

The Croquet Gazette

Issue 254

March 1998



**"AND HOW LONG HAVE
YOU BEEN A RED CLIP?"**

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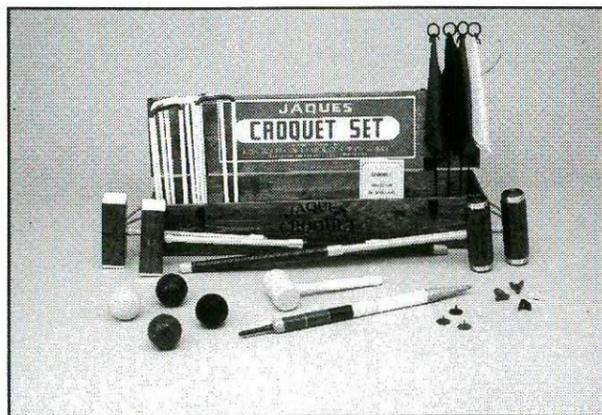
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Publicising Croquet

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Federation Development



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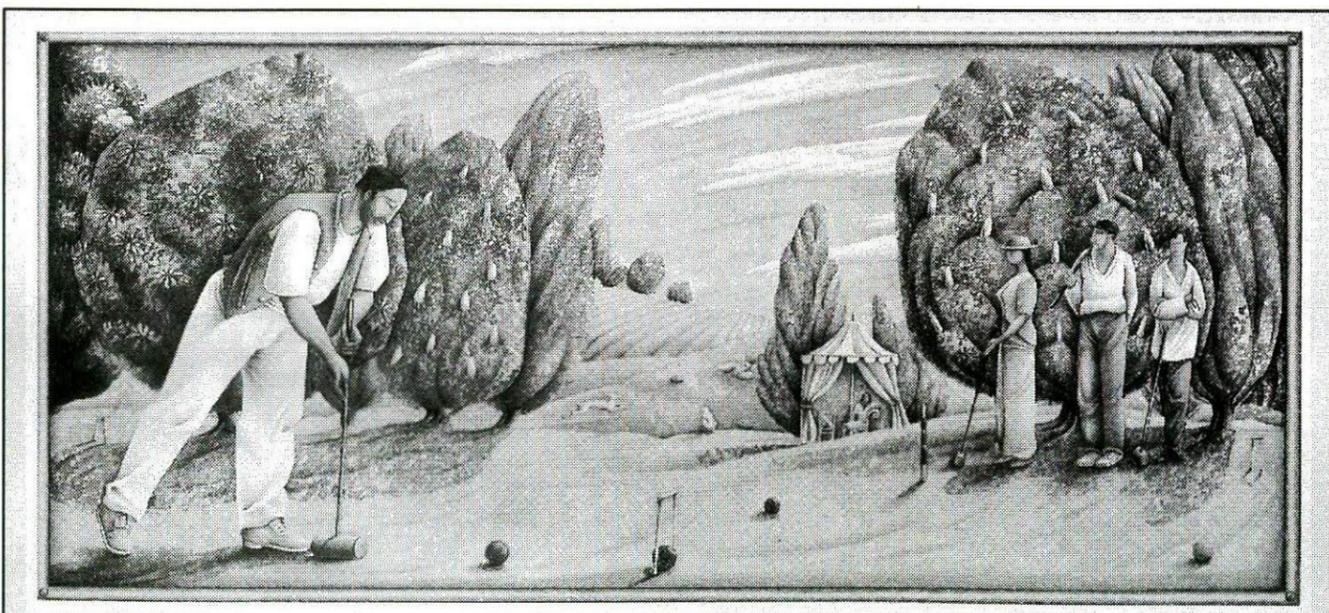


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PUBLICATION DETAILS

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Specific Questions & Queries

Specific questions or queries should be sent direct to the relevant CA official, e.g. Laws questions to the chairman of the Laws Committee.

Copy Details

General copy and contributions should be sent direct to the editor on floppy disc (text or ASCII files). Typed work or clear handwriting is also acceptable.

Photographs are always required. Both black and white or colour prints can be utilised. Please detail on the reverse of all photos the subject of the picture, and if you require the photographs to be returned please include your address on the reverse.

Tournament Results & Reports

Tournament results should be reported on the new tournament return sheet. These have been issued in a bid to make the reporting of events and the administration of the rankings easier. Please ensure that the forms are used. Tournament reports should be written and sent to the editor within SEVEN DAYS of the completion of a tournament. Failure to comply with this guideline will result in reports failing to be published.

Delivery Queries

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

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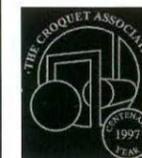
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&

Robert Fulford

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 Ranelagh Gardens, London SW6 3PR



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Editorial

There was a time when the winter months used to drag and the croquet season seemed as though it would never arrive. That however is no longer true, for me at least. Perhaps it is a sign of age catching up with me, but I prefer to think that the reason is more because as editor the croquet season no longer seems to close, it just slows down a little in the winter months.

The advent of the indoor carpet some years ago brought the prospect of year round croquet to be a more realistic target, for those not lucky enough to edit magazines and newsletters, and the innovation in producing mini carpets and now even the prospect of clubs installing all-weather courts could see some radical changes in players' tournament habits and needs. Innovation such as these together with the creative adoption of all manner of variations of the game such as Golf, One Ball, Short and Speed Croquet could provide not only a truly comprehensive tournament menu for players, but also and equally important means for smaller clubs to participate in the tournament scene that has for so long been confined to the larger clubs. Clubs who have strived to break away from the conventional tournament mould such as Winchester with the One-Ball Championship, Ipswich with Speed Doubles, Nailsea with Short Croquet and Croquet For Leisure with Golf Croquet are all providing a service, which by all accounts are attracting growing numbers of competitors to enjoy them, as well as encouraging other clubs to be more adventurous with their tournament programmes. What's more, the CA Planning Group endorses and acknowledges that a diversity of events can only be good for the sport for many reasons.

So if you are a little tired with treading the same courts year after year take a good look at the fixture book and treat yourself to one of the newer tournaments, a refreshing change may be all that is needed to refresh you and encourage others that croquet can be fun for everyone, regardless of their ability.

The start of a new playing season signals a fresh start to the Gazette year, and I sincerely hope that those of you who have enjoyed a croquet hibernation will awaken soon and contribute in some way to this publication. Only in the last issue there was a plea for Federations to be more willing to share their activities with others, and clubs too must be more willing to publicise their events.

In recent issues first Jeff Dawson and now Pete Trimmer have offered some insight into various aspect of the game, following Don Gaunt's series of Helpful Hints. Alas there are no more coaching articles waiting in the editorial files. Someone out there must have some tips that work for them, and must be brave enough



to offer them to the croquet playing public. It doesn't matter at what level of play they are offered, or indeed which version of the game they cover.

Other areas, which although many say they enjoy, have been surprisingly quiet, such as Letters and Points of View. Any bar or club verandah at a tournament is full of opinion, email bulletin boards even more, so don't be shy, share your opinions and questions.

My final plea is for photographs. You don't have to be a Lichfield or a Bailey to adorn these pages with your work, but if you would like some help with your croquet photography there will be something for you in the next issue of the Gazette. However in the meantime keep snapping and sending. If you want your pictures returned all you have to do is put your name and address on the back.

And finally, before any of you rush to the telephone or the writing paper, I am sorry that the results of the 1994 World Championships appear on page 17. Apparently the results have not previously been published in the the Gazette and to comply with its role as a journal of record it has been deemed necessary to publish the results now.

Gail Curry

~ Obituary ~

Frank Shergold - Parkstone CC

It is with great sadness that we record the death of Frank Shergold who died on May 25th 1997 aged 80.

Frank was a keen sportsman with a particular talent for a wide range of ball games. In about 1980 he took up croquet with the East Dorset Lawn Tennis & Croquet club (Parkstone). His expertise at ball games quickly enabled him to become an "A" Class player which took him to many tournaments around the country.

As a skilled coach and greatly respected national referee, he latterly was available as a coach every Monday at the Club, and with characteristic generosity was always ready to share his expertise. All who knew him will miss him immensely. The Club especially will miss his coaching and friendly encouragement to all new members.

NEWS & INFORMATION

CA Goes On-Line

The CA office is now able to send and receive e-mail at the following address CAOFFICE@CROQUET.ORG.UK

Web Site Editor Required

The publicity committee are looking for a web site editor for an official Croquet Association internet site. The site is looked upon as a long term project which will be set up in stages, with stage one and its content having been identified. The Web editor would be responsible for the practical hands-on work, such as inputting and updating information where necessary as well as designing the site. Anyone who may be interested in the position and would like to know more should contact Gail Curry gail@cgazette.demon.co.uk or Tel 0191 2579045.

Lawn Tennis & Croquet

Many years ago the CA office possessed a volume containing copies of the croquet "supplements" which appeared in the magazine *Lawn Tennis and Croquet* from 1897 to 1904 but the book was lost some time ago. Reference to these croquet supplements appears in David Prichard's *History of Croquet* and in the Centenary *History of the Croquet Association* by Colin Prichard. Being dismayed at the omission from our archives of this fascinating and valuable official record of the early days of the Association's history, David Drazin and Alan Oldham have, with the permission and cooperation of the Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum (to whom grateful thanks are due), made photocopies of the relevant pages in the volumes of *Lawn Tennis and Croquet* in the Kenneth Ritchie library at the museum. These photocopy pages have now been bound into eight slim volumes and placed with the other historic books on croquet and bound volumes of the Croquet gazette which form the small reference library in the CA office. These books may be consulted in the CA office by prior arrangement

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with the Secretary but may not in any circumstances be taken away from the premises.

Payment For Equipment & Literature From The CA

I would be appreciated if members or clubs purchasing literature or equipment on receipt of our invoice would make prompt payment. Unfortunately we find we have to write not once nor twice but three times demanding payment, often for as little as the Laws (£3). Not only is this time consuming, but it also cuts into the little profit the CA makes on these items.

Fortunately it is only a few people we have to contact; in future I regret that we will have to ask for prior payment before sending goods. We do not wish to embarrass members by having to do this, so your cooperation would be gratefully appreciated.

Secretary's Shield Results

Round 1: Himley Hall bt Northampton 5 - 2; Bowdon bt Bury 6 - 1; Tyneside bt Colworth 4 - 2; Plymouth bt Reigate 4 - 3. **Semi-Final:** Bowdon bt Himley 6 - 1; Plymouth bt Tyneside 6 - 1. **Final:** Bowdon bt Plymouth 5 - 1

Longman Cup Results

Round 1: Newport bt Medway 3-2; Wrest Park bt Edgbaston 4-1; Southport bt Beverley 3-2; High Wycombe bt Blewbury 5-0. **Round 2:** Newport bt Ealing 3-2; Colchester bt Hurlingham 5-0; Ipswich bt Parson's Green 3-1; Surbiton bt Reigate 3-2; Cassiobury bt Letchworth 5-0; Northampton bt Colworth 4-1; Nottingham bt Norwich 3-2; Wrest Park bt Leicester 5-0; Southport bt Tyneside 4-1; Croquet For Leisure bt Walsall 3-2; Bowdon bt East Riding 3-2; Pendle bt Stourbridge 3-2; Bristol bt Roehampton 3-2; Cheltenham bt Harrow 3-2; Dyffryn bt Woking 5-0; High Wycombe bt East Dorset 3-2. **Round 3:** Colchester bt Newport 3-2; Ipswich bt Surbiton 3-2; Northampton bt Cassiobury; Wrest Park bt Nottingham 3-2; Southport bt Croquet for Leisure 5-1; Bowdon bt Pendle; Bristol bt Cheltenham 4-1; Dyffryn bt High Wycombe 4-1. **Round 4:** Ipswich bt Colchester 3-2; Wrest Park bt Northampton 4-1; Bowdon bt Southport 3-2; Dyffryn bt Bristol 5-0. **Semi-Final:** Wrest Park bt Ipswich 5-0; Bowdon bt Dyffryn 5-0. **Final:** Bowdon bt Wrest Park 4-0.

Mary Rose Results

Round 1: Nottingham bt Bowdon 4-2; Walsall bt Surbiton 5-2. **Round 2:** Woking bt Nottingham 4-3; East Dorset bt Dyffryn 6-1; Wrest Park bt Colchester 7-0; Northampton bt Letchworth 6-1; Pendle bt Colworth 6-1; Cheltenham bt Hurlingham 5-2; Bristol bt Ipswich; Walsall bt Leicester 4-3. **Round 3:** East Dorset bt Woking 4-3; Wrest Park bt Northampton 4-3; Pendle bt Cheltenham 4-3; Bristol w/o Walsall. **Semi-Final:** East Dorset bt Wrest Park 4-3; Bristol bt Pendle 4-3. **Final:** Bristol bt East Dorset 5-1.

