

By Gerald Hallett

Members of the Croquet Council, consider carefully the serious charges against this aged croquet player.

1. He did one day, during the Counties in the 1960s, take his tie off on a hot afternoon, so causing the Manager, Daisy Lintern, to go pale in the face. He followed up this serious crime by smuggling a homemade sandwich in his trouser pocket and attempting to eat it before he reached the safety of the river bank.

2. He is charged with beating a distinguished gentleman, handicap 2 (playing at 8) leaving 4 of his bisques unused and not performing little rushes round the peg in attempts to waste his surplus and obeying the sacred custom of never insulting his opponent.

3. He addressed a long-haired boy from Cambridge mistakenly as a girl.

4. In the Surrey Cup at Colchester in the

Conduct unbecoming

70s he inadvertently hampered the non-playing Manager, Mr Duffield, during a game, from removing a worm near hoop 2.

5. At a tournament when playing Humphrey Hicks, a former World Champion, he rolled a ball from near hoop 3 to gain the point at hoop 5, causing Mr Hicks to drop the knitting he was engaged in.

6. He was heard to say "Huh!" a trifle loudly after an opponent had failed to move a ball from a take-off for the third time.

7. At Budleigh he caused a stir during the week - there was a performance of The Mikado - by remarking he liked the entry march of the Lords singing "bow, bow, you lower middle classes."

8. As a train was thundering past at Southwick, he did cough to add to the shock of his opponent trying to make the rover and

so, regrettably, cause him to hit the wire instead.

9. He did exclaim at Bowdon to the Manager, when he asked him to check the impossibility of a brown ball going through a hoop in which it had stuck four times, when he was told the hoop was "a trifle tight".

10. At Nottingham, when playing on the bowling green at 6pm, he ignored the impatient glares of expectant bowls players wishing to recover the court, and unconcerned, missed his peg-out.

As prosecuting consul, I ask the maximum sentence be passed on this old wrinkly, namely that his handicap card be advanced five points and his ranking number 420 be made 430. In addition he be removed from this short list for the Presidents Cup for two seasons. I rest my case.

he liked the entry march of the Lords singing "bow, bow, you lower middle classes."

A recurring theme which I hear around the clubs is that of the remoteness of Council. Grass roots players are, so I am told, unaware of the identity of the majority of Council members and those that they do know they rarely see. Well! Maybe!! I am not totally convinced but there is probably a nugget of truth somewhere in there.

So! What's the answer? Simple. Forward Mr Editor. Now hear this. This is your Secretary speaking. I want you to find space in your august magazine (that's "august" like in prestige not next year's edition) and publish the current Council Committee List along with the dates of meetings. That way your readers will see, at a glance, who to contact whatever the matter they may wish to raise and, at a stroke, we close the supposed gap 'twixt Council and the membership.

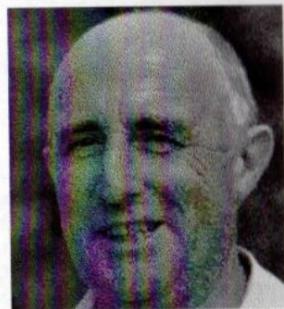
I now address myself to my friends on Council. How about an individual contribution from you of not more than (say) 50 words. Tell us what prompted you to give up your time and accept the inconvenience of serving on Council. What are your aims? What are your special interests (croquet-wise that is. Remember, this is family magazine!) Where do you see the CA in five year's time? 50 words, accompanied by a recent head-and-shoulders photograph. Perhaps Chairman Colin Irwin will kick-off the new "Council Column" which Mr Editor will set up. Thereafter, the same Mr Ed will politely, but firmly request a contribution from other members. Perhaps we could manage two per edition? In this way each individual Council member has a chance to reach the general membership and make him- or -herself known while, at the same time, members will be delightfully surprised to find that old Whatsit round the corner, who they have known for years, is a member of Council and the next time they see him at the club they can buy him a drink and address him on that burning topic they have been itching to get off their chest all this time!!

Through the Hoop

....CA Council and the grass roots
....Subscriptions
....and early Seasonal Greetings....

Included with this edition is a fall-at-your-feet page concerning 1993 subscriptions. Please! Please!! PLEASE!!! Read, mark and inwardly digest, complete the tear-off slip and bung it off to me along with your cheque all nicely made out payable to The Croquet Association with the correct date, amount and signed by your own fair hand. I know we all hate filling in forms but this is just a little one, wont take a sec and will give your Secretary a further chance to tighten the screws on the CA's membership machinery. Thanks in advance! To those of you who pay by Standing Order three more pleases to check the details with your bank, it takes up so much time to effect corrections. Your returning of the form, marked "SO Payment" would also be very much appreciated.

Finally, though I write this with the rest of October left to run its course, nevertheless it is the last edition before Christmas and the New Year. I look back with some dismay at the all too few visits to clubs I have been able to fit in this year. I see myself becoming what I swore I would never become, a grey, faceless bureaucrat tucked away here at Hurlingham. Next Season, come hell or high water I intend to circulate, to renew old friendships and, hopefully, make many new ones while, at the same time, talking with and more importantly, listening to our members. In the meanwhile, keep 'club-active'. Don't hibernate! There are bridge nights to organise and games evenings and



Tony Antenen

socials and goodness knows what else. What better way to spend a long, dark winter evening than in the company of ones croquet-playing friends reliving past glories or recounting those wonderful tales of what might have been if only....!

I leave you with that thought and, from your CA Office staff, Brian Macmillan, Alan Stockwell and yours truly our collective best wishes for the happiest of Christmases and may 1993 be good to us all.

CA Council Profiles

1. Colin Irwin (CA Chairman)

Major aims for my two years in office are to improve communication with the membership so that Council's activities are better publicised, hopefully better understood and in tune with what the membership in the main want; and to improve the financial viability of the CA so that its longer term future is secure. I hope that delegating 9 Council places to the Federations will help, and that these places will be taken up by members representative of their regions, prepared to work and preferably with handicaps in double figures.

CA Chairman is in many ways a sort of 'General Manager' of the CA's affairs. He Chairs Council and Executive Committee meetings and sits on Editorial, Finance & General Purposes, Tournament, Publicity and Development Committees.

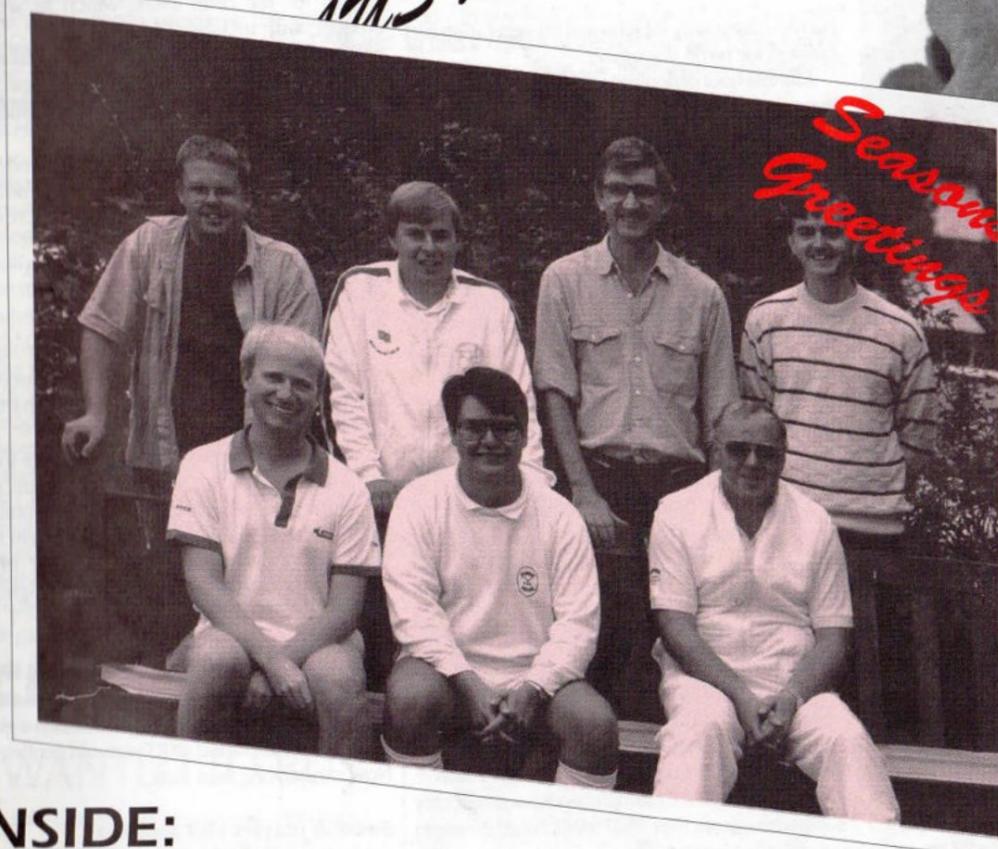


Croquet

MAGAZINE & NEWS

Issue 224
December 1992

Coming to AUSTRALIA



Seasonal Greetings



INSIDE:
Croquet News
Fiction
Coaching
Humour.

WARMING YOUR CHRISTMAS WITH THOUGHTS OF SUMMER BLISS!



Exhibition for the MacRobertson Fund

On Sunday 4th October 1992 the High Wycombe Croquet Club raised over £100 for the McRobertson Shield Test Tour Fund.

The club invited former World Champion John Walters and Great Britain Coach Keith Aiton to give a demonstration of top class Croquet. Play took place on Club Chairman Alan Oldham's lawn at Terriers Green and the 25 spectators were not disappointed with what they saw.

In the first game John hit in on the fourth turn took his ball to 4 back and left a diagonal spread. Keith missed the lift shot. John then proceeded to finish the game in 40 minutes although he had never played on this lawn before.

As the game finished so quickly a second one was played which produced an even greater display of virtuosity. The start was similar to the first game but John stopped at 1 back leaving Keith cross wired at hoop 1. Keith hit in with a jump shot over hoop 1 and ran the first hoop but unfortunately was unable to set up a break. John then hit in and guess what? He completed the game with a sextuple peel.

Anyone who was surprised when John won the world title in 1991 would have realised what a mistake they had made if they had seen this demonstration. I particularly remember his rover peel in the first game. There is quite a slope towards corner 4 on Alan's lawn. John played a split shot to 3 back with the rover peel completed from quite an acute angle and his ball coming to rest right behind his 3 back pioneer.

The players then took part in what I suppose you would call a Pro Am alternate stroke doubles. Each player had different partners every half-hour. The partners were drawn by raffle from the club members and visitors. They had a game they will remember for a long time. After 1 hours play with the scores level lunch, provided by Jane Oldham and some of the club committee, was a time for some interesting chat. Not all the chat was about croquet as Alan's daughter had cooked a

nut roast especially for John and his vegetarian diet came in for some discussion.

A further hour of doubles in the afternoon resulted in a win for Keith Aiton and his partners. Keith's coaching produced some very good shots from his partners particularly June Wankling and Bill Gillott.

The Croquet finished with a 1/2 hour Clinic with the 2 stars answering questions. John stressed the importance of concentration. He told us how he felt his single minded concentration on the game, during both his and his opponents turns, had brought about the improvement in his game which put him on 'top of the world'. Keith demonstrated his jump shot over hoop 1 and how to play with the mallet horizontal to the ground when hampered. Both players then showed us some unusual shots around the hoop and in the corner.

The day finished with tea and a presentation to the players of a bottle of Australian wine which should put them in the right frame of mind for the Test Tour. The shot of the day was Keith's roquet when wired at hoop 1 but John's sextuple peel, on a strange lawn with some interesting borrows was truly world class croquet. With play like this the British team should be capable of retaining the MacRobertson Shield next year.

Roger Jackman (Cartoon: Mike Lambourne)

Eating for the MacRobertson Shield Fund

Bowdon Croquet Club members have generously donated the profit from their annual club dinner to the MacRobertson Shield Fund. The move demonstrates another way that clubs who would like to lend a hand can play a valuable part in the British defence of the Shield. We will continue to report the imaginative ways in which clubs and individuals are helping out.

The MacRobertson Shield is the "World Croquet Team Championship". Dating from 1925 it is regarded as the most important event in the world and is held only once every 3 or 4 years. In 1990 Great Britain recaptured it from the New Zealanders in New Zealand - avenging their loss to the Kiwis

in the 1986 series in England. The 1993 series will be at the Rich River Club in Victoria, Australia, between 23rd March and 10th April. It will be the first time that the USA have joined teams from Great Britain, New Zealand and Australia.

While sterling work is being done fund-raising for the event, the British team and Coach are doing their bit. They will have a series of meetings throughout the winter and will be in discussion with Sports Psychologist Graham Jones. Practice before leaving in March, will be followed by practice on arrival in Australia and a warm-up match against Brisbane before the "real thing".

First in Perth

Cheltenham's Don Gaunt hardly needs to prove his enthusiasm for the game of croquet - nobody is going to question the keenness of someone who takes on the mammoth annual task of compiling the Croquet Association's Fixtures Book! But the fact is now verified in print from Australia. "Sportsview", the periodical of the Western Australian Sports Federation, reports that Don is the first to register for the fourth 'Australian Masters Games'.

Some 15,000 other players are expected to register for the Perth event, which as well as croquet will include 34 other sports - from acrobatics and American eightball to waterskiing and wrestling. Don will receive a specially inscribed T-shirt for his speed, which doubtless he will wear during the event.

The Games will run from 24th April to 2nd May. More information can be obtained from Ian McPhee at the West Australian Croquet Association.

Confusing our Vandeleurs and our Viscounts

Apologies for the fact that in the last issue I suggested that past CA Secretary Vandeleur Robinson once fell in the lake at Hurlingham. As CA Historian Alan Oldham writes:

"Vandeleur Robinson did many strange things in his time but did not, so far as I am aware, ever fall into the lake at Hurlingham. You have confused him with that wonderful character the 6th Viscount Doneraile - Hon Treasurer of the CA (1912-1932), who had cause to miss his footing one night."

Ramsgate made an example of

An example of everything we are always saying about croquet, Ramsgate Croquet Club write to say that their youngest playing member is a girl of 9 years and their oldest an 83 year-old gentleman. Now can anyone beat that?

Swedish players visit Surbiton

Members of a Swedish Croquet Club in Malmo visited Surbiton in July to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the founding of their club.

Led by Club President Gubbe Mikael Neumann, they played a club championship on the Surbiton lawns. To those watching, the Swedish version of croquet was a fascinating game. All four players were on the lawn at the same time, playing in sequence.

There appeared to be no croquet shots - if a roquet was made, the player's ball was placed within a foot of the ball it had hit, and the next shot



was played from there. However, if the opponent's ball could be hit against the peg, by playing a croquet shot with a foot on the back ball, then the opponent had to start from the first hoop.

Quite which was the first hoop was not entirely clear to me, nor was the order of the hoops. The Surbiton members took it all in their stride, and Hazel Kittermaster and others were all on hand with food at intervals to make it a memorable experience for all concerned.

Mikael Neuman (standing, second right in the photo) is a rock guitarist of some repute in Sweden, and is setting out to popularise the game. The Swedish players tried out "International" Rules whilst they were here, and came over to Hurlingham to see the Opens. Perhaps, in time ...
Chris Hudson

A piece of England?

It has been encouraging to see the USCA helping development of the International game in America recently. However, any thoughts that this might be the start of Association Croquet flushing out the US rules variant were challenged during the recent World Championship there. The USCA said that having spent time trying to ensure that people had the choice, they would now be turning back to develop the US game.

However disappointing that might be, one club remains years ahead of its time. Birnam Wood Golf Club in Santa Barbara plays exclusively International Rules Croquet - indeed, suggests croquet Chairman Forrest Tucker, they are believed to be the only US club who do so. Sticklers for the real rules, Birnam Wood have never tolerated any other games on their lawns in 25 years of existence!

CLASSIFIED

WANTED TO BUY

Old croquet books, pictures, drawings or anything else related to the subject matter of croquet.

Send me your list and price of items to sell.

My interest is to see that these items do not get lost over time, and stay within the "croquet family" in a preserved collection.

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Forrest himself is a handicap 8 and has often played in tournaments during visits over here. So if you're going over there, and would like to see a little piece of croquet England - well you know where to go.

Carefully gauged response

Birkdale Croquet Equipment have produced the answer to any Groundsman or Referee-of-Tournament's problems. The problems were basically to do with unpredictability in ball size, coupled with the change from an absolute width to a clearance specification for hoops in any tournament. The answer is a cheap set of three hoop feeler gauges from Birkdale. Key-ring sized, the tabs of metal let you check clearances of 1/32", 1/16", 1/8", 5/32" and 3/16". No Groundsman and no ROT can be without feeler gauges any more, so if you find yourself short (and your hoops wide or narrow) then try Tim Haste at Birkdale on (0202) 658119.

Winter croquet without the pneumonia

Indoor croquet is a concept that we have been struggling with for decades. From the CA's touring carpet worth thousands of pounds and requiring an enormous sports hall, to the teeny plastic efforts you can buy from a few pence at fairs. Our desire to find a replica of the beloved sport, that can be played away from the more hostile excesses of climate has been intense.

"Troquet" finally represents a good replication of croquet for your carpet. In fact it is surprising how well it stands up to the tests that other efforts have failed. For a start the four mallets have 32" shafts - so you play standing up. They are light with a small horizontal bar at the top which you grip with one hand, making the "pen holder grip" (used in the full game by NZ International Steve Jones and GB International Bill Perry) the most practical for the other hand.

