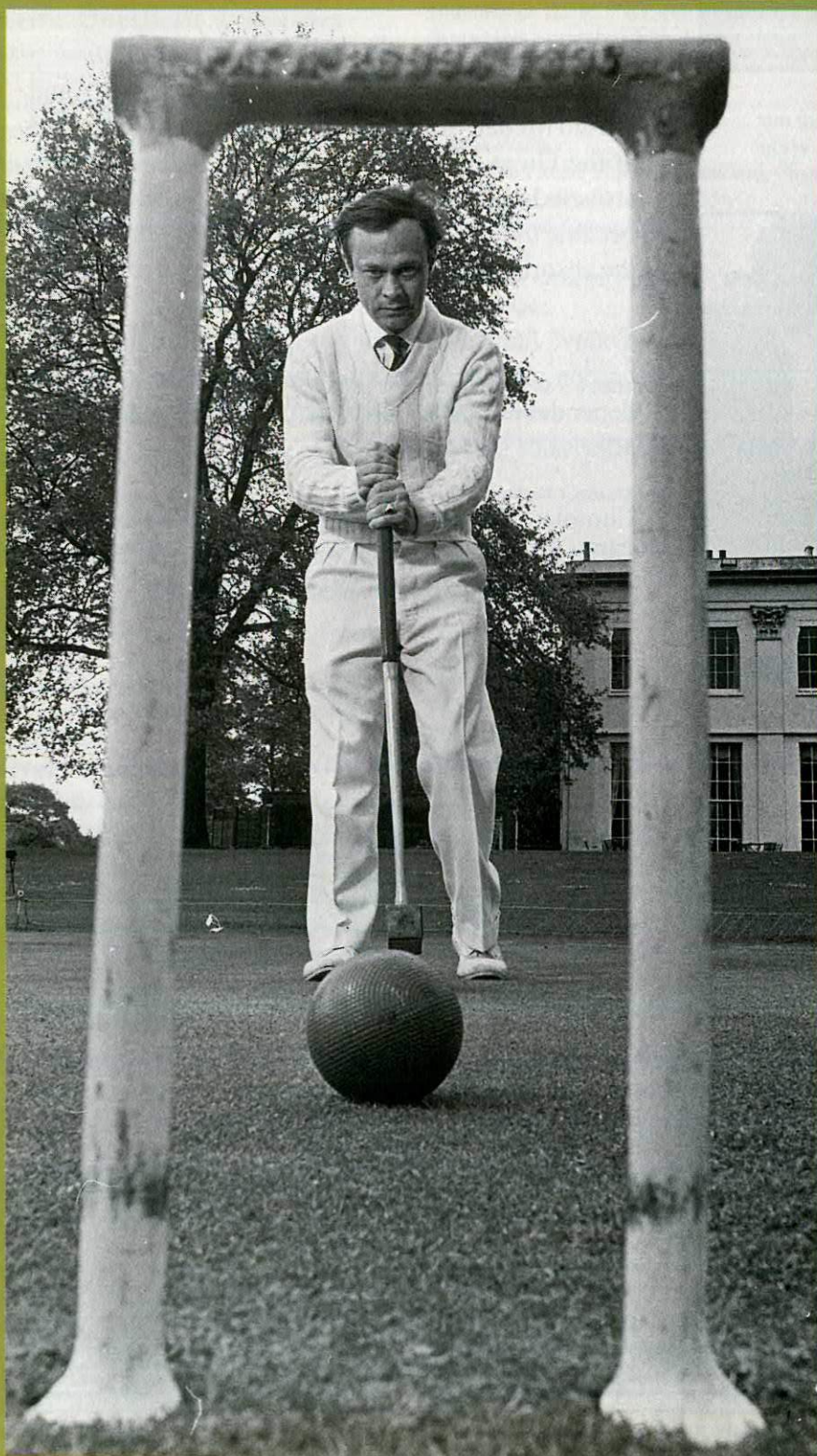


The Croquet Gazette

Issue 253

January 1998



IN THIS ISSUE

Letters

Golf Croquet Extra

News & Information

The Solomon Lecture

One-Ball Croquet

Coaching

Omega Croquet

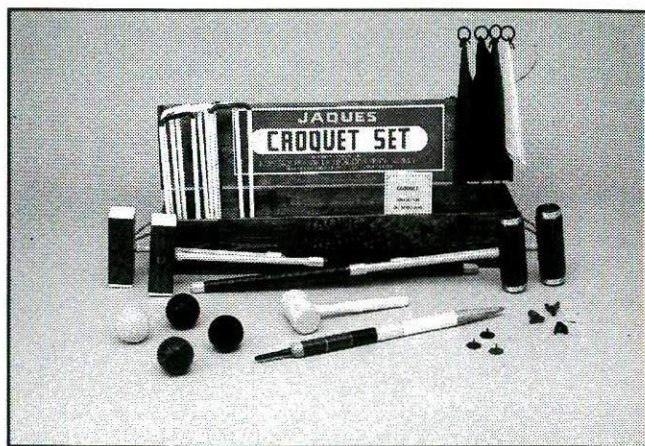
Handicap Alterations

Around & About

Tournament Talk

Chairman's Column

Centenary Report

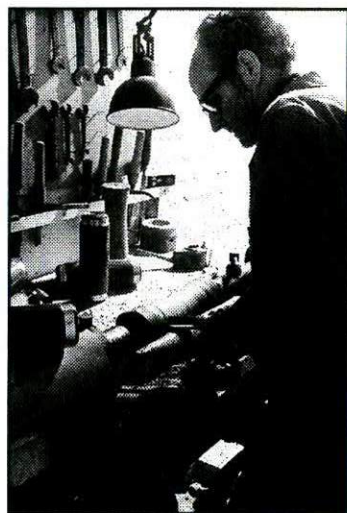
**JUBILEE CROQUET SET**

One of the range of twenty or so sets we produce in our South London factory suitable for beginners right through to tournament players.

CRAFTSMAN

One of Jaques' team of wood-turners and craftsmen who make an extensive range of high quality mallets using English and foreign hardwoods.

Ask for details of the latest Tuftex, twin-faced "long life" mallets - ideal for all standards of play.

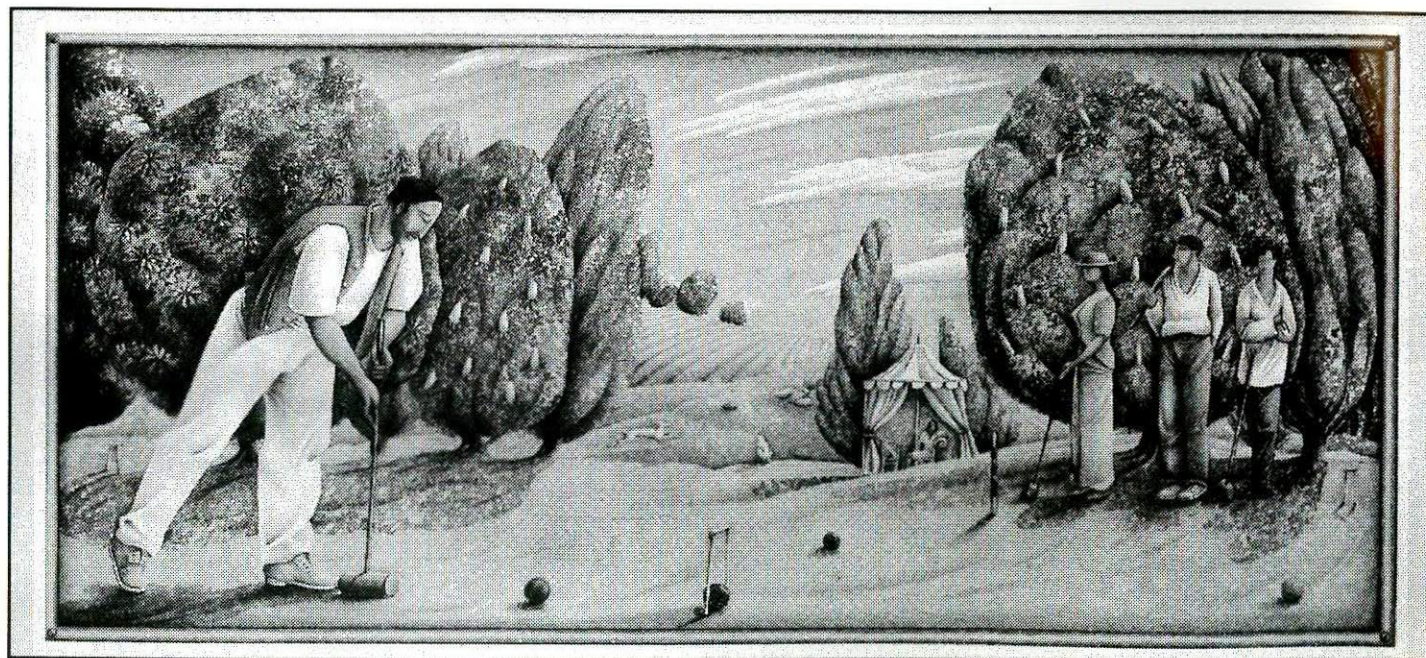


John Jaques II won a place in sporting history - and a Gold Medal - for introducing croquet into England at the Great Exhibition in 1851. His display there attracted such wide attention that the game speedily became the vogue and over the years developed into the absorbing sport enjoyed by so many world-wide.

Today, Jaques sell their products to tournament and garden players alike, all of whom can rely on their dependable quality and the company's unmatched after sales service.

Complete Croquet sets range in price from £80 to £800 and mallets from £25 to £150. Full specifications and colour brochure available on request.

"We taught the world to play...."



361 WHITEHORSE ROAD THORNTON HEATH SURREY CR7 8XP ENGLAND TELEPHONE 0181 684 4242 FAX 0181 684 4243

PUBLICATION DETAILS

The Croquet Gazette is published six times per year in January, March, May, July, September and November.

Publication Schedule

Copy should reach the editor before 16th December, 16th February, 16th April, 16th June, 16th August and 16th October.

Advertising

Full details of all advertising rates and data are available at all clubs as well as through the Editor of the Gazette and the Secretary of the CA.

Specific Questions & Queries

Specific questions or queries should be sent direct to the relevant CA official, e.g. Laws questions to the chairman of the Laws Committee.

Copy Details

General copy and contributions should be sent direct to the editor on floppy disc (text or ASCII files). Typed work or clear handwriting is also acceptable.

Photographs are always required. Both black and white or colour prints can be utilised. Please detail on the reverse of all photos the subject of the picture, and if you require the photographs to be returned please include your address on the reverse.

Tournament Results & Reports

Tournament results should be reported on the new tournament return sheet. These have been issued in a bid to make the reporting of events and the administration of the rankings easier. Please ensure that the forms are used. Tournament reports should be written and sent to the editor within SEVEN DAYS of the completion of a tournament. Failure to comply with this guideline will result in reports failing to be published.

Delivery Queries

Queries regarding delivery of the Gazette to members should be directed to the Secretary of the Croquet Association and not to the Editor.

This Issue

Editor Gail Curry
Production Gail Curry
Syd Jones
Margaret Selmes
Paul Campion

Printing The Print House, Prospect Terrace, North Shields, Tyne & Wear
Tel 0191-2587027

CROQUET ASSOCIATION CONTACTS**Secretary**

Paul Campion
The Croquet Association, The Hurlingham Club,
Ranelagh Gardens, London SW6 3PR
Tel: 0171-7363148

Chairman of Council

Bill Arliss
30 Hove Park Villas, Hove, West Sussex BN3 6HG. Tel: 01273 728204
E-mail arliss@mistral.co.uk

Gazette Editor

Gail Curry
33 Percy Gardens, Tynemouth, Tyne & Wear
NE30 4HQ. Tel: 0191-2579045
E-mail gail@cgazette.demon.co.uk

Tournament Committee

Bill Arliss
30 Hove Park Villas, Hove, West Sussex BN3 6HG. Tel: 01273 728204
E-mail arliss@mistral.co.uk

Laws Committee

Bill Lamb
5 Bondyke Close, Cottingham, North
Humberside HU16 5ND. Tel: 01482-840739
E-mail bill.lamb@bondyke.demon.co.uk

Handicap Coordination Committee

Bill Lamb

Coaching Committee

Adrian Wadley
5 Hawthorn Road, Plumley, Knutsford, Cheshire
WA16 0UH. Tel: 01565-722556

International Committee

Colin Irwin

Finance & General Purposes Committee

David Magee
Hurstwood, Moorend, Hartpury, Gloucester
GL19 3DG. Tel: 01452-700353

Development Committee

Derek Trotman
3 High Stobhill, Morpeth, Northumberland
NE61 2TT. Tel: 01670-518228

Golf Croquet Committee

Syd Jones
36 Front Street, Monkseaton, Whitley Bay, Tyne
& Wear NE25 8DF. Tel: 0191-2522962

Publicity Committee

Syd Jones

Editorial Board

Hamish Hall
5 Telford House, North Road, Bristol BS8 3PP
Tel: 0117-9741683

Selection Committee

Ian Burridge
47 Porter Close, West Thurrock, Grays, Essex
RM20 4AS. Tel: 01375-379275
E-mail Ian_Burridge@msn.com

Equipment Committee

Bill Sidebottom
Malthouse, 6 Malthouse Lane, Kenilworth,
Warwickshire CV8 1AB. Tel: 01926-852638

**FEDERATION REPRESENTATIVES
ON COUNCIL****EAST MIDLANDS**

Jean Ackerman
The Dovecot, Middle Lane, Morton-cum-
Fiskerton, Southwell, Notts NG25 0VY
Tel: 01636-830275

EAST ANGLIA

Judy Anderson
16 Wellpond Close, Sharnbrook, Bedford MK44
1PL. Tel: 01234-781783

LONDON & SOUTH EAST

Quiller Barrett
16 Frinton Court, Hardwick Green, London W13
8DW. Tel: 0181-9985453

NORTH WEST

Colin Irwin
5 Hawthorn Road, Plumley, Knutsford, Cheshire
WA16 0UH

Tel: 01565-722556

CROQUET NORTH

Bruce Rannie
7 Keswick Drive, Cullercoats, North Shields,
Tyne & Wear NE30 3EW. Tel: 0191-2529739

SOUTH WEST

David Magee
Hurstwood, Moorend, Hartpury, Gloucester
GL19 3DG. Tel: 01452-700353

SOUTHERN

Bob Smith
33 Donegal Close, Caversham, Reading, Berks
RG4 5DT. Tel: 01734-478802

WEST MIDLANDS

Bill Sidebottom
Malthouse, 6 Malthouse Lane, Kenilworth,
Warwickshire CV8 1AB

Tel: 01926-852638

YORKSHIRE & HUMBERSIDE

Mike Evans
12 Middlehowe Green, Walkington, Beverley
HU17 8TE. Tel: 01482-882936

(If any of the above contacts change please inform the editor and the CA Secretary.)

