

THE CROQUET GAZETTE

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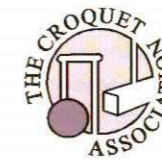
the Editor may be willing to expand this deadline for please contact her direct before making any assumption.

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 Manager of the Croquet Association and not to the Editor.

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Front Cover: The Solomon Trophy Venue. photo by Samir Patel.

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Chairman's Column



I want to enthuse all members for our sport in this issue. You may want to use the start of the new year to set yourselves a target. This can take the form of having more games in a year, enjoying more competitive play, entering a different level of tournament, earning a merit award, achieving a handicap reduction or going on a course to learn more about style, tactics or improve play generally.

For Association Croquet players another option is to watch and learn from world class players. Since the CA is hosting the MacRobertson Shield this year there will be opportunities around the country in August to see these players. I would suggest if you are considering taking a coach-load however that you ask the club if they can accommodate you for parking and catering.

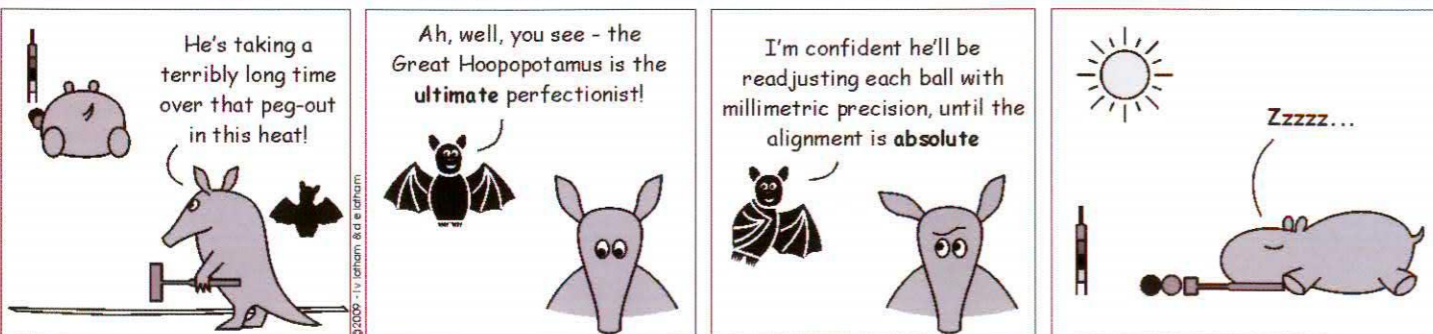
There will be a focus on the MacRobertson Shield this year as it is the top world team championship played by the four strongest nations. They field teams of 6 players. Look out for articles on its history and then others on the teams participating. A new innovation this year is the newly introduced WCF World Association Croquet Team Championships for other nations who can field smaller teams.

How many of our members would like to benefit their club? Most I suspect. The CA is extending its rebate scheme for every new member joining. If the application form nominates their club it will receive a £10 rebate in January 2011. New members in the meantime get the benefit of regular Gazettes delivered to their home, can enter as many tournaments they wish, enjoy discounts on purchases in the shop and know they are supporting their chosen sport.

Patricia Duke-Cox

HOPOPOTAMUS

by Victor



Letters

Re the spreading of Association Handicaps

Handicappers already have the authority, now, to make Hincroads into this problem; but the received wisdom is to 'let the automatic system do its work and all will be well'. I cannot agree with this maxim, as you will understand from my previous letter published in issue 322 – October 2009. Points continue to leak from the system and hence the spreading out of the range of handicaps.

As I see it there are three opportunities for putting things right and they stem from our three areas of activity in the game – clubs, tournaments and international events.

Maybe the open nature of International events would disqualify them from inclusion; but they can certainly be used to monitor how the different Continents are faring by comparing Handicaps of winners and losers.

Naturally, clubs are in the best position to make changes. Every year the club handicapper should observe with people joining and leaving how their total handicaps affect the club's overall position. For example, if two newcomers who take up the game are given H/Cs of 20, say, while three leave the area and their combined H/C totalled 15 then the adjustment to the club has been to gain 25 H/C places which could be the equivalent of 250 points on the system. The exact number of points can readily be calculated. As soon as possible, in the new season, the Club Handicapper should seek to reduce some club members to reflect this gain of points by a similar loss elsewhere. How could he manage this without upsetting those players he was reducing prematurely?

I would propose a further column on the H/C card for 'bisques left standing in won games' and this could be the Club Handicappers first evidence that a H/C is incorrect and that this player should be given a H/C reduction. If no such evidence exists then the Club should inform the National Handicapper that their Club has made an overall gain in the year. By matching gains and losses across the country the National Handicapper is either satisfied that things are evening out or that a nationwide H/C adjustment might be needed.

As far as Tournaments are concerned, either the Tournament Manager or an appointed Tournament Handicapper should be asked to inspect every player's card. If there were instances of heavy 'bisques left standing' entries on a card the player could be given an immediate H/C reduction before play. In this case, the use of a starred H/C could be reinstated for such players. The star should be removed, with or without further adjustment, at the end of the Tournament.

Geoff Strutt

P.S. Another change that might be useful in Tournaments would be the reinstatement of the idea that a player might have different H/Cs for doubles and singles.

My thoughts on 'Casting'

I have noted the correspondence in the Gazette and offer the following addition in case you are allowing the subject of casting to be further aired.

'Ah' said the Oldest Member in a tone of gentle melancholy

'the Elephants' salute, I see.' From our vantage point, conveniently situated to give a good view of the games in play nearby and in handy proximity to the bar, we observed a stout gentleman preparing to attempt a long roquet. Placing his mallet behind the ball he bent over until his upper regions were almost horizontal and then raised them until the mallet was high in the air. He then resumed his original posture and repeated the manoeuvre a number of times before, presumably tiring of the exercise, striking the ball towards his target with some force. As he went to collect the ball and place it on the yard line my companion turned to me. 'My boy' he said 'You are still young and have much to learn about our noble game. I urge you most earnestly to avoid falling into the trap of cultivating habits and mannerisms that may in time become repeated almost endlessly to the wonder of spectators and discomfiture of opponents of a nervous or irritable disposition'

I knew exactly what he meant, for I had earlier in the tournament been reduced to a state of seething frustration by an elderly lady who might have provided the perfect illustration of Aunt Emma at work. Her stock in trade was the take-off to separate the opponent's balls and the long roll-up. In this latter stroke she assumed a crouching position and then looked up towards the next hoop and down at her two balls. This up and down process was then repeated. I had sat by the courtside and counted the score which on occasion reached into the low twenties before she finally despatched the balls to their destination. No doubt her constant practice rendered her efforts effective for I lost heavily. (With apologies to the late P.G. Wodehouse).

In the 2009 Treasurer's Tankard play at Budleigh last autumn I had the chance to watch and enjoy much of the play. I was seated on one occasion behind a player who swung repeatedly over the ball before shooting. The mallet face was a number of degrees away from the line of aim towards the object ball and the line of the swing was also several degrees to the right of the target. When the striking actually took place the line of that final swing was quite markedly different from all that preceded it and the shot had a fair chance of being successful.

We all have our methods of aiming and striking but extensive repetition of the swing can come close to a gamesmanship ploy that is unworthy of 'our beautiful game' and may not achieve results significantly better than other methods. It is worth noticing how shots casually aimed into the corners can often hit the corner flag.

Charles Townshend

My thoughts too.....

Messrs. Solomon are evidently not fans of 'casting' – John asks what casters are trying to achieve? My swing settles after a few casts and there is a moment when it feels 'just right' – and that is when I strike. How many swings this takes varies – but it has made me a good shot. Apart from the virtue of tolerance extolled by Tony Backhouse, there are three other points to consider:

1. Neither of the two slowest tournament players I can think of are casters – one is slow because they are very defensive and the other because they take an inordinate time to consider their next stroke.

2. Casting is not new. I've been casting since 1981, and I copied it from a mentor when I first started playing.

3. The standard of shooting has improved hugely in the last 20 years, to the extent that the tactics in the top class game have had to evolve to respond to the greater accuracy. Not all the top

class players are casters – but many of the very best shots are.

So in a sport continually trying to develop, it would seem very odd to ban something – just because you don't think it attractive - which has been around for 30+ years, is not responsible for the slowest play on show, and has contributed to a huge improvement in shooting.

Martin French

Give A-class players bigger balls

For our finals weekend all the hoops were moved and reset by our uncomplaining Chairman to 3 3/4 inches width, i.e. to a clearance of 1/8 inch. However, on the first day it turned out that only A-class players were due to play on lawn 1, and they wanted tighter hoops: their preference, no problem, and one of them got down and did it. However, at the end of play, guess what, he didn't remember put them back to the clearance required for the next day and the Manager had to rouse our Chairman early next morning to reset them: whether he was still uncomplaining I am unable to say. Conflicts of interest like this arise not infrequently, and it occurs to me that rather than having to adjust hoop widths, an obvious solution is to have them invariably set to 3 3/4 inches, but for the A-class players to use bigger balls.

Modern balls are extremely uniform, and keep their size and shape very well. Those I have measured have always equalled the regulation diameter of 3 5/8 inches to much better than one hundredth of an inch, and it seems to me that it would be feasible to introduce a range of bigger balls: e.g. with a diameter of 3 11/16 inches giving a clearance of 1/16 inch, the 'silver' range say, and marked with a silver stripe. Similarly, one could envision the 'gold' range (diameter 3 23/32 inches, clearance 1/32 inch) – and maybe even a range with zero clearance for real masochists, the 'basher' range, perhaps. Clearly, bigger balls made from the material in present use would weigh more, but the technology of modern materials science could surely provide a suitable material to give balls with the correct weight and bounce. That the balls are bigger will of course have its major impact on hoop clearances, as desired, but it will also make roqueting marginally easier, though this effect is at less than the three percent level, and it is hard to see how this could be a reasonable objection.

