

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"	£50.00
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	£28.00

CLOTHING

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

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



ODDS & ENDS

Timer	£8.00
Silver Earrings	£12.00
Hoop setting feeler guage	£2.50
Canvas ball carrier bags	£10.50
Croquet Girl Cards (8) blank inside	£4.50
Croquet Posters - B&W prints	£6.00
Ball markers (pack of 10)	£1.00

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Call Jeff Dawson on 01483 776971

email sales@croquet.org.uk

Or visit our website www.croquet.org.uk/shop

We are based at 112 Potters Lane, Send, Surrey GU23 7AL

Callers welcome by appointment only, please.

BOOKS

A wide variety of croquet publications are available, including:

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



VIDEOS

Imported from Australia, these videos were made by Kevin Brereton in the 1990's.

Single ball strokes (30min)	£12.00
Croquet Strokes (30min)	£12.00
Tactics parts 1 & 2 (60 mins)	£14.00
Tactics part 3 - Peeling (90 mins)	£16.00
Using Bisques (30 mins)	£12.00
Sports Sciences & Croquet (30 min)	£12.00

COMPLETE CROQUET SETS

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

CLUB EQUIPMENT

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

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

THE CROQUET GAZETTE

ISSUE 301

FEBRUARY 2006



Style & originality, where else but croquet?

all, featuring local delicacies and two large decorated tournament cakes.

An excellent event, hopefully the first of many. Well run by the organisers, and I suspect that a large number of the participants will wish to enter next time, wherever the venue!



Women's World Champion Nahed Hassan of Egypt, pictured with the trophy and President of the Egyptian Federation, Amir Ramsis Naguib.

Final positions:

1 st	Nahed Hassan (EG)	26 th	Soha Moustafa (EG)
2 nd	Iman El Farnsawi (EG)	27 th	Soha Akel (PAL)
3 rd	Abir Moustafa (EG)	28 th	Freda Vitty (ENG)
4 th	Sherine Hamdi (EG)	29 th	Phyllis Young (NZ)
5 th	Mervat Shazli (EG)	30 th	Leo Dungan (IRE)
6 th	Hemat Moustafa (EG)	31 st	Hoda Ahmed (PAL)
7 th	Jane Shorten (IRE)	32 nd	Valerie Durie (SA)
8 th	Christine Pont (AUS)	33 rd	Jane Pringle (ENG)
9 th	Carole Jackson (SA)	34 th	Rola Abu El Kheir (PAL)
10 th	Sanaa Seif Elyazel (EG)	35 th	Patricia Duke-Cox (ENG)
11 th	Manal Ali Mohsen (EG)	36 th	Valerie Lefel (AUS)
12 th	Julie Hudson (ENG)	37 th	Victoria Browne (IRE)
13 th	Samia Mahmoud (EG)	38 th	Barbara Leeming (USA)
14 th	Abir Mourad (EG)	39 th	Norma Rayne (ENG)
15 th	Dallas Cooke (NZ)	40 th	Priska Vinnen (GER)
16 th	Rania Gabr (EG)	41 st	Freda Rogers (ENG)
17 th	Valerie Armstrong (SA)	42 nd	Jackie Old (ENG)
18 th	Soudad Abu Taleb (EG)	43 rd	Nina Mesecke (GER)
19 th	Clare Stableford (SA)	44 th	Greis Attallah (PAL)
20 th	Samantha Curry (ENG)	45 th	Jennet Blake (ENG)
21 st	Anne Oxton (SA)	46 th	Evelyn Martin (ENG)
22 nd	Anne Taves (USA)	47 th	Ros Pimlott (ENG)
23 rd =	Marwa Hamdi (EG)	48 th	Antje Ockelmann (GER)
23 rd =	Zeinab Kabani (EG)	49 th	Eileen Buxton (ENG)
25 th	Rana El Alami (PAL)	50 th	Natalia Bandi Bossi (ITA)

The complete results of the event can be found on the WCF website at <http://www.wfcroquet.org/Tournaments/1st-WCF-Womens-World-Golf-Croquet-Championship.htm>

All England Handicap Finals

Roehampton, 17th September 2005

Report by Gary Duke

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

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



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

After four rounds of the Swiss, the unbeaten player was local Chris Marshall. Chris faced Malcolm Daines of Huddersfield Syngenta in the last round. To the chagrin of the management, Malcolm beat Chris, and with Pierre Beaudry (Dulwich) also winning a fourth game, there was a three-way tie for first place. After some complicated calculations, it was finally announced that Malcolm had won, and that both Malcolm and Chris had earned savage cuts to their handicaps!

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

But what Golf Croquet they play! The lawns and surrounds are geared up exclusively to the Egyptian hard-hitting style and the GC Laws – each lawn is surrounded by an 18inch white-painted wall, with penalty lines painted in red, and further surrounded by solid 3ft metal fencing to avoid too many nasty accidents, as the balls are regularly hit at 40mph plus, although the home players are so accurate that it's usually the opponent's ball which gets knocked into the fencing! Each lawn had a permanent scoreboard which could be comfortably viewed from a distance. They also have floodlights on every lawn – a new experience for virtually all the visiting players.



Jane Pringle shows off the Plate trophy, flanked by fellow Durham players Freda Rogers and Freda Vitty

Every match had its own complement of referee in charge, dedicated scorer, and combined ball boy/hoop firmer, whose job it was to whack the top of every hoop (they even have flat tops to facilitate this purpose) whenever any Egyptian player was about to attempt even a shortish hoop. In the circumstances, it seems churlish to mention the refereeing. Despite assurances to the contrary at the initial players briefing, the new (revised 2005) "wrong ball" law was regularly mis-interpreted, and neither the home players or the referees had any concern when two opposing balls were close, and the intended shot would in all probability result in a "double tap". Fortunately, any controversy rarely resulted in a critical game result being affected, and no doubt over time the new-ish Laws will become bedded in and understood.

The early block games didn't present too many surprises. In Group A, Nahed Hassan didn't have it all her own way, losing to a solid all-round performance by Dallas Cooke of NZ, but still managed to prevail as block winner. In Group B, Anne Oxton of South Africa surprised everyone, including herself, by beating Mervat Shazli of Egypt, and qualified for the last 32. Egypt still provided the winners of six Groups. In Group C, Sam Curry was looking good on 5/5 but slipped up in her final match against Carole Jackson of South Africa when a 1-2 defeat would have been good enough to top the block, going down in straight games and finishing second to Carole. The big surprise was in Group E, where Julie Hudson beat two Egyptians in a single day, including eventual runner-up Iman El Farnsawi, and ultimately finished block winner with a 100% record and a well-earned place in the last 16.

Julie's match against Iman featured several amazing shots by both players, with Julie's tactical positioning just shading it over Iman's fantastic shooting, although the shot of the championship was probably Julie running hoop 11 (penult) from one yard out of corner 3 ! I kid you not - try it sometime. I keep practising and haven't made it yet.

So the scene was set for the play-offs for the last 32, with the non-qualifiers sorting out the Plate for places 33-50. The Plate was dominated by English players (read into this what you will), with Jane Pringle winning the all-English semi-final against CA Council member Patricia Duke-Cox, and then going on to secure the title against Rola Abu El Kheir of Palestine.



Iman El Faransawi and Nahed Hassan, finalists awaiting play.

Only three English players made it into the main Knockout, with Curry and Hudson being joined by Freda Vitty. Freda fell at the first hurdle, eventually finishing 28th; Sam lost in the second round to Shazli of Egypt, grateful to have qualified and taking her chances; and Julie was unable to continue her early promise, losing in the third round to Christine Pont of Australia.

The semis of the main Knockout featured four Egyptians: Nahed Hassan beat Abir Moustafa with a sustained bout of quality shooting and positioning, worthy of any player in the world. Meanwhile, Iman El Farnsawi overcame the disappointment of losing a couple of block games, and went all the way to the final beating Group F winner Sherine Hamdi in the other semi.

Nahed started the final as she had finished the semi, consistently running long hoops, and making clearance after clearance at long range. With Iman playing only marginally but perceptibly less accurately, Nahed built up a 2-0 lead, and looked likely to win in straight games. Iman was equal to the challenge, and stepped up her own performance to pull a game back, but in the end Nahed's overall quality and some dubious tactical selections by Iman in the fourth ultimately decided it – Nahed a worthy winner 7-5, 7-4, 6-7, 7-6.

The event closed with the longest list of thanks and presentations I have ever witnessed! Medals were awarded to every competitor, and presentation gifts made to sponsors, committee members, referees and officials. There was a TV interview for the finalists, and a welcome al fresco reception for

CA Contacts

Secretary
Klim Seabright
The Croquet Association, c/o Cheltenham Croquet Club, Old Bath Road, Cheltenham, GL53 7DF
01242 - 242318
caoffice@croquet.org.uk

President
Bernard Neal
41 Asquith Road, Cheltenham
GL53 7EJ
01242 - 510624

Chairman of Council
Ian Vincent
29 Thoresby Road, Bramcote Hills, Beeston, Nottingham NG9 3EN
0115 - 9253664
ian.vincent@nottingham.ac.uk

Treasurer
Dr Roger Bray
Street Cottage, Polstead Hill, Polstead, Colchester, Essex CO6 5AH
01206 - 263405
rwbray@tiscali.co.uk

Gazette Editor
Gail Curry
135 Acklam Road, Thornaby, Stockton on Tees TS17 7JT
01642 - 640880
gazette@croquet.org.uk

Press Officer
Rebecca Hopkins
ENS Limited, 42 Fullerton Road, London SW18 1BX
020 - 88713865
rebecca@ensltd.com

Tournament Committee
Richard Hoskyns
25 Burlington Road, London W4 4BQ
020 - 89943244
richard_hoskyns@compuserve.com

Marketing Committee
Jeff Dawson
Wildcroft, 112 Potters Lane, Send, Woking GU23 7AL
jeff@wildcroft.fsworld.co.uk

International Committee
Phil Cordingley
1 Milbro Court, 35 Anson Road, London N7 0RB
020 - 76093040
phil_cordingley@tiscali.co.uk

Laws Committee
Barry Keen
20 Grove Park, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 8QA
01565 - 632420
barry.keen1@ntlworld.com

Equipment Committee
Alan Pidcock
The Manor House, 1 Barncroft, Penwortham, Preston PR1 0SX
01772 - 743859
pidcock@manorh.u-net.com