TWO NEW ARRIVALS**1. CROQUET TACTICS SKILLS 1 + 2****2. CROQUET TACTICS SKILLS 3**

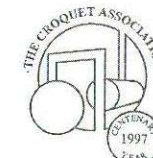
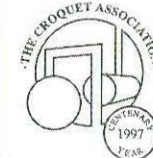
By Keith Bretherton

&

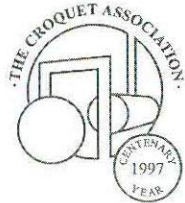
Robert Fulford

Price £23.50 each Post Paid

send orders to: The Croquet Association,
c/o The Hurlingham Club,
Ranelagh Gardens, London SW6 3PR



THE CROQUET GAZETTE



Issue 253 January 1998 £2.50

Front Cover: John Solomon takes a break from play in 1968.

Next Issue Published 14th March

Copy Deadline 16th February

Editor's Hotline
Monday 16th February
6.00 pm - 10.00 pm

CONTENTS

OBITUARY.....	4
CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN.....	4
NEWS & INFORMATION.....	5
LETTERS.....	6
A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR.....	7
OMEGA CROQUET.....	8
TOURNAMENT TALK.....	8
CENTENARY INDOOR FINAL.....	9
COACHING.....	10
ONE BALL CROQUET.....	11
STOP PRESS COLUMN.....	11
THE CENTENARY COMMITTEE REPORT.....	12
THE CENTENARY DOUBLES TOURNAMENT..	14
THE SOLOMON LECTURE..	15
GOLF CROQUET EXTRA.....	20
HANDICAP ALTERATIONS..	23
CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING.	23
AROUND & ABOUT.....	24

~ Obituary ~

Stephen Tarrant Badger 5.2.1940 - 14.11.1997

Stephen Tarrant Badger died on 14th November 1997 after a sudden and massive heart attack. He was born on 5th February 1940 in Dorset and maintained close involvement in the county of his birth, playing regularly for it in the Inter-counties Championships. He was educated at Sherborne and Pembroke College, Oxford, where he read Mods and Greats and where his love of ancient and medieval history of the church, had its beginnings. He joined Morgan Grenfell after leaving Oxford, and his critical faculties and ability to quickly grasp the salient points of an argument won him the respect of his colleagues and clients alike.

Having started croquet at the age of 7, playing and always beating his sister, he joined the Croquet Association in 1985 and within 6 years had been elected to Council. Almost immediately his banking skills were made use of for he became the chairman of the F&GP committee in 1992 which position he held until 1995, when he became Vice-Chairman of Council.

He joined Dulwich Sports club initially as a squash and hockey player, and then as a croquet player. For the major term of his membership, he was president of the croquet section of the club, and gently but firmly encouraged the ascendancy of association croquet over golf croquet. He had the great ability of identifying people's strengths and then involving them in the administrative or practical tasks involved in running the club. Not the greatest handyman in the world, he would nevertheless throw himself enthusiastically into the essential maintenance works that we regularly carried out at Dulwich: nobody could apply creosote with quite the panache that Stephen did!

In addition to Dulwich he became a member of the Cheltenham Club some three years ago when he bought a house adjoining the club and was closely involved with the SE Federation, of which he was Hon. Secretary for five years until 1995.

Stephen's croquet playing was characterised by his intense and consistent concentration. Most people's concentration during a croquet game follows a cosine curve pattern: improving as the game develops, peaking, dipping and then rallying again as the game draws to its conclusion. Stephen, however, was consistent throughout and many opponents found, to their peril, that Stephen would never present them with lapses in concentration in which they could nip in and wrap up the game. He viewed triple peels as an unnecessary risk, and if a game was progressing as he believed it should, with neither side making unforced errors, such displays of precocious ability were inappropriate.

Stephen was essentially a quiet person and it was almost a surprise when he became Chairman of Council in October 1996 to find he could be very firm. Waffling discussion in Council was not tolerated and he would swiftly move on to the next item on the agenda as soon as he thought no more useful debate would ensue, but always with the greatest tact and courtesy.

An extra chore for Chairman of Council - a busy enough job under normal circumstances - was the Centenary year and he convened and chaired the committee which organised a number of events. It was



enlightening that within only a day or two of each meeting detailed minutes were received listing everyone's involvement in any particular project. One of the last things he did was to produce a report to Council for its meeting on 6th December of the work of the Centenary Committee which is one of the finest ever to be put before Council. It is published separately in this issue of the Gazette.

Stephen was also keen on the "cult of the personality", in this case "Badgerabilia" as we referred to it. Stephen's home contained pottery badger ornaments, he had badger T-shirts and socks, badger carrier bags, and badger stickers for his correspondence. Some while ago, he heard of a property for sale in Shropshire: Badger Hall in the village of Badger, and briefly considered acquiring the property to complete the badger image.

We at Dulwich knew he was a man of many interests, most especially with the Confraternity of St. James, whose library he was instrumental in expanding. However the depth of his involvement in this, and his other interests, was largely unknown to us. Never one to boast of his contributions to the welfare of these organisations, the extent of his involvement only became apparent to the croquet playing fraternity after his death.

Stephen was essentially a private man, but his commitment to his family and friends was always evident. He was an extremely effective organiser and could analyse and solve a problem directly and efficiently. He had a unique way of cajoling people into contributing to a venture, be it financially, physically or administratively and he would not expect others to do things that he would not do himself. It goes without saying that he will be sorely missed, but the depth of feeling for him, shown by the numbers attending the thanksgiving service for his life, makes us realise how much his life touched us all. The extent of his commitment to such a wide variety of organisations is a wonderful legacy.

We extend our sincere condolences to Katherine and their children Penelope and Benedict.

Sue Best Dulwich CC
John Solomon, Croquet Association President

Chairman's Column

When I accepted the nomination for Vice Chairman last September I was looking forward to a year as understudy to Stephen Badger to learn the 'ropes'. Unfortunately this was not to be so and with the very sudden and tragic death of Stephen, I found myself as acting Chairman. An unexpected offer of early retirement has been accepted with alacrity and I will now be able to devote the time that the position of Chairman demands. Council confirmed me as Chairman at the December meeting.

As I am trying to pick up the threads, the major contribution that Stephen was making to croquet has become much more evident. Not only did he navigate the Association through a very successful Centenary year, he had been taking a very serious look at the future and had started a number of initiatives designed to ensure the continued growth of the Croquet Association in the 21st century. He will be a very hard act to follow.

The Croquet Association will be going through a difficult time over the next few years with the loss of the Sports Council grants. We must ensure that all the hard work in the last ten years on coaching, helping clubs to improve their facilities and the various development activities to promote the sport generally, continues with the same impetus.

Regrettably the CA is so often seen as only interested in the top class and high profile events. I hope that during my term as Chairman I can show everyone how the Association can and does help clubs and players of all standards, irrespective of whether you play competitive or social croquet.

Retirement means time to travel more extensively and I hope to meet more of you during the playing season. In the mean time if you have a favourite soapbox, please don't mutter in the shrubbery but get in touch - I will always listen, and as Stephen said, it is your Association

Bill Arliss
01273 728204

WORLD CLASS MCP Mallets now offer:-

**NEW LIGHT WEIGHT CARBON FIBRE
TUBE HANDLE - AMAZING STRENGTH
& TORSIONAL RIGIDITY**
fitted to MCP's Tried & Tested heads producing
**EXCEPTIONAL PLAYING
CHARACTERISTICS**

Mallet alterations & repairs carried out,
contact:

Mike Percival, Gosbeck House
Gosbeck Suffolk, IP6 9RZ
Tel: 01449 760480



NEWS & INFORMATION

The New Jaques Balls

Jaques failed to meet the mid-October date they gave for sending their new balls to the CA for testing. Chris Jaques has spoken of a two month delay, which almost certainly means that the earliest time for any testing will be into 1998. In the meantime the Barlow GT balls have been re-tested and re-certified.

The expectation is that the CA has sufficient Eclipse balls to cover CA events in 1998. A final decision will be made by the Tournament Committee.

The Western Championships & The Coles Cup

Players wishing to enter either of these events should note the closing dates for entry. The closing date of the Western Championships to be held at Parkstone 2-4 May 1998 is 9th April, and the closing date for the Coles Cup at Cheltenham also to be held 2-4 May 1998, is 24th April. This has been arranged by mutual agreement between the two clubs.

Yet another Centenary Celebration

1998 is the hundredth anniversary of the first croquet tournament held on the grounds of the present Cheltenham Croquet Club. To celebrate this centenary the Club intend to hold a special weekend 'Victorian' tournament on 18/19 July which is the weekend preceding the start of Cheltenham's July Week.

The tournament will be played under the rules applicable in 1898. Competitors will be sent a copy of the rules but a summary of the major differences from today's rules is as follows:

- 1) All balls are played in strict sequence.
- 2) The court layout is similar to today except that there are two pegs and hoops 5 and 6 are inside today's positions. The winning peg is in line with hoops 1 and 4 and the turning peg is in line with hoops 2 and 3. Hoops 5 and 6 are seven yards apart and seven yards from their respective pegs. Hoop 5 is the next point in order after hoop 4, as today, but after running hoop 6 the ball must strike the turning peg (so scoring a point and being entitled to a continuation stroke) before running one-back.
- 3) The mandatory starting point is one foot directly in front of hoop 1. As there are no wiring lifts, baulk lines are unnecessary.
- 4) No more than one bisque can be used consecutively.

This will probably be the only opportunity to play under these rules. No bad thing, some might say, but why not come and form your own opinion as to why the rules were changed? A

further incentive is that the entry fee is also representative of the period, being 2 guineas. The event will be listed in the Fixtures Book and applications should be submitted on the normal entry form found in the Fixtures Book.

Confirmation Of New Guinness Record For Croquet

The Crake Valley club are pleased to announce to the croquet world that the Guinness Organisation have finally accepted the result of the 24 hour croquet match against Belsay Hall in June 1997 as an official Guinness and World record, and they have a certificate to prove it.

The citation reads:-

"On 21-22 June 1997 a team from Crake Valley Croquet and Lawn Tennis Club played a team from Belsay Hall and scored 372 hoops between them in 24 hours."

Disappointingly the Guinness people were not prepared to accept the record as originally intended i.e. the winning team's score be logged as the record. Despite the rules being carefully written to ensure the challenge was played fairly we were told that they no longer accept winning scores from special timed competitive events because of the possibility of collusion.

However it is Crake Valley's view that as only one certificate is issued this should be held by the team scoring the greatest number of hoops. This will ensure the competitive edge is maintained in any future challenges. The winning club will also retain the right to host the next challenge.

As mentioned in the July issue of the Gazette this record is now up for grabs and we are hoping another club will challenge us during 1998. Any clubs interested please note that this event is best held on mid-summer weekend and that probably 9 or 10 players are needed to make up a team as any one player can only take part once in any challenge. Anyone interested please contact Bob Vaughan on 01229 - 885420

New Officials at Parkstone

Following the Croquet AGM at the Parkstone Club in November 1997 the Chairman, Dr W Ormerod, and the Secretary, Mrs J Lonsdale, retired. The officers elected for the ensuing year with immediate effect are as follows:-
Chairman: Dr I Scott, Coach Hill House, Burley Street, Nr Ringwood, Hants BH24 4HN (tel. 01425 403361)
Secretary: Mrs P Nutland, 40 Beacroft Lane, Colehill, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 2PA (tel. 01202 886523)

continued on page 9

Letters...

No more a rover, please

Dear Editor

I am sure that I am not the first person to make the following suggestion for the next time the Laws are re-drafted.

In more than 25 years of playing (15 of them as a referee), I have never heard the term "rover" used to refer to a ball for the peg as defined in Law 4(b), except in referees' conferences, committees and examinations. The term "rover" is used in this sense in various Laws.

When one is required to ascertain the state of the game, it is universally understood that terms such as "hoop-1 ball" or "4-back ball" refer to the positions of the clips indicating the next point in order. The use of the term "rover" to mean a ball which has made the rover hoop is anomalous.

I suggest, therefore, the introduction of the term "peg-ball". This would involve only three extra strokes on the keyboard, no more syllables than before, and the end of confusion.
Andrew Bennet

Record claim

Dear Editor,

Can I claim a record? At the recent European Championships Paolo di Petra played well, reaching the quarter finals where he lost to Robert Fulford, but not before taking a game off him.

However, he had never been given a handicap and since the consolation event was handicap, after discussion with Robert and the ROT Chris Irwin, I gave him a starred handicap of 1.5 (eventually reduced to 1). Is this the lowest handicap ever given initially?
Don Gaunt.

Break down in communications

Dear Editor

I was concerned to read that according to the letter published in the Croquet Gazette (issue 252 November '97) Aaron Westerby, winner of the British Men's, was not nominated by the NZCC. The NZCC nominations, which included Aaron Westerby, were forwarded to the WCF when requested. Aaron was not only nominated by the NZCC but in the WCF press release (20th April 1997) they acknowledged his nomination by using the heading of 'New Zealand mount strong challenge'.

The fact that Aaron Westerby became unavailable to compete in the World championship does not negate his original nomination by NZCC. The New Zealand

Croquet Council is fully committed to nominating the best players to represent New Zealand and is concerned that statements such as that made by the WCF Secretary General, Chris Hudson, are misleading and unfair to players, selectors and national organisations.

Alda Guy, Executive Director, New Zealand Croquet Council

A change in policy?

Dear Editor,

Last September 12 competitors gathered at Southport to play in the Barlow Bowl and Longman Bowl. For the first time to my knowledge these events were double banked. Does this indicate a change in policy? Can three lawn clubs expect to hold both these events in future and can two lawn clubs host one of the 'eights' (i.e. President's Cup, Chairman's Salver or Spencer Ell)?

Frances Ransom

It is not intended that the Ladies becomes a double banked affair. When Southport bid for the event, it was expected that additional lawns would be available for 97 but regrettably this did not happen. In future allocations of this event will be made to clubs that can provide the necessary lawns to host the two events or alternatively the events will be split. Unfortunately the number of clubs that can provide six or even eight lawns is limited and we may have to lose the social benefits of running the two events together. Southport still has the event in 1998 and there may still be double banking.

Bill Arliss, Chairman Tournament Committee

CA Awards

Dear Editor,

Next season, as has been the case for a number of years, some 140 or so matches will be played in the four Leagues of the South West Federation.

The vast majority of these matches will be played on full lawns with hoops set to tournament standards - many of the clubs taking part hold tournaments and know what they are doing in this respect.

Not all club players are able to get away to attend tournaments and are therefore unable to meet in particular Condition 5 as set out in the Fixtures Book.

Since the stated aim of the Scheme is to 'encourage enterprising play and raise overall skills' I suggest that it might be appropriate to amend Condition 5 to include games played as Inter-club matches within the various Federation Leagues.

As far as I am aware, the National Club Events are also excluded from the Awards scheme - again I see no reason as to why they should not be included.

The SW Fed Leagues are as follows:

Parkstone Trophy - Advanced Play - up to about 7 or 8 usually

Federation League - Handicaps 15 and below

Intermediate League - Handicaps 9 - 18

'B' League (originally B for Beginners, but now somewhat dubious in some cases!) - Handicaps 16 and above.

