

THE CROQUET GAZETTE

ISSUE 322

OCTOBER 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@tiscali.co.uk

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

CA Council Committee Chairmen

ICT Committee
Dave Kibble davekibble@ice.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 Management
Jonathan Kirby pjkirby@googlemail.com

Marketing
Barry Keen barry.keen1@ntlworld.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

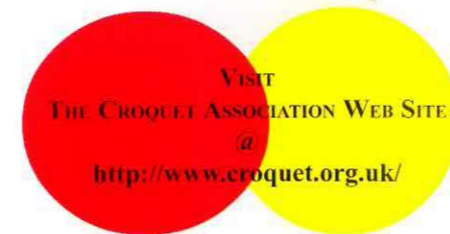
West Midlands & Wales - John Handy
01788 810572

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 322 October 2009

Front Cover: Challenge and Gilbey, in the Beginning
by Tudor Jenkins

Next Issue Published 15th December 2009

Copy Deadline Nov 19th 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

Obituary 6

Editorial 7

Points of View 7
Bill Arliss offers a view on the difference between Association and Golf Croquet Tournaments and Championships

The View From the Bar 8
A Summary of discussion topics from the Nottingham List by Nick Parish

Is 'Puzzle Croquet' A Solution for Coaching and Marketing 9
Lowen Clarke of Australia describes his new concept on coaching and marketing croquet

News & Information 10

The Eights 10
Reports and results of the selection events

Reports & Results 14
A comprehensive round-up of reports and results from this summer's tournaments

Merit Awards Scheme Winners 22

Chairman's Column

From the photograph you will realise that my time as Chairman might have expired already! In fact, although I was put in the guillotine during the magic show at the Nottingham week-long tournament, I have lived to tell the tale. The magician was Danny Razzoo, a croquet playing member known to us as Cliff Daniel. I was bemused on the evening because I seemed to be the most popular choice to assist with the act! In fact I intend to continue my CA chairmanship for another year.



Photo and magic by Cliff Daniel

For the majority of members, the croquet playing season is almost at a close. I hope you all experienced satisfaction with your game. I would like to congratulate the three juniors who acquitted themselves well in the inaugural World Under-21 Golf Croquet tournament in Cairo with final places of 5th, 8th and 13th.

I was one of the lucky ones drawn from the hat to attend the inaugural cruise event of the Celebrity Equinox that boasts a lawn club. Participating in the croquet competition was fun and offered good publicity. This collaboration can only be positive for our sport and I just wonder who will join the crew as the resident croquet coach in the future.

I tried to get round to each federation during the year and would have succeeded if only I had applied to a Yorkshire tournament earlier. I have enjoyed meeting so many CA members as I have travelled around the country and have listened to what you like and what concerns you.

One concern was catering at tournaments. As a player who travels quite far afield I do appreciate a good meal in good company at lunchtime whilst appreciating that catering will bring a profit to a club if done by willing members. Where there are not enough members willing or able to cater, a choice has to be made as to whether to employ outside caterers or make arrangements for sandwiches to be brought in. Generally it seems that visitors prefer a prepared meal to sandwiches.

Another topic was whether we have enough Golf Croquet

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

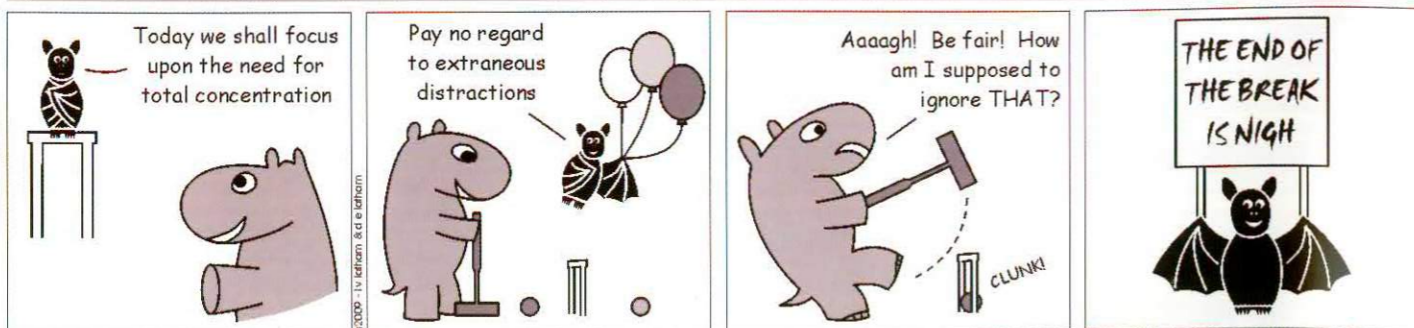
Email contributions, including tournament reports should be sent direct to the Editor, or copied to the Editor if they are being posted to the Nottingham List. Digital images are the easiest to work with, but coloured photographic prints are also acceptable. Please send digital .jpeg or .tiff format 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



tournaments that cater for those not in the top ranking positions, perhaps handicaps 2-4 (or 5). Any club wishing to cater for this group would be supported by entrants wanting to play at this level.

On the international scene I am saddened that the Welsh CA has withdrawn its membership of the CA in order to allow its members to play in the lower tiers of the MacRobertson Shield next year.

The CA's AGM is almost upon us. I do hope to see some members there and afterwards, as we hold a special luncheon in honour of Bernard Neal, our retiring President. With electronic voting available for the first time I trust many of you voted for his successor!

Patricia Duke-Cox

Letters

Casting v 'hitting the bloody ball'

I feel I must write on a subject which has concerned me for some time, the ever growing practice of swinging (I believe it is also called casting) over one's ball when taking aim.

This is so dreadfully boring to watch that I suspect it must put off many potential converts to the game. I have on occasions had to restrain myself, after about the eighth swing (and I have seen up to fifteen) from shouting out "For God's sake, hit the bloody ball!". Croquet should be interesting and attractive to watch and this practice certainly does nothing to help that image.

But my main concern is to find out what they are trying to achieve. I presume they swing up high so that they can check whether the mallet head is pointing exactly at the object ball. Presumably it is not, for they continue to swing and I suppose make some adjustment somewhere. But how? Do they twist their hands slightly? I can see no advantage in this, since the first swing was the natural one and when they eventually hit the ball they will go back to their natural swing. Do they subtly twist the shaft in their palms? I doubt it as this would be very difficult to do, with any control, while swinging.

In the 1950s there was a President's Cup player called W.E.C. Cotton, not spectacular but useful, about -1. He would address the ball, look up, and if not satisfied he did not adjust the mallet head but moved his feet very slightly until he was satisfied that his shoulders were at right angles to his line of aim, and then hit the ball. A very logical and sensible approach I would think.

It is important in this to consider the shaft. The most satisfactory shaft is octagonal and may be covered with thin leather, but not rubber golf grips which are a bit thick and disguise the angles of the octagon. After a short time a player will become used to the ridges formed by these angles and they will feel comfortable in his palms. Having achieved this one needs only to be sure that your grip is comfortable and never change it when aiming.

My own method was to take my grip, stand some 5 yards directly behind my ball, in line with the object ball and walk up to my ball, keeping my eyes on the object ball. When I reached my ball, (which I could tell out of the corner, or perhaps the bottom of my eye. I put the mallet down, looked up once for a final check, and hit. If I was not happy I would repeat this process, but that was most unusual.

I feel confident in stating that if tests were conducted between the two methods, my own would be at least as good, and possibly better than the swingers. I would welcome any results sent to me which I will record and publish in a later issue of the Gazette. The tests should be uniform and I would suggest the following format. Hardly any lawns are perfect enough to cope with really long shots so I suggest 12 yard shots at the peg from the side of the East to West boundaries. Ten shots be taken by each player. A marker should record the results and a miss by 1 mm. may be a moral hit but a miss is a miss. Results to be recorded as:-
Name - club - handicap
No. of hits
Method (Swinger or standard).
My email address is:
john.solomon3@btinternet.com.
John Solomon.

Long distance refereeing

Although I have been playing in Acroquet club matches for 47 years it never ceases to surprise me how many new circumstances still keep occurring. Here is one that was certainly new to me.

For the Cheltenham July week tournament I was asked to be the referee of the tournament (ROT) - not I suspect because of my great command of the laws (the details of which I rather alarmingly forget) but more due to the paucity of other referees. Be that as it may, I was in the middle of a game when I was called upon for an ROT decision. However this turned out not to be a call from a player on another lawn but from someone on the telephone! On taking the call I was even more surprised to be informed that the caller was ringing from Tangiers in Morocco! Apparently the person at the other end was embroiled in a debate with his opponent on a point of Law and was seeking a ruling. The issue essentially came down to Law 17 [Hoop and Roquet]. This Law often seems to cause, even experienced players, some confusion and fortunately on this occasion I was able to speak not only with authority (the most important thing for any referee) but also with accuracy. My contact was suitably grateful and I returned to my game.



It was only after the event that I wished I had obtained rather more detail as to the circumstances of the Moroccan game, who had been playing and how it had been decided to ring the Cheltenham club.

Many sports love their statistics and croquet is no exception. I have certainly heard endless conversations about the longest hoop run, the longest game, the longest time for an opponent to take their shot and so on. Is this then the longest distance between player and referee?

Finally I was left wondering whether with imaging technology, processing software and wireless broadband connectivity all getting ever more commonplace we should expect such long-distance refereeing to become more commonplace and extend beyond mere matters of law.

In any event, if our mystery caller is reading this please let the Gazette know.
Geoffrey Taylor

Jumping through hoops

In January 2008 I decided that I would like to start a local croquet group. Over the previous 4yrs I had been playing Golf croquet at Bowdon Croquet Club by special arrangement with another organisation to which I belong. The perfect spot had presented itself, an ornamental lawn surrounded by flower beds, with car park and loos and a friendly gardener in our local park.

It took some time to get clearance from the parks dept, but eventually they said I could give it a try. We all met on the lawn, gardeners, town hall officials, and myself (with garden croquet set to show them how it was done.) At this point I had only one other player, no equipment, and no knowledge of how to set up a croquet lawn. Liz Larsson at the Croquet Association was of enormous help, as was Barry Keen of Bowdon Club. Bowdon very kindly lent six hoops, four mallets and four balls to start us off.

One Sunday afternoon, having given much thought to the best area to try, I toured car boot sales looking for unwanted mallets. One cheerful stallholder called out "come on I'm sure we've got something you want!" Dejectedly I replied, "I'm looking for the one thing no-one has, a croquet mallet." His wife immediately dived under the table and triumphantly held a small packet aloft. "We've got some lovely knitting needles, brand new." Her husband looked at me apologetically and then at his wife, "croquet mallets not crochet hooks!"

Bowdon again came up trumps with playing equipment and we had a successful season last year.

This year we have 25 players and a waiting list. With a generous grant from Manchester Airport Community Trust Fund we have been able to buy some of our own equipment and added to that from our own funds.

What a wonderful generous world we live in! Many, many thanks to Liz, to Barry, to Steve our gardener, to Fylde Club (more balls) and to Manchester Airport. You have made the Flixton Crocs very happy.