Coaching Committee
Brian Fisk
7 Woodfield Drive, Winchester SO22 5PY
01962 - 865458
brian@fiskfamily.org.uk

Golf Croquet Committee
Bill Arliss
30 Hove Park Villas, Hove BN3 6HG
01273 - 728204
bill.arliss@ntlworld.com

Selection Committee
Assoc: Dave Kibble, 21, Grove Avenue, Coombe Dingle, Bristol BS9 2RP Tel: 0117 - 9079377
DaveKibble@iee.org

Golf: Bill Arliss
(details above)

Development Committee
Patricia Duke-Cox
171 Witham Road, Woodhall Spa, Lincoln LN10 6RB
01526 - 354878 (H) 07944487880 (M)
Duke-cox@hotmail.co.uk

Management Committee
Jonathan Isaacs
Meers Farm, The Hollow, West Chiltington RH20 2QA 01798 817326 (H)
jonathanisaacs@btinternet.com

Handicap Committee
Cliff Jones
2 Gronau Close, Honiton, Devon EX14 2YT
Tel 01404 41261
cliffjones@fraggles.wanadoo.co.uk

Publishing Committee
Charles Waterfield
The Lodge, Great Broughton, Middlesbrough, N.Yorks TS9 7HA
01642 - 712551
cwaterfield@btinternet.com

Regional Reps on Council

East Midlands
Patricia Duke-Cox

East Anglia
Vacant

Yorkshire
Julian Tonks
13 Hobgate, Acomb Road, York YO24 4HE
01904 - 791254

London & South East
David Mooney
121 Highlands Heath, London SW15 3TZ
020 - 8789 7707
d.mooney@rmjm.com

North West
Barry Keen

Croquet North
Charles Waterfield

South West
Cliff Jones

Southern
Pat Kennett
7 Woodfield Drive, Winchester SO22 5PY
01962 - 865458
pat@fiskfamily.org.uk

West Midlands
Esther Jones, 285 Harborne Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 3JB Tel 0121 455 6426
cbej@btinternet.com

Publication details

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

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

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

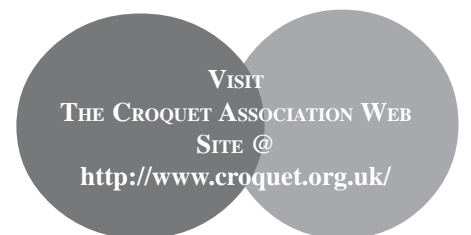
photographs can be used. Slides are no longer acceptable. Photocopies of pictures or print outs of digital images cannot be accepted. If using digital photography please send in jpeg or tiff format files. Please accompany all images with a description of the subject of the picture. If you require any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

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

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

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.

The Croquet Gazette is printed by Billingham Press, Central Avenue, Billingham, Stockton on Tees.



THE CROQUET GAZETTE Chairman's Column



Issue 301 February 2006 £3.00

Front Cover: Tom Weston, Bill Arliss, Edward Dymock, Sam Curry & ROY Wallis.

Photos for this issue kindly supplied by Patricia Duke-Cox, Rosemary Bradshaw, Russell Bretherton, Samir Patel, Dave Kibble, Tore Gulbrandsen, Jane Pringle, Chris Daniels, Stephen Read, Brian Kitching.

Next Issue Published 19th April

Copy Deadline 19th March

Disclaimer

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

CONTENTS

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN	4
EDITORIAL	4
LETTERS	5
COUNTY TEAM ORGANISERS	5
REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE YEAR	6
ASSOCIATION COACHING	7
PLAYING A TIDY BREAK	7
HOOPAPOTAMUS	7
WORLD CROQUET FEDERATION NEWS	9
GOLF CROQUET	9
GOLF CROQUET REVIEW OF 2005	10
AN INCLUSIVE SPORT	12
- CROQUET FOR THE DISABLED	
THE CLIPS OF DEATH	12
- A SHORT STORY BY DOROTHY RUSH	
90 NOT OUT	13
THOUGHTS ON DOUBLES PLAY	14
-BY KEITH AITON	
REMINISCENT ROQUETS	16
- THE LITTLE THINGS IN CROQUET	
CA COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES	16
REVIEW OF PUBLISHING	17
COMMITTEE YEAR	
CORRECTIONS TO 2006 FIXTURES BOOK	17
THE LAWS QUIZ	18
CROQUET IN NORWAY	19
COMPTON'S CROQUET CLOTH	20
WOMEN'S WORLD GOLF CROQUET CHAMPIONSHIP	21
ALL ENGLAND HANDICAP FINAL	23

Council met on 17th December and was informed that Tony Fathers had decided to retire from it after having been a member for a number of years. He was the first chairman of the Marketing Committee, whose remit includes commercial activities, including the CA shop, publicity, public relations, recruitment and fund raising. He has made a significant contribution to the improved organisation and effectiveness of the CA and we wish him well in his new role as Chairman of the Croquet Section of the Roehampton Club. Recognising the increasing importance of IT to the operation of the CA, Council strengthened the Administration Committee by making it a Principal Committee, thus making its Chairman a member of the Management Committee and electing Dave Kibble to that role. The re-written version of the membership database is now in sole use, after a period of parallel running, and attention is now turning to accounting software. Council considered and agreed its committees' objectives for the year: they are published [on page 16 or on the web site]. The reports about their activities that committees make to the Management Committee will also be published on the web site. There was also a discussion about how to handle an appeal by the Surbiton Club

against a decision of the Golf Croquet Committee not to award the Inter-Club Championship title last year, as their final against East Dorset had not been played. An Appeals Panel has been appointed to hear the case. When I visited the CA office in early January, I observed that Cheltenham folk are made of stern stuff: several of them were playing and our President was practising with his newly refaced mallet, having done a stint of fence mending. In the comfort of the office, I was given my membership package, including a copy of the new fixtures book, with the last few to be posted on a table ready for dispatch. It was an excellent achievement by all concerned to have it ready so early in the year: thanks to Nigel Graves for editing it and Klim Seabright and Elizabeth Budworth, together with a working party they had assembled from local members, for filling the envelopes. Please note the plea in the foreword, that people sending cheques to the office should write on the back what events or other items the cheque is intended to cover. I hope you enjoy planning your season!

Ian Vincent.

Editorial

Ah well here we go again, another year, another season. All thoroughly bored with dark nights, cold wet days and contemplating where to go to play in tournaments no doubt. It is only a matter of weeks before the first event will have you all gathering in trepidation on the the first calendar event of the fixture book at Cheltenham. You brave souls. No need to worry whether or not you can remember how to play, or hit that 10 yard tice, my memory says you should be more concerned if there will be snow on the second day. But no matter what the elements decide, I am sure all of those who have entered will enjoy their first flush of play, win or lose, it's just nice to get back into the swing of things. As usual there are some new events in the fixture book, and I wish clubs holding their first calendar event all the best and hope their only headache is an oversubscribed entry.

Following on from the article on photography in croquet, by Deborah Latham, I would like to mention that there has been a great improvement in both the quantity and quality of photographs making their way to my desk. Please do keep them coming. Occasionally I have a little difficulty in knowing who the subjects are, so clear labelling is needed. For digital images, it would be helpful if they could be saved with the name of the subjects instead of the camera assigned number. I have an awful lot of 'DSC' images, which the printer jokingly refers to as 'damned silly croquet', but I think actually refers to 'difficulty saving caption'. Perhaps a delve into the instruction manual would make life easier for all concerned?

Gail Curry

Women's Golf Croquet World Championship

Gezira Club, Cairo, Egypt

November 12th - 20th 2005

Report by Chris Daniels

After the middle of October, the prospects for UK-based croquet players are fairly limited. The majority are resigned to a freezing winter, where the closest they come to genuine competitive play is to re-read old copies of the Gazette, perhaps re-living ancient victories, or to leaf once more through that yellowing copy of Tollemache, with the fond hope that this time it will make more sense than in the past. For a few, there is the opportunity to play on the small number of winter lawns, but unsurprisingly these are often slow, the grass is uncut, and the weather can be guaranteed to be either raining, chilly, or most likely both.



The Egyptian entrants

However, those nice people at the Egyptian Croquet Federation, under the guidance of their President Amir Ramsis Naguib, decided that this winter would be different! November 2005 saw the staging of the first WCF Women's World Championship in Golf Croquet, where lady players from around the world got an opportunity to play in Cairo in the sun, on quality lawns, and against top opposition.

I suspect that the organisers and the WCF weren't too sure about the support they might get at first, but as it turned out, the entry limit had to be extended so that in the end there were 50 entrants, with Egypt (the largest contingent of 15), England (an impressive 12), South Africa, Palestine, Ireland, Germany, Australia, USA, New Zealand and Italy all represented.

The opening ceremony was an appropriate mix between formality and informality. The teams marched onto and around the main lawn, parading their flags in time to the music, before a short series of welcoming speeches. Rather bizarrely, the English team was represented by a Union Jack(!) but the players more than made up for this as they were all wearing team shirts emblazoned with an enormous Cross of St. George, sponsored by Ripon Spa Hotel, and rather fetching (and vital during the day) sunhats courtesy of Simon Carter clothing. A players briefing

followed, including clarification on Laws interpretation by the Tournament Referee (of which more later!).

And so to the play. The field was divided into eight blocks



The English players at the opening ceremony

of 6 or 7 players each, with Egypt providing 7 of the 8 main seeds, the exception being Sam Curry of England, whose international ranking suggested that she alone would be capable of causing any sort of upset to prevent an Egyptian victory. The Egyptian seeds included Nahed Hassan and Manal Ali Mohsen, both of whom finished in the top 16 in the last "mixed" GC World Championships at Southwick in 2004, and the smart money was on one of these stars carrying off the title, with the local punters also favouring the "next big thing" of Egyptian croquet, Abir Moustafa, who had won the Yorkshire women's event earlier in the year.

