

# THE CROQUET GAZETTE

ISSUE 282 - NOVEMBER 2002

Inside: *Thinking to Win* - the science of sport psychology  
*North of the Border* - a croquet desert in Scotland,  
or a development success?





**CA contacts**

**Secretary**  
Nigel Graves  
The Croquet Association, c/o Cheltenham  
Croquet Club, Old Bath Road, Cheltenham,  
GL53 7DF.  
01242 - 242318  
caoffice@croquet.org.uk

**President**  
John Solomon  
Kingswood Place, Horsham Road, Findon, West  
Sussex, BN14 0RG.  
01903 - 873921 (H)

**Chairman of Council**  
Quiller Barrett  
16 Frinton Court, Hardwick Green, London,  
W13 8DW.  
020 - 89985453 (H & F)  
rgb@dircon.co.uk

**Treasurer**  
Dr Roger Bray  
Street Cottage, Polstead Hill, Polstead,  
Colchester, Essex, CO6 5AH.  
01206 - 263405 (H)

**Gazette Editor**  
James Hawkins  
38 Ballantrae Road, Allerton, Liverpool, L18 6JQ.  
0151 - 7242140  
james@croquetgazette.fsnet.co.uk

**Tournament Committee**  
Richard Hoskyns  
25 Burlington Road, London, W4 4BQ  
020 8994 3244 (H & F)  
richard\_hoskyns@compuserve.com

**Laws Committee**  
Ian Vincent  
29 Thoresby Road, Bramcote Hills, Beeston,  
Nottingham, NG9 3EN.  
0115 - 9253664  
ian.vincent@nottingham.ac.uk

**Management Committee**  
Ian Vincent (details above)

**Coaching Committee**  
Bob Whitaker  
23 Rockliffe Road, Bathwick, Bath, BA2 6QW.  
01225 - 462718  
whitarch@lineone.net

**International Committee**  
David Openshaw  
Bridge House, 45 Baring Road, Beaconsfield,  
Bucks, HP9 2NF.  
01494 680184 (H), 01494 680321 (O/F)  
david@open123.demon.co.uk

**Golf Croquet Committee**  
Bill Arliss  
30 Hove Park Villas, Hove, East Sussex, BN3  
6HG.  
01273 - 728204  
arliss@mistral.co.uk

**Selection Committee**  
Phil Cordingley  
1 Milbro Court, 35 Anson Road, London, N7  
0RB.  
020 - 76093040  
phil.cordingley@virgin.net

**Development Committee**  
Hamish Hall  
5 Telford House, North Road, Leigh Wo, Bristol,  
BS8 3PP.  
0117 - 9741683

**Marketing Committee**  
Jonathan Isaacs  
Meers Farm, The Hollow, West Chiltonington,  
West Sussex, RH20 2QA.  
01798 - 817326 (H) 01798 - 817393 (F)  
isaacs.wapping@virgin.net

**Equipment Committee**  
Bernard Neal  
41 Asquith Road, Cheltenham, Glos., GL53 7EJ  
01242 - 510624

**Publishing Committee**  
Charles Waterfield  
The Lodge, Great Broughton, Middlesbrough,  
N.Yorks, TS9 7HA  
01642 - 712551  
c.waterfield@breathemail.net

**Handicap Committee**  
Michael Blackwell, 53 Ashfield Road,  
Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, NG2 4LR  
0115 844 7201  
m.c.blackwell@lse.ac.uk

**Regional Reps on Council**  
**East Midlands**  
Patricia Duke-Cox  
171 Witham Road, Woodhall Spa, Lincoln, LN10  
6RB.  
01526 354878 (H) 0794 4489880 (M)  
dukecox@aol.com

**East Anglia**  
Robert Bateson, 3 Applecroft, Northchurch,  
Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, HP4 3RX  
01442 866004 (H) 01494 535011 (O) 01494 452487  
(F)

**London & South East**  
Quiller Barrett (details above)

**North West**  
Barry Keen, 20 Grove Park, Knutsford, Cheshire,  
WA16 8QA  
01565 632420 (H) 01355 262603 (O)

**Croquet North**  
Charles Waterfield (details above)

**South West**  
Bob Whitaker (details above)

**Southern**  
Jolyon Kay, Ickleton House, London Road,  
Blewbury, Didcot, Oxfordshire, OX11 9NZ.  
01235 - 850010  
JolyonKay@aol.com

**West Midlands**  
Michael Blackwell (details above)

**Yorkshire**  
Julian Tonks, 13 Hobgate, Acomb Road, York,  
YO24 4HE.  
01904 - 791254

**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 the 15th of the month before publication is due, unless otherwise informed.

**Advertising**

Full details of all advertising rates and data are available at all clubs as well as via the CA Shop and the Secretary of the CA.

**Specific Questions and Queries**

Specific questions or queries should be sent direct to the Editor. Email contributions, including tournament reports, should be sent direct to the Editor, or copied to the Editor if they are being posted to the Nottingham List.

Both black and white or colour prints of photographs can be used. Slides are no longer accepted. Photocopies of pictures or print-outs of digital images cannot be used. If using digital photography please send in jpeg or tif format files. Resolution of scanned images must be at least 300 dpi. 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 and Reports**

Emailed reports are welcomed. Attachments may be sent in Microsoft Word format, or any other PC-based word processor. Hand written reports are no longer accepted.

**Delivery Queries**

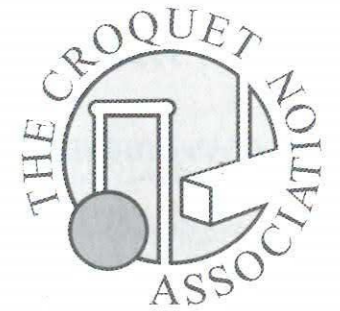
Queries regarding delivery of the Gazette to members should be directed to the Secretary of the Croquet Association and not to the Editor.

**Disclaimer**

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

THE  
CROQUET GAZETTE

ISSUE 282 - NOVEMBER 2002



Next Issue Published 14th January 2003

Copy Deadline 15th December 2002

**Contents**

<b>Chairman's Column</b>	4
<b>Editorial</b>	4 - 5
<b>Letters</b>	6 - 9
<b>Tournament round-up</b>	10 - 12
<b>North of the Border</b> <i>What's in the future of Scottish croquet?</i>	13 - 15
<b>Child Protection Policy</b> <i>The CA moves towards a policy supporting the well being of young people in the game</i>	16
<b>Citations for CA Diplomas</b> <i>With a new PR agent, the CA plans to better its image</i>	17
<b>News &amp; Information</b>	18
<b>Thinking to Win</b> <i>A profile of Keith Aiton, British croquet's sports psychologist</i>	19 - 21
<b>CA Merit Awards 2002</b>	22

**Cover photograph:**

This cake of a croquet lawn first featured in *Cake Craft and Decoration* magazine in May 2001. It was created by Christine Brunsch, whose husband Paul plays at Taunton Deane CC. Apart from the wire hoops, everything, from the mallets to the hyacinths, is edible.

Visit the Croquet Association website at [www.croquet.org.uk](http://www.croquet.org.uk)



## Chairman's Column

### Volunteers (again)

At this year's AGM John Solomon remarked that, once more, we had an uncontested election for Council. It's true that for as long as I can remember there have been vacancies at the Council table, some of which we have filled by co-opting people.

Coming on to Council these days does mean making a commitment to work on some of our committees. But the good news is that we usually manage to fill round holes with round pegs, and members make their contributions in one or more areas where they have an interest. So if you feel the time is right for you to help manage the game that has given you so much pleasure do please contact me, any other Council member or Nigel Graves, to find out more about what is involved.

My mind has turned to volunteers (again!) because it has recently been brought home to me how much the world outside croquet is affecting the workload of Council members. There are plenty of examples. The trend towards more litigation in Britain triggered a huge amount of effort to incorporate disciplinary and appeal procedures into the CA's constitution. Then we have had to write child protection policies, and we are en route to produce a national strategic development plan for croquet, all to satisfy funding organizations.

When I talk with administrators in other national governing bodies I realize that the CA has, to date, been very fortunate to find volunteers with the qualifications and willingness to cope with this extra workload. Many sports bodies now pay consultants and employ more staff to deal with these matters. If the Council is to continue to provide an efficient service for its member clubs by issuing guidance and model papers (such as club constitutions), I fear the pressure we shall be under will mean



that croquet, too, will need to start paying for more professional help. And that means we shall need to increase our annual income.

### Federations

Our Federations came into being in 1991 and their boundaries coincided with the then Sports Council regions. Federations have always been autonomous bodies, not part of the CA's formal structure, and this is one reason why Council has so far shied away from tackling problems that are associated with some of them. From Council's point of view the main concern we have is that we cannot implement our development and coaching policies in parts of the country where Federations are small and don't have sufficient volunteers to help clubs. It is not funding that is holding us back here, it is manpower.

However other Federations are strong and have, over the years, developed their own different cultures - running leagues and giving clubs lots of development and coaching help. They regard themselves as separate entities from the CA (as indeed is the case) and understandably some of them are suspicious of any move on Council's part to change the status quo.

All the Federations are represented on Council and, with their agreement, the CA is now going to grasp the nettle to see if it is possible to improve matters. Our starting point is to ask Federations what else the CA can do to help them. We would also like to know their views about the present links with the CA and the possibility of changing their boundaries. We hope we can find a way to help our member clubs that currently do not get the practical assistance they should. Wish us luck.

Quiller

## Editorial



Relax - the *Gazette* may look different, but I'm still here. You'll notice that I've been playing around with the layout of the magazine since last time.

Part of the reason for the change is to sort out some problems of space on the page (and thanks to Paul Castell for some advice on this), and part of it, I must confess, was because I'd backed myself into a corner with a format which was more restrictive than I'd like. As a secondary benefit, it no longer takes a whole black ink cartridge to print my proofs for the front cover, so I hope everyone likes the new look. Your feedback is, as ever, welcome.

Here in the Postroom at Gazette Towers, I'm surrounded by mail on the subject of handicapping. It seems David Mooney's article in the last edition has inspired many of you. Speaking as both a handicapper and (ex) mathematician, this is one topic on which I'm inclined to join the fray myself.

The problem as I see it, and it's a problem which has been in the system right from the start, is an arithmetical one. When we talk about winners gaining ten points for each victory, let's be clear what we mean. They're not *gaining* points, they're *taking* them. And for every point gained someone else is losing points. That's irrespective of whether their own play was good or bad.

In fairness the system stands up pretty well on a day by day basis. If everyone's handicap is correct, players will win more or less half their games. Sure, I'm happier to play certain opponents than others. Generally, many A-class players will regard giving 24 bisques as a more rewarding

game than the sole-destroying process of repetitive 26-ing by a string of handicap 10s. If I play in a handicap event, I expect to have a varied selection of opponents. Some games I'll win and some I'll lose. Only by this process can we judge if someone's handicap is really correct.

So let's look what's happening to the points. I take ten points off a 24, and an 8 comes along and takes them off me. Then the 24 wins them back. Simple. We're all square. If the 24 improves and suddenly starts playing to 18, I, as a handicapper, conjure up 150 points and hand them over. The 24 is reduced as a rapid improver and our three-way system remains stable.

Where the Automatic Handicap System is starting to show its age is in the way it deals, not with rapid improvers, but with *gradual* improvers. Here I'm as guilty as the rest.

This season, a fellow handicapper and I looked at one of our rising stars at Southport. He was playing well and was within a couple of games of a cut. We agreed to leave his handicap unchanged, knowing it would fall naturally within the next week or so. With hindsight, it's the wrong decision. Even with a handicap adrift by one bisque only, a player is likely to receive an unfair advantage in taking someone else's ten points off

them. It's no big deal when it happens once. The system can cope with one game where a 12 plays like an 11, hovering just above a cut.

What the system can't cope with is twelve years of gradual improvers. To put this in perspective, suppose that there are 50 people each season playing slightly below their handicap. Each one pick up 10 points which they shouldn't have done. Over the lifetime of the current system, they've taken a total of 6,000 points from other players. I doubt this is a realistic figure - I personally would account for more than 10% of this figure since 1991, without ever being termed a "rapid improver". There's little wonder that many established players are starting to feel left out by handicap play.