Cath Johnson,
Organiser Flixton Crocs

Old adversaries

Recently I was pleased to discover that the first 26 point game I ever played was against an opponent born in 1881. The lady in question was a renowned

folklorist and author, Miss Violet Alford, and I am indebted to her great-nephew, William Ormerod, for helping me to establish the year of her birth.

Prichard's 'History of Croquet' informs us that in 1948 John Solomon played against Miss Lydia Elphinstone-Stone, an opponent who had been born in 1866, the year before that in which Walter Jones Whitmore is credited with becoming the first ever croquet champion.

It would be interesting to learn whether any existing Associates can claim earlier born opposition.

Laurence Latham

Mallet Facts

I have a mallet, pictured right, which is made by Slazenger, with the word 'Poulter' on it. I understand there was a player named H R Poulter, who played to a high standard in the 1930 / 1950 era, and wonder if anyone has any information on this particular mallet. As you can see from the photos it has a slightly curved bottom edge, with a brass plate screwed to the base.

Dave Nick



Croquet with Bells On at Ripon

At the 9th annual croquet/bridge social get-together at Ripon Spa Hotel recently, we were treated to a performance by four of the Brodsworth Hall CC members. Wearing whites trimmed with primary colours and wielding garden mallets and corner flags, they performed a specially choreographed Morris dance, made all the more funny by the seriousness of their presentation. Quality of photograph not too good due to shaking of the camera in the hands of one of the audience convulsed by laughter!

Freda Vitty

Association handicaps are spreading out

We are seeing a deterioration of the automatic Handicap System for the Association game.

The average value of handicaps is increasing. This is caused by the number of index points leaking from the system whenever a player leaves the game to be replaced by a beginner. An experienced player takes away more index points than a newcomer brings into the system.

"So what?", I hear you say.

If you agree with the argument above, then our spread of handicaps tends to increase. With the 'minus' end of the scale fixed, the pressure is on the higher end. Over several decades it has moved and differences of handicap can now be excessive; to the extent that innocent beginners face the ignominy of winning games easily with bisques standing.

Solution(?) – next issue!

Geoff Strutt

GCHQ?

I can now report that there is clear evidence that Golf Croquet is becoming the dominant form of the game.

On departing Cheltenham to play in a tournament at Bath I happened upon the road sign "GCHQ", which I am presuming means "Golf Croquet Head Quarters". I must say I do not recall the establishment of a separate HQ ever being raised at any recent AGM and I can only assume that I must have dozed off during AOB. Surely Council must be congratulated on such a dynamic move?

I am informed that about 4,000 people are employed there and, if this is the case, then Treasurer Roger Bray must be warmly commended for achieving this without a significant increase in subscription.

I can report that the rumour that a further road sign requesting that motorists "form an orderly Q" is entirely untrue! I did contact GCHQ about this but they would not confirm or deny that "Q" is in fact Bill Arliss.

Klim Seabright

Mr Seabright I'm suprised at you, having spent several years in Cheltenham in an official capacity, and you never knew that GCHQ has nothing to do with Golf Croquet. It's not Bill Arliss that is 'Q' at Gail Curry HeadQuarters. ED.

A response to "Cheating to Prosper"

Dear Bounder,

In response to your letter in issue 321, may I offer a few words of caution before you proceed on your nefarious actions of deliberately impeding your opponent's winning shot. I agree with your assessment of the wording of law 12(c)(2) but what you are forgetting is that replaying the shot is only a solution as to where the red should be placed if the opponent decides to have the ball replaced where it would have finished. What you are forgetting is that the offending side still misses its turn and yellow will play next, so black will be extremely unlikely to score any way.

Whilst strict observance of the laws without intervention of a referee is possible, if you admit a non striking fault, my feeling is that the actions would follow a different course. Your opponent would most likely call for a referee who I am sure would consult the Tournament Referee if there were allegations of deliberate cheating. If the ROT after taking statements was satisfied that you had deliberately cheated I am sure he would consult with the Manager. You would then most likely be summoned to the Manager's office to be told in no uncertain terms how many 'beans make five'. If the Manager was feeling generous you might be allowed to finish the tournament but it would certainly be under the most strict warning. Any slight infringement of any code and you would be immediately 'OUT'. Just refer to Tournament Regulations., section M2. The Manager's is virtually 'God' on the croquet lawn.

If you really have upset the Manager, he may decide that your actions deserve even further punishment and you will be advised that you will be reported to a CA Disciplinary panel. This august body may not have the powers to transport you to the colonies but they may well decide that your involvement in this gentlemen's sport should be halted for a prescribed number of events.

I would therefore suggest that if you wish to continue your quest of the Chairman's daughter your refrain from such caddish actions,

*Bill Arliss,
GC Laws Committee.*

Obituary

James Ross Gillespie 1914 – 2009

There will be many readers in Yorkshire and elsewhere in the North who will recall Ross with great affection as the epitome of a gentleman croquet player. Always a courteous player, as well as the most patient of coaches.

Ross was born in 1914 at St Andrews, immediately following the outbreak of World War I. Sadly two years later his father was killed in that war on the Somme. He was brought up by the women in his family, which may have nurtured his gentle nature.

Ross gained masters degrees at three universities, Classics at St Andrews, History at Oxford and Medicine at Aberdeen. Three degrees and some prowess at bridge bear witness to his exceptional intellect.

Ross spent from 1939 until 1948 as a Magistrate's Associate in the Indian Civil Service, broken by service in the RAF in India. Whilst in India he was awarded the MBE. In 1948 he returned home in 1949 and married Dorothy Morley, whom he had first met when they were students at Oxford.

He practised as a G.P. in Hull until he retired in 1974. He started playing croquet with a few friends in a colleagues garden. He joined East Riding Club in its heydays in the 1980's. He took to the game rapidly and was soon a successful coach. In 1986 he was a founder member, secretary and Treasurer of Beverley Croquet Club, whilst retaining his membership of East Riding. The quiet calm and wisdom of Ross helped to set up the new Yorkshire Federation with the minimum of formality or fuss.

Ross will always be remembered at Beverley and East Riding clubs for his patience, charm and wisdom, but perhaps especially for his modesty and for his many daunting achievements. He died on 15th Aug after a short illness, aged 95. He is survived by his two daughters, two sons and his second wife Alison, to whom he was married when he was 93.

Mike Evans

Editorial

Well I wasn't put in a guillotine this season, but like Patricia I've just about survived my travels intact. I've noticed a few changes since I was last on the tournament scene, 9.00am starts due to more people turning up early to take advantage of the warm-up and practice time on offer at events, and I'm only too happy to take advantage of this facility, to get my arms moving in croquet mode rather than the usual daily digging mode. Journeys to clubs feel longer, but maybe that's changing from a motorbike to a Land Rover. On the positive side, I've been very impressed with all of the lawns I've played on this year, so well done to all of the lawn managers and green keepers. While it's nice to catch up with old fiends and adversaries, it's also good to see new faces and new talent enjoying the events.

I've met players, young and old, and I feel like at times I fit into the latter bracket now, having been asked a few times how long I've been playing 20+ yrs (cough, cough). The body is willing but senior moments are creeping in and a recent trip to the opticians confirmed things aren't what they used to be. When I explained I was hitting the right hand upright of most hoops recently, the optician informed me I was lucky I was hitting anything at all, so let's hope the new prescription has sorted out that problem.

Two small points, the first for Patricia, if you like a good lunch, I suggest you book a tournament at Southport next year. My final one is that I have managed to lose my white waterproof trousers at the Tyneside tournament this season, if you inadvertently picked them up, please let me know.

This season is almost at a close, and it won't be long before we are mostly hanging up our mallets and putting our lawns to bed with autumn and winter works in readiness for next season, indeed some lawns are already under such works in preparation for the Mac next year. However there will be some British players who will be busy while the rest of us do what we do during the winter. Kath Burt, Ros Pimlott and Teresa Burt will be representing England in the WCF Women's World Golf Croquet Championship at Cairnlea in Australia in November. Meanwhile, Robin Brown, Ian Burrige, Jeff Dawson, Tony Le Moignan, Stephen Mulliner, and Samir Patel have been selected to play for the Great Britain team to play the USA in the Solomon Trophy, at the Mission Hills Country Club, California in December. We wish them all well and look forward to hearing about the events. No doubt some readers will be heading off to the southern hemisphere to avoid the British weather and take advantage of the Australian and New Zealand season, so we wish them well too.

*Gail Curry
Editor*



Points Of View

The Differences between AC and GC Tournaments/ Championships by Bill Arliss

Over the years we have built up a pattern with AC tournaments where they have been organised as 'A' class, 'B' class, handicap and class events. There is a very valid reason behind this grouping and that is to ensure that any player who enters will know he/she will get sufficient play to make the entry worthwhile, provided the player picks the correct tournament for their own standard of play. I am sure everyone who plays Association has had those occasions where their own contribution to the game has only been putting two balls on the lawn and the odd shot at a distant opponent and they wondered why they entered.

In simple terms this division has been set up to ensure that all players can enjoy a tournament. It should not be confused with the true championships where the sole aim is to find the best players and generally the weaker players quite often do not get value for money with their tournament fee. The division between championships and tournaments can become rather blurred at times when events take on fancy 'championship' titles but still stick to effectively running a tournament to provide all round entertainment. Changing to championship principles can lead to loss of support in future years. This is particularly true in the Golf Croquet field where the majority of level play tournaments are billed as championships but effectively run as tournaments. Whenever changes have been made to the format to concentrate on best of three in all final stages, as one expects in a championship, it usually results in howls of protest as it means the block stage is severely limited to provide more time for the knockout stage..

As the GC tournament programme has developed over the last few years, nearly all the national tournament events have concentrated on level play only. In the early stages when the total number of tournaments was small, no handicap restrictions were made and it appeared we only catered for the lower handicap players. In an effort to attract more of the higher handicappers into tournament play, a series of events has started known as 'B' class events, still played level but with handicaps restricted to about 4 and above. Experience has shown that these B class events generally attract local players only and most are only one day. Whilst it could be said that this was catering for the higher handicaps, possibly the real target were those players not really committed to the demands of tournament play. What they really wanted was some competitive play but without the commitment of full weekend away with all the costs involved.

Right from the start of the GC tournament programme there have been some brave higher handicappers who have entered the no handicap limits, level play events. Whilst we have never seen their names in the winners list, surprisingly they have come back time and time again so one can only conclude that in no way did they feel overwhelmed. There is one very fundamental point with

a game of Golf Croquet that must not be forgotten; no matter whether your opponent is a reigning world champion or just another club player, both players still get the same number of shots and are both fully involved in the game for its total duration. In the early days of the Ramsgate tournament, Khalid Younis, who at the time was world champion, was entered for the event. Because of some last minute dropouts, the numbers were made up by some club higher handicappers. I am sure they had to have their arms twisted to enter but afterwards it turned out to be a completely different story. They did not feel overwhelmed in any way and even though they were beaten 7-2 or 7-3, all their thoughts were very positive and about the hoops they did get and the one point that all of them made was about how much they had learned about playing GC from such an event.

