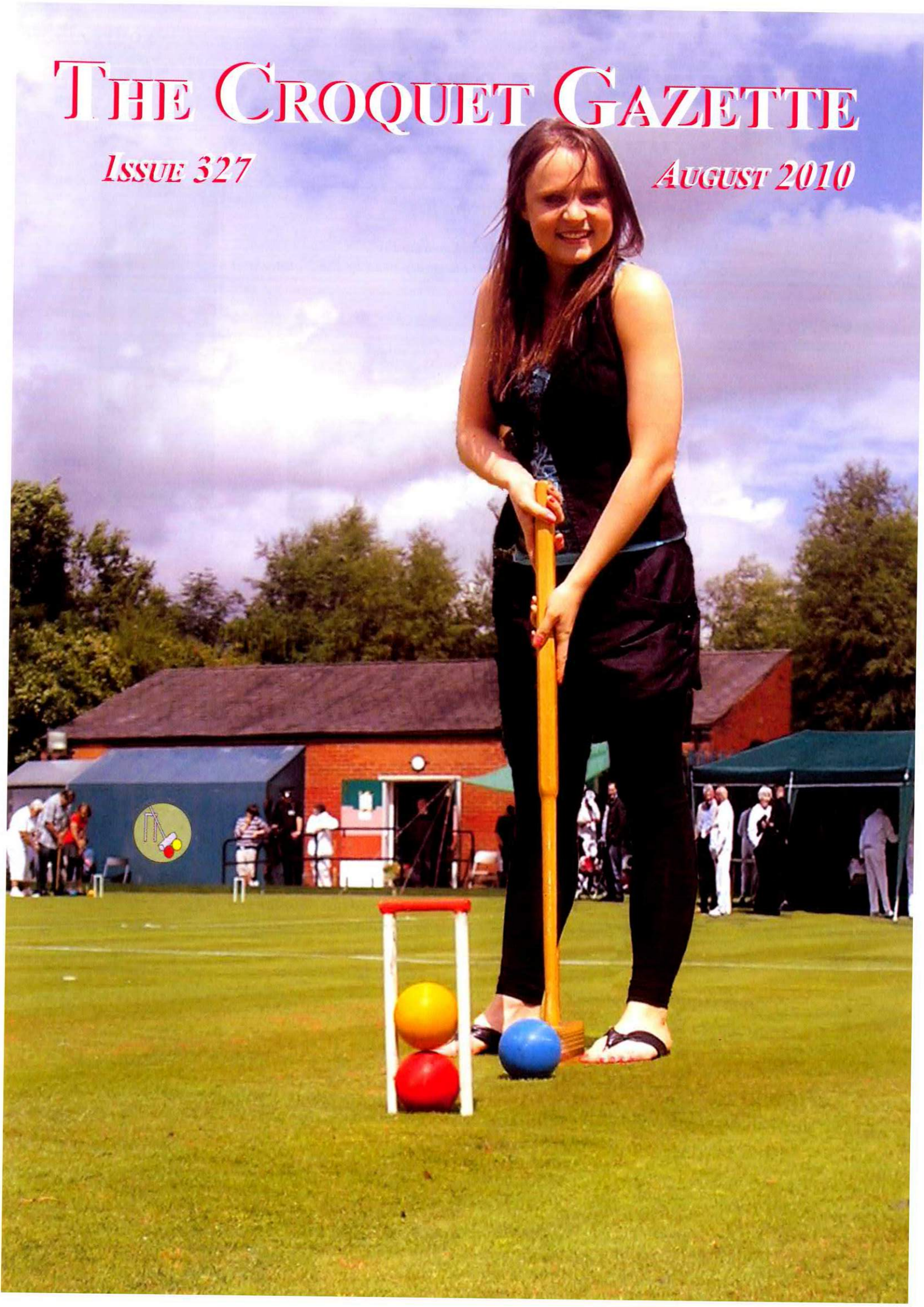


# THE CROQUET GAZETTE

*ISSUE 327*

*AUGUST 2010*

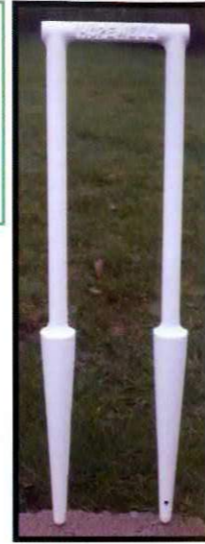


# New hoops, books and shirts from the CA Shop



## NEW: 'Hopewell' croquet hoops £295 inc p&p

Cast Iron Croquet Hoops that meet CA approval. Developed by the Nottingham Croquet Club with a British Foundry and currently used by the Nottingham Club.



New: MacRobertson Shield Souvenir Polo Shirts—see pic below  
Fruit of the Loom White Polo Shirt with MacRob 2010 Logo, poly/cotton, £12.50, plus £2 p&p Sizes M—XXXL  
MacRobertson Shield Enamelled badges £ 4.00 plus £1 p&p



The George Wood Discovery Mallet New for 2010 left  
Lightweight carbon/EVA handles with standard 9 1/4" lead weighted head with tufnol endplates. Heads are from Indian rosewood. Available in a variety of weights and lengths. £155



New: Complete Croquet: A Guide to Skills, Tactics & Strategy. The latest book on croquet by James Hawkins, published May 2010. A former Coach of the Year, James trains coaches around the country and has a deep knowledge of the game. Learn about improving handicap play right up to top-class croquet tactics. £16 inc p&p



Also available: mallets from Manor House, Hobbs, Percival and the popular GW Original Mallet at £110 inc p&p. Wide range of books, DVDs and croquet equipment.

Full descriptions and photographs can be found on the shop area of the CA Website. See website for full range Complete secure online ordering a payment service available on the website.

If ordering by post, please ensure that the correct postage and packing is included. If in doubt please call on 01242 233555. Cheques should be made payable to 'The Croquet Association'. Orders and credit card payments can be taken by telephone.

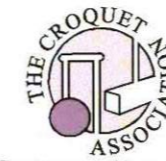
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The Croquet Association  
c/o Cheltenham Croquet Club  
Old Bath Road  
Cheltenham, GL56 7DF

## THE CROQUET GAZETTE



Issue 327 August 2010

Front Cover: Vicky Binms takes a break from Coronation St, to go to Coronation Park in Bury. Why? Find out in the next issue. Photo by Paul Rigge.

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### Disclaimer

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

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## Chairman's Column



I am always pleased to represent the Croquet Association and I recently had the honour to attend the All England Lawn Tennis Championships as a guest seated in the Royal Box. Over lunch I was able to mix with members of the club and celebrities and I hope gave a favourable impression of our game. I enjoy dressing for an occasion and wore the outfit you see in the above picture. In the same week however I also attended the funeral of one of our few Life Members, Sarah Hampson of the Hunstanton Croquet Club, along with Roger Bray and Hugh Carlisle who gave an address you will find later in this issue. Others who represent the CA and will be "flying the flag" are our President, Vice-Presidents and Vice-Chairman who will all be attending the MacRobertson Shield test matches this month and associated functions.

My diary is filled with tournaments and I have tried to vary the type of event, playing both golf croquet and association croquet. I have also tried to ensure I have entered club, federation and CA events including handicap and advanced. This year I was persuaded to enter a championship to encourage other ladies to enter too. All have been most enjoyable and each event allows me to hear the voices of the members and competitors who want to share their opinions on our game.

To those who really want to make a difference I should suggest that you stand for Council next year. It is good to know that the three places being vacated on Council will be filled by new volunteers. If your desire is to offer ideas on just one change, I will certainly pass on your comments to the appropriate committee chairman, but a letter to the office will underline your commitment to the idea being suggested and will mean the topic is put on the agenda for the autumn or winter meetings. The topics I have been asked about so far include providing more golf referee courses within federations, changing the handicap system by inverting it,

encouraging more action from club handicappers, developing a mentoring system not just for juniors but for those players showing great potential plus targeting the development of suitable competitions for lady players to improve their game.

At the recent special Council meeting in July the main topic was about international representation. The World Croquet Federation (WCF) does not recognise Great Britain as one country and may decide in August to prevent composite teams with players from more than one country in their events. Our CA Council meeting was convened to offer guidance to our representatives who will vote at the August meeting of the WCF. The ramifications of any decision will have an impact on future selection for international team events and possibly our constitution. Council's view was that more time for review and consultation with other nations, both within Great Britain and beyond, is needed after the MacRobertson Shield and Lower Tiers of the World Team Championships have been contested this year.

Patricia Duke-Cox

## Letters

### Flexible blocks - free-ish scoring software

Middlesbrough Croquet Club has successfully run a number of competitions and tournaments using 'flexible' blocks. Flexible blocks are simply block competitions in which not all the games are completed and not all players play the same number of games.

A full set of rounds is pre-prepared (as in a round robin) but the next round to be played is determined by the availability of players. This procedure minimises non-playing time and can allow the faster players to fit in extra games.

The winner and player ranking is determined by 'comparative' scoring as detailed by Gaunt and Wheeler in their book on Croquet Management. In this method the performance of each player is compared with the performance of each other player with account being taken of only those games in which they played each other or the same opponents. If (in valid games) Player A has the same number of wins as Player B but A beat B in their match, then A is awarded 2 points and B 0 points.

The screenshot shows a software window titled 'YOUR CROQUET CLUB' and 'YOUR CLUB - BLOCKS COMPETITION'. It displays a list of 12 players (A-L) with their names and handicaps. Below this are two tables: a 'Basic scoring table' and a 'Comparative scoring table'. The basic table shows match results between players, and the comparative table shows the resulting scores and rankings for each player based on the 'flexible blocks' method.

an illustration of the blocks produced by the flexible blocks software

Otherwise if A has not played B then it is a draw and each are awarded 1 point.

Scoring is time consuming and prone to error if carried out manually and so software has been developed which makes the scoring very simple and fast - see sample output. In addition an XL spreadsheet is available which generates the round robin rounds.

The software is available - free of charge - but, if found to be useful then a small charitable contribution to the Middlesbrough Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre would be greatly appreciated.

For further details contact me by email at [geoff\\_taylor@ntlworld.com](mailto:geoff_taylor@ntlworld.com)  
Geoff Taylor

### Handicap play

The handicap system was introduced to make it possible for a high handicap player to have a fair game against a low handicap player.

To achieve a handicap reduction below scratch players have to collect more index points (100 to achieve -1/2 and even more to go lower). This is recognised in the index points given or received in the result of level play games.

In handicap play there is no recognition of this, with the result that the bisesques received from a minus player are of considerably less value to the higher handicap player. I believe an adjustment should be made so that any step below scratch should be a 2 bisque value to the high bisquer to make the system really fair,

(and even 3 bisque value below -1/2). I hope that this will be given serious consideration by the handicap committee. We all want fair play, don't we?

Rosemary Gugan

### Confirming tournament entries

I enter a lot of tournaments and I have found that how you are notified, whether you have been accepted or not is totally different from tournament to tournament. For example, last season I entered a tournament. To see if I had been accepted I contacted the Secretary who informed me that I wouldn't be notified until after the closing date, which I accepted, as I am fairly new to tournaments. I received no notification from the Secretary, so therefore I didn't attend. On the first morning of the competition I received a phone call asking where I was.

This season I have entered 7 tournaments some have notified me and some have not. My question is why Clubs don't all contact entrants? On the form you have to put your e/mail address, so I can't see why an email to confirm acceptance is not the norm.

Confused of Southport

### Re: the size of a target

The comment in 'The View from the Bar' in issue 326 about the size of the target when attempting a roquet, raises a matter which has puzzled me for some time. Leaving aside the peculiar comparison with 'apples and pears', the

Notts List is clearly correct in that the centres of the balls that would just clip the left side of the target ball, and the right-hand edge, are two balls wide.

To look at the situation in a different way, however, if one were to place a bisque at the left-hand edge of a ball to the left of the target, and another at the right hand of a ball to the right of the target ball, it is

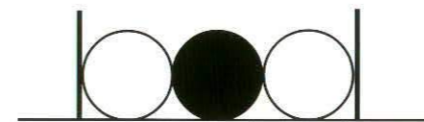


Fig. 1

apparent that the gap between the two bisesques is three balls wide (fig. 1 below)

Showing this to beginners, using croquet balls, placing bisesques to the left and right can be illuminating. Removing the balls, with just the bisesques remaining give a gap of three balls. If a ball can be struck between the two bisesques, provided neither is hit, would be the equivalent of a roquet, which gives the impression of making it much easier than aiming at a single ball.

Is the target two balls or three balls wide? Is it a matter of terminology, or is my reasoning at fault?

David Purdon

### Crocks Croquet

Since the article in February issue of the Gazette, we, at the Sudbury, Suffolk, Croquet Club have realised just how much pleasure the 'Crocks' croquet sessions have given us and the disabled, who can almost jump for joy when they get through a hoop!

Most of our disabled players are recovering from strokes and appreciate the mental exercise of Golf Croquet, as well as the fresh air and physical exercise. For our part, as coaching members, we are amazed at the improvement of our students, which gives us a tremendous satisfaction.

Last year's 'Crocks' Championship was a huge success and it would be pleasing to know if 'Crocks' sessions or tournaments were organised elsewhere, with the ultimate aim of entry into the Paralympics!

Disability can take many forms, so it is difficult to categorize it; nevertheless, there needs to be a dividing line, which we believe should be holders of a blue disabled badge/driving card; however any

competition should be reliant on the normal golf croquet handicap system to iron out anomalies.

Sudbury will be holding the 'Crocks' Championship at Sudbury, on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> September this year (limited to 10 entries). Any club wishing to set up a croquet session and/or competitions for the disabled and/or would like to enter a disabled player in the 'Crocks' Championship should contact me at [Paul-Strover@btconnect.com](mailto:Paul-Strover@btconnect.com) or on 01787 374006

Paul Strover

### Full-bisque play

In response to Hamish Hall's distress with law 3(b) relating to full-bisque doubles (Issue 325 Apr 2010), perhaps the solution is for there to be two sorts of bisque - those awarded because of the difference in handicaps, to be used by either player (normal H/C doubles rules), and those awarded because of the full-bisque system, only to be used by the longer bisquer.

