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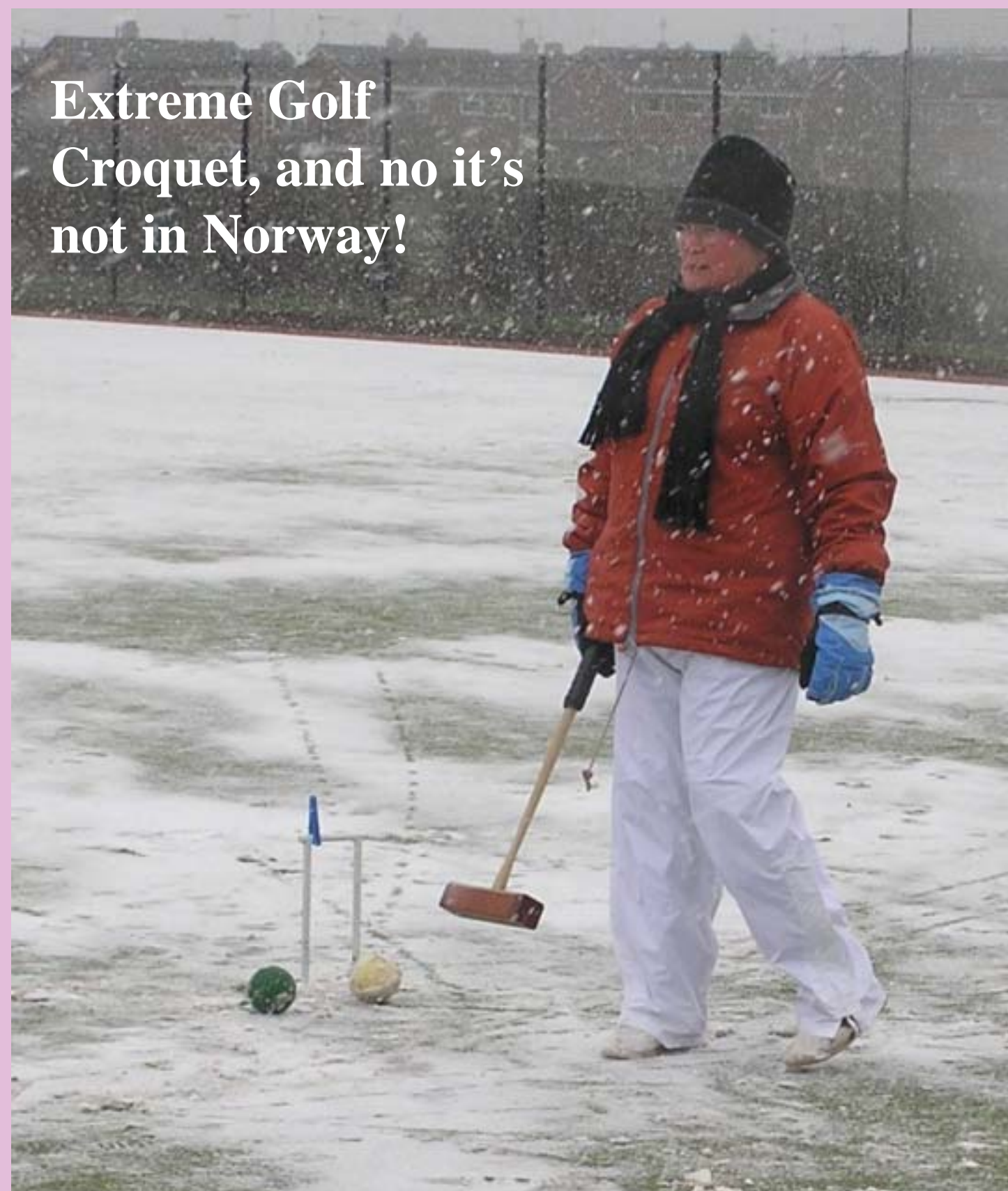


THE CROQUET GAZETTE

ISSUE 302

APRIL 2006

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There is something wrong in the kingdom of Denmark...

By Tore Gulbrandsen, Norway

There is something wrong in the kingdom of Denmark, said prince Hamlet, yes, they play neither Association nor Golf Croquet. But 6000 players play Danish Croquet (dansk krocket)! This must be around twice as many players as in Britain! On an ordinary Sunday in a lot of places in the county of Ribe there might turn up as many as 200 players, which means they need 50 lawns! - They have to use football grounds.

Danish croquet is highly integrated in the sporting scene of Denmark, much more than in the rest of the Nordic countries. Krocketudvalget (The Croquet Board) is part of Danske Gymnastikk- & Idrætsforeninger (The Danish Gymnastic and Sports Associations, DGI), and are funded from the government. The Danish organisation is also by far the biggest of the Nordic organisations and are skilled in staging large tournaments.



The biggest tournament is also held in Ribe County. It runs the whole season, or at least May-August, around 1200 players participate and it consists of nearly 4000 events! The players are not handicapped, but play in different groups/divisions.

The board of the Danish croquet players are planning to start playing Golf Croquet this summer. This again means that if the game appeals to them the, Danes will



A typical tournament scene - whatever the country

either have to play Golf Croquet at football grounds or build a lot of lawns. However the climate is more friendly for the Danes than for other Nordic neighbours in order to have good lawns.

Another problem in Danish croquet is the fact that a large number of the players are 'grown-ups' (they are not alone with this problem). In 2003/2004 86% were past 60 years, only 1% were under 25 years. This differs from the other Nordic neighbours. In Finland and partly in Norway the croquet scene is rather young. In Denmark a lot of women play. The Danes are alone in the Nordic countries concerning this as well. They had 222 clubs and staged 84 tournaments (stevner) and 54 courses in 2003. They then added a further 20 clubs.

It is only partly true that the international types of croquet will be introduced this summer. At Egeskov castle in the island of Fyn they have an international lawn, and some years ago the count, Michael Ablefelt- Laurvig-Bille (belonging to the Danish-Norwegian nobility) even staged a tournament using 'international' rules according to the count's secretary. In 1882 Doctor H.Schou issued a book called "Ny Haandbog i Croquet" (A New Handbook in Croquet), it was a translation from English, but at that time the one-peg-set-up (Willis setting) was not yet introduced, so it was much closer to the type of croquet the Danes play today.

Danish Croquet is a one-hand game, otherwise quite similar to American 9 wicket or Croquet, Norwegian Standard. If we look back in time croquet was much widespread as a garden game, much used for family- and township-parties. Every town and indeed every lawn used to have their own rules. This became problematic if one team wanted to visit one from another town/group. It is only

during the last 30-35 years that a game with consistent rules and a more sportive content, tournaments etc. have been developed.

During the 1960's croquet developed as a team game at town- and sportsfestivities. Tournaments lasted 1 or 2 days. Because of differences in rules it was difficult for players from another town to win a tournament. Something had to be done! The first rules were written in 1972.

The first county-tournament were held by Ribe amts gymnastik og ungdomsforening (Ribe county gymnastics- and youthclub) in 1986. 20 teams from 9 clubs met. The next year a countyboard was established.

The town tournaments have developed into Sunday-competitions.



Play in progress

First one thought that the volume of croquet playing was too little to be brought to much attention. But then the older people's sportorganisation started to pay attention. In 1997 representatives of 7 counties were invited to a meeting. They established a workgroup who looked at rules and how to educate instructors. In May 1998 the first instructors course were held. In April 1999 DGI's olderpeople's department established a croquetboard with 3 members. The first national championships were held the same year with 100 players playing in 8 divisions.

Danish sport are meeting regularly and croquet have also had countrymeetings/rallies. In 1997, the first year, with 100 participants. This year Danish Sport will meet in Haderslev at Jutland. 300 croquet players are expected. That's when DGI are planning to introduce Golf Croquet. The board believes it will be best for the players if they get used to the new layout of the court while playing Golf Croquet, then they can move on to Association. There are also plans for making the board into an association in its own right.

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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.

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THE CROQUET GAZETTE



Issue 302 April 2006 £3.00

Front Cover: Eileen Buxton in play at the annual East Midlands Federation Golf Croquet Coors Cup competition.

Photographs in this issue are kindly supplied by: Ray Mountfield, Tim King, Max Murray, Leopold Walderdorf, Roger Morris

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Chairman's Column

The South-East Federation held their AGM at the end of February and followed it (after an excellent lunch prepared by the Surbiton cooks) with a conference in the afternoon. Jonathon Toye spoke about disability issues, making the point that improvements to accessibility can often benefit able-bodied people as well as those with an impairment and that grants for them are available from a number of sources.

