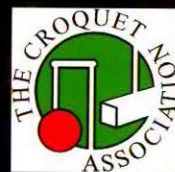


THE CROQUET GAZETTE

ISSUE 305

OCTOBER 2006



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THE CROQUET GAZETTE



Chairman's Column

Issue 305 October 2006
 Front Cover: Samir Patel, Winner of the Spencer Ell.

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There was a good turnout of croquet players for the service of celebration for the life of John Beech, a founder and primer mover of the Pendle and Craven club, at the St Andrews Methodist Church in Barnoldswick, his base for lay preaching during the latter years of his life. After some joyous hymn singing we were refreshed, with typical Northern hospitality, by a plentiful supply of sandwiches, trifle, tea and cakes, which I felt compelled to walk off afterwards by a brisk circuit of Malham Tarn and Cove.

This is my last column, as by the time you read it, I will have completed the maximum term of three years as Chairman of Council. At least I didn't have Tony Blair's problem of deciding when to go!. Looking back, there have been few major policy initiatives; rather a period of consolidation and implementation of the changes introduced by my predecessor, Quiller Barrett, such as the Civil Liability Insurance Scheme and the much increased level of grants to clubs. Behind the scenes, there has been significant progress with improving IT systems and integrating them with the web site. Much of Council's work is "business as usual", but none the less vital for that: the Fixtures Book and Gazette have appeared; tournaments have been organised, including two world championships; sponsorship and publicity obtained and grants given.

Less planned, there has been a certain amount of constitutional navel gazing and to some extent the quote attributed to Harold Macmillan is apposite: "Events, dear boy!

Editorial

It's that time of year again, the end of the season, well domestic anyway. It seems to have been a long season, not that I have played a great deal, perhaps next year I will make more of an effort to get out and about more. However we do have the MacRobertson Shield to look forward to and I would like to take this opportunity to wish our team a safe, enjoyable and rewarding trip.

Whilst the playing season is almost complete, it is precisely this time of year when lots of matters relating to croquet need to be taken in hand. Grounds often need extra work, committees are looking for willing volunteers and of course it goes without



Events!". There has certainly been a significant turnover of personell: Klim Seabright and Liz Budworth have joined us in the Office, Bernard Neal was elected President, Gail Curry resumed as Editor and Chris Williams has agreed to take over as Archivist. Support for women's events has declined to the extent that some are in abeyance, but Golf Croquet has continued to grow and the implications of this for both clubs and the Association need to be considered.

At least I have the opportunity to redress one early oversight: having failed to congratulate our team for winning the MacRobertson Shield in 2003, I wish them every success in Australia this autumn.

I conclude with heartfelt thanks for the patience and support of my fellow members of Council, its Committees and the Officers of the Association; and to them, the Federations, Clubs and Individuals who put so much into Croquet, for the pleasure I get from it. To paraphrase a well known radio sign-off: if you have been, thanks for reading!

Ian Vincent

saying that the Gazette could always use some articles or contributions. Perhaps you already have winter pursuits that occupy you out of season, but if not, I am sure there is a worthwhile cause somewhere within the sport that your contribution would be most welcome. As playing, whilst enjoyable, is not the only aspect of the game that needs your attention.



Letters

Truth or Fiction

Someone e-mailed me the image below, supposedly from the Bayeux Tapestry. It seems to suggest that croquet arrived with William the Conqueror!

I had a look at the Bayeux Tapestry website (the proper French one, not the English copy which has nothing similar) and the scene shown in image no. 24 is almost identical, except there are no mallets and hoops but rather just guys with shovels and picks!



I am wondering where this image came from, is it a spoof or what?

Maybe the Gazette readers could shed some light on it.

Esther Jones

Forty Years On

Exactly forty years ago as I write this - possibly to the very day - the October 1966 edition of *Croquet* was dumped on the Editor's desk by a cheerful young van driver from Prestoprint of Kingston on Thames. Who that editor was I have no idea, although one of those copies (price 3s.) is on my desk right now. Neither the Editor's name nor those of the officials of the Association was revealed to a disappointed readership and only three of the articles within are credited to an author, one of whom is Rover - a pseudonym, do you think? - and the second a New York Times reporter named Joseph Lelyveld. The latter article would bear reprinting in a present-day Gazette: it's a hoot. The third named contributor is HS Clemons of Tasmania. No Englishman dared put his name to any item.

However, the Correspondence page reveals that some associates were prepared to raise their heads above the parapet and - as ever - disgruntlement was the order of the day. Management and, of course, time limits caused as much debate as they do

today.

Of the magazine's 18 inside pages, 2 contain reports of The President's Cup, The Chairman's Salver and The Surrey Cup and 12 are devoted to the detailed results of every game in a large number of the preceding summer's tournaments. They appear uncannily like Chris Williams' website of modern-day results.

To someone like me, who came to croquet much later, few of the players' names mean anything at all, but the magazine's cover displays the names of Cotter, Solomon and Aspinall and within there are several references to "The Big Three", who I take to be Solomon, Hicks and Cotter. The Prichards are much in evidence in the handicap alterations - downwards, naturally - and Ormerod, Neal and Jackson sound familiar. And, sadly, Mr. Wylie, who that year was bottom of the list in the President's Cup.

In the list of New Associates I was intrigued to find a dozen people with addresses in Florida and New York, including one couple with a little place on Jungle Road. Bet they didn't hit too many balls into the bushes.

And there, almost at the bottom of the list, was the name of DH Moorcraft, then of Southport, later of Cheltenham. A familiar name at last. Happy Fortieth Year in the CA, Denis.

Forty years on that old Croquet is still worth three bob.

Mrs D Rush

Trauma Corner

I wish to make a suggestion to Clubs who hold tournaments. Would you consider providing in some small unused area of your club grounds, space for a 'crisis corner'? Having played several tournaments in the last couple of months I have noticed amongst many of the players the need for such a facility. I have in mind an area which could be utilised as a sort of wailing wall, where players could vent their frustrations against ball, lawn, mallet, opponent, weather, double bankers etc. Ideally there would be an adjacent plate smashing booth. Another highly desirable feature would be the provision of a slot machine which resembled those of my childhood trips to Cleethorpes. You used to put a coin in the machine and a jolly policeman or sailor laughed uproariously for about a minute before falling silent again. The croquet version would have instead an understanding figure who would interact with the user, responding to "my blue ball was for four-back and I had

a rush on yellow to hoop five.etc ad nauseum" with a sympathetic and understanding attitude, wanting to know more and exactly how the game progressed without even the suggestion of a glazed eye. I am currently surveying the grounds at Cheltenham to see if we could accommodate a suitable site for this vital player amenity.

Eileen Magee

Tribute to John Beech

The Craven and Pendle Croquet club lost a treasure on 10th September 2006 by the death of their mentor and friend John Beech.

John had just completed a successful £70,000 development of the club and we hope he will watch over us and watch our progress and where he so reluctantly had to leave off.

His influence will continue in the hundreds of croquet players country wide. Somehow I think he will look down on every tournament with pleasure.

Thank you for your life John and for the loyal, competent club members you have left behind, for now.

Betty Brierley

Inconsequential?

I found the article on choosing a mallet (issue 300, December 2005) very interesting, as I make my own wooden mallets. The Laws governing this 3(e)3 states that "The head may be made of any suitable materials provided they give no significant playing advantage over a head made entirely of wood".

Dr Plummer states "The material from which a mallet head is made is inconsequential" and then goes on to make a list of a variety of materials used in the construction of or hitting face of the mallet. Has he any proof that mallets so made have no significant playing advantage over an all wood mallet?

[I doubt that any mallet heads so made have been scientifically tested to prove this. My own feeling is that mallets with 'inconsequential' materials in their heads do have a significant advantage, or otherwise they would not have been derived or used. Perhaps someone would care to comment.

Tony Miller

In reply to Editorial

I'm a new member of the CA and I have seen your editorial in the June 2006 Issue 303 edition of the Coquet

Gazette.

Interesting! I've been playing, at Tyneside, for five years, having been introduced to croquet by a longstanding friend, from the Northampton Club.

It is unfortunate that there appear to be people who, whatever they do, seem to think their activity is of greater worth than that followed by others. I deal with that by believing that they are the unfortunate ones, in having such a narrow, restrictive view of life.

So far as croquet is concerned, it appears to me that both main forms of the game are of equal worth, for different reasons. The great advantage of golf croquet is that a game can be played in a very short space of time – important if you work or have other time restrictions. Availability of time can be a problem if one wishes to play even a short game of association. At least players playing the golf form are playing croquet.

Skills are required in both games and, though some are used in one form of the game than the other, they are transferable. Knocking balls out of the way in golf is great roquet practice for association. Touching balls in golf may be a problem for some players – but an association player will know exactly how the balls will behave when hit. Hoop-running in golf certainly adds to one's confidence when playing association, whereas precision in placing balls in association greatly improves one's golf.

There is mental stimulation in both games, probably more so in association and the converse is true with respect to sociability. It is possible to play seriously and have a laugh at the same time – this is especially true of golf.

I play and really enjoy both forms of the game, mainly playing association. I hope some of the players with more entrenched views will think on these things, revise their opinions and increase their pleasure.

Alan Thwaite

Lawn Booking via the Internet

Some two years ago Reigate Priory SCC decided to investigate the possibility of on-line booking for our single lawn (approximately 70% of our members now have Internet access). The main attraction was the ability to book the lawn by those members who lived some distance from the club.

After researching the possible systems available we settled on a system from Colin Docketty (see [http://](http://www.colindocketty.co.uk/bookingsystem/)

www.colindocketty.co.uk/bookingsystem/) which had been designed for aircraft bookings for flying clubs. This was available at a modest cost (£25+VAT per annum) and Colin was willing to undertake some tailoring to our requirements without charge.

Our system works by allowing double banking with one booking in the diary in the club house and the other booking made on-line. If the club house had the luxury of Internet access then all bookings could be on-line. This system is now in its second year of operation; it is robust and is well used, especially by those who cannot easily visit the club house. Bookings can be made from home or the office and it is easy to check if the lawn is available at a particular time or to cancel bookings no longer required.

