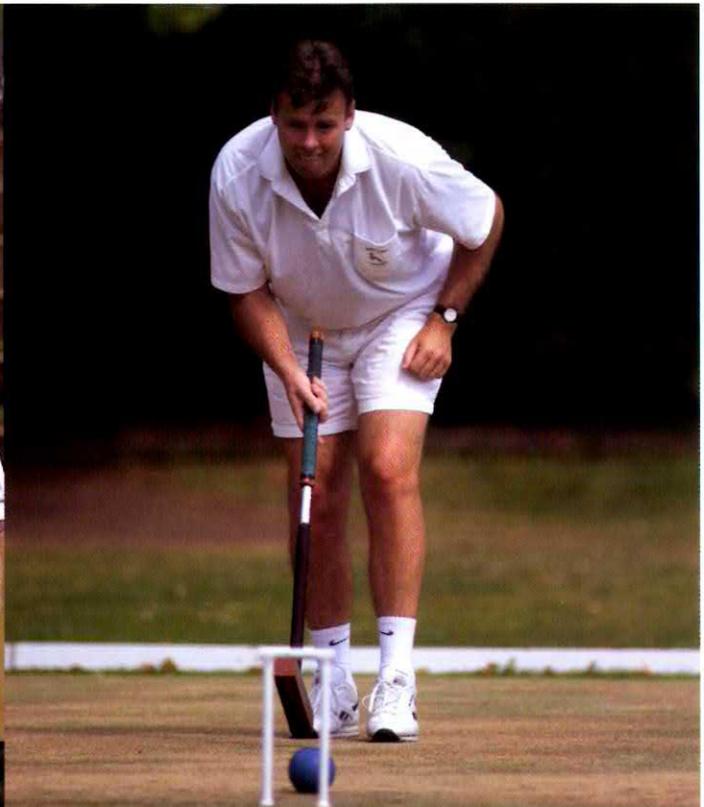
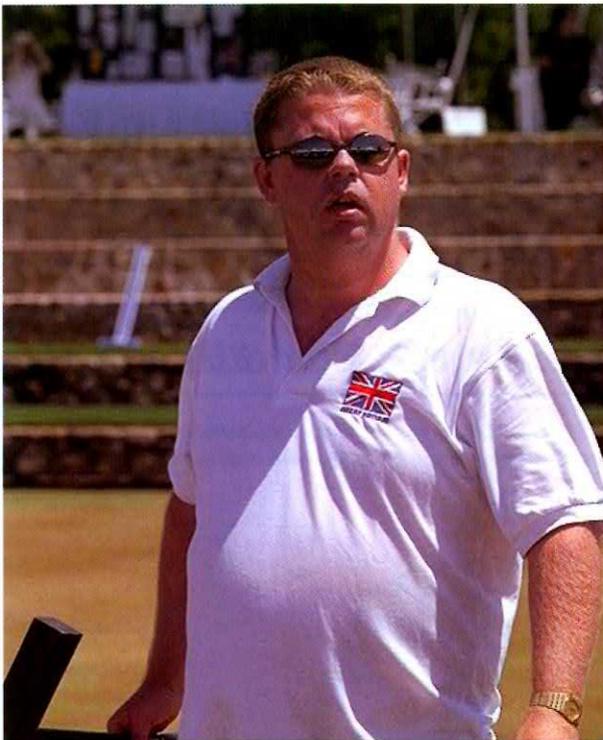


THE CROQUET GAZETTE

ISSUE 297 JUNE/JULY 2005



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Disclaimer

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

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Chairman's Column

I've just returned from a very enjoyable weekend at the Inter-Counties, one of the highlights of the calendar for those fortunate enough to be able to play in it. Congratulations to Nottinghamshire (the team people think I play for, though my Hunstanton sweatshirt confused the Norfolk players) and Dorset, who won the two divisions, and commiserations to Sussex, the team I actually represent, on yo-yoing yet again! I'm sure the nearly 200 players would join me in thanking the two clubs, Southwick and Compton, who give up their lawns to host it each year, their committees, groundstaff and many members who help during the weekend. The caterers deserve special mention, for feeding such a hoard to such a high standard, and the bar staff for ensuring adequate supplies of Harveys. Finally, thanks to Bill Arliss, Chris Williams and the team captains, for keeping us all in order!

The next great feat of croquet organisation will be the 2005 Mitsubishi Motors World Croquet Championship, being played at Cheltenham, Bristol, Edgbaston and Nailsea from 6th to 14th August. I welcome the players coming from overseas, and very much hope that they, as well as our own representatives, will have an enjoyable time and will appreciate the chance to play at several clubs during the week. For those not in the top flight, do take this rare opportunity to come and see the world's best players in action: although croquet is not primarily a spectator sport, it is certainly easier to watch than play! If you decide to visit Cheltenham, you could also look in to the CA Office and sign Klim's visitors book, as well as admire their new car-park entrance and the other improvements they have been busy making.

For those whose concern is with clubs, rather than counties or countries, it is the time of year when new recruits have appeared and been given some organised sessions of initial coaching, but who now need some encouragement to come to the club on their own initiative. Please make an effort to be welcoming to those that do: after all, you were new once, and a little time and trouble to make them feel at home and wanted will reap dividends in future. I still remember how welcome I was made (and how vast a full-size lawn appeared) by a couple called the Clements at the Preston Park club, who selflessly directed me on to Howard Austin at Southwick, when it was clear that I needed stronger competition than they could provide.

I was pleased to hear from Paul Champion, who was CA Secretary before Nigel Graves and who still has an interest in our affairs. He pointed out that my last column could be interpreted to imply that he had not had time to edit the fixtures book. It was Graham Gale, Nigel's predecessor as editor rather than secretary, that I had in mind: apologies.

Finally, a reminder that contributions to Nigel's retirement present can be sent to the CA Office and confirmation that the AGM will be on Saturday 15th October at Hurlingham, followed by a lunch in his honour.

Ian Vincent

Publication details

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

Publication Schedule

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

Specific Questions and Queries

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

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

Tournament Reports & Results

Emailed reports are welcomed. Attachments may be sent in Microsoft word Format, or any other text format. Hand written reports are no longer acceptable due to the illegibility of most.

