquet-related photograph is eligible for consideration. Croquet World will accept for consideration photos that have been entered in other photo contests. The contest will be judged by founding editor Bob Alman, European coeditor James Hawkins, and layout editor Reuben Edwards.

Results will be published in September and will remain online indefinitely. Owners retain full, exclusive rights to their photographs. To view results of the three previous photo contests, see the Letters & Opinion department of www.CroquetWorld.com.

Send your entry to Bob Alman, editor, at bobalman@aol.com, before August 15, 2009.

Free advertising for Medway CC

Rodney Parkins, the proud owner, and hopefully safe driver, of his three wheel Scorpion sports car, advertises Medway CC where ever he goes, via the their logo on his car.

Rodney informs me he can do 0 to 60 in 5 seconds, in his car powered by a BMW 1000 cc K series engine. However he neglected to say what the 1 to 4-back speed was ?



"Find the odd ball out"- Competition results

To remind readers, the challenge was to state how George managed, with a balance with a "jury-rigged" bar, to find in just three weighings whether, of 13 superficially equal croquet balls, one of the them was different from the other 12 and if so, whether heavier or lighter.

Solutions to the similar problem with just 12 balls are well known, but these use no more than 25 of the 27 possible outcomes to three weighings. It is widely argued that no solution is possible to the 13 ball problem. The statement of the 13-ball problem in the Gazette was carefully worded to emphasize the need for lateral thinking and outlaw a very artificial 13-ball "solution" to be found on the internet (to magically acquire a 14th ball known to be of "correct" weight - not feasible in Much Blobbing on a rainy afternoon).

Five readers of the Gazette submitted responses to the problem. Sadly, three of them failed to spot the lateral thinking required. Each displayed a good understanding of a solution to the 12-ball problem, and then argued, as others have, the "impossibility" of a 13-ball solution. Their attempts to try to claim the prize were inventive, but not sufficiently so!

Two submitted solutions incorporated the essential piece of lateral thinking. That is that the balance did not have to be symmetrical! If George had the resources to make a jury-rigged balance bar with arms of equal length, then he was equally capable of making one with unequal arm lengths of a chosen ratio. While the typical laboratory balance with equal arms may be the first to come to mind, many mechanical balances have unequal arms.

Fergus McInnes deserves the honourable mention for which he asked for submitting a solution with balance arms in the ratio 2 to 1 which starts by weighing six balls against 3 and, depending on the outcome, which other balls to weigh next. He also provided a proof as to why no 13-ball solution is possible with a balance with equal arms and further that the ratio of the arm lengths must satisfy a certain condition. He misses first prize for two reasons: the "contingent" nature of his weighing sequence and not being the first to be drawn.

The winning solution also has arms in the ration 2 to 1 but more elegantly specifies the three weighings of 6 balls against 3 *ab initio* with a lookup table to find the result.

Interestingly, as the constructor of the puzzle, I had not spotted the 2 to 1 arm ratio solution! My solution was based on an *ab initio* weighing sequence of 4 balls against 4 for the 12-ball problem on a symmetrical balance. I modified this by adding the 13th ball as a fifth to all three weighings on a balance with arm ratio of 5 to 4 (which obeys the condition Fergus established).

So, congratulations to the winner Jon Palin, and may he be equally successful with mallet and ball and enjoy his £10 gift voucher. *Martin King, Letchworth CC.*

OPENING DAY REPORT:
LLANFAIRFECHAN & NORTH WALES CROQUET CLUB

Report by Jack Pattenden, Photos by Tony Thomas

On 20th May 2009 in front of an enthusiastic crowd of almost ninety people was staged the final act of our three year project with the opening by Councillor Glyn Jones Chairman of Conwy County Borough Council of our new Clubhouse. The building looked magnificent with its off-white walls and Welsh slate roof decorated by a garland of bunting in Croquet colours. The final landscaping of the lawns and garden with the mountains rearing behind added hugely to the picture.

The ceremony was preceded by a lunch in the clubhouse to which representatives of our principal backers were invited which enabled the Chairman to thank each one on behalf of the club for their support which had made the building possible. Before sitting down to dine, Councillor Jones

continued on page 14



Jack Pattenden (Chairman) accepting the Townsend Award and cheque for £250 from Barry Keen on behalf of the Croquet Association.

COMMENTS ON
THE 2008
CROQUET
ASSOCIATION
ACCOUNTS



By Roger Bray, Hon. Treasurer

The surplus of income over expenditure after taxation fell by over £16,000 from 2007 to 2008. This dramatic change was in large part planned, since 2008 bore the brunt of the initial costs of restructuring in which several functions, including running the Shop, are being transferred to the CA Office. In the longer term it is hoped that these changes will prove financially beneficial as well as making key operations less dependent on the contributions of isolated individuals, and hence less risky. But the immediate and most obvious financial consequence is that staff costs have risen significantly. The increase of £15,000 is, however, compensated by savings under other headings, in particular in marketing and development following the termination of the external PR Agent's contract. In future years other, more significant, savings will come into play.

On the income side, subscriptions and levies increased by more than £4,000 – an excellent result in a year when subscription rates remained unchanged. However, the surplus on commercial activities fell by roughly the same amount, due almost entirely to a fall in sales, bringing to an end a remarkable run of year on year increases. Sales are now a major source of income for the CA but they are subject to changes in climate, both economic and meteorological! Fortunately the healthy profits over the last few years have enabled the CA to build up its reserves which should

prove a strong defence in the more stringent times we are currently facing.

The general fall in interest rates had only a slight impact on the CA's income in 2008 since the effect was masked by the increase in reserves generated by the previous year's surplus. The income from investment in gilts remained steady.

Although the total cost of grants fell by £3,700, the number of awards – development and new club grants – to clubs increased from 12 in 2007 to 17 in 2008. It is pleasing to note that 9 of the 17 awards were to newly registered clubs, bringing the total number of new club grants to 26 in just four years that the scheme has been running.

One new heading, Meetings Expenses, has been introduced into the Income & Expenditure Account. Previously the costs of hiring rooms and travel expenses incurred in attending meetings were scattered amongst various headings, with only Council members' travel expenses itemised separately. The new heading highlights a cost centre which has grown markedly in recent years, as witness the increase of around £1,500 in the two years under review. It should also be noted that it includes the travel expenses of non-Council volunteers who are playing an increasingly important role on CA committees.

The new extension to the CA Office was only partially built by the end of 2008 and Note 2 to the Accounts summarises the financial situation at that stage. The cost incurred during the year has been met from reserves and so has had no impact on the I&E Account. But in future years 5% of the total cost (which is likely to be around £52,000) will be written off annually as depreciation.

