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THE CROQUET GAZETTE

ISSUE 299

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IAN LINES CAUGHT MID ROQUET



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Publication details

The Croquet Gazette is published six times per year, in February, April, June, August, October and December.

Publication Schedule

Copy should reach the editor before the 21st of the month before publication is due. However if you have something that you think the editor may be willing to expand this deadline for please contact her direct before making any assumption.

Specific Questions and Queries

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

photographs can be used. Slides are no longer acceptable. Photocopies of pictures or print outs of digital images cannot be accepted. If using digital photography please send in jpeg or tiff format files. Please accompany all images with a description of the subject of the picture. If you require any material to be returned please enclose a SAE.

Tournament Reports & Results
Emailed reports are welcomed. Attachments may be sent in Microsoft Word format, text format. Hand written reports are no longer acceptable due to the illegibility of most.

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

a very solid first day, winning six out of seven games and drawing the other.

When moving to the Sunday blocks, each pair took forward their results against those other pairs that went into the same block (easier to experience than to explain!). These results replaced the need to play those pairs again and, thus, the games on Sunday were just against the qualifiers from the other Saturday block. On this basis, the block leaders were already in a good position to qualify for the semi-finals. However, some competitive games took place on the Sunday.

The semi-final between the first and fourth-placed pairs saw David Hopkins and Craig Oakley take an easy victory over Dick Strover and Jack Wicks (interestingly pitching two "old head and young blood" pairs against each other). The other semi-final, between the second and third-placed pairs, was a crunch match because Tim King and Roy Ware and opponents Shane Davis and Nelson Morrow had drawn 6-6 on time in the winners block. In the re-match, Tim and Roy eased to a 6-4 lead. However, they then met dogged resistance and failed to close out the game on both the eleventh and twelfth hoops. Thus, a nervy thirteenth hoop ensued but Tim and Roy had just enough gas to get past the line.



Tim King puts the ball into the jaws of hoop six as Roy Ware discusses the consequences with David Hopkins

The presence of David Hopkins and Craig Oakley in the final was no surprise in that they had won every previous game over the weekend, including a 7-5 victory over Tim King and Roy Ware in the winners block. The format for the final was slightly different in that instead of the conventional best of thirteen hoops, a two-hoops ahead requirement was added if the scores were level after the twelfth hoop (the nineteenth hoop being a decider if necessary). In the end, Tim and Roy achieved enough control of the final so that there was never any

prospect of getting to the thirteenth hoop. Craig continued to play with the aggressive intent that had led to success for the rest of the weekend. However, he appeared to lose a slight edge and missed one or two crucial clearances. Tim and Roy improved on their earlier Sunday performances (having lost also to the Sheen brothers) and secured a 7-3 victory. This was a tough experience for the losers who had been so consistent previously over the weekend but crucially Tim and Roy won the games that mattered. This success adds to their being the reigning Open Doubles champions.

List of Merit Award Winners 2005

PLATINUM (2)

Rutger Beijderwellen, Chairman's Salver, East Dorset, September 2005
Matthew Burrow, European Championship, Jersey, September 2005

GOLD (11)

David Barrett, Advanced Weekend, Pendle and Craven, June 2005
Sarah Burrow, The Open Championship, Hurlingham, July 2005
Nick Butler, Blewbury v East Dorset, Mary Rose Trophy semi-final, Blewbury, September 2005
Christopher Crowcroft, B-levels, Surbiton, September 2005
Richard Danby, Advanced handicap weekend, Surbiton, October 2005
Andrew Dutton, Blewbury v Woking, Mary Rose Trophy, Blewbury, August 2005
Barry Keen, All-England Area Finals, Southport, September 2005
John Male, B-levels, Surbiton, 18 September 2005, 1pm
Paul Rigge, B-levels, Budleigh Salterton, April 2005
Peter Wilson, Advanced Weekend, Pendle and Craven, June 2005
Steve Woolnough, Advanced Weekend, Ramsgate, September 2005

SILVER (20)

Derek Andrew, B-levels, Nottingham, August 2005
Martin Beacon, Robin Hood Gold Cup, Nottingham, August 2005
Brian Christmas, Summer Weekend Handicap, Pendle & Craven, August 2005
Cliff Daniel, Handicap Singles, Nottingham, August 2005
Lorna Frost, May Handicap, Bowdon, May 2005
Richard Griffiths, May Handicap, Bowdon, May 2005
Peter Hills, mid-summer Tournament, Sidmouth, June 2005
Tony Hudson, B-class Advanced, Edgbaston, June 2005
Richard Huxley, B-levels, Southport, August 2004
Barry Keen, Northern Week, Bowdon, August 2005
John Male, B-levels, Surbiton, 18 September 2005, 10am
Stuart Parks, All-England Preliminary Round, Blewbury, July 2005
Nick Saxton, Handicap Weekend, Cheltenham, May 2005
Klim Seabright, Handicap Weekend, Cheltenham, May 2005
Peter Shephard, June Week, East Dorset, June 2005

Martin Stephenson, Handicap Weekend, Roehampton, April 2005
David Turner, May Handicap, Bowdon, May 2005
Gerry Vamdell, Handicap Weekend, Colchester, June 2005
David Waterhouse, Hunstanton, August 2004
Andrew Winn, May Handicap, Bowdon, May 2005

BRONZE (30)

Neil Cook, Class Singles, August Tournament, Sussex, August 2005
Malcolm Daines, Winner, All-England Cup, Roehampton, September 2005
Colin Dalziel, Easter Handicap, Surbiton, March 2005
Tom Dixon, Three-Legged Race, Compton, October 2005
Geoffrey Elliott, Ashby v Tyneside, Longman Cup, Ashby, July 2005
Nicholas Furse, Merton v Colchester, Longman Cup, Colchester, June 2005
Mike Gardner, Spring Weekend, Colchester, May 2005
Malcolm Gee, Autumn Handicap, Nottingham, September 2005
William Gee, Autumn Handicap, Nottingham, September 2005
David Gillett, Spring Weekend, Sussex, May 2005
Barry Gould, Easter Handicap, Surbiton, March 2005
Robert Halpin, Handicap Weekend, Norwich, July 2005
Amanda Hames-Keward, Autumn Handicap, Nottingham, September 2005
Nigel Hames-Keward, Autumn Handicap, Nottingham, September 2005
David Holland, May Handicap, Bowdon, May 2005
Helen Hudson, Spring Weekend, Woking, May 2005
Tony Hudson, Spring Weekend, Woking, May 2005
Ashton Hulme, Handicap Weekend, Ramsgate, July 2005
Richard Huxley, B-levels, Nottingham, July 2003
Richard Jackson, Budleigh Salterton, May 2005
Barry Keen, Handicap Weekend, Bowdon, May 2005
David Kendrick, Fifty Plus, East Dorset, August 2005
Jonathan Lacey, Millennium, Bath, July 2005
Brian Pollock, August Week, Budleigh Salterton, August 2005
Liz Potter, Over-50s Handicap, Cheltenham, June 2005
Stuart Ray, May Handicap, Bowdon, May 2005
John Reddish, South of England Week, Compton, September 2005
Jeremy Smith, Three-Legged Race, Compton, October 2005
R. D. Willett, Handicap Weekend, Ryde, September 2005
David Williams, June Week, East Dorset, June 2005

Handicap Alterations

Sidmouth Club 2005 season

G Harford	11	to	10
Mrs V Henderson	14	to	12
R Henderson	6	to	8
P Hills	11	to	8
Miss SM Rogers	9	to	8
D Powell	9	to	10
D Clarke	6	to	7
R Hammond	20	to	9
Mrs A J Haste	11	to	14
Mrs M Piper	14	to	16
D Sinclair	20	to	18
D Temple	18	to	12
Mrs N Temple	20	to	18
R Wood	11	to	9

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Front Cover: Ian Lines mid roquet during the World Championships.

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Disclaimer

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Chairman's Column

During the AGM at Hurlingham I had the pleasure of presenting Nigel Graves with a camcorder, bought from your contributions, to thank him for his service as Secretary, and James Hawkins with a crystal bowl for his stint as Editor. The meeting was followed by an enjoyable lunch, where at our table the conversation turned to the number of croquet players who performed, or at least enjoyed, music in all its various forms. It was even noted that I was at least the second Chairman to have been a bell-ringer (though with nowhere near the skill of Edward Duffield): have there been any others?

Lunch was followed by the first Council meeting of the new session, where I was re-elected for a final year. We welcomed Esther Jones as West Midlands Representative, but there is currently no representative for East Anglia following the retirement of Robert Bateson. Much of the agenda of this meeting was formal, electing committee chairmen and so forth, but the topics discussed included Tremaine Arkley's gift; Incorporation of the Association; Club Conferences (given the lack of response, it

was decided to try and contribute to Federation meetings, rather than try and run our own); IT, including whether the CA should host the "Nottingham" list; and drug testing.

The issue of support for Juniors was also raised, stimulated by the letters published in the last Gazette (page 4 of issue 298). The writers thoughtfully pointed out some of the difficulties, but we recognised that we do not have a coherent policy in this area. I suspect this is at least partly because responsibility for it falls between at least five committees: International (for those who may represent us now or in future), Development, Coaching, Golf Croquet and Tournaments. It was agreed that the Management Committee should co-ordinate their plans and report back to the next meeting of Council.

However, as with many aspects of the sport, much can be, and has been, achieved by the efforts of clubs, individuals and, not least, the juniors themselves. As a small step, it may not be too late to offer a discount to juniors or students entering your tournaments next year: e-mail fixturesbook@croquet.org.uk if you wish to do so.

I hope you winter well,
Ian Vincent

Editorial

I will start my column with an apology for the lateness of the previous issue due to postal difficulties. I started work on this issue the day after going to print with the previous one, so hopefully this will arrive on time. I had hoped that by the time this issue was ready to go to print that 'we would have caught up with the time lost in the transition of editors, however this has not been possible for two main reasons. Firstly that in order to maintain continuity it is important I feel to publish any feedback from a previous issue. The second reason is simply that there is not enough copy to publish two issues virtually simultaneously, which would have been the ideal. While I have been 'persuading' some contributors to write material, I have to work to their timetable. Although there is sufficient in the way of tournament reports, these alone do not make a good magazine. I am still looking for clubs to take up the opportunity to sing their own praises in 'Club Focus', likewise I am still interested in anyone who may be

interested in conducting an interview or two. I do have some other items under construction, but it would be helpful if someone with access to a computer would be willing to offer me hand with some compiling - give me a call or drop me a line if you are interested.