The current system came into force to deal automatically with regional anomalies, and to provide for clubs without a recognised handicapper. It's worked well so far, in that the people who play best win tournaments and get handicap reductions. But there's a serious problem that's emerging, where some players feel they're losing games not by playing badly, but by having a handicap which doesn't fit in.

The article by David Mooney which has shed light on the issue of the Automatic Handicap System coincides

with the appointment of the new chairman of the CA Handicapping Committee, Michael Blackwell. I should imagine that Michael will want to conduct his own evaluation of the card system. If there is an anomaly which needs correction, what is the extent of the damage? And what is the way forward for the system; should we combine the cards with the old system of observing players at tournaments before handing out reductions to bandits, both major and minor? Or should there be some sort of protection for players who lose?

I'm sure maintenance of the system will require more time and thought than many of us are prepared to give it. It's a difficult task which Michael takes on, and I wish him the best of luck. I hope all of us are patient enough to wait to see what results become apparent.

Finally, and not for the first time, an apology. Once again we've had some difficulties with distribution of the *Gazette*. Although I've said it before, we hope to have had these problems resolved by the time you receive this edition. Knock-on delays always occur when one edition is late, but, fingers crossed, expect a punctual copy for the New Year. In the meantime, Happy Christmas.

### LOOKING FOR A NEW MALLET TO IMPROVE YOUR HANDICAP?



CHOOSE AN MCP MALLET from a wide range of sizes and weights, fitted with a traditional wooden shaft or the increasingly popular lightweight carbon fibre tube with its amazing strength & torsional rigidity. A range of grips and quality mallet bags are also available. Alterations and repairs undertaken to any mallet, please ring for a quotation.

Contact Mike Percival, The Laurels, Heath Road, Hessett, Bury St. Edmunds, IP30 9BJ  
Telephone no. 01359 270200  
Email: [mike@croquetmallets.com](mailto:mike@croquetmallets.com)

### The John Hobbs Mallet

Reg Bamford used one, plus a "Bamford Swing Trainer" to win the World Championship

You adjust, then lock the handle to whatever angle best suits your style of grip and swing.

New feature - a curved bottom to 12" heads so that you have the greater accuracy but don't dig in.

Light aluminium shaft, nylon shock absorber, variable weight heads - details from:  
<http://members.aol.com/Hobbsmall>

John Hobbs, Kingsbury, Argos Hill, Rotherfield, East Sussex TN6 3QH Tel & Fax 01892 852072  
Email [Hobbsmall@aol.com](mailto:Hobbsmall@aol.com)



## Letters

### Only two cheers for the Tournament Committee

Dear Editor,

Derek Trotman's article on hoop setting (*Gazette* 279) announces a welcome removal of some ambiguities in the Regulations: the Tournament Committee (TC) has now made it unmistakable that 1/8" means 1/8" and not something smaller, and they have removed the meaningless words "in exceptional circumstances" from the rules. They deserve credit for taking two steps forward - and one should draw a veil over how these ambiguities got there in the first place.

But it also takes a step backwards by introducing a new principle which essentially undermines these two decisions, a step moreover which is based on a very shaky foundation. Despite the fact that hoop/ball clearance is a major element in the difficulty of the game - in fact it is the only way in which Championship play (at 1/16" clearance) is distinguished from ordinary play (1/8" clearance) - the TC now proposes that Managers and Clubs shall be free to set clearances at

any level which they think appropriate. The rationale of the TC appears to be that since there are many variable affecting the difficulty of the game which are beyond our control, then there is no need to set hoops to an accepted standard. But there is a fallacy here; since the hoops have to be set to something, it might just as well be to a value which does not add to the uncontrollable variability. Golf, by way of comparison, is a game even more subject to variability than croquet, but I am not aware that the size of the holes is left to the discretion of individuals or Clubs.

An important function of the CA is to encourage uniformity of good practice throughout the game, and the purpose of the rules is to make that practice definite and unambiguous. Leaving hoop standards to the discretion of Clubs (and in reality this is to one or two individuals in a Club), is a big step backwards.

So, only two cheers for the Tournament Committee until they put this right.

Don Gugan  
Bristol

### Bi-polar croquet - a response

Dear Editor,

David Mooney makes some very good points about some problems with our present handicap system (*Issue* 281, page 14). However, his analogy with golf has its limitations for two reasons, I believe:

1. Each golfer is in effect playing solo against the course, so that the opponent exerts mental pressure but does not otherwise interfere with his or her score on a particular day.

2. As a golfer's skill improves then his or her scores should diminish in a linear fashion, so at all times the most likely net result remains at par for the course. Since this is true for both players, the handicap does its job without bias whatever the difference in absolute standards of play.

Neither of these is true of handicap croquet. As an absolute beginner progresses to handicap 16 or thereabouts, he or she first of all develops basic roquet, croquet, and hoop-running skills. A plateau may well be reached inside 2 years, whereby most bisques are used to set up a 4-ball break and progressively fewer are needed just to keep such a break going. Past this stage improvements arise via better hitting in, better tactics in setting up a break from ever less promising positions, tighter control as hoops are made, and more deadly leaves for the opponent. Thus the corresponding two points in croquet are as follows:

A medium handicap player will have far fewer turns against a good player than against someone of his or her own standard or worse, and must maximise what few opportunities are presented. A player's balls are rarely left where they were at the end of the preceding turn. Croquet is a very interactive game, not a "solo" one.

From handicap 24 to about 16 the number of turns a player needs to complete a game reduces very sharply, but thereafter only slowly. Improvements in skill are therefore not "linear" in their impact on the

score, yet the number of bisques that may be claimed do fall uniformly. The most likely net result is by no means neutral.

Using straight subtraction to generate bisques, as we do now, particularly benefits players who have just reached the "plateau" of handicap 16 or so. What is needed is a way of equalising the opportunities for both the B-class player and the 16-handicapper when they meet in a tournament.

Forbidding bisques after the first stroke of any turn, as David suggests, is too much of a reversal in my view. "Plateau" players need an opportunity to get a break going using one or more bisques, but should then be able to progress round to peg only if they are playing really well on that day - not just because of the artificiality of a linear system.

My proposal does not alter how many bisques players are entitled to, only when they may use them. In any single turn, bisques cannot be used once a player has run a number of hoops equal to half his or her handicap (rounded down if necessary). Thus 16-handicap players on their first turns may choose to use bisques up to 8 hoops, but not thereafter. If they are good enough to run the last 4 without bisques then good luck to them. A 9-handicapper cannot use bisques after running 4 successive hoops.

This rule would continue to apply for all turns, e.g. the 9-handicapper starting a turn on hoop 5 could proceed to 2-back inclusive using bisques if needed, but then the "no-bisque" condition would cut in. I see no reason why it should not be used equally well in doubles matches also, with each player limited to half his or her individual handicap in each turn, not the partnership handicap.

Such a limitation need not be universal, but tournament managers may choose to impose it in certain events only - specifically to give a more even chance across the full range of handicaps.

Tom Banfield, Middlesbrough CC  
Dear Editor,

Although not quite a B Class player (currently 7), I have harboured similar, albeit not identical thoughts to David Mooney (*Gazette* 281) while extracting bisques in timed CA tournament matches against many competent 14-18 handicap players. Often I've run out of time at the end for my own contribution to the game.

In July 2001 I read a letter from Bob Burnett of Southport to the *Gazette* advocating a 'variable base' system, in which competitors play with a base one quarter of their combined handicaps. So, if a 7 plays a 14, the sum is 21 which, when divided, produces a base of 5.25, rounded down to 5, giving them 2 and 9 bisques respectively.

I evaluated his ideas in our end of season tournament in September 2001, setting up a 'Hands Egyptian' competition for 15 players on three full lawns. Under Bob's system, the lower handicap players usually get a bisque or two, and even a solitary half bisque for these better players against a higher handicap player can and often does make quite a difference. In our case, only two of more than 50 games played went to time and the final result was well spread between the handicaps.

Trying again in 2002 I had much the same general outcome. In 2001, the handicap range was 3.5 to 20 and 2002, 3.5 to 18. The final placings each year do not seem to reflect any particular dominance by one handicap category, the 2001 winner coming 10th in 2002, albeit off a one lower handicap by then.

The consensus was good and given that almost all players (including myself) are regular tournament players whose handicaps interface with those from other parts of the country, I do not think there was any 'regional distortion'. On both occasions, the results seemed to be more a reflection of who was playing best at the time (in relation to their handicap) rather than on the handicap itself - which seems to accord with the views expressed by David Mooney in the conclusion to his article.

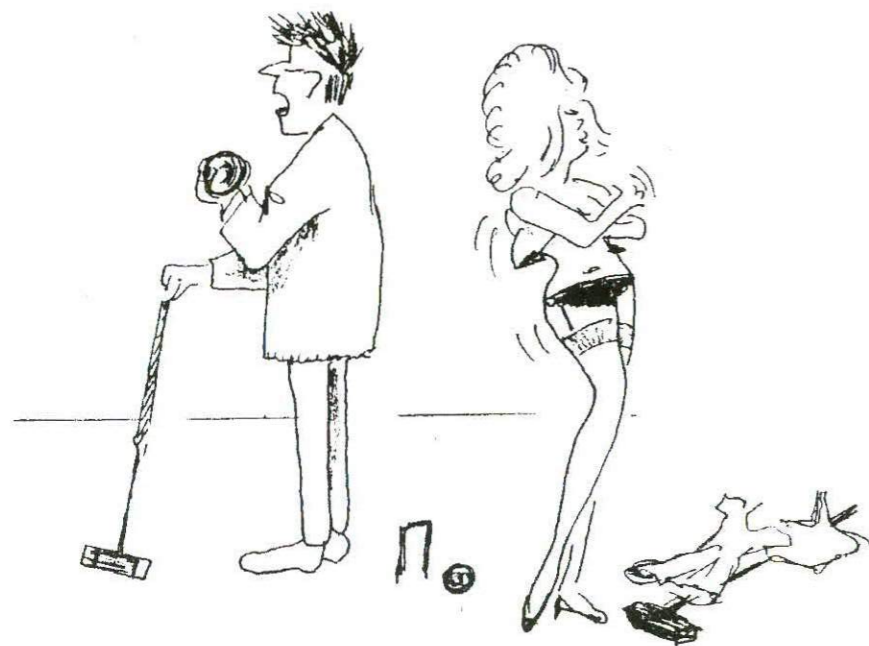
The 'Burnett variable base system', as we now call it at York, has also been adopted for some of our own internal all-season club tournaments and is proving both versatile and popular. Moreover, our own B-Class players also like it - against each other our 3.5 handicappers now each get 2 bisques, making for a most exhilarating game.

I am not claiming that this variation resolves all of the problems which David Mooney raises, but I suggest that it might be attractive to tournament managers, because it does seem fair to all. The mere fact that 95% of games played on this system at York have finished within time seems important in the context of the problems which David mentions for B-class players.

I am not sure how it would work with handicaps below 2, nor does the Burnett system really cater for players whose handicaps are intrinsically wrong in the first place. I think that's a different and perhaps more fundamental problem wherein I generally endorse David's views.

Part of the problem stems from handicaps not changing within a club when members play each other regularly on a non-competitive basis, winning and losing more or less the same number of games and getting better all the time but without any change in handicap, even if these friendlies are recorded. Here, the club handicappers must do their job properly and at York we try our best. A recent new recruit to our club (from overseas) came in as a notional 14 in 2001 but was rapidly reduced to 11 (by the handicap committee), later to 8 as it became obvious that he was a good player - certainly C Class. He finally came down to 7 on the automatic system, partly as a result of entering outside tournaments, and very recently triggered to 6.

What this particular case also revealed (as it had also done in my own case a few years earlier) was that entering outside handicap tournaments is a good way of testing one's handicap against a wider range of



Jack Shotton

**I'm sorry, Gloria, you're not good enough to play for the team...and I can't think of anything you could say or do that would make me change my mind...**



players from elsewhere. Properly appraised, this can feed back into the club itself and at York, we tend to regard those with considerable tournament experience as forming useful comparators to those of our members who, for one reason or another, do not play in many tournaments. Mind you, if other clubs are not equally vigilant with their 'rapid improvers', it can distort the position when it comes to competitive league matches, for example.