The Gezira club, located on Cairo's Zamalek island, is more like Hurlingham than Sahara. With umpteen tennis courts, two golf courses, even a horse racing track, it's amazing that they have found room for croquet, and yet there are three lawns owned by the host club itself, and three lawns located separately which form the headquarters of the Egyptian Federation. All six lawns



Norma Rayne running a hoop

were used for the first five days, after which the play-offs were concentrated at the headquarters' lawns. It's clear to the new visitor that nearly all play is GC - in fact a small amount of Association seems to be played by a few keen enthusiasts, but this is certainly less than 1%, and clearly holds little interest for the average club player.

stage anything for the 'British' types of croquet. In their 'After Eight' – tournament Golf Croquet was played for the last time...silent is the lawn... until the revival in 2004 when Jeloej Croquet Club celebrated their 30th Anniversary with another Jubilee Tournament. In the Opening Ceremony The Croquet Association of Norway was started! This was made possible by the combined forces of JCC and Brevik Croquet Teams. Then both Associaton Croquet and Golf Croquet was introduced to the Norwegian Croquet scene again. At Krocketfestivalen, combined rock and croquet venue in Halden, JCC/The Croquet Society had showed Associaton Croquet earlier the same autumn.



spillereKristiania

It is true that some other groups had started playing Association Croquet, Nord Jarlsberg County & Croquet Club, Christiania Croquet Selskab and Oslo Croquet Club all play Association Croquet (the first one the American variety), but they have had little or no impact on the Norwegian croquet scene.

Because of the Jeloej Grand Tournament, the first international tournament in Norway, staged by The Croquet Society and JCC in May 2005, a National Team was put up by The Croquet Association of Norway. The tournament developed into the first Nordic Championships. In April the same year the National Team learned how to play Association and Golf Croquet. They beat the Finns, who also had just learned it, but could do nothing against the Swedes. The Norwegian National Team got some compensation in the autumn when they bet the Swedes in Golf Croquet during a battle between the two brother nations 100 years after the union between Norway and the Swedish king was split up.

Late in 2005 the foundation of the first international type lawn was laid by Hjulmakerveien Croquet Club in Fredrikstad,

2/3 size. Earlier only one-hand croquet courts existed, one at Lillstroem and one in-door at Jaeren (close to Stavanger). At Jaeren 4 or 5 outdoor lawns are also supposed to exist. A golf club also has a croquet lawn among it's grounds, but much of the games are played in parks. Earlier, in the 1950's around 5 lawns had existed at Lillestroem, close to the river, but flooding took them away. In the southern part of Norway Havsoe Croquet Club once had 4 indoor courts.

In 2005 the first National Championships was played, in Croquet, Norwegian Standard, Association Croquet and in Golf Croquet. And this year, 2006, the same will happen, but there will also be a championship in one-hand croquet. This will be international (or Nordic). The Golf Croquet Championship might also become an international venue.

The prospects of croquet in its various forms seems good, the season is short, but hardrocked Vikings play even in snow and ice, - and where else can you enjoy a good old game of croquet under the midnight sun?

Compton Croquet Club's trophies' presentation tablecloth

Jill Carpenter has been collecting cloth badges from as many different croquet clubs as she can to decorate the tablecloth (shown here at the prize giving for the 2005 Cowhorn weekend). She is always grateful to have the opportunity to add further cloth badges and would be delighted to receive any additional contributions, especially from visitors to Compton, old and new. Please contact Jill at: Jill.SeafordBay@virgin.net

So far she has: Bath, Ramsgate, Bowden, Reigate Priory, Chelmsford & Bentley, Rottingdean, Colchester, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Compton (Eastbourne), Sidmouth, Downham, Stony Stratford, Dulwich, Swindon, H.B.K.C.C., Dyffryn, Sussex County (Southwick), Hamptworth, Surbiton, Hurlingham, Kingston Langley, Littleton, Canada, Nailsea, Port Alfred (South Africa), Parsons Green, Rondebosch (South Africa), Preston (Brighton), Somerset West (South Africa), Purley Bury, St Andrews BC (South Africa) & Medway.



Letters

Correction to Issue 299

Re the article by Michael Hague in issue 299 of the Croquet Gazette on 'A Century of Croquet at Woking'.

For the record I think it important to state that Lionel Wharrad and Derek Caporn had nothing to do with the founding of the Ramsgate Club. The club was in fact founded by Eileen and Dennis Shaw in 1983 on the East Cliff with one lawn, later increasing to two the following year. Then in 1987 the club moved to the Royal Esplanade on the West Cliff with four lawns and now have a 21-year lease.

Dennis Shaw

Disappointment at Gazette

I started playing croquet last season after a break of 38 years (having played for the university team when I was up at Oxford) and joined the Croquet Association last June.

Having received five issues of the Gazette since I joined, I am disappointed that so much of the content is about tournaments and not much for the less serious (but nevertheless passionately enthusiastic) players such as myself. I found the article on choosing a mallet in the December issue interesting and wonder whether future issues might include more practical advice, hints and tips for high bisque 'beginners and improvers'.

David Bateson

Dear David, and quite possibly other readers who have had similar thoughts. I will be happy to try to supply the type of article you require, providing you contact me with your specific needs.

Issues within issues

Although the issue of the Gazette which you have just produced states at its masthead that it is issue no. 300, it is not correct to say that it is the 300th issue of the Gazette.

The Croquet Association Gazette was born in April 1904 and it appeared weekly during the summer, monthly during the winter (except during World War I) until the outbreak of World War II in 1939. The issues were numbered consecutively and by September 1939 had reached 901.

Thereafter until 1953 the issues were not numbered consecutively but I have counted them and there were 72.

In 1954 the journal was re-designed and called 'Croquet'. the title has since oscillated between that and 'The Croquet Gazette' but all the issues have been numbered consecutively up to the present (with a mishap in 1972 when the issue after no.119 was also numbered 119 but was then followed by 121). Therefore if we ignore the various changes in title the number of issues of 'The Croquet Gazette' has now reached a total of 1273. Do you ever feel that you have produced as many as that?

Alan Oldham (CA Archivist)

Editor regrets she cannot reply to this letter in the proper manner, as the thought of weekly production is just too much to contemplate. But wishes to thank the archivist for his kind words of instruction.

Women's World Golf Croquet Championship

I was lucky enough to be one of the group of 12 ladies who left England for Cairo for the 1st Women's World Golf Croquet Championships 12-21 November 2005. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the organisers for a job well done, to thank the team sponsors, Ripon Spa Hotel and Simon Carter.

The competition was keen, the Egyptians were all in fine form, as results proved with 19 places out of the top 26. They did have some stiff opposition from the USA, Australia, South Africa and of course many of our own players. I am delighted to state that Jane Pringle of Bishop Auckland won the Plate, Julie Hudson showed what style she had, by playing above herself in many games. The English women may not have set the world alight but did play well, correctly and with great fairness and charm. Suffice to say we feel as though we have all improved and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves, thanks in no small part to the excellent organisation.

Ros Pimlott

Help required on recruitment and retention of young people

In time for next season the CA Marketing Committee is hoping to provide its member clubs with guidance on the subject of recruiting and retaining young people into croquet. In preparation for this Brian Kitching would be grateful if anyone wishing to offer advice or comments on this subject, whether from actual experience or

Continued on page 18

County Organisers 2006

Golf Croquet

County Durham: Eugene Brady 01388 488666 embrady@supanet.com

Devon: Roger Bowen 01395 442360 roger_bowen@budleighs.freereserve.co.uk

Dorset: Tom Weston 0771 3056471 TopTurnTom@yahoo.co.uk

Kent: Roy Ware 01843 861109 roy.ware@btinternet.com

Lancashire: Alan Pidcock 01772 743859 pidcock@manorh.u-net.com

Leicestershire: Ray Mounfield 01530 273098 raychrism@hotmail.com

Northumberland: Par Badhan 07970 480862 parbadhan@hotmail.com

Oxfordshire: John Munro 01491 651709 joncolmunro@aol.com

Suffolk: Paul Strover 01787 374006 paulstrover@btconnect.com

Surrey: Don Beck 01932 251178 dbeck@iee.org

Sussex: Bill Arliss 01273 728204 Bill.Arliss@ntlworld.com

West Midlands: Richard Thompson 01527 821821 richard.paul.thompson@dsl.pipex.com

Association Croquet

Avon: Ray Ransom 0117 968 2255 rrb17928@blueyonder.co.uk

Bedfordshire: Howard Bottomley 01525 374697, (M) 07880 781666 h.bottomley#talktalk.net

Channel Islands: Sarah Burrow 01534 887213, (W) 01534 768300 pegout@psilink.co.je

Berkshire: Joe King 0118 948 1004 01372, 868769 (W) 07768 182885 (M) jwking@lgc.com

Cheshire: Colin Irwin 01565 722556 Colin@irwin-ce.freereserve.co.uk

Devon: Cliff Jones 01404 41261 cliffjones@fraggles.wanadoo.co.uk

Dorset: Peter Trimmer 07745 842772 pt5736@bristol.ac.uk

Essex: Michael Heap 01708 728136 01708 867237 (W) 07836 243401 (M) michael@roundhouse38.fsnet.co.uk

Glamorgan: Chris Williams 01633 400853 chris@butedock.demon.co.uk

Gloucestershire: David Foulser 01242 580295, 01242 581481 (W) 07836 534426 (M) davesvolvo@aol.com

Hampshire: Brian Fisk 01794 322209, 01962 815580(W) 07793 223004(M) brian@fiskfamily.org.uk

Cont'd

Hertfordshire: John Gibbons 01727 894727, 07931 307752 (M) JohnGibbons@fsmail.net

Kent: John Hobbs 01892 852072 hobbsmail@aol.com

Lancashire: James Hawkins 0151 722 4207 jdjh@rlpc.freemove.co.uk

Middlesex: Nick Parish 020 8879 9838 nick@rebeccaparis.plus.com

Norfolk: Jonathan Toye 01366 382280 jt@wndis.org.uk

Northamptonshire: Lionel Tibble 01604 493929 anglion@btinternet.com

Northumberland: David Turner 0191 2841244 davidmtturner@blueyonder.co.uk

Nottinghamshire: Richard White 07932 603366 polisher@ntlworld.com

Oxfordshire: Mark Gooding 01865 717499, 01865 280941 (W) mark.gooding@gmail.com

Suffolk: Steve Comish 01394 385551 (M) 07711 439345(M) s.comish@btinternet.com

Surrey: George Noble 07970 880501 (M) georgenoble@blueyonder.co.uk

Sussex: Roger Wood 01424 210632 RogerWood@ntlworld.com

Warwickshire: Andrew Gregory 01223 573560 akgregory@talk21.com

Wiltshire: Richard Dickson 01725 511586 richard@wickfarm.fsbusiness.co.uk

Yorkshire: Peter Thompson 0046 8 6416341, 0046 73 4438842 (M) peter.thompson@skanska.se

An exciting new initiative was the provision of the New Club Fund. This originated from the sponsorship provided by Bellingham Wines when £5000 was set aside. The fund provided a basic package of equipment of hoops, drill, peg, clips, balls and mallets. The clubs that have benefited are **Fowey, Penrith and North Lakes U3A, Ringmer, Sandhurst, Lytes Carey and Abbey Glastonbury**. With this successful take-up a new form has been produced to provide some initial information and contacts and is available from the CA office/website as well as the FDOs.

