

The Croquet Association

CROQUET SHOP



Expert advice, discounted prices, rapid delivery on most items

CROQUET MALLETS

A comprehensive selection of mallets, including, **Pidcock, Percival, Hobbs, George Wood** and **Jaques**. The popular George Wood Original mallet at £75 + delivery is still our best seller. Come to us for the widest variety and impartial expert advice.

- Also a range of hard and soft mallet covers to suit most mallets, including both padded and unpadded.
- Hard Leather Case, 9.25 x 38 x 2.5" £50.00
 - Standard blue cover £20.00
 - Padded blue cover £24.00
 - Large blue cover up to 12" head, 40" shaft £24.00
 - Large padded blue cover up to 12" head, 37" shaft £28.00

CLOTHING

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

- Breathable wet weather jacket £40.00
- Breathable jacket & trousers £56.00
- Fleece reversible windcheater jacket £37.00
- Fleece reversible gilet £27.00
- Roll up sports windcheater £31.00
- White trousers £30.00
- Pullover £29.50
- White shorts £26.00



ODDS & ENDS

- Timer £10.50
- Silver Earrings (mallet or hoop & ball) £12.00
- Hoop setting feeler gauge £2.50
- Canvas ball carrier bags £15.00
- Croquet Posters - B&W prints £6.00ea
- Ball markers (pack of 10) £1.00

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Call Jeff Dawson on 01483 776971
 email sales@croquet.org.uk
 Or visit our website www.croquet.org.uk/shop
 We are based at 112 Potters Lane, Send,
 Surrey GU23 7AL
 Callers welcome by appointment only, please.

BOOKS

- A wide variety of croquet publications are available, including:
- Basic Laws of Association and Golf Croquet £2.00
 - The Laws of Association Croquet £4.00
 - Official rulings and commentary £3.00
 - The Laws of Golf Croquet £2.50
 - A guide to Golf Croquet £5.00
 - Golf Croquet Tactics £11.00
 - How to play Croquet £4.50
 - Know the game £5.00
 - Alternative Croquet £7.00
 - Croquet - The Skills of the Game by Bill Lamb £10.00
 - Croquet by John Solomon £9.00
 - Plus One on Time by Don Gaunt £10.00
 - Expert Croquet Tactics by Keith Wylie £14.00
 - Croquet Management by Gaunt & Wheeler £11.50
 - Lawn Management by John Beech £5.00
 - Croquet: Technique by John Riches £7.00
 - Croquet: Error Correction by John Riches £7.00
 - Croquet: Next Break Strategy by John Riches £9.00
 - Croquet: The Mental Approach by John Riches £9.00
 - Croquet: Lessons in Tactics by John Riches £9.00
 - Croquet: Finer Points by John Riches £10.50

DVDs AND VIDEOS

- Learn Croquet (DVD) Association £19.00
- Mastering Golf Croquet (DVD) £19.00
- Tactics part 3 - Peeling Video 90min £16.00

All books and video prices include P&P to UK addresses

COMPLETE CROQUET SETS

How about getting a set for the back garden? We sell a wide range of sets at low prices and our voucher scheme entitles members to a **£20 discount** on their first set!

CLUB EQUIPMENT

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

BALLS - Barlow GT, Dawson and Sunshiny
HOOPS - Omega, Aldridge, Townsend and Jaques
 Corner flags, yardline markers, pegs, clips, gauges.

THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS - 31 DECEMBER 2006

1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Accounting convention

The accounts are prepared under the historical cost convention.

Fixed Assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life:

Office Building 5% per annum from 1 January 2003
 (the building was completed in the last quarter of 2002)

Croquet & Office Equipment & Fittings 33% per annum

Trophies are included in the Balance Sheet at valuation.

Stock

Stock is valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

2 LISTED INVESTMENTS AT COST

	2006 £	2005 £
15,409 4.125% Index Linked Treasury Stock 2030	18,810	18,810
9,733 4.75% Treasury Stock 2020	9,918	-
9,344 4.75% Treasury Stock 2015	9,898	-
10,157 4.25% Treasury Gilt 2011	9,927	-
9,920 4.00% Treasury Stock 2009	9,915	-
Investments at cost	58,468	18,810
Market value of investments at 31 December 2006	75,050	35,980

3 SPECIAL FUNDS

Fund Name	Balance Balance 1 January 2005	Transfers from/(to) General Fund in year:			31 December 2006
		Investment	Donations	General Allocation (net)	
	£	Income £			£
New Club Fund (see below)	5,000	-	-	(5,000)	-
Development Fund	87,000	-	-	15,000	102,000
Benefactors Fund	30,310	1,043	1,028	-	32,381
International Fund	28,450	979	-	-	29,429
Duffield Bequest	20,464	860	-	(2,458)	18,866
Total Special Funds	171,224	2,882	1,028	7,542	182,676

The New Club Fund has been amalgamated with the Development Fund

THE CROQUET GAZETTE



Issue 310 Aug/Oct 2007

Front Cover: Rutger Beijderwellen and Chris Farthing at hoop 6, during their match in the final of the Ascot Cup, the English National Golf Croquet Championship

Next Issue Published 14th December 2007

Copy Deadline 7th Nov 2007

Photos in this issue by Chris Williams, Derek Old, Samir Patel, Tim King, Freda Vitry, Ian Vincent, John Bevington, Richard Hoskyns.

Disclaimer

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

CONTENTS

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN	4
EDITORIAL	4
LETTERS	5
NEWS & INFORMATION	6
OBITUARY	8
COACHING	9
John Riches on the 'Sweep Shot'	
EQUIPMENT	10
All Weather Practice	
COACHING NOTES	12
Openings	
TECHNICAL MATTERS	12
Lawn Speeds	
TOURNAMENT REPORTS	13
EXTREME CONDITIONS	20
The weather and croquet	
COMMENTS ON THE CA ACCOUNTS & THE ACCOUNTS	21

Chairman's Column

During the summer months I have visited a number of clubs around the Country, to play in tournaments, and try to learn from good practices that are adopted at club level.

Some smaller clubs I have visited said they would love to host a CA Tournament but felt that they were too small. A clever way round this problem is very well demonstrated by the 6 Lawns Tournament hosted by three 2 lawn clubs Hamptworth, Littleton & Winchester.

Run over 3 days I had the pleasure of playing and socialising at all 3 clubs. I can thoroughly recommend the experience. All the lawns were in good condition, albeit the 3 clubs presented quite different playing conditions. The competitors played at a different club each day and many of us met up at a suitable hostelry in the evenings to put the world to rights.

It made for an excellent tournament and I can thoroughly recommend the idea to other small clubs who would like to be involved in hosting a tournament.

Some clubs I have visited ask what we can do to encourage more youngsters into the game, whilst others openly admit that they are not interested in youth development

and are quite happy to exist with an "older profile" of members.

Currently we are the top croquet nation in the world, however to stay there we need to continue to develop new talent from the younger generations.

If we really do want to attract the youth into our game I believe we seriously need to question the image we portray to the outside world. Some of the media certainly like to suggest we are an elitist sport from a bygone era.

Should we start considering trendier clothes for tournament players? Do whites have to be sacrosanct? Cricket and tennis are sports that have adopted trendier dress codes. Has the time come when we should consider whether a similar change would benefit our sport?

I would welcome your views on either of these subjects in the Gazette or on the Nottingham Board.

Jonathan Isaacs



Editorial

Where does the summer go to? Is it a sign of age creeping up, or maybe more that the weather has been particularly troublesome for part of the season. Several clubs have suffered at one time or another, Tyneside had a mud slide to contend with, and Cheltenham had water problems, and poor John Jeffrey, well you will see further into the issue, but my own view is that it was due to divine intervention for destroying the garden, but then I would say that wouldn't I with my other hat on.

I haven't been out and about quite as much as I would have liked this season, but I am hopeful of doing more next year. It has been interesting listening to experienced tournament players, and those who have not been around so long, giving their views on the game, the clubs that they have visited and what they gain from playing at different clubs, and different levels; I guess that is how quite a lot of information is exchanged

in the croquet world. It was interesting listening to how players really appreciate the efforts put in improve facilities from year to year, and in particular of course, to the courts themselves. So to all those hard working grounds staff, and grounds committee members, who no doubt sweat and toil with boring regularity, we the players would like to thank you for not only the physical efforts, but also the planning that goes into making the courts we use a pleasure to play on.

Gail Curry
Editor



A novel way of Lawn Maintenance at Tyneside !!

by Derek Trotman

After a night of torrential rain, Sunday morning 1st July appeared bright and sunny. The Tyneside team arriving at Exhibition Park to prepare their lawns for a Secretary's Shield match were greatly surprised to find they had to negotiate over two feet of water in the underpass at the entrance before they could reach the Club House. Surprise turned to horror as they approached the Pavilion lawn and found it several inches deep in a muddy sludge that had flooded down from the Town Moor. Their opponents, Huddersfield, arrived shortly after and were even less impressed as their round trip of over 250 miles plus the overnight stay in a local hotel appeared to have been in vain. The CA guidance notes on how to resolve the tie in inclement weather did not seem to apply to a flooded lawn leaving only one lawn fit to play the match. As both teams wanted to play croquet, common sense prevailed and it was decided to play two rounds of two doubles, double banked. If the match could not be resolved by games won, a result would be based on the net points scored over the four games. In the event the latter situation applied and Tyneside won plus 8.



Corner two at Tyneside, looking rather bedraggled

By now any remaining water had drained away from the Pavilion Lawn leaving over an inch of mud on the surface. Visions of a badly disrupted season were uppermost in the Tyneside members' minds and next day the annual Mid-Week Handicap Tournament, a League match and a Progressive Doubles Tournament scheduled for play in the next two weeks were postponed. Meanwhile members attempted to fit in all their club games on the one remaining lawn.

The groundsman did a marvellous job in clearing the mud from the stricken lawn and the grass began to make a rapid recovery, but it still came as a welcome surprise when the lawn was declared fit for play on 16th July. The greatest joy however was to find the lawn played even truer than usual and the grass appeared greener and thicker than it had ever done before. The Committee are now exploring ways of getting the second lawn treated in the same way during the closed season !!