I am very pleased to note this trend of the higher handicapper entering level tournaments is continuing and actually expanding. It is also worth noting that several of the present regular tournament players started their tournament careers as high handicappers in level events and their rapid progress through the ranks is a good indicator of how much they have learnt from the process. To put these ideas into context, I would suggest that it is not out of order

The View from the Bar

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

I don't write much about Golf Croquet in these summaries. That isn't because of any personal animosity, but because GC simply isn't much discussed on the list – and when it is it sometimes turns into slanging matches between supporters of the two codes. However an interest question arose recently about a GC tournament at Budleigh which rather than use the normal best of 13 or 19 points format, went for best of 13 but must be two clear points ahead, in the manner of a tennis tie-break. Opinion was divided on the Board as to whether this was a good idea. Some felt it meant that the better player was more likely to win, and therefore should be supported, but others felt that the reason two clear points is adopted in some racket sports is to nullify the advantage of the serve. If anything, GC has the opposite effect since the winner of a hoop is usually disadvantaged at the next hoop, so perhaps a margin of two clear points was not needed. Others simply felt that introducing yet another variation was not a good idea.

Ever felt that just as your game starts to come together and you might be catching up with the better players, they just push the peaks still further out of your reach? Well Robert Fulford has taken this to the extremes by completing the first competitive nontuple peel (yes – that is indeed *nine* peels on the peelee while running twelve hoops with the striker's ball) in an internal competition game at Colchester against Jack Wicks. Some admittedly fairly low-quality mobile phone footage to the conclusion of the break – a straight quadruple peel – can be seen at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NFjjXE1jm8M>. It seems

for say a 8 handicap player entering a normal level event. Provided that the player wants to play competitively and does not expect to win many games, a few level tournaments will quickly polish his game. The other side of the coin must be considered, that of the lower handicapper. I have yet to hear of a lower handicapper who objects to some of his opponents having a high handicap. He still has to play the game in a competitive manner to ensure a win. In virtually every tournament this season I have seen instances where the better player has not taken his opponent seriously enough and has ended up losing and totally against the handicap indications. A 1 losing to a 7 was a typical recent example.

In conclusion I would suggest to club committees that when they are considering possible new GC events, they forget the typical AC approach and concentrate on a single level event with no handicap restrictions. It is far more likely to attract sufficient players to make the event workable and will be doing their own high handicappers a good favour if persuaded to enter.

If any reader feels I have exaggerated the importance of the level tournament to the higher handicapper, please talk to one who has played in a level event.

unlikely this feat will be repeated any time soon, which will at least prevent a repeat of the debate on whether it should be a ntuple, nonuple, nonatuple etc.

Finally, there has been an extended debate about whether it is reasonable for players not to play in consolation plate events at tournaments, or to drop out of them if they are not playing well. The arguments here are interesting and quite well balanced. Some feel that players should play in the plate to maintain the number of opponents and ensure games are available. In particular, it has been suggested that it is bad form for top players to pull out merely because they are not playing well as others have a good chance of a scalp – indeed it was characterised as “pathetic” by a couple of commentators. And there are also ancillary benefits for the manager (who knows how many players he has to organise), caterer (who knows how many teas to organise) and so on. Others feel that it is a player's prerogative to play when he wants, and that managers and caterers are normally quite capable of dealing with some fluctuations in numbers. It has also been pointed out that forcing a player to play in an event he is not interested in is not likely to end happily – the player may not play to win and may start trying all sorts of highly unlikely, low probability exploits such as sextuples, which may seriously tarnish the pleasure any lower ranked player may experience in claiming the scalp of such a player.

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

IS 'PUZZLE CROQUET' A SOLUTION FOR COACHING AND MARKETING ?

Is it perhaps a new pathway to Association Croquet ?

Lowen Clarke explains his concept

Something new happened at a recent Club Event at Brunswick Malletsports Club : Sixteen people from all codes of malletsports and skills were playing a tournament together, all playing the same game ! All having fun, yet still 'taking it to the limit' ! They were playing 'Puzzle Croquet.'

The event was a Research Tournament for 'Puzzle Croquet', a game Lowen Clarke has developed while studying Group Dynamics and Group Psychology at University. The day formed part of the Research with RMIT University.

Lowen says 'The great thing is : it is all about the essence of Croquet : the pleasure of the two-ball croquet shot. We are the only sport with that shot, yet we are not encouraging everyone to play it or making it accessible.'

Lowen says, 'I've heard long term Association players express amazement that now 'their' croquet game can be as fun and social as Golf.'

'Players are happy when they really feel free to do their best, and they then improve rapidly. Now, as long as they do their best, they can still participate fully in their sport.'

'And, we've had members who have had to give up Association now able to again play the shot they love, the croquet shot.'

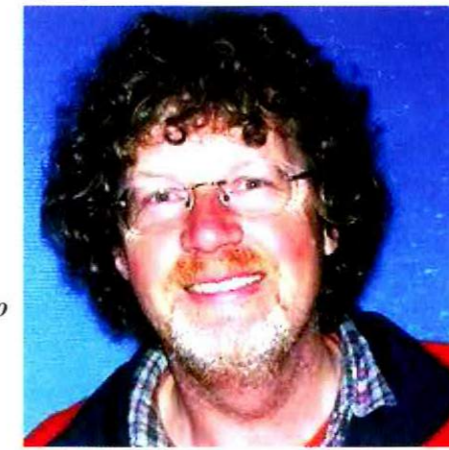
Since the Research tournament, a group of young women have learnt Puzzle Croquet at Brunswick, the Club has set aside a day for playing the game, and an Interclub Challenge has been suggested, as other Clubs take up the game.

Puzzle Croquet provides just the right amount of sport and competition that most people want in busy modern lives. And for those who want more, it is a sound start to Association.

Research tournament

The 16 players were from many different croquet backgrounds : there were people who had never picked up a mallet before having recent coaching lessons, golf croquet players with a few lessons, players who have not played an Association type game for years, people who had left the the sport, and seasoned existing players in Association, Golf and Gateball, of all skills levels. They were able to come together and have a great tournament.

Lowen says 'One of the strengths of Malletsports is its ability to host a diversity of games, skill levels, and purpose groups. One possible gap has been in the Association croquet area, which has now been complemented by this new game which anyone can play



and enjoy with a minimum of coaching - maybe straightaway for those who know Association, and with just a few lessons for Golf Croquet players, building on their existing knowledge. New inductees seem to need from two to four introductory sessions, and they can then be paired with more experienced players in Doubles, playing shot for shot.'

Puzzle Croquet can also lead to more people continuing on the Malletsports journey to the game of traditional Association.

'With Puzzle Croquet, people can discover the benefits we've been boasting about for Association Croquet, but in a fun, inclusive and dramatic game' says inventor Lowen Clarke. Lowen is a Senior Coach and a Group Dynamics Consultant who has worked on the issues of Association and how to market it for some years.

'The game develops with the player, and takes them on the Malletsports journey with them in charge' said Lowen.

A brief description

A Game is made up of separate Contests for Each Hoop. A Contest may be won in one or more Innings, by either player. An 'Innings' of Association Croquet is 6 shots with a one ball two ball (croquet shot) sequence using all balls. In Puzzle Croquet,

you are automatically awarded this sequence, going straight on to a croquet shot (the name of the game !) by being given 'Contact'. Now you have to solve the puzzle of working out how to get your ball to the hoop, using all four balls, and run it (Single Puzzle). After the allotted shots of your innings, the opponent now has 'Contact', and has an Innings. Once a hoop is won, the contest is for the next hoop, after some 'Housekeeping', if needed.

The Game Grows with you : From Single Puzzle to Double Puzzle :

As a player gradually learns more of the croquet shots, they may be expected to solve two puzzles, (Double Puzzle) - finding the pathway to the hoop, AND putting a ball

towards the peg. Really skilled players can attempt to solve three puzzles, as they have to peel a ball as well (Triple Puzzle) !

The game continually grows with the skills of the players, and two players of different skills levels can play a genuinely equalised game. Doubles is also a big plus, shot for shot, so players really learn to become part of a team as they increase their skills and experience.

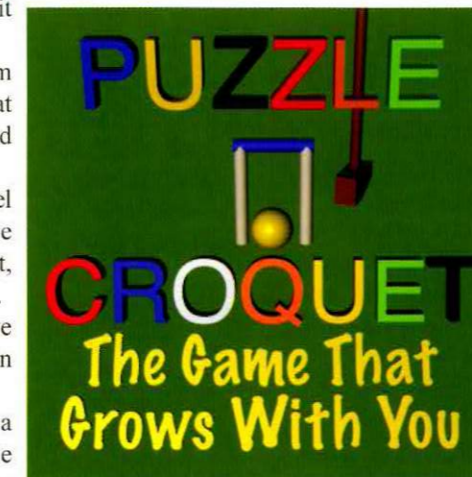
Puzzle Croquet is just like Golf Croquet but you use the full Croquet Innings sequence, and you are getting the pleasure of the croquet shot.

Puzzle Croquet is just like Association Croquet, but one hoop is contested at a time, and 'Contact' ensures you have an opportunity to do your best.

Commentators are saying that Puzzle Croquet has the best of Association Croquet and the best of Golf Croquet.

Club development possibilities

Puzzle Croquet may also bring new possibilities for club



growth. Puzzle can fit into existing Marketing strategies, or be the basis of a new thrust to get members. 'It appeals to all ages, but seems to also draw interest from a very difficult market segment, the 20 to 40 year olds' said Lowen.

So, Puzzle Croquet is a pretty complete package, and Lowen is happy to share the game, the coaching and the marketing, coming to clubs to show how to play it and also training coaches in the methods needed to communicate it easily. 'So far, I have produced Coaching Programs for players at different levels (novice, golf and association players) and an overview information paper for club coaches and officials. These are available from me on the web. There will be a DVD to explain it as well and there will be 'Train the Trainer' seminars' he added.

Contact Lowen on lowenclarke@iprimus.com.au

News & Information

The Croquet Academy at Southwick recently played host to a group of players from Normandy for a weekend association croquet course. One of only two clubs in northern France, the Catenay Club has two lawns on a multi-sport facility and they have strong connections with Sussex as they play an annual match against Waldron Croquet Club at alternating venues.

They were all pretty good strong hits - due I suspect to the rather long grass they have on their lawns - and it took them a while to adjust to the speed at Southwick. Their play and understanding of the game improved hugely over the weekend which was most enjoyable, if hard work, and they were a lovely group to coach and charming people themselves.

As mentioned above, they have a problem cutting their grass short - they don't have a cylinder mower. If any club is thinking of selling an old but working mower, please contact me by email at webmaster@thecroquetacademy.com, as they are interested in buying one but, being rather few in number, can't afford a new one.

They're also looking for some second-hand mallets to replace the wooden-handled ones they currently use.

The Academy has now hosted two overseas groups - the other was from Norway - so it's really becoming an international activity as well!