George Noble then gave his thoughts on the financing of croquet, pointing out how much our clubs and tournaments are subsidised by the huge amount of voluntary effort that is put into them: "con amore" (with love) to use his expression. In many ways this is one of the attractive features of our sport, and helps with accessibility in a different sense, but because we are used to getting things on the cheap we perhaps accept lower standards, particularly in the matter of lawn maintenance, than we would if we were paying commercial prices.

Finally, Patricia Duke-Cox, who chairs the Development Committee, spoke about the considerable increase in the level of grants given by the CA to clubs in recent years, before a general discussion in which

Editorial

The last few months have indeed been busy, with no less than two World championships and our own domestic season now under way. It will soon feel like there has been no break in the proceedings. For those lucky enough to enjoy play during the winter, if lucky is the word to use given the photo on the front cover, it is probably just a case of simply stepping up a gear and playing more while having to wear slightly less. On the other hand, and I include myself in this, it can be quite a daunting prospect to re-commence playing. I know from personal experience that my one time muscle memory used to click in and I would play without particular thought. Alas this is no more. Perhaps it is an age thing, perhaps it is a gardening thing. I know I struggled first to find my mallet and then when I had found it I could not remember whether it was my left hand that went to the top of my grip or was it my right hand? Both felt equally strange. Perhaps hitting a few balls would help? Actually no, it made matters worse. Hoops and roquets were infrequent, the only thing I managed with any great degree of consistency was to

the Gazette seemed to be the main topic of interest.

The March Council meeting was held at Hurlingham and ratified a number of recommendations from its committees. These included a subscription increase, in line with inflation and to help to maintain the level of grants; new procedures for approving loans to clubs; a 50% discount for Juniors in most events run by the Association; and a selection policy for national and international Golf Croquet events that would normally restrict eligibility to players who had competed in at least two from a list of events nominated by the selectors each year.

It also adopted the recommendation of the Appeals Panel that the unplayed final of the 2005 Golf Croquet Inter-Club Championship final should be played at the start of this season and that a single date should be advertised in future and asked the Management Committee to review the rule stating the objectives of the CA (our President

Continued on Page 14

take divots! My paranoia rose, and I have no doubt that unless I play or practice with some regularity, my handicap will move in the same direction. But then a memory popped up like an old friend, which made me realise why I wanted to return to play. It is not excellence that I dare to chase nor is indeed the reason I wish to play again. My reason for playing is the the sheer enjoyment, fun and camaraderie that can be found in croquet. I stood there on the lawn and recalled for no more than a few seconds some of the moments I have experienced that I would have found nowhere other than at a croquet tournament, laughing at and with myself. Then, without thought I picked up my mallet, turned around and ran a ten yard hoop. My muscle memory had returned, my laughter muscles that is, I think that is all I will need to enjoy my return to croquet, anything else will be a bonus!

Ed.



More News & Information

2nd Egyptian Open Golf Croquet Championship announced.

The Egyptian Croquet Federation are pleased to announce the 2nd Egyptian Open Golf Croquet Championship, sanctioned by the WCF, taking place from 1st to 6th October 2006 inclusive.

The venue is the Egyptian Croquet Federation Headquarters located near to the Gezirah Club, Cairo using the Federation lawns and those of the Gezirah Club itself. (6 in total)

A total entry of 24 players will be accepted with 8 being reserved for Egyptian players.

Confirmed entries include:-Ahmed Nasr (2004 World Champion), Mohamed Nasr, (Current World Champion), Khaled Younes (1996, 1998 and 2002 World Champion), Salah Hassan (1997 and 2000 World Champion), Nahed Hassan (Current Women's World Champion), Yasser Esmat (2000 World Championship Finalist)

The entry fee is 50 U.S.D: to be paid upon arrival in Cairo All entries should be sent to the Egyptian Croquet Federation, President, Amir Ramsis

mahamass@link.net Closing date for entry is 1st September 2006.



MacRobertson Shield 2006

Details of the interim, but as yet unconfirmed, arrangements for the 19th MacRobertson Shield World Team Championship have been released by the Croquet Association.

The Championship is to be held between the 16th November and 3rd December 2006 at the Rich River Croquet Club (part of the Rich River Golf Club Resort at Moama/Echuca), and at Shepparton Croquet Club, New South Wales, Australia.

The original venue was set to be the newly completed magnificent croquet complex in Victoria, Australia at Cairnlea. However delays in the construction have meant that the Championship be switched at this stage to avoid any impact on the event.

Croquet photo contest proves successful

Croquet World Online launched a photographic competition following the publication of Deborah Latham's article 'How to Shoot Croquet players' last year. Entries were recieved from players from many countires and approximately 100 contest photographs were submitted with the stories behind the shots. The photographs are now online and ranked in their categories, as judged by co-editors Bob Alman, Reuben Edwards and James Hawkins. To view the entries and winners go to www.CroquetWorld.com.

The compeition is now to be an annual event, if for no other reason that they recieved so many excellent entries. So don't forget to take your camera with you and start snapping!

How the CA uses legacies to help our sport

Report by Jeff Dawson

The CA is mainly run by volunteers who give of their time without cost. The CA's normal revenue resources, which include personal and club membership fees are adequate to cover the modest cost of running the CA. However they are inadequate to fund the development of croquet in what is now a highly competitive world.

To do this they have to raise further resources by other means. Two major sources of extra funding are Sponsorship and Legacy income.

The monies donated to the CA are held in various funds and used to help fund numerous initiatives such as:

- The development of new clubs
- The improvement of facilities at existing clubs
- Helping clubs to recruit new members
- Helping clubs to retain, encourage and improve the skills of existing members
- Maintaining our position as a top croquet nation by supporting the development and maintenance of our top international players.



Work in progress in 2005 at Tunbridge Wells. The club were made a £6,000 grant towards the lifting and re-laying of three courts as well as installing an automatic watering system. It is only with the help of legacies made to the CA that grants such as these can be made.

Through Legacy and sponsorship income in the last 12 months we have managed to support projects including helping 6 new clubs to establish themselves and many existing clubs enhance their facilities with projects ranging from the relaying of lawns to the provision of a new clubhouse.

Without the income we get from legacies many of these projects would remain unsupported.

If you would like to talk to a member of the CA in confidence about leaving a legacy to croquet contact the CA secretary Klim Seabright tel: 01242 242318 and he will send you further information on taking the next step.

MARKETING CROQUET

By Elizabeth Williams

Ask anyone who has tried to market croquet and they will tell you that the usual reaction from the uninitiated is that they have been told it is a 'vicious game' or it reminds them of Alice in Wonderland and putting feet on balls when they are hit. That or it induces a charming mental picture of lazy summers and cucumber sandwiches.

The truth, as we all know, is somewhat different, and the Marketing Committee is charged with promoting the modern game to the wider public and also providing support for clubs' marketing efforts. Indeed, its objectives are, for 2006:

To improve public awareness of the game through improved media coverage of the sport.

To develop a garden croquet event

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

To ensure adequate materials are available to support club recruitment

Club Recruitment

Taking the last point first, the committee provided each club last year with a Recruitment and Retention Guide which included guidance on a variety of methods such as organising recruitment campaigns, generating positive PR, a list of materials available from the CA, and how to plan for recruitment and retention. Most of the information contained in the guide had been written by committee members and others in the CA with expertise they were willing to share. This information is also available on the CA website.

As well as the recruitment guide, the marketing committee have made available the following materials, all of which are freely available from the CA Office:

- Leaflet on Association Croquet
- Leaflet on Golf Croquet
- Recruitment posters
- 'Anyone for Croquet'
- Leaflet on joining the CA

Improving Public Awareness

Last year, the CA renewed its contract with ENS, who provide public relations services and the coverage obtained last year was estimated to be worth some £113,000 if such space had to be bought. Certainly the world championships provided a major

publicity hook, and the coverage achieved on a national basis was excellent and was certainly appreciated by the sponsors of the event. This year, with no major championship such as a World Championship taking place in the UK, we have decided to concentrate on developing a 'garden croquet' event and we have a sponsor is who is keen to support just such an event. As we go to press, the success of this venture depends on getting a suitable agreement with national media to promote it, which is currently uncertain.