The awarding of larger grants has been made possible due to the generosity of the CA allowing 20% - 25% of available funds. Thus, over £20,000 was distributed in 2005 to **Surbiton** (£1500), **Blewbury** (£2000), **Eynsham** (£1674), **Cheltenham** (£2000), **Royal Tunbridge Wells** (£6000), **Letchworth** (£1000), **Bury** (£3000), **Fylde** (£1000) and **East Dorset** (£3000). In some cases the money had been carried over from 2004. It is hoped that 2006 will see a similar distribution and applications are already under review. A revised application form is available from the CA office/website or the Development committee chairman. Forms should be submitted to the FDO in time for a report to be written and submitted to the CA office before distribution to the Development committee members who meet in February and November.

The committee is bound by the Standing Orders recently updated by Council. In addition it decides on specific aims. Hopefully the topic of juniors, schools and elite players will be addressed in 2006. A small budget is set aside for this group and the FDOs will be talent spotting so the committee can liaise more closely with International, Tournament and Handicap

half the cost of such a visit. For details please contact John Beech, George Noble, Bob Whitaker or the CA office. In February John Beech reported that advisory visits had been made to **Sydenham, Newport (Essex), Reigate Priory and Royal Tunbridge Wells**. In addition, George Noble had advised the satellite clubs hosting the World Championships. All CA member clubs should have a copy of the booklet "Croquet laws: their construction, maintenance and development" as this was issued in 2005.

A pleasurable task for the committee at the first meeting in 2005 was to decide on the recipients of the three biennial awards, the Townsend, Apps-Heley and Millennium. The clubs meriting the awards (in the form of a plaque) plus £100 for club funds were **Ashby, Bowdon and Cheltenham**.

At each meeting the FDOs report on the health of their Federations, giving interesting and diverse reports. Thus we share information on newly formed clubs, those seeking development grants or those needing help and how best to support them.

Review of Development Committee year 2005

by Patricia Duke-Cox,
Chairman of Development Committee

The Development Committee is quite large as it invites the Federation Development Officers (FDOs) to attend as well as those Council members who have a particular interest in the development of the sport and its clubs.

The committee has the benefit of the Lawns Advisory Group (LAG) reporting to it as well as the Equipment Committee. The LAG is a small group that is willing to offer advice or be instrumental in providing advice from the Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI) for which a grant of £100 + VAT is available. This meets approximately

CROQUET IN NORWAY, BY ONE OF THEM...

that is - by Tore Gulbrandsen, President and co-founder of The Croquet Association of Norway, Tribune and Founder of The Croquet Society, Secretary General and co-founder of Jeloej Croquet Club

'No, please, not the peg! Please don't send me to the peg!' My opponent had hit my yellow ball. Now he places his foot on his own ball, with my yellow in front. He swings his mallet... and - he missed! I'm still alive! I can still win!

In the childhood days of croquet everyone played croquet this way. Then 'loose' croquet came, where you don't hold your own ball steady. In Norway and the other Nordic countries we still enjoy this old form, though we nowadays also have got the choice of the two 'loose' varieties.

It is believed that croquet arrived in Norway in the 1860s. In 1867 Falck Ytter published a book about games, and croquet was among them. The same year Christiania **B o l d l a g** (Christiania is the old name for Oslo, boldlag is ballteam, written the old way) started playing croquet. This means that a sportclub played it. Both men and w o m e n participated. They played at Akershus Fortress. Croquet

soon became very popular in the towns, but also spread to the officials living in the countryside, later to the wealthy farmers. Around 1880 tennis took over much of the interest among the citizens. In the countryside grown up people kept up their interest until the 1920s. Around 1970 the game gets a renaissance, as people are playing in the parks as well as having always been played in the gardens as a family game.

Who then introduced croquet into Norway? We do not know. Falck Ytter with his book certainly had a great impact. It is believed by the historian of The Croquet Society that seamen might have brought the game back home, officials might have experienced it abroad as well. In Norway some play croquet with very short mallets, among them the players at Lillestoem. According to the historian of Strandpromenaden Croquet Club, it was English



Tori-Croquet.

engineers working on the railway that introduced the game to Lillestroem. However old pictures even from Lillestroem show long mallets. The short mallets must have been introduced later on. The Croquet Society thinks perhaps from Denmark where they play with short mallets. At Jaeren they also play with short mallets, and in certain spots up the southern coast. Jaeren is quite close to Denmark. Old pictures from this area show long mallets,



Kristiansand 1908

and females playing. Short mallets were only used by the male players, when you see people play with short mallets it's obvious that this is not a comfortable position for a female.

If we then have a look at modern times Jeloej Croquet Club (JCC) and Croquet-selskabet, The Croquet Society introduced Association Croquet into Norway in 1974. The first game was played 8th of June 1974. Golf Croquet was introduced the next year after a visit to Ryde Croquet Club. At The Isle of Wight we learned about this easy game. During the trip to England, the laws of Croquet and Golf Croquet were translated. The latter quickly became popular. At the time Jeloej Croquet Club had around 100 members. During the Jubilee Tournament Golf Croquet was played for both seniors (over 18!) and juniors, but Association was only demonstrated. The seasons 1976 and 1977 became the highlight of the 'British' forms of croquet during this period. Equipment had been bought from John Jaques in Britain. At times Association & Golf Croquet were being played as much as Croquet, Norwegian Standard! The Autumn-tournament 1976 was the first tournament where Association Croquet was played in Norway. It was played as doubles, for both seniors and juniors. Golf Croquet was played in the same way.

In 1977 Statistics for both Association Croquet and Golf Croquet were introduced. These competitions lasted the whole season, like the Croquet-statistics (in Croquet, Norwegian Standard) which had started 1970 and which is the longest running croquet-competition in Norway, approaching its 36th year. But it was difficult to get in touch with other clubs at the time, no others played Association Croquet or Golf Croquet in Norway. The interest fell into decline... 1981 was the last attempt from JCC to

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

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/Hobbsmail>

John Hobbs, Kingsbury, Argos Hill, Rotherfield, East Sussex TN6 3QH Tel & Fax 01892 852072 Email Hobbsmail@aol.com

The Laws Quiz

by Barry Keen, Chairman of the Laws Committee

How much do you really know?

Answers at the bottom of the page. It may be useful to have your Laws book handy so you can look up the appropriate Law.



Tony Backhouse & Ian Wilson checking up on the Laws at Cornwall C.C.

Law 1

1.1 At the start of a game Ray chooses Red and Yellow and plays red on to the lawn. Babs, not paying attention, picks up the Brown ball from a set of reverse colours and is about to play it onto the lawn. Is this permitted?

1.2 Ray is playing with Red with Yvonne who is playing with Yellow in a long doubles game where very little progress has been made by either side. At the start of their turn an easy four-ball break is available for Red. However Ray notes that he has had most of the play so far, so tells Yvonne to play with red to give her some play. Is this allowed?

1.3 When playing in an open game (ie: it is not handicap), Ray plays Red through the following hoops in the order stated: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 1-back, 2-back, 3-back, 4-back, Penultimate and Rover. Ray then plays Red onto the peg and removes it from the lawn. Is this correct?

1.4 At the start of the game, Ray strikes Red so that it runs hoop 1. He then immediately strikes Red in an attempt to run hoop2. Is this correct?

1.5 Ray puts Red in contact with Yellow to play a croquet stroke. He then strikes Red but does not move or shake Yellow in the stroke. Is this allowed?

1.6 After having roquetted and taken croquet from Yellow, Black and Blue, Ray strikes Red through its hoop. He then roquets Black again and takes croquet from black. Is this correct?

Law 2

2.1 The inner edge of the boundary marking is the actual boundary. Is this correct?

2.2 The baulk-line is an imaginary line one yard inside the boundary on the North and South boundaries between the corner spots in corners 1 and 3 to a line through the centre of hoops 5 and 6. Is this correct?

Answers

1.1 No Law 1(b) states that the game is played between two sides, of which one plays Blue & Black and the other the Red & Yellow balls (or Green & Brown versus Pink & White).
1.2 No Law 1(b) states that in croquet stroke is played by placing the striker's ball in contact with the roquetted ball and then striking it so that both balls move or at least shake.
1.3 Yes Law 1(e)(6) states that every time the striker's ball scores a hoop point in order as stated in Law 1(c) and by hitting the peg the ball is then said to be pegged out and is removed from the game.
1.4 Yes Law 1(e)(2) states that if a ball scores a hoop point for itself, the striker edge of the marking being the actual boundary.
1.5 No Law 1(e)(4) states that a croquet stroke is played by placing the striker's ball in contact with the roquetted ball and then striking it so that both balls move or at least shake.
1.6 Yes Law 1(e)(6) states that every time the striker's ball scores a hoop point in order as stated in Law 1(c) and by hitting the peg the ball is then said to be pegged out and is removed from the game.

2.1 Yes Law 1(e)(2) states that if a ball scores a hoop point for itself, the striker edge of the marking being the actual boundary.
2.2 Yes Law 2(a)(4) states that the inner edge of the marking being the actual boundary.

Letters

Continued from page 5

as an interested observer, would write to him at thekitchings@aol.com, or, to Marston, the Paddocks, Upper Beeding, West Sussex, BN4 3JW

1 Why does your club want to recruit young people - how has it improved the club - have the youngsters been welcomed by other club members?

2 How is the scheme financed (presumably young people do not pay an adult sub - for how long do they pay a reduced sub)?

3 How young is young?

4 Where do you look for potential recruits - word of mouth - local schools - youth movements?

5 What do you offer that succeeds in attracting your recruits?

6 Do you need a separate section, or can you integrate young and old?.

7 What is your success rate in keeping youngsters - if they drop out, at what age does this happen, what reasons do they give for not staying?

8 Do they start with Golf - is this enough - do they go on to Association - are other "fun" games played?

9 How do you retain their interest in the winter?

10 Are your recruits mainly boys, how to get a balance?

Brian Kitching

Camp it up at Budleigh

The Budleigh Salterton Club has cleared an area previously much overgrown ready for people attending tournaments at the club to use for camping.