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.

The Eights Events

Eights 'Stats'

by Chris Williams, CA Archivist

Martin Murray at 67 became the first player to win the Spencer Ell Cup (2009), Chairman's Salver (1973) and Treasurer's Tankard (2008). Martin also won the Spencer Ell's predecessor, the Surrey Cup, twice (1968, 1969).

At 67 Martin is the oldest winner of the Spencer Ell Cup, though he still has a few years to go to beat Hope Rotherham, who was 72 when she lifted the first Chairman's Salver in 1966.

All four winners of this year's 'Eights' had previously won an 'Eight' before, which is the first time this has happened.

Robert Fulford's eighth win in the President's Cup takes him to within one title of John Solomon, who won 9, and within 3 of Nigel Aspinall's record of 11.

Tony Le Moignan's second win in the Chairman's Salver means that the last six titles have been shared by Le Moignan, Ian Lines and Jeff Dawson. In fact going into the final day only these three were left as possible winners of this year's event.

David Goacher finally achieved his hundredth game win, in the Chairman's final round, though he was stuck on 99 for 8 rounds. Jeff Dawson leads the Chairman's with 107 game wins.

Peeling

This year's totals were down on last year, though the President's was the same as last year. Interestingly there were 6tpos and 6 otps in the Pres.

Pres 46 (inc 4sxp, 6tpo, 6otp) (Most ever 51 in 2007)

Chairman's 15 (lowest since 1996) (Most 43 in 2008)

Spencer Ell 13 (Most 25 in 2008)

Treasurer's 12 (inc 3tpo) (Most 12 in 2007, 2008 and 2009)

Play-Offs

The play off in the Spencer Ell at Southport means that all 5 Spencer Ells at Southport have resulted in a play off (2009, 2007, 2004, 2001 and 1994)

Since 1993 there have been 10 play offs in the Spencer Ell, 5 in the Chairman's and 2 in both the President's Cup and Treasurer's Tankard. The Chairman's had no play offs between 1981 and 2001, but since then there have been 4 plays offs in 5 years.

President's Cup

East Dorset 11th -14th September

Report by Jonathan Kirby

This year the President's Cup returned to East Dorset for the first time in seven years, as part of the East Dorset Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club's centenary year. In 2002, Jonathan Kirby was making his Pres debut, and struggled to make an impact, while everyone failed to make an impact on Robert Fulford, who won all 14 games. This time, Jamie Burch was making his Pres debut and again the field struggled to make an impact on Robert, who ended the winner on 12. It was

probably the first time the Pres had started on a Friday, as it had been decided that three days was sufficient for the standard of play.

The conditions should really have been considered easy, with the lawns running at about 11 seconds (estimated) and the ground soft enough that the hoops, though excellently set by David Harrison-Wood, did not present a significant challenge. However, the lawns at East Dorset (or Parkstone as it is commonly known) are not totally flat, and the speed did vary with some patches being more spongy and others more sun-baked. Perhaps the players were more in the mind-set of the World Championship in West Palm Beach in May or the Opens at Hurlingham in July, where the lawns were consistent enough that one did not have to think too much about them. Whatever the reason, play on the Friday seemed more error-strewn than I can remember at a Pres, and the standard of play was not as high as might have been expected with places in the next GB MacRobertson Shield team potentially at stake. Just to put things in perspective, very few games went beyond ten turns, and there was never any question that we might not finish five rounds in a day, so the standard of play was still very high by most standards. In this context, "error" really means taking croquet on a turn later than turn 2 and not going round.

Robert Fulford was the exception, as, after a first day in which he did make the odd error but got to 4/5 anyway, he reeled off 7 games with no errors in which he also hit every shot (except one cross-court shot in round 8). This took him to 11/12, and he won the next after trading errors with David Maugham to take the title for the eighth time.

Interestingly, the shooting in the opening was generally poor, but a high percentage of lift shots were hit. No one was keeping count, but in my games I think about 70% of lifts must have been hit, and Robin Brown reported that all but one lift shot had been hit against him. All the lawns had good, flat, East boundaries, which makes a big difference. There were relatively few fifth turn finishes (I had one, and one against me) and only 17 scores of +26. I thought that some of the opening tactics were dubious. I was not aware of any game in which the winner of the toss did not choose to go first (and the opponent then took Red and Yellow). All but one of my games had a supershot opening, but the most common second turn response was to shoot gently at the supershot ball - sometimes from the end of A baulk, sometimes from corner 1, and sometimes from in front of hoop 1! At least in my games, it was rarely hit (once?) and usually a double or short shot was left on turn 3. After the first round, I always responded by going just South of corner 2, and of those six games I only once had a third turn break against me. The South of England Championship played the following weekend was played under the "Restricted Opening variant", which effectively prevents supershot openings, but on the evidence of the President's Cup, the need is to remind players that there are alternatives rather than the supershot opening actually being too strong. There were 12 completed tpos, of which 6 turned into otps. It should have been 7, as I put down 3 chances to beat Stephen Mulliner in round 12, including a three ball break which was under control until I broke down at 2-back. On the other hand with so many lift shots being hit, the alternative to the tpo of just going to 4-back was probably worse than 50% to win anyway, so the tpo tactic was justifiable.

There were more spectators than players throughout the event, and the catering was excellent. For this and the rest of their warm hospitality, many thanks are due to the East Dorset LTCC.

Results

Robert Fulford 12/14

Stephen Mulliner 10/14

Keith Aiton 8/14

David Maugham 8/14

Rutger Beijderwellen 7/14

Jonathan Kirby 6/14

Robin Brown 3/14

Jamie Burch 2/14

Chairman's Salver

Colchester 10th - 13th September

Report by Jeff Dawson



L to R: David Goacher, Tony Le Moignan, Chris Williams, Ian Lines, Mark Avery, Jeff Dawson, Lionel Tibble, Martin French. Photo by Chris Williams

The Chairman's Salver took place this year at Colchester. The conditions were dry, with sunshine and clouds. Some days had a little wind, but nothing too significant. The hoops were set tight, and the ground was very firm, making them a significant challenge. The lawns were timed at 12 to 12.5 Plummers, but this doesn't give the full story, since there were patches of brown grass which were considerably quicker, and some areas surprisingly slow, which meant reading the lawn was very important. Overall, the conditions were as testing as any I remember in this country, which led to many balls sticking in hoops, relatively few supershot openings, relatively few tps, and very few attempted tpos (one I think, and it didn't succeed). With these conditions, it was generally agreed that there was no need for super-advanced rules!

The tight hoops gave rise to the question of balls physically sticking in the hoops, although thanks to Martin's excellent hoop setting, none actually did. Nevertheless an argument emerged about what happened if one did - would the law amendment offered by 53(b)(2) apply? At least one referee didn't realise that hidden away in the current tournament regulations (under Referee in Charge, R2(h)(4)) is a clause that says it should apply. We wondered how many other referees didn't know this?

Jeff emerged as the early leader, with two tps in the first 2 games (5 overall), and 7 wins out of 8 after 2 days. Mark, having lost all 4 games on day 1, proceeded to win all 4 on day 2 to put himself back in the chase. By the end of day 3 however, there

were only 3 possible winners – Jeff and Tony tied on 9 wins, and Ian on 8 wins. As Ian had to play both the other leaders, he could force a play-off. No-one else could get to 10 wins at that stage. Jeff's challenge faded as he lost both games, and Ian succeeded in winning both his so that a play-off with Tony was needed to decide the winner.

In the play-off, several errors were made due to the difficult conditions and pressure of the occasion. Eventually when on 1 and 4-back, Ian hit in with his 4-back ball, and having Tony's 2 balls already by 4-back, elected to go to the peg. Tony missed the lift, giving Ian a 'simple' break to finish. However, he stuck in hoop 4, which was also Tony's hoop, giving Tony the break. As expected, Tony took the opportunity and went to the peg, pegging off 2 balls to leave 4-back verses 4. With 2-ball breaks difficult under the conditions, this led to Tony emerging the winner +6.

Overall a very pleasant 4 days, with unexpected sunshine and high temperatures making the memories of a rain-drenched Chairman's last year fade quickly away. Many thanks to Colchester for their hospitality.

Results:

- Tony Le Moignan 10/14
- Ian Lines 10/14
- Jeff Dawson 9/14
- Mark Avery 7/14
- Martin French 7/14
- David Goacher 5/14
- Lionel Tibble 4/14
- Chris Williams 4/14

Le Moignan bt Lines +6 in the play-off.

**Spencer Ell Cup
Southport 9th - 13th September**

Photo by Tony Thomas



L to R: Dave Nick, Dave Mundy, Phil Cordingley, Gavin Carter. Bottom: Roger Jenkins, Don Gaunt, Paul Castell, Martin Murray.

Results:

- Murray 10/14
- Mundy 10/14

- Carter 8/14
- Castell 8/14
- Nick 6/14
- Cordingley 5/14
- Gaunt 5/14
- Jenkins 4/14

Murray bt Mundy +19 in the play-off.

**Treasurer's Tankard
Budleigh Salterton 9th - 13th September**
Report and photos by Ian Vincent



L to R: Ian Vincent, Martin Stephenson, Richard Griffiths, James Hopgood. Bottom: Cliff Jones, Dave Kibble, Nelson Morrow, Paul Smith.

Five old hands (at least one of whom had wrongly assumed a 10am start!) and three playing in their first Eight turned up just as the clouds were clearing, for what turned out to be five days of almost unbroken sunshine at Budleigh, with just enough breeze to keep us from overheating.

A coffee pram shortly did the rounds, which proved to be typical of the considerable efforts made to feed and refresh us during the event. A choice of hot or cold meals at lunchtime, homemade cakes for tea, and Otter Ale on tap at the bar all contributed to our enjoyment. In return, we hope we entertained the many knowledgeable spectators, though one player, having previously been improperly, but unnecessarily, encouraged to do a triple, retorted that he had been trying to score hoops when accused of just laying up in a subsequent turn!

We were allocated a group of four centrally placed lawns, 7,8 5 and 6, which were renumbered on Cliff Jones, the Manager's, charts so that Lawn 1 was in front of the main pavilion, with its wonderful shaded veranda. The lawns were eminently playable, at a comfortable 10.5 seconds, despite having been treated for a fungal disease called "dollar spot".

The hoop setters also did a good job, though gave rise to an interesting laws question when, in an attempt at an Irish Peel a foot in front of Rover, the croqueted Yellow ball went through by some yards but the striker's Red stopped in the middle of the hoop, clearly touching both uprights. After trying another ball, it was clear that the hoop had to be reset, but the question then was whether the striker had to replay the stroke, or had the option of continuing

with Red in the jaws of the hoop. He was permitted to continue and finished.

By the end of day one, Paul Smith was undefeated and everyone had won at least once. The selectors had evidently done a good job in getting a well matched Eight, and the newcomers were not to be underestimated. James Hopgood had one bad day, but ended as joint runner up. Martin Stephenson, his fellow Scot, visibly improved as the event progressed, and was a good tactician. Richard Griffiths had excellent stoke play and also finished on six wins.