Stuart Orr, Plymouth

The Awards Scheme is open to Associates of the CA, i.e. people who have paid the full subscription to the CA as Tournament Players, and is funded by the additional revenue that those players provide. The National Clubs championships are advertised in the CA Fixtures Book, and therefore are eligible for consideration for the Awards. Claimants must still be Associates, however, and the claim must be made in the official manner.

The Conditions for 1998 have already been set. Any criteria for selection of qualifying events in future years will have to be carefully set to ensure the Scheme is not applied to fixtures between clubs who, although members of a Federation, have not registered with the CA, and therefore are not even paying CRF as their contribution. The current qualification conditions also encourage all match players to join the CA as Associates, and their clubs to register, so that they may all reap all the benefits such membership can bring.

Bruce Rannie, Coaching Committee

Clock Croquet

Dear Editor,

The suggested timing set out in my original article (Points of View, September 1997) didn't work out right. The pundits could all get round to the peg in 30 minutes or so if they put their minds to it, so high bisquers were disadvantaged. In the next attempt, we allowed 80 minutes per game, played full bisque to base 6, with differential timing according to bisque difference. For every full bisque difference up to 10, the higher bisquer got half a minute extra, and for every bisque more than 10, a full minute. For a twenty bisque difference (maximum) you therefore had 33 minutes playing 48.

Of 16 games played, nine were pegged out, in three of which the loser scored 20 or more. The lowest scoring game was 15 - 14. Those taking part ranged from -0.5 to 20, and the winner played off 3.5. The lower bisquer won nine times and the higher six. In two of my own games, I came from behind to peg out after my opponent had used all his time and was reduced to single strokes.

I think that the system just needs a very little tweaking now, with a tiny bit more help to the high bisquers, and it will be just about right. Comments welcome.

John Anstey

Handicapping suggestions....again

Dear Editor

It seems to me that the present system of handicapping does not necessarily keep players at a sensible handicap commensurate with their abilities. To lose 10 points on the AHS when the match has been lost by 1 point is unreasonable. I would like to suggest, when the system is next revised, that the handicap index changes by the amount of the win/loss, i.e. by 1, 2, 3, etc. up to a maximum of 10 for any win/loss of 10 or over. This could even spur players on to make better wins and lessen the number of those winning by one on time. There may be some good explanation as to why this has not already been initiated and, if so, I await enlightenment.

May I also suggest that handicap cards are initialised by one's opponent after a match. However, though at my club we play club competitions according to CA rules and note results on our handicap cards, I do know clubs where this is not done, and the problem arises as to whether one should alter one's card when playing against such a person, or someone who is not a CA member and only has a 'club' handicap, in an inter-club match.

Diana Brothers

American blocks

Dear Editor

I refer to Bryan Teague's article on American Blocks in Issue 251 of the Gazette and to Bill Lamb's response.

There seems a general supposition that the purest form of tournament is a knock-out, because this is the only form that will produce an indisputable winner. I can see no justification for this. American blocks (leagues) reduce the influence of a "lucky break" as a determinant of the overall winner in favour of the best sustained performance over the length of the tournament. In the footballing world, which do we think is the best football team in England - the League Champion or the FA Cup winner?

As far as Bryan's article is concerned, I do not see that a case has been made for a radical change from the current regulations. If we accept that the tournament winner should be the player with the best sustained performance over the period of the tournament, then all results should count. Bryan's (Rover's) method 2 is as unsatisfactory as method 1 because, surely, it is as much a distortion to ignore the quality of defeats (method 2) as to ignore the quality of wins (method 1).

In an ideal world there would be no difference between method 3, which totals all a player's scores for and against, and current regulations which aggregate a player's nett scores in each game. (I have long harboured a suspicion that nett scores were introduced to hide the shame of those who couldn't get a game finished within the allotted time span!)

However, at the levels at which I play my croquet, games are frequently won on time or played over a shorter course to avoid time constraints. If, as I believe, a player who has

lost, say, 26:22 is considered to have done better than one who has lost 20:16, then Bryan's method 3 provides a further method for separating positions. If two players' number of wins and aggregate points difference are the same, then the player with most points scored overall could be declared the winner. (This would go some way to answering Bill's criticism that aggregate points difference discriminates against the better player, because he is more likely than his weaker competitor to have won his winning games outright, not on time.)

At all costs I think that in an American Block competition "who beat whom" should be relegated as far down the decision tree as possible. This is because of the double counting effect referred to by Bryan. Let us say that player A and player B are equal on wins and on aggregate points difference but A has beaten B by +8. To get into this position B's aggregate points difference with respect to all the other players will be +16 better than A. Thus, in all respects other than the one game between A and B, B will have been the better player in the tournament, so putting any undue emphasis on the results of this one game seems unfair.

Malcolm Harbord

Federation Input

Dear Editor,

Whilst attending the South West Federation's AGM listening to the range of items that came up I realised how little I knew of what went on in the other federations. What events do they hold? What leagues do they run? What handicap ranges do they use in their leagues? Do they have golf croquet competitions? Always ready to pick someone else's brains or benefit from their experiences I wondered if some way of spreading information would be worthwhile. There must be many ways of doing it but, following what some other organisations who divide up their territory do, why not an occasional "Round the Federations" section in the Gazette? It might, also, enable better publicity for those lesser competitions organised by some clubs and federations that don't make the CA Fixtures Book. Maybe we should be looking further ahead and thinking of a web site with all the information there - perhaps it is already there if I knew where to look.

Arthur Addis

The prospect of a federation orientated column has always been a priority, however the federations seem not to share this view, excepting East Anglia and Croquet North. As many of the Federations cannot provide such a good tool of communications as the South West have in SWAN, I have no doubt that the Federations could utilise the Gazette for the exchange and promotion of information, but when such an opportunity be used rather depends on the Federations. However, help is at hand. The Publicity Committee will shortly be seeking out federation publicity officers to give them details

of a forthcoming conference at the back of the year, and to find out at what level publicity in the federations operates.

As to the web page, the CA have finally taken the plunge and are connected to the Internet and have plans for a web page of their own, but that will take time to develop. Hopefully, however, in future issues of the Gazette you will be able to read news from the Federations and where to look for that elusive web page.
Ed

A variation for beginners

Dear Editor

My wife and I are late starters to croquet, and have high handicaps. We have often felt rather frustrated when playing with a low handicap person because we have one stroke, which fails utterly, and we are faced with the choice of taking a bisque or of knowing we shall have to stand around for some time whilst our opponent notches up several good strokes, - and taking a bisque doesn't really help because it does nothing towards correcting your stroke. It is only of use in a new stroke.

When playing each other we have found the following rules acceptable and helpful and wonder whether other people might like to try them.

- 1) We have no bisques.
- 2) We allow each player 3 goes at 2/3rds of his strokes, taken from the point where the initial stroke was taken, and with all balls replaced in their positions at the start of the first stroke.
- 3) As stated, each player gets 3 goes at 2/3rds of his strokes, (i.e. he can have 3 goes on only 2 strokes out of 3.) In other words if he's had 2 x 3 goes at the last 2 strokes, his next stroke counts whether he likes it or not. This keeps the game progressing at a reasonable speed.
- 4) The stroke cannot be changed when playing, (i.e. if a player makes a shot at the hoop and misses, his next shot or shots must also be at the hoop.)

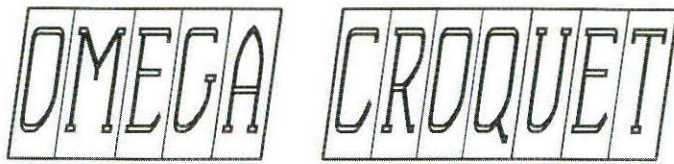
We have found that these rules give us a chance to correct bad strokes and also allow us to learn how to cope with unevenness on the courts. We've named it "Learners' Croquet" and we hope nobody will take offence at our presumption.

Bill Bartlett.

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

No, my New Year's resolution was not to write the shortest editorial in the history of the Gazette, although it could be a thought.

Usually at this time of year there is a great shortage of material for the Gazette, however this year has been quite the opposite and this issue could have been doubled in size, had it not been for threats from the direction of the treasurer and the F&GP Committee. So, if this means that not everything you expected to see in this issue is here I am sorry, but this editor has to arrange the Gazette to fit the budget, not vice versa, alas.
Ed.



Omega Croquet embraces all croquet happenings that are inadvertent - whatever the cause or outcome. David Wedmore's imaginary Grand Order Of Omega Players (Goops) is putting this kind of croquet onto a properly organised basis, with a full infrastructure.

6. Grand Order of Omega Players Worl Rankings as at 1st Nov 1997 (Qualification: 10 losses)

Rank	Name	Grade	Games	Wins
1	Mrs Winifred Hitsin	2192	22	0
2	Ron Ball	1923	19	0
3	Peggy Toot (S)	1750	13	1
4	Major Vere Last-Hoop	1718	25	2
5	May I Market	1672	12	1
6	Didi Twobble (F)	1638	23	2
7	Adam Fluke	1585	39	4
8	Izzy Wired (SA)	1522	17	2
9	Miss Plaist-Balls	1485	31	4
10	A Baulk (NZ)	1451	30	4
11	B Baulk (S)	1410	28	4
12	Shaun Laughan (I)	1373	14	2
13	Mark Tread	1295	23	4
14	Justin Boyo (W)	1254	16	3
15	Mrs A Hoop	1204	13	3
16	Mrs Anne Other	1167	28	8
17	Abner Bisk	1130	14	4
18	Juan Back (Sp)	1099	17	5
-	Raoul Schott (F)	786	20	10

M. Schott is unranked because he did not reach a reasonable standard. Mrs Hitsin and Mr Ball grossly exceeded all reasonable standards, thus disgracing themselves. Major Vere Last-Hoop is therefore elected as 1997 Supergoop and Ms Peggy Toot as 1997 Superdupergoop.

The following players had fewer than 10 losses:

Miss Teri Taw	Dr D Catt	VNR Boye, esq
Indy John (USA)	Lady Nirth	Carmen A Dorhim (Sp)
Miss Ledd	Lord R Mussey	Phelan Foine (I)
Sir EnnDipity (A)	Gen R Larme	Sinead Vertent (I)
Myles Owett	RUD Cent	Capt Beld (Ret'd'd)
Ann U Wool (J)	The Hon tthing	Sasha Biabelli (It)
Noah Fence	Berenice Gaunt	Walter Plinge

Walter Plinge sullied a fortuitous win by applying (repeatedly) to the CA for a Bronze Badge. In consequence he has been found guilty of being a Poopergoop, and is hereby required to resign from the Order.

7. Fixtures Update

Arising from a request on BBC Woman's Hour some time ago, the Grand Order has decided to introduce Naturist Croquet. This is a special version of Omega Croquet, unsuitable for male players but ideally suited to female naturists. If you are one, send a large SAE for details: but please remember to put on three first class stamps before taking it to the post.

For the Grand Order
Adam Fluke, Chief Secretary

The Omega Tower
Hyde Park, London

TOURNAMENT TALK

The days are getting longer and in less than three months we shall be back on the tournament trail. But please don't forget the winter indoor events. As the RAF are renovating their sports hall at Innsworth in January/February we shall not be able to hold the planned January event there but it should be available for March. This was to be the final but will now be a heat. The final will take place at Maidstone on 28/29 March 98. We will use both the large CA carpets and also have a mini, carpet borrowed from one of the Federations.

If you have never tried the indoor game I think you will be agreeably surprised. It would be an ideal sharpener for the start of the season; the speed croquet format certainly keeps your interest.

This year the tournament committee are trying to give a new look to the All England Handicap. For the last few years the national final has been rather a non event with just a small number of players meeting right at the end of the season. During 1998 we intend to make the final a much bigger affair with sixteen players in the final which will be at Wrest Park. To achieve these numbers we will replan the area finals to be much more local events where possible.

The Centenary Doubles at Cheltenham last year was quite popular but the committee felt that it would not get the same support as a yearly event but will explore possibilities of a three or four year cycle.

The divisional format for the Inter Counties Championship proved so successful last year in ensuring competition right up to the last matches that we will continue with the same format. A new trophy will be awarded to the winners of the second division. Twenty two entries is the ideal number and the maximum we can accept for this competition with the available lawns. Already we have had an application from the Channel Islands for a place in the event but we cannot award it until entries close at the end of March. In future priority will be given to new entries from the domain of the CA. Please see the redrafted rules in the fixtures book.

We have reintroduced the position of County Organiser, for this competition. If you feel you are qualified for a particular county and would like to be considered for the team, please get in touch with the Organiser listed below. The figure immediately after the name is the maximum handicap that is likely to be considered for that particular county; * is no figure given.

AVON, Ray Ransom, *, 0117 968 2255
BEDFORDSHIRE, John Wheeler, 3, 01525 860134
BERKSHIRE, Adrian Wadley, 5, 0118 934 0214, amwadley@compuserve.com
CHESHIRE, Brian Storey, 3, 0161 941 6696, brian@storey.w-net.com
DORSET, Strat Liddiard, *, 01202 694534
DUBLIN, Mathew Davey, 8, 01223 506978, mcdavey@mrso.cam.ac.uk
ESSEX, Justin Goddard, *, 01223 721292, justin.goddard@origin.it.com
GLAMORGAN, Chris Williams, *, 01222 462268, chris.williams@uk.airsysatm.thomson-csf.com
GLOUCESTERSHIRE, Ian Maugham, 2, 01242 234737
HERTFORDSHIRE, Nigel Gray, 10, 01462 436430
KENT, Denis Shaw, 3, 01232646242
LANCASHIRE, John Haslam, *, 01704 547875
MIDDLESEX, Thomas Coles, 2, 0171 357 0367
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE, Brian Hallam, 6, 01604 768285
NORTHUMBERLAND, Gail Curry, 5, 0191 257 9045, gail@cgazette.demon.co.uk
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE, Graham Fowler, 3, 01332 864889
SUFFOLK, Steve Comish, 8, 01394 385551
SURREY, George Noble, 6, 0181 940 1427, karin.n@netcomuk.co.uk
SUSSEX, Roger Wood, 5, 01424 210632, rw@gxvf.rgo.ac.uk
WARWICKSHIRE, CG Bennett, 4, 0121 455 6426
YORKSHIRE, David T Coates, 5, 01905 427040

Provisional

CHANNEL ISLANDS, Sarah Burrow, *, 01543 32167, burrow@itl.net

Organisers, please make sure your entry is in on time. The tournament manager is allowed to accept entries that arrive shortly after the closing date, however all such entries will be subject to a surcharge of 50% of the entry fee. This will apply to all CA sponsored competitions.

Please remember if you are unhappy about any of the CA sponsored tournament arrangements, please get in touch with the Chairman of the Tournament Committee. We cannot guarantee we can always satisfy you but we are always trying to improve.

Bill Arliss

NEWS & INFORMATION

(continued from page 5)

Tournament Secretary: Mrs K Priestley, Horn Cottage, Burley Road, Bockhampton, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 7AL (tel. 425 67416101)
Treasurer: Mrs B Saunders, 1 Harbour Shallows, 15 Whitecliffe Road, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset BH14 8DU (tel. 01202741637)
S.W. Federation League Organiser: Mr R Sharman, 29 Elgin Road, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset BH14 8QU (tel. 01202 72784)

Centenary Indoor Tournament

Revision of Dates and Venues

Because of unforeseen problems the programme for the above tournament has had to be changed. Would clubs please note the following alterations:-
1) Innsworth Tournament due 17/18 January Postponed to 14/15 March 1998.