Having "got to grips" with the mallet you find that a proper game of croquet is perfectly playable. With very little practice I found the full range of shots available, using the 25mm snooker balls provided. The hoop design is another clever innovation: the bases provide thick weighted cylindrical uprights that are ideal, and by connecting these with a light arch of metal at the top the balance is such that they are not easily knocked

over. A carpet with a light pile is best though - thicker piles make the ball-running and hoops less good: well there you are that is like the outside game, but I wouldn't take a mower to your front room!

Apparently the game was created when the designer's father moved from a house with a full-size croquet lawn to a bungalow. Missing their competitive bashes, work started on an indoor version of the game. So necessarily is the mother of invention.

"Troquet" is attractively presented and boxed with 4 delightful little mini-clips adding to the feeling of quality. It is an achievement to have so successfully cut the game down to a version that can be played on a living room carpet that could be as small as 8' by 6'. Dare I say, the ideal Christmas present? Even if it does turn out to be the kind that after a little "testing" one decides to keep for one's own pleasure after all (for more details contact Fieldcourt Games, Tel: 0206 42629).



Christmas Presents to beat the Recession

Now available from the Croquet Association:
"Croquet: The Skills of the Game" by W Lamb (Normally £10.00 + P&P, now £7.00 P&P inclusive)
"History of Croquet" by Prichard (Normally £10.00 + P&P, now £9.50 P&P inclusive)
"Croquet: The Complete Game" by Gill (Normally £9.00 + P&P, now £8.00 P&P inclusive)
We also hold a selection of Mallets, Equipment and Ties.



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T O P I C S

The CA: Working for Croquet - Worth your Support!

Nine-thirty, Pee-em, Mid-August, '92. A Sunday night in the noisey smoke-filled public bar of the Peg 'n Mallet in down-town Gypeswich. My name?.... Let's just say that plenty of guys died not knowing it.

"Are you the....?" A tall, dark man, white trousers, white sports shirt, mid-forties I guess, slight limp, Spoke with a real Limey accent.

"I 'phoned earlier this evening.....yes?" He sat down in a quick nervous movement. His fingernails was chewed right down and his hands trembled as he reached out to offer me a cigarette. Cheap brand. It pays to notice in this business.

"Sure," I said.

"You'll have to forgive me," he said, "I've never done this sort of thing before only, you see I'm a... I'm a...." I struck a match and held it out across the table. He avoided my eyes as he leaned forward.

"You're a what?" I said.

"A Croquet player!... I.... play Croquet." He looked down at the floor, shuffling his grubby white sports shoes under the chair.

So that was it. In my line of work you get to meet all kinds of weirdos: masochists, sadists, sado-masochists, maso-sadichists, every kind

CONTRACT

CROQUET

By Dick Leaf

a sport....a sport I tell you." He spat the words out at me. Somewhere on the other side of the room a beer glass smashed to the floor, goirls laughed and the juke box started to play.

"O.K. so it's a sport," I said. This guy was jumpy and I could see I'd touched a raw noivre. I didn't want him going ape on me, I had my rep to consider and besides, I needed the cash. I waited

well, I admit, but they'd do the same to me. Don't you understand?" He seemed to be pleading almost begging. "No, I don't expect you to. You don't need to. It's not even going up that hurts. It's, it's.... The MANAGER.

He was beginning to ramble and I was starting to wonder just what sort of a weird game could toirn an oirdnry decent human being into the gibbering noivous wreck crouched across the table from me biting his fingernails again and dragging on his cigarette right down to the butt.

"Maybe you better tell me about this so called sport of yours," I said. I needed to know just what I was getting myself into. "I ain't never hoird of the Bisquers before. They some kinda new mob run by this Manager guy?"

That same high eccentric laugh again.

"No, no, Bisquers. Players with BISQUES. A Bisque, you see, well, it's a system which allows players who are not as good as you are to beat you. Sometimes you don't even Set more than a couple of shots in.

"He was starting to interest me and I began to wonder where I could get hold of a couple of these Bisques. Maybe they could come in handy if I ever got myself into a tight corner, which I don't as a rule. I pride myself on being a professional, but you never know.

"Are dey audomadic, dese Bisques, or semi-audomadic?" I asked. He looked puzzled for a moment and then, ignoring my question, went on.

"Nine hours, I waited, can you imagine it, nine hours. The first game was fine, I felt good, took a ball round to four-back, made a good leave. He hit in, made a good break, I can't quite remember where to but then broke down, I had my chance, went to Rover. Next turn, peeled through Rover, pegged out, fine. What could be fairer than that?"

"You lost me pal," I said and he had. Who was 'Four-back? And where did the dog fit in?

"Then we waited....for the Bisquers. An hour and a half? Two hours? I asked the manager if I could go for a walk. 'No' he said, 'You'll be on in a minute.'

The second game I played a bandit, a real bandit. Claimed to be a twelve. Took one bisque to Set the first ball round! One bisque! I couldn't believe it. Then I had my turn. Hit in on his leave, (continued on page 21....)



of poirvoirt under the sun. You name it, I'd met it, but this one.....? I slid my chair, instinctively a little way back from the table and waited for him to go on.

"There's someone I want you to.... you know, rub out. Is that the expression? I don't care how much it costs."

I don't like to be hurried as a rule. I like to know something about the guy I'm working for prior to committing myself to a contract. I threw the burnt out match into the ashtray.

"Croquet," I said, "that's some kind of leisure pursuit, right?" He looked up quickly from the floor and our eyes met for the first time. A flash of pure hatred burned its way towards me through the smoke haze.

"Who have you been talking to?" he said. "It's

for him to go on.

"I've just been playing....hah!.....playing?..... taking part, in a weekend handicap tournament at lps..." he stopped and looked noivously around the room.... "not very far away from here."

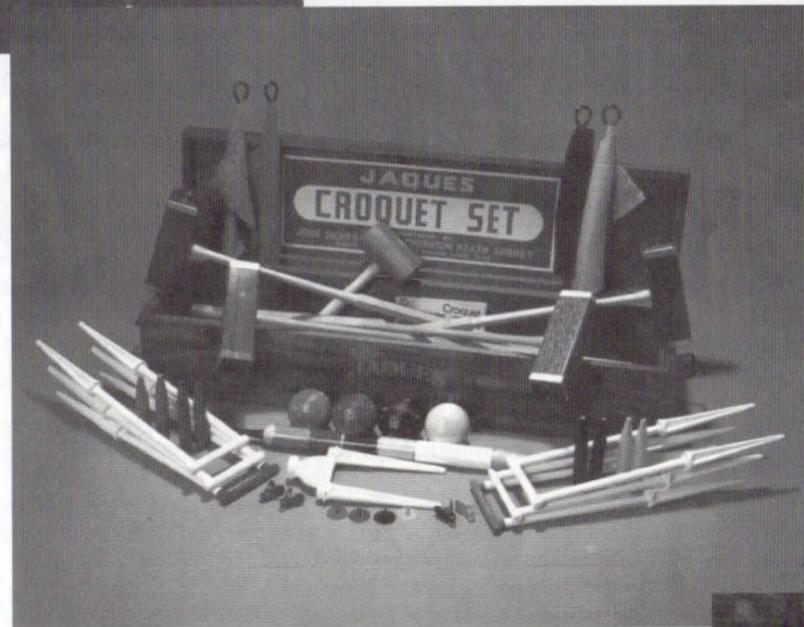
"I don't understand," I said. "Handicap....does that mean you have one hand tied behind your back or something?"

His high pitched eccentric laugh took me by surprise and the group of goirls looked over from across the bar. I had said something funny, sure, but I'm damned if I knew what it was. He went on.

"I'm, what you might call, quite a good player, you see, in all modesty, My handicap is, or was, 2 1/2....now it's 3. It's taken me all season. I've worked hard to get where I am. Beaten some low bisquers. Taken advantage of really high ones as

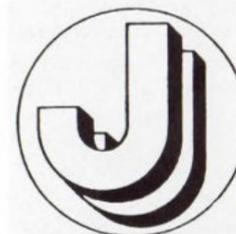


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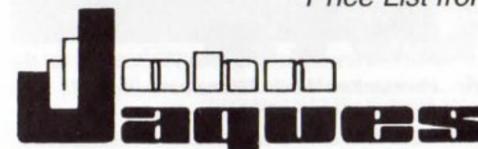
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Croquet

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Tournament results & reports should be sent via the CA Secretary; any correspondence about non-delivery of the magazine should also be addressed to the CA Secretary.

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"YOUF" Croquet!



John Walters

I have sat back and watched with interest as the discussion on "Youf Croquet" moved onto the pages of the magazine following Andrew Bennet's "provocative" letter in issue 222. Now I must make an admission: I was a teenager once! I hope people will understand. It happened when I was at school and university and was really all part of being a member of my generation, however I must admit that I did inhale. It is also true to say that I was a draught dodger and have avoided other beers whether they be bottled canned or spouting from a natural spring! However, I have never taken to Coke in the conspicuous quantities consumed by those who came after me. For my generation, the Real Thing was something entirely different.

The point of this Editorial though, is to do what none of the previous correspondents (bar one unpublishable and anonymous letter) have attempted. A wholehearted defence of the concept of croquet for the young and the encouragement of it. For although Peter Dorke makes a robust defence of young croquet players, he still could not resist ending his letter "While I would not encourage the young as a group to play croquet, there being so many more interesting things to do ...". Even the great Keith Wylie (originally an undergraduate croquet player), in a letter stating that croquet is "largely a game for the young, or at least for those who learnt it when young", ends by saying "...the campaign to promote croquet in schools was a mistake Life should be too varied, interesting and important at school age for croquet to become a principal occupation, let alone 'an obsession' ...". It all rings of Edgar Jackson who supposedly, on discovering croquet in his 20s, exclaimed that it looked like a very good game and that he would take it up when 50. He did - and became an excellent player as well! Politely, I disagree with this whole attitude however.

I began on the croquet path aged 13 years. I was never impressed by most of the leisure pursuits typically pressed on one while at school. But then I was never impressed by my colleagues who pursued them! The typical pretence of rebellion among people of that age, which amounts to nothing more than pack mentality

clinging to an intense underlying reactionary comforter, always struck me as rather pathetic. Therefore, we did not like each other! Croquet gave me the opportunity to break away from this loathsome groove. The people I met through croquet were kind, thoughtful and genuine. Through croquet I saw a far greater cross-section of life and people than most children that age. Through croquet I and other young players have travelled both nationally and internationally. Contrary to what I hear from its detractors, croquet gave me a better social education than I would have had without it - as well as rescuing me from a pit of despair in a lifestyle I found hostile. One of my recommendations for croquet then, would be anything that tears the young away from "the norm" and opens their eyes to a wider world must be good in serving to break down conservative prejudices (such as those on age, class and lifestyle) and developing a liberal conscience.

Perhaps in encouraging school croquet we destroy some of the advantages I found in it. When it is institutionalised and becomes just another option within school it might cease to be a way to widen horizons. I do not know. But certainly Andrew Bennet's group of QEGS pupils has produced one prominent player for whom croquet has singularly failed to break down prejudices! Of course it has indeed been the case recently that rather than breaking out of schoolboy cliques their members have simply transferred them, in an almost hermetically sealed bubble, to the field of croquet. This phenomenon seems to be one of the targets for Andrew Bennet's anger, and there I do sympathise with him and



Mark Avery (right) and John Walters (left) at the Hunstanton Week Tournament in 1980, with their coach - Ipswich's Nan Zinn.

will add my voice to his condemnation. Croquet encourages a sense of individual identity as well as awareness and acceptance of wonderful social diversity, any changes which lessen this are a tragedy for our sport's unique culture.

For me croquet was liberating, but our correspondents on youth croquet have accused it of being a prison - an unhealthy "obsession"! I would certainly not advocate croquet to the exclusion of all else any more than I would advocate any sport, academic study or occupation to the exclusion of all else. Travel, the arts and other sports should all be important parts of our pursuits through life. But in as much as some people do choose to immerse themselves in something relatively superficial, croquet is less guilty a temptress and no worse a choice. It is wrong to denigrate achievements in croquet made at the expense of other alternatives, unless one is willing to do likewise for those people who have made sacrifices in the name of football, rugby, cricket, snooker, accountancy, engineering, financial acquisition, etc.

I recommend croquet to the young. Of all the sports they could choose to concentrate on it is the finest. Yes indulge in other sport for fitness and strength; sample all and any aspects of life for experience. But in croquet you will find challenges of skill, concentration, tactical thinking, character and mental & spiritual discipline, unrivalled by any other sport. Life, particularly when one is young, is all about making choices - croquet is no bad choice!



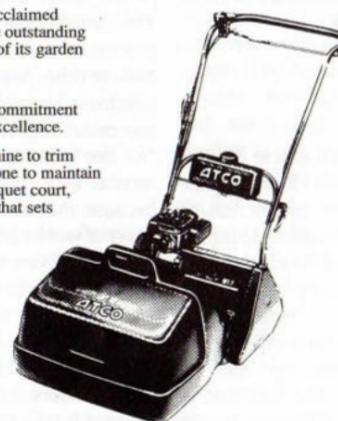
Teams from Hinchingsbrooke School in Huntingdon (left) and the Royal School at Holbrook near Ipswich (right) took on a GB International each as coaches for the day, when they met for an Eastern Inter-School match in June. Organised by the Eastern Federation's tireless coaching representative Claire Heritage, who had spent six sessions with the lads prior to this match. RHS were the winners and will play Ardingly this term. Friendly competition, generous hospitality and a beautiful venue made for an extremely enjoyable occasion and prospects are good for continuing interest with the addition of two more schools in next year's competition

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Changing face of croquet?

Dear Editor,

When I discovered croquet some twelve years ago at the age of nearly 50. I quickly succumbed to its charm and challenge. After some months, I well remember speaking to Edgar Jackson, a player of considerable skill and flair, and a man whose knowledge and experience was (and is) valued by all players who knew him. 'You must regret that you were older than I am now when you started playing', I said. 'Not in the least,' he replied. 'Think of all the fun I should have missed playing all the games I can't now play'.

I have often reflected on the wisdom of that remark, and indeed have quoted it to Andrew Bennet and Chris Hudson. It led me to question the CA policy on schools in the eighties. For some years I too have been very concerned at the attitudes shown by some of the younger players towards the more senior if less able players: Margaret and I have seen real hurt caused to people without whom there would now be no courts to play on.

We cannot expect the customs of our game to remain unchanged for ever but standards of behaviour in a game where self-refereeing is essential should be maintained lest we descend to attitudes shown nowadays in some other games and sports. Of course I would not question the integrity of anyone currently playing croquet, only their manners!

We live in an age where to win is everything and where success and possessions are more valued than people. Sponsorship and sports psychologists are the order of the day and drug testing seems essential if fair competition is to thrive. Personally, I would still rather lose 25-26 than win 26-0. To me playing, not winning, is the important thing.

Martin French in his article asks where we are going and suggests that the Council should look to the well-being of its members and its clubs. How wise! Without them the grandiose and expensive hopes of the Council are doomed anyway. So let us forget the recent desire to expand at any cost, place less emphasis on youth, keep our overheads down and concentrate instead on giving help and encouragement to those who run our clubs and provide our facilities - those members who will probably never represent their country but who enjoy the game for its own sake.

Ken Cotterell, Harwell & Phyllis Court

Dear Sir,

I have read with interest and concern the correspondence and explanation of the CA's proposed financial arrangements set out in recent issues of the magazine.

Let us concede, for the sake of argument, that the CA needs more funds; then it is highly unlikely to achieve its objective by this method.

For example my club has lost its lawn after a tenancy of over 30 years, fortunately we have acquired another site which has had to be relaid. We have already spent some £1300 on one lawn and expansion will be expensive.

Let me say that for reasons which are not relevant here that we cannot obtain financial assistance outside our club of some 30 members.

We have a keen membership but only a few have any interest in CA activities. The proposed scheme means that at a time when we need all our funds to develop the new site we shall be attempting to collect CA fees at £12 per head as an addition to our subscription.

As an aside I was amused at the laughable statement that clubs were free to raise the extra fees how they chose, where else apart from the members' pockets does the CA imagine it will come from.

My own view is that my club would abandon the CA rather than risk losing members due to excessive subscriptions.

It has been put to me by another CA member that he would consider paying his CA subscription to the local club where he would see a better return for his money.

In these days when the analogy of the marketplace is used frequently and if there are large numbers of croquet players who do not join the CA, then you are trying to sell a product the customer does not want.

The answer is to improve the product not price yourself out of existence - which is a possibility you should consider. If clubs decide they cannot afford to affiliate then there is a strong possibility you would lose some of the members of those clubs who do belong to the CA.

Yours faithfully,
S A Pickell, Brentwood

Dear Sir,

Having read Martin French's article "Is this Progress?", and heard from Chris Hudson of the proposal to raise CA revenue by increasing Registration Fees over the next 3 years up to the CA membership rate, I presume that no such radical steps can be taken by the CA Council without the backing of the vast majority of CA Associates.

The CA must know the proportion of their Associates who are of retirement age, most of whom are on fixed incomes. The fact that at present only about a quarter of all the people who enjoy playing Association and Golf Croquet are CA Associates probably shows that either they are not yet at the standard where they wish to enter tournaments, or that they only enjoy social club play and events. A club which already had a high subscription and a high proportion of retired people would, I forecast, find that up to one-fifth seriously reconsidered their club membership. Clubs whose members are mainly of working age may look differently at the CA proposal because, hopefully,

their incomes will increase as they progress in their careers.