Earning Revenue

The committee is active in seeking out sponsors, and also in ensuring that sponsorship obtained by other members of the CA is developed to the full, and that sponsors receive the maximum benefit from their support of croquet.

The shop, run by chairman of the Marketing Committee, continues to provide income for the CA, with an increased contribution of around £18,000, representing 10% increase on the previous year.

Other Activities

The committee also discusses various marketing topics, usually with a view to providing guidance or proposals to the CA Management Committee. Such topics include possible division of sponsorship revenues, how to attract new members etc. Email makes these discussions an ongoing event, with the result that items can be debated regularly and the need for formal meetings kept to a minimum.

Anyone in the CA can, indeed should, ask any member of the Committee for advice and support they are:

Chairman: Jeff Dawson, jeff.p.dawson@gmail.com

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Elizabeth Williams, elizabeth@butedock.demon.co.uk

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Nigel Graves, Nigel.graves@blueyonder.co.uk

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Inter-Counties Team Shirts

This year we are again making Inter-counties shirts available, with the name of your county/team. The shirts are white, 100% cotton 'Fruit of the loom' short-sleeved polo shirts, and they will bear an Inter-counties logo and county name on the breast (as below) embroidered in green.

Only £16 each!

Available in sizes S to
XXL

As the shirts will be made to order, orders must reach the CA shop by **May 5th** at the latest. Shirts will be available for collection at the event (Southwick), or they can be posted in advance for a charge of £1.50 per shirt.



Order from Jeff Dawson at the Croquet Association Shop,
email sales@croquet.org.uk or call 01483 776971

Letters

'Impossible' hoops 2

Keep trying, Chris. In the latest Gazette (No. 301, p22) you record an amazing golf croquet shot which ran hoop 11 (penult) from one yard out of corner three, though you say you haven't managed it yet yourself. This is the largest recorded angle of run that I know of, with an angle somewhere between 51.1 and 55.8 degrees, depending on where the ball started from, and assuming a standard court. However, it is easy to show that even angles of 60 degrees are possible in theory (Gazette No. 293, p26), so, keep trying Chris, and good luck.

Don Guban, Bristol

Re: Camp it up at Budleigh

Contrary to the letter in the February Gazette entitled "Camp it up at Budleigh" I regret that there will not be camping on the grounds of the Budleigh Salterton Croquet Club. At their February meeting the club's general committee considered a proposal to allow camping but rejected it, primarily because of inadequate facilities.

However, visitors who wish to camp can do so at several local camping grounds, the nearest being less than two miles from the club.

Peter Jones

(Chairman, Budleigh Salterton Croquet Club)

Offering accommodation

Here at Ramsgate we are aware that entrants for the many

tournaments and competitions that we run involve, for some people, a great deal of travel. We have found that accommodation offered by our members is very much appreciated. Not only does it reduce the cost of "going away" to a tournament, but also it is an opportunity to make other friends in the croquet world.

Can I urge clubs to draw up lists of their members who would offer this facility. This is included as a question on our annual "renewal" forms.

Valerie Harding

Ramsgate Croquet Club

Re: Issues within issues (issue 301)

It was never my intention to imply that you might produce the Gazette weekly – I merely wanted the readers to know (or be reminded) that that there was a Gazette before 1954.

In those days the task of the Editor was, of course, much easier; he only had to collect the material and hand it all over to our publisher, the Holmesdale Press at Redhill where a man, who had done the job for years, put it all together and saw to its distribution. This happy state of affairs came to an end following a disastrous fire at the Holmesdale Press in 1964 and the retirement of our 'key man' and the cost of everything soared out of all recognition.

Alan Oldham (CA Archivist)

The editor now sees the bigger picture, having been born in the year of the disastrous fire. It must be fate that brought her to this post. However she is eternally grateful that it is a not a weekly toil.

German Golf Croquet Open

The Deutscher Krocket Bund is pleased to announce the staging

of the first ever German Golf Croquet Open Championship.

Here is an outline of the event:

21-23 July, 2006;

Hamburg/ Germany, three full-size lawns, up to 24 players, WCF GC Rules, 120 Euro entry fee, good food, a little sightseeing and (hopefully) a nicely mixed crowd on the lawns.

Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Joern Vinnen, Deutscher Krocket Bund, Chairman.

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AGM NOTICE

At the next AGM, which will be held on Saturday the 14th October 2006, five members of Council will have completed their terms of office, all of whom have indicated their wish to stand for re-election.

The names of any other Associates who wish to stand for election to Council should be notified to the Secretary of the CA by the 1st June 2006. In addition it would be helpful if notice of any motions to be put to the AGM could be given to the Secretary by that date.

Obituary

Sheila Blenkin

Sheila, with her husband Alan, joined the Cheltenham Croquet Club in 1967, but her enthusiasm for the game had to face opposition from so many other interests, so she never managed to get a single figure handicap. But her willingness to help in the running of the club combined with her friendly out-going nature made her an extremely useful and popular member. She served on the committee from 1969, and she and Alan ran the bar from 1970 to 1982.

Sheila's energy was also used in the Cheltenham U3A, where she organized local walks and set up and ran a rota for people willing to respond to calls for help from fellow members. She joined several of the U3A groups to study a variety of subjects, ranging through astronomy, science, technology and Italian.

Both Sheila and Alan were keen on Scottish Country Dancing, and would happily dance on a Saturday evening in or near Cheltenham and would then play in a one-day tournament on the Sunday.

However, she was not always around to indulge in these activities, having a passion for travel and holidays. These often

combined interests, such as walking, Scottish Country Dancing, the study of flowers, geology and sightseeing. She had previously been to Australia on behalf of GCHQ before she married Alan, but had an opportunity to return in 1983 when Alan was posted there for three years shortly before his retirement. Of course, she located the croquet clubs and was able to play there.

Sheila died suddenly on 4th February last year in Lanzarote while on a Scottish Dancing holiday with her husband and several friends. She was a lively warm-hearted woman who will be missed by her many friends.

Eileen Cheverton.

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Handicap Association Coaching –

Lesson 2: The Modern Break

By James Hawkins

Tradition dictates that there's a standard layout for a four-ball break: ball at your current hoop, ball at your next hoop, and a ball at the peg. I won't bore you with the details – make a hoop and send the object ball to the next-but-one hoop, each time pivoting around the middle ball to make things easier. This way – say the coaches with some glee – you can make an all-round break, and you need only ever play 12-yard take-offs and 25-yard half-rolls.

That's the theory. In practice, it's 9.40 on a Sunday morning. You're not warmed up, the caffeine's not kicked in, and you've not worked out the pace of the lawn, half of which is covered in dew, half not. You've set up a decent-looking break for a bisque, but you want some easy, little shots to get things tidier. The last thing you want is big difficult heaves across the lawn. And that's the problem with the traditional break.

Actually, that's not the only problem with keeping a pivot ball at the peg. If you're given the choice (which you are), deliberately putting any ball within a foot of anything else is usually a really, really bad idea. Until the last ten seconds of the game, the peg serves no real purpose, except to get in your way. And the closer a ball is to the peg, the more awkward an obstacle it is. There's no stupider way of breaking down, or wasting a bisque, than landing a foot away from a ball, but not being able to hit it because there's a peg in the way.

So what's the alternative? With the traditional technique, you move the pivot ball just a few feet each time, and the striker's ball does all the work. Most top players work the other way round. The pivot ball moves around, and the striker's ball travels the short distances. Here's how it works.

You want to keep the pivot in front of you (i.e. vaguely between you and your next hoop) at all times. At the start, when you're heading towards Hoop 2, it wants to be somewhere in the grey triangle shown here.

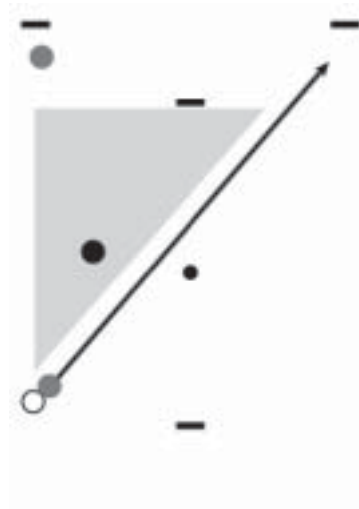


Diagram 1:
The pivot (black) can go anywhere in the grey triangle. The best spot is somewhere around the point shown.