Very simply, the system uses a "month by month planner" and allows time slots to be booked as required. It also incidentally provides E-mail facilities between members, links to other Croquet sites and a Club Calendar. There are various ways this system could be used to handle more than the one lawn.

For a demonstration of our system log on to <http://home.clara.net/reigatecroquet/> then click on "Make a Lawn Booking" and use the "Guest Log-on" button.

Mike Bottomley
(mike.bottomley@tesco.net)

Postscript to Alan Oldham Obituary

The committee of the High Wycombe Croquet Club would like to add a postscript to the excellent obituary to Alan Oldham by Stephen Mulliner.

Alan was solely instrumental in 1980-82 in founding the High Wycombe club. From that time until a few years ago, Alan was the club's chairman and latterly its president. Alan organised, refereed and took part in many of the club's activities, competitions and matches. Even though, over the years we have lost many players through relocation, this small one court club has still rebuilt and retained a healthy membership, which is a tribute to Alan's leadership.

Bananas

Dear Fraulein Hudson, I write on the matter of bananas. It seems to me uberly remiss for the prize to be given to another as food. Here we would have been more sensible to the feeling of Herr Dorke. If no other banana could be found

conformant to regulations of size unt straightness. We would hav proceeded giving only the inside of the banana to the diner retaining the skin which could have been stuffed with items gifted by the players who defeated Herr Dorke, say an old sock, some nail clippings, a disused denture and from meaner spirited people candy wrappers, used chewing gum and cigaretten ends and so on. The skin (of the banana not of the ibble) could be dried and engraved at a later date as is traditional.

It does seem that the croquet world in England is partly inhabited by strange members of the tribe of ibble. Are they all particularly uninvented? Is there an explanation for this?

Deiter Porke

Richard Rothwell in Spain

In 1980 Henry Fernandez de Bobadilla, President and founder of the "Santa Clara C.C" de Jerez de la Frontera (Cádiz) in South Spain, and me, visited the Hurlingham Club (see "The World of Croquet" of J Mc Cullough and S. Mulliner page 164)

As a result of that visit, Mr Bobadilla invited a Richard Rothwell (Secretary of CA) and Robin Godby very good player of Hurlingham, to visit Jerez in August of 1981 and coach the members of Santa Clara Club. Both of them left an unforgettable memory, playing during the whole day at around 40°C heat, fortunately the swimming pool was so near.

Fernando de Ansorena



A TRIBUTE TO JOHN BEECH

(Died 10 September 2006)

by *Kathryn and Roger Schofield*

John Beech, the man, where do you start to do justice to a man who was so much to so many people?

First and foremost John was a Christian and a family man. His faith shone through in all parts of his life, and he loved to go anywhere and everywhere to preach the gospel of Christ as a Methodist local preacher for over 40 years. He leaves a devoted wife, Kathleen, four grown up sons, Simon, Paul, David and James, daughters-in-law and two grandchildren, Charlotte and Jonathan.

After these came the other great loves of his life Stoke City Football Club and croquet. You would be amazed how often Stoke City and some aspect of croquet appeared as illustrations in his sermons! He was also a member of the Gideons.

John was an outgoing, friendly kind of chap, who could talk to anyone and usually did. He worked in education during his working life and finished his career with Bury Education Authority. He went to agricultural college which enabled him to write his book "Lawn Management".

John went on a course through work where there was a croquet lawn and came back home full of enthusiasm for this wonderful sport. At a similar time his friend and neighbour, Norman Hicks, was also introduced to croquet at a different venue. They got their heads together and played on John's back lawn. As John often said they thought they knew how to play but later they discovered they were not necessarily obeying all the rules!

John was a Methodist and Norman was a Baptist they each went to their different churches on a recruitment drive, and a few of us who liked playing bat and ball went to a meeting at John's house and formed Croquet in Pendle and John started his own little business, Woodland Mallets. We played on the back lawn for a bit, but as you know nothing was impossible to John.

It wasn't long before we were playing on the front lawns at Nelson and Colne College, then we added two more lawns round the back, then we had to move to a different part of the playing fields and created three new lawns.



Eventually we relocated to Earby after several abortive attempts at other sites in the Pendle area. Throughout all this development John worked tirelessly at any and every job at the croquet club. If no one else would do it, John would take it on, as well as the hundreds of jobs he was already doing.

John was well known throughout the croquet world and has been a past chairman of the North West Federation of Croquet Clubs and also for quite a number of years Development Officer and a member of the C.A. Council. Many clubs including Bury, Llanfairfechan and Culcheth are grateful for the many hours he put in helping them get established. He did a great deal to help the development of croquet in the north.

When our club wanted to honour him in some way at the newly developed club in Earby all he wanted was a CA Diploma. He achieved this when at our opening ceremony in July 2005 the Chairman of the CA, Ian Vincent, presented him with this award. Sadly he was not able to play much croquet at the new grounds, having suffered a stroke just a few months after we started playing there. But what a legacy he has left to the croquet world and especially to us at Pendle & Craven Croquet Club. We give grateful thanks for having known John and urge you all to play more and more croquet and to enjoy your croquet because that is what John would have wanted most. He will be sadly missed.

News & Information

European Festival of Croquet

The World Croquet Federation (WCF) in conjunction with the European Croquet Federation (FEC), is very pleased to announce that a European Team Championship will be held at Cheltenham, England in June 2007. This will feature both Association Croquet and Golf Croquet.

Agreement has been reached with Cheltenham Croquet Club and with sponsors Mitsubishi Motors, to hold the event during the week beginning 25 June with the final on either 30 June or 1 July.

It is expected that teams will consist of three players. Each match will be a combination of Golf Croquet and Association Croquet.

A consultation process will take place with FEC member associations to determine their views on the finer details of the event.

It is also the intention to provide coaching on a variety of aspects of the game both before and after the event (and possibly during the event). The idea is to make this a European Festival of Croquet.

8th World Golf Croquet Championship to be hosted by South Africa

The World Croquet Federation has much pleasure in announcing that the South African Croquet Association has been awarded the hosting of The 8th World Croquet Federation World Golf Croquet Championship.

The event will be played from Saturday 8th to Sunday 16th March 2008 in Cape Town, centred at the Kelvin Grove Croquet Club, Newlands, which has four excellent courts. Kelvin Grove is overlooked by Devil's Peak and is next door to the famous Newlands Cricket Club and the Newlands Rugby Ground.

Additional matches will be played at Rondebosch Croquet Club which has three courts and is 10 minutes walking distance from Kelvin Grove, and Somerset West Croquet Club which has three courts (with a fourth currently being built) and is approximately a 40 minutes drive from Cape Town.

This is the first time that a World Croquet Championship event has been held

in South Africa, which is a founder member of the World Croquet Federation.

There will be an expected entry of up to 64 players from around the world in the main event.

President of the South African Croquet Association, Mrs. Carole Jackson said, "Croquet in South Africa has always been strong with the Association having fourteen clubs and enthusiasts around the country. This award will provide the impetus to spread the sport even wider. In particular I would like to thank the host clubs for their support together with Barlow Croquet Equipment who will be the ball suppliers for the event.

Further details of the 8th WCF Golf Croquet World Championship will be released in due course.

Stephen Mulliner elected as New President of the Fédération Européenne de Croquet

At the AGM of the FEC (Fédération Européenne de Croquet), held in Jersey during the recent European Croquet championships Stephen Mulliner was elected as President. This follows the recent resignation of the former president, Peter Payne, due to personal circumstances.

The FEC owes a great deal of debt to Peter for his work in forming the FEC, and his continual assistance to European croquet in the years since.

Bodham Croquet Club Juniors visit Norwich

On 10 September the Juniors from Bodham Croquet Club visited Norwich to experience another lawn. This was our second attempt to give the youngsters this opportunity, on the first occasion after about ten minutes play the skies opened and very soon the lawn was waterlogged.



I hope you will forgive the dress code but I thought it more important the youngsters played Croquet than what they wore. They certainly attracted plenty of attention as Norwich people had not seen such young people playing Croquet in Eaton Park before.

The youngsters had a wonderful day and the weather, this time, was perfect.

Thank you to Terrey Sparks and the Committee at Norwich Croquet for allowing us this opportunity.

Croquet players to the rescue!

On the Saturday of the Yorkshire Open at Ripon Spa Hotel, play was interrupted by a helicopter landing to collect "lucky" prize-winners to take them to the St. Leger at York racetrack. A miscalculated approach, catching the landing gear in a large bush, had players on high alert. While our manager (in real life an A & E theatre sister) got ready to use her medical skills, half a dozen engineer/croquet players rushed for tools and prepared themselves to repair the helicopter!

New Clubhouse for Chelmsford & Bentley

Chelmsford Croquet Club, established in 1990, relocated from Central Park, Chelmsford to Writtle College Sports Ground in 1997. In those early years the dedication of several members – in particular the current Club President Grahame Goodacre, his wife Jackie and Cheryl Stephenson - saw the transformation of four disused grass tennis courts, part way converted into bowling greens, into two reasonably good, full-sized, croquet lawns. In 1999 came a merger with Bentley Croquet Club, who had lost their ground, to form the Chelmsford and Bentley Croquet Club.

Happily the leasing arrangement with the College includes provision for their groundsman to maintain the lawns and since his appointment two seasons ago the current groundsman, Peter Gray, has enthusiastically worked to make further (much appreciated) improvements to the playing surface.



L to R Grahame Goodacre, Cheryl Stephenson and Jackie Goodacre celebrate the opening of the new clubhouse

With about 40 members what the club has lacked until this year has been a clubhouse – though on a wet day the two existing small huts have provided some interesting moments! However, thanks to grants from **Awards for All** and the **Croquet Association**, all that has changed. A splendid new clubhouse was erected in time for the start of the season and was officially 'opened' 25 May. The picture shows (from left to right) Grahame, Cheryl and Jackie performing the ceremony.

At this exciting time in its development the club would welcome new members – both association and golf croquet are played. For further information contact the Club Secretary, Richard Lewin, on 01702 586312 or by email at rw.lewin@tiscali.co.uk.