Everything would now be lovely if only we knew how to deal with the plague of rabbits who appear to be determined to undo the improvements we have been fortunate enough to achieve.

Comments on the 2006 Accounts

The CA's finances continue in a healthy state. Overall income rose by just under 5% in 2006 whilst expenditure stayed virtually the same as in 2005, thus producing an increased surplus (after tax) of just over £11,200. Most of the surplus has been transferred to the Development Fund, thus earmarking it primarily for grants to clubs in future years.

Commercial activities, which cover the CA Shop and Corporate Events, produced the largest increase in revenue (£3,200). The CA is greatly indebted to Jeff Dawson, David Collins and their helpers for their continuing important contributions to the CA's finances. Club subscriptions were up by over £2,000, a notable factor here being the number of newly registered clubs. A significant increase in Donations (transferred to the Benefactors Fund – see Note 3) is due to a bequest from the late Alan Blenkin for which the CA is extremely grateful.

Expenditure in 2006 included the cost, nearly £10,700, of sending the MacRobertson Shield team to Australia. This was covered partly from income accrued to the Duffield Bequest (almost £2,500 – see Note 3), the remainder being met from revenue (rather than the International Fund, a reserve available for that purpose).

There was again a strong demand from clubs for Development Grants. However this is not reflected in the year's expenditure, since three large applications were approved subject to conditions which were not met during the year. (This was an added reason for boosting the Development Fund – see above – as a contingency if and when the conditions are satisfied.) Ten clubs were awarded Development Grants, seven received Starter Grants (long term loans of croquet equipment to new clubs) and three federations received financial help for their development programmes.

Thanks to Klim Seabright's efforts in seeking competitive quotes, nearly £3,600 was saved in the cost of the Club Legal Liability Insurance premium.

Investments, all in government stock, rose to nearly £60,000 in the year – see the Balance Sheet – in an ongoing policy to invest more of the CA's reserves.

The New Club Fund has been closed and its assets transferred to the Development Fund – again see Note 3. It was set up at the end of 2004 as a reserve to meet the costs, if needed, of the Starter Grants inaugurated at that time. It has never been used and Council agreed that the Development Fund could play the same role if ever future costs of these grants could not be met from revenue.

A more detailed analysis of the 2006 Accounts will be published and distributed at the AGM in October.

Roger Bray
Treasurer

The Calthrop Cup for the E Class event which was played as a 22 point full bisque game went to Maryse Roberts. 16 year old Richard Sykes was the runner-up.

The conventional doubles trophies, the Barwell Salviers, were won by last year's runners-up, Geoffrey Taylor and Robin Smith. Second place went to Penny Crowe and Tony Forbes.

The family doubles trophy, the Secretary's Spoon, went to the Fisks, Brian and Pat Kennett. Roger and Angela Martin came second.

David Mundy and Carol Smith won the alternate stroke doubles. Tournament Manager, Alison Thursfield, and Neil Kellett were runners-up.

Addendum: After their heroic efforts at Cheltenham, David and Eileen went off to Budleigh for a rest!!

Report for High Bisque Tournament SCCC 5th-7th June 2007

by Gene Mears

This was the 20th High Bisque tournament to be held at Southwick and play started at 9.30 am for a 22 point game. All games were played to a base of 10 with the lowest handicap being 12, the top being 20.

There were 18 entries from 10 clubs, some coming as a result of the Improvers and Bronze coaching courses held in April and half of the entrants were returning from previous High Bisque tournaments.

As usual the bar and catering volunteers provided excellent lunches, teas and liquid refreshments.

By Thursday morning Ivor Meredith from Budleigh Salterton and Elaine Newman from Wrest Park had 4 wins each, but by lunch time Ivor was the only one to have 5 wins and looked



Keith Slatter of Caterham and Sussex CC, winner of the Southwick high bisque tournament

good to be winning the competition. Those with 4 wins were Elaine, Wendy Spencer-Smith from Enfield and Keith Slatter from Caterham and Sussex County.

The final was played between Ivor and Keith, and Keith then turned on the magic and nothing could stop him playing a very good game and winning 22 - 4 and as winner was presented with the salver and a SCCC engraved glass.

The runners up, both Ivor and Wendy received a bottle of wine each.

This was a very enjoyable and successful tournament.

Extreme Conditions

Two clubs share their experiences of extreme problems caused by the British summer.

John Jeffrey

The cover picture of the previous issue caused some amusement here. We have a walled garden which, when we moved in 2002, needed at least two full time gardeners. There being no croquet club nearby, and having been a very active member down south at Nailsea and Tournament centres, I decided to literally bulldoze the flower beds etc and create a perfect croquet lawn.

Having removed nearly 800 tonnes of subsoil to level the area which had a 1.5m fall between diagonal corners, we applied 250mm clean 19mm gravel followed by a layer of 'Ceram' cloth and then another 200mm sand. All this was covered by some of the original topsoil and then 100mm rootzone (70:30 loam/sand).

Seeded with the best seed obtainable from British Seed Houses we eventually had a lovely lawn plus/minus 6.5mm all over. It was truly wonderful to play on. Then came the rain.....more rain.....and even more rain.



The result of this was about 100mm water all over the lawn by 12.30pm and then at 16.39hrs we had the big heave. Parts of the lawn were forced up and stood about 300mm above the waterline. Having now dried out we find the lawn is still mainly plus/minus about 9mm but where the heave occurred there is still some unevenness and places where it is about 25mm above the rest of the lawn. We shall endeavour to put this right when the autumn comes.

So, hello to South Cheshire and N.Staffordshire players. If there is anyone who would like to play near Eccleshall do make contact with John Jeffrey e.mail john.jeffrey1@tiscali.co.uk or tel. 01782 791226

The attached pictures clearly show the problems and so far we haven't been able to find anyone who has had quite such a severe problem.....happy days!

Letters

Comment

I was interested to see in edition 309 of The Croquet Gazette, Kevin Carter's report on the latest survey of 'croquet players' but read it with some trepidation. Kevin says in his report 'perhaps AC Associates should stop whinging.....' Frankly what a bloody cheek! Croquet is our magazine. People who want to play something else with croquet hoops, mallets and balls are free to do so. The trend it seemed to me however, as stated in my last letter seemed more a take over by those who like these alternatives; (or can't master the proper game). This is not a question of Association Croquet & Golf Croquet as if there is some kind of equality.

For beginners there is a perfectly good alternative which is an easier introduction, which is the short lawn game, 14 points and half size lawn, where one can learn more easily the finer points of croquet. It gets scant attention in the journal despite running beginners leagues (as e.g. the Yorkshire and Humberside short lawn league and competitions).

We even now have an arrogant committee telling people what to do in their own gardens, with special rules! What next?

Kevin goes on 'there has been a 20% increase of new croquet players since 2002'. Not so! As he admits these are people who enjoy a version of putting, using croquet implements instead of putters. It is not croquet. I am not surprised that they see little relevance in joining the Association, which is, or should be, for those who want to play croquet at match or tournament level. Those only playing social things in local clubs do not see the relevance.

A final two further comments. One ball? For heavens sake why can't people be content to play the proper game. Are they bored?

I note that page 3 states that 'handwritten reports are no longer acceptable'. Is this not a case of the young no longer getting practice at reading script any more? Do you know what percentage of the over 60s do not have email and computers, nor indeed myself, a typewriter? Script has been good enough for 400 years. What right has the editorial team to disenfranchise us?

Michael Haslam

I don't believe anyone has been disenfranchised, tournament reports are the only item requested not be written by hand, and for the reason stated, legibility, or rather illegibility. Script is fine, if it's your own, but it can be very difficult to read when written by another. I'm afraid I don't know what percentage of any age range is without email, computers or typewriters, but I am sure someone will tell me. If anyone in that category wishes to make a contribution to the Gazette in writing I would happily receive it, but would ask for a telephone number to be included, that way if I have difficulty reading the item I can at least ask for clarification. Ed.

Change of Association

To all members of the 'Association' I am writing this letter for you to comment upon. I would like to propose that the title format 'The Croquet Association' be changed. With Association and now Golf Croquet growing in stature within the CA, I propose that our title be changed to 'The Association For Croquet'. It can then differentiate between all games the world over.

I do not wish to see a break up between Association and Golf mainly, in the years to come. It is up to you fellow members to decide the change! Maybe under 'any other business', it might take two years because of constitutional rules at this year's A.G.M.

Just a hooping member
T5841

An alternative

At the Sidmouth Tournament in June this year, celebrating their Centenary, I persuaded Cliff Jones to run the doubles part of the tournament as an alternate stroke affair. This proved to be popular and was apparently enjoyed by all who took part. In the belief that croquet should be enjoyed as much as possible by those who play, I have been quizzing players on the tournament circuit for their views on alternate stroke play. Many clubs of course use alternate stroke doubles as a means of coaching but I would like to see it taken a step further. Generally speaking doubles is not particularly popular, as so often one half of the partnership spends a large part of the time as an out-player. Quite often the weaker player, as the stronger of the pairing is trying to set up his or her partner with a break opportunity. Alternate stroke play at least

means a 50% share of a successful turn, a true 'team' game.

As to the rules or modifications to either handicap or advanced play, it seems to me, hardly any.

1) Obviously partners must be able to strike either ball of the pairing.

2) Whoever played the last shot on the previous turn plays the first of the next turn. (To avoid unnecessary debate.)

3) In handicap play I see no reason why bisque calculations should be any different to the way they are now.

4) Not a rule, but consideration needs to be given to double banking, as this would involve four players being on the lawn.

This last being the only negative as far as I can see. I have recently persuaded several tournament players to participate in alternate stroke games, both handicap and advanced, and although reluctant at first had to admit they really enjoyed it. So how about it croquet players, what do you think?

How about alternate stroke play for the mixed doubles Championship, which had only eight entries this year?

Paul Castell

If you get the mixed doubles to alternate stroke, you have a willing partner here Mr. Castell. Ed.

