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THE CROQUET GAZETTE

ISSUE 306

DECEMBER 2006



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Continued from page 14

+12tp(F), +26tp(C)
Avery / Maugham beat Cherry / Huneycutt +26qp(A), -26tp(H), +26tp(A)
Aiton / Kirby beat Soo / Lamm +26tp(K), +26tp(A)

Robert Fulford beat Jerry Stark +20sxp, +16sxp
David Maugham beat Jeff Soo +17tp, +25tp
Chris Clarke lost to Danny Huneycutt +21tp, -26, -26tp
Keith Aiton beat Damon Bidencope -17, +26tp, +26tp
Jonathan Kirby beat Rich Lamm +6, +18
Mark Avery beat Bob Cherry +5tp, +24

Fulford / Clarke beat Cherry / Huneycutt +14, +26sxp(F)
Avery / Maugham beat Soo / Lamm +7, +26tp(M)
Aiton / Kirby lost to Stark / Bidencope -26tp(S), +15tp(A), -26tp(S)

New Zealand v Australia (10-11)

23-27 November 2006
Westerby / Chapman beat Watts / Dumergue +12tpo(C), -15tp(W), +11
Bryant / Davis lost to Fleming / Clarke -26, -21
Lowe / Wislang lost to Forster / Bassett -25, -26tp(F)

Westerby / Chapman lost to Fleming / Clarke +26, -17tp(F), -26tp(F)
Bryant / Davis beat Forster / Bassett -14, +8, +2tp(B)
Lowe / Wislang lost to Watts / Dumergue -26tp(W), -6

Aaron Westerby beat Martin Clarke +26stp, -26tp, +12tpo
Paddy Chapman lost to Bruce Fleming -26tp, -7
Greg Bryant lost to Harley Watts +12tpo, -4otp, -25tp
Shane Davis lost to Ian Dumergue -25tp, -26tp
Brian Wislang lost to Trevor Bassett -16tp, -5
Robert Lowe beat Stephen Forster -3, +2, +5tp

Westerby / Chapman beat Forster / Bassett +16tp(C), +26
Bryant / Davis lost to Watts / Dumergue -5, -26tp(W)
Lowe / Wislang beat Fleming / Clarke +17, -5tp(F), +15

Aaron Westerby beat Bruce Fleming +13, -26tp, +20
Paddy Chapman beat Martin Clarke +25tp, +26tp
Greg Bryant beat Ian Dumergue +2, -13, +25tp
Shane Davis lost to Harley Watts +13tp, -16tp, -26tp
Brian Wislang lost to Stephen Forster -17tp, -24tp
Robert Lowe beat Trevor Bassett +8tp, -1, +14tp

Great Britain v Australia (19-2)

29 November to 3 December 2006
Clarke / Fulford beat Fleming / Clarke +26tp(C), +15
Avery / Maugham beat Bassett / Forster +26, +12tp(M)
Aiton / Kirby beat Dumergue / Watts +26tp(A), +26tp(A)

Clarke / Fulford beat Bassett / Forster +26tp(C), +26tp(C)
Avery / Maugham beat Dumergue / Watts +17, -3, +1otp(W)
Aiton / Kirby beat Fleming / Clarke -17tp(F), +26tp(A), +5

Robert Fulford beat Martin Clarke +26tp, +26
David Maugham beat Bruce Fleming +26tp, +25tp
Chris Clarke beat Harley Watts +26tp, +26tp
Keith Aiton beat Ian Dumergue +26tp, +16tp
Jonathan Kirby beat Stephen Forster +4, +17
Mark Avery beat Trevor Bassett +22tp, +26tp

Clarke / Fulford beat Dumergue / Watts +26tp(C), +15tp(C)
Avery / Maugham lost to Fleming / Clarke -26tp(F), -17tp(F)
Aiton / Kirby beat Bassett / Forster +12tpo(K), +16tp(K)

Robert Fulford beat Bruce Fleming +26sxp, +26sxp
David Maugham beat Martin Clarke +26sxp, -25tp, +11
Chris Clarke beat Ian Dumergue +15tp, +22tp
Keith Aiton beat Harley Watts +26tp, +13tpo
Jonathan Kirby beat Trevor Bassett +25tp, -26tp, +7
Mark Avery lost to Stephen Forster -17, -26

USA v New Zealand (13-8)

29 November to 3 December 2006
Huneycutt / Cherry beat Bryant / Davis +26stp(H), +16tp(H)
Soo / Lamm lost to Chapman / Westerby +21, -25, -8
Stark / Bidencope lost to Lowe / Wislang +2, -26tp(L), -17tp(L)

Jerry Stark beat Paddy Chapman +26stp, -26tp, +26
Jeff Soo beat Aaron Westerby +26, +26
Danny Huneycutt beat Shane Davis +15tp, +16tp
Damon Bidencope beat Greg Bryant -10, +9, +5tp
Rich Lamm beat Robert Lowe +26tp, -24tp, +7tpo
Bob Cherry beat Brian Wislang +13, +26

Huneycutt / Cherry lost to Chapman / Westerby -7, -6
Soo / Lamm beat Lowe / Wislang +22tp(S), +16
Stark / Bidencope lost to Bryant / Davis +8tp(B), -17tp(B), -23tp(D)

Jerry Stark beat Aaron Westerby -24tp, +3otp, +26tp
Jeff Soo lost to Paddy Chapman -26tp, -26tp

Danny Huneycutt beat Greg Bryant -16, +15, +17
Damon Bidencope beat Shane Davis -20stp, +13, +11
Rich Lamm lost to Brian Wislang +12tpo, -26, -19
Bob Cherry beat Robert Lowe -17tp, +23tp, +3tp

Huneycutt / Cherry lost to Lowe / Wislang -17tp(L), -26tp(L)
Soo / Lamm beat Bryant / Davis +26, -9tpo(D), +11otp(B)
Stark / Bidencope lost to Chapman / Westerby -12tpo(C), -26tp(C)

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HANDICAP CHANGES

Cheltenham July Week

| | | | |
|---------------|-----|----|-----|
| Mrs B Young | 5 | to | 4.5 |
| G Young | 10 | | 9 |
| Peter Francis | 1.5 | | 1 |
| K Seabright | 4.5 | | 4 |
| T Golesworthy | 3 | | 2.5 |
| R Smith | 14 | | 12 |
| P Shephard | 4.5 | | 4 |

| | | | |
|-----------------|----|----|----|
| Colchester Club | | | |
| Mrs J Collis | 14 | to | 12 |

Norwich B level, 29-30 July

| | | | |
|----------------|-----|----|----|
| Martin Leach | 3.5 | to | 3 |
| Gerry Varndell | 10 | | 11 |

Budleigh Salterton, Aug Tournament

| | | | |
|---------------|------|----|-----|
| Nigel Betts | 2.5 | to | 1.5 |
| S Field | 6 | | 5 |
| Brian Lewis | 14 | | 12 |
| Mrs E Magee | 3 | | 3.5 |
| I Meredith | 12 | | 14 |
| GPK Miller | 10 | | 9 |
| Richard Mills | 12 | | 11 |
| Lionel Tibble | -1.5 | | -1 |
| A Wimshurst | 10 | | 9 |

Colchester over 50's, 8-10 August

| | | | |
|-----------|-----|----|-----|
| K Pickett | 3 | to | 2.5 |
| A Edwards | 12 | | 11 |
| N Gardner | 4.5 | | 5 |

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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

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THE CROQUET GAZETTE

Chairman's Column



Issue 306 December 2006

Front Cover: The Competing Teams and the Victorious GB Team. Photos by Max Murray (Aus).

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During my time on Council I have become increasingly impressed with the time & effort given by the members of the CA Council, its Committees and the army of other people who make our sport so enjoyable.

We sometimes have to remember that virtually all the people who help govern croquet are volunteers who give a considerable amount of their time for the Croquet community's benefit. A big thank you to you all.

Ian Vincent handed over the chair in mid October and I'm sure you would want to join me in thanking him most warmly for the sterling work he has done during his 3 years in office. During his tenure the CA has continued to flourish. A measure of this is the fact that we have been able to increase our grants as well as funding the Public Liability Insurance for member clubs.

Brian Fisk came to the end of his period of office following the election of the new members to Council. He served as a Federation representative for the southern region and also he chaired the Coaching Committee where he completed the publication of the new CA Coaching manual. Thank you - Brian.

Bob Whittaker has been a major asset to the CA. In 2004 he took over the role of Child Protection Officer. Together with Nigel Graves (retired CA Secretary) they produced the CA's Child protection strategy. Bob has handled this sensitive role with the utmost professionalism. Bob was a Federation Representative on Council & is a member of the Lawns Advisory Group. It is members like Bob that really make all the difference to our sport. I am sure you would like to join me in thanking him for his huge contribution to the sport and hope he will be able to serve us on the Lawns Advisory Group and in other capacities for many years to come.

The sad loss of Alan Oldham has been reported in previous issues. It was a fitting tribute that Alan's wife was able to receive the CA Medal on his behalf at this years AGM. Alan's role as Archivist has been taken over by Chris Williams who is currently re-locating our records at Cheltenham.

I would like to thank Charles Waterfield for his diligent work as Chairman

of the Publishing Committee as his term of office has come to an end. I am pleased that he remains a member of Council as a Regional Representative. His role as Chairman of the Publishing Committee has been taken over by Derek Trotman who has been re-elected to the CA Council as have Jeff Dawson and Richard Hoskyns

Now for a big welcome the "New boy's on the block" - Tim King, and two new Regional Representatives - Lawrence Whittaker and Arthur Reed.