CLUB AWARDS AND £100

by Patricia Duke-Cox,
Chair of Development committee

A message to all club members. Have you read your CA Club Handbook this year? Did you know that the CA gives three awards every other year in recognition of a club's progress. This can be at national or local level in any two of the previous three years. The time is coming to submit an entry.

Clubs wishing to be considered should submit a nomination form from the handbook to their Federation Development Officer by the 31st December 2006. This will then be forwarded to the Development Committee who will consider all the applications at their first meeting in 2007.

The winner of each award will receive an inscribed plaque and a cheque for £100. The actual trophy will be presented at the following AGM of the CA and will be held for 2 years. Clubs must be full members of the CA.

The Townsend Award is open to all clubs with one or two courts. The Apps Heley Award to clubs with three or four courts whilst the Millennium Award is open to clubs with five or more courts.

- The judging criteria include
- oFacilities that the club has managed to develop off court
 - oDevelopment and quality of courts
 - oPlaying achievements
 - oParticipation in Federation activities
 - oHosting of CA or Federation events
 - oLocal and regional publicity
 - oFund raising activities

The 2005 winners were Ashby, Bowdon and Cheltenham.

Late Arrivals at the Croquet Ball

By Sally Green

The BBC Radio 4 programme "I'm Sorry I Haven't A Clue (The antidote to panel games)" has for years been running a game called "Late Arrivals". Members of the panel have to invent the names of people arriving late for a ball held in honour of a particular profession or sport.

When the croquet community was asked via the Nottingham list to suggest Late Arrivals at the Croquet Ball, contributions came pouring in both from those who were obviously avid listeners of the programme and from those who joined in for the fun of a pun. Here is a selection:

- Will you welcome Mr and Mrs Quet and their son Ro.
- And there's Mr and Mrs Rush with their drunken son Cut, and his heterosexual brother Straight.
- Not forgetting Dolly Rush and her dog Rover. (Sally Green)
- All the way from Spain; Mr and Mrs Clip-on-four-back-and-one-on-the-peg and their son Juan.
- Mr and Mrs Baulk and their daughter Bee. (George Noble)
- Brigadier and The Very Reverend Peel with their dead dog, the late Rover. (Rob Edlin-White)
- From France M and Mme Panroquet and their son Hugh. (G.S. Liddiard)
- Mr and Mrs Eledge, and their daughter, Bev.

Mr and Mrs Ot, and their less-than-bright and stuck-in-a-rut son, Div.

Mr Trun, who is a Rabbi. (Andrew Winn)

Please welcome Mrs Pershot and her daughter Sue, followed as always by her fiancé Max-Len Spall.

(Chris Patmore)

Don't forget Mr & Mrs Edgy and their medical son Strat...
...or the poor Tactics and their lovable father Pop.

Please welcome Mr & Mrs Dard-Leave and their baby son, the new Stan...

... accompanied by Di, daughter of the Agonal-Spreads.

Representing the Outside Agency, Lou Simpediments, and that most diplomatic of lady players, Con Tact. (Roger Wood)

Mr and Mrs McKardin and their diligent son Phil. (Liz Wilson)

Mr and Mrs Lett and their son Mal accompanied by The Gripes with their son Solomon.

The rather annoying Miss Anne Uffershot

Just arrived from Sweden, Mr and Mrs Inderhuup with their grandson Stig. (Colin Clark)

Still no sign of Lord and Lady Grip, or their family.....

Mr and Mrs Wired, they do look annoyed about something. (Richard Dickson)

And possibly last but certainly not least, we are very honoured to have royalty among us: all the way from Tubac in the distant South-West, Queen Tupalpeel. (Fergus McInnes)

We apologise for the late arrival of Joe and James whose flights were delayed; they're sharing a limo from the airport. In fact here it is. Please welcome the Hogan and Death Rolls. (Rob Edlin-White)

Not content just with personal arrivals, Chris Daniels worked in appearances from croquet clubs around the UK:

Please welcome the party representing the CA:

...Colin (likes to be known as Col) Chester and his lovely wife Wyn

...Sir Bitterne Crokey-klub

...Parson Screen

...royalty from the remote provinces, the Kings Tonlangley and Stonmaurward

...those Northern chaps, Bo Dunn and Ash(ley) Bee, accompanied by the delectable Belle Say-Hall

...those West Country gentlemen, friendly Bud Leigh-Salterton and his noisy friend Sid Mouth

...the layer of the Welsh tice, Duff Wrinn

...unaccompanied: Ham Twerth, Ivy Church and Ken Illworth

...and finally, a chap who wishes to be known simply as Lester.

Regards,

Park Stone

Bob Burnett decided it was time to move on and asked:

All the arrivals came through Euston via Tottenham Court Road; but then where???

We were not disappointed by a short but interesting trip on the London Underground to, where else but, "Mornington Crescent".

Want to know more about the programme? Go to: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/comedy/clue/>

To join the Nottingham, email list, go to the CA website and look under "links"

EXTRACTS FROM A BIBLIOGRAPHER'S CASEBOOK

IX. A RIPPING YARN WITH A HAPPY ENDING

by David Drazin

Though it is certainly remarkable that I was in the thick of it from start to finish, the odds against my involvement at every stage of this little drama were probably a lot less than might be imagined, because I am a dedicated collector of croquet memorabilia and was privileged to count the late Alan Oldham, past CA Treasurer, Vice-President, and Archivist, as a close friend. So when, out of the blue in April or May 2004, Alan received as donations to the CA two precious books of artwork by Horace Francis Crowther-Smith ('Crowther'), master croquet caricaturist, it was natural that Alan should show them to me. And, knowing that the CA had limited curatorial resources, it was natural that I should take the trouble to scan both books from cover to cover for the benefit of anyone who might care to examine them. It was natural too that I should inform the police of their theft from Alan's car when we were in Brighton together for the WCF World Golf Croquet Championship in June 2004; and, having long since given up hope of ever seeing them again, it was natural, as a daily visitor to the eBay website, that I should see them offered for sale by a Hampshire dealer on 28 May this year, the day after the auction was posted.

The two books in this mini-saga are mysteriously entitled *The Croquet Association: "Ten Best" 1911* and *The Croquet Association: "Ten Best" 1912*. This was the era when the ten players who contested the CA's senior selection event for the Champion Cup (forerunner of the President's Cup) were commonly called the Ten Best. Crowther was then building a reputation as the game's leading artist and cartoonist. For a number of years he produced caricatures of the Ten Best and had them bound in cloth as handsome books for presentation. These were the books of 1911 and 1912 that were donated to the CA by Margaret Payton on behalf of Barbara and Joan Chittenden, mother and daughter, past members of Compton Croquet Club, Eastbourne.

Swinging into action right away, I spoke on the phone with the Sussex Police, quoting the Crime Number they had given me two years earlier, and suggested that they ask eBay to pull both auctions. The goods on offer had clearly been stolen and it would obviously have been unhelpful to allow the auctions to proceed. But, notwithstanding their professed commitment to co-operate with authorised law enforcement agencies, we never supposed that eBay were so responsive that their co-operation could be taken for granted. So, while the police inspector in charge of the case was doing battle with their administration, the croquet world closed ranks and mounted a spirited defence. Just in case the auctions should run to full term despite police intervention, Tremaine Arkley of the US, a good friend and benefactor of the CA and leading collector worldwide of croquet art, very generously put in safety bids, undertaking to pay up to £2888.88 for each volume in case of need and, if called on to purchase both volumes, to donate them (for a second time) to the CA. And I dashed off a few emails, warning the usual suspects in the croquet world not to muddy the waters by putting in spoiling bids. We didn't want the bidding to be driven up needlessly.



Winner 1911: H Maxwell Browne, winner of the Champion Cup, 1911 (from the 1911 volume)



Winner 1912: P Duff Mathews, eponymous inventor of the duffer tice, winner of the Champion Cup, 1912 (from the 1912 volume)

By a sad and strange turn of fate, Alan had died on 28 April of this year, a month before this little story began. He had been badly shaken by the loss of priceless CA property while it was in his charge and, having then assumed that it would never be seen again, he would have been thrilled to learn that there was every prospect of recovering it. And so in fact was his family who survived him. The auctions were due to end at 6 pm on 7 June, the day before Alan's memorial service was to take place in the church of St Francis of Assisi, Terriers, near his home outside High Wycombe, Bucks; and, as eBay had taken no action to terminate the auctions, the few of us who knew what was going on were on the edge of our seats. How would the story end? What would we tell the Oldham family and the croquet establishment at Terriers Church? Would the Sussex Police stop the action, or would the sales run their course? And if they ran their course, would Tremaine prevail, how much would he have to pay, and would the police then step in to reclaim property they had reason to believe was stolen? At the bottom line, who would pay how much at the end of the day?

As the hours marched on, the picture took shape. The auctions duly ended, Tremaine winning one volume for £460 and the other for £360. Though the croquet world held back, there was never any way I could induce outsiders to do so. In order to

assist the police in identifying and locating the vendor, Tremaine offered to pay him by means of an instrument addressed to his home. Tremaine emailed this address to me, I relayed it to the Sussex Police, they promised to swoop, and they swooped! Two lovely books were once again safe and sound.

Having been primed by the police, at Alan's memorial service I was able to tell the family, the CA Secretary, and a few other croquet notables that we had good news. Only later did I learn from the Sussex Police that they reclaimed the two stolen books at about 2.00 pm, the very time that we were welcomed to Terriers Church by the minister who officiated at the service. A few of us had no doubt that this coincidence was set up by Alan from the other side!

Inspector McCarthy of the Sussex Police told me that the vendor looked as clean as a whistle. He was a dealer of good standing who claimed to have bought the books in all innocence for £5 each at a car boot sale. He was pleased to co-operate with the police as best he could, he refused Tremaine's payment, and expressed deep regrets for having been innocently involved in trading stolen property. Mr McCarthy suggested that it would be a fitting gesture to refund his £10 outlay and this I did. As readers may recall, Alan was CA Treasurer for all of 25 years. If he had been in post to draw a line under this story and record the total net liability, we might suppose that he would have been well satisfied. The ending of this story might have been even happier if effective action had been taken against eBay for failure to co-operate with an authorised law enforcement agency. But, as Mr McCarthy mused, life is too short. eBay are smart and police resources are already over-stretched.