COACHING HOLIDAY

South East Croquet Federation's

SUMMER SCHOOL

will be held at
 SOUTHWICK, SUSSEX
 on
 6 to 10 July 1998

The school is intended for players of handicaps 10 and over. The cost, including coffee tea and lunch is £80

A prospectus and entry form is available from

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 Tel: 0181 467 8589

NEW BOOK IN STOCK

Peel Appeal
 by
 Steve Jones

Peel Appeal looks at the triple peel as seen from the experiences Steve has acquired over the years with the help of some of New Zealand's leading players. The matches described are some of the most fascinating and exciting that have ever been played. An interesting and amusing anecdotal account of New Zealand and World croquet over the past 15 years, the book also serves as an invaluable coaching guide both for beginners and more expert players.

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NEW BOOK IN STOCK

Letters...

'Southwick' on the Up!

Dear Editor
The CA Forward Planning proposals are excellent, and at 'Southwick' we can vouch for the success of many similar ideas.

We made 21 new members in 1996 and 31 in 1997, a total of 52 in two years. Our membership has been slowly increasing over the past six years due, we think, to inaugurating Golf Croquet, monthly Fun Doubles, Bridge Drives, as well as ongoing coaching.

During the winter months we keep 2 lawns open, have Lunches (with a Christmas special), Golf Croquet, 1-Ball and Bridge Drives. This year we have expanded social events to include Quiz Nights, various Fun Events, Coffee Mornings and mini indoor Croquet. The Quiz Nights and Bridge include non-members, several of whom are going to try Croquet.

At the same time it was felt imperative to keep newcomers a second year to ensure they were hooked on Croquet, and to this end a Newcomer's Package was initiated. Thus prospective new members join for 1, 2, 3 or 4 months at £10 per month up to the end of August, when they are offered the following year's membership at the current year's subscription rate to include Sept-Dec. This has proved remarkably successful.

Much improved publicity by a splendid sign at the Car Park entrance, and on local TV, Cable and Radio, as well as major CA events such as the Inter-Counties and, this year, the Centenary Tournament and the European Championship, have all played a part.

Our Winter Working Party are again doing wonders, and saving the Club thousands of pounds. All this effort has meant that this year we have been able to employ Laughton Landscapes to look after our lawns with excellent results.

You will see in the 1998 Fixtures Book that the Autumn Tournament is now called more appropriately the AUGUST Tournament, and that the Summer week has become the SUMMER WEEKEND (3-day).

Diana Brothers
'Southwick' Membership Secretary.

Croquet's problems

Dear Editor
The trouble with croquet is that it is on the one hand a trivial garden pursuit and on the other hand a serious game.

Those of us who regard croquet as a serious game have a problem on our hands. This can be defined in two ways:-

- 1) How to increase the small numbers who currently play the game in a serious fashion?
- 2) How to persuade those who play in clubs that £5 is a less than adequate annual sum to keep the CA in being; and that without some national organisation (if not the CA then the same by some other name) how will we prevent the game declining into a number of disparate clubs many of whom would soon develop different versions of our game with different rules?

With the likely cessation of the Sports Council grant at the end of 1998 coupled with the rooted objection of most croquet players to consider the plight of the game's finances it is hard to avoid a feeling of pessimism about croquet's future.

Tony Fathers

Constructive comments?

Dear Editor
Why do so many letters appearing in the Gazette propose changes? Andrew Bennet's letter in issue 253, is the latest and argues for re-naming the rover ball. Contrary to his experience I've never heard the expression "rover ball" used incorrectly. Surely, we were all taught, "you can only peg-out a ball with a rover ball etc". As for Andrew's "universally understood expressions, 'hoop-1 ball' and '4-back ball' - uh, what did you say?"

His letter states that the term "rover" is anomalous, and if you want to be completely logical, he is right. But does it matter? The Laws clearly define the term "rover" for all to read. If some players occasionally misuse the word "rover" then it is for them to change - not the laws.

The modern game of Association Croquet is not perfect; neither is golf, football, kite flying or picking flowers; but I think it is about right.

Sadly, if here is one thing about croquet that does need changing then it has to be its image. How about some constructive comments on changing that?

Nick Evans

Golden Mallet error correction

Dear Editor
Through the medium of the Gazette could I invite

Syd Jones (and Rosemary Longbottom, as appropriate) to acknowledge and correct a repeated mistake in the report of the above competition published in Golf Croquet extra section of the January 1998 issue.

The winner John Moore, while also a member of Tynemouth Priory GC Club, was playing as a member and representative of Tyneside CC.

Jim Wardhaugh

I accept full responsibility for the above error and apologise unreservedly for any inconvenience or embarrassment it may have caused to John or anyone connected to either of the above clubs. Ed

WCF letter error

Dear Editor
Alda Guy is quite correct when she says Aaron Westerby was nominated by the NZCC to play in the Bunbury Championship but then had to withdraw.

I must apologise for the error in my letter in the November issue of the Gazette.

Chris Hudson
Secretary General, WCF

An update from China

Dear Editor,
I was interested to see the article in the September Gazette on Croquet Chinese Style. My son met the game while in Beijing for a year and acquired a set of rules. At the time he began to translate them and sent me a draft of the first few rules, promising to continue later! I have now reminded him of this, and he is working on it with his tutor who has not met the game. I hope that in future he may be able to give me a fuller outline.

The court is either 25 x 20 metres or 20 x 15 metres. The hoops are 22cm wide and stand 20cm out of the ground. Hoop 1 is half way along the east side, and 2 m from the boundary, hoop 2 is 4m from the east boundary and 2 m from the north and hoop 3 is two-thirds along the west side from the north boundary. They therefore go round anticlockwise starting from corner 4.

Teams consist of five players, and each member plays his ball in sequence. To start the ball must run the first hoop from a position near "corner 4". After that the roquet, croquet and

continued on page 11

COACHING COURSE

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2 - 3 MAY 1998

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CA MERIT AWARD WINNERS 1997

Congratulations to the following players
who qualified for merit awards during the 1997 season

BRONZE AWARD	Ian Wilson	Syd Jones	Ben Elwell
Penny Crowe	Michael Pullin	Keith Noble	Joanna Carter
Philip Tidswell	Jonathan Isaacs	FH Smith	John Low
Susan Edwards	Iris Cotillard	Gina Lewis	Don Beck
Tony Treglown	Anne van der Vliet	Roger Ivill	Ailsa Lines
Frances Low	Mary Goodhart	Kathleen Priestley	Tim Dutton
Daphne Gaitley	Esther Jones	David Matthews	Margaretha Regan
Margaret Godson	Rachael Scott	James Mackay	Ben Elwell
Margaret Ward	Elizabeth Batin	Sarah Burrow	Barney Lewis
Mary Smith	Jack Baxter	Gordon Porter	Rob Callingham
Sheila Watts	Gordon Verinder	Naomi Green	GOLD AWARD
Derek Watts	David Pollitt	J Filsak	Paul Castell
Ian Price	R Clark	R Gold	Hugh Smorfit
Dr Allan Laidlaw	Jane Babbage	J Leader	James Dixon
G Underwood	Anna Price	Edward Knapton	Nelson Morrow
Brian Kitchen	Pauline Davey	AJ Lovett	Peter Payne
Andrew Davies	CJ Davies	Mireille Sowerby	Shaun Carter
Bob Burnett	David Clarke	Johnathan Toye	Roger Jackman
James MacKay	SILVER AWARD	Peter Wilson	
DK Mumford	Douglas Gurney	Liz Fraser	

7th WCF World Croquet Championship, Bunbury, Australia November 1997

The World Croquet championship hosted by the Western Australia CC and the Australian CA in November was won by Robert Fulford (England), who takes the title for the fourth time. Bruce Fleming (Australia) won the Plate event, and Fernando de Ansorena (Spain) was awarded the "Fun Cup", donated by the Italian CA for the player who gives everyone the most enjoyment at the championships.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Block A | Ian Dumergue (New Zealand) |
| Jerry Stark (USA) | Walid Wahban (Egypt) |
| Alan McInerney (Ireland) | Reg Bamford (South Africa) |
| Peter Payne (Switzerland) | Block F |
| David Openshaw (England) | Steve Jones (New Zealand) |
| Bob Jackson (New Zealand) | Rohan McInerney (Ireland) |
| Block B | Greg Bury (Australia) |
| Edoardo Lualdi (Italy) | Jacques Fournier (USA) |
| Richard Baker (New Zealand) | Tom Weston (Jersey) |
| Andrew Hope (Scotland) | Block G |
| David Maugham (England) | Colin Pickering (Australia) |
| Aggy Read (Australia) | Don Fournier Jr (USA) |
| Block C | Jonathan Lamb (Belgium) |
| Wynand Louw (South Africa) | Jane McInerney (New Zealand) |
| Shirley Carr (Australia) | Robert Fulford (England) |
| Stephen Mulliner (England) | Block H |
| Phillip Archer (Guernsey) | Lester Sullivan (South Africa) |
| Ian Bond (Scotland) | Masaaki Yamada (Japan) |
| Block D | Shane Davis (New Zealand) |
| Paul Skinley (New Zealand) | Mik Mehas (USA) |
| Chris Williams (Wales) | Bruce Fleming (Australia) |
| Phil Cordingley (England) | |
| Helene Thurston (Australia) | |
| Fernando de Ansorena (Spain) | |
| Block E | |
| Ashley Faulkner (Australia) | |
| Shaun Carter (Wales) | |

Knockout stage:
R Fulford bt A Hope +19 +25TP; D Openshaw bt R McInerney -12 +3 +4; J Fournier bt P Skinley +2 +18TP; R Baker bt D Fournier +16TP +14; D Maugham bt S Carter +21 +23; H

Thurston bt I Dumergue +15 +26; G Bury bt J Stark +8 +12; R Bamford bt J McInerney; S Mulliner bt A McInerney +4 +26; W Louw bt A Faulkner -4 +22 +26; P Cordingley bt A Read +26 +25; S Jones bt S Carr +15TP +12; C Williams bt B Fleming +7 - 26TP +7; S Davis bt I Bond +5 -2 +25; Mik Mehas bt C Pickering +13 +26; B Jackson bt L Sullivan +22 +16.

Fulford bt Openshaw +20TP +8TP; Baker bt J Fournier +4 +17TP; Maugham bt Thurston +12 +7TP; Bamford bt Bury -7+26 +4; Mulliner bt Louw +17TP +15TP; Jones bt Cordingley +3 -10 +18; Davis bt Williams +11 +25; Jackson bt Mehas -3 +26TP +6TP. Fulford bt Baker +24TP-17TP +15TP; Maugham bt Bamford +26TP +3; Mulliner bt Jones -14 +22 +13; Davis bt Jackson -3 +26 +26TP. Fulford bt Maugham -10TP +15TP +17TP-4TP+110TP; Mulliner bt Davis +10 +26TP +17. Fulford bt Mulliner +15 -3TPO +90TP +110TP.

Plate Event:

- | | |
|---------------|-------------|
| Block U | Block W |
| P Archer | A Read |
| E Lualdi | I Bond |
| F de Ansorena | C Pickering |
| W Wahban | L Sullivan |
| Block V | Block X |
| J Lamb | B Fleming |
| T Weston | A Faulkner |
| P Payne | A McInerney |
| M Yamada | S Carr |



Block Y
D Fournier Jnr
P Skinley
I Dermergue
A Hope

Block Z
J Stark
J Mc Intyre
S Carter
R McInerney

Knockout Stage:
B Fleming bt T Weston +19TP; C Pickering bt R McInerney +10; J Stark bt W Wahab +4; D Fournier bt P Payne. Fleming bt Louw +11; Cordingley bt Pickering +11; Williams bt Faulkner +17; Mehas bt Bond +1; Openshaw bt Skinley +7; Fournier bt Lualdi +9. Thurston bt stark +23; Fournier Jr bt Bury +25. Fleming bt Cordingley +15; Mehas bt Williams +24; Fournier bt Openshaw +13; Thurston bt Fournier Jr +26. Flemingbt Mehas +26TP; Thurston bt Fournier +14. Fleming bt Thurston +5 +22TP

Overseas Development

Luxembourg's first Croquet Club is born report & photos by John Davis

Finally, on Saturday June 7, 1997, the official opening of the new European Investment Bank Croquet club took place. The story of why it took so long but why it was well worth waiting for follows.

In 1991, I left ICI to join the European Investment Bank in Luxembourg, a new start in the heart of Europe but without two of my most favourite things, a croquet club and Rotherham United football club. I am sure you will all understand why I missed the first of these and I won't mention the second again except to say that it is my father's fault for having moved there when I was five years old!!

When I first arrived in the Bank six years ago, I looked enviously at the large lawn outside the restaurant, but I was told it would not be the done thing to be seen to be enjoying playing outside whilst people were eating inside (I don't understand this as I quite enjoy eating as well and don't in the least bit mind other people enjoying themselves).

I went quiet for a while but then, three years ago, I was shown the plans for the Bank extension. As an engineer, having a trained eye for detail, I immediately spotted that the roof of the new car park must be flat and, because we all have big cars (we work for a bank!), quite large! Consultation with one or two members of the project team confirmed my observations and, even better, revealed that the whole of this surface was going to be laid as lawn. Whoopee!

The rest was quite straight forward. With a lot of help and cooperation from the project team and Bank staff, the end of the extension closest to the tennis courts was laid with a bit of extra care and attention and the croquet lawn was born. Finally, last July, we began playing.