As a general rule, try placing it between a third and half way towards the middle of the opposite boundary. Here, that means somewhere level with the peg, and about four yards left of it. With your Hoop 2 ball a couple of feet in front of the hoop, you're ready to go. So,

1. Come through Hoop 1, and hit the object ball. You're probably a couple of yards north of the hoop, so you'll naturally have a clear line towards Hoop 3.

2. Play a straight drive, sending the ball to Hoop 3. You should drop very close alongside – and, crucially, to the South East of – the pivot. If not, practise it.

It's a straight shot, and all you should be focusing on is a good position for your ball. We can tidy up a bad pioneer later.

3. Rush the pivot somewhere towards the Hoop 2 pioneer. I refuse to be any more precise about that. It depends on where your shot's pointing. Rushing to the boundary is too far for most tastes, as you'll have to roll the pivot back towards the middle. Rushing well short of the hoop is no disaster – you've reduced a precarious 12-yard take-off to a comfy 4-yard one. In an ideal world, your rush will go just beyond your target, to the edge of the Inner Rectangle (where the line from Hoop 1 to 2 meets the one from Hoop 2 to 3). Let's assume that's the case.

4. A little stop shot sends the pivot ball back into play, and you land ideally placed for the Hoop 2 ball. As before, the pivot goes somewhere towards the middle of the opposite boundary (between Hoops 3 and 4). In this case, that'll leave you a ball a yard or two past Hoop 6.

5. Through the hoop, and you've another straight shot to send something down to Hoop 4.

The same procedure follows. Each time you rush the pivot just beyond your pioneer, and stop it back into play. By keeping the pivot moving,

you're reducing all the distances the striker's ball travels. You've also cut out all those ugly rolls and take-offs in favour of rushes and stop-shots. Needless to say, it takes a bit more confidence with rushing than many players have. But then again, the margin for error on each of those rushes is much, much wider than for the long take-off which you'd have to play otherwise.

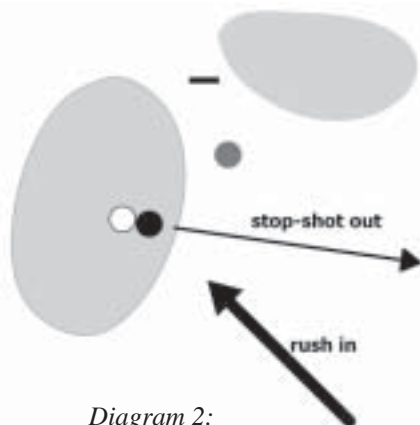


Diagram 2:
There's plenty of leeway about where to rush to, as long as you can send the pivot back to somewhere useful. Anywhere in the shaded areas is OK, but the balls are shown for the ideal spot. Wherever you go, your ball should land very close to the Hoop 2 ball after the next shot.

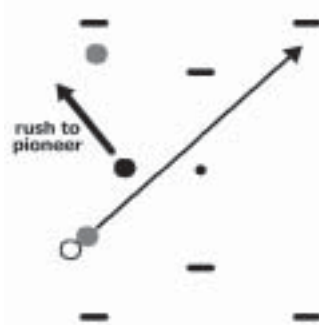


Diagram 3a:
Pivot placements for Hoop 2. With the pivot at the optimum spot, you should land right alongside it ready for a rush towards your next hoop.

TOURNAMENT ROUND-UP

Surbiton Winter Golf Croquet "Warm Up"

February 11th - 12th 2006

by Don Beck and Dave Turner

In order to give the English players who are travelling to New Zealand for the Golf Croquet World Championship in April, Don Beck decided to organise a warm up tournament at Surbiton in February. The event attracted 10 players to Surbiton to face all that February could give.

An 11am start on the Saturday saw bright sunshine and reasonable temperatures with 3 lawns in excellent condition, making us all wonder why we do not do this sort of thing more often - however the answer soon came. Sunday saw a very different day with steady rain and a drop in temperature. Of the 3 players destined for New Zealand Tim King had a very "wintery" start mixing good and terrible shots, over the 2 days his good shots got better but he needs to work on his game for the big event.

Ian Lines and Stephen Mulliner showed their true form. In their head-to-head they each won one 13pt game and both looked likely to win all their other games.

Ian Lines continued to sweep all before him until he tripped over Roy Ware (one player showing his winter form is nothing like as good as his summer exploits). Ian dropped a game against Roy and this would prove crucial.

Stephen Mulliner meanwhile with a winning combination of skill and exceptional luck won his games and hence the title. Another crucial game was the one he played against Derek Old.

After hoop 9 Derek was 3 - 6 down and looking as though he was going to roll over against Stephen like the rest of us but he fought back to 5 - 6 with a very interesting position after hoop 11.

Derek got his yellow in front of the hoop and blocking black's 2 yard angled shot. Meanwhile the red - next to play was in front of blue at hoop 11 and preventing blue's shot down to hoop 12.

Derek with great tactical awareness chose to play red off blue sending blue to the west boundary away from hoop 13 and putting red 4 feet in front of hoop 13. All the pressure was now on Stephen - he had the choice of trying to clear yellow and fight on for the win at hoop 12 or attempt the jump shot to win the game, knowing that a miss would leave Derek in an invincible position. Stephen went for the glory shot and missed! Derek ran



Derek and Eileen Buxton in play at Shobnal

12, leaving himself a simple shot to win 7- 6. Stephen missed the long clearance on red with blue. However the pressure or the cold or the Mulliner Family Gods got to Derek, he missed the simple hoop shot, managed to recover a few shots later to the same position only to miss yet again leaving Stephen to clear up, which he did.

With a 11/12 record he looks in good form and should make the last 8 in New Zealand. Congratulations also to John Spiers who's handicap improved to -1. And many thanks to Surbiton for the use of their lawns.

BASS SHIELD / COORS CUP GOLF CROQUET COMPETITION 12th March 2006

Report by Ray Mounfield

The fifth annual E.M.F.C.C. Astroturf event was held at Shobnal (Burton-on-Trent) on Sunday. Adverse weather reports gave rise to the late withdrawal of the Woodhall Spa team, but with a little reorganisation a second Ashby team was created to enable six stalwart teams to brave the wind and snowy conditions. In all, six E.M.F.C.C. clubs were represented with Sapcote and Nottingham members joining force.

Initially the courts were covered with a layer of snow but during the day this melted away giving rise to very interesting and challenging variation in both speed and trueness of the surface. During early rounds it was inevitable that balls collected a covering of snow and visibly grew as they rolled towards their targets.

The event is sponsored by the local brewery. The results of the team competition (for the Bass Shield) were decided when all members of each team had played a member of each of the other teams. The winners were Southwell (Don Martin, Tim Robson, Mick Seagrave) scoring 12.5 wins, out of a possible 15 with Ashby "R" (Barrie March, Chris and Ray Mounfield) second on 10.5 wins, followed by Ashby "E" (Eileen Buxton, Mike O'Brian, Derek/Mick) 9 wins : Sapcote/Nottingham (Joyce Critchley, Pat Wright, William Gee) 7 wins : North Hykeham (Stan Mumby, Brenda Roe, Doreen Taylor) 4.4 wins : Gainsborough (Joan and Toy Hesp, Steve Pikett) 1.5 wins.

At this stage the two highest scorers were Mick Seagrave and Don Martin. After the final round of play, which paired Mick against Don, and Barrie against Tim (for third place) the final individual ranking was : First, and winner of the Coors Cup : Mick Seagrave (5.5 wins) Runner-up : Don Martin 3rd Tim Robson : 4th Barrie March : 5th Pat Wright 6th Chris Mounfield : 7th Ray Mounfield : 8th Eileen Buxton

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Reminiscent Roquets:

The Spring 1982 Gazette included an extract from 'Croquet', July 1954, entitled 'Getting Better' by Dr W R D Wiggins. This is a slightly edited version of the extract.

I wonder how many 'B' class players realise that the future of croquet very largely depends on them? It is from their ranks that the great players of the future are to be drawn and it is vital that they should come forward in increasing numbers during the next few years. Croquet cannot flourish without a modicum of good players.

What does it take to become passably good at this difficult, but intriguing, game?

I would put first temperament and the will to win. Presuming these quantities to be present, the next and all-important quality is stroke play. Most can play a straight forward 4-ball break when it is presented, but the difficulty lies in picking it up. It will rapidly become possible when the following four points are mastered:

- 1) You have studied from a book and thoroughly grasped the art of break-laying.
- 2) You can rush a ball with force and accuracy.
- 3) You can play a fine take-off to any agreed distance.
- 4) You are content to lay a break and not try to make an odd hoop, if circumstances suggest that progress can best be made this way.