Delivery Queries

Queries regarding the delivery of the Gazette to members should be directed to the Secretary of the Croquet association and not to

the Editor:

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Letters

Tournament disillusionment (II)

David Tester's letter in the April issue of the Gazette "Tournament disillusionment" implies a wholly unjustified criticism of the South Africa Croquet Association (SACA). The Laws of Association Croquet are accepted throughout the world, but has always been agreed that the Regulations for Tournaments held within their respective jurisdictions are a domestic matter for the governing body concerned (see the Introduction to Tournament Regulations published by the CA, March 2005).

The SACA is fully within its rights to determine the winning team in an American Block by a method which I understand has been in use in their country for many years (as was the case here until fairly recently). David Tester should accept the outcome with good grace, and retain a pleasant memory of a match when he and his partner were victorious over a partnership including the 2001 World champion."

Bernard Neal

President of the CA

I would like to respond to David Tester's letter. I played in the same Western Province Open Doubles Tournament (in fact my partner and I were responsible for David and his partner's one defeat) and although I can understand his disappointment at not being awarded the championship, I understood at the time that the decision was based on the method traditional for that tournament.

I have been fortunate to play three times in the Western Province Championship in the past five years and, like many of the visitors from abroad, I have had a wonderful croquet holiday, due to the professional management of the tournament by Carole Knox (who takes no prisoners!) and the wonderful support from all of the volunteer workers at both the Rondebosch and the Somerset West clubs.

Peter Quimm

First, David Tester raised some reasonable points, so I'll certainly ensure they receive the

attention of the International Committee in due course. In the meantime I offer this reply. I tackle your specific experience first, and follow with some general points.

The international consensus is that laws should be standardised, but regulations are a matter for individual national Associations and their domains. Thus Association Croquet is played to a common set of laws agreed by the four MacRobertson Shield countries, but we all have our own, differing sets of regulations (which in the CA's case, can be found at <http://www.croquet.org.uk/tournament/regulations.html>). I would be surprised if the Western Province Championship used a different set of laws. Resolution of ties in American blocks is deemed to be a matter for the regulations, and as such, unless specifically stated otherwise in the Conditions for particular tournaments, the host country's regulations will apply. This is even true of the forthcoming World Championship to be held at Cheltenham in October. More on this later.

What is undoubtedly true however is that, one way or another and E&OE, the method to be used for tie breaks should have been defined in advance, and the defined method should have been followed. You do not say whether this was the case at the Western Province Championship, although I would be surprised if it was not. Assuming the tournament was advertised in some SA equivalent of the Fixtures Book, unless overridden therein, South Africa's version of Tournament Regs. would apply. Sorry I know neither the mechanics governing the running of tournaments in SA nor the contents of their regulations if any. Maybe I should. They don't appear to have a web site on which to look them up.

That said, basically either the tie-break method was defined or it wasn't. If it was, they either followed it or they didn't. If they did, I'm afraid you have no complaint. If it wasn't defined, then basically it is at the manager's discretion, and, poor practice though this may be, again I'm afraid you have no cause for complaint. In the latter two cases, your only re-course is not to enter tournaments in a particular domain if you feel sufficiently strongly about the way they are run. You only really have cause for complaint if the method was defined in advance and they did something different in practice. Again you don't say whether this was the case. Sorry to be so apparently unsympathetic, especially after your excellent win over Bamford, but I'm afraid of necessity

that is the way it is.

Speaking more generally now, there are good reasons for having nationally dependant regulations. An example is regulation P2 (b) of ours which, in restricted form, permits gambling at tournaments in the CA's domain. We enjoy a flutter over here, but in other countries gambling may be culturally unacceptable. Except for the most ardent of fanatics, generally there is no particular reason why the will of one Association should be forced upon the other in such matters. Without being party to the history, I suppose people feel that legitimately different views may be held about the best way to decide an American block, so it is left as a matter for regulation rather than law. Knowing the "A" class croquet community home and abroad as I do, if it were up for discussion it's pretty unlikely we would be able to obtain consensus on this issue domestically, let alone around the globe. I suppose one might consider the case for extracting non contentious regulations with a view to at least partially standardising across international borders, but I rather suspect that with the limited resources available this would be a long way down our list of priorities, even were it possible. (As an aside and to illustrate how tricky these things can be in practice, I think you'll find at least two of the sports you mention have failed at one time or another to standardise on these things. I refer here to the schism between the two rugbys (Union and League), and the rival darts organisations the WDF and the PDC. In the latter case they use two completely different tournament formats to determine the two completely different World Champions, which seems to be to some extent analogous to the situation you describe.)

Hope this response at least puts the matter in some sort of context and perspective, even though it is probably no consolation to yourself. Feel free to share it with your fellow overseas competitors if you wish. Good luck for the coming season.

Phil Cordingley,

Chairman, CA International Committee

I received a copy of our evergreen Presidents letter to the gazette and believe that the more discussion we can get on this subject the better. I agree with everything that Prof. Neal says, with the possible exception of his last sentence, but hope that he read John Solomon's letter

to which I was replying. In an effort to achieve John's aims Association Croquet needs to expand considerably. I understand that The Commonwealth Games beef was that not enough people played the game globally. To help achieve this we should at least attempt to standardize rules and REGS. globally. I am quite aware that SACA was within its rights, to introduce their own regs, provided they were displayed and available, I can't remember ever saying that they were not?

However, Nobody will ever, ever convince me that any serious, major international sport or game does not substantially benefit from supporting one set of common rules and regs.

I do totally enjoy the banter, food, drink, characters, camaraderie, win over Reg and South Africa, as did I Rugby and Cricket, in a former life, just as it should be in any major recognized sport, but any game producing two different winners on the same set of results in two different places! Is it actually worth playing seriously enough to be considered for inclusion in major sporting events?

It seems that those sports, so widely played especially in Commonwealth countries could be more successful, heavily supported and still expanding, in part because they DO play and support common rules and regs which they have negotiated with much aforethought and pain. Remember the 8 ball over the Australians used to bowl. Remember No lifting in the Line out played in Rugby. Remember The Kentish Dart Board. All consigned to the SCRAP HEAP for the good and success of their sport.

I find it incredible that he indicates Association Croquet still deliberately encourages variations of this magnitude and that this seems to have his support!

In my humble opinion that is totally wrong, backward and defies any kind of applied logic.

The simple question is, do we want our game to expand, be more widely accepted and truly international or continue on a garden croquet basis? Without Golf Croquet many many clubs would not now exist. Our game is doubtless struggling, let alone moving to achieve John Solomon's lofty aims, even more so in S.A. the Rondebosch Club now having only a dozen or so playing members, The Kelvin Club with 80 plus members playing no ASSOCIATION AT ALL, and even

Somerset West, the most successful Western Province club, a mere handful.