The proposition that hoops have a fixed width is evidently not the case at present; however, hoop setters (and testers) lives would be much easier if there was only the one width of 3 3/4 inch to think about, judged by test bars – which would of course also be available to anyone to test a hoop of doubtful legality, either too narrow or too wide. It should also encourage thought about how to make hoops much less variable than the present ones, preferably requiring no adjustment at all. I have a few thoughts about this, but they will be saved for elsewhere.

There are other advantages. Handicap games between players of widely different ability could be played with each player using their preferred size of ball, so that an A-class player would no longer feel that the game presented no worthwhile challenge, while the high-bisquer would not have that uneasy suspicion, not infrequent at tournaments and even inside clubs, that some blighter has set the hoops too tight.

Whether a maker could be found for these balls remains to be seen, but one would like to think that an enterprising manufacturer would regard it as a commercial opportunity, with a target market amongst A-class and would-be A-class players

prepared to invest in their own set of balls, much as in bowls. I can imagine that there are not a few for whom possession of a set of 'Goldenballs' would be a much-prized status symbol.

Don Gugan



Tess Burke, Cath Burke, and Ros Pimlott, with a good view of part of Cairnlea in the background.

Thanks

I am happy to say the WCF World Woman's Golf Croquet Tournament in Melbourne, November 2009 lived up to expectations.

I was fortunate enough to renew friendships made in Cairo in the 1st Tournament and make many new friends.

The Australians really pulled out the stops, Cairnlea has 12 good lawns. We were well catered for, play organization was good, the competition stiff. Same wonderful play to see and be part of. Dinner at the Royal Melbourne Yacht Club being just one of the highlights.

The final shot of the competition with the score at 2 games each and 6 hoops each made the 13th hoop critical, and a shot suitable to the occasion secured the Championship for Australia.

The excitement in the pavilion was electric to say the least, I am glad to have been present on such an occasion. Thank you CA for the wild card.

Ros Pimlott

Pedants reprise.....

I am fed up with being thought of as a player of second class Croquet. Every time 'Croquet' is mentioned alone it always refers to *Association Croquet* and yet *Golf Croquet* has been around since at least 1896, which is sometime before the formation of the Croquet Association itself!

Even the official 'Golf Croquet' page of the Croquet Association website uses language such as '... has simpler rules requires same or greater accuracy than Association ... a simple idea ...'

Simpler rules imply a simpler game. Same or better than implies a patronising token of respect from a 'superior' agency, and simple ideas suggest play suitable for simpler people. Grrrr.

The truth is that Golf is a faster, more interactive and interpersonally more challenging game than Association with real time competition on the field requiring complex and fast changing

tactics and the application of attacking, defensive and positioning modes of play.

Pussyfooting around hoops on an individual basis for 3 1/2 hours maybe many peoples idea of a game, and therefore has a right to respect, but it is not a sport.

Could I suggest that reference in the future be made to the GAME of Association Croquet and the SPORT of Golf Croquet?
Tony Lee

And Finally.....

Our 'Roving Reporda', Lorna Ndawarda has sent me a report of her last game which reads:

Although it had been raining heavily for eight days the lawn was already set up for our Association game and in perfect condition. I won the toss and chose to go first, running hoop one with black. Yellow came on the lawn and I played a remarkable break with blue, winning on the third turn. I rather think I may have done this in the fewest possible shots. All the best, Lorna. Typical Lorna, she forgot to say how she did it.

I also received an email from Phil McKardin who writes: I am giving up Croquet for good and moving to Blackburn Lancashire. The other day I measured out and set the lawn up from scratch ready for my game against Lorna. She turned up late as usual, won the toss and ran hoop one with her first shot, and then correctly pegged out both balls on the third turn. It took her fewer shots than the holes I made setting the lawn out. While I was clearing the court she shouted back from the car park that she thinks it is, in terms of shots, the shortest game possible.

In order for me to update the website I need to know how many shots there were in that game and how many holes Phil had to make to set the lawn up. Please help.

Gustave

Wed 18 – Sun 22 August

GB v Aus Surbiton
NZ v USA Surbiton

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Winning Mac Logo

Here is the logo we have chosen for the 2010 MacRobertson Shield. This will be used on publicity material, souvenir shirts, programmes etc. for the competition. The design is the result of the competition we ran in the August Gazette. The competition winner was Gavin Carter from the Jersey club, in due course he will get his prize of a shirt bearing this logo (obviously we don't actually have any of those yet) and a bottle of bubbly. Thanks also to John Bevington, John Carr, Penny Crowe and Tony Lee who also sent in design ideas.



Golf Croquet Inter-Club Shield.

The CA are initiating a new Golf Croquet competition in 2010 for Club Teams of four. This will be to allow players with GC Handicaps greater than 2 to enjoy competitive level play Golf Croquet Team Matches against other clubs. It is designed to be, for Golf Croquet, somewhat like the Mary Rose Trophy and Longman Club Cup are for Association Croquet. There will be a Shield for the winning Club to hold for a year.

Each match will be run on lines similar to the Inter-Club Championship matches. Entries will have to be sent to the CA at the same time as entries for other Inter-Club competitions, i.e.. 12th March. The draw, which may be on a regional basis depending on the entries, will be made on 1st April, and Clubs will then arrange their own mutually convenient fixtures.

This note is to allow Club Secretaries to start thinking about their teams. Full details of the competition will be in the 2010 Fixtures Book.

Merit Awards

Congratulations to Jim Field on achieving his Gold Award at The British Men's and Women's Championship at Cheltenham in June 2009.

COACHING

A roundup of news from the Croquet Academy

By Jonathan Isaacs

The Academy completes its second year

The Croquet Academy has now completed two successful years. During 2009 a comprehensive range of courses were held including The Academy's first Masterclass - "Improving your game". The one day class was conducted by David Openshaw (President of The World Croquet Federation) and was very well received.

The Academy's Golf Croquet courses proved to be so popular in 2008 that it was decided to run two courses in 2009, the first covering beginners and improvers and the second a Golf Croquet summer school aimed at more experienced players wishing to improve their play. Both courses were successful and will be repeated in 2010.

In August the Academy conducted its first course in French for the Catenay Club from Normandy. Thanks must go to John Low who not only taught in French but prepared all the course notes in French. The course was tailor-made to their needs and a marked improvement in the game was noted during the weekend.

U3A, Probus, Rotary and other similar organisations offer croquet a fruitful recruitment ground. With this in mind The Academy have run specific courses for U3A groups in the South East of England as well as offering tuition to visiting Probus and Rotary groups.

Bookham U3A visited the Academy in force for a one day tailored course suited to their playing level.

A number of the Academy coaches visited other clubs and federations to run specific courses tailored to the needs of the club or federation concerned. Many clubs were visited including Nottingham, Rother Valley, Littlehampton and Earmley. If clubs or federations are looking for specific help with coaching contact Frances or John Low. Details of their location can be found on the Academy website.



The Association Croquet Summer School held at the Academy in July 2009

New courses for 2010

The Academy is always looking to further develop coaching and with this in mind is launching two new courses in 2010.

For many association players the transition from handicap to advanced play is not easy. To help make this an easier experience Cliff Jones has devised a two day course called "An Introduction to Advanced Play". Aimed at single handicap players it is designed to help players new to advanced play to develop their skills as well as those who are playing advanced tournaments but are looking to improve their technique. Further details of this and other courses can be found on the Academy's web site: www.thecroquetacademy.com

A significant number of people attending Academy courses have asked if a more intensive course could be run specifically dealing with "The triple peel".

As a result Cliff Jones has developed a three-day course which will be run in August 2010 covering triple peeling in some detail. It is aimed at players with handicap's between 0 & 4 and will cover straight and delayed Triple peels as well as advice on improving ones technique. See the Academy website for further details.

Following the success of David Openshaw's Masterclass in 2009, Keith Aiton has agreed to run a one day Masterclass called "The Psychology of Association Croquet" on Saturday 3rd April 2010. Keith is a leading World Association Player and a Master Practitioner of NLP. This promises to be an excellent day and could well help many to develop the art of positive thinking. You are strongly recommended to book this course early as spaces are limited.

Finally we will be running a High Bisque Tournament split into 2 groups, the first will cover handicap 16-20 and normal tournament regulations will apply and coaches will be available between games for consultation if required. The second group will cover those with a handicap of 20+ where assistance will be given with their first games especially on the use of bisques. This is an ideal opportunity to take your first plunge into the tournament circuit in a friendly environment with like-minded people.

The prospectus for 2009 is detailed below and further information can be obtained from The Croquet Academy Website www.thecroquetacademy.com or by emailing courses@thecroquetacademy.com

Dates	Course	ideal handicap range
27 th March	Golf Croquet referees course (Bill Arliss & Michael Hague)	NA
3 rd April	Masterclass – The Psychology of Association Croquet (Keith Aiton)	All
17/18 th April	Association Gold Course	Below 4
17/18 th April	Association Silver Course	8-11
24/25 th April	Association Introduction to Advanced Play	4-8
24/25 th April	Association Beginners/Improvers	18 & Above
29/30 th April	Association Bronze Course	12 – 18
15/16 th May	Golf Beginners and Improvers Course	6 & above
3/4 th July	Golf Croquet Summer School	2 – 6
26-30 th July	Association Summer School	16 & Above
5 – 7 Aug	Association Triple Peel Course	0 – 4
12/13 Aug	Supervised high bisque tournament	16 & above

News & Information

MacRobertson Shield Info:

The following is offered to enable spectators to organise any visits to the events. Further information will be published as it becomes available, in the Gazette.

Dates, Venues and Contacts

Fri 6 – Tues 10 August

GB v USA Bowdon
Aus v NZ Heaton Park

Thu 12 – Mon 16 August

GB v NZ Nottingham
Aus v USA Roehampton

Golf Croquet Referee Training

Bill Arliss, Senior GC Examining Referee

As competitive Golf Croquet really started to grow in 2000, we decided that it was essential to start training referees specifically for this format of the game and introduced our first training course and qualification examination for potential referees in that year. Initially there was no infrastructure in place to organise such courses and we started with single day events where we covered application of the laws, refereeing practices, fault detection plus practical and written tests all in the same day. This was far from ideal and I have to admit meant that our standards of testing were far from the ideal level that we see with Association referees. The need to keep to a single day was forced upon us by the lack of Examining Referees and the need to minimise overnight stays whilst at the same time being able to run courses around the country.

