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THE CROQUET GAZETTE

ISSUE 298

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REG BAMFORD BACK ON TOP OF THE WORLD



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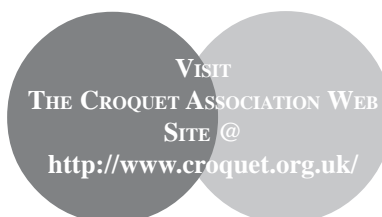
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Tournament Reports & Results
Emailed reports are welcomed. Attachments may be sent in Microsoft Word format, text format. Hand written reports are no longer acceptable due to the illegibility of most.

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

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Obituary

Andrew Bennet

It is with great sadness that I have to report that Andrew Bennet died of a heart attack on August Bank Holiday Monday at the age of 53. The day before his death, he had enjoyed watching the Northern Championships at Bowdon.

Andrew started to play croquet in the early 1970s at Cambridge, where he read modern languages, specialising in French, Spanish and linguistics. At university he acquired the nickname "Bucket" which is still used by many of his friends. Following a year in Spain, he returned to Cambridge to read for a Certificate in Education, and then taught in two schools in Blackburn. Later he became a specialist teacher of English as a foreign language, teaching in Brighton, Saudi Arabia, Dubai and Thailand.

Andrew played in tournaments at many clubs and became an A-class player, achieving a handicap of 1. He was a member of Southport and, later, Bowdon, and represented the Northern Counties. Andrew liked to play what he called "brighter croquet" and was a keen exponent of peeling breaks. In doubles, he would often suggest that the shot should be taken by the first player to reach his ball. I am told that he used this tactic at Hurlingham and would like to have seen the reaction. As a referee, his first question would often be "And what is the intended fault?" He became an excellent manager, a championship referee and an examining referee, and enjoyed discussing the more abstruse byways of the Laws. One evening in a pub he was asked how many more turns there would be when the last stroke of your turn in a timed game is a double tap and time is called in between the taps. He came up with a masterful analysis of the problem, but unfortunately neither of us could remember it the next morning. Visitors staying with Andrew during tournaments would be served a gigantic "Bucket breakfast" with bacon, eggs, sausages, black pudding, devilled kidneys, mushrooms and more. After his hospitality the previous evening, this would often be more of a challenge than the subsequent croquet.

Andrew was an enthusiastic contributor to the Gazette, writing

tournament reports, coaching articles, anagrams of players' names, French translations of croquet terms ("la confiture dans la gueule du vagabond", jam in the jaws of rover), and even poems. He spent some time as Sports Editor, in charge of tournament reports and results. When shortened versions of croquet were becoming popular, he wrote an account of a delightfully bizarre lengthened game (Leeps and Poohs) for the Gazette, and recently revived it for Don Gaunt's book on alternative games.

Andrew's greatest legacy was as a teacher. He coached a number of young players on a 20 yard by 5 yard lawn at Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School in Blackburn. This group became known to the rest of us as Bennet's Bandits (possibly the first use of the word "bandit" with this meaning?) and several became minus players, including Chris Clarke. When the CA made the first Coach of the Year award to Andrew in 1988, Pat Hague wrote in the Gazette that he had "patience, tolerance, a quiet and confident approach and a willing eagerness to help at any time" and that after a busy day at QEGS he would drive off to coach on the Fylde coast and the next evening think nothing of crossing the Pennines to do a stint at Pendle. Chris Clarke made another important point in a tribute on the Bowdon website written shortly after Andrew's death, saying that one of the secrets of his success was the knack of making croquet fun.

Outside croquet, Andrew was a talented musician. He was an expert cellist and played orchestral and chamber music all over the North. He sang in choirs, was a competent pianist and played a number of other instruments. His rendition of "The Flight of the Bumble Bee" on the double bass had to be heard to be believed. He was also an expert linguist, adding Arabic to his repertoire when working in the Middle East and learning several other languages such as Portuguese and Turkish.

Andrew will be missed very much by his many friends in the world of croquet and elsewhere, but we can be thankful that he was there to make our croquet fun.

Martin Kolbuszewski

Handicap Alterations

Roehampton 'B' Level 25-26 June			
Brian Rees	3.5	to	4
A Reed	4.5	to	4
Dyffryn Club 24 July			
Gary McElwain	0.5	to	0
Sue McKay	9	to	10
Jim Clancy	14	to	12
East Dorset July Week 2005			
Martin Stephenson	6	to	8
Peggy Nutland	7	to	5
David Kendrick	12	to	11
Norwich 'B' Level 30-31 July 2005			
Mr TD Sparks	5	to	4.5
Hurlingham Tournament 30 July - 7 Aug 2005			
JM Bowcott	8	to	7
RF Hoskyns	1.5	to	2
TFH Jessel	4.5	to	4
J C Kay	9	to	7
N K Polhill	3	to	2.5
Miss S M Strong	12	to	14
JM Taylor	3	to	2.5
Hurlingham Club 28 July			
PJM Prain	14	to	12
Colchester Over 50's 2-4 August 2005			
KE Pickett	4	to	3.5
GR Winder	4.5	to	5
Mrs M Gardner	18	to	16
I M Hill	9	to	8
Mrs V Lester	16	to	18
East Dorset Mid Week 9-10 Aug 2005			
Bill Arliss	2	to	2.5
David Williams	12	to	11
David Kendrick	11	to	10
Liz Webb	8	to	7
Roger Parsons	14	to	16
Roy Edwards	1	to	1.5
South East Federation 14 Aug 2005			
Gary Duke	7	to	6
Sussex County August Tournament 25-29 Aug 2005			
Mr J Isaacs	5	to	6
Mr A Cottle	3	to	2.5
Mrs J Slawson	14	to	16
Mr N Urban	5	to	4.5
Mr R F Knapp	1.5	to	1
Miss J Carpenter	14	to	12
Mrs C Street	10	to	9
Mr N Coote	20	to	14
Mr G Rushant	18	to	14
Hunstanton 4 Day 27-30 Aug 2005			
P Duke-Cox	11	to	10
C G Donovan	7	to	8
M J Leach	4	to	3.5
G Woolhouse	4	to	3.5
D C Tutt	1.5	to	1
East Dorset August Weekend 29 Aug 2005			
Mr J E Crowe	3	to	2.5
Mr R Wood	10	to	9

THE CROQUET GAZETTE



Issue 298 - Aug/Sept 2005 £3.00

Front Cover: Reg Bamford kisses the Wimbledon Cup after winning the World Championship at Cheltenham in August.

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Chairman's Column

I had the pleasure of representing you at the opening of the Pendle and Craven Club's new pavilion and lawns on a glorious summer day, with no less than four Mayors or other Council Chairmen (it being near the border of the two Rose counties) complete with their chains of office. Relocation from their former site in the grounds of a college had been made possible with grants from Lancashire County Council's land reclamation fund, the CA's development fund and other bodies, in addition to donations from and a lot of hard work by a number of individuals. In particular, the Club asked that John Beech's efforts should be recognised by the award of a CA Diploma. Photographs of the site before work started show the transformation that has been achieved, turning a patch of waste ground near a factory into an amenity for the village of Earby. Are there any other clubs with sheep grazing in an adjacent field?

The recent world championship gave me the opportunity to visit two established clubs, Bristol and Nailsea, for the first time, as well as Edgbaston and Cheltenham which were familiar to me. I was very impressed by the efforts made at all the venues to provide the best possible playing conditions, with hoops meticulously set to 1/32" in the main event, to provide lunches, teas and, at Cheltenham, breakfast and supper for the players, to welcome spectators and to keep a worldwide audience informed. The WCF were very appreciative of the arrangements for the event, which seems to have been enjoyed by players and spectators alike. Thank you all.

Despite their hospitality to various officials, players and visitors during the worlds (even to the extent of installing a pool table), I'm sure that Klim and our new Assistant Secretary, Liz Budworth, will be glad to have their office back and some peace to get to grips with their new IT setup. The two elderly computers have been replaced, there is now a broadband connection, and the database software has been rewritten using current software. Inevitably, there have been some teething problems with all this change, but I trust you will bear with us until normal service is resumed.

Ian Vincent

Editorial

As I said in the previous issue it was not an easy issue to complete given all of the problems that arose. However I wish to apologise for the standard of typesetting in that particular issue and hopefully, with the aid of my trusty new proof reader we shall not have any further problems in this regard.

I also need to apologise for two omissions concerning the previous front cover. The first for omitting to name the players on the previous front cover, who were from top left clockwise, David Maugham, Reg Bamford, Robet Fulford and Chris Clarke. The second is for using a copyrighted photograph of David Maugham without obtaining the permission of the owner, Adrian Wadley. I apologise unreservedly for this error, which was mine alone.