2) Final due at Innsworth 14/15 March now to be played at Maidstone on 28/29 March 1998.

All clubs involved in the finals will be contacted with details of the arrangements for the weekend.

THE GRAND FINAL OF THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION
CENTENARY INDOOR SPEED CROQUET TOURNAMENT
AT MOTE PARK LEISURE CENTRE, MAIDSTONE, KENT.
MARCH 28TH & 29TH 1998

Format: Handicap doubles played to speed croquet rules using two indoor carpets. Played as two separate Swiss events with final between winners of each event. Six rounds will be played.

Teams: Maximum of 24 teams with up to three players per team. Nominated players for each game may be changed as required. Teams need not be limited to one club. The top four teams from each of the three heats at Wolverhampton, Soham and Innsworth will be guaranteed places if required. Other places allocated as received but priority given to the first entries from individual clubs

Venue: Mote Park Leisure Centre, a non-smoking complex, is in the centre of the county town, on the edge of parkland, and adjacent to the County Cricket ground. Mote Park is signposted from the town centre.

Times: Play will commence on Saturday and continue to about 9.00 pm, starting Sunday at 9.00am and will finish about 5.30 pm

Organisation: South East Federation with entries to Quiller Barratt, 16 Frinton Court, Hardwick Green, London W13 8DW, Tel: 0181-998 5453. Entry fee £30 per team, cheques payable to the South East Croquet Federation.

Accommodation: Details of accommodation available locally, and maps, are available from Mrs Brenda Powney on 01634-389511

Sponsorship: Many thanks to Maidstone Council and the Leisure Company, Serco for their support

CENTENARY YEAR BOOK & HISTORY OF THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION

A limited number of copies of this excellent book are being printed and will be available for dispatch in May from the Croquet Association office

Order your copy now

Price £12.00 plus 70p postage

Please supply.....copies of the Centenary Year Book & History of the Croquet Association

Name

Address.....

.....

Post Code.....

I enclose a cheque for made payable to 'The Croquet Association'. Return this form to: The Croquet Association, c/o the Hurlingham Club, Ranelagh Gardens, London SW6 3PR.

CROQUET BALLS FOR CHAMPIONSHIPS, TOURNAMENTS AND CLUBS

The BARLOW GRANDE TOURNAMENT ball, known as the 'GT' will set the standards for Championship and Tournament play into the new century.

The 'GT' is approved by the CA for Championship play at the highest level, comes with a 3 year warranty against warping and splitting and is stable in performance in all climatic conditions. Recent CA tests revealed remarkable consistency in size weight and resilience. All sets are matched to these exacting standards.

The CLUB ball, known as the 'C' (formerly known as the Championship ball), will continue to be available as the most economical ball conforming to the CA Championship requirements.

GARDEN croquet balls available in primary colours only.

1998 prices

'GT' £129 per set 16oz Garden £42 per set
'C' £91 per set 12oz Garden £38 per set
add £5 per set for postage, packing and insurance. Special postage rates for multiple orders.

Advice available from John Beech by phone
WOODLANDS CROQUET, WOODLANDS,
SKIPTON ROAD, BARNOLDSWICK, BB18 6HH
phone/fax 01282 813070

Send for a full list of Top Quality Croquet Equipment and Sets.

CA Centenary Mallets remain available in 1998



If I have a practice session, I also like to throw in those shots I know are rarely played in a game, so that I don't become too 'rusty' playing them. This includes, for example, playing jump shots and corner cannons.

Once you have done all the above (and I suggest only then), there are a few general practice routines you may like to try:

a) Practice breaks. One of the easiest methods of assessing your progress is to set up a break for hoop one, and play it to the peg. Count how many bisques you use. As a rough (and highly simplistic) guide, if you double the average bisques you use, that is what your handicap should be.

b) For players whose handicap is under 10, a better practice routine may be to do the same, but for a three-ball break only. This will lead to your practising rushes and roll shots. Of key importance to three-ball breaks is running hoops under control, to get your rush afterwards. Count the number of hoops where you succeed in getting your rush.

SELF COACHING NOTES

by Jeff Dawson

Part 2 of some coaching advice on how to improve your own game

c) For players below about 6, try playing a four-ball break, with the rule that no hoop pioneer may be closer to the hoop than 2 yards from the peg. Thus the break has the pattern of keeping 2 balls by the peg at all times, leaving a long (but hopefully well controlled) rush to each hoop. This is good practice for rushes and for awkward hoop approaches; skills useful for picking up breaks. Count the number of hoops you rush to within, say, 2 yards, and try to improve each time.

d) Occasionally, it is fun to try a two-ball break too. This is good practice for controlled hoops and rushing the ball, since you will not get far unless you can rush from one hoop to the next. However, it is a lot more difficult than c) above to get very far!

e) Try 'round the clock' hoop approaches. Position the balls to take croquet from each position around the hoop, starting from straight in front (12 o'clock). Each time, play the approach shot and then run the hoop. The aim should be not only to run the hoop, but to get a rush in the desired direction afterwards. Start by trying to get a forward rush for each position. Then try all the start positions again aiming for a rush to the side, and then again for a backward rush. Once you have done all this from a position 1 yard away from the hoop, try again starting 2 yards away.

f) Take one ball only, and starting from 'A' baulk, see how many strokes it takes you to go all the way around to the peg. Count your strokes; 35 is very good. This is good practice for 'touch', i.e. judging the strength of a stroke.

g) Starting with your ball one foot in front of a hoop, run the hoop. Then turn around and run it in the opposite direction. How many times can you do this? This is a good exercise for running hoops with control.

h) You may like to practise your shooting. One way is to take 4 balls to the middle of the East boundary, and shoot at the peg. Then shoot back again. See how many you can hit out of 12 (0 is not uncommon, 4 will be doing well, 12 is the equivalent of a hole-in-one; drinks all round!). Two points of advice here: a) there is no point in practising unless you take the same care as you would with a critical game shot. Stalk the ball, and concentrate. b) I find it counter-productive to keep practising beyond about 12 shots, or if I am not concentrating well. Better to take a break and try again later, after a different practice routine.

I hope these routines give you grounds for thought, but remember: the best practice for you is to practise your weakest strokes, so make up your own practice routines which concentrate on your own particular areas of difficulty. Try to apply the same general principles of counting errors (or successes!) over a series of strokes, so that you have a personal target to beat in the next practice session. I find this gives me greater incentive to get it right.

Finally, I am sure many of you will have favourite practise routines I have not listed. Since these notes will hopefully be improved with your feedback for next year, please let me know how you like to practise, and how you get on with the suggestions I have made. Perhaps next year your tips will be able to help others.

Alternative Games

ONE BALL CROQUET PART 2

Kevin Carter, a member of the Berkshire and Winchester Croquet Clubs, gives an outline of the game of One-Ball in the second of a two part series designed to encourage others to explore this often overlooked version of croquet.

There are often opportunities to lay traps in One-Ball. Consider: you have just hit in near hoop one (opponent's hoop) and you are for hoop four. Not surprisingly you do not fancy the long pass roll to hoops four/five, so to where do you move opponent's ball as you attempt to get a good position on your hoop? The answer is to split opponent's ball up to east of hoop three. On your continuation shot you tidy up and sit neatly in front of hoop four (Figure 3). You will be pleased for opponent to shoot at you, since a miss leaves the ball on the south boundary just west of where you will be after running hoop four hard - another break opportunity.

One-Ball also has some advanced tactics - advanced in the sense that they are not recommended for other than 'A-class' players. One of the most fruitful can be deliberately trying to 'get some wire'. For instance, if you have an easy hoop three to make when opponent is in front of five (or even in front of two-back), then you will improve your chances of roqueting opponent's ball if, when you run hoop three hard, you skim the left hand upright of the hoop, deflecting the ball to the right (Figure 4). A further stage is to place your ball fractionally to the right when in front of three back in order to facilitate getting the left wire.

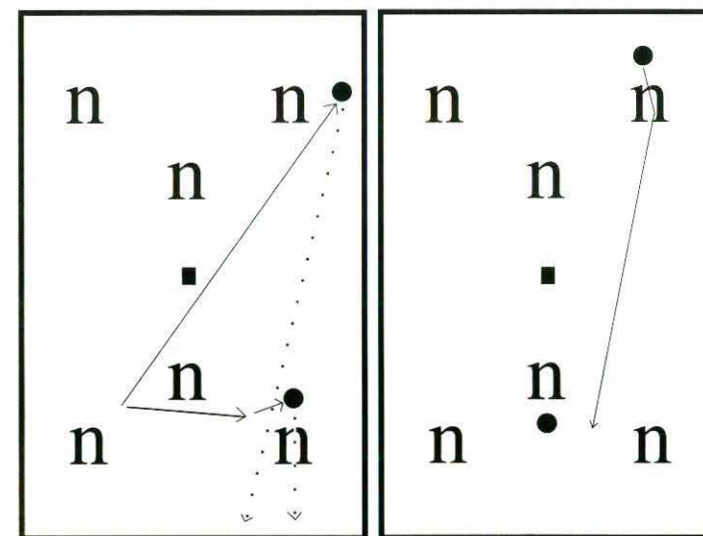


Fig. 3

Fig. 4

A ONE-BALL VARIATION

An interesting multiple-player variation of One-Ball bears some similarity to 'Pirates'. Players (from three to six can play, depending on their degree of sobriety) take their turns in rotation and are allowed to roquet and croquet only one other ball.

The tactics are complex, but suffice to say that if you are ahead do not expect to stay there. For instance, to prevent player A running a hoop, player B may send C's ball near to A.

Further, if two players are ahead then in order to stay there they might form a pact to protect each other - until one decides to break the pact in a bid to be the eventual winner. You get to know who your friends are playing this game!

STOP PRESS...

Refereeing Courses

The following refereeing courses have been arranged for next year.

Bowdon	May 9/10
Cheltenham	March 14/15
Hurlingham	March 7/8
Nottingham	April 25/26

There is no fee for the course and applications from all players are welcome. It is unlikely that there will be time to examine candidates at the end of the course: examinations will be held some time later.

There is no obligation to take the qualifying examination, although naturally we hope that most applicants will wish to do so. If the courses are over subscribed, preference will be given to those who wish to qualify.

Applications should be made by post or email to:

Bill Lamb
5 Bondyke Close
Cottingham
East Yorks HU16 5ND

The Wimbledon
Lawn Tennis
Museum

Visit the Museum
at the home of
Lawn Tennis and
find out why
Wimbledon is more
than just two
weeks of the year



Why not come
and visit the
new exhibition
celebrating 100
years of Croquet.

There is a Tea Room, and a
Shop selling Wimbledon
leisurewear, gifts and books.

The Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum.
At the All England Lawn Tennis
and Croquet Club,
Church Road,
Wimbledon,
London.
SW19 5AE

Tues - Sat 10.30am - 5.00pm
Sunday - 2.00pm - 5.00pm
Free car park
For more information
and a free colour leaflet
Telephone : 0181 946 6131

CROQUET ASSOCIATION CENTENARY COMMITTEE ROUND-UP

Report by Stephen Badger, Chairman Centenary Committee

With the CA's centenary year now more or less at an end it seems right to review what happened. At national level I make the tally one exhibition, two dinners, three tournaments, four prints, a centenary year book, a lecture and a logo, but there were a host of other events at federation, club and even individual level. I will try to cover as many as reasonably I can.

The exhibition ('With Mallets Aforethought') was of course at the Wimbledon lawn tennis museum and it actually continues until the end of February 1999. It is very professionally presented by Valerie Warren and her staff and was designed by Pat Hodgson, a free lance who was also responsible for the Twickenham rugby museum. It was reviewed in the July Gazette. If you haven't been yet, go during the winter.

The dinners were at Southwick during the Inter-Counties tournament, which was celebrating its own centenary with a record entry of 22 teams, and in the debenture holder's lounge at Wimbledon on the evening of the AGM. The latter is equipped with miniature croquet hoops and, despite the presence of at least two current and many more past MacRobertson Shield players, the only person who could score 5/5 was Eileen Magee, so she certainly deserved her magnum of champagne. In aggregate over 300 people attended the two dinners and thanks from all are due to the two organisers, Christine Constable, and David Godfree respectively. The

Centenary Inter-Counties winners were Avon in division 1 and Northants in division 2.

The principal special tournament was one for as wide as possible a range of club doubles players at Cheltenham, devised and managed by Ian Burrige and catered for by the same Eileen Magee. Some 34 clubs were represented and appropriately enough one of the Cheltenham teams emerged as winners. The Tournament committee thinks it may have found a gap in the market as a result. The other two were played indoors at RAF Innsworth, Gloucester (won by a Jersey team which for some reason included Aaron Westerby) and coming in December, at Wolverhampton GS. I am counting these as two, but there will actually be two more in the opening months of 1998 with a grand final again at Innsworth in March. An impressive trophy seems to be available and we hope this indoor series will now become established as an annual event.

The historical prints and yearbook were published as mementos of the centenary. Copies are still available from the Office but supplies are now limited. The year book contains a history of the CA's first century written by Colin Prichard and detailed statistics of tournaments going back even beyond then to the first so-called open in 1867. The result is a mine of fascinating information which at least in part up-dates father Prichard's History of Croquet. The compiler was of course Alan Oldham and the production editor David Drazin. The photo shows the two of them



David Drazin and Alan Oldham discussing the finer points of the Centenary Year Book.

contemplating the fruits of their labours on a sunny afternoon in the garden at Hurlingham.

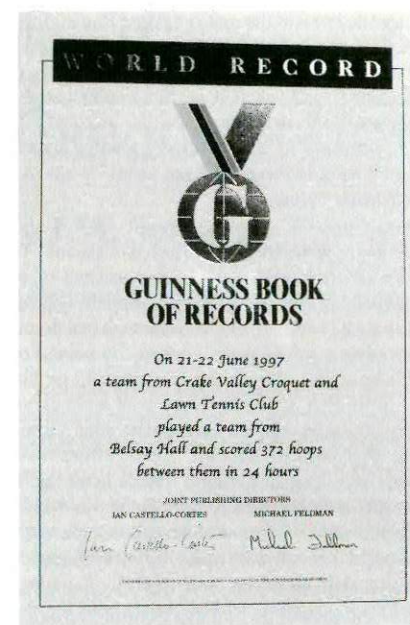
Our president played rather more than a walk-on role in centenary year. He was called upon to speak at just about every event mentioned above, and others as well, culminating in the Solomon Lecture which was combined with the AGM of the SW Croquet federation. This was so named in his honour, not just because he was the first speaker, and it is intended to



Brian Storey, Carol Lewis and Dave Barrat sharing the silverware at the North West Federation Centenary Tournament.

become a regular event featuring a different speaker on each occasion. He also presided over a president's team which played a commemorative match against the croquet section of the AELT&CC Wimbledon but lost by one point.