Getting Crowther's work back to the CA office in Cheltenham from the police pound in Brighton proved to be tricky because the police wanted a signed receipt from someone with good credentials. But the chairman or secretary of the CA was obviously not going to make a special trip to Brighton just to provide an autograph. Eventually this impasse was overcome by a member of Sussex County CC at Southwick, Brighton, a retired policeman who still knew his way around the local police scene. And thence to Cheltenham, where Crowther's work was conveyed on 19 August by direction of a senior member of Southwick.

Just one loose end. The provenance of these two books will probably never be traced back to the artist with any certainty, but we have a hypothesis that might never have enjoyed wider currency if they had not gone walkabouts. When Alan Oldham received them from Margaret Payton, he learnt that they came from Barbara and Joan Chittenden of Compton CC, Eastbourne, not how they came into the Chittendens' possession. So the brief forewords I appended to the facsimiles I deposited with the CA office in 2004 noted that their origins were obscure. But now we have a good clue at least. On learning that the books had shown up on eBay, Roger Wood of Compton told me the circumstances in which Margaret Payton first brought the Chittenden gift to the notice of the club. In the early years of the last century Barbara Chittenden was very close to Nora, widow of the Rev George Frederick Handel Elvey, a past CA Chairman, and may well have received Crowther's work from the Elveys. But how they got into the Rev GFH's hands in the first place remains a mystery.

THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION REPORT FROM COUNCIL TO THE 2006 AGM

1. Personal

At the end of the December 2005 meeting of Council, Alan Oldham announced that he would miss the next one in March, his first absence for very many years, for a trip to watch a solar eclipse. Sadly, he died a few weeks after his return. He had been a Vice-President since his retirement, in 1992, after 25 years as Hon. Treasurer. He was also the CA Archivist and an active member of the Golf Croquet Committee. The Association was well represented at the service of thanksgiving for him and a donation of £100 was given to the British Heart Foundation. He is to be awarded the Council Medal posthumously for his exceptional service to the Association. Chris Williams has been proposed to replace him as Archivist, subject to confirmation by Council, but discussion about the role and procedure for proposing additional Vice-President(s) is scheduled before any are nominated.

John Beech, a former member of Council who led the Lawns Advisory Group, died in early September after a long illness.

Tony Fathers, a former chairman of the marketing committee, retired from Council during the year.

The Chairman represented the Association at the service of thanksgiving for the 80th Birthday of our Patron, the Queen.

2. Membership

There was concern about an apparent drop in the number of new individual associates in 2005, which prompted a review by the Marketing Committee, but paid up home membership at the end of July remained almost static at 1600. Encouragingly, there has been a 10% increase in the number of member clubs (from 122 to 137), resulting from pro-active work by the Office and Development Committee and the attraction of the Civil Liability Insurance. This was moved to new brokers, resulting in a significant saving in premiums.

After being unchanged in 2006, it was agreed to increase subscription rates for both individuals and clubs for 2007 in line with inflation, to ensure that the level of grants to clubs could be maintained.

The Association was represented at the opening of the new lawns at Letchworth and Royal Tunbridge Wells.

3. Constitution

Concern was raised about the personal liability of members of Council and Trustees, but the advice received in 1999 that the benefits of incorporation would be marginal was reconfirmed. However, it seems possible that the Association could become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation under the bill currently before parliament and the situation will be reviewed when that and its associated regulations are in place.

A change to the Objects of the Association has been proposed to regularise international activity and further changes to permit electronic voting have been drafted. Appeals procedures and the role of the Chairman of Council are also under discussion, following the eventually successful appeal by the Surbiton Club against the decision not to award the Golf Croquet Inter-Club Championship trophy after failure to agree a date for the final.

4. Administration

The role of the Administration Committee was reviewed and

resulted in an increased emphasis on IT provision, under the chairmanship of Dave Kibble.

After a period of parallel running, the rewritten database, including a receipts module, is now fully in place, and being increasingly integrated with the web site. There is now a members login area, where Associates can view, but not yet update, their own details. The directory is also available to members online and the printed copy is now produced directly from the database.

A financial system, Sage, is being purchased, initially for stand-alone use by the Treasurer, after which integration with the Office systems will be considered.

The documentation of office procedures is being reviewed and updated.

Whilst recognising the value of the "Nottingham List" as a means of communication, Council decided not to assume any responsibility for it, to avoid liability for its content.

5. Coaching

A new Association Croquet coaching manual was made available on the web site. A survey of coaches is being planned.

6. Development

Development grants have been made to East Dorset, Fylde, Auckland, Blewbury, Bowdon, Bransgore, Budleigh Salterton, Caversham, Chelmsford & Bentley, Chichester & Fishbourne, Eynsham and Reigate Priory, and offered to Sydenham and Sussex County. Grants or loans over £5,000 now need approval by the Management Committee.

Equipment provided out of the new club fund was sent or promised to 7 clubs: Bakewell, Charlton, Dogmersfield, Ilkley, Liverpool and the Universities of Southampton and York.

The committee have a group looking at the relationship between Federations and the CA.

Insufficient interest was shown to justify organising club conferences this year.

7. Equipment

Standards for ball colours have been specified. The MacRobertson Shield has been refurbished.

8. Golf Croquet

The tournament programme continues to grow and is being reviewed to try and minimise clashes with major association croquet events.

We have agreed to host the 2007 European Championship at Budleigh Salterton.

The Golf Croquet Committee have instigated a process for filming various croquet shots at very high speeds. It is hoped that this will lead to a better understanding of what actually happens in both Golf and Association Croquet and will much assist in the training of referees for both formats of the sport.

A review of the implications of the growth of Golf Croquet is proceeding.

9. Handicap

The Apps Memorial Bowl was awarded to William Gee, but there were no nominations for the Steel Bowl.

10. International

A policy about grants for potentially elite junior players was published, but plans for coaching them did not materialise due to illness.

A working party to review drugs policy was set up but has yet to report.

Proposals by the WCF for changes in their rules were considered and the issue of representation on its management committee discussed.

11. Laws

A laws quiz was written and made available on the web site and in the Gazette.

12. Marketing

Despite the lack of a press sponsor, it was decided to proceed with the National Garden Competition, which had 150 entries though with a 40% no-show rate. Feedback from clubs was generally positive, but the cost of advertising and the considerable effort required to organise the event means that it is unlikely to be repeated in this form.

A review of CA membership resulted in a recommendation for a recruitment bonus, which was endorsed by the Management Committee, provided that the bonus is paid to clubs rather than individuals.

The Open Championships at Cheltenham this year were sponsored by Mitsubishi Motors and are to be sponsored at Hurlingham next year by Lawpack.

A significant amount of publicity was generated by the Prescott affair and the Opens.

13. Publishing

Production and distribution of the Gazette have been without major problems this calendar year. Replacement of the Editor's PC should enable content to be converted to PDF for online publication. The website continues to be developed, with more content and the start of a useful members' area.

14. Selection

A team consisting of Keith Aiton, Mark Avery, Chris Clarke, Robert Fulford (captain), Jonathon Kirby and David Maugham has been selected to defend the MacRobertson Shield.

Selection criteria for international Golf Croquet events were introduced which require participation in a minimum of two qualifying events.

15. Tournament

The fixtures book was distributed in early January and a calendar of forthcoming events published on the web site. There is concern about the level of entries to some tournaments; in particular, the Women's Championship and Mixed Doubles continue to be very poorly supported.

The attempt to resurrect the National Schools' and Junior Championships with Hurlingham as the host club was unsuccessful, as the date chosen did not fit satisfactorily into the schools' calendar, although a number of schools had expressed an interest in participating. For next year attempts will be made to find a date acceptable to schools (and to a host club). A 50% discount in entry fees for juniors was introduced.

It was agreed to subsidise hospitality for visitors playing matches against the CA.

Selection Events

Chairman's Salver

7th - 10th September, Hunstanton

Report by Ian Burridge

Eight are horrible as you stand around waiting for the event to start, will you be the miserable soul on 0/4 wanting to go home rather than play 3 more days of croquet at dinner on the first night, or will you be one of the bouncy lively ones near the top raring to go the next morning.

The lawns had good quality grass, were easy paced and the hoops were easy without being trivial and tended not to get much easier as each day progressed, the boundaries were locally poor in places, but fine for shooting down. All those who had been before thought that they had improved since their previous visit, a tribute to the work of groundsman Jeff Race.

Holder Jeff Dawson quickly dispatched of Tony Le Moignan despite failing 2-back on his first break only for Tony to stick in hoop one and spend the rest of the game looking as if he has just remembered why he failed to complete the last eight he played in. Nobody had predicted that Chris Williams (Statto) would win and rightly so given his shocking display of form in his six error victory over Chris Patmore who didn't look like he could hit a barn door. Tudor took the first all Welsh clash against Burridge (in this the first Chairmans with 3 Welshmen since 1984) in a reasonable quality game. David Goacher (Goat), in his 20th consecutive eight, set his stall out for the week when pegged down against favourite Ian Lines, one break all after 2 and a half hours.

Statto understandably hadn't been watching but if he had done he might have avoided falling down the same cliff as Lines had against Goacher on the west boundary of lawn one to gift Burridge his first win in round two. This and the other round two games hadn't even started when Tudor beat Patmore with the first triple of the tournament, making Burridge feel both old and slow. Le Moignan dispatched the Goat who was by now beginning to look quite out of form and Dawson completed a TP to beat Lines who didn't take croquet.

Burridge picked up his first break for the second consecutive game with a corner two cannon for hoop 1 and for once made a standard triple look easy to dispatch Le Moignan. Unbeaten Tudor and Dawson clashed and it started brilliantly with a Dawson TPO on turn 4. Sam got himself a four foot angled 45 degree angled jump at hoop 1, his trademark shot but on this occasion he failed. The game then degenerated slightly with Sam having one further turn of croquet before Jeff finally finished him off to take the outright lead on 3/3. Lines beat Patmore in a slightly scrappy affair and Goacher was last to finish again by some time; winning what to be fair was a relatively interesting tactical affair with Williams +4.