I have not mentioned hoop-running; not all 'A' class players are good hoop runners, but they are mostly good stroke players, which more than makes up the difference. You will see what I mean when I go through the points.

1) This takes a lot of learning and can best be done by watching the very best players. Follow the game carefully and note how situations arise and what steps the opponent takes to counter them. Never rely on your opponent playing with the ball you have so carefully laid at your next hoop; she may well choose the other one and cut into your game severely.

2) To rush a ball accurately is probably the most difficult of all strokes, bar the pass roll. When mastered it yields rich dividends and gives great satisfaction. The stroke can best be learnt by constant practice. Place the balls to give yourself dead straight 'baby' rushes. Practise until you can rush the ball to the exact

spot selected; gradually lengthen the rush, then try the cut rush. Always choose some spot to which to rush the ball; direction and length are equally important. It is just as important to be able to rush a ball accurately for five yards as it is to be able to do so for 25 yards. To illustrate the value of the rush, imagine the balls lying in what for you is a most unfavourable position: Black and Blue are two yards apart on the side boundary, Blue in corner one. Red is in corner two, Yellow somewhere on the boundary between hoops three and four. By a cut rush, the first hoop is made, Black being so controlled that a forward rush is done after the hoop has been made. By rushing Black into the second corner, the opportunity for a corner cannon is presented and a break should now result quite easily. Note the shots that gave you the break: two rushes.

3) There seems a lot of nervousness amongst 'B' class players about taking off. So many, in their anxiety to make the object ball shake, execute a take-off that is far too thick, and so they lose both direction and length. Carefully watch a good player take-off from corner one to the third hoop. The object ball moves less than an inch and has little effect on the line of direction of the striker's ball. There should be no fear of the object ball going off the lawn if the balls are correctly placed. This stroke takes a lot of practice, but, when learnt, anxieties about taking off from one end of the lawn to the other will cease. You will learn more about the pace of a lawn if your ball goes off the court from a take-off than you will if it is hopelessly short and you miss the roquet.

4) When you hit in and the situation is not very favourable, do not try to make a hoop at all costs. Carefully survey the situation and lay a break for next time. Trying to gain a hoop on the cheap, as it were, is generally costly in innings and leads to breaks for your opponent. If it is safe to make a hoop, and you are reasonably sure of doing so, then it has its advantages in that you have the use of all the balls and should have a forward rush from your hoop which will help in laying the break.

And now that question of hoop running. If, as I have urged, you have learnt to rush a ball accurately, the pilot ball will be lying plumb in front of your hoop and you should have a perfectly straight shot of about six inches. You can tell when a player is in peak form by the length of a hoop he has to run. Also, by having control, the nightmare of the missed return croquet does not arise.

Chairman's Column cont'd

spotted that we seemed to have no mandate for entering international events!), appeals procedures and the role of the Chairman.

Future Council meetings will also consider a new 3-year plan, the implications of the resurgence of Golf Croquet and whether our current committee structure best serves the needs of both it and the Association game, and a report from a working party set up to review our drugs policy. Please contact me or other members of Council if you have ideas to contribute to these policies: I have a new e-mail address Ian.Vincent@cantab.net.

I hope you have a very enjoyable season.



Diagram 3b:
Pivot placement for Hoops 3. With the pivot at the optimum spot, you should land right alongside it ready for a rush towards your next hoop.

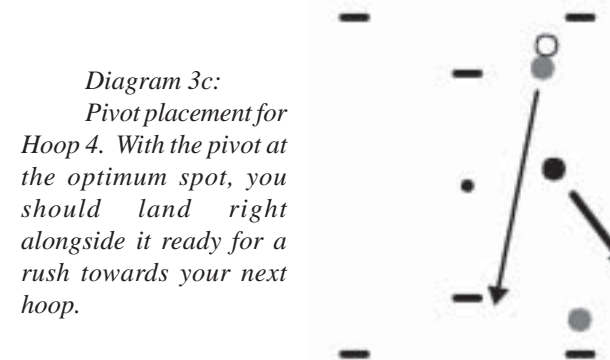


Diagram 3c:
Pivot placement for Hoop 4. With the pivot at the optimum spot, you should land right alongside it ready for a rush towards your next hoop.

All of this anticipates that you're playing an error-free game, and that everything is placed perfectly in position. The next couple of lessons deal with some little tricks to juggle the balls round and rescue you from impending disasters.

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Tournament Committee News

2006 Tournament Regulations

The CA Tournament Regulations have been updated, and will take effect from the start of the 2006 playing season. The changes were ratified by Council in March 2006. The major changes are:

* The old Regulation M1 (Powers and Duties of the Manager) has been split into two sections: "M1 - Duties of the Manager" (things which the manager must do) and "M2 - Powers of the Manager" (things which the manager may do should the need arise).

* M2d - Lateness. This new regulation clarifies the powers the manager has to deal with players who are not available for play at the required times; it also aims to provide more advice and support to the manager than the previous regulation which simply allowed the manager "to impose such sanction as he sees fit, including, in the last resort, disqualification".

* P1a2 - An extension of the list of "exempt fixtures" (those which can be entered by players who are not members of the CA) to include the Junior and Schools' Championships and Grass Roots and Centre Stage Golf Croquet Tournaments

* Appendix 1d - Initial Hoop Setting. New paragraph to define what should happen should a "protruding carrot" interfere with play.

The new regulations can be found on the CA Website at: <http://www.croquet.org.uk/tournament>

For reference, the old regulations can be found in the archive section at: <http://www.croquet.org.uk/history>

Tournament Discounts for Juniors

The Tournament Committee is pleased to announce that from 2006 there will be a 50% reduction in entry fees to CA Tournaments for Junior Members of the CA. It is hoped that this discount will help reduce the financial burden on Junior Members who frequent the tournament circuit and encourage others to enter CA events. This reduction does not apply to team events, the All England or events specifically designed for junior members (i.e. the Student Championship and the National Juniors' Championship, since these are in effect already discounted). While it is not for the CA to dictate entry fees to clubs, it is hoped that many will consider whether they wish to offer similar discounts to their tournaments to Junior Members.

The 50% discount is applicable to:

- * The Association and Golf Croquet Opens
- * 'Eights Week', including (both Association and Golf Croquet) Selector's Weekend
- * Men's, Women's and Mixed Doubles Championships
- * The National Golf Croquet Singles and Doubles Championships
- * The Peel Memorials
- * The Challenge and Gilbey
- * The South of England Week
- * The South of England Championship

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“New Members Welcome”..... A perspective on recruiting and coaching at Compton

by Carter Moody

This is a statement, which is frequently used in Croquet Clubs around the country, and we at Compton are no exception.

Towards the end of 2004 we thought about our recruiting programme for 2005 and asked members for their opinions and for their interest in becoming Club Coaches. The feedback was very positive and the matter was taken further by asking Michael Hague about the possibility of holding a Club Coaches Course at the Compton Club. This was agreed, arranged and it proved very successful. We had a very good recruiting drive for the 2005 season and the following is an overall view of our 2005 coaching.

If you ask most croquet players what R.C.C. stands for they will invariably say Roquet, Croquet, and Continuation. For those who play at our club in Eastbourne they can add, recruiting and coaching at Compton.

The following is a description of our coaching activities in 2005. Early in April seven of our members attended Michael Haigh's course at Compton on becoming a club coach. Six were interested in Association and one in Golf. It was an excellent course, well presented, very intensive but very tiring. Michael was well supported by Frances Low, Daphne Gaitley and David Collins.

Although Golf Croquet is easier to learn we decided to teach Association Croquet, to follow the C.A. Coaching Manual and include a couple of sessions on Golf Croquet. At the end of the C.A. course we had intended to offer a short course specifically on Golf Croquet, but illness of the Golf Coach prevented this from happening.

To encourage new recruits we charged £20.00 pounds for the C.A. Association Croquet course, and offer the two first lessons free. (For 2006 the charge has been raised to £25.00 and will include a copy of the book 'How to play Croquet').

“Although Golf Croquet is easier to learn we decided to teach Association Croquet, to follow the C.A. Coaching Manual and include a couple of sessions on Golf Croquet”.