That missed shot

Have you wondered why you are missing those roquets, rushes and hoops, or maybe even poor croquet strokes? What do you blame for these missed shots that happen now and then?

It may be the way you hold your mallet, pressure on that actual shot, it can affect us all at some time during a match.

Could it be your stance that was wrong maybe, or you altered your grip? You have all heard of Tiger Woods, maybe the greatest golfer. He was at the top of his game, but not content with that, he changed coaches, altered his swing, all in striving for that elusive perfect swing. But you don't have to be so drastic. We all have two eyes, why do we have two, when we can see as well with one? Ah well. Do you know which eye is your 'master eye', the one that goes straight to your target? Standing square on to an object in the distance, with both eyes point at it. Still pointing shut one eye, then repeat with the other eye, whichever eye stays on the object is your 'master eye'. The other eye is your 'range finder' (in a few cases both miss, nothing to worry about, just

how the lens in a camera with auto focus works).

When you play a stroke, are you breathing in or out, or holding your breath? Do you know or have you never thought about it? Standing in front of a mirror, so you can see yourself above the waist and holding your mallet, take your stance. Now taking a deep breath, has anything happened? Maybe the shoulders have lifted, the chest too has lifted slightly – could this be the cause of the topped shot? Breathe out and back to your normal stance, the mallet is back on the floor now – the cause of hitting the ground on that long shot?

Maybe these might be the reasons why you are letting yourself down, when pressured into that nasty shot.

When you next get out to practice, try my method of loosening up before a match. Put four balls just outside the court in a line. Stalk each one and aiming at the peg, hit each one with the master eye only, then repeat with the other eye, and then with both. I wonder which ended nearest the peg?

After that, hit on of the balls anywhere on the court, and then hit the others to it, that should get your mallet action honed, and your eye in.

Colin Hadley

Does anyone else have any coaching or practice tips they would care to share?

News & Information

Croquet Hall of Fame

The World Croquet Federation (WCF) today announced the 2007 inductions to the "WCF Hall of Fame".

Devised to meet the requirements laid down by the founders of the Federation, "to make awards to those who have contributed to the achievement of the Federation's aims", the Hall of Fame is virtual, existing only through the WCF web site.

Each year no more than 5 persons who meet the exacting criteria, can be inducted, thus making it a very special group of croquet enthusiasts and supporters.

The WCF Hall of Fame Committee of four persons, led by their Chairman, Rhys Thomas (USA), made the 5 difficult choices from the nominations received.

2007 WCF Hall of Fame Inductees

- Nigel Aspinall, England;
- Andrew Hope, Scotland;
- John Jaques II, England;
- Jack Osborn, USA;
- John Prince, New Zealand.

Full details of the achievements of each inductee can be seen via the WCF web site at: <http://www.wcfcroquet.org/Halloffame/hoff.htm>

Nominations for the 2008 induction will open to the public on 1st January 2008. It will automatically include all those nominated in 2007, but who were unsuccessful on this occasion.

Welshman won the first Norway GC Open

John Evans, Wales, won the first Norway Open held by The Croquet Society at Holmsbu Golf Course, Hurum, in Norway 18th and 19th August. The weather on Saturday was wonderful and the players enjoyed the August sun and the beautiful surroundings of Hurum. Sunday was more clouded and as soon as the Final was over it started raining.

Holmsbu Golf Course has got 4 international size lawns and one smaller, but the owner, Magne Myhre, says they can be expanded. Dave Underhill, Switzerland, thinks this must be the biggest assembly of croquet lawns in continental Europe. Magne Myhre got the Croquet Societie's

Honorary Medal for his work of helping Norwegian Croquet with extending and maintaining lawns.

The competition consisted of 4 blocks playing Golf Croquet, single games. Each match was best of three 13 point games. Those singled out before the quarter finals played a Plate event.

Results: Norway Open 2007

1. John Evans, Wales,
2. Kevin Garrad, Isle of Man
3. Rune Johansen, Norway
4. Roar Michalsen, Norway
5. Birger Stene, Norway
6. Dave Underhill, Switzerland
7. Steinar Olsen, Norway
8. Borge Bringsværd, Norway
9. Robin Bringsværd, US, winner of The Plate Event
10. Anders Hafstad, Norway
11. Mats Glenne, Norway
12. Anne Lee Holm, Norway

USCA awarded the 12th WCF World Association Croquet Championships 2009

The World Croquet Federation (WCF) has much pleasure in announcing that the United States Croquet Association (USCA) has been awarded the hosting of the 12th WCF World Association Croquet Championship.

The event will be played from Saturday 9th to Sunday 17th May 2009 in West Palm Beach, Florida with the centrepiece at the National Croquet Center's 12 lawns. Additional matches will be played at The PGA National Club (5 lawns), The Beach Club (3 lawns) and The Royal Palm Yacht and Country Club (2 lawns).

All the clubs are within easy commuting distance of each other and Palm Beach International Airport.

The event was previously hosted by the USCA in 1992 in Newport, Rhode Island.

There will be an expected entry of up to 80 of the world's top players in the main event.

World Association Croquet Championship: English Selections

Twelve places were allocated to England for the forthcoming event in February 2008, Christchurch, New Zealand, and the following have been selected to take them (in alphabetical order):

- Robin Brown Chris Clarke
- Marcus Evans Colin Irwin

croquet for very many years and had served on the CA Council for most of that time. During recent year he had been an ardent supporter of Golf Croquet, had chaired the GC Committee for one year and had a major input to the development of this format of the sport. Naming this tournament after Alan was felt to be a very fitting tribute to all that he had done for the game. The question was; what kind of a trophy shall we have? Searches were made around the silversmiths for some croquet related trophy but nothing was really found. It was then discovered that about 20 years ago, the CA had purchased a silver plated trivet depicting croquet mallets, hoops and balls. It had become part of the CA archives and its guardian was the CA archivist, Alan Oldham. Apparently Alan was very fond of this piece and it had been stored in his study for many years. If this could be mounted on a suitable base we had found an ideal trophy. The photo shows our trophy on its new rose wood base. We were delighted that Jane Oldham, was able to visit Southwick and present the trophy to Derek Old.

The history of how the trophy came into the CA's possession is worth a mention. A Mr

George Batty who lived some time in Malta, and some time in Sheffield found the trivet in street market in Valletta in the late 1980's. He describes himself as a general collector but with a preference for articles made by Sheffield craftsmen. Our trophy has a Mappin & Webb stamp on its base (they had a Sheffield factory, long since closed) and a design stamp that would date the item in the mid 1800s but no later than 1883. When he came back to England, Mr Batty saw an article on croquet written by Edgar Jackson, then President of Cheltenham, and wrote to Edgar offering the piece for sale to the CA at the price he had bought it, a mere £35. Edgar then passed the matter on to Alan who was CA Treasurer at the time. The rest is history, but we now have all the hand-written letters between all three people involved. It is believed that this piece is not unique but part of a small limited batch. We know that our present Treasurer, Roger Bray, has one but have heard of no more. If anyone has seen similar pieces, the CA would be please to know of them.



Cheltenham July Tournament

23rd - 28th July

by Penny Crowe

TOO MUCH WATER AND NO WATER!

After torrential rain in the west of England, Cheltenham Croquet Club's water supply was cut off along with 130,000 homes. Would Cheltenham's 91st July Tournament be able to take place? Time to go into emergency mode! With the sterling efforts of chief cook and bottle-washer, Eileen Magee, husband, David, and sister-in-law, Janice, plus bringers-in of water by players living out of the region, the tournament went ahead. It can have been no mean feat to provide meals for 65 players, and wash up, using bottled water. David tapped into the club's irrigation reservoir and from the water outlet to the loos there

seemed to be a constant stream of bucket carriers – mainly, guess who? Yes, the Magees! At one point David, arms stretched by full buckets in each hand, was heard to mutter, "What do the ladies do with all this water?!"

In a tournament to be remembered for its incidents Peter Francis fell off a chair while attempting to sit on it and almost amputated the end of a finger. After first aid by his opponent, Dr



Janice, David & Eileen presented with a small gift of thanks from the players by Roger Wheeler

Watson, Peter continued to play complaining that he had to alter his grip. Paul wryly observed that his injury didn't prevent Peter from hitting across the lawn!

In one game Michael Hague set his timer for 8 hours 30 minutes. Time limits were generous- but not **that** generous! Now for the results:



Maisie Peebles and Richard Sykes, maturity and youth, enjoying croquet at Cheltenham.

The Daniels Cup for handicap play was carried off by Roger Jenkins. The runner-up was Simon Cawdell. The Consolation prize went to Martin Prins from Australia.

Roger Jenkins scored the double by winning the Cheltenham Challenge Cup for A Class advanced play. David Foulser was runner-up.

The Money Salver for B Class advanced play was won by Klim Seabright and the runner-up was Graham Roberts.

John Morgan won The Asa Thomas Trophy for C Class advanced play. Roger Martin was runner-up.

Geoff Young won the McClements Cup for D Class level play. The runner-up was 'bandito', Tony Forbes, who only started playing croquet last year.

M C Percival Mallets

The new proven TM range of mallets are available with proven Carbon fibre or ash handles, mallet weights are adjustable by +/- fl to 3ozs from any base weight. Handles are adjustable for angle, removable and interchangeable. all mallets are made to your specification.

A new range of hard wearing synthetic grips available in various colours, lengths from 2 to 18 metres. Alterations or repairs are undertaken to any mallet (over 350 completed so far).

Contact Michael Percival, The Laurels, Heath Road, Hessett, Suffolk IP30 9BJ Telephone 01359 270 200 M o b i l e 07780677943 Email: michael@croquetmallets.co.uk Web: www.croquetmallets.co.uk

well they know each other's game? No: Gaitley and Hamilton (Mark not Lewis!), 7th.

Would the first-time partnering evergreens bring out the best in each other? No: Hopkins and Strover (Dick), 6th. Would the veterans teach the young "whipper snappers" a thing or two? No: Arliss and Old (Derek), 5th.