With a number of close finishes (less than half the games were won by more than +13), it was clear that the third lift variation was not required at this level, and there were few supershot openings. However, we did one TP per round in the first series and a total of 12 in all, from an allegedly weaker than normal field: Cliff Jones added some variety with two TPOs. We would have struggled to play more than three rounds a day, but pegging down disks were not required.

Paul's success continued to the end of the first series, but he then ran out of steam. Nelson Morrow, on the other hand, started playing more confidently. Ian Vincent started both series with two losses, but ended as joint leader at the start of the final day. However, Dave Kibble won both his last two games, claiming his first standard TP in five years, to avoid a play-off and take the tankard with 10 wins.

For future visitors, we highly commend the fish and chip shop and a restaurant called "A Slice of Lyme", but one of the recommended pubs has been de-listed. We would thoroughly recommend you to come here, but you will be lucky to get the weather we had!

Results:

- Kibble 10/14
- Hopgood 9/14
- Vincent 9/14
- Smith 7/14
- Griffiths 6/14
- Stephenson 6/14
- Jones 5/14
- Morrow 4/14

**The Selectors Weekend
Surbiton 11th - 13th September**

Report by Kevin Carter

The 25th Selectors Weekend was won by Brian Fisk, beating Kevin Carter in the final.

The Selectors is a CA selection event and is sometimes thought of as the fifth 'Eight', even though it has 16 contestants. It is intended for up-and-coming players, along with established players who cannot play in a true 'Eight', either because they are not good enough or because they cannot find the extra time for an Eight.

We had a number of up-and-coming players this year, notably Gabrielle Higgins, Steve Woolnough and Richard Smith. All are sure to continue their improvement but this year's Selectors belonged to the old hacks, four of whom came through the flexible swiss stage to contest the semi-finals.

In the first semi-final Kevin Carter 26'ed Ian Parkinson and in the second Brian Fisk comfortably defeated Ian Plummer. There was a brief discussion about a best-of-three final. However, conditions were very testing, with lawn speeds up to 13 plummers and hoops set very firmly in the sun-baked clay. Several games over

the weekend took in excess of three hours. So, with neither finalist relishing the possibility of a finish in the glare of headlights it was decided to play safe, take a leisurely lunch and then play a single game final. In the event Brian played very well and nothing went right for me, so 90 minutes was sufficient to produce the winner of the Ranelagh-Weightman Cup.

Meanwhile the flexible swiss continued, with Gabrielle showing how unlucky she was not to make the semis. She took the 'Best of the Rest' prize (an engraved glass donated by the Surbiton Club) and also earned herself a handicap cut to scratch.

Owing to the conditions not many peeling turns were attempted, and most that were resulted in disaster. However, one was completed; Richard Smith managed a TPO. In eleven months time Surbiton will host a couple of MacRob tests. If conditions are similar they will be interesting to watch.

Results summary:

- 1st: Brian Fisk
- 2nd: Kevin Carter
- 3rd: Gabrielle Higgins 6/8
- Ian Plummer 4/6
- Steve Woolnough 5/8
- John Daniels 5/8
- Andrew Gregory 4/7
- Gary Bennett 4/8
- Ian Parkinson 4/8
- Graham Gale 4/9
- Peter Thompson 3/7
- Richard Smith 3/8
- Tom Weston 2/6
- David Mooney 2/8
- Mary Knapp 1/6
- Mark Hamilton 0/5

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

Reports & Results

Middlesbrough 1-day B-level Tournament (Sat 4th July 2009)

Report by Charles Waterfield (Manager)

Eight players from Croquet North clubs (Belsay, Tyneside, Auckland and Middlesbrough) took part in this one-day trial event (starting at 9.30am, finishing around 6.30pm) run as two blocks of four, followed by a play-off. We were favoured by glorious weather, with the lawns playing fast and true. A 2¼ hour time-limit enabled four games to be played in the day and handicaps ranged from 2 – 10; both factors led to about half the matches being peg-outs, with the others close to completion. Block positions were based on wins, then points and in one case who-beat-who (Derek Watts losing out to Derek Old by just 1 point).

Block A:

Derek Old (4.5) beat Derek Watts (2) and Roger Staples (7)

Derek Watts beat Derek Robinson (6) and Roger Staples

Derek Robinson beat Derek Old and Roger Staples

Block B:

Phill Scarr (7) beat Phil Errington (3), David Turner (6) and Eugene Brady (10)

Phil Errington beat David Turner and Eugene Brady

David Turner beat Eugene Brady

Play-offs, between the A & B block winners, seconds, thirds and fourths, led to the final order:

Phill Scarr beat Derek Old +19

Phil Errington beat Derek Watts +13

David Turner beat Derek Robinson 24-12

Roger Staples beat Eugene Brady 22-14

Phill Scarr played controlled and thoughtful croquet to win in his first attempt at an advanced-rules event. Everyone agreed the one-day format was a success and should be repeated.

Norwich 10th Annual Handicap Tournament June 27th & 28th 2009

Report by Colin Hemming

The day before I reported for duty at Eaton Park in Norwich I received an email from Manager Neil Chalmers enquiring whether I still had a copy of the report I wrote for the inaugural tournament way back when; he had looked for the club's copy of the relevant issue of the Gazette and couldn't find it (collectors' copy by now, I expect), but "As a computer professional, I am confident you will have a copy somewhere" he wrote. Well, I'm retired now but I'm still a nerd (or is it a geek?) - I was able to find and send him the report in 30 seconds, which is 25 seconds longer than it should have taken me if I had been able to work out that if the tenth tournament is in 2009 then the first was in 2000, not 1999.

So I arrived at the venue on the Saturday morning, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, and found the old report pinned to the notice board for all to see. Interesting, of course, if somewhat bland, but to my eye distinguishable from my more recent reports firstly by the fact that I wrote an awful lot about the individual games of croquet and secondly that I was able to write no fewer than seven paragraphs without being rude to anyone. This second fact was

clearly noticeable to others: someone (I've no idea who) had taken the trouble to find a highlighter and mark the sentence which began "The Egyptian event was well managed by Terrey Sparks . . ." Hmmm.

There have been one or two changes to Norwich Croquet Club in the last 10 years. It is still the "delightful venue" which I described back in 2000, the lawns surrounded by mature trees and ornamental gardens but nowadays you don't have to take a ten minute walk to use the toilets; there is one installed in the clubhouse. Back then there were only two courts, and now there are three. Players who may have attended a tournament in one of the intervening years may remember there being a third court about 100 yards away, whilst there was a rather sad-looking derelict bowling green just to the left of the first two. I am pleased to report that last year this was brought back to its former glory by the Norwich Parks Department and the three courts in close proximity improve the ambience enormously.

But let me say something about the tournament itself; there were 12 competitors, with handicaps ranging from 2 to 20. Interestingly, the top and bottom of the list had the same surname: Colin Hemming at the bottom and newcomer Georgeen Hemming at the top (yes, she's my wife, so don't expect an impartial report). The weather was very hot, muggy, and threatened to rain practically all day. When it arrived it lasted little longer than it took for the players to don their wet-weather gear and interestingly enough, I've just lifted that last sentence practically verbatim from the 2000 report; it may be boring in Norfolk, but at least you know where you are.

Nine of the twelve competitors managed to complete three games on day 1; it was nearly eleven of them, but the game between Georgeen Hemming and Robert Halpin had to be pegged down with 51 minutes still on the clock. In the event, it was finished in 9 minutes on the Sunday morning. Only local man Feargal Smith managed to fit in four games, becoming almost manic in his quest for that elusive first win and in reality setting what threatened to be a new low in the Egyptian index (69 points). Jonathan Toye, hampered by the peg, played an interesting hammer shot which would have done severe damage to Neil Chalmers who was still taking position to referee the shot and only just got out of the way in time. Overnight leaders were the three ladies present: Jane Collier on 126 points, Rosemary Bradshaw on 120 and Georgeen Hemming on 119.



Neil Chalmers takes avoiding action from Jonathan Toye's hammer shot. Photo by Ian Storey

Rain never threatened the play on the Sunday, and there was sunshine throughout the day. Most competitors completed the required two games, but three players managed one more, helped by a couple of games which were completed quickly. Most notably, David Wedmore demolished Colin Hemming +26 in 43 minutes. Remarkably, he used 6 of his 12 bisques to get through the first three hoops but then settled down and finished the first ball using only one more. His second ball took only 3 bisques, leaving two in hand: a remarkable performance. And he plays so quickly!

Meanwhile, the top of the table was still dominated by the ladies, but when all the games had finished the order had changed somewhat: First was Georgeen, with 133 points from 5 wins out of 5; second was Rosemary with 4/4 and third was Jane with 4/5. So Georgeen achieved her first tournament victory, was presented with the revered "Chalkhill Mallet" which was whisked away immediately and replaced by a small plaque as a memento.

And whilst all this was going on, there was some action at the bottom of the table too: Feargal saw his apparently dominant position (or should that be subservient position?) challenged and then overtaken by Colin; they both finished with 1 win out of 6, but the vagaries of the Egyptian scoring system meant that Feargal finished with 80 points and Colin only 65. So the leader board finished in just the same way as the list of entrants had started: Colin Hemming at the bottom and newcomer Georgeen Hemming at the top. Rather fitting, really.

Long live Norwich Croquet Club. I wish it at least another ten years of success with this enjoyable tournament.



Don Gaunt pegs out to win the Veteran's Championship, beating Tom Weston 2 - 0 in the final. Photo by Tom Weston.

The Mexico Trophy Fylde CC 24th May

Report by Hugh Morris

The Mexico Trophy twixt Fylde & Southport is an annual event set up to raise money for the lifeboats and named after the ship that floundered a long time ago in the Ribble estuary with record loss of lifeboatmen's lives. This year it was played on 24th May.



The Fylde team all squeeze into one picture, while Martin Bradshaw presents Liz Wilson with the trophy. Photo by Hugh Morris.

As recently as one year ago no one could have envisaged that Fylde could produce as many as seven playable lawns and as many as 17 players! But we did it! The weather was kind – arguably too kind, as we had to send out an urgent request for gazebos, parasols and sun screen. The annual charity event vs Southport for the "Mexico Trophy" was this year to be hosted by Fylde for the first time. It all started rather downbeat, as with little over a week to go Southport could only find four players. A little gentle persuasion by Southport's John Taylor increased this number to 16 which little old Fylde managed to match by bringing in a beginner and two friends. All players were charged £10 for entry plus lunch and teas with the profits going to the Mexico Memorial Appeal Fund. The event included a golf croquet competition (6 players per team playing 5 games of doubles all ably managed by Cath Morton), a short croquet competition (8 players per team playing in two blocks of four – all play all – managed by Alan Morton) and a combination of one-ball and advanced doubles (4 players per team – managed by Peter Wilson) to keep the big boys happy. The golf competition produced a score of 7 -7 with every player on the Fylde team a star in the captain's eyes. The advanced one-ball was won by Fylde with a match score of 9-7 with Liz winning all four of her games. The advanced doubles finished one game all. The total match score was then standing at 17 -15 – still quite close. Then the short results started to pour in and wow did they do well. Top marks to Leonard (4/4), Betty (3/3) and Peter Hallet (2/2) who finished on 100% wins and well done to Norman who won 2 out of 3 despite hardly ever picking up a mallet. Congratulations also to Philip who won his first ever game. YEH! The short competition score finished at 20 -12. Final score on the day 37 games to Fylde and 27 games to Southport. Liz was presented with the trophy by Martin Bradshaw and a cheque for £340 was presented to Marion Coupe from The Lytham Civic Society. All agree the star of the show was the new water boiler. Amusing happening – Norman walking across a lawn with Liz stopped in horror at what we had done to his beautifully painted hoops after only 8 weeks use – only to discover that it was the set we had borrowed from Southport!