For those who know the club's geography, the area is behind the bowling green and lawns 3 and 4. We are creating an open grassy space ready for up to 20 tents for big tournaments. There will be the usual facilities (ladies and gentlemen's) in the changing pavilion and there is good access to the site.

If the demand is there we will construct a central tented area for communal dining/relaxing.

The sea views are unparalleled and with the usual catering arrangements at the club there is little excuse for not booking for one or another of this summer's vast range of tournaments and combining this with a Westcountry holiday.

Roger Bowen

committees. Anyone working with school or youth groups should contact their FDO and seek support for their costs. Federations are also allocated budgets to help cover the costs of visits to clubs or providing help and resources for this or general recruitment and development issues.

Finally, one of the objectives last year was to be instrumental in setting up Club Conferences. After publishing a piece in the Gazette offering thoughts and asking for ideas and comments and only receiving a handful of replies, the 3-man group found there was no appetite for such meetings. Even though Council officials pressed for the event(s) to go ahead, feedback was negative. A compromise idea of linking with Federation AGMs was explored, but so far only the South East have organised speakers for their meeting. One topic is about Disability, the other is The True Cost of Croquet. One other Federation has shown interest in having CA representation at its AGM. If, however, readers feel I have got this wrong, please let me know!

I would like to round off this report by thanking all those who have served on the committee over the three years of my chairmanship. My term of office expires in October and I have enjoyed the experience of chairing this interesting committee and having the opportunity to visit and meet those club members who do the development work in their area.

WOODLANDS CROQUET

CROQUET BALLS FOR ALL OCCASIONS
CA CHAMPIONSHIP APPROVED

SUNSHINY £117 PER SET
BARLOW GT £139 PER SET
DAWSON 2000 £159 PER SET

GARDEN CROQUET BALLS
16oz £46; 12oz £41; 7oz £36
Postage, packing and insurance adds £5 per set.
PPI on multiple orders at special rates.

MALLETS, HOOPS, WINNING PEGS, FLAGS
AND CLIPS AVAILABLE AT KEEN PRICES.
CROQUET SETS FOR GARDENS AND HOTELS
Advice available from John Beech by phone
Send for a full list of Top Quality Croquet
Equipment & Sets.

Woodlands Croquet, Woodlands, Skipton Road,
Barnoldswick, BB18 6HH
Phone/fax 01282 813070

Association Coaching

Level: Handicap

– Playing a Tidy Break

by James Hawkins

Put me on the spot. Ask me what's the most important thing about bisque-taking, and I'll have to say it's not using bisques to set up a break. You can be the best player in the world at creating a promising position from nothing, but it counts for little if your later play isn't up to scratch. Once you've taken that clip off the top of hoop 1 and put it in your pocket, the trick is to reach the peg, with a stack of bisques still firmly in the ground.

This is the first of a series of articles I'll be writing on break play. You can focus on the start of your turn later, and sometime after that you can decide on how to finish gracefully, leaving your opponent with a difficult prospect, and yourself with an easy pickup at the start of the next turn. For the time being, let's look at how to deal with the middle of the break. Learn to play this well, and it's the key to winning games and improving.

I'll deal with the nitty-gritty of how to make things easy, and how to regain control once it's started to slip away, in later lessons. Lesson One is concerned with a few basic tips which should make things easier throughout the break.

“Learn to play this well and it is the key to winning games and improving”

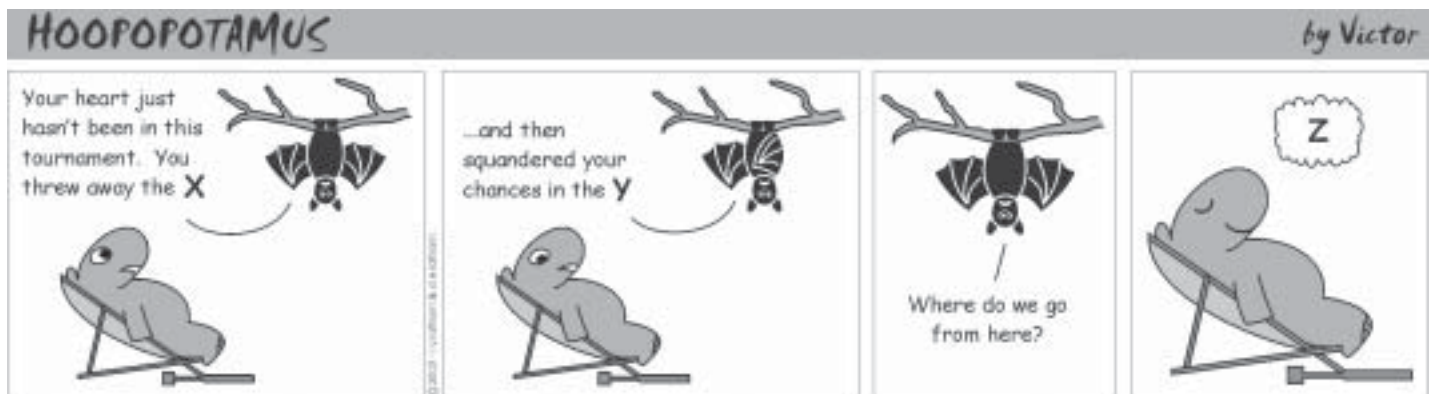
1. Keep the balls in front of you.

Stand by your ball and face your next-but-one hoop. You should be able to see all four balls without having to look round. If there's a ball ten yards behind you, you've got problems. Or if there's a ball

miles away that you can only see from the corner of your eye, you've probably got a nasty split roll coming up in a shot or two. A laid four ball break can become a three ball break, a two ball break, and then no break at all very quickly. Even if the best you can do is shove a ball somewhere – anywhere – into the middle of the lawn, it's almost always better than abandoning it, for want of a better plan.

2. There's only one important ball.

I remember my first tournament. I was very good at hitting long shots, and very good at placing pioneers for my next hoop. But I was dreadful at getting my own ball anywhere near where I



wanted to be. So I lost all my games.

Only after I'd finished did the club coach tell me where I went wrong. You can be forgiven for placing the object ball too far or too short; it's easy enough to tidy it up later. Focus on the striker's ball. Be certain that you always end up near enough to another ball to hit it. Nothing will use up bisques faster than that five yard roquet

“Be certain that you always end up near enough to another ball to hit it.”

which you need to hit, but miss (and then miss again three times with bisques). If you can't ever leave yourself a hittable roquet during your turn, you'll lose. Even with 24 bisques, 24 misses won't get you a clip beyond 2-back.

3. Keep inside the rectangle. Imagine a rectangle joining hoops 1, 2, 3

and 4. Once you're off and running, it's usually a good idea to keep all four balls within this rectangle (within reason, of course – you won't be able to score Hoop 1 if you're too rigid about this).

Work out the surface area of a croquet lawn, and the bits outside the hoops account for 70% of the space. Convincing yourself that you only need to cover the inner 30% of the turf makes the whole idea of a break seem much less of an obstacle. Keeping inside this inner rectangle as much as possible leaves you with much shorter shots.

You'll find it's much easier to approach a hoop from two yards in front than two yards behind. Often when I'm playing very badly, or when I've no confidence and the lawn's pace is difficult to judge, I'll deliberately leave balls short of where I want them. Rushing a short ball another couple of yards towards a hoop is a lot easier than coaxing a ball back into play when you've accidentally put it two yards beyond.

4. Not all shots are equally easy. This sounds kind of obvious. You'll know yourself which shots are your best ones and which ones you'd prefer not to rely on.

Generally speaking, most people find short shots easier than long ones, and straight shots easier than splits. If you're sticking to the principle of keeping within the rectangle, it's unlikely that any shot will be much longer than about 13 yards – that's from the peg to each of the outer hoops, or equivalent to half the width of the lawn.

Confining yourself to the easy shots,

“Convincing yourself that you only need to cover the inner 30% of the turf makes the whole idea of a break seem much less of an obstacle.”

and not having to cope with 30-yard split full rolls or corner-to-corner cut rushes, is something you can control with your choices about where to put the other balls in your break. I'll deal with that at some length in the next lesson.

individual members of the WCF management committee.

Provide preparation resources for the 2006 MacRobertson Shield team.

Resurrect the Elite Training Programmes aimed at improving our team for the MacRobertson Shield in 2010.

Continue to develop the Schools and Junior competitions and resurrect our Junior/Student Training Programme.

Laws

To update the examiners' handbook to include a guide to the practical examination.

In conjunction with the publishing committee, to provide an interactive laws quiz on the web

Marketing

To improve public awareness of the game through improved media coverage of the sport. Specifically to target garden players next year.

To seek additional funding opportunities through sponsorship, commercial activities and other means.

To ensure adequate materials are available to support club recruitment.

Publishing

Continue to increase all CA committees' direct input to their website areas

Gazette to be made accessible on-line in members' area

Start building up a photo-library (top players, with biographies; action shots)

Allow members to update their personal contact details on line

Enable approved individuals to submit news or results directly to the website

Interactive Laws Quizzes as an on-line learning resource

Review website 'ease of use' with respect to the Press and/or garden players

Get ready to facilitate player availability/entry in 2007-season CA Events

Tournaments

The prime objectives of the Tournament Committee are to run a comprehensive tournament programme and to issue the fixtures calendar on time.

In conjunction with the International Committee, to review policies relating to drugs.

Review of Publishing Committee Year 2005

by Charles Waterfield, Chairman of Publishing Committee

The Publishing Committee is fortunate in including several members of other committees (Marketing, Development, Coaching, Laws), as well as the CA Chairman and Secretary. Its two main areas of responsibility are of course the Gazette and the Website, so Editor and Webmaster play key roles.

James Hawkins stepped down as Editor last April and Gail Curry took over for a second term. Various factors conspired to delay production some issues, but these have hopefully been overcome and normal service has resumed. The 2004 Survey showed that the magazine is still a valued benefit of CA membership, but this in turn relies on regular contributions from committees and individuals. It is evident from their websites that some Clubs might be able to provide interesting material for the general readership.

Earlier last year membership application and payment were implemented on the website. The interactive Fixtures Calendar continues in parallel with the book form. There is also a Members' Area, where the first application in place enables a member to register availability for CA Events (Eights, Barlow & Longman, GB vs Ireland); this will be followed by a facility to update selected personal details. In time approved individuals will be able to submit news or results directly

Brian Fisk is developing a CA website area for the Coaching Committee, which will include the latest edition of the Manual. Barry Keen is compiling a store of straightforward Laws questions, from which selections could be made and answers provided (with links to full Laws/ORLC pages). We hope to build up some kind of photo-library, mainly as a resource for Marketing; ideas involve mug-shots of say the 20 top players, with short biographies; general croquet 'action-shots'; pictures of venues, etc. At some stage we will look into providing Gazette back numbers on-line, helped by a contents index.