Reverting to bisques, the idea of disallowing them in the last part of a timed game has some attraction - though Bob Burnett's system did seem to get rid of most of the time problems in our own case. But what might be worth examining is a variation whereby bisques cannot be used in succession in the latter part of a game - i.e. a player can only extend the initial turn by one bisque turn at this stage. Even so, I have to say, as mostly a 'puller-out' rather than a user of bisques these days, that I quite like to see two or three bisques vanish in rapid succession if my opponent meets with a real problem...

I doubt that we will ever reach a stage where the automatic handicapping system is perfect; but like democracy itself, it is probably better than any alternative which I can envisage. I therefore offer Bob Burnett's variation into the debate with a strong recommendation that it be considered most seriously on a more national basis for handicap tournaments. I would merely add that the further refinement which I adopted (copying John Beech at Pendle if truth be told!) of imposing a maximum handicap difference of 10 between players for as long as possible, also helps to even out the field and usually makes for a competition which can go 'down to the wire' regardless of individual handicap.

David Jenkinson  
York

Dear Editor,  
Maybe there's a touch of paranoia in the oft expressed thought that your many bisqued opponent is using his bisques to keep you out of the game until time is up. He may well waste time by 'thinking' for long periods, but that is another matter.

But even if it was possible to prolong an innings by using bisques 'destructively', it could only be regarded as a technique for winning (however distasteful) and the effect would be eliminated by the Automatic Handicap System. Restricting a player's ability to use his bisques as and when he wants would, as time went by, tend to give him more bisques and his opponent fewer. Hence more bisques for the high bisquer to abuse and the low bisquer to grumble about.

It's interesting that David Mooney feels that higher bisquers win more than 50% of their games with lower bisquers. I haven't noticed this myself, but surely if handicap cards were kept properly and honestly by all players, this couldn't happen anyway. You don't have to be Einstein to see the mathematical imperative built into the AHS, which assures that, given a big enough sample of games and scrupulously kept cards, everyone would have a roughly 50% chance of winning any game. But this also depends on players of all classes playing each other regularly. Those who are refusing to play with lower classes are themselves part of the problem. The convergence of handicaps across all the classes is an important part of the system.

As I see it, problems of this kind emanate from badly kept handicap cards, particularly among C and D class players. I agree with David Mooney that tournament managers should check cards at the beginning and end of every tournament. OK, it's a bit of a pain, and more work to do, but our handicap system would be healthier and one of the biggest causes of dissatisfaction might well be removed.

There is a very serious obligation on club handicappers to

deal promptly with rapid improvers. They are probably the most disruptive force in the whole handicap system, and the cause of much justified irritation.

Tony Garner  
Harrogate

Dear Editor,

I was delighted to read David Mooney's reference, in the September issue, to the remote Cotswold village of MUCH HOOPING. But it's not easy to find. May I suggest that the right way to arrive at this desirable place is via GREAT RUSHING and LESSER ROLLING. Otherwise, dread fate, you might end up in MUCH CLANGING.

Tony Fathers  
Richmond

*Drug control - an effective policy?*



Dear Editor,

After 40 years in the game, (36 in tournaments), I am now well qualified for Veteran's events. My main concern on entering my first CA tournament was that I should thereby forfeit my AAA amateur status by competing with the 'professionals' who received £5 cash prizes for winning! By entering the Budleigh Salterton 1966 May tournament I gave up for ever my amateur status in athletics for a lifetime in croquet, a wise choice.

My concern is now focused on

the drug control statement of the CA, which mimics closely those of the IOC and again the AAA. The reduction in flows of adrenaline attributable to advancing years has steadily improved my performance, but the increasing need for occasional medication has caused me concern lest it may infringe the Regulations. The Regulations are quite explicit. Prescription medication is permitted in CA Calendar events. But surely such medication ought to be declared in advance? There is a provision that even these drugs may be banned at designated events, but I have yet to find a single event thus "designated".

Most of us "Vets" are on something, but nowhere on the entry form are we asked to declare it! Some of the chemical supports for heart and


blood pressure must be an aid to better croquet - they are certainly banned from the world of Olympic sport. Yet one of the joys of croquet is its accessibility to all ages. The recent invitation events covered an age range from seventeen to seventy-odd, yet none was "designated". One might have guessed that invitation events would be the first to be covered by drug control regulations, and a few random tests.

So what are the designated events? Are there any? Has there ever been one, and did anyone make any declaration or take a test? Or do we just go on taking the tablets as we get older and put the younger players at a disadvantage? To declare my interest, I did ask my doctor for Olympic clearance for my occasional NSAID and daily diuretic, but his attitude was

humorous incredulity! Am I wasting his time or is the CA quietly taking action to separate events into those which are controlled and those which are not? Or are we once again leading the athletes (some of whom are already there) into the area where almost anything goes?

Perhaps we could start by controlling all events which contribute to the 'Rankings', or alternatively exclude from the 'Rankings' all competitors who are not drug controlled. Is there an "official" view and who is responsible? Some further thought and a commentary on the subject from the CA would be much appreciated.

Martin Granger Brown  
Bowdon



**TOWNSEND CROQUET LIMITED**

For a comprehensive range of Croquet Equipment, Mallets, Balls, Hoops, Winning pegs, Clips, Corner flags, Corner pegs, etc.

*All at competitive prices.*

Ask for Townsend Croquet equipment at your local shop.

**TOWNSEND CROQUET LTD.  
VALLEY BRIDGE ROAD  
CLACTON ON SEA  
ESSEX CO15 4AE  
Tel: 01255427717 Fax: 01255 474241**

**CROQUET BALLS FOR ALL OCCASIONS**  
CHAMPIONSHIPS • TOURNAMENTS • CLUBS • HOTELS • SCHOOLS • GARDEN LAWNS

<p><b>CA CHAMPIONSHIP APPROVED BALLS</b> Barlow Grande Tournament (GT) £139 Sunshiny Championship £117</p> <p><b>CLUB AND HOTEL STANDARD BALLS</b> Barlow Club (C) £97</p> <p><b>GARDEN LAWN BALLS</b> 16oz £46 ; 12oz £41 ; 7oz £36 All sets are available in Primary or Secondary colours except Garden Lawn sets available in Primary colours only. Postage packing and insurance adds £5 per set. PPI on multiple orders at special rates.</p> <p><b>MALLETS</b> TOURNAMENT GRADE from £59 to £96. Carbon Fibre, Fibreglass, Metal or Ash Shafts. Standard or customer specification. GARDEN LAWN GRADE from £20 to £62. Fine quality hard wood traditional English Mallets. Postage packing and insurance £6 on most mallets. Cheaper for multiple orders.</p>	<p><b>HOOPS.</b> Sets of 6 CA TOURNAMENT SPECIFICATION Championship (Cast Iron) £195 Competition (Steel and GRP) £129 PPI £10 per set. GARDEN LAWN HOOPS 10mm £48 ; 6mm £20 ; PPI £8</p> <p><b>OTHER EQUIPMENT</b> CA Centre Pegs £15 Garden Lawn Centre Pegs £6 Corner Flags (set of 4) £15 Clips (metal set of 4 primary or secondary colours) £12 Clips (rubber set of 4 primary or secondary colours) £10</p> <p><b>CROQUET SETS</b> COMPLETE CROQUET SETS AVAILABLE from £55 to £700</p> <p>Advice available from John Beech by phone WOODLANDS CROQUET, WOODLANDS, SKIPTON ROAD, BARNOLDSWICK, BB18 6HH phone/fax 01282 813070</p>
---	--

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



## Tournament Round-up

### The President's Cup

Parkstone saw Robert Fulford claim the President's Cup title for the fourth time in five years. He won 11 of his 14 games, every one of them with a triple. Between them the eight players notched up 37 triples in the 56 games. Additionally Jeremy Dyer completed a sextuple peel on Mulliner, the only one of the event.



Robert Fulford whose President's Cup form seems unstoppable

Triple peels on the opponent were rare, newcomer Jonathan Kirby finding himself on the receiving end of both of them.

Results: 1 Robert Fulford (11 wins), 2 David Maugham (10) Jeremy Dyer (9), 4 Stephen Mulliner (8), 5 Chris Clarke (6), 6 David Goacher (5), 7 Jonathan Kirby (4), 8 Jeff Dawson (2)

### The Chairman's Salver

This year's Chairman's Salver was at Budleigh Salterton, with predictions favouring Mark Avery or Colin Irwin.

The first day ended with no-one really dominating. Dave Kibble laid up for a sextuple against Phil Cordingley, and it looked like fortune was with him when his miss after 1-back ran 2-back instead. He hit the

return roquet and played on, but his luck was exhausted at penult.

On Day 2, John Gibbons had a bad migraine, but still overcame Irwin. Elsewhere Avery pulled clear with four straight wins. By the next day that left only Avery and James Death in contention. Avery's 13th round win against Gibbons clinched the title, and gave him what is, surprisingly, his first win in an Eight.

Results: 1 Mark Avery (11 wins), 2 James Death (9), 3= John Gibbons (8) Colin Irwin (8), 5 David Harrison-Wood (7), 6= Dave Kibble (5) Phil Cordingley (5), 8 Tim Wilkins (3).

### The Spencer Ell Cup

This year's Spencer Ell Cup was played for at the Hunstanton Croquet Club. The groundsman is to be congratulated for producing four excellent lawns, fast and true, subject to the odd entertaining boundary, and firm hoops had been set. The motley crew assembled by the Selectors had not been chosen with an eye to promoting croquet as a sport for the young, although possibly for the young at heart. There is insufficient information to calculate the average age, but there was only one player aged under 40, and at least three aged over 50. Luckily they were only required to play no more than three games in a day, and even that proved to be a struggle for some of the less adventurous players. Regarding the time taken for each game, at one end of the scale Ian Lines and Dave Foulser spent a total of seven hours on their two games. At the other end Lionel Tibble took a commendably swift two hours and four minutes to see off Dave Mundy twice, not without some outrageous luck (according to Dave) or skill (according to Lionel). In particular Lionel shot from near corner three and hit a ball stuck in hoop two, but one suspects he was aiming at another ball a yard north of hoop two at the time. Maybe the fact that Lionel is Dave's hero (allegedly) was a contributing factor!

16 of the 56 games were won

by margins of five points or less. It would need a commentator far less tactful than your correspondent to suggest the reason for this. There were examples of spectacular hitting. Dave Foulser in his first game with Ian Lines hit shots of seventeen or more yards in four out of his last five turns, and in the other turn missed a double through the fairly small gap in the middle. One could ask why he would need to hit that often at the end of the game without having taken one of the chances to win it, but that would be harsh. There were fourteen triple peels and one quadruple peel, but only by the top four players and Dave Foulser.

As a contest the event was very much alive until Saturday when Peter Taylor contrived to lose twice, to Dave Mundy by 2, and to Dave Foulser by 14. Keith Aiton had two lucky wins against Dave Foulser. In the first series the latter missed a short peg out, and in the second series (on the Saturday) he clipped another ball with the edge of his mallet while making a roquet. By the end of round 12 Aiton could not be caught, so there was a rather lower key feel to the final day than in some recent Ells.

Results: 1 Keith Aiton (11 wins), 2= Michael Heap (8) Peter Taylor (8) Lionel Tibble (8), 5= Dave Foulser (7) Dave Mundy (7), 7 Ian Lines (5), 8 Roger Jenkins (2)

### The Treasurer's Tankard

David Magee won the Treasurer's Tankard at Surbiton with 10 wins. His Cheltenham clubmate, Paul Smith was runner up with 9 wins. A number of close games, including Paul Smith and Louise Bradforth in the dark and David Magee and Paul Castell in round thirteen where David took advantage of the "help" Paul was getting from his bounding and youthful dog.