A more comprehensive commentary on the 2008 Accounts will be distributed at the AGM in October.

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2008

	2008	2007		2008	2007
	£	£		Note	£
Income from:			Fixed Assets		
Subscriptions:			Office Building at written down value	1	41,325
Individuals	48,132	46,422	Office & Croquet equipment at written down value	2	1,189
Clubs	33,528	32,309	Trophies at valuation		10,000
Levies	14,764	13,564	Investments at cost	3	78,580
Surplus (deficit) of income from -					131,094
Commercial activities	23,967	27,929	Current Assets		
Sponsorship	-	2,666	Loans to Clubs	4,213	8,349
Tournaments	1,857	2,224	Stock held for resale	1	15,066
Investments	9,566	9,991	Debtors & prepayments	2,718	7,077
Donations and royalties	550	1,659	VAT recoverable	3,348	
Total Income	132,364	136,764	Cash at bank and in hand	133,482	152,948
					183,440
Expenditure on:			Current Liabilities		
Publications	19,263	15,899	Receipts in advance	6,114	3,155
Marketing & Development	5,007	8,381	Creditors & accrued expenses	17,678	12,387
International activities	2,436	2,175	VAT liability	140	140
Direct expenditure on Clubs & Federations	19,497	23,211	Provision for taxation	3,292	5,172
Grants to Clubs & Federations	5,968	5,501			20,854
Legal liability insurance scheme			Net current assets		140,340
Central administration costs:			Net Assets		
Staff costs	51,884	36,755	Financed by:		
Office building & equipment depreciation	4,317	4,334	General Fund		294,456
Office overheads	2,805	2,227	Balance at 1 January 2008		
Office services	5,777	5,483	Deficit (Surplus) for the year from Income & Expenditure		107,307
Meetings expenses	9,293	7,744	Account retained in General Fund		(5,053)
Professional fees and expenses	815	810			107,307
Sundry expenses	336	107	Special Funds	4	186,373
Direct debit and related charges	744	755			293,680
Total Expenditure	128,142	113,382			
Surplus for the year before taxation	4,222	23,382			
Provision for Corporation Tax					
year ended 31st December 2008	3,389	5,267			
adjustment for prior year	57	1,054			
Surplus for the year after taxation					
Net transfer from/(to) special funds					
Deficit (Surplus) for the year transferred to General Fund					

P Duke-Cox Chairman
Dr R W Bray Treasurer

**THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION
ACCOUNTANT'S REPORT**

In accordance with Council's instructions I have examined the attached accounts for the Croquet Association for the year ended 31st December 2008, together with the accounting records maintained for that year. I obtained such further information as I considered necessary to assist me in my review.

Although I have not conducted an audit of the accounting records, in my opinion the attached accounts summarise and are in agreement with the accounting records and information obtained relating to that year.

Marian Hemsted, Accountant

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS - 31 DECEMBER 2008

1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Accounting convention

The accounts are prepared under the historical cost convention.

Fixed Assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life:

Office Building	5% per annum from 1 January 2003
Croquet & Office Equipment & Fittings	33% per annum

Trophies are included in the Balance Sheet at valuation.

Stock

Stock is valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

2 CAPITAL COMMITMENT

£23,433 plus VAT was expended during the year on building an extension to the Office Building. The CA is committed to spending a further £24,363 plus VAT on this project in 2009.

3 LISTED INVESTMENTS AT COST

	2008	2007
	£	£
15,409 4.125% Index Linked Treasury Stock 2030	18,810	18,810
4,228 2.5% Index Linked Treasury Stock 2024	10,053	10,053
3,898 2.5% Index Linked Treasury Stock 2016	10,059	10,059
9,733 4.75% Treasury Stock 2020	9,918	9,918
9,344 4.75% Treasury Stock 2015	9,898	9,898
10,157 4.25% Treasury Gilt 2011	9,927	9,927
9,920 4.00% Treasury Stock 2009	9,915	9,915
Investments at cost	<u>78,580</u>	<u>78,580</u>
Market value of investments at 31 December 2008	<u>101,541</u>	<u>99,072</u>

4 SPECIAL FUNDS

Fund Name	Balance 1 January 2008	Transfers from/(to) General Fund in year:			Balance 31 December 2008
		Investment	Donations	General	
	£	Income	Allocation (net)		£
Benefactors Fund	34,441	1,012	123	3,000	38,576
Development Fund	102,000				102,000
Duffield Bequest	19,636	813			20,449
International Fund	<u>30,296</u>	<u>881</u>			<u>31,177</u>
Total Special Funds	<u>186,373</u>	<u>2,706</u>	<u>123</u>	<u>3,000</u>	<u>192,202</u>

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2008

continued from page 11

unveiled a plaque on the wall commemorating all those bodies and persons who had supported the project.

At 2pm we moved outside for the opening ceremony which took place in front of another seventy guests, comprising club members, dignitaries from local councils, members of other clubs in the North West Fed., members of local groups and schools who use the lawns during the summer and individual members of the North Wales community. It was an opportunity for the Chairman to extend thanks to all these individuals who by their contributions had added so significantly to the money raised to cover the cost of the project.

Councillor Jones was fulsome in his praise for the hard work that had been done to make the project a success and declared the building open by cutting the tape across the patio doors.

This was not quite the end of the ceremony as Barry Keen was with us not only to represent the Croquet Association but, to the delight of members, to present the Chairman with the Townsend Award for the most improved club in the form of a Cup, an Award and a cheque for £250!

Tea and refreshments were served at 3pm and all present were invited to enjoy a game on the lawns, which many took advantage of.

The event was well covered by the media. It started with a Radio interview on Tuesday afternoon and BBC, ITV and S4C all had cameras and reporters there on the day. Interviews appeared on the respective news channels in the early evening. The local papers will run pictures and reports and a special media representative was sent by the Welsh Assembly to ensure that maximum coverage should be achieved throughout the Welsh Media. This can only be good for the future of Welsh Croquet and croquet in general.

And a final word: of all the good things that have come out of this project all of us in the club appreciate most the interest shown by members of the other clubs in the N.W.Fed. For so many of you to have travelled so far to help us celebrate our big day was really appreciated – we are out on a bit of a limb but on Wednesday we really felt like one of the ‘gang’!



Play in progress in the beautiful setting of Llanfairfechan



Recruitment

OUR ‘SECRET WEAPON’ WHICH HELPED TREBLE OUR MEMBERSHIP!

Richard Field of Bishop Monkton CC, shares the club's experience of recruitment.