**Bear of Rodborough Open Golf Doubles
6th - 7th June**

Report by Robert Moss

The Bear of Rodborough Croquet Club hosted its first national tournament over the weekend when players from across the country competed in the Golf Croquet Doubles Tournament. The club has a successful record playing in the South-West League but this is the first time it has held a national event under the auspices of the sport's governing body, The Croquet Association.

David Foulser (Cheltenham) and Richard Thompson (Edgbaston) were the top seeds and showed their skills by winning the trophy, beating Don Gaunt (Bear) and Carol Smith (Cheltenham) in a 'best of three' final. Foulser and Thompson took the first game on the golden hoop after being held at bay by Gaunt and Smith until the end. In the second game, the roles were reversed with Gaunt and Smith taking the game after a golden hoop but in the third, deciding game, Foulser and Thompson held their nerve and won the game 7-2 and the match 2-1.



Dave Foulser and Richard Thompson being congratulated by Club Chairman Robert Moss.

Players had to contend with weather conditions ranging from warm sunshine one minute to heavy rain, hail and cold winds the next. However, all players agreed that the tournament was friendly and well-run and our thanks go to Don who masterminded and managed it so well.

Compton Summer Tournament, 24th to 28th June

Report by Brian Kitching

Tim Smith, asked me to write the report on this five day feast of croquet. He did so on the basis of my longevity as a visitor – I have enjoyed playing in this tournament virtually from when I started playing croquet. Thanks, Tim, that will teach me. The weather was glorious and we saw some fascinating and close games of croquet. The Compton lawns are much improved and are as fast and true as they used to be. A special mention is due to Dennis Shaw, the ROT, to Roger Wood the hoop setter, and to Tim and Hilary Smith for their catering – I even took home their recipe for pate. Compton is a delightful old club and this is a great Summer tournament – try it!

First there was the two day doubles, ably managed by Tim, for pairs with a combined handicap 8 or above, for which Mike Cockburn and I retained the Kirk-Greene Bowls. Sadly, only six pairs had entered this year, and one of them had to cancel at the last minute, so we each played just four games, with Mike and I and Pauline Read (from New Zealand) and Ann Jarman, both winning three out of four games. As we had beaten Pauline and Ann +4 the result was declared in Mike's and my favour on a "who beat who" basis. Ironically, the one game we lost was against indefatigable Dennis partnered by Arthur Nelson, the one they won!



(L to R): George Williams, President Compton CC; Tim Smith, Manager, with Brian Kitching and Mike Cockburn winners of the doubles.

This was followed by three days of singles, ably managed again this year by Frances Low. The Anstey Cup for Handicap Play had only six entries and was run as an American Block. An early

leader was Avril Rangoni-Machiavelli, but by the time of the last round it was clear any one of three players was in contention for the Cup. Jill Carpenter ended up with 4/5 wins including a +1 on time against Avril. I ended up with 4/5 wins including +3 over Jill, but as Avril had already slaughtered me by +19 the previous day, the issue was easily resolved by going to quality of wins with Avril winning the Anstey Cup and Jill a close 2nd.

Two other notable achievements for Avril during this tournament, were getting her Bronze award, as part of the slaughtering, and earning her Silver award the following day. Well done Avril!



Frances Low, manager, with Dick Knapp and the Horsburgh Challenge Cup.

The Horsburgh Challenge Cup for Advanced Play, was better attended with ten seeded entries run as an American Block with seven rounds being played. As in the handicap event, there were some very tight games but the clear winner was Dick Knapp, winning all seven of his games. Frances reports that "Dick's controlled play and marvellous roqueting were enjoyable to watch and a lesson to all of us watching". Roger Wood was runner up, winning 6/7 and only losing to Dick. Roger had several FTP's (failed triple peels), ITP's (intended triple peels) and one actual TP (triple peel) – Frances says.

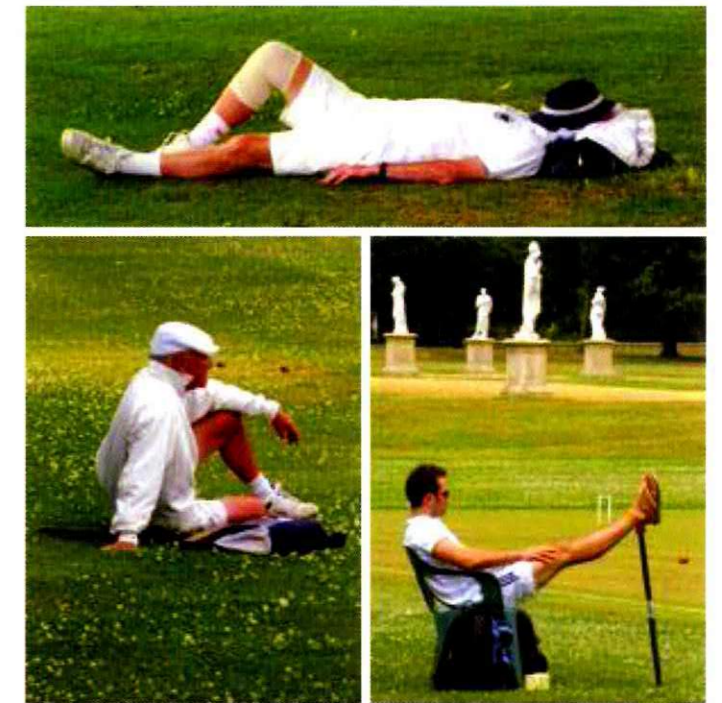
Finally, a special mention must be made of my doubles partner, Mike Cockburn, whose game in the Advanced Singles improved really well against a strong field, losing only to Roger Wood in his seven matches. Mike's handicap went down from 5 to 4.5 as a result. Well done, mate!

Wrest Park Advanced tournament 3-5 July

Report by John Bevington

The heatwave eased with overnight rain on Thursday which slowed the lawns up on Friday morning, but the tournament was played out in warm sunshine interrupted by a single brief shower. Lionel Tibble immediately served notice of his intentions when he completed a triple against Howard Bottomley in just over half an hour. Other games were more leisurely – no names, no pack drill, and no rest for manager Eric Audsley with 28 players to organise, whose handicaps ranged from -1 to 9.

Lionel lost his second game to a triple by Andrew Winn, but won his remaining seven games comfortably to take the top prize ahead of Andrew (6/8) and Ben Ashwell (4/6). The use of index points gained to determine winners led to George Woolhouse winning the second block ahead of Eric (5/6), Ken Pickett (5/8) and Ian Mantle (4/7), and the third block was won comfortably by John Hall, whose only loss in eight games was to Terry Mahoney, from Peter Spiller and Amanda Keward (both with 4/6).



Wrest Park outlayers (clockwise from top): Mark Homan, Ben Ashwell, Kes, George Woolhouse. Photo by John Bevington.

Wrest Park's lack of boundary boards caused Ian Parkinson some confusion when he went to his red ball only to find it had disappeared, John Hall having collected it at the end of his game on the adjoining lawn. There were the usual bizarre changes of fortune: James Skelton bounced back off hoop 3 with the break under control, and John Bevington shot with the ball at hoop 4

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

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

(which was for 4-back) at James's approach ball only to miss, run his hoop and roquet the ball behind it. Eric, after failing 2-back off the opponent when conceding a lift, went away only to be called back almost immediately to find that as a result of a "previous misplay", he had been peeled through the hoop and had the innings back with the balls more or less as they were before he left.

Wrest Park regulars will know that kestrels nest in an oak near the lawns. On Saturday one youngster took Independence Day literally but fell to earth. The Pet Rescue team put it in a bucket filled with grass which was winched back up the tree, and Kes (or Icarus) managed to hop out and regain the safety of the nest. We hope he or she is none the worse for the experience.

**Pendle and Craven Midweek Tournament
July 7-10, 2009**

Report by John Filsak

Just another ordinary tournament at an ordinary tournament venue. Fourteen players came together to contest three class events, an Egyptian competition and handicap doubles. Unfortunately one had to leave after one day because of a family medical emergency, forcing the early closure of the A and B classes, with both being cobbled together into a Swiss.

Not everything was ordinary. Torrential rain on the first day put the lawns under so much water that we feared the local waterfowl would come and move the balls about; or worse, that Liz and Betty would arrive and perform their now-famous synchronised croquet-swimming routine. However three of the four lawns we were using dried out sufficiently for play to restart an hour or so after the rain ended.

Joe Lennon went on against John Filsak in an end-of-day 18-pointer. "Let's set the clock for two hours, so it doesn't drag on", said Joe. Twenty-three minutes later Joe pegged out. This tournament has a prize for the fastest game, but for full games only.

In a two-ball ending against Colin Hemming, David Turner had just run rover, with the oppo in front of penult. What does he do? Colin looks on with glee as David lines up a shot through the hoop at the peg. Surely it will take some wire and end up near penult. But the Force is with him. David hits it hard and it gets the peg full on, to cheers from the gallery.

Just an ordinary tournament, then. People played classy croquet, and total rubbish, sometimes in the same turn. They chatted and ate (and drank) together. They had fun. Long live the ordinary.

Results:
A class - John Filsak Swiss
B class - David Turner Colin Hemming
C class - draw and process
Draw: Robin Delves Doubles - knockout
Process: Janet Davies John Filsak and Howard
Final: Janet Davies Bowron beat Robin Delves and Peter Dewhurst +1

Egyptian
1 Dennis Graham Fastest game
2 Colin Hemming Janet Davies - 75 mins
3 Robin Delves Addict (most games)
Chris Donovan and Jim Penny
11



Following their marriage in July, Susan Fulford's first trophy as Robert's doubles partner. Taken at the Ramsgate Handicap Doubles weekend, with manager Ron Welch and ROT Dennis Shaw. Photo by Michael Poole.

Ramsgate Handicap Weekend - July 11th - 12th
Report by Jolyon Kay

Twelve hardy players gathered by the Ramsgate shore to enjoy a day's croquet, with unexpectedly gray skies and a gusty wind. All but two came from Kent - from the Ramsgate and Medway clubs - with two from further afield - Hamptworth and Blewbury. We were allowed the unexpected pleasure of playing some of our games on single-banked courts, thus avoiding the understandably intemperate expostulations that occasionally mar double-banked play. Another treat was the presence of three referees, so there was none of the strain on the arms and the morale of long waits with the mallet held aloft. But it was windy - a great blessing for those needing an excuse for too flagrant a miss.