The great danger in the proposal is that when the Registration Fee has reached the same rate as that of the CA Associates, it may continue to be raised annually as the CA needs increase. I agree with Martin French that if positions filled by volunteers become instead paid posts, it could easily jeopardise the multifarious tasks at present undertaken by volunteers.

The CA should focus all its efforts on the needs of club members, and "Croquet" should reflect this by including as much news and views about clubs and members as possible, rather than 2/3 of a page about the lack of vegetarian food in the USA!

Yours faithfully
Diana Brothers, Rottingdean

Stephen Mulliner's discussion document proposals were an attempt to ensure that the CA does not "price itself out of existence" as Mr Pickell puts it. Recognising that many CA activities (and their consequent expenditure) were for wider benefit than just existing Associates, the idea was to broaden the revenue base to other club members (in common with other sports) rather than hiking up existing subscription fees to a painful level. Even in phase 3 of his proposals Stephen foresaw subscriptions of only £12 (£9 more than non-Associates pay now). Certainly not the £20 level Associates currently pay, which Diana Brothers seems to imply.

The suggestion from the CA that such fees need not be covered by direct increases in the levels of club subscriptions, was to highlight the fact that some clubs might prefer to raise this money from tournaments, bar/catering profits, differential subscription increases, etc.

The CA Councillors who preside over setting budgets have no interest in spending more than necessary. For them new projects simply mean more unpaid work! They do not claim to be perfect, but costs are always foremost in the mind. The annual budgetary exercise is an often painful process of cost control. There is no question of making posts paid, if they can possibly be done effectively by volunteers. The CA is extraordinarily successful in getting vast amounts of work done "for free". The two or three positions which do receive very modest pay are so by necessity, because they are skilled jobs requiring many hours of work each week and could not be filled otherwise. Even then the incumbents gratefully receive the help of unpaid assistants, which is needed in order to get through the workload!

Finally, and importantly, the CA genuinely wants to help and satisfy the needs of clubs and their members. It tries to fulfil those needs, as they are seen by the CA. What would be enormously helpful is to hear from clubs in quite explicit and particular terms, how the CA can help. We're listening...so speak!

Un peu d'histoire!

Dear Editor,

In a recent publication of "Croquet", one of your readers wanted to know more about the origins of the game. According to my resources (Dictionary of games by) B Pick and the Federation

francaise de Croquet, whose members play Association Croquet) I, and the rest of the french "Croqueteurs" believe that "mail" as it was called, was played in France as early as the 13th or 11th century in Languedoc; the word "mail" used to mean: "dispute". In the meantime the English were playing a game of bowls being passed through hoops but without a mallet. Later on they borrowed our french game for a short while. It went to Ireland via France where it took the name of Croquet, in Scotland it became golf.

In France Louis the 14th, who was not able to play mail in the winter, started the game of Billiard.

Croquet entered England from Ireland under that name in Victorian Times, and in 1866 a public croquet match was played at Evesham. The popularity of Croquet in England had its ups and downs, but in 1900 The Croquet Association was established.

In France however, Croquet as it is now called, disappeared around 1950, except under the form of garden croquet. It was revived about 10 years ago and since 1989 "La Federation francais" is one of the 18 associations of the World Croquet Federation.

So let's get familiar with "la Croque at la roque; les boules et les arceaux." The french are back!
Francine Cross, York

Olympic Games

Dear John,

I was reading an article in the August 17th issue of NEWSWEEK magazine about the Barcelona Games and therein was a reference to various sports which had been included in earlier Games but which were now excluded.

To my amazement I read that Croquet was listed amongst these excluded sports together with: Motor boating; Rope climbing; The 56lb weight toss; Horse-back high jump; and live pigeon shooting.

I realise that croquet is sometimes regarded as an odd game but to be included amongst the above list I find rather surprising.

I wonder if any elders of the sport can cast any light on this report?

Bob Vaughan, Crake Valley CC

The Handicap System

Dear Sir,

Having just completed my first year of playing "handicap" tournaments, I am sitting back reflecting on the merits of continuing to enter such events, not because I have not enjoyed them but because of the format used. I entered "handicap" events on the mistaken assumption that I would be playing handicap games and not the full-bisque variation with whatever base the manager happened to feel appropriate.

Whilst appreciating the ever-present problem of time for managers, I do feel that the lower bisquer **always** gains an unfair advantage over the higher bisquer.

Suppose I am playing a 10 with base six. The opponent receives 4 and I get 14. Fair, you may say. No, you are wrong: think about it. My 10 opponent can do far more with four bisques than I can with 14. The ratio is not rightly adjusted to our handicap difference. I do not have an

alternative format to offer but it would be fairer if the event were correctly advertised as either "handicap" or "full-bisque handicap", stating the base.

I do feel the powers that be should give consideration to my reflection and I would be interested to hear other people's views.

Yours faithfully
Margaret Jones, Manchester

Dear Sir,

I am replying to Mr H J Bottomley's letter in the March/April issue proposing that at the start of each turn a bisque can only be taken after running a hoop or making a roquet.

One afternoon a trial was carried out at Cheltenham to see how this proposal worked and to get comments from players.

Fourteen singles games were played; all were full-bisque shortened games: 2 games of 26 points for players of handicaps of 6 and below; 2 games of 22 points for handicaps 7-10; and 1 of 18 points for high handicapped players.

The four low handicapped players felt there was no merit in this rule change; one player said it would be just about acceptable for games played under advanced rules.

One medium handicapped player said that the scheme 'devalued bisques'. Another made the comment that 'it is a different game'.

None of the high handicapped players had a good word for it. The most voiced objection was that they could not use their bisques to 'hit in'; that if their opponent made a successful roquet in the fifth or sixth turn then he or she would probably go round using their bisques, separate the opponent, and lay-up for the second ball, giving the other player no opportunity to get started. This occurred in one game between players of handicaps 18 and 22 where the 18 player pegged out in 2 turns, winning by +18 (in an 18 pt game) with 4 bisques to spare before the opponent had started.

Mr H J Bottomley also suggested that '... the change would inspire high handicap players to play the game at a higher level ...' and that it would '... speed up handicap games ...'.

For two reasons I do not think this would happen. First, surely high handicap players are already aspiring to play to a higher level; and second this will slow down handicap games by restricting the use that can be made of bisques.

Yours sincerely
J R P Lansdown, Cheltenham CC

Dear John,

Faith (7) and I (3 1/2) would like to say how well we think The Automatic Handicapping System is working. Having competed in 15 tournaments as far apart as Bowdon, Budleigh and Compton and having played 120 games each we feel that we can speak with some experience of its first full season of operations. It certainly seems to work well in the mid-range when players move around the country. We cannot speak for the minus players or for the high bisquers who play predominantly in their own clubs; they must have their own views. Players whose competitive games all take place in one venue may end up with an unrealistic handicap when taken in a wider context! It may even be possible to 'manipulate' one's handicap by careful

selection of events and venues but does this matter in the long run? No system is 100% perfect.

As a referee I would like to deplore the widespread use of coins as markers by both double-banked players and surprisingly by some referees. Coins are not only bad news for mowers if forgotten but they are also liable to move if the double-banked ball passes directly over them. Plastic markers only cost a few pence and are available in many clubs and golf or sports shops. They should be as much part of a player's equipment as a mallet when playing double-banked games.

Looking forward to the 1993 season.
Yours sincerely
Bob Fewtrell, IOW

Dear Sir,

After two years, the handicap card system seems to me to have revealed at least one valuable benefit (as intended) and one serious flaw (not intended at all).

The benefit lies in the open comparison and gradual equalisation of handicap standards between clubs.

The flaw lies in the fixed number of handicap points available to the system as a whole.

Croquet is expanding and beginners are joining at an encouraging rate. After a 'novice year' of coaching and practising, a beginner will be given a handicap of say 20 and then hopes to improve to 16-14-12 etc. This can only be done by taking points from others, except on the rare occasions when a player is judged to be a "rapid improver" and is put down 3 bands at once. In general, as one person goes down another goes up.

Players leaving croquet do not put their hard won points back into the system. Some older players with 'historical' handicaps may drift slowly upwards, providing a few points to accommodate the press of improvers, but some other ways of introducing more points into the system must be found. Here are some suggestions:

1. Tournament Handicappers could be permitted and encouraged to lower handicaps more frequently and by 1 or 2 bands as well as the 3 now permitted.

2. Club Handicappers could be encouraged to make annual assessments which lower more handicaps than they raise, thus putting more points into the system - eg by 5% or 10% of the club total.

3. The CA computer might be arranged to give an 'average' of all handicaps put into it, to give a benchmark.

4. At higher bisque levels, say 14 up, winners could be given 10 points but losers only 5. This would ease the situation I have seen in more than 1 visited club whereby a group of beginners who joined together 2 or 3 years ago and are steadily improving still seem all to be stuck on 18 or 20.

5. To discourage 'handicap massaging' by experienced players repeatedly picking off high-bisquers in, for example, All England club matches, perhaps the above could be reversed so that players of say 9 and below should gain only 5 points when beating bisquers of 14 or more.

Yours sincerely
John Evenett, Dulwich CC

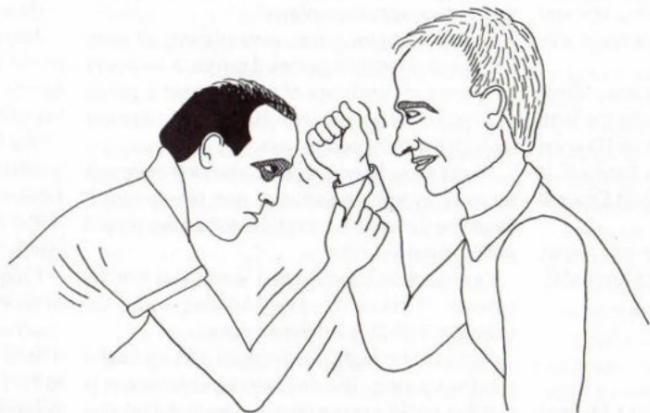
Two of the most vigorous combatants on CA Council were at each other's throats again on Saturday October 24th. Off the leash now they no longer had to consider the possibility of being "team-mates" for the forthcoming MacRobertson Shield.

Away from the personalities, the policies were no less fierce. It took over an hour for John Walters to deliver his Tournament Committee report. With a raft of proposals that generated discussion, it was the cornerstone to the Committee's 1993 plans that generated most debate. The Committee had arranged a shake-up for the CA's three premier events - the Opens, Masters and Mens/Womens Championships - placing them all at provincial centres, notionally to accommodate the World Championship at Hurlingham but also seen as a

handicap play. He pointed out that Council had supported these and that the Tournament Committee should now acknowledge this by turning more CA events over to these kinds of play. In fact the conditions for only one 1993 event had been changed, though further discussion on what was a very complex issue had simply been delayed to the next meeting - for a fuller debate on a growing file of correspondence the Chairman had on the issue!

One reverse for the Tournament Committee was voluntary - the Tournament Chairman stating that after contact with those likely to be involved, he wished the Ladies 1st Invitation Event to be for eight players again in 1993 (rather than the six which the original meeting had contemplated). Mirroring action the previous year over the Womens Championship (when last-minute changes were

of the report by the Subscription Working Party. Stephen Mulliner tabled an analysis of replies received from clubs after consideration of the proposals which he had published. His proposal was to implement phase 1 as a holding position pending further discussion with clubs and members (phases 2 and 3 NOT to follow automatically). That would levy a charge of £4 (including 50p Federation fees) / £3.50 (excluding 50p Federation fees) per club member on Registered Clubs in 1993, while there would be no increase in individual CA subscriptions. That amounted to a £1 increase in affiliation fees for non-Associate club members, and a £3.50 increase for Associates (who currently pay nothing through their clubs) which is countered by the freezing of subscriptions they pay directly to the CA (that



CA Council snubs World Championship

good thing "in itself". In a lengthy debate Council rejected the Tournament Chairman's impassioned pleas. Though narrowly defeating an amendment banning the World Championship from the CA's domain in 1993, a motion that "In 1993 The World Championship not be held at Hurlingham, but the Opens and Masters be held at Hurlingham" was passed by Council. Despite additional supportive intervention by the Publicity Committee Chairman and National Development Officer, Council seemed uninterested in the plight of the World Championship. One group of Councillors showed attitudes ranging from ambivalence to outright hostility to the event. Obviously close to resignation after this major snub, the Tournament Chairman decided instead to carry on and pick up the pieces of the devastated 1993 Calendar. There was an indication later, from Stephen Mulliner and Bill Lamb, that they might attempt to remove responsibility for the CA Ranking system from the jurisdiction of the Tournament Committee. Such a move would make the pressure for resignation almost irresistible - coming just at the moment when it was revealed that the Committee had set up a Sub-Committee to investigate and monitor how the Ranking System operated. Previously the system had been allowed to function with little interference, largely at the whim of Stephen Mulliner - who operated it. With concern over the ranking system having grown during the season, the Committee had decided to tackle the problem head-on but here were attempts to undermine this new-found authority.

Lionel Wharrad was scathing about the lack of action on encouraging full-bisque and advanced-

made at the request of competitors), it later became apparent that such a "listening approach" was one he wished to see elsewhere. His paper on the International Committee highlighted shortcomings during the 1992 Solomon Trophy, but it was aimed at organisational changes on the Committee that would: i) spread work more; ii) make it more accountable to Council; and iii) more responsive to the wishes of those players it affected. Discussion was curtailed pending detailed proposals. As if to underline his commitment to "consensus politics" the Tournament Committee had put two issues up for discussion at the forthcoming Federation Conference. Firstly The Secretaries Shield (a national team competition for the winners of regional leagues), where the format and qualification criteria were at issue. Secondly the Inter-Counties Championship, for which Bernard Neal had suggested a clever new 2-league system that would encourage more people and countries to take part.

Fortunately, other reports were less divisive. The Publicity Committee revealed that National Croquet Day 1993 would be on May 15th. The Development Committee had renamed the "4 lawn fund" the "4 court fund". Chris Hudson had been doing research into the reasons why lapsed Associates had left, producing statistics from his questionnaire that might help the Association retain more members. He also reported on progress to establish 8 new "Regional Competition Venues". The Secretary would keep a record of all enquiries in the future; this would allow us to target croquet and possibly demonstrate to clubs how the work of the Association Office produces new club members "on the ground".

The most important business was consideration

would otherwise have increased by £3 to £4 for 1993). All club members would receive 2 issues of "Croquet" magazine sent directly to them.

Judy Anderson proposed an amendment to reduce the fee to £3 with Federations still collecting their own 50p fees. What therefore amounted to a 50p reduction was defeated since there appeared to be no opposition to the £4/£3.50 charge in clubs but the Association could ill afford to give up the £3000 that each 50p raised. However, the difficult matter of how Federations should fit into the Grand Plan would be debated at the Federation Conference.

John Walters attempted to propose a complete and public abandonment of phases 2 and 3 (which led to a £12 per member fee) "right now". He said that "Croquet News" was essentially a good idea and that it could contain all the ordinary club member wanted; attempting to refocus the whole of every magazine was folly, could not be done, and that even attempts to do it would - in his experience - cause great annoyance to the existing readership. He wanted to amend the motion so that all club members received one winter issue of "Croquet" sent to them plus three issues of "Croquet News" through the clubs. His amendments were disallowed as "negating the motion".

Finally, the original motion as proposed by the Working Party was carried by Council. A detailed article on club and player reaction to the proposed subscription scheme will appear in a future issue, so too will the CA's plans as they take shape.

From Croquet Magazine's Council correspondent in discussion with Councillors.

The meeting called for 11 April 1992 could not serve as the 1992 Annual General Meeting because of insufficient notice

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at The Hurlingham Club on Saturday, 27th June 1992

The meeting called for 11 April 1992 could not serve as the 1992 Annual General Meeting because of insufficient notice (see Croquet No 221 page 10) and was reconvened for 27 June 1992.

Present: C J Irwin (Chairman) S N Mulliner (Retiring Chairman) R W Bray (Hon Treasurer) A J Oldham (Retiring Hon Treasurer) L W D Antenen (Secretary) and 12 Associates

Apologies were received from Mrs C Bagnall, M R French, W P Gillott, W E Lamb (Vice-Chairman), B G Neal, J W Solomon (President), C P Townsend.

In the absence of the President of Council, and there being no Vice-President in attendance, the meeting was chaired by the Chairman of Council, Mr C J Irwin.

Members shall be elected to represent one of the nine Croquet Federations of England by the votes of all Associates resident in the geographical area

1 MINUTES

1.1 The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 20 April 1991 were signed as a true record of that meeting.

2 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

2.1 The Chairman's Report had been published in "Croquet" Issue No 221 (May/June) following its presentation at the meeting of Associates held at the Hurlingham Club on 11 April 1992. There being no further comments the Report was adopted nem con.

3 TREASURER'S REPORT

3.1 The Treasurer's Report had been published in "Croquet" Issue No 221 (May/June) following its presentation at the meeting of Associates held at the Hurlingham Club on 11 April 1992. There being no further comments, the Report was adopted nem con.

4 ELECTION OF TREASURER

4.1 The proposal by J W Solomon (President), seconded by S N Mulliner (Retiring Chairman) that Dr R W Bray be elected Hon Treasurer was approved nem con.