Bishop Monkton, a small village in North Yorkshire, is not the most likely venue for a new croquet club but one was formed there last year and it has proved so successful that it will be trebling its membership this year!

Last year the club was formed, two lawns were created, and 23 villagers made a jump into the unknown as founder members.

This year, after a concerted membership drive during the close season, membership will treble, boosting the total to 65 with more names on a waiting list, making it surely one of the fastest growing clubs in the country!

The ‘secret weapon’ in achieving this success, and bucking the trend, was to do a link up with Harrogate U3A (University of the Third Age).

Club Chairman and U3A recruit Richard Field contacted the booming Harrogate branch, which has a membership of over 800, and suggested forming a croquet section. The response was definite and immediate – ‘Yes, please’.

During the winter Richard and members of the Bishop Monkton club attended U3A meetings and ‘sold’ the idea of croquet to a responsive U3A membership.

Amazingly, 82 U3A members expressed interest in taking up croquet, so the Club set up a series of four introductory sessions this spring when U3A applicants visited the club, heard about plans for the affiliated section, and then were taken out for a few rounds before tea after which came the inevitable production of membership application forms!

The response was enthusiastic with 100% of those attending the first two sessions signing up on the spot!

In the end the club had to limit the U3A section to 40 members and they were allocated two club days each week when they will



A SPOT OF PRACTICE: U3A members get in a bit of practice before they venture out onto the lawns. Several show real talent and promise, according to Chairman Richard Field.

take over the lawns and clubhouse.

The plan is to get the U3A to form its own committee, and to organise its own club days, fixtures and social activities, with Bishop Monkton members offering support as and when it is requested.

‘We had read in the *Gazette* about the problems clubs have in increasing their membership, and sometimes indeed merely retaining members so, this link up with U3A was a perfect solution, and might provide an idea for other clubs around the country’, said Richard.

Another factor in the success story was the fact that Harrogate has no croquet club of its own so Bishop Monkton offered the ideal solution.

With this greatly increased membership, the club realised that it needed to offer improved facilities if it were to meet the hopes and expectations of the new members. To achieve this, they launched a campaign to raise funds to build a small clubhouse/store alongside the existing lawns.

The money to build the new clubhouse came through generous grants from three organisations, £5,000 from the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, £1,500 from the Croquet Association and £300 from the Shepherd Trust – with more money in the pipeline.

The new building will be formally opened on Sunday, June 7 when it is hoped representatives from the donor organisations will join local dignitaries and members of both the village club and the affiliated U3A section.

The new U3A club hopes to plan fixtures against other U3A croquet clubs in the area and would be delighted to hear from any such group interested in arranging a home and away fixture. Please send details to Richard Field at BMcroquet@aol.com



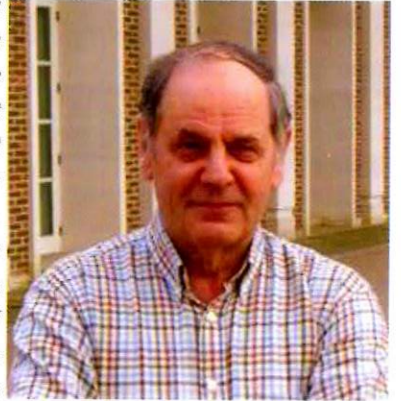
PUT A SOCK IN IT! Bishop Monkton Croquet Club Vice Chairman John Hague tells U3A members how he remembers the sequence of colours when he is playing – he simply rolls up his trousers to reveal socks which remind him of the correct order.

Talking Croquet

Prof. Alan Pidcock

Interviewed by Gail Curry

The intention of the series ‘Talking Croquet’ was always to draw upon the experiences of not just players of the sport but people involved in its many different aspects. Finally, after many months of trying, I was able to pin down Alan, in a fashion. I suspect most people reading this will be familiar with Alan’s mallets, if you don’t play with one you will surely have seen one. So with that in mind we will keep the introduction to a minimum and let Alan tell you his story.



How and when did you become involved in croquet?

Together with a friend with a suitable lawn I entered the 1988 Croquet Classic - Chris Hudson’s national competition for garden croquet players. Drawn to play away at remote Dewsbury led to an invitation from the area organizer (John Beech) to play instead half way at the Pendle Club. Though 26 years earlier I had played coarse croquet on the front lawn of a college residence (sometimes after dark with the front room lights blazing), this was my first contact with proper courts and equipment and I was hooked straightaway. Details of the nearer Southport club were provided and on my first visit there a tournament and peeling were in progress. I signed up for lessons and membership on the spot.

So what made you decide to get involved in making mallets and when did you begin?

From an early age I’d been a keen woodworker, so when the mallet I bought soon after joining Southport proved to be defective in several respects (shaft incorrectly aligned, faces not square to the body of the head), in the Christmas vacation I fulfilled a long standing intention to visit Boddy’s timber store in Boroughbridge. I returned with some ash for handles and out of the vast range of timbers there I alighted on Purpleheart for the heads and made two mallets based on measurements of other mallets at Southport. They proved satisfactory and the Purpleheart was of the right density, tough, and polished up to a very striking colour, so it wasn’t far into the 1989 season before the spare one had a buyer and requests were forthcoming from Southport members. The first sale outside the club was in July and by then a source of hickory for handles had been found. Barbara (my wife) had earlier become a handloom weaver and that had resulted in my making shuttles as a spare time outworker for the loom makers, so I knew that domestic scale woodwork could become a small business. And readers will know that academics are very poorly paid....

So from the early mallets you made what made you get involved in designing and improving the then fairly standard mallet? Did you use only your own knowledge or did you involve others in the process?

The aim was make mechanically efficient mallets which also had a pleasing appearance. The science background helped with the former, so the process early on involved a sequence like: idea, find materials, make a prototype and then to ask Colin Irwin what he thought of it. Following golf and tennis, it seemed likely that there would be scope for carbon fibre (lightness and strength), and an important contribution came from Peter Nash who drew my attention to the foam material used for fishing rod grips. Also, as well as debriefing customers and players in general, I've always made a point of meeting suppliers face to face and have learnt a great deal from them over the years about materials and methods.

I am bearing in mind that you currently wear three hats as it were, that of a player, a mallet manufacturer and the chairman of the CA Equipment Committee. However, all that said, do you think that the regulations governing the properties and restrictions on mallets are still required, or should they be released to see what, if anything, is produced that may throw some ideas into the melting pot?