At the risk of repeating what may have been previously said, or that which may be said later, the World Championships was a truly fabulous event. This was made possible not by any individual, but by a whole host of dedicated croquet enthusiasts. I have been lucky enough to play in one previous event and spectate at another, but I have to say the spirit of this event and the obvious amount of planning and sheer hard work was greatly appreciated by all those concerned. All four of the venues, Cheltenham, Bristol, Nailsea and Edgbaston are to be congratulated for their efforts, and hopefully were able to gain something from the event, be it in the form of publicity or club spirit. I understand all venues were regularly visited by spectators and I am sure will be remembered both by the players and spectators for their welcome and facilities.

As for any big event there were some results to upset the form book. It was particularly heartening to see some of the younger players demonstrating their skills and ability to take on the top players at the very highest levels, so well done to Marcus Evans, James Death of England, and Paddy Chapman of New Zealand, who I am sure will be around for a long time to come. It was also good to see the players from the lesser well known countries, or developing nations competing. I am sure by the time of the Next World Championships some of them may well be ready to show us the skills they acquired at this year's event, providing they can continue to develop the sport in their own respective countries. Ed

LETTERS

Lack of Support for Juniors

Over the past few years, I have been lucky enough to be able to play croquet, where and whenever I want. This is due to help and support from my family, providing financial backing, and members of my local club agreeing to give me lifts to and from tournaments.

I have also received two grants from the CA during the last two years, to help out with accommodation costs and such like. I am not aware of the CA providing this kind of help to any other young players, although clearly there are very few. This year the CA has refused to provide any such grant, and has failed to give me a reason for their change of heart. Due to this decision I have had to withdraw from two tournaments. I cannot help but feel disappointed because by the sounds of it the money is there; it isn't like they have to find it from anywhere. This all conspires to make it appear that the CA thinks that I/we are not worth it.

A national newspaper recently contacted me, the CA having given them my phone number. I was happy to talk to them and promote croquet, however next time it will be difficult to restrain myself from telling them how the CA fails to support junior players. If you look at young people in other sports then it is clear that the governing federations want to encourage them, and so provide financial support, so why is it different in croquet? How does the CA expect to attract teenagers to the sport if they receive no encouragement or financial help?

Last year I won the junior championship. There were three entrants, and it was played at Parsons Green. I have never received the trophy and on numerous occasions have tried to contact the manager but no reply. This year the CA has failed to organise the event, which I think is poor. Even if they were to say to me they were not holding the event due to lack of entrants, it would be better than seemingly forgetting about the whole thing altogether. The junior championships clearly mean nothing to the CA, and neither do the younger players.

It is understandable that most of the CA's time may have been taken up with organising the world championships, but I

feel like I should bring this subject up, so it doesn't get forgotten about.

*Jack Wicks, 18
Colchester*

Very few tournaments offer reduced entry rates for students/juniors. This would be a good way to reduce costs, but also allow youngsters to play in more tournaments. I understand the green fees and whatever else have to be covered by the entry fees, but £50 to play in the Opens seems a little steep, especially on a tight budget.

It would be good to see the CA Junior Squad reinstated, as it 'fast tracks' younger players into the game, and keeps them interested. With our sport being quite a time-consuming game, it is important to grab the attention of the younger players before they get bored by the potentially long learning curve through a club's internal coaching system. Which is not always adequate if there is a lack of sufficiently good coaches within the club.

*Eugene Chang, 19
Bath*

Jack sent me a copy of his letter before forwarding it to you, and I agree with everything he says. My experience has been much the same; when I was about Jack's age I believe there was a plan to develop youth with a view to retaining the Mac in future years, with David Openshaw in charge. Since at the time I was (apparently) the only player in the country of that age and ability, it wasn't possible to do any organised coaching, so I was selected for the CA v CAI match with my food and accommodation paid for. Of course I was very grateful, and the experience was useful for my playing development, but that appeared to be that. Since then I have, like Jack, had support from my parents, my club [Nailsea] and even my university [Nottingham], who granted me a sports bursary, but very little if anything from the CA. Like Jack, I was the victim of cancelled and under-promoted Junior Championships. Like Jack, I am keen to promote the sport in the media, and I always try to give the CA web address, but the truth is my other benefactors are more worthy of a mention.

And like Jack, I've managed to become a pretty good player (even if I say so myself), but this has been largely despite the CA rather than because of it.

The tone of this letter has been a little harsh; I certainly appreciate all that the CA does. What it achieves with a small budget and almost entirely voluntary workforce is amazing. But I think it could do more, and if this stings someone into action then we will have at least achieved something.

*Yours faithfully,
Marcus Evans*

Letter Of Thanks

These are a few inadequate words to express the thanks of the World Croquet Federation for the hard work shown by so many people within the Croquet Association and the Bristol, Cheltenham, Edgbaston and Nailsea Croquet Clubs in the recent Mitsubishi Motors 2005 World Croquet Championship

Although I know some of the people involved, I am aware that to caterers and pot washers. Without them it would have been just another event. With them, it was a Championship!

*Brian Storey
Secretary-General, World Croquet Federation*

What's in a name?

Attempts to interest Golf Croquet players in Association Croquet face many obstacles, but one area of confusion could easily be removed. I refer to the identification of hoops after hoop 6 as "1 back" etc and finishing with the rather precious "penult." and "rover". I suggest that the appropriate CA committee should consider this issue, and sensibly recommend that we follow the golf croquet example by using numbers only for all hoops.

John Hall

Gazette Frustration

I sympathize with the frustration which was palpable in your editorial of issue 297 of the Croquet Gazette. I have been reading the magazine

for hoop 2 with Ian's balls in corners 1 and 4.

In the semis, Jonathan Kirby beat Dave Nick fairly tidily, and David Openshaw came back from 1-0 down to beat Chris Dent. I didn't see much of the final itself – but in the decider, Openshaw went round first with a spread, Jonathan hit the ball at the peg from the North boundary and had an NSL. Openshaw, somewhat to the crowd's surprise, shot from south of hoop 1 at the chink of partner ball showing on the north side of hoop 4, but missed and Jonathan finished with an easy triple. My overall impression was that both Jonathan and David were playing reasonably well on easy lawns, but that Jonathan's shooting was marginally superior.

The consolation plate event was run as an Egyptian, with the top 2 and losing semi-finalists going into a knockout on the Sunday afternoon. In the Plate final, Jenny Williams beat Bob Burnett +26tp.

The prizes were presented by Brian Murdoch. Jonathan received the Moffat mallet, which is the oldest croquet tournament trophy anywhere in the world, dating from 1870. The peeling prize was awarded to Ian Lines for 4 tps and an otp, although Jonathan also finished with 5 tps (nobody even attempted to win the Champagne on offer for a sextuple). Thanks were also recorded to Fergus McInnes for organising the event and setting the hoops, Chris Dent for managing and arranging a Nepalese meal for 16 on the Saturday night, and to all those who provided the sumptuous tea on Sunday afternoon.

Ranelagh Gold Cup Roehampton 30-31 July

Report by Kevin Carter

There was a "better class of player" in this year's event, largely owing to its being deliberately scheduled the weekend before the World Championships, with the expectation it would be used as a warm-up. However, perhaps disappointingly only one overseas player, Mike Jenner, entered.

The presence of John Gibbons, Ed Duckworth, David Openshaw, Stephen Mulliner and others did not prevent Dave Maugham for winning the trophy again, though the Roehampton Club did not follow the time-honoured tradition of allowing a three-time winner to keep the trophy...

The all-Bowdon final with Ian Lines was entertaining, with much subtle play. In fact, for most of the match Dave was in catch-up mode, after losing the first owing to being hampered after the rover peel of a TPO and losing the opening of the second. Ian had also played well to get to the final, dispatching John Gibbons and Stephen Mulliner on the way.

Unseeded Chris Farthing played out of his skin, beating Jeff Dawson and David Openshaw before a drubbing by Dave in the SF and narrowly losing to Stephen in the third place play-off.

The big guns did not use the easy conditions to exercise their sextuples, though there were 20 TPs of one flavour or another during the two days. However, in the consolation swiss Ed Duckworth and Chris Patmore tried an SXP at every opportunity. Chris Patmore completed all six peels of one before trickling onto partner ball after an angled Irish peel at rover. In another, later, he left himself a straight quad and got into all sorts of trouble, eventually trying the penult peel from the north baulk behind four-back (it didn't go through). Ed obviously knew when to give up on a forlorn SXP, since he won the swiss.