Three blocks of four had differing fortunes. Block A had two games go to time - the only two of the day: it also featured a double medal win by Richard Godfrey, defending his title, where the red ball's break achieved a Bronze and the yellow a Silver. Block C had margins of 20 or greater in every one of the six games. And all the games in Block B appeared to end early in the bar.

The next day dawned similarly, but soon warmed up. In the morning semi-finals Allan Card (14) convincingly beat Liz Maltby (best runner-up), winning a Silver award: and David Dray (3½) beat Richard Godfrey. By the afternoon there were actual patches of blue in the sky. As the sunhats came out, however, the gusts blew them off again, to the amusement of those who had gathered to watch the final.

The final was a nail-biting game between David, the youngest player on the courts, and Allan. Allan, using his 10½ bisques in textbook fashion, took both his balls to rover, but just lacked the one bisque he needed to peg out. David, still on one and one, hit in and sailed round the twelve hoops with each of his balls in successive turns and pegged out, a worthy and popular winner.

The manner of his victory left ample time for Club founder, elder and ROT, Dennis Shaw to present the prizes and for even those of the assembly who were rushing off to Gatwick to take

the tea and delicious cakes as the climax of the gastronomic feast provided by the Ramsgate kitchen that I suspect that, for those in the know, was an even greater draw than the impeccable courts (albeit slowed a little by the rain), the relaxed management style of Ron Welch and what must be the most elegant façade of any croquet pavilion south of the Thames.



The winning Surrey team of Don Beck, Mike Town, Bernard Jones and Howard (Photo: Bill Arliss)

**Golf Croquet Inter-Counties
Sussex County CC 12th - 13th September**
Report by Bill Arliss

The twelfth GC Inter County Championship was played at Southwick over the weekend. For the first time twelve counties participated and the event was played as an all play all format. Each match between two counties comprised two singles and one doubles. To prevent two strong players from sweeping the field, no player was allowed to play more than one doubles than singles or more than one singles than doubles. Because of a limit of ten lawns the eleven matches for each team were spread over 13 sessions with each team having two byes. The first seven rounds were played on Saturday but no clear winner emerged and any of about six counties could have won dependent on their Sunday play. The weatherman was extremely kind with brilliant sunshine all day..

Southwick's aim was to generate an end of the season party feeling and ran an Asian themed dinner in the club house on Saturday evening with about 50 people attending.

Sunday was again dry but rather cloudy and cold. A few surprising results were posted but Surrey held on with a run of five wins to become clear winners with nine wins in eleven games. The final results showed that no team really dominated the event as there were many 2-1 wins and all teams posted at least three wins. Because of the similarity in scoring of this event with that of the AC Inter Counties event, we were able to use the same scoreboard to keep all informed of the latest situation.

Place	County	Wins	Net Games
1	Surrey	9	15
2	Kent	8	13
3	Oxfordshire	7	7
4	Sussex	6	3
5=	Glamorgan	6	1
5=	Leicestershire	6	1
5=	Somerset	6	1
8	Glos/Worcs	6	1
9	Durham	3	-3

10	Hampshire	3	-9
11	Dorset	3	-11
12	Cornwall/Devon	3	-17



Alan Cottle congratulates Jack Davies on his win the Seniors Championship. Photo by Julie Horsley.

**National Seniors Championships
Sussex County CC 14th - 19th July**
Report by Nigel Graves

The Trevor Williams Cup for the National Seniors' Championship will have a new name on it after Jack Davies beat fellow Sussex clubmate Alan Cottle +17 +26 in a best-of-three final. This was sweet revenge for Jack, who earlier in the week with Jamie Angus, playing in his first CA tournament, had lost the Doubles to Alan and his partner Avril Rangoni-Machiavelli by -2.

In weather that was never quite as bad as forecast, the Colin Hemming Cup was won by Rodney Parkins, who beat Terrey Sparks +8 in the final, and the De Ansorena Cup by Pauline Davey, who beat Neil Coote +4T. The two lower blocks were won by Harry Bruford with 5/6 and Ron Atkinson with 3/5.

The Unrestricted Handicap Singles was played as an XY knockout; the Quiller Cup went to Gene Mears, who beat Peter Thompson +15, and the Y final was won by Ken Wood, who had to knock down 12 bisques to defeat Jill Carpenter by +9.

Grateful thanks are due to the Sussex County Croquet Club at Southwick, who provided good lawns with well-set hoops, first rate catering and beer in excellent condition. One moment of low comedy is perhaps worth reporting; a senior ex-member of Council, when trying to run an awkward hoop, lifted the hoop clean out of the ground with his mallet when following through, before letting it drop neatly back into its holes. The ball arrived safely on the non-playing side, but whether it can be said truly to have run the hoop is a moot point - one for the Laws Committee to rule on, perhaps?

Tunbridge Wells One-Day Super B, 1st Aug
'Lightening strike - not many dead'
Report by Kevin Carter

Manager, Alex Jardine, issued a dire warning that if the tournament reporter went home before the end then

there was bound to be a significant happening - such as that in the title. However, this tacit suggestion that I call him later revealed that no such event took place; everybody simply got soaked in the storm.

For those who have not yet been to the Tunbridge Wells Club they really should try it. You get a big welcome, it is in a pretty setting and the courts are very flat (if they were rather green after the recent wet weather).

The winner was Jon Male, with four wins in four games. His play is unflashy but steady and error-free; he is much better than his 1.5 handicap implies.

Local player Jolyon Creasey and yours truly finished with three wins.

This was one of this season's experimental one-day 'Super-B' events. They are proving popular, since they appeal to those who have busy jobs and/or families. Four games are guaranteed. Watch out for more next year, at Tunbridge and elsewhere.

Colchester Midweek 50+ Handicap, 4 - 6 August

Report by David Haslam

Sixteen players competed with enthusiasm in this over-subscribed event and were rewarded by sun, high temperatures (not due to swine flu) and excessive and debilitating humidity! A remarkable 56 matches were completed, an average of 7 per player and even more remarkable was the very small number of games going to time, particularly in the early rounds. Also worthy of note was the

participation of players with handicaps of 1.5 and 3 and Terry Mahoney's performance in finishing fourth with 4 wins from 7 deserves applause. However it was the consistency and sheer delightful play of Nick Steiner that caught the eye from start to finish. The only person to beat Nick was Peter Kenward and but for the spoiling acts of Gerry Varndell, Peter could have finished top. On the final day Gerry first extinguished Nigel Gardner's hopes (he eventually finished second), and then went on to beat Peter in a "golden hoop" finale with the crowd applauding Peter's final break to peg.

The catering, as usual, was greatly appreciated and there is no truth in the rumour that several players nodded off during the afternoon sessions having consumed some excellent lunches. This is certainly a tournament not to be missed!

Compton Open Weekend, the Cowbell and Cowhorn, Aug 1st - 2nd

Report by Roger Wood

Eastbourne's sunshine was evident early on Saturday and for most of Sunday, but light rain at lunch on Saturday turned heavier as the afternoon went on and did not let up until close of play - the only good feature was that there was no wind; lawns - rather patchy, showing variable pace. It was good to welcome COWhorn newcomers Jamie Burch, Dick and Mary Knapp and David Mumford; and to see Steve Comish again after a gap of 20 years. At the other end of the scale George Noble made a record 20th appearance in the 28th staging of the event!

Except for the Final, the results in the knockout went strictly according to the rankings, although Jamie Burch had a close shave against Phil Cordingley in his semi-final. The final produced two exciting games. In the first Rutger hit his own supershot ball third turn and went to 4-back. Jamie missed down the east boundary and Rutger looked set to finish when, having peeled 4-back, he failed a difficult, angled 3-back giving Jamie the innings. Jamie went to 4-back leaving Rutger's forward ball just in the jaws of H2, Rutger's other ball 5 yards off the east boundary just above H5, and himself a rush to H2 from the maximum length spot on the west boundary. Rutger lifted the H2 ball to A-baulk, nicked Jamie's boundary ball, made penult and rover, cross-wired Jamie at 3-back and retired to corner 2. Jamie shot with his backward ball and hit but only succeeded in

getting a sharply angled rush to H1 which he cut superbly. However he then failed an angled H2 giving Rutger a 14 yard shot which he just missed, from where Jamie made no further error and finished with a triple. The second game saw Jamie to 4-back in the third turn leaving the rush on the east boundary just north of H4. From B baulk Rutger hit centre-ball. Having peeled Jamie's ball through 4-back he attempted a cross-wire at H1 with the intention of making a 1-back leave, but while rushing partner away from H1, cannoned one of Jamie's ball to a position NE of H5, and no longer wired. So he continued with the TPO until, pegging out from about two feet, faulted in the croquet stroke! Jamie took contact from Rutger's partner ball in corner 2 and finished in the fifth turn to win the COWhorn at his first attempt.

Before the final round of the Swiss the only players with a single loss were Mary Knapp and Tim Wilkins. The match between them was won decisively by Tim who got to take home the Swiss COWbell. Richard Dickson had a good run to come second. There were 14 triples completed during the weekend with Rutger and Jamie sharing the peeling prize with three apiece. Having only won one of his previous games Ian Vincent finished in style with two triples after lunch on Sunday!

Southport B Level 25th - 26th July

Report by Fergus McInnes

This was my first visit to Southport, and my first time managing a tournament in England (though I'd done plenty in Scotland during the past 11 years). So here are the impressions of a newcomer...

The town: Southport is a pleasant place, with a sense of spaciousness about it and some interesting large brick-built houses. I enjoyed the hospitality of Terry and Melanie, and the short walk from their house to the croquet club on Saturday morning. (On Sunday morning it was raining and I was happy to accept a lift.)

The croquet lawns: Good lawns, and plenty of space for expansion. Not as fast as the Meadows lawns, but at least as good as anywhere else in Scotland. A curious and possibly unique feature is that the lawns are below the high tide level and so their speed is affected by the state of the tide. (So, at some times of day, the B Level was below the sea level! Having recently bought a watch which tracks the phase of the moon

and deduces a rough estimate of local tides, I wondered whether this might be construed as an artificial aid and therefore banned from use while playing here.)

The pavilion: Not huge, but adequate for a tournament of this size, and well-equipped - with, among other things, a broadband Internet connection, which I appreciated as I had my laptop computer with me and was using it to do the management. (I think this was my first paperless tournament as a manager, an addition to the other "firsts" noted above. It probably won't be my last, since it seemed to work well.)

The food and drink: Delicious lunches and afternoon teas, and a well-stocked bar - thanks to Margaret and all the others who helped.