Keith Ross

### Games going to time

No-one has responded to my plea for H/C singles (Issue 320 June 2009) to be played on full-bisque system (perhaps with a base of eg 4\*). Without bisesques anyone over about H/C 6 cannot pick up and sustain a break, so necessarily the game takes a long time. Far better to give both sides some bisesques rather than reduce the number of hoops. We should scrap all forms of short play, and introduce a mandatory full-bisque system. Think how quickly the rabbits will learn to set up and play breaks - and games finishing on time will be a thing of the past.

\*Thus a -1 player against a 8, the 8 will get the normal 9 bisesques; but if two 8s are playing each other they both get 4 each.

Keith Ross

### A response to Conceding Defeat

Anyone who has tried to concede a game before both balls are pegged out will appreciate how bemused the opponent can become by this action. The thought of not actually finishing is abhorrent to many players.

I recall an opponent who had but one ball left and for the peg, making a long roquet from Corner One which rushed my ball three feet short of the peg. I wanted to concede,

but no! Although Striker's ball ran away through corner 3 and for a further 25 yards beyond it landing near the equipment shed, nothing would stop him trudging to retrieve it and making the short take off (Did that ball move? I almost asked) to leave a 3 inches to win. Fair play I suppose.

I would add Match Play Golf to the list of games where conceding is good etiquette, but I am not persuaded by LH's reference to Chess as supporting the idea in Croquet. In Chess resigning is the usual way of conceding the game gracefully. However many club players 'play to the last pawn'. This actually means you play all the way to Checkmate or bare Kings. By not resigning when faced with overwhelming material superiority you allow your opponent the chance to find the quickest Checkmate possible or some delightful combination while searching for a Stalemate draw yourself. This action of not resigning may also be seen, in its own way, as a gracious gesture. But note that in Chess, even though they move alternately, unlike Croquet the players are actually thinking (playing) simultaneously no matter who is to move.

In Snooker a player may be faced with a huge points deficit, which we all agree is insurmountable. Of course this does not actually resemble Croquet where any points deficit may be overcome. However Snooker does resemble Croquet in the respect that one player is sitting down, unable to act. The etiquette appears to be that the player will concede only when it is their turn to play or perhaps, on rare occasions, during their break.

So, in Croquet, if we are not to deprive our opponent of his or her fun, when would be the right time to concede?

In some tournaments or circumstances a concession would save time and I would imagine that all players of all strengths would acknowledge the right of their opponent to concede the game at any time. But I would also support the winner's right to take his turn following the concession. If we accept this then I think care must be taken. Remember that after missing a lift shot, saying 'I concede' is actually disturbing the striker, an action specifically prevented by the Laws.

Liz Wilson

### Conceding defeat

I must disagree with Lee Hartley's letter on giving up. The analogy with snooker is mistaken - in snooker, once

one player has scored about 80 points, it is not possible for the opponent to score sufficient points to win - there just aren't enough points left on the table. So they concede. But croquet is different - there are always 26 points on offer to each side, no matter what your opponent may have done. So conceding defeat is just that - defeatist!

Some time ago I was playing a strong and gritty opponent in an important match. He very quickly got to peg and peg without me taking croquet. He ran into his partner ball after rover so was unable to peg out that turn, but had a decent leave instead. I took my "last shot", feeling it was probably pointless. But I hit, and took that ball round and made a leave. My opponent then missed his shot at my leave and I was able to finish in the next turn.

Now whenever I am behind in a game, I remind myself of that win. In croquet - unlike snooker - you can always win right up until the moment your opponent pegs out. Deciding your opponent is "almost certain to win" often becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

*Martin French*

### Tournament Reports

Recently an individual complained (on the Notts Board) that his 'amusing and interesting reports' had too often been edited or ignored. The CA very much values all tournament reporters and takes any such comments seriously. In view of the range and type of calendar events, discretion has to be exercised as to whether a report is more suited to the magazine or website news. The latter communicates with a world-wide audience (including potential sponsors, new players and the Press) so is not really the place for lengthy anecdotal reports, especially if much space is taken up with weather, food, in-jokes, etc. In this case reports need to be set out clearly, in a top-down manner - who won, what, where, when - to avoid the need for editing. Provided there's space, the Gazette, going out to committed croquet enthusiasts, can take a more relaxed approach, especially if there's a good photo! Advice on how and where to send reports is given in each Gazette issue and on the website (see under Tournaments).

*Charles Waterfield (Publishing Committee)*

## News from the CA Office

*By Elizabeth Larsson  
CA Manager*

### New member of staff

Liz Parsons has joined the staff in the office as the part time online Shop Assistant. Liz will be working in the afternoons and will be able to assist with all queries. This now means that all staff in the office are called Liz - it's not a requirement to work here, but it's certainly a co-incidence. There's another Elizabeth if you count the portrait of our patron on the wall!

### Insurance

The CA put its insurance requirements out to tender this year and as a result, has now changed to Endsleigh Business Insurance Services. Endsleigh works with many sporting governing bodies and have an understanding of the sporting world. The CA has negotiated with them in addition to the Public Liability Insurance, clubs will now also get Professional Indemnity Insurance for all club officers, coaches and referees. This is a significant enhancement of our insurance provision. New certificates, policies and claim details have been sent to all club secretaries of clubs that qualify for the free Public Liability Insurance.

Endsleigh will also be providing the CA and member clubs leaflets in clear plain English which will describe the insurance policies and what they cover.

Endsleigh are offering clubs equipment, property and employer's insurance at competitive rates, for which clubs should contact Endsleigh directly. Our contact is Andy Lyons: Phone: 01242 866800, Mobile 07917145401, Email [andy.lyons@endsleigh.co.uk](mailto:andy.lyons@endsleigh.co.uk)

### Tournament Information

A new application has been added to the tournament entry part of the Members' Area of the website. Players can now check

on who has entered a tournament - particularly useful if you want to find a doubles partner! Go to 'Tournament Entry', click on the 'Menu' button, click on 'List all Tournaments' and then click on the Tournament name of your choice. Players who have entered will also see confirmation of their own tournament entries and whether or not they asked for lunch!

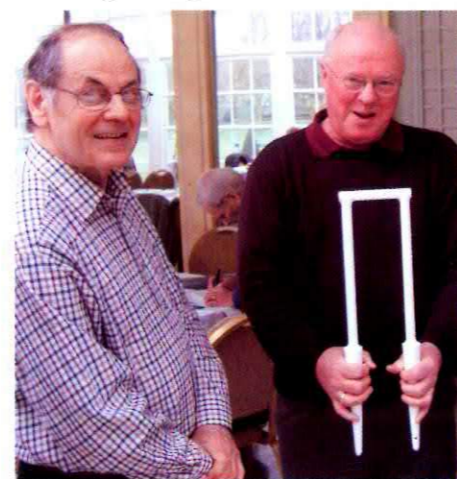
### Email Addresses

When you are giving your email address to the office, can you please make sure it's clearly written. We've had a few problems this year with scribbled email addresses, that are ultimately revealed (usually after a few bounce backs) to be rather different from the interpretation we put on the handwriting.

### New Lines in the CA Shop

#### Hopewell Hoops

The new Hopewell Cast Iron Hoop is finally here! Developed by the Nottingham Club with a British Foundry and approved by the CA, it will be in use for the MacRobertson Shield in Nottingham and is now available from the shop for £295 including delivery.



*Prof. Alan Pidcock and Colin Irwin with the Hopewell Hoop.*

#### Complete Croquet

The CA Shop is now selling James Hawkins' new book, Complete Croquet, which is aimed at improving play at handicap level to understanding top-class, championship level tactics. The price is £16 with free postage and packing.

#### MacRobertson Shield Polo Shirts

The shop is selling polo shirts with the MacRobertson Shield 2010 logo embroidered on them for £12.50, plus

£2 postage and packing. Made by Fruit of the Loom, they will be a 65/35 poly cotton mix and at 180 gsm, reasonably heavy but light enough for hot summer days!

#### MacRobertson Shield Enamelled Badges

An enamelled badge is available for £4 plus £1 p&p with the MacRobertson Shield logo on it.

## Editorial



I'd like to apologise for being difficult to contact in June, I was away in the USA, and having been given 'the talk' by my 'Neighbourhood Watch' chairperson personally, I decided I should heed his warnings - wouldn't want another lecture like that the first one.

Unfortunately just before I left for New York, I had the misfortune to break my wrist, so playing may present a few problems for me for the rest of the season, but I'm looking forward to returning to Budleigh this month after an absence of well, too long. On form or off I'll enjoy my croquet, and if by chance I'm advised not to play, I won't be too disappointed as I'm one of those strange players who actually enjoys watching croquet being played. I believe that there is always something to be gained. Hopefully some of you will be joining me in watching the MacRobertson matches. I'm sure there will be plenty to learn and admire and I'm sure the team will appreciate some home support in their quest to retain the Shield. British sportsmen might have disappointed elsewhere in sport this summer, but croquet, the expectations are high, as well as well founded, because croquet does not have to hark back to 1966 for its last glory.

*Gail Curry*

## Publications

**Complete Croquet - A Guide to Skills, Tactics and Strategy** by James Hawkins, Crowood Press, 2010, 176pp, paperback, £16.99 (£16 from the CA shop)

*Reviewed by David Appleton*

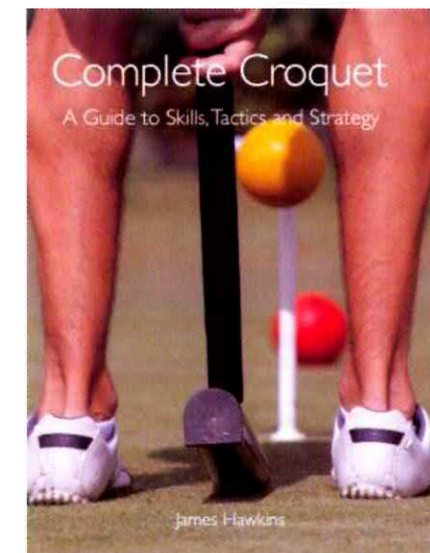
It's time there was a new croquet book and James Hawkins has written the first one to take advantage of 21st century printing technology. It includes lots of coloured photographs and lawn diagrams making the text look more approachable than it would in their absence.

The diagrams are drawn in a form that wouldn't be out of place in a comic, the balls taking up an area of some 2000 times more than they would if drawn to scale. I thought I wouldn't like that, but in fact it works perfectly well. Apart from those of the author himself, which have been taken to illustrate particular points regarding grip, stance, etc, most of the photographs are merely decorative; they could perhaps have been rather smaller, releasing space to make the font a point or two larger. But maybe I'm just being an old curmudgeon: I suppose anyone with pretensions to hit a ball 20 yards away will be able to read it.

The lawns in the photographs are immaculate, there is little sign of wet-weather gear<sup>2</sup> - indeed most of the players are in shorts - and the surrounding scenery, for example at Cheltenham and Wrest Park, is uniformly pleasant. It is the sort of book that might be expected to appeal to prospective croquet players, and no doubt the publishers hope it will.

But, even though I notice it is available at Tesco, it almost certainly won't. Perhaps no croquet book can. Imagine a non-player or even a garden-croquet aficionado opening this or any other croquet book at random and finding our usual words and phrases: '2 yards south-east of 1-back', 'wafer cannon', 'early pioneer', 'straight peel', 'peg and box', let alone 'Riggall', 'MSL' and 'tea lady'. I think they would quickly close it again.

So this book is for people who play croquet already<sup>3</sup> and I shall therefore try to assess its value from the point of view of an improving croquet player who buys it when he has a handicap of about 12 and hopes it will help him on his journey to A-class.<sup>4</sup>



It ought to. Not surprisingly, break play is the main topic. For the 4-ball break the basics are described, then the pivot is encouraged to move around a bit, then it is rushed a bit more, then the possibility of it becoming a pioneer is introduced. In discussing the first break in an advanced game James emphasises the need to have partner at 2-back and the advisability of placing it there after making hoop 5. I think he is a bit optimistic at one point (on page 140): "Nine times out of ten, [partner] will be your pioneer at Hoop 5 anyway". I wish I could agree. If you pick up a break from a 'dream leave' with opponent in corner IV partner will be your pioneer for 4 and the ball in the corner will go to 5; if you pick up a break on the fourth turn by hitting your own tice, whether west boundary or Duffer, when your opponents are joined on the East boundary you are again likely to make 2 and 4 from partner. I agree if you let your opponent go round first and hit his diagonal spread you will probably end up with partner at 1 and hence it is easy to get it to 5. I'd settle for 'about half of the time' or even 'slightly more often than not'.

I am in complete sympathy with what James has to say about breaks (including, towards the end, peeling ones), when to shoot, what to do should you fail to get hoop position (a sometimes neglected topic), when to peg out the opponent and what to do afterwards, how to play cannons, plan and achieve controlled leaves, or start the game (which is finally covered in chapter 15). It is all good stuff, though naturally rather indigestible taken as a whole and I hope players will not try to read it all at once. Even coaches will benefit from taking it in moderate doses.

James gives eleven helpful 'rules' about using bisques, but I would like to add one more to make up the round dozen: RULE 12: Give a Boundary Ball a Friend. I shall explain what I mean by that in a separate article which follows this review. To prove I have read this book (and at least two others) carefully, I shall point out one inconsistency and ask a question. The inconsistency is that on page 147 James describes an opening where Blue goes to the east boundary and Red hits Blue, but on the previous page he has described Red's shot at Blue as "a shot that nobody would take on". Incidentally, Wylie<sup>5</sup> reports articles from the late sixties advocating that shot, though the last stroke of the turn if the roquet is made is slightly different from the one James describes.

My question: McCullough and Mulliner<sup>6</sup> say "The New Standard Leave is moderately polarised and most players lift the ball near hoop 2" while James (page 138) says "in the NSL [it is usually] the ball on the wire of Hoop 4 [that is lifted]". Is this discrepancy the result of changing fashions; is there a north/south divide; is it to do with playing the game at the very top level or a slightly more human one? I think in fact both statements are rather bald. They ignore the clip positions and the perceived likelihood that the opponent will complete a delayed triple peel, or indeed a standard one, if the lift shot is missed. So, although readers should generally take James' advice, they should also remember that all generalisations are false.<sup>7</sup>

There could perhaps have been an additional chapter on practice routines and one on the psychology of the game – I write as someone who has benefited from an introduction to Neuro-Linguistic Programming – but the book's claim to be *Complete Croquet* is pretty sustainable.