5 ELECTION OF AUDITORS

5.1 The proposal by R J Smith, seconded by D W Shaw, that Messrs Nicholass Ames & Cobe be re-elected as Auditors was approved nem con.

There would not be a second AGM in 1992. The next AGM would be held in October 1993

6 ELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

6.1 There being only seven candidates for the eight vacancies on Council, Messrs D C Caporn, G Cuttle, M R French, S N Mulliner, D W Shaw, C P Townsend and D W Trotman were declared duly elected.

6.2 A J Oldham pointed out that the Agenda had not indicated that Dr R W Bray who had been co-opted to Council to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of W T Coles also retired under Rule 16 and he enquired whether he (Dr Bray) sought re-election to fill the eighth vacancy. S N Mulliner explained to the meeting that Dr Bray had told him that, since he would be ex-officio a member of Council if elected as Treasurer, he did not seek a normal elected place on Council. This left room for the introduction of a Federation representative on Council in the 1992/1993 session.

7 MOTIONS

(1) Direct Representation of Federations on the Council

7.1 Proposed by S N Mulliner on behalf of Council THAT

Rule 2: replace the existing rule by the following: (a) The management and control of the property, funds and affairs of the Association and the fulfilment of its objectives (except as otherwise provided in these Rules) shall be vested in a Council consisting of 24 members (exclusive of ex-officio members). (b) Fifteen members shall be elected by the votes of all Associates resident in the Domain, Scotland and Wales ("resident Associates"). One-third shall retire by rotation at each Annual General Meeting but shall be eligible for re-election under Rule 7. (c) Each of the other nine members shall be elected to represent one of the nine Croquet Federations of England by the votes of all Associates resident in the geographical area administered by the relative Federation ("qualified Associates"). One-third shall retire by rotation at each Annual General Meeting but shall be eligible for re-election under Rule 7.

Rule 7(a)(i): replace "Rule 2" by "Rule 2(b) or Rule 2(c)".

Rule 7(a)(ii): insert after "seconded" the words "for membership of the Council pursuant to Rule 2(b)".



The Croquet Association

Add Rule 7(a)(iii): "Associates duly proposed and seconded for membership of the Council as Federation representatives pursuant to Rule 2(c) by two other qualified Associates of whose candidature written notice has been received by the Secretary by 1st February preceding the Annual General Meeting".

Add Rule 26: "The provisions relating to Federation representatives in Rules 2 and 7 shall become effective at the discretion of the Council but not later than 31 December 1997"

7.2 The Chairman, C J Irwin, reminded the Meeting that the Motion had been presented at the meeting of Associates held on 11 April 1992.

7.3 There being no further points for discussion, the Motion was carried, voting 10 for, 0 against. The Chairman then announced the result of the postal ballot on this motion as being 66 votes for with 4 against.

(2) Alteration of the date of the Annual General Meeting

7.4 Proposed by S N Mulliner on behalf of Council THAT

Rule 3: replace "April, May or June" by "October".

Rule 5(d): replace "1st February" by "1st August".

Rule 7(a): replace each occurrence of "1st February" by "1st August".

7.5 This matter also had been presented at the previous meeting referred to above.

7.6 There being no further comments the Motion was carried. Voting 12 for, 0 against. The Chairman then announced the result of the postal ballot on this Motion as being 73 for with 1 against.

7.7 On a point of clarification the Chairman confirmed that there would not be a second AGM in 1992 and that the next AGM would be held in October 1993.

8 BENEFACTORS BOOK

8.1 The Secretary read the names in the Benefactors Book.

9 OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 There being no other business, the Meeting closed at 11.20am.

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The Last Presidents Cup?

1992 is the last time that "The Presidents Cup" will bring together the best eight available croquet players in the country. Next year the first "Croquet Masters Championship" will take place. One hope is that continuity might be provided by Angostura Aromatic Bitters, who have been such excellent sponsors of the Presidents Cup for two years - supported by a top rate PR team who have pushed Angostura and Croquet to the fore. It would be most fitting then, if the historic occasion of the first Croquet Masters Championship had the name of Angostura associated with it.

Here now, to help you enjoy any Indian Summer or to contemplate a balmy July in icy December,



ANGOSTURA

The President's Cup

A subtle blend of orange juice, creme de cassis and Angostura over ice, topped with soda water
For a special occasion add sparkling wine instead of soda water

Milawe Cocktail

Pour equal parts lemonade and ginger beer over ice

Stir in lots of Angostura

James' Delight

Mix 1 part each of lime juice, lemon juice and grenadine

Add 2 parts of pineapple juice and passion fruit juice and three parts of orange juice

Top up with ice and four dashes of Angostura

Grenadine Cooler

Take equal parts of pineapple and orange juice

Stir in 1oz Grenadine and 2 dashes of Angostura and pour over ice

Cranberry Crammer

Pour equal parts of cranberry juice, orange juice and soda water over ice

Stir in 5 dashes of Angostura

are a few suggestions for cocktails with Angostura. Just the thing to warm up a Christmas party, or to celebrate the coming croquet season - on January 1st!

As drinks manufacturers turn to herbs and spices to create non-alcoholic drinks with modern 'healthy' appeal, a new generation of low-alcohol drinkers has discovered a 150 year old recipe from

the Caribbean which gives real adult taste in a whole range of delicious summer drinks.

An exotic blend of over 20 herbs and spices, Angostura aromatic bitters is an essential ingredient of the exotic fruit filled cocktails of the Caribbean. A natural flavour enhancer, a few dashes of Angostura also adds a subtle yet distinctive flavour to tonic and mineral water, as well as cutting the sweetness of saccharine based mixers, like ginger ale and cola.

"ANGOSTURA aromatic bitters" was first made in 1824 by Dr J G B Siegart in the town of Angostura, Venezuela (renamed Ciudad Bolivar in 1846).



This year the Presidents Cup returned to the lush lawns of Hurlingham. This meant that Nigel Aspinall made himself available to play for the 23rd time - one short of John Solomon's record. He was joined by 5 regulars, Clarke, Fulford, Irwin, Maugham and Mulliner. David Goacher was at last given his first chance in the event after an excellent year and he was joined by Jeff Dawson - a surprise selection ahead of Debbie Cornelius.

Round 1

Fulford was first to get off the mark. Despite being 2 breaks down against Clarke, he hit a poor leave and finished in two turns after a good 10 yard take-off to set up his second break.

Maugham was soon on rover and peg against

Mulliner who had rashly taken on a long hoop 1 to give David a laid break. Steve then took his first ball round but stuck in 3-back off David's rover ball. David then stuck in rover allowing Steve to stick in hoop 1. A good leave by David was then hit by Steve who finished with a quadruple peel.

Dawson made a good start with a comfortable win against Aspinall and Goacher looked in control against Irwin who was 2-back alone vs 1 and peg. However, a series of unusual tactical manoeuvres allowed Colin to win without David scoring another point despite Colin making all his remaining hoops in separate turns.

Round 2

Saw winners play winners. Dawson was first to win with a whitewash against Mulliner. Fulford

and Maugham both won with triples in close games against Irwin and Aspinall. Clarke performed the first TPO of the event against Goacher and soon finished with a good break after Goacher finessed into the wrong corner.

Round 3

Aspinall, Dawson and Fulford all won by 26 against Irwin, Goacher and Maugham respectively. Clarke had TPO'd Mulliner but despite Steve splitting off the lawn from the contact, a missed roquet after hoop 3 by Chris allowed Steve to hit a 20-yarder to win.

Round 4

Was fairly unexciting with no triples. Both Dawson and Fulford lost their unbeaten records against Irwin and Mulliner respectively and

Aspinall and Clarke also won. So at the end of Day 1, we had a triple tie. Dawson, Fulford, Mulliner: 3; Aspinall, Clarke, Irwin: 2; Maugham: 1; Goacher: 0.

Round 5

Clarke beat Dawson on the sixth turn, but it was over an hour before another game finished. Mulliner took a scrappy game with Goacher and Maugham took the Bowdon battle with a +3 against Irwin. The BBC was filming the Aspinall/Fulford clash and were treated to an exciting if error-strewn game, which eventually went to the 11 times winner +5.

Round 6

Fulford put the morning's loss behind him to inflict a 26TP defeat on the luckless Dawson. Clarke and Maugham both had comfortable wins over Aspinall and Goacher. Meanwhile, Mulliner had decided to TPO Irwin who was on 1-back with the other ball. This proved to be a successful tactic with a 3-ball break soon established for victory.

Round 7

Produced 4 clinical triples from Irwin, Maugham, Mulliner and Goacher, who thereby broke his duck.

Round 8

Mulliner beat Maugham to complete an excellent day. Fulford beat Clarke with a TPO and Dawson and Irwin also won easily. So at the end of day 2, Mulliner had a 2 game cushion over Fulford. Mulliner: 7; Fulford: 5; Clarke, Dawson, Irwin, Maugham: 4; Aspinall: 3; Goacher: 1.

Round 9

Saw 4 rather one-sided games as Aspinall, Clarke, Fulford and Mulliner all won, only Clarke failing to triple.

Round 10

Fulford gained revenge over Aspinall with a whitewash triple. Meanwhile, Mulliner was playing Clarke. A scrappy start by Steve allowed Chris 4 shots, the last of which he hit to take a ball to 4-back. However, he left Steve a 10-yard lift shot which was refused in favour of the 'safe' long shot. Chris failed to finish his triple, breaking down on rover and peg. Steve went to 4-back but left Chris the identical 10 yard lift which Chris took, hit and finished from to open up the event. The other 2 games saw a bloodless win for Goacher over Dawson and another close Bowdon battle which again went to Maugham.

Round 11

Fulford beat Mulliner 26TP in the vital top of the table clash to join him on 8 wins. Irwin and Maugham both won with triples and Clarke beat Aspinall to move within one of the leaders.

Round 12

Saw Clarke's chances evaporate in a high quality 17TP loss to Maugham. Goacher continued his recovery with a maximum win over Aspinall and Mulliner beat Irwin. Meanwhile, Dawson looked set to beat Fulford 26TP when disaster struck on the straight rover peel. Robert took full advantage of the reprieve to win +4TP. So, going into the final

day, it was effectively a 2 horse race. Fulford, Mulliner: 9; Clarke, Maugham: 7; Irwin: 5; Aspinall, Dawson: 4; Goacher: 3.

Round 13

Mulliner showed no signs of nerves as he raced to a 26TP win over Dawson to put the pressure on Robert, who was playing Colin. An error by Colin when in control gave Robert a chance to Rigall Colin. However, an error by Robert gave Colin a good chance to finish which was wasted and it needed Robert to miss a subsequent 2 foot cut-rush before the game eventually went to Colin. Goacher and Maugham both won with triples against Clarke and Aspinall respectively.

Round 14

All Mulliner had to do to win his fifth Presidents Cup was beat Aspinall. However, Nigel was on 4 consecutive losses and had never lost 5 consecutive games in the event before. The game was fairly nervy with Nigel having the early running and eventually a break to 4-back. However, little pressure was being exerted on Steve since Goacher was taking his second break round against Fulford. Steve managed to regain the innings and from there played carefully to record a +17 win and victory in the tournament. Minutes later Goacher beat Fulford. Maugham completed his 7th triple of the event to beat Dawson and Clarke hit a bonus shot to snatch victory from Irwin +3OTP.

Mulliner: 11; Fulford, Maugham: 9; Clarke: 8; Irwin: 6; Goacher: 5; Aspinall, Dawson: 4.

There is no doubt that Steve deserved to win the event. His shooting was better than the rest of the field and he regularly played excellent turns. It was perhaps a slight shame that his rebound shooting ability served to instil a rather careless attitude at times, but that is a fault which we all occasionally commit.

Robert must be disappointed with the final day. He played well to produce a record 9 triples in the event. However, he failed to win any of the 5 games in which he did not have a triple and his 2 losses to Goacher ruined his chances, giving him just one of the 6 domestic tournaments this year.

David Maugham did well to win 8 of his last 10 games to maintain his outstanding record in this event. With the Eastern and Northern Championships under his belt this year he must now be one of the top 6 players in the world.

Chris had a solid tournament and rarely played a poor game. However, with only 3 triples on easy lawns, there was very little sparkle in his play.

Colin probably played worse in this event than he has done for 4 years and it

is a credit to him that he still managed to scrape together 6 wins.

David Goacher improved as the tournament progressed. From a dismal and downcast 0/6, he was positively chirpy at the end with 5 wins from his last 8 games.

Nigel recorded his worst ever result. His play was more defensive than any other player's and opponents often took advantage of this. However, he took his defeats with his customary good grace and it is always a pleasure to play against him.

From 3/3, Jeff was obviously disappointed to obtain just 1 more win. He always looked as if he belonged in the event and in my opinion was the most unlucky player, often managing to bring the best out in his opponents.

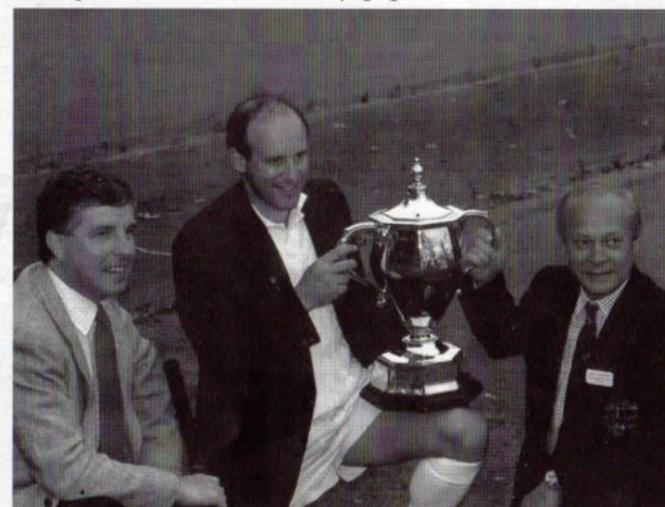
I felt that the standard of play at the top of the event was rather disappointing, but this is belied by the statistics (see below) which show a record percentage of triples. The standard of play in the lower half was however generally very good. Thanks go to Angostura for their generous sponsorship and to Keith Aiton for his efficient management.

Statistics

Total TPs 31; % TPs 55%
Longest game 135 mins; Shortest game 40 mins
Average game 81 mins

Individual Player Average Game Length

Clarke 67m; Dawson 73m; Fulford 74m; Mulliner 75m; Maugham 81m; Aspinall 87m; Goacher 93m; Irwin 102m.



	SNM	RIF	DBM	CDC	CJI	DJG	GNA	JPD
S N Mulliner (11 wins, 1st)	+26	+3qp	+11otp	+6tpo	+14	+26TP	-26	
R I Fulford (9wins, =2nd)	-26	+26	-17	+16	+16tp	+17	+26tp	
D B Maugham (9wins, =2nd)	+26tp	+26tp	+13tpo	-?	-?	+26tp	+4tp	
C D Clarke (8wins, 4th)	-3	-26	-14	+3	+17	+3tp	+19tp	
C J Irwin (6 wins, 5th)	-26	-26	+17tp	+5tp	+14tp	+7tp	+7tp	
D J Goacher (5 wins, 6th)	-11	-4	+14	-26	+10tpo	+26	+26tp	
G N Aspinall (4 wins, =7th)	+17	-13	-17	+7otp	-?	+26	+26	
J P Dawson (4 wins, =7th)	-6	-6	-3	+26tp	+14	-26	+16	
	-16	+?	-5	-?	+15	-16	+12tp	
	-14	+26tp	-17	-10	-14	-26	-26	
	-16	+?	-14	+7tp	-15	+26	+26	
	-26	+5	-3	-26	+26tp	+26	-16	
	-17	-26	-?	-26	+16tp	-26	-23	
	+26	-26	-19	-26	-16	+26	+16	
	-26	-4	-?	-26	-12	-26	+23	



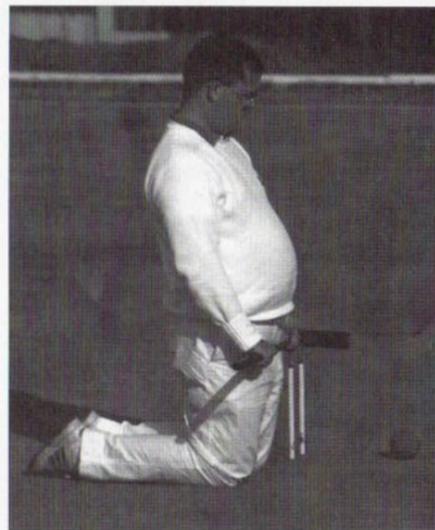
... of the Championship of the North of England
Here we are at Bowdon again. Now Gail Curry has told us all (on pain of death) that it never rains in the North, so this stuff falling out of the sky must be sun. That's good because it might help the dreadful cold I seem to have picked up, as happens (by pure coincidence of course) every time I come to this event. It's nice and warm too, so I better not take off any of these woollies otherwise I might get too hot. Although it would be nice to have sufficiently few clothes on so as to be able to move my arms and legs; oh well, I guess I'll have to stick to rolling around the lawn rather than walking. Hmmmm, perhaps that Guinness stuff Gail always talks about might help. Oh yes look it goes on like a treat, sets very quickly too. I don't think my clothes have ever been so waterproof, I mean "sunproof", they're not very white any more though. Here comes Gail now, she doesn't look very happy - I think I'll roll off somewhere else.
Christine Irwin always manages this event, I wonder how it's going. There's the Management now. Oh dear, she seems to have put on some weight; mind you she's playing well these days; can't say I like the beard much though. So who've we got here this year. Mr Tall jnr has gone to America I'm told; the rules are different there though - two hoops, no mallets and you have to be very tall. But I heard during the Olympics that their amateurs get paid a lot of money to play! Sounds like a "Gail Curryism" to me. The Little Miss' are doing quite well. Little Miss Little even beat Captain Lanky-Lanky-Lanky-Lancashire and Little Miss Not-So-Little beat Mr No-Errors, but he always seems to have "no-error" games against the Little Misses - so he never beats them. Mr Little and his brother Mr Littler were not playing this year (So with the absence of Mr Tall jnr and his friend Mr Machismo

Has anyone seen the report ...?

quite a good year for the youngsters all round then, notching up fewest losses in many-a-year by not entering) but their brother Mr Littlest was. Mr Littlest had obviously done something he was ashamed of to Mr Pink-Elephants - in fact he was so ashamed he wouldn't tell anyone what it was. Perhaps it was just that he hadn't spiked Mr Pink-Elephants' drink! The "best" players would have tied to win the consolation Egyptian event, except a condition was imposed that you had to play a minimum number of games in it - and they fell short of that minimum by virtue of playing absolutely none at all.