Tudor was again the lucky person able to start without waiting for the Goat but this time he was dispatched in quick time by Le Moignan. Lines, the most prolific peeler of those playing, completed his first against Statto. Burridge had Dawson on toast needing to play a 4 ball break from hoop 1 to the peg to win but came to grief at four-back and when he failed to finish again after another Dawson error Jeff wrapped up the game to take a commanding lead in the event on 4/4. Goacher improved slightly to beat Patmore but still didn't look like a likely winner.

Patmore achieved his 5th loss of the day at the tournament meal (held early as this was the only day Burridge wasn't commuting) in the first game of spoof and Jeff proved that he could be beaten at something in the next.

Tudor beat Lines with a 6th turn TP after an uncharacteristic breakdown by Lines having hit the lift. Le Moignan kept up his record of winning every game in which he scored a point whilst making sure that Williams did not take croquet for the second game running. True to his word of the night before Burridge ensured that Goacher was not last to finish for the first time gifting him two breaks as his hoop stroke appeared to disintegrate. Dawson and Patmore both retained their 100% records as Jeff won his third Riggalled game of the event, although Patmore showed some form that suggested he would soon break his duck.



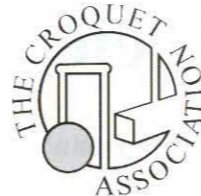
Chairman's Salver Competitors L to R Tony Le Moignan, Chris Patmore, Ian Burridge, Chris Williams, David Goacher, Ian Lines, Jeff Dawson, Sam Tudor.

Burridge confirmed his total loss of confidence with an abysmal performance against Lines who completed his second TP, despite looking error prone himself. Only Tudor could now be considered to be playing well, nobody else looked likely to play an errorless game. Dawson lost his 100% record to Williams. The rest of the players were getting used to watching Goacher and his occasionally bizarre shot selection and he didn't disappoint at the end of his TPO against Tudor. He opted to play a two yard peg out as a split shot and it duly missed, after only about 30 seconds thought he then rushed partner to the east boundary and laid up a yard apart. Sam picked up his hoop 1 ball took the forgotten contact and finished. Patmore looked like winning his first game but his rush to peg from the south boundary hit rover and the game was pegged down with Le Moignan having a six yarder, which he chose not to take, with his hoop 1 ball with partner on 4-back.

Tudor had already got more than a round ahead again with a 5th turn 26tp demolition of Williams. Once a lawn was available Burridge joined him in the clubhouse having beaten Patmore +26. Lines finished another triple against Le Moignan who didn't take croquet. Which left us watching Goacher again who as usual didn't disappoint. Finishing a TP with a straight rover peel against Dawson he rushed to an unpeelable angle about a foot from the hoop. He adopted a bizarre yoga position to line up the peel and played a shot where the actual aim will remain a mystery to

The Croquet Association

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everyone - suffice to say his next stroke was to play away without a peel having been achieved. Dawson missed the ball in the hoop horrendously allowing Goacher to make rover but Dawson hit his last shot before probably the worst hoop stroke of the tournament allowed Goacher to wrap the game up.

The second series started with a return match, if this is possible given that it wasn't spotted in round 1, with the four Oxbridge Physicists against the others. They had comprehensively won 3-0 with one pegged down in the first series and a repeat scoreline certainly looked on the cards at the outset. The match got off to a peach of a start for the rest, Patmore appeared to place his first ball in corner 3 and Statto traditionally put his ball into corner 1 only for Patmore to walk to third corner place his ball on the corner spot and played his 6" rush towards hoop 2 but somewhat predictably failed hoop one having rolled up. Tudor responded to the pressure of favouritism well with a +3tp victory after Burrridge had failed a tricky penult and peg finish, getting caught out by the same hill that had foiled Goacher's TP in the previous round. Lines looked like completing another robotic TP against Goacher but came to grief at Penult before eventually taking the game an hour or so later. Dawson won a good quality game with Le Moignan +17. Patmore took his game with Williams with a TP after Williams had failed his own. Another victory for the physicists.

Round 9 started with the smell of sewage wafting across the town presumably something to do with the 20-year high tide. Jeff played an errorless game, hitting a lift to beat Tudor +17tp. Burrridge again ensured that Goat wasn't last to finish going down 26tp, no croquet in 90 minutes. Le Moignan won with a TP against Williams after the latter had failed his own and Lines made it four TPs in the round for the first time against Patmore.

Stabber failed his trademark shot again 3rd turn against Lines but after the resulting seven yarder was missed Sam won two turns later. Burrridge shut out Le Moignan again but couldn't complete his second standard TP of the event. Goacher equalled Edgar Jackson's record of 87 wins in the Chairman's Salver with his TP against Williams and Dawson beat Patmore +2TP after Chris had failed to peg out through rover at the end of his own triple.

Round 11 saw the four contenders play the non-contenders. Williams suffered his 4th no croquet loss of the event to

										no.wins		
1	Jeff Dawson	+26tp -25	+12tpo +17tp	-23 +26tp	+26 +17	+3 +26tp	+4 +2tp	-25 +26tp		11		
2	Ian Lines	-26tp +25		-20tp -26tp	+13 +17	+26tp +26tp	+20tp +4	+15 +13tp	+26tp +18	11		
3	Sam Tudor		-12tpo -17tp	+20tp +26tp		+14 +26tp	-26tp +3otp	+13 +3tp	+26tp -19	+26tp +15	10	
4	David Goacher	+23 -26tp		-13 -17	-14 -26tp		-25 +4	+24tp +26tp	+12tp -11tp	+4 +18tp	7	
5	Tony Le Moignan	-26 -17		-26tp -26tp	+26tp -3otp	+25 -4		-26tp -26	+2 +17	+26 +10tp	6	
6	Ian Burrridge	-3 -26tp		-20tp -4	-13 -3tp		-24tp -26tp	+26tp +26		+26 -17	+25 +16tp	5
7	Chris Patmore	-4 -2tp		-15 -13tp	-26tp +19		-12tp +11tp	-2 -17	-26 +17		-16 +7tp	4
8	Chris Williams	+25 -26tp		-26tp -18	-26tp -15		-4 -18tp	-26 -10tp	-25 -16tp	+16 -7tp		2

Dawson. Lines sent his Irish peel at rover off the lawn against Burrridge, but a rover and rover triple failure, far worse than any of Goacher's that had previously been so gleefully criticised, gifted the game back to Lines. Le Moignan put up a better showing for the also-rans with a TPO against Tudor, a game he looked like winning when Sam shot at and duly missed wired balls in corner one from corner three when he was for hoop six. However he refused to play a makeable sweep shot after penult and played away, Tudor hit the resulting 13 yarder and finished from hoop 2. It was Patmore who finally disposed of one of the contenders with a TP after Goacher had missed a three-yarder to follow on from his missed five-yarder that had conceded the first break.

Dawson employed the same trick as he had against Williams in the previous round against Burrridge, failing to make his diagonal spread to ensure that he only had a standard TP to do to win +26tp. Tudor beat Goacher +26tp despite sticking in hoop one at the first attempt.

Meanwhile Lines was beating Williams and Le Moignan beat Patmore +17 before completing the double over him with the resumption of their pegged down game which he won +2. Goacher and Lines also managed to complete their game from round one game with Goacher taking no further croquet.

Standings after 12 rounds

Dawson	10
Tudor, Lines	9
Goacher, Le Moignan	6

Burrridge	4
Patmore, Williams	2

The tension started to creep in during round 13, Tudor missed a big double in the opening, broke down at two back on his first break and when Patmore failed his TP Tudor missed nine, twenty five, twenty and twelve yarders before Patmore wrapped the game up. Dawson Lines saw Jeff stick in hoop one turn five and hoop two on turn seven after Lines had joined up. Lines uncharacteristically finished in three turns only attempting the first peel straight when Jeff asked what happened to the TP Ian's reply was "he sort of bottled it". Burrridge completed his second TP against Williams and Goacher made sure that Le Moignan had no hope of getting his afternoon flight with a +4 victory finally surpassing Jackson's record at the third attempt to prolonged applause.

The final round saw Dawson play his best turn of the event to complete a delayed TP against Goacher and guarantee at least a play-off. Tudor put the ball going to hoop 3 off in a Hogan roll (Hogan Drive?) but in a very poor game eventually beat Williams. Patmore and Burrridge produced an equally forgettable game that Patmore won convincingly in the end. Lines was back to his robotic best with a no croquet +26tp against Le Moignan to force a play-off.

Dawson, Lines	11
Tudor	10
Goacher	7
Le Moignan	6
Burrridge	5

Patmore 4
Williams 2
(Career Chairman's Salver wins Goacher 88, Jackson 87, Dawson 83, Cordingley 73)

This play-off ensured that those who turned up to watch at lunchtime got something to see. It was far from a classic although after some in and out play in the opening Dawson won with another TP, to become only the second person to successfully defend the Salver, the other being our old friend the Goat.

The tournament ended with the top four ranked in the top 20 in the world and it is fair to say that they were a different class to the other four competitors. It was nine years since I had last played an eight and I certainly hadn't changed much, an average of an error a game, good shooting and a poor peeling record pretty much summed up my play a decade ago and it was no different this time. Now however this form gets you in the bottom half of the Chairman's Salver rather than the President's Cup.

Finally a thank you to all the members at the Hunstanton club who with their catering and support helped make this an enjoyable event for all the players.