I was very pleased that Patricia Duke-Cox having been re-elected onto Council has accepted the role of Chair of the Management Committee and also agreed to be my Vice Chairman.

I make no apologies for spending the main part of my first Chairman's column talking about people as without their support the CA would not survive.

As we go to press the great news of our MacRobertson team's comprehensive victory in Australia deserves special mention. The performance of the whole team has been superb and I'm sure you will join me in congratulating them.

Finally may I wish all of you a very merry Christmas and enjoyment on the Croquet Lawns in 2007.

Jonathan Issacs



Richard Sykes (15), the youngest competitor at the Cheltenham July tournament, pictured with Maisie Peebles (97), the most mature of the competitors.



Woking, winner of the Mary Rose. Peter McGowan, Colin Hemming, Andrew Dutton, Nick Harvey and Gill McDiarmid

inform the losing parties that the results stood. This resulted in the lunchtime score being 2-1 to Pendle. The afternoon session saw Pendle progress to 4-3 victory in a tight contest. This proves the need for all parties to take full notice of the clock in all situations and not to rely on others.

Surbiton beat Blewbury in the 3-4 play-off and the day finished in bright sunshine. Having completed their 40 days and nights the teams left two-by-two leaving the mangler reflecting on the fact that Surbiton Ark used to be played on that weekend. I wonder why?



Samir Patel, Chris Farthing, Stephen Mulliner and Chris Patmore, Surbiton's Winning Inter-Club team 2006.

Blewbury beat Beverley 4-3 in the Secretary's Shield Final

Nottingham, 26th September 2006

Report by Ian Vincent

After much negotiation, the final of the Secretary's Shield (the competition for winners of last year's Federation Leagues) was held at Nottingham, Monday 25th September. It was the battle of the B's: Beverley v Blewbury. Conditions would have been good for seamers at the somewhat delayed start, but the sun broke through to give a pleasant early-autumn day. A rough measurement of the speed of the freshly mown lawns was 9.9 seconds on the Plummer scale.

Demand for refereeing seemed intense, with at least half a dozen shots at balls in or near hoops, two (unsuccessful) wiring claims, a shot at a ball replaced by the double-banker while the striker's ball was in flight and the several attempts at roquets after staggering through a hoop. Two of those were 'flat' hammer strokes, with the non-striking end of the mallet being swung through (rather than over) the hoop while the striker faced away from the target, both of which were successful. Unlike Tiger Wood's 9-iron, a yellow ball was retrieved from the stream after only a short delay.

The Southerners took the doubles with a neat double peel, but Beverley won both the morning singles. Nick Butler, fresh from winning the Treasurer's Tankard, levelled the score with the first afternoon game to finish. Avril Ragoni-Machiavelli then took Blewbury ahead and the decisive result came in the match between the Johns, where Blewbury's John Spiers won by +2, with all four



Secretary Shield Winners, Blewbury
John Spiers Nick Butler Avril Ragoni-Machiavelli Stuart Parkes

clips on the peg, after John Kennedy had earlier got cross-wired when about to finish. Shortly afterwards, Mike Evans took the final game to give a 4-3 margin, hardly the 7-0 complained of in earlier rounds!

Congratulations to both teams for getting this far, and to Blewbury on their victory.

Results
Nick Butler & Avril Ragoni-Machiavelli bt Colin Fletcher & Mike Evans +13
John Spiers lost to Robin Edwards -17
Stuart Parks lost to John Kennedy -5(T)

Nick Butler bt Colin Fletcher +16
John Spiers bt John Kennedy +2
Stuart Parks lost to Mike Evans -13(T)
Avril Ragoni-Machiavelli bt Robin Edwards +9(T)

Day Three dawned cloudier than the previous two, but the sun was soon shining again, especially on Robert Fulford who beat David Maugham +17tp in what turned out to be the decisive game of the event. No errors were made: Rob went to 4-back on the 3rd turn with a DL, Dave hit and went to 4-back with an NSL, Rob hit the shortish long lift and finished, leaving Dave regretting his decision not to TPO.

After wins in the next two rounds for both the leaders left only themselves in contention, Maugham needed a win in his final game and then had to hope Fulford lost to force a play-off. Dave applied what pressure he could by winning +19tp against Rutger. When Dave failed hoop 1 on the 3rd turn things weren't looking good for him, especially as Rob had the first break going in his game against Mark Avery. However, Rutger's break was a little carefree and he was unable to get a hoop 6 pioneer. With this in mind, he successfully cross-wired Dave at 1 after making 5, but failed to get a rush to 6. Rolling up from near 5, he put the forward ball off the North boundary. Dave hit from 1 to 6 and went to 4-back with an MSL, no doubt heartened by seeing his doubles partner (Avery) do what he wanted for once and hit the tealady Rob had left him on the neighbouring lawn. Mark went to 4-back with a diagonal spread, but Rob hit shortly after Rutger did the same against Dave, swinging the pendulum firmly in Fulford's direction. Rutger made Rob work for it though by failing 3 having taken off from the "worse than death" position, allowing Dave to

complete his triple. Soon after Rob finished his TPO with two POPs and two balls pegged out, leaving 1 vs 3-back. Mark failed to approach hoop 1 and took position, Rob took position at 3-back, Mark narrowly missed the 15-yarder and Rob hit him on the boundary and finished, +13tpo, to become the worthy winner of the 2006 President's Cup.

Stephen Mulliner, wearing his CA Vice-President hat, did the presentations, commending in particular the catering (which he rightly put on a par with Surbiton's) and hospitality, the quality of which was in inverse proportion to the amount I have mentioned it so far. Lunch each day at the club (including a snack on the Wednesday before the tournament) was absolutely superb, a different restaurant was organised each evening, and every player who did not have prior arrangements was put up for the best part of a week by a Jersey CC member. Not only that, Sarah Burrow, in addition to doing the vast majority of the hoop-setting and organising many other things, provided a taxi service all over the island each evening for those without transport, to ensure we had a great time both on and off the courts - thank you isn't nearly enough. Stephen also took the opportunity to wish the GB MacRobertson Shield team every success in the coming weeks, and despite the diverse fortunes for the four members of the side on show in Jersey, I am confident that on this form they will retain their crown.



Pendle & Craven, winners of the Longman Cup. L to R, Abdul Ahmad, Alice Fleck. David Mooney, tournament manager. Stephen Mulliner presenting cup to team captain, Robin Delves. Andrew Webb.

one quipping "Good weather for ducks i.e. Ed the Duck" Surbiton coming out 5-2 victors The inter club final was a final where mistakes became the deciding factor rather than good play or hitting in, a surprise at this level, with Ed Duckworth failing a peel at rover against Stephen Mulliner and Samir Patel missing a peg out for a TPO against Roger Jenkins.

Longman Cup final was a controversial affair that had a lesson for all. It seems that the teams agreed to use one clock for 2 of the matches and that time was mistakenly called 55 minutes early. As all parties left the courts having agreed that the games were over, then they were. Having realised the error it was championship referee Stephen Mulliner's unfortunate duty to

Editorial

The time of writing this was the day after Children in Need. I was feeling slightly stiff and more than likely coming down with a cold, having spent much of yesterday with a band of fellow gardeners cutting hedges in fancy dress for the aforementioned charity. The weather is not dissimilar today, bright, very windy, and the occasional down pour of rain - much more conducive to editing and far less embarrassing than being dressed as a garden gnome. For me the autumn is very much a time of taking stock in the garden, and it is also a good time to take stock of the Gazette and make plans for the next year. I have been receiving comments throughout the past year and have been considering how to give a wider interest and to make the Gazette more interactive. From the feedback and discussion with the Publishing Committee, both coaching and laws issues are to be regular features, covering all aspects and levels of the game. Ian Vincent, Chairman of the Laws Committee has agreed to answer any laws queries you may have. Please send any queries to me and I will forward them to Ian for response to accompany the question in future issues. In coaching I would like to offer items to

beginners, improvers and golf croquet players. It would therefore be helpful if you would be willing to let me know any precise requirements you may have, as I would prefer to offer what readers need or want rather than what I think they should have, so please get in touch. Following on from this I will also be asking some of the top players for their hints and tips on practice routines, as these can be useful to players of every level of the game.

If you have any other specific requests as to what you would like to see in the Gazette, please let me know and I will see what I can do.

I think all that remains for me to do is to congratulate the GB Team on their winning performance in the MacRobertson Shield, of which you can read more further on, and to wish you all a happy and healthy Christmas & New Year.

Gail Curry
Editor



Letters

Brandy in Trauma Corner

Eileen Magee's letter on 'trauma corners' (Issue 305) reminded me of a player some years ago who, when beaten, would disappear behind the nearest hut and kick it furiously while muttering four-letter expletives. He would then emerge to shake hands politely with his opponent.

I must confess to disappearing behind a hut on one occasion - not to vandalise it but to have a 'swig of brandy' following defeat to a flushed-with-success, bisqueladen Aunt Emma!

Audrey Howell

Church Stretton

I write at the request of the Development Committee of the CA and as its retiring chairman. The members were concerned about the comments and sentiments expressed by Church Stretton member Peter Dorke in his article entitled "John Prescott, eat your heart out" in the last issue.