It has been eventful and very successful season. It is good to see so many new names and winners, as well as new events and the strength of competition in some of the more established ones. This month sees the inaugural Women's World Golf Croquet Championship in Egypt. I look forward to seeing our competitors challenge for the top places and hearing their feedback on the event.

My final words in this issue are those of Bon Voyage to Chris Clarke and Jenny Williams who are off to New Zealand. I am sure they will be sadly missed here, but will be welcomed warmly in New Zealand.
Ed.

Letters

Best wishes for the Worlds

The first Women's World Golf Croquet Championships is being held in Egypt in November. Twelve competitors from England have entered, headed by Samantha Curry, and while their expectations are not high, as the Egyptian women players appear to be as formidable as their men, their enterprise is highly commendable. I wish them well.

Bernard Neal
President of the Croquet Association

Food for thought?

I was wondering about the history of croquet and also the effect of the game on our language. Such phrases as 'pegging out', 'having a break', 'lovely shot', 'cock-a-hoop' and there are probably many more, could come from croquet. Also the hoops: blue for baptism, red for sunset: could it be the stations of the cross? And does the peg reflect the conflict between the solar and the lunar year? It probably means whatever you want it to mean. 28 is a perfect number, and seven is known to be magical. A game of croquet is like the course of someone's life. You start out optimistically, and then find it is more difficult than you thought; or you start cautiously and everything falls into place. Does anyone else have any thoughts along these lines?

Mark Everett

New initiative from the WCF

The WCF is embarking on a major new initiative, the "WCF Development Programme".

Applications for the funding of likely projects are now being actively sought from WCF Member Associations.

In anticipation of the response, WCF now needs to recruit people with suitable qualifications and expertise that can be used to fulfil the following roles:-

Coaches and Examining Referees of Association and Golf Croquet suitably

qualified in their own WCF Member Association. Ideally they should be fluent in one or more language other than their own native tongue.

The purpose is to facilitate visits to other member nations to coach, train and examine their nationals to a suitable standard to become coaches and referees operating in the developing nation.

Any person with the skills, qualifications, time and inclination should forward a CV or Resume to the WCF Secretary-General.

All posts will be unpaid and will involve a commitment of providing their time free. However, where necessary, all transport costs will be paid via the WCF Development Programme. Other costs may be payable subject to local agreement with the relevant WCF Member Association although it is envisaged that no costs will be incurred by the volunteer.

Brian Storey
WCF Secretary General
www.wcfcroquet.org

Croquet in Russia

In the short story, "The Old Woman," by the Russian writer, Danl Kharms, there is an interesting footnote alluding to a croquet mallet which is mentioned in the tale:

"It is worth pointing out that croquet remained popular in Russia for a surprisingly long time (20,000 copies of Chesnokov's Description and Rules of the Game were printed in 1930.)"

This raises several interesting questions. Was there contact between British and Russian players and their respective croquet associations? Did Jaques supply the Russians with equipment or did they make their own? As the rules (printed in 1930) appeared some years after the Revolution (when most aristocratic families were decimated), does this mean Russian Middle classes had adopted the game?

Can any of our croquet historians throw any light on the intriguing subject of croquet's erstwhile popularity in Russia?

James Mays

Foot on the ball

Readers may be interested in another light on the question raised by George Houghton in issue 297, and answered by Howard Wright in issue 298. Some may remember that Lewis Carroll's "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland", (1865) includes a description of a game of croquet played with flamingos for mallets and hedgehogs as balls. Fewer may remember that the accompanying illustration by Sir John Tenniel shows Alice with her foot on the striker's ball (hedgehog) while the roqueted ball (hedgehog) has uncurled and is running off, and she is struggling with the perhaps understandably unco-operative mallet (flamingo). No doubt, as long as "Alice" continues to be published and read with the original illustrations, memories of the obsolete rule will remain alive. Long may this be so.

Martin King

"Gazette Frustration"

If the excellent balance of pictures and prose in issue 298 continues, Ainsley Jones' plea for more readable coverage has been well satisfied. Any magazine that has to cater for such a wide range of skills and attendant interest will always find it difficult to please everyone. The brighter sparks will tend to conduct recondite debates in the letter columns but the Editor can hardly be blamed for that. It is up to the majority to contribute what interests them.

The letter columns do, however, have a problem: there seems to be a lack of accountability. When serious points are raised, there ought to be an authoritative published response to avoid leaving the point hanging in the air. It is not for the Editor to write this, unless of course it concerns her domain, but with twelve Committees, Regional Representatives and CA Officers available, I suggest that her task should include ensuring that the relevant response in forthcoming well in time for publication.

Peter Miller

is heartedly recommended. It has been a regular tournament in the club's calendar since 2001 and the organisation, management and facilities are first rate. The lawns are situated on the sea front and attract many knowledgeable spectators as well as those who are mildly bemused. As my opponent made a wide join I heard a voice behind the fence sigh to her companion 'awwww... he's missed'.



Ivor Nunn in seasonal dress for Budleigh

Budleigh Handicap Tournament 9 ~ 11th Sept 2005

Report by Richard Danby

The tournament was managed with calm efficiency by Julie Horsley and Peter Jones as a straight knock-out and Egyptian. The knock-out was won by Adam Wimshurst 26-0, 26-0, beating Ian Wilson in a best-of-three final. The Egyptian was won by Derek Andrew. Winner of the fastest game was Richard Stevens.

The Challenge and Gilbey: Budleigh Salterton 1st / 4th September 2005

Report by Hamish Hall

The Challenge and Gilbey regained its popularity returning, over subscribed, to Budleigh Salterton, where we noted a marked improvement in the standard of the courts since our previous tournament here two years ago.

Players unfortunate enough to meet Martin Stephenson (from Meadows, Edinburgh) in the Gilbey had few strokes, as he played beyond his handicap of 8, winning the ¼, semi and final rounds +26, +25 and +26 (with a bisque still standing!) David Magee had a single stroke once the balls were on the court - a 25yard hit in was needed!

In the Challenge, Dick Knapp collected the Roehampton Cup, defeating David Magee in a single life final, whilst wife Mary Knapp won the Council Cup, snatching victory from Ian Parkinson in an exciting game largely played in appalling conditions as the heavens opened. After Ian had gone to the peg, with a poor leave, Mary hit in, and pegged him out. A brilliant hit in enabled Ian to make 4-back, but a very ambitious stroke just failed, roqueting the ball he was attempting to rush. Thus Mary now has 2 cups to

keep polished!

Alan Newman, whilst in America, persuaded John Kennedy from Beverley to enter this tournament, and doubtless he will be back next year to defend the Reckitt Cup, as he overcame Peggy Nutland in the final. And to the delight of the locals, Michael Hamilton ensured that the Stevenson Cup remained at Budleigh with his win over Sidmouth's Peter Miller.

Pendle & Craven Summer Handicap Tournament 27th - 29th August 2005

Report by John Beech

The new lawns at the Earby Club were busy over the Bank Holiday when 16 players come to Pendle & Craven to compete in this important national event. The competitors were from croquet clubs in Tyneside, Chester, Shrewsbury, Fylde, Surbiton (Surrey) and Sussex County as well as our own local players.

The turf on the Earby lawns is improving rapidly and attracted compliments from the visitors.

Competition was fierce but eventually the champion emerged with Janet Davies of Chester CC taking away the coveted cup.

The low handicap trophy was won by David Gillett of Sussex County CC who was a member at Pendle club for many years and was the first Pendle Club Captain at Nelson & Colne College.

The high handicap trophy was won for the second year running by Andrew Webb who is a member of Fylde and Pendle & Craven clubs.

The fastest winner was David Gillett who beat local club Secretary John Beech +26 in just 50 minutes of a game allotted a duration of 3 hours.

Great distinction was gained by Brian Christmas of Shrewsbury CC when he beat his opponent by achieving a 12 hoop break and he will receive the Croquet Association's prestigious Silver Award.

National Golf Croquet Doubles Championship The Ranelagh Cups, Surbiton Croquet Club, 27 & 28 August 2005

Report by Tim King

This year the English National Golf Croquet Doubles Championship was for a whole weekend (rather than a single day) and, furthermore, without any qualification rounds. As a result, the number and quality of pairs appears to have increased, providing a substantial challenge to all. The entry covered some pairs in very strong contention for the title all the way down to some novice players who gained valuable experience from playing in such exalted company.

Unfortunately, the final number of pairs was 15, which meant an unequal division into two, all-play-all blocks for the first day of play. With games played to a time limit of 55 minutes, draws in the block stages were possible (after playing eight strokes after the calling of time). At the end of play Saturday, the first round block results determined who would then play in the winners and losers blocks on the Sunday. The top four from each block played in the winners block.

Each block had a pair clear in first place. David Hopkins and Craig Oakley were top of the seven-team block, having won every game. In the eight-team block, Tim King and Roy Ware had

Tournament Round-Up

All England Handicap Final Roehampton 17 - 18 September 2005

Report by Gary Duke

Saturday 17th September dawned cold but clear. The sixteen qualifiers from the Area Finals arrived at Roehampton at 9am to find one of the main group of three lawns out of action - it had been turfled, but problems meant it was not yet ready for play. Instead, a pair of grass tennis courts had been hurriedly converted to add to the other two lawns and the club's fourth lawn in a nearby walled garden. The resultant scattering of the players meant that walkie-talkies were provided in case referees needed to be summoned to the two remote lawns!

The lawns started slowly in the heavy dew, but the day



from left to right back: Pierre Beaudry of Dulwich, Peter Jankel of Roehampton, Douglas Gurney (Tournament Manager), Gary Duke of Parsons Green, Jim Clancy of Dyffryn, Chris Marshall (partially obstructed) of Roehampton. front: Hilary Smith of Compton, Marion Clancy of Dyffryn, Liz Maltby of Surbiton, Roger Jenkins of Bristol (pointing into the distance,) Robert Skeen of Meldreth, Alex Shipp of Kington Langley.

rapidly warmed up, drying out the lawns and enormously speeding them up. Despite keeping the meal breaks short, the third round lasted well into the twilight, and with several players facing long journeys home, it was decided to play just two rounds on Sunday.

After four rounds of the Swiss, the unbeaten player was local Chris Marshall. Chris faced Malcolm Daines of Huddersfield Syngenta in the last round. To the chagrin of the management,

Malcolm beat Chris, and with Pierre Beaudry (Dulwich) also winning a fourth game, there was a three-way tie for first place. After some complicated calculations, it was finally announced that Malcolm had won, and that both Malcolm and Chris had earned savage cuts to their handicaps!