Results: 1 David Magee (10 wins), 2 Paul Smith (9), 3= Paul Castell (8) Jenny Williams (8), 5= Louise Bradforth (7) Jerry Guest (7), 7 Lawrence Whittaker (5), 8 Chris Dent (2)

### Selectors Invitation Event



Martin Granger Brown, right - the surprise winner of the Selectors Weekend at Wrest Park

The fifth 'Eight' is for 16 players. This year it was held at Wrest Park in very challenging conditions. The courts were parched and hoops set very firmly. There were only four TPs (Samir Patel two - one a QP; Richard Smith - a first ever, earning him a gold badge; and Marcus Evans).

In the first round there was a shock win for Samantha Symonds over the warm favourite, Samir Patel. However, the shock wore off as the tournament progressed, since neither player won another game that day! Samir continued to struggle, and when he got it right was very impressive; when he didn't he wasn't.

Nelson Morrow flattered to deceive, going into the second day unbeaten and retiring at the end of it with three losses. Marcus Evans confirmed he was a promising youngster without being quite up to this class yet. Andrew Cowing looked as though he was seriously returning to form. Local lad, Howard Bottomley, put in a solid performance and Duncan Hector - a last minute substitute (and winner of the Spencer Ell in 1980-something) found he could play again.

Meanwhile, Martin Granger Brown was putting an emphasis on quality rather than quantity. He participated in a game lasting over four hours in each of the first two days. However, at the end of the two-

day swiss stage of the tournament remained unbeaten.

The four top players then went into semi-finals. Martin showed that he was not inherently a slow player by despatching Duncan in the quickest game of the tournament, then went for a walk around the park, while Howard and Andrew ground out a lengthy match resulting in a win for Howard.

Then, in the final, Martin did the same again, swiftly beating Howard +25. So, MGB bicycled to his car (if you have been to Wrest Park you will understand this) with a mallet in one hand and the Ranelagh cup in the other. We have yet to hear whether he made it...

### Zenmet win the Longman Cup

"Where do you come from?" This is the usual question once fellow croquet players realise they have just met the Zenmet Team. Our arrival at Cheltenham for the Longman Club Team Cup Final's weekend on the 5th & 6th October proved no exception.

Zenmet is the joint match-playing team made up from The Croquet Section of the agribusiness company Syngenta, formally Zeneca, at Jealott's Hill Research Station near Bracknell, and the Met Office Croquet Club based in Bracknell. The association of the two clubs has been a long one with the Met Office Club hiring the Jealott's Hill Lawn for matches before the formal merging of the club a few years ago when the Zenmet team was formed. We have just one lawn and a wooden hut but from our lawn on a sunny evening we are often privileged to watch wonderful sunsets from our high vantage point at Jealott's Hill.

Despite having only six people available to play in this tournament we were not deterred as we went off to play in the lovely garden surroundings at Reigate Priory or to enjoy the facilities at Roehampton. With each win, my problems as team captain seemed to get worse trying to find a date to fit in with

our opponents and when I could field a team. But to our amazement we found ourselves in the Finals and were determined to enjoy the weekend.

We were due to do battle with Bristol, Bury and Letchworth over the weekend. On the Saturday we played Bury, winning 6-1 and on the Sunday Bristol and Zenmet fought it out in the final. Possibly nerves got to several of us as no one pegged out in the final, and so the result could have gone either way near the end. Zenmet led 2-1 at lunch and didn't lose the lead, finishing 4-3, despite Bristol managing to come back from the same position against Letchworth in the semi-final. Our star players over the weekend were David Moseley who won all 4 of his games, and Dennis Baker who won 3 of his.

The weekend was very enjoyable with the matches being played in a friendly atmosphere. We enjoyed the excellent hospitality of the Cheltenham Club, especially in the catering department. A few of us had time to glimpse some of the top players in the Inter-Club Championship being played on adjacent lawns, including Robert Fulford and Chris Clarke.

After our victory in the Longman Cup, the Zenmet Team is now hoping to play in competitions for one more year and perhaps even defend our title. But with the relocation of the Met Office to Exeter next summer & autumn, the majority of the players will be moving to Devon. So perhaps our entry will ask if we can play in the West region! But those of us that are moving hope very much that we are leaving a thriving Croquet Section behind at Jealott's Hill after enjoying many happy hours of croquet there.

Wendy Hardy, Zenmet Captain

### Bowdon Firs Win Secretary's Shield

Bowdon Firs won a tense final against East Dorset at Cheltenham by virtue of sheer determination in what seemed to be a near impossible situation at one stage.



John Wilkinson and Sylvia Steer (Bowdon) started well with Sylvia getting to penult after good use of bisques in two breaks. Then Terry Wood hit in and played a faultless break, going to peg with a double peel and peg out of Sylvia's ball. This left John with his clip on hoop five and a solitary bisque after an hour and a quarter's play. Eventually he ran penult but failed to roquet a ball near rover to lose by 2 with just a few minutes left for play.

Meanwhile Frank Moir was in his dominating mood and won by +24 but fellow Bowdon player Lorna Frost couldn't break down the wily and in form Roy Edwards, losing by just 6 after a very good final break to 4 back.

Halfway through the afternoon and 2-1 down to the Parkstone team, everything seemed to be falling apart for Bowdon. Frank was 11 hoops behind, Sylvia had both her clips on hoop 6 but with only a half-bisque left and an opponent already with a clip on rover. John Wilkinson and Roy Edwards were level but there were no bisques left. Lorna was the only one in a promising position.

Gradually, the atmosphere built. Frank was pulling back and Lorna was nudging ahead. John remained level. Vitally Sylvia gradually moved her clips round, keeping Terry at bay. Lorna pegged out, Frank pulled ahead, Sylvia got both clips to rover and John was still level with Roy.

When time was called Frank won by +8, and John slipped back to lose by 2. Without doubt the performance of the day was Sylvia hanging on to a +6 victory, giving Bowdon Firs the title by 4 games to 3.

John Wilkinson

**Kentish man overcomes man of Kent to decide Mary Rose final**

The Bedfordshire boys had been consistent throughout the year, with the same team of veteran John Wheeler, George Collin, John Bevington and the much improved Ben Ashwell. After a

bye, Bowdon and Nottingham, the final at Cheltenham, against Medway, was eagerly awaited. The Medway banner, visible on arrival, made it clear how important club competitions are. In the 20 years of the competition it had taken until 1995 for Wrest Park's first win, and they now had the chance of a third.



Ben Ashwell, John Wheeler, John Bevington and George Collin with the Mary Rose Trophy

Following a sunny if somewhat slow start in the morning dew, the first problem was whether Eileen Magee could cater for the band of supporters, all eager for some of Dab's bread & butter pudding. Panic over, a doubles win for John Wheeler and Ben against David Parkins and Paul Miles, and the first bottle of wine was opened. The sky darkened as clouds came and the morning singles were eventually lost after nearly 5 hours to leave the team 2-1 down.

The doubles boys had already started the afternoon singles and the tension mounted as peels failed, with several attempts at rover required before a 3-2 lead was posted. One more match needed. George succumbed to some steady work by Rodney leaving John Bevington (born west of the Medway, a few miles from the club) to clinch the final game for a 4-3 victory to Wrest Park after many twists and turns.

Howard Bottomley

**Golf Croquet Inter Club**

Tyneside made a determined effort to regain the Golf Croquet Inter Club title which they won in its first

year, 2000, by fielding two regular international players, John Moore and Derek Old. The final was played at Hurlingham on Mon 30 Sept. Their opponents, Hurlingham, however put up a very spirited defence but in the end went down 4.5 to 2.5, the doubles not being completed.

This competition is still only in its third year but it is pleasing to see how the teams in this event are getting stronger each year.

**All England Golf Croquet Handicap**

The final of this event was played off at Colchester in late September. 18 players took part with handicaps ranging from -2 to +6. Play was initially in two time limited blocks of nine. After completion of the blocks, the top two players in each block contested the semi-finals. So Ray Mounfield from Ashby played Bill Arliss from Southwick and Abdul Ahmad from Pendle played last years winner, Marcus Evans from Nailsea. Ray went through to the final 10-5 and Abdul 10-8. In the final Ray had the upper hand initially but Abdul held steady and ran away during the last few hoops to win 10-5.

A brief study of the results showed that the handicap system did not appear to favour any particular end of the handicap range as the semi-finalists started as -2, -1, 2 and 3 handicaps. However the automatic system showed its teeth after the competition by reducing Ray from 3 to 1, Abdul from 2 to 0 and Marcus from -1 to -2. There were in fact 4 entrants playing off a handicap of 6 and none of them lost all games. John Keats and his wife from Eynsham both playing off 6 managed 3 and 2 wins respectively which I feel shows that no one with genuine handicaps need worry about being totally outclassed in this event. It is a good starter competition for anyone interested in playing golf croquet competitively and provides invaluable experience for the future events.

Bill Arliss

**Croquet in Scotland - a development success?**

**With just nine clubs in total, few would regard Scotland as a major centre for croquet. But, it seems, Scotland is far from being the croquet desert it may at first appear.**

The earliest known reference to croquet in Scotland is the booklet called *The Game of Croquet, its Laws and Regulations* which was published in the middle 1860's for the proprietor of Eglinton Castle, near Kilmarnock. Jousting events were apparently held regularly at Eglinton Castle, and clearly the owners saw sufficient money-making potential in the new game of "croquet" to publish their own set of rules. One of the many variations described is "The Eglinton Castle Game of Croquet", complete with eight circular hoops, two pegs, two tunnels and a double hoop with a bell. One of these sets is still used for demonstration in the West of Scotland.

1869 was established as the next known date with a surprise find at Edinburgh Croquet Club. An old mallet, bearing this date and the name "Highgate" was found in the club room. Research showed that this was almost certain to have been a quarter-finalist's prize at a championship held at Highgate that year, and the mallet's likely owner was the famous David McFie, of Borthwick Castle near Edinburgh. How the mallet travelled from Borthwick to the Edinburgh Club's current base at Lauriston Castle remains a mystery. Nevertheless, this find shows that as early as 1869 there was in Scotland a player good enough to compete against the best in England.

Croquet tournaments were held in Scotland as early as 1870. The Scottish Championship dates from at least that year, and was usually held at Moffat. The prize for that event in 1891, a mallet, still exists, and has become the current trophy for the Scottish Open Singles Championship.

As recently as 1990, a magnificent solid gold medal was found in an old box at the Gleneagles Hotel. Names of all winners from 1875



Top left: Ruins of Eglinton Castle; Top right: Lauriston Castle, home of Edinburgh Croquet Club; Bottom: The Gleneagles Hotel

up to 1914 had been engraved. The medal's inscription, "Scottish Croquet Club Championship of Scotland for Annual Competition", shows that the game was organised nationally (i.e. throughout Scotland), and that there had been a forerunner to the Scottish Croquet Association as far back as 1875.

An article in the *Moffat News* of 26th August 1871 gives a report of an all-ladies competition, with competitors from several parts of Scotland, and valuable prizes (the fourth prize was a "double (silver) smelling bottle"). With a lady winning the Championship of Scotland in 1877, it's clear that, even then, men and women competed as equals (though women also had their own competitions). This equality of the sexes was in advance of English ideas, and has continued throughout Scottish croquet history, with a third of the Championship's winners being women.