And I'm W.C.F Equipment Officer too! The Laws governing mallets ensure that the *player* must use a single simple implement produce a variety of strokes. The playing characteristics of the mallet may not be altered to assist with the production of different types of shot, nor (within a turn for Association) may the mallet be exchanged for another which is better suited to the shot required. This is for me an *essential* feature of the game. The Laws wording: (heads giving) "no significant playing advantage over a head made entirely of wood", could surely be improved: end-weighting of heads does confer advantage and has been a feature of (sport) croquet mallets almost from the beginning.

Also, since it would be awkward to rule against mallets that had already established themselves in the game, I'd be in favour of pre-emptive action in say a technical appendix to the Laws to outlaw such things as designs to ease hampered shots (eg. wider faces than body of head); fortunately, however, remarkably few attempts are made to 'get round' the mallet rules, so it isn't an urgent matter

Within the Laws, technical advances are a good thing since they (ideally) enable a player to gain more satisfaction by reaching a higher standard, and they do not alter the character of the game. There is nothing more dispiriting than seeing player on a slow lawn physically unable to hit far enough to reach distant targets. Modern mallets have helped to bring more shots within the compass of the physically less well-endowed, improved 'control' for most users, and also, by reducing jarring fairly dramatically, prevented and alleviated the effects of damage to wrists etc.

I'm sure at one time or another we have all wished that we had a different mallet for that hampered shot you speak of, but it ended that way because of the previous shot, so we only have ourselves to blame and I agree that changes in mallets over the recent past have given players the benefits you mentioned. Do you feel that you or any other mallet makers are close to the optimum mallet or do you feel that as technology progresses, that the holy grail of mallets is always one step away.



Alan with his mobile factory and shop

End-weighting of heads (and resistance to twist) using brass or tungsten composites in the most advanced mallets is now close to the limits set by available materials and is not far from the theoretical limit. Further gains could only be small and would be very expensive. Handles can be very light, so if it was shown to be advantageous it would be possible to add weight at any point along the shaft. The small market for croquet equipment - compared, say, with golf or gateball, means that resources for research and manufacturing are almost negligible. Shafts currently are either uniform tubes or taken from golf, but it seems likely that some structuring of the flex of shafts as in golf clubs would also be of benefit in croquet.

I'm also aware that you play quite a lot of croquet and therefore see others playing. Do you therefore learn from that in any respect or do you find that you learn more from talking to players rather than watching them?

The characteristics of the player and the mallet are not easily distinguished in play, so talking has been more useful, particularly when I'm persuaded to make something new - specifically, for example, the D-shaped ends at the behest of Jeff Dawson. However, a really great attraction of the Association tournament scene is the time available for conversation - between out-players, at lunch and tea, in the bar...

And with that Alan disappeared back into the factory.

Manor House Mallets

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

Hollow head with brass plate extreme end-weighting (£20 extra)
Revolutionary 2001 model £230
3000 model with D-shaped ends £265

Mallet bags (£27) Head wraps (£7.50)

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

THE WCF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS 9TH - 17TH MAY 2009

National Croquet Centre, Palm Beach Florida

Report by Gail Curry

Eighty players gathered at the National Croquet Centre in Florida to play in the 12th WCF World Croquet Championships. Preliminary rounds were played in seeded blocks, with 8 blocks of ten players, identified by the primary and secondary colours. The black block produced a four-way tie for the final qualifying place between Chris Farthing, David Walters, Pete Trimmer and Ken Bald (Aus). Chris Farthing bt David Walters, Pete Trimmer bt Ken Bald, and then Chris went on to beat Pete to secure his place in the knockout event. The Pink group was slightly less complicated with a three-way tie for two places. Bruce Fleming (Aus) bt Ian Burrige, but then Ian beat Anton Varnas of Sweden and so Ian and Bruce were safely through. The white group had a two-way tie for the remaining place and Greg Fletcher (Aus) bt Aiken Hakes (NZ)

The final 32 players entered into best-of-three matches. On paper perhaps the only shock result, as in it wasn't perhaps expected on recent events, was Chris Farthing beating Keith Aiton.

In the second round of the knockout, play was increased to best-of-five matches. There were more surprises. James Death beat the defending Champion, Chris Clarke, in five games. Robert Fletcher, a young man from Australia of whom we will hear more in the future, dispatched David Maugham. Chris Farthing continued his good form beating Ed Duckworth in four games. John Gibbons, of whom we haven't seen much recently, knocked out Ian Lines in five games. Perhaps the result that made the 'home team' celebrate the most, was Ben Rothman of the USA beating Robert Fulford in three straight games.

The quarter-finals paired two young exciting players in the first match. Robert Fletcher and James Death, with Robert beating James in four games. Meanwhile Reg Bamford was playing Rutger Beijderwellen, which Reg won rather clinically in four games. Meanwhile Chris Farthing was still in there and fighting and taking on Stephen Mulliner, also known for his dogged determination. This time youth was the victor, with Chris winning the five game marathon. The final quarter-final was the young American pretender, Ben Rothman against a rejuvenated John Gibbons, and Ben made full advantage of the home support and won in three straight games.

The semi-finals put Reg, the seasoned and calm old hand against the new kid on the block, Robert Fletcher. Robert took the first game, but Reg hit back with three games and made his way deservedly into the final. In the other semi-final, both players, Chris Farthing and Ben Rothman, were playing for the chance to really upset the applecart. It went to a fifth game and Ben was triumphant by the clinical score of +26tp to take his place in the final.

So Reg Bamford, South Africa, versus Ben Rothman, USA. Reg was in no mood to make Ben's dream come true, and won his third world Association title in three straight games.

The plate event played by players who did not make it through to the knockout event was won by Duncan Dixon of New Zealand who beat Danny Huneycutt of the USA.

The 'Z', or consolation event of consolation events, was won by Ian Lines.



Reg Bamford 2009 World Champion (photo by Chris Farthing)

For anyone wishing to know more detailed reports of the event I suggest you visit the World Croquet Federation website, or <http://worldcroquet2009.com> where there are numerous photos and commentaries on matches.

Knockout Results:

1st round. Chris Clarke bt Jim Bast +24, +17tp; James Death bt Brian Cumming +9, +6; Robert Fletcher bt Ian Burrige +26tp, +10; David Maugham bt Danny Huneycutt +26tp, +17; Rutger Beijderwellen bt David Openshaw +12tp, +23tp; Stephen Forster bt Mark Avery +14, +21tp; Bruce Fleming bt Samir Patel +21, +17; Reg Bamford bt Stuart Lawrence +10tpo, +26tp; Chris Farthing bt Keith Aiton +14, -26, +26tp; Ed Duckworth by Robert Lowe +5, -17, +22; Leo McBride bt Jamie Burch +15, -17, +22; Stephen Mulliner bt Paul Billings +3, +3; Ian Lines bt Greg Fletcher +12, +23tp; John Gibbons bt Kevin Beard +25tp, -12, +14; Ben Rothman bt Marcus Evans +25, -21, +20; Robert Fulford bt James LeMoignan +10tpo, -14, +17.