Results: Final: David Maugham bt Ian Lines -14, +14TP, +17TP 3rd place play-off: Stephen Mulliner bt Chris Farthing +5STP, +2 Swiss consolation: Ed Duckworth (5/7)

Club Focus Contd. (PHYLLIS COURT)

was played on about six different lawns around Henley owned by members.

In 1976 Golf Croquet was introduced to the Club and the section members grew rapidly proving not only to be a great social asset but giving the funds that are required for the upkeep of the courts. However, today the Club still has 24 Association players who play regularly against other clubs and at home in their own tournaments. The start of the season sees proficient players giving up their time to coach newcomers though in the days gone by Jock McElwain was instrumental in setting up the training.



Brian Bucknall & Smokey Eades enjoying a rest from playing at Phyllis Court

When Smokey Eades, who started playing in 1965, was asked why he took up croquet, he said that it was the attraction of a still ball and a tactical game. Brian Bucknall, whose father was a prominent player, thought it looked fun and followed suit.

Croquet is one of 22 club activities, known as Sections, available to members of Phyllis Court Club. Owned by its members, for its members, the Club has established an array of interesting and engaging activities designed to appeal to members of all ages with a wide range of tastes and abilities.

A full programme of events is also arranged for members' enjoyment across the year from dinner dances to literary events and from theatre trips to musical evenings with an annual Christmas party for member's children.

New members are warmly welcomed. To find out more about the croquet section or becoming a member at Phyllis Court Club, please telephone Sue Gill, Marketing and Membership Manager on 01491 570500 or refer to website www.phylliscourt.co.uk

**MARCUS FAILS TO WIN THE NAILSEA OPEN!
Nailsea Advanced Weekend 25-26 June 2005**

Report by Kevin Carter

Somerset is in a state of shock as it is revealed that local wunderkind, Marcus Evans, did not win his home club's advanced level event at the weekend. The editor of the Nailsea and District Echo must be suffering apoplexy as this much-vaunted star, unlucky runner-up in the Men's Championship, was expected to romp away with the event as just a minor stepping-stone to World Championship glory. Marcus enjoyed support of Henmanian proportions and everyone is now asking if the 20 year-old will retire from competitive croquet.

The second seed, winner of the Western Championship, Dave Kibble - who notably decided to bypass the Worlds to concentrate on this event - also crashed out. Neither Marcus nor Dave completed a single sextuple all weekend. Maybe Nailsea's gently undulating sward contributed to this astonishing statistic.

To manage the event Peter Dyke invented a new format, half way between an American Block and an Egyptian. It needs a name - what about The Azores? Nobody seemed to know how it worked, possibly including Peter. Roger Tribe emerged as the day one leader, but did not stay the distance. Ben Green's comeback foundered on the rock of eighth seed Alan Newman. Louise Bradforth stalked around the lawn with assurance but rather less success than she would have liked.

So, it was left to a couple of old codgers, Paul Smith and Your Truly to contest the final. This high-class affair was closely observed by a discerning crowd, who both applauded loudly at its conclusion, in favour of Mr Krypton. 1. Paul Smith 5/7 (winner) 2. Marcus Evans 5/7 (devastated) 3. Kevin Carter 4/7 (runner-up).

Oxford Advanced Weekend 22-24th July 2005

Report by Mark Gooding

The hoops were very firm, therefore despite being on the wide side of 1/8", proved a challenge to all. The lawns were generally quite slow, except in patches where they were very fast. These difficult conditioned meant that all (including Kirby) struggled, leading to some fairly close and scrappy matches. A number of players took advantage of this to beat stronger players with notable victories by Chris Hansen (Hcp 10 bt Hcp 2), Andrew Cottrell (Hcp 6 bt Hcp 0.5), and the tournament winner, Nick Butler (Hcp 3 bt Hcp -0.5).

Other notes;

1.) Peter feels the purporting to take croquet from a live ball should be a fatal error. Therefore, after correcting the error, he deemed his remaining stokes.

2.) Approx. 100 15yr olds descended on the Parks on Friday afternoon - to sit around and drink vodka. Keeping them of the courts was a challenge. Fortunately for them Russell could only play Sat & Sun.

3.) Peter managed to lose by 1 after rushing his opponent onto the peg, having run though rover backward in order to hit it.

4.) Russell had his beer confiscated ("stolen" in his words) by a police woman on Saturday night.

5.) Eugene managed the only triple right at the end of the tournament with only his oppo (Guy) still around to see. (Well, that said, Russell saw it but wasn't concious of what was going on!)

6.) Rain didn't stop play - although a number of players

opted to leave early as they were soaked.

7.) Someone stole Guy's danish pastries - and he was right miffed!

8.) The manager was forced to lose many handicap points in order not to win his own tournament - that's his excuse and he's sticking to it.

9.) Russell did so badly he informed us that none of the games would go on his handicap card so that he could pretend that the weekend didn't really happen.

**Scottish Open 2005
Meadows Croquet Club 16-17 July 2005**

Report by Ian Lines

The Scottish Open Championship was won by Jonathan Kirby, who beat David Openshaw -3, +26tp, +17tp in the final. The 11 competitors also included a number of other minus players including Chris Dent, Dave Nick, Bob Burnett, Ian Lines and Jenny Williams, as well as Jonathan Bowen from Canberra. This was apparently the strongest field of competitors at a Scottish croquet tournament since the Home Internationals were played in Glasgow in 1992.

The event was held at Edinburgh's Meadows Croquet Club, about a mile south of the town centre on the edge of a very pleasant park. The club is also the home of the Scotland's National Croquet Centre. As such it is the Scottish Croquet Association's <http://www.scottishcroquet.org.uk/> centre for the development of the game in Scotland at all levels and hosts major competitions and international events.

As a first time visitor, I was pleasantly surprised by the high quality of the lawns. Meadows was originally a bowls club with 2 lawns with a wide path between, but the path was removed some years ago and now there is ample room for 3 full sized courts, all on the same level. The lawns are remarkably flat and the quality of the grass very good, making them relatively easy, although on the fast side of medium due to the hot and sunny weather which we enjoyed. The lawns are fenced off from the park, and have their own pavillion/park-keeper's lodge, but there is a steady stream



Jonathan Kirby is presented with the Moffat Mallet by Brian Murdoch

of spectators looking over the fence at one end.

The event was run as a knockout with best-of-threes from the quarter finals onwards. Kirby and Openshaw won their quarters in slightly scrappy games; Jenny Williams put her striker's ball hard on the wire when completing the rover peel of a triple to lose -3tp to Dave Nick; and Ian Lines was beaten -14otp in a deciding game by an in-form Chris Dent, who finished from a contact leave

for seven years now but this one takes some beating. I have the impression, especially from the letters which take up a considerable amount of space, that the publication is written by and for the elite of croquet: those who argue at length about the Laws of the South African Croquet Association for example, which are not the concern, nor ever will be of the vast majority of your readers.

If a potential new recruit to the game were to read our magazine he would be completely turned off. All the well known cliches that cling tenaciously to croquet's image would be immediately confirmed! A magazine should be sharp, informative, with humour and lots of pictures. I am not suggesting that all contributors should have journalistic skills but how about confining all this pompous verbosity to the web-site, thus reducing the number of issues necessary and saving time and money.

The majority of our members will never be seriously good croquet players and many clubs are struggling to exist. A magazine like ours should try to widen its appeal, emphasize the sociability of the game and above all lighten up!

Ainsley Jones

There are several points made in this letter and I take on board some of its criticism. However, as said in my previous reply to a letter there is little forum for discussion in croquet and I believe it is only by encouraging the largely silent majority to express their views that we will be able to understand what they require in order to have their respective croquet needs met. I agree that the Gazette should have appeal to all standards of players, but unfortunately can only edit what material

is supplied. I have commissioned material for future issues, which will have a general content, but until such material reaches me I can only work with what I have. Unlike the previous editor this is not my full-time occupation, and even if it were I would not be willing to write the majority of its content. I see my role as being a facilitator for croquet players to share their views and experiences with the general croquet community. Along with this however we have to also remember that the Gazette is also a journal of record, and within that remit much official buisness must be included, whether it is entertaining or not. Perhaps you would care to discuss with me your ideas re 'widen its appeal, emphasize the sociability of the game and above all lighten up', maybe others would care to share their ideas too. Ed

The Foot on the Ball Question

The answer to George Houghton's query in issue 297 about the croquet stroke in which one foot was placed on the striker's ball (known as "tight croquet") is that it was a legitimate stroke, but it was banned as long ago as 1870.