Thanks to Douglas Gurney for running the tournament, Nigel Aspinall for being the ROT, and Roehampton for the excellent facilities.

Sidmouth Croquet Club B Level Advanced Weekend September 2005

Report by Peter Wilson

After 8 games a three-way tie existed between Robert Bateson, Ken Wood and Richard Griffiths. The results of their individual games resolved matters. Robert having beaten both the others won the tournament and was presented with a newly commissioned silver salver and commemorative glass goblet. Ken was runner up and Richard placed third.

Friday's weather was bright and sunny, the lawns fast around the hoops.

Robert's 'swiss gambit' (loosing the first game in a Swiss or Egyptian) was to turn out very well. Richard made a fine time turn break with only three balls on the lawn having to hit a 17 yard shot and dug the other ball out of the corner. Ken also won, so at the start of the second day Richard was on 3/3 with Ken and Robert on 2/3.

A cool North Easterly wind with bright warm sunshine gave



A happy little group of competitors at Sidmouth.

a pleasant feel to the second day throughout the three games. Robert took the overnight lead with three straight wins crucially beating Richard and Ken on the way.

On Sunday the wind dropped leaving a blue-sky overhead. All three leaders won their opening games leaving Robert in an unassailable lead.

For those seeking a lively and sociable event this tournament

NEWS & INFORMATION

2006 MacRobertson Shield Team announced.

The MacRobertson Shield Selection Committee (Phil Cordingley (Chairman), Chris Clarke, Robert Fulford, David Maugham and Stephen Mulliner) is pleased to announce that the team to represent Great Britain at the 2006 MacRobertson Shield will be: Robert Fulford (Captain), Mark Avery, Keith Aiton, Chris Clarke, Jonathan Kirby & David Maugham. The sole objective was to pick the team to maximise Great Britain's chance of retaining the Shield. Fulford, Clarke & Maugham were automatic selections. The priority adopted then was to select those candidates with the consistency and strength of performance mostly likely to guarantee solid, winning performances in the lower half of the order. The selectors particularly commend the quality and commitment of all candidates, which made it impossible to select anything other than an extremely strong and highly worthy team. The event will be hosted by the Australian Croquet Association in Melbourne from 18 November to 4 December 2006.

UNESCO adopts International Convention Against Doping in Sport

The International Convention Against Doping in Sport was adopted unanimously by the UNESCO General Conference meeting in Paris for its 33rd session. This is the first time a legal instrument aimed at eradicating doping is both binding and universal. A global response to a global problem, such is the challenge put to the new Convention. It supplies governments with a legal framework for an international harmonization of efforts in the fight against a scourge that flouts the ethical and social values of sport while putting the health of athletes at risk.

The last Olympic Games in Athens in 2004 revealed a record number of cases of doping. Furthermore, in France, according to the Conseil de prevention et de lutte contre le dopage (CPLD), nearly 5% of all samples taken last year from

professional athletes showed use of illegal substances or procedures.

While doping by professional athletes is often headline news, there is little talk of the use of doping agents among amateur athletes or the general public, although this too is growing steadily. According to a European Commission study in 2002, nearly 6% of all clients of fitness centres in several European countries admitted to taking doping agents to enhance their performance. A survey by the University of Quebec discovered the same year that 26% of amateur athletes questioned had used substances banned by the Olympic Committee at least once in the last 12 months.

The International Convention Against Doping in Sport fills a gap. Most of the existing standard setting tools, whether national, regional or international, emphasise repression and anti-drug testing, methods which, according to experts, are limited in their effectiveness. Others, such as the International Olympic Charter against Doping in Sport (1988), are not universally legally binding.

The new Convention goes beyond testing and sanctions. It incites States Parties to "undertake, within their means, to support, devise or implement education and training programs on anti-doping" in order to raise public awareness of the negative effects of doping on health and on the ethical values of sport, as well as provide information on the rights and responsibilities of athletes and on testing procedures. Signatories will also promote "active participation by athletes and athlete support personnel in all facets of the anti-doping".

CA Merit Award Statistics

Now that the UK tournament season is at a close. The numbers of winners are: Platinum 2, Gold 11, Silver 20, Bronze 30

In previous years the numbers have been: 2004 (first year for Platinum) 6 - 7 - 19 - 12

2003 5 - 21 - 15

2002 9 - 24 - 26

2001 10 - 29 - 27

2000 8 - 26 - 36

The CA congratulates all the winners. The Merit Award Scheme continues to recognise and reward enterprising play, and

the CA Coaching programme, nationally and locally, is geared towards teaching players how to make the best of each and every opportunity within a match.

Bruce Rannie

(A full list of the winners of this years awards can be found on page 22)

New Observer member for the WCF

The WCF is pleased to announce that the Czech-Moravian Croquet Association has been admitted to membership of the WCF with Observer status, subject to eventual ratification by the WCF Membership.

The Czech Association known locally as:- "Asociace Ceskomoravskeho kroketu" has a total of four clubs playing on 10 half size courts. They play the Association and Golf variants of the sport. The first national championship is scheduled to take place in 2006.

New Website for Sports fans

ActiveinTouch.com Opens Up a Lively New World for Sports Fans Active in Touch (<http://www.activeintouch.com>), a Surrey-based online resource, is putting sports fans in easy reach of like-minded people who want to widen their sporting circle and meet a livelier alternative to their not so active friends. Active in Touch makes it easy for people of all ages to get involved in a diverse range of sports and, perhaps, live out their sporting fantasies. Once they've registered on the site free of charge, members can browse for buddies by age, gender, sport and geographic location. And, when they've got to know their new sporting friends better, they can email them to suggest a game of golf or a group cycle ride, safe in the knowledge that these lively mates are likely to be up for it. Active in Touch is the ideal place to ask questions about what gym to join, seek a suitable training partner, view details of UK and international sporting events, be notified of competitions and tournaments, secure deals on group trips, and receive discounts on selected products and services. Making it accessible to an international audience, the Active in Touch website has been translated into 15 different languages. It includes chat rooms, where members can discuss certain sports live. They could conceivably talk about cricket with Chinese fans or Lacrosse with Lithuanians. If an Active in Touch

member is going on a business trip in the UK or abroad, he/she can arrange a round of golf or a game of squash with a like-minded member before arriving. For companies wanting to advertise a sporting event or holiday, Active in Touch provides a receptive user base of sports fans. Event organisers can list their fixtures on the searchable web calendar free of charge. They can also invite members who have requested details of certain sports to come along and play. Occasionally, Active in Touch will arrange its own events and competitions covering a variety of sports. Members can post adverts for their tournaments, etc., on a special notice board, where each ad will remain in place for two weeks. Richard Edwards comments: "Too frequently, people spend their leisure time vegetating in front of the TV because they don't mix with a more active set of friends. Perhaps they dream of going diving or windsurfing but can't find anyone to join them? Active in Touch means anyone can arrange a game of tennis, a round of golf - or try something more extreme, such as speed skating or kick boxing - with 'fresh faces' who share a passion for the same sport. Thanks to our site, members can expand their social circle and their sporting life simultaneously." Basic membership of Active in Touch, where users can browse all the profiles and listings, is free of charge. Those wishing to upgrade their membership can take advantage of extra benefits: for example, with a bronze package costing £2.99 per month, they can upload pictures of their events; while a gold package costing £6.99 allows them to start a live webchat. As a special introductory offer, the first 100 members to join will be upgraded to bronze membership for a year free of charge. Active in Touch will donate £1 from all paid monthly registrations to the NSPCC charity. For further information about membership, visit <http://www.activeintouch.com>

The Croquet Association Report of Council to the 2005 AGM

1. General

Council met three times during the year. The concerns that had been raised about the structure of its committees were debated in December, but it was decided to retain the Management Committee with only minor modifications. These were enacted in March along with changes to reflect the fact that a number of committees do much of their work by electronic discussion, rather

than in physical meetings. Three committees, Marketing, Tournament, and Development, gave presentations about their areas of activity.

Nigel Graves retired as Secretary of the Association at the end of March and was co-opted to the vacancy on Council. Klim Seabright was appointed to succeed him. His assistant, Nicole Zymelka, resigned shortly afterwards and Elizabeth Budworth took up the post on 1st August.

There was no significant change in the level of individual or club membership, but Council was represented at the opening of the Fowey Club and the new lawns and pavilion of the Pendle and Craven Club.

2. Administration

The office computers were replaced over the summer and the dial-up connection was replaced by broadband, with a wireless router to provide communication facilities for managers and players during tournaments. The bespoke membership database was re-implemented in current versions of Microsoft Access and Visual Basic with broadly the existing functionality, but with a view to enhancing it to meet current requirements. Financial software has still to be procured.

The role of the Administration committee is likely to be reviewed as IT becomes more integral to the working of the Association.

Advice was circulated to clubs about the Licensing Act, 2003.

3. Coaching

The courses run were better supported this year.

4. Development

Grants totalling some £18,000 have been given to the Bury, Eynsham, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Surbiton, Blewbury, Cheltenham and Letchworth clubs. In addition, basic equipment was provided from the newly established New Club Fund to Fowey, Penrith, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, Ringmer and Lytes Cary.

The Millennium Award was made to Cheltenham, the Apps-Heley to Bowdon and Townsend to Ashby.

Topics for discussion at club conferences were solicited.

5. Equipment

An investigation into possible damage to balls by metal-faced mallets concluded that they were unlikely to be responsible. Colours of currently available balls have been accurately measured and recommended specifications will be sent soon to all the main manufacturers. Surface temperatures of balls left in the sun have



David Ekstrom, Abbott Combes, Finbar Sheridan and Vic Forrington pause for a photo.

Once again I had been met with great enthusiasm and hospitality which I hope some day to reciprocate here in Cheltenham. As I visit Dallas and the Lenox area quite frequently the discovery of the two clubs is a real bonus. However international socialite that I am I then moved on to Troy, Michigan, to meet up with some friends from Wyre Piddle, near Pershore and attend their son Jason's wedding. Troy is part of the Detroit/Motown conurbation where Jason is a designer for Chrysler. The Detroit Croquet Club took some finding as the USCA website listed a number of out of date addresses and telephone numbers. However I eventually tracked it down to the Omni Hotel on Detroit's Riverside which claims to have Michigan's only USCA approved lawn. I was shown the lawn but unfortunately although I had the most cordial of invitations I was not able to play there owing to a clash of dates with their regular playing evenings. However I did move on to Ann Arbor, the home of the University of Michigan, where the Department of Physics claims to have done fundamental work on the dynamics of playing croquet in thick snow. I was unable to validate their work as the temperature was in the 80's at the time of my visit. Fortunately my hosts, the Simonett family have introduced the garden game into their community and in particular Stewart Simonett has mastered the use of a cricket bat as an alternative to a spindly toy mallet. Some things never change!