2nd Round:

James Death bt Chris Clarke +8, +13, -26tp, -4tp, +5; Robert Fletcher bt David Maugham +15tp, +17, -15, -17tp, +9; Rutger Beijderwellen bt Stephen Forster +17tp, +5, +18; Reg Bamford bt Bruce Fleming -12, +17tp, +25, +17tp; Chris Farthing bt Ed Duckworth -16, +5, +13, +5; Stephen Mulliner bt Leo McBride +16, +26tp, -4, +26; John Gibbons bt Ian Lines +16, +26, -26tp, -26, +15; Ben Rothman bt Robert Fulford +14, +15tp, +17.

Quarter-Finals:

Robert Fletcher bt James Death +26tp, +12tpo, -23, +14tp; Reg Bamford bt Rutger Beijderwellen +26tp, +24tp, -26tp, +26tp; Chris Farthing bt Stephen Mulliner 17tp, -17, +19tp, +17, +26tp; Ben Rothman bt John Gibbons +17, +17, +16.

Sem-Finals:

Reg Bamford bt Robert Fletcher -8tp, +26tp, +26tp, +5tp; Ben Rothman bt Chris Farthing +13tp, -8, +23, -26tp, +26tp.

Final: Reg Bamford bt Ben Rothman +13tp, +22, +18tp.

COACHING

WINNING NOT LOSING

Part Two of an article by Colin Irwin

Previously published in Issue 245 September 1996

If your break falls apart, as it will, then use your bisques to get back into your comfortable break pattern as quickly as possible. This will always be more economic of bisques than trying to use fewer by playing difficult shots. How many times have you tried a very angled hoop and then needed two bisques to recover, when a tap into good position followed by a bisque was a safe option? "But I usually run them from there!" I hear you cry. I bet that you don't. The trouble is that memory is selective – you remember the times you made it because you were happy about the result, but the failures get swept under the mental carpet.

So the important thing is to know are your abilities. (Back to practising again). As I indicated previously, it has been my experience over many years that most players, particularly high bisquers, are incurable optimists. They (a) think they are better than they really are and (b) assume the best result and don't consider the cost of failure. For example, if asked how often you hit a 7-yard shots what would you say? 50%, 60%, higher? How does shooting at oppo on the boundary affect this percentage compared with a free mid-court shot? Does it have any effect? Should it have any effect if you know the risks and rewards and have decided it is the right thing to do? What would your basis be

for your estimate? As I said above, memory of performance in games is unreliable, as we all remember the good bit and forget the bad bits. Unless you have been out on the practice ground shooting 7-yarders and counting, you really have no idea. Listen to top players reasoning why they made a particular choice of shot. Mostly you will first hear an analysis of what the opponent was likely to do if the various options failed and then a judgement on how confident the player was of making the various shots and the benefit to him of success. You have to consider the cost as well as the benefit to decide if the risk is worth it, and that means you have to know the risk. As a higher handicap player why they played a particular shot which they have just missed, giving away everything, and they will tell you how good it would have been if they had made it, not thought of other consequences. If you then say "but look what you have given away" they invariably say "well I usually make that shot". In my experience usually they have not considered failure at all.

How good are you at stop shots? That is actually the wrong question. The question should be, what is your normal ratio on a stop shot? Let's look at a couple of scenarios. Your normal stop shot is about 6 to 1. You are south of hoop one, taking croquet say two or three yards in from the boundary, and the approach ball for hoop one is three or four feet south of the hoop. The fourth ball is over behind hoop four somewhere. Naturally you want to get a pioneer towards hoop two. Option one is to get close to (ideally just short of) the approach ball, so that you will be taking croquet to approach the hoop from 3 feet or less. So the striker's ball ideally will move 3 yards at most. That means the croqueted ball can be sent 18 yards at most if the striker's ball is to be ideal, so it will be 7 yards short of hoop two. Option two, to get the croqueted ball a yard from hoop two, means you will have to move it 24 yards, so either the striker's ball will move 4 yards, leaving a 3 or 4 footer hitting the approach ball away from the hoop, or you have to make an 8 to 1 stop shot. Which of the first two options you choose depends on your confidence of approaching that hoop on that lawn from 4 or 5 feet. The third, 8 to 1 stop shot, which you usually can't do, is not an option. At any point in the break there is only one thing you have to do right to keep the break going. There are lots of ancillary nice things you would like to happen as well, but only one thing is critical. Identify that thing, do it right and the break will continue. In this case you have to make hoop one. Where do you have to be taking croquet to be confident of a good hoop approach? This is now the critical factor. Do you need to be closer to the hoop? Maybe the approach is a bit hilly? Then you must choose option one, get the little rush closer, and live with the short pioneer at hoop two. If the lawn is flat and easy paced and you are sure you can approach hoop one from five or six feet and make it ("sure" does not translate to "on a good day with luck and a following wind", it does translate to "if someone will bet £20 against me making this hoop I'll give him 5 to 1.") then option two is viable. The point is that you must make hoop one. If you don't then it doesn't matter how good the pioneer at hoop two is (except that is much better for the opponent now that you have stuck in hoop one, trying a 3 foot angled hoop resulting from a poor approach from 6 or 7 feet caused by trying an 8 to 1 stop shot, which you can't do, so it didn't work and you didn't even get your normal 6 to 1 so had a 2 yard return roquet to the approach ball.....!). The error was not failing the hoop, it was bad shot selection 4 shots ago.

However on the next lawn, in identical circumstances, another player is about to approach hoop one. He is 2 feet short of the approach ball, an opponent ball, and there is a ball somewhere down near hoop two somewhere, 7 yards short. The fourth ball is over in the fourth corner somewhere. Now where does he want to be taking croquet to have the best chance of getting a pioneer to three and a rush to two? Towards the west boundary about peg high would be good. A simple drive with not much split would do nicely from there. So he needs to be taking croquet about 2 feet more or less straight in front of hoop one, so a little gentle drive or stop shot will give close position (<1 foot) and a chance for the rush westwards after the hoop.

But wait dammit, he over-hit the little rush and now he is only a foot short and a bit east of one and the hoop is a bit in the way of the croqueted ball but maybe he can play a really good stop shot approach and get really tight position, then he could just trickle though and get the rush..... Is a different plan possible?