Originally the player placed their left foot on the ball, with their heel on the ground. They then hit their own ball, but the turn ended if their ball moved (this was later relaxed).

In January 1870 there was conference of club secretaries to decide a standard code of laws. In addition to banning "tight croquet" several other important laws which had been developing were formally standardised at that conference. Hoop widths were reduced to 6 inches, and they were to be made of half inch cast iron. The

number of balls in the game was reduced to four - blue, red, black and yellow, while pink, brown, orange and green were dropped. A ball could only be pegged out by a ball which was also for the peg. If either ball went off the court in a croquet stroke then the turn would end (originally going off did not matter, then in 1868 the striker's ball had to stay on the court). The game as we know it was becoming the standard one.

My source for this is "Croquet" by Leonard Williams, published in 1899 by A D Innes and Co Ltd.

I Howard Wright

Dating a mallet - help required

Can anyone help me with dating an A.G. Spalding and Sons, Made in Great Britain, on a Spalding trade mark sticker showing a seamed white ball (baseball) on one side of, and the same title also inscribed into, the other side of the head. Has octagonal cord bound 3 ft handle, and (I think) lignum vitae cylindrical all wood head. The lower rounded shaft has the four first colours painted as rings 9 inches up from the head. The striking faces of the head has carved concentric rings and there is a 1/16 inch synthetic material line running along the top of the head fore and aft. Spalding US no longer make competition mallets and cannot give me any info at all. Does anyone know when Spalding GB last sold mallets, so that I can try and date it?

Nick Nicholas

niconic@odyssean.co.nz



CLUB FOCUS

PHYLLIS COURT CLUB, HENLEY-ON-THAMES

Phyllis Court has a distinguished history which can be traced back to 1301 when the building, known as Fillets Court was the Manor of Henley-on-Thames. Some say the old English name for hay was fillide and so the estate was called after that, the local crop. But most people prefer to think it is called after the old name for a red rose, fyllis or filletts because the red rose was the nominal rent paid by the first owner of the land, John de Molyns. He was Treasurer of the King's Chamber and Keep of the Royal Hawks and Falcons, and was given the Manor of Filletts by King Edward III in 1347. When Phyllis Court Club was founded on 2 June 1906, a rose, not hay, was incorporated in the Club's emblem and is still used today.

Phyllis Court has welcomed many distinguished visitors over the years. Queen Anne, the consort of James I, visited the manor in 1604, and in 1643 Oliver Cromwell built the wall that still edges the garden where it fronts the Thames. Just over forty-five years later, William of Orange held his first court here, on his way to London. In more recent times, in 1998 Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, paid a brief visit when she left the Club by boat to open the River and Rowing Museum in Henley. She in turn was presented with a red rose, history repeating itself.

Down through the centuries Phyllis Court has had many owners, but the most far-sighted was Roy Finlay, who founded a proprietary Club at Phyllis Court in 1906 with a group of friends and London businessmen. His decision was prompted by the Court's position in terms of Ascot and, of course, the Henley Royal Regatta. During the Olympic Regatta in 1908, one hundred of the foreign crew members were entertained at Phyllis Court.

In 1912 King George V and Queen Mary attended the Royal Henley Regatta and it is on record that 'because of the crowds who attended the Regatta, the Grandstand Pavilion was constructed'.

The Club remained opened throughout the First World War,



The Phyllis Court Club

and in 1924 the Prince of Wales (later Edward VIII) became patron. World War II saw Phyllis Court requisitioned by the Ministry of Supply. During the latter part of the War, the Club became a rest home for American air crews, and was finally handed back to its members in 1946.

Phyllis Court Club occupies an unrivalled position on the bank of the Thames set in beautiful Oxfordshire countryside. The sweep of the lawns, the many fine trees and the elegance of the Club House itself convey a feeling of restful well being. The M4 and M40 are immediately accessible with London some forty minutes away. History relates that the Club had two fine croquet courts in 1908 and a further four were constructed in an old cricket field close to the main drive, offering facilities of the highest order. After the World War II there was a decline in croquet playing and a revival did not start until 1970.

Today the Club boasts four very fine courts and croquet continues to be played on the immaculate lawns covering the remains of an ancient road some 2000 years old. The Section plays officially between mid April and the end of September, but members can be seen on the courts in their whites whenever the weather allows or until the groundsmen close the courts for annual maintenance.

In 1970 there were only 9 playing members, one being Smokey Eades who had moved into the area and felt to travel to Roehampton Club was rather a long way. Before becoming a member, Smokey arrived at the Club and after eventually finding some balls tested out what he described as a field. At the time of his arrival Colonel Waugh was also a member of the Club. When Maidenhead Croquet Club closed soon after, some of their members joined Phyllis Court Club, but it was not until 1973/1974 as Dr Boucher retired, and the Caversham Club closed, that everyone moved to Phyllis Court Club bringing with them Brian Bucknall and Nigel Aspinall, a UK champion.

Betty Weitz was instrumental in organising the croquet players into the section that it is today, which totals 145 members. In October 1974 it was suggested that the lawns were cut twice a week but when the Head Gardener retired in 1977 it was felt that to continue these regular cuts, the members might have to do the lawns themselves! In those days the Thames Valley Tournament

Continued on page 21

lawns by 8.30am meant breakfast was somewhat early, so the arrival of the freshest sandwiches I have ever tasted plus scones and cakes at 11am was wonderful.

The croquet itself was much the same as any other tournament, if you are playing well, the heat and lawns are immaterial, if you are making hard work of it, then you can be nitpicking about everything. Finals day was something to comment on however, Reg Bamford, whose home club Rondebosch is, played Sarah Burrow from Jersey in the Open Singles and she certainly gave him a hard time, making an exhilarating afternoon for the spectators, before another delightful round of refreshments.

The two weeks ended on the Sunday morning with a knockabout event between visitors and Rondebosch members. The visitors won and then we all went off for our final meal at an outdoor restaurant half way up Table Mountain by the Rhodes Memorial. I always thought that the view from the Cheltenham Croquet Club courts must be the best, but now I know differently.

Tournament Round-Up

2005 UK Student Championships

June 18-19 2005, Oxford

Report by Mark Gooding

The 2005 UK Croquet Association Student Championships were held on June 18-19 in the University Parks, Oxford. The tournament was hosted by Oxford University Croquet Club and had a broad representation of teams and competitors from across the UK and Ireland. With temperatures reaching 28°C, sunburns all around, and quick sandwiches gobbled up between shots, we had two excellent days of play.

The individual championship was won by Marcus Evans from Nottingham University, with a perfect 5-0 record against a tough field of competitors. In second place was Eugene Chang from Imperial College, who won close matches against Chris Hansen, Sam Mooring and Andrew Cottrell to set up the final with Marcus.

In the team championships, Oxford A defended the team title against Trinity College Dublin after defeating the team from Imperial in the semi-finals.

Many thanks go out to Alan Oldham from the CA, who was on hand to present the individual and team trophies.

Participants are listed below:

Player	University	Handicap
Marcus Evans	Nottingham	-1.5
Eugene Chang	Imperial	3.5
Mark Snow	Oxford	6
Andrew Cottrell	Oxford	6
Sam Mooring	Oxford	7
Enda Coyle	Trinity College Dublin	10
Conor Broderich	Trinity College Dublin	10
Chris Hansen	Oxford	10
Anton Evseev	Oxford	14
Tom Tibbetts	Imperial	20
Tom Holland-Elliot	Imperial	20

Team Event - Semis

Trinity College, Dublin (EC & CB) bt Oxford B (CH & SM) +3T

Oxford A (MS & AC) bt Imperial (EC & TT) +6T

Final

Oxford A (AC & AE) bt Trinity College, Dublin (EC & CB) +21

TEAM CHAMPION - Edmund Reeve Cup.: Oxford University
Singles
Final Standings
1st - (The Dudley Hamilton Miller Cup Winner) -Marcus Evans 5/5
2nd Eugene Chang 4/5
3rd Chris Hansen 2/3



Alan Oldham surrounded by the competitors in the Student Championships
Anton Evseev bt Tom Holland-Elliot +16T, Mark Snow bt Tom Tibbetts +21,

Eugene Chang bt Chris Hansen +3T, Andrew Cottrell bt Enda Coyle +14T, Marcus Evans bt Conor Broderich +24, Sam Mooring bt Anton Evseev +1T, Conor Broderich bt Tom Holland-Elliot +12T, Eugene Chang bt Mark Snow +12T, Marcus Evans bt Andrew Cottrell +17, Marcus Evans bt Anton Evseev +22, Andrew Cottrell bt Conor Broderich +11, Enda Coyle bt Tom Tibbetts +16, Eugene Chang bt Sam Mooring +8, Tom Holland-Elliot bt Tom Tibbetts, Marcus Evans bt Eugene Chang +17, Anton Evseev bt Conor Broderich +7T, Chris Hansen bt Tom Tibbetts +22, Sam Mooring bt Enda Coyle +12T, Marcus Evans bt Sam Mooring +10, Eugene Chang bt Andrew Cottrell +9, Chris Hansen bt Enda Coyle +15, Conor Broderich bt Tom Tibbetts +21.