There are a few misprints, but not enough to get under the reader's skin: the last two paragraphs of chapter 13 are repeated as the first two of chapter 14; there is a 'Hoop 4' where there should be a 'Hoop 5' on page 60; a 'forward' rather than a 'sideways' on page 142; I think an 'if' rather than an 'unless' in the first paragraph of page 144; and on page 108 James claims to have heard of "players who have achieved a peg-out from 40 yards away" which I will take to be the result of a misprint rather than of the author's miscalculation of the distance from corner-spot to peg, or of his gullibility.

Finally, there is one nice aspect of the book I haven't mentioned. As well as the main text, the illustration of positions on the lawns and the photographs, there is a selection of inserts with a light blue background. It is there that James is at his most humorous: on page 8 he describes 'extreme croquet' as combining "many of the finer characteristics of golf, orienteering and picnicking" while on page 59 he asserts "Patience and caution are virtues in a croquet player, and I have neither".

To sum up: this may be the most expensive book in the CA shop but it is still very good value for money. It's the same price as a pitch repairer and a timer. If you want to improve you would do well to get yourself a copy.

<sup>1</sup> On page 161 there is a photograph of James in position to play a hammer shot. His comment is typically pithy: "Just do not bother." I'll go along with that.

<sup>2</sup> James does advise that you might have to allow more for 'pull' if the lawns are wet, so he does implicitly admit it can rain on a croquet lawn.

<sup>3</sup> Which makes the first three chapters (on the history of croquet and stroke production) a little superfluous, though in a book called *Complete Croquet* I admit they have to be there.

<sup>4</sup> I am following James' convention here in my use of pronouns; he says on page 39 "your opponent is referred to throughout as 'he'. Croquet is unusual in sports by having a roughly equal gender split". Sadly one wouldn't believe that from the photographs where the 'gender split' is far from equal.

<sup>5</sup> Wylie, K (1985) *Expert Croquet Tactics*, section 4.2.

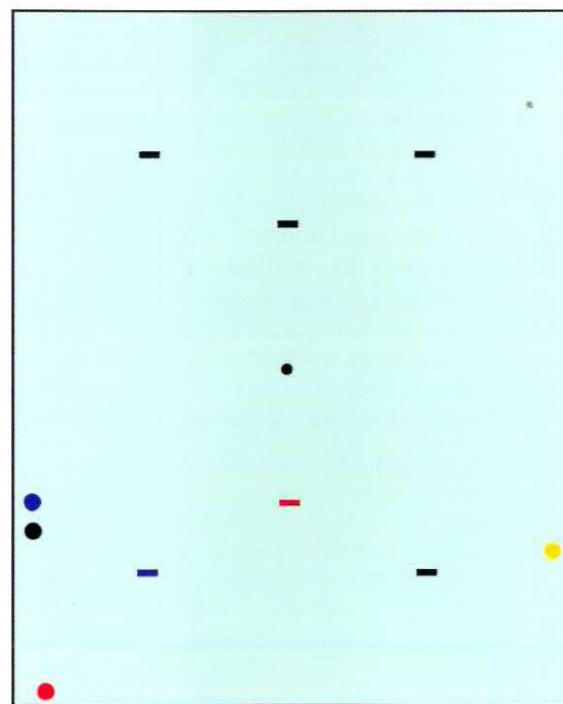
<sup>6</sup> McCullough, J & Mulliner S (1987) *The World of Croquet* Crowood Press, page 130.

<sup>7</sup> Including this one?

## COACHING

### Rule 12: Give a boundary ball a friend

By David Appleton



#### Position 1.

You are Black and Blue. It is the sixth turn of the game. Red has shot at you from near corner II and is just outside corner I. What is the easiest way to use a bisque to set up a break?

This position is similar to Fig 2.1a in the CA coaching manual and if I were to follow the advice given there I might try to use Blue to cut Black towards hoop 1, take off to Yellow, croquet it with a drive somewhere between hoops 1 and 5 and shoot off into corner 1. Then I'd take a bisque and roquet Red to where I can send it as a pioneer to hoop 2 stopping at Black or Yellow. Either way, off I go on my 4-ball break.

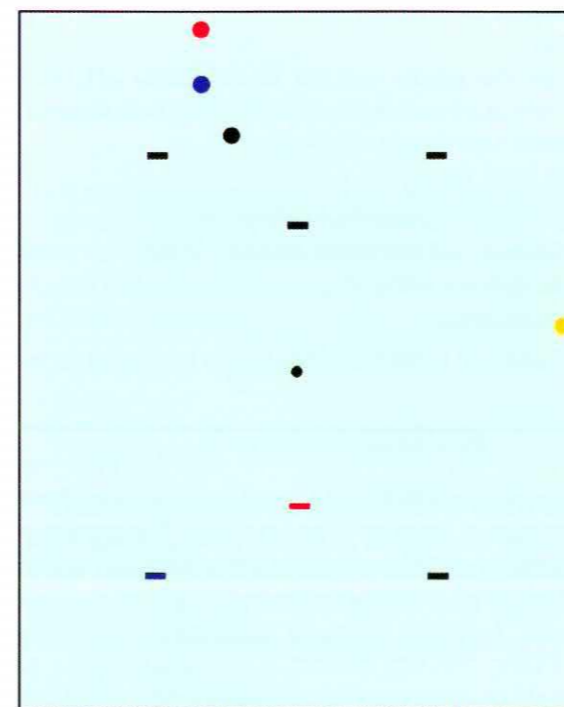
It's possible, but I'm not sure how well I can cut Black (Blue had an easier shot in the Coaching Manual example) and I don't

like the take-off to Yellow which can end up short, go off the lawn or hit hoop 4. I much prefer rushing Black to the south boundary, stopping it to hoop 1, turning round and roqueting Red which I croquet to a few yards east of the peg. The good thing is that its exact position is not really crucial, as we shall see. What I do need to make sure of is that I can then shoot off the lawn so that Blue comes back on two or three feet south of Yellow. I then take a bisque and rush Yellow, not hard and perhaps with a little cut into the lawn, to where it is simple to croquet it as a pioneer to hoop 2 giving Blue an easy shot on Red. It's because I can control Yellow on the bisque shot that Red need only be in a general area. Now I take off to what should be a really good pioneer at Hoop 1 and carry on from there.

The key is that I have sent Red to be Yellow's friend, to where it makes it easy not just to get Yellow off the yard-line but to place it where I need it.

#### Position 2

This is a real position I once found myself in a long time ago but have never forgotten. I had just watched my handicap-10-going-on-5 opponent set up a break for Black with only one bisque on the fifth turn – I had started aggressively as I was pretty sure my only chance of winning was to go round first – use two more to go to the peg, and sort out a reasonable leave with a half bisque. Red was by hoop 1. Hitting with Yellow would have been nice but missing with it would have made my opponent's task just too easy with the six bisques she still had, so I missed with Red instead.



She roqueted Red with Blue and sent it towards hoop 1 (a bit short), roqueted Black and sent it to hoop 2, then shot at and missed Yellow. After taking a bisque she cut Yellow a little into the lawn and rolled it to the peg going to Blue. That's a difficult shot and she didn't get very close. She missed Blue; she also missed it on the way back, but got it the third time. However it was now 3 yards behind the hoop and the take-off left a difficult hoop which

she missed. The fourth bisque went to make the hoop. She could still have won – she had taken the first ball round with only two bisques – but it's difficult to play with steam coming out of your ears and the breakdown was more or less inevitable. She never got in again.

So what is the moral? The same as last time. Black shouldn't have gone to hoop 2; it has to befriend Yellow. Somewhere between hoops 3 and 6 will do. Then when you shoot at Yellow you either hit it (fine) or end up with a rush towards Black from where Yellow can go to hoop 2 leaving you an easy shot on Black to the middle of the lawn. Even better, make Red Yellow's friend in the first place. Then you should get a rush down the lawn on Black so that you are putting it in position from much closer.

James Hawkins' rule 5 is 'Start with the Most Difficult Ball' but that doesn't necessarily mean that you must play it first. In the examples here you certainly won't as you have the innings. However, you must think about it first and that often means deciding who is to be its friend. The National Speleological Society will tell you that bats need friends; so do balls.

### Tips for Coaches No. 3 - Basic Rushing

By David Mooney

Rushing and hitting consistently beyond 10yards are the most important skills in converting a novice player into an accomplished one. Rushing is the key stroke for developing breaks from broken play. It is also the skill that most players around handicap 10-12 struggle to master. Hitting and rushing skills are key to making progress in level and advanced matches and also winning when giving bisques.

Hitting and rushing must form part of the player's regular practice and we will look at a number of practice routines. In this article we are only going to look at straight rushes but we are going to expect pupils to be able to rush the length of the court and with not a great deal of effort.

The coach needs to provide a solid basis for players to develop their rushing skills. This could be a long process and may take up to two seasons for players to really gain confidence in rushing. I have seen players hit a brick wall on rushing and not be able to break through into single figure play. The coach is key to enabling pupils gain confidence in this difficult area of the game.

#### Terminology

Coaches must be able to communicate the various elements of the shot unambiguously:-

**Rush line:** the line that the object ball travels along.

**Rush distance:** the distance the object ball travels.

**Roquet line:** the line that the striker's ball travels along

**Roquet distance:** the distance between the striker's ball and the object ball

**Dolly rush:** a rush which the player can guarantee both line and distance of the rush

**Dolly rush distance:** the roquet distance which the player considers he can guarantee the line and distance.

#### Technique

The first thing is to define what a rush is; a rush must have correct distance and direction. Most players are capable of moving

a ball up to three yards correctly under both criteria reasonably consistently with a normal roquet shot up to two yards from the object ball. Greater rush distances than this need a change in technique. The player must adopt a change in technique by standing back between eight inches and a foot from their normal stance position. This will ensure that correct centre to centre energy transfer is achieved. So the key elements to teach are:-

**Stalking:** rushes must be stalked in exactly the same manner as long roquets use the six S's (see Tips for Coaches 2).

**Stance:** ensure that the mallet is around 6-12 inches in front of the toes. This improves energy transfer.

**Aiming:** there are many ways to look for the aiming point. I personally look for marks on the ball where I want to hit and I use the imaginary ball to envisage the shot. Alternatives are the Mulliner finger point, placing the mallet behind the object ball on the rush line and swinging the mallet over the object ball, etc.

**Swing:** ensure that as with long hitting the mallet goes through the ball straight. There is a lot of debate as to whether you should follow through on rush shots. As it is important to hit accurately, my feeling is that it is important to keep the mallet momentum going through the ball. Stopping the mallet head may introduce twisting into the swing. However when you are rushing balls over a greater roquet distance it can be beneficial to stop the mallet head to keep the ball skidding.

**Energy Transfer**

When a ball is hit by the mallet there are two stages to the travel of the ball. The first phase is the skidding and the second phase is rolling. It is important that the roquet distance is completed whilst the ball is still skidding as this ensures efficient energy transfer from the striker's ball to the object ball. The harder you hit the ball the longer the skidding phase will be, as it is the friction with the ground which causes the ball to rotate.

The coach can monitor the quality of energy transfer by seeing how far the striker's ball carries on after striking the object ball. Good energy transfer results in the object ball stopping almost immediately. Efficient energy transfer happens when centre to centre contact is made between the balls. Any height difference above or below the centre line will result in a poorer energy transfer.

Fig 1 Physics of ball movement

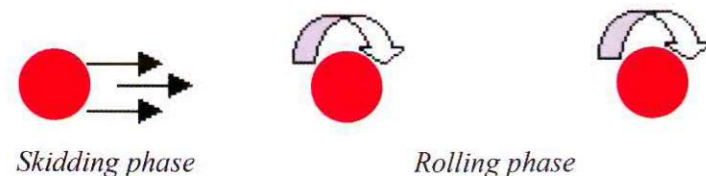
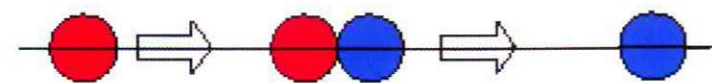
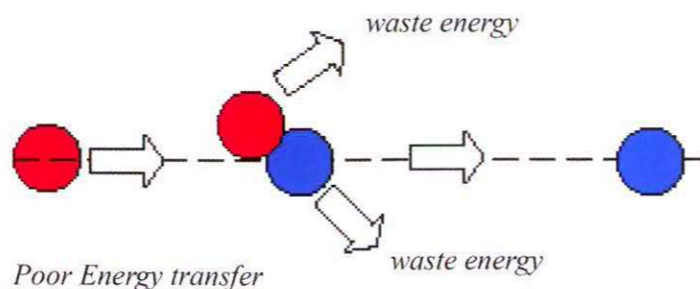


Fig 2 Energy Transfer



Good Energy transfer along the centre line



Poor Energy transfer

**1st Practice: Rushing off the North boundary**

The first practice objective is to find the players dolly rush distance and for the players to rush consistently the length of the lawn. As with all practice routines it must be both repeatable and measurable (see Tips for Coaches 1). The coach should place the striker's ball on the south boundary and put the object ball at a distance where they can guarantee rushing a ball off the lawn (don't be too ambitious it is important to give a good demonstration).

**Demonstration:**

Mark the ball with a marker. Demonstrate at least two rushes off the lawn.

**Explanation:**

Remember to explain the four points mentioned in the technique section above.

**Application:**

Give the pupils four balls. If possible mark the objects balls at no more than 14inch dolly rush distance

**Repetition**

When the pupils can hit three rushes off the lawn consecutively at 14 inches increase the dolly rush distance until pupils cannot rush straight off the lawn.

**Faults to look for:-**

- Striker's ball jumping. Examine the stance.
- Rushed ball not going straight. Make sure pupils are stalking the rush correctly.
- Head lifting.
- Tension in swing (shoulders tend to rise during the swing).

**Safety:**

If you are doing this exercise with more than three pupils, it is important that pupils are told to walk to the north boundary around the edge of the court to retrieve balls. The process can be repeated from the north boundary but only after all the pupils have finished their series of three rushes.

**2nd Practice: Sniping Hoops**

The object of this practice routine is to put straight rushing into a sequence of shots that would be expected to appear in the course of a game. The situation is that you have hit in and your opponent is joined up on an opposite boundary. The strikers ball is yellow the shot sequence is as follows:-

1. Yellow does a thin take off across the lawn to the black and blue.
2. Yellow roquets black.
3. Yellow does a thin take off behind blue at the players dolly rush

distance.