If he doesn't get the westward rush he still has a split half roll as an option, followed by at worst a scoop to hoop two. If the approach to two is off the partner he could be quite aggressive as the opponent has a long shot to get the innings, but a better option might be to lay up guarding the boundary instead of approaching the hoop. If the approach is off the opponent and his partner is the ball in corner 4, if he fails to get good hoop position on the

approach he can go back to partner. Indeed he could choose not to approach at all, but take off to partner and make a strong leave. If the fourth ball is near a boundary and he has bisques he could croquet the pioneer nearer to hoop two and carefully shoot off by the fourth ball, leaving a rush into the court for an instant four-ball break. So the split is a reasonable fall back position.

However, if he plays the croqueted ball to the east of the hoop one, which is possible from this new position, he might get a rush to corner four and then get a rush out into court on the ball over there. How viable this is depends on exactly where the ball over there is and whose it is. It should not become a more risky option than the straightforward split already described. If the ball is out around hoop four, this line of play may be a no-loss option offering the possibility of the fourth ball to be brought into the game, if even a moderate rush is achieved. Indeed it might then have been the first line of approach from the very beginning: approach hoop one, rush back to the end of A baulk, drive the croqueted ball to hoop three looking for a rush into the court and settling for a take-off to two if don't get it. All low risk shots, with alternatives if they are less than perfect. If the ball is right in the corner, rushing to it is so much less likely to work than the half split roll, as to be not worth considering, so there is no point even thinking about the rush. (Anybody who is thinking about playing for the rush for the corner cannon should see a doctor)

What he does not do is fail hoop one by trying too hard for either rush, and he does not take the rush to corner four unless it is very easy, because if he fails to get a good rush into the court on the ball over there the split shot needed to recover the break is twice as long and at a more difficult angle than the split he had after hoop one. Be flexible, be ready to change your plans as you go along.

What I have tried to describe here is a way of thinking which minimises careless errors. However the thinking is not negative. I am certainly not advocating an Aunt Emma style of play. The objective is always to get a good break, but to do it in such a way that you don't throw away the game with risky shots. Don't be afraid to settle for a solid leave rather than a risky break. Make your opponent work for his gain and be prepared to work yourself, don't expect to turn a mediocre position into a break with one brilliant shot; see if you can get the same position or even a better one with three, four or five easy shots. You have the same overall chance of success

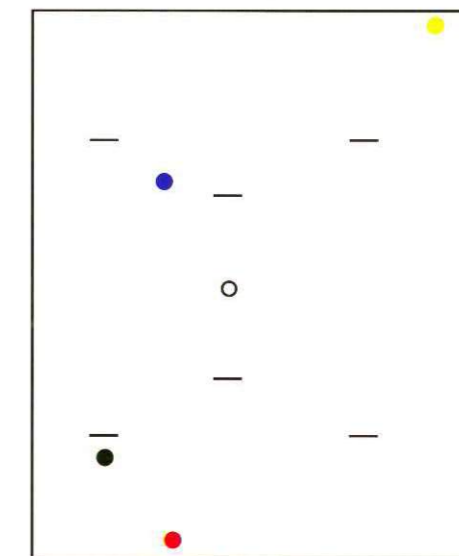
with five shots, each of which you can play four times out of five, as with one shot which you can play one time in three. Croquet does not have to be anywhere near as complicated as we try to make it.

And finally, did you work out why he should be approaching hoop one off an opponent, as highlighted above? Because he will be croqueting that ball to a position west of three before approaching hoop two off a very loose pioneer. If it is his partner ball and he fails to approach two, where can he run away to now? I am not saying that you should never approach hoop one off the partner, with a good pioneer at two go for it, but you should be aware of the risks if the pioneer at two is bad and, for example, play for the rush towards corner four after hoop one as the first option, aiming to leave the partner there near the boundary, and try and use the opponent balls to set up the break, so that if it fails he is hung out to dry in the middle of the court and you are joined up near a boundary.

I'm afraid this has been rather longer than I would have hoped, but I hope it has illustrated why some players seem to win a lot more than others of apparently similar or indeed better ball-striking skills.

Break Builder 2 - Solution

by John McCullough



Yellow is on the north yardline 3ft west of corner 3.

We assume that you wish to play with red, which is for hoop 1. You are prepared to set up a break using one bisque. What sequence of shots should you play to set up the break?

Shoot to the third corner. Take your

DAVID BARRETT

The maker of POWERFLEX croquet mallets

A wide selection of designs and sizes are now available with Square or Round heads and a choice of Adjustable or Fixed Shafts. Weights vary from Lightweight to Heavy.

A Powerflex shaft enables players to achieve great control and added distance when hitting shots. Jump shots and Stop shots are said to be easier.



Each mallet head is machined to size and then HAND FINISHED to the highest standards. It is made from a single piece of 'solid' composite material that is virtually Indestructible

Prices from £140 to £160 Each (Plus P&P)

A Powerflex mallet also HELPS EASE PROBLEMS WITH ACHING WRISTS AND FINGERS when playing.

For details contact: David Barrett, 61 Heywood Hall Road. Heywood. Lancs. OL10 4UZ
Tel: 01706 368214 Mobile: 07957103417
e.mail: davidbarrett.db@tiscali.co.uk

Percival Mallets

Hand crafted wooden mallets with Carbon or Ash shafts, any weight, length or size made to your own specifications. Adjustable weight range +/- 2 ozs, variety of grips and peripheral weighting available. Mallets altered, repaired and upgraded.

Contact Michael Percival on 07780677943 or Michael@croquetmallets.co.uk (or .com) web page www.croquetmallets.co.uk

All mallets still at 2007 prices

bisque. Roquet yellow as far as you feel comfortable with. Croquet yellow to hoop two, with your ball going cloe to and the north of the blue. Roquet blue again as far as you feel comfortable with, so that is in the middle of the lawn. Take off to black, roquet and make the hoop. Your break is laid.

Coaching Tips

I have tried and will continue to try to solicit coaching tips from individuals. My first call was on the Nottingham List, I am now broadening my search via the Gazette. I believe any player can give a personal coaching tip, i.e. something that works for them, no matter what their handicap is. So I want everyone to consider writing their tip for their fellow players. You can keep them short and punchy, or you can make them longer if you wish. Golf Croquet or Association, just give your name and handicap with the tip. Please send to the usual address. Ed.