At least 20 people, of various nationalities, came along to try the game and so we decided to kick off the 1997 summer season with a grand opening event. Intricate planning and preparation went on through the winter months as the club committee worked tirelessly to ensure a successful day. It was decided to invite a representative of the Croquet Association and, in February, after much diary consulting, the weekend of May 17/18 was chosen.

In April the Luxembourgish authorities announced that they were going to close off the whole of Kirchberg, including access to the Bank, for a vintage car rally on the weekend of.....May 17/18! Oh! dear.

Hasty rearrangement thanks to E-mail, a wonderful invention, meant that the event was postponed until the weekend of June 7/8. All we needed now was good weather.

Ian Vincent, one of the best players, and nicest people, in the CA, arrived on the Friday evening and Saturday dawned warm and sunny. We went to the Bank in the morning to cut the grass and have a practice.

At 2pm we began playing a match. It had been agreed that we would play a full game of singles and that the player not in play would explain to the spectators what was happening. This requires an almost telepathic understanding between the two players, particularly if you say things like..."now next Ian is going to do this in order to do that". It is also very embarrassing when he does something completely different, as I found out.

Several spectators had already arrived and were witness to a dreadful start with both of us making mistakes, in play as well as in commentary. However we soon settled down and Ian made a break to 4-back. I then had a rush of blood and also went to 4-back. After about one and a half hours, by which time the crowd had swelled (!), we were level at 11 hoops each. I then made what turned out to be the crucial mistake. I took a long shot at Ian's balls and missed. This enabled Ian to get going with his second ball and complete a triple peel. This was particularly

impressive as the lawn is still very slow and rushing balls more than 20 yards is almost impossible.

The main event of the day, Pimms accompanied by cucumber sandwiches and cake, then took place. The sun was still shining, a few brief words were spoken and the croquet club was officially opened. Ian and I were given the task of consuming the remaining Pimms whilst everyone else took part in two competitions, four shots at a hoop 6 metres away and four shots at the peg 7 metres away.

The four shots at the peg contest started slowly, six players making the playoff with one out of four. The playoff narrowed it down to two, Constantin Christofidis and Chris Knowles (the club treasurer) who again scored one out of four. However, it then got very exciting as sudden death



took over. The old adage, of practice makes perfect, surfaced as, with Constantin starting, the first five shots all hit the peg. Unfortunately Chris missed his next shot so Constantin took the honours.

The four shots at the hoop contest (three points for running the hoop, one point for hitting it) produced a four way tie, on 4 points, between Peter Bond, Fiona Turner (the club president), Bharrat Kakkad and Chris (again). The second round reduced it to Peter and Bharrat who each scored 5. Peter triumphed in the third round scoring a very impressive 7 to Bharrat's 3. The formal proceedings over, play continued into the evening before a rather spectacular thunderstorm forced an end to the fun.

Fortunately the weather was again fine on the Sunday afternoon as Ian gave coaching lessons to some of the keener club members. All-in-all a thoroughly enjoyable weekend with which to get the club off to a fine start.

Although it is a 'private' club on Bank grounds, anyone passing through Luxembourg is welcome to contact me and we'll arrange a game. As many of my croquet friends know, my only tournament play for the last six years has been in the Inter-Counties so I am looking forward to getting back into the swing (literally, as that part of my game has gone completely!!). I also soon hope to be able to claim to have been the first person to represent Yorkshire and Luxembourg!!

Contact;
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Luxembourg
Tel. (352) 340472

From Skewers & String to Silver - A Summer's Progress

report & photo by Newton Tweedsdale

"Go and see the Vicars Choral - they're playing croquet on the Cathedral green, and they have problems with the rules."

So I went, and after playing at Bath and Cheltenham for two years, and a CA member with a handicap of 12, I answered their questions, but said that they must have a marked out court! They were complete beginners. This was the start of the Easter holidays in early April 1997 in Wells, Somerset, and next day I turned up with four skewers and a ball of string and we paced out a court - wire hoops and a Jaques garden set. A few days later, the Bursar of Wells Cathedral School allowed us to play on a better lawn behind one of the 18th century school houses.

By now, one of the vicars (to whom I had lent a Jackson mallet) - Deiniol Morgan, 27 - was impressing me very much by his extraordinarily rapid grasp of tactics and strokes. On 14 April Deiniol, playing off 20, beat me in a handicap game. Introduced to Bath croquet club, he played on 2 May in the morning off 18, winning again and followed this up with another win in the afternoon playing off 16. He then joined the club, and shortly after the club handicapper, Audrey Whitaker, watched him and gave him a handicap of 16. This was reduced not long afterwards to 12.

Joining too late for the Bath trophies, he entered for our newly instituted League and for the All England Handicap. Deiniol beat everyone in the All England, but couldn't play in the area final because the date coincided with the first weekend of term in September, singing in Wells cathedral choir. In the Bath league Deiniol lost only one game, came down to 11 and was then cut again to 8.



Deiniol receiving the Cheltenham Challenge Bowl from Bernard Neal

During a friendly match between Bath & Cheltenham Deiniol won both his games and decided to join as a far country member, applying to play in the August trophies. The first of the two weekends in August saw him win all his handicap singles games and take the Cheltenham Challenge Bowl, first competed for in 1899. He now plays off a handicap of 5, on the way to 4.5, and to have achieved all this in four months possibly marks Deiniol out as the most improved player of the year and, if he chooses, for possible international play for Wales in the future.

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Thinking Handicap Tactics

by Pete Trimmer

Handicap articles are generally written purely for relative beginners; I hope this may also benefit some better players. As 'ideal' B-class tactics are too complex for my pen, I discuss the simpler case of A-class v C-class. I cannot show that the tactics described here are correct (other A-class players disagree with them); only that they seem to work well for me.

To avoid the interminable references to 'A-class' and 'C-class' players, I shall consider Arthur versus Charles respectively. I will also adopt the convention that the order that the balls are played during the opening is blue, red, black, yellow.

OPENINGS

The aim of the opening for Charles is to establish a break using as few bisques as possible, whilst minimising Arthur's break chances. This usually involves establishing a break very soon after the opening, generally in the fourth or fifth turn.

Arthur has two options; to play safe making Charles work hard for a break, or to go for a break in order to get round first and really put Charles under pressure.

Due to the presence of bisques, the opening should be somewhat different from the 'standard opening' used by players of similar handicap. Knowing that he wants a four-ball break as soon as possible, Charles hopes to win the toss to enable him to choose to go in second; this way, he gets to put the fourth ball on the lawn with the possibility of using bisques to get going in the fourth turn. Knowing this, Arthur hopes to win the toss to

prevent him doing this. Thus, *the winner of the toss should choose to put his opponent in.*

First, assume that Charles wins the toss; Arthur is to play first, with blue. Arthur usually puts blue somewhere near corner IV (discussed later). Charles wants to set up a break easily; to this end he puts red near the centre of the lawn to help set up the break on his next turn. Note that if he had laid a standard tice, Arthur would probably have shot black at it, giving a very difficult break set-up even if Arthur misses.

Arthur dare not shoot at the ball in the centre of the lawn, for fear of going into baulk if he were to miss. There are usually two things at this point that Arthur will consider. One is to shoot at his own ball near corner IV, hoping to try either for a three ball break or just to move the ball out of the middle of the lawn if he were to hit. The other is to put black close to corner II, to make it difficult for Charles to make a break. If Arthur shot at his blue and missed, I would strongly recommend Charles to shoot at the balls near corner IV and go for the break.

If Arthur has put black near corner II, Charles can still go for the break, putting the blue to hoop 2 going to red, then to the black on a take-off, and putting this to hoop 1, taking a second bisque to start the break.

Or Charles could just shoot at red, to finish near corner III if he were to miss. This is one of the very few situations where not going for the break immediately is justifiable; Arthur has not taken a shot and is in a very defensive position. If Arthur were to hit a shot, he would not have much on (compared to shooting in the third turn), and he would be giving an easier break as long as Charles takes the time to consider the best way to set up a break. If Charles uses this option, he must be certain not to be drawn into trying to 'save' his bisques: he must be ready to go round in the sixth turn if Arthur takes a shot or joins wide.

If Arthur were simply to deem, (ie, leave his balls where they lie) Charles could join up in the third corner, giving Arthur one shot of over 20 yards, before going round without having had to use a bisque to hit in.

The 'third ball in corner II' is used a great deal. It is very rare to see the fourth turn shot into corner III, because beginners are 'brain-washed' into going round immediately. In many ways this is good, as it prevents them being out-smarted in the heat of the match. I hope I have explained this opening in enough detail to have done as much good as harm.

As the opening is used so much and understood so well, Arthur can usually be fairly sure that Charles will do the right thing from his 'standard' positioning of the first ball. Is there no better place to put the blue?

Think about it and compare your answers with part two in the next issue

continued from page 6

continuation shot sequence is followedBUT.....when a player roquets another ball the player's ball remains where it comes to rest, while the roqueted ball is retrieved and placed in contact with the player's ball for the croquet stroke. Moreover the roqueted ball must not move during the croquet stroke....so the foot is placed on it to stop it moving. This, of course, is what used to obtain in our version until the law was changed to make it illegal not to move the croqueted ball.

The other main difference is that the courts are of compacted bare earth, not grass. In fact, when Martin saw it, he was north of Beijing and a snowstorm was in progress!

Alison Thursfield

A day out for croquet

Dear Editor

In March Sheila Warner, Publicity Manager of the Polesden Lacey Open Air Theatre, contacted my wife Pam asking if we would like to introduce croquet to the public at the Fair which concludes their festival season. We said that we were interested and would like to see the facilities before making a final decision, and a visit was arranged.

Polesden Lacey is a National Trust property with a Regency house set in magnificent gardens and an estate of some 1385 acres in the heart of the Surrey Downs. When we arrived we met with Andrew McElwee, the Property Manager, and were shown two Short Croquet courts of good quality grass. The views from the lawn are superb and certainly influenced us in making a very quick decision to accept the challenge.

Next we had to enlist some support and the members of Merton Croquet Club rose to the occasion and offered to make themselves available on the day in whatever capacity was required. Extra equipment i.e. mallets and balls were kindly supplied by Brian Macmillan, as well as publicity material. It was decided that we would stage a demonstration of Short croquet on one lawn with Golf croquet being played on the second, coupled with the invitation to any spectator to partake or have tuition on either croquet format.

Came the day, July 6th, warm and sunny and we arrived on site in good time to set up our area ready to begin play at 11a.m. At 10.50 our first enquiry led us to introduce two beginners to golf croquet. Then came the rush that was to continue until 5.45. We had to abandon our initial plans and decided that in view of the number of people wishing to try the game we would fall back on golf croquet. This had to be shortened to a seven point game as people were now waiting to get on the courts.

Double banked foursomes were the order of the day with one member of Merton attached to each group to offer advice, coaching and act as referee. To cater for families with young children we quickly set up a "ladder of achievement" for the younger element whilst their parents enjoyed a game. The ladder consisted of placing nine markers at differing distances from a hoop set alongside the lawn with the promise that anyone making the hoop from the ninth marker, a distance of six feet, could go onto the main courts. We soon had to set up a second ladder, such was the competition. Not for the purist I suppose but we were pleasantly surprised by the number of people interested enough to walk 300 yds from the main Fair arena to where we were situated to see what we had to offer.

The two "free" members were supposed to be enjoying short breaks to eat and visit the rest of the fair. No such luck, they were dealing with many enquiries regarding the availability of the game in various areas, demonstrations of shot making and general questions about the game.

At 5.45 when we shut up shop and sat down to enjoy a self congratulatory glass of wine, we estimated that some 300 spectators had availed themselves of the opportunity to play croquet.

Will we do it again next year? Yes please, but remembering to take the CA's list of clubs in ALL areas, a copy of HELP for club locations and a couple more helpers!

Roy Fox
Merton Croquet Club

Encrypted Laws

Puzzle No.1

(From 5th edition, 1992 reprint.)

In the following paragraph a part of one of the Laws has been encrypted by substituting letters. You are invited to unravel the paragraph, and then identify the number of the Law by reference to the book.

(Clue: to start, think of words commonly used in Croquet and find possible substitutions.)

AK BLP YBOAUPU JDSSABY V KVHGB VIX AB AY IDB
RVANPX DO JDIXDIPX, BLP QVGGY VOP OPFGVJPX AI
BLPAO GVRKHG FDYABADIY QPKDOP BLP YBODUP AI
RLAJL BLP KVHGB RVY JDSSABBPX, ID FDAIB SVE QP
YJDOPX KDO VIE QVGG AI BLVB YBODUP DO VIE
YHQYPTHPIB YBODUP VIX BLP BHOI PIXY.

(Answer and next puzzle in the the next issue.)

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Tournament Round-Up

Centenary Indoor Tournament Wolverhampton Grammar School 13 - 14 December 1997

report by Terry Greenwood

The tournament took place in the ultra modern multi-purpose sports hall whose modern design fits in with the main school building which was built around the time of the start of the reign of George I. With a balcony for viewing play, a small room equipped for making drinks, excellent toilet facilities and changing areas plus an important factor when not in play, the sports hall is heated and most competitors played and sat about in shirt sleeves. It was a pity that the number of entries did not reflect the excellent conditions. Perhaps the date was too near Christmas?