Peter informed us that the club was set up a decade ago and spurned the idea of joining the CA, seeing it only as a way of entering tournaments in which few of their members had any interest. He then goes on to say that the club now considers it the right time to join since they have been evicted from the hotel grounds where they started and wish to set up two courts at a new location.

We are pleased that Peter has now recognised that there are more advantages to joining the CA other than being able to enter CA tournaments, but would challenge their previously held view that tournament entry was the sole benefit and now as a provider of grants.

Apart from supporting our own national organising body, there are some very good reasons why all clubs should consider joining the CA. These include:

- Free Civil liability cover, worth probably in the region of £75 - £150 per annum
- Grants & loans to new and existing clubs (Subject to CA approval)
- Access to development support and

laws advice.

- Access to qualified coaching
- Access to model Club constitution, Child Protection policy and advice.
- CA club handbook offering advice and information on all aspects of the organisation
- One copy of the Fixtures Book giving access to CA tournaments
- One copy of each edition of the Gazette per annum

All governance with specialised committees or groups on Association Croquet, Coaching, Development, Equipment, Golf Croquet, Handicaps, International tournaments, Laws, Laws, Marketing, Publishing and Tournaments.

Just a slight word of warning - If a club decides to join the CA in order to apply for a grant, this they can do. **However the granting of an award is not automatic and can be accompanied with restrictions.**

The last club to join the CA with the principal reason being to be eligible to apply for a grant, found only a small grant offered with an additional loan. A clause was included to reclaim all monies if their loyalty was found wanting over subsequent years!

The Development Committee considers every application very carefully. They ask pertinent questions that encompass information about year of formation, loyalty to the CA, quality and quantity of members and their contribution to the CA scene in the form of referees and coaches, and whether tournaments at club, regional or national level are hosted. Then there are the decisions as to whether the constitution contains an appropriate clause referring to dissolution as well as providing viable financial, business and membership plans. Although a formal points system has not been adopted, all members of the committee consider all the answers on the application form to determine the worthiness of the application.

Church Stretton may consider that they have saved themselves the capitation fee (some £1466) that has ranged from £4 in 1994 to £6.35 in 2006 but what will they seek from the CA?

We want to welcome new member clubs to the CA, and to enjoy their croquet at a social or more serious level as they please, but please think about what you are contributing as well as taking and recognise what the CA's loyal group of volunteers do in their free time to help support and develop Croquet in all its forms for your benefit.

Patricia Duke-Cox

CA Inter-Club Events

National Finals, Surbiton 30th Sept - 1st Oct 2006

Report by David Mooney

On a weekend that saw the South East of England receive a months rain in 48 hours. Surbiton hosted the association croquet national team finals. Arriving just after the morning's thunderstorm the teams were dispatched to the courts after assessing which of the teams had the most strong swimmers or as the ROT one, G Noble yeoman of the borough, whispered "Send the Mary Rose chaps down to 6 and 7 then I won't have to go down there much."

At lunchtime the lifeboats were dispatched to recover the survivors. The match scores were close, all of them being 2-1.

Casting the players adrift again it was clear that Surbiton were sinking fast, losing finally 6-1 to Parsons Green. Whilst Blewbury and Pendle were desperately treading water with Pendle pulling the life jacket off Blewbury to go 4-2 ahead before Blewbury pulled it back to 4-3 then sinking in true Leonardo di Caprio style.

Meanwhile news came in that in the distance an epic struggle was taking place between Woking and Colchester with Woking finally triumphing 4-3. Life rafts were dispatched and the victors and vanquished rescued.

Sunday

Rain, Rain, Rain. The stalwarts that were the Longman Cup teams donned their Sou'westers and braved the steady rain. Meanwhile the A class teams arrived appropriately in dribs & drabs

Further to the Tapestry

I'll write something further for the Gazette in the near future about the 1066 croquet image, but I'll confess now to being the guilty party. I wrote the following page about 4 years ago.

<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~croquet/oucc/history/alternativehistory.shtml> unfortunately a minor modification was made when we changed the style of the site. All the pages used to have a creation/modified date as a footer. This page had the wording of the footer modified to make it clear that it was fictional.

Mark Gooding

Shedding light on the past

I can throw some light on the questions raised by Mrs. D. Rush regarding the October 1966 edition of the Gazette, assuming that this is not a spoof on several articles appearing under her name several years ago (or was she a Miss?)

The Gazette at that time was edited by Ian Baillieu (also working on the first redraft of the laws) assisted by Bernie Duthie, also a member of Hurlingham. He had stepped into the breach after the previous editor was unable to continue. He adopted a very cheap format as the CA was not very flush at that time.

"Rover" was Maurice Reckitt, who wrote regularly under that title for very many years. He also wrote non-croquet articles under the pseudonym "Ember" (which were of course his initials).

I remember H. S. Clemens from Tasmania who visited Hurlingham on, I believe, a couple of occasions. He was a useful, but not outstanding player.

The large number of new associates from Florida followed the visit from The Westhampton Mallet club of Long Island, New York which I visited on a couple of occasions. They had challenged Hurlingham only to discover that they still played a Victorian version of the game. They visited again a few years later and when they removed their blazers they all had large L plates on their backs. On the evening before the match Hurlingham gave a reception for them, but Henry ***** did not attend as he had acquired a new girl friend in London.

After the match they gave a dinner for us at Les Ambassadeurs in Knightsbridge attended by the American ambassador and TV camera crews. Henry was at the reception with his girl friend who was

wearing a dress like chain mail (and I was reliably informed was wearing nothing underneath), but was not allowed to attend the dinner as he had been discourteous in not attending Hurlingham's earlier reception, but waved us goodbye as we sat down to dinner. After dinner our captain, Alex Karmel, said that although we had had a convincing win there would no doubt be a future generation of Americans who would give us a good run for our money. "Yes" said Dave Seiniger, sitting next to me, "I reckon that's what Henry's working on right now", about the best off the cuff remark I have ever heard.

John Solomon

My Introduction to Croquet At Cober

Forty-three years ago, with my first wife Vi and 10-month old son, I turned up at Cober Hill, Cloughton, near Scarborough, for a week's holiday.

I got out of my pick-up van to see if we were at the right place, looked over the wall and saw a figure on the lower lawn, knocking balls about with a hammer (which I soon learnt was a mallet!). The figure looked up, "Boy!" he yelled. Thinking this was the owner, I ran down the steps, expecting to be reprimanded for being in his garden. His next words were "Can you play croquet?" "No", I said, as I didn't know what he was talking about. "Come here and I'll show you". We had a game. Then I saw my wife with our son in her arms at the top of the steps. "What are you doing?" she asked. "Playing croquet". "Well - is this the right place?" I still wasn't sure! Fortunately we were. I was immediately hooked, or should I say 'hooped', on croquet. Cober Hill was the only place I knew of where croquet was played in the North East (apart from Otterburn Hall in Northumberland) and I have returned every year since.

I later found out that the man I played was Walter Wilcox, a professor at Sheffield University who spent his whole summer holiday at Cober. This was a Saturday change-over day, and there was nobody else to play with. He had adapted a version of American rules (eg playing in sequence and including deadness until next hoop scored) for a short-lawn doubles game where anybody could take part. Over the years many people I've met also got hooked the same way and joined, or started, clubs near to them. A few come to mind, with some of

whom I still keep in contact:

David Price (ex Belsay Hall; now in Hunstanton area), David Barrett (Bury), Peter Robinson (Leicester), Hastings Wang (Chester), Eric Nixon (Belsay Hall),

Phillip Jackman (Ellesmere; tragically died in a motorcycle accident on his way to play), Peter Wallace (Tyneside), Clive & Georgina Llewellyn (Llanfairfechan, founder members; sadly, Clive is no longer alive), Justin Brightmoor (Bury, new member), Phill Scarr (Middlesbrough, new member), Richard & Rob Clarke (ex Huddersfield and Middlesbrough resp), John & Margaret Crossland (Brodsworth Hall, near Doncaster).

I think there will be many more (Don & Debbie Cornelius, for example) and it would be interesting if this article might prompt them to come forward. In my opinion Cober has been a foremost ambassador for the game of croquet, especially in this part of the North. Interestingly, Cober Hill is a not-for-profit Residential Centre owned by the York-based Joseph Rowntree charities.

Walter Sanders (Middlesbrough)

Banish those winter blues

With the purpose of keeping our collective minds from drifting away from croquet during the winter season, I am writing to propose that a decent vocabulary of rhyming slang is long overdue in a sport with such a wealth of colourful terminology as croquet.

Since I myself am a consummate simpleton in the field of linguistic expression, I am hoping to recruit the help of your readership in generating suitable terms. I would however like to start the ball "Grassing" with a few initial suggestions: Grassy knoll - Roll (or Pass Roll) Three Blind Mice - Tice Eightsome Reel - Peel Mohammed al Fayed - Wired Mystic Meg - Peg

With the support of my fellow readers, I am confident that this can be built up into a substantial list, and perhaps someday I will hear the a fellow player cry "Oh no, that Eightsome has left me completely Mohammed!" and know in my heart that something of true worth has been achieved.

John Moore

yards from the peg. Fulford, in the clubhouse, pointed out that Dave could simply take contact from partner in 1 (lifting the ball in 3) and just play a little roll through the hoop, leaving a wired rush to the peg. However, the position of the ball in 1 apparently made that difficult, so Dave simply lifted it to A-baulk and played a 1-foot shot, wired from Stephen's ball, knowing he would get a wiring lift with the ball in 3 next turn which would give him a rush to the peg. Mulliner took the only shot he had, from near corner II to the ball in the jaws on 3, but this missed so Dave took his lift and finished, +3.