Now to look at the federations in random order. The South East's centenary celebration was a handicap doubles tournament at Surbiton in July. 42 players competed from 9 clubs, one apparently playing off a handicap of 29. The semi-finalists all received centenary medals and in the final Simon Miles and Don Beck of Medway also won a cup each by beating Len and Jean Nash of Crawley. Surbiton's magnificent catering was much appreciated and



The certificate that Crake Valley waited so long for from the Guinness Book of Records.

the whole weekend seemed to capture the right spirit.

The West Midlands decided that each club should determine their own winner to forward to a centenary knockout competition for the Armada Dish presented by the centenary committee. The worthy overall winner in September was Sam Tudor, who is still at Wolverhampton GS, so we hope he will go on to win even more prestigious trophies. The East Midlands have yet to get their act together by comparison but are said to be planning a regular centenary tournament from 1998 onwards. Perhaps they know something we don't.

East Anglia picked the last Saturday in June at Wrest Park for their tournament, not knowing that the afternoon was going to be wiped out by rain. Nonetheless 23 players performed with frequent changes of lawns and colours and by hook or by crook the competition was completed with Jeremy Scott beating Ron Harris 'fairly quickly' in the eventual sunny final. Our reporter opined that the winner must get his handicap reduced soon. In contrast the south West decided to award their trophy to an individual selected for his overall contribution to croquet and to his club. The recipient was Arthur Addis of Plymouth who received his award before a large audience at the Federation AGM immediately after the Solomon lecture. Also in the SW federation the Bristol club celebrated their own centenary with a dinner as well as carrying off the centenary Inter-Counties trophy under the guise of Avon.

Yorkshire & Humberside celebrated with what they describe as a multi-game circus at the East Riding club with the maximum entry of 40 from all 7 clubs. Everything from pirates to level advanced play seems to have been included and it must have been a success since a repeat is planned for next year. The only embarrassment was that the Armada Dish for the

overall winner went to Mike Evans who was also the organiser. The runner-up, Dr Colin Fletcher, received a centenary medal, and Zeneca won the team prize. Meanwhile in the South they favoured a multi-venue handicap doubles tournament which was won by Roy Harmer and James Tuttiott of Littleton.

Croquet North also organised a gymkhana-type event over two sunny days at Newcastle. Nearly 50 people took part in 9 team events ranging from golf croquet to advanced play and embracing beginners and A class players alike. Despite all this competition Bruce Rannie featured as co-inventor of the format, manager of the weekend, chairman of the host club and captain of the winning Tyneside team. I guess he deserved the trophy!

The North West Federation held two centenary events, one to publicise the game and the other to play. In the latter, 8 clubs competed at Southport in handicap, short and golf croquet under the management of Brian Storey. This was successful in attracting those new to the game and other high bisquers who would not normally compete in tournaments. The handicap was won by Pendle the short croquet by Bury and the golf by Bowdon. The centenary championship was won by Pendle. A centenary exhibition on the history and development of the game was mounted by the Crake Valley club at the Great Garden Countryside festival at Holker Hall. There was glorious weather for the occasion and a record number of about 35,000 people attended over the three days, some of whom were persuaded to have a go at croquet, with 16 actually enrolling for coaching. The Federation purchased a special display stand for the occasion and there was a trade stand selling croquet sets.

Moreover Crake Valley celebrated its own centenary in the year. They took on Belsay Hall in a 24-hour challenge and a separate 6-hour challenge devised by Bill Lamb to see who



Don Cornelius presents Jeremy Scott with the Armada Dish for winning the East Anglia Federation Centenary tournament.

would score the most hoop points. We have to see whether they get in the Guinness book of records as a result.

Finally two individual projects endorsed by the centenary committee: John Beech produced a centenary mallet for sale and David Drazin arranged the publication of Crowther Smith's Best Ten of 1925, a charming collection of caricatures which had originally been presented to that year's winner, W. Longman.

All in all, a wide variety of activity; congratulations to all who did their bit. We hope that as result the centenary has given everyone, whatever their own handicap, a little more pleasure both on and off the lawn and resulted in a fuller range of competition generally. If some of the events are perpetuated or if new players have been persuaded to take up the game, so much the better.

S.T. Badger November 1997
The members of the Centenary Committee were: Stephen Badger (Chairman), Veronica Carlisle, David Drazin, Hamish Hall, Alan Oldham, and John Solomon



Parkstone members enjoying the Centenary day L to R Margaret Burt, Peggy Nutland, John Lonsdale, Jill Lonsdale, Ian Scott, Beryl Saunders.



Participants in the Centenary Dinner held at Wimbledon following the 1997 AGM.

The Centenary Doubles
Cheltenham 30th - 31st August 1997

report by Shona Vaissiere & Gordon Porter

photos by Alison Thursfield

THE LARGEST GATHERING OF THE CLANS SINCE 1922

Overcast skies heralded the start of the Croquet Association's Centenary Doubles weekend, thought to be the largest gathering at one venue since the 1922 tournament at Devonshire Park, Eastbourne, which is believed to have been the largest event ever, attracting 202 competitors, 190 of whom played in the handicap singles. The 8 events were played on 13 lawns, with no time limits and lasting 16 days.

So 170 players from 24 clubs forming 38 teams playing over two days was no mean feat for the organisers. It was managed in smooth style by an unusually cool and calm Ian Burrige and Co. with catering on a grand scale by Eileen Magee and her team of happy helpers, providing lunches teas and a superb BBQ on the Saturday evening. The only break in the dismal weather allowed everyone to eat outside

and enjoy the music provided by the band.

Play was fast and furious; with an hour and a half time limit on the 14 point games it enabled each team to have six games. Day one showed the World Champions team fighting to retain the bottom of the table position, whilst Richard Hilditch was left to run 3 hoops with the bisques after his 17 handicap partner ran to peg without faltering. In a bottom of the table clash, the Dulwich Badgers and Cheltenham 4 had an excruciating end game with peg and peg against rover, Roquets, Hoops and Peg were all missed by distances of at least 12 inches, each team giving the other opportunity to finish, neither managing to capitalise, or perhaps they were both wanting to keep the coveted last place!!!!

In the final games on Sunday afternoon

Leicester had to win the match against Budleigh B to secure first place, so when they only managed a draw after both games being level on time, it left the Cheltenham Racketeers as clear winners with Leicester second and Medway third.

To see so many players having such an enjoyable weekend was a delight, certainly one to go into the history books.

FORMAT:

The 38 teams were divided into two blocks, one of 18 and one of 20 teams. Each team consisted of two doubles pairs who each played a pair from the opposing team, in a 14pt handicap game. Thus each match could either end as a win (2 points), a loss (no points) or a draw (one point). Each block was played as a three round swiss after which the teams were again divided into the 20 teams with the most points after 3 rounds and the 18 teams with the least. Another three rounds of Swiss were played giving 6 rounds in all and the team with the most points after 6 rounds was declared the winner. (In reality most of the teams in the bottom block of 18 elected not to play their final game in order that they could go home early). A tie-break procedure was used to separate teams with the same number of points.



Results:

Round 1

Bristol Blues 2
Belsay Hall 1
Prime Berks 1
Sussex Eagles 1
Cheltenham Hopefuls 0
Beverley 1
Plymouth 1
Blewbury 1
Ipswich 1
Round 2
Cheltenham Swans 1
Letchworth 2
Dulwich Dolphins 1
Winchester 1
Budleigh B 1
Cheltenham Hoopers 1
High Wycombe 1
Harwell 0
Sussex Condors 0
Meldreth 2
Round 3
Sussex Eagles 1
Medway 1
Dulwich Badgers 0
Plymouth 2
Ipswich 0
Saltorton Swizzlers 1
Harrow 1
Bristol Blues 1
Belsay Hall 1
Round 4
Cheltenham Hoopers 1
Bristol Bisquers 1
Sussex Condors 1
Dyffryn 1
Tyneside 1
Letchworth 0
Wolverhampton GS 0
Winchester 0
Leicester 2

Cheltenham Swans 2

Round 5

Bristol Cream 0
Hurlingham 1
Bristol Blues 1
Beverley 0
Prime Berks 2
Belsay Hall 2
Saltorton Swizzlers 0
Dulwich Badgers 1
Harrow Oak 0
Round 6
Tyneside 2
Cheltenham O's & S's 1
Dyffryn 1
Sussex Condors 2
Dulwich Dolphins 0
High Wycombe 1
Cheltenham Swans 1
Leicester 2
Cheltenham Charlies Angels 1
Cheltenham Hoopers 2
Round 7
Cheltenham Charlies Angels 0
Cheltenham Hopefuls 1
Cheltenham Racketeers 2
Cheltenham Hoopers 1
Bristol Cream 0
Meldreth 2
Budleigh B 1
Prime Berks 0
Bristol Bisquers 1
Cheltenham O's & S's 0
Round 8
Ipswich 2
Cassiobury 0
Wolverhampton GS 2
Harrow 1
Saltorton Swizzlers 1
Dulwich Misfits 0
Sussex Eagles 1
Beverley 0

Dulwich Dolphins 0

Cheltenham Racketeers 2
Cheltenham Widows and Orphans 1
Plymouth 1
Blewbury 2
Cassiobury 0
Sussex Eagles 0
Cheltenham Hopefuls 2
Ipswich 1
Medway 2
Cheltenham Misfits 0
Dyffryn 1
Surbiton 1
Harwell 0
Wolverhampton GS 2
Bristol Bisquers 1
Meldreth 1
Letchworth 0
Budleigh B 1
Berkshire Hogs 0
Medway 2
High Wycombe 1
Dyffryn 0
Belsay Hall 1
Cheltenham Widows and Orphans 2
Bristol Blues 0
Plymouth 1
Cheltenham Swans 2
Hurlingham 1
Leicester 2
Harwell 0
Dulwich Dolphins 2
Blewbury 0
Surbiton 1
Winchester 1
Dulwich Badgers 2
Berkshire Hogs 1
Letchworth 2

Tyneside 1

Round 9

Belsay Hall 1
Medway 2
Budleigh B 2
Cheltenham O's & S's 0
Leicester 1
Cheltenham Hopefuls 1
Bristol Cream 2
Dyffryn 1
Prime Berks 1
Bristol Bisquers 1
Round 10
Berkshire Hogs 2
Harrow 1
Tyneside 2
Wolverhampton GS 2
Ipswich 1
Sussex Eagles 2
Beverley 2
Surbiton 0
Harwell 1
Round 11
Leicester 1
Bristol Cream 2
Bristol Blues 2
Prime Berks 2
Hurlingham 0
Belsay Hall 1
Cheltenham Hopefuls 1
Cheltenham Racketeers 1
Plymouth 1
High Wycombe 0
Round 12
Wolverhampton GS 1

Sussex Condors 1

Cheltenham Widows & Orphans 1
Meldreth 0
Cheltenham Swans 0
Plymouth 2
Cheltenham Racketeers 1
Cheltenham Hoopers 1
Hurlingham 0
Bristol Blues 1
High Wycombe 1
Cheltenham Charlies Angels 1
Winchester 0
Budleigh B 1
Saltorton Swizzlers 0
Letchworth 0
Sussex Condors 1
Blewbury 0
Cassiobury 0
Dulwich Dolphins 2
Cheltenham Misfits 1
Budleigh B 1
Cheltenham Hoopers 0
Cheltenham Widows & Orphans 0
Cheltenham Charlies Angels 0
Cheltenham Swans 1
Bristol Bisquers 1
Medway 1
Meldreth 1
Dyffryn 2

OVERALL RESULTS

Winners - Cheltenham Racketeers 9 pts
Second - Leicester 9 pts
Third - Medway 9 pts
(above positions determined by tie break procedure)
Consolation block - Wolverhampton GS 7 pts

THE SOLOMON LECTURE
CROQUET - HOW WAS IT FOR YOU?

By J.W. Solomon, President of the Croquet Association

Presented at the Redwood Lodge Hotel, Bristol, November 2nd 1997

I am very gratified that there are so many croquet lovers here today. It is, of course, a great honour for me to have been asked to give this lecture, and to have it named after me. I am not so innocent as to pretend that I am unaware of the reason why I should have been chosen, nor so modest as to deny that I did have a considerable period of success in competitive tournaments over a period of 25 years - what I believe a unique record and one which may never be equalled, consisting of 48 National and International titles between 1951 and 1974. There is also the fact that I have the honour to be the President of the Croquet Association.

As we all know, this year marks the Centenary of the Association and a number of events have taken place to mark this special year. Whilst there are a considerable number of Associates who are older than I am I believe there is no-one in this country today who can claim to have been playing, competitively as long as I have. Freddie Stone played from, I think 1912 until 1956, a total of 44 years. However, I played in my first tournament in September 1947 and this year therefore marks my 50th anniversary of tournament play. I am not going to talk very much about myself, except in so far as I was, in one way or another, involved with other people; but to put something on the record which is not I think generally known I will say a word or two about how I began. The usual question I am asked is "When did you start to play croquet?" to which I reply "When I was 15".

Whilst this is true in one sense the real answer comes if, as I sometimes am, I am asked "How did the Solomon grip come about?" We



Mr M Reckitt with John Solomon and Patrick Cotter, at Roehampton in 1956.

had a grass tennis court at home which I can only remember being laid out as a croquet lawn, on which we played golf croquet, the only kind we knew. From the age of 5, possibly earlier, I used to amuse myself hitting a ball around. When you are no more than 3 feet tall and you are confronted with a mallet that is as tall as you are, there is really only one way to hold it. Starting at that age it soon became totally natural for me to swing without even thinking about it.

Jumping now to what happened when I was 15, my mother was introduced to Association croquet at Roehampton and she taught me a little at home. In the school holidays of 1947 I went along to Roehampton a few times to watch my mother playing in a small tournament. If one of the lawns became free I would lay out the balls and try to play a break. In September, the week before returning to school there was a small tournament, the Turketine Tray, which I entered, was given a handicap of 15, and in I think 4 rounds had won it and was brought down to 10.

The following year, 1948, in the Easter holidays. I used to cycle to Roehampton from our home near Putney Heath two or three mornings each week and practise, laying out 4 ball breaks and seeing how many bisques I took to get round. There were 3 or 4 regulars there, I remember R.H.Park, Capt. Backhaus, Edward Carlisle, (no relation of Hugh and Veronica) and one day Mr. Carlisle said to me "Come on the court Solomon" (it was all very formal in those days even to young 16 year olds) "and I'll teach you how to play a four ball break". Well I bridled at this - I knew how to play a four ball break, I'd already won a tournament hadn't I? - but I was a well brought up lad and so I duly followed him as he laid out a perfect 4 ball break. I made the first hoop and was about to roquet the pilot ball when he asked me what I was going to do. I said I was going to roquet it and send it to the third, going to the pivot near the stick. "Fine" he said, and as I was about to roquet it he said "where are you going to roquet it to?" "I'm just going to roquet it" I said. "Well, consider that if you send it to here, you'll be wired by the peg, and here you'll be wired by the pivot ball, so make sure you avoid those two spots". Yes, good thinking, I mused. Having roqueted the pivot he again asked my intentions and I said I was going to take off to the pioneer at the second. "Where precisely?" he said. I said "well, just go to the hoop", to which he replied, "the pioneer is a yard to the left of the hoop, so if you go to



John Solomon, President of the Croquet Association, prepares to offer the inaugural Solomon Lecture.

the hoop you'll be hitting it further away. Make sure you go to the left of the pioneer and then you'll be able to hit it up in front of the hoop". And so it went on, my resentment vanished and I lapped up every word of wisdom that he expounded. I think at the sixth hoop he said "That will do - you've got the idea" and I was eternally grateful for the only lesson I ever had in my life.