During the 1880's and 1890's croquet in Scotland, as in England, declined. The Gleneagles medal

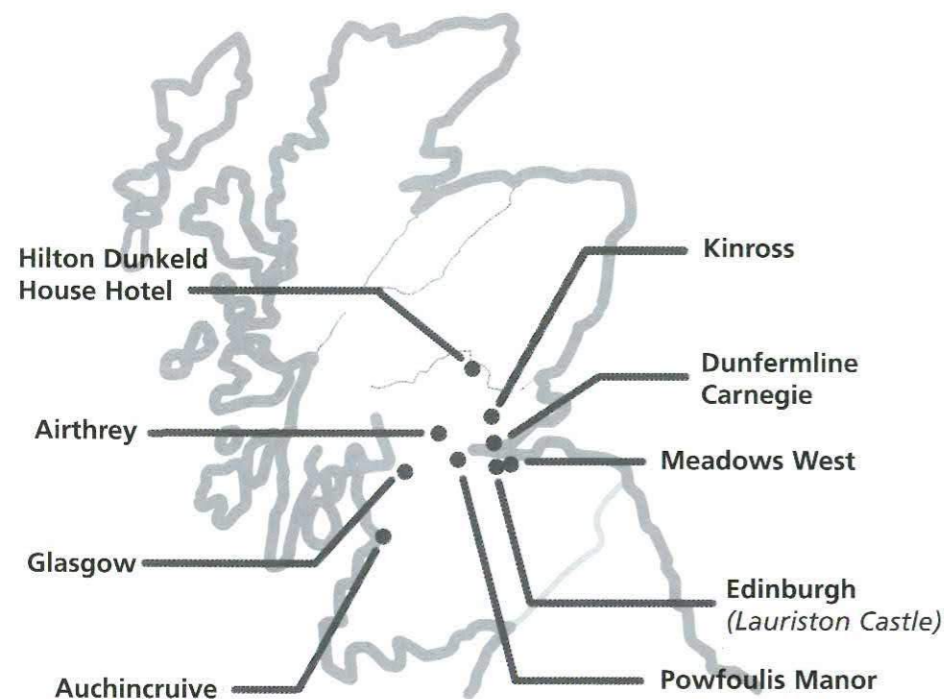
shows no winners for the years 1880 to 1897. The new craze of tennis accounts for much of this loss in popularity; with 19th century courts measuring 40 yards by 40 yards, many people could fit a tennis court more easily into their gardens than they could a croquet lawn.

Sense prevailed in the late 1890's, with a revival of the Scottish Championship. However, the venue was no longer Moffat. From 1897 to the last date on the medal, 1914, it was held in Edinburgh at the Edinburgh Hydropathic in Craiglockhart.

That venue also saw competitions for Scottish Gold Medals between 1908 and 1914. These medals were presented by the Croquet Association. Was the CA the governing body responsible for croquet in Scotland in those days?

From the onset of the First World War right until the founding of the Edinburgh Croquet Club in 1950, the history of croquet in Scotland is almost blank. But not quite. The flame





flickered and was kept alight.

Throughout this period golf croquet was played fairly widely in North Aberdeenshire, mainly among the farmers and ministers. Association Croquet, too, was also kept alive, but by only one club, the all-ladies Livilands Croquet Club in Stirling.

In those days women were not allowed to play bowls, and so in 1913 they sought to use a spare area of the Livilands Bowling Club grounds to set up a small court for croquet. Only in 1921 did their plans bear fruit, and for the next 29 years this remained Scotland's sole croquet club. They played with two pegs right to the end, which came in 1976, when Stirling Infirmary bought the land for a nurses' residence. A similar area of ground was given to the bowling club somewhere else in exchange but, instead of a small croquet court, a car park was laid.

In 1949 the Monquhitter Croquet Club in Aberdeenshire was the first club to start after the Second World War. Another ladies' club attached to a bowling club, they played only golf croquet. A few other smaller golf croquet clubs formed in that area, too, in the villages of New Deer, Maud and Ellen. The Aberdeen

Press & Journal frequently reported on the good-spirited matches between them.

The first Association Croquet club to restart was in Edinburgh. The well known author Moray McLaren put a letter in the *Scotsman*, inviting anyone interested to a meeting in the spring of 1950. 35 people turned up. A court had already been found at Lauriston Castle and play started there later in the season.

In August 1957 the secretary of the Edinburgh Club received a letter asking for assistance in "promoting interest in the game in the West of Scotland". This saw the birth of the Glasgow Croquet Club. By that September a suitable ground had been found, and a meeting of prospective members was held. By early April

1958, even before the two courts were ready for play, the new club already had 42 members and a waiting list had been started.

Glenochil Croquet Club in Stirling and Langside CC in Glasgow both started in 1966. The Whins Croquet Club opened at the National Coal Board Area Headquarters in 1969. Each of these, though, has subsequently folded.

Stirling University was the location for the new Airthrey Club, formed in 1971. With a core of keen staff members, it accommodates a stream of ever changing students. Aberdeen and St Andrews universities have also given rise to clubs, but because only students were involved, there was virtually no continuity and maintaining contact proved difficult.

Early in the seventies, Glasgow Croquet Club was finding its sloping lawns unsatisfactory, and sought an alternative location. A nearby area was found which could be purchased cheaply, and Scottish Sports Council aid was sought. This raised the problem that the Council could deal only with properly constituted, fully autonomous governing bodies, and croquet in Britain was governed by the Croquet Association.

Steps were put in train to form the Scottish Croquet Association, and with the CA's help, the country's own governing body was formed in May 1974.

Scotland has nine affiliated croquet clubs. The earliest established, Edinburgh, remains in its original location, at Lauriston Castle. There's been a week-long tournament there

Airthrey	Stirling University	1 lawn	6 members
Auchincruive	Ayr	1 lawn	30 members
Dunfermline Carnegie		1 lawn	5 members
Edinburgh	Lauriston Castle	3 lawns	70 members
Glasgow		4 lawns	10 members
Hilton Dunkeld House		1 lawn	(affiliated)
Kinross		1 lawn	15 members
Meadows West	Central Edinburgh	3 lawns	30 members
Powfoulis Manor	Falkirk	2 1/2 lawns	10 members

during the Edinburgh Festival for the last 30 years. It's easily Scotland's largest club, with a membership over 70, and with three full sized lawns has a view overlooking the Forth and across to Fife. Admittedly, the Club has been aware for some years of the need to improve its lawns (two of them are on a slope), and this goal is being actively pursued.

Airthrey Club has met mixed fortunes, with upheavals in Stirling University's sporting arrangements. They now play on an ex-putting green, but the Physical Education Department has expressed hopes for a dual-purpose bowling green and croquet lawn on the main sports field. Nothing has yet materialised.

The other surviving club from the early days of the SCA is Glasgow. The Sports Council grant of 1973 allowed for the purchase of two lawns, laid out by volunteers from scratch. They moved again to two bowling greens at Glasgow Green West in 1983, then a further move took place in 1988 to Glasgow Green East. The clubhouse there was burned down in 1995, and another move was made to its current home in Kelvingrove Park. Current plans for the neighbouring Art Gallery's expansion on to the club's bowling greens are proving unpopular, both with croquet players and local residents. With the ongoing uncertainty of tenure of the last 30 years, it is easy to see why membership remains low. Nevertheless, Glasgow has produced several of Scotland's finest players, it has more space than any other club (there are six bowling greens in total, though the Croquet Club rarely uses more than four), and the potential remains good.

Auchincruive Club, just outside Ayr, is based on the estate of an agricultural college. The club started with a garden croquet set and some very odd rules, until they were discovered by the new SCA in its first year of operation. Since 1974 Auchincruive has grown steadily, both in skill and membership numbers.

Scotland's other clubs date

from more recently. It's perhaps too soon to expect Dunfermline Carnegie (1987), Kinross (1995) and Powfoulis Manor (1998) to have become fully established, though membership levels are encouraging. In the capital, though, a second club appeared in 1980, with the formation of Bush Croquet Club.

Bush had been a sport and social club, and numbered around seven or eight croquet-playing members. When, in 1989, its membership became open to all, Bush CC expanded rapidly. In 2000 it moved from the Bush Estate (near Penicuik) to the centre of Edinburgh in an impressive new facility, funded by SportScotland, and located on disused bowling greens at Meadows West.

SportScotland is the major sport funding body for the country, and annually distributes around £40m in grants to organisations and individuals. They in turn have funds provided by both the Scottish Executive and the National Lottery. The policy for funding requires applicants to raise a percentage of the money for any project, which SportScotland then undertakes to top up to the full amount. If an organisation chooses to develop a national centre, the percentage needed by the applicant is a mere 25%. Negotiations with the SCA quickly led to a proposal to establish the new Scottish National Croquet Centre.

The cost of the new Centre was determined as £75,000. With a mixture of individual donations, contributions from clubs and use of its own reserves, the SCA found the amount (approximately £20,000) it needed for the project. Critically, funding bodies allow gifts-in-kind to be put towards the total. In this case, money saved by in-house project management could be counted towards the qualifying amount. With their contribution in place, SportScotland provided the balance of around £56,000, and - thanks largely to the efforts of the Bush Club's Captain, Brian Murdoch - building work proceeded in mid-2001.

The new lawns had been two bowling greens which had fallen into

disuse. As well as construction of a new clubhouse, the plan was to remove the concrete pathway which separated them and replace it with grass, providing three croquet courts alongside each other. This work is now complete and the middle lawn is expected to be ready for play at the start of the 2003 season.

As for the mechanics of sharing the Meadows West Club (as it's now called) between the local members and the SCA, a time-sharing arrangement has been agreed. The SCA use the lawns for twelve weekends each year, for tournaments, coaching and so on. A stipulation of the City of Edinburgh Council was that the project should provide some benefit for the local community. For three half-days each week bowlers pay a green fee to use the lawns, an arrangement which suits everyone, providing money and security for the club, as well as a possible pool for recruitment. The clubhouse itself is hired out to local community groups for meetings.

Campbell Morrison, the Secretary of Meadows West, is buoyant about the future. Being in such a visible area in a public park right in the centre of the city, he expects a considerable upturn in membership. In their first season at the new club, numbers have risen from 24 to 30. The target of 60 seems not far away.

It's been a difficult ride for Scottish Croquet over the last 150 years. Early development of the game in England was largely concentrated in the South West, and along the South coast, reflecting the areas of influence of the game's pioneers. The outer reaches of Scotland, by the country's geography, remain remote now as they did then. Nevertheless, the two major cities have the potential to develop the game to a level way beyond anything that's happened before. These are exciting times for Scottish Croquet.

*Edited and adapted from Ian Wright's History of Scottish Croquet, and from club information, published in the SCA Handbook*



## Child Protection Policy: A CA Code of Practice & Procedures

The problem of child abuse is high on the political agenda. Already legislation exists in the Childrens Act 1989, and it is probable that further legislation may follow. Recognised teaching establishments (RTEs) will be required by the government to put a formal child protection policy in place by 2003.

The Croquet Association, federations and croquet clubs are not RTEs but, as coaching of young people is provided at all levels, it is recommended that a child protection policy is adopted. The Childrens Act of 1989 defines children as persons of less than 18 years of age.

Earlier this year, the Croquet Association was circulated with a consultation questionnaire by a joint NSPCC/Sport England working party. The CA completed the questionnaire and wisely decided to draft a policy, code of practice and procedures for the

Croquet Association and for clubs. The draft documents were largely written by our chairman, and, after consultation and modification, were approved by Council at its October meeting.

I have been asked to be the CA's national Child Protection Officer and am in the process of writing to all club secretaries, federation secretaries and those individuals at the national level in the CA who are or will be involved in organising of activities for under 18s, including tournaments.

I shall be sending to them copies of the relevant policies, the CA policy document for national and federation levels and the policy for member clubs and the guidelines to croquet clubs. The croquet organisation in the UK is not yet required to have a child protection policy in place, but we should be aware of the stance of the funding bodies such as Sport England and the National Lottery, who require a

CPP to be in place before they will give any grants. Local authorities are expected to follow the national lead.

Similarly, clubs hoping to achieve charitable status are likely to be required to have a child protection policy in place. In addition, I am sure that the CA, federations and clubs would wish to have the interest and well being of children taking part in the game as an achievable objective and not to see it as yet another difficulty or bureaucratic measure to be imposed on the game.

Further details will follow in the *Croquet Gazette* in the new year, but my address details are listed on the contact page for anyone needing further information or assistance.

Bob Whitaker

### Play Croquet in Florida in February

UK Association Rules Tournament 7-18<sup>th</sup> February, 2003

British croquet players are invited to an eight-day association rules tournament at the new US National Croquet Centre at Palm Beach, Florida. The weather in Florida in February is similar to England's in July, so you can enjoy their sub-tropical climate and hospitality.

#### Highlights:

- 11 day package including flights, return airport transfers, 3\* hotel with American breakfast, tournament entry fees, welcome cocktail reception and prize giving dinner.
- Croquet to English laws and tournament formats, with English managers and referees.
- Play in one, two or all three events.
- Non players welcome.
- Flight and Hotel upgrades on request.
- Optional excursions and extensions available.