Alan Honey, Australia - (0)

I have always been considered a good roqueter. Whilst this is true quite often my "roquet" will dessert me for a week or a couple of games. When this happens I retrace my routine and a new step to make me concentrate. Eg stalk, count to five, check feet alignment square to target, eye on the exact spot I want to hit ball. Then I might add in stalk from the opposite direction or visualise hitting the ball as i strike or hold my head down for 2 seconds after shot, increase follow through etc any thing to make me concentrate. On an aside i often say to myself "play every shot like a hard roquet" and my game will improve.....if i listen to myself

Gail Curry - (0)

I'd like to offer advice on a clear plan of action. This based on watching handicap play recently, where a player would make an initial roquet and then ponder their next shot. This would be followed by a croquet shot and further pondering and so on. My tip would be to do your thinking before you make the initial roquet. Make your plan of action in your head for the first series of roquets, up to you make the first hoop. By doing this you can concentrate on playing the actual shots, and don't need to keep stopping and thinking. It's my experience that when I do this I inadvertently move my feet and miss short roquets, or have even played the wrong ball. Need to be clear and concentrate.



Julie Horsley and Charles Townshend ready for the presentations at Budleigh

Tournaments

Budleigh Salterton 4th – 9th May

Report by Mike Steer

The sun shone from the south but the wind seemed to be coming from the far north. It was fine and bright most of the time but decidedly chilly. The perambulatory hot coffee was very welcome at lawnside and the tasty hot meal option at lunch time was popular, especially with old softies like me who like their comfort food.

Julie Horsley's quiet, efficient management ensured that everything went off smoothly. This is not easy to achieve with 42 competitors, in such a complex tournament, when some of them end up in more than one final. The carefully worked out schedules had to be modified more than once. With lawns 3 and 4 not in use, room was tighter than usual too.

Fairly unusually, the knockout handicap final was between two of the lowest handicap players in the tournament, who must have needed an enormous amount of skill and a scythe to battle their way through the thicket of bisques which undoubtedly confronted them.

In Block A David Nicholson (Winchester) retained The Godfrey Turner Challenge Cup, beating Brian Wainman (Plymouth/Cheltenham) +24, +7

In Block B/C Charles Townshend (Budleigh) won the Woodlands Quaich beating Mike Steer (Bowdon) +1T, +3T

In Block D/E Graham Harford (Sidmouth) beat Jane Hull (Kington Langley/Cheltenham) +6 to win the J. K. Brown Memorial Challenge Cup.

In Block F Rosemary Bradshaw beat Jeannette Pollock (both Budleigh) +7T to win the Pat Tunmer Cup

In the Handicap Knockout final David Nicholson beat James Tuttiett (Hamptworth) +13

The Egyptian winner was Richard Griffiths (Cornwall)

The X Doubles winners of the Daldry Cups were Sylvia and Mike Steer (Bowdon)

The Y doubles winners were Ken Wood and Tony Church (both Budleigh)

A big thank you to all the people behind the scenes who set hoops, provided food, served behind the bar and did all the other work which made this such an enjoyable tournament.

By the way, Scottish friends of mine pronounce Quaich starting like quaint and ending like loch. Now that I know how to say it, I'll have another go at winning it. I probably wasn't trying hard enough when I thought I was playing for an open tart with a savoury filling.

East Anglian Golf Croquet 16th & 17th May 2009

Report by Chris Sheen

An unseasonably cold weekend awaited the competitors, but Colchester's lawns played true if a little slow. It was good to welcome newcomers to the tournament circuit and others who are less experienced. Tony Lee showed how his winter practise had honed his jump shots which were to be feared from all distances and Andrew Johnson is a name for the future.

The competition consisted of two blocks from which the eight quarter-finalists won through. These threw up some intriguing clashes such as John Spiers and Richard Thompson, John prevailing 7-3, 6-7, 7-6 in a marathon and Simon Carter against the wily Paul Strover, Simon winning in three. Thereafter the semi-finals saw Simon Carter beating Ray Mounfield in two and Dick Strover just outlasting John Spiers in yet another epic, 7-5, 6-7, 7-6. These set up the final!

Simon Carter took the first game in a high class contest and Dick Strover hit back early in the second to lead 4-1 early on. To Simon's credit he fought back and, with some good clearances, got back to 6 all. Dick had first approach, which was a little short but eventually had a clear shot at the hoop but missed. Simon took his opportunity and after a few more shots

closed out the game and match. A worthy winner and a new name on the Ann Lee Trophy.

Peel Memorials, Southport, May 7th-10th 2009

Report by Geoff Young

The event, first contested in 1898, was this year held at Southport in brisk breezes. The hospitality was, as ever, splendid and the lawns friendly. The eight pairs in the Mixed Doubles played the first two rounds of an XY knockout with 3 hr 30 minute time limit on the Thursday, only two games going to Time, to produce finalists for Sunday morning play.

The Men's and Women's events were in Swiss format. With ten male entrants, managers Don and Diana Williamson were probably planning that a tiebreak sequence would be needed on the Sunday. Three rounds on Friday were completed without problems, and on the Saturday there was only one rather unpleasant shower, which failed to interrupt play. At the end of round five Abdul Ahmad (8) had won all his games. The only player on four wins was Ken Harper (playing off 20 perforce), who had lost to Abdul so a further round was not needed. Ken's reward was a handicap reduction from 24 to 18; Abdul secured tenure of the magnificent trophy and a reduction to 7.

In the women's event, only two rounds were undertaken on the Friday. Two more on Saturday left three people on three wins, so a Sunday session with each playing a two-game winner was declared in the hope it would make things clearer. Most of the six were in doubles finals, so these were in fact the only games play on Sunday morning.



Don Williamson presents the splendid Peel Trophies, to Amanda Hames-Keward, Liz Maltby and Nigel Graves, and Abdul Ahmad. Photos by Tony Thomas.

In the X final Liz Maltby and Nigel Graves beat Gail Curry and Ken Harper +9 in a game which never had an obvious outcome. In the Y final Amanda and Nigel Hames-Keward defeated Diana Williamson and Neil Kellett.

The defining round of the women's event produced wins for Amanda and for Barbara Young and a defeat for the other leader Carol Lewis. As Amanda(6) had beaten Barbara(4.5) in an earlier round, she had thus won on who-beat-who and secured the silverware.

The First Kenilworth Festival Trophy

Report by Ray Clipson

In view of the expansion of Kenilworth Festival, we felt as a club that we would like to be included in the celebration. Why not a Midlands inter-club competition - Golf Croquet to make it more interesting to spectators. Wednesday the 13th was chosen which turned out to be a less than inspired choice!

The day was damp, cold and very windy. However, teams of two hardy players from Ashby, Edgbaston and Sapcote arrived promptly at 10am to play the two from Kenilworth. A number of spectators braved the elements – and we were particularly pleased to welcome Patricia Duke-Cox.