4. Yellow rushes blue to hoop 1 to an approach position.
5. Yellow plays a croquet shot to a hoop running position.
6. Yellow runs hoop 1.

This can be undertaken as an individual practice routine or in pairs taking alternate shots.

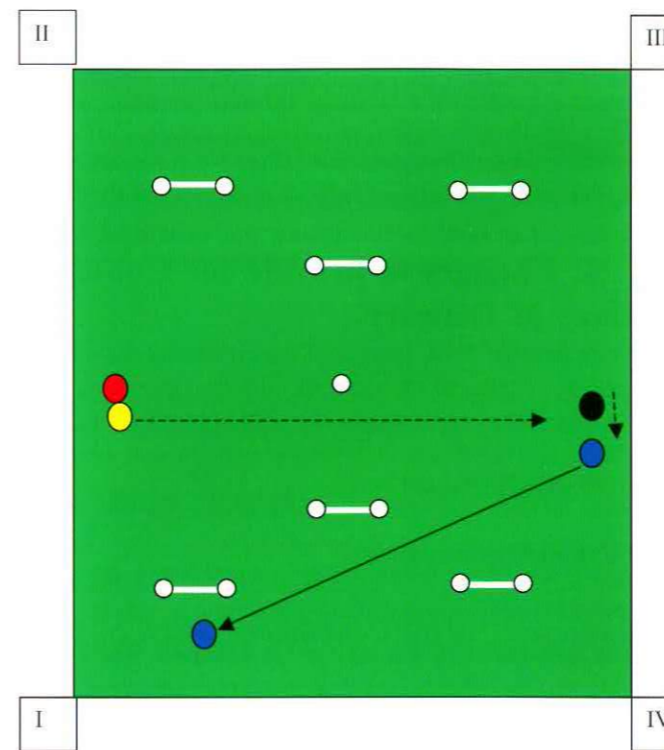


Fig 3 Sniping Hoops (yellow ball intermediate positions not shown)

This practice can be converted into an overload practice for better players by converting it into a 'no pioneer break' using just rushes and take-offs as the main shots between hoop approaches. The take-off balls should stay roughly in the same position on the east and west boundaries.

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**NOTICE OF MEETING**

**The Annual General Meeting of the Croquet Association will take place at the Hurlingham Club on Saturday 16th October 2010 commencing at 11.00 a.m.**

**AGENDA**

1. Apologies for Absence.
2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2009.

The minutes are in the documents section of the members' area of the CA Website and will be sent to Home Members on written request to the office.

3. Chairman's Report.
4. Accounts for the year to December 2009 and Treasurer's Report.

These accounts and brief commentary were published in the April 2010 Croquet Gazette. Copies will be available at the meeting together with a more comprehensive report, which will be sent to members on request to the office.

**5. Election of Hon. Secretary.**

Dr. I. G. Vincent offers himself for re-election and is the only nomination.

**6. Election of Hon. Treasurer.**

Dr R. W. Bray offers himself for re-election and is the only nomination.

**7. Election of Reporting Accountant.**

**8. Changes to the Constitution.**

Changes to the Constitution proposed by Council, together with a ballot paper, are published in this edition of the Croquet Gazette. Both Individual Associates and Member Clubs may vote on them by post or at the meeting. Individual Associates may alternatively vote electronically on the CA website. Votes before the meeting must be received by the CA Office no later than 6th October.

**9. Election of Council Members.**

The following member of Council retires by rotation and seeks re-election under clause 18 (a)(i): Prof. A.Pidcock. In addition, Mr P. J. Death, Mr. M. R. French and Mr. I. G. Lines have been proposed by Mr. B. A. Keen and second by Mr. N. R. Graves, so there are 4 candidates for 4 vacancies and an election is not required.

**10. Benefactors' Book.**

The names of benefactors will be read.

**11. Presentation of Trophies for the Most Improved Players.**

**12. Presentation of Coach of the Year Award to David Nicholson**

**13. Presentation of Council Medals**

The Council Medal is to be presented to Professor Bernard Neal and Dr. Ian Plummer.

**14. Presentation of Croquet Association Diplomas.**

**15. Any Other Business.**

**16. President's Closing Remarks.**

Dr. I. G. Vincent  
Hon. Secretary  
15th July, 2010

**THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION  
Proposals for changes to the Constitution to be proposed by Council to the 2010 AGM**

**A. Changes to the Election of Members of Council**

At its January 2010 meeting, Council considered the request made at the 2009 AGM that full results of elections should be declared and unanimously agreed to propose this. The opportunity is also being taken to correct a drafting error in the amendments proposed in 2007, which removed references to the Domain and Scotland from 12(a)(ii) and 18(a)(v), but not from the preface to 18(a), which is thus now inconsistent with the other clauses.

*Council therefore proposes:*

*1. that clause 18(a)(viii) of the Constitution, which currently reads:*

“(viii) Two scrutineers who are not members of the Council shall be appointed by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Council to count the votes. In the event of a tie they shall decide by lot. They shall report the names of those elected in alphabetic order at the Annual General Meeting.”

*shall be replaced by:*

“(viii) Two scrutineers who are not members of the Council shall be appointed by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Council to count the votes. In the event of a tie they shall decide who is elected by lot. The result and number of votes cast for each candidate shall be published after the candidates have been informed, and reported to the Annual General Meeting.”

*2. that the preface to clause 18(a) of the Constitution, which currently reads:*

**“18. GENERAL MEETINGS: ELECTION OF COUNCIL**

- (a) Election of Council Members by Individual Associates

The procedure for the election of the 15 members of Council who are elected by the votes of the Individual Associates resident in the Domain or Scotland shall be:”

*shall be replaced by:*

**“18. GENERAL MEETINGS: ELECTION OF COUNCIL**

- (a) Election of Council Members by Individual Associates

The procedure for the election of the 15 members of Council who are elected by the votes of Individual Associates shall be:”

**B. Changes to provide for Contested Elections of Officers**

At its January 2010 meeting, Council considered possible procedures for contested elections of Officers (President, Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer) and decided to propose that there should be a single ballot of both Individual Associates and Member Clubs, with each having one vote.

*Council therefore proposes:*

*1. that clause 17 of the Constitution, which currently reads:*

**“17. GENERAL MEETINGS: ELECTION OF PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENTS**

At an Annual General Meeting the Association shall on due notice given under Clause 16(c) elect its President and may elect Vice-Presidents nominated by the Council from among Individual Associates or Benefactors to the Association or persons of distinction who are interested in Croquet. They shall be ex-officio members of the Council, but shall not be eligible for membership of Council Committees unless so appointed by the Council.”

*be replaced by:*

**“17. GENERAL MEETINGS: ELECTION OF PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENTS**

(a) In the event of a vacancy in the office of President, candidates may be proposed as provided in clause 16(c). If one candidate is proposed, he or she shall be declared elected at the Annual General Meeting. If more than one candidate is proposed, a single ballot shall be held as follows:

- (i) The Honorary Secretary shall issue a voting paper with the Agenda for the Annual General Meeting as required by Clause 13. The voting paper shall give the names of the candidates, their proposers and seconders (for any not proposed by Council) and such other relevant information about the candidates as the Council may reasonably require and the candidates are willing to supply.
- (ii) Each Individual Associate and Member Club shall have

one vote.

(iii) The voting paper must be signed and returned to the office so as to arrive not later than the first post 10 days before the date of the Annual General Meeting. Alternatively, if so advertised, votes may be submitted by e-mail to the Office from a registered address, or by other attributable electronic means, by the same time.

(iv) Two scrutineers who are not members of the Council shall be appointed by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Council to count the votes. In the event of a tie they shall decide who is elected by lot. The result and number of votes for each candidate shall be published after the candidates have been informed, and reported to the Annual General Meeting.

(b) Vice-Presidents may be nominated by the Council from among Individual Associates or Benefactors to the Association or persons of distinction who are interested in Croquet. Any nominations shall be treated as motions and dealt with under clause 19.

(c) The President and Vice-Presidents shall be ex-officio members of the Council, but shall not be eligible for membership of Council Committees unless so appointed by the Council.”

*2. that clause 20 of the Constitution, which currently reads:*

**“20. GENERAL MEETINGS: ELECTION OF HONORARY SECRETARY AND HONORARY TREASURER AND APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER**

The Association shall elect Individual Associates to the posts of Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer and appoint an Independent Examiner of the Accounts at each Annual General Meeting. If a vacancy in any of these positions arises during the year between Annual General Meetings, Council shall appoint a substitute to hold office until the next Annual General Meeting.”

*shall be replaced by:*

**“20. GENERAL MEETINGS: ELECTION OF HONORARY SECRETARY AND HONORARY TREASURER AND APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER**

The Association shall elect Individual Associates to the posts of Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer and appoint an Independent Examiner of the Accounts at each Annual General Meeting. If more than one candidate is proposed for any of these positions, a ballot shall be held using the procedure set out in clauses 17(a)(i)-(iv). If a vacancy in any of these positions arises during the year between Annual General Meetings, Council shall appoint a substitute to hold office until the next Annual General Meeting.”

**C. Changes to allow non-elected members of Council to chair committees**

Council decided, in March 2010, to propose that the explicit restriction on chairmanship of committees by the President and the Vice-Presidents (and arguably also the Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer) should be removed from clause 25 of the Constitution.

*1. that the words “currently elected” be deleted from the first paragraph of clause 25 of the Constitution, which currently reads:*

**“25 COUNCIL: COMMITTEES AND PANELS**

The Council may appoint committees and sub-committees consisting of members of the Council and other Individual Associates and may delegate some of its powers and duties to such committees. The Chairman of such a committee shall always be a currently elected member of the Council and the Council shall have the power to elect and remove him and to withdraw the powers delegated to a committee.”

**D. Changes to add a Borrowing Power**

Council wishes to have a limited power for unsecured borrowing, which is required to obtain a credit card to order goods for the shop.

*Council therefore proposes that the following clause should be inserted before clause 30 (which should be renumbered to 31):*

**“30. BORROWING**

(a) The Council may authorise borrowing, for the purposes of the Association, of up to £10,000, without pledging property or investments as security. Any borrowing in excess of that, or the pledging of such security, requires the approval of a general meeting.

(b) The Council shall have no power to pledge the personal liability of any member for repayment of any sums so borrowed.”

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**THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION**

**BALLOT PAPER FOR CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES**

The Council of the Croquet Association proposes the changes to the Constitution of the Croquet Association published in the August 2010 issue of the Croquet Gazette. If you wish to vote, either as an Individual Associate or on behalf of a Member Club, please indicate your agreement or otherwise to each set of changes by placing an "X" in the appropriate boxes, then sign and return this ballot paper to the CA Office. Alternatively, a facility for Individual Associates to vote electronically is available on the CA website. You may also vote on these motions at the AGM on 16th October, 2010. Votes before the meeting must be received by the CA Office no later than 6th October. If you require further copies of this ballot paper, it may be photocopied or downloaded from the CA web site.

**A) Changes to the Election of Members of Council**

**In Favour of the Motion**

**Against the Motion**

**B) Changes to provide for Contested Elections of Officers**

**In Favour of the Motion**

**Against the Motion**

**C) Change to allow non-elected members of Council to chair committees**

**In Favour of the Motion**

**Against the Motion**

**D) Changes to add a Borrowing Power**

**In Favour of the Motion**

**Against the Motion**

**Name of Individual Associate or Member Club:**

**Name of Officer (if on behalf of a Club):**

**Signature:**

**Obituaries**

**Sarah Hampson  
1920 – 2010**



Sarah was born on 4 April 1920. She was sent away to school and then on to a domestic science college. When she joined the WRENS during the 2nd World War her kitchen skills ensured rapid promotion and she ended up as the cook to an Admiral, with the rank of Chief Petty Officer (which is why my children always called her "Chief"). After the war she became a domestic science teacher at Kings Lynn High School. In due course she also became Deputy Headmistress. This was an unusual combination for a domestic science teacher but is an indication of the respect in which she was held; and of her ability to keep order, due no doubt to her understanding of discipline in naval kitchens. She lived in Hunstanton throughout and eventually built a bungalow, together with her sister Pat, in the garden of the original family home. Pat was a radiographer who spent her working life in London; but they shared the bungalow until Pat died 3 years ago. Sarah later moved to the nursing home next door and it was there that she died on 5 June 2010. Both she and Pat were unmarried.

Sarah was a close friend of Bryan Lloyd Pratt who had also been brought up locally. I think that it was he who encouraged her to play croquet, although I was recently told that her mother had been a founder member of the Hunstanton Croquet Club. The first mention of her in the Croquet Gazette is at the Hunstanton summer tournament in 1958 when she played off a handicap of 14, without success. Her handicap was unchanged in 1959 and the high point must have been winning the handicap doubles with Hope Rotherham, then at the top of her game: she was the Open Champion in the following year. Sarah's progress thereafter was rapid. In 1960 the report reads:

"The handicap "X" was most convincingly won by Miss Sarah Hampson playing off 12 bisques. In the course of the event she beat Mrs Rotherham, with 3 bisques still standing, Warwick with 4½ bisques still standing, and Karmel with 2 bisques still standing. One feels that perhaps Miss Hampson was a little unwise to treat Warwick in this cavalier manner as he was the handicapper of the tournament – goodbye to some beautiful bisques Miss Hampson!"

By 1962 her handicap was down to 7 but subsequent reduction was slow, with limited success in tournaments. In 1966 she went down to 6; then to 4 in 1968. She reached 3 in 1969 and her zenith was a handicap of 2 in 1977. By this time she was a regular on the croquet circuit, playing in particular in the Counties and at Nottingham and Hurlingham. One of the highlights was at Hurlingham in 1976 when, with Keith Wylie, in the mixed open

doubles final she beat Nigel Aspinall and my wife, Veronica:

"Wylie and Hampson ..... had enjoyed a highly successful union when playing for Eastern Counties earlier in the season. The last half-hour of this final was absorbing to the gallery, but rather nerve-wracking to the contestants. Sarah Hampson had the unexpected privilege afforded to her of pegging out the Open Champion, and with error on both sides in the subsequent exchanges she and her partner narrowly won."