For an information pack or further details contact:

**Travel arrangements:** Diplomatic Travel Ltd  
Diplomatic House, Coach Lane, Danehill,  
East Sussex, RH17 7JJ. (ATOL 5469)

Tel: 01825 740262 [simon.lacey@diplomatic.co.uk](mailto:simon.lacey@diplomatic.co.uk)

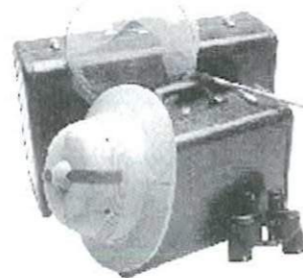
#### Tournament Details

Kevin Carter: 0118-971-2948 or [kevin@profundus.com](mailto:kevin@profundus.com)

#### Sponsored by

US National Croquet Center: [www.croquetnational.com](http://www.croquetnational.com)

Dust the cobwebs from your mallet and get away for a break!



New Zealand  
South Africa  
Australia  
Canada  
America

For individual or group holidays in the best destinations in the world with or without croquet

**Diplomatic Travel Ltd**

Coach Lane, Danehill, East Sussex  
Tel: 01825 740262; [www.diplomatic.co.uk](http://www.diplomatic.co.uk)  
[enquiries@diplomatic.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@diplomatic.co.uk)



## CITATIONS FOR CA DIPLOMAS 2003

**ASHBY & DISTRICT CROQUET CLUB**  
*Barrie March*

About 5 years ago the club was advised that the land their lawns occupied was required for a proposed extension of a leisure centre, and that there were no plans to build new lawns. As a result of intense lobbying the council was persuaded to replace the lawns; potential sites had to be evaluated, contractors appointed, and additional finance arranged. From the outset it was Barrie who managed the project and coordinated all the resources needed to complete the move, and we are pleased to award the diploma in recognition of his hard work and initiative.

**BRISTOL CROQUET CLUB**



Bristol CC's Barbara Evans and Rosemary Gugan with CA President, John Solomon

*Barbara Evans*

Barbara Evans has been a member of Bristol Croquet Club for the last twenty years, and has served the club in a variety of posts over that time. Indeed, it has seemed that whenever there has been an emergency, and a post has had to be filled at short notice, Barbara has always been the person to whom the club has been able to turn for help. Initially this was as our Tournament Secretary, then subsequently as Chairman, Treasurer, and Vice-Chairman. In between these duties she has served almost unbroken as a Committee member. Although she has now retired from the Committee, she continues to work for the club in many ways, as coach, referee, general

assistant, and, most importantly, as a wise head to whom anyone in the club knows they can turn to at any time for sound, pragmatic, and sensible advice.

*Rosemary Gugan*

In 1982 the Bristol Club was in the process of being revived by John McCullough. The club needed a Secretary, and John persuaded Rosemary Gugan, a newcomer to croquet, to volunteer. He couldn't have made a better decision, for Rosemary stayed in the job for nineteen years, finally passing over the post in 2001. Those nineteen years saw the small club rise to the third largest, in membership numbers, in the country, and this success was largely due to Rosemary's energy, efficiency, and determination. These same qualities saw her become one of the leading lady players in the country, bringing even more credit to the club she so devotedly served for so long. Everyone at Bristol knows and appreciates what Rosemary has done for the club.

**CHELTENHAM CROQUET CLUB**

*Betty and Bernard Weitz*

They say that good things come in twos, and in the case of Betty and Bernard Weitz they are correct.

Both are long time members of Cheltenham Croquet Club, and between them have contributed to just about every aspect of club life. Bernard has been Lawns Manager, has organised and played in club teams, including the Mary Rose, and despite indifferent health continues in the arduous post of Membership Secretary.

Betty was for many years part of the coaching team, and headed up the House Committee with its attendant catering responsibilities. She was one of the club's handicappers when that was a much more active role than it is today.

It would need a long list to record every contribution Betty and Bernard

have made to club life. Such stalwart commitment is the lifeblood of any club, and the members of Cheltenham Croquet Club thank them for it.

*Eileen Magee*

When Eileen moved to Cheltenham in the early 90s, her reputation as an efficient organiser at the CA Office preceded her. She soon transferred her boundless energy to her new club, volunteering to take on the onerous post of Secretary, and later being elected Vice-Chairman. Not only has she been a tower of strength in the club's administration, she has also been active as the club's gardener as well as leading the team of caterers who look after the needs of players at tournaments and social events. Nor is she ever at a loss to develop new and subtly different ways of coaxing money out of members at fund-raising functions.

She also finds time to enjoy her croquet.

**DYFFRYN CROQUET CLUB**

*Stan Salt*

Stan Salt is the club player par excellence. He took up croquet after retirement just over 10 years ago, and fluctuates between a 16 and a 20 handicap. He is ever ready to represent Dyffryn in handicap matches, enters all club tournaments for which he is eligible, and at club afternoons and evenings he works tirelessly with newcomers to the game. Stan is not a committee man, but this has not prevented him from making a major contribution to the club by putting his practical woodworking skills to good use. He has made a first class equipment trolley which holds ball carriers, yardsticks, flags, bisques, Wharrad turn counters and, in true recognition of a croquet player's needs, a bottle opener. In addition to this, he has improved the club tent with an excellent awning which doubles the amount of shelter available. His contribution to Dyffryn is immense.



## News & Information

### New office and new staff

As Nigel Graves reported at the AGM, our new office is now up and running.

The CA Council is most grateful to the Cheltenham Club: they could not have been more helpful in working with us. The building itself was finished on time but problems with the electricity supply delayed the move from Hurlingham by a few weeks. The CA's treasurer, Roger Bray, tells us that it looks as though the total cost of moving to the Cotswolds will be a little less than we originally estimated ✓ but we are still talking about more than £50,000.

We welcome Mike Neal who has been appointed Assistant Secretary of the CA and is already working with Nigel. As can be seen from the photographs in the last issue of the Gazette, they have a really pleasant environment and a splendid view of the lawns. The portakabin in London will soon be a distant memory.

Our President, John Solomon, has written to all Individual Members appealing for donations to help us restore our funds so that Council can continue developing croquet. I can report that the appeal has got off to a

good start; many thanks if you have already sent your contribution to John. If you have mislaid the appeal letter you can download a copy from the CA website and print out the reply form.

*Quiller Barrett, Chairman of Council*

### WCF World Croquet Championships

New Zealand hosts its first World Croquet Championship under the auspices of the World Croquet Federation, in Wellington between 2nd and 8th December.

This will be the ninth championship, and will be defended by Reg Bamford, who faces competition from a strong New Zealand contingent, as well as a powerful line-up of British players.

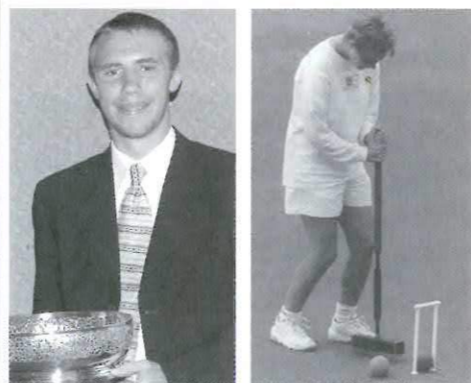
The English players selected are Robert Fulford (2001's losing finalist), Chris Clarke, Phil Cordingley, Ed Duckworth, John Gibbons, David Goacher, Michael Heap, David Maugham, Stephen Mulliner, David Openshaw and Peter Trimmer. At the time of writing, Mark Avery and Robin Brown, the two other English selections, have just dropped out and their places will be taken by competitors in the qualifying competition.

Chris Williams will represent

Wales, Keith Aiton will play for Scotland and Jersey will field the World No 10, Matt Burrow. The Irish contingent is remarkable for the selection of all three McInerney brothers, Alan, Ronan and Mark, along with Simon Williams. A wildcard entry for Ed Cunningham takes the Irish tally to five.

### Our best improvers

Congratulations go to Marcus Evans of Nailsea for winning the Apps Memorial Bowl for Most Improved Man, and to Jenny Williams of Bowdon for the Steel Bowl for Most Improved Woman.



Marcus Evans and Jenny Williams, the most improved man and woman of the year

## Thinking to Win: the Psychology of Croquet

**Keith Aiton has twice won the British Men's Championship, and has coached the Great Britain Test Team to victory. He is now a qualified sports psychologist. Where does a positive frame of mind lead the future of croquet?**

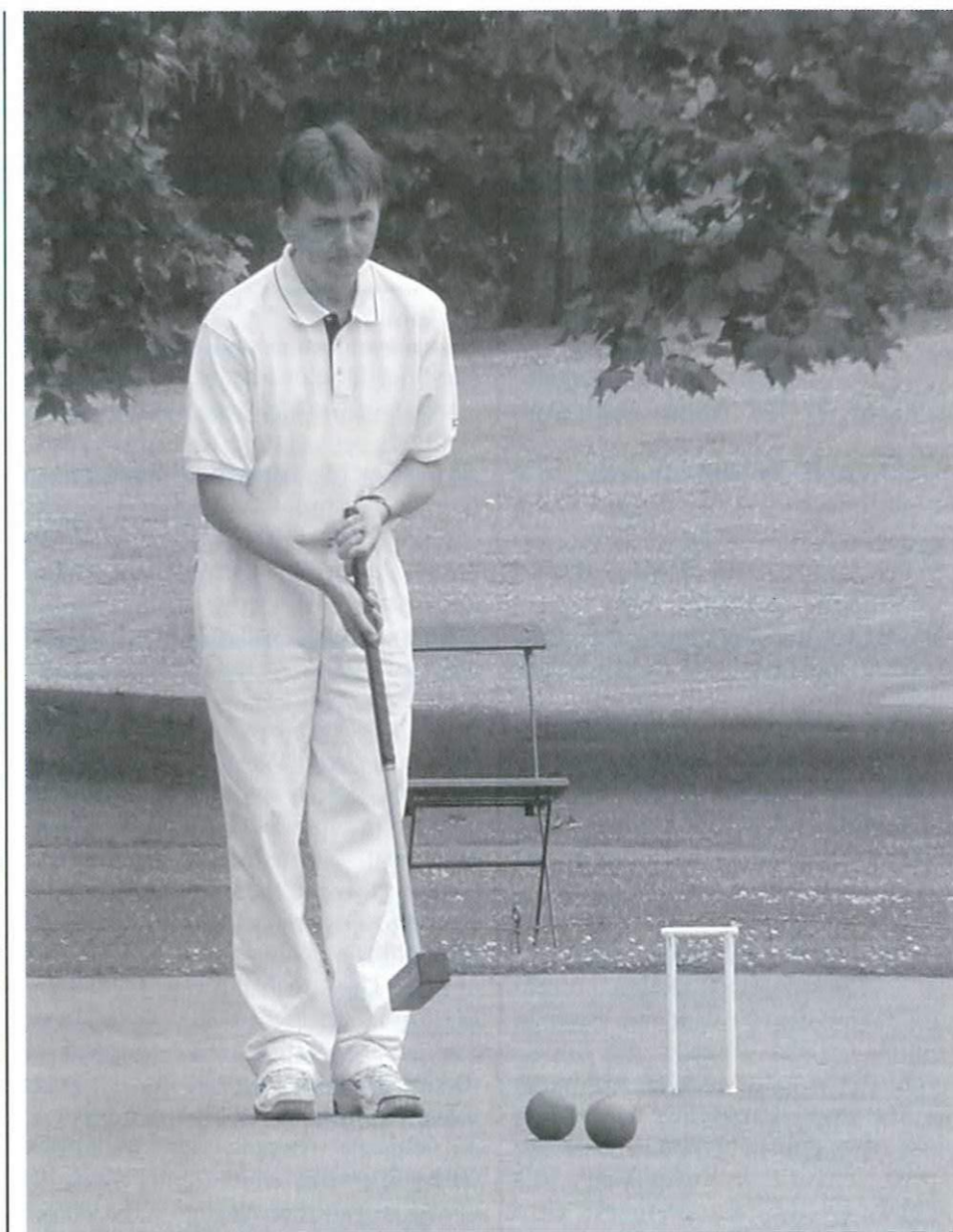
No one has ever grown rich playing croquet. We've come to expect top sportsmen and women in other pursuits to travel to events with an entourage of dieticians, fitness trainers and psychologists. Here in the world of croquet, where we proudly hang on to our status as enthusiastic hobbyists, such measures seem alien to the game.