In the final the Management had to play Mr Universe, who is Champion of the known universe of course. The Management was playing well, and doing well, but I thought that Mr Universe would just flex a pectoral to win the fourth game and take the match to a deciding fifth. Mr Universe had a small peg-out (apparently they all do) but his posing got the better of him and he missed! The Management then bounced him out of the club and that was that.

So where is the tournament report? It must be around somewhere, after all there were 24 players so someone must have had the decency to agree to writing one. Surely the twin peaks of The Management and Gail Curry looming over them would get anyone to sign. Oh well, until it arrives I suppose I'll have to do it. Now where's my Tournament Report form?



THE WEATHER WAS censored.
THE FOOD WAS down the road at the Canadian Charcoal Pit.

THE MANAGEMENT WAS the wrong sex I think!
THE LAWNS included lawn 4 unfortunately.

THE WINNER WAS a little lucky in game 4 of the final.

THE TOURNAMENT REPORTER WAS n't.

Championship of the South of England 18th-20th September 1992 By Andrew Gregory

Unaccountably, this was the first time I had visited Compton on my croquet travels. What a feast of entertainment I had been missing! On Saturday we were treated to both football and women's hockey. In the latter spectacle, it was my contention that the thighs of Eastbourne's no.16 outgirthed Robert Fulford's. Somehow I lacked the courage to verify this.

On Sunday, the neighbouring sportsfield provided an entire jamboree for our enjoyment. The highlight of this was a cricket match between an England ladies team, and a University of Brighton XI comprising various ex-internationals and "celebs". In their allotted overs the University XI was held to 105 all out. The ladies were subdued by an opening attack of Jon Snow and John Lever, and never looked like reaching their target. They eventually subsided to 87 for 9. But the men had reckoned without Councillor Maurice Skilton. The Mayor of Eastbourne was presenting, and indeed giving, the trophy. In a magnificent display of personal whim, chauvinism and total disregard for the rules, he presented the trophy to the ladies "because they weren't actually all out".

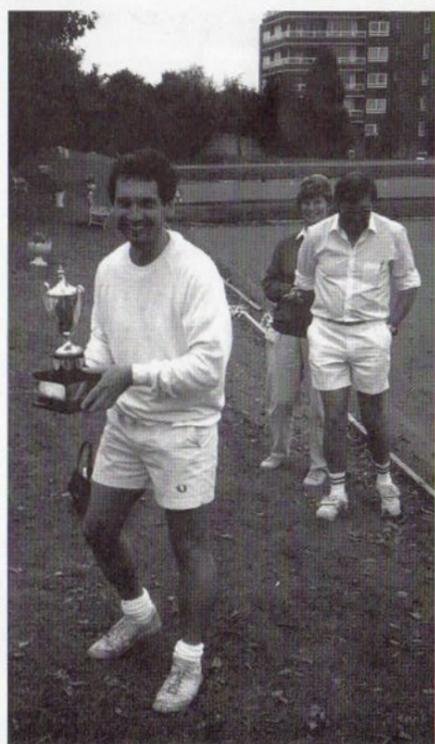
Would that the same principles had governed the croquet. "Well Stephen, you did beat Annabel 2-0, but you did fail your sextuple, so Annabel goes through." Scrupulous manager that he is, Roger Wood sadly failed to apply this logic, so Mulliner made his way to the semi-final. Annabel meanwhile ate some ginger cake which, she assures me, is the solution to all problems, and went on to claim a deserved reduction in handicap.

In the semi-final Mulliner faced John Walters. First game, fourth turn, Walters went to 4-back, Mulliner hit the lift and completed a TPO, leaving his balls in corner 3, and on the West boundary about 4 yards South of corner 2. With the contact, Walters rolled the corner 3 ball to between hoops 1 and 2, his own ball finishing within eighteen inches of the boundary beside the other ball. He could only rush this behind hoop 2, and then took off back to hoop 1, leaving himself a 3-yard angled hoop. This was run with aplomb, and he finished that turn.

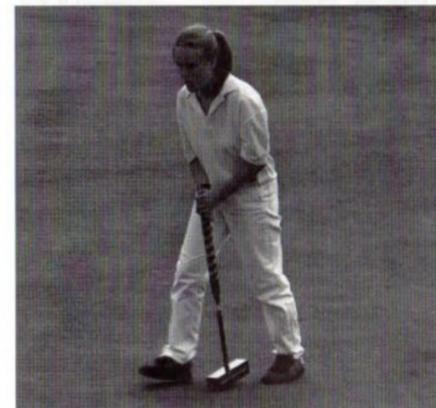
In the second game Mulliner missed Walters' duffer tice to concede another fourth turn ball round. The lift was missed, and Walters completed the triple, thus winning the match in twelve turns.

The lawns at Compton were in fine condition. The only problem was the abundance of wormcasts.

(continued at bottom of page 15)



Stiff Upper Lip and Courtesy



Junior Championship Bowdon, 15-17 July By Andrew Bennet

Entries were down to three this year, three more being drummed up after the closing date. Various reasons were offered, including high entry fees, disdainful attitude, holiday dates and fear of Ben Green. Pick, mix and add as you like.

All the entrants were previous competitors. It was pleasing to see Yohann Ravez (Fontenay-le-Compte) back during a French government-subsidised trip which had started at 4.30 that morning, and James Coleman, who had not been available last year. Mark Elwell and Robert Owen from Wolverhampton were here again with their stylish play, a great credit to their coach, David Iddon. Nicola Currie and Ben Green, the Bristol

This was especially acute on lawn 3, so your reporter selflessly agreed to to play on that lawn for an hour each morning before everyone else, just so that the lawn might be cleaner for the rest of the players. And did they appreciate it? Nothing but abuse did I get, something about holding up the tournament. Ingrates.

For entirely unconnected reasons, the second semi-final was not ready to start until some time after the first was complete. The match hinged on the start of the first game. Fulford blobs hoop one, Goacher hits across the lawn and wins +26. In neither of the next two games did the loser take croquet, Goacher winning the decider 26TP.

The manager informs me that this is the first time since 1987 that Robert has failed to reach the final. His opponent for the last four years has been either Mulliner or Walters. And the 1987 finalists? Mulliner and Walters.

In the Swiss Mulliner beat Fulford 26TP, then lost to Lewis Palmer. Palmer now had to play Fulford, who made a second vain attempt at a sextuple.

contingent, were looking dangerous, Ben being the hot favourite after the impression he had made at the Inter-Counties. At the end of the first day, however, he had some more proving to do after James was the clear leader.

At last, junior players have rediscovered that missing and clanging are socially acceptable ways of giving up the innings, and that such misfortunes are to be borne with the stiff upper lip. Long hit-ins are still highly fashionable, but the accuracy of the subsequent splits, rushes and hoop-approaches may vary. Just when they thought they had done all the work, they found themselves looking at a beautiful "Aldridge" hoop - lovingly prepared by Brian Storey or myself.

On the spare lawn, those who were not quite young enough to qualify for the Championship raced through many games (including the fastest +26 on record by Colin Wild) with the Golden Oldie, David Lendum (22), producing TPs as if from a hat.

I'm sorry if that digression makes it sound as if the Juniors were slow, which they were not. For one thing, Law 45 (a) was not abused this year. The Law is intended to permit the outplayer to take shelter or attend to such matters as refereeing and managing. In the previous three years it had been taken as an excuse for timewasting and relayed

discourtesies. This year the croquet received full attention, not one pack of cards was seen and I found only one half-empty can of Coke.

Yohann played with *panache*, James' games were full of *Aufregung*, and if I knew the languages of Bristol and Wolverhampton I would continue. As it happened, Ben had some serious competition, not least in the final in which he beat James +9, +9. There was an awkward moment when James was hampered after 2-back in the second game. I gave him the benefit of the doubt, as his mallet has no bevel and it was not definitely a bottom edge. The spectators also looked doubtful but agreed with the decision. In any case, justice was done at the next hoop.

Chris Hudson was able to join us on the last day and was refused permission by the Manager to go shopping in Altrincham, because Ben would not take long to finish. The Manager was right, and at the presentation Chris promised that the CA would get the cup re-plated this year and wouldn't lose it this time, *honestly*.

Honourable mention is due to Brian Storey for his time and expertise in organisation, and indeed to David Lendum, Alan Linton and the other Bowdon members who gave their time and effort. Nearly forgot: and to Bill Aldridge for making the hoops. (If you can't make them any other way ...)



(L to R) Yoann Ravez, Ben Green, James Coleman, Nicole Currie, Mark Elwell, Robert Owen.

Palmer then should have completed a triple, but some sadness behind rover enabled Fulford to hit in and win by one. The three-way tie was resolved by Palmer winning the shoot-out at the peg.

The first game of the final was won by Walters with a sixth turn 26TP. Walters had the first break in the second game, but was faced with a take-off approach to first hoop with his second. The take-off went into the jaws, and the attempted taking of position saw the ball roll back. This was Walters' first mistake of the tournament! A few turns later Goacher completed a delayed triple, to the stirring accompaniment of the Eastbourne Sea Cadets Band.

In the third game Goacher played his first ball off the West boundary, just North of the peg. Walters laid a duffer tice. Goacher hit this, picked up a break and went to 4-back. The lift was missed, and Goacher completed a fifth turn triple. The fourth game had an opening similar to the third, and again Goacher took a ball round third turn. This time the lift was hit, and after one false start Walters embarked on a TPO.

It was perhaps at this point in the weekend that the absence of a certain individual was most keenly felt. The waitress at the Chinese restaurant had put her finger on it. Surveying our motley crew, she enquired "Where is Mr. Hilditch?" Where indeed? for Richard would surely have revelled in the entertainment provided during the tea interval of the aforementioned cricket match. Majorettes were, the announcer informed us, majoretting to the well amplified strains of Duran Duran.

John Walters was not enjoying Duran Duran, but graciously did not blame the music for the astonishing miss that he made, having just done the first peel on his opponent. This rare lapse left Goacher with an excellent opportunity to finish the match, which indeed he did.

This was the first major title for David Goacher, and he well deserved it. John Walters' play was most impressive through the weekend, but he did make both his mistakes in the final. David was a bit scrappy in the earlier rounds, but gave little away when it mattered.

"Where is Mister Hilditch?"

Results

North of England Championship

Winner (1): D B Maugham (=3 seed) bt

Fulford +17, +4, -3, +2TP;

Cornelius +3, +5; Walters +11, +21;

S Comish +5, +25; C Wild +3, +23TP.

Runner-up (1): R I Fulford (=1 seed) bt

Burridge +22TP, +10TP;

Irwin +7TP, +11TP0;

B Storey +18TP, +26TP; A Sutcliffe w/o.

Semi-finalists (2): Miss D A Cornelius (=5 seed) bt

Openshaw -23, +18TP, +26;

J Haslam +24, -17, +12; A Bennet +11, +4.

I J Burridge bt Symons +17, +4;

Harding -9, +25, +17.

Quarter-finalists (4): D K Openshaw (=1 seed) bt

Williams +22, +17; A Collin +20, +25TP.

J O Walters (=5 seed) bt J E Guest +11, +21;

J R Hilditch +16, -17, +1.

A J Symons bt Curry +6, +4; A Saurin +7, +2.

C J Irwin (=5 seed) bt Reeve +13, +20TP.

Round 2 (4): C Williams bt

I Maugham +10, +9.

R Harding bt

D J Goacher (=5 seed) -16, +22, +20TP.

Miss G Curry bt

C D Clarke (=3 seed) -17, +19, +8.

D Reeve bt M Sandler +21, +9.

South of England Championship

Winner (1): D J Goacher (=3 seed) bt

Walters -26TP, +17TP, +26TP, +23;

Fulford +26, -26, +26TP;

Pritchard +10, +25; D Magee +14, +23.

Runner-up (1): J O Walters (=3 seed) bt

Mulliner +14OTP, +26TP;

Palmer +14, +4; C N Williams +26, +26TP.

Semi-finalists (2): S N Mulliner (=1 seed) bt

McDiarmid +26TP, +20;

D L Gaunt +26TP, +17.

R I Fulford (=1 seed) bt Gregory +15TP, +26TP;

R E Wallis +26TP, +26TP.

Quarter-finalists (4): L J Palmer bt

D W Shaw +10, +22.

Miss A J McDiarmid bt Dr R Wood +16, +11.

A K Gregory bt

Mrs W R D Wiggins -17, +9, +6.

C H L Pritchard bt M J Evenett +8, -7, +15.

Consolation Swiss

Winner: **Palmer** 6/7 (after shoot-out)

Runners-up: **Mulliner, Fulford** 6/7

All England Handicap

Area Final Winners

North: **J Hawkins**, Bowdon (5)

South-West: **B Marsh**, Dyffryn (10)

South-East: **Mjr L Hawkins**, Ramsgate (11)

East: **S P Sharrock**, Wrest Park (8)

London: **S Harbron**, Letchworth (16)

National Final

Winner: **S Harbron**, Letchworth (14)

Summary of other Results

BOWDON

NORTH OF ENGLAND WEEK

Manager: J Hawkins

Rick Harding provided many of the highlights. He achieved triples in the A class, B class and handicap singles. In his B class final he was for 4-back alone but wired (with no lift); he jumped over hoop 1 from five yards to hit-in 35 yards away, make the last 3 hoops - but miss a 10 yard return roquet and lose by 1!

In the handicap singles final Alan Linton was for 1-back and 1-back with Ken Cooper penult and peg. Alan hit-in and went round in complete darkness - leaving the lawn with 10 seconds left on the clock. Ken cornered, and Alan went round on the last

turn regardless to win by 1.

Advanced Class events (K/O)

A: **H Taylor** bt B Thompson +5 OT

B: **H Taylor** bt R Harding +1

C: **J Hawkins** bt Mrs L Taylor-Webb +11

Full-Bisque D Class (Block)

1. **D Buxton** 4/4

Handicap Singles (Egyptian)

1. **A Linton** 4/5

2. **A Bennet** 5/7

Handicap Doubles (K/O)

M Sandler & B Shotton bt

A Linton & B Storey +24

BUDELIGH SALTERTON

Advanced 3-8 August (K/O after Blocks)

A: **D Harrison-Wood** bt C S Jones +6

B: **C J Davey** bt L Toye +3

H'cap C Class 3-8 August (K/O after Blocks)

Mrs G Dart (9) bt

P A Dwherryhouse (10) +14

Handicap 3-8 August (K/O after Swisses)

D Prescott (7) bt T Howard (4) +2

Handicap Doubles 3-8 August (K/O)

D Cornelius & M Hornby (9) bt

J McBurns & A Wickham (13) +10

CHELTENHAM

20-25 July

Managers: Dr R and Mrs D Wheeler

In a week when Cheltenham Town was hosting a Music Festival, a Junior Tennis Championship and the County Cricket, the Croquet Club organised their 76th July Tournament.

A record 66 entries were accommodated by the impressive management and by the use of three extra lawns on the East Glos Hockey pitch. So in the Egyptian handicap alone four people had 12 games in the week, the average being 7.3 games.

Alan Bogle achieved a 7th turn triple peel and Millicent James got her Bronze award.

Level Play (K/O after Blocks)

A class, **D Harrison-Wood** bt

C N Williams +26

B class, **A Pidcock** bt Mrs D H Harris +12

C class, **Miss H Pritchard** bt R H Selmes +8

D class, **R B Huyshe** bt D Regan +21

Full Bisque class, **R Selmes** bt

Mrs M E Evans +4

H'cap Doubles (22pt Swiss)

Family, 1. **Dr & Mrs B G F Weitz** 4/4

Non-Fmly, 1. **C N Williams** and **S Harding** 4/4

Handicap (Egyptian)

1. **R B Huyshe** (6) 74 pts

2. **A Pidcock** (2) 71 pts

Level Play w/e 29-31 August (Egyptian)

Managers: P J and Mrs G Dorke

The weather-man predicted a stormy week-end, but 48 croquet players arrived at Cheltenham for the Bank Holiday Level Play Tournament eager for games and prepared for anything.