Both of the other notable matches occurred in Round Five, the last of the day. With both players for 4-back with one ball, Marcus Evans (playing Stephen Mulliner) got a break, failed to get position for a TP, so took on the TPO instead. In the sixth big pass-roll of his turn, he clanged into the back of hoop 3 after rushing up after 4 with one peel done and stayed there, forcing him to retire to corner II. Mulliner had all the balls for his double peel before hoop 6, but only managed to jaws the first peel going to 4-back. The attempt to promote partner through penult after 4-back resulted in the promoting ball blocking the hoop and the peelee going through by a couple of inches, so he elected to rush peel it through 6. This dislodged the other ball, but peelee remained a few inches due North of penult. Stephen then played an Irish peel of penult and ended up with a good position for the straight rover peel, which he completed. He then rushed partner into the back of rover where it stuck, so he put it over to the West boundary, put Marcus's 4-back ball near 4-back, and went to corner II, leaving Marcus's hoop 5 ball about an inch off the end of A-baulk. Evans played his 4-back ball but made a poor leave. Stephen hit partner, and, unable to peg out, left Evans's 4-back ball on the East boundary level with 4-back his other ball in corner II, and his own balls on the end of A-baulk with a rush to the peg. Evans hit partner from corner II with his hoop 5 ball,



Stephen Mulliner presents Robert with his trophy.



David Maugham, reflects on what might have been

played some good aggressive shots to get the delayed triple going, and finished, +2TP.

Meanwhile, Robert Fulford and David Maugham were having a good game - Rob went to 1-back on the 4th turn with 1 POP, but the leave offered Dave "only a 27-yarder" (Rob's words!). Dave duly hit and went to 4-back with two POPs, but failed to put Rob's 1-back ball in the jaws of 2 and ended up with an OSL, which Rob missed. Dave then played a poor turn in which he only peeled 4-back going to 2-back, which was then failed. Rob thought about an SXP starting at hoop 3 but elected to double-peel Dave and peg him out instead, leaving his balls in corner IV and near the North boundary in front of 1-back, conceding a contact. Dave's first attempt to finish failed so Rob hit with

his peg ball and made a very good leave: Dave in corner I and his own balls joined up in corner III with the peg ball wired from Dave and not rushable to near 2-back. Dave hit his second (and much longer) tea-lady of the game and finished, after a perfect rush (i.e. as near as he could get) and a good roll-up to 2-back, +8.

All this left David Maugham the early pace-setter on 4/5, with Wicks, Evans and Fulford close behind on 3/5, and the rest struggling a bit to keep up but still very much in contention

"Best" game of Day Two turned out to be Rutger Beijderwellen vs David Maugham in Round Seven, which my notes record only as a "27 turn error-fest with lots of long hitting-in," - a reasonable summary! Rutger's growing contingent of Dutch fans (who turned out to be his family) eventually saw him win by 14.

Round Nine got off to a flier when Mulliner (playing Maugham) hit on the 4th turn and promptly played a wrong ball, eliciting the surprising claim from Fulford that he (Rob) plays a wrong ball every three tournaments or so. This gave us all hope, but sadly this event wasn't one of them and he finished the day tied for the lead with Maugham on 6/9, with everyone else on 4/9 - all to play for on the final day.

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.

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BARRY MARSH – DYFFRYN CROQUET CLUB

Barry joined Dyffryn in 1988, shortly after the club was founded, and by 1991 had taken on the role of club treasurer, a position he held until this year. Other office holders have come and gone, but Barry has been the glue holding the committee together over 15 years. In addition, he has looked after all the club equipment over the winter, ensuring the club has newly painted hoops and complete sets of balls and clips to start each season. He also works tirelessly with inexperienced players at club evenings and continues to be a huge asset to Dyffryn Croquet Club.

News & Information

Golf Croquet added to handicap database

The Croquet Association database now has provision for recording Golf Croquet handicaps and we would like to complete and verify our present records. I would therefore ask all Tournament members to check on their recorded handicap to see if it correct. You can do this in two ways, either visit the members area of the web site where you can check all your details or alternatively our Secretary will send you the present records when he does his mailing at the end of the year. Please notify the Secretary if any of your details are not correct, preferably by email if you are connected.

If we can try to get all corrections made during January 2007 at the latest, it will enable us to provide an accurate record as at the start of the season when our printed directory is produced. I would also ask all Managers of GC events to report handicap changes after events as happens with all Association Croquet tournaments.

Bill Arliss

Golf Croquet Chairman

New regulations from the WCF

The WCF today unveiled its Regulations to control future WCF World Championship events and they are now available on the WCF web site at www.wfcroquet.org

At the end of each WCF World Championship, all competitors and officials are given the opportunity to comment on the organisation of it, with particular emphasis being placed on ideas to continually improve all matters.

In recent times, comments were received at the 10th World Association Croquet Championship, the 7th Golf Croquet Championship and the 1st Women's Golf Croquet Championship.

Following the recent vote by member associations to allow the WCF to specify its own Tournament Regulations, the WCF Management Committee was mandated to completely overhaul the WCF Sports Regulations.

In development since the inception of the WCF in 1989, the Regulations in various guises, have sought to address common issues that arose at Championships and have been part of the conditions imposed upon members that host WCF events.

The revision of the WCF Sports Regulations includes all the essential matters that are necessary to hold a successful

Championship, wherever they take place in the world, and it will now be rarely necessary to rely on the Tournament regulations of the host association.

As the Sports Regulations are subservient to the WCF Statutes, or specific resolutions passed by members, of necessity they must reflect the current wording of them and hence some anomalies remain until the opportunity is taken to propose amendments to the WCF full members for their consideration, at a later date.



President's Cup competitors, left to right, Rutger Beijderwellen, Jack Wicks, Marcus Evans, David Maugham, Keith Aiton, Robert Fulford, Mark Avery and Stephen Mulliner.

President's Cup

Jersey, October 12 - 15 2006

Report by Marcus Evans

Robert Fulford takes sixth title (oh and he won the pool, darts and Tenpin bowling too)

The Jersey CC lawns had been superbly prepared by the groundsmen and members, and were cut every morning before play, but the weather, while excellent for the time of year, kept them very easy-paced throughout - they were timed at about 9 seconds on the Saturday morning. Lawn three in particular had a pronounced slope from West to East, but nearly all the hoop areas were perfect and most boundaries were fine. Hoops remained firm and well-set throughout, but the ground was soft enough to bully them and they certainly couldn't be described as difficult.

Day One contained three really entertaining games. First up was David Maugham against Stephen Mulliner, last to finish in Round Three. With every other game already over, Dave had reached peg and peg, with Stephen still for 1 and 1, after failing the straight rover peel of a triple. Mulliner went to 1-back with the standard leave, and was going reasonably well on his sextuple when he overhit the rush to penult on the straight triple. With one of Dave's balls already in the jaws of 3, he made the last two hoops and managed to jaws Dave's other ball in 1, sending partner (for penult) to near corner II before pegging himself out, conceding contact. This obviously made it difficult for Dave to finish on that turn, being unable to rush either of his balls closer than seven

News & Information

CA introduces a 'recruitment bonus'

The CA has been looking at ways of encouraging more club players to join. To this end, we have introduced a new initiative for the new year. We hope this will encourage clubs to make their members aware of the benefits of joining the CA, and to ensure they keep a stock of application forms available. For anyone who joins the CA for the first time, the CA will credit £10 to the club they indicate on their application form as being their primary club. This will be done automatically as applications come in, and the clubs will then receive a cheque covering all new members at the end of the year. We think this can add up to a significant sum if several people sign up, and we hope that by giving a little back, we can encourage clubs to be a little more active in this area.

If you have any other ideas as to how we can attract players to join the CA, please let us have them. You can email Jeff Dawson at sales@croquet.org.uk, or send your thoughts to the CA office.

Please check your membership details

Members are invited to check that the CA Database has their details correctly stored by viewing their record in the members' area of the CA website - please notify the office of any errors or omissions. The members' area is secured by a login - to visit it, you will need your membership number and post code (your membership number is on your membership card).

Inter-Counties Play-off

As there were 23 entries this year, the allocation of the 22nd place is between newcomers Wiltshire and 2006 last placed in the second division, Norfolk. The teams were given the choice of a play off or ballot and have chosen to play off at Newport on Sat 14 April. The arrangements are for the normal team, of three pairs in an all play all format.

In the event of failure to achieve a result for any reason, the place will be settled by ballot.

National garden croquet challenge

The CA would very much like to run this competition again 2007. An enthusiastic VOLUNTEER is needed to administer the competition. It would require someone prepared to organise contacting the 300 people who expressed an interest last year, receiving new applications, liaising with clubs and much more! If you are prepared to help please contact Jeff Dawson on 01483 776971 or sales@croquet.org.uk.

WCF Hall of fame

The World Croquet Federation (WCF) today announced the first inductions to the newly formed WCF Hall of Fame

Devised to meet the requirements laid down by the founders of the Federation, "to make awards to those who have contributed to the achievement of the Federation's aims", the Hall of Fame is virtual, existing only through the WCF web site.

Each year no more than 5 persons who meet the exacting criteria, can be inducted, thus making it a very special group of croquet enthusiasts and supporters indeed.