So if you are going to be in the USA remember that croquet is not just available in Florida and California but in many other states. If my experience is anything to go by you will be made most welcome and your visit will be enhanced by playing the game you love in conditions often very different to those over here.

Book Review

Golf Croquet Tactics by Michael Hague

Review by James Hawkins

Michael Hague's new book, *Golf Croquet Tactics*, has suffered the troublesome gestation which no author would wish to have. Torrential rain and a split tarpaulin on the delivery lorry left the entire first print run unusable. So now, a few months later, and ready for some out-of-season studying, this glossy Technicolor work is finally available.

Hague owes an obvious debt to Lord Tollemache and his 1914 magnum opus, *Croquet*. Not only does he adopt the same basic principles of play, but both books include pull-out scale diagrams of a croquet lawn. This is particularly useful with the new book, which is filled to burst with practical examples.

Any author on the subject faces the dilemma of what to include and what to omit. Pitching this work firmly towards the rank and file club member, Michael steers a wide berth away from the stodgy topic of probability theory and the evaluation of opponents' hitting percentages. Instead, his model is one of coaching by use of examples, and this book is stuffed with illustrated problems for the reader to consider.



With colour diagrams on virtually every page, he provides the reader not so much with hard-and-fast rules, but guides players into a mode of thinking, ready for when similar positions arise. This methodology applies equally to the chapter on the use of extra turns (bisques).

With *Golf Croquet*, and its formalised coaching, only recently established, some inconsistency in terminology remains among the playing community. Hague wisely starts his book with a glossary of terms, though he does borrow freely from both Association and his own military background. Included are the terms "rushing" and "wiring", as well as phrases such as "dead ground". Nevertheless, the vocabulary is well explained and remains constant throughout, and the overall style and meaning are clear.

With guidance for coaches included as a supplementary last chapter, this is as useful a book for instructors as it is for players. As a resource for dipping into, for working through individual problems, or for discussion on a wet afternoon in the clubhouse, it should prove a valuable asset to the library of many players.

Cost is £9.99 (plus £1 p&p). Order from M J Hague, Homewood House, Pond Road, Woking GU22 0JT

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The originators of carbon fibre shafted mallets now offer a truly comprehensive range, from the 'Basic' at £87.50, the well established T-series (£137.50) to the 2000 mallet at £160 (inc. head wrap). All have heads of fine hardwood with screwed and glued double faces, inlaid sight lines and a high quality finish. Sustainably managed timbers.

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AN IMPRESSION OF CROQUET IN THE USA

by Vic Forrington

Visitors to Dallas are faced with three mysteries – who killed JFK, who shot JR, and how to find the Dallas Croquet Association. It is in fact situated in the Wyndham Anatole hotel, a vast edifice the inside of which at first sight resembles a Disney version of Ankor Wat but which in reality houses many hundreds of itinerant conference-going executives intent on self-improvement and the realisation of the American Dream. Fortunately the croquet lawn is situated in a leafy outback of the hotel complex known as the Veranda Club which has something of the atmosphere of an English country house. I had discovered the Association through the ubiquitous Google search engine while visiting my daughter and her Texan husband in Dallas, having been tipped off by an American I met in Cheltenham that croquet is played in Texas. I had contacted the club by telephone and was met by Harold Menzel on my arrival at the lawn. Harold patiently outlined the major differences between ‘American Six Wicket Croquet’ and Association rules before proceeding with alarming alacrity to make an opening break to three back. Fortunately his game then deteriorated, perhaps out of politeness to my level and we fought a keen battle. He said he was even prepared to forego his evening poker game in his zeal to educate me in the niceties of the American game. And all this at 100 degrees in what little shade there was!



Harold Menzel of the Dallas Club in play

The major differences in the rules are firstly that at the start of a turn you must play your ball in sequence; hence if you had previously played your red you must now play your yellow. Thus your opponent could have laid up near your red to facilitate his next turn. The second difference is that once you have used a ball you cannot use that ball again until you have run a hoop, irrespective of the number of turns you may take. Thus you can, and do, have the situation in which one or more of the balls are ‘dead’ at the start of your turn and hence cannot be used until you have run a hoop. The deadness situation is recorded on a board at the side of the lawn. In the extreme when all balls are dead to your current ball you can only play for position. There are quite a lot of other differences in the games, for example your turn ends if you

rush a ball off the lawn and also the yard line is a nine inch line, but the two outlined above seemed to me the most significant in determining the overall tactics of the games.

Harold tells me that croquet has not really taken off in Texas, due he thinks to it not being played at schools and colleges, although there are other clubs in the state, in particular at Houston. Dallas has a keen core membership, but like most UK clubs new members and visitors are always welcome. I would strongly recommend any croquet players visiting Dallas to get in touch



Abbott Combes of the Lennox Club with the deadness board

with the Dallas Croquet Association and to enjoy their hospitality and acquaint themselves with the Six Wicket game. I am sure I reflect the views of our own CA clubs and members in saying that we should be most pleased to welcome Harold and his colleagues to visit us when in the UK. But be warned: Harold is very conversant with the Association game, so do not expect any easy rules-based victories!

There is perhaps much more croquet in the USA than many of us appreciate. The United States Croquet Association has some 3000 individual members and lists 200 clubs with approved lawns and who are pleased to receive visitors. As I was due to move on from Dallas to spend a few days with old friends in the Berkshires, Massachusetts, I had a look at their website and found a club only a few miles from my destination. This was the Lennox Club where, amazingly I had been a guest at a wedding only a few months earlier without knowing that it housed a thriving croquet club. I persuaded my host, Finbar Sheridan to take a day off from his golf and tennis and accompany me to the Lennox Club, where we were met by David Ekstrom and Abbott Combes. David is the club president and Abbott runs weekly clinics; both are referees. We were joined by Bob Comeau and had a very friendly doubles, with Abbott operating the dreaded dead ball board and Finbar showing much promise as a potential new member. Abbott explained that they played the Six Wicket game, as do most Eastern clubs, while the West Coast, in particular California, play to Association rules. He agreed that irrespective of the merits of each game, the rules differences must be a serious disadvantage to US players in international tournaments, in particular the world championships as was subsequently shown to be the case in Cheltenham a few weeks later.

been measured to provide a basis for laboratory measurements of effects on diameters and resilience.

6. Golf Croquet

The Golf Croquet Laws Committee played an active part in the revision of the World Croquet Federation Golf Croquet Rules, but time did not permit the complete unification (of the Rules/Laws, as opposed to what we consider should be Regulations) that was desired. Considerable effort was put into training referees and players in the new Laws.

Reports from around the country indicate that Golf Croquet (GC) is providing a very positive stimulus to recruitment to croquet generally and the additional subscription income that it is providing is stabilising the financial position of many clubs. Whilst a large proportion of new members are playing only social croquet and enter few tournaments outside their clubs, the popularity of tournament Golf Croquet is however growing rapidly, with entrants being drawn from both new players and existing Association Croquet (AC) players. In this last season the GC Inter Counties Championship increased from six to ten teams, the GC Inter Club from five entries to nine, the National Championships for both single and doubles were changed from one to two day events and a series of events for the higher handicappers were taken into the CA Calendar. As well as CA sponsored events, a number of club events are also well established and indications are that there will be three new major club competitions next season. Experience also indicates that many new players who start with Golf Croquet only are also taking up Association Croquet.

7. Handicap

A well attended and successful handicap conference was held for handicappers from clubs in the South West. The Apps-Memorial Bowl was awarded to Jack Wicks and the Steel Bowl to Gina Lewis.

8. International

The Mitsubishi World Croquet Championship staged at Cheltenham, Bristol, Edgbaston, and Nailsea was a tremendous success, which reflected the considerable effort of the clubs and individuals involved. The transport, food, lawn conditions and overall management were appreciated by the players and a good number of spectators were entertained, both locally and, in the later stages, remotely with a break-by-break commentary on the web site.

9. Laws

The examiner's handbook was published and used for the spring courses. Several Examining Referees were appointed.

10. Marketing

A modest amount of sponsorship was obtained from Holiday Property Bond. A potential sponsor for restarting the Garden Classic competition has been found.

Promotional effort was focussed on the World Championship, and significant coverage obtained.

A legacy strategy was launched in articles in the Gazette.

A handbook entitled “Get them and keep them” was sent to clubs.

Commercial sales have again increased.

11. Publishing

At the end of 2004 James Hawkins gave notice of resigning as Editor of the Croquet Gazette the following April, after three and a half years. The position was advertised on-line in January and in the February Gazette, but elicited an underwhelming response. Happily, Gail Curry came to the rescue and was appointed for a second term in April. The short time-scale of this editorial changeover and technical problems meant that there were delays with the June and August issues.

The Reader Survey report, covering magazine and website, appeared in December.

‘Alternative Croquet’ by Don Gaunt has been published. This is a 90-page compendium of Fun Games, Variations on Standard Croquet and Fringe Croquet.

As well as carrying an increased amount of news and an interactive fixtures calendar, the website has been developed to allow data to be submitted. Online membership application and payment was introduced earlier this year and a members’ area established with a simple login procedure. The first application enabled players to register availability for selection events and this will be extended to allow personal details to be updated.

12. Tournaments

The CA Fixtures Calendar was again published on schedule due to the sterling efforts of Nigel Graves.

The British Men's and Women's Championships returned to Cheltenham. The Men's had a good entry; however, although the Women's entry was stronger than the previous year, its size remains a concern.

The Open Championships had a successful return to Hurlingham after two years at Cheltenham, with Parsons Green providing two lawns for much of the week. The entry was considerably up on the last time it was held in London, despite the expectation that entries might be adversely affected by the World Championships.

In general, CA tournaments are being well supported; however, Ladies' Week was again cancelled due to lack of support, The Veterans' Championship entry was considerably down on the previous years with no firm reason being established.

The Inter-County Championship continues to be a popular event. However, the qualifications for playing in it are still being reviewed in order to encourage the optimum number of 22 counties entering without the need for special teams to make up the number and also to stress that participants should have a close allegiance to the county they are representing. This review was not completed in time for the 2005 event.

Bids have been invited for the allocation of CA Tournament events to venues for 2007 and 2008. The procedure has been changed slightly in that bids will be invited annually on a rolling two year basis.