1977 was crowned for Sarah by her selection to play for the first time in the Ladies' Field Cup. It was also a first for Hunstanton where it was played. Sarah got 4 wins, including beating the eventual winner, and came a creditable 6th. There was an interesting refereeing moment when one of the black balls would not run the first hoop: when a check was made, it was found that the hoop size was correct but that most of the black balls were larger than the others. She was thereafter a regular in the Ladies' Field Cup. In 1978 she was leading for much of the time and the Gazette quotes her dry comment:

"Sarah Hampson ..... announced that as she was such a rotten player none of the "top notchers" could understand her tactics and so were beaten."

The report indicates that it was quite hard work and that "on no occasion was the last game over before 8pm." In 1978 her handicap increased to 3, in the region of which it remained for many years.

It was also in 1977 that Sarah started managing tournaments and this became her forte. Her managerial, and disciplinary, skills were much in demand and she travelled far and wide. Her contribution to the Hunstanton Croquet Club was substantial and at times her efforts were almost single-handed. She was variously Tournament Secretary, Secretary, Handicapper, Treasurer and eventually President, which post she occupied at her death. One event which gave her particular pleasure was captaining the Hunstanton Team which reached the final of the Inter-Club Championship in 1979. It is true that the team was then overwhelmed by an all-President's Cup team from Cheltenham, with one game including a straight quadruple peel by Paul Hands; but to get to the final at all was a remarkable achievement for so small a club. Special mention must be made of the re-building of the clubhouse after the fire in 2000. Sarah was one of those involved not only in the design and construction but also in the fund-raising: her memory went back many years and she was able to put this to good use, to the Club's great benefit. She was also a council member of the Croquet Association from 1982 to 1989.

But Sarah was more than a teacher and a croquet player. She was a woman of many talents. In the winter she regularly travelled the world (frequently visiting Bryan Lloyd Pratt who had moved to South Africa) and the resulting photographs were of the highest quality. She was a remarkably self-sufficient gardener, with foliage grown specially for the local flower arranging club, and her garden was not complete without two or three tortoises whom she alleged always to be misbehaving. And she was a keen beekeeper, because she believed the stings would stave off arthritis.

Above all Sarah was a giver. She contributed to every aspect of her life. She was a good friend and was great fun. We shall long remember her.

*Hugh Carlisle*

**John Michael Cockburn Evans**

Michael Evans died on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2010, aged 77. He is survived by his wife Mary and three sons. A memorial service was held in Beverley Minster.

Mike was born in 1933 in Liverpool and made Penny Lane famous long before the Beatles - by being christened there. He was drawn to a career in the Law. During his articles he joined the Territorial Parachute Regiment and gained his wings in 1952. He was admitted to the Roll of Solicitors in 1956 and did National Service for two years until 1958, after which he was posted to 151 Ack-Ack Reporting Battery, Royal Artillery. He played rugby for and captained the Battery Command Team.

In 1960 he married Mary who trained as a physiotherapist in Liverpool. They were blessed with three sons: John, a chemical engineer, David, a chartered accountant and Chris who became a solicitor. Michael's family was his greatest joy.

Michael became a very successful solicitor in Warrington and became a partner in his firm and President of the Warrington Law Society, as well as the North West Law Society, in the early 1980s. Michael became a good sailor and this became his way of avoiding unwanted clients! The family lived in Lymm for 21 years and then 4 years in Grappenhall near Warrington. When appointed to the Bench in 1983 he moved to Hull. District Judge Evans became renowned for his fair and impartial hearings, and was gifted with common sense and doing all he could to dispense justice.

He joined Beverley Croquet Club shortly after it was formed and played a prominent part in the development of the club, as successively its Secretary, Match Secretary and Chairman. He also found time to be a member of the East Riding club in Hull and a far-country member of Bowdon. From 1989-1991 he was Secretary of the Northern Confederation, and from 1991-2001 Chairman. In 1993 he published 'Help', a guide to the Northern Clubs. In 1995 'Help 2' arrived (a joint effort with Gail Curry); this was a National guide, containing information about each club and instructions for getting there. From 1997-2001 he was on CA Council as Yorkshire Federation representative and served on the Development, Equipment, and Coaching committees.

The truly impressive thing about Mike was his unfailing enthusiasm and commitment for all things croquet, especially its development. His enthusiasm, with a constant flow of ideas and initiatives, rubbed off onto others, with a knock-on effect that extended beyond the club. He was responsible for obtaining an indoor carpet, shared with the other Yorkshire clubs, and arranging a Winter League to maximise its use. He was the major force for finding new club members, and then giving his time for their tuition. He encouraged local Trade Associations to have croquet evenings at the club, and hosted these events. If this were not enough, he did more than his fair share of general club maintenance, lawn cutting etc. He continued to play as much as he could at Rowley Manor and in every league match. In 2002 Mike was told that he might have only two years to live, certainly not more than five. He took no notice. He and Mary went off on a round the world cruise and loved every moment. He was not for giving in and lived life to the full. Typically whilst in hospital, shortly before his death, he sent a message to Mary via the nurse. 'Please don't forget to post those letters I've done for the croquet club - they need to go off'. His fortitude, enthusiasm and commitment typified this 'small' man who was a great character.

*Derek Knight*



**Audrey Whitaker**

Audrey died peacefully at home on the 8<sup>th</sup> July, after a long illness, nursed by Bob her husband for the last four months. She and Bob had celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary only a month previously.

Audrey joined Bath croquet Club in 1988 and was coached as a beginner by Maurice Boardman, the club coach who was a master of tactics. She quickly took to the game and learned much from him, attaining a low single figure handicap eventually. When Audrey found herself behind in a game,



she was prepared to be patient and play cautiously and defensively, until the gap was narrowed, at which point she would move into a more attacking mode of play, usually resulting in a win. Two onlookers at Cheltenham were heard remarking on Audrey's opponent, "He will need to watch out, Audrey has the habit of coming up and nipping you in the bottom!"

During the late 80s and early 90's Audrey played in both the Women's Championship and the Ladies Eights. She was a tenacious player who was not at all phased by playing opponents with lower handicaps, and often said that she enjoyed those times, and felt privileged to play with and against the top women players and was in return respected by them.

Audrey was an active member of the Bath Club off the lawn too, and held the position of Coach, Catering Officer, Team Selector, Handicapper and South West Federation representative. She will be sadly missed by those who knew her.

*Bob Whitaker*

## Championship News

### 2010 INTER COUNTIES CHAMPIONSHIP

29th May - 1st June 2010

Report by Sue Mackay

Somerset won the 96th Inter Counties Championship for the second time in three years. Their team of Kristian Chambers, Ed Duckworth, Marcus Evans, Jim Field, David Goacher and Roger Jenkins were unbeaten for the first three days, but as the last day got underway there was a mathematical chance that Nottinghamshire, last year's winners, could catch them. Somerset's superior game tally meant, however, that they would need to lose both matches on the final day by 0-3 to see the trophy slip away from them. They did in fact lose their first match to Lancashire, but as they lost it 1-2 their ultimate victory was assured, and in the end they finished top anyway with 9 match wins to Nottinghamshire's 8.

The race for the Second Division title was much closer, and was undecided until the last game to finish. Hertfordshire, relegated last year, had been at the top of the leader board for the first three days, but had faltered against Sussex and Dorset, and with a bye in the last round could do no better than 8 match wins and 20 game wins. Both Dorset and Sussex could overtake them with a better game tally, and they were playing each other at the start of the final day. Sussex were without Rutger Beijderwellen on Tuesday, but they put up a good fight. Dorset won the encounter 2-1 in the last turn after time, putting Dorset on 8 wins and Sussex on 7. Sussex needed to win their last match against the Channel Islands, which they did, but they also needed Dorset to lose 0-3 to Yorkshire. With the score 2-0 to Yorkshire it all depended on whether Dorset could win the final game. David Harrison-Wood and William Ormerod had started late, their previous game having gone the distance, and as time was called David Harrison-Wood had the opportunity to finish. Despite the pressure of the situation, David pegged out, ensuring that Dorset finished as champions on the "who beat whom" rule. Their team of Charlie Askew, John Crowe,



The successful Somerset team. L to R: Jim Field, Kristian Chambers, Ed Duckworth, David Goacher, Roger Jenkins and Marcus Evans. photo by Liz Larsson.

David Harrison-Wood, David Kendrick, David G.A. Nicholson, William Ormerod, Dave Trimmer and Pete Trimmer otherwise had an identical match/game win total to Sussex, who were also promoted to Division One next season, along with Hertfordshire.

Relegation battles have been an enthralling part of the Inter Counties in the final stages since the introduction of the two division system. Bedfordshire won the Second Division in 2009 in fine style, but found it tough in the top division, especially as they were without Ben Ashwell. Even Jon Watson's lucky socks (in croquet coloured stripes) failed him eventually, and he lost his first game after a winning streak of 18 consecutive games at the Counties. Bedfordshire duly came bottom of the First Division and were relegated, but they did have had two match wins, against Gloucestershire and Essex, the other two relegated teams. Essex have been without Robert Fulford for the last two years, and came dangerously close to relegation last season. They won a game in every match they played, but only twice, against Surrey and Middlesex, could they manage to get two wins in the same match,

with the result that they will be in Division Two next season.

The third relegation place was wide open until the very end. At the start of the final day Gloucestershire had 3 wins but there were four teams (Surrey, Suffolk, Middlesex and Glamorgan) with only 4 wins, and all these teams had a mathematical chance of being relegated. Gloucestershire had managed one win on each of the first three days, despite having to concede a game when Louise Bradforth was taken ill overnight. Their final game was against Middlesex, which they needed to win 3-0, but Nick Parish and Eugene Chang won their game and allowed Middlesex off the hook on game difference. Middlesex had started really well, winning three games on the first day, and their players were observed taking photographs of Middlesex at the top of the leader board on the second morning. Tempting fate?

There was a CA Select team playing in the event to make up the numbers, although as most of their players came from Sussex some of the local spectators did get a bit confused, especially when CA Select played Sussex. Berkshire also made a welcome return to the Counties, this time as Berkshire/Oxfordshire (a county combination with a history in the event, as Berks/Oxon won the Championship in 1974, 1975 and 1981) and at Compton on Bank Holiday Monday Martin Burger and Joe King once more paired up to form the famous Burger King partnership. Berks/Oxon and the CA Select only had two match wins each, but the wooden spoon this year went to Wiltshire, whose only win came against Berks/Oxon in their very first match.

The vagaries of the English climate meant that it was cold and wet on the Saturday and Tuesday but dry and sunny for the middle two days. Spectators from inside the clubhouse could gauge the weather, however, by noting whether Dean Bennison of Nottinghamshire was sporting a bowler hat or a stetson. Many teams wore shirts with county logos on, but the Middlesex team shirts also had "Makes Breaks and Leaves" written on the back - delightfully ambiguous in view of their near brush with relegation.

There were some very exciting finishes at Compton on the Monday. Dave Kibble of Gloucestershire did a very good combination peg out in one game. In another, Yorkshire's Robert Wilkinson had come from behind as time was called to make a long break and peg out, leaving his team one ahead, with his partner on penult and Sussex on penult and peg. Paul Castell hit in on the final turn and only needed to peg out to take the game to sudden death, but he took off to his partner ball, rushed it to penult and succeeded in peeling it to level the scores. Unfortunately his partner ball ended up exactly between his own ball and the peg, but he managed to jump over it and peg out to win +1T. Meanwhile on an adjacent lawn Ian Burridge of Glamorgan had done a DPO and then pegged himself out, leaving partner Kevin Ham well ahead against Mike Porter of Essex. Mike constantly hit in, however, and managed to level the scores by running 4-back with his last shot after time. Kevin did eventually run the golden hoop, to much cheering, but this was nothing compared to the cheers that greeted Kevin at the end of his final game on Tuesday.

David Mooney of Surrey had gone to 4-back and Kevin had got round to 2-back for Glamorgan. Ian Burridge attempted a quintuple, but failed the penult peel twice. He eventually peeled Kevin through penult, but only after running rover, so pegged himself out to ensure that if Jeff Dawson hit the lift he would have to do a three ball triple. Jeff declined the triple and went to peg, and his partner then got to peg and laid up in Corner 3 with a rush to finish. Kevin hit in from Corner 1 and rushed green to rover, but his approach shot was not quite good enough and he took position in front of

the hoop, with green wired on the other side. Green retreated to give Surrey a perfect rush to the peg once again from Corner 3. Kevin ran rover, but the hoop was now between him and the peg. He then did a spectacular jump shot over rover to hit the peg smack in the middle. This ensured Glamorgan finished in fourth place overall, their best ever position in the Counties.

The final day brought drama both on and off the lawns. Players driving to Southwick from the A27 in the morning were treated to the sight of a police car with flashing lights which had pulled over a certain small, rotund gentleman from the Lancashire team for not having a tax disc. (It was June 1st). This did seem to inspire Lancashire, however, as shortly afterwards they became the only team to beat Somerset. Meanwhile Jeff Dawson of Surrey found himself playing on his own against Essex. His partner David Mooney arrived an hour late to be told he was on Hoop 4 - apparently he had managed to lock his car keys in the boot of his car. The Dorset team must have been particularly glad to triumph on the final day, as the fire alarm had gone off at 5:30am in their hotel, resulting in some bleary eyes.

The Counties was, as usual, a tremendous festival of croquet. All the teams had at least one win, and a good time was had by all. The catering at Southwick and Compton was superb as ever, and thanks are also due to the ground staff at both venues. Thanks also to Chris Williams for managing the event, and to Bill Arliss, Jeff Dawson, Colin Irwin, Ian Lines and David Walters for managerial/ROT duties at either Southwick or Compton on the various days.

| Div 1           | Wins | Games | Div 2           | Wins | Games |
|-----------------|------|-------|-----------------|------|-------|
| Somerset        | 9    | 23    | Dorset          | 8    | 23    |
| Nottinghamshire | 8    | 20    | Sussex          | 8    | 23    |
| Lancashire      | 6    | 16    | Hertfordshire   | 8    | 20    |
| Glamorgan       | 6    | 16    | Channel Islands | 6    | 18    |
| Suffolk         | 5    | 16    | Yorkshire       | 6    | 16    |
| Cheshire        | 5    | 16    | Kent            | 6    | 15    |
| Surrey          | 4    | 16    | Hampshire       | 5    | 15    |
| Middlesex       | 4    | 13    | Warwickshire    | 3    | 12    |
| Gloucestershire | 4    | 11    | Berks/Oxon      | 2    | 10    |
| Essex           | 2    | 12    | CA Select       | 2    | 7     |
| Bedfordshire    | 2    | 6     | Wiltshire       | 1    | 6     |

## MEN'S & WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIPS

Budleigh Salterton 9-13 June 2010

Report by Patricia Duke-Cox

This report is written by the CA Chairman entering her first CA Championship by virtue of the Manager of the event seeking a "vote of confidence" from the other players present on the first day!