Would family ties be strongest from the father and the son who first played last Tuesday (well, on a proper court anyway)? No: 3rd equal but an incredibly impressive debut from Ed, helped along by father Chris in yet another variation on the pairing Sheen and Sheen.

Would the double female touch take a grip of the competition? No: Jackson (Carole) and Vitty, 3rd equal. Would the deciding factor be the benefit of local experience as the Surbiton lawns played fast in the recently unfamiliar decent weather? No: Beck & Moonie, 2nd.

Wrong on all counts; the story was actually that the first trick is to send a twin brother on holiday to distant shores and then pair up as a last-minute partnership. Ivor Brand and Richard Thompson showed all the strengths of careful thought and determined precision in only losing one game all weekend (one block of all play all, semi finals and then a final). Don Beck lost his shooting form in the final, which made the job less difficult for Brand and Thompson but they played with admirable consistency and deserved success. Richard Brand now has to discover whether he can break up a winning team or perhaps there will be a Spanish bloke looking for a new partner next year (although he has more experience in a fast car than with a mallet)?



Ivor Brand and Richard Thompson, on their way to victory

Alan Oldham Memorial (Golf Croquet Veterans) 1st - 3rd August, Southwick

by Bill Arliss

It was probably the first time in many weeks that there had been three consecutive days without torrential rain at some time and this event was blessed with two days of perfect sunshine and one cloudy but dry day. Thanks must go to Chairman Jon Isaacs and his wife Chrissey who organised a first class buffet lunch each day for this first Golf Croquet Veterans Tournament.

Entry was rather low with only 16 players but Manager



Derek Old, winner of the Golf Croquet Veterans

John Low had chosen a two block all-play-all twice format with play-offs in a knock-out for the top four in each block. Unfortunately two players did not turn up leaving blocks of seven, however John filled the schedule with additional inter-block games, which kept all players busy without a too demanding schedule.

Block play followed its normal pattern with approximately one in three games resulting in a one game each result and by the end of the blocks there was no obvious winner in sight. There were several unexpected results. Eileen Buxton, playing superbly claimed games off both Derek Old and Tom Weston and Jennet Blake recorded a win over Bill Arliss. Daphne Gaitley showed a big return to form, regularly running hoops from the boundary. The eventual line up for the quarters was Carol Jackson vs. David Hopkins, Dick Strover vs Tom Weston, Daphne Gaitley vs. Jack Davies and Roy Ware vs. Derek Old. Carol, Dick Daphne and Derek emerged as winners. On the final morning Daphne's shooting partially deserted her and gave Derek a fairly easy game of 7-2 but she came back somewhat in the second with a 7-5 loss. The other semi was a lengthy struggle with Dick Strover just reaching the winning post first with a 7-6, 6-7, 7-4 score sheet.

Derek started the final with a runaway first game of 7-1 and it looked like an early tea time but Dick moved up a gear to claim the second 7-1. The final game was more balanced but Derek eased ahead and was up 6-3 as they approached the tenth. Dick managed to position both his balls in good running positions with one of Derek's balls behind the hoop with his second still at hoop nine. Unfortunately for Dick, there was just room between his two balls for Derek to make the final hoop from 20 yards.

Alan Oldham and the Trophy

When the event was originally envisaged, the Golf Croquet (GC) Committee looked for ways to make this competition rather different from the others in the CA lists and the idea of making this a memorial event was suggested. Alan Oldham had played

Ailsa Lines Ian Lines
David Maugham Stephen Mulliner
David Openshaw Samir Patel
Chris Patmore Jack Wicks

In addition, Robert Fulford and James Death have been awarded places owing to their excellent finishing positions in the last World Championship.

A number of wild-card nominations have also been forwarded to the WCF
Dave Kibble, Chairman of Selectors (AC)

Golf Croquet World Championship 2008 Selections

The Golf Croquet Selection Committee met on Monday 6 August via a tele-conference to discuss the selection of players for the 2008 Golf Croquet World Championship in South Africa. England have six places of right plus a direct invitation to Stephen Mulliner for achieving third place in the previous championship. The committee decided unanimously that four of the six places would be awarded as follows:

Marcus Evans Tim King
Ian Lines Chris Clarke

However there was some divergence of opinion over the other two places and the Selectors agreed that their final decision on the remaining two places would wait until the results from the Musk and Ascot Cups were available.

The decisions on the other two places and the recommended wild card list will be made and announced during the week starting 24th September 2007.

Twenty one players registered their availability for this event.

Bill Arliss, Chairman of Selectors (Golf Croquet)

WCF Management Committee election

ALL WCF Member Associations (Full, Associate and Observer) are now requested to nominate people to stand for election to the WCF Management Committee.

The three current members who retire by rotation are:

- Charles Jones (New Zealand);
- Rhys Thomas (USA);
- Kevin Garrad (Isle of Man) (currently co-opted).

All have indicated a wish to be re-nominated for election.

Timetable for Nominations and Election

Nominations received by WCF from members - 22nd October 2007. Voting papers sent to FULL Members by WCF - 30th October 2007. Election result declared - 1st December 2007. Elected people take up their appointments - 1st January 2008

Restrictions on numbers

There are no restrictions on the number of people to be nominated by any WCF Member Association.

Pursuant to Rule 105.9 of the WCF Statutes, no more than two persons from the same WCF Member Association may serve on the WCFMC at any one time.

CA members who wish to be considered for nomination to serve on the WCFMC should contact the CA Office.

Grass Roots and Centre Stage 2007

Grass Roots

From a reduced entry in 2007, just 9 players from clubs at Bury, Southport & Birkdale, Watford (Cassiobury) and Woodhall Spa competed in the Grass Roots Golf Croquet Final at Northampton.

After 7 rounds of a mixture of

progressive doubles/singles the leading hoop scorers were Nick Archer with 41 hoop points, Denis McConnon with 35 hoop points, Mary Warren with 32 hoop points and 4 wins and Pam Hunter with 32 hoop points and 3 wins.

Semi finals scores – Nick Archer 7 v Mary Warren 4; Pam Hunter 6 v Denis McConnon 3. The runners up result was Denis McConnon 6, Mary Warren 7, a very close game, but the final saw Nick Archer and Pam Hunter play a keen match with Nick winning 7 - 3.

Centre Stage

Ten players from as far afield as Yorkshire and Bath gathered at Edgbaston Croquet Club to play the final of the Centre Stage Golf Croquet competition. This was again expertly managed by Pat Wright.

Double-banking worked perfectly using the following formula. Both games started at the same time with Game 1 playing in the normal order. Game 2 started in corner 2 and played hoops 3 to 12 in the normal order and then played hoops 1 and 2 and finally hoop 9 as the 13th hoop.

The winners of each block played the runner up of the opposing block and won again in each case. Thus Roger Barnacle of Dogmersfield played Eric Cole of Eynsham, winning 7:1 and Ian Morrison of Lansdown played Roger Nicholls of Watford (Cassiobury) 7:6.

The final between Ian Morrison and Roger Barnacle was a hard fought game with Ian winning 7:5.

Pat Wright presented the Egg Cup trophy donated by Syd Jones of Croquet for Leisure.

Grateful thanks go to Rosemary Longbottom for managing this competition over the last seven years, and for her support for the original Golden Mallet competition that was the CA's precursor to these competitions.

The John Hobbs Mallet

The mallet that adjusts to your grip.

You set the handle to whatever angle best suits your style of grip and swing.

Optional curved bottom to 12" heads
Easily dismantled for airline travel.

Light aluminium shaft, nylon shock absorber, variable weight heads - see web site:

<http://John-Hobbs-croquet-mallets.mfbiz.com>

John Hobbs, Lewins, Mayfield Road, Rotherfield, E. Sussex TN6 3LS
Tel: 01892 852072 email Hobbsmall@aol.com

Manor House Mallets

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.

Hollow head with brass plate extreme end-weighting (£20 extra)

Revolutionary 2001 model £230

3000 model with D-shaped ends £265

Mallet bags (£27)

Head wraps (£7.50)

For details or discussion, contact Alan Pidcock,
Tel & Fax 01772 743859
e-mail pidcock@manorh.u-net.com
The Manor House, 1 Barn Croft, Penwortham,
Preston PR1 0SX

Obituary

Roy Wallis (1933 – 2007)

by Roger Wood



Roy Wallis (“Wol” as per Christopher Robin) died at his home in France on 2007 June 16 after a year-long battle with cancer. He was cremated at Bezier on June 21.

Wol, like me, first saw some sort of croquet being played in the mid-1960s in the formal gardens of Herstmonceux Castle, then the home of the Royal Greenwich Observatory where we both worked. The Astronomer Royal, a keen cricketer and tennis player, had invested in a Jaques croquet set of moderate quality and, perhaps foolishly, allowed staff and summer students to use it in the lunch hours and after work. Predictably no-one knew the rules and there was often more abuse than use. Shortly thereafter Wol was seconded to the Royal Observatory in Cape Town where he indulged his many other passions and forgot all about croquet for a while. The croquet spark was re-ignited in 1970 when he transferred to Pretoria where I, also seconded, had joined the local croquet club and become an enthusiastic player.

On our return to the UK we were both absolutely delighted to find a thriving croquet club in Eastbourne, right on our doorstep, and we joined Compton. As with almost everything else that he turned his hand to, Wol took to croquet with great gusto and determination. Unlike me he quickly decided he should qualify as a referee, and it was at his insistence (after a joyfully chaotic summer tournament managed by the aging and increasingly forgetful Major Dibley) that the next year we jointly (with Stuart Malin and Bernard Yallop, two other RGO colleagues) dipped our toes into the murky waters of management for the first time. Later, in 1978, we initiated the Compton Open Weekend (COW), one of the first, if not *the* first, weekend tournament with lots of play, designed specifically for the working man. It proved immensely popular and continues to this day. In pursuit of our

mutual love of wordplay we found a brass post horn for a trophy just so we could call the event the COWhorn! Other horrible puns followed: in 1981 we changed the format from blocks



to a knockout and consolation Swiss, whereupon Wol chanced upon the perfect trophy in a bric-a-brac shop in Hastings – a small brass cowbell with a Swiss mountain scene painted on it which we hung from a wooden hoop mounted on a base, the COWbell! This was closely followed by the Ace Peeler award, a joke policeman’s helmet crowned with one of Wol’s (in this instance outrageously politically incorrect) cartoons.