Questions are sometimes asked as to whether the website is sufficiently user-friendly for Press & Media and/or 'Garden Croquet' players. Views are being sought

generally and from our other committees. Whatever your feel about this, or anything else involving how you like to be kept informed, please get in touch - or maybe even write to the magazine!

FIXTURES CALENDAR 2006

Additions and Corrections

Pages 6, 10,33 &34 The National Juniors' and Schools Championships will be held at Hurlingham on 1-2 July.

Pages 4, 8 & 79 The date of the Newport Weekend Handicap Tournament has been changed from 29-30 July to 5-6 August.

Page 68 The Crake Valley Advanced Tournament is on 12-13 August, not 13-14 August as printed.

Pages 83 & 84 The Tournament Secretary at Pendle & Craven is now John Filsak, 12 Rothwell Mount, Halifax, West Yorkshire, HX1 2XN. tel. 01422 344530 Email john.filsak@1979.alumni.man.ac.uk

The Great Britain versus Ireland match will be played at Colchester on 2-3 September.

Another sponsorship deal with Mitsubishi

Following on from the success of last years World Championships, the Croquet Association has been fortunate to secure a lucrative sponsorship deal with Mitsubishi Motors, to sponsor the 'Mitsubishi Motors British Open Championships' at Cheltenham for 2006.

REMINISCENT ROQUETS: originally published in the Gazette in August 1941 and reprinted in Autumn 1980. This is a slightly edited version.

The Little Things In Croquet

Croquet has often been called Outdoor Billiards, and, when explaining the game to someone who is quite ignorant of its quality, this is by no means a bad simile to make. For the game undoubtedly does resemble billiards in many ways; strokes there are in croquet closely related to those on the billiard table - split shots and roquets of varying strength, strokes requiring knowledge of angles and so forth. Unfortunately, there is a vast difference between the playing surface of the two games: unfortunately, because in both games it is often fractions of inches that make or mar a good shot. And in croquet, because it is impossible to have a lawn as uniformly level as a billiard table, really accurate play cannot be relied upon; one is often unable to play with an eye for the niceties of the game, those little things that make all the difference to the success of strokes on which winning a game may depend.

Having learnt to resign ourselves to the fact that 'Outdoor Billiards' cannot be played on a billiard table surface, we can find consolation in the knowledge that though we have often seen our finest short turn off line in the last yard or two, we have also seen a bad shot turn on to the object ball when it should have missed.

Those who study the Laws of Croquet soon realise, by the very detailed nature of those Laws, how the game is made up of little things which, though small in themselves, are actually of paramount importance. The yard-line provides a case in point, as in the following actual occurrence. The striker went off the boundary with Blue at a point where Black looked to be a yard-line ball. On putting Blue on the court (having apparently measured a yard with his mallet), the striker decided that Black was not a yard-line ball and placed Blue just not touching Black. As

a result of this action - taken, we must assume, in good faith - Blue had a perfect rush on Black to its hoop. Thus, the question of whether both Black and Blue were really accurately positioned was crucial: a case of a little thing in itself (a matter of perhaps an eighth of an inch between the two balls), but of enormous importance to the issue of the game.

Another little thing: two balls a yard apart on the boundary are yard-line balls, or intended to be. On the same boundary, 25 yards off, is the striker's ball, and she shoots with it at the two balls. They should, of course, have presented a single ball target, but because the further one is not accurately placed but projects very slightly, this half-inch sticking out is grazed; only a small inaccuracy, but one that might make the difference between winning and losing the game.

Then there is the decision as to placing the striker's ball in contact with a ball that is so nearly protruding into the hoop on the non-playing side of it: if it is decided that even a fraction of the ball does so protrude, the striker may run the hoop in the croquet stroke. If the ball is judged not to protrude even a fraction of an inch, there may be such difficulty in making contact with it that even in the continuation stroke the hoop cannot be run; if this was the rover hoop and the striker only had to run it to win the game - what a little thing decided the game! (Consider, too, how difficult is the umpire's task in such instances). One cannot but be impressed with the fact that winning or losing a game so often hangs on a mere thread.

CA Committee Objectives

(as agreed at Council, 17th December, 2005)

Note that routine matters, which often form the bulk of a committee's work, have generally been omitted from this list. They are specified in their terms of reference, which are published on the CA website.

Administration

(Not yet available as its chairman has only just been appointed.)

Coaching

Work with Marketing and Publishing Committees to publish new coaching manual both electronically and in hard copy

Create new coaching award to recognise services to coaching over a longer period

Work with Publishing Committee to take ownership of the coaching section of the CA web site and expand it.

Sponsor coaching course.

Publicise the Merit Award Scheme

Work with Golf Croquet Committee to publish syllabus for Golf Croquet Coaching

Review and, if necessary revise, coach qualification process possibly introducing a new grade 4 coach

Development

Identify issues of concern between the relationship of Federations and the CA and report back. A sub-committee has been set up.

Maintain fair budgetary controls on development grants

Publish "New Club Fund" application form on website alongside general CA Development grant application form.

Encourage FDOs to spot young talent and work Marketing to attract Juniors and with International to develop those with "elite" potential.

To contribute to 2006 edition of Club Handbook.

Support the Garden Classic initiative spearheaded by Nigel Graves.

Equipment

To revise the ball testing protocol to include temperature specifications.

Golf Croquet

Increasing the tournament calendar further by promoting further club organised tournaments as opposed to CA sponsored events.

Ensuring there are sufficient 'B' class events in the programme.

Handicap

To revise the guide to handicappers.

To hold further conferences for handicappers.

International

Continue to increase our influence on the WCF and develop stronger links with NZCC, ACA and USCA and with

World Croquet Federation News

The WCF is pleased to announce further grants from the WCF Development Programme. This time to the Italian Croquet Federation.

The Italian Federation made three applications for support for projects that had either taken place or were planned for 2006.

Although the WCF Management Committee declined one application the other two were successful.

The awards made are for 1,000 Euro to assist in the production of a DVD for eventual distribution to key places in Italy for development of the sport and 350 Euro to assist in the organisation of a Golf Croquet Coaching Course in 2006.

President of the Italian Croquet Federation, Gianni Leoncini said, "The Federazione Italiana Sport Croquet is very happy about the WCF decision and I wish to express my personal thanks to all for the initiative that takes us all in the right direction with the aim of croquet's development in the world. Thank you very much."

At the inception of WCF in 1986, certain principles and objectives were established to promote the sport of croquet throughout the world. One of these is enshrined in the WCF Rules (Statutes) - (103.11) *To make awards to those who have contributed to the achievement of the Federation's aims.*

Many sports and pastimes have recognised the leaders in their chosen field, either as practitioners or as supporters, sometimes by tokens (gold watches), awards (Oscars), medals, certificates or by other means. All have a common theme, to thank those that have demonstrated exceptional ability or generous support.

To fulfil the objective, WCF today announces the formation of the WCF Hall of Fame that shall be based on the WCF web site.

Any person may make a nomination for induction via the WCF web site, but they and their nominee must be, or if deceased, have been or would have been, in good standing with their own National Association and WCF.

Only those persons that have made significant contributions to the WCF aims shall be considered for induction and hence no more than five persons shall be inducted in any one year.

Sure to attract attention and controversy whilst making talking points for years to come, the first inductions shall be made in late 2006 and the following time table shall apply to this cycle.

Nominations for inductions close on 30th June 2006. Consideration of nominations completed by 30th September 2006. Induction to the WCF Hall of Fame thereafter possibly at a suitable WCF recognised event.

Full details of the concept and mechanics of the WCF Hall of Fame can be found on the WCF web site on the Hall of Fame-Croquet Legends Information Page. Croquet enthusiasts may make their nomination to WCF via the electronic nomination form.



Golf Croquet

Centre Stage 2005

Report by Patricia Duke-Cox



Pat Wright and Par Badham

The Centre Stage golf croquet competition is aimed at improvers to the golf croquet scene. This year 6 clubs entered, these being Ashby, Eynsham, Ripon, Tyneside, Woking and Woodhall Spa representing the East Midlands, Southern, Yorkshire, North and South East Federations.

The event encourages players to enter their first competition to play 13-point games and meet like-minded players of similar ability from around the country. It is also a natural progression from the Grass Roots competition where players start with doubles before moving to singles games in the second part of each event.

Pat Wright managed the final at the Old Silhillians Croquet Club at Solihull and the winner, Par Badham of Tyneside, was decided by the total number of wins (5/6). He received the Egg Cup trophy provided by Croquet For Leisure. Second places were awarded to Tom Brant of Woodhall Spa and Christine Mounfield of Ashby with 4 wins each, Tom just managing to accrue 7 net points to Chris's 6.



Bernard Jones, Par Badham, Pat Wright (manager), Christine Mounfield, Rosemary Longbottom, Tom Brant, Doreen Macauley, Brian Hitchins.

Golf Croquet Review 2005

Report by Bill Arliss,
Chairman of Golf Croquet Committee

Ever since I took on the job of Chairman of the Golf Croquet (GC) Committee I have tried at the end of each season to review progress in the previous season and highlight what I feel are our best achievements. GC is certainly continuing to grow within our clubs to the extent that it is becoming the major activity in many of the smaller clubs. Admittedly a lot of play can best be described as social but there are good indications, certainly at Federation level, that local competition is also growing. What must be remembered is that this upsurge in GC is bringing in considerable subscription income, which is stabilising the financial position of many clubs and ensuring a future for the social and the competitive players in both Association and Golf Croquet. I would also like to take this opportunity to introduce the members of the GC team who form the GC standing committee. Each of our members has taken on special responsibilities as Directors for specific areas of our programme and as their chosen areas correspond to their own particular interests, we are already starting to see the benefits.



Final of The Golf Croquet Open, Chris Sheen, Bill Arliss (referee) and Reg Bamford

Since the CA started to concentrate on promoting Golf Croquet, a number of new competitions have been introduced including the Opens, Inter Counties and Inter Club Championships and the Selector's Weekend. Entry for these competitions has been growing steadily but this last year showed a significant increase in popularity.