Ian Vincent, Chairman of Council

A CENTURY OF CROQUET AT WOKING

by Michael J Hague

In the Beginning

The Woking Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club was formed in 1905 in Hook Heath, just 1½ miles from Woking town centre. In the first year the membership totalled 157. The annual subscription was initially two guineas reduced to one in the second year, one cost being the rent to the London Necropolis Company, £37 10s per annum for the two and a half acre site which was later enlarged to over three acres. In 1926 the leased land was purchased outright for £1557 6s 3d and a trust formed which continues today.

Early Days

The Club started its first annual open week long croquet tournament on Monday the 4th of May 1908, there being no matches played in those days over the weekends and indeed no play of any description permitted on Sunday mornings. Woking is one of only four clubs in the country that has a virtually unbroken record apart from the periods of the two world wars, of holding annual weeklong open tournaments.



Gazette advertisement for the first Woking open tournament in 1908

Although hard surfaced roads were a rarity right through to the late 1920s, open tournaments in these early days were well supported, no doubt in part due to the excellent train service to Woking and the short cab ride to the club. For instance there were 85 participants for the 1909 tournament, 147 in the next year and 127 in 1912. In 1926 the General Strike trapped no less than 46 visiting players in Woking for a whole week when all rail travel was suspended and the tournament postponed. The timing of the tournament so early in the season maximised the use of the lawns before the tennis nets were put up. But it meant that there

was always the danger of cold and wet weather. Roaring log fires were one of the club's attractions. But it was not until 1946 that the tournament was moved to mid-June and not until the mid 1960s before Woking added the weekends to either end of the Summer Tournament.

There were four croquet courts initially until the period of extensive enlargement to the clubhouse in 1926, when two more croquet courts were constructed. Even then as many as eleven courts were required to cater for the large numbers of entrants to tournaments and the club had to make use not only of some of the grass tennis courts but also of the lawns at nearby houses in the area. The grandmother of a present member of the croquet section, Jim Marley, was one of those to loan a lawn. Jim was a junior tennis member in the early 1930s when, he recalls, the adjacent roads were not yet tarmac. The club grounds were all grass and croquet was very much played. The lawns were economically manured incidentally by the effluvia from the gentlemen's changing room (Greens Committees please note!). He remembers John Solomon, the Don Bradman of croquet, taking part in the Woking open tournaments in the late 1940's and 1950's.

Players who were fostered out to play at nearby residences were very well looked after and "several well-known hostesses in the locality entertained large house parties and were present in force at the tournaments, much to the delight of the representative



Pre World War I Members at Woking

of the Ladies Field, who was extremely busy with his camera all the afternoon" (Croquet Gazette 1912). In fact there were many more lady players in those days than now, possibly because the employment of large domestic staffs allowed the mistresses of the house more leisure time.

Commander Claude Paget RN was a club member who had much success in the early years winning the Open Singles Trophy for the third time in 1912, thereby becoming its permanent owner. Tragically the Croquet Gazette of February 1917 reported that "while skating on the Broadwater Lake at Oakwood Park, near

awarded the Diploma for his tireless effort and inspirational leadership in ensuring that new facilities, including five lawns and a Clubhouse came into existence. He continues to work hard to ensure that the lawns quickly reach the standard required to attract major competition.

Derek Buxton - Ashby Croquet Club

Derek learned to play croquet in 1995 and since then he has been at the centre of transforming the club, which now has the facilities and players to be part of the national scene. He has been a pioneer in playing in external events and returning to his club to encourage others and to coach and manage club teams. Derek is a patient, good humoured member of his club. He is liked by all and participates in all aspects of club life. Since retirement in 2002, Derek has become the club secretary and also Vice-Chairman of the East Midlands Federation Committee.

Iris Dwerryhouse - Sidmouth Croquet Club

Iris, at 40 years, is the longest serving member of Sidmouth Croquet Club. She was Chairman of the Committee for 10 years. In order to increase the membership of the club she became a coach, referee and member of the Handicap Committee and is still active in all of these areas. Iris has been Secretary of the South West Federation and a Trustee of the main club. She has recently accepted the Presidency of the main club, which covers Tennis, Cricket and Hockey in addition to Croquet.

John Hatherley - Sidmouth Croquet Club

John has been a member of Sidmouth Croquet Club for 25 years having served two terms as Chairman. He is a coach, handicapper and referee. He has given countless sessions of coaching and has a very strong knowledge of the laws. His health now prevents him from playing as often as he used to but he can still be seen at the club encouraging members and offering help and advice.

Rose Jenner - Sussex County Croquet Club

Rose used her culinary skills to raise funds for the club. The club Building Fund has benefited from Rose's efforts over a period of 15 years. Her steak and kidney pies, provided for the Inter-Counties Championship, have become "legendary". Catering plays a pivotal role in fund raising for the club and Rose, now in her eighties, has been central to this effort for nearly 20 years.

Margaret Roberts - Plymouth Croquet Club

Margaret is a founder member of the club but is no longer able to play. For many years she has been the Social Convenor. She leads a team of helpers who provide an extensive social programme including strawberry teas, pasty suppers and ploughman's lunches. The catering is superb and has become a very important part of club life. Plymouth Croquet Club has become noted for its hospitality and this is due in no small part to the effort of Margaret.

Jill Austin - Sussex County

Jill joined the Croquet Club nine years ago and since that time has gradually taken over the care and maintenance of garden areas in front of the pavilion and clubhouse, the 100 metre border alongside the railway line and the borders of the car park. She has also taken on responsibility for other gardening aspects of the club grounds. She keeps the garden areas well stocked from her own cultivations and the gardens are always beautifully tended and a colourful sight. Jill is also the club's "recycler" and ensures that nothing goes to waste. Jill organises Golf Croquet afternoons twice per week and also helps with club competitions. She is a

steadily improving player.

John Morgan - Cheltenham Croquet Club

Ever since John "discovered" croquet he has supported the sport, more especially Cheltenham Croquet Club with remarkable energy and enthusiasm. When other club members were reluctant to take on the role of Honorary Treasurer, John volunteered himself with enthusiasm and without hesitation. He devoted considerable time to the job and produced immediate benefits as he set about identifying areas of profit and loss as well as maximising returns for Club reserves. Whatever his contribution he makes things really "hum" and his broad range of experience led him to take on the role of Bar Manager. Not only did he bring organisation to the bar but also turned loss into profit. Despite periods of ill health, which has forced him to give up the position as Treasurer, John continues to demonstrate his keen interest and support for croquet and the club.

William Hill - Tyneside Croquet Club

Bill has been a member of the Tyneside Croquet Club for over 15 years. He has been Hon Secretary for 12 years. He was largely instrumental in organising a successful move to the new site in Exhibition Park. He has developed a cooperative relationship with the club landlord ensuring that the lawns are maintained in good order. His duties in this respect seem to encompass both rabbit and child control! Bill's expertise in the DIY field has been put to good use both in respect of croquet "furniture" and on the two occasions when the club kitchen had been vandalised.

Rick Davis - Nottingham Croquet Club

Rick retired from the post of Hon. Treasurer in April, after seventeen years service, during which time he not only kept the books meticulously, looked after the equipment (reshafting mallets, making bisques and painting pegs), managed tournaments and the Mary Rose team, and not least, stocked the bar!

WCF 1ST WORLD WOMEN'S GOLF CROQUET CHAMPIONSHIP 2006

The event, the first of its kind, being solely for women, will be held in Cairo, Egypt, November 12th to 20th (inclusive). Organised by WCF and The Egyptian Croquet Federation at its headquarters located in the Gezirah Club, Cairo, it involves 51 top women players who have been nominated by the croquet playing nations from around the world including Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, USA, Italy, Germany and Ireland and centred on the Middle East.

Joining the 14 senior players of the host nation, Egypt, will be their national junior champion, Soha Moustafa a 16 year old prodigy.

Coming into the event, tournament favourite is world ranked number 11, Egyptian, Nahed Hassan, although it is likely she will be put under a lot of pressure by her fellow compatriot Manal Ali Mohsen (Ranked 12)

The 12 strong English contingent, of Jennet Blake, Eileen Buxton, Patricia Duke-Cox, Julie Hudson, Evelyn Martin, Jackie Old, Ros Pimlott, Jane Pringle, Norma Rayne, Freda Rogers and Freda Vitty led by world ranked No 16, Sam Curry of Ripon, will clash with 5 highly skilled players representing Palestine, who, together with the host nations players, will guarantee a cultural battle of East v West on the sporting field.

a double from C2. Tim duly hit and finished with what Pete described as a "perfect break and leave (un-rushable to peg), followed by a text-book delayed TP". Chris Farthing sought to confuse the manager (not too difficult at any time!) by reporting a +35(TP) victory over Chris Patmore - after a short pause it was revealed that he had a break to 4-back with the wrong ball (possibly distracted while wondering which knot is optimal for worm eradication!). Ed and Rutger had levelled at game all in their semi-final; Tim and Marcus only had time for one break of theirs before dark.

Sunday morning dawned beautifully bright and clear, but hoops had been removed the night before to facilitate mowing, and repairs were required to the sites of 3 hoops where birds had dug out craters, scattering soil and grass all around. Ed clinched his semi-final match with a +26 win over Rutger but was then faced with the prospect of a long wait for an opponent in the final. He whiled away the time with a game against Chris Dent in which Chris again TPOd but failed to capitalise. Marcus and Tim fought most of the morning to finish their first game in which Marcus had pegged out two balls with himself on 3-back and Tim on hoop 3. Tim got in, took his ball to the peg but was unable to finish that turn but, with Marcus in position for rover, trickled from the North boundary and hit the peg next turn. Time limits were imposed, but not needed since Tim won the next game in short order +17(TP). The first game of the final saw much sparring to start with and not many hoops scored. Eventually Ed went to 4-back with a reverse NSL, Tim missed the lift and Ed finished. Ed was first to 4-back again in the second game, in the 5th turn, but the leave was poor,

Tim hit and also went to 4-back with a less than perfect diagonal spread. After some indifferent play in which both players failed hoops, Tim got going and finished with a triple. Ed then took game three +26 with few frills to become South of England champion after three consecutive semi-final defeats in the preceding years - a popular win and persistence rewarded. The third place playoff was decided by best-of-3 14 point games. In the first Rutger made a cross-wired leave at H3 and retired to the south boundary. Marcus's lift claim was disallowed after 10 minutes of deliberation, appeal to two referees and the ball being adjudicated upon being hit by a double-banker! Later Rutger failed H4, Marcus's second appeal for a wiring lift was dismissed, his triple attempt came to grief and Rutger won +7. Game 2: Marcus third turn to peg and pegged out; Rutger sixth turn to peg and pegged out. Later Rutger fails H1, Marcus hit and finished. Game 3: Marcus completed what he described as "a rough TP after hitting the suicide shot at Rutger's QP leave", finishing with a straight double peel.