Wol’s management style was much appreciated and he

officiated at Southwick’s summer weeks and for South of England Weeks. On the lawns he maintained a handicap between 2 and 4 for most of his playing career, represented Sussex in the Inter-Counties for a number of years and later gathered several CA Select teams. In 1982 he was again posted abroad, this time as part of the team of pioneers who set up the new observatory on La Palma in the Canary Isles, and was resident there for the next eight and a half years. Of necessity this cramped his croquet style, but he contrived occasional trips to the UK to play. After his return he initiated his very own end-of-season fun tournament the Three-legged Race which will undoubtedly be his lasting legacy. For the wider croquet audience Wol will perhaps best be remembered for his cartoons, many of which were published in the Gazette. He left cartoons everywhere he went – restaurants’ napkins, blackboards in colleagues’ offices, observatory log books, and, like any good scientist, on the backs of envelopes – sadly most too ephemeral to have survived.

Although he was an inveterate raconteur and loved to reminisce about his school, army (national service) and leisure activities, it is unlikely that most who met him would be aware of the full range of his talents and interests outside croquet – there were many! From boyhood he was a food lover, the more exotic the better, and he became a very fine cook and wine devotee, both of which were given full rein in South Africa and the Canaries. He took a keen interest in flora and fauna wherever he went and photographed much of what he saw – he was particularly devoted to mushrooms, something he could eat! As a young man he pursued many sports excelling as a sprinter and high jumper. His manual dexterity was evident in everything he did. At home he taught himself plumbing and electrical wiring and transformed a succession of kitchens and bathrooms. He was the only man I ever knew who could claim to have made his wife’s and his daughters’ wedding dresses! He conceived and created beautiful pieces of jewellery; and made a magnificent solid silver chess set to his own design. His professional life saw him tame a series of telescopes and sophisticated instruments to give the best possible results; and his culinary flair ensured his inclusion on observing trips where self-catering was the order of the day. Perhaps his greatest impact on the observatory was as writer, producer and actor for the annual Christmas pantomime, wonderfully witty and subversive events enjoyed by children of all ages.

Having retired to Eastbourne, where he was born, he took a TEFLA (Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Adults) course and plied his new-found skills in a local language school and with private business pupils, mostly from Italy. He delighted in illustrating his lessons with drawings and became adept at devising games for his students to practise their new-found vocabularies. When he announced that he had joined the WRVS we teased him no end about meals-on-wheels, but he was actually



although the Pendle faithful had managed to mow the courts. Court 3 was even more sodden than the day before, so the tournament had to continue with double banking on one court. Fortunately, the manager had been camping to the west of Earby and the weather had cleared over there during the morning, so the decision was to keep to the original format and within half an hour of play starting, everyone had removed their waterproof jackets.

Editor: John opened up the competition by beating Freda in the first round of Sunday matches then.

Reporter: And Mark began to emerge from the pack with a win over Bill Arliss. But then he had a misfortune on the 13th hoop of the third game against Tim, who, thus, had won two matches in a row!

Editor: I see in that penultimate round, John beat Bill and Ian beat Freda, so defending champion John (4 wins) and Ian (5 wins) became the front runners.

Reporter: Ian had the advantage of having beaten John on the Saturday but Tim now had a potentially pivotal role. Tim was playing Ian, but also the match between John and Tim from Saturday was suspended at one game all. As the final round began to unfold a major shift had taken place. Whereas on the Saturday cries of anguish and self disgust had frequently emanated from Tim, John was now going through the agony of having lost his top form.

Editor: I am not sure that we can afford Keith Aiton, but it would be great to have a side column on the mental dimension to King and Spiers: so destructive at their best and yet is that a fragility that lurks beneath?

Reporter: Tim beat Ian in the first game but John also lost to Richard. Then Ian and John both came back in the second: either of them could still win the Cup. In the end, John and Richard finished first and, thus, Richard winning the third game determined the result: Ian had won and, although he did not know so at the time, he crowned his success with victory in a tight third game against Tim.

Editor: Ian was a clear winner on six wins, I see.

Reporter: Yes, Mark, John, Richard and Freda all had four match wins but net games separated them in that order. Although Chris Sheen had dropped being manager this year, he never quite found the form that he was hoping for as a consequence and once again someone else walked away with his prize money.

Editor: Both Ian and Mark earned handicap reductions to -4. And Caro Sheen presented Ian with the trophy and his winnings. A good end to the story.

Reporter: Ian certainly justified his being on the plane to South Africa next March.

Editor: How well will he do in the World Championship?

Reporter: Now you are mentioning that controversy.

Editor: You started it.

Reporter: No it was definitely the Golf Croquet Selection Committee. They picked the four players.

Editor: Hang on a minute; is that a rat over there ... ?

The All England Croquet and Lawn Tennis Club v The Hurlingham Club 1st Aug 2007

by Peter Quinn

The above historic match was the last team match to ever be played on the Wimbledon croquet lawn before it was demolished as part of the clubs huge development programme.

The team picture illustrates the massive reconstruction that



The All England team: Buster Mottram, Jonathan Smith, Mike Hann, and Michael Dawes. The Hurlingham team was made up of Peter Quinn, John Culhane, John Bowcott and John Williams.

is currently being undertaken at Wimbledon.

The two clubs which are approx 2 miles apart, have always shared many common interests, i.e. Tennis, Croquet and membership.

The All England Croquet Club was formed in Wimbledon in 1867 and The Hurlingham Club in 1869.

Bernard Neil, the CA President is a member of both clubs and in addition to his many achievements, has won both the Hurlingham Club Championship on a number of occasions and the All England Clubs Championship 38 times!

The All England team of four was made up of 2 past Davis Club players, one of whom, Buster Mottram, was the British # 1 for ten years, and in 1983 rose to 12th in the world rankings. The other, Jonathan Smith was a Davis cup player for 3 years and was the British # 3.

The Team also included, Mike Hann, a British International Tennis player, whilst Michael Dawes is currently representing GB in Senior events.

Buster Mottram has also been a Hurlingham member since a junior. I have had the pleasure of being involved with Buster in his initial croquet coaching.

The Hurlingham team was made up of Peter Quinn, John Culhane, John Bowcott and John Williams.

Match result: All England Croquet and Tennis Club 1 - The Hurlingham Club 3.

2007 National Golf Croquet Doubles Surbiton 4-5 August

by Timothy King

Just ask Lewis Hamilton; he will tell you the trials and tribulations of teaming with a partner. The real drama of sport is the human dimension rather than the seconds per lap or the number of hoops run. So what was to be the story of the 2007 National Golf Croquet Doubles?

Would the 2005 winners rediscover how to gel? No: King and Ware, 8th. Would the milkman and his “mum” show how



Stephen Mulliner, winner of the Championship of Ireland

delayed TP began to come together. However, failure at 1-b let Stephen take his forward ball to 4-b and to victory by 10tp when the lift was missed.

In the other semi-final, Chris Patmore had a convincing +26tp, +25tp victory over Andrew Johnson to add to a closer win over Patsy Fitzgerald.

The final featured another missed dribble at the hoop 6 pioneer by Stephen in game 1 but Chris had a poor NSL leave which gave a slightly hampered 6-yarder. This Stephen hit with his hoop 1 ball and completed the TPO. Chris failed a difficult hoop 1 off the contact and did not take croquet again. Game 2 was brisk, with Stephen stopping at 3-b in turn 3 and completing the quad in turn 5.

DAVE MUNDY WON THE NATIONAL SENIORS' CHAMPIONSHIP

16th - 21st July 2007, Budleigh Salterton

by Nigel Graves

Playing in his sixth National Seniors' final, Dave Mundy won the Trevor Williams Cup, beating Roger Hayes +22 +6. The Hemming Cup for the B Class was won by Colin Hemming, who beat Terrey Sparks +2. Neil Chalmers beat Peter Hills +20 to win the C Class; the D Class winner was Quiller Barrett, and Jack Thompson won the E Class.

The Quiller Cup for the Unrestricted Handicap Singles knockout was won by Michael Lester (4.5), who beat Steve Lewis (-1) +26, and the Handicap Doubles, played as a five round Swiss, was won by Don Gaunt & Nigel Graves with 5/5.

THE MUSK CUP (GOLF CROQUET SELECTOR'S WEEKEND)

18th - 19th August, Pendle and Craven

by Tim King

[In a newspaper office near you ...]
 Editor [tall and somewhat manic looking]: Now then, about your report on the most prestigious sporting event of the past weekend.
 Reporter [short, dark-skinned and with a confused look]: The Musk Cup at Pendle and Craven Croquet Club.
 Editor: Yes. I told you not to mention the World Championship.

Reporter: But how much more tension can you get than the combination of three of the selectors, two of the World Championship selections and three of the e-mailing protagonists on the selection controversy? Freda Vitty was the only neutral present and must have felt like Henry Kissinger.

Editor: This is a serious newspaper and we stick to the observable facts; not trying to hype up the alleged human drama. What do you think this is? Big Brother?

Reporter: So you are happy that I mention the strong early showing from Freda who was unbeaten on the Saturday.

Editor: Yes. But you can scrap the line "Freda (23) threatened to strip off in the crowded clubhouse". This is not the Daily Star and there are more than enough discussion points in Golf Croquet without mentioning ages.

Reporter: So how about "By contrast, having also had poor singles results at the Inter Counties Championship the previous weekend, manager Tim King had a shocker on the Saturday, failing to win a match. Perhaps his mind was on having already been selected for the World Championship?"?

Editor: Are you from Barcelona? I told you not to mention the World Championship.



Ian Lines, of Bowdon, winner of the Musk Cup, is presented with his trophy by Caroline Sheen, wife of the Sponsor's Chairman.