The WCF Hall of Fame Committee of four persons, led by their Chairman, Rhys Thomas (USA), made the 5 difficult choices from the nominations received.

2006 WCF Hall of Fame Inductees

Tom Armstrong, AUS

Ashley Heenan OBE, NZ

Sir MacPherson Robertson KBE, AUS

Arthur Ross, NZ

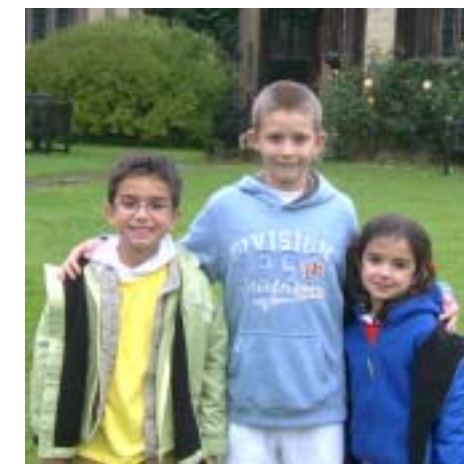
John Solomon, ENG

Full details of the achievements of each inductee can be seen on the WCF web site.

Nominations for the 2007 induction will open to the public on 1st January 2007. It will automatically include all those nominated in 2006, but who were unsuccessful on this occasion.

Oliver and Ramsgate CC's awfully big adventure

Ramsgate Croquet Club were invited to send a junior member of the Club for some T.V filming at Hever Castle early in October. This was part of a series about two small children who travel round the world, having adventures, and finding out what local children eat, play etc.



Hever was chosen so that the children could go round (or get lost in) the maze, and the idea was to relate the pattern of Golf Croquet playing to this. Ten year old Oliver Rice, who has been with the Club for just over a year, was chosen, for his outgoing personality and his ability to show smaller children how to play (and grown-ups too!). He is pictured here with the brother and sister aged eight and six. It was a damp day but Oliver found it "very exciting"

The series is shown mostly in Canada and U.S.A though it can be picked up in other countries. The producers estimate that over two million people watch the programme called "Are We Nearly There." This episode will not come out until the spring of 2007, but both Oliver and Ramsgate C.C will have their names in the credits.



John Norman, winner of the Grass Roots Event, presented with his trophy by Patricia Duke-Cox, Vice-Chair of Council

Continued on page 18

THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at The Hurlingham Club on Saturday 14th October 2006.

Present: Prof.BG Neal (President), Dr. IG Vincent (Chairman of Council), Dr.RW Bray (Treasurer), KJ Seabright (Secretary) and 46 other Associates .

Prof. Neal took the chair and welcomed all to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance. The President welcomed particularly the former President John Solomon and his wife Barbara. He also wished the MacRobertson Shield Team well in Australia, and was confident that the team would retain the trophy.

1. Apologies for absence

There were two apologies for absence.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on Saturday 15th October 2005

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on the 15th October 2005 were signed as a true record of the meeting.

3. Chairman's Report

The Chairman of Council presented its annual report (attached) which had previously been published on the web site, mentioning the enormous contribution made by the late Alan Oldham to whom fuller tribute will be paid later in the meeting.

He commented on the Charities Bill, which was currently making its way through Parliament. It adds “the advancement of amateur sport” as an additional charitable purpose, but defines sport as requiring “physical skill and exertion”. Whilst it seemed likely that the CA would qualify under this definition, it would be clearer if “exertion” was replaced with “exercise”. It also introduces Charitable Incorporated Organisation status, which we could consider adopting to avoid the need for individual trustees. Clubs who are already registered as Community Amateur Sports Clubs would not be affected as they are specifically excluded by the Bill.

The Chairman wished the MacRobertson Shield Team well on the forthcoming tour to Australia.

The Chairman mentioned the results of a recent survey which indicated a growth in the popularity of Golf Croquet, which now showed slightly more players than Association Croquet. He pointed out however that currently 28% play both games. Council is to consider the implications of the increase in Golf Croquet. He stated that attempts are made to avoid fixture clashes between the two games.

The Chairman reported improvements in the approach to junior players. A 50 % reduction in entry fees had been implemented for CA Tournaments and he very much hoped that clubs would consider a similar reduction. He was hopeful that progress would be made in the next year in respect of Junior Coaching.

The Chairman thanked the President, Treasurer, Chairmen of the various committees, the Secretary and Secretary's Assistant for their excellent support.

The Chairman wished his successor well for the future.

There was an offer from the floor, from HBH Carlisle esq.,Q.C., to assist with the outcome of the above mentioned Bill.

4. Accounts for the year to December 2005

The Treasurer presented the Accounts for the year to 31st December 2005 and gave a brief report. He acknowledged Alan Oldham's contribution to the financial wellbeing of the CA, explaining that he had inherited excellent systems and methods from Alan and had also learned much from Alan's approach to the role of Treasurer.

The Treasurer explained that Council aimed to set a neutral budget each year. This could only be achieved in 2006 with substantial help from some of the Special Funds. Indications so far were that the call on those reserves would not be as great as feared, but the outcome for the year was difficult to predict because there were some significant items of expenditure still to come.

The Treasurer pointed out that although the CA has substantial reserves, it is essential that revenue (rather than reliance on reserves) supports the development programme.

The President thanked the Treasurer for the smoothness and accuracy of his work, which brought to mind the style with which the Treasurer had played his croquet.

The adoption of the Accounts was proposed by Patricia Duke-Cox and seconded by Jeff Dawson and was approved nem.con.

5. Election of Treasurer

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

6. Election of Reporting Accountant

The Treasurer expressed his appreciation of the work of Marian Hemsted during the previous year. Mrs Hemsted was re-elected as Reporting Accountant after being proposed by Hugh Carlisle and seconded by Eileen Magee.

A vote of thanks to Mrs Hemsted for her work was passed by acclamation.

7. Change of Rules

The Chairman explained the need for addition to the Rules (see report attached to these minutes). He had given the Welsh CA an assurance that there was no intention to interfere with selection of Welsh teams.

The Motion:

That the following be inserted at the end of Rule 1 (Constitution and Objects) of the Croquet Association:

(f) To represent the interests of its members and promote development of croquet internationally.

(g) To enter individuals and teams in international events to represent nations or groups of nations associated with the Domain and to host and support such events.

The President explained that those at the AGM, who had previously not voted, were entitled to do so. 22 Associates voted for the motion (there were no votes against) and 5 Clubs voted for the motion (there were none against). The postal ballot was 100 Associates in favour of the motion and 37 clubs in favour of the motion. There were no votes against the motion in either category. Therefore 164 votes were in favour of the motion and none against the motion. The motion was therefore passed unanimously.

David and Eileen Magee were thanked for their work as scrutineers.

MIKE COPE -BATH CROQUET CLUB

Mike recently retired from the committee after over 15 years service. He was Secretary for 10 years in 2 separate spells.

Mike was a leading part of the team which successfully bid for Lottery funding.

Mike is a qualified coach and organises the club's regular Saturday morning sessions for beginners. He has also regularly coached “improvers”.

As Secretary Mike regularly liaised with the CA and organised the club's Annual Dinner.

Mike carried out extensive work with the Council and Solicitors in relation to the club's lease.

PAT HETHERINGTON – COLCHESTER CROQUET CLUB

Pat was on the Colchester Committee from 1979 to 1996, being Chairman from 1987 to 1996 and gave her time unstintingly to the club. During this period the club went through a period of decline membership. It was due to her hard work that Croquet was promoted in the Colchester area and the club returned to a healthy position. She has managed innumerable tournaments, organised and provided refreshments and, when the club was at low ebb, almost single handedly ran the club.

RAMSAY AND BARBARA BETTINSON – MIDDLESBROUGH CROQUET CLUB

The club committee would like the behind-the-scenes contributions that Ramsay and Barbara have made to croquet on Teeside, over nearly twenty years, be recognised by the award of CA Diplomas.

Ramsay and Barbara have been tireless in their support for croquet firstly in 1989 at Ormesby Hall, then 10 years later at Prissick Park. They also both played a full part in competitions and other activities. Ramsay regularly took on lawn mowing duties and helped with equipment; whilst Barbara often provided tasty meals. Heart problems have more recently curtailed Ramsay's active involvement, but both members are now key to the club's use of an excellent indoor venue for carpet croquet during winter months.

JOHN DE WINTON –TAUNTON DEANE CROQUET CLUB

When it became obvious that the club would have to move from its premises John persisted in and eventually located a potential site for 3 lawns at Taunton Vale Sports Club with its modern spacious facilities. He then set about the daunting task of leading the team to obtain substantial funding from Sport England as well as persuading Taunton Deane Borough Council, the CA and members to contribute. Having raised the funds he oversaw the construction of the lawns. Without John's unstinting dedication it is unlikely that Taunton Deane Croquet Club would exist now.

MIKE EVANS – BEVERLEY CROQUET CLUB

Mike brings what can only be described as sheer energy to the game of croquet. Over the years he has contributed at the local and national level.

Mike had played a form of the game while in the Army. When he left the Army in 1983 he moved to East Yorkshire and joined the Beverley club shortly after it was formed. He has played a prominent part in the development of the club, and has been Secretary, Match Secretary and Chairman. He also joined the east Riding and Bowdon Croquet Clubs.

Mike has been Secretary and Chairman of the Northern Confederation and in 1993 he published a guide to Northern

Croquet Clubs. He subsequently co-edited Help 2 which was a national guide to croquet clubs.