It must be so much simpler if we all played to common association rules and regs throughout the croquet playing world!

May be you took the wrong emphasis from my article.

David Tester

Was it once croquet law?

At my club in Malvern new players often arrive with the idea that the game is played by putting one foot on the strikers ball, they have either seen the game played this way on the television or have been told by others about this. I have seen it played this way myself on television usually when the clip has been set in the 30's but cannot give them a definite answer.

Could anybody tell me if this was ever a law in Association Croquet and when it was removed, if it was.

George Houghton.

Malvern U3A Croquet Club.

Inspirational Pendle

The article by James Hawkins 'The Renaissance of Pendle', which appeared in the April 2005 Gazette, was truly inspiring. It showed what can be achieved by sheer determination, enthusiasm and hard work, and all those concerned, especially John Beech and Ted Fort, are to be congratulated.

The club has sensibly registered as a Community Amateur Sports Club, so that donations can be treated as Gift Aid. I have sent a contribution to help with the shortfall in funding, basking in the knowledge that the Inland Revenue will add a useful 28%! *Bernard Neal*
CA President

What Do you know of Harry Fowler?

If anyone can give me any information about "Harry Fowler", who played croquet to a high standard, from about 1895 to 1912 I would be grateful...things such as where he lived, to which club did he belong... by how many did you beat him!!!!

Klim Seabright
CA Secretary

Armada Trophy Facts Required

The Southern League are staging this event at Winchester this year and the main club here wish to put info on their web site but I know very little about it, or its origin. Can you help?

Jolyon Kay tells me he thinks a trophy was given to each Federation to celebrate the millenium, is this so? and why called the Armada? I would appreciate any info or background snippets you may have which would form the basis of a short article.

Ivor Nunn (Chairman Winchester Croquet Club)

Tournament Reports

Hello Gail and welcome back to the salt mines. Although James never agreed with me, I still feel that people like to read about themselves and people they know. I think re-introducing the tournament reports would be most welcome.

Dick Knapp

Well Dick its ok, I understand that most players have a touch of narcissism so I will be happy to include photos and tournament reports. My only proviso is that they be sent via email or on a disk, for reports and that they be concise. As to Photos, I would prefer digital, as you might expect, but will work with prints. If you are sending digital images please email in Jpeg format, or alternatively please send them on a CD in Jpeg format. Please make sure the names of the subjects are on the reverse if you send a print. If you wish to have any material returned to you please enclose a SAE. Ed.

Comments on the 2004 Accounts

The budget for 2004 approved by Council showed a sizeable deficit. In the event, however, a number of income sources performed far better than expected and the outcome was a healthy surplus of income over expenditure (before transfers to/from the Special Funds) of £17,200. Donations and sponsorship totalling nearly £13,000 (gross, and including advertising revenue) was the major factor here and the CA is very grateful indeed to all those organizations, especially Bellingham Wines, and individuals who contributed so generously.

Individual members are also thanked for their continued loyal support of the CA through their subscriptions, which provided £2,600 more than in 2003, mainly due to an increase in subscription rates.

The year included a(nother) significant step in providing more direct help to clubs. The introduction of the Civil Liability Insurance Scheme, free to member clubs, cost the CA over £9,000 in 2004. This was greater than anticipated as twelve clubs were attracted to join or rejoin the CA; but that was more than offset by the increased income from club subscriptions.

Development grants to clubs continued at the high level set in 2003: over £16,000 was allocated to eight clubs in 2004. (Some of this was met from sponsorship income and only the net cost to the CA is shown in the Income & Expenditure Account.) Given the overall surplus for the year, there was no call on the Development Fund to help meet this expenditure. Rather, Council decided to boost the Fund by £8,000, in order to be able to continue the development grants programme in future, leaner years. Further, it agreed to set up a New Club Fund with an initial £5,000 to help newly formed clubs which become members of the CA by providing them with basic croquet equipment.

The Development and New Club Funds are two of five Special Funds (see Note 3) held by the CA to help finance 'exceptional' expenditure. Two others, the International and Duffield Bequest, were used in 2003 to meet the cost, some £7,300, of the CA Team participating in the MacRobertson Shield in the USA. No similar call was made on those funds in 2004.

A more detailed analysis of the 2004 Accounts will be distributed at the AGM in October. If you wish to receive an advance copy, please notify the CA Office and provide a stamped, addressed envelope.

Roger Bray

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2004

	2004		2003	
	£	£	£	£
Income from:				
Subscriptions:				
Individuals		39,435		36,849
Clubs		24,568		22,115
Levies		13,556		12,941
Surplus of income from -				
Commercial activities		17,883		17,036
Tournaments		3,542		3,966
Advertising and royalties		5,238		5,177
Investments		7,416		5,649
Donations & Sponsorship		5,967		7,324
Total Income		117,605		111,057
Expenditure on:				
Publications	19,762		21,034	
Club legal liability insurance	9,272		-	
Marketing & Development	6,290		5,373	
Grants to Clubs and Federations	13,803		18,207	
International activities	696		8,719	
Central administration costs:				
Salary costs	32,182		31,727	
Office overheads	5,076		5,962	
Depreciation of office buildings	2,719		2,704	
Office services	4,605		4,706	
Council members' travel expenses	2,160		2,130	
Accountancy	(250)		8	
Sundry expenses	2,505		1,192	
Total Expenditure		98,820		101,762
Surplus for the year before taxation		18,785		9,295
Provision for Corporation Tax year ended 31st December 2004	2,007		1,890	
adjustment for prior year	(437)		(274)	
		1,570		1,616
Surplus for the year after taxation		17,215		7,679
Net transfer from/(to) special funds		(16,786)		(6,921)
Surplus for year transferred to General Fund		£ 429		£ 758

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2004

	Note	2004		2003	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets					
Office Building at written down value	1		48,996		51,053
Croquet and office equipment at written down value			-		1,770
Trophies at valuation			10,000		10,000
Investments at cost	2		18,810		28,836
			77,806		91,659
Current Assets					
Stock held for resale	1	10,962		10,999	
Loans to Clubs		3,000		4,000	
Debtors & prepayments		6,868		5,422	
Cash at bank and in hand		176,482		144,381	
		197,312		164,802	
Current Liabilities					
Subscriptions received in advance		2,735		3,507	
Creditors & accrued expenses		12,631		10,772	
Provision for taxation		1,951		1,596	
		17,317		15,875	
Net current assets			179,995		148,927
Net Assets			£257,801		£240,586
<i>Financed by:</i>					
General Fund					
Balance at 1 January 2004			93,777		93,019
Surplus for the year from Income & Expenditure Account retained in General Fund			429		758
			94,206		93,777
Special Funds	3		163,595		146,809
			£257,801		£240,586

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS - 31 DECEMBER 2004

1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Accounting convention

The accounts are prepared under the historical cost convention.