All participants seemed pleased to see an increase in the number of women playing this year with 9 participating in the Women's event (the highest number since 2002) and 10 playing in the Mixed Doubles. 16 men competed, the lowest number since the mid 1970s.

The first day saw the start of the Mixed doubles for which there was a two-life draw and process arrangement. Player handicaps ranged from 7 down to -2.



Patricia Duke-Cox presents The Women's Championship Bowl to Gabrielle Higgins. Photo by Liz Larsson.

Gabrielle Higgins was the deserving winner of the Women's event. She began in Round 1 beating Patricia Duke-Cox with a triple peel in her second game to earn her gold merit award. In the quarter final she beat Barbara Young, in the semi final she beat Sue Edwards and in the final she met last year's defending champion Carol Smith. Her prizes included a Gold Challenge Casket, a Silver Challenge Bowl, a Gold Challenge badge, a Gold Locket, a silver croquet mallet brooch – prizes well worth fighting for!

The Men's Championship was won by James Death after an epic 5-game match against Stephen Mulliner. James went into the third game 2-0 down but with some exciting strokes, tactics, errors on both sides, he went on to win the subsequent 3 games. He went home with the Challenge Trophy and a Gold Challenge Casket. He was pleased to have beaten two of this year's MacRobertson Shield



James Death starting a break on his way to the Men's Championship title. Photo by Liz Larsson.

team members to gain this reward. He also entertained the audience with one sextuple peel-won game during the tournament.

The Mixed Doubles final was the last event to be played. The two pairs competing were Gabrielle Higgins and Keith Aiton versus Louise Bradforth and Dave Kibble. Because of the lateness of the hour, very few spectators witnessed the game. The eventual winners were Gabrielle and Keith +16.

The Du Pre Cup was won by Chris Williams who beat Louise Bradforth in the final. The Z event provided games for those knocked out early in competition but had no overall winner.

Budleigh Salterton proved a delightful setting for the championship and the weather was fine. Their club members were appreciative of the high standard of play exhibited by the participants (well most of them). Cliff Jones ran a relaxed and tournament that accommodated players wishes and abilities and was rewarded with a bottle from the cellars at the club.



Chris Williams inspects the the history of the Du Pre after winning it. Photo by Liz Larsson.

Full results:

Men's Championship 2010 Round 1:

Stephen Mulliner beat Cliff Jones +3tpo +12tpo, Lionel Tibble beat Martin Murray +17 -10tp +15, David Openshaw beat Dave Kibble +1 +17tp, Ian Burrige beat Dave Mundy +26tp +22, James Death beat Jim Field +26sxp +26, Dave Foulser beat Paul Castell +22 +9, David Goacher beat Chris Williams -6 +20 +3, Keith Aiton beat Dick Knapp +23tp +13tp.

Quarter-Finals:

Stephen Mulliner beat Lionel Tibble +26tp +9tpo +26tp, David Openshaw beat Ian Burrige -4 +15tp +17 -8 +19tp, James Death beat Dave Foulser +10tp +7tpo +17sxp, Keith Aiton beat David Goacher -8otp, -3 +24 +8 +26tp.

Semi-Finals:

Stephen Mulliner beat David Openshaw +17 +26tp +16, James Death beat Keith Aiton -14 -26tp +26tp +26tp +25tp.

Final: James Death beat Stephen Mulliner -26tp -26tp +19tp +12 +4.

Women's Championship Round 1:

Gabrielle Higgins beat Patricia Duke-Cox +22 +26tp.

Quarter Finals:

Gabrielle Higgins beat Barbara Young +25 +23, Sue Edwards beat Frances Ransom +8 -2 +19, Alwen Bowker beat Mary Knapp +15 -4 +6, Carol Smith beat Gene Mears +6 +22.

Semi Finals: Gabrielle Higgins beat Sue Edwards +11 +25, Carol Smith beat Alwen Bowker -9, +19, +19.

Final: Gabrielle Higgins beat Carol Smith +17, +15.

Du Pre Final:

Chris Williams beat Louise Bradforth +6.

## THE OPENS REPORT 2010

by Andrew Gregory

This was the most exciting and fascinating Opens for many years. Why? The principal factor was the weather. Not just during the week – one overcast day, otherwise glorious sunshine – but the best summer we've had awhile had produced lawns more brown than green. These lawns, well prepared by David Magee and his helpers, produced interactive croquet. A break needed concentration; a triple peel was a real achievement. As one losing player had it: "Great fun!" – a croquet match, not a shooting contest. If you read my account of the later stages below you may think it was business as normal – but this is just testimony to the excellent play of the finalists.



Andrew Gregory, reporter and cyber commentator on this years Opens. Photo by Samir Patel.

**Monday to Wednesday:** The Qualifying Swiss. This format continues to work well. The top players qualified easily (except Aiton who was awarded 3 losses when absent on Monday). Perhaps too easily – the Swiss was seeded – wrongly I think. First to qualify was Lines with 5/5. During his sixth game the qualifying criterion was reduced from 6/11 to 5/10 (because of the "slow" play in the challenging conditions). Lines is thus the only person to qualify from a Burrige Swiss having lost his last game.

At the other end Vincent reached 0/5 – a very deep Swiss gambit. He won his first 4 games in Last Chance Saloon, but lost his last. According to Pete Trimmer (in a previous Gazette) this feature is unfair, but I say it adds to the excitement.

**Thursday:** the Singles knock-out started. Tony le Moignan reached peg and peg before Bamford had started. Bamford surprisingly made a 1-back leave – a dubious tactic given the conditions. Bamford had to bail out of his sextuple attempt before conceding contact, though eventually won the game. I am unaware of any subsequent sextuple attempt in the Main event. Bamford reached the quarters without dropping a game, as did fellow seeds Fulford and Maugham. Dave Trimmer was on a match-finishing turn against Mulliner, but broke down at 1-back. Westerby lost a game to Mundy, and should have lost the match to Goacher – the latter playing too defensively when he should have simply finished. Robert Fletcher dropped a game to fellow Aussie Peter Landrebe, but was otherwise untroubled.

All three Fletcher brothers reached the knock-out stage of the Singles. Robert is already very good indeed, Greg and Malcolm not far behind. And there's a fourth brother back home in Australia.

Defending Champion Beijderwellen was unlucky to be drawn against reigning Men's champion Death, and lost in straight games. Death then defeated shockingly unseeded Lines 26tp 26tp – Death has recently beaten 4 of the 7 GB Mac players. USA number one Rothman went down to Pete Trimmer after three close games.

**Friday:** the quarter-finals. The Manager had wanted to play

these on the most difficult lawns: 4, 5, 3 and 2; but the over-running of Westerby v Goacher on 3 meant that Maugham's match with Death went on lawn 7. Maugham won this 3-1. On lawn 2 Bamford went two up against Pete Trimmer, but Pete equalized. Pete had the first break in the decider, but Reg was the winner 17tp.

On lawn 4 Robert Fletcher had gone 2 games up, but Robert Fulford drew on his experience to make it 2-2. Fulford got to 4-back and peg in the decider. Fletcher hit his last shot, played an all-round break and pegged Fulford out, conceding contact. The contact leave: Blue (for 1-back) 6y S of 2nd corner, Black in 1st corner. Fulford played a thick take-off from 1st corner, hit Blue, tried to roll off 4-back, failed a 4 yard hoop. There was quite a crowd for the match, clinging to the shade to the East of lawn 5. Others were watching from beyond lawn 3. Fletcher made 1-back and had a leave. Fulford hit his lift, but again failed to get going. Fletcher made 2-back and had a leave near 4th corner. Fulford missed a 28-yarder to give Fletcher the three balls. Fletcher played a good turn, eventually making rover off his partner ball. No rush after the hoop, but in a strong position as he can always peg out one ball. In the event he pegged out partner from 10 yards to complete a deserved win, maybe momentous.

The fourth quarter-final didn't start till tea-time, as Westerby



Robert Fletcher and Reg Bamford after the final. Photo by Liz Larsson.

took more than the ten-hour time limit to defeat Goacher in the second round. Mulliner won the first game, but in the second Westerby pegged out his opponent. Your correspondent was looking forward to an exciting 3-ball ending, but the players decided it was too dark to finish with Westerby's clips on 2-back and peg, Mulliner on 4-back alone.

**Saturday:** Westerby, now for 3-back, made a leave near 3rd corner. Mulliner took on a long shot, but hit 4-back. From this Westerby finished. To the Manager's relief, Mulliner won the next two games quickly. Had Westerby won the match, he would have had to be scratched from the Doubles.

In the semi-final on lawn 8, the second game was key. Maugham reached 6 and peg. Bamford hit in and picked up a break. Normally he would use a 1-back leave, but decided to go all the way round to peg out Maugham, conceding contact. Players seemed more prepared to try such tactics this week – the conditions favoured the player with two balls more than usual. Bamford won the game without Maugham making another hoop, and eventually the match with a 5th turn QP in the decider.



Ben Rothman and Brian Cumming, very happy winners of the plate doubles event. Photo by Samir Patel.

The second game was also pivotal in the other semi-final on lawn 1. Another 3-ball ending, Mulliner pegging out Fletcher. Mulliner looked in control when approaching rover off partner, but under-approached. Fletcher's ball (for 2-back) was on the East boundary. Rather than try the difficult hoop Mulliner retreated to 2<sup>nd</sup> corner. Fletcher hit his 15-yarder, and finished with a 2-ball break. Fletcher won the match 3-0.



Keith Aiton is presented with the plate event trophy by Andrew Hope. Photo by Samir Patel.

The relative brevity of this match allowed the Manager to start one Doubles semi-final at about 6.30pm Saturday. Mulliner & Robert Fletcher now combined to beat Fulford & Burridge 26tp(F) 26tp(M). The other semi-final started on Sunday morning: Westerby & James le Moignan playing Dawson & Patel – the latter having won their quarter late Saturday evening.

It's been a wonderful week. Why?

I remind you of the fine weather and the tricky lawns. Also:

- the catering; lunches, teas, suppers, excellent as ever. The suppers, (provided free thanks to our sponsors) were a real boon, as players stayed to watch the late action rather than rush off to restaurants. This year marks the end of Mitsubishi's involvement: our thanks to them and to David Foulser for arranging the sponsorship.

- the ambience; being with a crowd of like-minded idiots, laughter, anecdotes, debating tactics

- the croquet; I just find it exciting. It's like any other live sport - unpredictable.

- the Club - Cheltenham really made us feel welcome, despite us using their lawns for a week. This is just a great place to be.

- the number of visiting foreign players; there were 8 Australians, 3 from North America and 1 from NZ. They employed different tactics: more than once I saw a Fletcher having a cross-wire at 3 with his balls near 1 - a reverse 1-back leave. And the idea, when break down, of going to 1-back with one peel on opponent, then a DPO with the second ball, seems to have been revived. (Or maybe they never gave up on it Down Under).

- the Manager; David Maugham is supremely competent. He will inevitably cop some flak for the tournament not finishing, and best-of-5 quarters rather than best-of-3 was perhaps too ambitious ("a calculated risk"). But it has been policy for many recent years to have reached only the quarters of both Singles and Doubles by the start of Friday. I suggest that Tournament Committee review this policy: I advocate playing the Doubles quarter-finals before Friday, perhaps at the cost of 2 fewer rounds of the qualifying Swiss.

*Sunday: The Final.* Robert Fletcher is the first Australian to reach an Open Singles final, and at 16 years 11 months the second youngest player (after Jacques Fournier in 1998). Robert had probably played the best croquet of the week to date, but Reg Bamford had the experience of many major finals.

A tentative first game had errors from both players. Robert failed 3 hoops; Reg's TP attempt yielded zero peels. The next three games were of excellent quality, and the crowd had the excitement of a decider.

The fifth game has the first "supershot" opening of the final: Robert plays the first ball about 2 yards NW of hoop 5. Robert misses 3<sup>rd</sup> turn, Reg misses 4<sup>th</sup> turn. This gives Robert the first chance, and he takes it, going to 4-back with an attempted diagonal spread – but Reg's balls aren't cross-pegged! Did Robert not notice? Did he hope Reg wouldn't notice? Reg hits his ten-yarder for an easy break.

Reg embarks on a standard TPO (Triple Peel of the Opponent). An unusual manoeuvre for Reg: Statto's records show only 4 instances since 2001. Reg lost just one of those games: against Robert in the World Championship semi last year.

Reg completes the TPO, leaving his balls in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> corners. Robert fails to approach hoop 1 from 4<sup>th</sup> corner, takes semi-wired position. Reg retreats back to 4<sup>th</sup> corner. Robert runs 1 and roquets the ball in 2<sup>nd</sup> corner. He approaches hoop 2, leaving a ten-foot hoop similar to the one he ran in Game 4. This time he fails.

There's now some jockeying for position. My expert analyst (Robert F. – the old one) is surprised both that Robert is offering Reg opportunities for a 3-ball finish and that Reg is refusing them, preferring cagey wired rushes...

Reg has reached hoop 6; Robert is still for hoop 2. Reg has a rush out of 4<sup>th</sup> corner, wired from Robert's ball on the West boundary. Robert shoots at Reg gently, hoping to find some hill around hoop 4. Goes off next to Reg.

Reg again ignores Robert's ball. He makes 6, 1-back, 2-back on a 2-ball break. Without a good rush after 2-back, he rolls partner ball near the East boundary going to Robert's ball in 4<sup>th</sup> corner. He approaches 3-back, makes it and now plays a 2-ball break with Robert's ball. 4-back, penult (just – lucky not to be hampered), and rover, with a rush to partner. A four-foot peg-out and Reg wins the decider +12tpo.

Congratulations to Reg Bamford on his seventh Open Singles Championship. He is now 4<sup>th</sup> on the all-time list, level with Humphrey Hicks and behind John Solomon (10 titles), Robert Fulford (9) and Nigel Aspinall (8). And congratulations to Robert Fletcher for his part in a memorable match. It's hard for someone to play and shoot like he did and still lose: perhaps his errors on the leaves in Games 3 and 5 were decisive.