From left to right Terry Foster (SBCB Chairman), Richard Smith (Event winner), Jonathan Lamb (Runner-Up), Fergus McInnes (Manager) and Don Williamson (Plate Winner)

The incidental entertainment: Music from a series of concerts in an adjoining area of the park was clearly audible, and we were regaled with Abba songs on Friday evening (when I helped Terry to deliver the bar stock and had a little practice on the lawns), classical music followed by fireworks on Saturday, and more music on Sunday.

Now on to the croquet. With 16 entrants in the handicap range from 2 to 8, I had planned the tournament to consist of four blocks of four, seeded by handicap and then by CGS ranking, with the top two performers in each block (after tie-breakers if required) going into a three-round knockout while the remaining players had a flexible Swiss consolation event. And that was pretty much what happened - the only deviations from plan being that David Turner didn't turn up, reducing one of the blocks to three players, and that in the one block whose results called for tie-breakers, with three players in contention for the second place, two of the three declined the opportunity and so Terry Foster went through to the knockout stage by default.

The block games were completed soon enough for the knockout quarter-finals to be played on Saturday, leaving time for a best-of-three final after Sunday morning's semi-finals. The semi-finalists were Jonathan Lamb (from Uruguay, handicap 2), Keith Roberts (Southport, 5), Terry Foster (Southport, 3.5) and Richard Smith (Bowdon, 2); the results were in accordance with

handicap and ranking, and hence it was Jonathan against Richard in the final.

The weekend's only triple peel was performed by Jonathan Lamb in his third block game, against Andrew Webb, on Saturday, and he found it a particularly memorable experience with Land of Hope and Glory sounding out in the background!

The final was completed in two games, in each of which Richard overcame Jonathan by a narrow margin: +6 in the first, and +1 on time in the second. So Richard received the newly substituted cup (the original having been stolen from a previous winner's car some time before) plus £20 in cash, and Jonathan got the second prize of £10. The final of the consolation event was between Don Williamson (Southport) and myself, and Don prevailed to receive the nonexistent plate and a real £5. I was thus the losing plate finalist for the second weekend in a row, having ended up in a similar position at the Scottish Open a week before; but I consoled myself with having had my lunches free of charge as manager, in addition to the Fosters' hospitality already mentioned and a thoroughly enjoyable weekend.

Overall the quality of croquet was much as one would expect from this handicap range: some good breaks, some scrappy play, a few triples attempted but only one completed. The fact that 19 out of 44 games went to the 2.5-hour time limit (with at least one more game reaching a peg-out after time was called) was also a fair reflection of the standard of play. Jonathan and Richard were worthy finalists, a cut above the rest of us, and it seems reasonable that they shared the honours - Jonathan doing the one TP but Richard winning the cup.

For anyone else who hasn't been to Southport before, I can recommend it. (For Scottish-based players, it's easy to reach by train from Edinburgh or Glasgow.) And to the locals I say: thanks for your hospitality!

Wrest Park Advanced, 8th - 9th August

Report By John Bevington

The tournament was won by Phil Cordingley, who began with a triple against Peter Thompson and continued with five more wins (including a win against Mike Porter recorded on the sheet as +17NZTP, whatever that might be). Phil wore his mallet on his sleeve and cries of anguish would ring out as balls failed to reach their intended positions on what were relatively slow lawns, due to heavy rain two days earlier.

Phil was brought up short in his last game against Jonathan Lamb, over from Uruguay, who won +16 and took second place with five wins out of 6. Jonathan's only loss was to Tom Anderson in the first round and this may have spurred him on. Jonathan's penultimate game against John Bevington was slightly unusual:

- 1 Pink just short of E boundary north of hoop 4
- 2 Green short tice
- 3 White hits tice and goes to 4-back leaving diagonal spread with Green near hoop 2
- 4 Brown misses from B baulk to just outside corner 4
- 5 Pink goes to peg on 3 ball break, leaving rush to 4-back south of hoop 2
- 6 Green hits lift from A-baulk and goes to 3-back on 3 ball break, sticks in hoop
- 7 Opponent hits ball in hoop and lays up for 4-back
- 8 Green shoots at Brown and misses
- 9 White makes 4-back and penult but fails to get rush to rover. Takes off to corner 4, roquets Brown, gets rush on Green, rushes it to rover and finishes.

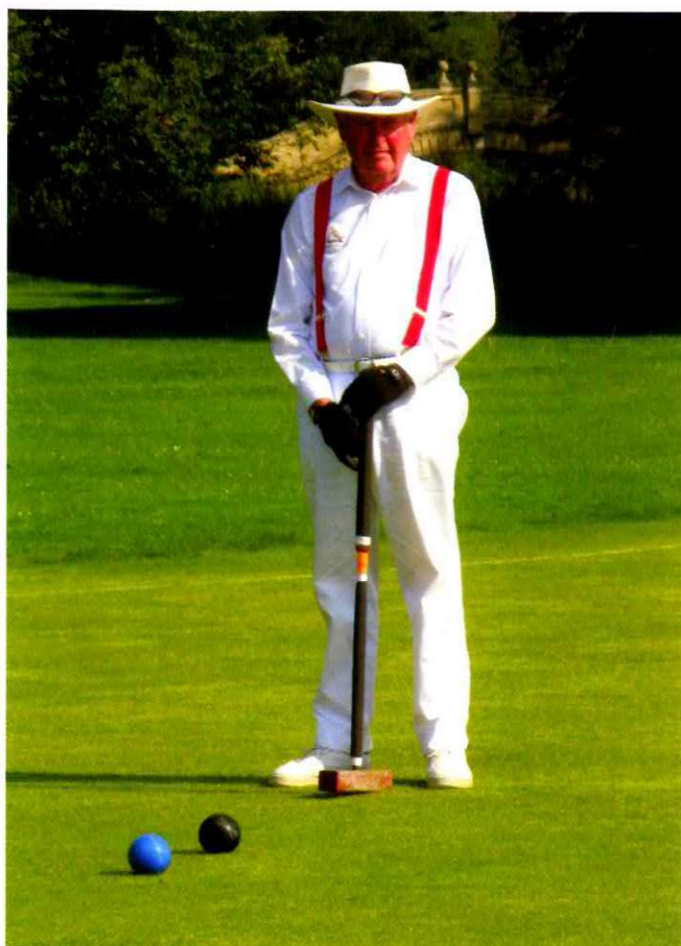
Percival Mallets

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

If White had got the rush to rover, the game would have been completed with Brown having remained untouched from the moment it was played onto the lawn. Do such things happen often?



Richard Stevens "in play" at Wrest Park. Photo by John Bevington

Third place went to David Tutt, who in his modest and unassuming way quietly collected five wins in his seven games, including one against his club colleague Nick Mounfield. Nick is definitely one to watch. Until relatively recently he had only played golf croquet and indeed this may even have been his first Association tournament. Playing off 8 he quickly had opponents reaching for calculators to work out the number of index points they might lose. He won four of his seven games, dabbled with a triple peel and might have done even better but for some forgivable errors such as laying up in baulk having forgotten that there was a lift due. Needless to say his handicap has now been halved. It was convenient that David is his club handicapper and that Ian Parkinson, chair of the Handicapping Committee, happened to be playing in the tournament as well. With Nick on four wins were Mike Porter, John Male and Richard Smith. Richard had a slow start but finished strongly, hitting in at the death to win the last game to finish, against manager Rod Ashwell, +2 on time.

The weather was good, the catering (with thanks to Linda, Vera, Peggy and Margaret) splendid. And we had our fashion moment: Richard Stevens' wife returned from Bedford on Saturday afternoon with a splendid pair of red braces which he donned forthwith, brightening up the lawns no end.

New 2009 Merit Awards Achieved up to 5th September 2009

Particular Congratulations to Lee Hartley for Achieving GOLD and to Avril Rangoni-Machiavelli for Achieving BRONZE and SILVER in the same Tournament. Also to Richard Godfrey or achieving both Bronze and Silver in the same game. A special mention also to Sanaa Hallam for achieving both Bronze and Silver in the same tournament in his first year of playing. He attributes this to three things, the Nottingham Coaching Course run by Ailsa Lines, additional coaching from his father Brian and his inherited talent from the same source.

John Handy, Merit Awards Organiser

BRONZE

- Barry McKenzie - Bowdon May Weekend, 2 May
- Howard Cheyne - Surbiton Weekend Handicap Tournament, 11 April
- Georgeen Hemming - Hunstanton "Over 50" Weekend, 12 June
- Anne Peek - Nailsea Handicap Singles Tournament, 3 May
- Avril Rangoni-Machiavelli - Compton CC Summer Tournament, 26 June
- Christian Carter - Hurlingham Silver Jubilee Cup, 3 Aug
- Jane Collier - Colchester over 50s, 5 Aug
- Tim Dennis - Northern Week Bowdon, 23 July
- Richard Godfrey - Ramsgate Handicap, 12 July
- Clive Goode - Nottingham Handicap, 11 July
- Andrew Gray - Longman Cup, 15 Aug
- Omid Hallam - Nottingham Annual Tournament, 21 Aug
- Sanaa Halam - Nottingham Annual Tournament, 17 Aug
- Peter Moore - Nottingham Handicap, 11 July
- John Pollard - East Dorset June Week, 25 June
- Edward Schaffert - Cheltenham over 50, 8 July
- Sue Wileman - Nottingham Handicap, 12 July

SILVER

- David Temple - Budleigh Salterton May Tournament, 8 May
- Peter Kenward - Colchester Spring Handicap, 4 May
- Bob Prichard - Roehampton Summer Tournament, 27 May
- Joe Lennon, Tyneside Midweek Handicap, 10 June
- Sheila Watts, National Veteran's Championship, 19 June
- Avril Rangoni-Machiavelli, Compton CC Summer Tournament, 27 June
- Robin Burnell - Cheltenham July Week, 24 July
- Allan Card - Ramsgate Handicap, 12 July
- Patricia Duke-Cox - Nottingham Annual Tournament, 19 July
- Harry Fisher - East Dorset June Week, 24 June
- Richard Godfrey - Ramsgate Handicap, 12 July
- Sanaa Hallam - Nottingham Annual Tournament, 17 Aug
- Richard Harris - East Dorset 50+ Handicap, 11 Aug
- Don Martin - Nottingham Handicap, 11 July
- Julian Remfry - Cheltenham over 50 Handicap, 8 July
- Robert Savage - Cheltenham over 50 Handicap

GOLD

- Lee Hartley - Pendle & Craven B-Level Advanced, 17 May
- Tony Bower - Budleigh August Week, 6 Aug

PLATINUM

- Chris Farthing - Ranelagh Gold Cup, 19 July

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 wet weather gear is available, including:

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



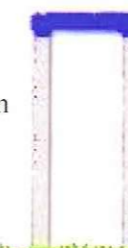
ODDS & ENDS

Timer	£10.50
Silver Earrings (mallet or hoop & ball)	£12.00
Hoop setting feeler gauge	£3.00
Canvas ball carrier bags	£15.00
Croquet Girl cards (pack of 8 - blank)	£4.50
Lawn 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.

JAIQUES CROQUET LONDON

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

05



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

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

ESTD
LONDON 1795

JAIQUES
LONDON

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