Fixed Assets

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

Office Building	5% per annum from 1 January 2003 (the building was completed only in the last quarter of 2002)
Croquet & Office Equipment & Fittings	33% per annum

Trophies are included in the Balance Sheet at valuation.

Stock

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

2 LISTED INVESTMENTS AT COST

	2004 £	2003 £
10,395 6.75% Treasury Stock 2004	-	10,026
15,409 4.125% Index Linked Treasury Stock 2030	18,810	18,810
	18,810	28,836
Market value of investments at 31 December	£ 32,854	£39,400

3 SPECIAL FUNDS

Fund Name	Balance	Transfers from/(to) General Fund in year:			Balance
	1 January 2004	Investment	Donations	General Allocation (net)	31 December 2004
	£	£	£	£	£
New Club Fund (see below)	-	-	-	5,000	5,000
Development Fund	74,500	-	-	8,000	82,500
Benefactors Fund	27,045	1,023	967	-	29,035
International Fund	26,455	1,000	-	-	27,455
Duffield Bequest	18,809	796	-	-	19,605
Total Special Funds	£ 146,809	£ 2,819	£ 967	£ 13,000	£ 163,595

The New Club Fund has been set up to provide basic croquet equipment on long-term loan to newly-established clubs, provided they are members of the Croquet Association.

THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION

NOTICE OF MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of The Croquet Association will take place at the Hurlingham Club on Saturday 15th October commencing at 11.00 a.m.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. **Minutes of the previous meeting held on Saturday 16th October 2004.** These were published in **The Croquet Gazette**. Copies will be available at the meeting and will be sent to Home Members on written request to the Secretary.
3. Chairman's Report
4. **Accounts for the year to 31 December 2004 and Treasurer's report.** These accounts and a brief commentary were published in **The Croquet Gazette**. Copies will be available at the meeting and a more comprehensive report will be sent to Home Members on written request to the Secretary.

5. **Election of Treasurer** - Dr.R.W.Bray offers himself for re-election.

6. Election of Reporting Accountant

7. **Election of Council Members** The following 4 members retire by rotation under Rule 18 (a)(i): Mr.C.Sheen,Mr.D.Kibble,Mr.P.Cordingley and Mr.W.Arlliss. Mr.N.Graves was recently co-opted onto Council. All retiring members and Mr.Graves seek re-election under Rule 18(a)(i). This also means that the number of candidates does not exceed the number of vacancies and it will therefore not be necessary to hold elections.

8. **Benefactors' Book** - The names of the Benefactors will be read.

9. Presentation of the Apps and Steel Memorial Bowls.

10. The retirement of Nigel Graves as Secretary of the Croquet Association

11. The retirement of James Hawkins as Editor of the Croquet Gazette.

12. Presentation of Croquet Association Diplomas

13. Any other business

14. President's Closing Address

Klim Seabright - Secretary 19.7.05

THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at the Hurlingham Club on Saturday 16 October 2004

Present: JW Solomon (Retiring President)
Prof. Bernard Neal (Incoming President)
Dr IG Vincent (Chairman of Council)
Dr RW Bray (Treasurer)
AJ Oldham (Vice-President)
NR Graves (Secretary)
and 41 Associates

John Solomon took the chair and welcomed all those present to the Meeting and thanked them for their support.

1. ELECTION OF PRESIDENT

John Solomon having expressed his wish to retire as President, Council proposed Professor Bernard Neal to succeed him. Professor Neal had expressed his willingness to serve, and was elected by acclamation. He then took the chair.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 11 October 2003 were signed as a true record of that Meeting.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman had distributed the following report before the meeting, and questions were invited.

Council's Report to Members at the 2004 AGM

1. **General Council** met twice during the year, in October and March; the December meeting was cancelled due to lack of business. This reflects the fact that most decisions are now delegated to committees, but concern about this and the workload of chairmen who also sit on the Management Committee has resulted in a working party to review the three-tier structure introduced in 1999.

The President, John Solomon, is retiring at the start of this AGM and a dinner has been organised to thank him for his long service. Bernard Neal has been nominated as his successor. The Secretary, Nigel Graves, has also indicated his wish to retire and the opportunity is being taken to review the role of this post.

Individual membership is essentially static, but eleven clubs have (re-)joined the CA to obtain the benefit of the Civil Liability Insurance scheme that was introduced this year. Individual subscription rates are to be slightly increased.

The strategic plan drafted last year was adopted. Terms of reference for the Major Grants Committee and Investment Sub-Committee were approved.

2. **Administration** Packaged membership administration systems are being investigated to replace the current bespoke database, to meet the needs of the office, shop, website, Treasurer and membership.

3. **Coaching** A workshop on sextuple peeling was run following the introduction of the platinum award for this feat.

4. **Development** The grant application form is being revised and procedures for considering applications streamlined. Grants have been made to Medway, Pendle and Ramsgate clubs and the South and South-West federations. Information about Sportsmatch has been circulated but no applications have yet been made.

5. **Equipment** Balls from three suppliers have been tested for approval and their colours measured. Further investigations have been made into the playing characteristics of hoops and encouragement given for the production of a new cast-iron hoop. Advice is being given on the construction of a proposed artificial

court, using the experience gained at Bury St. Edmunds.

6. **Golf Croquet** The Open Championship was this year subsumed into the 6th World Golf Croquet Championship and successfully run at Southwick June 20-27th for the World Croquet Federation. Sponsorship by M G M Assurance, Bellingham Wines and others, the provision of facilities by the Sussex County and Compton clubs and the assistance given by members of these clubs and other clubs in the neighbourhood is gratefully acknowledged.

Clubs report increased membership of Golf Croquet players and the Grass Roots and Centre Stage competitions were relaunched. Standards of play have improved at the top level, a coaching course run and a number of new referees trained. We continue to be heavily involved in the WCF Rules revision, with the aim of ensuring that the result is suitable for club as well as championship play; meanwhile, the CA's interim Laws were revised to track this process.

7. **Handicap** The operation of the revised guidelines issued last year is being monitored.