Aiton won the Association Plate, Maugham & Beijderwellen the Y Doubles, Malcolm Fletcher the Z.

The Doubles final started at 6.35pm. At 9pm Robert Fletcher & Mulliner won the first game +1 (against Dawson & Patel). It is intended to complete the match at Surbiton during the MacRobertson Shield matches.

## Club News

### East Dorset Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club's Centenary Year

by John Lonsdale

The East Dorset Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club was formed on 8<sup>th</sup> February 1909 on a site leased from the Estate of Lord Wimborne. The croquet courts opened on 20<sup>th</sup> April 1910 followed a month later by the tennis courts. The Club now has nineteen tennis courts (including nine grass), five croquet courts, and a petanque court and achieved a record 800 members last year, including a thriving bridge section of over 100 members.

Last year the Club celebrated its centenary with a year-long programme of monthly events, set out in an attractive calendar so that everyone could keep track of the programme, which was enjoyed by Club members and the local community. First off was the biggest Bridge Drive we could fit into the Clubhouse. Twenty tables of members and visitors playing for a fine collection of prizes. Our Club House Café 8 provided a magnificent supper culminating in the cutting of a beautiful cake topped by one hundred candles which were blown out by the Bridge Chairman in two mighty puffs!

In February our President, Mrs. Pat Newman, held a Celebration Tea Party attended by the Mayor of Poole, the Chairman of the Croquet Association, Mrs. Patricia Duke-Cox, and Mr. Eric Dry representing the Lawn Tennis Association. Altogether 120 members and their distinguished guests attended, enjoyed a fine tea, listened to speeches of congratulation from our principal guests and drank the Club's health. At the end of tea the Centenary flag was dedicated and subsequently flew high above the Clubhouse for most of the year.

In April Waitrose provided a Cheese and Wine Tasting evening and in May we held a Barn Dance and Barbecue attended by 200

members and guests in spite of very doubtful weather which finally drove the event indoors. However everyone, including many children, enjoyed the evening. June was marked by our annual Oxley/Wood Bridge/Croquet tournament (named after the respective Section Chairmen who instituted the event and donated the two trophies).

In July the annual tennis Finals Day was preceded by a parade of past champions who were presented to Mr. Roger Draper, Chief Executive Officer of the Lawn Tennis Association. Also a Golf Day was held at the Parkstone Golf Club attended by 24 Club members.

There were two very successful events in August. First, a Tennis Clinic and Exhibition including a match between Peter Fleming and Chris Wilkinson followed by the opportunity for tennis members to try their skill against the two champions. Rows of chairs were placed around the show court, complete with umpire and ball boys (tennis juniors). More than 300 spectators, including many visitors, enjoyed the tennis, music and patronised the side shows around the grounds.

Later in August 170 members and their guests enjoyed an evening boat trip in Poole Harbour which ended with a close-up view of the weekly firework display in Poole Bay. The boat trip was scheduled to go out into Poole Bay earlier in the evening but the state of the sea persuaded the organisers that this might spoil our fine supper!

September was marked by the Croquet President's Cup in which the top eight players in the UK compete in a round robin tournament. October was the occasion for a formal dinner dance at the Premier Inn in Bournemouth, attended by 150 members and their guests, when the prizes for the Centenary Year Draw were awarded. The first prize was a holiday in Barbados for two, organised by the U-Care Cancer Charity, and other prizes were donated by local organisations. A Charity Auction was also held and U-Care's share of the proceeds from the Draw and the Auction was £3000. A great evening with dancing well after midnight.

Our annual firework display, which is hugely popular with the locals, took place in November, supported by 2000 visitors and later that month we held a quiz night with supper.

In December the Christmas Bridge Drive was held. Finally the year ended with a carol concert before Christmas and a New Year's Eve party in the Clubhouse.

Altogether a memorable year and a fitting tribute to 100 years of sporting activity at East Dorset. Congratulations to our Centenary organising committee and all who helped to make the year a great success.

### The Rother Valley Club Celebrates its 10th Birthday

Report and Photos by Bill Arliss

The Rother Valley Club is tucked away in the rolling Sussex countryside on the road between Chichester and Petworth. It can be quite difficult to find as the entrance is via a small lane from the main road in the village of Duncton. It is not visible from the main road but once round the sharp bend one first gets sight of a modern village hall with the croquet club to the right and on a slightly lower level than the hall. It is not a large club but has two full size and one half size lawns, the latter being used for practice. The view from the club is simply amazing with the South Downs stretching off into the distance and only about four buildings visible. It is accompanied by a small

but well equipped club house and equipment shed but quite surprisingly has a state of the art watering system. The membership register now shows over 70 players.

I suppose there are quite a number of similar sized clubs around the UK but I doubt whether there are many that can match the almost fairytale development of this club. The way in which it has grown from a green field site to a fully established club in the last ten years sets an ideal target for all new clubs to achieve.



A well attended lunch to celebrate ten years of the Rother Valley Club.

It all started back in 1992 when retired and much travelled cleric, Canon Peter Cole and his wife Marion decided to settle in the small Sussex village of Fittleworth. Peter had been given a croquet set for use in his retirement. Being a very active type of person Peter advertised locally for others interested in playing croquet and by 1994 had set up an embryonic club with eight other members playing on a half sized lawn in a private garden. They very soon outgrew their lawn and looked for larger accommodation. They managed to obtain space for one full sized and one three quarter sized lawns on the local sports club cricket outfield. Whilst this gave them much needed facilities to increase their membership it was not ideal especially as the fast bowlers started their run from around hoop 3 every weekend. In 1998 two of their younger members were married at the local RC church in Duncton (just down the road from Fittleworth) and held their reception in the parish hall just behind the church. They noticed that just beside the hall was a flat area that had been used as a football pitch but was then falling into disuse. A few words to the imaginative committee at Fittleworth and this started a train of events that has led to the formation of the croquet club we now know as Rother Valley. Although the club is actually in Duncton, the committee felt that the name of Rother Valley was more indicative of the catchment area from which they hoped to draw members.

And so on 20 May 2000 John Solomon, the then President of the CA, was invited to cut the tape and open the new Rother Valley Croquet Club. Following the tape cutting ceremony, John then played an exhibition game of AC against myself to complete the opening.

We now jump exactly ten years to May 2010 and both John and myself were invited back to the tenth birthday celebration. Much has happened in the intervening years to change the original two croquet lawns into what can now be regarded as a very thriving croquet club with all the facilities that one comes to expect with an established club plus of course the club's involvement in all the

local Federation activities. This of course has come at a price and much hard work by the committee in raising all the necessary funding. Of course Peter has been fully involved with all the developments but has managed to build up a team that I am sure will carry on the growth of Rother Valley during the next and subsequent decades. Technically Peter has partially retired and has been appointed life President of the club for all the work he has done to date. However as long as his health remains I cannot see him taking too much of a back seat. The records show that grants were obtained from many sources including the Croquet Association, the SE Croquet Federation, the Chichester District Council, the Sussex Community Foundation's Grassroots Fund, the Sussex Playing Fields Association and the National Lottery Sports. However the most recent acquisition overshadowed all previous grants and was from the Petworth Leisure Fund who gave £42,000 which allowed the establishment of the practice lawn, plumbing and electricity for the club house, a watering system and a modern mower.

The sporting side of the club was considerably enhanced in the early years by the recruitment of the Rev Nick Waters as a member. Nick was Chaplain at the local public school at Ardingly and took care of croquet for the school so he was a natural for the position of club coach and ran regular coaching sessions at the club when he was not flying around the Sussex countryside in his micro-light.

The weather could not have been better for the birthday celebrations with brilliant blue skies all day and a slight wind to keep everyone cool. The festivities started with a review of the club by Peter Cole and then Ian Burn, ex club Captain, ex Chairman, for many years and fully involved in all the developments,



Afternoon fun on the lawns at Rother Valley.

presented club members and their guests with copies of a book he has written and had published on the first decade of the Rother Valley Croquet Club. This is an excellent publication, available from the club, with many colour illustrations and describes just how it is possible to develop in such a short time. Everyone then went into the village hall for the birthday luncheon. For once the club ladies were not called up to do the catering and an excellent cold lunch was provided by outside caterers. After lunch, a short talk was given by John Isaacs entitled 'Stuck in the Hoop'. John retired last October as Chair of the CA but is still Chairman of the Southwick club and has recently joined Rother Valley (as it is just down the road). Activities then transferred to the lawns with a demonstration Golf Croquet match between Jon Isaacs and myself. A croquet gymkhana was then run for all members to participate

in and activities completed with John Solomon unveiling a new honours board naming all club competition winners. Tea and a birthday cake were then served in the village hall. Nancy Allan who had made the cakes chose some rather fierce candles to decorate the cakes and managed to activate the smoke alarms. Luckily there was no connection to the local fire service but it did take a few minutes to discover how to silence the alarms.

I cannot complete this article without once again returning to the club President Peter Cole. With doubt there have been many who have contributed to the development of the Rother Valley Club but it is under his leadership that the club has managed to progress so quickly. Having known Peter for over ten years, I for one am someone who has been hooked by his infectious enthusiasm for anything he becomes involved with. The club already have their eyes upon some land adjacent to the present lawns and although the local Council are not willing to part with it at present, I would not be all surprised to see the club become a four lawn club in the next decade.

## The View from the Bar

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

It's been quiet on the list in the last couple of months in terms of discussion issues. Although there have been 559 posts in June and July to date, over 300 were in-play reports on the Men's & Women's Championships, the Opens, and the Scottish Opens, sent in painstakingly by Chris Williams, Andrew Gregory and Martin Stephenson respectively. If you're interested in top level croquet – and it does help if you play the advanced game and so can follow the reports, or else know some of the players involved – these are fascinating reading, allowing you to follow the action as it unravels. I found the tension in the end-game in the Opens quarter-final between Robert Fulford and Robert Fletcher incredible – poised at two games all, with one ball pegged out in the last game. It's hard to bring tension across the miles from a croquet lawn in Cheltenham to a London office, but the reports managed to do that.

There's not much of that which is worthy of re-publication after the event, however, but fortunately there were a couple of interesting discussions on other topics. One was on the rules and etiquette once a referee has been called. What do you do if the referee rules that a shot you have played is a fault, when you think it is clean? It's clear cut, of course – you accept the referee's decision. But what about the reverse – the referee calls it clean, when you know it is a fault. One contributor felt that you should accept the referee's decision here – the referee is in charge and not to accept his decision is rather insulting. He argued that because Law 48 (a)(1) says "The players act as referees of the game in the absence of a referee in charge ...", by implication where a referee is present, the players are not acting as referees and therefore there is no obligation on the striker to declare a fault. However most others felt that the striker is often better placed to call a fault than the referee, and that therefore to do so does not reflect badly on the

referee – in fact, it may not merely be acceptable, but rather essential to fair play. It was also pointed out Regulation R2 (Referee in Charge) says that "The presence of a Referee in Charge neither relieves the striker of his obligation nor deprives the adversary of his rights to warn that a questionable stroke is about to be played or to draw attention to any error that may have been committed".

Another interesting thread was about rush lines. Newcomers are often taught to play croquet strokes along rush lines, so that if a shot is hit slightly too hard or too gently, the next rush is still obtained. To put it another way, the previous croquet stroke should as far as possible be along the same line as the desired rush following that stroke. However Rob Edlin-White initiated an interesting discussion, pointing out that in many cases it seemed simpler to play the croquet stroke as a straight shot, forfeiting the rush line approach for the benefit of not having to calculate split. His example was that if the Hoop 3 pioneer (say yellow) is two yards west of the hoop, a rush line aficionado would want after making Hoop 2 to rush to due west of Hoop 3 so as to play the croquet stroke going to yellow along the rush line. However this means playing a wide split shot. It might be simpler to take croquet from somewhere about 3 yards west and 4 yards north of the yellow, so as to play the croquet stroke in a straight line loading Hoop 4 and getting a rush on yellow to Hoop 3. The latter option means not approaching along the rush line, but also avoids having to calculate split. In the discussion that followed there was a fair degree of support for this, and a feeling that rush-line theory might be more of a personal preference than a universal theory.

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

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## 2011 Subscription & Levy Rates

The subscription rates for 2011, in pounds sterling, are as follows:

|                                      |         |
|--------------------------------------|---------|
| <b>Individual members</b>            |         |
| Standard and Overseas (including EU) | 42 (37) |
| Standard and Overseas composite      | 63 (58) |
| Junior                               | 12 (12) |
| Non-tournament                       | 27 (22) |
| Non-tournament composite             | 36 (31) |

(Figures in brackets are the discounted rates for payment by direct debit.)

|                       |      |
|-----------------------|------|
| <b>Member clubs</b>   |      |
| Standard (per capita) | 7.30 |

(Minimum total of 50; newly registered clubs in first, second and third years, maximum total of 50, 75 and 100.)

|                          |    |
|--------------------------|----|
| Universities and schools | 30 |
|--------------------------|----|

|                   |    |
|-------------------|----|
| <b>Affiliates</b> |    |
| UK                | 30 |
| Overseas          | 40 |

Subscriptions were last raised in 2009. The main rates have been increased at around the rate of inflation over two years. In agreeing these increases, Council was mindful of the negative impact on the CA's finances of

- raising this year the lawn hire fee paid by the CA to clubs hosting CA events – from £22 to £25 per court per day, and
- reducing next year the levy rate paid by clubs to the CA for tournaments listed in the Fixtures Book – from 30% to 25% of entry fees.

Roger Bray, Hon. Treasurer

## Tournament Round-Up



Martin Granger Brown, President of the Bowdon Club, presents John Lucas with the Reed Cup.

### Bowdon May Tournament 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> May

Report & photo by Mike Steer

Despite a gloomy forecast the weather for the first day turned out to be very pleasant. Unfortunately the second and third day heralded in some rather low temperatures but at least it stayed fine. Twenty four players from as far away as Glasgow competed for the Reed Cup. With handicaps ranging from -0.5 to 16

the result was no easier to predict than the general election.

The eventual winner, in a close final, was John Lucas of Bowdon and the runner-up was Mick Haytack of Ashby. Dave Holland (Bowdon) won the Egyptian event. The tournament was managed with humour and characteristic attention to detail, by Lorna Frost. This was a most enjoyable and friendly tournament played on superb lawns.