From 1997 to 2001 he was on the CA Council and served on several committees.

The truly impressive thing is his enthusiasm for all things to do with croquet. This rubs off on others and has a knock on effect which extends beyond the club.

Mike was responsible for obtaining the indoor carpet which is shared by Yorkshire clubs and he formed a winter league to maximise the carpet's use.

Mike has been heavily involved with the coaching of beginners and also with corporate events.

Mike is a credit to croquet and much deserving of official recognition.

PETER TAYLOR - BOWDON CROQUET CLUB

Peter is the Ground Manager at Bowdon Croquet Club. He has been an active playing member of the club for 14 years. Peter actively supported all aspects of club life in addition to becoming a good player. He offered to take over responsibility for the grounds in 1997. The high standard of the lawns has been maintained and steadily increased.

The whole appearance of the club has been radically improved and enhanced through his hard work and the way in which he has supervised a team of some 20 volunteers.

The major work inspired and supervised by Peter involving the moving of some 150 cu meters of earth and increasing the available lawn space has been a major contribution to the age old problem of boundary “fall off”.

Peter had a novel approach to improving drainage problems on one of the lawns. He was able to create a system for improving the drainage to enable surface water to escape to the sand sub-strata.

Peter was also fully committed to the restructuring and refurbishment of the bar and kitchen bringing them into line with modern health and safety requirements.

None of the above projects would have been concluded without the help of all the other volunteers in the club but none would have started without the energy supplied by Peter.

PATRICIA DUKE-COX – WOODHALL SPA CROQUET CLUB

Patricia was the driving force behind the formation of the croquet club. In 1991 she urged a group of friends to form a proper club and join the CA. She became the club's first Secretary and served on the committee for over 13 years, holding positions of club coach, press officer and Chairperson.

Patricia was the prime mover in persuading the club to join the local federation so that they might enjoy competition with other clubs. She later became a member of the Federation Executive Committee and served as Secretary from 1999 to 2004. In 2000 she was elected as the Federation representative on the CA Council later becoming Chair of the Development Committee.

Patricia has always “been there” to coach and encourage members to play in competitions. She has always been willing to pass on her knowledge and has been instrumental in the encouragement of youngsters.

There is no doubt that without Patricia's driving force, and the numerous tasks she has tackled, Woodhall Spa Croquet Club would not have progressed as far as it has.

Croquet Association

Diploma Winners

Citations for CA Diploma 2006

MRS GD HARRIS – CHELTENHAM CROQUET CLUB

During her long membership of Cheltenham Croquet Club Bo has been active in many aspects of club life. She was Secretary for many years when the post included that of Membership Secretary. The kitchen and management desk have also benefited from her competent attention. She has represented the club in many competitions and won the top national ladies events.

It is perhaps in her sphere of coaching beginners that Bo has contributed most to wellbeing of the club. In 2002 she was presented with the Gloucestershire Lifetime Services to Coaching award in respect of her effective no nonsense approach to introducing new members to the game.

Bo is still passing on her sound playing skills informally and she also co-manages the club's High Bisquers Tournaments.

DAVID MAGEE – CHELTENHAM CROQUET CLUB

David is another all round club performer. He is well known as a manager of tournaments at all levels. He has been active in the coaching of beginners and can often be seen giving ad.hoc. lessons to more advanced players. He helps in the tea room with tournament lunches and in many areas of the club where so many jobs need to be done.

David was instrumental in the provision of the new CA office.

On retirement three years ago David became the Lawns Manager. He has recruited and trained a most effective team of hoop setters.

There is no doubt about the level of David's contribution to the World Championships in 2005, he was everywhere and is very much a "work in progress".

PAULINE SOFTLEY - SUSSEX COUNTY CROQUET CLUB

Pauline has been a member since 1990 and has served on the club committee for 10 years, during which time she was an excellent club secretary for 6 of those year. She copes with organising the extensive duty rota for the Inter Counties Championship which is a mammoth task tactfully and efficiently accomplished.

Pauline is a quietly useful member doing all the things which keep a large club running smoothly particularly during tournaments.

Pauline prepares tea every Tuesday for the Golf Croquet

afternoons as well as for many other club events. She will turn her hand to a wide range of ancillary duties. She still finds time to enjoy both Association and Golf Croquet.

JOHN GOSNEY –SUSSEX COUNTY CROQUET CLUB

John joined the club some 9 years ago and within two years had joined the grounds sub-committee, assisting in setting and moving hoops. This required early attendance at the club, sometimes before 7.00a.m. Prior to the start of the season he assists with the marking out of the eleven lawns. Each year he undertakes the many maintenance and repair tasks required in respect of buildings and club equipment.

John was a major contributor to the club's tree planting scheme and he has formed the trees into a fine hedge.

John has always volunteered to undertake any task required at the club and is usually one of the first to volunteer.

John played a major part in the planning, design and implementation of the irrigation system and has now mastered its computer programme.

John is not only the first to volunteer for the various tasks undertaking by a team of about 20 club members but also uses his initiative in spotting and dealing with problems. He is a real "gem".

John is also a good playing member with an association handicap which is still falling. On occasions he can also be persuaded to play Golf Croquet.

BOB WHITTAKER MBE -BATH CROQUET CLUB

Bob was the secretary of the club for three years; Lawns and Equipment Manager for 5 years; and Chairman for two separate spells. He "retired" from the committee this year after 12 years service.

Bob was instrumental in leading the Club's successful bid (from the lottery fund) in 1996. The money was used for a major lawn levelling project and Bob rightly represented the club at the opening ceremony in front of the Mayor of Bath and John Solomon.

Bob is a Grade 1 coach and regularly coaches beginners and improvers.

During the winter months Bob helps with all maintenance tasks; liaises with the ground staff and also Council officials over parking arrangements.

Bob carried out liaison work with the Council and solicitors in respect of the club's leasing arrangements.

Bob is a qualified referee and has officiated at many tournaments. He also regularly sets hoops for club and CA Tournaments.

Bob has also carried out much work for the CA and South West Federation.

8. Election of Council Members

The Secretary announced that the following had been elected to Council:

Jeff Dawson, Patricia Duke-Cox, Richard Hoskyns, Tim King and Derek Trotman.

Once again appreciation was expressed to David and Eileen Magee for their work as scrutineers.

Brian Fisk was thanked for his services to the CA and Council.

Dick Strover was thanked for his willingness to stand for Council.

9. Benefactors' Book

The Secretary read out the names of the benefactors during the past ten years.

10. Presentation of the Apps Bowl

The Apps Bowl was presented to William Gee, from Nottingham Croquet Club.

11. Presentation of Croquet Association Diplomas

CA Diplomas were presented to:

D Magee, Mrs GD Harris, M Evans, Mrs P Hetherington and Mrs P Duke-Cox.

CA Diplomas have also been awarded to and will be presented at club ceremonies:

Mrs P Softley, J Gosney, R Whittaker, M Cope, Mrs B Bettinson, R Bettinson, J DeWinton, P Taylor and B Marsh.

The President remarked on how positive an innovation the CA Diplomas had been and expressed his wish for an increased number of nominations.

12 Any Other Business

Mike Evans passed on indirect greetings and support for croquet from Deputy Prime Minister J Prescott.

13 President's Closing Address

I begin with some excellent news. The World Croquet Federation (WCF) recently established a Hall of Fame, to which

five individuals will be inducted each year. Our

Past-President, John Solomon, has been selected as one of the first five, and the other four are all from the Antipodes, two from Australia and two from New Zealand. Details can be found on the WCF website.

Nominations covered the game from its earliest beginnings, and so this is a great honour for John and richly deserved recognition of his standing in the world of croquet and his many contributions internationally.

One of my most pleasurable duties is to attend the finals of CA events and present the trophies. This gave me the opportunity to see Robert Fulford at his awesome best. He won the Men's final against Jack Wicks with three majestic triples, and the Open final against the current World Champion, Reg Bamford. This match was won by +1 in the fifth game, after a wonderful display by the two best players in the world.

It is fitting that Robert will captain the Great Britain and Ireland team which travels to Australia in November to defend the MacRobertson Shield, which has been won by GB & I in the last five contests. The other team members are, in alphabetical order, Keith Aiton, Mark Avery, Chris Clarke, Jonathan Kirby and David Maugham. This is an extremely strong team, and we wish them good fortune, but we can be confident that they will bring the Shield back home.

The Chairman reported on the work done by Council and its Committees. I thank all members of Council on your behalf, especially the Committee Chairmen.

These days Committees often conduct their business by e-mail, but Council is not yet ready for tele-conferencing, and still meets three times per year. This imposes a burden on Council members who live a long way from London, and so we are particularly indebted to them.

At the Council meeting this afternoon, Ian Vincent will relinquish the Chairmanship. He has conducted our affairs with a firm but tactful hand. I had a particular reason to be grateful to him when I chaired the Appeal Panel dealing with the Surbiton Club's appeal against the decision not to award the trophy for the Golf Croquet Inter-Club Championship. Ian produced a detailed statement covering all the convoluted events which led to the appeal, and this was agreed to be totally accurate by all concerned. It was a masterly piece of work, and it made the Panel's task immeasurably easier.

Ian, we thank you most sincerely for all your work as Chairman for the past three years.