8. **International** We successfully defended the MacRobertson Shield and the Solomon Trophy, played at Heaton Park, but cannot rest on our laurels. Plans are well under way to host the Association Croquet World Championship at Cheltenham and other clubs next August, taking into account experience gained from the Golf Croquet one this year.

9. **Laws** An examiner's handbook is in its final revision, with the intention of making some of the material available online. Additional Examiners have been appointed.

10. **Marketing** A significant amount of sponsorship has been achieved, both by the Committee and various enthusiastic groups and individuals around the country. Apart from the World Championships, Bellingham Wines were the principal sponsor, donating prizes for several events, holding wine tastings and wine for sale by clubs.

Several promotional leaflets and posters were published and the profile of the game raised through increased PR activity, resulting in significant TV, Radio and press coverage.

Commercial sales are at an all-time high.

11. **Publishing** The Gazette has reached its centenary and the results of a readership survey are being analysed; publication has changed to even-numbered months. The web site continues to be developed, with an interactive fixtures calendar, but facilities for on-line entry and payment would require serious consideration. Advice for Clubs and the Basic Laws have also been added. A compendium of many variations of Croquet has been written by Don Gaunt.

12. **Tournament** In general, CA tournaments are being well supported, but the entry to the Womens Championship and Mixed Doubles (held separately for the first time) was poor and there were insufficient entries to hold either of the Ladies Invitation events. Qualification for the Inter Counties is being reviewed to encourage the optimum number of 22 teams whilst ensuring that players have a close allegiance to the county they are representing.

4. ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR TO 31 DECEMBER 2003 AND TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer presented the Accounts for the year to 31 December 2003, and gave a brief report.

The Accounts were approved nem. con.

5. ELECTION OF TREASURER

There being no other nomination, Dr RW Bray was duly re-elected as Treasurer.

6. ELECTION OF REPORTING ACCOUNTANTS

Proposed by WH Arliss, seconded by AJ Oldham, Marian Hemsted was re-elected as Reporting Accountant for the current financial year nem. con. She was warmly thanked by the Treasurer for the thorough and efficient way in which she conducted her audit.

7. ELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

There having retired under Rule 18(a)(i) Messrs AG Fathers, J Isaacs, DK Openshaw,

Prof. A Pidcock and Dr IG Vincent by rotation, and Dr JC Ruddock resigned from Council, there being one unfilled vacancy last year, the number of vacancies on Council was seven.

All retiring members sought re-election under Rule 18(a)(i). One other nomination had been received as follows:

Mr IC Parkinson proposed by AJ Oldham and seconded by WH Arliss

As there were six candidates for the seven vacancies on Council no election was necessary, and the meeting declared these six people elected to Council.

8. MOTION OF COUNCIL

The following motion was approved, voting being as follows:

Individual Members: FOR 189 AGAINST 8 ABSTAINED

1

Club Members: FOR 20 AGAINST 5 ABSTAINED 1

That Rule 29, which currently reads:

29 BANK ACCOUNT

A bank account shall be maintained in the name of the Association. All cheques shall be signed by at least two persons nominated by the Council from time to time.

be replaced by:

29 BANK ACCOUNTS

The Council shall maintain in the name of the Association such bank accounts as it deems necessary. The person or persons authorized to operate these accounts, to sign cheques and make other payments in respect of them shall be as determined by the Council from time to time. These provisions shall be reviewed by the Council at least once a year including immediately following the Annual General Meeting. The persons so authorized shall keep account of all receipts and disbursements for which they are responsible.

9. BENEFACTORS' BOOK

The Secretary read the names in the Benefactors' Book.

10. PRESENTATION OF THE APPS AND STEEL MEMORIAL BOWLS

The Apps Memorial Bowl for the most improved male player of 2003 was presented to Chris Daniels of East Dorset Croquet Club.

The Steel Memorial Bowl for the most improved female player of 2003 was presented to Julie Hudson, also of East Dorset Croquet Club

11. PRESENTATION OF CROQUET ASSOCIATION DIPLOMAS

The Secretary announced the award of the Diploma to the following:

Name	Nominated by
Alan Linton	Bowdon Croquet Club
Christine Bagnall	Budleigh Salterton Croquet Club
David Purdon	Budleigh Salterton Croquet Club

Derek Trotman	Croquet North
Les Butler	East Dorset LT & Croquet Club
Peter Dyke	Nailsea & District Croquet Club
Geoff Hughes	Nailsea & District Croquet Club
Canon Peter Cole	Rother Valley Croquet Club
Hazel Kittermaster	Surbiton Croquet Club
Diana Brothers	Sussex County Croquet Club
Hyacinth Coombs	Sussex County Croquet Club
Bryan Teague	Sussex County Croquet Club

Those present at the meeting received their diplomas from the President.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None was raised.

13. PRESIDENT'S CLOSING ADDRESS

You will have gathered from the Chairman's Report that the Council and its Committees have, as always, been extremely active during the past year. I hope that when you return to your clubs you will be able to answer the question "What does the CA do to benefit us"? I thank Council members on your behalf for all the work they do, usually behind the scenes.

Since the last AGM there has been a loss to the world of croquet which I am sure you would wish me to refer to. Ashley Heenan OBE, of New Zealand, who died recently, became the first President of the World Croquet Federation when it was formed in 1989, an office which he held until 1994. He played in the MacRobertson Shield in 1951, where he met a young John Solomon playing in his first Test series. This began a lifelong friendship based on their love of croquet and music. Ashley managed the successful New Zealand Test team in this country in 1986, and the team insisted that he played in the last match. He was President of the New Zealand Croquet Council from 1985 to 1988.

The rest of this Address will be devoted to John Solomon's presidency, his influence on the game, and his prowess as a player, no doubt to his embarrassment.

The Association has been exceptionally fortunate to have had John as President for 22 years. During that time, in addition to normal presidential duties, he has travelled widely to croquet events in other countries, and because of his legendary status his visits have had huge influence.

The Channel Islands, France, Switzerland and Italy have found his visits inspirational; they stimulated exchanges of teams and the development of the game in those countries, with France even staging a World Championship. Other trips were also made to the Republic of Ireland and the Bahamas, and John also coached extensively in South Africa before he became President.

John also attended three of the four World Championships which have been held overseas: Newport R I in 1992, Fontenay-le-Comte, France in 1995 and Bunbury, Australia in 1997. He actually qualified as a competitor in Newport some 15 years after he announced his retirement from competition.