Caption Competition

Just what was happening at Cheltenhamham on lawn 8?

Put a caption to this competition and the funniest printable response will be published, and the author will receive a suitable prize.

EMail your response to gailecurry@hotmail.com. Closing date for entries is 20th Oct 2005. Editor's decision is final.



Play in progress at the Phyllis Court Club

NEITHER SWALLOWS NOR AMAZONS

An Account of a first Time Visit to the Western Province Tournament in South Africa
By Eileen Magee

For a couple of years now, it has been suggested to us that we should go to South Africa to play in the Western Province Tournament. We hived and hovered and didn't do anything about it, more fool us. But then, in March 2005 we found ourselves queuing up in terminal four at Heathrow waiting to board the overnight plane to Cape Town. I won't bore you with the trials and tribulations of overnight flying for twelve hours, and seemingly being the only one unable to lay one's head to one side, go slack jawed and breathe heavily for hours on end, I won't bore you with that because it really was the only negative ingredient to the whole thing.

Several of the visiting players have been going to Cape Town at this time for some years now and have tailored this holiday to meet their particular requirements. We became immediately aware of the benefits of such fine-tuning. On landing at Cape Town airport, we were delighted to be met by Carole Jackson, event manager, transport monitor and generous hostess, and Bob Stephens who with others had already been there a week touring



Players and visitors with the tournament prizes.

other parts of South Africa. Leaving the airport, I was instantly confused by the road signs that directed us to Worcester, Malmesbury, Athlone and Goodwood! On either side of a very new looking road were vast stretches of very poor looking home-made shacks hardly as big as our garden shed and made of every sort of material. If one lived in the region, one might understand more properly the situation.

We were deposited at our hotel - Medindi Manor in the Rosebank suburb of Capetown. The house was originally a gracious Victorian home built in the late 1890s. Our very comfortable room, originally the drawing room, was spacious and furnished with wonderful period furniture, including a wardrobe that you could set sail in for the colonies, but you wouldn't want in your modern more compact house. Anyway, no time to dawdle,

a quick shower and change, insert matchsticks into the eyelids and we were transported off to Stellenbosch, to the Delaire winery for winetasting and lunch au dehors and overlooking a lovely valley full of vines. I am now addicted to Sauvignon Blanc. And really this was how the fortnight continued, interrupted by croquet. On two days in the first week, David and I played in a handicap tournament arranged purely for the snowbirds, (as opposed to swallows, who visit for months rather than weeks), to acclimatise



Swap the mountain for a tree and you could be in Cheltenham, weather permitting.

ourselves. Others went off sightseeing. In the evenings, we shared cars and went off to whichever eatery or drinkery had received the Mundy seal of approval in previous years. Each year one or two new restaurants are added to the list of places to visit. The variety was eclectic, from a calamari and chips café over a pub, to a white and aluminium night club, to a tree platform in the bush at the dead of night, where someone wanted to paint your face white. There wasn't a dud amongst them. Anyone wanting to join in this winter jaunt, should get in some serious drinking practice beforehand. I had always considered myself a reasonably competent wine imbiber, but I struggled to keep up with the cogniscenti, and gave up after a few days. The Medindi was almost totally occupied by the visiting croquet fraternity, which made for companionable breakfasts and later in the day group lounging about in the lovely garden or sitting on the veranda. The staff at Medindi were very engaging. I think the dining room staff were all related, more regular visitors know the precise connections. On the Sunday the daughter (or daughter in law) served breakfast, gliding in and out of the dining room, dressed in a superb outfit of gold and black, floor length, off the shoulder and with a matching head-dress. Asking her about the outfit, she said that she was going to church later and this was her best dress, in fact it was her wedding dress.

From a croquet angle, David and I played at Rondebosch, the Club's three lawns nestling under the shadow of Table Mountain, mind blowing. We also played at Kelvin Grove, a two-lawn, private club nearby, a miniature of The Hurlingham Club in London. Others also played at Somerset West about 45 minutes away. The members at Rondebosch were so very friendly and welcoming and the provision of morning and afternoon tea was one of the croquet highlights of my visit. Having to be on the

GOLF CROQUET

SUSSEX WIN THE GOLF CROQUET INTER COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS

The entry for this competition was considerably enhanced with new entries from Leicester, Suffolk and Surrey. With regulars Kent, Dorset, Northumberland, County Durham, Oxford and Sussex plus a CA Select team, a total of 10 teams met at Southwick over the weekend of 13/14 Aug. 05

The format was an initial American block with each team of four playing two singles and one doubles against all others in the block. Each member of the team had to play singles and doubles in alternative rounds. The rain held off for most of Saturday but settled in very solidly for the eighth and final round on Saturday evening. At the end of play Sussex and Oxford had six wins each with Dorset and Surrey close behind on five wins.

The final block round was played on Sunday morning putting Sussex in a clear lead with seven wins, Oxford second with 6 wins, Leicester third with 5 wins and 14 net games. Three counties tied for fourth place, all with five wins and 13 net games. Manager Don Beck sorted this out with a shoot out from the boundary to hoop five. Dorset showed their shooting skill to gain fourth place.

In the semi-finals two rounds of two singles and one doubles were played with Sussex beating Dorset 4-2 and Oxford beating Leicester 4-2. For the final the second round was changed to four singles matches with Sussex clinching the final game to take the title 4-3 and Leicestershire



Manager Don Beck with the Sussex team, Bill Arliss, Daphne Gaitley, David Hopkins and Mark Hamilton.

beating Dorset 4-3 in the 3rd/4th place playoff.

A large influence on Oxford's good results came from young Nick Butler whom raced through the weekend without a loss in his singles games. On the way he collected the scalps of several -2 and -3 players and found himself suitably rewarded with a cut from 0 to -2.

WCF 7TH WORLD GOLF CROQUET CHAMPIONSHIP 2006

As I am sure all competitive Golf Croquet players are aware, the next GC World Championship will be held in New Zealand and is only just over six months in the future. This will mean that the Selection Committee will have to meet shortly after the finish of our present season.

As yet we do not know how many places will be available for English players, but based on previous championships I would estimate there will be between 7 and 10 places when places of right and wild cards are considered.

To help the Selection Committee prepare for their task, I would ask that all players who would like to be considered should contact me as soon as possible but no later than 3rd Oct 2005 by either email or letter stating their availability. Lack of response will be taken as lack of interest. To be considered a player must be a Tournament member of the CA and have a playing record during the 2005 season and meet the eligibility requirements for England as given on the WCF web site. I would remind all players that no financial support can be given by the CA and that if selected you will have to fund the following:

- Cost of flights from England to New Zealand and return.
- Entry fee of around £60
- Cost of hotel accommodation for the full period of the event. (We assume the hosts will broker some all-in deals with local hotels)
- Cost of meals during the championship (Lunches could be provided by the hosts but this is likely to depend on sponsorship levels).

Below is a copy of all the data we have to date on these championships. This is taken from the WCF web site and is the situation as at 18 Aug.

Bill Arliss, Chairman Golf Croquet Selection Committee

Text from WCF Web Site

The WCF have much pleasure in announcing that New Zealand has been awarded the hosting of "The Hawke's Bay WCF 2006 World Golf Croquet

The John Hobbs Mallet

The mallet that adjusts to your grip.

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

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

Light aluminium shaft, nylon shock absorber, variable weight heads - see web site:
<http://members.aol.com/Hobbsmall>

John Hobbs, The Lewins, Mayfield Rd, Rotherfield, E. Sussex TN6 3LS Tel & Fax 01892 852072 Email Hobbsmall@aol.com

Manor House Mallets

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

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

Revolutionary 2001 model £220

Mallet bags (£27) Head wraps (£7.50)

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

Championship". The event will be played from Saturday 4 March to Sunday 12 March 2006 at Te Mata, Marewa and Rangatira Croquet Clubs.