I will start with recruiting, as without new members, there would be no course. Apart from regular newsletters in the local press, and members contacting friends, our main effort was a hands-on/visual display in March at the Eastbourne Arndale Centre. We issued our Club Flyer 2005, and talked to the public about the game and had information on a

display board. As an eye catcher this included the question 'When did England last beat Australia in a Test Match at the Saffrons?' The answer was in the McRobertson Shield in 1986. (Yes, it was Great Britain, but we hoped to make an impact) We also made a track, 2.4m x 0.6m, where the public were invited to run four balls through a hoop. The prize for making two hoops was a free course of lessons in Association Croquet. We run two identical

courses, one on Tuesday mornings and the other on Thursday evenings, each course having a Lead Coach. The recruits can attend both sessions at no extra cost.

At the start of the course we had thirty two applicants for the free lessons. On the first morning we introduced them to Golf Croquet and held a mini tournament of four rounds, progressive play to encourage mixing, with a prize of medallions for the winning pair. All the coaches and Officers of the club were there to make potential members welcome, and free refreshments were offered. The following week we commenced the C.A. course, following the six week syllabus. It was fortunate we had so many Club Coaches to assist as all our five lawns were full, often double-banked. After the two free weeks, twenty five recruits signed on for the remainder of the course and were given a copy of our Welcome Pack 2005, a ten page A5 booklet. Part 1 of the pack is a brief history of the club, a comparison between Association and Golf Croquet and details of the course. Part 2 is the Programme of Events for the year and Part 3 is a detailed description of those events. Members of the Committee, with contact details are listed on the inside of the front cover. At the end of the course, by paying an additional fee the recruits joined as Introductory Members. This gave them full membership until the end of the season. The next priority was to maintain the Introductory Member's interest for the rest of the year. To achieve this we arranged some Newcomers Events. We started with a Newcomers Buffet, organized by the coaches and ended playing a game of Pirates, with a bottle of rum awarded to the Pirate Supremo. There was also a Newcomers Tournament for both Association and Golf Croquet, and a Competition for Playing Shots. All events were well attended. We continued the coaching sessions until the end of September with Supervised Practice, either playing Golf Croquet or the Association 10-point game, depending on the member's preference. By then we had a regular average attendance of twenty on Tuesday mornings, the majority of whom opted for Association Croquet. In October we sent an 'End of Season'

“The next priority was to maintain the Introductory Member's interest for the rest of the year”.

circular letter to all Introductory Members, basically reviewing the past year and welcoming them back in 2006. By using mail merge they were personalized to each recipient. It proved useful to keep notes of their progress and interests. Another circular letter was sent out before the 2006

season started to welcome them back.

At the end of the season we had a review meeting of coaches to assess our progress. Prior to that we had asked for comments from the newcomers. Some of the points to be adopted for 2006 course are as follows;

1. The six-week course is very concentrated and we have adapted it into an eight week course with a revised syllabus.
2. We will start each session with an outline of the lesson by the Lead Coach, using a magnetic board and visual aids. We have illustrations of croquet shots on A5 sheets. The recruits will then take to the lawns in groups of four with a coach, the emphasis for the first 15 minutes being on supervised revision.
3. On the Club Coaches course we were advised to keep the terminology simple but we decided to introduce the terms

Obituary

L.S.(Les) Butler 1905 – 2006

Les Butler was a Dorset man. He was born in Weymouth 91 years ago this May. He lived nearly all his life in Poole in his house. Apart from three years in Burma in the Second World War he spent his working life at the SRDE (scientific research and development establishment) in Christchurch. When he retired he took on the cooking and housework since his wife continued to work. He was married to Norma to whom he was devoted. She died 8 years ago. They had a son Barry and 2 grandsons, David and Paul.

He joined the East Dorset Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club over half a century ago as a tennis player. He was club secretary and treasurer to the club for 13 years. He was instrumental in negotiating land from the railways to build the newer tennis courts. He continued to play tennis well into the 1990s.

In the early 1970's he took up croquet and showed a facility for the sport; perhaps not surprising since he had been Dorset Snooker champion in earlier days. He won the club championships, the doubles and the open singles and in the early 1980s he won the Ashton cup in 3 consecutive years. No mean achievement for a top class player, which he was. He regularly competed in the Parkstone June and September weeks winning many trophies. His name is to be found 3 times on the Stafford Cripps memorial gold cup.

He played at Buddleigh Salterton, Cheltenham, and Hurlingham in the Opens having his best year in 1981 when he lost in the 3rd round to Paul Hands. He played twice in the Spencer Ell in 1980 and 1982 coming fourth the second time.

When Pat Newman stood down, Les became chairman of the croquet section in the late '70s and promoted the growth of croquet, quickly doubling membership. I can remember his pride when we first achieved over 100 members. He worked ceaselessly and often thanklessly for the good of the croquet section and the club. He will always be remembered for laying lawn 1. It is still our best lawn and the credit goes to Les who at the age of seventy did much of the physical work himself. He also managed tournaments, served on the Croquet Association council and was awarded a CA diploma for services to croquet in 2004.

But perhaps he will be remembered most for his starting and captaining the Devon and Dorset counties side until he was no longer fit to travel. Indeed we became known as 'Butlershire' even after we were obliged to enter as separate counties. I know his proudest croquet moment was when we won the championship in 1996 and he held up the trophy as captain of Dorset.

In 1991 he played in and won all the doubles in the Parkstone side which won the Mary Rose inter-club trophy. In the final I remember Les pegging out from 2nd corner to win his singles match and with it the trophy. Poole Sports Council were notified and he was awarded a certificate of commendation. He was rightly proud of this.

The last years of life were clouded by Alzheimer's disease but that is not what we will remember. He was modest, honest, kind, hard working, scrupulously fair and fair-minded. He was a devoted family man, a talented sportsman and a loyal servant to the club where he has left his mark. We are grateful to him. He was a smashing bloke.

Strat Liddiard

International Committee Financial Awards to Assist Elite Players

As part of the CA's commitment to encouraging youth croquet, International Committee is pleased to announce the availability of financial awards to assist elite Junior CA Members defray the expenses of tournament play.

The awards are available to Junior players who are:

- a) fully paid up Junior members of the Croquet Association in current full time education
- b) rapid improvers and players aspiring to reach MacRobertson Shield level

Applications should be made to International Committee via the CA Secretary, and should include the following details:

- a) Applicant's name, address, CA Membership Number and date of birth
- b) Name and address of educational establishment
- c) Proposed tournament schedule for the coming season
- d) Documentary evidence of grant applications to other bodies (e.g. local authority, educational establishment), and amounts of any awards actually made
- e) Amount of award requested

Awards made will be paid retrospectively and on production of VAT receipts for actual expenses incurred to the CA Secretary



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great skill in clearing from long distance. But Mohamed just had the edge. At this point, the writing appeared to be on the wall for Salah.

The next incident was one of the most obvious examples of sporting behaviour during the Championship. This behaviour was notable not least because the two players had been slightly at odds over an earlier situation when Mohamed played a crush shot in running a ball that had lain in the jaws of the hoop. In Egypt, the convention is for such crushing not to be a fault. Salah had to explain the decision of the referee to Mohamed, who looked less than happy.



Leopold Waldendorff of Austria, winner of the plate event, with David Openshaw, President of the WCF and Christine Pont of Australia.

At the beginning of the third game, Mohamed had an aberration and touched his ball while casting. Salah looked all set to carry on with his next shot when he suddenly changed his mind and called Mohamed over for a discussion in Arabic. As a consequence, the players played the next three balls with gentle taps, leaving Mohamed in the same position as if he had not made his mistake. The crowd applauded generously once they realised what was happening. Mohamed eventually won the hoop. However, Salah was up to the challenge and won the game 7-3. The spectators were delighted to see the spectacle continue.

In the fourth game, Salah battled to a 3-2 lead. And then occurred the final pivotal point of the match. Mohamed had his red close to corner I (the blue flag). Black was



Brother to brother: Mohamed Nasr succeeds Ahmed as World Golf Croquet Champion

the only ball in the vicinity of the hoop (six). One or two of the spectators spotted the purpose in Mohamed's attitude as he stepped up to level the game. Everyone was awe struck as he ran the hoop. Salah did have a relatively easy chance to win hoop 7, which he subsequently lost, but the end was in sight. Mohamed maintained control of the rest of the game to win 7-5.