Manager Peter-Cheerful-Welsh-Dragon-Dorke was wearing a monster "He who must be obeyed" badge and instructed us all to obey Law 48(a), ie to get on with it. Bernard Neal did just that and TPd Peter in the very first game, which gave Peter plenty of time to reset the peg on lawn 5 so as to make double-peeling penult and rover in one stroke impossible. He appears to have succeeded - spoil sport!

Most players must have read Law 48, or at any rate they got their games over in an hour or two, but some evidently hadn't and we suffered a few four and even five hour matches, or perhaps these players were just taking full advantage of having no time limits.

There were the usual amusing fluke strokes - running 2-back in order from the hoop 3 area when attempting a long roquet; failing a 10 yard roquet but making one at 20 yards instead; making a roquet along a yard line by skillfully (?) swerving round two other balls also on the yard line!! This last notwithstanding, the lawns were really very good, but a little local knowledge must have helped - just see where most of the class winners came from!

To our surprise, Saturday remained reasonably fine - even the odd sun bat was spotted, one sprouting a magnificent, flowing brown pony-tail! Everyone got a dowsing on Sunday morning but the rest of the day and Monday were beautifully bright although breezy ("I allowed for the wind but it didn't blow" was one rueful comment).

The prize for playing the most games was won by Paul (Rush-about) Heath with 11 games. This qualified him for the Carnarvon prize for speed (he led an Egyptian expedition, geddit?). *Rosemary Gagan* A: 1. **A Bogle** - Cheltenham (no ladies) B: 1. **B Weitz** - Cheltenham (2.5 ladies - Dab Wheeler, half-time) C: 1. **C Ross** - Cheltenham (1 lady) D: 1. **D Regan** - Kington Langley & Cheltenham (3 ladies) E: 1. **Ms V McClements** - Cheltenham (7 ladies!)

COLCHESTER

Handicap w/e 7-9 August (Swiss)

Manager: Pat Hetherington

A remarkable and deserved victory for Catherine Storey, because the three way tie was decided by a shoot-out at the peg in which she was comfortably the highest bisquer. Unperturbed, she struck early and was unmatched. It was also impressive that she remained so solid throughout the weekend, as one of the highest handicapped players competing on Colchester's tricky lawns.

1. **Mrs C Storey** 6/7 (after shoot-out)

2. **R White & G Willard** 6/7



COMPTON

Veterans Championship

Whisky Galore at Compton

Manager: Derek Caporn

Our laid back manager Derek Caporn

had his first problem when two competitors failed to appear at 10.00 Monday, so his block plan for the open handicap was turned into a swiss. However, Michael and Margaret Turner, who thought the competition started on Tuesday, decided to look in after lunch for a bit of practice and found themselves immediately in action. The second problem was when Dr Robert Wiggins disturbed a wasps nest under a water hydrant. Ron Atkinson his opponent could and did run away fast, but Robert was stung very badly on the face and hands. Fortunately Gordon Drake, referee and pharmacist was on hand,

but the stings lost Robert a day's play.

The manager has the power to ask someone to write up the competition and if he does this just as a critical stroke is about the be taken it is very effective as a way of putting off an opponent. The reason for my selection was that I had uttered a biblical parody after a particularly lucky hit in from long range, helped by the lawn. "The lawn giveth and the lawn taketh away, blessed be the state of the lawn!" The rest of the time, despite their excellent condition the lawns seemed unusually to 'take away'. However they did not stop Arthur Rojette from twice making his hoop in order from twenty yards whilst really aiming for a ball somewhat to the side.

The participants ranged in age from a youngster of 60 years 3 months to a veteran of 82. It was agreed that 3 games in a day at 80 was quite a strain, but speaking as one of the youngsters I will be happy to achieve two matches at that age. One sign of the general decline in hearing acuity was an incident when someone in the other double-banked game asked if they could mark red and on being told "No", said "Thanks" and promptly marked it!

It was interesting to hear the different approaches to the ethics of the game by various competitors. One pointed out that his opponent, who had just been commiserating with someone else about losing one's spouse, was just about to play the wrong ball. This was gratefully acknowledged and it was agreed that the rule on silence while such errors were observed was 'nonsense'. At the other extreme, someone who was distracted and enraged by the other game in a double-banking and then played the wrong ball, accused his opponent of 'gamesmanship' when it was not pointed out until after the event. I think it illustrates several facets of croquet; firstly that one should not get upset about anything, particularly the other game, because that is worth two bisques to your opponent straight away and secondly that

one can play to have an enjoyable game whether one points out potential infringements or not, but it as well to acknowledge that the rules as they stand do not call for advance warnings to be given.

The whisky reference in the title refers to the little known fact that fully a bottle of whisky a day has to be supplied during Veterans week, and that does not include the bottle raffled off for 20 tickets at £1 each! There was no scientific evidence for better or worse play during the afternoons than the mornings. The major difference after lunch was a feeling of satisfaction at having eaten so well, thanks to the lady members of the club who had volunteered to prepare and serve such superb fare. Play also stopped for tea at 4pm which is as it should be in all civilised parts of the world.

Eileen Shaw was quite the most elegantly dressed player of the tournament and took part in an exciting exhibition of "speed croquet" with her husband Dennis in the final of the doubles. As time closed both sides were rushing around so that errors - missed roquets, croquets off the lawn and playing with the wrong ball crept in. Which only made it the more exciting. Alan Oldham came to present the prizes, after having been spectating the Open at Hurlingham. He said that it was much more exciting here though, because the unexpected happened and the results were never certain - right up until the last ball was hit. *J Hobbs*

Advanced Level w/e 1-2 August (K/O)

T D Harrison bt

D C D Wiggins -26, +18, +2

HURLINGHAM

Week Event 8-15 August

Late Show alters it All

On receiving the order of play I was encouraged to see how many women were competing in this event. I, therefore, set off for Hurlingham in the hopes of seeing a good display of ladies croquet on the lovely setting in front of the house. Sure enough on arrival there were all the ladies down by the managerial tent awaiting orders. The games started and where was the female contingent - on the outside lawns. It was obvious that the absence of a female Fulford or Clarke was preventing the ladies from showing off their talent on a stage which they deserved.



EDGBASTON

Handicap w/e 17-19 July (K/O after Blocks)

Manager: Andrew Gregory

Four members of the Flutter family, spanning three generations, proved that croquet is a game that can be enjoyed competitively by all ages. They all gave a good account of themselves in a tournament where the overall standard of play was very high. Fortunately they were drawn into the four different blocks thereby reducing the possibilities of any inter-family needle matches.

David Kibble (handicap 16) secured his bronze award with a 10 hoop break with bisques; Faith Fewtrell achieved her Silver award with a bisqueless break of 12 hoops. **A Flutter** (12) bt W Ward (4) +11

GUILDFORD & GODALMING

Advanced Level w/e 15-16 August (Egyptian)

1. **D C D Wiggins** 6/6

2. **N Harris** 6/7

HARROW OAK

Handicap w/e 11-12 July (Swiss)

Manager: Richard Hilditch

A Tradition Dies

It's like this, you see. I happened to have some plastic cutlery in my luggage, and by the simple thoughtless act of donating it to the club I ruined the long-standing tradition of the Lonely Harrow Knife. There were even three pens, but then you expect that sort of efficiency when Richard Hilditch is managing. He did a remarkable job of keeping 11 players occupied in games of greatly varying speed.

David Ruscombe-King's enterprising tactics led to mixed results. But without doubt the most entertaining performer was Terry Burge, who hits very hard and mostly very straight, to the accompaniment of his own running commentary. Whilst giving the impression of belonging to the wham-bam-slam school, he had enough control to finish his last game with his first tournament triple peel.

Meanwhile, Paul Sharrock played with quiet determination, winning all his games, a handicap reduction and a silver award.

Thanks again Harrow, and I'm really sorry about the knives. I won't bring any more, I promise. **A Bennet**

1. **P Sharrock** 6/6

2. **D Drazin** 5/6

and the Ladies Candlesticks. This late show alters it all and we see that the ladies game can take centre stage. *Celia Pearce*

RYDE
Advanced Play w/e 14-16 August (Block)

1. **D Coates** 7/8

2. **P Kennerley** 6/8

NOTTINGHAM

Week Event 10-16 August

Having your cake and eating it

Manager: Ian Vincent

A smaller field than usual, coupled with Ian Vincent's unobtrusive management of six different events, ensured that you could have as much play as you wanted in this week tournament. The only player who might dissent from this view was James Death, who seemed to contrive to spend a fair amount of his time waiting. Yet James wasn't idle; when he wasn't playing he was eating - lunch, remnants of lunch, tea, whatever. Lest it be thought James would prefer to eat apple pie(s) than play croquet, we can acknowledge that he played pretty well too.

Barbara Noble was playing - after a good degree of cajoling - in her first tournament. She was one of the band of players who did well in more than one event.

In my report last year I said that James had been pegged out en route to defeat in the final of the handicap; as James has spent much of the year reminding me, it was he who pegged out one of his balls. In reversing that result now, James took his second win at Nottingham this year - not bad for a 14 year-old.

Robin Hood Handicap (K/O after Egyptian)

J Death bt A Weightman +16

Level Class Events (D & P)

A: **B G Hallam** bt L Whittaker +14

B: **A Weightman** bt W Ward +4

C: **J Death** bt Ms M Boyd +17, +14

Handicap D Class (Block)

1. **Mrs B Noble** 4/4

Handicap Doubles (K/O)

L Whittaker & I Smith bt

G Hopewell & Mrs B Noble +1 OT

PARKSTONE

Level Play 24-29 August (K/O after Blocks)

A: **P Trimmer** bt A T R Leggate +8

B: **J A Packer** bt Mrs E Asa-Thomas +21

H'cap C Class 24-29 August (K/O after Blocks)

Mrs D Birrell bt F J Exell +6

X Handicap Singles 24-29 August (K/O)

D Trimmer bt R F Bailey +26

Y Handicap Singles 24-29 August (Egyptian)

1. **A T R Leggate** (1.5) 4/5 (117pts)

2. **C F Moon** (6) 4/5 (116pts)

Handicap Doubles 24-29 August (K/O)

C Jones & Miss M S Catling (17) bt

D Thatcher & R T Jackman (6.5) +2 TPO

ROEHAMPTON

"B" Level 11-12 July (K/O & Swiss)

Manager: Paul MacDonald

Players arrived to find that they had been provided with their own elegant alphabetical list of Players and a set of rules and regulations. Such attention to detail was one of the many attributes of the Manager.

The winner was clearly "The Best!" In the Swiss Kevin Carter won a game in 42 minutes with an 8th turn triple. Patrick Hort won his first Mars Bar (=triple peel) and therefore a CA Gold Award with it.

Concorde was 2 minutes and 33 seconds late and 1 degree off track for the presentations.

R Best bt N R Harris -6, +2, +4

Consolation Swiss: 1. **K J Carter** 5 wins

SOUTHPORT

Week Tournament

Level Play (Blocks)

A: 1. **D Appleton** 6/9

B: 1. **A Linton** 4/5

C: 1. **E Dalley** 5/5

Handicap D Class (Block)

1. **J Alpert** (18) 7/7

Handicap (K/O)

J Alpert (18) bt R Harding (1.5) +3

SURBITON

The Peel Memorials

Manager: Derek Caporn

I have seen Surbiton described as a favourite river resort; with the advent of the second day's play in the Peel Memorials I can see why. Heavy rain started at the commencement of play and by lunch time all lawns except one were flooded, which was a great pity as the previous day, like Turkish Delight, had started full of eastern promise.

The lawns, whilst still showing some scars from the severe winter, played reasonably true and seemed to favour those players who were sheltering behind a stockade of bisques; which sprouted monotonously in the fertile wasteland beyond the borderline of each lawn.



Australian BALLS

*Time to sit down
and be discounted!*
By Creina Dawson

I'm still standing! By John Walters

John Walters cannot be allowed to get away with publishing mis-information as he did on page 18 of the July/August 1992 issue of "Croquet". He decries the fact that for the next MacRobertson Shield, Dawson 2000 croquet balls will be used.

It is not true, as John Walters claims, that Australians do not want to use the "dreaded ball." In fact he then contradicts himself by saying that they are used almost exclusively in Australia. Someone must think they are O.K.

Maybe, as with all new products, at first some players found difficulty in changing over to them, but having now used them in our National Championships since 1989, we have adapted to them well and like them very much. Because they are a little different, players have to take more care with their strokes, but surely this is good for croquet.

Perhaps the U.K. has kept the best for themselves, but certainly the product exported to Australia, particularly over the past 10 years or so, has been less than perfect. Yes, we should have returned them, but the reality is that we tended not to. The long delays without balls meant that most clubs had to battle along with an inferior product rather than suffer the delays and the added expense of shipping them back for replacement. Difficulties were also experienced in actually procuring balls at all.

Maybe for the past quarter of a century we have been the dumping ground and were forced to play with the U.K.'s reject balls - undersized, overpriced, out of shape, easily cracked. Yes, reliable in their pull for peeling but the undersized nature of the balls must also have helped. But how well we remember the balls we used to refer to as the "pudding balls" - the ones that could only be rushed with great difficulty. Although marked "London" the story was that they were actually produced in Taiwan and in no way stood up to the Australian heat. Cracks appeared in the covering very quickly.

It is most interesting to note that we were paying anything up to A\$400 for a set of balls from the U.K. but the price made an astounding plunge downwards soon after the Dawson 2000 balls came onto the market with a price tag of A\$205 (now A\$225). Thus, not only were we getting an inferior quality but were also paying through the nose for the privilege.

At least we Aussies can now go out onto a court to play and do not need to inspect each of the balls to check whether they are cracked, undersized or egg-shaped. We know they will be the same size and weight and that they are round.

The Australian Croquet Association, State Associations and clubs can rest assured that the balls they purchase will last for a substantial time and do not have to be replaced on almost a yearly basis as was the case in the past.

Is John Walters like the old Luddites of the past and frightened of new technology, or is he merely frightened that the U.K. team may not be able to cope and so lose the MacRobertson Shield? Perhaps it is time to sit down & be discounted - or as we Aussies would say, sit down and shut up.

*Creina Dawson (no relation to the makers of the Dawson 2000 Ball) is
South Australian State Team Captain and
Australian Trans-Tasman Women's Team Captain*



The problems of croquet balls have been on my mind for quite some time now. I can still remember the first attempts at making a more reliable article than the problematic Jaques Eclipse balls of the mid-eighties. The Walker Balls were durable - indestructible in fact - but with a significantly higher bounce than that we were used to. Nevertheless they had their proponents, particularly the "you should be able to adapt / we'll get used to them / we must have an alternative to Jaques" school of thought. Fortunately, thanks to a combination of not wanting to settle for what was currently on offer (in the knowledge that something better would appear) and gradually improving Jaques Eclipse, Walker Balls did not manage the national take-over they once threatened.

Now we are faced by a number of different balls. As Chairman of the Tournament Committee I am all too aware of the potential difficulties that poses. Surely it is unacceptable to expect players to go from one tournament to another, swapping between balls with substantially different playing characteristics continually, some players having the advantage of playing with ball types used by their club. And make no mistake, the difference between the soggy Dawson 2000 at one extreme and the lively Birkdale II at the other is substantial. May I also put one myth to rest straight away: the changing necessary between ball types is completely different to that necessary between lawn speeds - the complexities of the changes needed for the former dwarf the requirements of the latter (mainly skill for a faster lawn and strength for a slower one!). But I accept that the difficulties are probably greatest towards the "top-end" of the game, where the margins for error are far smaller.

In setting its "Standards" the CA Equipment Committee had in mind the encouragement of new ball manufacturers, a laudable enough motive, and that is why the specifications are relatively generous. Now of course it is politically difficult to tighten up - and exclude balls made by those manufacturers who have been "encouraged". Though I believe we should have a specification which is such that any balls complying with it have near indistinguishable characteristics in play. Apart from the differences in play, balls of the modern era have shown other problems: fragility & inconsistency in size/shape/weight (Jaques Eclipse); propensity to lose shape in heat (Jaques Eclipse and Birkdale I); "dead" spots caused by plugs (Birkdale I); very noticeable changes in bounce in different temperatures - to the point of becoming "illegal" in extremes (Barlow and Dawson 2000).

But with modern plastics technology it should be simple to produce a croquet ball TO OUR EXACT SPECIFICATIONS; however, if we do not lay down the law there is no incentive. A case in point may be the Barlow Ball - very close to what we want, but with a bounce slightly below the ideal (considerably below the ideal in warmer temperatures). If that ball were made "temperature resistant" and a little more "bouncy" we may have found the Holy Grail! Frightening then to hear that the manufacturer was considering REDUCING the bounce of his balls! The abandonment of freshly minted sets during a recent US International event, because the players refused to continue with them, suggests that the threat might even have been carried out. I hope not.

This then is the background to the stand I take on croquet balls and the use of Dawson 2000 balls in the forthcoming MacRobertson Shield. Together with the fact that I do not believe the host should have the right to change the ball type (that has been used in the event since its inception). Though I also lay blame for that at the feet of our International Committee, for offering no resistance and not consulting those GB players likely to be involved. In the four competing countries, Jaques Eclipse dominate in Great Britain, New Zealand and the USA (where Barlow Balls are increasingly popular); Dawson 2000 balls only dominate in Australia.