I believe the weakest part of the new GC referees armoury was in on lawn fault detection. It is quite easy to say to a potential referee that he or she should go away and really learn the laws before they ever came near a referees' course, as the laws are well documented in the laws books. However the same cannot be said for fault recognition. There is no referee's manual available which tells the referee where to stand to get the best view of shots and what are the critical points that he/she should be watching for. We did make it clear from the start that referee's course were never intended to teach players the laws, only how to apply them and those without a very good knowledge of the laws before they came on the course would be unlikely to pass the written test. Our written test failure rate of almost 75% has shown that many did not take this warning to heart.

I have been asked many times why we do not allow players to use a copy of the laws book when sitting the written test, as they would be able to use a book when answering a player's question. The answer is very simple; without an inbuilt knowledge of the laws and exactly what they contain, it is extremely difficult to apply the laws to a particular situation even with a copy in your hand. I liken this very much to riding a bike; once you have really conquered the basic techniques, you never forget them and only require a refresher from time to time. Because of this approach I believe all CA qualified referees have a good knowledge of the laws. A further interesting point with our written tests is that a majority of questions are directed to only four laws, the two fault laws, the wrong ball and half way law as these probably cover 98% of the questions that a referee on call is likely to meet. Future referees should bear this in mind when preparing for an examination.

The lack of documentation describing fault detection has been recognised for some time and we have had to rely on trained association referees to help our case as fault detection is very similar in both formats of the game. However in 2006 the CA commissioned some high-speed photography work on a wide variety of croquet shots. It was certainly not the intention to push croquet of the future into the use of high tech equipment. Our approach was that if we could understand from this exercise exactly what happened when bat meets ball meets other ball etc. we would be able to advise players on how to detect faults from what they could see and hear. When you realise that when a mallet hits a ball in a single ball shot, it only remains in contact for about one thousandth of a second, the difficulty of recognising double taps

for instance is extremely difficult. From the Golf Croquet point of view the test results revealed a much easier way to determine double taps which are far more critical in GC than AC simply from observing that ratio of travel between the striker's ball and the second ball. The tests also threw some light on what happens when hard shots are played on balls close to a hoop. Surprisingly many shots that I would have in the past given as a fault were shown to be quite clean. All of this information was summarised on a DVD, which is now generally available for GC referee training

In view of these various developments we have made in this area, I believe we are now at a stage where we can demand much higher standards from our new referees on fault recognition and future tests from now onwards will reflect these new standards. As part of this change, our courses will no longer include both the training and qualification on the same day. The first course on this new theme will be run at Southwick under the auspices of the Croquet Academy on Sat 27 March. It will run from 10.00 until 4.30 pm with the day divided approximately into application of the laws and practical on lawn refereeing. Full details of the course and how to apply are given on the Academy web site at www.thecroquetacademy.com under the courses tab. Examinations will be arranged later in the season.

Although the numbers of our Examining Referees have started to grow, we are still very short especially in the northern parts of the country and I would be delighted to hear from any experienced referee who would be willing to take on this task. Suitable training and a supervised first course will be made available. On the general question of organising other referee courses we have to rely on our Federations or large clubs to recognise the need and undertake the secretarial organisation. Please get in touch with me if you feel there is such a need in your area.

Tips for Coaches

by David Mooney

No 1 The Basics of Coaching and Straight Rushing

The CA coaching Committee has identified that there is a lack of information for coaches on ideas and techniques for coaching outside the boundaries of the CA coaching courses. 90% of the coaching for croquet is actually done in the clubs by either qualified coaches or senior club members on a largely informal basis. This article is first of a series we hope to publish primarily for the purposes of coach education to expand the knowledge of coaches and to document coaching techniques and tricks of the trade.

At the moment most of the coaching that is done under the auspices of the CA is the running of courses and the training of Coaches to deliver those courses. The courses themselves are designed around teaching rather than coaching. The committee feel we do need to establish the difference between teaching and coaching as they are very different skills and should be approached using different techniques.

This first article is going to address the fundamental differences between coaching and teaching and explain coaching in more depth. Further articles will cover specific topics salient to

both Golf Croquet and Association Croquet with examples and lesson formats.

Teaching: The imparting of new knowledge in the form of skills, technique and tactics. The method of doing this is best described by the acronym IDEAR

Introduction, Demonstration, Explanation, Application, Repetition. This acronym is widely used in other sports

Coaching: The enhancement of an existing skill or the removal of mistakes that have developed in an existing skill. Owing to its nature coaching cannot be carried out properly in a short course format. It requires a longer duration than a course format can offer to really be successful.

Coaching is best carried out on a one to one basis. There is always an element of coaching within a teaching situation but not vice versa (application and repetition).

The acronym for coaching is not as well defined as it tends to be related to the individual sport. My own acronym for croquet is **IAPRORM** (if anyone has a better acronym I would love to hear from you: mooneyd@pbworld.com)

Identify, Analyse, Plan, Repair, Overload, Repeat, Monitor

Identify: What is the problem? Has the pupil articulated the problem correctly? Do you agree that the problem exists and is it the problem the pupil thinks he/she has?

Analyse: What is the cause of the problem? Communicate the cause to the pupil.

Plan: Identify with the pupil a plan of action that will rectify the problem.

Repair: Demonstrate and instruct the pupil on how to rectify the problem.

Overload: Identify a strategy to put the rectified fault under pressure to ensure that the situation is improving.

Repeat: Devise a practice regime that can be used to ensure that the fault is eradicated and which can be undertaken by the pupil by him/herself as well as under the coach's control.

Monitor: Both the coach and the pupil should continue to monitor the situation to ensure that the problem does not return.

If the coach has a long term relationship with the pupil, goals should be set for the season and a coaching plan agreed between the coach and the pupil.

Straight Rushing

Note this technique can also be applied to Clearing at GC.

The example below is concerned with the coaching element of the skill of straight rushing. The situation is that Joan, a Handicap 8 player, has come to you to after attending a silver CA course and is having difficulty in mastering a three ball break.

Identify: "I cannot keep a three ball break going. I make two or three hoops and break down" explains Joan. "Demonstrate the problem to me" says the coach "by playing a three-ball break now to hoop 6"

Joan fails to get a rush out of hoop 1 and plays a big roll to hoop 2 putting her pioneer too far toward corner three. The coach stops her there and asks her "did you not think to get a forward rush out of hoop 1?" "I am not very good at long rushes and I like to play rolls more."

The coach has now identified the true nature of the problem as being a reluctance to rush.

Analyse: The coach now asks Joan to undertake a straight rush across the lawn south to north with the object ball 18 inches (450 mm) in front of the striking ball. Joan repeats this five times with twice succeeding in rushing the ball off the north boundary. The other three attempts exhibit standard mistakes such as standing too close to the ball, failure to stalk properly, and trying to hit too hard.

The coach's job under this section is to analyse the stroke, identify and explain the mistakes to the player so that self-analysis can take place during the repetition stage. The coach should use any supporting literature such as the coaching manual and CTC course notes to aid the identification of all the common faults.

Plan: Having identified all the mistakes, agree with the player what needs to happen for the mistake(s) to be eradicated (with technique sessions this will normally be a revision of the teaching points associated with the problem). It may be best to identify the mistakes to the pupil one at a time, as it can be demoralising to give a list; however if the mistakes are related then they should be dealt with together.

The plan may take a number of stages to rectify the problem fully. If this is the case the coach should identify to Joan intermediate achievable goals, so that progress can be demonstrated to her. An end goal must always be established, so that the session can be brought to a finish. Any follow up sessions should be agreed before the end of the session.

Repair: The coach identifies the problem and runs through a shortened version of teaching how to rush so that the correct picture is established in Joan's mind. Break down the stroke into its component parts so that the technique is clear (demonstrate good technique not mistakes). For a first practice a straight rush of 10 yards with an object ball distance of 18 inches is a good starting position. We are looking for both direction and distance, so mark the target area with bisques: a target bisque and a bisque either side 3 feet away. Mark the position of the object ball and striker's ball to ensure repeatability. Set the shot up with a backboard to avoid having to retrieve balls from across the lawn.

Overload: Once Joan has become proficient at the basic practice (4 out of 5 attempts would be acceptable) it is time to overload the technique to expose any residual problems. Any problems revealed should then be put back into the repair section and worked on until the desired success rate is achieved. The way to overload straight rushing is to increase the shot distance and then to increase the distance between the object ball and the striker's ball.

Repeat: Agree with Joan the practice routines to be followed outside the coaching format and remind her of the mistakes you have identified and how to rectify them.

Monitor: The monitoring section of coaching is one of the hardest things to assess as it varies between pupils; however it is critical for both the coach and the pupil. Monitoring will identify whether the coach's techniques are working. For the pupil, following up on the lesson gives added self esteem, confirming that what they are doing is correct and that the coach is taking an interest in their progress. By adopting a relevant monitoring regime, progress can be accelerated and other coaching topics identified.

Monitoring can take the form of:-

- Talking to the pupil
- Watching the pupil's play in matches and tournaments
- Short remedial practice sessions (20 minutes max)
- Supervised play with other pupils.

In our example Joan has progressed significantly and has reduced her handicap from 8 to 6 and is now making all-round 4-ball breaks successfully in competitive matches and is beginning to pick up breaks from leaves. Her coach suggests that they have a 15 minute remedial session (if it is a multi-pupil session, double the time) just to look at rushing technique to see that no faults have crept in. Use overloading techniques to put pressure on the shot, but not immediately.

After the session, the coach identifies that the next topic for coaching for Joan would be on tactics and how to win when giving bisques.