The total number of entries allowed will be 64 with the selections decided in due course jointly between the New Zealand organisers and WCF. The Laws and Regulations that will govern the event shall be the WCF Rules of Golf Croquet in operation at the time of the event.

The Director of the event shall be Mr. Don Reyland. The Tournament Referee of the event shall be Mr. Gordon Smith, supported by other Referees.

Don Reyland, President, Hawke's Bay Croquet Association, said, "We believe Hawke's Bay is the best location in which to stage this event. Apart from having three clubs with lawns of the highest standards, Hawke's Bay is the leading Golf Croquet Association in New Zealand with all three clubs having past experience in hosting national tournaments.

Hawke's Bay is the Mediterranean of New Zealand with a wonderful climate and has many outstanding attractions in the district and is one of the most progressive pastoral and horticultural districts in New Zealand. We in the Bay are confident that we can stage a World Golf Croquet Tournament of the highest standard and provide an environment for players, supporters and visitors that will be most enjoyable.

For background information see:-

<http://www.croquet.org.nz/>

and

<http://www.hawkesbaynz.com/>

Chris Daniels wins the Golf Croquet Selectors Weekend for the Musk Cup

Report by Bill Arliss

This event was originally scheduled as an eight but due to administrative problems on availability, it was decided to increase the event to a twelve. The format chosen was an initial all play all block using single 13 point games with a final knock out for the top four players from the block. The Compton lawns although still fast had slowed after the recent rains to give rather more manageable conditions than were met during the recent Ascot heats.

The block was completed by mid day on Sunday with a returned to form Bill Arliss taking pole position with eight wins from eleven games. Chris Daniels also on eight wins took second place on the who-beats-who rule. Tim King was clear third with 7 wins with Yorkshire's finest, Ed Dymock emerging from a group of three players on six wins to take the fourth place by best net points.

The knockouts were played as best of three, 13 point games. Chris had a straight 2 game win over Tim 7-5, 7-3 but Ed had a harder road to the final winning 7-6, 2-7, 7-5. In the final Chris' more consistent play proved too strong for Ed with a 7-6, 7-5 victory.

The support for this event was extremely good and indications are that we could be looking at two eights in future years.

NEWS & INFORMATION

CA WEBSITE RECEIVES RECORD NUMBER OF VISITORS

David Maugham's "live-updates" for the World Championship Quarter Finals have become the most accessed page on the CA Website. Active for only a day, it received almost 15,000 hits, from a total of 450 people. The figures suggest that around 50 people were tuned in for most of the day.

The Semi-Final and Final reports were viewed by 176 and 212 people respectively while the matches were still in play.

The week of the worlds also proved to be the busiest yet for the CA site as a whole, with a total of 5000 different visitors during the week. There were 676 visitors to the on-line shop during the week.

NIGEL GRAVES' RETIREMENT LUNCH AT THE 2005 AGM.

Immediately following the AGM on Saturday 15th October at Hurlingham there will be a lunch to honour Nigel's recent retirement as Secretary of the Croquet Association. Nigel is well known to many Associate members, both in his role as Secretary and as a competitor in tournaments. It is hoped that as many members as possible will come to the AGM and to the lunch. Non-Associates are also welcome to attend the lunch. Applications for tickets for the lunch (which will comprise three courses plus coffee), together with a cheque for £34, should be sent to the CA Office no later than 2nd October. Members are also reminded that contributions to Nigel's retirement present should also be sent to the Office.

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program such as Photoshop or even Paint, CorelDraw, Publisher, etc). Even if you can't do this yourself, don't let it stop you taking the photograph in the first place – there'll be someone somewhere who can!

Whether with a zoom lens or without, being as near as you can to your subject without being distracting is still obviously advantageous. If you are spectating from near corner 4, for instance, it will be much more difficult to get a good photograph



Beatrice McGlen approaching a hoop - note the photo was taken after the shot has been played

of play around hoops 2 or 3, whereas hoops 4 or 5 will offer much better opportunities. So your position relative to the court can contribute to the success of your shot. Also, it is useful to plan ahead in your mind, especially if you are focusing manually (eg with an SLR camera) rather than automatically (as with many smaller cameras). Therefore if a player will soon be approaching, say, rover, pre-focus on the hoop and then depth of field over the distance concerned should take care of general focus, unless the speed of play is such as to give you opportunity for fine-tuning.

However, the greatest skill in shooting croquet players, in



Laurence Latham playing a rush along the boundary (note: photo taken after shot has been struck)

my opinion, lies in the selection of playing stances to photograph. A key element here is being able to see enough of the player's face to be able to recognize who they are (assuming you know them in the first place, of course!). Clearly a photograph from behind does not achieve this particular criterion, but surprisingly

often, neither does a shot from head on. This is because, when in play, the player is often looking down as they strike the ball, and therefore what you mostly see is the top of their head, not their face. So unless they have a particularly recognizable top to their head, the best opportunities are offered by a stance where they are at least at a 45° angle to you, and ideally are sideways on to you. An example of this is the photograph of David Cairns and Bernard Neal, taken at some point in the mid to late 80s – Bernard is recognizable because he is in profile, whereas, despite its strong points as a 'live action' photograph, you will probably only know the refereeing player is David because the caption tells you so – he is looking downward, just as he would be if he were playing a shot.)

Then again, some shots are more photogenic than others. Refereed shots, positioning the balls for the croquet stroke (whether using hand or foot), a roll stroke, running a hoop, lining up a peg-out, are all good 'action' shots (though I repeat my earlier exhortations not to take the photo as the actual shot is in the course of being played so as not to risk distraction, and that such shots are often best from the side rather than head-on or behind). Capturing a player in a fairly inactive stance but with their opponent or other spectators at the court side also visible in shot can be an interesting combination, too.



Colin Irwin Lining up a peel

The examples shown here (taken in the 1980s and 1990s - some of them dating back to the 1980s when the technology of the day meant that black-and-white photos were the preferred format for submission to the Gazette!) are not included because of the standard of the photographs themselves, but as illustrations to give you a flavour of what I mean by a croquet 'action' shot.

It is my hope that with the benefit of some of the foregoing suggestions, which I'm sure many can improve upon, perhaps more of us can shoot ourselves... Not in the foot, I sincerely trust, but for the benefit of Posterity (History, even?!) and of ourselves and our croquet colleagues (not forgetting our hard-working Editor of the day), by enlivening the pages of the Gazette with images of croquet players who are actually playing croquet!

(So who is going to take up the challenge? I have seen many players and spectators with digital cameras at tournaments, but as yet not many jpegs wending their way to my email box. Don't worry about the size of the file, broadband is a wonderful thing. It would be great to think I had too many photos to choose from when editing future issues! Ed.)



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HOW TO SHOOT CROQUET PLAYERS

by Deborah Latham

Think for a moment. Think about the photographs of sports that are displayed in various publications. Photographs of footballers, rugby players, cricketers, golfers, swimmers, skiers, sailors, jockeys – any sport you can think of. Look at any specialist magazine relating to any of those sports. Then retrieve the Croquet Gazettes of the last few years and compare the photographic content. I suspect a marked difference will manifest itself.

To me, that difference is that the Croquet Gazette editors of recent years appear to have had a dearth of a particular sort of photograph from contributors to include in the magazine layout, and that is photographs of croquet players playing croquet. If you compare other sports, I venture to suggest that you will see ‘action’ photographs of footballers in play (quite often with two or more players in shot), rugby players running with the ball or in mid-flight on their way to ground as they score a try or tackle an opponent, cricket batsmen having sent the ball arcing for six, swimmers at full stretch in the pool, athletes in mid-air as they hurdle, or long-jump, or high-jump, and so on. And when you look through the Gazette? Less than half – quite often much less! – are of croquet players in action. Much more common are posed group photographs of teams, or assemblages of event winners beaming over their trophies, or other collections of players, etc, or else ‘wide angle’ overviews of general play, and perhaps the occasional head and shoulders shot of an individual player.

It goes without saying that such photographs have their place in any sports publication. But there are more challenging photos out there to be taken. Surely, with the growing number of players



Dennis Moorcraft positioning the balls for a croquet stroke by hand for a croquet stroke

over the last decade or so, the croquet community has acquired some players who also have their share of photographic ability? (And the necessary equipment to go with it?)