Croquet has suffered a severe loss this year by the untimely death of Alan Oldham, a Vice-President of the Association. Alan's obituary, written by Stephen Mulliner, appeared in the June Gazette, and it gave an excellent account of Alan's distinguished career as an actuary and his many diverse interests, which included philately and astronomy. It also covered his important contributions to the game and its administration. On this occasion, I will simply highlight some of the very special qualities which made him a unique figure in the world of croquet.

Alan was a mine of information on all aspects of the game. As an example, when I had to chair the Appeal Panel which I referred to earlier, I asked Alan whether there had been a similar appeal in the past. Alan immediately quoted a precedent 25 years ago, and sent me a complete copy of the Panel's findings.

Council keeps a record of "significant decisions", which are binding on future Councils, unless rescinded. Alan ensured that



South of England Week at Compton CC Eastbourne. From left to right: Rodney Parkins and Gina Lewis (The Gilbert Spoons); Paul Miles (The Devonshire Park Salver); Pat and Richard Jackson (The Anna Millns Salvors); Peter Nash (The Ionides Cup); Nigel Graves (The Trevor Williams Cup); Farooq Malik (The Brittain Porringer); Jonathan Isaacs (The Devonshire Park Cup) and John Reddish (The Luard Cup).



these were kept up to date, and would take great delight in reminding us of a relevant decision if it was being overlooked.

Council business is subject to procedures defined in a book termed "Standing Orders of the Council and Council Practice Book". It is doubtful whether many members of Council have mastered the 25 pages contained therein, but we could always rely on Alan to remind us when someone had transgressed. He would rise to his feet and, with a gleam in his eye say "Chairman, on a point of order.....".

Alan felt strongly that at CA Tournaments there should always be a Council representative to present the trophies, and he would often fulfil this function himself when he knew that no Council member was available at the venue.

As President, I have sometimes been confronted with difficult decisions, and I found it invaluable to be able to turn to Alan for advice. His judgement and wisdom were second to none, and he will be sorely missed by all.

Alan loved the game and all it stands for, and he served it wonderfully well, as Treasurer for 25 years, Archivist for 18 years, Council member and Vice-President.

Council has unanimously and with alacrity decided that Alan's massive contributions should be recognised by the award of the Council Medal, and I now invite Jane Oldham to accept it as a permanent memento of our gratitude.

The Council Medal was presented to Mrs Oldham. Mrs Oldham thanked the CA for awarding such a prestigious medal to a much loved husband and said that she was proud to accept it on Alan's behalf.

The meeting closed at 12.07 p.m.

COACHING COMMITTEE CA MERIT AWARDS 2006

UP TO 31 OCTOBER 2006, THE MERIT AWARD BADGES CLAIMED ARE AS FOLLOWS:

| Year | Platinum | Gold | Silver | Bronze |
|------|----------|------|--------|--------|
| 2006 | 3 | 5 | 20 | 36 |
| 2005 | 2 | 11 | 20 | 30 |
| 2004 | 6 | 7 | 19 | 12 |
| 2003 | - | 5 | 21 | 15 |
| 2002 | - | 9 | 24 | 26 |
| 2001 | - | 10 | 29 | 27 |
| 2000 | - | 8 | 26 | 36 |

Note that 2004 was the first year for the Platinum award.

The CA congratulates all the winners. The Merit Award Scheme continues to recognise and reward enterprising play, and the CA Coaching programme, nationally and locally, is geared towards teaching players how to make the best of each and every opportunity within a match.

List of Merit Award Winners 2006

PLATINUM (3)

- Dave Nick, Advanced Weekend, Southport, September 2006
- Samir Patel, Open Championship Z, Cheltenham, July 2006
- John Toye, Advanced Weekend, Budleigh Salterton, July 2006

GOLD (5)

- Roy Edwards, Class Event, East Dorset, July 2006
- Brian Fisk, Advanced Weekend, Cheltenham, May 2006

- John McMordie, Advanced Handicap Weekend, Surbiton, October 2006

- Alan Pidcock, Advanced Tournament, Southport, April 2006
- Michael Sandler, Advanced Weekend, Southport, September 2006

SILVER (20)

- Sir Edward Barry, Bt., Memento Mori Cup, Nottingham, July 2006
- Michael Cockburn, Mary Robinson Challenge Shield, Rye, September 2006

- Colin Robert Dalziel, Easter Handicap, Surbiton, April 2006
- Jim Field, Millennium Cup, Bath, July 2006
- David Gaitley, Class Singles, Southwick, August 2006
- Iain Gaman, All-England Finals, Nailsea, September 2006
- William Gee, B-level, Cheltenham, April 2006
- David Gillett, Handicap event, Southwick, April 2006
- Mark Godfrey, All-England Area Final, Compton, September 2006
- Barry Gould, All-England Area Final, Compton, September 2006
- Kevin Ham, May Tournament, Wrest Park, May 1997 (sic)
- David Kendrick, Handicap, East Dorset, July 2006

- Stephen Lewendon, Class Singles, Southwick, August 2006
- Carol Lewis, August Tournament, Budleigh Salterton, August 2006
- Sue Mackay, All-England Qualifier, Dyffryn, July 2006
- Philip Mann, Medway v Reigate Priory, Longman Cup, July 2006
- Roger Staples, Midweek Handicap, Tyneside, June 2006 (same game as Bronze)

- John Taylor, Class Singles, Southwick, August 2006
- Alan Truckel, Mary Robinson Challenge Shield, Rye, September 2006
- Andrew Webb, Over-50s Advanced, Pendle & Craven, July 2006

BRONZE (36)

- Anne Belcher, Handicap Weekend, Southport, May 2006
- Alwen Bowker, Handicap Weekend, Southport, May 2006
- David Boyd, Advanced Handicap Weekend, Surbiton, October 2006
- Rosemary Bradshaw, Handicap Weekend, Cheltenham, May 2006
- James Clancy, All-England Qualifier, Dyffryn, June 2006
- Marian Clancy, All-England Finals, Nailsea, September 2005
- Mary Coombs, Summer Tournament, Hunstanton, August 2006
- Alan Edwards, Mid-Summer Handicap, Woking, June 2006
- Jim Field, Handicap Weekend, Nailsea, May 2006
- Melanie Foster, Handicap Weekend, Southport, May 2006
- Terry Foster, Handicap Weekend, Southport, May 2006
- Mark Godfrey, Robin Hood Gold Cup, Nottingham, August 2005
- Nigel Grant, All-England Area Final, Bristol, September 2006
- Geoff Gunton, Longman Cup, Compton, May 2006
- Janet Guthrie, May Handicap, Bowdon, April 2006
- Mark Hamilton, Peels, Compton, May 2006
- Michael Haytack, Midweek 50+, East Dorset, September 2006
- Neil Kellett, Veterans, Southwick, June 2006
- Paul Kenworthy, All-England Finals, Nailsea, September 2006
- Stephen Lewendon, Class Singles, Southwick, August 2006
- Jean Liles, Handicap Weekend, Budleigh Salterton, May 2006
- Timothy Liles, Handicap Weekend, Budleigh Salterton, May 2006
- Sean Magee, Handicap Weekend, Cheltenham, May 2006
- Peter Miles, June Event, Parkstone, June 2006
- Richard Mills, August Tournament, Budleigh Salterton, August 2006
- Elaine Newman, September Tournament, Wrest Park, September 2006
- Elaine Norsworthy, Handicap Weekend, Budleigh Salterton, September 2006

- Nigel Parkins, 50+ Midweek Handicap, Colchester, August 2006
- Stan Salt, All-England Qualifier, Dyffryn, July 2006
- Linda Shaw, Weekend Tournament, Nailsea, August 2006
- Robin Smith, Easter Tournament, Cheltenham, April 2006
- Julian Stair, All-England Area Final, Compton, September 2006
- Roger Staples, Midweek Handicap, Tyneside, June 2006
- Andrew Willis, Autumn Salver, Bath, September 2006
- Adam Wimshurst, August Tournament, Budleigh Salterton, July 2006
- Gerald Wynn, Handicap Weekend, Cheltenham, May 2006

Bruce Rannie, Organiser, Awards Scheme

CROQUET AT BRIDESHEAD?

Report by Charles Waterfield

A charity tournament was held on what turned out to be the last day of the hot spell, 6th August, using fourteen short lawns in the splendid setting around the South Front fountains of Castle Howard in Yorkshire. Maybe it's less prestigious in the croquet world than say Hurlingham or Wrest Park, but this has to be even more magnificent. Where else would players be directed to lawns overlooked by grand statues of Apollo or Bacchus? Over a hundred supporters of The Brooke Hospital for Animals (worth visiting their website at www.thebrooke.org) paid good money to enter a Golf Croquet competition, devised, managed and refereed by members of Croquet North, Yorkshire, and East Midlands Federations. Six block-rounds (each pair playing three times), were followed in the afternoon by a knock-out competition for the best eight pairs. The leading team (pairs were members of various teams) received a case of champagne and both finalist pairs got boxed croquet sets donated by Jaques. The main sponsor was Skoda Cars and there was even a guest appearance by Desert Orchid. The event raised nearly £11,000 in a good cause!

Promotional material from the CA and local clubs was available throughout the day and informal or demonstration games took place on spare lawns in the afternoon, including Association



croquet. Many of those attending had obviously played some form of garden croquet, so GC rules gave few problems. Possibly, for these image-conscious times, there was rather a high proportion of landed gentry and their families, but games were keenly contested in the best tradition of social croquet, in a relaxed and good-natured atmosphere – no concerns here about handicap changes or ranking points! Unsurprisingly, there was no sign of the DPM or his team from Dorneywood!