Although they are the only original competitions run before the formation of the GC Committee, the Ascot and Ranelagh Cups, which are now known as the English National Singles and Doubles Championships have changed considerably in format. Under the leadership of Chris Sheen assisted by John Moore, the final for both events changed to separate weekends in 2005, which allows more time to organise a full championship schedule more appropriate to the status of the competition. In place of the many heats around the country for the singles final, there are now opportunities to qualify at several of the major GC events during the season. Only two open heats are now run; one in the south and one in the north for those who cannot qualify in one of the



Northern heat of the Ascot Cup (English National), Ray Mounfield and Mike O'Brien (playing a jump shot)

other events. No heats are involved with the doubles, the top 16 pairs entered, based on combined handicap, get entry directly to the final.

I look after the Inter Counties Championship which last year jumped from a maximum of six teams in previous years to 10 in 2005. For 2006 we already have nine provisional and one 'very interested' entry. With such an entry at this stage we have decided to limit the maximum number to 10 for 2006. It is not that we want to restrict new counties; it is just that we have now reached a stage where we either change the format considerably or look for additional venues if we are to grow. The format of a mixture of singles and doubles appears to appeal to most players and we would like to retain this or something very similar.

The other two competitions that I direct are the Inter Club and the Musk Cup. Last year we had a record entry of nine teams for the Inter Club. From the interest shown in the Musk Cup,



Jennet Blake and Norma Rayne preparing for the Women's World Golf Croquet Championships

otherwise known as the Selectors Weekend, there is a possibility that this could be converted to two separate "eights" in coming years if the same interest is maintained.

For the less experienced we have two separate competitions for the higher handicappers. The All England handicap is now

"Try and run the hoop" or, even worse, "Well, you could try and run the hoop" (in which case the striker will almost certainly hear the unspoken ".....but I don't think you can").

If the striker asks for an idea as to what he should play then I think the partner should say what he would do in singles, assuming he thinks the striker can do it, but otherwise he should strongly affirm his agreement with the striker's choice of shot. Rather than answering the striker directly the partner could ask him what he would do in singles, and if he gets a positive response say something like "So would I, go do it." If he gets something like "I'm not sure, that's why I'm asking you", then the partner can say what he would do. However the discussion develops though, the partner's task is to leave the striker believing that they are both in complete agreement, and believing that he can make the play.

An alternative approach in fairly even pairings is for the player on the lawn to play their own game and for partner to accept that the marginal gains of tactical discussion in such situations are less than the losses suffered by interference. Of course, that approach presupposes that interference is a bad thing. Indeed the use of the word "interference" suggests that it is. I accept that that



John Gibbons & Reg Bamford about to be congratulated by Chris Clarke & Fulford at the Open Doubles Championship

approach is okay in the early days of a partnership, subject to the partner being available to provide reassurance that he is in complete agreement with the striker's decisions. Once a partnership matures I think it should be possible for "interference" to take place because it isn't perceived as interference, but as enhancement, or, if you will, teamwork.

For completeness there are of course situations where the gains may be a lot more than marginal, e.g. if the striker looks like he may be about to commit an error.

One danger to avoid in a partnership is that of assuming that you know what your partner is thinking, for example that he is having doubts because he has asked you what to do. Actually you don't "know", as then you would be mind reading. In fact you would only be guessing, and that guess may, or may not, be accurate. Seriously, I think that is an important point, and both players should be aware of when they might be "mind reading" and should then check, as quite often they can be wrong. So, if the striker asks a question like "Are you happy with me doing X?" it doesn't necessarily imply doubt in the striker's mind. It may be that the striker thinks the partner has doubts, and between

them they decide not to do X when in fact it is what both of them wanted to do. So through mind reading they have managed to worsen their line of play. The partner should reply, "I am if you are" in a positive way, or, simply, "Yes". Of course if X is actually dubious then the partner needs to come up with something like "Have you thought about doing Y?"

Exactly how much better at tactics you have to be than your partner before regular interference starts becoming sensible is unclear. Once the striker overcomes the idea that interference is a bad thing, the obstruction is removed from the partner initiating a discussion. I always tell my partners that if they see me doing anything they don't understand or don't agree with, they should come on and tell me, as it won't adversely affect me in any way (and I really believe that). If I were playing with a more tactically astute partner I would want him to come on and tell me what to do in non-standard situations. Even freakier than that though, I would want him to tell me shot by shot how to do what he wanted me to do, as I wouldn't want to have to think out the line of play as well as play it. I could think out the line of play and then go play the shots, but what's the point if he has already done it for me.

When playing doubles with an obvious junior partner I have often managed to get them to play above themselves by doing the thinking for them and just telling them, very specifically, where to put the balls on each stroke. I believe this is because the mind works better when it is given specific instructions. "Put red here and yellow here" is better than "Approach the hoop putting yellow over there somewhere" for example.

I suppose my conclusion is that the central "problem" of doubles is communication, as it often is in any activity involving human beings! There seem to be two diametrically opposed schools of thought as to the best way of dealing with that problem in order to play doubles successfully. One way is to minimize the amount of communication that takes place, and perhaps also to pretend that any communication that has taken place hasn't as soon as it stops. Or, in other words, to play as though you were still playing singles. The other way is to put some effort into refining one's communication skills, so that having a partner becomes more like an extra resource rather than a potential source of interference.

I leave it up to the individual reader to choose which way works best for them.



M C Percival Mallets

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

specification.

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

Contact Michael Percival, The Laurels, Heath Road, Hesselst, Suffolk IP30 9BJ

Telephone 01359 270 200 Mobile 07780677943

Email: michael@croquetmallets.co.uk

Web: www.croquetmallets.co.uk

Thoughts on Doubles Play

By Keith Aiton

“Master Practitioner of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) and Member of Great Britain’s MacRobertson Shield team for 2006 (Coach of three winning MacRobertson Shield teams in 1990, 1993 and 1996). When not playing croquet Keith is a partner in a firm specialising in corporate and executive coaching and people development.”

I have always thought that two players ought to be able to play better than the sum of the parts, on the basis that two heads are better than one tactically. In practice though it seems that this is not the case, as quite often one of the players plays worse than in singles, and sometimes both players do. Apart from wanting to find reasons for that, I am also interested in finding “cures”, as I believe there are some doubles partnerships who don’t generally play below their expected level, and it ought to be possible to analyse what they are doing “right” that other pairs are doing “wrong”. I am also interested in finding out how to get the best out of your partner, and how he can get the best out of you. I think it should be possible to do better than leaving each other to get on with it. I assume that the partners have at least had a discussion beforehand to clarify such matters as the type of leave they each prefer after the first break to 4-back, say, although I know from personal experience that this doesn’t always happen!



Reg Bamford and Stephen Mulliner deep in discussion about the end of turn leave.

Let’s suppose that the striker has doubts between an aggressive option requiring a good shot and a defensive option merely requiring him to play away. Some people believe that his chances of making the good shot are generally worsened by breaking the flow of the turn by talking to partner. Although this belief is commonly held, why should it be the case? If in a game of singles you have to re-stalk a shot, perhaps because someone got in your eye line, do you think you have less chance of making



it? Or if you have to wait for a double banker? Or do you in fact have a strategy for dealing with the shot as though you are approaching it undisturbed, as a professional golfer would do? Surely the same strategy ought to work in doubles if the interruption is caused by a discussion with partner.

I think a problem can quite often be caused not by doubts about the line of play in the striker’s mind, but by a belief of the



Gabrielle Higgins and Sam Symmonds discuss their start of turn tactics.

striker that the partner might be having doubts. That may cause hesitation, which may be noticed by the partner and then a discussion ensues. The way that discussion goes is important. Unless the striker is very much the junior partner (and needs tactical input) then I believe the non-striker’s goal should be to get the striker in the right frame of mind to make whatever shot the striker wants to play. If the striker is unsure then the partner could give him options. “Either do X, or do Y.” I think it is very important for the partner to choose his words, and manner of speaking them, carefully, as the striker will (consciously or not) pick up on any incongruity in the partner’s message. The partner needs to appear to be very confident in the striker’s ability to make the shot, and should avoid using the word “try” (as to the subconscious mind it implies failing) “Run the hoop”, rather than

managed by newcomer to our team, Freda Vitty. Two years ago we also took over two competitions that had been started outside the CA for the raw beginners and improvers and known as the Grass Roots and Centre Stage. Under the directorship of Patricia Duke Cox these are now well established and have become a regular fixture in our calendar. I would like to suggest to all senior players in our clubs that they recommend these latter two competitions to new players, as they are ideal to get players accustomed to tournament play.

The other area where excellent competition can be found is in the increasing number of club competitions. All of these are now well established with full entries and include in chronological order, Surbiton, East Anglia, Lancashire, Ramsgate, Surbiton B Class and the Yorkshire. In 2005 the first Surbiton Event increased from a single day to two days and the B class event was started. This later event was initiated by one of our number, Jennet Blake. I am please to say that Surbiton have decided to continue with this event and hopefully it will now be a regular fixture. Intentionally it clashes with the Selectors weekend, as both are intended for different classes of players. The number of club competitions will again grow in 2006 with the introduction of a new two-day event at Southwick in July. If any players have



John Moore and net holders at Sussex County

problems or any questions concerning any of our competitions, please contact the relevant Director. They will be in the best position to help

The other three members of our team are Jennet Blake, Richard Hoskyns and Tim King. Jennet was until this year Director for the All England but has now handed over to Freda so that she can concentrate on the coaching aspects of Golf Croquet. Richard’s main job is as Chairman of the CA’s Tournament Committee. As both he and I sit on each other’s committees we ensure that there is full co-ordination between events for the two different formats. Tim is another new entry to the team. Relatively new to croquet he has rapidly become one of our leading GC players and has been selected for the World Championships this year. When I learned that Tim, as part of his professional life was involved in the writing of international standards he was a natural for our GC Laws committee. At present his main brief on the GC Committee is on laws matters.

With the growth at club level there is now an ever-increasing demand for coaching. Two coaching badges have now been introduced specifically for GC, the Club coach and the Silver level. The latter badge is intended for those players who have the necessary coaching skills for running open courses for beginners and improvers. Five coaching courses for beginners and improvers plus two for new coaches are already arranged for next year and details are given in the fixtures book.