Well, not quite. It's twelve years since the training of top-flight croquet players took a more sophisticated turn, and it was Keith Aiton who was in there at the start.

Keith's own croquet started, as for many people, with a garden set at home in the 1970s. Without being aware at the time, this was some sort of version of the American Rules game - balls played in sequence, nine-inch boundaries, dead balls, and so on. When the hoops were laid out on the college lawn during his first summer at Cambridge in 1979, Young Keith soon learned that he knew much less about the true game than he'd thought.

These were fertile years for university croquet, and Sidney Sussex College represented the stronghold of the Cambridge game. All within a couple of years of each other were an impressive squad of Aiton, Dayal Gunasekera, Richard Hilditch, Nick Hyne, and Tim Harrison. This is not to say that Keith found himself instantly walking with champions. Only as a second-year undergraduate in 1980 did he give any indication of promise, with a semi-final loss to the eventual winners. The small but hilly and perilously fast Cloister Court lawn saw his first twelve-hoop break, and his handicap was declared as 9.

With a year's sabbatical from study (he switched from Maths to Computer Science and, four weeks



later, to History and Philosophy of Science) he got down to some serious croquet. By the time of his graduation, his handicap was down to 2. His first triple peel, characteristically on the opponent's ball, followed shortly.

The Open Championship of 1983 may still be regarded as Aiton's moment of glory. Cheltenham's temperatures remained above 90 degrees for the whole week, and the glassy lawns provided perhaps the most difficult conditions the game has ever seen. As an indication, Michael Heap won the title of Ace Peeler, completing the one and only triple peel of the event; the 2002 Opens saw Reg Bamford racking up 13 sextuples,

one quad and a triple. Nigel Aspinall played the turn of his life, digging a finishing turn out from nothing in the most testing of circumstances. With characteristic touch play, the debutant Aiton was one of the few to endure the punishing conditions, and met the top seed in the final. Aspinall took the title in two games, but Keith ran him surprisingly close.

His reward was selection for the Chairman's Salver, where he polished off his first straight triple (again, on the opponent's ball). It seemed Aiton could do no wrong, sailing confidently to victory in the event. The reckless flourishes of his youth and

*Essential reading for all golf croquet players!*

*The new improved edition of...*

## A Guide to Golf Croquet 2002

Available from  
The Croquet Association  
e-mail [sales@croquet.org.uk](mailto:sales@croquet.org.uk)  
CA Shop: 01483 776971



**Price £5.00** each inc. UK postage

Special rate for 10 copies

*Great value*

### Manor House Mallets

The originators of carbon fibre shafted mallets now offer a comprehensive range: from the 'Basic' (£82.50), the well established T-series (£130), and the 2000 mallet at £150 (inc. head wrap). All have heads of fine hardwood with screwed and glued double faces, inlaid sight lines and a high quality finish. Sustainably managed timbers.

Hollow head with brass plate extreme end-weighting (£17.50 extra)

**Revolutionary 2001 model £207.50**

Mallet bags (£25), Head wraps (£7.50)

For details or discussion, contact Alan Pidcock,  
Tel & Fax 01772 743859  
e-mail [pidcock@manorh.u-net.com](mailto:pidcock@manorh.u-net.com)

The Manor House, 1 Barn Croft, Penwortham, Preston PR1 0SX



such tactically suspect peeling turns are long past, though these achievements are among his most remarkable.

A broken index finger in 1985 caused Aiton to change from standard to Irish grip. His very first practice game with the new technique saw his first sextuple. A year or two later, playing doubles against a fearsome Robert Fulford, he'd written off all hope of winning while Fulford remained in the game; the result provided one of the few recorded sextuple peels on the opponent in a serious match. At the Oxford Open Tournament in 1988 he recorded the first ever third turn triple. (David Peterson went to 4-back on the second turn, Keith hit, completed the peels and pegged out both balls, before Peterson's second ball was in play. Peterson eventually won the game.)

One year on, Aiton was on the shortlist for a place on the GB MacRobertson Test Team to visit New Zealand in 1990. Although not selected, he volunteered to go along anyway as a spectator, and was invited to act as official team coach.

No one had really thought before about the role of a team coach in croquet. At that stage in the game's progress, the focus was on technique and tactics. Herein lies a problem when the students don't wish to appear weaker than their coach. "It's difficult to convince yourself as a coach that you make a real difference," says Keith now. "A player could play like a donkey, and I could give him some advice. The next day he plays well. Maybe he would have stopped playing like a donkey anyway." The single example he quotes where he seemed to make a genuine difference was in the final test against New Zealand.

Britain led the host nation 10-7 before the last day. Stephen Mulliner had just lost to World Number One Joe Hogan. Both GB Captain David Openshaw and Keith noticed Mulliner's strangely slow play and tense body language in that match. Keith and Stephen discussed it.

## It's difficult to convince yourself as a coach that you make a real difference

Mulliner-Jackson started with the same nervous approach, until a serious error seemed to startle Mulliner into recovering his usual style. Bob Jackson failed to score in either game, and Mulliner took the match in under two hours. From a predicted final result of either an 11-10 win or 10-11 loss, GB now had the test victory in the bag, and notched up two of the remaining three matches to win 13-8.

From now on Keith's own play suffered. Work forced time off from the game, and his performance became nervous over the most simple of shots. Nevertheless, his ongoing coaching work has spurred on an interest in sports psychology, and he now holds a diploma in the discipline.

The technique of Neuro-Linguistic Programming grew from the observation of successful therapists in the United States. NLP relies on stimulating the memories of its subjects. People store memories with differing elements based on visual, aural or kinaesthetic (based on touch) recollections. NLP philosophy asserts that positive memories tend to be vivid (large, colourful and with movement) and bad memories are often suppressed (visualised as small, still, blurred or in black and white). Practitioners claim that a bad memory can be made less unpleasant by "colourising" the negative image. NLP disciples working in the field of sport psychology extend this principle further.

Rather than looking at a past memory, NLP extends its focus to look at current perception. Aiton cites as an example a difficult relationship with an aggressive boss. When he shouts, imagine his voice becoming high-

pitched. Imagine him as a fluffy rabbit. Imagine hard enough, and the negative aspects of an encounter become dwarfed by the mental image. Giving a feared enemy the persona of a ridiculous cartoon has taken much of the sting from a confrontational episode.

"Reframing", as the jargon would have it, is a powerful tool if the user can get it to work. Public speakers have used it for decades, with that old standby piece of advice to imagine an audience stripped to their underwear. And yet, seeing a formidable croquet opponent as a bug to be squashed underfoot takes more than a second's visualisation. The key to psychological strength at croquet is no different from the key to a successful hoop shot: practice.

"People tend to underestimate their abilities," claims Keith. "They may say, 'I can't play in the rain'. OK, so they won't play *as well*, but they can still do it." Rationally, it's a fair point. Once someone's out on a croquet lawn in the wet, it's harder to think so clearly. NLP seeks to remove obstacles to objective thinking and increase performance to an optimum.

Looking back 19 years to that Open Championship final between Aspinall and Aiton, Keith still recalls



Keith referees a hampered shot for Mark Avery

Nigel's post-match comment: "Losing the second game doesn't worry me, as I always win the third." An outsider might view this (unfairly) as just an arrogant remark. Statistically, though, it was pretty close to the truth at the time. Maybe it was a trick to ward off the threat from the young newcomer, as if to bolster his own confidence and dent Aiton's. Aspinall had almost certainly never heard of Neuro-Linguistic Programming, or had any formal exposure to the new science of sports psychology. Even so, no great player can maintain their top position without a consistent mental as well as physical approach. Take the former *Gazette* editor, John Walters, whose year off studying Zen Buddhism led him to jump 20 places up the rankings and secure a surprise World Championship title. Or look at Robert Fulford.

"Robert," says Keith "has no truck with sports psychology." Although Fulford's approach seems to be a self-conceived one, but it has proved undeniably effective. He and Keith discussed the topic, and Fulford's key response was, "When I walk on to the lawn, I am God." Of course, some turn of events occasionally shakes this conviction, and Robert has to adopt a different outlook. The fact remains that Fulford has all the shots required for success, and the ability to put them together. That goes for many other players, but the difference is that lesser players *know* that they're vulnerable against him, a feeling which is never reciprocated.

Over in Australia, Liz Fleming has followed a similar path to Keith Aiton. She too is a trained (NLP) sport psychologist and hypnotist, and has turned her attention to husband Bruce. Preparing a self-hypnosis tape for him, she's seen his performance rocket, making him Australia's top player.

Not everyone shares in the ethos of NLP. Academic sports psychologists are sceptical: there's deemed to be insufficient data to prove the technique's effectiveness. Conversely, NLP followers regard

## "When I walk on to the lawn, I am God"

Robert Fulford

academia with distrust for its quantitative approach. At least one top croquet player has a routine closer to the academic camp. Each season starts with a practice routine to establish a "comfort zone" for certain shots. Going into a big match, the player can predict with confidence the percentage chances of success for an angled hoop, or a hit of a certain length or a difficult croquet stroke. What's outside that personal comfort zone can be avoided; what's inside provokes no fear of failure. No self-respecting NLP'er would countenance framing one's own performance in such a negative way.

And what of Reg Bamford? How does the World Number One deal with the problem of mind over body? Not surprisingly for the man who spent 2001 systematically correcting his swing, Reg has undertaken a similar regime in straightening out his attitude to play.

Bamford and Aiton found earlier this season that they were both steadfast NLP devotees. Unusually, rather than using the technique to overcome fear of an individual opponent, Reg was preparing himself for his fear of a particular place, specifically for the ordeal of the Sonoma Cutrer World Championship.

Sonoma is played in the heart of the Californian vineyard area, and the Championship is an integral part of the winery's annual charity fundraiser. Invited players are flown in to battle it out, and the final occurs in a daunting environment amid crowds of 1,500 dining wine-growers.

It's noisy, off-putting, and with hefty prize money (for croquet) this is the one event which the top stars want to win. Bamford had never had much success, so he set this as his major target for 2002.

To this end, he spent the early part of this year practising at Surbiton. Not just practising shooting or playing breaks, but practising *practising* - taking in the details of his environment, the sights, sounds, feel, and smell of the place. Having programmed a straight swing into his muscles last year, this was now an exercise in programming a specific non-threatening environment into his consciousness.

Aiton recounts another NLP technique, that of creating an "anchor". Certain triggers, or anchors, release a particular experience in us. Some anchors are good ones associated with positive memories, such as a loved one's face. Some bring instant bad sensations (imagine the sound of a dentist's drill). What Reg was endeavouring to achieve was the creation of Surbiton Croquet Club as a positive anchor.

Once the anchor is stored in the mind, a simple gesture can be used to trigger the imagination. Aiton cites a clenched fist as an example, something which creates a signal to the player himself (Reg), experienced both visually and kinaesthetically.

And so it was at Sonoma. Reg reached the final as predicted. A wave of the fist and, for him, the crowd actually did vanish. With the familiarity of an evening's practice session back home, he sailed to his first Sonoma victory.

Puzzled by Reg's ongoing strivings to better his performance, Keith asked what is possibly left still to conquer. Worryingly for the rest of the croquet fraternity, Reg is still concerned that his shooting isn't what it should be. With a manufactured swing and a similarly enhanced frame of mind, it's difficult to see how Bamford can be beaten.

Maybe Keith Aiton is the one player who can do it. Why is he not turning his focus on his own play? "That's the question everyone asks. It's much harder to analyse your own problems than anyone else's." Even so, fresh from a win in this year's Spencer Ell, it seems Keith is back on the path to success.



## Merit Award Winners 2002

### GOLD

The Gold Merit Award is given for a CA Associate who completes a triple peel for the first time (and wins the game) in singles in an official match.