The tournament started with all players in two blocks of 13 point singles. High standards were promised when the first three balls of the first game all ended within a foot of hoop 1. David Lambert from Sapcote twice made a very good hit from long distance only to leave Adrian Morris's ball (for Kenilworth) in the jaws (twice!). Rachel Rowe (a Kenilworth member

studying at Warwick University) was playing with her usual force and accuracy. Derek Buxton, for Ashby, won two of his morning matches but did succumb to Rachel, whilst his wife Eileen, as well as Paddy Heath & Ian Whitlock for Edgbaston were finding the conditions difficult.

Kenilworth had two fairly comfortable wins, but their game with Sapcote was a tense affair progressing via scores of 7-7, 8-8 and 9-9 to a final hoop. From 6 yards Adrian cleared Sapcote ball left just in front of it, leaving Rachel to score the winning hoop. The last match, in the gathering gloom, was also a tense affair between Ashby and Edgbaston ending when John Hanson got his red into the jaws of hoop 19 from near hoop 18. Unluckily, Ian Whitlock's shot from the same distance was so good it actually knocked John's ball through to give the win to Ashby.

The Festival Trophy was presented to Kenilworth. Despite the weather, all the players seemed to really enjoy the day and the visitors agreed this competition should be continued next year when they will come to get their revenge on Kenilworth.

Roy Wallis Three-Legged Race, Compton 24th - 26th April

Report by Paul Castell

It is not necessary to have 3 legs to enter this good fun tournament but it might help! The format, devised by Roy Wallis (who is sadly missed) is really good. H/cap doubles followed by 3 games of one-ball and 2 singles games all against the same opponents (but everybody plays everybody one way or another) all on the same lawn. A new set of opponents on the following 2 days - hence the 3 legs.



Presentation of the Wallis Trophies. Left to right: George Williams, President, Compton Croquet Club, Jill Carpenter, Graham Thompson and Hilary Smith, Manager

The weather was sunny with a fresh wind from time to time which trickily speeded up the excellent lawns. A closely fought contest and the result was in doubt until the end of the very last game between Jill Carpenter and Marie Young. Jill and her partner Graham Thompson the eventual winners, runners-up Marie Young and Paul Castell. The only disappointment being that the tournament was under-subscribed. So, come on fellow croquet players don't let an early season fun tournament be neglected next year. (And as an enthusiast of entertaining doubles play don't forget my alternate stroke tournament on the weekend of 1st and 2nd of August. It's in the book under Sussex CCC. See you there!

Woking B-Level 23rd-24th April 2009

Report by Michael Town

Woking's first B-class advanced level tournament was held on Thursday and Friday 23-24 April 2009, with 16 entrants and a handicap range from 1 to 8.

The winner was Alan Edwards, with Collin Southern second. Both won 5 games out of 6 without playing each other, and the tie was resolved by a quality-of-wins calculation.

Final standings: Alan Edwards 5/6, Collin Southern 5/6, Jim Field 4/6, Mark Homan 4/6, Mary Knapp 4/6, Paul Miles 4/6, Jonathan Isaacs 3/6, Gina Lewis 3/6, John Reddish 3/6, Bernard Jones 2/5, Neil Cote 2/6, Ross Goodman 2/6, Barry Gould 2/6, Geoffrey Cuttle 1/5, Tim Moriarty 1/5, Roger Staples 1/5

Middlesbrough's One-Ball Tournament Albert Park, Sunday 19th April 2009

Report by Charles Waterfield

On one of the first real sunny spring days, twelve players from local clubs enjoyed an energetic and friendly day of handicap one-ball croquet. Geoff Taylor diligently managed his customary 'Egyptian' format, in which players were matched wherever possible with opponents fairly close in index. There were no time-limits and most people completed games in 30-45 minutes. Five players had 9 games and seven had 8. In this system quality of wins rather than simple number is of most benefit and this proved to be the case.

Alice Fleck galloped away, winning all of her first six games,

and looked impossible to catch; however the other runners found form towards the end. In a close finishing bunch, dark horse Mike Akester edged ahead by a length and received the Golden Ball trophy for this year.

Pendle & Craven B-Level Advanced, 16th-17th May

Report by Peter Wilson

Mike Porter remained undefeated to win the "B" Level Advanced Tournament at Pendle & Craven. Eighteen players contested the B-level tournament, homing in from the North and the South.

Heavy rain preceded the start of the tournament preventing a final mowing and lawns were heavy for the first game but improved throughout the tournament as spells of sunshine warmed them. Special mention must go to Roger Schofield for his efforts in preparing the five lawns needed with freshly set hoops. He would later go on to run 2back from about 10 feet East of the peg. A beautiful shot that took some wire.

Managed by Liz Wilson, the tournament was run Flexible Swiss style with players playing as much or as little as they wished and the winner determined on the percentage of games won.

Lee Hartley was able to defend his trophy despite a recent handicap reduction to scratch by virtue of the entry conditions. Mike Porter took the lead in the second round by beating Lee. This prompted Lee to set off like a hare to play as many games as he could in an effort to reduce the percentage loss and he eventually reached 6/7 (85.7%) which would have been enough to win the tournament had Mike Porter not won his last game giving him 5/5 (100%) in an Aesop's Fable sort of way.

Despite having to don the wetsuits and then strip off to shirt sleeves every half an hour, everybody did report they were enjoying the tournament, the venue, the bar and the hospitality of the catering teams who provided elevenses, lunch and tea on both days.

There were three handicap reductions: Mike Porter to 1, Andrew Webb to 4.5 and Mark Godfrey to 5.

CA Gold Merit Award to Lee Hartley on Sunday for beating third place finisher Alan Mayne with his first Triple Peel.

We enjoyed the company of one long distance visitor who didn't play: A racing pigeon determined to rest in the pavilion and was strangely attracted to Pink...

The John Hobbs Mallet

The mallet that adjusts to your grip.

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

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

Light aluminium shaft, nylon shock absorber,
see web site:

<http://John-Hobbs-croquet-mallets.mfbiz.com>

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

The Croquet Association

CROQUET SHOP

Expert advice, discounted prices, rapid delivery on most items



CROQUET MALLETS

A comprehensive selection of mallets, including, **Pidcock, Percival, Hobbs, X-Act, George Wood** and **Jaques**. The popular George Wood Original mallet at £84 + delivery is still our best seller. Come to us for the widest variety and impartial expert advice.

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

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

CLOTHING

A wide range of white clothing and 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 repairer	£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:

Know the Game - NEW EDITION	£7.00
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.

JACQUES CROQUET LONDON

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

05



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

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

ESTD 1795
LONDON

JACQUES
LONDON

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