Equipment

Hoop clamp - a real aid if not a panacea

Martin French & Martin Leach

During the 2009 season, we have been trialling a clamp that holds a hoop at the desired width as it is driven into the ground. We imported this from Canada – the postage was half as much as the clamp!

We concluded it makes a real difference, both in how accurately and how quickly hoops can be set or moved – so will

benefit all those unsung volunteers who set the hoops at every club and tournament.

The clamp came from Oakley Woods of Canada, at <https://shop.oakleywoods.com/> - it is, or is similar to, a Rodoni clamp which has been used in North America for some years. Essentially, it is a modified ViceGrip (or Mole Wrench as these have been more commonly known in the UK). The jaws of the clamp have been adapted to grip the outside of the hoop uprights, and there is a 'floating' centrepiece which fits between the uprights. You apply the clamp at the right height above the carrots before driving the



The clamp in use

hoop into the ground. The centrepiece can be adjusted easily for various widths or gaps – we found you can do this with fingers, you don't need a set of spanners.

We have tried it at a number of clubs during the year. For example, at Ipswich where the soil contains only small stones, if you move 6 hoops, 4 or 5 will be exactly the right width first time. The other 1 or 2 may require some fiddling. At Colchester, where there seem to be some larger underground stones, in each set of 6 hoops moved to new holes for the Chairman's Salver, only 3 or 4 were right first time. However, Rob Fulford confirmed it was still much quicker to move a set of hoops than he had found in the past at Colchester when not using a clamp. Basically, if the carrots



The clamp with the modification of some plastic added to the inner adjusters.

don't encounter underground obstacles, the hoop will be right first time – whereas a large hidden stone can cause the hoop to spring in or out a little when the clamp is removed, requiring some adjustment

with a screwdriver down the hole!

Although it is an extra item to carry round the lawn when resetting hoops, it saves enough time to justify this. After the first few hoops, the initial clumsiness with the clamp passes and it becomes quick and easy to use, even with a mixed set of hoops of varying makes and ages.

It is supplied with a rubbery coating around the outer jaws, which prevents damage to the hoop paint. But the inside spacer is uncoated – this didn't seem to cause a problem on hoops that were thinly painted but when the hoops had umpteen layers of paint, it did cause the paint to chip off sometimes. A simple improvement, which seemed to stop this (shown above in photo), was to fix a thin piece of plastic (cut from the lid of a glue tub) onto the spacer ends using double sided tape.

To save everyone large international postage costs, the CA Shop is likely to import a supply of the clamps direct from Canada - they will be about £70 plus P&P. If you regularly set or move hoops, or act as Referee of Tournament, you may find this a useful aid that saves you time and improves the consistency and firmness of hoops. We recommend it.

Obituaries

Henry Drew 1923 – 2009

Twenty Years Secretary at Exeter Croquet Club

In the 2009 Calendar of the Exeter Croquet Club, the most significant and moving happening was the death of Henry Drew. For some months he had fought a losing battle against illness, but still found time and energy to come to the Club to sit and chat and, sometimes, to comment with customary humour. His last visit was to present the "Henry Drew Cup" which the Committee had commissioned, to mark his immense contribution to Croquet in Exeter. A Church packed with representatives from the varied Organisations to which he belonged, paid a final tribute to his life and achievements. As befitted a very modest and unassuming man, there was no eulogy but his own choice of Hymns: Bunyan's "He who would valiant be", and "The Battle Hymn of the Republic", was appropriate comment on a life that met sorrow with courage, and treated all with friendship, good humour and optimism.

The Exeter C C was formed for season 1983. Henry joined in 1986 when many of the pioneers were still playing. He was appointed Secretary in 1988 and for twenty years was the point of contact for new members, a patient and inspiring coach, arranger of fixtures, organiser of the hospitality for visiting Clubs, link with the Council ground staff and officials and the authority on the Rules and Procedures of the Game. He kept the Club alive during a period when membership was dangerously low, and saw it recover to its current very healthy state.

Henry had a presence and when he was seen approaching the Club the comment "Here comes Henry" somehow lifted the spirit of members, and urged them on to higher standards of play and more impressive breaks. On fine days next Season, we shall



Henry Drew (right), with Club President, Geoff Bird

probably still half expect to see him gently ambling along to join us.

In his lifetime Henry was very much a sportsman, having played Rugby, Golf, Tennis and I have no doubt other games. He was a Bridge player, and belonged to various Societies whose members he sometimes brought to the Club for a taste of Croquet. Professionally he was a Brewer, first with St. Anne's Well in Exeter and, after the takeover by Whitbreads at their premises at Tiverton, formerly the old West Country Brewery Starkey Knight and Ford. His laid-back and unflappable approach in the face of set-backs such as the accidental loss of hundreds of gallons of wort, or an unexplained infestation of wild yeast was a characteristic that also exemplified his work with the Club.

To his two devoted daughters who were with him during his last weeks, and at the end, the whole Club expresses deepest sympathy.

Well done Henry, and so many, many thanks. You will be greatly missed.

Geoff Bird, President Exeter CC.

Patricia Shine

Many members will be sorry to hear that Patricia Shine passed away on the 24th November 2009. The funeral service took place on December 7th, when both Sussex County Croquet Club (SCCC) and Worthing Croquet Clubs were well represented. It was also a surprise and a great pleasure to see Bernard Weitz, her brother-in-law, from Cheltenham, present too - and looking well. Pat was 92 and had outlived her twin Betty Weitz and elder sister Maisie Fitzpatrick, all having been keen croquet players.

After founding and managing a Girls' School with her sister Maisie she retired to Worthing and from 1975 they both sought to set up a croquet club, mindful that the first croquet club ever was reputed to be that at Worthing in 1865.

Pat's charm and persuasive powers were finally rewarded in 1983 when the local council allowed space for one lawn to be made at Field Place Bowling Club and so form a one-lawn Croquet Club

With 50 or so members for the one lawn, even a strict rota for Association and Golf Croquet did not satisfy Pat who then pursued and obtained a lease at the local municipal golf club for two lawns in 1986, later expanded to four with a small practice lawn. Sadly Maisie did not live to see this, but a seat there commemorated her contribution..

Pat related the full story in the July 1987 Gazette, where she linked Worthing with SCCC at Southwick and where she had been a stalwart member from 1972 and also well known in the Croquet world at large.

I joined Worthing in May 1990 receiving, as all other new members, a hearty welcome, encouragement and support, which ensured that I continued with the sport, both at Worthing and Southwick. She maintained that friendly encouragement throughout my croquet career and also gently persuading me to contribute to both Clubs, as she did with many others.

Many senior croquet players will have met Pat in the 1980's and early 90's and appreciated her as an efficient tournament manager. No computer generated notices in those days, but impeccably hand written instructions, tables and charts in multicoloured inks for clarity.

Besides managing the major Southwick calendar tournaments at Easter and in September for 12 or more years she was chosen by the Croquet Association to manage their Inter-Counties and Veterans Tournaments and also to take on the prestigious Test Match at Southwick in 1986 between Australia and New Zealand..

During this period she served on the Southwick management committee and also held the office of Tournament Secretary. She also instigated and managed for 10 years what became our most popular tournament, which is now in its 22nd year. This is the 3-day High Bisque event; which has attracted over 40 applicants and has players returning year after year.

All these responsibilities were efficiently undertaken at the same time that she was running the developing Worthing Club to include the offices of Treasurer and President and serving on the CA Council!

She was a generous benefactor to both clubs; examples being personal payment for coaching and lawn levelling at Worthing and replacing three huts destroyed by vandals at Southwick, followed more recently by a very generous contribution to the Southwick lawn irrigation fund. In addition, she was adept at fund-raising and recruitment at both clubs with Open Days, Silent Auctions and Gymkhanas.

Her final work for Southwick has been the compilation of a catalogue and history of our Trophies past and present, beautifully completed in fine calligraphic style and supplemented with photographs and a descriptive booklet compiled by Bernard Weitz. Two of these trophies, the Shine Salvors, were presented by Pat for the annual doubles title.

She ranks with other icons in the sport of Croquet - a great and gracious lady indeed.

Bryan Teague.

Development News

Grant-awarding bodies that can help croquet clubs

By Pat Kennett

Chairman Development Committee

The Development Committee through your local Federation Development Officer can often assist with advice on how to obtain grants for development projects. Your club can, of course, apply to the CA for development funds but an award will not be made for more than half the project cost. The Committee, in common with other grant-awarding bodies, will also expect your application to show evidence of seeking funding elsewhere. Some may only make awards on a matching basis. So most clubs will have to look for a source of funding from several bodies.

Your Local Authority, District/Borough Council, Parish Council, and County/ Metropolitan Council can all be located through www.direct.gov.uk if you do not already know their address, and you will be surprised how many small funds are available. Many Councils refer to a local fund sometimes called Community Chest or Neighbourhood Fund, for instance, but each one has slightly different approaches. Your County may have appointed a Regional Development Officer who will also be able to give advice on small local funds. 'Commutated Funds' may be available as a result of a deal by the Planning Office with a major local development which is close to your club (e.g. a housing estate or supermarket).

Field in Trust (www.fieldsintrust.org.uk 0207 2642400) is not a source of funds but is dedicated to protecting and improving outdoor sports and offers useful advice itself on making an application, and gives links to other organisations offering free on-line advice. See Getting Funding for your Community Project at www.fieldsintrust.org/unages/stories/content/pdfs/FIT_Funding_Advice_Leaflet.pdf

The Community Foundation Network (www.communityfoundations.org.uk 0207 7139326) administers funds established by local people, often for specific purposes. Each area has its own local Foundation but the national office will put you in touch with your local foundation.

Regrettably many national organizations which the Committee used to suggest have now ceased to have funds available. One which is still operating is Biffaward (www.biffaward.org. 01636 67000) which is worth approaching but you must be within 10 miles of a Biffa operation and a landfill site.