The tournament was set in motion by Himley v Stourbridge and WGS (A) v WGS (B). Stourbridge started as they meant to finish with a victory of +1 with the help of Himley who had difficulty keeping the ball on the carpet from take-off strokes and a brilliant match winning roll which was inch perfect by Pat Woodhams. The WGS (B) team was strong but the size of the winning margin, +9, was a surprise. The WGS (B) continued their victory parade by beating Himley +8. Edgbaston, represented by Bill Ward and Paul Schofield looked strong but Bowdon's +6 victory indicated the difficulty that Edgbaston would face of having two compulsory peels throughout the tournament. WGS (B) showed their potential threat to everyone else who had thoughts of winning the tournament when they blasted Edgbaston off the court with an impressive +14 win and then felled Himley, Stourbridge, Bowdon and Tyneside.

WGS (A) were disappointing, they appeared to have a strong team but perhaps their involvement with the running of the tournament in which Michael Blackwell and Sam Tudor spent an appreciable amount of time in between matches in time keeping and trying to satisfy all of those who had a query or a grumble was too demanding. They also nursed round a younger colleague to the trials and tribulations of indoor play.

The honours went to WGS (B) with Ben Elwell and D Matthews. They received three bottles of wine and then promptly gave one to Dr Edlin a part-time croquet player who teaches chemistry, who very kindly stepped in at the last minute to run the event. All of the players owed him a debt of gratitude for giving up his weekend.

The best part of the weekend was provided by the mothers of the grammar school lads who turned up on Sunday afternoon to provide a tea whose quality far outweighed that of the croquet. Thank you ladies.

Results:

WGS (B) 6/6	Stourbridge 4/6	Himley Hall 4/6
Bowdon 3/6	WGS (A) 2/6	Tyneside 1/6
Edgbaston 1/6		

The Longman Cup Final Bowdon v Wrest Park, 28 Sept, Cheltenham

Report by Andrew Winn, photo by John Bevington

The early morning mists had cleared to reveal a clear sky by the time the teams had emerged to do battle on the lawns of Cheltenham; only a heavy dew and a slight chill in the air reminded us that we were not still in mid-summer. The match to be played was the final of the Longman Cup, and the day promised plenty of action as both Wrest Park and Bowdon had won their semi-finals 5 - 0. Wrest Park had defeated Ipswich the previous



Alan Oldham presents Roger Deacon with the Longman Cup

weekend, while Bowdon had played on the day before, at Cheltenham against Dyffryn.

The Bowdon team comprised Roger Deacon (8), David Walters (7), Hamish Stoddart (11), and Andrew Winn (14). Wrest Park's team were John Bevington (3.5), David Parsons (11), Terry Mahoney (4) and Paul Sharrock (8).

The doubles games in the morning saw Bowdon's David and Andrew up against Wrest Park's John and David. Bowdon managed, for a refreshing change, to avoid the usual stop-and-start scenario which all too often dogs the doubles game. Bisques were put to good use, beaks were built, (before lunch - very industrious!) and they won +22.

Progress was somewhat slower on the other lawn, and it was with some trepidation that I ventured over to view the situation, as this time yesterday Bowdon's Roger and Hamish had been involved in a shocking display of bisque frittering and coffee spillage. No such frivolity had transpired this morning, and a comfortable +17 on time set Bowdon with a 2 - 0 advantage as stomachs growled for lunch.

The sunny weather continued into the afternoon, and with Bowdon only one game away from victory, it was Wrest Park with all the hard work ahead of them. The doubles match of the second session saw Bowdon's Roger and David playing Terry and John, while in the singles it was Andrew against David and Hamish against Paul. Andrew was having a day in which everything was going well, and played above his handicap to take control of the game from an early stage. Wrest Park's David was having a bad time, and struggled to make headway. Andrew won +22 and the Longman Cup was Bowdon's, for the first time since 1981. The doubles game was capitulated by Bowdon, preferring an early departure, and Hamish was left to win his singles game all on his own, as the rest of his team disappeared soon after the tea and prize giving!

We all thanked Don Gaunt and everyone at Cheltenham for their hospitality and facilities, and especially for the afternoon tea - cakes a plenty.

National Short Croquet Team Event 6 September, Leicester

Report by Lawrence Whittaker, photo by Gary Norman

Ashby secure first short croquet team event win

The final of the 1997 National Short Croquet Team Event was played at Leicester on 6 September, following the Royal funeral. The holders, Nailsea,

were matched in a four-way contest with former winners Pendle, previous finalists Ashby and new finalists Ealing.

In the first round Nailsea and Ashby drew 2 each, while Pendle overcame Ealing 4-0. Nailsea and Ashby continued strongly in the second round, beating Ealing and Pendle respectively without losing a game. Ashby's win over Pendle was probably crucial, as Pendle came back in the final round to beat Nailsea 3-1. Ashby could only draw 2-2 with the improving Ealing, but this was sufficient for them to secure the cup for the first time (8 wins), closely followed by Nailsea and Pendle (7 each). Ashby's middle order players, Richard Sanville and Jeremy Staley, dominated their groups with 3 wins each, while in the top group Kriss Chambers (Nailsea), probably the strongest player yet in a Short Croquet Teams final, deserves special mention for overcoming his double mandatory peel handicap to win all his games.



The winning Ashby team l to r Derek Buxton, Richard Sanville, Jeremy Staley and Gary Norman

Teams:

Nailsea: Kriss Chambers (2MP), David Murphy (3.5 bisques), Ian Wilson (5), Pat Long (7).

Ashby: Gary Norman (2), Richard Sanville (3), Jeremy Staley (6), Derek Buxton (10).

Pendle: David Gillett (2.5), John Macdonald (3.5), Kathryn Schofield (5), David Pollitt (7).

Ealing: Brian Rees (3), Tony Tizard (4), David Wedmore (4), Kieran Morrisroe (6).

5th European Championship Southwick, September 19th - 21st 1997

Report by Norman Eatough

The Sussex County Croquet Club at Southwick had the honour of hosting the first European Championship to be held on English soil, and responded magnificently to the challenge, showering warm sunshine and hospitality, and only three hours of rain, on the field of 16 players from 10 countries. This championship can surely be said to have come of age when it is graced by the presence of Robert Fulford, described in the programme as being 'widely regarded as the the best player in the world'.

In the first day's play (3 games each in 4 blocks of 4), several shocks reverberated round the lawns: seeded Colin Irwin lost to Charlie von Schmieder (Ireland) and Matthew Burrow (Jersey), and the youngest competitor at 17, coming third and so missing the first round; Ian Burridge also came third after losing to Simon Williams (Ireland) and Paul Duckworth (qualifier, Jersey); and Robert Fulford just held off Norman Eatough (Switzerland, and the oldest competitor at 65) 26 - 24 after coming unstuck with his attempted sextuple.

In the first round, 'A Spaniard in the works' would be one way of describing an unexpected result, when Fernando de Ansorena (Spain) beat Norman Eatough with some very steady play after being given a contact.



Fernando de Ansorena congratulates the champion Robert Fulford with Carlo Farioli, president of the European Croquet Federation, and Stephen Mulliner, the losing finalist looking on.

Paolo de Petra (Italy) gave Robert Fulford his second shock by cheekily winning the second game and breezing solidly ahead in the third, before rolling off a boundary to let back in the by now much-concerned maestro. In the quarter-finals, our Spaniard almost succeeded in grinding the works to a halt for Matthew Burrow when he won the second game and was well set in the third. In the ensuing marathon (no time-limits), Matthew had to pull out all the stops to finally take the match.

Fulford had settled down to his familiar rhythm by the semis, beating Burrow +13 and +9. Meanwhile, the three-times European champion Stephen Mulliner had been briskly trotting his way along and now beat Simon Williams, the holder, +6 OTP and +26 TP. The best-of-five final produced games of oscillating fortunes, Fulford taking the first +22 TP, Mulliner the second +26 TP, only to suffer a brilliant +11 OTP followed by a final +26 TP. Roberto had done it again. Matthew Burrow beat Simon Williams +15 and +20 in the third/fourth place play-off.

On Saturday and Sunday, our hard-working manager Don Gaunt had concocted a handicap Egyptian consolation event, which proved very popular indeed with both the losing competitors and a number of Southwick members, all of whom were eager to join in any giant-killing that might be available. Philip Archer (Guernsey), who had had an extremely lean time in the main event, came through to win this after a protracted battle in the final with Peter Payne (Switzerland) and ran off with a dazzling smile and a fine cup. The event came to a close with prize-giving by John Solomon, President of the C.A. and now happily relocated not far from his new club Southwick, followed by the new champion, who said how impressed he had been with the "fantastic job done by the club". The chairman of the Championship Committee, Bill Arliss, praised in turn the sponsors, the much-appreciated efforts of Don Gaunt, chef de cuisine Christine Constable and her team of helpers who turned out magnificent



Carlo Farioli and John Solomon congratulate Philip Archer on his win in the consolation event.

meals for the multitude (not forgetting Hyacinth and her 'heart-warmer' ginger beverage served up in the cool of the evening), Marjorie McEvoy (publicity, including TV coverage), Peter Pullin (logistics and trips to Gatwick), and our ROT Chris Irwin who covered a fair number of kilometers in administering justice to the warring tribes.

John Solomon concluded by presenting Peter Payne with the C.A. gold medal for his first TP in a tournament (at the Easterns) and received from Carlo Farioli a plaque from the European Federation to the C.A. for its Centenary year, and a second plaque for Southwick, both much-appreciated gestures.

It is always such a pleasure for the shrimps of the croquet world to have the opportunity of grappling with the big boys, hoping to nip a few of their schemes in the bud, and we congratulate the European Federation on adopting the open format which offers a place to each of its member countries. As was discussed at the Federation's 1997 AGM, held at the club, this format will be retained, but the expected arrival of more member countries will no doubt one day soon cause the length of this event to be stretched to four days. The central committee of chairman Farioli, secretary-general Peter Payne and Bill Lamb, was thanked for its work and was voted in for the coming year. Next year's venue primarily depends on the local politicians at Gijon (Spain) and the feasibility of building at least three courts there, news of which is expected shortly. In the meantime, Scotland and Switzerland offered to host the two qualifiers.

**All England Handicap Final
Colchester, 20 - 21 September 1997**

Report by Pat Hetherington

Despite beautiful weather and the courts playing nearly as well as ever in the past, the final of the All England Handicap was somewhat marred by the non-appearance of two of the finalists which meant that instead of a block of six players there were only four contestants, and instead of five games each there were only three.

Two games were played by each contestant on the Saturday - watched in the afternoon by several Colchester members - and on the Sunday morning there was a much livelier atmosphere as the golf croquet finalists and their supporters put in an appearance, but with only one round left, play was over by lunchtime.

Alan Oldham arrived to present the trophy to the outright winner, Hamish Stoddart of Bowon, together with the New Zealand tray for the winning club.

Results:
Hamish Stoddart 3 wins out of 3
Paul Miles 2 wins out of 3
Adrian Trickey 1 win out of 3
June Wankling 0 wins out of 3

**Inter Club Final
Cheltenham, 28th September 1997**

Report by Colin Irwin

The day got off to a fine start with one of the team at the club, when we were supposed to meet at my house, but he turned up eventually and we set off a bit later than planned. The sun was shining, the birds were singing and I had a pleasant rest for half an hour or so in the tailback at Stoke, having driven almost 20 miles non-stop on the M6. But we struggled on and got to Cheltenham about 10.30. I didn't like to ask the Woking players how long they had been there. Our Longman Cup team were already in action against Wrest Park, and looking strong.

So quickly on to the croquet. In the doubles Woking won the toss and went in. Pete Trimmer persuaded Jeff Dawson to put a ball by hoop 1, David Maugham for Bowdon shot gently, hit but failed position on the backward take-off, so shot off in corner two. Trimmer then shot at this ball north of hoop one and missed joining Maugham in corner two. Colin Irwin then also shot at this ball, rushed it into the second corner area, and went to 4-back with a new standard leave. Trimmer missed the lift. Maugham triple peeled, 1 - 0 to Bowdon.

But in the singles Bowdon were struggling. David Wiggins was playing well for Woking, beating James Hawkins in a fairly routine +17TP. Colin Southern and Alan Linton were having a rather scrappy game, with Linton struggling for any kind of form in the early part, and Southern failing to capitalise. Then Linton got back into it, got a ball round and pegged out Southern with his partner on 6 and Southern on 4-back. The three-ball end game was an in and out affair, both players had break opportunities without doing anything decisive, but Southern got it by 4.

Because the doubles had been quick the top singles were started well before the morning singles finished. Maugham beat Trimmer quickly +23TP, but Irwin was struggling somewhat against Dawson, until a Dawson error at hoop 6 gave him the balls in quite a promising position from which he constructed a delayed triple to win +12TP.