Perhaps what is of most interest in all this is that, having played in tournaments since 1947 I am probably one of the few people to have played against or with people who played before the war, in the 30s or even 20s. Indeed a person I knew very well for many years and whom I played on several occasions actually won the Ladies Championship in 1899, almost 100 years ago. She was then Miss Lilius Gower and I think she was about 18 at that time and she won it 3 years in a row. I knew her as Mrs. Beaton and my partner Pat Cotter christened her (privately to me) the brown bomber or the blue bomber, for she appeared to have only two dresses, both identical in design and one was brown, the other blue. She was very easy to get on with and was still a useful player - her handicap was -0.5, in 1950.

It was during my first tournament at Roehampton, the Turketine Tray, that I first met Humphrey Hicks. The President's Cup was being played at the same time, they on lawns 1 to 4, we on 5 to 7. They were all in one long line in those days and they had two more up on the bank where the putting green now is for their big tournament. I was playing on lawn 7 when Humphrey, who had finished his game, came striding down the bank at the north end and sat on the bench at the end of the court. After a while I finished a turn at that end of the court, I

probably stuck in the second hoop, and went to sit down on the same bench. I plucked up courage and said, "you're making me very nervous", to which he replied, "Oh, don't worry, I'm making your opponent much more nervous".

In those days and for the next 2 or 3 years, I met many players who had played before the war. Handel Elvey whom some will have known but most will know of. His full name was George Frederick Handel Elvey and he had been the Vicar of Upper Dicker, just north of Eastbourne. He was a fine player, though perhaps past his best when I knew him, and a good craftsman, making mallets of many kinds. Many of you will have known Norah Elvey who was also a fine player of around scratch, -2 I think at her best. Kay Longman, a fine minus player and I think in those days the only lady to play centre stance. Her husband Willie Longman, of the publishing family, a President's Cup player was also still playing well.

Mrs Neville Oddie, a minus player who



Miss D.D. Steele (illustration from the Best Ten drawn by H F Crowther Smith)

wasted no time, she just walked up and hit the ball, very effectively too. Often it looked as though her break was going to disappear altogether and that she would be bound to break down, but more often than not she managed to keep it going. The only occasion I won the Open Mixed Doubles Championship was with her.

D.D.Steele had of course been the supreme player before the war, winning the Beddow Cup 4 times when it was presented to her and was replaced by the President's Cup. She had a fascinating style, standing very upright, her heels together but her feet at right angles, rather like a ballet dancer, and swinging her mallet actually over her right foot.

Duff Mathews, just a name to me, along with C.L.O'Callaghan, and Cyril Corbally. They were the great Irish trio of the early part of this century. Corbally first won the Opens in 1902, winning it 5 times in all; O'Callaghan won it in 1910 and again twice more; Duff Mathews in 1914 and again 3 more times. I not only met the

Duffer, but actually played against him at Carrickmines when the CA sent a team over to play Ireland in about 1956. I remember that he had me beaten, except that on his second turn to the peg he laid up in the third corner. As I thankfully took the lift he said "Oh, that dratted lift. We don't bother about them in Ireland!"

Hope Rotherham, tallish and very straight, had probably the most unpure swing anyone has ever seen. It described an arc behind her. She said that one winter she spent a lot of time in front of the mirror developing a straight swing. When she went on the court in the spring she missed everything by a yard!

I am skipping ahead a little chronologically, for it was in 1950 that I had the opportunity to go to New Zealand with the team for the MacRobertson Trophy. It is perhaps a little interesting as to how I came to be part of that team in 1950/51. In my last quarter at Charterhouse I went for a medical for my National Service and was rather delighted when I was turned down and as I had been accepted at Magdalen College, Cambridge for two years later. They agreed to take me a year earlier, but that meant that I had a year free. My father had heard that the Longmans, who had originally been part of the team, could not now go and he volunteered my name. You can imagine my extreme pleasure when I received a letter from my father a week before the end of my last quarter which contained nothing but a first class return ticket to New Zealand, which incidentally cost £300, which I remember working out later cost just over 1 penny a mile, including about 5 meals a day and dinner was 7 courses each evening!

I mentioned Humphrey Hicks a little earlier. I got to know him pretty well because we were both members of the England team which went to New Zealand in 1950. Four of us went by sea from Tilbury, Winifred Kingsford, later Winifred Ashton, and Mrs. Ozzanne, Hicks and myself. On the first evening we met for a cocktail before dinner and Winifred said to me, "John, we have been talking. We think it will be silly if you call us Mr. Hicks and Mrs. Kingsford and so on, so I'm Winifred". "And I'm Humphrey" said he. Mrs. Ozzanne remained silent, possibly because her deaf aid was switched off. She was profoundly deaf and carried an ancient apparatus, about the size of a handbag which she kept switched off unless you signalled to her to turn it on.

During that trip to New Zealand, where we spent three months and played croquet on at least 85 of the 90 days there; I improved rapidly. I had left England with a handicap of -1, and although Hosannah was scratch I thought her greater experience would count. In the event I played 4th in the first two matches and 3rd in the last.

There were two other members of the team, Eddie Ward Petley, who was coming direct from South Africa, and Dudley Hamilton-Miller, our captain, who ran a prep school and was flying out and would join us shortly before the first Test.

Although we would be six, the matches would consist of 5 singles and 2 doubles. Well I have no need to go over the results of that Test Series. We lost it by the narrowest of margins, winning the third and last Test having forfeited one match because of a car accident which meant that Eddie Ward Petley could not play. After the MacRobertson Trophy was finished we played in the New Zealand National Championships where I won my first titles.

Humphrey Hicks was in my opinion the greatest croquet player I have ever seen. He was the one I feared more than any other, good as Pat Cotter was. You somehow knew that Humphrey would hit the last lift. I remember particularly two games I lost to him, (there were of course many others), one in an exhibition in Australia in 1951, when I had given contact and pegged him out, (showing off a bit I suppose) and got 2 balls in the corners but the third was two feet out of the 2nd corner spot. With the contact Humphrey took off from the ball in the



Major General Sir Miles Graham (right) watching play at the 1960 Open Championship with H. O. Hicks.

fourth corner and got a rush behind the ball nearly on the second corner spot to the first hoop and finished the game. In the Open Championships in England in about 1960 I remember playing him on court 5 at Hurlingham and in a similar situation, having one of my balls in the second corner, and Humphrey's in the middle I put my striker's ball in the fourth corner instead of the obvious, with hindsight, the third. Humphrey took contact from my ball in the fourth corner, split to the first hoop, got perfect position, ran it and finished the game. He had the most unusual style and I believe there are few photos which will illustrate exactly how unusual that was. In a strange way there was a similarity between Humphrey's and William Ormerod's, (though at greatly different levels of height from the ground).

He held the mallet in an Irish grip but considering the shaft was at least 3ft. 3 inches, and he held it right at the top, playing side stance, it was a strange grip, his left hand holding the

top of the shaft only with the thumb and forefinger. His real forte was the long rush. Most of us would only 'guarantee' a rush of about 1 foot, perhaps 2. Humphrey Hicks would almost invariably accurately pull off rushes of 2, 3 and 4 yards, something that few players today would be very confident about. In terms of technique I have not noticed that any players today are able to play any shots better than the best players of some years ago. Accuracy in rushing, split shots, long rolls was just as good then as it is now. I must however admit that long shooting is more accurate today and I will say a little more about that shortly. In passing I might mention that the present almost universal practice of playing full rolls by holding the lower hand near the bottom of the shaft was almost certainly my doing. Until 1951, and a year or two afterwards, everyone played long rolls holding the mallet more or less as one normally did, but stood much more over the balls and played well down so that the back ball jumped. They are much more difficult to play that way and it is amazing how accurate some players could be.

When I was staying with the Tingey's in Sydney in 1951 Robert Tingey showed me that if you hold the mallet within an inch of the head and try to play a stop-shot, it is impossible; so that if you play a bit of a roll it becomes a full roll and a full roll becomes a pass roll, and so on. I had always been nervous of pushing or double tapping and this was a wonderful development for me and soon began to be adopted by more and more of the players here.

Another development today is the greater use of cannons. They were of course played, even long before my time, but people were less adventurous, tended rather rarely deliberately to play for a cannon, and more often than not would then only play 'the worm'. In fact I believe it was the New Zealanders who introduced us, in I think 1963, to the mini-cannon, which can be so accurate.

One thing that seems completely to have disappeared, I am personally thankful to say, is the golf stance. It was never widely used but I can remember Canon Pym from Bedford and Victor Evans, noted for having designed some of the CA ties and the flag, always played with



Duff Mathews, reputed to be responsible for the 'Duffer tice' (illustration from the Best Ten)

a golf stance and I have to say they were not ineffectual players, the Canon playing off a half and Victor Evans off +1. But the most remarkable player I ever saw, and knew well, was Monty Spencer Ell, who had no arms. He had a couple of inches of his left arm, with which he could scratch his ear, and his right arm ended just above the elbow. He normally had a gadget with which he could do a number of things but when he arrived at Roehampton, normally his man would cope with things but on a number of occasions I would unclip his normal gadget and clip on his mallet, which was a steel shafted one about four feet long. He got his handicap down to scratch and how he played long rolls I really do not know but very well he played them. He could take the clips off the hoops and put them on again if they were on the side, but not the top. He would gladly accept help but could manage remarkably on his own if he had to. In addition he was one of the most charming men you could wish to meet.

Finally, I must say something about Pat Cotter, my partner for almost 25 years. He was a natural games player, having had a golf handicap of scratch and he hit the ball very gently

and delicately. He was not a particularly good shot, probably because he didn't usually hit the ball hard enough to stay on line. Even the splendid courts at Hurlingham are not absolutely true. He was a good tactician and we both favoured peeling partner through the first hoop to make the triple peel easier - or so we thought. It only needs one good split at the beginning of the second break to get it going. I always got on very well with him and we were good friends, but some people found him a bit difficult, for he did have rather a short temper and he could be a bit curt on occasions. The problem was, I think, that he was highly intelligent, he was senior classics master at St. Pauls for as long as I knew him, he had been the world bridge champion in 1938, and he assumed that other people had a similar intelligence. If it transpired that they did not he could be rather brusque. I cannot imagine how I managed to avoid this part of his character. One thing that he did early on when he took up croquet again in 1947 (he had hurt his foot and couldn't play in a golf tournament) was to break down the barriers of formality. In those days everyone was Mr. Reckitt, Miss Lintern, and so on even though they had known each other for 20 years or more. Within a year or so he was calling them Maurice, Daisy, and in no time nearly everyone else was doing the same.

We all play croquet for fun, for enjoyment, for relaxation, for exercise - yes, it can be energetic! At least I suppose we do and yet how often do we hear people complain about some recent game. How badly they played, how well their opponent, how wet it was, or hot it was or why couldn't they have stopped for tea? Whatever these problems, there are fortunately many moments of humour which all of us must have enjoyed at some stage, possibly on numerous occasions. One of the best examples of this was related to me only quite recently and concerns Paul Hands who was playing handicap doubles with a lady of about 24 - handicap that is. He laid up with her ball a yard in front of hoop 1, his own a foot in front of hers. She approached and went straight into the wire. At the next opportunity he laid up with her ball a foot in front, his own just beside. The same thing happened. At the next opportunity he contrived

de MOWBRAY MALLETS

Highly polished exotic wood 9" - 12" heads;
Screwed and chemically welded double faces;
Hardwood handles and Fibre glass shafts;
Luxury KARAKAL grips; inlaid sight lines
Double handles/other variables: no extra cost

Centenary limited edition Ebony head: £95
Salmon Pink, Tiger Stripe, Lignum heads: £85
All other beautifully grained heads: £75

de MOWBRAY MALLETS tel 01275 852508
7 Bucklands Lane, Nailsea, N. Somerset BS19 2DJ

The John Hobbs Mallet

Try it with the **longer axis** of the shaft **at right angles** to the line of aim. It feels **more comfortable** and for most people **it improves their hitting-in**.

All you have to do then is **rotate the head** till it is dead central, then test and fine tune it for maximum accuracy. Once **locked** it doesn't move - unless you want to adjust it.

Light aluminium shaft, nylon shock absorber, padded top and bottom grips, range of woods. Details from:

John Hobbs, Kingsbury, Argos Hill, Rotherfield,
E. Sussex. TN6 3QH. Tel: 01892 852072
E-mail: HobbsMall@aol.com

to get her ball in the jaws of the first hoop and his own waiting on the non-playing side. At this point he was called away to referee a shot on another court. When he returned he found all the clips in the same positions and the balls scattered around the court. Upon enquiring what had happened he was told that she had run the hoop the wrong way. "At that moment" said Paul, "I felt that the game was beginning to slip away from us!"

Having considered something of the last 50 years, what of the next 50? It is a brave man who will stick his neck out with predictions for the future but I suppose it is something I am expected to do. Of course we must all hope, and have every confidence, that croquet will continue, at the very worst, at its present level of popularity; but there is no reason why we should not expect there to be an increase in the number of clubs and a corresponding increase in the number of tournaments available for us all to play in. In 1960 there were only 4 registered clubs north of Manchester, today there are 18.

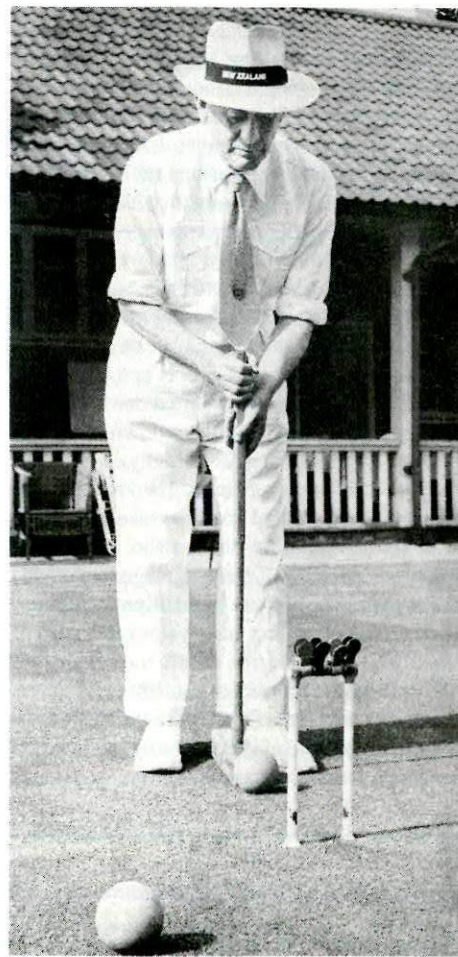
There have always been some, like Brian Lloyd Pratt, who deplored our efforts for so many years to broaden the scope and interest of croquet and to make it available to a wider audience. We may look with envy at bowls, which is regularly shown on TV. Here again is a sport that had the image, as croquet has had, of being an older person's game. Yet the international professional bowls tournaments today feature many younger players. Perhaps not many non-croquet players now realise that the cream of our croquet players are mostly under 30, and this applies also to Australia and New Zealand. If we can continue to attract young boys and girls, and particularly girls, of which we have a great shortage, in their teens, we will build up a strong nucleus from which the game will continue to develop.