Mark Avery with the Robert Prichard Trophy at Hunstanton.

### Robert Prichard Wknd, Hunstanton 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> May

Report & photo by Nick Harris

Mark Avery with 9 wins from 11 games won the Robert Prichard at Hunstanton in very variable Meteorological and Plummer conditions, mainly sun and calm on Saturday but on Sunday and Monday, Hunstonic winds (strong and bitter from the north), bursts of hail and showers.

George Collin, with a win over Mark, was the runner up with 6/8 and reduced his handicap from 1.5 to 1 and Nick Steiner in third place with 5/7 had his handicap brought down to 4.

### Ramsgate Open 8-9th May

Report by Andrew Hobbs

On a typical British Spring Day in May eight hardened croquet players descended on Ramsgate croquet club to try and win the Ramsgate Open. In weather more suited to penguins and polar bears the players braved the elements with a promise of a good lunch to keep them going. Alex Jardine who was in superb form came back from behind in his first match to beat Andrew Hobbs and then managed to play near faultless croquet to take six wins out of seven, including making a triple peel look very easy.

Alan Edwards and Steven Woolnough did not give in easily and fought hard to rein in Alex but to no avail. David Dray is one to look out for the future as he played very well and took some good scalps. He is rapidly improving and should be down to scratch in no time.

We would like to thank Dennis Shaw and Ramsgate croquet club for Good Management, Lovely Lawns and Fantastic Lunches, this made up tremendously for the weather and enabled us to all have an enjoyable time.

### Dennis Scarr wins Middlesbrough HC Tournament on 8-9<sup>th</sup> May

Report by Charles Waterfield

Twelve players from several northern clubs (Bowdon, Penrith & North Lakes, Tyneside, Auckland and M<sup>bro</sup>) entered. As last year, we used the 18-point format with 2-hour time-limits which worked well; only a quarter of the games going to time. Four rounds were played in a biting wind on Saturday and three more on Sunday, when we had sunshine, thank goodness.

Rounds were selected from an American block, starting with games between similar handicaps. Subsequent rounds were then chosen so as to minimise waiting time and allow some quicker finishers to start their next games. Block positions were computed at the end of play each day by Geoff Taylor using a 'comparative scoring' program (based on Gaunt & Wheeler), in which each person's performance is compared with everyone else's (only games played against 'opponents in common' being significant). Dennis, winning all his seven games, emerged as clear victor, collecting a glass trophy (and a significant handicap reduction!).

### The Latham Cup, Bristol, 8-9 May 2010

Report by Bob Scott

Twelve players, eight of them from Bristol CC, challenged for The Latham cup on a cold and breezy weekend. Players were divided into two blocks and Gill Pocock of Bristol and Richard Jackson of Sussex County were the two block winners each having won 4 of their 5 games. Spectators enjoyed a thrilling final during which Richard pegged out one of Gill's balls but Gill persevered and won the game +3 just after Richard had failed to make his final hoop.

### Surbiton Speed Doubles 15- 16 May

Report by Samir Patel

A smaller-than-usual band of players gathered on FA-cup weekend to contest the Nelson Morrow Tray in the annual Surbiton Speed Doubles tournament, played this year as a double-round robin of 26pt handicap doubles (that's 5 handicap doubles matches per day!).

Newcomers Sam Murray and Martin Siedel initially found the going tough, starting with 5 losses, but found their form and an approach to the format on the second day, winning 3 from 5 in the second round. Regulars (having contested every time the event has been held) George Noble and Alice Williams started

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well, winning 4 from 5 in the first series, but faded on Sunday and didn't win another game.

That left Kevin Carter and Avril Rangoni-Machiavelli to surge into the lead, with some solid performances, including a rare - for this event - +26 win over Phil Eardley and Phil Eardley (who was partnering himself on day 2, after his original partner Gina Lewis had to withdraw).

Late entries Samir Patel and Colin Dalziel had to play catch up, drawing level before the final round, which was - as a result of some excellent clairvoyant management - scheduled against Kevin and Avril and in effect the final.

After some early sparring, Kevin took a break to 4-back, leading Samir to take on what may be the first ever Speed-Doubles TPO (in just under 10 minutes!). That left Colin and Avril to battle out the 3-ball ending, with Colin just making it to Rover when his time expired. Samir and Colin managed to engineer the final hoop while Avril was catching up, Avril got round before they could peg out - and with 90 seconds of her time remaining.



Bob Potter, Chairman Woodhall Spa CC, with Richard and Mike Bilton

### Lincoln Castle surrenders

Report & photo by Roy Ware

The weekend of the 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> May saw 68 players from clubs within the East Midlands Federation descend on Lincoln castle as members of the Woodhall Spa club organised the annual Golf Croquet Doubles event. The object of the exercise was to encourage beginners to try their hand at tournament play supported by more experienced partners

This years event was organised and managed by Roy Ware, now a member of the woodhall Spa club ably assisted by Mary Currie who calmly collated all the scores and helped keep everyone in order, including Roy.

Play was on six approximately half size lawns and due to the number of players involved just the first seven hoops were run during the block and semi final stages. Players attended from Bakewell CC; Branston U3A; Richmond Park; Long Eaton; North Hykeham; Nottingham; Southwell and Woodhall Spa with ages ranging from 13 to 90. With more than one hundred games to be played everyone did their bit to ensure that the games kept flowing with the chilling breeze making players get on and play rather than sit and watch. Mary however did slowly change to a lighter shade of blue sitting doing the scores.

At the end of the block stage Richard Bilton, age 13, and his father Mike, from Richmond Park won block A; Steve Marsh and Gill Roberts, Bakewell won block B; Tony and Valerie Fisher, Richmond Park won block C and finally block D was won by Angel Mumby and Keith Whitelam from North Hykeham. Both Semi-finals were close affairs with Richard and Mike Bilton competing against Angela Mumby and Keith Whitelam in the final.

It was pleasing to see so many people stop and watch the final and although the eventual losers put up strong resistance the Biltons were eventually easy winners.

On the Sunday two lawns were used for members of the public to try the game with a steady stream of people giving it a try. Towards the end of the afternoon the Mad Hatters Tea Party decided to visit the croquet lawns as the Queen of Hearts; The Mad Hatter; White Rabbit and Alice joined in the fun. All in all a successful weekend.

**Pendle & Craven B-level tournament 22<sup>nd</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> May**  
*Report by Peter Wilson*

The weekend weather was exceptionally hot and sunny drying the lawns and leading to some problems with hoop setting but otherwise making play very pleasant. With 12 entries a Swiss format was used. Alan Edwards won the tournament with a perfect score, Richard Smith was runner-up. Ken Jones won the Managers Peeling Prize with 6, and both Alan and Richard earned their respective handicap changes to 0.5 and 1.5.



*Eileen Gallagher receiving trophy from Southport Vice-President, Don Williamson*

**Eileen Gallagher Wins Southport Jubilee Handicap**  
*Report & photo by Tony Thomas*

Spring Bank Holiday in Southport means another Handicap Tournament (for the Jubilee Tankard) and weather to wonder at. This year was a two day event rather than the traditional three days. Waterproofs were the order of the first day, with continual rain throughout - yet the lawns remained playable all day. Come day two and the sun shone brightly, giving us a glorious sunny Southport day. Sixteen players battled through five rounds of a Swiss event over the two days, very well managed by Barry Keen. Eileen Gallagher (Southport) emerged victorious winning all five games, beating Peter Hallett (Bowdon) in a close game. She takes the Jubilee Tankard and a handicap

decrease from 14 to 12. Tony Thomas (Southport) won the runner-up prize with four wins and gained a handicap reduction from 6 to 5. An enjoyable event, supported as always by excellent catering, no wonder there are requests to return to the three day format next year.

**Bath President's Cup 5<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> June**  
*Report by Daniel Mills*

The field for the President's Cup was arguably the strongest ever to line up for a CA tournament at Bath in the modern era with handicaps ranging from -0.5 to 2.5. The defending champion, Richard M Smith from Bristol, was rocked in the opening round by a defeat against Gabrielle Higgins playing precision croquet of the finest order. Andrew Willis, playing on his home lawns, snatched what he admitted was an undeserved victory in the final minutes of his opening match against last year's runner-up, Richard H Smith from Bowdon.

Having won the battle of the minus players against Jim Field in the opening round, Kevin Carter notched up another win against Andrew in the next round. Gabrielle played Carol Smith in the second round which was a repeat of the final of last year's Women's Championships, only this time Gabrielle emerged the winner. It was back to business as normal for the holder as he won against Mike Hammelev who struggled for form throughout the weekend.

Kevin remained undefeated after Day 1 which proved to be a long day for some. Gabrielle ended the day on three wins out of four having succumbed to Kevin in the third round. The defending champion (Richard M Smith) had battled back after his opening defeat to also end the day with three wins out of four and he was to win what proved to be a critical match against Kevin in the morning on Day 2.

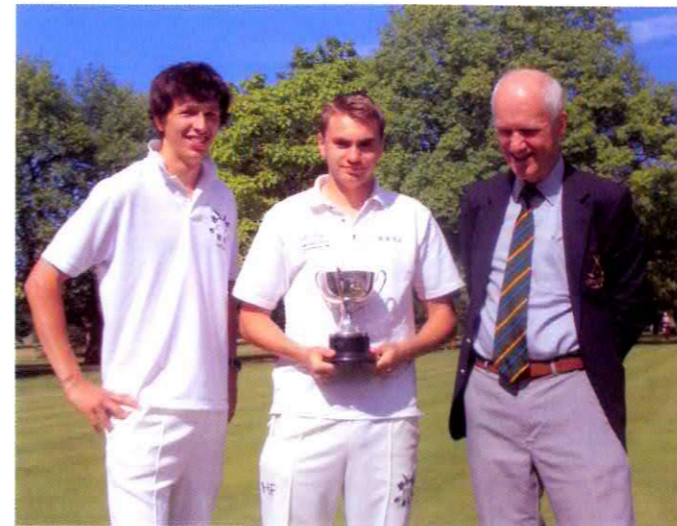
The manager had offered a bottle of wine to the player with the most peels on Day 2 and this appeared to inspire Jim as he returned to winning ways against Carol in the morning on Day 2 with some audacious but probably unnecessary peels along the way. Andrew pulled off a surprising and yet decisive victory against Gabrielle in the next round which left Kevin and Richard M Smith on five wins and Andrew and Gabrielle on four wins with just one round left to play.

A return to form for Carol put paid to Kevin's chances in the final round and similarly any hope of a tournament victory for Andrew was denied by Jim. Gabrielle finished her weekend with a win against Mike who was still not playing at his best but this was not enough for Gabrielle to snatch the trophy from Richard M Smith who finished his weekend with a narrow victory against his resilient namesake leaving him with six wins out of a possible seven.



*Richard Smith looking very relaxed in play at Bath. Photo by Roger Hayes.*

Having accepted the President's Cup from Bob Whitaker, it was just left to Richard to thank the Tournament Manager, Roger Hayes. Will anyone be able to deny him a hat-trick of victories?



*Tom Whiteley and Harry Fisher (Oxford) receive the Edmund Reeve Varsity Team trophy from Andrew Hope. Photo by Ian Plummer.*

**6 Triples, 6 Universities, 17 Players and the Student Championships, Oxford 19<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> June**  
*Report by Dr Ian Plummer*

Players from Cambridge, Gloucester, Nottingham, Trinity College Dublin and Warwick met at Oxford University to compete for the Student Individual and Team Championships. This year there was a wide span of ages as well as abilities; two mature students were amongst the pack and handicaps ranged from -1 to the undefined! All matches were played Level Advanced so there was no opportunity for banditry.

Oxford's Sports department claim not to have mowers available for croquet which would cut under 12mm! Consequently the lawns speeds were ~8 plummers making long rolls arduous but control easy. (Donations of cash or suitable lawn mowers welcomed!)

The manager, Harry Fisher, ingeniously alternated doubles and singles for successive matches and despite short time limits the majority of games completed.

In the semi-finals of the team event Will Gee (Oxford) (-1) tripled his novice partner, Luke Valori, against the Trinity College Dublin pair. Tom Whitley (Oxford) also notched up a well-controlled triple in the other semi against Cambridge, with the assistance of his partner Harry Fisher. Not content with that triple Tom repeated the process to beat Will and Luke to win the Edmund Reeve Varsity Trophy for the team event ... again with Harry's assistance!

In the singles, Will Gee was knocked out in the semi-finals by some audacious play by Harry Fisher - unfortunately Will's shooting was not at its best. In the other semi Tom Whiteley beat Danny Johnson (TCD) this time without a triple! Danny had however managed one in an earlier round.

The singles final was another all-Oxford event: Tom versus Harry. Tom played controlled and precise croquet and won the Dudley Hamilton-Miller Student Championship Singles cup for the second year running ... with another triple!

Congratulations to Tom and Harry and our thanks to Andrew Hope who gave an excellent speech about the benefits of croquet and awarded the prizes on the behalf of the Croquet Association.



*A brief break for Tea at the Tyneside mid-week handicap event. Photo by Derek Watts.*

**Roger Staples wins the Tyneside Mid Week Handicap Tournament for the second time in three years.**  
*By Derek Trotman*

The twelve entries for the Tyneside Mid Week Handicap (8-10 June) were divided into two blocks (Red and Blue) with the block games scheduled for the first two days. Winners and runner-ups of the blocks played the semi-finals on the third day followed by the final. The remaining competitors played cross block games.

Despite almost continual rain and wind on the second day of the event which took a canvas gazebo over the hedge surrounding lawn 2 and would have deposited it in the lake if the players had not rushed to its rescue, the tournament was completed on time. The damage to the gazebo however meant a lack of any shelter from the elements on the lawn for the remainder of the event. You need to be tough to play croquet in the north-east!

The unbeaten winners of both blocks, David Millener (Belsay) and Tony Whateley (Glasgow) played Derek Old (Belsay) and Roger Staples (Middlesbrough) respectively in the semi-finals. They both succumbed to their opponents, Derek Old winning his game quite comfortably +19 and Roger Staples after a much harder game won +8.

The final was closely contested until Roger appeared to have gained control but he then failed to peg out both balls from near the south boundary. This allowed Derek to score a few more hoops before Roger hit the peg with his remaining ball from about 5 yards in from third corner to win +7.

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