The Egyptian team expressed their delight at yet another success. The spectators all expressed their appreciation of a great match. At the celebration dinner on the Sunday evening, Amir Ramsis was frank in admitting his objective to maintain the Egyptian grip on the Championships. But players from other countries showed that they have the talent to play the necessary shots. The current gap almost certainly lies in the relative paucity of tough, competitive golf croquet that is available to the non-Egyptians, some of whom also put in plenty of practice time to reach the peaks of their consistency.

The age range of the players was wide (12 to 75). And some of the older players showed that touch can make a contribution to success in Golf Croquet. The most notable older performers were Bob Jackson (New Zealand, 8th), Owen Edwards (Australia, 12th) and Tony Hall (Australia, 22nd). However, the spectacle lies in consistent big hitting, which seems more likely to establish a reputation as a truly competitive sport and attract a steady influx of new players. On the other hand, Chris Clarke did report the "elderly" spectator who said "I play Golf Croquet; what game is this they are playing?"

Congratulations to Stephen Mulliner in leading the England challenge by finishing 3rd. The other England representatives finished: Robert Fulford (9th), Chris Clarke (16th), Chris Daniels (20th), Dick Strover (21st), Ian Lines (25th), Chris Sheen (28th), David Hopkins (46th), Tim King (50th) and Julie Hudson (52nd). All gained valuable experience from the opportunity and enjoyed other local delights including some wonderful wines. When you meet the players on the tournament circuit in the coming season, they will be full of stories. Dick, Chris Sheen and David were accompanied by non-playing partners, who helped to prevent croquet being the only topic of conversation during social time. Dick hosted an excellent barbeque for all the team and other friends.

Overall, the Championship was a great festival of Golf Croquet. Some learnt lessons will perhaps lead to changes for future aspects of organisation. However, nothing major marred the general sense of enjoyment. Most players will be marking their diaries for 2008, when the current expectation is for South Africa to be the next venue for the Championship.

Results

1st Round KO

- S Mulliner bt N Eatough 7/4, 7/5
- R Bamford bt J Christie 7/3, 6/7, 7/4
- B Jackson bt T Hall 7/4, 7/5
- R Fulford bt D Bulloch 7/4, 7/4
- Y Esmat bt M Kamal 7/4, 7/5
- K Younis bt C Sheen 7/4, 6/7, 7/3
- S Hassan bt P Drew 7/3, 7/2
- O Edwards bt D Strover 5/7, 7/2, 7/3
- M Nasr bt I Lines 7/5, 1/7, 7/6
- P Couch bt C Daniels 7/5, 7/6
- A Varnas bt S Aziz 7/4, 7/5
- A Nasr bt AJ Reid 7/4, 7/6
- P Batchelor bt T Stephens 7/5, 7/5
- M McInerney bt C Clarke 3/7, 7/2, 7/3
- S Jackson bt M Mehas 7/4, 7/2
- J Williams bt P Beaudry 7/3, 7/3

2nd Round KO

- Stephen Mulliner v Reg Bamford 5/7, 7/5, 7/3
- Bob Jackson v Robert Fulford 7/6, 7/4
- Yasser Esmat v Khaled Younis 7/4, 7/6
- Salah Hassan v Owen Edwards 7/5, 6/7, 7/1
- Mohamed Nasr v Peter Couch 7/4, 7/4
- Anton Varnäs v Ahmed Nasr 6/7, 6/7
- Peter Batchelor v Mark McInerney 5/7, 7/4, 6/7
- Stewart Jackson v Jenny Williams 3/7, 1/7

Quarter-Final Round KO

- Stephen Mulliner bt Bob Jackson 7/5, 6/7, 7/5
- Salah Hassan bt Yasser Esmat 6/7, 7/4, 7/5
- Mohamed Nasr bt Ahmed Nasr 7/6, 5/7, 7/6
- Mark McInerney bt Jenny Williams 4/7, 7/4, 7/3

Semi-Final Round KO

- Salah Hassan bt Stephen Mulliner 7/5, 4/7, 7/5
- Mohamed Nasr bt Mark McInerney 7/6, 7/4

Final

- Mohamed Nasr v Salah Hassan 7/4, 7/6, 3/7, 7/5

Full results of the championship can be found at www.wfcroquet.org

roquet, croquet and continuation right from the start. Only time will tell if this was a correct decision.

4. Having so many recruits, some of whom attended both morning and evening sessions, and some who were unable to attend every week, we were soon into phased coaching. It became difficult to record their progress just by using the attendance registers. This led to the introduction of a Progress

SHIFTS

Stalk the ball

Head down

I (eyes) on the ball.

Follow Through

Swing from the shoulders.

Fig. 1

Record Sheet, maintained by the coaches. The form lists each element of the course taken from the C.A. Coaching Manual, e.g. stop shot, rolls and take-off, etc plus a couple we have added. More about that later.

For 2006 we have produced 'The Compton Croquet Club Association Croquet Coaching Manual', a copy of which will be given to those recruits paying to complete the course. This is a 14 page A4 publication which starts with an introduction to the course followed by the eight week syllabus. Then follows a series of illustrations in colour showing croquet shots and some mnemonics, a Reading List and an Element Check list so that the recruits can monitor their own progress. The mnemonic 'Shifts' is shown in Fig. 1 and also two illustrations, Fig. 2, Plants and Fig. 3, Split Croquet Shots. Plants is a new element. I recall from my learning days the knowledge of the 'Plant' principle from

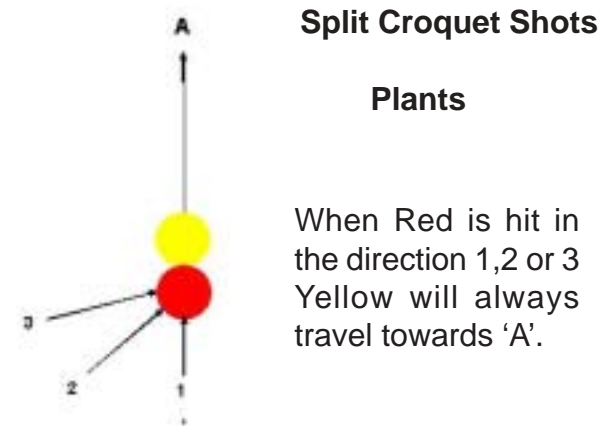
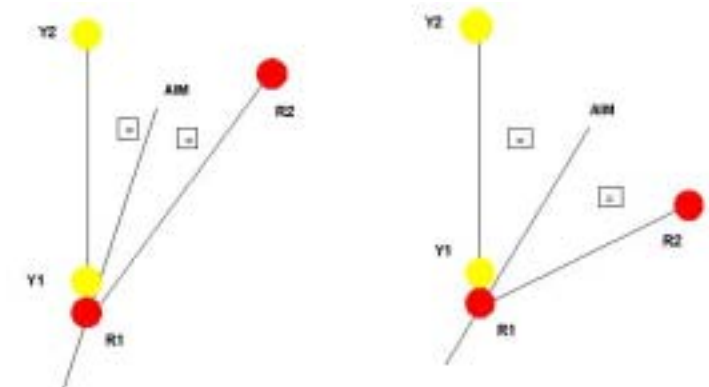


Fig. 2

snooker made split shots easier to understand. And this was also true for our recruits. We felt that the importance of lining up the balls for split shots should be emphasized more.

Split Croquet Shots

With one hit it is possible to send both balls in different directions of varying distances



For a split shot aim halfway between the direction of red and yellow

Fig. 2

The Club Flyer, the Welcome Pack and the Compton Coaching Manual were all produced on a home P.C. using Windows XP and Word Drawing programme. For the illustrations, an Apple Mac would be an advantage. But it all comes at a cost in time and money. I have no idea of the man-hours expended over the last two years in producing and printing the documents. The flyer presented few problems. I have to thank my grandchildren for reducing the Welpac from A4 portrait layout to A5 landscape in columns. There was a learning curve to master the Word Drawing programme.

Printing costs are difficult to assess when using a home P.C. To produce 200 Club Flyers, 25 copies each of the Welpac and the Coaching Manual, all double sided and some pages in colour, the cost comes to app £45.00 assuming 3.5p per printed page. If access to a network system was available, including a duplicator, the printing costs could possibly be reduced. Certainly time would be saved when printing double-sided. Once set up, the Club Flyer and Welpac require a little editing each year. The Coaching Manual if proved adequate this year will need no editing.