About lunchtime the Woking supporters club had turned up and set up camp between lawns 6 and 7, table, chairs, picnic lunch, chilled wine. Spectating with style, something which has much to recommend it.

So 3-2 to Bowdon and all down to Hawkins and Linton, both losers in the morning. Linton still hadn't settled into his game and Wiggins was looking too good for him, and indeed he eventually won by 4. Meantime Hawkins suddenly found top gear and managed a 6th turn triple against Southern to take the trophy for Bowdon. Thanks to Cheltenham for the use of their facilities, and for providing afternoon tea for the visitors, Don Gaunt for giving up his weekend to manage and to Alan Oldham for presenting the trophy.

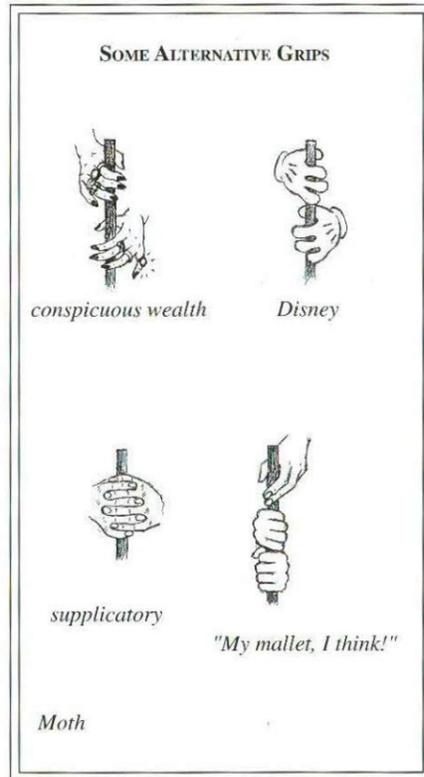
Yorkshire & Humberside Croquet Federation Centenary Event

Report by Julian Tonks, Federation Chairman.

Yorkshire & Humberside decided to celebrate the Centenary by holding a one day event on 22nd June at East Riding designed to attract as many inexperienced players as possible. Our first step was to set up a sub-committee of three (to make sure the rest of us had little to do!). Mike Evans of Beverley, Anna Giraud of Zeneca, and Margaret Garner of York were the lucky three and they provided some 34 players with a most enjoyable day. We were rushed from Pirates to One Ball to Golf and I even played my first game of Advanced (short lawn) after some discussion as to where the lifts occur.

We enjoyed excellent weather with the only shower coinciding with lunch. Players' abilities ranged from low bisquers to someone who had previously only played golf croquet, but this did not affect the intense competition for the individual and team prizes! Anna and Margaret had devised a complex scoring system and retired to the tent for a very long time to decide the winners. Finally, white smoke (or was it steam?) arose and it was announced that Mike Evans had won the trophy given by the CA while Zeneca (Huddersfield) won the Rose Bowl which Alan Pidcock had donated.

The day ended for some of us sitting in the sun outside a pub on the banks of that most romantic of rivers, the Humber. We would like to repeat the event but from what I hear we will need a new sub-committee. The old one has certainly earned a rest.



Extracts from the Minutes of the Council Meeting on 18th October 1997

1) ST Badger (Chairman), JW Solomon (President), BG Neal and AJ Oldham (Vice Presidents), RW Bray (Hon Treasurer), and 21 other members of Council were present with PWP Campion (Secretary CA)

2) ST Badger was re-elected Chairman and WH Arliss was elected Vice-Chairman.

3) Silver medals will continue to be sent to the Swiss and Italian croquet Associations but will no longer be sent to the French Association as the game there is at present understood to be at a low ebb.

4) The English Sports Council Grant for 1997 has been received. The UK Sports Council Grant was expected to be received in full for 1997 but nothing was to be expected for 1998.

5) Arising from the ongoing reports of the Standing committees:-

(i) HM Hall, Chairman of the Editorial Board, gave an assurance that all tournament results if sent to the Editor in the required form would be published in the Gazette.

(ii) Bernard Neal having tested the stock of Eclipse balls in the CA office advised that they were suitable for use in the Opens and President's Cup in 1998. Barlow GT balls were suggested as an alternative. A loan scheme to assist clubs to buy to buy whatever balls become the new "officially approved balls" will be considered.

(iii) The finer details of some of the Laws are under international consideration; a schedule of these was tabled for the information of Council.

(iv) Recognition of the MacRobertson Shield as a "World Championship Team Event" would be considered at the next WCF meeting at Bunbury, Western Australia.

(v) The Tournament Committee regarded the new format of the Inter-Counties Championship as successful: the Committee will contemplate as a future event a National Doubles Handicap based on the successful Centenary Doubles event at Cheltenham in August.

6) The Planning Group reported that the latest draft of the document "Looking to the Future" would be sent to delegates attending the Club Conferences to be held in November.

7) Following criticism relating to the 1997 All England Area Finals, Council noted a recommendation that there should be better communication with relevant clubs in relation to these events in future.

8)

(i) RQ Barrett, HM Hall & BM Rannie were elected to form the Editorial Board.

(ii) IJ Burrigde, CD Clarke, DL Gaunt, CJ Irwin and AM Wadley were elected to form the Selection Committee.

(iii) DL Gaunt was appointed to the Executive Committee.

9) On a proposal by BG Neal seconded by AJ Oldham, Tremaine Arkley was elected an Honorary Life Associate of the CA in recognition of his services to croquet, particularly in regard to the Centenary Exhibition at Wimbledon.

10) Council confirmed the election of 57 new Associates. As at 8th October 1997 the number of paid-up Associates was stated to be 1622 including 67 overseas.

Extracts from the unconfirmed Minutes of the Council Meeting on 6th December 1997

1) WH Arliss (Vice-Chairman), AJ Oldham and L Wharrad (Vice

Presidents) RW Bray (Hon Treasurer) and 19 other members of Council were present with PWP Campion (Secretary CA)

2) At the start of the meeting those present stood in silent tribute to Stephen Badger, Chairman of Council, who had died on 14th November.

3) The morning session, chaired by WH Arliss and which AG Fathers as a member of the Planning Group had been invited to attend, was devoted to a discussion of matters raised at the recent Northern and Southern Club Conferences relating to the Planning Group's document "Looking to the Future".

4) At the afternoon session WH Arliss was elected Chairman of Council and it was agreed that RW Bray would act temporarily as Vice-Chairman until the next meeting of Council.

5) SO Jones gave notice of a motion that he CA support in principle the holding of a Golf Croquet World championship in England in late 1998 or early 1999; there is to be no financial risk to the CA.

6)

(i) There is a small likelihood of the CA receiving any meaningful grant from either the UK or English Sports Council in future.

(ii) The proposed 1998 budget was referred back to the F&GP Committee for further consideration in view of the loss of the Sports Council Grant.

(iii) Copies of two books 'Bowling Greens, their History, Construction and Maintenance' by RDC Evans and 'A Guide to Croquet Courts, Planning, Building and Maintenance' by Carleton Mabee are to be held in the CA office for loans to clubs and Associates.

(iv) Provision is to be made for late entries to CA Tournaments in 1998.

(v) Action to be taken in regard to slow players was discussed.

(vi) Jaques has so far failed to produce their new balls for testing but the Equipment committee will bring a proposal to the next meeting of Council for "CA recommended balls" to replace the Jaques Eclipse.

(vii) Group entries from clubs which are not registered with the CA will be accepted for the All England Golf Croquet competition in 1998 though they will have to pay a higher entry fee.

7) The amended Regulation 13(f) providing for "Wharrad Turns" submitted by the Laws Committee was further amended by Council. The final version of Regulation 13(f) is published elsewhere in this issue of the Gazette.

8) The typographical and minor changes to the Rules of the Association agreed at the previous Council meeting were ratified for submission to the 1998 AGM.

9) The Secretary reported that 6 members had resigned and 4 had died since the last meeting. Council confirmed the election of 9 new Associates. As at 27th November 1997 the number of paid up Associates was stated to be 1619 including 68 overseas.

10) The Secretary reported that gifts of silver-plated dishes to mark the Association's Centenary had been received from La Federation Europeene de Croquet and the Associazione Italiana Croquet.

FIXTURE BOOK CORRECTIONS

p20: Championship of the East Midlands: Event (i) should be Draw and Process, not Best of Three (and hence, according to the Tournament Committee, it should be classified as a Class III Championship).

p53: Entry fee for (b), June 6-7 two day handicap W/E, should be 12 not 15 pounds.

Publicising Croquet

Centenary Outreach in the Lake District

report by Neil Williams

Like our parent body, the CA, our small club, Crake Valley, on the outskirts of the Lake district, celebrated its centenary in 1997. We soon found out, as I expect the CA did too that there aren't any rules about how you do this.

Of course, we had heard from other clubs about their special tournaments, cookbooks of members favourite recipes, commemorative mugs and T-shirts.....Committee fingers drummed, pencils tapped and eyes glazed.

My mind hit a bit of a blank about quite what happened next. But suddenly we found ourselves with not one but two wild ideas. The other is yet to come.

And now our scene shifts to Holker Hall, the home of Lord and Lady Cavendish, neighbours of the club. Across the deerpark in December mists stroll three members of the Crake Valley committee.

Every year at the end of May this parkland is transformed into a vast tented city - flags flying, bands playing, crowds milling. Everything every gardener or country lover ever needed can be had there. Things to



Spectators look on at a croquet demonstraion at Holker Hall

sit on, plant, drive, wear, read, plug in, rub on, give away, squirt, neglect or kill with kindness. It is the Holker Hall Great Garden and Countryside festival.

The Festival attracts 26,000 souls over three days. People come from far and near - the USA, NZ and the Far East: explorers from the south of England and even a lot of locals.

We - little Crake Valley Croquet Club - have been generously invited by Lord Cavendish to celebrate our centenary by taking part in the festival. We should have a marquee in which to mount an exhibition and, adjoining it, an area of grass which we could turn into a croquet lawn. There, club members would demonstrate their finely honed skills, and visitors could try their laughably inept hands at running hoops and all that.

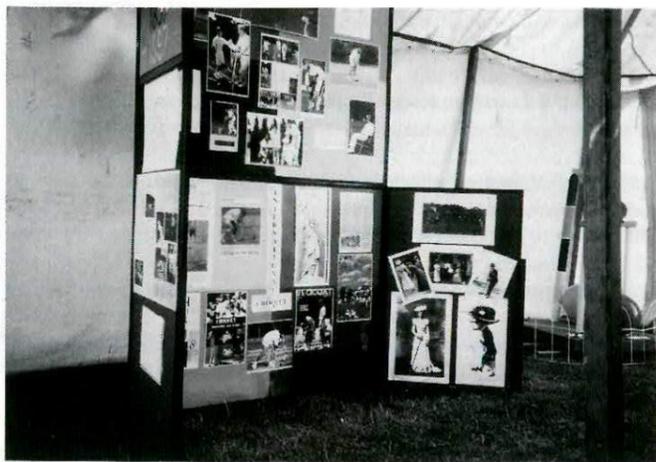
Should we accept this invitation? Is it an invitation, or just another recipe - this one for disaster?

Huddled in our car back in December 1996 we find ourselves saying yes, we'll do it.

"Outreach," someone says.

"Croquet is a game to be proud of. We'll attract new members."

"What about the CA? It's their Centenary. We'll give them some



Part of the exhibition mounted at Holker Hall to give an accurate portrayal of croquet.

publicity."

"And they'll give us some money."

"That Federation lot can feel useful for once - we can promote croquet in the North West."

"And they can give us some money too."

The car windows have steamed up and the park where the Queen sometimes exercises her corgis and the D of E used to drive his carriage and pair has disappeared.

Well we did it. The little local difficulties you won't want to hear about - everyone falling ill as the Great Weekend approached; the Hon Sec's emotional outbursts; no one to put up the marquee; the giant model croquet hoop (complete with clip) and giant mallet (definitely a Pidcock) still not finished; the car headlamps the only way to light the inside of the marquee as we mount the exhibition at 11.30 the night before we open.....

The good news is that the weather was glorious and the crowds poured in -

"We call them wickets in Boston"

"When do you put your foot on it?"

"Have you got a leaflet with the rules?"

"Oh we don't play like that in our garden"

Most people are amazed how tight the hoops are - and then to our shame, run them at least as well as we can. The Steel Band visits. A boy is so aborbed and stays so long his mum thinks he's lost and puts out a message over the public address system.

We could not have done it without the CA. Stephen Badger himself produced material for the exhibition. Syd Jones produced more material and the exhibition stands - and he came up to spend the first day with us. (His new leaflets are terrific.) The North West Federation did support us generously.

We thank them all publicly now, and hope we repaid them in publicity terms. We also attracted many people interested in joining our own club. Only now can I bear to think how awful it might have been if it had rained.....if nobody had come to our stand.....

Still, we believe if something lasts for 100 years, it's worth shouting about. Reaching out.