We have received the following message from the Australian Croquet Council.

Can you please pass on to John Solomon the very best wishes for a long and happy retirement, from Croquet Australia and the many croquet players in Australia that over such a long number of years have come into personal contact with John, and also the many, many others, who have known John through various

other ways.

Many of us in Australia remember John's attendance, in 1997, at the World Croquet Championships in Bunbury, Western Australia.

The world of croquet has been very aware of John Solomon for such a long time, before in fact several of the current champions in most croquet countries were born.

It must be difficult to think of any croquet player who has had such an impact over such a long period of time in both the areas of playing and administration. The benefit to the sport of croquet from John Solomon's involvement is appreciated in all croquet playing countries.

We owe a debt of gratitude to our peripatetic President. As his successor, I cannot promise to be such a traveller, but I will definitely attend the 2005 WCF World Croquet

Championship in Cheltenham!

John has had a particular influence on the game in the USA. He was a member of the Hurlingham team which visited Westhampton in 1967, encountering a game with balls played in the sequence Blue, Red, Black, Yellow and an unusual court setting. By 1981 the USCA had adopted the standard court layout, equipment and accessories, and had benefited from several visits by Nigel Aspinall, but were playing to 'American Rules'. These involved balls played in sequence, deadness (a ball's deadness after taking croquet only relieved in that turn or a subsequent turn by scoring its hoop), and a nine inch 'yard line'.

An unofficial team, organised by Nigel Aspinall, visited Palm Beach at that time. It consisted of Nigel, John, William Ormerod and myself. A match was played against a

USCA team, with half the games played according to American Rules and half Association Croquet 'International Rules'. Our team won decisively, using attacking tactics, and the precision of the play of John and Nigel made a lasting impression on the hosts. The American Rules game had favoured cautious tactics: a failed attempt at a break would render an aggressive player '3-ball dead', unable to make a roquet in a subsequent turn, and was usually fatal. The break-making ability of John and Nigel was a revelation.

John made two further visits to the USA, one a few years later to play in a select international team and the other to compete in the World Championship in 1992.

To foster the development of Association Croquet in the USA the CA's International Committee instituted an annual International Rules match between Great Britain and the USA, starting in 1988. The CA provided an American silver two-handed cup, dated circa 1910, named the Solomon Trophy. These regular contests were a prelude to the United States joining the MacRobertson Shield contests for the first time in 1993.

At this evening's dinner John will be presented with a Certificate of Appreciation from the United States Croquet Association. The inscription is as follows:

Presented by the United States Croquet Association in recognition of several years of unselfish service for the development of croquet in the United States of America.

I must now appear to digress, for a reason which will shortly become obvious, by referring to my very good friend Tremaine Arkley, who is an Honorary Member of our Association. Tremaine is a distinguished player who represented the USA in four Solomon Trophy teams and in their first MacRobertson Shield in 1993. He has a superb collection of croquet art and other memorabilia and

many will remember the beautiful paintings he loaned to the Centenary exhibition at the Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum in 1997.

Tremaine has asked me to make the following announcement, on behalf of his wife Gail and himself; they deeply regret they are unable to be present today.

We are making a bequest in John's name to the CA of many 19th and 20th century croquet items from our collection. The items include trophies, CA medals and signed first edition books including presentation copies and books from the personal libraries of many famous old English croquet players. We will also give some appropriate pieces of English croquet art. We will endow the bequest with a purchasing fund for future purchases.

During our lifetime we will maintain and continue to add to this Solomon Collection and when the CA is prepared to accept part or all of the pieces we will make the arrangements.

I was asked to make this announcement as a complete surprise, and so Council were only informed today with John absent. Council will express their gratitude for this wonderfully generous bequest. The naming of the Collection after John shows how very highly he is regarded in the USA.

From the time when he first burst on the croquet scene in 1951 as a 19-year-old member of the Test team travelling to New Zealand in 1951 (by ship in those days), John has exerted a huge influence on the way the game is played. He soon began to promote, by his example, more adventurous play, using the triple peel as a means of winning games in two turns rather than three. A three-ball triple was his answer to Patrick Cotter's defensive ploy in an Open Championship semi-final of refusing a lift shot and placing a ball in corner 1.

Colin Prichard, in the Centenary Yearbook, declared that 'He kept croquet's flame alight through the dark days of the fifties and early sixties, and beyond,' and David Prichard, in his History of Croquet, wrote 'He was constantly trying out new gambits which disconcerted his opponents and astonished the spectators. Subtle leaves, daring openings and a wealth of spectacular feats flowed from his fertile brain.'

John pioneered the concept of the sextuple, although his leave differed from the modern 'delayed' leave. The one disappointment in his astonishing career is that he only completed the six peels and peg out once, in a friendly game in New Zealand. But his most amazing peeling feat was in the Open Doubles in 1972, when his partner Patrick Cotter failed to appear for their first round match. Starting each game by placing Cotter's ball in corner 1, John won the match by the unbelievable score of +24 +21, peeling Cotter's ball through all twelve hoops in both games.

Fittingly, in 1991, John presented a trophy to be awarded to the player completing most peels in the Open Championship.

John became Chairman of Council at the extraordinarily young age of 30. He immediately addressed the problem of excessively long games between high bisquers of similar handicaps, and advocated the full bisque system. He returned to this theme in his book in 1966, and again in his 1997 Solomon lecture. Alas, games lasting five or six hours still occur, and some full bisque games are played with too high a base. The other theme which he has always pressed is the use of shortened games, and this campaign has met with greater success.

At the Dinner this evening John's playing career will be covered in some detail. Here I will confine myself to pointing out that in the latter half of the sixties, new players of world class

calibre were emerging, Nigel Aspinall and Keith Wylie in particular. With a Test Tour to Australia due in January 1969, competition was especially fierce. Yet John won six successive Open Championships from 1963-68. He seemed, and indeed was, unbeatable.

John was a very complete player. His shooting combined great power with accuracy, and his book is well worth reading for his thoughts on this subject. The 1969 Test team met at Hurlingham shortly before departure for Australia, and John took us out to lawn 7 for a brief practice. He placed 4 balls on A-baulk and shot at hoop 1. All four went cleanly through and John pronounced himself satisfied with his swing. He had not held a mallet for three months!

John was also a superb exponent of croquet strokes. I count myself fortunate that when I took up the game in the sixties I could watch him and learn these strokes by imitation; many others also copied John.