We were fortunate that in that 2005 we could cope with such a large class with our Club Coaches. We will have another review at the end of the 2006 season and hope to make further refinements

Not every club who offers coaching courses will have the numbers of recruits and coaches that we have at Compton, so what I have described is specific to our Club. We hope other Club Coaches find our experiences in 2005 interesting and we would welcome comments and or questions from other clubs.

Carter Moody. Recruiting & Publicity Officer.
Email. marjcart@hotmail.com

World Croquet Federation 7th World Golf Croquet Championship

Hawkes Bay, New Zealand 4 to 12 March 2006

Report by Tim King

Sixty-four players from nineteen countries gathered to compete in the WCF 7th World Golf Croquet Championship. Hawkes Bay served as an excellent location, with a Mediterranean climate and three delightful clubs providing courts: Te Mata (Havelock North), Marewa (Napier) and Rangatira (Dannevirke). The clubs are spread apart (two hours drive north to south) but transport provision by the organisers was more than adequate.

The ten England representatives at the Championship were Chris Clarke, Chris Daniels, Robert Fulford, David Hopkins, Julie Hudson, Tim King, Ian Lines, Stephen Mulliner, Chris Sheen and Dick Strover. Simon Carter sponsored team shirts, which helped to provide a sense of national pride. Unsurprisingly, as hosts, the New Zealand contingent numbered sixteen. The other major "team" was Egypt with eight players. The latter two groups



The England representatives at the World Golf Croquet Championship final 2006 (standing: Chris Clarke, Chris Daniels, Chris Sheen, Robert Fulford, David Hopkins, Ian Lines, Dick Strover; kneeling: Tim King, Stephen Mulliner, Julie Hudson)

provided visible and audible support for fellow nationals. Indeed, the Egyptians hold very dear their clean sweep of the six previous Championships.

The Championship began with an Opening Ceremony on the evening of Friday 3 March at the Te Mata club. The local interest was already apparent from the presence of more than 100 spectators for the ceremony. Dignitaries from local life, Croquet New Zealand and the WCF gave speeches. A briefing ensured that the players were all ready to start at the three different clubs on the following day.

The weather for the Championship began most unseasonably. The first day (Saturday) was the low point, with very bitter, strong winds from the south (that is, direct from

Antarctica!). The wind appeared to unsettle many of the players and there were some noticeable upsets. Khalid Younis (Egypt, three-times World Champion) lost to Geoff Young (New Zealand), Robert Fulford lost to Jean-Yves Guermont (France) and Mark McInerney (Ireland) lost to Doron Gunzburg (Australia). Eventually, at 47th, Doron was highest of those three early winners in the final rankings for the Championship.

The organisers could do little about the weather but all other preparations were generally without fault. Catering was often excellent. The reputation of the Egyptians had clearly gone before and the court layout was generous (made possible by redrawing court boundaries, reducing usable court numbers at each club) with substantial boundary boards. The Marewa courts were in superb condition. Unfortunately, at Te Mata, the hard hitters occasionally suffered from some bumpiness. One shot from an Egyptian suddenly leapt to chest height after travelling part way across the court. The referees performed to a generally high standard. No major controversy affected the Championship.

A major toxic fire in the locality failed to disrupt play at Te Mata on the first day. Heat of all sorts became a theme of the week. Te Mata provoked memories for the older players as the local fire station had possessed something sounding like an air raid warning siren. Meanwhile, the courts at Marewa were treated every twenty minutes or so to the sound of the water heater whistling! Once everyone no longer needed multiple layers against the wind, some of the most welcome facilities were the SPF 30 sunscreen dispensers available beside the courts.

As the weather settled down, results began to go more to expectation. The eight blocks each consisted of eight players. The seven block matches for each player consisted of single 19-point games, with all playing all. The allocation to blocks took account of an even distribution of nationalities and ranking positions. However, seemingly easy and difficult block still appeared. The seven rounds of play took place over the first three-and-a-half days of the Championship.

Reg Bamford (South Africa) versus Evan Newell (Ireland) was one of the exciting block matches. Evan is probably the archetype for the expression "mercurial". Over the course of the Championship, neither individual played to their full potential. But the match included Reg playing one of the best shots of the week when he cut rush black to clear Evan's blue from in front of hoop 9. Yellow and black were close to each other on the south boundary close to hoop 8 and yellow ended up close to hoop 2. After a close battle, Reg won 10-9. Reg was undoubtedly disappointed not to leave Hawkes Bay as holder of both World titles.



A be-gloved Stephen Mulliner gets precise on his way to 3rd place

The top four from each block qualified for the main knockout. Number of match wins was the primary decider of position. If players with the same number of wins lay either side of the fourth-fifth place divide then play-off matches occurred (13-point games). Of the eight blocks, three had fourth versus fifth play offs and one had play offs between three players for two places. Ian Lines was successful in the latter situation but Tim King missed out on being the eighth English player in the top 32, losing to the talented New Zealand teenager AJ Reid.

The closest block included Mark McInerney, failing to live up to his top-six seeding and ending up in a play off for fourth and fifth places. Mark won and, thus, emerged as a dangerous opponent for a block winner. Previously, at the players briefing, the organisers announced a change to the originally published draw, which had given the potential for players to identify knockout opponents dependent on the results of block matches. Instead, after completion of all the matches, each block received a new letter by random draw for allocation of the players into the knockout. Chris Clarke (having won all his block matches) was unfortunate enough to end up playing Mark and lost 7-3, 2-7, 3-7. Chris won all his remaining matches, winning 14 out of 17 games in total for the Championship, one of the top winning percentages.



Mohamed Nasr's backswing which produces shots of incredible power and yet retains unbelievable accuracy. Mohamed went on to win the Championship

Many of the knockout matches were in line with predictions. However, some players performed above expectations. Before eventually losing the match, Ian Lines had one of the best game results, beating Mohamed Nasr 7-1 in the second of three. (Mohamed only lost two other games all week, both to Egyptians.) Stephen Mulliner reached the semi-finals, where he lost to Salah Hassan (Egypt) but beat Reg Bamford on the way. The other losing semi-finalist was Mark McInerney, who played some shots at the same level as the Egyptians but his heart was not in 3rd-4th play off and he lost to Stephen. Jenny Williams finished 7th, the best performance by a woman at a World Championship (and she will join the top eight with automatic selection for the next Championship). Anton Varnas (Sweden) came 15th, an



Stephen Mulliner punches the air after scoring a hoop closely watched by his opponent Salah Hassan. Salah went on to win a close game.

impressive improvement on the previous Championship.

In the plate, Leopold Walderdorff (Austria) showed rapidly increasing confidence during the course of the week as he relished the opportunity to play on better courts, against stiffer opposition than is possible in his home country. He won the final 10-6 against Christine Pont (Australia).

The final on Sunday 13 March was a spectacular climax to the Championship. About three hundred people gathered to watch, encircling the court. Mohamed Nasr and Salah Hassan did not disappoint. Salah demonstrated why he is twice world champion and Mohamed delivered against the potential of high position in the Egyptian ranking system.

The match has several key passages.



Jenny Williams deep in concentration

Arguably, the first was definitive, although enough twists occurred throughout for this not to have felt the case at the time. After sharing the first two hoops, Salah made a tactical error at hoop 3. He looked set to attempt a shot at the hoop with black when he changed his mind. However, although he cleared yellow to an acute angle, this was not all the way to the boundary. Mohamed ran the hoop with yellow.

Salah approached hoop 4 with blue. Mohammed ran hoop 4 with red from about five yards east and one yard north of the peg. As is more often the case with Mohamed, the ball ran all the way to the far boundary (south), closer to hoop 4 than 5. The next three balls approached hoop 5. Mohamed then ran hoop 5 with the red ball that had run hoop 4 on its previous turn (from yet another tight angle)! Before too much longer, Mohamed moved to 5-1 up.

To his credit, Salah did not crumble and won 9 of the next 15 hoops. He went 2-6 down and eventually lost 4-7 in the first game. But he took a 6-3 lead in the second game. Mohamed was not able to sustain his previous devastating burst and Salah played with the variation that he has in greater abundance than many of the other Egyptian players. Only very occasionally, would Mohamed play a less aggressive shot. At the risk of failing to acknowledge some of the more subtle Egyptian tactics, such inconsistency in his approach seemed somewhat random.

The next phase of play, was Mohamed rescuing the second game with four hoops to win 7-6. Nothing spectacular but showing an equal ability to tough out close, competitive hoops. Both players showed