Before I look in a little more depth at the game we all play, I must be careful not to ignore golf croquet. I know, and sympathise with those who argue that the game is not golf and it is not croquet. The name is, I think, unfortunate. Perhaps a new name might be 'Hoops' or 'Mallets' or some such. But I have little sympathy with those who brush it aside as being of no merit. It has been found by a number of clubs as being an ideal way of attracting new members many of whom soon take up association croquet.

But what of association croquet itself? Will that remain as it is now, or will there be new developments in its format? I believe there should be, and I hope very much there will be. Here, there will be groans from many players who will be saying, or at any rate thinking, "Why do we have to keep changing the laws? They're always making some changes." In fact, this is not so. True there is a minor change to the laws almost every year, but these are to put right things which had been overlooked or to overcome the undesirable cleverness exhibited by ingenious people who have spotted a lacuna. I will give you two examples. A few years ago someone,

for a reason which now escapes me, decided it would be of help to him to take croquet by balancing the striker's ball, in hand, on top of the roqueted ball. This being undesirable, not least in terms of timewasting while trying to achieve the balance, the law now says "the striker must place the striker's ball on the ground in contact..."

Another instance took place as a result of a game I played in the 1963 NZ Championships following the MacRobertson Trophy, against Arthur Ross, the leading NZ player during the 30's, 40's and early 50's. Arthur had shot at my ball and gone off the side boundary, leaving me a nervy 7 yard roquet if I was to pick him up and build a break. I decided to be brave and took my aim. Looking up for a final time to verify my line of aim I saw Arthur, who had picked up his ball and was just replacing it. "Sorry, John", he said, "there was some mud on it". Pure gamesmanship as ever I saw.



Arthur Ross, captain of the New Zealand touring team, in play at Roehampton in August 1956.

I must say a little about Arthur Ross, whom I first met in 1950 in NZ. He was a very stylish player - in a natural way, not in any artificial way. He was still good, though past his very best, having first won the NZ Open Championship in 1922 and then 7 more times before the war. He often played with a pipe in his mouth which he would sometimes throw to

the boundary as his break became more involved. He visited England a couple of times after the war and won our Open Singles in 1954. At an international meeting at the end of the tournament to consider the laws there was no problem in changing the law to say that "a ball may be wiped by the striker at any time".

These changes are all cosmetic and have no real effect on the game that we all, at any level, play. The last time a change was made in the laws that had any significant effect on the way the game is played was in 1946 with the introduction of the second lift after 4 back and of contact if 1 back and 4 back were made in the same turn by the first ball. This of course made an enormous difference to A class play, (though not to lesser mortals where B class games were usually played under Variation B, that was, only one lift after 1-back - even the Inter County championship was played under Variation B for many years) and the advent of contact was responsible for the renaissance of the triple peel, since almost invariably the first player stopped at 4 back in order not to give away the innings by giving contact, and, if the lift were missed, the opportunity was there to finish the game in only one more turn by completing the triple peel.

One aspect of the game I have always considered to be illogical is the half-bisque, if only because it is purely a matter of chance whether one has one or not. I would prefer to see them either abolished or to allow a player the option of splitting a bisque into two halves if he so wants. I suspect that most would regard that as too expensive an operation, unless of course they already had a dozen or so bisques. I nearly succeeded in getting Council to abolish the half-bisque when I was Chairman of Council in 1963 or 64. I proposed a motion to do so and there seemed to be some sympathy from the majority of members. But I went too far in my motion and proposed that those with a half in their handicap should go down a half if they were minus, and up a half if they were plus. But I had reckoned without Mrs. Nickisson, a stalwart at Roehampton. She said, "Oh that won't do. I am a 2 and Daisy Jennings is a 4.5. I find it very difficult to beat her now; it will be impossible if I have to give her 3 bisques." I still think it worth considering.

The developments in the game since then have not been as a result of any law change but as a result of players during the last 15 years or so developing new leaves against lift shots and these have had a significant effect on certain aspects of the game. A contribution to the changes in leaves in recent years has been the much increased accuracy in shooting, particularly in shots of up to 15 yards or so, and I accept that this has forced some change in the thinking which governs the leave. I suppose this increased accuracy stems from the swinging which seems now to be universal when taking aim. I have to say that I find this the most distasteful and boring development to have emerged in the last dozen or so years. Three or four swings I can accept but 8 or more is the

biggest turn off imaginable. One change in the law I would welcome would prohibit the practice but I realise that that is not practicable. But this greater accuracy in shooting has led to lift shots being taken which I would describe as suicidal and would almost never have been contemplated twenty years ago. Having been a percentage player all my life I prefer to have the reasonable possibility of having another shot, rather than the virtual certainty of losing the game.

A change in practice which I would welcome, and there are quite a number who hope that it may soon happen, is one which will shorten the game considerably. It is interesting that during the 50's attempts were made to encourage long bisquers to play one of the shortened variations. This was logical on the basis that those with handicaps in double figures took 5 hours to finish a game and even then frequently didn't do so. Such attempts to simplify the game for them were laudable but, paradoxically, were resisted by those very people



Mr A.A. Reed and Mrs E Rotherham during the 1963 President's Cup at Hurlingham.

on the grounds that if the experts played 26 points why shouldn't they? They paid the same subscription to the CA and the same entry fee to the tournament. I was responsible for the introduction of the full bisque game, although it had been mentioned many years before but never had any serious experiment. It has never achieved its objective because it is even now used only rarely and I believe that the base is now set at far too high a level. It is also unpopular with longer bisquers only because they still do not know how to use their bisques and hoard them instead of using them constructively. If a base must be used I would hope that this would never be higher than 6, though I would prefer 4 or even 3. But, in addition, if the two players both have handicaps above the base, that that be ignored so that if a 10 plays a 16 then they should each have their 10 or 16 bisques. It only needs a relatively few long bisquers to start using their bisques attackingly and beating their more cautious opponents for others to realise what bisques are for. It really must be unjustifiable for two 16 bisquers to play each other on level terms, on exactly the same terms as opponents in the Open Championships, (without lifts, of course) and for us to feel surprised that they take so long over it.

An initiative taken by many of today's

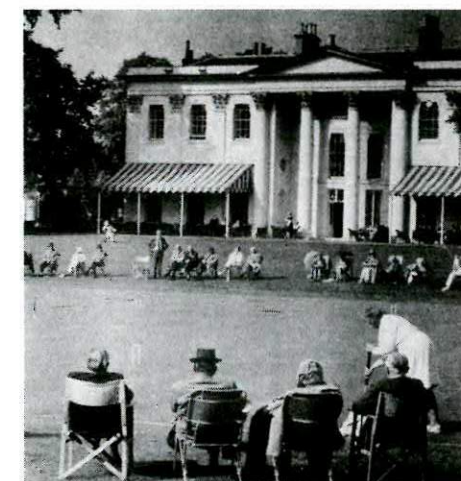
leading players, particularly those involved with the Croquet Players Association, (a body for which I have the greatest respect and do not regard them as being in any way competitive to the various national associations) have recently advocated the 14 point game, that is to say that game comprising of the first 6 hoops and the peg. The point about it is that lifts (and contact) occur after the 3rd and 4th hoops. This gives little time to organise a triple peel, which now assumes much greater difficulty. This version of the game has a number of advantages. First, it can be played in an hour or so. Secondly, it is easier to explain to spectators and novices alike. Thirdly, it has the logic of comprising of only one circuit of the hoops, - what is the point of making them twice? But I believe the fact that games can be played by experts in about an hour is a great advantage, and those with handicaps of up to about 15 should, with bisques, play it in no more than two hours. I hope very much that this version will be played more and more in our tournaments and I would be more than happy if it were to become the only version of the game. However I foresee the possibility of an ironical problem emerging. As I said earlier, long bisquers have consistently disliked playing shortened games while the rest of us play 26 points. If the 14 point game becomes standard I would not be surprised if the longer bisquers complained that they weren't getting their moneys worth if they cannot play 26 points! Well, we shall see.

I have now to mention something that I find unpalatable, but which I believe needs to be said. I am sure most of you will know that the next World Championship takes place in a weeks time in Bunbury, just south of Perth, Western Australia, and Barbara and I are off there tomorrow morning to fly the flag for the CA, and I am one of our delegates at the WCF meetings that will take place there. Not all of you may know that Chris Clarke, the holder of the title and therefore an automatic selection, has declined to go.

His reasons seem to be his concern that the organisation of the event may not conform to the conditions laid down, based on the unfortunate experience everyone had two years ago in France. To be fair to the French, no-one could have foreseen that the hotel everyone was booked into would go bust a few weeks beforehand. It is unfortunate that he should assume that the Australians may not be able to stick to the advertised conditions; accommodation for competitors will be provided free by the Australians, including continental breakfast, transport to the ground each day and lunch. He also sought to impose his own conditions, one at least of which could not be accepted by the organisers. I find it distressing that anyone can be so callous to the hosts who would be so happy to welcome him. What is also distasteful to me is that correspondence on this subject by more than one of our younger players is on the internet, and therefore available to almost everyone. It disparages the CA and is

scathingly rude about other countries in the WCF. We are the senior Association in the world, we have the best players in the world and that gives us a responsibility to behave with decorum and courtesy to others. This childish behaviour does our cause no good and I now take the opportunity to apologise to our friends overseas and to assure them that this behaviour is not typical of English croquet players. I hope such behaviour will now cease.

There is one aspect of our approach to the game, or rather the approach of those in authority in the CA, which I would hope can radically change, and that concerns the hospitality we are able to provide for visiting teams to this country. Or rather the lack of it! Particularly during the last 25 years I have made many trips overseas, not as a member of a team, but in a private capacity, or rather as President of the CA, - I think I have played in a dozen countries - and invariably have received wonderful hospitality. Sometimes my



Miss Joan Warwick in play during the President's Cup at Hurlingham in 1963.

accommodation has been provided free, almost invariably meals at clubs have been at no charge and I often find it embarrassing that we are unable to return such hospitality here. When setting budgets, I hope those responsible will double the figure they first thought of to cover this aspect.

Croquet has given me immense pleasure over the last 50 years and I know there are thousands of players, in this country alone, who hold the same view. The fact that anyone wishes to join the Association is proof that they hold the game in high regard and I knew three or four ex-internationals in other sports, rugby, hockey and tennis, who took up croquet when age prevented them playing their more athletic sport, and who all said, "If only I had discovered croquet earlier!" Well I can only hope that there will be a constant addition of players in the years to come, hopefully many of them reasonably young, who discover the delights, of which there are many, and the tribulations, of which there are a few, of the game which we all love.

..GOLF CROQUET EXTRA..

World Golf Croquet Championships, Egypt, October 1997

THE PLAY

Forty eight players from nine countries competed for the championship. The event was played at two venues in Cairo, the first days as eight blocks, then the top thirty-two going forward to the final knock-out play for the world rankings. Seven of the ten English entries got through to this stage, which was an excellent performance. The final rankings of the English players (age range from 16 to 66) were:

16 Ivor Brand	22 Syd Jones
23 Richard Brand	26 Edward Dymock
27 Andrew Hutchinson	30 Simon Miles
31 Samantha Curry	37 John Jeffrey
38 Don Beck	40 Len Hawkins



Scoreboard and personnel with the players



Dealing with a loose hoop



The English representatives waiting for the opening parade with WCF Secretary General Chris Hudson

Meanwhile the Egyptian players were proceeding to the top. The final was between Salah Hassan, a 33 year old engineer and Walid Salah, a professional singer. Walid, with accurate and strong hitting was the favourite to win but Salah with calm clever tactical strategy was the eventual winner. Walid won the first game 5-7 but Salah recovered to win the next three 7-4 7-3 and 7-6. The match finished with a very tense moment, with the score 5-4 to Hassan, Walid ran four-back but was judged by the referee to have jumped a blocking ball and so the shot was disallowed. Walid was upset to the point of walking off court but was persuaded to stay by Hassan who then in a generous sporting gesture gave the hoop to Walid. Hassan then went on to win the game, match and championship. The Egyptian players hit very hard indeed, the ball often travels at about forty miles an hour, which makes a marvellous spectator sport but liable to be dangerous in spite of the three foot high safety boards.

THE RULES ETC.

We played not only Egyptian rules but Egyptian style! The difference to our usual laws was not too difficult, but the way of playing with ball boys, scorer and referee on court was excellent but we had to remember not to go chasing after the ball ourselves and not having to keep the score in mind was great. The big difference however was the way of playing; in golf croquet you have to be positive and play to get hoops, this means playing hard and confidently for hoops that before we went to Egypt, to us, was out of the question. I think we all rose to the quality of play and became better at the game, let's hope that we can keep up this standard in England next summer. Rule changes were mainly:

- Start from corner four.
- Only bring the ball in one foot.
- When a ball goes out of play it can not be hit by the opponent until it is played in on the next turn.
- The ball does not have to come back if it sticks in a hoop.
- Ball played to the next hoop before previous hoop has been run may have to come back to a penalty spot.

In general we had no trouble playing to these rules and at a players' meeting the majority were very much in favour of adopting these for all golf croquet international competitions and if possible introducing them into our own countries' laws.

THE HEAT

The temperature was around the 96 degree mark and as we played throughout the day, a noon game was quite a struggle, the big difficulty was holding your mallet and a bottle of water at the same time!

THE LIFESTYLE

A wonderful experience. We were looked after from the moment we stepped off the plane. The hotel was superb. Our hosts were friendly, the food was good, the outings were exciting and the belly dancing was exciting - and that was just the croquet players! The opening ceremony and the spectacular laser show finale were amazing.

EDITORIAL

This issue should really have been published in November, but two good excuses, I was enjoying croquet in Egypt, and we have taken the first available opportunity to appear within the Gazette again. As before this issue is generally a review of the summer activities and a report on committee progress.

We had a good season for golf croquet, doubled the entries for the All England, held the first Golf Croquet Inter-Counties and had ten players taking part in the World Championships in Cairo. We also continued the success of the Golden Mallet and the Golf Croquet cups. So get ready to join in even more opportunities on offer in the summer of 1998!

Hopefully we will be sending out a list of 1998 events early this year, if you don't get a copy please let me know and I will send you one. If you have any comments or ideas for Golf Croquet you can send me them too.

Syd Jones

COMMITTEE NEWS

We held a meeting in the Croquet Association office on the 10th November 1997. Those attending were Rosemary Longbottom, James Wankling, Brian Macmillan, Norma Rayne and our new member Brian Judson and myself as Chairman.