Probably the biggest change during 2005 was the introduction of a new set of laws. This had been suggested back in 2002 but due to lack of progress was not fully implemented until the beginning of 2005. Whilst there are many players who would have preferred laws to suit our own requirement entirely, we must ensure that our top players are well prepared for international competition by playing the game in the same way as the rest of the world. To this end we followed the lead of the WCF rules committee on which we are represented by myself but strongly backed by the input from our own laws committee. I would now say that the GC Laws and the WCF GC rules are almost identical in the way the game is played and the differences are only in the areas of behavioural rules and the use of Referees in Charge. In our view behavioural rules and the use of referees in charge should have been included in Tournament Regulations, which differ from country to country. Regrettably we were not able to persuade the WCF rules committee to take this point of view. To run a tournament in England now under WCF rules becomes rather pointless unless the vast majority of games are played with a Referee in Charge.

I personally feel that the new wrong ball law is too harsh and puts too much weight on concentration rather than skills of mallet on ball. However the approach to the wrong ball law was agreed by the majority and is now accepted as our standard so lets try and live with it for some time until an alternative approach becomes evident.

We will continue to run referee courses throughout the season and gradually increase the number of qualified referees. No courses are listed in the fixtures book for 2006 but will be arranged on demand. Generally we would hope that Federations will take the lead in this area, identify the demand and make the initial arrangements. I personally will co-ordinate assistance from the laws committee. We very much want to create a full network of examining referees around the country so that courses can be run independently and I would certainly like to hear from GC referees who would be interested in carrying out these duties. One point I would however make is that any potential examining referee should have experience of being a Referee in Charge. Whilst we do not use Referees in Charge to any extent in England it is nevertheless an ability we expect from our qualified referees and as such their examiner must have the necessary experience to carry out the required training. I am sure those who have acted as Referees in Charge at GC World Championships and similar will recognise the need for this form of training.

Arrangements are already underway for the first course in 2006 to be held at Hurlingham in either February or March. This will be open to non-members of Hurlingham and details will be published on the CA web site shortly.

An Inclusive Sport

Jonathan Toye reports on his efforts to make croquet available to disabled players

I am forever extolling the virtues of croquet to anyone who will listen, telling them how it's one of the few sports played on an international basis in which we, the Brits, excel. How it's totally amateur and in what other sport do you stand a chance of having a game with one of the top players in the world? How men and women, old and young, fit or not at one's best, compete enjoyably with one another.

Other aspects, such as the possibility of a handy pint or glass of red nearby as one is in the middle of a match are of course extra ammunition in the process of persuasion.

Given that I work in the field of Disability Rights it's hardly surprising that I also point out that it's an excellent sport for anyone who has an impairment to give a try. There are no barriers. One of the all-time greats, often cited, is of course Spencer-Ell. On a slightly more mundane but highly enjoyable level, playing in a CA tournament a year ago, I double-banked on a lawn whose four occupants included a person with Parkinson's, someone who was totally deaf, someone visually impaired and an amputee with a paralysed arm. No concessions. Lots of fun.

I have recently taken this a stage further with a bit of positive promotion of croquet for disabled people. I give various support groups interesting bits of information about accessible pubs and friendly B&Bs and so on. It seemed a logical extension to tell them about my beloved game and invite them to come and try it at our club. We play in the beautiful grounds of Stow Hall, just outside Downham Market in Norfolk. The lawns are upsy-downsy but it's a haven of peace and calm, like a lot of croquet clubs.

Over the last season roughly 100 disabled people came and had a go. Some brought picnics. Others visited the pub nearby. All had a great time. I borrowed a pair of Bradshaw Buggies (pictured) from a local Sports Centre. These have been developed for bowls and I had a hunch they would work for croquet. They do, leaving no trace on the lawn because of their wide wheels.



(Bowls club groundskeepers are every bit as twitchy as croquet clubbers). There were some problems with self-propulsion, owing to the rustic nature of our grass. I'm sure they would turn on a sixpence on a smoother surface such as the billiard table lawns of nearby Hunstanton. In the event we got over the problem by playing doubles with a buddy pushing.

Mike Percival made a dozen or so mallets of all shapes and sizes with different types of grip, inter-changeable handles and variable weighting using plastic or metal washers. By the end of the season we had established the best of the bunch and he will produce more of those for next season – as all the groups that visited have said they want to return. Some individuals have joined the club. One group wants a more competitive format playing for a trophy.

All of which, I think, tends to indicate that croquet is a truly inclusive sport. Watch this space!

(JONATHAN IS COACHING AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICER FOR THE EAST ANGLIAN CROQUET FEDERATION AND ADVISOR ON INCLUSION TO THE CA. CONTACT HIM ON 01553 776177 (WORK), 01366 382280 (HOME) OR JT@WNDIS.ORG.UK)

the stick. Even then I didn't give up hope but tried to roll up – and I'm good at the old Wolverhampton roll. Not this time, though: made a terrible mess of it, red squirting about a yard towards penult and blue going off the East boundary.

Nice while it lasted, I thought, but damn me if I didn't hit in on the fourth turn and fall effortlessly into another break, with 4 balls instead of 2 this time. Now, with things apparently going my way, you'd expect me to have a go at the triple, wouldn't you? After all, I'd never yet done one in a tournament and they're offering gold medals for it nowadays, as though anyone needed that kind of incentive. But no, it simply did not occur to me that it was on. Never gave it a thought, just played the break.

Or did I? I was going through the motions; my mallet was striking the balls; but was I playing the break? I know you get into a groove sometimes, when the ends of your fingers seem to sense the precise strength needed to put every ball exactly where you want it – but this wasn't one of those times. Indeed I neither felt the weight of the mallet nor registered the blows as it distributed the balls about the court. And this on a damp and heavy court.

Mind you, I didn't fight it but just let it happen, revelling in my new-found mastery of the game, hoping there was a handcapper lurking nearby, biro poised to chop me down to scratch – or below.

Until I reached 1-back, where I got perfect position, six inches from the hoop, bang in front – and missed. Not the hoop but the ball. An air shot: just floated over the top with the same sense of being out of control that I'd experienced when playing all those elegant roquets, croquets and hoop shots that had got me through the previous six hoops.

It must have been a full thirty seconds before I 'quit my stance under control' and walked slowly, numbly back to the lawnside bench, where my opponent still sat, grinning like a Cheshire cat and clearly bursting to give me the benefit of his wisdom. I looked down at him, irritably.

'Alright, Terry, what is it? Tell me the worst.' His grin widened and became more sinister.

'You've got the clips of death, me old mate. Bad omen, that. You might lose this game after all'.

'Clips of death? What the hell are they?'

Terry gestured towards the lawn. 'You're 1-back and 4-back. Whatever you do, you can't run a hoop without conceding a lift. Them's the clips of death, old love. Fatal to croquet players, them are.'

And, cackling wildly, he strode purposefully onto the lawn, where a crisp roquet on my forlorn black led to a neat break to 4-back. I missed the short lift and that was that: gold medal time for Terry and the manager wrote '-11' against my name.

That was about half-an-hour ago. I left the club soon after, refusing the traditional offer of a drink and not even bothering to change out of my whites. Somehow nothing mattered climbing into my car and getting home as quickly as I could. The day, which had been warm and humid, had given place to a chill and clammy evening. The sensation of unease, which the game with Terry had aroused in me had become a sick, frightened feeling in my stomach. Irrational but real: I had to get away.

The car started first time, with no sign of the ignition trouble that has baffled the garage for weeks now. For the first 20 miles I drove rather better than usual. Faster too. But it wasn't until I'd past through Leicester without a hitch that I realized that something was up: all through the city the lights had been at green; I never even had to brake or ease off the throttle, just steamed through the city of Leicester as though it was, a tiny deserted village.

When the car reached the outskirts and began to accelerate away, without my depressing the pedal, I knew that, as with my unexpected break-building, the control of my destiny was in hands other than my own. Unable, so even to believe what was happening I tried to brake but my foot would not leave the accelerator. As the car's speed rose through the sixties, the seventies, the eighties, as it approached a velocity of which I knew it to be quite capable and left that mark far behind, my mind passed rapidly through incredulous horror and abject terror until it reached the state of numb acceptance on my fate which I am now experiencing.

I now find myself strangely unafraid, resigned, intrigued even, watching the panic in the faces of the oncoming drivers, as we weave in and out of the traffic at breakneck speed.

We,
My guardian angel and I
My angel of death.

We have just passed a 'road narrows' sign. I could make

out the very spot where the two lanes become one, were it not for a couple of container lorries which are racing at tortoise pace, each trying sluggishly to gain the lead before overtaking is rendered impossible by the narrowing road. The huge rear-view mirrors project from their sides like clips on the sides of a pair of hoops. Clips of death. There is no room to pass and we are hurtling towards them at well over 100mph towards their great, elevated backsides, perched on gigantic wheels, great hoops of space below. Nearer and nearer. Shall we run the hoop and concede the lift? Or give up the innings?

Clips of death. Clips of death. Clips of.....

Editor's Note: Ms Rush would like readers to know that she is enjoying her retirement and living in a Druid commune in Ludlow.

Gerald Hallett, 90 Not Out.

It was in the early seventies when I first met Gerald Hallett, a

sprightly well-spoken gentleman, at Colchester Croquet Club. At that time Gerald was just retiring from his position as lecturer at the Colchester Institute, an FE establishment. Now, some 30 years later Gerald is still an active member of the same club, a little less sprightly maybe but no less enthusiastic about the game he loves so much. For a year or more he had



made several mentions of his great hope that he would be able to play croquet when he was ninety! When asked when that would be, he somewhat reluctantly volunteered that December 3rd was the date, sadly rather after the end of the season. So, with little need for persuasion, I arranged for a court to be set up and 18 members who had been special friends and had played regularly with Gerald, arrived for a noon start in very cold and adverse weather conditions. A short period of activity on the court was followed by a delicious lunch which Ann Lee had prepared in the usual Colchester tradition.

Gerald, who for a number of years had been secretary of the club and was more recently made Vice-President, spoke with affection of the many years he had enjoyed as a player and of some of the well-known names from the past from whom he had learned. In his younger years Gerald was a most competent player with a low handicap and took part in tournaments around the country. Now that his legs prevent him from participating in long games of association croquet he has turned his attention to golf croquet where his experience is utilised in guiding the younger generation - the over 60s and 70s etc! During his short talk to those present for the lunch Gerald unwrapped a small silver cup which had been given to him around 40 years ago by Cyril Ratcliffe and explained how this symbol of good fortune had remained with him throughout the succeeding years. All members of Colchester Croquet Club, past and present wish Gerald many more years of enjoyment on the croquet lawns.