I am quite happy to restate the fact that on questioning, senior Australian players revealed a preference for either Jaques Eclipse or Barlow Balls in the MacRobertson Shield. I might add that it seems the GB team would be far less critical of Barlow Balls than Dawson 2000s being used in the MacRobertson, though Jaques would be the number one preference. Presumably the players in Australia who are such solid supporters of the Dawson 2000 ball are all on the ACA Executive! My original article mentioned the great CA tradition of government by and for the players. However, the ACA has a different tradition; often one of "top players should be seen and not heard"! Even excluding their top player from certain competition after vocal dissent from the party line in

(continued at bottom of page 19...)

This Lady's prerogative ...

After Debbie Cornelius' appeal to end the Ladies' Invitation events in the last issue Gail Curry, current British Womens Champion, seeks to change YOUR mind!



In issue 223 (October 92), the question was asked "But how does reigning women's Champion feel about her nemesis Debbie Cornelius, World no. 1 ranked player? Well anyone who knows the reigning women's Champion will know I need no nemesis (Nemesis being the Greek Goddess of retribution & vengeance), as I am more than capable of fighting my own battles, thank you very much.

I can make little comment on Debbie herself, as we have only met on two occasions but she obviously has a 'literary' mind. Therefore I would look upon her as more of a kindred spirit rather than my 'nemesis' thus quashing any thought by the questioner that there might be a feud, poor peer relations or any other type of ill feeling between us.

However, I was very surprised to read the talking point article entitled "Ladies events. No thank you!", penned by Debbie and will endeavour to explain why, I and other women players hold the opposite view of that article.

The first statement that Debbie made was quite correct, she has not played any of the ladies events for some time, 1986 being her one and only appearance. I should like to know therefore, how she feels she has the right to criticise such events in the way she did and why she feels they should be criticised at all!

I do agree that croquet can be played on equal terms by men and women, who can be as proficient as their male counterparts. Debbie then asked why the women need their own events? The answer to this question is not so simple to provide but I shall offer my own reasons why I think the women's events are necessary. Firstly I think it would be wise to inform some, that at one time the women were the players that won every event in sight and because the men found this fact a little hard to bear they decided they would have separate men's & women's events. The men have eventually improved their standard of play with time and have now evolved into the dominant players from these humble beginnings. I believe the balance having now swung in their favour, that the women's game should be given an equal opportunity to re-establish itself.

I think it would be fair to say that the women's game has some way to go before reaching the dizzy heights of domination that it once held, but would also add that domination is not what I

would like to see. I would far rather see a general improvement of the standard of women's croquet and believe that this can only be achieved in conjunction with the C. A. and it's women members. If as much time and effort was spent in promoting and improving as is spent devaluing and dismissing our play I feel the standard would not be at the level it is now. Women have been and are subjected to derogatory whispers about their play at tournaments, particularly at those of the higher levels. (Gentlemen please, if you have nothing positive to say about the ladies play kindly say nothing, or at very least have the decency to say it to our faces and not our backs!) Maybe this is one of the reasons why willing mixed doubles partners are so difficult to find come the Men's & Women's Championships?

As Debbie stated the Longman Bowl was donated with the purpose of forming a training ground for ladies aspiring to play in what was then the Ladies Field, an eight. Maybe if this fact was made public knowledge to aspiring lady players, they might be more inclined to play in it. As to the Selectors Weekend, well this is not the first year that it has been held on, or adjacent to the dates of the Barlow Bowl. As a player who would have liked to play in this event I was forced to make a choice between the events. I chose to play in the Barlow as it is an event for the top eight available lady players, a category I am fortunate to find myself in, therefore I feel that the top eight players should play in it.

I disagree that it is difficult to find clubs to host this event or indeed managers to manage it, incidentally it has been player/managed for the past two years. I agree that the event has been given little support and should like to add that, it as well as the Women's Championship has also been given little importance by the C. A.. This was proved by the cover of Croquet issue 221 which boasted "British Champions" but as pointed out to me by Celia Steward, only pictured male champions.

As to competitors for the ladies events being difficult to find, well the same could be said for the Chairmans Salver and Spencer Ell this year, are they going to have the number of competitors cut from eight to six in 1993, as the tournament committee have recommended for the Barlow Bowl next season? I do agree that two games a day

is not satisfactory, that is why an eight should be the only format for the Barlow Bowl. Maybe players would be more willing to compete in such events if they were held at the same time each year, with the same number of competitors (eight please, if the tournament committee are reading) in a specified venue for a set amount of time, say three years, so that the necessary arrangements can be made instead of chasing up and down the country booking and re-booking annual leave.

By far the most disturbing statement I found by Debbie however was that the ladies invitation events consistently lose money. No blame for this can be laid at the feet of the players, if the Croquet Association charge less for ladies eights than the other eights that is their prerogative, I do not think any of the ladies would complain if they were asked to pay the same as others for equal events.

As to Debbie's final statement, "Surely it is time that these largely unwanted, out of date events are laid to rest." It seems to me that 'these events' are only unwanted by people who do not play in them and therefore have no right to criticise or condemn them. As to being out of date, well I think this is a view only shared by people who are out of touch. Laid to rest? As I mentioned earlier, if as much time and effort was spent promoting and improving as is spent devaluing and dismissing there would be no need for articles such as this.

Having replied to Debbie's article I only have two further things to say. Firstly I would like to encourage as many players of both sexes to apply for the invitation events, ladies don't restrict yourselves to just the ladies events. (Remember you don't have to make the decision whether your play is of a good enough standard, that's why we have selectors.) Finally the only thing that should be 'laid to rest' is the myth that the ladies eight is more commonly known as the 'ladies hate' nothing could be further from the truth. The only unpleasurable experiences I have had in three years of this event is a severe pain in the ribs through laughing and a six hour coach journey home.

the past. I do not believe in "WE make the rules YOU play by them" nor indeed the palpably false "It's fair because it's the same for everyone", croquet's favourite facile fallacy.

It is interesting that Creina mentions the "Pudding Balls" - the Jaques Eclipse of the mid-eighties that were categorised in the UK as "like trying to rush blobs of putty"! I agree they were dreadful; strange then that in the Dawson 2000 the Australians have designed a ball that react like this not as a fault but by default! I understand that in heat these balls do

become more lively (yes - the opposite of Barlow Balls!), but Dawson 2000s are also peculiar in that they are less responsive when hit with less force. How I remember the joys of sticking in a short hoop simply because the shot hadn't been hit hard enough, or failing to reach the target ball on a 2 yard roquet!

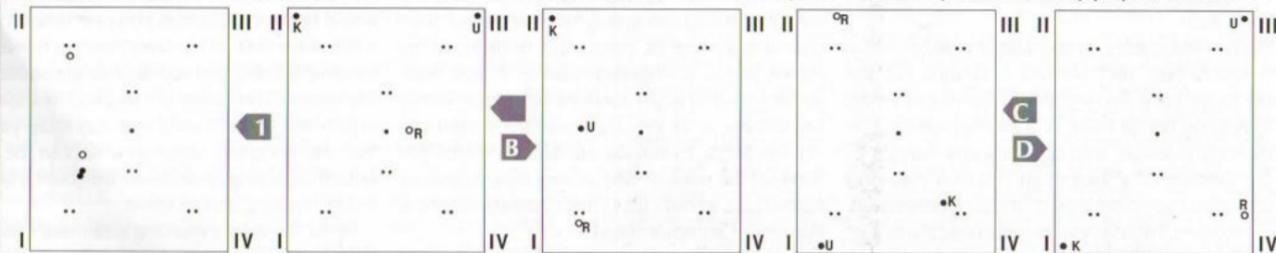
One final point before Creina Dawson or Stephen Mulliner retreat to a "we couldn't afford any other balls" position. Though I never predict the giving of gifts, I might say that it has been

practice in the past for the balls used in an event such as the MacRobertson Shield to be donated by the manufacturer. Jaques have been kind enough to do this for recent World Championships (including the 1992 event in the USA), and Barlow Balls have also indicated an interest in such a promotion. There is generosity behind such a move, but also commercial incentive to be the balls demonstratively "World Class". But then perhaps that is one of the reasons the ACA were so keen to see Dawson 2000 balls used?



Bill Lamb

As I indicated in my last article, you should always try to play croquet strokes from within the comfort



Expert Tactics
by Robert Fulford

Last time I talked about triple peels on the opponent and promised to talk about pegged out games. I will start by discussing the scenario where a TPO has just been completed leaving the two other balls hardly started.

If you have been TPOed and you are on an odd hoop you can try to pick up a break in such a way that if you fail to approach your hoop you can take position making a squeeze leave.

For example a common position after a TPO is shown in diagram A. The best way to proceed from there is to take croquet from the ball in III and roll it to about 10 yards N of 1 going to the other ball (even a very good player is by no means guaranteed to take croquet off the second ball). Next play a take off from II attempting to get position at 1. If you fail to get position you then try to take good position in front of the hoop making the leave in diagram B. This leave is essentially a squeeze, which ever ball moves R can run the hoop to the other ball and has chances to make 2. If K shoots and misses R can turn around and try to pick it up (before or after making the hoop). If U shoots and misses R will have two balls to play with.

If you do take off to position you should try to crash through to the N boundary and then hit the ball near II, split it to 3 trying to get a rush to 2 and hopefully getting a 3-ball break. The closer you put

zone, that is where strokes that can be played easily without resort to brilliant stop shots or big rolls. However, there will often be occasions when that is not possible. Consider the position in diagram 1. You have just run hoop 1 and roqueted the pilot to the position shown. You are much too close to the pivot, which itself is a long way from the peg. You could try to play your best ever stop shot to get a pioneer to hoop 3 and a rush on the pivot towards hoop 2, in order to reduce the length of the take-off, but extreme strokes should always be avoided when they are not necessary. There are two other ways to play from this position. The first is to play a modest stop shot, concentrating on getting a good pioneer to hoop 3, and accepting the fact that you will have a return roquet of a couple of yards to the pivot. The other is to forget about the pioneer and play a little drive, concentrating on getting a rush on the pivot

U to 2 with the initial roll from III the easier this split shot is but you cannot afford to put U too near K and then Bounce off or merely take position. I once shot K at U in the position in diagram B which was a bad mistake, my opponent not playing well enough to justify it, but I would consider taking it again if I was shooting well against a particularly brilliant opponent.

If you are for an even hoop you do not have the luxury of making a squeeze so you pretty much have to go all out for the break.

Assuming the initial chance for the single ball passes, there often comes a period where the two balls are looking to obtain the innings relatively safely. Keith Aiton once told me this was his biggest problem with TPOs, he never felt he could safely join up. The single ball does not always want to shoot.

I am going to discuss one sample of what you might describe as the chaotic phase of a 3-ball game. Diagram C is the diagram that was supposed to be printed at the end of the last article but was unfortunately wrong. It might be a good idea for you to look at it and decide what shot you would play as R before I start to discuss it. Assume the conditions are not difficult.

As far as I am concerned there are 3 different interesting alternatives for R: (i) Shooting at K; (ii) Triangulating just off the end of A baulk; (iii) Menacing U, the peg ball

Everybody's first impression must be to look at R at K, it is the only open shot and in a 4-ball game it would look relatively free. But if it is missed K can then hit R and has an easy roll from in front of 1. The 7 yard pick up does not have the ordinary risk of losing the innings because K doesn't really have the innings and R can never hold on to it.

Triangulation is interesting, if K misses this time R will have a rush to U; if U misses K, R can then shoot at U and will have a good chance if it hits in. Against a relatively weak player UK may feel forced to play K to III. I would probably shoot K at R against a strong player and hope to finish much as before. This is typical, some players are almost certainly not going to be able to finish from a position like croquet from U in the diagram with K in III, other players may finish once out of four attempts, so your tactics

towards the west boundary, from which position you can croquet it to hoop 3.

So which is the best line of play to adopt. Forget about the super stop shot; it is most likely to end with no pioneer and no rush. Of the other two, the first is quite acceptable because the pilot at hoop 2 is good but the pivot will be roqueted even further out of position. However, the break can be brought back under control by rushing the pilot after hoop 2 towards the west boundary in the vicinity of hoop 1. The second will exchange the pioneer and pivot and result in a tighter break immediately, provided that you have the control to get the rush in the first place and then to rush it reasonably accurately.

Which way you play should depend upon your ability. High-bisquers should concentrate on placing good pioneers until their skill improves to the level where they can confidently play for the rush.

should be quite flexible with respect to your opponent's playing strengths as always.

Menacing the peg ball in this case is probably the best tactic. If R shoots off 7 yards N of I, UK is almost forced to play U to III, as U missing R gives a rush towards 2 and U missing K is not at all safe. Now R shoots at K, this being a shorter shot than in (i) and a safer shot because there is no longer a ball in front of hoop one. The following pick up would be very dangerous because of missing on the left and even if hit UK could never join up where he would like to in I. I would retreat and play K to I (Diagram D).

Diagram D shows a different kind of position in the 3-ball game, Both U and K are reasonably safe where as in diagram C, K was in the middle of the lawn. The game could continue in many ways. R can shoot at U, if missed U takes off to K and lays up guarding 1 (This is about the best ever leave you could get without being wired), R can shoot at K, if missed K can either try to approach 1 or take off to U and lay up in III ideally with K on the East boundary pegged from R and U open a few yards in court. The latter leave is much inferior to the former because of the clip positions.

R doesn't have to shoot at all but could play something like R to the boundary in front of 3-back, hoping to get a shorter shot or a position to shoot with greater break prospects.

In general when R has a shot and U and K are not joined up yet R must look at the alternatives if he is to get the best chance. His options are normally in order of occurrence, shooting, menacing, triangulating (rare), taking position (very rare). This is really quite different to the 4-ball game and the number of tactical errors made in the 3-ball game is much higher, probably because everyone is much less experienced at playing with only 3 balls on the Lawn. There is no real substitute for experience.

For UK the tactics are normally much simpler, either try to take the innings, or run away to the furthest corner from Rs break.

I hope this has given you a few ideas, but this is only a brief guide on a very messy part of the game.

Next time I write about the much simpler position where UK has taken greater control of the game.

(...continued from page 4)

took off to corner four leaving a nice pioneer at two, got a nice rush to one, approached it with a long roll-up, ball in the middle, all set for a four-ball break, clanged in the jaws. Can you believe it, CLANGED IN THE JAWS!"

"Ok, Ok," I said, "Let me get this straight. This Bandit guy, he works for the manager right? And he's out to...."

But I didn't have time to finish. He lifted his head from the table, took out a sweat stained rag of a handkerchief and wiping the tears from his eyes went on.

"And then, and then. He missed a two foot roquet...he MISSED A TWO FOOT ROQUET!.... He stands there, looking at it. My beautiful four-ball break all set up for him and he stands there looking at it for five minutes, wondering what to do. 'He's going to walk off and leave it,' I thought, 'he's going to give me another chance. Please God, make him give me another chance!' He looks at the red ball in the middle, the two balls lying close together at hoop one, the pioneer, my beautiful pioneer placed impeccably two feet in front of hoop two. He looks up, toying, teasing....'How many bisques have I got left?' he says, 'nine' I say. 'Oh well, I think I'll take one.'"

His head fell forward onto his folded arms and his sobs began to shake the table.

"Here," I said, "use mine." I pushed my own silk handkerchief over towards him, the one Big

Frenchie 'The French' French had had embroidered special for me the day I... but that's another story. Was I starting to feel sorry for this guy, this... Croquet player? Me, the toughest hit man this side of the big pond going soft?

I couldn't follow everything he said but he went on about how he spent all the next day waiting for a game or sitting at the side of the lawn pulling these bisques out of the ground and then this Manager guy telling him he was 'out of the reckoning' and couldn't have another game. Somehow, he seemed to blame the manager for everything. 'But I just wanted a chance to prove myself' he said. I think it was this that finally got to me.

"Look, pal," I said, "don't get me wrong, I ain't turning soft or nudd'n but just tell me who dis manager is and I'll waste him for you for nudd'n... well, for half price anyway. No, let's say twenty five per cent discount."

"I'll pay you anything, anything," he said. "I just want to BE THERE when you do it. I want you to make him suffer the way I suffered. It's not just simple revenge it's... it's something bigger than that. something bigger than both of us, something bigger than Croquet itself... bigger than, than... balls... and hoops... mallets, the peg, triples, TPOs .. Bisquers, Rover ... woof, woof.... woof, woof.... woof, woof!"

He was standing over me, clutching wildly at my astrakhan lapels, his eyes staring beyond, past

and through me to the next room. Then his body suddenly went rigid and he fell back stiffly, staring, mouth open, froth foaming about his chin.

"Take it easy pal," I said as the bar-keep came over with a bucket of water. "Just tell me who it is and I'll fix him for you."

"It's...it's...." He spluttered out a name through the froth which sounded like Lu-Lu or Lou or Lois or something but I just couldn't make it out.

"Big Louis? Do you mean Big Louis, pal?" I said but it was too late. He passed out on me and the bar-keep threw him onto the street outside.

I offered to pay for the broken table, it seemed like the least I could do.

"No, no, that's all right sir," said the barman. "I should have warned you when I see him go over to your table. He's in here every Thursday night with them croquet players. But I must say, I haven't seen him as bad as that for some weeks. They're usually fairly quiet most of the time but then it suddenly seems to get to them somehow, I don't know, and they just turn. It does that to them, you see."

"You mean this Croquet game?"

"That's right sir."
"Well why in hell don't they just give up the damn game?" "Oooo...they wouldn't do that sir. Finest game in the world, they say!"