**The Spencer Ell Cup
6th - 10th September, Nailsea**
Report by Phil Cordingley

Day 1

Conditions were bright at first, clouding over towards late afternoon/early evening. Lawns hard & fastish (11.2 Plummers, I am told). Hoops firm and narrow with variable approaches, so plenty of early sticking. All in all, a hard but invariably fair test. Play finished comfortably by 18:30. The event got off to an early managerial cock up when I told those that asked that play started at nine thirty, when in fact the conditions say ten. Thus it was that David Harrison-Wood's and Roger Jenkins' first round games started half an hour after everyone else, a cardinal error from which many managers have failed to recover. Amazingly, these were in fact the first two games to finish. Rather be lucky than good, as I always say. Samir Patel set the early pace, winning his first two games by narrow margins and in far from clinical fashion, but nonetheless both with TPs. In the final round of the day he faced his fellow Eights debutante Richard Dickson, who was winless thus far. Not surprisingly Samir prevailed to remain undefeated. David Magee joined him on 3/3, winning by



Richard Dickson, David Magee, Sarah Burrow, Gerry Guest, David Harrison-Wood, Samir Patel, Phil Cordingley, Roger Jenkins.

PLAYER	Dickson	Jenkins	Cordingley	Magee	Patel	Guest	H'son-Wood	Burrow	Pos.
Dickson		+26 +15	-13 -6	-7 +6	-12 +14tp	+17tp +18	-24 +10		2=
Jenkins	-26 -15		+20 -20	-15 -2	-6 -17	+15 -24	-24tp -11	+15 +13	7=
Cordingley	+13 +6	-20 +20		-4 +10	-18 -7	+20 +15	-26tp +4	-5 +10	2=
Magee	+7 -6	+15 +2	+4 -10		+8 -18	+4 +2	-10 -3	+8 +11	2=
Patel	+12 -14tp	+6 +17	+18 +7	-8 +18		-22 -4	+5tp +20	+26 +7	1
Guest	-17tp -18	-15 +24	-20 -15	-4 -2	+22 +4		+14 -25	+8tp +13	6
H'son-Wood	+24 -10	+24tp +11	+26tp -4	+10 +3	-5tp -20	-14 +25		+4 -16	5
Burrow	-15 -13	+5 -10	-8 -11	-26 -7	-8tp -13	-4 +16	+5 -12	-5 +12	7=

increasingly comfortable margins. Jerry Guest failed to join these two by losing to Roger Jenkins in the final round. Roger himself produced the luckiest shot of the day from the vicinity of hoop 4 he ran 6 (his hoop) when shooting at two balls a yard to the side. David Harrison-Wood got off the mark in the last round with a tidy TP. This report brought to you courtesy of the kind, albeit unknowing, cooperation of the chap in Avening Close with the unsecured wireless network.

Day 2

Round four saw the clashes of both the Titans (Magee and Patel, both undefeated) and the Rabbits (Burrow and Dickson, both winless). Of the Titans, David prevailed to become the first outright leader. Of the Rabbits, Richard got off the mark, despite failing to peg out from three yards by electing to play a roll. David Harrison-Wood completed his second consecutive TP with the aid of a rush peel of 4b from just off the east boundary level

with the peg. In round 5 David Magee maintained his unbeaten record to 5/5 with an attritional win against Jerry Guest, while Samir got back to winning ways with a quick win over Phil Cordingley, while David Harrison-Wood completed his third consecutive win following two straight losses. Sarah Burrow got out of the unenviable position of being the only winless player by beating Roger Jenkins. In round 6 the battle of the Davids saw Harrison-Wood hand David Magee his first defeat, to the gratitude of the rest of the field. Patel was thus able to join him at the top of the leader board on 5/6 by struggling home against Roger Jenkins, after Roger had helped by sticking in rover with the second ball. Richard Dickson showed his nerves, if any, had dissipated by beating Jerry with a TP. In the worst game of the tournament to date, Phil Cordingley eventually overcame Sarah Burrow in near darkness by taking off to corner 2, hitting hoop 6 (his hoop) but sitting in front of it. With partner for the peg, he ran hoop six, hit the double in corner 2 and finished. Still all to play for, for most.

Day 3

Conditions continued to get more difficult as Day 3 dawned with not a cloud in the sky. Richard Dickson and Jerry Guest won quickly, the latter over joint leader Samir Patel. Phil Cordingley looked well set to hand David Magee his second defeat when for peg and 3 back against 1 and ball box, but a succession of 25+ yard roquets by David ended when from the last he played an increasingly controlled break to win by four. The final game, also a three ball ending, span out for four hours when Sarah Burrow finally hit and finished when for peg alone after David Harrison-Wood had clanged penult. After lunch Phil beat Roger quickly, and David Harrison-Wood beat Jerry easily. Samir lost his second game in a row, this time to back marker Sarah Burrow, but temporarily at any rate lost no ground to David Magee as his epic with Richard Dickson was pegged down. In round 9, Samir stopped the rot by beating Phil after being potentially a break away from defeat, not in the least due to good shooting, having hit on the fourth turn and two lifts. David Magee continued to keep the pressure on by beating Sarah Burrow. Jerry Guest beat Roger Jenkins to consign the latter to a share of last place, and David Harrison-Wood and Richard Dickson pegged down, with Richard well ahead.

Day 4

Top five still mathematically in contention, with Samir in the box seat with

9/12, David Magee lurking with 7/10 with two pegged down, and Richard Dickson on 8/12 after seven consecutive wins. Undefeated today were Cordingley & Dickson, while Burrow, Guest and Magee failed to register a win.

Day 5

Final day, and in the morning Phil Cordingley beat Richard Dickson in a hard fought battle, but both were consigned to the also-rans as Samir Patel beat David Harrison-Wood reasonably easily. David Magee eventually prevailed over Roger Jenkins in a four and a half hour pegged out epic. Thus Samir and David Magee were now the sole contenders, with David two wins behind but with two pegged down games in hand. Thus David potentially having four games still to complete from two thirty in the afternoon. The spectre of this nightmare scenario receded somewhat when David lost to Phil in round fourteen, leaving Samir with his fate in his own hands playing Jerry Guest. Having pegged Jerry out, Samir embarked upon a potentially Cup winning two ball break from 2 back, only to clang penult, also Jerry's hoop. Needless to say, Jerry hit and finished, leaving David Magee with the two pegged down games to win to force a play off. In the first, he was penult alone against David Harrison-Wood's peg and rover, but with a lift. The lift at the peg ball was missed and Harrison-Wood had a leave. This shot was also missed, and Harrison-Wood finished, thus sealing Samir's victory. David Magee eventually finished his final pegged-down game with a +2 win over Jerry Guest at about 7.25 this evening. Just as well he was not in a play-off against Samir as looked possible earlier in the day!!!

**Treasurer's Tankard
6th - 10th September, Surbiton**
Report by George Noble

1 Nick Butler		+17 +5	+16 +10	+21 +1T	-16 -5	+17 +4	+21 +8	+17 +15	12	1
2 Nelson Morrow	-17 -5		-4 +26	+9 +6	+8 -5	+17 +16	+5 +13	+2 +7	10	2
3 Andy Davies	-16 -10	+4 -26		+22 +14	+22 +8	-3 +2	-11 -8	-9 +4T	7	3
4 Nick Harris	-21 -1T	-9 -6	-22 -14		+4 +26	+2 +3T	-7 +14	np +17	6	4=
5 Ben Ashwell	+16 +5	-8 +5	-22 -8	-4 -26		+5 -26	-12 +5	+5 -1	6	4=
6 Dave Trimmer	-17 -4	-17 -16	+3 -2	-2 -3T	-5 +26		+4 +10	+8 +10	6	4=
7 Paul Smith	-21 -8	-5 -13	+11 +8	+7 -14	+12 -5	-4 -10		+13 -2	5	7
8 Martin Murray	-17 -15	-2 -7	+9 -4T	np -17	-5 +1	-8 -10	-13 +2		3	8

Day 1

The harvest moon was high over the lawns at Surbiton at 20.15 when Nick Harris and Martin Murray decided that their game should be pegged down and put the dwindling crowd out of its serious misery. All the players must have been enjoying themselves, given the amount of time they spent on the lawns, but it was not immediately obvious why that should have been so. The lawns were a conducive 11.70 Plummers and the hoops firm but fair: yet only Nelson got anywhere near a successful TP and that bit the dust at rover. Only Nelson is unbeaten..... and they made me miss the first half of the footie.

Day 2

There was a partial eclipse of the harvest moon this evening. In view of the consequent reduction in light intensity, it was necessary to peg down Nick Harris's evening game at 20.10 rather than 20.15 as yesterday. Nelson Morrow lost a game today so he now tied for

first place with Nick Butler: five wins each.

Day 3

Paul Smith and I had half a plan to go to the world premier on Thursday evening of an opera about the leader of Libya, but the measured pace of the games meant that we were unable to do so. Judging by the reviews, we may have had a lucky escape. Further gratitude to the players today who responded to the imposition of time limits by completing all the scheduled games by moonrise. The pegged down Smith/Harris game will be resumed at 09.00 tomorrow and pegged down again at 10.15.

Day 4

Games all finished at 19.20 to much relief. Nick Harris now obviously content. Nelson Morrow and Nick Butler tied on 10 wins each and play each other in the final round. A play-off cannot be contemplated because of the clash with the televised Hammers v Villa game.

The pegged down Smith/Harris game resumed at 09.00 and was over in 10 minutes.

Day 5

None of that tripling nonsense here. Nick Butler won what was effectively a final in round 14. He and Nelson had started the final day on 10 wins each but Nelson lost to Ben Ashwell, who had drafted in a supporter,

and Nick just beat Nick (+1T) so that Nelson had to beat Nick B in the final round to force a play-off (which would have been infeasible). Some good, golf croquet style, play for Nick B was, sadly, too much for Nelson. The best example was when Nelson set a reverse spread and Nick B ran 1 from A baulk and then hit the balls on the west boundary.

When later asked about time limits, Martin Murray adds: "A time limit of 3.25 hours was applied to all games in the second round, after a game was pegged down on each of the first two days. The longest finished game had been 4.75 hours. The standard of play improved (marginally) in the second round, and the speed of play increased dramatically, so that only three (or thereabouts) games went to time, even though, as I said, a remarkably high proportion were close."

George Noble: "The time limits of 3.25 hours were imposed after the first round of seven games. Yes - I know that it would not have enabled us to complete three rounds in a day, if too many went to time, but it did curtail the 4/5 hour games which held up everyone else. And it meant that we finished at tea time on Sunday."