THE 5TH WORLD CROQUET CHAMPIONSHIP HELD AT CARDEN PARK, ENGLAND

Block A	Block E
P Archer (GUE)	P Day (ENG)
R Bamford (RSA)	T Nozaki (JPN)
S Comish (ENG)	R Rebuschatis (USA)
S Jones (NZ)	M Taylor (AUS)
R Thomas (USA)	S Williams (IRE)
Block B	Block F
T Barlow (RSA)	P Cordingley (ENG)
R Fulford (ENG)	G Garlick (CAN)
D Grimsley (USA)	D Goacher (ENG)
M Kobelt (AUS)	F Rogerson (IRE)
C Williams (WAL)	A Westerby (NZ)
Block C	Block G
P Fellows (NZ)	I Bond (SCO)
D Maugham (ENG)	C Irwin (ENG)
D Openshaw (ENG)	C Knox (RSA)
P De Petra (ITA)	T Le Moignan (JER)
J Stark (USA)	B Northey (AUS)
Block D	Block H
I Burrige (WAL)	R Carter (AUS)
D Cornelius (ENG)	C Clarke (ENG)
B Jackson (NZ)	J Dyer (SCO)
S Mulliner (ENG)	P Payne (SWI)
Y Ravez (FRA)	P Skinley (NZ)

Knockout Stage:

Round 1: Bamford bt Fellows +16 +26TP; Northey bt Day -17 +4 +3; Fulford bt Jackson +26TP +20; Cordingley bt Carter +15 +7; Maugham bt Thomas +25TP +25; Taylor bt Bond +16 +17; Cornelius bt C Williams +26TP +26; Williams bt Le Moignan +24TP Opp scr; Comish bt Openshaw +15 +17TP; Goacher bt Dyer +4 +1; Kobelt bt Burrige +20 -17 +2; Irwin bt Rebuschatis +26 +23; Stark bt Jones +4TP +8TP; Clarke bt Garlick +26 +26TP; Mulliner bt Grimsley +26TP +17TP.

Round 2: Bamford bt Northey +26TP +13TPO; Fulford bt Cordingley +26TP +26TP; Taylor bt Maugham +26 +7TP; Westerby bt Cornelius -24 +17TP +25TP; Comish bt S Williams +26STP +9; Kobelt bt Goacher +4 +17; Irwin bt Stark +26TP +9TPO; Clarke bt Mulliner +17 -25TP +26TP.

Quarter-Final: Fulford bt Bamford -25TP +26TP +5TP; Westerby bt Taylor +25TP +7OTP; Comish bt Kobelt -26TP +26TP +17; Clarke bt Irwin -25TP +26TP +11TPO.

Semi-Final: Fulford bt Westerby +17TP -17TP +26TP +20QP; Clarke bt Comish -26TP +8TPO +26 -25TP +13TPO.

Final: Fulford bt Clarke -12TPO +12TP +18TP +13.

Tournament Manager - Christine Irwin

Tournament Referees - Tim Haste & Don Williamson.

Council Matters

Council agreed at its meeting on 6 December 1997 the following addition to Regulation 13: it relates to the introduction of 'Wharrad Turns' an alternative system to standard time limits on games.

'(f) (1) As an alternative to a one-hour time limit imposed under 9(b) above, or to the final hour of a time limit imposed under (a), the Manager may limit instead the number of further turns to twelve (exclusive of any bisque turns) to be played by each side.

(2)(c) (2) above does not apply but a player whose turn is in progress when the further turns are due to take effect shall complete that turn first.

(3) If the game has not ended before these turns are completed, the side that has scored the greater number of points is the winner. If each side has scored the same number of points, play continues and the side for which the next point is scored is the winner.'

This addition to Regulation 13 is subject to ratification by Council.

Any comments or suggestions should be made in writing to the Secretary, please.

Development

The Origins & Development of Croquet Clubs

The Development Committee decided that it might be a help to croquet clubs in general if the origins and development of a number of newish, successful clubs, were investigated. It was hoped that what these clubs

had achieved would provide lessons of use to both new and established clubs. The following clubs contributed to the exercise:-

- Belsay Hall, Newcastle upon Tyne Est 1989
- Bury St Edmonds, Suffolk Est 1986
- Kenilworth, Warwickshire Est 1989
- Newport, Essex Est 1983
- Purleybury, Surrey Est 1990
- Plymouth Est 1987

Many of the comments were predictable by anyone who has been involved at club level; what was surprising was the astonishing diversity in the circumstances in which the clubs were formed.

A copy of the full report is available from the CA office on request. The conclusions of the report are given below.

1) The clubs have illustrated what variety of approaches there are to the establishment of croquet clubs, given the drive and enthusiasm of quite a small group of people. Somewhat surprisingly, they do not need to have been croquet players, though clearly, the accessibility of experienced players with knowledge of what it takes to run a club is hugely influential.

2) Finance is critical, but it appears to be critical to the quality of the lawns and facilities rather than a block to the starting of the club. Survival long-term is obviously dependent on an adequate financial state.

3) Membership and publicity are difficulties at nearly every club. Most people find the game intricate and difficult. There appears to be no magic solution. Word of mouth and the local media are reported as the most effective methods; the others usually seem to give a poor return.

4) Enormous effort has been applied to the formation and encouragement of new clubs by some of the Federations with outstanding success. The need for a group of dedicated activists applies equally at this level, and on a

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Highly polished exotic wood 9" - 12" heads;
Screwed and chemically welded double faces;
Hardwood handles and Fibre glass shafts;
Luxury KARAKAL grips; inlaid sight lines
Double handles/other variables: no extra cost

Centenary limited edition Ebony head: £95
Salmon Pink, Tiger Stripe, Lignum heads: £85
All other beautifully grained heads: £75

de MOWBRAY MALLETS tel 01275 852508
7 Bucklands Lane, Nailsea, N. Somerset BS19 2DJ

The John Hobbs Mallet

Try it with the longer axis of the shaft at right angles to the line of aim. It feels more comfortable and for most people it improves their hitting-in.

All you have to do then is rotate the head till it is dead central, then test and fine tune it for maximum accuracy. Once locked it doesn't move - unless you want to adjust it.

Light aluminium shaft, nylon shock absorber, padded top and bottom grips, range of woods. Details from:

John Hobbs, Kingsbury, Argos Hill, Rotherfield,
E. Sussex. TN6 3QH. Tel: 01892 852072
E-mail: HobbsMall@aol.com

larger scale than at club level. On the evidence of these listed clubs, the CA and the Federations can look back with some pride to what has been achieved in the past decade.

5) Looking to the future, generalisations about what it takes to establish a good croquet club should be avoided; flexibility in outlook is needed. The one exception is the need for a sufficiently large group of key people able to give initial guidance on membership issues, on the basis of lawn care, on how coaching can be made available and how the CA, the Federations and local clubs can provide assistance.

6) One suspects that popularizing and spreading croquet will always be a difficult task. From the evidence given, we need to encourage all branches of the sport - golf and other variations, as well as association croquet, and acknowledge the importance of the social side of the club

Bill Sidebottom.

CROQUET NORTH - Mini Indoor Croquet

report by Derek Trotman, photo by Syd Jones

In January this year Croquet North took delivery of the new CA mini indoor carpet. The idea of this small seven and a half yard by six yard carpet with full size hoops is two fold:

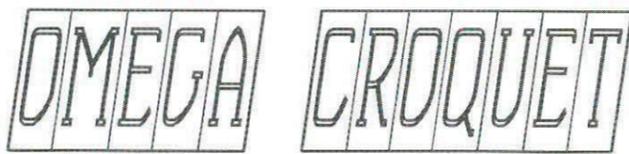
- 1) To encourage club play in sports halls or local halls as a winter activity and
- 2) To provide an aid for promoting interest in schools, as it offers a chance to demonstrate the game in school gyms, thus overcoming the need to transport pupils to club courts.

It is intended that this carpet will be controlled by the Schools Development Officer, once the 1998 programme has been finalised but in the meantime Croquet North will be using it to assist their development programme. Their first demonstration day was set up in the Metro shopping centre at Gatehead where they were allowed to use the indoor town square on a Sunday. Alternative hours were spent with local clubs playing speed croquet or golf croquet and the public participating in hoop running and golf croquet. This proved very successful and it is hoped to repeat the experiment later in the year.

Experience with this carpet and a similar one purchased by the Yorkshire & Humberside Federation is being closely monitored and will be reported in later editions of the Gazette. Meanwhile because other Federations are known to be interested in obtaining mini carpets for their own use the recent Development Committee meeting considered proposals which would enable the CA to give financial assistance to such purchases.



Mini carpet croquet played in Europe's biggest shopping centre - is this the way forward in recruitment?



Omega Croquet embraces all croquet happenings that are inadvertent - whatever the cause or outcome. David Wedmore's imaginary Grand Order Of Omega Players is putting this kind of croquet onto a properly organised basis, and getting it suitably equipped.

8. Equipment

Don't leave your inadvertent croquet to chance: make use of the specialised Omega Croquet equipment now available to you at very favourable discounts from our newly refurbished shop. In addition to the Omega-shaped hoops for which the shop is famous, we stock a wide range of equipment from commercial suppliers, viz:

The "Frinton" Nightsight, for those late autumn evening games. Special Omega version with head-UP display.

At last, from Shakespeare, ranges of 7 mallets to suit all ages:
Pi range: "Infant" ...through to..."Second Childhood"
Omega Range: "Puker".... through to ..."Oblivion"

"The Stranglia" Mallet, handcrafted to order in a wide choice of unsustainable Omega hardwoods, from Deadwood and Faintheart through to the exotic Roccocacola.

The "Sussex" Mis-alignable Mallet, for Omega players who find they can no longer rely on their mallets twisting as they play. This one lets you set any desired amount of twist - in advance!

The "Preston" Improved Moral Fibre Mallet, for Omega players who shrink from the challenge of defeat. This mallet ensures that you are really well shafted.

Wriggle in and out of tight corners with the new self-propelled "Beechballs". These can be supplied with or without a weasel attached. (Battery extra)

HOOPSetc (ex Omega Croquet Shop) South Carriage Drive
Abner Bisk, Sales Manager Hyde Park, London

OMEGA TROPHY WINNERS - 1997 ET PREC.

The results of the principal Omega Croquet Individual and Inter-Club competitions are now known. The individual competitions were both tied, and so the winners had to be determined on the basis of "who inadvertently did what to whom". The declared winners are:

The Sleeper's Serendipity Salver - Signore Biabelli
The Secretary's Partial Plate - (missing)
Eddie the Eagle Cup for Blind Cheek - Justin Boyo
Marie Celeste Inter-Club Trophy - Roehampton OCC
F1 Hybrid League Champions - Harrow Oak OCC
Runners Up - Ealing OCC

The Grand Order is deeply grateful to all who took part in these events.

The Croquet Association

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at the Hurlingham Club on Saturday 18 October

Present JW Solomon - in the chair
ST Badger (Chairman of Council)
Dr RW Bray (Treasurer)
AJ Oldham (Vice President)
PWP Campion (Secretary)
and 51 Associates

Apologies were received from Hugh and Veronica Carlisle, Chris Clarke, Gail Curry, Tony Fathers, Syd Jones and Lionel Wharrad.

OPENING ADDRESS

In his introductory remarks the President welcomed all present and thanked them for attending and supporting the Meeting.

1. MINUTES

1.1 The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 19 October 1996 were signed as a true record of that meeting.

2. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

2.1 The Chairman presented his report to the Meeting:
"As the President remarked, this is our centenary AGM. But I am afraid we are actually three days late since it was on 15 October 1897 that the CA, or the UAECA as it was then called, came into being when the initial meeting of the Council took place at 19 Southwell Gardens in Kensington. This was the home of Walter Peel, its first Secretary and I'm sure that Paul for one is pleased that meetings no longer have to take place in the home of the Secretary. Apart from Peel there were 8 others present on that occasion, whereas we now have a Council of 24 to say nothing of the President and Vice-Presidents. So we are most grateful to the Hurlingham Club for providing this room for us today and for regularly making available very appropriate accommodation for Council meetings.

I think in his closing remarks our President will be looking back over that past century, so I intend to review what we have done in the current year, in particular what has happened to mark the centenary, and to think briefly about the future.

The centenary really started as it were in May with the opening of the croquet exhibition at the Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum and the publication of the Centenary Yearbook. Sales of the latter have gone well, but there are still copies available, so if you want one, or a set of centenary prints, make sure you visit Brian Macmillan's stall immediately after the meeting and if you have not yet seen the exhibition, the museum will be open until 7pm this evening - entrance is free for anyone holding a dinner ticket.

This exhibition was originally scheduled to close next spring but discussions are now under way with those who have loaned artifacts with a view to extending it through to February 1999. The exhibition provides a very useful showcase for croquet and the CA itself and I hope this extension will therefore help to publicise the game and encourage recruitment. This may seem a boring theme, but as a sport we do need to grow if we are to thrive both because new people coming into the game bring new ideas and new talents with them and because greater numbers allow us to spread costs more widely.

In addition to the exhibition I think we have succeeded in achieving good coverage in the national press, in journals and on the radio this year. The centenary has been a natural peg to hang this on, but thanks are also due to all those who have worked hard to achieve the result. It seems to me that one of the problems of our game is that it has an unhelpful image, even perhaps a range of different but equally unhelpful images, with those who have not played it. This is not something that can be corrected overnight. It must be something that can be improved in the course of the next century, but this will only happen if we all keep on working at the publicity at both local and national levels.