Since the majority of evidence supports the theory that human beings are innately contrasuggestible, reasons (which

should, I fear, so often be spelled ‘e-x-c-u-s-e-s’) will start to emerge from the psyche at this point. “Oh, I’m just no good at taking photographs!”, “the players are too far away for a good picture” – that sort of thing. Well, I had a fair degree of success in getting photographs published in the Gazette in the late 80s to mid 90s, when I attended more tournaments than I do these days, so I would like to place before you some suggestions that seemed to work well for me, and then you can see whether you could make use of any of them. (Apologies in advance for any specialist vocabulary whose meaning I fail to explain or that cannot be gleaned from the context.)

However, the very first thing I must emphasize is – TRY TO BE UNOBTRUSIVE! Be empathetic – how would you feel if you were in tournament or club competition play and became aware of someone bobbing about on the boundary levelling a camera at



David Cairns and Bernard Neal, taken at some point in the mid to late 80s – Bernard is recognizable because he is in profile, whereas, despite its strong points as a ‘live action’ photograph, you will probably only know the refereeing player is David because the caption tells you so – he is looking downward, just as he would be if he were playing a shot.)

you? True, some people genuinely don’t mind having a lens pointed at them, but they tend to be a minority, and in any case wouldn’t want to be distracted during play, so be very careful your activities are not literally putting your subject off their stroke. This includes the timing of shutter operation. Empathy again – would you like to hear a loud, distracting ‘click’ just as you were addressing the ball, resulting in a fatal loss of concentration and a wild mis-hit? No? Then either press the shutter button while the stroke is still being lined up, or the instant after the ball has been struck, but not as it is about to be, ‘on the downswing’. (I should mention here that I particularly have in mind here the use of SLR [single lens reflex] cameras, whose shutter actions are fairly audible, as opposed to the quieter level of a digital camera’s shutter button.)

The real secret of my success (such as it was) with croquet photographs was having an SLR camera with a zoom lens. However, if your digital camera is set to a sufficiently high resolution (ie the number of pixels or ‘dots’ per inch that create the image), it should be possible to take a photograph from visually ‘further away’ than the picture a zoom lens will produce, and the area of the photograph containing the player themselves cropped, thus discarding the surrounding background. If necessary such a cropped image can be enlarged to a satisfactory size without too much loss of picture quality (eg using a ‘professional’ graphics

WCF World Championship 2005 Report for CA Gazette

by Jonathan Kirby

Eighty players from nineteen countries, dozens of officials and helpers, hundreds of spectators, four clubs, twenty one lawns, and nine days went into making the Mitsubishi Motors 2005 World Croquet Championship the largest and most successful croquet event of recent years.



Cheltenham Club awaiting the first of many visitors

Like most other players, I arrived on Friday 5th August to see a Cheltenham Croquet Club transformed from the last time I was there. It was immediately clear that an enormous amount of work had already gone into preparation for this event - the



The Mitsubishi’s players transport awaits its first customers.

first sign was that the untidy, thick hedge at the front of the club had been replaced by a shiny fence, making enough room for the Mitsubishi people carriers to park and also opening out the club to be visible from the road. Players from around the world were warmly greeting old friends, interrupted only by a short briefing from the Tournament Director Phil Cordingley, Manager Andrew Gregory and the Tournament Referee



Mike Jenner of the USA in play at Bristol

Bernard Neal, and by the formal part of the Opening Ceremony. After that more time for socializing, with what was advertised as a “very light finger buffet” turning out to be quite generous thanks to Eileen Magee and other Cheltenham members. The ample food provision was to continue, with various people providing breakfast at the club each day for those players who wanted it, and lunches and dinners provided excellently by Cliff Jones.

Saturday, Sunday, and Monday were set aside for the group stage, with eight groups of ten, and everyone playing three games a day. A closer look at the lawns at Cheltenham revealed another change - the



Daily mowing by the dedicated team of Peter James, David Magee and Peter Stone.

quality of the grass was much improved on recent years, and the surface was now very good. Lawns 9, 10, and 11 which were relaid three or four years ago were still very flat, but the other lawns have retained their characteristic undulations which, particularly in hot weather, make them such a good

challenge. The improvements must partly be due to sponsors Toro, who had provided new lawnmowers, but the major effort must be due to the Cheltenham grounds staff, in particular David Magee. Another one of David’s responsibilities was in organising transport for the players from various lodgings to the Cheltenham club and on to the satellite venues. A team of volunteers drove the Mitsubishi vehicles round all week and it seemed that everyone got to where they needed to be, and on time. More Mitsubishi cars were on display at Cheltenham by the shelters between the front and back sets of four lawns. These seemed very much in danger from flying balls from some of the harder hitters, but in fact were well enough placed not to get a scratch.

Another relatively new feature at Cheltenham is the CA office, and here Phil Cordingley and WCF Secretary-General Brian Storey spent a lot of time keeping up with all the results, and keeping the WCF website updated. This must be the first major croquet tournament to have all the results available on the web as they come in.

Each day half the competitors were at Cheltenham and the other half spread round the satellite venues of Bristol, Edgbaston and Nailsea. I had one away day at Bristol, where the hospitality of the people and quality of the lawns matched those at Cheltenham superbly. Reports from Edgbaston and Nailsea were equally glowing. A feature of the Monday I spent at Bristol was the particularly clear sky and hot sun. The weather at all the clubs was good, and with the lawns already getting fast people were wondering if they would reach the levels of the 2003 British Open, when running a four ball break was a great achievement by the last day.

The top four from each group qualified for the knockout stage, and



David Openshaw in play, regardless of the WCF management meeting



Ian Dumergue of Australia, winner of his first seven games

Tuesday was reserved for play-offs to split ties for fourth place. In the event five of the eight groups needed play-offs, ranging from the Blue group, where there was a four way tie for fourth place, to the Brown, where there was a six-way tie for first place! David Openshaw got full value in the form of lawn time by losing his first game and winning the next two to be the last to qualify for the knockout stage - and also managed to avoid the WCF meeting he had been supposed to chair.

Three players won all nine of their group games and they were three of the favourites mentioned in the last Gazette: Clarke, Bamford and Fulford. The other favourite Maugham dropped only one game,



Ken Bald of Australia, played himself into the quarter finals

to Australian Ken Bald who was looking very solid himself. Another Australian playing well out of season was Ian Dumergue, who won his first seven games to qualify easily, but for the most part the British-based players looked to be coping better with the lawns than the others.

Tuesday evening saw a barbeque and

the draw for the knockout, done on lawn 8 in front of the assembled crowd. Chris Williams had updated the rankings after the group stages, and this formed the basis for the seedings. Recent results meant that strong favourites Bamford and Fulford were



Robert Fulford looked comfortable and relaxed until the final

seeded three and four, with Maugham and Clarke at one and two. Apart from the seedings, there was also provision for players from the same country or group not to play each other in the first round. Andrew Gregory had spent the afternoon coming up with a clever way to make this work, which indeed it did to his relief.

The start of the knockout on Wednesday was a tale of differing lawns. Lawn 9 saw three matches (seven games) finish by mid-afternoon, with very few errors. In contrast on lawn 4 David Openshaw was again getting full value from his match against Ian Dumergue, which started at 10am but was the last to finish at 8:40pm! For once



Jonathan Kirby of Scotland played well but was disappointed with his performance in the semi-finals



Marcus Evans, a young quarter finalist whose future progress will be carefully watched

David was on the wrong end of a +1 in the third, but he had again managed to miss chairing a meeting by playing for longer than



The players watching the draw for the knockout stage unfold before them on lawn 8

expected so it wasn't all bad news. Another tricky lawn was number 1, where Reg Bamford decided not to risk trying any peels! However, the main excitement of the day was in front of the pavilion on lawn 8 in the early evening, when Ken Bald held his nerve to complete two triple peels and cause the first big upset of the event by beating Chris Clarke.

On Thursday morning Chris had recovered from his disappointment enough to write online reports on the second round through the day. Lawn 9 struck again, with two matches (five error free games) finishing in less total time than any single match on another lawn. Firstly Aaron Westerby had an 11th turn match win against Matt Burrow, and then James Death caused another upset by beating David Maugham 2-1 in 16 turns. Once more the manager

Press Report on Grass Roots 2005 for Gazette by Patricia Duke-Cox

The Grass Roots golf croquet competition is aimed at novices and beginners to the golf croquet scene. This year 9 clubs entered, these being Bury, Chester, Eynsham, Hunstanton, Leighton-Linslade, Reigate Priory, Sapcote, Watford (Cassiobury) and Woodhall Spa.

The event encourages new players to learn from each other by playing up to 7 rounds of progressive doubles before determining the top four who then play singles games for the top four places in two further games. The same format is continued at both the regional events, this year held at Ashby, Blewbury, Bury and Northampton as well as at the final at the Old Silhillians club at Solihull.