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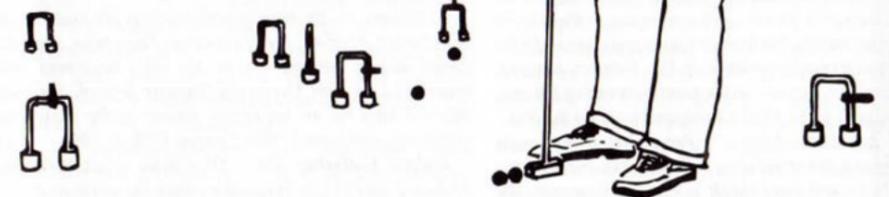
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Northampton: Sunday, 18th October
Report from Chris Hudson

Played at St Andrew's Hospital, Northampton, the new home of the Northampton Croquet Club, the final brought together 12 players from places as far afield as Southwick, the Isle of Man, and Newcastle-on-Tyne.

After 6 rounds of progressive doubles, the four leading players went into a knockout semi-final and final, playing Golf Croquet Singles, best of seven points.

In the first semi-final, Daphne Gaitley, winner of the Worthing Regional final, lost to Roger Bearpark from Billericay, a member of the Chelmsford Croquet Club. In the other semi-final, Janet Hobson from Woodhall Spa, beat John Roach, from Rochester, a member of the Medway Croquet Club.

The final between Janet and Roger was a gripping affair. Janet won the first hoop, then came under pressure as Roger went into a 3-1 lead. She pulled

Nigel Hind Successful at 4th Attempt
Report by Chris Hudson.

This year's final was held again at Heathfield School, Ascot, by kind permission of the new Headmistress, Mrs Benammar.

Eight short lawns were laid out on the preceding Friday, and the sixteen finalists reported ready for battle at 10.30am. This year the sixteen included two ladies; Penny Cobb, whose brother reached the regional final at Castle Howard in the 1987 Classic competition, and Liz Fraser, who learnt to play croquet at Lancaster University Summer School.

As usual, the finalists were drawn into four blocks of four, with the block winners going into a final knockout to decide the 1992 Champion.

1991 finalist Malcolm Beacham seemed to be favourite for Block A, but those in the know recognised a dark horse in the form of Peter Noble-Jones, whose mother reached the final in 1988. In the end, Peter won all three games, his most protracted game being against Penny Cobb whom he beat 7-4 on time.

Block B contained the reigning 1991 Champion, Andrew Gallagher. He got through, but was almost unseated by John Hansen from Sapcote in a close game.

RESULTS

- Block A: Winner: Peter Noble-Jones (3 wins)
- Block B: Winner: Andrew Gallagher (3 wins)
- Block C: Winner: Nigel Hind (3 wins)
- Block D: Winner: John Goose (3 wins)

THE 1992 CROQUET CLASSIC FINALISTS

Brian Allen Brian is a Civil Engineer with Southern Water. Aged 53, he took up croquet 3 years ago when the Chartham Hatch Garden Croquet Club was formed, and has become an addict. Chartham Hatch organises matches against other croquet clubs in Kent, and has 12 active members.

Neil Barton Aged 27, Neil is a computer programmer working for Barclays Bank at Radbrook Hall in Cheshire. He started playing croquet two years ago during lunch hours at work, and takes part in a "lunch-time league". Engaged to be married, he also plays tennis and golf.

Malcolm Beacham Malcolm, aged 40, is an underwriter at Lloyds and a member of the Lloyds Croquet Society. He lives in Sussex and was taught the rules of croquet by his father-in-law. Formerly an active hang-glider, he gave up the sport on breaking his arm. He played in the 1991 Classic and reached the final.

Penny Cobb Aged 37, Penny has three young daughters, the oldest aged 7. She teaches music (piano and flute) and also English as a foreign language. She plays all her croquet with her husband in his father's

1992 Golden Mallet

back to 2-3, and then played Blue 3 feet in front of the sixth hoop. Roger, hampered by hoop four, could only play Red close to the peg, almost on the line of the centre hoops. Black and Yellow then played, leaving Janet with a 3 foot shot to run hoop 6 and level the score.

Her shooting was accurate and through she went, leaving Red with a simple peg out to take the match. Looking back on the game, I bet she wishes she had played Blue nearer hoop 6, deliberately not making the point. This would have forced both Red and Yellow to play further away from the peg, thus giving her a better chance to win the seventh point and take the match. There's more to Golf Croquet than meets the eye!

Regional finals this year were held at Worthing,

Bowdon, Plymouth, Leicester, & Tyneside. Regional winners were presented with framed Golden Mallet trophies, made by Ray Stanners, whilst Roger Bearpark wins the CA's most distinctive perpetual Golden Mallet trophy, sculpted by Ron Nixon.

RESULTS: Preliminary rounds (Progressive Doubles): 27pts: John Roach (Medway) 25pts: Daphne Gaitley (Southwick) 23pts: Roger Bearpark (Chelmsford) & Janet Hobson (Woodhall Spa) 21pts: Jon Bartlett (Sapcote), Chuck Ward (Tyneside), & Ken Ashurst (Tyneside) 18pts: Diana Kemp (Thames Valley) & Norma Rayne (Thames Valley) 17pts: Eileen Tompkin (Sapcote) 15pts: Chris Midgeley (Isle of Man) & Alec Ginty (Tyneside)

Semi-Finals: Janet Hobson bt John Roach 4-3
Roger Bearpark bt Daphne Gaitley 4-2

Final: Roger Bearpark bt Janet Hobson 4-3

1992 Croquet Classic

In Block C, we had Nigel Hind, last year's runner-up, and Bill Robinson, both making their fourth appearance in the Classic. They were competing against two newcomers, Jonathan Loutit, captain of Bishop Vesey's Grammar School team, and Andy Cripps from the recently formed Chelmsford Croquet Club. In the event, Jonathan was perhaps not quite up to his usual form, and Nigel had an incredibly close last match (+1 on time) against Bill to win the block.

In Block D, John Goose scored a winning hat trick with some steady and deliberate play, winning all his games on time.

The semi-final matches were uneventful, with relatively easy wins for Nigel Hind over Peter Noble-Jones, and Andrew Gallagher over John Goose.

The final, then, was a repeat of the previous year, with Andrew Gallagher, 1991 Champion, defending his title against Nigel Hind, 1991 Runner-up. As with all the preceding games, the final was played with a one-hour time limit. Nigel was soon round to 4 with Red, with all three other balls on 2. Andrew just nicked a long hit in, and took Blue from 2 to 6 with

some lovely rush shots on a difficult lawn.

More play, and they were dead level, Black and Yellow in 2, Red and Blue on 6. Nigel, in play when time was called, took Red through 6 to take the lead by one point, and made sure of the Trophy by leaving Andrew with a long hit in.

Honours even, then, for Andrew and Nigel, who now plan to "turn professional" and join their local croquet clubs (High Wycombe and Winchester respectively). Nigel, who has his own three-quarter size garden lawn, has improved every year he has played in the competition, and was obviously delighted at winning. What impressed me, though, was the sporting and graceful way in which Andrew accepted defeat. From him, there were no complaints about being left a long hit-in on an undulating lawn. He played his shot and enjoyed himself.

Nigel and Andrew will be ineligible for next year's Classic, and this year has also seen the last appearance of Jonathan Cullis, who has played regularly in the event since its inception. He has joined Vine Road and acquired a handicap

garden, both of whom entered this year's competition. She has an occasional match against her neighbours, and her brother reached the Regional final of the Classic at Castle Howard in 1987.

Andy Cripps Andy, now 37, first played croquet at College. His interest was rekindled some years later at a local show, the "Chelmsford Spectacular", where there was a "Come & Try It" session. A founder member of the Chelmsford Croquet Club two years ago, he is Head of Engineering for Power Tetrodes & Triodes at the English Electric Valve Company.

Jonathan Cullis Jonathan, aged 31, is a medical doctor at the Hammersmith hospital. He played garden croquet with his parents for many years before becoming interested in Association Croquet at Cambridge University, where he won the Trinity Hall doubles in 1981. This is his fourth Classic final. He joined Vine Road Croquet Club in 1991.

Liz Fraser Liz is the manager of a medical practice in Manchester. Aged 43, and the mother of two boys, she started playing croquet 4 years ago on a beginners' course at Lancaster University Summer School. She returned later for an Improvers' course at the same University, and joined Fylde Croquet Club in 1991.

Andrew Gallagher The 1991 Classic Champion, Andrew lives in High Wycombe where he works as a Systems analyst with Equity & Law. Aged 25, he started

playing croquet when he was at Lincoln University, but since then he has been handicapped by the lack of a lawn on which to play. Consequently, apart from competing in the last four Croquet Classics, he plays on relatively few occasions.

Kevin Garrad Kevin comes from Portishead where he is a manufacturing systems analyst with Avon Rubber. He entered this year's competition with a group from Nailsea Croquet Club, near Bristol, and won the group outright, beating all the other players. This is his first attempt at the Classic.

John Goose Aged 34, John farms in Lincolnshire, where he grows daffodils commercially. Father of two young boys, he plays all his croquet with local friends on garden lawns, complete with the usual hazards. This is his fourth Croquet Classic, but his first time in the final

John Hansen Aged 62, John is a retired Education Lecturer formerly involved in Teacher Training. He started playing croquet at school in 1946 and has played intermittently in the garden since then. This year, he joined the Leicestershire Croquet Club to learn more about the Association game. Keen on gardening and mountain walking, he plays tennis and an occasional round of golf.

Nigel Hind Aged 43, Nigel is a Project manager with the Friends Provident in Salisbury. A garden (continued at bottom of next page)

Using Your Bisques

Bisques are free turns awarded to the weaker player in handicap play. The weaker player is given the number of bisques which is the difference in the handicaps of the two players. A bisque can be taken at the end of any turn whether it is a normal or bisque turn. Bisque turn can immediately follow bisque turn. In every new turn all the other balls can be re-roqueted again. The only constraint is that you have to continue playing with the same coloured ball. There are also half bisques. These are bisque turns in which no points can be scored for any balls. They are very useful for positioning balls prior to taking a full bisque. You should also read Section 11: Giving Bisques to have an idea of the strategy which is probably being used against you.

9.1. The only way to cope with a lower handicap player is not to give them a chance and, when you have to give them the innings, make it as difficult as possible for them.

9.2. As you will be receiving bisques you should put the opposition in to play if you win the toss. To win you are going to have to maintain a four-ball break to the peg. By going second all the balls will be on the lawn at the end of the fourth turn. when you can start to build your break. If you let them in second then there is the chance of them hitting in fourth turn and gaining many hoops.

9.3. you must prepare yourself to build breaks by taking bisques. You must play knowing that you are going to take bisques. As an example you do not shoot hard at a ball if you intend to take a bisque should you miss - you will end up far away and could waste the bisque if you subsequently miss the

return roquet.

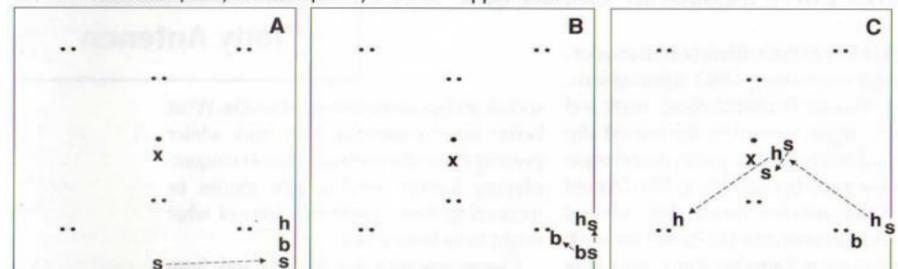
9.4. You cannot afford to 'get used to the lawn' before taking your bisques - this gives your opponent the chance to do the same! you must start to take your bisques at the earliest opportunities.

9.5. There is a saying that it is possible to build a four-ball break from any position of balls on the lawn using only two bisques. This is almost right but there are some situations ...

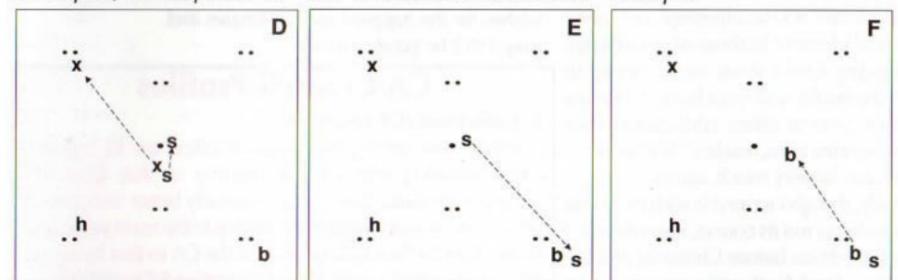
9.6. How you use your bisques depends on how many you have. They can be used to attack, repair and defend, preferably in that order. We start by assuming that you have 10 or so.

9.7. **Attack.** To build a break using bisques the general recipe is: identify a hoop ball and a bisque ball. A hoop ball is the ball which will be sent accurately to the hoop you want as a pioneer during the first bisque turn. The bisque ball is the ball you end up next to at the end of the first bisque turn ready to start the second turn. Unfortunately you are going to have to think and solve the problem as to how to make the break from the scattering of balls you are initially presented with.

9.7.1. A typical start of game with 10 bisques could be: the opponent lays up on the East boundary, you knock your first ball into the centre of the lawn - because you know that you will be taking bisques later. The opponent shoots at their partner ball and misses. You then shoot at the opponent's balls. The ball in the centre of the lawn is to make building your break with bisques easier and leave your opponent with a long shot which, if they missed, will feed the opposite baulk.



A). Fourth turn, striker takes bisque and roquets; the 'bisque ball' b. B). A small roll gains the rush on ball 'h' to the centre of the lawn. C). The hoop ball, h, is then stopped to hoop 1.



D). Partner ball roqueted and sent to hoop 2 E). Striker shoots behind bisque ball getting a rush to centre of lawn F). Second bisque turn, bisque ball to centre, take off to pioneer at hoop 1.

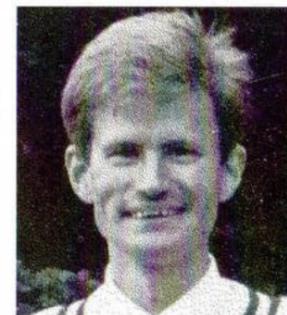
croquet player for most of his life, he has built his own three-quarter size lawn and plays regularly with his neighbours. Last year's runner-up, this is his fourth appearance in the Classic. A keen sportsman, he plays village cricket, hockey and fives.

Jonathan Loutit 17 years old, Jonathan is currently at Bishop Vesey's Grammar School, Sutton Coldfield where he is captain of the school croquet team. He is doing A levels in Maths, Economics, Geography, and General Studies, and plans to study Business Studies or Accountancy at University. Besides croquet, he plays

Golf, Badminton, Squash and Water Sports. His school team plays in the West Midlands Croquet League.

Peter Noble-Jones Aged 31, Peter is an Associate Partner with Richard Ellis, a firm of Chartered Surveyors. He plays tennis as well as croquet, and is a keen fisherman. In 1988, his mother became the first lady to reach a Croquet Classic final.

Bill Robinson Bill, aged 37, is a Land Agent working for a firm of Chartered Surveyors in Cumbria. He learnt to play the game when young with his family in Derbyshire, and took up competitive croquet three



Ian Plummer

9.7.2. We'll assume that you miss in the fourth turn. You now take your first bisque and roquet one of the opponent balls. One of these will be your bisque ball. It is a good idea, but by no means essential, to have your bisque ball just off a boundary - you will see why shortly. Let us make this first ball the bisque ball - if we play a small roll we will be able to move it from the boundary and place our striker's ball near to the other opponent's ball to get a rush anywhere into the middle of the lawn. This ball would be suitable as your hoop ball. We now rush to the middle of the lawn.

9.7.3. The aim in the first bisque turn is to accurately stop shot the hoop ball to be a perfect pioneer on your hoop. From the centre of the lawn we stop shot the opponent to hoop 1 and end up anywhere near our partner ball. This we croquet and place in a position useful for the four-ball break. We can stop it up to hoop 2 as a pioneer, or leave it in the middle as a pivot. After doing this we shoot back to our bisque ball so as to get a rush on it to bring it into the break. In summary, in the first bisque turn we have placed an accurate hoop ball and returned to another (bisque) ball leaving ourselves a rush into the lawn.

9.7.4. By leaving the bisque ball near a boundary we can shoot off behind it with little care for the strength of the shot, whilst getting the correct position when it is brought back on to the yard line. We are now ready to take our second bisque and start the break.

9.7.5. Had we put a ball to hoop 2 in the previous bisque turn then we would get the rush on the bisque ball to the centre of the lawn to make it the pivot. Alternatively had we already got a pivot we would plan to rush the bisque ball to the centre of the lawn and stop it to hoop 2 whilst going to pivot. Once at pivot you take-off to your pioneer at your hoop and start the four-ball break.

9.7.6. Having established the break you use bisques to repair any accidents - however you can gain full value from these bisques by leaving off from the break pattern, shepherding the other balls into accurate positions than resume the break. I will discuss 'repairing' breaks in detail in the next article.

years ago when he answered a newspaper advertisement looking for players to form a group. This is his fourth appearance in the Croquet Classic.

Giles Thorman Aged 49, Giles is a Solicitor in private practice in London. He learnt the game at a very early age from his parents, playing on a lawn which extended into their orchard and had a bank in the middle of it. Whilst at Cambridge, he discovered more about the game and has continued to play since then on his own home lawn. This is his second consecutive year in the final.