In the plate, played as a flexible Swiss (which some preferred to characterise as Grecian since it seemed to them to be half way to an Egyptian), Samir Patel worked his way steadily to the top of the card by winning eight consecutive games, only to fall in the final round to Pete Trimmer's +17(STP). Not far behind were David Harrison-Wood and Chris Patmore; and Patrick Hort (taking time off from his studied concentration of a tome entitled "Tournament Poker") finished the weekend with a flourish: +17(TP), +26(TP), +25(TP). However, no-one could match Tim Wilkins's tally of 6 triples and he took the peeling prize.

CA. He then presented Nigel with a gift which had been provided from the donations of individual affiliates.

Nigel thanked all those who had contributed so generously and explained that the present was a "state of the art" camcorder, which he had been "admiring from afar" for some time. He thanked everyone whom he had served as Secretary for the last seven years. He expressed the hope that, being free from the Secretary's office, his handicap would come down quickly. Several of those present, who had first hand experience of Nigel's recent form, endorsed this sentiment!

Most present at the AGM then conducted a mass "take off" to the dining room, where an excellent lunch was enjoyed by all. The President proposed the toast to Nigel.

I am sure that most of you know that Nigel is now a member of Council and will be joining a significant number of committees. He has also agreed to act as the "mentor" for the intended resurrection of the Garden Croquet Competition. It is pleasing to note therefore that Nigel's experience and knowledge of "all things Croquet" will not be lost to the CA.

CA DIPLOMAS

The Management Committee of the CA is pleased to announce that the following Affiliates have been awarded the CA Diploma for their services to Croquet. The announcement of the awards was made at the AGM, which was held at the Hurlingham Club, on Saturday the 15th October. The citations are as follows:

John Beech - Pendle and Craven Croquet Club

The CA Diploma was presented to John, by Ian Vincent, at the official opening of the Club on the 12th July 2005. John was

Weybridge, Commander Paget was unaccompanied and had covered the full half a mile when, at the Walton end, the ice gave way near the bank under the trees. No one saw him disappearonly his pipe, stick and box of matches were visible on the surface of the ice."

There was a bit of a scandal during the depressing years of the First World War when a non-Woking member, H. F. Crowther Smith, having won a silver trophy at Woking in 1914, refused to hand it back until he had had a chance to defend it. There were of course no tournaments held during the war years and Woking had to threaten court action to get the cup back. It was finally returned in 1918. Crowther Smith then applied to re-join the Croquet Association but was refused as he had not apologised for his behaviour. It took him five years to say "Sorry" and he was allowed back into the croquet world in 1925. He became editor of the Croquet Gazette for seventeen years but is best remembered for his caricatures of croquet personalities.

The Golden Era

Woking won the Inter-Club Championship in 1924, 1925, 1930, 1933, 1935 and 1937 and the Longman Club Team Cup in 1932 thanks in the main to Ben Apps and his wife, Lorn. He joined Woking in 1918 and studied the game using Lord Tollemache's epic "Croquet", first published in 1914 and still held in the club library. He was described as a highly temperamental player and inclined to explain his failures away as bad luck on his part or the good fortune of his opponent. Even so, by 1925 he merited a place in the Top Ten list and continued to do so until his sudden death from angina pectoris in September 1935.

Of his many triumphs, his outstanding achievement was to win the Croquet Association's Open Championship in 1926, 1930 and 1931. With his partner, Mrs Lorn Strickland, he won the Mixed Doubles Championship in 1926 and 1927. Mrs Strickland was the widow of Commander C W C Strickland RN who, having survived all but the last few months of WW1, was killed on a level crossing in September 1918 en route to play croquet at Sheerness. In 1928, Ben Apps converted his croquet partnership into something of a more legally binding and permanent relationship.

Lorn Apps was herself an outstanding player of either gender. She was only over-shadowed by the formidable Miss Steel, the original "Iron Lady" who is the Martina Navratilova of croquet. Lorn Apps' ultimate triumph was to win the President's Cup in 1936 and become one of only three women ever to have done so (Miss Steel won it three times). She was a no-nonsense, down-to-earth sort of person with an astringent wit. Perhaps it was that wit which caused her to start the rumour that she had received guidance from above during her great victory. She knew, of course, that it is contrary to the Laws of Croquet to receive outside advice even if received from a recently deceased husband! She became Secretary of the Croquet Association in 1948 and for a salary of her first class ticket and £40 per annum, she travelled up to Headquarters, then at Southampton Row, three days a week from her home in Mount Hermon Road until her death in 1959. The name of Apps is perpetuated in croquet circles by the Apps Memorial Bowl awarded annually to the most improved male player in the country and the Apps Heley Award for the best development of a club with 3 or 4 courts.

The Renaissance

As with so many clubs that survived WW2, the lawns at Woking in 1946 were in the worst condition in the club's history. It was no surprise that, in the period of another major refurbishment of the club at the start of the 1960s, the number of croquet courts was reduced to two with the proviso that the Croquet Section would be able to continue with its open tournaments through the occasional use of some of the grass tennis courts.

Such was the low ebb of the Croquet Section in these times and in response to an appeal for help from Captain Nalder as Club Secretary, the 40 year old bachelor solicitor, Derek Caporn, a recently appointed member of the Croquet Association Council, was tasked by the Association to help Woking back onto its croquet feet. Based in a grace and favour apartment in Hampton Court Palace, he joined Woking in 1963 where he found that the croquet membership had dwindled well down into single figures, newcomers during the 1950s having been frozen out by the existing members. He made Herculean efforts to recruit more members and introduced all sorts of innovative ideas to make the croquet side of the Club more attractive for players of all abilities, including in 1965 tacking the weekends to either end of the annual weeklong tournament and renaming it "Irish Week", a ten day croquet festival.

After a stint of some thirty years, Derek was still serving in 1993 on the Club's Croquet Section Committee and was elected Vice President of the Association in 1994, having been Chairman of the Council (1976-78) and Honorary Secretary of the Association from 1984 to 1990.

When Derek Caporn died in 1995, the Croquet Association lost one of its greatest propagandists and organisers of good works. To quote from his obituary published in the November edition of the Croquet Gazette of that year, "It will surprise many present day Associates to know that prior to 1969 there was no Fixtures Book: intending competitors had to wait receipt of the Gazette in order to learn the details about tournament entry, information which appeared in the form of advertisements (for which clubs paid £2 per insert). It was solely Derek's initiative that the Fixture Calendar came into being, now a sine qua non, and which he himself produced for the first four years of its existence."

His outstanding work was not of course done alone; he gradually built up around him a team of similarly dedicated people. Among them was another member of Woking who is also held in high esteem at national level, namely Lionel Wharrad. He acted as Honorary Secretary for a year from May 1993 and was appointed Chairman of the Council (1984 to 1986), and later Vice-President but his lasting contribution to croquet mainly stemmed from his work as Chairman of the Development Committee when together



Derek Caporn a stalwart of croquet both in and out of Woking

RETIREMENT OF NIGEL GRAVES

Report by Klim Seabright

It was perhaps appropriate in a sporting organisation such as Croquet, that the presentation to mark Nigel Graves' retirement as Secretary of the CA should be in "two halves". The more formal part of the ceremony was conducted within the AGM, after which some forty members joined Nigel for an informal lunch.

Prof Bernard Neal, President of the CA, expressed his appreciation of Nigel's work within the CA and made particular mention of the excellent advice he had received from Nigel when Cheltenham Croquet Club (of which Prof. Neal is also President) faced some complex issues in respect of the legal status of the club. On behalf of the CA Prof Neal thanked Nigel for the seven years which he had served as Secretary of the



Nigel with the Trevor Williams Cup at Compton

with Derek Caporn he founded such clubs as Surbiton, Ramsgate and Bournemouth and introduced a number of innovations including Short Croquet for television, the much used Wharrard Turns and full bisque games. His 14 point Advance Handicap is a popular version of croquet and played across the country. In our Centenary Year, Lionel is at last retired from the sport and has moved down to Kent.

Inspired no doubt by the examples of Caporn and Wharrad, others went on from Woking to create new clubs, such as Tony Mrozinski (Guildford and Godalming), Bob Smith and John Rose (Reading) and Tony Backhouse (Cornwall). Perhaps Derek Caporn had some justification when writing up Woking for the nomination of the Apps-Heley Award, for claiming "I cannot imagine that there is any other small club with only two lawns, which for over twenty years has done so much for croquet in general or for the CA in particular". Nevertheless Woking failed to get the award!

Maintaining Traditions

Other current members have given service on the national Council such as Geoffrey Cuttle and James Wankling. The latter was Chairman of the Golf Croquet Committee, a version of croquet that has recently become very popular at the club although the Croquet Gazette records a two-day open Golf Croquet tournament



Croquet Chairman, Bill Wood-Roe, receives a cheque from the sponsor of the Croquet Centenary on an Edwardian Day in July 2005.

at Woking held in 1936. Jeff Dawson is currently on the Council of the Croquet Association and is Chairman of its Marketing Committee. He is the Ben Apps of Woking as it starts its second century, having numerous times won the Championship of Surrey and in our centenary year qualified for the World Croquet Championship as well as winning the Chairman's Salver. He represented Great Britain on the last three occasions in the Solomon Cup against the USA. However he has not yet succeeded in finding another Mrs Strickland for the club!

Croquet at Woking after 100 years is alive and well with over 70 members, which is about the maximum two courts can cope with. It is in excellent shape to start the next one hundred years of its existence.

CRAKE VALLEY AND THE BOB VAUGHAN MEMORIAL TROPHY

Report by Mark Miller

"Crake Valley - where's that?" is what people south of Manchester usually say when I tell them where I've come from. Well, it's in a picturesque setting beside the River Crake, in Cumbria, on the very edge of the southernmost point of the Lake District National Park, with a backdrop of wooded hills and, often, circling buzzards. Up the river you can see the handsome Penny Bridge Hall (home of our landlord), from where in the 1920s Mrs Machell would punt downstream with mallet and racquet.

Some time in the 1890s a local archery club was looking for premises, and was offered the use of an acre or so of level land next to the Crake. Croquet soon followed, and then the new game of lawn tennis. Archery eventually departed; croquet faded, and died out in the 1950s. The lawns became tennis courts - a familiar story in so many places. The club became a casual tennis club and a recreation area for children from the village.