The main source for clubs is probably the Lottery funded Awards for All (www.awardsforall.org.uk 0845 4102030). To meet their requirements your project must have one of their specified outcomes. The most likely one for croquet clubs is probably

'healthier and more active people and communities'. You can apply for between £300 and £10,000 to fund all or part of your project which may be for any of the following:

- equipment hire or purchase
- feasibility studies for building projects that will cost £25,000 or less (including VAT)
- information technology equipment
- land, building, refurbishment, landscaping or property projects costing £25,000 or less (including VAT)
- materials for use in your project
- publicity materials for use in your project
- updating equipment for health and safety reasons
- volunteer expenses
- VAT that you cannot recover

You could also apply to The Sport England Small Grants Programme (www.sportengland.org 0845 8508508). It has been set up to support local community sport projects which seek to increase participation, sustain participation or develop opportunities for people to excel at their chosen sport.

It may seem tiresome to make a great many applications but it can amount to substantial funds being made available. You are much more likely to be successful if it can be seen that you are determined to raise the funds and prepared to put in the effort. Once you have one 'in the bag' others are encouraged. Good luck.

Points Of View

Bill Arliss writes in reply to Zoe Hawkins article in the December issue of the Gazette.

In the December Gazette Zoe raises several points which deserve a reply, as I must take issue with most of them. Zoe, I am sorry but you appear to have misunderstood the main thrust of my article in the previous Gazette with your first point, I am sure that Ramsgate is not the only place where there is an ample source of beginners to make the running of internal level play events a very worthwhile proposition. I have seen as many as 50 taking part in level play doubles at Southwick on a club afternoon. However the players concerned are in the main not really interested in serious competition and in general would never dream of travelling to other clubs for tournaments. I say 'in the main' as there will always be the odd player that gets bitten by the competition bug and wants to take things much further and this is the player who my article was referring to. My message was very simple. In Golf Croquet David can take on Goliath, enjoy himself and learn a lot in the process.

I am very concerned with your assessment of handicap play. If we worked on a basis of allowing hoops to be run with an additional stroke, it would make a nonsense of handicap play as proper use of the extra stroke would make the scoring of a hoop at least 95%. The higher handicapper would simply put a ball in front

of a hoop and if the position is good enough, take an additional stroke and run the hoop. With this certainty of scoring, the handicap range would have to be limited to a maximum of six. There would be virtually no defence against five or more additional strokes and handicap play is supposed to give a 50% chance of winning for either party.

The first point I always try to make when coaching on handicap play is "Do not use your additional strokes in a defensive manner. Remember the aim of the game is to win hoop points and knocking an opponent away from a hoop with an additional stroke only delays the time when you will lose and does not increase your chances of scoring. You must use your additional strokes to help score hoop points, E.g. to remove an opponent who is likely to clear your partner ball. From a likely scoring position; to put your own ball in the jaws of a hoop; to improve your own ball's position for certain running when all the opponent's balls are too far away to clear you. These are the **offensive** situations that the new player should be taught to recognise and one would hope that this would be built into your club coaching.

I would have thought the fact that the All England produced a wide range of handicaps simply demonstrates the fact the handicap system is starting to work as it was intended. When you are faced with a hedge of white sticks, I am sure most players will tend to be defensive and it should be the high handicapper that goes on the offensive.

I will agree that more should be done to harmonise the laws of GC and AC and have always taken the stance with the WCF GCC Rules Committee that the wording should be identical if there is no good technical reason for it to be different. Unfortunately the price we have to pay for being members of an international organisation is that you meet people with slightly different views and occasionally you have to bend with the wind.

Bill Arliss

SPONSORSHIP AND FUNDRAISING

To host major events it is becoming important that the CA can either find sponsorship or other means of raising funds to support these events.

Being a voluntary organisation we cannot afford to pay an agency in the hope that they may come up with the results. We are however prepared to pay people based on a percentage of the result achieved.

If anybody has the expertise required or knows of someone who would be prepared to work on a voluntary or percentage fee basis could they contact the Chairman of the Marketing Committee, Jeff Dawson, jeff.p.dawson@gmail.com

Report from Council

Report of the Council Meeting held on 23rd January, 2010.

By Ian Vincent.

Council met at the Hurlingham Club and the Chairman, Patricia Duke-Cox, welcomed Anna Giraud, representative of the Yorkshire Federation, to her first meeting. It was reported that the representatives for the Southern, South-West and West Midlands Federations were due for election this year.

Provisional accounts for 2009, which show a surplus of the order of £11,000, were reviewed and a budget, for a loss of about £5,000, which could comfortably be met from the International and Development Funds, agreed for 2010. The main exceptional factor is the cost of hosting the MacRobertson Shield, which happens once every 14 years: the projection for 2011 is to break even.

There was a discussion about the rate of tournament levy, following representations by some clubs. It was pointed out that although it can be seen as a tax on clubs holding Calendar Fixtures, it is actually paid by players entering those events, and so ensures that those who play most actively pay more for the benefits they receive from the Association. It was agreed that Barry Keen, the Chairman of the Management Committee, should draft a paper looking at the levy in the context of the Association's overall finances. However, a proposal to increase the daily rate paid for lawn and ball hire from £22 to £25 was approved to take effect this season.

The Hon. Secretary reported that the Association had surrendered its lease of the Surbiton Club's ground in exchange for one held by the club directly. The Manager, Liz Larsson, reported on a year in which the Office had taken over both the shop and compilation of the fixtures book, which was now held in a database and updated from a web browser using software written by David Kibble.

The main items proposed by the Management Committee were the adoption of a mentoring scheme, initially for juniors, and proposals for constitutional changes in respect of voting and to introduce a power for limited, unsecured, borrowing (in the hope of obtaining a credit card for electronic payments), to be put to the next AGM. Its recommendations that election of officers (President, Hon. Treasurer and Hon. Secretary) should be by a single ballot in which each member, either Individual Associate or Member Club, has one vote, and that full results of elections should be declared as soon as the candidates had been informed, were approved, the latter unanimously.

Specific objectives for some of the committees were approved shortly after lunch, but the meeting continued for another hour with discussion of issues raised by David Openshaw and other members of Council. The concerns included responsibility for success of the GB team, following its defeat in the Solomon Trophy; the role of the Management Committee and Council in discussions with the WCF and other national associations, in particular about how the WCF operates and whether Great Britain should be represented by one or several national teams; and a clash of dates involving the European Golf Croquet Championships.

Successful Croquet for the Disabled

Report on the 2009 "Crocks" Croquet Championship

Report by Paul Stroker

This took place at the Sudbury, Suffolk, Croquet Club on Saturday 19th September. Fortunately, almost perfect weather conditions prevailed, so the tournament was rated a resounding success and much enjoyed by all who participated.

However, its success resulted from nine months careful preparation with sage advice from Jonathan Toye, who was disabled in a motor cycle accident, but overcame his disability to become a first-class one-handed croquet player and an inspiration to all disabled croquet players.



Play in progress at Sudbury

The Sudbury Croquet club also had three disabled members and a qualified nurse in Bunty Dickison, so there was an awareness of the problems encountered by disabled players.

From the beginning of our research, it was evident that a full-sized croquet lawn was too large for disabled people, so we halved our full-sized lawn into two 5/7th lawns, which were near perfect sizes for disabled players; also those who could use their legs were taught to synchronize leg leverage with arm swing to compensate for lack of strength and accuracy.

It was also realized that golf croquet, rather than association croquet, would prove to be more popular, because it was more social, with all players participating on lawn and helping each other. Finally, we realized that games should be limited to 25 minutes or to the first to 5 hoops rather than to the conventional 7 hoops, with good intervals between games.

In order to keep to a programme of starting times, there was double banking with secondaries starting 15 minutes after primaries; this resulted in good rests between games.

The tournament was on a handicap basis so that substitutes could be made for disabled players too exhausted to continue; in the event, three out of ten players needed substitutes, who not only gave generous bisques, but also helped their competitors to use them; Andy Ellbech, an SAS member who was blown up in Bosnia, benefited greatly from the sage bisque advice of the disabled ex-chairman of Sudbury Croquet club, Robert Walpole, but despite the good advice, was beaten into the final by Sheila Frampton and Viv Hatfield.



Jonathan Toye, Viv Hatfield, Sheila Frampton and Paul Stroker

Both these ladies used their legs for leverage with synchronized swing of arms to produce some really skilful displays. The final was won by Sheila Frampton, who was presented with the Shield by the coach Paul Stroker, who, with Jonathan Toye organized the Championship.

Spot the Difference



The annual New Year's Day frostbite gathering at Dulwich Croquet Club, well attended and sunny. (Photo by Ray Hall)



The annual New Year's Day frostbite at Tynemouth Golf Croquet Club, not so well attended. (You don't have to be mad to play but it helps) (Photo by Alice Fleck)

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

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.

Solomon Trophy 2009

GB and USA at the Mission Hills Country Club, California

4-7 December 2009, was the 18th Solomon Trophy contest. The format is best-of-21 matches (9 doubles and 12 singles).

Report by Ian Burr ridge

Photos by Ian Burr ridge & Samir Patel

The match started well for the US with them winning the first game in each match, but Danny Huneycutt put a ball out of bounds setting up the first break of game two against Ian Burr ridge and Robin Brown and he and Jerry Stark did not take croquet again. The score quickly became 2-0 as Jeff Dawson recovered his form which had deserted him in the first and he and Samir Patel quickly wrapped up the second and third games. Stephen Mulliner and Tony Le Moignan had also equalised against Doug Grimsley and Ben Rothman with a sextuple from Stephen. Mulliner completed a TPO in the third but unfortunately the ending was lost. 2-1 to GB at the end of the first round.



Play in progress at Mission Hills

The second round of doubles was the most uneventful round of the match. Huneycutt and Stark made short work of Dawson and Patel after the Brits made an error in the first game, whilst Brown and Burr ridge quickly went down to Rothman and Grimsley. Leaving Tony and Stephen who had taken the first with a clinical Le Moignan TP and, following a break down on a TPO by the Americans, the match was pegged down with Tony having a finishing turn from 2 and penult.