Main points were:

- 1) Budget. We did not spend all our previous allowance due to publishing the magazine in the Gazette. A budget has been submitted for 1997-1998 which will, we hope, enable us to continue to develop Golf Croquet.
- 2) Magazine. It was agreed to continue to publish our magazine as a supplement twice a year in the Gazette.
- 3) Tournaments. Some changes have been made mainly that the Golf Croquet championships will now be run as two separate singles and doubles events. This should encourage entries and provide a better format. The Inter-Counties will be a two-centre event for north and south with winners meeting in a national final.
- 4) Handicaps. Trials of the system have produced many comments and we have changed this to suit.
- 5) Coaching. Plans were discussed to provide courses for beginners and experienced players. We will try to produce these for next season.
- 6) Laws. These are still the subject of much discussion and even some agreement! We are still hopeful of preparing a set of trial laws for use next season.

Syd Jones - Chairman Golf Croquet Committee

THE GOLDEN MALLET

A new manager and some changes have provided some improvements. Excellent job on the management side by Rosemary Longbottom who completed a difficult job of organising groups throughout the country up to and including the final at Solihull in September, and even better news she has agreed to do it all again in 1998. Well done Rosemary and thanks from us all. Congratulations to John Moore, the winner from the new club Tynemouth Priory & Castle, especially as it is his first year playing croquet.



Rosemary Longbottom with finalists Jim Mortell and John Moore

1997 GOLDEN MALLET COMPETITION

152 players from 13 clubs and a W.I. group took part at group level. Twelve players in each of the five regional finals and sixteen players through to the national final at Solihull on September 14th.

This year six, seven or eight, seven-point twenty-two minute rounds, were played at each venue. From the reports which came in, there are at least fourteen different ways to play a seven point game. Next year, please play hoops 1 - 7 (1 -back). If possible place the red hoop at number 7.

The game is finished when all seven hoops have been run, or the time limit has been increased from 15 minutes to allow more time for the game to be played properly, more time to play more strokes, not more time to play slower strokes. To swing the mallet nine times whilst making your shot is just about acceptable, ten swings and we are really beginning to go off you. Regional Finals

Newport Essex - winner Eve Wilson (Mount Rayleigh W.I.)
Northampton - winner Chris Taylor (Solihull)
Southwell - winner Norma Bell (Zeneca)
Tyneside - winner John Moore (Tynemouth Priory)
Worthing - winner Jim Mortell (Southwick)

The national final started at 12.30pm to allow the players who had travelled long distances to start their return journey in daylight. Maybe next year it would be better to start earlier and have a lunch break; comments please.

Seven rounds were played and only two games ran out of time. Would twenty minutes be a better time limit? When the scores were totalled at the end of the seventh round, the points of the sixteen players, ranged from 29 to 18. No player was more than five points ahead, so there was no outright winner at this point.

Semi-Finals

In first place Chris Taylor (Solihull), Margaret Astley-Cooper (Mount Rayleigh W.I.), John Moore (Tynemouth Priory), with the fourth spot being taken by Jim Mortell (Southwick) who beat

Manor House Mallets

Originators and specialist makers of finely crafted mallets incorporating carbon fibre rod or tube shafts and choice timbers - for all levels of play. All mallets have inlaid sight line, double composite faces and grips, and are dispatched quickly to your individual specifications. 'Cordura' Mallet bags are also available.

Top specification Basic Mallet
(carbon shaft, Bubinga head, double faces)
£65

Discuss your requirements with Alan Pidcock
on 01772 743859 or email pidcock@manorh.u-net.com
The Manor House, 1 Barncroft,
Penwortham, Preston PR1 0SX

Jaqueline Richards of Thames Valley in a play-off. In the best of 13 point games John beat Chris 7 - 1 and Jim beat Margaret 7 - 3, leaving a north/south final. John Moore won 7 - 3, his win being noted by the spectators counting the clips on the hoops. They broke into applause before the players had time to check the score.

The distinctive trophy was presented by manager Rosemary Longbottom. The winner and runner-up each received a Croquet association Centenary medal.

The Golden Mallet competition for 1998 will be in the Croquet association Fixture book. For players who are not eligible please do try some of the other competitions, ask your club secretary for details.

TRIUMPH FOR TYNEMOUTH PRIORY & CASTLE

The third north east of England Golf Croquet Team championship, organised by Croquet for Leisure of Monkseaton, was held on Thursday 17th July in Auckland castle, Bishop Auckland. The event was again sponsored by Portwood Insurance of Bishop Auckland and attracted teams ranging from Ripon to Tyneside. The tournament resulted in a close contest between the two finalists, Croquet for Leisure and Tynemouth Priory & Castle. After a hard fought match Tynemouth won by two games to one. The day finished at four with tea provided by the sponsor and the presentation of the cup by the castle warden, Alastair Yule.



Players assembled for the North East of England Golf Croquet Championships

GOLF CROQUET INTER-COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP 1997 NORTHAMPTON 27TH JULY

Whose daft idea was this competition? Whether it was Syd or myself is now immaterial as it is a success. (I claim the idea of an inter-club event but as to how..... look out for it next season.)

After a couple of dismal July days the sun shone fair for the inaugural Golf Inter-

County. An entry of 4 teams; Essex, Kent, Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire, was ideal to start what promises to be a regular feature of the croquet diary.

Kent were quickly established as the form team, finishing with an impressive 16/18 score. The other teams fought a hard battle to join them in the final with the other finalist not decided until the last two games left the lawn. At one point the players who had finished their games had hurried discussions about the merit of telling the 6 players still on the lawns the score and the significance of their final efforts. Silence and crossed fingers prevailed.

Northampton (2) beat Essex (2) 7 - 5 leaving Oxfordshire doubles to beat Kent to qualify and of course it went to the deciding hoop. a very long and tense final hoop. Oxfordshire triumphed 7 - 6 to meet Kent in the final.

The Kent doubles, Simon Miles and Richard Mann, were given a talk by their captain Don Beck. This inspired their play as they reversed the previous result with a 7 - 1 victory.

Results:
Final - Kent 2 : 1 Oxfordshire
3rd place - Essex 2 : 1 Northamptonshire.

THE YORKSHIRE OPEN GOLF CROQUET CHAMPIONSHIP

The first part of this event was run as in previous years as an Egyptian format to select the players for the finals on the second day. Alice Fleck was unbeaten in this part but was knocked out in the semi-final by George Farmery, so maybe this format is a little unfair, it's certainly unkind! After losing the first game to Keith Smith, Syd Jones won the other semi and then went on to defeat George in the final.



Samantha Curry presents Syd Jones with the winner's trophy

THE GOLF CROQUET CHAMPIONSHIPS

A good entry this year leading to an excellent finals day at Parsons Green on the 13th July. There were eight players in the singles which was played in two blocks, the winners Roy Edwards and Syd Jones then playing in the final which was a very convincing win by Roy of seven points to one.

The block for the doubles Championship was won by Ivor and Richard brand, with last year's winners Syd Jones and Arthur Addis coming last! As usual time was very tight, running both events on the same day, so next year the singles and doubles will be organised with the finals on separate days.



Syd Jones presents Roy Edwards with the Golf Croquet Singles Trophy

ALL ENGLAND GOLF CROQUET FINAL COLCHESTER, 21ST SEPTEMBER 1997

On a beautiful autumn Sunday the six area finalists gathered at Colchester to contest the final, which was played on a block basis, each player playing everyone, the winner of a match being the first to seven points. As it happened no less than five of the 15 matches were won by 7 - 6 and a further four by 7 - 5, so there was plenty of play and excitement.

There was also considerable amusement for the spectators as several players lost their way on the courts, and in one match hoops one and two were run three times.

Syd Jones and Alan Oldham joined the players and spectators for lunch and after brief speeches Alan presented the winner's trophy to David Haslam of Colchester.

Results:
4/5 David Haslam
3/5 Rosemary Longbottom, Irene Brazier and Alan Brooks
1/5 David Boffey and John Payned

ROQUET A REPLY ?

I have compiled this to the best of my ability but comments, insults or better still good ideas are very welcome. Even better why not write contribution myself.

Write to Syd Jones
36 Front Street
Monkseaton
Whitley Bay
Tyne & wear
NE25 8DF
Tel: 0191 2522962

Prepared by Croquet for Leisure for the Croquet Association.

Handicap Alterations

Sidmouth Club August			
Miss S Rogers	16	to	14
B Smith	1	to	0.5
Southport 1 - 3 August			
A Sutcliffe	1	to	1.5
J Death	0	to	-0.5
P Death	0.5	to	0
N Williams	7	to	6
Parkstone 2 - 3 August			
J Dixon	2.5	to	3
Mrs G Stoaling	16	to	14
Mrs K Priestley	10	to	9
J Phillips	18	to	20
Cassiobury 2 - 4 August			
E Matthews	11	to	10
A Reed	1.5	to	2
D Shipston			3
Colchester 3rd August			
Mrs I Brazier	16	to	14
P Allnutt	1.5	to	1
Budleigh Salterton 3 - 8 August			
Mrs V Henderson	10	to	11
Mrs B Porter	14	to	16
A Jardine	1	to	1.5
Mrs E Magee	6	to	5
D Magee	-0.5	to	-1
B Smith	1.5	to	1
P Mayers	4	to	4.5
R Scaddan	4.5	to	6
Mrs A Whitaker	5	to	4.5
Miss J Goodhart	11	to	10
D Kibble	-0.5	to	-1
Miss L Bradforth	5	to	4.5
B Whitaker	12	to	11
Ms S Vaissiere	3.5	to	2.5
G Porter	5	to	4
Ms G Curry	2.5	to	2

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

NEW ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES

Classified advertising has now been introduced to the Gazette at very competitive rates, to both individual members and clubs as well as rates for non-members and trade/commercial. Details of how to place an advert should be available now at all clubs.

SERVICES

Keith Aiton ATT Tax Consultant For comprehensive and confidential advice on all aspects of Income Tax, Capital Gains Tax, Inheritance Tax and Self-Assessment Tax.
Tel: 01623 - 871380 Fax: 01623 - 871414.

Hurlingham 3 - 10 August			
Mrs M Boyd	9	to	10
P Castell	3.5	to	3
T Dutton	8	to	7
Mrs A East	9	to	8
R Knapp	12	to	11
N Morrow	1.5	to	1
R Stephens	2.5	to	2
W Thornhill	4.5	to	6
Mrs H Carlisle	3.5	to	3
R Porter	14	to	12
Mrs B Reid	18	to	16
S Cawdell	4.5	to	4
A Mooney	7	to	6
D Ironside	16	to	14
J Hilditch	2	to	1.5
Edinburgh August			
J Potter	6	to	5
Harrow Oak 17 August			
Ms S Vaissiere	2.5	to	2
Southwick 18 - 23 August			
P Castell	3	to	2.5
D Collins	3.5	to	3
Mrs P Davey	18	to	16
Mrs D Gaitley	8	to	7
Mrs P Howell	8	to	9
Miss P Kendall	8	to	9
A Rajotte	4.5	to	5
M Rogers	14	to	16
Cheltenham 23 - 25 August			
M Blackwell	4	to	3.5
A Cowing	3	to	2.5
Mrs S Edwards	14	to	12
J Godson	10	to	9
Mrs V McClements	11	to	12
D Morgan	7	to	6
Mrs M Watts	12	to	14
Mrs D Wheeler	10	to	9
R Wheeler	10	to	12
D Bradley	2.5	to	3
P Higgins	11	to	9
Miss L Bradforth	4.5	to	4
K Chambers	1	to	0.5
S Tudor	4.5	to	4
Dr F Whittaker	2.5	to	2
Hurlingham 23 - 25 August			
D Mooney	6	to	5
N Carter	14	to	12
D Ruscombe-King	4.5	to	5
R Hutchinson	14	to	12
Hunstanton 23 - 26 August			
M Harbord	10	to	11
Mrs E Magee	6	to	5
M Kolbuszewski	10	to	11
H Carlisle	6	to	7
A Chalmers	6	to	5
Mrs C Pearce	6	to	5
Mrs B Gosden	12	to	11
Bath Club August			
T Doughty	12	to	11
D Stoaling	12	to	11
M Cope	8	to	7
K Bright	7	to	8
Mrs G Staoling	14	to	12
Mrs D Johns	18	to	16
B Whitaker	11	to	10

Pendle 25 August			
Mrs L Fraser	12	to	11
Dr P Tidswell	8	to	7
D Watts	16	to	12
S Watts	14	to	12
Parsons Green 26 August			
E Brookfield	7	to	6
Ryde Club August			
Mrs M Robinson	12	to	11
P Kennerley	1.5	to	1
R Tillcock	11	to	10
Parkstone 25 - 30 August			
Mrs D Birrell	16	to	14
L Hawkins	7	to	8
R Henderson	6	to	7
Mrs D Parsons	18	to	16
D Price	2.5	to	2
Roehampton 28 August			
Dr J Eden	2.5	to	3
Mrs P Healy	3.5	to	3
G Bennett	1	to	0.5
Budleigh Salterton Club August			
Mrs C Bagnall	9	to	12
I Birdseye	14	to	12
Mrs J Birdseye	24	to	20
R Bowen	14	to	12
Miss M Goodhart	12	to	10
Mrs M Scaddan	12	to	14
R Scaddan	6	to	5
Mrs D Smith	12	to	14
Rev C Townsend	1.5	to	2
Hurlingham 2 - 4 September			
N Graves	20	to	16
D Wedmore	14	to	12
Mrs H Carlisle	3	to	3.5
Spencer Ell 3 - 7 September			
A Mrozinski	-0.5	to	-1
Newport Handicap 6 - 7 September			
Mrs M Boyd	10	to	11
D Cornelius	4	to	3.5
J Wilkinson	7	to	6
Sidmouth handicap 6 - 7 September			
J Coombs	16	to	12
Edgbaston B Class 7 - 9 September			
S Tudor	4	to	3.5
Budleigh Salterton 12 - 14 September			
S Carter	0	to	0.5
T Doughty	7	to	6
Mrs V Henderson	11	to	10
D Moorcraft	2	to	2.5
Dr E Owen	12	to	14
Mrs A Price	16	to	14
D Stoaling	11	to	10
Wrest Park 12 - 14 September			
J Leader	8	to	7
N Evans	2	to	1.5
M Lester	18	to	16
J Norris	9	to	8
O Bryce	11	to	12
J Hall	9	to	10
Barlow Bowl 10 - 14 September			
Ms G Curry	2	to	1.5
Longman Bowl 10 to 14 September			
Ms S Vaissiere	2	to	1.5
Ms S Stenhouse	5	to	4.5

AROUND & ABOUT



Richard Brand and Ivor Brand being presented with the trophies for the winners of the Golf Croquet Doubles Championship.



The All England Golf Croquet finalists line up before play at Colchester.



John Simmonds, Chairman of the South West Croquet Federation, presenting the league winners Bristol with their trophy. The Bristol team are L to R: Bob Scott, Rosemary Gugan, Margaret Pena and Marion Hilton.

Bottom of the fashion stakes, but using his head, Martin Grainger Brown shows how to stay in the shade at Bowdon.



Players at the Phyllis Court Club dressed for 'Croquet 1897'.



Robin Brown must have had a good week as manager of the Hurlingham week, or perhaps it would have been lemonade not bubbly.