To return to this year's events, in addition to being the CA's centenary 1997 was also the centenary of the Inter-Counties tournament. This resulted in the biggest entry ever with 22 teams competing and was



Paul Campion (Secretary), Roger Bray (Treasurer), John Solomon (President) and the late Stephen Badger, presiding over the CA AGM.

marked with a dinner on the Sunday night. For those with higher handicaps a special team tournament was held at Cheltenham at the end of August where as many as 200 players were involved, ranging from the current World champion to high bisquet club players. Some said this must have been the largest gathering of croquet players ever assembled. The centenary itself is of course a once-in-a-century affair, but both of these innovations seemed to be very well received and may possibly be repeated well before the next century is up.

Most Federations and many clubs also held events to mark the CA centenary, and I believe two clubs, Bristol and Crake Valley, were also celebrating their own centenaries. Crake Valley held a particularly ambitious croquet marathon and may even appear in the next Guinness Book of Records as a result. Anyway I hope that everyone has cause to feel that the centenary has had at least some small impact on their own year and that it has made it the more enjoyable.

Centenary medals were given to the winning teams at the Inter-Counties and also at the Cheltenham tournament. In all some 50 have been awarded. If anyone has still not won one you have one last chance; there is to be a series of indoor tournaments through the winter, culminating in finals in March, and the winning team will qualify for the last remaining medals. If you want to enter, details appeared in the last Gazette.

The year will be rounded off with the centenary dinner at Wimbledon tonight and the Solomon Lecture at the Redwood Lodge near Bristol on Sunday 2 November. I hope you all have that date in your diary. This is another innovation that may be repeated - not of course by our President himself, who will probably feel that he has done quite enough speaking for one year, but by becoming a regular institution with a different speaker on a different topic each year.

I have already mentioned the indoor tournaments proposed for the winter. In the past our indoor carpets have been little used except in East Anglia. However, there does seem to be a pool of players eager to play indoors and I believe we have now found a formula that makes it economic for them to do so. At the same time some clubs are looking at the possibility of installing synthetic surfaces for all-year outdoor play. These developments could make a fundamental change to the traditional croquet season and I believe are to be encouraged. The availability of funds from the lottery should ease what might otherwise prove insurmountable financial obstacles to proceeding.

On another front the encouragement of junior players must be important for the future well-being of the game. With this in mind we are seeking to arrest the decline of the game in schools, which is a difficult task given the variety of competing activities, and we have expanded the teaching programme to include special sessions for promising juniors. There are in fact more young players about than is realised and I am particularly glad that one of them has been chosen to come here today to receive the trophy for the most improved lady player. Certainly we feel that we will be justified in reintroducing a Junior Squad in 1998 who may be ready to form the nucleus of the MacRobertson Shield team when it is next played in this country.

I do not propose to catalogue all the results of the year's main tournaments since these are revealed almost instantaneously on the internet as well as being reported in the Gazette; at which point I would like to congratulate the editor on the excellent job she does. But it is right to record that the Opens were won by Chris Clarke and the President's Cup by Steve Comish. On a rather different level, but equally important, the winner of the All-England Handicap was Hamish Stoddart of Bowdon and even as I speak the World Golf Croquet Championship is taking place in Egypt. I understand that we are not the favourites for this, but I am sure you would want me to wish our competitors good luck.

Elsewhere on the international scene Chris Clarke added the title at Sonoma to his World Championship and Robert Fulford won the European Championship which was this year held at Southwick. At present we have 5 of the 10 top ranked players in the world but we are closely followed by New Zealand which has 4. The WCF World championships take place in Western Australia next month. In passing I also want record that Colin Irwin has been elected to the Management committee of the WCF. In the past we have had something of a love/hate relationship with this body. I hope in the future the love part will now predominate.

So much for the current year to date. But centenaries should be the occasion for looking forward as well as back. With this in mind at the beginning of the year we set up a small planning group the purpose of which was to assess what should be the goals, targets and objectives for the CA as its second century opens. Their preliminary report is now available and contains a wide range of proposals which are due to be debated at two regional club conferences next month.

The purpose of these conferences is not for participants to be told what a small (but hopefully representative) group thinks is good for them, but for all to have an opportunity to express their own points of view and come up with any new suggestions that may seem appropriate. Getting feed-back from this sort of consultation is most important, so I hope there will be a good turnout at each of the conferences so that the way the CA develops is the way its members want it to.

A secondary purpose for the planning process is to provide a basis for the compilation of our next four-year plan for submission to the Sports Council. I say 'the Sports Council', but there are now in fact two and an increasing jungle of red tape between them, the lottery and yet other bodies. Moreover, despite the lip service which politicians pay to helping sport, this seems more and more to mean major sport, and minor sports such as ourselves are in danger of getting left out. But I am pleased to say that the Chief Executive of the English Sports Council is coming as a guest to the dinner tonight. Historically we have received between £20,000 and £30,000 a year from them for development work. There is now a real danger that this may either drastically reduced or even eliminated, so the presentation of our next plan is of no little importance. Watch this space.

Finally I should like to express my thanks to the office staff who keep things going through thick and thin; to Paul Campion whose first AGM this is in office, to his two assistants Janet and Shirley, and to his volunteer helper Roy; also to Brian Macmillan who in between forever setting new sales records so often finds time to be the first to answer when the office phone rings.

Thank you all for coming today. If there are any questions on what I have said, I will try to provide answers".

3. TREASURER'S REPORT

3.1 After a brief introduction to the Accounts, the Treasurer answered several questions from the floor. He emphasised the possibility that the Association might encounter more difficult financial times in the coming year.

The accounts and the Treasurer's Report thereon were adopted nem con.

4. ELECTION OF THE HONORARY TREASURER

4.1 There being no other nominations for the post, and he being willing to continue, Dr R W Bray was re-elected unanimously and to acclamation.

5. ELECTION OF AUDITORS

5.1 The proposal by Hamish Hall (Bristol), seconded by Bill Arliss (Southwick) THAT Messrs Morgan, Brown and Spofforth be re-elected as auditors, was approved nem con.



Naomi Green of the Bristol club, winner of the Steel Bowl, with John Solomon and Austin Sherlaw-Johnson of the Bowdon club, winner of the Apps Bowl.

6. ELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

6.1 Mrs TW Anderson, Messrs DL Gaunt, HM Hall, WE Lamb and IPM Macdonald and Dr M Murray having retired by rotation under rule 2, Dr GS Liddiard and Dr TJ Haste having resigned and there being two other unfilled vacancies, the total number of vacancies on Council was ten. Mrs BJ Ackermann (East Midlands), Mr RQ Barrett (London and South East) and Judge JMC Evans (Yorkshire & Humberside) were elected as Federation Representatives on Council under Rule 26.

Mrs TW Anderson and Messrs DL Gaunt, HM Hall, WE Lamb and IPM Macdonald sought re-election under rule 7A(a)(i): AM Wadley had been proposed by AJ Oldham, seconded by Dr TJ Haste and RWB Judson had been proposed by JL Wankling, seconded by AJ Oldham.

There being no other nominations, no election had been necessary and the meeting declared these seven persons elected to the Council.

7. BENEFACTORS' BOOK

7.1 The Secretary read the names in the Benefactors' Book.

8. PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

8.1 Apps and Steel Bowls The President announced the award of the Apps Bowl to R Austin Sherlaw-Johnson (Bowdon) as most improved male player, and the Steel Bowl to Naomi Green (Bristol) as most improved female player, of 1996. Happily both winners were present and received their trophies from the President to acclamation.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 A number of matters were raised by members present: viz. fees for Junior Coaching; that no directory of Members had been published in 1997; the showing of Handicap Cards at tournaments; delays in passing on tournament results for the determination of Rankings; difficulties encountered at the Finals of the all England Championship and the possibility of the Association having its own Web Site. The President and Chairman of Council replied.

10. THE PRESIDENT'S CLOSING ADDRESS

"It's rather a daunting task to have to wind up this centenary meeting. We have been concerned with the events of the past year but it would be appropriate to consider the events of the last 100 years, if only in an abbreviated form.

On 15 October 1897 a group of people got together to form the United All England Croquet Association. There had been attempts for almost 30 years to form an Association, but there were rivalries and disagreements and none lasted the course. It was WH Peel, a name no one can be unaware of who plays croquet, who made a proper Association a reality. Three years later, in 1900, it changed its name to The Croquet Association.

I do not propose to take you through the history of the last 100 years. Those of you interested in that detail should obtain a copy of the Centenary Year Book which contains, apart from all the important records of the Association's history, its Officers since its inception and the prize winners of all important events since their inauguration, also a very full account (though described as "concise") of the history of the Association

by Colin Prichard, which continued the work done by his father Col. David Prichard.

I should like consider, albeit briefly, what has been achieved during the last century. I think it was about three years ago that I surmised what would have happened had there never been a CA. There would hardly have been as many clubs as there are now, without any doubt every club would have had different rules. Handicaps would have been awarded on dozens of different bases, and so on.

I believe the CA can take pride in a number of achievements. The Gazette was started in 1904 and has continued continuously since then. The improvements in equipment, from boxwood balls to composition, as early as 1898, would you believe it, and cast iron hoops down to 3 5/8". The Willis setting, that we use today, introduced in 1902 as an experiment was standardised in 1922. The redress of having a lift if your ball was wired from all others, though interestingly it started in 1907 by being able to lift to A baulk, in 1910 to either baulk at the dictate of the adversary and finally 1913 the choice as we have it today.

Of course, probably the most fundamental change to the accepted pattern of the game was the abandonment of the sequence game in 1920, by which the 'dead' ball could be positioned next to one's partner, or put to the next hoop knowing that it could not be removed, to the 'either ball' game we play today.

This association is the senior of all the national associations and it is to our credit that we have always been on remarkably good terms with those in other countries. Australia, New Zealand and South Africa have associations almost as old as ours but they have always looked up to us as a leader in croquet fashion. Equally, I believe we have been circumspect in consulting our overseas colleagues about any new ideas and not imposing them without consultation.

It was in 1920 that Australia took the initiative to challenge this country to an International Match and this eventually materialised when they arrived in 1925 and the MacRobertson Trophy was 'born'. New Zealand joined in 1930 and the US had to wait over 60 years until 1993 to be invited to join.

The first official World Championship was held in 1989 under the auspices of the World Croquet Federation. Starting with some 10 countries it now consists of 18. With the exception of the first, which was won by a New Zealander, every World Champion has been an Englishman and the runner-up also except on one occasion. And in the MacRobertson Trophy we have certainly been shown to be the leading country, having won it on eight out of the last ten contests. I have no doubt that this success has come from the fact that we are able to demonstrate more strength in depth than our opponents.

The standard of play has clearly developed over the last 100 years, even the last fifty, and certainly the last ten. Sextuples were unheard of fifty years ago, today a handful of players seem able to complete them almost at will. I do not think that the greater prevalence of automatic watering has made lawns much easier than they used to be.

We are fortunate in having Council to run the affairs of the Association which is dedicated to improving the game and this has been the case for as long as I can remember, (which is fifty years) but it must be said that for the last fifteen years or so the approach of those on the Council has become much more professional. And rightly so, considering the demands made upon us by the virtue of the grants we have received from the Sports Council.

And so I believe we are in very good shape to look forward to the next 100 years. We have a strong Association, we have a dedicated Council, we have players of the highest calibre, we have some 150 clubs, many of which are becoming more and more successful in attracting, and keeping, new players. We must thank our ancestors who put this Association on a firm base during the early years of this century and we must have faith that those currently in charge of our affairs will continue the good work that has already been done.

A couple of weeks ago I had to go to Manchester on business. On my return in the evening my train was ten minutes early at Euston. I wandered down to the Underground, went down the escalator and went on to the platform just as the doors of my train were opening; fifteen seconds

later the train started and in ten minutes I was at Victoria. I wandered up to the main line station, consulted the board and saw that my train was leaving in four minutes. I walked to the platform, got on the train and one minute later we were on our way. And I thought "this was very good. If only it were always like clockwork". And then I thought "But what has happened to the leisure of life, why can't we just stand and stare if we want to, why do we always have to be so busy?" Croquet offers leisure. What can be more pleasant than to sit beside a court on a sunny afternoon, relaxing while your opponent is making a break, other, of course, than to be making the break oneself. But then, of course, croquet is not always a gentle, relaxing pastime. There have been occasions when spectators, let alone players, have been sitting on the edge of their chairs with excitement as a game nears its climax. I remember, I think it was the last Champion of champions contests I played against Nigel Aspinall which ended as a two ball finish which had everybody agog with excitement. So I suppose you may take your choice whether croquet is relaxation or a hard fought struggle. Perhaps it is both.

I know I am going to see many of you again this evening at our special dinner at the AELTCC at Wimbledon. I have to warn you that I will be speaking again during the course of the evening but I can assure you that very little of it will be recognisably the same address I have just made, which closes this meeting. You are all invited now to have a sherry on the Association".