The first round of singles was played best of five. On a cold cloudy day Grimsley got the US off to a great start beating Ian in straight games. Tony made similarly easy work of Jim Bast, never looking in trouble. Alongside him Stephen was being beaten by Danny, who hit all five of the shots he had in the match including a tea-lady, impressively winning +17tp, +17tp +17tp. Brown v Rothman looked initially as if it would be an easy win for the American but a few errors crept into his play and he ended up only

just sneaking it in 5. Jeff always seemed in control against Jerry despite losing the first game and duly won 3-1. The final match was the poorest quality of the day as an out of form Jeff Soo took on Samir, by the end of the day they had only completed three games (Samir leading 2-1).

The remaining daylight enabled Tony to finish in the pegged down doubles to make the overnight score 6-5 to the US.

In the final doubles round, the US again began by winning the first three matches and soon afterwards Rothman and Grimsley beat Dawson and Patel with one TP each. Things were starting to look bad as Soo and Bast had the first break in the second but a Brown TPO led to an equaliser and a fifth turn win in the next meant that GB had gone from game and break down to winning the match in an hour and a half. A bit of momentum at last maybe as Stephen and Tony had also equalised.

I thought this next game would decide the test match. Stephen put out a supershot, Danny replied with a ball about 4 yards off the E boundary just slightly N of hoop 5. Tony shot gently at the short 11 yard supershot ball missing, Jerry missed the resulting double and Tony missed the shot back at partner. Danny hit the supershot ball and played a great shot to get a rush to hoop 1 on the ball on the S boundary. In probably his only sign of nerves of the week he moved the rush about a yard and when he didn't get position for the hoop with a take-off had to retire to partner on the N boundary. Tony hit the resulting 14 yarder at partner for the first break which he took to 1-back. The sextuple was never going well and eventually broke down when Stephen failed to run a 3' very slightly angled 3-back with 3 peels done. This allowed Jerry to get round, but Stephen hit the long lift, made his hoops, left Tony a rush to 4-back from the W boundary, Jerry in penult and Danny slightly off the E boundary with a 13 yarder at about 75% of a full target at the ball in penult which he missed. Tony finished, and with Samir wrapping up his pegged-down singles in 5, the score going into the final day was 8-7 to GB.

The final round of singles was played as best-of-three. Samir won his first game in double-quick and morale boosting time. Dawson took his first game a while later, but Jim was one up against me. Danny had hit the lift and took his first game, by which point Stark had equalised against Samir and Tony had got in and completed a TPO against Doug. Rothman had chosen a poor line of play against Stephen after his 3 back pioneer hit the peg breaking down and allowing Stephen in to win the game with a sextuple. Burr ridge, Brown and Soo all equalised and Stephen raced to put the first point on the board for GB with a 5th turn TP in the second. Doug took the first against Tony in a tight two-ball ending.

Samir was well through another TP in game 3 but Danny had hit the lift in the third against Robin, Jeff Dawson had the first break in the third, as did Jim against me. The drama for the day was Samir failing a 5' slightly angled rover peel after his rush to peeling position had got a kick. He ended up too near a jawsed peelee to be able to jump it and Jerry had made his first break. Samir struck the lift shot well but it missed by a couple of inches, so Jerry had a delayed TP for an unlikely win. Jeff Soo had hit the lift but stuck in hoop 1 off partner but established his first break after Dawson missed from hoop 2. I had also missed and was going

down to a Bast TP, Tony was on another TPO and Danny had just finished to beat Robin. Jerry completed his TP, as did Jim, to make the match score 10-9 to the US.

Tony immediately got a three-ball break after the contact turn so for the moment it was all eyes on Soo and Dawson. Soo made a mess of his leave, ending up with an 8-yard join on the E boundary allowing Dawson a free short shot at the 4-back ball which missed by absolutely nothing. Soo played the 4-back ball and laid up in corner 4 with Jeff's hoop 1 ball between hoop 3 and the boundary and his partner ball fairly near the W boundary by hoop 2. Dawson missed from hoop 3 to hoop 2 and Soo completed the triple to wild applause and of course "whooping" from the Americans as they took an unassailable 11-9 lead, winning the trophy for the first time in eighteen meetings.



Jeff Soo, very proud team captain with the Solomon Trophy.

Results:

Huneycutt & Stark lost to Brown & Burr ridge +26tp(H) -26tp(Bu) 26tp(Br)
Grimsley & Rothman beat Le Moignan & Mulliner +17tp(G), -26sxp(M) +60tp(M)
Bast & Soo lost to Dawson & Patel +5tp(S), -26tp(D) -16tp(D)

Huneycutt & Stark beat Dawson & Patel +13, +26tp(S)
Grimsley & Rothman beat Brown & Burr ridge +26tp(G), +16tp(R)
Bast & Soo lost to Le Moignan & Mulliner -26tp(L), -4

Ben Rothman beat Robin Brown +26tp -14tp +5 -26 +17tp
Danny Huneycutt beat Stephen Mulliner +17tp +17tp +17tp
Jeff Soo lost to Samir Patel -5tpo +21 -9 +12 -17tp
Jerry Stark lost to Jeff Dawson +17 -26tp -15tp -7tp
Doug Grimsley beat Ian Burr ridge +26tp +26tp +2
Jim Bast lost to Tony Le Moignan -16tp -18tp -24tp

Huneycutt & Stark lost to Le Moignan & Mulliner +22tp(H) -17 -17
Grimsley & Rothman beat Dawson & Patel +26tp(G) +25tp(R)
Bast & Soo lost to Brown & Burr ridge +17tp(B) -11tpo(Br) -26tp(Br)

Ben Rothman lost to Stephen Mulliner -5sxp -26tp
Danny Huneycutt beat Robin Brown +17tp -26tp +17tp
Jeff Soo beat Jeff Dawson -26tp +26tp +17tp
Jerry Stark beat Samir Patel -26tp +26tp +2tp
Doug Grimsley unfinished Tony Le Moignan +20tp -13tpo
Jim Bast beat Ian Burr ridge +26tp -4tp +26tp

Editorial



Well I don't know about anyone else, but I'll be a lot happier when February disappears, as my thoughts are already wandering to warmer and sunnier days than the grim, grey and cold ones that have been around for far too long.

We have much to look forward to, new events in the fixtures book, the World Team Championship and the MacRobertson Shield. As Patricia mentioned in her chairman's column, spectators will be welcome at all venues, and I can say from personal experience that watching top class play is a good way to inform our own play.

For those who prefer to take a more active role in their own playing improvement, then there is a good selection of coaching courses for various levels of expertise. If you are serious about wanting to improve your play then take a look at those offered by the Academy, as well as those in the Fixtures book.

All that remains for me in this issue is to wish you a relaxing sun-filled summer and I look forward to meeting and speaking with players throughout the season.

Gail Curry
Editor

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The MacRobertson Shield

Background information and details of the 2010 Event

By Colin Irwin

About the founder - Sir MacPherson Robertson

Sir MacPherson Robertson, known as Mac, was an Australian industrialist and croquet player. He was born in 1860 in Ballarat, Victoria. Accounts of Mac's early life show he had a fickle father and Mac had to learn at an early age to support the family. Schooling was a casualty to the need to earn money but it appears that Mac was both intelligent and smart. He grew up in Australia and then in Scotland. Later when the family moved back to Australia, Mac apprenticed himself to a confectioner in Melbourne and began a career that saw him become the most successful entrepreneur - and the highest taxed person - in Australia.

At the age of 19 he set up his own business making sweets in his mother's bathroom from Mondays to Thursdays and then selling them around Melbourne on Fridays and Saturdays. By 1925 his business's turnover was a staggering £2 million - roughly equivalent to £90 million today. Alongside his business success, Mac is reported to have been obsessed with keeping fit, both physically and mentally. For physical fitness he punched a boxing speed ball each day and for mental fitness he choose croquet, relishing the strategy and mental skills needed.

According to the Australia Croquet Association, "After the World War he saw the new entertainment of cinema as a new outlet for his lollies and chocolates. He enlisted veteran servicemen to take up these concessions. Most of the young vets had no idea of running a business and some failed, owing Mac money for his stock. He realised that he would have to train them and his other concessionaires in business management (or street smarts). He realised then and there the value of the thinking sport of croquet and had them all take it up to play whenever they were free. Croquet proved a wonderful teaching aid for training them in self discipline, risk management and a host of other attitudes which had to be changed. Eventually, Mac had more than enough veteran croquet players to run tournaments with very good prizes. In 1925, wishing to do something spectacular to create more media interest in his products and for his veteran players, he sponsored the MacRobertson Shield between Australia and England in their beloved sport of croquet. Initially the team was comprised of vets who wanted to return to the United Kingdom to visit the graves of their mates they had left behind. In some cases to marry the girls they had left behind."

Mac died aged 85 on 20th August 1945. Later the MacRobertson Company was taken over by Cadburys and it still makes chocolates and sweets in Australia.

MacRobertson Shield Events (1925 – 2006)

After that first 1925 event, the event was held irregularly over the next few years and New Zealand played for the first time

in 1930. In some years the competition was England against Australia, some years it was Australia against New Zealand and some years it was England against New Zealand. From 1963 it became a more regular event between the top 3 countries of Australia, New Zealand and England (later replaced by Great Britain).

Table of Results

Year	Venue	Champion
1925	England	England
1927-28	Australia	Australia
1930	Australia	Australia
1935	Australia	Australia
1937	England	England
1950-51	New Zealand	New Zealand
1956	England	England
1963	New Zealand	England
1969	Australia	England
1974	England	Great Britain
1979	New Zealand	New Zealand
1982	Australia	Great Britain
1986	England	New Zealand
1990	New Zealand	Great Britain
1993	Australia	Great Britain
1996	England	Great Britain
2000	New Zealand	Great Britain
2003	USA	Great Britain
2006	Australia	Great Britain

Croquet has grown significantly as a world sport in the last 20 years, aided by the establishment of the World Croquet Federation (WCF) in 1986. The WCF recognises the MacRobertson Shield as the Association Croquet World Team Championship (ACWTC) and, in recognition of the international growth of the game, has decided to expand the ACWTC in 2010 by adding two further tiers to the event to enable countries all over the world to compete in an international team event for the first time.