In his book John describes at length the 'two main grips, the Irish grip and the standard grip.' He then goes on to say 'My own grip is somewhat strangely neither of these; in fact I am almost alone in adopting it.' This was doubtless true in 1966, but certainly not now.

There are two points which have escaped John's many imitators. The first is that John only used the Solomon grip for single-ball strokes; he played all his croquet strokes using the standard grip. Secondly, he was ambidextrous; his Solomon grip had the right hand uppermost, while for croquet strokes the top hand was his left. This variation seemed natural to him.

John had the ability of all champions to raise his game when necessary and to bring off the apparently impossible shot. An example comes from one of the finest games I have ever seen. In a Champion of Champions match in 1969, John pegged out two balls against Nigel Aspinall, leaving Nigel for hoop 1 and himself for penult. Playing inspired croquet Nigel had reached rover before John had made that hoop, and was lurking on the side boundary with John in position. John ran rover, finishing about a yard beyond the hoop with apparently no shot at the peg. He turned round and calmly jumped over rover to hit the peg. Perhaps he remembered how, in 1957 at Cheltenham, he had jumped over hoop 2 to peg out.

John has been a great champion, and like other great champions he always had an impeccable court demeanour. I can only remember one occasion when his feelings showed, when his ball unaccountably drifted over the boundary at Hurlingham. I am sure that I detected one eyebrow slightly raised and the forehead furrowed.

He was a perfect role model throughout his career, and to adapt Kipling's famous words, reproduced over the Centre Court entrance at Wimbledon, he always treated those two impostors, triumph and disaster, just the same.

John has been paid many tributes, but my favourite is by John Prince, of New Zealand, himself a legend of the game, quoted in Mulliner and McCullough's book. "The most complete player I have seen is John Solomon - to watch him play is like listening to a favourite piece of music; there is an artistic quality about his play".

John Solomon has rendered exceptional, and indeed unique, services to the game of croquet, both in this country and across the world. I now invite him to accept the Council Medal, the highest award which the Council is empowered to make.

Throughout his Presidency John has enjoyed the support of his wife Barbara, and she is much loved by all in the croquet world. I now ask her to accept a bouquet of flowers as a small token of our affection.

Finally, I wish Barbara and John many more years during which they continue to enjoy their musical and theatrical activities.

The meeting then gave Barbara and John a standing ovation.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 6.15.

News & Information Contd.

CA Secretary Klim Seabright, would like to remind members that he will shortly need to "close" the collection for his predecessor Nigel Graves. Cheques made out to the Croquet Association should be sent to the CA office now. He would also like some idea of numbers for the AGM lunch, which will be a formal opportunity to thank Nigel for his contribution to the CA. The AGM is on the 15th October.

Obituaries

Tony Brand

Tony Brand, one of the gofathers of Exeter Croquet Club and father of the golf croquet specialist Brand Twins (Ivor and Richard) has died at the age of 87. Devonian croquet players will remember him for his multi-feathered hat and his generous contribution to the bar takings at Budleigh Salterton.

As a young man Tony was a keen sportsman and athlete, skilled at every game he played. He so communicated his enthusiasm for games to his sons that they both became PE teachers, but when they began, as teenagers, to beat their father at games, Tony conceived a fiendish plan.

Having moved the family to Exeter in 1971, Tony bided his time until the boys and their sister had left for University (circa 1980) then bought a garden croquet set and began to teach himself to play. He was then 62. As a founder member of the Exeter Club he played there and at Budleigh until 1995, becoming a coach and a referee and achieving a handicap of 12. An average player, perhaps, but a tremendous enthusiast. Most importantly, he taught his sons to play, thus re-establishing his dominance and fulfilling his cunning plan.

Alas as age weakened his pass rol, the twins began to defeat Tony at croquet, too, and he and his wife Beryl fled to the croquet wilderness that is North Herefordshire: to a charming half-timbered cottage with room in the garden for - oh dear! - a croquet lawn. In a moment of madness Beryl forked out for the necessary earthworks and I was dragged out of croquet retirement in nearby Ludlow to pull out biosques and watch Tony clang hoops.

In the early days, Tony strove manfully to get croquet going in the Leominster area but was no more successful than I had been some years before. He still played once a year at Phyllis Court, but golf croquet only. Until a month before his death he continued to play in his garden with his family. He died in hospital

in June.

Tony Brand had many talents and many interests, though croquet was perhaps the main enthusiasm of his last twenty years. He was generous, companionable and a truly spiritual man. He loved a walk, a drink or three and a game of pool in the Mortimer Arms. He was a great family man and a good friend.

Peter Dorke

Peter Gosney

Sussex County Croquet Club has recently lost one of its most popular members, namely Peter Gosney who passed away on 3rd May. He had only a few days earlier been taken into hospital with a suspected heart attack, which was said to be mild but which resulted in his relatively sudden death a few days later due to an accumulation of fluid.

He had been looking forward with his wife Myra to playing in the Spring Bank Holiday Tournament in the express hope of getting his handicap down to 7, but it was not to be.

He joined the Club in 1989, having then, recently married Myra who was already a member. Both had lost their first spouses and often spoke of their good fortune in renewed married life.

Peter improved his game steadily over the years, being an extremely formidable opponent on his best days with an inimitable, pronounced, deliberate approach to the ball and hard-hitting style.

He volunteered regularly for matches and had been captain for several years of teams entered in the S.E. Federation leagues. He had some successes in tournaments with handicap events and on a holiday to South Africa came home as the winner of a handicap event, with a handsome ceramic plate. He rarely played doubles with Myra as partner, but in 2003 they played together in our 14-point team doubles tournament and they won all their 12 games, securing the trophy for the "Goshawks" team.

When Peter joined the Club, he came with 50 years experience as an electrical contractor, which has proved to be an exceptional blessing to the Club. Renewed wiring throughout Clubhouse and Pavilion, new consumer units, fluorescent lighting, electric convector heaters, and electric water heaters to replace obsolete gas appliances, evidence this. Additionally, he installed security lighting with time controls and armoured cables to the workshop and machine shed, the latter to feed the pump and control circuits for the Automatic Irrigation System.

Without being asked he enthusiastically turned his hand to many other tasks around the Club site. Examples being fencing repairs, hut repairs, painting and a fixed ball stop all along the south perimeter of the grounds. For the World Golf Croquet Championships he constructed the substantial platform on which the dignitaries sat and made their opening speeches and where the trophy winners received their cups.