Reporter: Que? I think I might have got away with it. Is "Mark Hamilton, Ian Lines, John Spiers and Richard Thompson were also in good shape at the end of the Saturday" better?

Editor: What about important details like the weather?

Reporter: Well, fairly grim. Never quite a complete downpour but very steady and eventually Court 3 became unplayable. The local club members provided wonderful hospitality and catering though.

Editor: No rats in the kitchen then; but also no Musk's sausages. I am afraid you will have to drop the reference to them being available in all good Waitroses; your report is not an advertorial! And what is this confusion over Court 5 being Court 4?

Reporter: Those diligent folks at Pendle had reconfigured the court layout with proper clearances at the boundaries and boundary boards to keep everyone safe from the hooligan Golf Croquet element.

Editor: So Sunday was a tense day then?

Reporter: The weather was dismal when everyone arrived,



Mediterranean fare proved too much and in April 2004 he and his wife, Jill, moved to Bédarieux near Montpellier in the south of France. There they quickly established a new circle of friends, joined the local art class and each produced an impressive array of paintings; and Wol wrote a novel based on his boyhood experiences which is just about to be published. The first signs of illness were apparent in 2006 March when, with a group of ex-colleagues, we all travelled to Turkey for the total eclipse. Shortly after that cancer was diagnosed and, despite the heroic efforts of the French health service, for which Wol had nothing but the highest praise, it was too late.

Wol will be sorely missed in many circles and warmly remembered in every single one.

Gerald Hallett

by David Haslam

Colchester Croquet Club received the news of the death of Gerald Hallett with great sadness on 12 July 2007. Gerald celebrated his 90th birthday in December 2005 and an article about his short celebratory game of croquet and the following lunch at the club was published in the Gazette soon afterwards. He had always harboured a wish to play croquet when he was ninety and his wish was fulfilled on his birthday but sadly it was his last excursion onto a croquet court.

Born in Kent in 1918, Gerald was trained in an office which he is recorded as having disliked immensely. During the 1939-45 war he was stationed for a time in Colchester where he met Dorothy whom he married. Dorothy predeceased him by several years. After the war Gerald returned to Colchester and after undergoing a course of teacher training took up a teaching post at Colchester Institute, the local further education college. It was the life he sought and he was promoted through the ranks to become head of department and was greatly respected.

Gerald developed into a more than useful croquet player with a very low handicap when in his prime and he enjoyed playing in CA tournaments around the country. He was secretary of the Colchester Club was a number of years in the late sixties - early

involved with civil defence, supporting local authorities in the event of major emergencies. At this time he also revived expertise gained on La Palma and examined candidates who wished to qualify as first-aiders. Eventually the pull of warmer climes and



seventies and for a number of recent years he enjoyed the position of vice-president. With the advent of increasing mobility problems Gerald took up golf croquet, a game he enjoyed up to his 90th year.

It is rather amusing to note that Gerald often appeared at the club carrying library books. Not everyone realised the significance of these - but it is now known that he told his wife he was going to the library, since in her later years she disapproved of croquet! Maybe this is something to remember when we have our own conflicts of interest!

Gerald is already being greatly missed by his many croquet friends and our sympathy is extended to his family.

Coaching

THE SWEEP SHOT

by John Riches

John Riches, 68, is a retired teacher and Deputy Principal of a large secondary school. He lives with his wife in Enfield, South Australia. He has played the game of Association Croquet for more than 27 years.

John has published several booklets on various aspects of the game, including technique, tactics, strategy, refereeing, laws interpretation and the mental approach to the game. (Some of the short articles are reprinted in The Game Department of CroquetWorld.com.) He has assisted with publication within South Australia of a Coaching News letter, which has become much sought-after in other states, he is also a regular contributor to state and national croquet magazines and newsletters.



The "sweep" shot, in which the mallet is used with the shaft horizontal rather than vertical, has increased in popularity during the past 20 or so years and is now quite common. It can be used in many situations to hit a ball which could not be legally roqueted any other way, and may well make the difference between winning and losing a game by enabling the striker to continue a break which would otherwise have had to be aborted.

The questions to which a coach needs answers are: What is the most effective way to play the sweep shot - i.e. position of feet, body, hands, and type of swing? Are there other ways, which may be better for different players or in slightly different situations? How should one go about teaching a player to play effective sweep shots with confidence?

Some tentative ideas are as follows: Assume that you have just made hoop 1 and have finished six inches (about 15 cm) directly behind the left-hand (western) hoop-leg. You need to roquet a ball, which is a further 2 yards (just under 2m) behind the hoop. The centres of the two balls are exactly in line with the centre of the hoop-leg. In such a position, and over such a distance, a legal

hammer shot is virtually impossible, but the roquet should be makeable most times with a properly played sweep shot. Note that over a distance of 2 yards direction becomes an important factor in the shot, as well as getting enough force into the severely hampered shot to make your ball reach the ball you want to roquet.

1. How to Play the Sweep

There are various ways possible, and explaining in words without demonstration or illustration will leave a lot to be desired, but the best, for those who can manage it, seems to be: Walk in from the front of hoop 1 along the line in which you want to hit your ball. Keep your body square to this line at all times, with your dominant (sighting) eye directly in line with the hoop-leg and the centres of the two balls. Hold the mallet horizontally, with your right hand near the head of the mallet (fingers under the shaft) and your left hand toward the end of the shaft (fingers on



David Appleton kindly demonstrates 'the sweep shot'

top of the shaft). Keeping the shaft horizontal, move both arms and the whole mallet to the left until the head of the mallet is in front of your body and in line with your sighting eye, so that you can look straight down the bottom of the mallet head. For some players this will be a rather uncomfortable position of the arms, especially the right wrist which is required to bend at a considerable angle, but most players can do it if they are shown what to do. The shaft can be held with the fingers of the right hand - it is not necessary to have the palm of the hand flat against the shaft. Kneel down on one knee (preferably your right knee) in front of hoop 1, looking over the hoop with your sighting eye directly over the hampering hoop-leg. Check that the mallet is exactly horizontal, and place the mallet head against the outside of the hoop-leg, with the centre of the end face at half-ball height. The bottom of the mallet head should be flat against the hoop-leg. Adjust the mallet so that when you move it forward to contact the ball the edge of the hitting area on the mallet face will just fractionally overlap the centre of the ball. Keep your body still, and when hitting the ball use a deliberate forward "pushing" action with follow through, not a jerk or a jab. In the forward 'swing' both hands should move forward at almost the same speed, so that the whole mallet moves forward, with the shaft remaining parallel to the ground and also parallel to the south boundary. After practising it for some time you should be able to learn to not only catch the ball with the very edge of the mallet face just overlapping the

centre of the ball, but also slightly drag the ball to the left, and even make it miss the target ball on the left-hand side (or hit a ball in that position which looks even more impossible). This requires exact timing, since it involves an additional movement of the mallet, which must not begin until the mallet is virtually in contact with the ball. It is best achieved not by stopping the left hand in its forward movement and rotating the mallet around the end of the shaft, but by moving the whole mallet to the left. That is, the whole mallet moves directly forward until it contacts the ball (or just before), then changes direction and moves toward the second corner. Don't forget the follow-through, which helps achieve accuracy of direction.

To facilitate sweep shots the mallet should have a firm place near the head where it can be gripped. A thin metal shaft makes things harder. It is also better if there is as little bevel as possible and the bottom of the head is smooth and flat, rather than curved, - this is a definite disadvantage of the new NZ mallets which have a curved bottom. With a good sweep action distances considerably greater than 2 yards are possible, but obviously direction becomes less reliable as the distance increases. A player who sights with his left eye will find this particular sweep shot more difficult than one who sights with his right eye, but he will find it easier to play the mirror-image sweep shot with the balls directly behind the right-hand (eastern) leg of hoop 1. Players should learn to play the shot on either side of the hoop, swapping hands and knees over as necessary. Unfortunately the sighting eye cannot be swapped (at least, not for most players), so they will usually find one side easier than the other.

2. Other Ways

Some players position the body quite differently, e.g. by kneeling on either one or both knees with the body at right angles to the direction in which the ball will be hit. That is, they kneel down alongside hoop 1 with the body facing hoop 4. Others also face hoop 4, but remain standing and bend over, which makes it rather difficult to get the hands low enough for the shaft to be properly horizontal so as to achieve maximum effect (which of course will not always be needed). In either of these two methods the hands will be placed with the fingers of both hands under the shaft, and it is important in either case to stand well forward so that your eyes are again directly in line with the centers of the balls. Most players who use these 'sideways' methods have a "scooping" action in which the end of the shaft moves only slightly relative to the head. This requires that the swing (which is more or less a rotation of the head achieved by moving the right hand toward hoop 2 while keeping the left hand stationary) must start with the left hand well forward toward hoop 2 - at least level with the ball you are hitting, as otherwise the edge of the hitting face is not likely to overlap the centre of the ball. In all cases you should hit forward through the ball; do not jab down on it.

3. How Best to Teach it

This is a question that I cannot answer satisfactorily at present. Although it takes a lot of explaining in words, the shot is not so hard to play in practice - a part from getting the timing correct when maximum effect is required - provided the coach can demonstrate it correctly. It is a question that coaches (and coaching committees) should be addressing if they have not already done so; but first they would be advised to try the different methods and satisfy themselves as to which one they should teach. It is

the Big 5 in terms of Lion, Leopard, Elephant, Rhino and Buffalo. I like my face the way it is, so I'm ending this paragraph here.

James Death turned up late morning and declared there wasn't enough beer. Bowdon's President Martin Granger-Brown was duly despatched to forage for fine ales amongst the shelves of Sainsbury's, whilst the maned, spotty, big-nosed and horny top seeds continued to peel their way effortlessly into the quarter-finals. The first Q-F actually took place on Day 1, with Reg Bamford (World 3rd) beating James Death (9th) emphatically with two sextuple peels and a quad.

Shock result of Day 1 was possibly Andrew Winn (0.5) beating James Death (-2) playing under the new ARBITRANPPH handicap system. (Alcohol Replaces Bisques In The Ratio A Negative Pint Per Half).