The shape of the competition in 2010

Tier 1 – The Association Croquet World Team Championship

The format of the competition has changed over the years. This year's event will follow the format of the last few and it will be played as a four-team round-robin of 5-day test matches. Each five-day test consists of 21 matches - 12 singles and 9 doubles – and each match is the best of 3 games. Dates and venues are:

- Friday 6th - Tuesday 10th August
Great Britain v USA at Bowdon CC, St Mary's Road, Bowdon, WA14 2PL
Australia v New Zealand at Bury CC, Heaton Park, Manchester
- Thursday 12th - Monday 16th August
Great Britain v New Zealand at Nottingham CC, University Boulevard, Nottingham, NG7 2PS
Australia v USA at The Roehampton Club, Roehampton Lane, SW15 5LR
- Wednesday 18th - Sunday 22nd August
Great Britain v Australia at Surbiton CC, Alexandra Drive, Surbiton KT5 9AA
USA v New Zealand at Surbiton

At the time of writing this, the Australian, New Zealand and USA teams have been announced and are as follows:

Australia

Kevin Beard	Reserves:
Martin Clarke	Trevor Bassett
Ian Dumergue	Greg Fletcher
Robert Fletcher	
Stephen Forster	
Peter Landrebe (Captain)	

New Zealand

Aaron Westerby (Captain)	Reserve
Paddy Chapman	Phillip Drew
Paul Skinley	
Jenny Clarke	
Greg Bryant	
Michael Wright	
Charles Jones (Manager)	

USA

Ben Rothman	Reserves
Danny Huneycutt	Jim Bast

Women's World Golf Croquet Championships

Victorian Croquet Centre, Cairnlea, Australia, 21st - 28th Nov 2009

An edited Australian view from the sidelines by Geraldine Trivett, previously published in Croquet Australia No. 240.

Arriving in Melbourne with anticipation and excitement about the big event, I had hit with some of the Australian entrants and friends at Essenden Croquet Club. We were proudly shown around the heritage-listed building, built in 1913, with its four-metre dining table, wood panelling, wooden lockers, stained glass and glorious light fittings. The excitement escalated when one of the girls took a call from Max Murray inviting her to take a late place in the line-up; Nerida Taylor moved from hitting with the girls to hitting with contenders in a world event! At that stage it was 40 degrees with a hot wind blowing, but that soon progressed to dust storm, then lightning, heavy rain and finally coolish. That's Melbourne.

Saturday was practice day at Cairnlea, a day for players, tournament managers, referees, scorers etc. to become familiar with the venue. As the players practised a great variety of mallets, grips, swings, stances and follow-throughs were in play. Some players use an angled mallet head most of the time, even for long roquets. Some achieve power in their shots with short back-swing and a wrist flick rather than a drive from the shoulders. Some do lots of casting and some don't do any. Some stalk the ball from a distance,

Doug Grimsley	Paul Bennett
Jerry Stark	Paul Billings
Jeff Soo	
Rich Lamm	

Great Britain team will be announced in February.

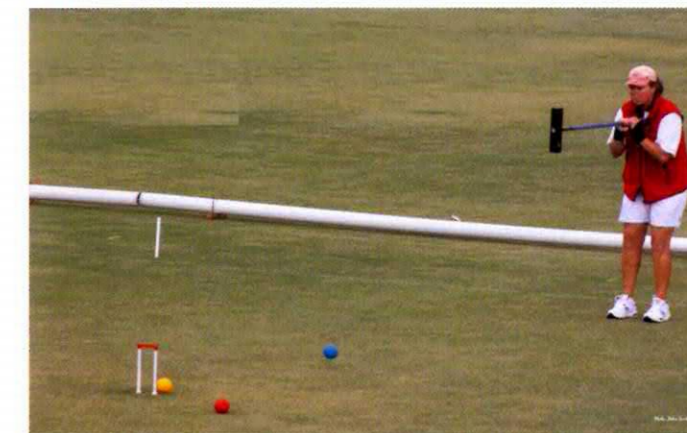
Tier 2

This section of the competition has two divisions. Each division will be comprised of four teams of four players, determined by the strength of the nominated players. It will be played from Monday 16th August to Saturday 21st August. Division 1 will be played at the Hurlingham Club, Ranelagh Gardens, London SW6 3PR and Division 2 will be played at The Compton Club, The Saffrons, Compton Place Road, Eastbourne BN21 1EA.

Tier 3

Tier 3 is jointly organised by the WCF and the Croquet Association (of England) and will be comprised of 1 division. Each team will be comprised of four players.

It will be played at the Sussex County Croquet Club, Victoria Road, Southwick BN42 4DJ from Wednesday 18th August to Saturday 21st August 2010.



Alix Verge of Australia plays the winning shot with blue in a thrilling five game final against Iman Elfaranswari of Egypt. Photo by Peter Smith

some line up from the front of the mallet.

Sunday was the first day of competition and Melbourne really turned on the weather: 65mm of rain fell; out came the wet weather gear and extra layers of clothing. But what fabulous lawns; only on the back line of court 8 did I see a puddle and only for ten minutes or so. Sunday was a tough first day for everyone.

On Monday I arrived in time to give the hoop-setters a hand, setting to 1/32 inch clearance. So it was another intense day of block play for the competitors, playing best-of-three matches.

Egypt has a well deserved reputation in Golf Croquet; they have the ability to be tenacious, fast and accurate. However, this time they faced a strong contingent of Association players; the game is evolving with the amalgamation of the skill sets of Association and Golf Croquet Players and the more sophisticated deployment of tactics. Egypt came with a lot of myth that they were hard hitting; they actually hit no harder than other players. Their aggressive hoop running shots are impressive and when

successful do get the ball toward the next hoop on 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9, often past it; only statistics on hoop running-rate would determine the better approach. There is also a perception that only the Egyptian players understand effective tactics. On the whole other players can see the patterns and techniques they use, and certainly the Australian Skill babes will meet these challenges. Egyptian players are undoubtedly well rehearsed, practised and have a commanding presence on the court. They are also extremely generous with expertise, as well as being engaging and friendly.

My role as a spectator continued throughout the week, right up to and including the wonderful nail-biting final. Congratulations to all of the competitors for a fabulous week of croquet.

On reflection I realise that we Golf Croquet players all need to work on skills that improve accurate cutting, not just clearing but placing both balls. We need to be able to assess ball placements quickly and accurately and to rapidly compute possible shots and strategy. We need a repertoire of hoop-running shots to score from any distance. Videos of Championship games with appropriate commentary will be a valuable coaching resource. After that it's up to us.....and....practise!

Congratulations to Alix on a wonderful win. It was a wonderful experience and a privilege to be a spectator at the 3rd World Women's Golf Croquet Championships.

Results form Knock-out stage:

1st Round

Iman El Faransawi (EGY) bt Liz Fleming (AUS) 7-5, 7-2
 Erica Stephens (NZ) bt Tricia Devlin (AUS) 7-4, 0-7, 7-3
 Sarah Riad (EGY) bt Ann Sharp (NZ) 7-6, 6-7, 7-6
 Abir Moustafa (EGY) bt Creina Dawson (AUS) 7-6, 7-1
 Manal Ali Mohsen (EGY) bt Alison Wall (NZ) 5-7, 7-5, 7-3
 Anne Taves (USA) bt Mavis Brogden (NZ) 4-7, 7-2, 7-4
 Sherine Hamdi (EGY) bt Ashley Cooke (NZ) 7-4, 4-7, 7-5
 Jenny Clarke (NZ) bt Samia Mahmoud (EGY) 7-4, 7-5
 Hemmat Mostafa (EGY) bt Judy Wembridge (AUS) 7-6, 5-7, 7-4
 Margaret Melville (AUS) bt Kath Burt (ENG) 7-3, 5-7, 7-5
 Rosemary Graham (AUS) bt Carole Jackson (RSA) 7-4, 7-6
 Shaden Okasha (EGY) bt Kay Chynoweth (AUS) 7-4, 7-4
 Alix Verge (AUS) bt Jane Shorten (IRE) 7-1, 7-5
 Nihal Ahmed (EGY) bt Sue Beattie (AUS) 7-1, 7-4
 Pam Gentle (AUS) bt Salwa Saleh (EGY) 7-6, 7-4
 Marwa Mostaf (EGY) bt Christine Pont (AUS) 7-4, 7-6

2nd Round

Iman El Faransawi (EGY) bt Erica Stephens (NZ) 7-6, 6-7, 7-2
 Abir Mostafa (EGY) bt Sarah Riad (EGY) 7-5, 5-7, 7-6
 Manal Ali Mohsen (EGY) bt Anne Taves (USA) 6-7, 7-6, 7-4
 Jenny Clarke (NZ) bt Sherine Hamdi (EGY) 7-4, 7-3
 Margaret Melville (AUS) bt Hemmat Mostafa (EGY) 7-6, 7-6
 Shaden Okasha (EGY) bt Rosemary Graham (AUS) 7-1, 7-6
 Alix Verge (AUS) bt Nihal Ahmed (EGY) 7-6, 7-3
 Marwa Mostafa (EGY) bt Pam Gentle (AUS) 7-2, 6-7, 7-3

Quarter-Final Stage

Iman El Faransawi (EGY) bt Abir Mostafa (EGY) 4-7, 7-5, 7-6
 Jenny Clarke (NZ) bt Manal Ali Mohsen (EGY) 7-5, 7-3
 Shaden Okasha (EGY) bt Margaret Melville (AUS) 7-3, 6-7, 7-3
 Alix Verge (AUS) bt Marwa Mostafa (EGY) 5-7, 7-5, 7-3

Semi-Final Stage

Iman El Faransawi (EGY) bt Jenny Clarke (NZ) 3-7, 7-5, 7-6, 5-7, 7-5
 Alix Verge (AUS) bt Shaden Okasha (EGY) 7-5, 7-6, 7-6

Final Stage

Alix Verge (AUS) bt Iam El Faransawi (EGY) 7-6, 5-7, 3-7, 7-6, 7-6

3rd / 4th Place Play Off

Jenny Clarke (NZ) bt Shaden Okasha (EGY) 7-1, 7-3

Marketing Committee

Leaving a Gift to the CA in your Will

by Jeff Dawson, Marketing Committee

Have you considered leaving a legacy to the CA in a will? Income from legacies is an important part of our revenue, and an easy and painless way to help the Association: we urge you to consider it. Even small amounts can make a difference; they all add up!