In the late 1980s Bob Vaughan set about reviving croquet; without Bob's inspiration there simply would not be any croquet here. Good lawns were found under knee-high grass and weeds. Fortunately, Neil Williams, previously of Cheltenham, Bowdon and Southport (where he had been chairman), and one-time playing partner of Bernard Neal, was living not far away; he brought much needed skills and wide experience. Neil Pennington, who had only played garden croquet, was delighted to find a friendly village club; an ex-engineer, he cleared weeds, made hoops and took mowers to pieces. Sadly these three stalwarts are no longer with us.

For a few years croquet, with only a handful of players, functioned as a minor subsection of the tennis club. Gradually lawns were recovered and croquet playing increased. An all-weather and indoor tennis centre opened in nearby Ulverston, and now the roles have been reversed. We keep one tennis court going, but it's not used much.

Bob Vaughan was an extremely active, hands-on chairman until his untimely death in January 2001. He straightaway realised the importance of reaching out to the wider world of croquet. He and his wife were friends of Derek and Margaret Trotman. As a result of that contact Croquet North gave us a lot of help. So did Pendle and Southport, and Colin Wild from Bowdon, another friend of Bob's. We even had some coaching from one Gail Curry, but it didn't seem to do any harm. By about 1992 we were able to take part in the Croquet North Handicap League. Later, for geographical reasons, we transferred to the North West Federation. We maintained our links with Croquet North, though; in 1997, our designated centenary year, Belsay Hall played Crake Valley in the world's first ever 24-hour croquet match, which earned us a Guinness Records certificate. Derek Trotman refereed.

We now have 35 members, 3½ lawns and a tennis court, play handicap and advanced, and run two advanced tournaments. Last year and in 2002 we hosted the English CA v Scottish CA fixture.

The club had a rather decrepit wooden clubhouse with no facilities. Thanks to a generous grant from the CA the clubhouse is no longer decrepit; there are even those who want to call it

under pressure. In my experience, this is not true, they simply have a much greater "comfort zone" in which they can play without requiring shots they find difficult. In game four, Dave managed to take Reg out of his comfort zone and was rewarded with multiple errors in the two ball game.

The singles final was completely one-sided. Maugham failed hoop 1 3rd turn in the first, but Clarke failed to get through the rabbit run at 3 and despite a further failure at hoop 1 from Dave, Chris was unable to capitalise, failing hoop 4. Dave eventually finished with a TP. After this shocking first game, Dave played very well with tight 6th and 5th turns wins in the next two to win the Opens for the first time. With an excellent Presidents Cup record and some superb performances in the MacRobertson Shield it is only fitting that the top trophy in the British game now has the name Maugham on it.

The doubles final saw the new pairing of Bamford and Gibbons face the old guard of Fulford and Clarke. The first game was a routine 26TP to the defending Champions, but Reg was on a sextuple to equalise in the second. It became delayed and ended up needing to complete an STP. The four back peel was made and after another 27 minutes, Reg walked off the lawn, having peeled John to rover and pegged himself out. Robert then played an excellent turn, going to the peg, peeling Chris to hoop two and laying up guarding corner 2 with his ball propped on the left hand wire of 1-b. John cornered and Chris started the wiring game which failed after hoop 3 when he missed a 3-yarder. John hit from corner 2 to south of 3, split the ball behind rover, going to the ball level with hoop 5, took off to rover, and finished.

In the deciding game, Robert went through the middle of a double 4th turn, John went to 1-b 5th turn, and Reg finished with a good sextuple 7th turn. After a weak start where he admitted to feeling nervous playing with Reg, John produced a perfect performance in the final and can feel proud of his first Championship win. An excellent tournament overall and thanks to the Hurlingham and Parsons Green clubs for the use of their lawns. I hope to be able to return from my new life in New Zealand each year to play in many more Opens, but if I don't succeed, "So long, and thanks for all the hoops".

South of England Championship Compton (Eastbourne) 2005 Sep 16-18

Report by Roger Wood

Some regulars were missing this year, severely depleting the number of Davids but attracting an equal number of Chrisses. One West Country player got half way to Surbiton before remembering that he was heading for Eastbourne, and even then detoured via Southwick! The first day was mostly overcast with an unpleasantly cold and gusty north wind to which some seemed entirely oblivious while others donned arctic exploration gear. Only three matches went to three games. Marcus Evans won through after losing the first to Roger Tribe. Newcomer James Tuttiett took a game off Ed Duckworth in a somewhat protracted match which looked like extending into day 2; but Ed rallied in the third to complete a swift triple by the light of the rising moon. A little earlier ominous black clouds appeared but the rain only lasted a short while and we were treated to the magnificent sight of a double rainbow.



Peter Nash, winner of the Ionides 'A' class trophy at the South of England Week

Cloudless and calm conditions on Saturday saw Marcus Evans, Ed Duckworth and Rutger Beijderwellen win through to the semi-finals, with another newcomer Richard Dickson having taken the first game against Rutger +26(TP) and David Magee only denied victory over Marcus by failing 4-back in the third game with all peels completed. Meanwhile Pete Trimmer (waiting for Tim Wilkins and David Harrison-Wood to finish), having been TPOd by Chris Dent in an extra Swiss game, hit three wonderful long shots in succession (the final one 40 yards) to win from hoop 1. Having lost to Tim Wilkins in the knock out, David Harrison-Wood met Jerry Guest in the Swiss. David made the first break but stuck in 2-back whereupon Jerry completed all five peels on David's ball and pegged it out - sadly for Jerry, David went on to win. The 4th quarter final began after lunch: Pete Trimmer won the first +25; Tim Wilkins replied +15(TP) and all seemed settled in favour of Pete in the third when he ran rover with his partner ball waiting north and slightly west of the peg - but he chose to send Tim's black to C2 while going to partner and ran heavily into rover with his own ball, leaving himself a shot at the peg towards partner. He trickled, missed peg and ball and presented Tim with

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the third game, with Shane reaching penult and peg with a leave, before Dave hit in, winning the match with a TP.

Fulford had equalised on lawn 10, but the decider had seen Patrick maintaining very good shooting form to take the first break. Robert at last showed his dominance with a break to 4-back, peeling Patrick to hoop 3, and after Patrick's last shot hilled off, Robert made no mistake to move into the next round, setting up a rematch of the Western's final with Dave Kibble.

On lawn 5, Clarke had gone 48-nil down to Leo McBride. Leo had won the first game 5th turn and was finishing 6th turn in the second game before the severe hill at rover caused his peel to bounce to the side, which he then followed with a poor hoop stroke to finish on rover and rover. Clarke finished in two turns. Leo overcame his disappointment by taking another 3rd turn ball around, but this time Chris hit the lift and completed a TPO 4th turn, which he converted into a match win 6th turn.

Bamford fared best of the top 4 seeds, with a straight games win over Matt Burrow, which was not free from controversy. Matt had a difficult short, angled hoop which was being watched by a referee when Matt hit the ball while casting over it. Reg was very unhappy about the fact that the ball would now have to be replaced, potentially making the hoop easier, but with the laws as they currently stand, there is no penalty to the striker for doing this.



Mark Avery in play

Patmore had a good win against Death, but the scores of -17TP, +26TP, +26TP somewhat flattered the quality of the match. Avery came from game down to beat Beijderwellen, and Burrige showed that the magic that got him into the 1996 MacRobertson Shield team was still there by coming from game down to beat Mulliner. Of all the performances that morning, it was Peter Landrebe, fresh from the trauma of a long 3-hour tube journey that morning, who produced the best croquet hitting all his shots to beat Jenny Williams in straight games.

The evening entertainment was on lawn 6 with the Kibble/Fulford match. Robert made several errors and missed his last 6 shots to go down in straight games to the Western Champion who has the enviable record of 5 straight wins against the World Champion. Burrige's tournament was over as quickly as it had started, with a disappointing 25TP, 25TP loss to Avery. Maugham was back on Lawn 4 to inflict an 11th turn match win on Heap, who had had to wait 6 hours for his 5 strokes. The final action of

the night saw Goacher fail hoop 2 to allow Bamford to end the evening at game all, after failing his sextuple.

Friday morning saw Bamford complete his win against Goacher. Meanwhile on lawn 4, we had an intriguing match between Keith Aiton and Peter Landrebe. Keith has been showing improved form this year and most expected a comfortable win. However, a spectacular 3rd turn ball round involving dozens of yards of roquets from Peter, gave the Australian the best possible start. He then finished the game 5th turn and the match 11th turn to produce one of the best performance from an underdog I have seen for some time.

Patmore eventually made it past Harrison-Wood to set up a match with Kibble. This match was poor and it must be very frustrating for Dave that he has regularly failed to beat lower ranked opponents this year.

In the other top half quarter, Avery had gone game and break up against Clarke, but another last shot was hit and another TPO ensued. Avery approached hoop 1 well, but then failed it from a yard straight. Chris joined in corner 2 and Mark failed a near impossible hoop to give Chris the equaliser. Mark had the first break in the third with the aid of a very lucky hit-in. Chris had failed hoop 1 and Mark, shooting from second corner, missed by a yard to hit the ball in the hoop. Chris again hit his last lift and completed a TPO which he soon converted to a match win.

Meanwhile, Bamford had demolished Gibbons with two sextuples. John had chances, but failed to capitalise on them. Maugham was back on lawn 4 playing Landrebe. Peter maintained his aggressive style of play, but failed his TPO in the first and then rather unfortunately finished in hoop 6 when peeling 3-b going to 1-b on his sextuple in the second allowing Dave a place in the semis.


Saturday morning and shock, horror, Maugham vs Bamford was not on lawn 4, but lawn 3 instead. The other semi on lawn 2 proved to be as competitive as it looked on paper with Clarke beating Patmore 3-0 with no hoops conceded. The other semi however was very competitive. Dave took the first two games with some good shooting before Reg employed the 20 minute sandwich break to good effect to win the third with a sextuple. The fourth was the most interesting game of the tournament. Reg went round 3rd turn and as usual stopped at 3-b. Dave hit the lift and to the surprise of most embarked on a qpo. This became slightly delayed, but it was completed without too much worry allowing Dave to peg two balls out. Reg approached hoop 1 and ran an excellent hoop, then hit another 10 yarder to have croquet near corner two. In most circumstances, this would be easy for Reg, but he failed the hoop. Later, with Dave in front of hoop 1, Reg failed a 1 yard hoop 3 from fairly straight, bouncing over towards hoop 2. Dave took full advantage and established a 2-ball break, which he had under good control until he left himself a long 4-b at Regs' hoop. With most thinking caution was wise, Dave ran the hoop to obtain a good rush to penult which he inexplicably over-approached. The game then became tactical, with Reg in front of hoop 3 and Dave near hoop 2. In an attempt to position in the jaws of hoop 3, Reg ran the hoop and felt forced to shoot at Dave, missing. Dave then missed a slightly hampered 5 yarder, giving Reg croquet. Eventually, Reg misapproached hoop 4 and decided to try and take wired position which if successful would still give Dave a 9-yarder or the option to take position at penult from the end of B-Baulk. As it was, he failed the wiring, leaving Dave a rush to penult from which he finished despite another poor approach. Many people say that the top players are very good



Graham Whitehouse (CV) Joan Clinch (Secretary, CV) Mark Miller (Chairman, CV) Walter Sanders (CN) Derek Watts (CN) Liz Vaughan John Shakespeare (CV) Alice Fleck (CN) Sheila Watts (CN) Photo by Derek Watts.