Group names: Derek Blow, Dawn Corrigan, John Copper, John Bristow, Sheila Guest, Sally Clay, Keith Long, Judith Gaskell, Marion Hitichins, Helen Walker, Christine Ryder, Roger Nicholls, Jean Oldfield, John Walker, Mary Coombs, John Oldfield and Patricia Duke-Cox (kneeling).

Sixteen players reached the final on Saturday 10 September and each originating club had at least one player. The weather was not particularly kind, but the enthusiasm of these players saw them determined to play the full 7 rounds instead of the minimum 5 rounds before the semi-finals and final placing games.

The final four places went to Christine Ryder from Sapcote, John Walker from Watford, Judith Gaskell from Bury and Mary Coombs from Hunstanton. The winner of the competition was John Walker who beat Christine Ryder 7:2.

Peter Mallen, winner of the cup in 2004, presented the cup, provided by Croquet for Leisure.

Austrian Wine Cup 2 - Report by Patricia Duke-Cox

The Second Austrian International Association Croquet competition was held in early September at the Wolkersdorf Croquet Club near Vienna and was supported by 8 English players.

The enthusiastic Austrian player behind this initiative was Heinz Hackl who enticed players ranging from those of world renown to basic club players of similar standard to that seen in Austria. His efforts were crowned when Austrian national television came to film the competition and competitors and then allocated some 5 minutes of prime-time television on their Sport on Sunday programme.

As an emerging developing croquet nation, it was excellent to see John Solomon offering his support with a return to gentle competitive play and also to have William Ormerod offering A-



The competitors take a break from playing for a group photograph.

class play and supportive tuition to the hosts at appropriate times. Both provided excellent television commentary when interviewed.

The main competition was played as level advanced with the top two winners of each block playing for the final. In the final John Cosier won the Austrian Wine Cup, a prize that just eluded him last year.

The consolation event was a handicap Egyptian that was won by Joseph Sögner, an Austrian member of the Salzburg croquet club that is likely to host the event next year.

A prize for the first Austrian triple peel was not won, but several competitors tried to get that prime position on the honours board. Perhaps other world class players will be interested in gaining that accolade next year!

Those attending were also able to do some sightseeing, enjoy good food and wine-tasting plus attend a musical event. English players competing were John Solomon, William Ormerod, Mike Town, John Cosier, Gill McDiarmid, Ian McDiarmid, John Timmis and Patricia Duke-Cox.

Anyone interested in visiting this 2-lawn club should contact Heinz Hackl, Kühltal 17, A-2120 Obersdorf, (Austria) or email him at heinz.hackl@velux.com

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NEWS & INFORMATION



Pendle & Craven's new facilities were declared officially open on a glorious sunny day. Photo by Derek Watts.

Pendle & Craven's New Venue is open

The opening of Pendle and Craven's new venue at Earby on Tuesday 12 July 2005 was a wonderful affair, with local dignitaries, CA Chairman, CA Secretary, local members with their families and countless invited visitors from CA Federations and Clubs around the country. On a warm day, we were welcomed with cool drinks before taking our places around the new clubhouse for the official opening ceremony. John Beech introduced the club's President Mr Edward Fort OBE to propose a toast "The Pendle & Craven Croquet Club" in which we held our champagne glasses high. The Chairman of Lancashire County Council, County Councillor Bob Wilkinson officially opened the Club by drawing curtains open to unveil the club's inscription board. The Chairman of the CA Dr Ian Vincent then presented John Beech with the CA's Diploma for services rendered in making the new club possible. The various County Council dignitaries were then invited to "start the ball rolling" in typical fashion on the new lawns and local players then played a friendly game whilst all the guests enjoyed a superb afternoon tea, splendidly laid out by the club ladies.

In this almost idyllic afternoon setting, it was a fitting climax to all the hard work and frustrating times that John Beech and his

team have endured over the past three years. Pendle & Craven Croquet Club deserve all the success that they get in the future and with five lawns, once they are established, this club could become one of the major croquet clubs in the country.

Crake Valley get help with their mowing

The Crake Valley Club received £500 grant towards a lawn mower from Low Furness and Ulverston Neighbourhood Forum (Cumbria County Council). The club added another £550 to buy a re-conditioned 30-inch Atco to maintain their lawns in the manner to which visitors are becoming accustomed.



From the left: Mark Miller (Chairman, CVCC) John Hemingway (local County Councillor) Dave Nick (you knew that!) (Cumbria Cup manager) Alan Pidcock (Cumbria Cup finalist) Brian Storey (Cumbria Cup finalist) Stan Holmes (Fund-raising, CVCC) Joan Clinch (Secretary, CVCC) Kate Winnard (Treasurer, CVCC). Photo by Gail Curry

Cheltenham Wine Down Party

A couple of days after the Mitsubishi Motors World Championship, Cheltenham Club members enjoyed a wind (wine) down evening with shared supper and croquet skittles on Lawn 8. The Club President, Bernard Neal, gave a short speech making us all feel very special; the Club Chairman, Derek Bradley, treated us all to free drinks.

The photograph shows some of the 90 Club members who helped before and during the Championship. (photo by David Magee)



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arranged evening entertainment on lawn 8, with Marcus Evans and Mark Avery playing a close match. Marcus won a two ball ending in the second, and then took the third more comfortably +26tp.

With lawn 9 proving to be just too easy, the manager decided not to use it for



James Death, a young player with flair and belief in his own abilities to take on the best

the rest of the main event and the quarter finals were put on lawns 1, 7, 10 and 11. For the rest of the tournament, David Maugham wrote online reports of the matches. The most entertaining match was Death against Westerby, with James doing tpos in each of the first three games, in the third after running into the wrong ball after running hoop 3 (his partner ball was also for 4b!) Aaron won the second of these, and was on his own tpo in game 4, but broke down giving James an easy finish. Fulford and Bamford had minor scares but looked fairly solid in their matches, whilst Kirby



Robert Fulford takes on and runs a difficult hoop1 against James Death

finally managed to overcome Ken Bald in a match where the players broke down at a very firm hoop 2 eight times between them.

The semifinals were Fulford against Death on lawn 10 and Bamford against Kirby on 11. Unfortunately, the hot weather of the week left us, and there was a long spell of rain in the middle of the day. Fulford managed two quick wins and was thinking about a sextuple in game three, but with rain on the way elected to go to 4b instead. Death hit and did a tpo, but gave Fulford too many chances in the pegged out game and Robert picked up a three ball break in the increasing rain to finish, and reach the final for the eighth time. Bamford won the first game easily with a sextuple, but the second game was slower and was halted for over two hours when the court got waterlogged, about the time the other semifinal finished.



Reg Bamford demonstrates the cross-wiring leave for a sextuple in his next turn, if the shot is missed

Eventually Kirby had a chance to finish but couldn't quite get used to the new pace of the lawn and Bamford completed a triple. He had a fifth turn quad in the third to reach the final for the second time.

Sunday dawned brighter than the Saturday, but the rain had done its work and lawn 8 was easy-paced for the final. Over 100 people were there for the start of play at 10am, and the crowd rose to over 250 by the middle of the day, another triumph for the event, as only about 50 people watched the last World Championship final in England, in 2001. That match, also between Bamford and Fulford, was a closely fought affair with errors and shots missed from both players, two sextuples from Reg but also a failed sextuple by each player and Reg eventually winning 3-2. This rematch had been eagerly awaited almost since that day, and everyone was hoping for an equally exciting match. In the first game, Fulford

hit on the fourth turn and took his break round to 4b, looking a little nervous to start with but settling in to his rhythm. However, to his dismay he sent a ball off the lawn in making a diagonal spread, giving Bamford



Robert Fulford's last shot from the cross-wired leave left by Reg Bamford

an easy start to his turn. Reg tried for the cross-wiring, but didn't get it so went to 4b. The lift was missed and Reg completed a tidy triple peel. He doubled his advantage in game 2 with a sixth turn sextuple. Fulford won the opening in game 3, but his break looked far from the tidy exhibition he usually gives, and his attempt to POP Bamford's ball didn't seem to get close, so he just went to 4b with a diagonal spread, this time a good one. Bamford hit the lift shot, and went to 1b again with another good cross-wiring. As in the second game, Fulford struck the long shot well, but not very hard, and it hilled off to miss by a foot. Bamford completed his second sextuple to win 3-0 and become



Reg Bamford takes on his last jump shot of the Championships, during the sextuple peel, carefully watched by Bernard Neal

World Champion for the second time. A tremendous error-free performance from Reg in a high class match with generally