**Selectors' Weekend
8th - 10th September, Sidmouth
Sun, Sand, Sea, Wind oh and some
Croquet or CHRIS DANIELS vs. The
BIRDS**

Report by David Mooney

This year's Selectors', at Sidmouth, was dominated by the playing conditions.

Though they had a good covering of grass, the club's four lawns were like concrete. Hoops were set very firmly and they were extremely difficult to run. The wind was also a factor, causing hitting-in also to be difficult. Consequently play was very fragmented and there were no successful TPs over the three days. Indeed, a nine-hoop break was as difficult as a TP in normal conditions. Most games lasted over two hours and eight went to the three-hour time limit.

The touch players fared better than the 'Heavy Hitters'. The revelation of the tournament was Eugene Chang. Despite being one of the highest handicapped players in the tournament, playing off 2.5, he beat all four of the tournament's minus players; his main attribute was the capability of finishing a break under control.

Sidmouth is a delightful regency-style

seaside resort and this thriving club provides a warm welcome. However, one penalty of playing at a seaside resort is the hitchcockian intervention of wildlife. When three very large seagulls landed on a lawn which Chris Daniels (doing acceptable impression of Tippi Hedren) thought was his for the remainder of the break he tried to shoo them away, but all three turned on him and chased him away!

The event was played as an all-play-all single block of ten. After two days Kevin Carter led the field, with six from seven, along with Eugene on 5/6 with one pegged down game, which he was losing heavily. On Sunday morning these two met and both played untidily, but Eugene scraped home +3. Despite Eugene then losing his pegged down game he was favourite, since he had to win his final game against David Mooney, or if Kevin lost to Gary Bennett it would be a multiple tie which Eugene would win under the tie-break rules.

Both games were scheduled for the show lawn, 1, which was the fastest and also had some 'interesting' hoop approaches, with an estimated lawn speed of 10 Plummers. A small but appreciative crowd of Sidmouth members turned out to watch. When Gary went to 4-back and peg that game seemed all but over, but Kevin clawed back and pegged-out Gary. In the ensuing 2 vs. 1 tussle Gary hit in once, but failed to capitalise on the chance and Kevin finished. Meanwhile David played his best game of the weekend to comfortably beat Eugene.

So, Kevin won the Ranelagh-Weightman Cup (at his fifteenth attempt!). Eugene's second place was shared with Chris Daniels, David Mooney and a courageous Cliff Jones, who was struggling to overcome health problems.



Iris Dwerryhouse, the President of the Sidmouth club, presenting the Ranelagh-Weightman Cup to Kevin Carter, winner of the Selectors' Weekend.

What was good about this tournament was the relaxed atmosphere with all the players attending the excellent Saturday night dinner at the Bedford hotel and the quality of the venue More CA tournaments at Sidmouth please.

Results

- 1 **Kevin Carter** 7 wins / 9
- 2= Eugene Chang, Chris Daniels, Cliff Jones, David Mooney 6 / 9
- 6= Gary Bennett, Paul Castell 5 / 9
- 8 Tom Weston 3 / 9
- 9 Daniel Mills 1 / 9
- 10 Julie Hudson 0 / 9

**Musk Cup 2006
Golf Croquet Selectors' Event
26th - 27th September, Compton
Report by Chris Sheen**

As would be expected of 8 of the top golf croquet players a very competitive and demanding weekend was spent at Compton on 26th & 27th September. In mixed weather on Saturday and a fine warm Sunday, the tournament was played in a block, with everyone playing each other the best of three games. Without a time limit this could have been a manager's nightmare and, even with 50% of the games going to the decider, the players managed to (almost) complete the block!

The winner, John Spiers, showed terrific concentration and maintained his form throughout the weekend winning 6 of his 7 games. David Openshaw tied with Ivor Brand with three and a half wins each (being one game all in their match) and the remainder all achieved three wins! Although John was clear and had won the trophy and cash before the final round, second place and all the other positions were in doubt and would have been different had the Openshaw/Brand match been completed.

The standard of play was of high-quality and would have graced most tournaments. There were no easy matches and good fun was had by all. Thanks are due to Compton club who made us most welcome. For the record the full result, as declared, was as follows:
1. John Spiers
2= David Openshaw/Ivor Brand
4th Tom King
5th Richard Thompson
6th Chris Sheen 7th David Hopkins
8th Nelson Morrow

Christmas Cards

Croquet Christmas cards are now available from the CA Shop. They are A5 size (Approx 21 x 15 cms), and have the simple message 'Merry Christmas' inside. 3 pictures as below (in colour), each pack contains an assortment, or you can get all one picture if you prefer to specify.



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JOHN PRESCOTT, EAT YOUR HEART OUT: GARDEN CROQUET TO DIE FOR.

By Peter Dorke

When, over a decade ago, Fred Smith persuaded the Longmynd Hotel to let him set up the Church Stretton Croquet Club on their rather awful lawn, his ambition was for a modest one lawn club of about 25 members. He achieved this quite quickly and - though members came and went - the club prospered and gave enormous pleasure to players of a wide range of enthusiasm and skill. Fees stayed low, equipment was basic, the club did not affiliate to the CA. There was not much point in doing so, as competitive croquet - apart from internal ladders and knockouts - was confined to the annual duel with Shrewsbury CC, the A49 Challenge. A very few members joined the CA and went to tournaments. There was, however a strong social side and it became a very happy place to play croquet - or just sit and watch croquet: 25 players to one lawn means very precise organisation and plenty of opportunity to practise spectating.



murder to roll, suicide to try to run a hoop from more than six inches; three hoop breaks a major achievement. But what a setting: a lovely house with that graceful air of decay that no amount of money can fake. Must have stood there for 500 years. And outlayers can look at the view across to Wenlock Edge, if they can't bear to watch the hilarious frustrations of their opponents.

When the Church Stretton members get their new lawns, they will cherish the memory of these pleasant evenings at Acton Scott. You don't have to be Deputy Prime Minister to enjoy a good game of garden croquet.

THE CHOCOLATE CROQUET CONNECTION.

By Carter Moody

I discovered the link between chocolate and croquet on my last visit to Australia when I met a guest at my granddaughter's wedding who also played croquet having learnt initially at the MacRobertson High School for Girls in Melbourne. The school was built in 1933, with part of the £100,000 donated by Sir Macpherson Robertson to the State of Victoria as part its Centenary Celebrations. She told me he was known as the Chocolate King of Australia, and a little research unveiled the following about Sir MacPherson Robertson, who condensed his two names to MacRobertson when creating his confectionary empire. The name remained for many of his enterprises. Known by his acquaintances as Mac, he became one of Australia's greatest entrepreneurs and philanthropists.

Macpherson Robertson was born in Ballarat, N.S.W. in 1860, the son of a carpenter. From the age of 9, Mac was working to support the family and trying to get schooling at the same time. Eventually schooling was abandoned and he was apprenticed to a confectioner in the Fitzroy suburb of Melbourne. By the age of 19 he had set up a sweet factory in his mother's bathroom, working there four days a week, and selling the products at the weekends. The company was originally called the MacRobertson Steam Confectionary Company, later to become MacRobertson Chocolates. A combination of good products and clever marketing resulted in him dominating the confectionery business in Australia. By this time he was known as 'The Chocolate King' Some of the

popular lines, such as Freddo Frog and Cherry Ripe still remain on sale today. By 1925 he employed 2500 workers, in a number of factories, all painted white, in Fitzroy, a suburb of Melbourne. The area became known as "White City". Mac often used to dress in a white suit and frequently travelled in a sulky drawn by two white ponies. He was obsessed with keeping fit both physically and mentally. For the former he punched a boxing speed ball daily and for the latter he chose croquet for the strategy required. He was a keen player and ardent supporter of the game. At his best he played off a handicap -3 and wasted no time around the courts. Between the two world wars his two private lawns at Fairfield were always a happy meeting place for many enthusiastic players living in and around Melbourne He was member of the Melbourne, Brighton and Warleigh clubs. After World War One he identified the cinema as a new outlet for confectionary and employed ex-servicemen to take up concessions. Many of them had no idea of running a business and he soon realised he would have to train them and his other concessionaires in Business Management.

Appreciating the value of the thinking sport of croquet, he encouraged them all to play the game whenever they were free. Croquet provided a wonderful teaching aid in clear thinking, self discipline, and forward thinking. Eventually Mac had more than enough of his ex servicemen to run tournaments.

He was a caring employer and a great philanthropist. In 2004 it was estimated that he had donated the then current equivalent of 28,000,000 Australian dollars to the country. In 1925 he sponsored the MacRobertson International Croquet Shield for matches played between England and Australia. They were joined by New Zealand in 1930 and in 1935 the three countries competed in the first Triangular Contest. In 1993 the U.S.A. competed for the first time. In 1979, England became known as Great Britain and Ireland and in 1996 the name was changed again to Great Britain. The first series was played in England in 1925 with Test venues at Roehampton, Cheltenham and Southwick. In



*Jumping Jehoshaphat, just look at Mac,
He's just got in with a long shot with Black,
No wonder he skips,
For look at his clips,
Blue is a rover and Black for four back.*

2003 the series was played in America and Great Britain won the shield for the fifth consecutive time. Robert Fulford is the only player to have played in five winning teams. The 2006 International Tournament will be played in Australia

The Shield is made of Australian Oak, with a silver shield as the centre piece. On the shield is a pair of crossed mallets, hoops, a set of balls and the centre peg. At the base of the shield are the crossed flags of Australia and England. The shield is surrounded by crossed oak leaves, also in silver and then by silver discs in which the names of the successful winners are inscribed.