There being no further business, the Meeting was closed at 12.05pm

World Rankings after 1998 New Zealand Open Championship

Qualification 10 games in year February 1997 to January 1998

	Grade	G's	Wins		
1	Fulford RI	2739	121	90	17 Goacher DJ 2503 77 43
2	Westerby AJ [NZ]	2722	66	50	18 Garrison T [NZ] 2497 54 36
3	Clarke CD	2714	94	67	19 Louw JW [SA] 2497 36 28
4	Mulliner SN	2696	109	72	20 Avery MN 2496 61 44
5	Maugham DB	2661	159	119	21 Bury G [A] 2494 49 34
6	Comish S	2653	93	70	22 Watts H [A] 2488 54 37
7	Jackson RV [NZ]	2608	112	91	23 Cornelius DA Miss 2478 31 19
8	Prince JG [NZ]	2593	49	41	24 Dumergue I [NZ] 2473 31 20
9	Stephens AJ [NZ]	2577	17	8	25 Cleland A [A] 2467 27 20
10	Bamford RL [SA]	2574	37	16	26 Couch PD [NZ] 2464 67 46
11	Fleming B [A]	2560	49	40	27 Burge TR 2457 127 84
12	Davis S [NZ]	2556	56	35	28 Pickering C [A] 2449 86 61
13	Cordingley P	2549	114	76	29 Trimmer PC 2448 96 59
14	Irwin CJ	2544	61	41	30 Jones SG [NZ] 2441 60 33
15	Taves JB [USA]	2537	15	7	31 Beale GW [NZ] 2437 39 26
16	Skinley PJ [NZ]	2517	10	5	32 Mehas M [USA] 2436 48 32

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Chairman's Column



When I became hooked on the game of croquet some ten years ago, I did not relish the winter months as it was devoid of my new passion. Having accepted nomination to Council and got somewhat involved, the situation has dramatically changed and I am beginning to wonder if the winter break is long enough. From early October until early March, the various committees and Council of the CA are deeply involved in planning for the following year. It is not only the tournament programmes but the coaching programmes, the development projects, and the overall balancing of the CA budget to name but a few of the activities. Add to this some winter indoor tournaments and life becomes very hectic.

As Chairman, I become an ex-officio member of several of the standing committees of the CA and whilst this does give me quite a lot of meetings to attend, it also gives me a good overall picture. It is my intention to use the Chairman's column in the following months to describe the various CA activities and how they affect the total croquet scene.

First of all some very good news. At the beginning of last December we all felt that the likelihood of getting a reasonable grant from the English Sports Council (ESC) was very remote but they surprised us all and we have been awarded £17,000 for the 1998 season. This will not simply disappear into the general funds but has to be devoted to specific activities mainly centred around development of the game. We have to account to the ESC for our spending and report on all our activities. Next year unfortunately the grant will definitely cease and we shall have to fund all our own development work. The politicians have decided to fund only the major sports, the ones that can usually afford to support themselves. So if you have any MP friends, bend their ears to our plight.

Up to two years ago we employed a National Development Officer and during his time many new clubs were formed. Now with a very few exceptions, most existing clubs can cope with large increases in membership and our priorities have therefore swung towards strengthening existing clubs. Such activities must of necessity be carried out locally and in the main Area Federations provide the necessary manpower and skills. The support for local clubs becomes a mixture of coaching, general development and publicity. Whilst all the coaches, developers, and publicists are voluntary, they nevertheless have some expenses that must be met and the CA has now instituted grants for meeting these expenses and providing any necessary equipment and literature.

Whilst the Federations are set up as independent bodies and thus able to tailor their activities to suit local conditions, the CA has a vital role in bringing together all the various Federation officers to interchange ideas and practices, both good and failed. We already have the Federation development and coaching officers attending the national committees for their areas of interest and hope to repeat this with the publicity and schools officers during the next year.

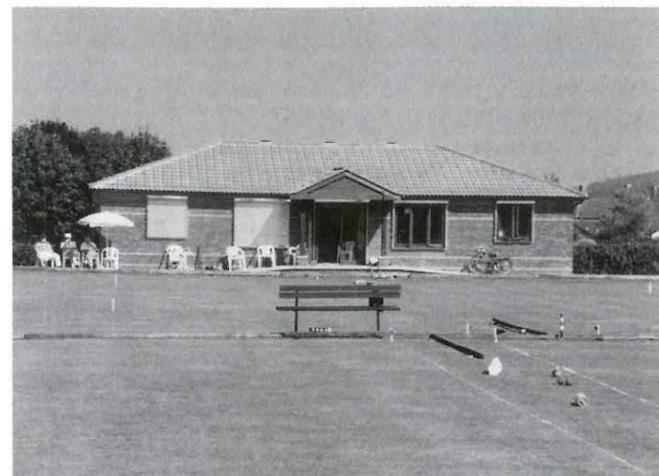
Before I conclude this month's column I must tell you of the direct help we have been able to give some clubs during the last year and the promises we have made for the forthcoming season.

Grants of £500 were paid in 1997 to each of the following clubs- Bury St Edmonds - development of hoop fixings for synthetic surfaces (more of synthetic surfaces in later issues of the Gazette) Nailsea - assistance with the new pavilion Berkshire - assistance for new club facilities We have also approved similar grants for East Dorset and Woodhall Spa subject to their receiving lottery grants.

Almost the start of the new season now; I hope to meet many of you at the various tournament throughout the season. Please remember it's the Centenary of the Peel Memorial Tournament held at Surbiton in May. Let's make it a record entry, so why not join me there?

Bill Arliss

All e-mail replies to arliss@mistral.co.uk. Tel No 01273 728204. Please send all text in body of message whenever possible.



Visitors attending Nailsea's May weekend tournament on 9th/10th will be able to see for themselves the splendid clubhouse which will have been officially opened the previous day by MP Liam Fox - so everything should be in apple pie order! If you haven't entered why not give it a try, and encourage Nailsea as they embark on an expansion drive?

STOP PRESS...

Colchester Tournament Entry Change

Due to the sudden death of Malcolm Harbord entries to Colchester's tournaments in 1998 should be sent not to Malcolm, as printed in the CA fixture booklet, but instead to our club chairman, David Haslam, 11 Orchard Close, Copford Green, Colchester, CO6 1DB

Inter-Club Results 1997

Round 1: Harrow bt Hurlingham 7-0; Surbiton bt Nottingham 5-2; Woking bt Cheltenham 4-3.
Round 2: Bowdon bt Harrow 4-3; Surbiton bt Ipswich ?; Northampton bt Wrest Pk 5-2; Woking bt Bristol 4-3.
Semi-Final: Bowdon bt Surbiton 6-1 Woking bt Northampton 6-1.
Final: Bowdon bt Woking 4-3.

Handicap Alterations

South of England 15 - 20 Sep

P Tidswell	7	to	5
B James	3.5	to	4
J Davey	8	to	7
J Nash	10	to	9

Cheltenham 19 - 21 Sep

<i>Club play</i>			
A Cowing	2.5	to	2
M Peebles	18	to	20
J Powell	18	to	16
A Blenkin	18	to	16
A Laidlaw	14	to	12
D Howson	12	to	14
J Godson	9	to	8
R Jackman	1.5	to	1
P Higgins	9	to	8

After Tournament

A Cowing	2	to	1.5
C Edwards	14	to	12
D Foulser	-1	to	-1.5
J Godson	8	to	7
Mrs G Harris	2.5	to	2
Mrs J Powell	16	to	18
Mrs M Watts	14	to	16

Nottingham 19 - 21 Sept

D Brydon	7	to	6
J Filsak	6	to	5

Southport 20 - 21 Sept

C Dent	2.5	to	2
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All England Area Finals

H Stoddart	12	to	11
D Owen	9	to	8
D Beck	11	to	10
P Miles	10	to	9
J Burch	3.5	to	3

Chairman's Salver

I Burridge	-1.5	to	-1
<i>Colchester Club Sept</i>			
J R Hilditch	1.5	to	2
J Ansty	1	to	0.5

Roehampton Club Sept

T Dutton	6	to	5
Mrs B Ismail	16	to	14
P Macdonald	4	to	4.5
Mrs J Oades	12	to	11

Hurlingham Club Sept

R Hutchinson	14	to	12
Mrs R Stephens	10	to	11

Compton 4 - 5 October

Mrs G Ward	16	to	14
J Creasy	1.5	to	1
Miss M Buist	17	to	16
Mrs J Lindfield	16	to	14

Cheltenham 10 - 12 October

J Godson	7	to	6
Mrs S Edwards	12	to	11
D King	20	to	16
F I Maugham	-0.5	to	0
D Mills	20	to	16
M Ranshaw	2.5	to	3
T Weston	4	to	3.5
G Weir	16	to	12

Surbiton 11 - 12 October

M Percival	1.5	to	1
B Rees	9	to	8
P Watson	4.5	to	4
N Jackson	4	to	3.5
Mrs C Heritage	11	to	10
D Goulding	3	to	3.5
D Mooney	5	to	6

Bath Club October

Miss L Bradforth	4.5	to	4
B Race	2.5	to	3
Mrs A Whitaker	4.5	to	4
D Morgan	6	to	5
D Stoealing	10	to	9
Mrs G Cope	16	to	14

Southwick Club October

W Arliss	0.5	to	0
Mrs D Brothers	8	to	7

Mrs M Case	18	to	20
D Gaitley	26	to	24
D Hill	16	to	14
Mrs P Jackson	26	to	20
Miss M Loveys	18	to	16
Mrs F Low	16	to	11
J Low	8	to	4.5
P Pullin	3.5	to	1.5
B Teague	1	to	0.5
Mrs P Wain	10	to	9

New Associates

Mr J Baker	Winchester
Mr G Fuller	Dulwich
Mr C Hemming	Colchester
Mrs S Page	
Mr P Prain	Hurlingham
Mr P Wallis	Hurlingham
Mrs G Davey	Bath
Mrs S Jardine	Royal Tunbridge Wells
Mrs M Knapp	Roehampton
Mr K Piper	Belsay Hall
Mr C Ross	Surbiton
Mr A Bennett	
Mr M Gardner	St Albans
Mrs P Quinlan	Cheltenham
Mr P Whittall	Sidmouth
Dr J Bee	Cassibury
Mr E Butt	East Dorset
Mrs J Collis	Colchester
Mrs M Eldon	Zeneca
Mr M Eldon	Zeneca
Mrs J Hoare	Bournemouth
Miss J Horsley	Budleigh Salterton
Mrs A Jacot de Boinod	Woking
Mr D Mattacks	Hunstanton
Mr M Najarian	USA
Mr J Repp	Oxford University
Mr K Roberts	Southport & Birkdale
Mr J Scrase	Southwick
Mr W Stoddart	Bowdon
Mr D Taylor	Woodhall Spa
Mr K Wheeler	

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

NEW ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES

Classified advertising has now been introduced to the Gazette at very competitive rates, to both individual members and clubs as well as rates for non-members and trade/commercial. Details of how to place an advert should be available now at all clubs.

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Principles of Handicapping	£2.35	CA Enamel Brooch	£4
Know the Game	£3.35	Inter-Counties Tie	£12.26
How to Play Croquet	£3.42	Tissot croquet notecards (8)	£4.50
The Skills of the Game	£7.10	Historical Prints (4)	£6 each + £2P&P
Plus One On Time	£5.69	Croquet Management	£10.77

The prices given are as discounted to members of the Association, including packing and posting.

A wide range of equipment is also available at discounted prices to Associates, please contact the office for details.

Telephone Brian Macmillan on 0171 7363148

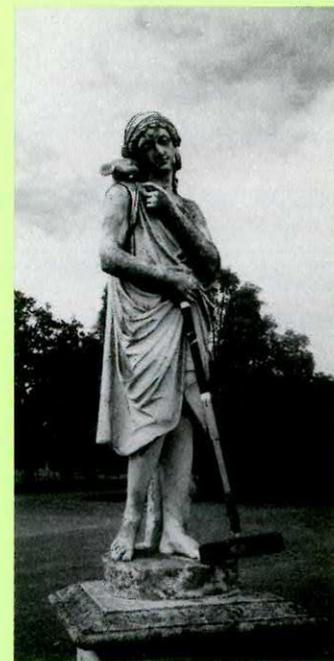
AROUND & ABOUT



Bisque Please! Even the statues at Wrest Park can enjoy croquet.
(Photo by Graham Bond.)



Compton members getting ready for their Boxing Day Frostbite Golf Croquet Tournament. (Photo by George Williams.)



A little bird spreading the word at Wrest Park. (Photo by Graham Bond.)



The Bristol CC winning Mary Rose Team of Hamish Hall, Rosemary Gugan, Frances Ransom and Terry Ballard. (Photo by Rosemary Gugan.)



Lansdown CC enjoying tea after a club match. According to Monica Catling the club is more noted for its teas than its croquet, but does it matter? (Photo by Monica Catling)



Can there be a more idyllic setting than Wrest Park? (If there is perhaps someone would care to take a photo.) (Photo by Nigel Gray.)