Even though in his late 70's he appeared very fit, strong, and able to cope with physically demanding jobs both at home and at the Club. Therefore, it was such a shock to everyone to see him go. He will however, be well remembered: - as we glance around to see his handiwork and as we switch on lights and heaters - and we'll miss that pipe we grumbled about.

Our sympathies go to his wife Myra, his two daughters and brother John, the latter having lost his wife Marion, only two months ago; both Club members.

Bryan Teague

The World Championships Cheltenham 6th-14th August, 2005

Information to Visitors

Play will take place at Cheltenham, Bristol, Edgbaston and Nailsea croquet Clubs for the whole of the event, except that play will only take place at Cheltenham on the weekend of the 13th and 14th August.

There will be lunch/ tea/ refreshment at all FOUR venues. It is requested that 'large' parties advise the club concerned before arrival.

Parking at the satellite clubs will be in the neighbouring roads. At Cheltenham there will be signs directing people to the overflow carpark in the Eat Gloucestershire Club (next door).

There will be an official programme costing £1. I believe one or two of the satellite clubs are also producing a local brochure.

There will be 'meeters and greeters' at all venues who will advise visitors of general etiquette and any special arrangements.

Play is scheduled to commence at 10.00am.

Who Will Win & Why?

Reg Bamford (World Champion 2001)

"Given that the event is being held in England, I think it very unlikely that the winner will not come from the Big 4 (Rob, Dave, Chris and myself). For someone to travel across the world (with the associated disadvantages of jetlag, out-of-season play, and not having played often at the venue), and then to win 4 or 5 tough matches in a row, is a truly big task. I don't think there's much to choose between the Big 4 in ability, but it will come down to winningness. My personal views on each individual's belief about who can beat whom, and who can't beat whom, makes me think that Rob and myself will battle out the final!"

Dave Kibble (CA Webmaster)

"Who'll win? Rob, Chris, Dave or Reg. Maybe the Open Championship will make Reg get some practice in before the World Championship, which will make it a bit more even. Dave and Chris believe that Rob is the best and therefore find it difficult

to beat him.

Conditions will make a big difference - if it's nice, dry and fast, Rob; more evenly paced and with some practice, Reg is in with a good chance. I think if you wanted one name it would have to be Rob."

Chris Williams (Rankings Compiler)

"I think you have to bet on Fulford, especially after some of his recent setbacks. Dropping to world number 3 will have hit him hard and he will no doubt be practising six hours a day until the event."

Bob Alman (Editor of Croquet On-Line Magazine)

"There isn't any reasonable choice beyond Fulford, Clark, Maugham and Bamford - who are all great once-and-future champions, of course. But of that quartet, I'd like to see Bamford win again, because Reg at least *claims* to be something other than a Brit, and as you well know, the Brits have too many monopolies in this sport already. You have all the world championships (except the womens Golf Croquet championship in Egypt), and now you even own the WCF, with Openshaw the president and Brian Storey the Secretary-General. So I have to root for Reg, if only because he can break the British Monopoly. If he really wants to win, he'll work hard on his swing-trainer to give himself the critical edge - a slightly higher hit-in percentage.

Phil Cordingley (Tournament Director)

Can't bring myself to bet against home advantage. Given the recent form and success of Clarke & Maugham, it is going to be tougher than ever for them, but for overall consistency, skill and experience, can't bring myself to bet against Bamford and Fulford. Despite the current ranking ascendancy of Clarke and Maugham, you just know when the chips are down one of these two will likely produce what's required. Pure prejudice suggests Rob to retain. On a purely personal note however, nothing would give me greater pleasure than having to eat my own words in the event of a Clarke or Maugham victory.

Robert Fulford (Current World Champion)

"Anyone could win. Mainly hoping the conditions will be similar to 2003 when they were deadly fast. In those conditions it is difficult to see anyone else being able to compete with me and Reg on break play. Dave Maugham might make a good stab at it, but would be likely to have to beat us both. In easy conditions, which are more likely, the tournament will be much more wide open. Clarke, Trimmer and Mark McInerney

will have a real chance. The winner will have to play well but from personal experience I'd say much will also depend on dumb luck - whether an opponent takes a chance to finish against you or blows it, whether the draw opens up nicely in front of you so you don't have to play the toughest opposition."

EDITORIAL

I won't pretend that this issue of the Gazette has not been difficult, if not nigh on bloody impossible.

I openly admit this is not a great issue, in fact it is pretty boring, but given the various problems and constraints I think it is a stepping stone to the kind of issue we would all like to see. I have had a positive response to returning to the hot seat from some readers and they are beaver away on items for future issues. Please bear with us, or of course you could have an idea you wish to share with either me or the readers, feel free. I am openly encouraging reader participation, as that way you get a say in what goes into your magazine. I would particularly like to hear from anyone regarding coaching material, or advice and ideas on improving your own play. Equally I would like to see more features written by experienced players on different aspects of the game, such as that Written last year by Pete Trimmer. Club Focus is also to return to the Gazette, so if your club was not featured during my last occupation and you think your club deserves to be featured then please get in touch with me, this is a good opportunity for clubs to self themselves and their tournaments to players who have not yet visited. You can contact me in the usual ways (see page 2) or alternatively feel free to talk to me at the forthcoming World Championships.

Speaking of the World Championships, I recommend to any readers that the event is well worth a visit to watch and learn, as well as enjoy of course. Details of the venues can be found elsewhere in the Gazette and I know you will be made most welcome by any of the host clubs. If you wish to see a particular match you can see the full schedule of play on the internet go to <http://www.wcfcroquet.org/Tournaments/Mitsubishi-2005-World-Croquet-Championship.htm>.

Gail Curry

The Croquet Association

CROQUET SHOP

Expert advice, discounted prices, rapid delivery on most items



CROQUET MALLETS

A comprehensive selection of mallets, including, Pidcock, Percival, Hobbs, George Wood and Jaques. The popular George Wood Original mallet at £71 + delivery is still our best seller. Come to us for the widest variety and impartial expert advice.

Also a range of hard and soft mallet covers to suit most mallets, including both padded and unpadded.

Hard Leather Case, 9.25 x 38 x 2.5"	£69.00
Blue cover with croquet logo	£20.00
Padded blue cover with croquet logo	£24.00
Blue canvas cover for up to 40" shaft and 12" head	£29.00

CLOTHING

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

Breathable wet weather jacket	£35.00
Breathable jacket & trousers	£49.00
Fleece reversible windcheater jacket	£35.00
Fleece reversible gilet	£23.50
Roll up sports windcheater	£29.00
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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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