"The Pavilion". Cumbria County Council, through Ulverston Neighbourhood Forum, has helped to pay for roof repairs, mains water and a new mower. Awards for All has funded a toilet and sewage disposal system. We should by next season have a much improved kitchen and a ramp for disabled access. Anyone who has been involved in this sort of development will understand how much work all this has taken - fundraising, organisation and manual labour.

After Bob died, his widow, Liz, presented the club with a trophy, to be awarded as the committee saw fit. After some deliberation, we went back to our roots and, as so often with croquet, to a good relationship; we invited Croquet North to play Crake Valley in an annual fixture. The invitation was gladly accepted, and this year's was the third Bob Vaughan Memorial Trophy. Rather poignantly, there was a Crake Valley player taking part who never knew Bob. Croquet North won convincingly (as we did at Tyneside last year). It makes for a good day's croquet and a delightful social occasion. Long may it continue.



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The CA and the Holiday Property Bond

by Brian Kitching, member of the CA Marketing Committee

I am pleased to announce a sponsorship agreement between the Holiday Property Bond and the Croquet Association.

Visitors to the Cheltenham club, to the Mitsubishi World Championships in August, would have seen the Holiday Property Bond banner displayed on the lawn used for the Plate Event final and perhaps wondered why it was there.

HPB helped sponsor the World Championships, as part of a deal in which they are supporting the CA generally. This article explains the background to the deal and what it aims to achieve.



Paddy Chapman, 17 year old New Zealander. Winner of the World Championship Plate event.

I started playing croquet at the Tunbridge Wells club at about the same time as we bought a Holiday Property Bond. An old friend was already a member of HPB, and had recommended it, so when my wife's father died we did not hesitate to use some money he left her by investing in a Bond.

Holiday Property Bond's object is to provide top class, reliable, self catering holiday facilities, at reasonable cost. It is a serious investment which we made with our children and grandchildren in mind. We vested the Bond in our children's names, so they can still enjoy holidays after we have gone.

Founded in 1983, the Holiday Property Bond offers its investors an interest in and rent-free accommodation at a growing portfolio of UK, and overseas properties, mostly in Europe. Some of its exclusive sites " which include a French chateau, country houses, and even a castle in Wales - have their own croquet lawns. They all have leisure facilities of some sort, including those for small children.

HPB has already demonstrated its commitment to the CA deal with the refurbishment of the lawns and equipment at selected sites. I understand a number of regional initiatives are also underway - for example, at Langton House, on the Isle of Purbeck, both the lawn and some croquet equipment has been made available to the newly formed Swanage Croquet Club. One consequence of which has been to encourage considerable holiday making Bondholder interest, as they can watch games being played properly.

Although we have not yet been to play winter croquet in Florida or South Africa, where the lawns are full sized and well maintained, we have played on the small lawn at the HPB site in La Gomera, a small island in the Canaries close to Tenerife. The croquet was still great fun and we met up on the lawn with other club croquet enthusiasts from Budleigh Salterton and Bowdon. The lawn needs refurbishment and I understand this is to be done. The CA Shop has already supplied new equipment.

When we visit HPB sites we meet some really nice people; just the same sort as we have in our croquet clubs: many are middle class, but whatever their background they are always good mannered, often retired, and with money and time to spend to enjoy travel and hobbies. I thought, why not put the two groups together? Bond Holders, or many of them, would enjoy croquet.

The Bond encourages its members to recommend others to join. We have exactly the same object in the CA, albeit with a smaller budget. I put the idea to my colleagues on the CA Marketing Committee, - to develop a mutually rewarding relationship with HPB at minimum cost to the CA. They agreed. An approach to HPB followed and an agreement was reached:

HPB will publish an article about the CA, without charge, which will see the CA promoted to 50,000 existing and potential Bondholders via HPB's quarterly magazine.

- HPB will purchase new croquet equipment as necessary from the CA Shop, for which we have offered a discount.
- HPB sponsored a lawn at Cheltenham.
- HPB to insert CA promotional material, which we will design, in its croquet equipment boxes and bags.
- HPB have agreed to make a contribution to the Association for each new HPB investor who originates from our ranks. Don't forget to mention the CA in any dealings you may have!

Ranked among the UK's 33,000+ Bondholders are sportswoman-turned-broadcaster Sue Barker, and TV presenter Judith Chalmers.

- To learn more about the benefits of the Holiday Property Bond:**
- request an information pack, or schedule a no-obligation tour of a Bond site near you,
 - telephone HPB Management, on 01638 660066, and mention the Association when you call,
 - or visit www.hpb.co.uk, selecting Croquet Association from the drop down box

British Opens, Hurlingham

3 - 10 JULY 2005

Report by Chris Clarke

This year's Opens returned to Hurlingham and, despite some people's fears of a reduced entry, 46 players, one more than last year, played in the singles. We were pleased to welcome Leo McBride and Brian Cumming from Canada, Rosie Graham, Peter Landrebe and Jonathan Bowen from Australia, and Stewart Jackson from America. With the World Championships only a month away, this was not the major event of 2005, merely an opportunity for the top players to engage in early sparring and for the MacRobertson Shield hopefuls to exhibit their ability.



David Maugham, winner of the Open Championship

The weather was grey and overcast and the lawns were green and easy-paced, though with a hint that good weather could speed them up noticeably. With the ground soft, the hoops were very easy, and the automatic watering on the cricket pitch meant that peeling finishes were compulsory, but it was only time that would tell whether it would be triples or sextuples that won the day.

The first three days of the tournament were allocated to singles block play, and saw a few surprise results. When Ian Lines returned after an hour of his game with Martin Murray, no one

was surprised - except when Martin announced to the manager that it was he who had won 25TP, 8th turn. More games than not were finished with peeling turns, and most games finished in under an hour and a half. It was somewhat of a surprise, therefore, when Michael Heap, playing on lawn 4 against Louise Bradforth, finished with a "T", but no "P" on his +2 game. The best performance of the block stage was by Reg Bamford, who completed 7 consecutive sextuples, to win the block without dropping a game, the only player to do so.



John Gibbons and Reg Bamford being presented with their doubles trophies by CA President Bernard Neal.

Tuesday morning saw a set of results that had the male chauvinists running for cover. Double-banked on lawn 2 were Louise Bradforth against Robert Fulford, and Jenny Williams against Andrew Gregory. Whilst on the adjacent lawn 3, Rosemary Graham was playing George Noble. The odds of all three winning were slim. The odds of all three winning with triples, even slimmer. But never-the-less, the gentlemen were all put to the sword to complete a remarkable morning for the gentler sex. Sarah Burrow was delighted that the other three ladies had done so well, but felt obliged to make sure everyone knew that she was the first lady to have had a 26TP win that week.

To qualify from your block at the Opens is much easier than qualifying from your block at the Worlds, since 50% wins is all that is required. It must therefore have been disappointing for Marcus Evans, Ian Lines and Robin Brown to all fail to qualify.

The doubles started on Wednesday, and many people were looking forward to seeing how the newly-formed doubles partnership of Reg Bamford and John Gibbons would get on, after Reg had been dropped by Stephen Mulliner in favour of Matthew Burrow. Reg seemed particularly up for it, given the fact that Stephen had asked Matthew to partner him before telling Reg.

Doubles is rarely quick, but on the easy-paced lawns, few expected the Davis + Morrow vs Noble + Vincent match to be won +8 on time after 9 hours in the third. However, there was an excuse for this, since the match was on the slightly tricky lawn 10. As if spurred on to greater feats of lawn occupancy, they then beat Peter Landrebe and Rosie Graham +1 on time in the third on the very easy lawn 3.

Bamford and Gibbons started against past Champions, Farthing and Patmore, and were soon game down. The lift shot was missed in the second and it was looking like a short-lived

partnership before Patmore rolled back into the rabbit-run having run hoop 3 with a triple laid out. From here, Bamford and Gibbons took control to win the match, 26TP in the third.

Clarke and Fulford had started well with four triples in their first four games and decided to celebrate the all-Colchester quarter-final against Heap and Wicks by trying to become the first doubles pair to have a sextuple each in a match. Fulford's sextuple in the first was routine and Clarke seemed to have his under control, having jawsed the rover peel and jumped over to the boundary, however a missed 5 yarder cost them the record, but not the game.

Hector and Mundy vs Cumming and McBride had a very interesting start. Mundy went and put the clips on at the start of the game and after about 40 minutes, they were about to put their first clip on 4-back, when they wondered why it had a blue top. No-one had realised that Dave had put the clips on hoop 3 instead of hoop 1. Referees were called and the balls were eventually put back to their positions many turns earlier when the Canadians had first been misled. McBride and Cumming went on to win the match and then disposed of Avery and Maugham.



Jenny Williams, winner of the 'Z' at the Open Championship.

Players arrived on Thursday morning to find that several of the competitors had been delayed by problems on the Tube. A "power surge" was blamed, but as the morning wore on, everyone became more than aware that London had suffered its worst terrorist attack for many years. With the wail of sirens in the background, the tournament continued with all the seeds struggling to overcome their weaker opposition.

On the cricket pitch, Robert Fulford was playing Patrick Hort. The first game was scrappy, but looked to have gone Robert's way when a failed wiring at 1-back by Patrick - who was on 1-back and peg - allowed Robert to hit in with his hoop 6 ball leaving a fairly-straightforward double peel finish. It is unusual for Robert's clips to ever find their way onto 6 and penult, but it was even more of a surprise to have them stay there, having had such an easy chance to finish. Patrick took the opportunity and went 1-nil up.

Meanwhile, Maugham was in trouble on lawn 4 against Shane Davis. Shane's play had been improving from the start of the Men's all the way through the last month, and it looked as if he would soon be recovering the form that made him one of New Zealand's top MacRobertson Shield players. The match went to