The CA is mainly run by volunteers who give of their time freely. The CA's normal revenue resources, which include personal and club membership fees, are adequate to cover the modest cost of running the CA. However they are inadequate to fund the development of croquet in what is now a highly competitive world. To do this the CA has to raise further revenue by other means. Two major sources of extra funding are sponsorship and legacy income.

The monies donated to the CA are used to help fund numerous initiatives such as:

- The development of new clubs
- The improvement of facilities at existing clubs
- Helping clubs to recruit new members
- Helping clubs to retain, encourage and improve the skills of existing members

Through legacy and sponsorship income we have managed to support many projects including helping new clubs to establish themselves and many existing clubs to enhance their facilities with projects ranging from the relaying of lawns to the provision of a new clubhouse. Without the income we get from legacies many of these projects would remain unsupported.

If you would like to leave a legacy to the CA, then making an insertion into your will is probably the easiest way. Simple wording such as the following would be suitable:

"I direct my executors to pay to the Croquet Association, c/o Cheltenham Croquet Club, Old Bath Road, Cheltenham GL53 7DF, the sum of £xx (in figures and words) to be used for its general purposes."

Alternatively, you could write a codicil, which is a supplement to your existing will, along the following lines:

"I (name) of (address) declare this to be the (first/second/etc) codicil to my will dated (date of will).

(1) In addition to any legacies in my said will I direct my executors to pay to the Croquet Association, c/o Cheltenham Croquet Club, Old Bath Road, Cheltenham GL53 7DF, the sum of £xx (in figures and words) to be used for its general purposes.

(2) In all other respects I confirm my said will and any other codicils thereto in witness whereof I have signed this deed at (address) on (date)

(Signature, name and address of witness)"

We would always suggest taking the advice of a solicitor in order to make these or any other changes to your will. If you would like to talk to a member of the CA in confidence about leaving a legacy to croquet contact the CA manager Elizabeth Larsson tel: 01242 242318 and she will be pleased to help.

Please do consider this appeal.

Publishing Committee

Has your club got its own website?

By Charles Waterfield, Publishing Committee

Only about a third of CA member croquet clubs have some sort of website, used to communicate with members and with people who might be interested in their activities and joining.

As a break from those winter jobs, like painting hoops and clearing old notices from the clubhouse, some might find it interesting to see what these club websites have to offer in the way of ideas, as well as what other clubs get up to. This could be of particular interest should your club be thinking of creating its own site.

The CA will host club web-pages on its site, although there might be difficulties keeping these updated. Alternatively, clubs can have a permanent URL 'redirect' (e.g. www.croquet.org.uk/clubs/Bath) which can be readily changed (by email) to point to any page on the web. Of course, all known club websites are linked from the Clubs pages.

To get started, here's just a small selection of websites (in alphabetical order) to give ideas as to what can be done. Apologies if your club's site isn't mentioned here; the reason for this note was not to have a beauty-contest!

Bowdon: Extensive range of categories. Picture archive and much more.

www.bowdoncroquet.co.uk/

Cheltenham: Concise, doing the job clearly. Aimed more at the visitor.

www.cheltenhamcroquet.org.uk/

Compton: Very croquet-green decor. Good historical section.

myweb.tiscali.co.uk/rogerwood/Compton/

Dyffryn: Simple effective format. NB uses freeware to build site.

www.dyffryncroquet.org.uk/

Fylde: Neat (Google calendar) events diary. Members' area.

www.fyldecroquet.co.uk/

Jersey: Claims to be one of the best. Lots - tips, games, quizzes.

www.mnlg.com/jcc/

Nottingham: Excellent for visitors or new starters. Enquiry form. www.nottinghamcroquet.org.uk/

Oxford University: Clear and comprehensive. Coaching guides. Spoof ancient history.

users.ox.ac.uk/~croquet/oucc/about.shtml

Pendle & Craven: Fairly elaborate - 'worth the detour'. Archived news and much more.

www.pendlecroquet.org.uk/

Ramsgate: Nice clear site. Several uses of 'printer-friendly' pages.

croquetramsgate.co.uk/

Sidmouth: Clear layout and welcoming.

www.sidmouthcroquet.org.uk/

Surbiton: An excellent model. Tournament vacancies; lawn speeds.

www.surbitoncroquet.org.uk/

Sussex: Very good, as expected. Link to the Croquet Academy.

www.sussexcountycroquetclub.org.uk/

Woking: Also bowls, chess and tennis. Lawn booking.

www.wlcc.org.uk/

Tournament News

Golf Croquet in Corfu

The non-Brits shine in the first Open Greek Golf Croquet Championship

by Michael Hague

A party 18 strong including two players from Hamburg assembled at the Kontokali Hotel in Corfu for a croquet holiday over the last ten days of September, Anne and Robert Laver arriving one day late and £600 poorer thanks to an out of date passport.

The couple from Hamburg did not have Golf Croquet handicaps nor had they any experience of using Extra Turns. Horst Haack won with his partner Jan de Swarte, the opening Level Doubles day and was given a handicap of 4. His wife Julaine fared worse over the first



Found overgrown and dilapidated in a Corfu garden, the refreshments kiosk has been restored to its original colours

two days and had her handicap raised from an arbitrary 5 to 8 causing unease in the minds of at least two of the other lady players (it's amazing what a few tears can do to a man!").

In the final of the Handicap Singles Gill McDiarmid lost her concentration to the extent of hitting her ball to hoop 10 when playing hoop 6. She managed to recover from 6/2 down to 6/5 but her opponent Jan Harbers, a Dutch local resident, used his one Extra Turn to win at hoop 12.

Meanwhile Juliane's play had improved dramatically. She and Gill McDiarmid met up in the final of the Handicap Doubles with the favourites, Jane Collier and Ian Cobbold. Both Gill and Juliane played some spectacular shots and did not have to use any Extra Turns until Gill wasted her one at hoop 10. Undaunted she still won the hoop and the match 7/3 by scoring from 12 yards. The last 15 minutes of this match were played in a noisy storm. One player ran for shelter at the first flash of lightening for fear of being electrocuted (not British thank goodness). The Tournament Referee ordered him back on the court, as the Laws do not allow matches to be abandoned or delayed for such flimsy reasons!

As in previous Corfu tournaments, several managed to fall off their bikes, the first being Sylvia Hague before supper on the very first night. She was dramatically caught in mid-air by Ian McDiarmid who failed however to give similar assistance to his wife, Gill who hit the deck a few minutes later. The most dramatic crash was that of Anthony Cox who disappeared into a hedge following a boozy supper. Enough said, but it did stop him talking for several blissful minutes.

The final event was the two-day Level Singles which took place following the organised boat trip along the beautiful north-east coastline. The excursion included an on-board BBQ, Greek dancing as we crossed the choppy bay and the hilarious celebration of the 73rd birthday of Anthony. Miss Marilyn Monroe (alias Sylvia) sexily crooned "Happy Birthday" and the ship's skipper Stilos sprayed, Formula 1 style, a startled birthday boy with bubbly.



A 'pegged-out' but happy group of competitors at the end of the holiday.

But back to the Level Singles final where Horst clawed his way back to 6 all against Ian Cobbold despite having been faulted after scoring hoop 11. All four balls took up scoring positions in a semi-circle at hoop 13. Ian missed his and Horst stole the victory ensuring that the three competing non-Brits won the two singles events and both of the doubles with their British partners.

At the prize-giving 4-course dinner on the final night, in addition to the winners and runners up of the four tournaments, prizes were given to those who merited special recognition. The Most Brazen Hussy award was given in the light of the strange phenomenon which had developed during the holiday, namely a failure amongst the ladies to recognise the international sign for the gents' loo. It went to the lady who startled the Tournament Manager as he stood peacefully in front of a urinal by poking her head out from the gents' changing room to ask "Michael, are you having a swim too?" When it was pointed out to her that she should be next door, Gillian Noble-Jones replied "Are you really sure?"

All in all it was a memorable holiday full of gaiety and fun. Those who participated are indebted totally to Annemiek Boon who single-handed had to take over unexpectedly not just the preparation of the club and the administration of the tournaments but also the organisation for the whole holiday. The fact that everything went off without a hitch is to her everlasting credit. See you next September, Annemiek!

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Cheques should be made payable to 'The Croquet Association'. Orders and credit card payments can be taken by telephone.

Opening hours: 9am to 4.15pm, Monday to Fridays. We are not open at weekends although purchases can be made through the online shop 24 hours a day. Rapid delivery on most items.

Call The CA Shop on 01242 233555
Email: sales@croquet.org.uk

www.croquet.org.uk
The Croquet Association
c/o Cheltenham Croquet Club
Old Bath Road
Cheltenham
GL56 7DF



Books (free p&p)

Expert Croquet Tactics - Keith Wylie £14.00

This acclaimed book is widely regarded as one of the best guides to AC tactics for the advanced player—a must have for advanced tournament players or those who wish to improve their tactics.

Shortening the Odds: The Tactics of Golf Croquet - Bill Arliss £9.50

This book is aimed at GC and AC players who are proficient with a mallet, and want to extend their repertoire of winning tactics. Includes the development of training and coaching routines.

Croquet Books by John Riches: Valuable insights into key areas of the AC players game .

Croquet: Error Correction, £10.50 Croquet: Technique £10.50, Croquet: Finer Points £15

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