Day 2 - when seeds were cast on stony ground. This is by no means a criticism of Bowdon's pristine lawns, which may have been slightly slower than many players would have liked due to the 2007 summer weather, but the grass quality was excellent and hoops were set to a tight 32nd.



Bowdon President, Martin Granger Brown, presents Sam Tudor, the winner of the plate event with his trophy.

Rutger Beijderwellen defeated World No. 1 Rob Fulford 3-0, the second game a close +3. David Maugham (5th) knocked out Keith Aiton (4th) in a match which went to the 5th game, a +26tp to David. It was triples all the way in the last quarter-final, with Ian Lines (14th) beating Chris Clarke (2nd) with three +26tps to one -24tp.

Day 3. Rutger continued his fine form and knocked out David with two triples and a +8. A healthy-sized crowd of spectators had gathered at the clubhouse this intermittently sunny Sunday and were treated to a fine display on Lawn 1 as Reg beat Ian 3-1. The most memorable game was the last, in which Reg's sextuple came unstuck at Rover. Despite all manner of attempts at posthumous promotion peels he could only peg out his striker's ball. Ian made 11 hoops in a 3-ball break leaving Reg in corner 3. Undaunted, Reg - whose shooting had been of the highest standard all weekend - ignored Ian's balls and shot at the peg, hitting centre-ball for a place in the final.

In the Plate, keenly contested by the 20 players out of the main event by this stage, the nail-biter of the day was Steve Lewis v Ailsa Lines, Steve winning +1.

Bank Holiday Monday drew a good crowd for the best-of-five final between Rutger and Reg, Reg winning 3-1 with two sextuples and a quintuple peel, too good even for Rutger's fine form throughout the tournament. Sam Tudor beat Ian in a well fought final for the Plate.

As well as the excellent lawns, well set hoops and good organisation courtesy of player-manager Ian Lines, a big thank you is due to all the caterers, washers and tidiers up and keepers of general order. The food, as always, was of a very high standard and greatly enjoyed by all who partook.



Rutger Beijderwellen accepts his runners-up trophy, from Martin Granger Brown.

Stephen Mulliner won the Championship of Ireland

by Stephen Mulliner

Stephen Mulliner won the Championship of Ireland at the third attempt by beating Chris Patmore in the final +13tpo, +26qp. In partnership with the very promising 16-year old William Gee from Nottingham, he also won the Irish Doubles Championship.

The entry was only 14 but included well-known local names such as Ed Cunningham, Patsy Fitzgerald, Andrew Johnson and Simon Williams. Shock of the Championship was the defeat of Ed Cunningham by William Gee in Round 1. Ed sprinted to a quick triple in game 1 and laid for a sextuple in game 2. The break fell behind and required an array of extraordinary rescue shots to end with a posthumous rover peel and one ball off. William took one ball to penult off the contact (an accidental cross-wire after 4-b) and, despite giving Ed half-a-dozen shots at the peg, survived to take the game +1. He was first away in game 3 with a break to 4-back and, after the lift was missed, took the other ball to peg, not yet being a confident tripler. Ed now hit his lift and chose to take a ball to 4-b rather than pegging out William's and conceding contact, or laying a 1-b leave. Nothing daunted, William hit the long lift and, with a few adventures, finished to record his best scalp in his short career.

William lost to Stephen Mulliner in the quarter-final by 20 and 26sxp. Stephen had a close call against Simon Williams in one semi-final, losing the first -12otp before replying with a 5th turn +26tp in game 2. In game 3, a missed dribble at the hoop 6 pioneer when going for the 1-b leave let Simon take a ball round and, after the lift was missed, an Irish victory seemed likely as the

he mis-approached 3-b from 5 yards straight. Another +13 soon followed. David and Kathleen won their semi with two +17 wins, though it took David 7 attempts to finish from 3-b and peg, leading to a pegging down over night and an early start on Sunday to finish the game off for a 2-0 match win.

The single-game plate event matched up pairs as they became available. Two pairs finished with no game wins, and two pairs finished undefeated in plate games, with winners David Foulser and Carol Smith having 4 wins counting main event games. David Magee found his form in the plate with a TP late Saturday evening, and Carol and David came back from well behind to beat George and Chris after Chris missed the pegout, David hit and George missed several shots before Carol pegged out, +1.

The main-event final started at 11 on Sunday with Jenny struggling to hoop 3 before Chris had an optimistic attempt at a dectuple. The first peel, before hoop 2, went through cleanly and was initially on target to also go through hoop 4. A failed rush peel and Chris went to 3-b leaving David's ball in the jaws of 4. David was clearly over his problems of the previous game, centre-balling the lift and proceeding to 4-b. Defensive play was punished when Kathleen picked up two breaks after the opponents cornered, and the first game finished shortly after Jenny had struggled to 2-b and Chris had taken his 3-b ball to 4-b with a cross-wire at 2-b and laid up in corner 3. DKO centre-balled the tea-lady. +10 to David and Kath. Chris & Jenny levelled the match in game 2 with a tidy 6th turn TP by Chris after David hit a poor lift leave but failed hoop 1 to leave Chris a double with his ball at hoop 2. In game 3 David got the first break - and stopped at 2-b to discourage popping by Chris. Jenny got to hoop 2 in several turns and Kathleen picked up a well-constructed break before sticking in hoop 4 with all the hard work done. Jenny went to 4-b with a defensive leave which David hit, but he failed 2-b giving Chris another tidy TP to take the match. Bernard and Liz Neal were welcome guests on the final day, and Bernard presented the Mixed Doubles trophies.

Full results: Chris Clarke & Jenny Williams beat Craig & Sue Edwards +25TP(C), +26TP(C), George Noble & Christine Osmond beat David & Eileen Magee +8 +3T, David Foulser & Carol Smith beat Mark Hamilton & Daphne Gaitley +16 +4T, David Openshaw & Kathleen Priestley beat Chris Daniels & Julie Hudson +18 +20. Semi-finals: Chris Clarke & Jenny Williams beat George Noble & Christine Osmond +13, +13, David Openshaw & Kathleen Priestley beat David Foulser & Carol Smith +17 +17. Final: Chris Clarke & Jenny Williams beat David Openshaw & Kathleen Priestley -10, +26TP(C), +16TP(C).

REG BAMFORD WINS NORTHERN CHAMPIONSHIP

Bowdon, 24th - 27th August

by Andrew Winn

So what was the biggest surprise of The Northerns? The tumbling of top seeds in the quarter-finals, or the lack of rain?

A very strong field of competitors travelled to Bowdon for this year's event, including the World top 5, or 6 in the top 10, or indeed 24 in the top 453, which doesn't sound quite so impressive. 453 isn't even a prime number, despite its relative obscurity. Ten of the players had handicaps of -2, and three were -2.5. We were in for a display of peeling the like of which had not been seen since the unfortunate time when the bus hired for the Fruit-Eaters Anonymous annual day out broke down next to the Chiquita Banana central distribution warehouse. (The bus company later described the incident as a major slip-up in operations).

Friday morning saw Colin Irwin whipping the 10.5 to 11-second lawns into shape with a long whippy thing whilst others discussed which way up to fly the Union Flag. Then it was down to business, and the Big 5 soon got stuck into their mere mortal opposition. Being keen on safari holidays I'm used to thinking of



Martin Granger Brown, President of Bowdon CC, presents Reg Bamford with the Faulkner Cup.

also important to decide whether particular types of player (as regards stature, flexibility of muscles and limbs, coordination of eye and limb, etc.) may require different methods, and at what stage of a player's development such a shot should be taught. One player asked me "Why didn't you teach me this when I had a higher handicap and was getting into these positions all the time?" - now I run hoops better and rarely need to use it." I think there are other more important things to teach players at that level, but perhaps his point is worthy of some consideration.

I would welcome any other ideas or suggestions or corrections along the lines that I have attempted to explain above - even from those who believe that coaching is an unnecessary waste of time.

All weather practice?



Alan Pidcock, Chairman of the CA Equipment Committee, and respected mallet maker, shares his latest equipment innovation.

Living seventeen miles from my club in Southport and the time pressures of mallet making and otherwise full-time retirement often leads to my arriving at tournaments without having played a shot for several weeks.



Although in my case, any amount of practice is unlikely to make perfect, my results have shown the need for more effort and, in particular, I have found it difficult to stabilise even relatively minor changes in the way I hit the ball. Over the years, I've had few compliments for my hitting-in ability. Some sort of domestic practice range would help solve the problem and it would also be useful if mallet customers who call in person could hit a ball in a meaningful way instead of on our rather unkempt lawn.



Procrastination came to an end earlier this year when I realised that stockists of suitable outdoor carpeting (Verde Sports Ltd) were nearby in Chorley and that the costs of the carpet and installation were rather lower than expected. It was to be, at least in part, a business expense, anyway!

A level carpet measuring 7 m long 1 m wide, but widening to 2 m at the target end was laid on a sand bed with a wood-strip surround; added sand on the carpet holds it in place and there is no need for additional fastening. Then it was up to me to create the target and, if possible, a ball-return mechanism. The outcome pictured works rather well. The target is a crudely painted disk on 1" thick plywood which leans backwards at about 45 degrees and which is back-filled with concrete. A firmly struck ball hits the board and becomes nicely airborne. Wooden posts in spiked metal holders support the catching net and the wide guttering and ducting that guide the balls back adjacent to the shooting end. The netting is a combination of plastic garden mesh and safety netting from a ships' chandlers and it is held in place by staples and elastic cord. A fair amount of trial and error was needed to achieve reliable capture.

Although the capture mechanism is not infallible even when the ball hits the target board, it speeds up practice no end. With a four ball set, there is almost always one ball ready to go again, and when all the balls have evaded capture they can be quickly

db David Barrett

POWERFLEX- High Tech Mallets with the Exclusive 'Powerflex' Shafts
The shaft that assists strength shots and helps to ease aching wrists. All Mallets have a foam grip on the shaft which can be EITHER Adjustable or Fixed.