Successful this year were: Ben Ashwell, Philip Brabazon, Bob Burnett, John Davey, Marcus Evans, Mike Hoggett, Richard Knapp, Richard Smith, Paul Swaffield, Guy Towlson, Brian Wainman.

### SILVER

The Silver Merit Award is given to players completing their first all-round break without bisques. Of particular note this year was Frank Moir (Bowdon) who gained his Bronze Award and Silver Award in one day in the same match.

Congratulations to: Harry Bruford, John Crowe, Richard Dickson, David Dray, John Gosney, Tony Harvey, Paul Heath, Jolyon Kay, Denis King, Farooq Malik, Peter McDermott, Peter Miller, Frank Moir, Derek Old, Michael Poole, Amanda Prowse, Stuart Romeril, Feargal Smith, Tony Tizard, Guy Towlson, Tony Treglown, Clifford Walker, Derek Watts, Rupert Webb, Michael Wilson.

### BRONZE

Bronze Merit Award badges go to players who use bisques to complete a break of ten hoops or more in a recognised event. Again, play must be singles, and games must be won.

Recipients are: Mary Barnes, Jean Birdseye, John Brudenell (October 2001), Derek Buxton, Barbara Clarke, Brian Claye, Cliff Daniel, Philip Errington, Mark Gooding, Mike Huxley, Allan Knight, Farooq Malik,

Evelyn Martin, Frank Moir, Craig Oakley, John Reece-Hoyes, Paul Rigge, Susan Rogers, Stuart Romeril, Richard Stevens, Julian Tonks (July 2001), David Turner, Nigel Urban, Rosalind Pimlott, Edme Robinette, Feargal Smith, Kathy Wallace, Jonathan Wood.

### COACH QUALIFICATIONS 2002

#### Golf Croquet Coaches (Silver badge)

Appointed on coaching course: David Bourne (High Wycombe and Surbiton), Jo Burnaby (Winchester), Richard Clark (Royal Tunbridge Wells), Andrew Cowing (CERN (Switzerland) and Cheltenham), John Hobbs (Royal Tunbridge Wells), Ken Mason (Sussex), Pamela Mason (Sussex), Gerald Mitchell (Harwell), John Munro (Blewbury, Harwell), Paul Robertshaw (Himley Hall), Edme Robinette (Bury St Edmunds) and Chris Wright (Purley Bury).

Directing staff for the course were Jennet Blake, Robert Fulford, Daphne Gaitley, Chris Sheen and Roderick Sheen.

Also appointed during the season was Rosemary Longbottom.

#### Golf Croquet Club Coaches (Yellow badge)

Margaret Brown (Leighton-Linsdale), Maureen Brown (Chelmsford and Bentley), Philip Joseph (Hurlingham), Ronnie Richardson and Coralie Toogood (Chelmsford and Bentley).

#### Association Croquet Club Coaches

##### (Yellow badge)

Appointed on Cheltenham coaching course: Anne Belcher (Southport), Ray Belcher (Southport), Nora Burbridge (Tyneside), Janet Davies (Chester),

Anna Giraud (Zeneca, Huddersfield), John Kennedy (Beverley), Ailsa Lines (Bowdon), Ian Lines (Bowdon), Ray Lowe (Southport), Mollie McBride (Chester), Tony Thomas (Southport), Peter Wardle (Crake Valley), Neil Williams (Crake Valley / Keswick / Kendal), Geoff Young (Bury).

Directing staff for the course were Bob Burnett, James Hawkins and Keith Roberts (all Southport and Birkdale).

Appointed on Cheltenham coaching course: Derek Beard (Taunton Deane), Eric Bevan (Kington Langley), Penny Crowe (Cheltenham), Deirdre Duggan (Bristol), John Green (Stourbridge), Jolyon Kay (Blewbury), Ian Lewis (Bath, Lansdown), Daniel Mills (Bath, Bristol), John Munro (Blewbury), Dennis O'Brien (Watford Cassiobury), Brian Toomey (Taunton Deane), Bernard Wilson (Bristol, Nailsea), Ian Wilson (Cornwall, Plymouth, Nailsea), John de Winton (Taunton Deane).

Directing staff for the course were David Magee (Cheltenham) and Bob Whitaker (Bath).

#### Grade I Coaches (Blue badge)

Ray Belcher, Peter Francis, Ailsa Lines, Ian Lines, Ian Plummer, Neil Williams.

#### Grade II Coaches (Green badge)

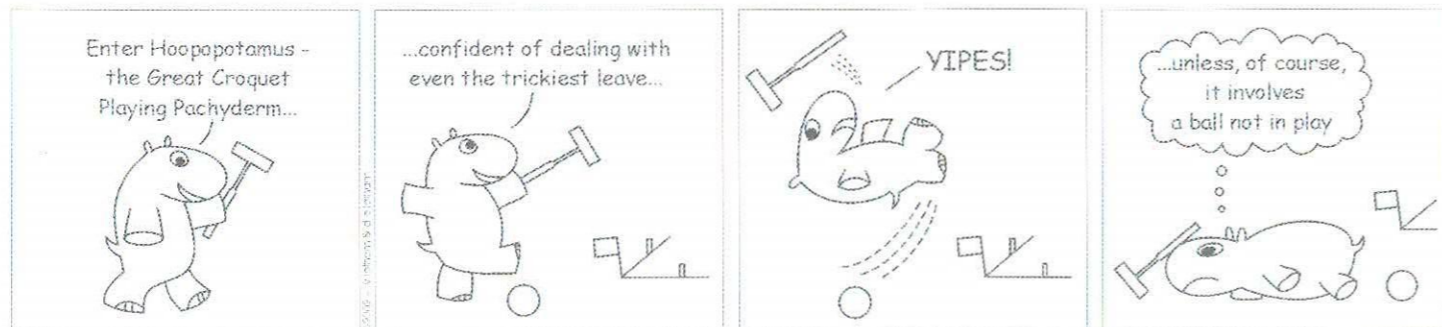
Bob Burnett, John Haslam, James Hawkins, David Kibble, Ailsa Lines, Ian Lines, David Magee, Ian Plummer, David Mooney, Ron Welch, Neil Williams.

#### Grade III Coaches (Red badge)

John Haslam, James Hawkins, Ian Plummer.

by Victor

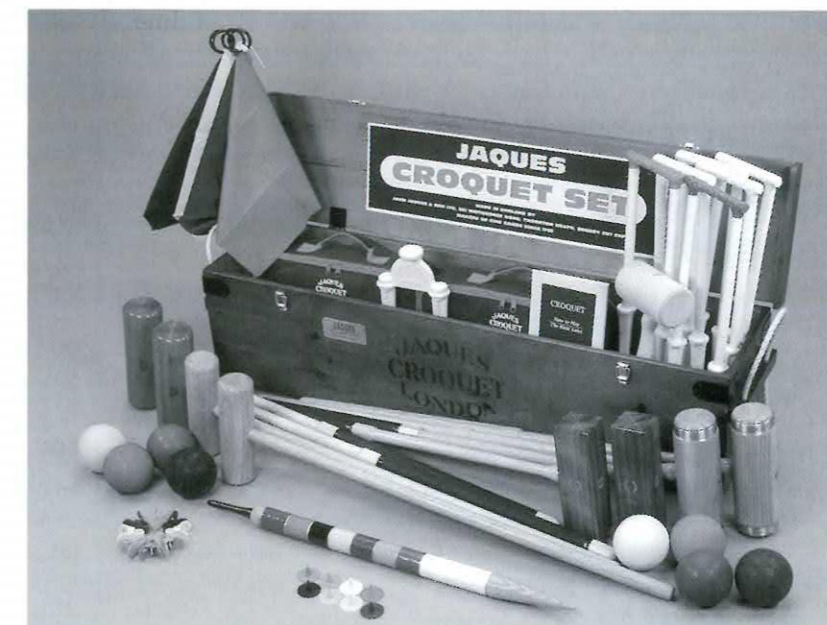
## HOPOPOTAMUS



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

To commemorate the 150th anniversary of this event, the company has introduced a special Limited Edition 'Great Exhibition' set which includes Association Hoops, 16oz balls and fine quality mallets, all at a very competitive price. Only 150 of these sets are being produced!

The company also manufactures a complete range of sets and mallets for all standards of play, ranging from £60 upwards. View these on our website: [www.jaques.co.uk](http://www.jaques.co.uk)



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



John Jaques & Son Ltd, The House of Jaques, 1 Fircroft Way, Edenbridge, Kent, TN8 6EU  
Telephone : 01732 500200 Fax : 01732 500111 Email [gameon@jaques.co.uk](mailto:gameon@jaques.co.uk)



# CROQUET SHOP



*A Wide variety of Croquet related goods, ideal for Christmas!*

## Croquet Mallets

Now selling a comprehensive selection of mallets, including Pidcock, Percival and Hobbs mallets, as well as the Hogan, Jaques and Townsend mallets we have always sold. The popular Hogan mallet at £68 + delivery is still our best-seller. Come to us for the widest variety and impartial expert advice.

## Mallet Covers


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

Jaques grey cover with red 'Jaques' on side	£16.00
Blue cover with Croquet logo	£19.00
Jaques green 'de-luxe' cover	£21.00
Padded blue cover with croquet logo.	£23.00
Padded blue cover for longer mallet head lengths	£27.00

*Please add £1.50 for p&P*

## Clothing

A wide range of white clothing and wet weather gear is available, including:

	Breathable wet weather jacket	£36.00
	Breathable jacket and trousers	£45.00
	Fleece reversible windcheater jacket	£35.00
	Fleece reversible gilet	£27.00
	Fleece jacket	£29.00
	Fleece waistcoat	£18.50
	Pullover	£18.50
	Ladies cardigan	£28.00

*Please add £4.00 p&P.*

## Jewellery

A range of silver jewellery, including:



Tie clip (mallet and balls)	£12.50
Brooch (mallet and ball)	£17.00
Earrings (hoop and ball), screw-on or pierced	£12.00

*Please add £1 p&P*

## For more information

Call Jeff Dawson on 01483 776971

Or Email [sales@croquet.org.uk](mailto:sales@croquet.org.uk)

Or visit our website

[www.croquet.org.uk/shop](http://www.croquet.org.uk/shop)

We are now based at:

112 Potters Lane, Send, Surrey

GU23 7AL

Callers welcome by appointment only, please

## Odds and Ends

Smaller gifts, ideal for stocking fillers.

Croquet Girl cards - pack of 8, blank inside	£4.50
Croquet posters - b&w prints, 4 designs available	£6.00ea
Ball markers, pack of 10 assorted plastic markers.	£1.00
Ball marker plastic holder, with 4 markers	£1.00

## Books

A wide variety of croquet publications are available, including:



The Laws of Association Croquet	£4.00
The Laws of Golf Croquet	£2.00
A Guide to Golf Croquet	£5.00
Know the game	£5.00
Croquet - The Skills of the Game by Bill Lamb.	£10.00
Croquet by John Solomon	£9.00
Plus One on Time by Don Gaunt	£10.00
Expert Croquet Tactics by Keith Wylie	£14.00
Croquet Management by Gaunt & Wheeler	£11.50
Croquet Coaching Manual	£11.50
The Principles of Handicapping by Bill Lamb	£2.50
Challenge & Gilbey book by Alan Oldham	£3.00
Lawn Management by John Beech	£2.00
Croquet: Technique by John Riches	£7.00
Croquet: Error Correction by John Riches	£7.00
Croquet: Next Break Strategy by John Riches	£9.00
Croquet: The Mental Approach by John Riches	£9.00
Croquet: Lessons in Tactics by John Riches	£9.00
Croquet: Finer Points by John Riches	£10.50

*All book prices include P&P to UK addresses*

## Complete croquet sets

How about giving a friend a garden croquet set for Christmas? We sell a wide range of sets at rock bottom prices, and leading up to Christmas we are offering **10% discount** on all sets to individual CA members!

## Club Equipment

This is an ideal time to check over your club equipment, and replace any equipment necessary. As always, we sell all the equipment your club is likely to need, including:

**Balls** - Barlow GT, Dawson and Sunshiny

**Hoops** - Omega, Aldridge, Townsend and Jaques  
Corner flags, yardline markers, pegs, clips, gauges.