In 1927 Mac co-founded MacRobertson - Miller Aviation Company. In 1929-30 He sponsored an Antarctic Research Expedition for which Sir Douglas Mawson named MacRobertson Land on Antarctica after him. He was knighted in 1932 and appointed K.B.E. in 1935. In 1933 he donated £1000,000 pounds to State of Victoria for the Centenary Celebrations which helped to build the Girls High School, the MacRobertson Bridge

over the river Yarra, the MacRobertson Fountain behind The Shrine of Remembrance and a Herbarium in the Melbourne Botanical Gardens He also sponsored a Centenary Air Race from London to Melbourne

He died in 1945 at the age of 85 a happy man and was without a doubt Australia's greatest entrepreneur and philanthropist. In the croquet world his name will always be remembered internationally and he is one of fourteen nominations in 2006 for the World Croquet Federation Hall of Fame. In 1997, Jill Robertson, no relation, moved into an apartment in one of his converted chocolate factories. Intrigued by his flamboyant signature still intact on the front of the building, she researched his life and in 2004, her book, 'The Chocolate King' was published by Lothian Books of South Melbourne. To date I have been unable buy this book in the U.K. so have a good reason for another trip to Oz.

All England Golf Croquet Handicap Competition 2006

Report by Freda Vitty

The All England Golf Croquet Competition, which started in May with heats in home clubs, reached its conclusion on the weekend of 23rd/24th September. In glorious sunshine, at East Dorset Croquet club, seventeen qualifiers from all over England (and Wales) met to play the finals.

Saturday saw block play and on Sunday places 1 to 17 were decided by playoffs. The final, best of three 13 point games was won by Bob Donald from

Budleigh Salterton, who beat Andy Kennedy from Letchworth 7 - 4, 7 - 4.

Although I was unable to attend (playing elsewhere), feedback tells me that it was a most enjoyable weekend, admirably hosted by East Dorset, played in a friendly and sporting manner.

As East Dorset had been unable to provide a manager/referee, a fellow club member of mine, Eugene Brady, who was accompanying his playing wife, ran the final on my behalf. I am told he managed the two days brilliantly and contributed greatly to a successful competition. Many thanks, Eugene and congratulations to the winner, Bob Donald.



Andy Kennedy, Bob Donald and Eugene Brady

Tournament Round-up

Centre Stage final

Report by Rosemary Longbottom
 Ten players from as far afield as Yorkshire and Bath gathered at Northampton Croquet Club on 10 September to play the final of the Centre Stage Golf Croquet competition. The weather was hot and sunny after a very foggy journey for most of the players.

Many thanks go to the Northampton CC for making the contestants welcome. The event was expertly managed by Mr Pat Wright.

The competition was played in two blocks of five with the winners of each block playing the second placed from the opposite block.

The semi-final results saw winner of block 1, John Bee of Watford (Cassibury), playing Richard Keighley of Leighton Linslade. Richard won 7:4. The winner of block 2, Derek Blow of Southwell, played Don Martin, also of Southwell, and won 7:5.

The final between Richard and Derek proved to be a hard fought game with Richard Keighley winning 7:4.

Pat Wright presented Richard with the Centre Stage Egg Cup trophy donated by Syd Jones of Croquet for Leisure and small memento trophies were given to winner and runner up.



Manager Pat Wright and winner of the Centre Stage final Richard Keighley



Tompkinson Shield, Edgbaston - The competitors, shown from left to right, were: Andrew Gregory (Manager and RoT), Mike Hammelev, Paul Salisbury, Daniel Mills, Gary Bennett, Nigel Polhill, Kevin Carter, Martin G-B, Ian Parkinson, Jonathan Lamb, Ken Jones, Peter Dorke, Ken Cooper, Bill Sidebottom and Paul Swaffield.

Tompkinson Shield - Edgbaston 19-20 August 2006

Report by Andrew Gregory

Martin Granger Brown retained the Tompkinson Shield, being unbeaten for the second year running.

Following torrential rain on Friday, the lawns started a bit squidgy, but dried quickly to an easy pace. We were fortunate to have very little rain over the weekend.

The tournament was restricted to handicaps between -1/2 and 3. This seemed a popular idea, as the tournament was over-subscribed. Most games were competitive, and indeed of the four minus players, only Kevin Carter was in contention at the end of Saturday.

He faced Paul Swaffield on Sunday morning. Paul, emboldened by two triple peels on Saturday, tried a TPO, but was fatally hampered after 1-back. So the key game on Sunday afternoon was Carter v Granger Brown. I missed the opening, but I saw Martin's clip on 2-back with Kevin going round to 4-back. Kevin attempted a diagonal spread, but failed the wiring and left a target of ball by peg and his own two balls. Martin duly punished this, and made two hoops with the forward ball and a strong leave. Kevin took an aggressive shot, leaving Martin an easy break, which he took peellessly to the peg. Kevin missed, Martin finished. Meanwhile, the only other player with one loss was Bill Sidebottom, but he lost to Ian Parkinson (who gained the prize for

most brownie points). This left Martin a clear winner. Martin was steady and solid as ever - only Daniel Mills scored more than 9 points against him.

It was good to see some players new to Edgbaston, including Jonathan Lamb from Montevideo. Even better to see some old faces, especially Peter Dorke returning to tournament play after many (20?) years. Sadly he was in competition for the Wooden Spoon, with the key game being against Ken Jones. Ken pegged out Peter with Peter's other clip was on 4-back, Ken's on 3. For reasons of space, and tact, I will not give the ball-by-ball commentary, but Ken won by 2.

Northampton Handicap September 30/October 1 2006

Report by James Skelton

It was late one night when Lionel Irang to say he was double booked, having 'forgotten' his son's wedding, and asked if I could run a tournament for him? I've never run a tournament and thought I must be the last one on his list and he was desperate... then it twigged... it was my wife he was after! ...he really needed someone to cook two feasts fit for the visiting athletes. Anybody could run a croquet tournament but something to replace his 'sausage casserole' was much more important.

By the time players had dropped out, dropped in and been roped in there were 12

lined up at the start. Some of the visitors had a bit of trouble with the lawns saying that they were 'too flat' but they soon got used to leaning to one side before hitting the ball.



Neil Chalmers, winner at Northampton

There were some close games on Saturday - Terrey Sparks' patience paid off and he beat Rex Hale +2, but James Skelton just failed to beat Derek Buxton after catching up with two good breaks and pegging one ball off. Derek hit in from corner four to finish +1. By the end of the first day Neil Chalmers had calmly won all his three games, with four other people winning two. Apart from one heavy shower the weather had held fine.

Sunday saw more close games with John Leader narrowly winning over Elaine Newman and John Newman persisting to beat Terrey Sparks. It was a day of sunshine and downpours but most people just played through. Neil Chalmers beat John Leader by 14 hoops to become the winner. Derek Buxton beat Peter Newman to be runner-up.

I tried to run the tournament in the same friendly and relaxed manner of Lionel, (without the jokes!) which NCC has become known for. I hope I succeeded but I don't think it really mattered... there were 12 clean plates on Saturday and Sunday and that *does* matter!

(For those interested in being welcomed next year the menu was: Saturday: Meatballs in tomato sauce with vegetables, Bakewell Tart and cream. Sunday: Beef casserole with winter vegetables, Plum and Apple Crumble with Custard)

HANDICAP CHANGES

Nailsea Handicap, 6-7 May

J Field 9 to 8

Budleigh Salterton, 8-13 May

E Dymock 1 to 0.5

P Miller 10 9

Derek Powell 10 11

Douglas Sinclair 16 18

James Tuttiett 0.5 0

Cheltenham Advanced, 13-14 May

Rodney Parkin 4 to 3.5

Paul Smith -1.5 -1

Alan Newman 3 2.5

Chris Williams -1 -1.5

Bristol, 21-2 May

Barry Marsh 7 to 8

Bob Scott 8 9

Barbara Watson 16 14

Deidre Duggan 12 11

Frances Ransom 4.5 4

Budleigh Salterton H'cap, 27 - 28 May

J Lacey 7 to 6

Mrs J Liles 12 11

R Sherwin 6 5

Nailsea Advanced, 3-4 June

Richard Dickson -0.5 -1

Ryde Advanced, 3-4 June

Mark Hamilton 10 to 9

Men's & Women's Championships

Budleigh Salterton, 8-11 June

Frances Ransom 4 to 3.5

D Mooney 0 0.5

J Burch -1 -1.5

Woking Handicap, 9-11 June

A Edwards 12 to 11

M Mander 8 9

J Timberlake 11 10

Veteran's Championship

Southwick, 12-17 June

W Arliss 2.5 to 2

R Hoskyns 2.5 3.5

D Mears 5 4.5

N Kellett 16 14

R Edwards 1.5 2

M Granger Brown -0.5 0

J Timberlake 10 8

J Whateley 18 12

Sidmouth Mid-Summer, June

M Steer 7 to 8

Mrs S Steer 6 5

Mrs B Young 6 5

G Young 11 10

Mrs M Watts 18 22

Miss J Horsley 14 12

Rochampton, 24 - 25 June

Mark Fawcett 1.5 to 1

Newport Essex B level, 24-25 June

Neil Chalmers 6 to 5

Colchester Handicap, 27-29 June

Ashton Hulme 16 to 18

Gerry Varndell 9 10

Jonathan Hills 3 2

Violet Lester 18 16

David Haslam 4.5 5

Compton Summer Tournament

30 June 2 July

Dr T Smith 11 to 12

Mrs D Gaitley 7 6

Mr D Parkins 0.5 1

Budleigh Salterton Adv, 1-2 July

John Toyne -1 to -1.5

Norwich Handicap, 1-2 July

Jonathan Toyne 7 to 6

H Bruford 11 12

Bath Millenium Cup

David Perkins 12 to 11

Chris Donovan 7 6

Wrest Park, 7-9 July

Terry Mahoney 2 to 3

Peter McDermott 2 1.5

James Skelton 3.5 3

Robert Bateson 4.5 5

Ramsgate Handicap, 8-9 July

Mrs J Slawson 16 to 18

T Mockett 8 7

East Dorset Handicap, July 17-20

Roy Edwards 3 to 3.5

David Kendrick 8 7

Jonathan Wood 4.5 4

Tom Weston 1 1.5

David Kendrick 7 6

David Williams 8 7

Watford Handicap, 22-23 July

Arthur Reed 3.5 to 3

Janet Lewis 10 9

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