Heads:- Square or Round Models crafted from Black solid composite with decorative gold decals and sight line.

Various NEW sizes and weights now available:

Prices £135 & £140

Including Free Head Wrap Plus £10 p +p (UK)

Carbon Fibre shafts also available.

For details contact : David Barrett. 61 Heywood Hall Road. Heywood. OL10 4UZ

Tel: 01706 368214 Mobile 07957 103417

e-mail david@barrettd.fsbusiness.co.uk

retrieved and dropped into the target gutter - avoiding the need to carry or hit balls back to the start line. Using the range and having the balls return is rather enjoyable - and it's just outside the back door - but it must be admitted that the names of Wallace and Gromit have been mentioned in connection with it.

A 6-7 m shot may not seem adequately demanding - but there is a refinement. The two white (fibreglass) pegs just in front of the target board are inserted into springs (fixed below ground level), and their separation can be made either 2 or 3 balls wide. A ball passing through the 3 ball gap without touching the pegs would make contact with a central target ball, and though the 2 ball gap a hit would be made on a ball at twice the distance - say 12 m. It is, of course, possible to go even further - but reliable hitting at 12 m means that the hitting-in method and execution are in reasonable shape and I just now need little time and a gap in the 'weather' to make use of it all.

The whole system is, of course, only a first attempt - but it does work and I would be glad to supply details to others with a spare patch of garden. Something similar may also be of interest to clubs.

COACHING NOTES

by Keith Aiton

These notes are intended for coaches of groups or individual, players who aspire to A-class croquet or better.



III. OPENINGS

To discuss the opening phase of the game I shall use the convention that the balls are played into the game in the order Blue, Red, Black Yellow.

I have no intention of embarking on an academic discourse on this subject. Interested players can refer to the chapter on openings in Wylie's "Expert Croquet Tactics". In practical terms I think you need to decide whether you are trying to attack or defend in the opening. By this I mean are you going to try to set things up to go round as soon as you can take croquet, or are you going to try to make it difficult for your opponent to do that?

As an example Blue has already played and has gone in the "super shot" position a few yards north and west of hoop 5. Red may decide to try and hit Blue. Before he does so though he ought to have thought about why he wants to do that. If he hits is he going to try and make a 2-ball break (aggressive) or send the balls to corners 2 and 4 (or as close as he can get them) (defensive). If Red happens to miss Blue what is he expecting to happen next? Will Black shoot hard (aggressive) at what may well be a double target (a miss giving Yellow an easy break chance)? Or will Black be put off from that shot and simply play into the lawn near Red, but not increasing the size of the target for Yellow? Will Yellow reckon to hit on the fourth turn, as if this is in serious doubt then Red has been too aggressive in trying to hit Blue. A defensive play by Red would be to play just south of corner 2 or just north of corner 4, or to play to the point on the east boundary that is just over 19 yards from corner 3 (and the eastern end of A baulk).

Black will try to hit Red with the intention of setting up a 3-ball break.

If Blue plays to ten yards north of corner 4 Red may choose to try and hit Blue. What for? To try and play a 2-ball break (aggressive)? To set up a double target somewhere in the middle of the lawn (aggressive)? To send the balls to corners 2 and 4 (defensive)? What else could Red do? Lay a tice. What is the purpose of a tice? It is to try to control the length of shot that Yellow will have. Nowadays the most popular tice is the "Duffer" tice played from B baulk a little to the west of hoop 6. It discourages a shot at Red by Black, and also discourages Black from joining up with Blue. Black can shoot at Blue or Red from corner 3, or take the risk of shooting at Blue from A baulk. If Black hits Blue then he can either try and set up a 3-ball break, or move Red to near the west boundary leaving a rush to it for Blue. If Black hits Red he will probably move Red near the west boundary and leave a rush to it.

Yellow will have to consider what is facing him and I don't propose to go through all the possibilities. Most likely he will feel he must take the shortest shot available, unless it is clear that Blue/Black does not have the innings, eg when Black has missed the Duffer tice from corner 3, when a risky play would be to shoot gently at Red.

It is probably not good though for Red to be putting out a tice that he doesn't think Yellow can hit. In those circumstances Red should play defensively to just south of corner 2. Black will probably shoot at Blue and then Yellow can shoot at Blue or Black from A baulk.

TECHNICAL MATTERS

LAWN SPEEDS

by Samir Patel

Lawn speeds are traditionally measured using a simple measurement of the time taken for a ball to travel the length of a croquet lawn (i.e. 35 yards); this takes longer on a fast lawn than on a slow one, so a "10 second lawn" is faster than a "9 second lawn".

To do this in practice, one person times, while another tries to hit a ball from South boundary to North boundary (and then vice-versa). A number of such strokes are normally played and an average of those that come close are taken. Measurements can also be made with a stimpmeter type device but I prefer the traditional method, simply because it only needs equipment you tend to have to hand at a croquet lawn - a ball, a mallet, a watch and a person to swing the mallet (although the competence of the latter is sometimes an issue).

All figures given are speeds once the morning dew has cleared (and before the evening dew starts collecting). Clearly nothing can be done about rain, which can easily add 1-2 seconds to a lawn's speed, more if surface water starts collecting.

About 10 seconds should be considered a "normal" pace for a lawn. It is a comfortable pace and allows most strokes to be played without undue force; no player with a reasonable technique (i.e. pendulum-like swing) should find it difficult to rush a ball the length of the lawn. For the best players, 9-10 second lawns seem to turn the game into a shooting competition, with the breaks and peels appearing to be relatively easy and game results

turning on how many shots are hit and hence on the quality of the leave.

Slower lawns (8-9 seconds) clearly require greater force to be put into shots; it is at around 7-8 seconds where break strategy needs changing because some shots become unplayable. For example, the roll from hoop 1 to hoops 2 and 3 in a three-ball break becomes a test of strength rather than accuracy, and so there is merit in putting the hoop 2 pioneer further south so there isn't so far to go if you don't get a rush after hoop 1. Clearly the point at which certain shots cease to be available will vary from player to player, but it is around 8 seconds where casual conversation at tournaments tends to turn to slow lawns.

Significantly below 8 seconds, lawns quickly become unplayable; or at least breaks as we'd understand them become almost impossible and the whole game becomes something of a test of strength rather than accuracy. Although I have seen a TP on a lawn that was subsequently measured at around 5-6 seconds (at that required the ball to be airborne for much of the 35 yards), I broke a mallet trying to do the same earlier that day.

Up to around 12 seconds shouldn't cause many players too much problem. The extra pace starts requiring more accuracy, but all shots are available - even huge rolls strokes, such as from corner IV to hoops 2 and 3 becomes strokes requiring care rather than brute force. Good break play gets rewarded, with approaches across the face of a hoop or across rush-lines becoming dangerous (since a similarly casual bad shot is likely to leave a 30 degree hoop rather than a 15 degree one)

Much above 12 seconds, lawns start to become difficult. This occurs less often, but having watched a B-class tournament on 15-second lawns, some of the players might have described them as "unplayable", if it wasn't for the fact that the previous weekend saw the top players completing TPs.

Cheltenham for the Opens in 2003 recorded 17+ seconds. At that pace all but the top few players struggled, with only a handful looking like they were expecting to complete delayed TPs, but damage to the lawns was reported afterwards. Nailsea has watering system (I think), but produced (by turning it off) lawns playing at around 14-15 seconds in the middle of the day (although there was a significant amount of dew in the mornings and evening which slowed up the lawns) for the Spencer Ell last year, and I haven't heard of any long-term damage. Jersey has a watering system, but routinely produces high-quality fast lawns (12+ seconds) for the Jersey Opens and European Championships also through the simple measure of turning them off. The fact that they can do this twice a year, every year indicates that no lawn damage occurs.

Seconds	Lawn Speed
< 8	Very slow / Unplayable
8-9	Slow
10	Normal
11-12	Fast
> 13	Very Fast / Difficult

I would like to see clubs aiming for 10 seconds for day-to-day play in dry conditions, with that as a minimum for tournaments and >=12 seconds for the top tournaments. It is interesting (but not necessarily unexpected) to note that clubs with watering systems (e.g. Southwick, Parkstone, Cheltenham) tend to be in the 8-10 second range, while those without (e.g. Surbiton, Compton, Bowdon) tend to be in the 10-12 second range.

JENNY WILLIAMS & CHRIS CLARKE WIN MIXED DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP Surbiton 11-12 August 2007

by Jenny Williams

With 8 pairs entering, including several past champions, and a change to a full best-of-three knockout this year's event promised to be a good contest. Manager David Foulser imposed time limits of 3.5, 5.5, 7 (with a 9-hour final) to keep the tournament on schedule, and the games were all single-banked. The Surbiton lawns are in lovely condition - about 10-11 seconds, with a good covering of grass and hard underfoot they are a credit to George's efforts and Bob's mowing. Tight hoops added to the challenge, though they relented somewhat on the second day after many balls had been slammed through. Catering was the usual exceptional Surbiton fare, complemented by a well-stocked bar, with George and Christine doing the honours on day 1 and Celia providing lunch on day 2.

Chris and Jenny started strongly winning a quick two-TP match against Craig and Sue Edwards, and the most exciting round 1 game saw David Magee pegging out George Noble with George's partner Chris Osmond still on 1-b. Making 1-b, Chris hit the Magees' balls in corner 4 and took a decisive lead with time fast running out, eventually pegging out with 5 minutes to spare. In the other first-round matches David Foulser and Carol Smith won 2-0 against Mark Hamilton and Daphne Gaitley, with a narrow victory in the second, and Chris Daniels and Julie Hudson had a slow start, losing 2-0 to David Openshaw and Kathleen Priestley.



Jenny Williams and Chris Clarke, winners of the Mixed Doubles Championship

After a 5-hour wait Chris and Jenny met George and Chris in the first semifinal. ChrisC quickly raced to 4-b, but then the match stalled with many errors before the favourites won +13. The second saw another poor start before Chris got in (for hoop 2) with Jenny for hoop 5. He started a delayed octuple which was close to perfection. He had ideal position with 6 peels done when