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS CC, SHOWCASE CROQUET

Sport 2006 was an innovation, showcasing some 40 different sports in a single venue and sponsored by Sport England amongst others, to encourage participation in sports of any kind. Groombridge Place was the chosen location this weekend, with publicity attempting to attract people from over South East England. Since we are the closest club to Groombridge (a mere 5 miles) the Croquet Association had nominated us to participate. Groombridge Place is a lovely old medieval moated manor house, reconstructed in the 17th century, now trading on its location for the filming of *Pride and Prejudice*, where they managed to provide a flat enough lawn, albeit with some rabbit holes and somewhat lengthy grass, which we shared with the bowlers from The Grove Bowling Club. So given that Sport 2006 had forecast between 10,000 and 12,000 attendees we thought it worthwhile to put on a show, which was organised by Jon Diamond. A gazebo was purchased and, whilst the forecast was for showers, a pretty fine and sunny Saturday



ensued, but boy were we glad of the gazebo on Sunday! The event started slowly, but by the middle of Saturday there were 3 groups of players on the lawn simultaneously, with people queuing for a go! When we had a chance to pause for breath and look around the show it looked like we were about as busy as any other sport. We don't know how many people we introduced to Golf Croquet, but it must have been over 100, with an age range of 7-70. At times we had 12 people on the single lawn, with a queue! We expect some to come to Tunbridge Wells; but there was significant interest in others in the region from people as far away as Dulwich, Reigate, Gravesend, Canterbury, Brighton and Worthing. So hopefully we've contributed to membership at other clubs too. Our impression was that there were nowhere near the original 10-12,000 target, our best guess being probably 2,000-2,500. So the event may not happen again, but if it does we should certainly attend, and now we know what to expect! One definite message is to bring some short mallets for the children. Thanks are due to all the club members helping - Mick Belcham, Miriam Reader, Carolyn and Frank Gunstone, Pauline and Roger Morris, Stan Oxenbury and Jane and Selwyn Ward, together with two ex-members Barbara and Brian Kitching who now play at Southwick (Brian is also on the CA's Marketing Committee). It was hard work, but enjoyed by all.





Phil Cordingley, GB team manager.

The GB record

This was Great Britain's sixth successive victory in the MacRobertson Shield Championship, with the longest winning streak in the event's history. They now have an unbroken chain of 18 Test Match wins – last losing (to Australia) at Colchester in July 1986.

Since the introduction of the 21-match format (12 singles and 9 doubles), GB has never lost a single test match, with 15 wins in the Mac and 14 in the Solomon Trophy [GB vs USA].

Robert Fulford is one of only four players to represent their country six times (with David Openshaw [GB], Paul Skinley [NZ] and Bob Jackson [NZ]). Only John Prince (NZ) has bettered this, with nine appearances, though Fulford is the only one of these five to play always on the winning team.

This was the fifth successful outing for Chris Clarke and David Maugham, who have now won in excess of 50 matches for their country. Only Fulford and Prince have ever surpassed this.

Keith Aiton made one of the most successful debuts in the history of the Shield, winning 13 of his 15 matches. He was undefeated in his singles matches, and over the course of the whole event conceded only one game of singles (to Damon Bidencope).

Summary results

Great Britain

Keith Aiton; Mark Avery; Chris

Clarke; Robert Fulford (Captain); Jonathan Kirby; David Maugham

USA

Damon Bidencope (co-Captain); Bob Cherry; Danny Huneycutt; Rich Lamm; Jeff Soo; Jerry Stark (co-Captain)

Australia

Trevor Bassett; Martin Clarke (Captain); Ian Dumergue; Bruce Fleming; Stephen Forster; Harley Watts

New Zealand

Greg Bryant; Paddy Chapman; Shane Davis; Robert Lowe; Aaron Westerby; Brian Wislang

Great Britain v New Zealand (15-6)

USA v Australia (7-14)

Great Britain v USA (19-2)

New Zealand v Australia (10-11)

Great Britain v Australia (19-2)

USA v New Zealand (13-8)

Final results:

| | Tsts W | Tsts L | M'ches W | Mches L |
|---------------|--------|--------|----------|---------|
| Great Britain | 3 | 0 | 53 | 10 |
| Australia | 2 | 1 | 27 | 36 |
| USA | 1 | 2 | 22 | 41 |
| New Zealand | 0 | 3 | 24 | 29 |

Full results

Great Britain v New Zealand (15-6)

18-22 November 2006

Fulford / Clarke beat Chapman / Westerby +26tp(C), +19tp(C)

Aiton / Kirby lost to Bryant / Davis -10tp(D) -17

Avery / Maugham lost to Lowe / Wislang -2, +24tp(A) -10tp(W)

Fulford / Clarke beat Bryant / Davis +26tp(C) +26tp(C)

Aiton / Kirby beat Lowe / Wislang +15qp(A) +16tp(A)

Avery / Maugham beat Chapman / Westerby +17tp(M) +23tp(A)

Robert Fulford beat Paddy Chapman +26tp, +24tp

David Maugham lost to Aaron Westerby +17tp, -26tp, -6tpo

Chris Clarke beat Brian Wislang -26tp, +19tp, +17tp

Keith Aiton beat Greg Bryant +17tp, +26tp

Jonathan Kirby lost to Shane Davis -26tp, -26tp

Mark Avery beat Robert Lowe +23, +26

Fulford / Clarke beat Lowe / Wislang +26tp(F), +26tp(C)

Aiton / Kirby beat Chapman / Westerby -17, +7otp(W), +9tpo(A)

Avery / Maugham beat Bryant / Davis +26tp(A), +26tp(M)

Robert Fulford lost to Aaron Westerby -19tp, +9otp, -5tp

David Maugham beat Paddy Chapman +14otp, +10tpo

Chris Clarke beat Greg Bryant +10tp, +26tp

Keith Aiton beat Brian Wislang +26tp, +23tp

Jonathan Kirby lost to Robert Lowe -26tp, -26tp

Mark Avery beat Shane Davis -26tp, +26tp, +26tp

USA v Australia (7-14)

18-22 November 2006

Huneycutt / Cherry lost to Dumergue / Watts -23, -26

Soo / Lamm lost to Fleming / Clarke +17, -17tp(F), -12tp(F)

Stark / Bidencope beat Bassett / Forster +21tp(B), +17tp(S)

Jerry Stark lost to Martin Clarke -2, -26

Danny Huneycutt lost to Bruce Fleming -2, +8tp, -26tp

Damon Bidencope lost to Harley Watts +17, -26tp, -11tp

Jeff Soo beat Trevor Bassett +19tp, +17

Rich Lamm lost to Ian Dumergue -17tp, -26tp

Bob Cherry lost to Stephen Forster -14tp, -23

Huneycutt / Cherry lost to Fleming / Clarke +26, -24, -14

Soo / Lamm beat Bassett / Forster +8, +11

Stark / Bidencope lost to Dumergue / Watts +12, -17, -5tp(W)

Jerry Stark lost to Bruce Fleming -17tp, -11tp

Danny Huneycutt lost to Martin Clarke -4tp, +26tp, -26tp

Damon Bidencope beat Trevor Bassett +7, -20tp, +26tp

Jeff Soo beat Harley Watts +17, +26

Rich Lamm beat Stephen Forster +26tp, +5

Bob Cherry lost to Ian Dumergue +17tp, -26tp, -26tp

Huneycutt / Cherry lost to Bassett / Forster +17, -20, -26

Soo / Lamm beat Dumergue / Watts +10, +17tp(L)

Stark / Bidencope lost to Fleming / Clarke -25, -13tp(F)

Robert Fulford beat Jeff Soo -26tp, +26sxp, +26sxp

David Maugham beat Jerry Stark +17tp, +17tp

Chris Clarke beat Damon Bidencope +26tp, +22tp

Keith Aiton beat Danny Huneycutt +24tp, +25

Jonathan Kirby beat Bob Cherry +5, -13, +26tp

Mark Avery beat Rich Lamm +26tp, +26tp

Fulford / Clarke beat Stark / Bidencope

Continued on page 22

MacRobertson Shield 2006

Great Britain have successfully defended their title to win the MacRobertson Shield for the 13th time. The event was contested by GB, Australia, New Zealand and the USA, in a series of back-to-back test matches played in Australia between 18th November and 3rd December.

Summary Report by James Hawkins

The Venues

Plans to mount the series at Victoria's new purpose-built centre were changed early on, when it was realised that the lawns would not be laid in time for the event. Instead, the Championship took place at two clubs in the Melbourne area, Rich River and Shepparton.



Chris Clarke and Robert Fulford looking for the precision leave.

Shepparton has three lawns, and was the venue for several of the doubles matches. Meanwhile, singles matches were played on the six lawns of the Rich River Club. Rich River has four dedicated croquet lawns, with a bowling green providing a lightning-fast fifth lawn, and a sandy (and much slower) golf tee area the sixth.

Many of the locals were accustomed to the ubiquitous flies, and clothed themselves in head nets as they spectated. But the search for insect repellent proved an ongoing extra challenge for the players. With three five-day tests crammed into 16 days, this was a trial of endurance for all participants.

The Format

The Mac has been contested 19 times since 1925, its trophy presented to the game by Australian jam manufacturer Sir Macpherson Robertson. The event was played sporadically between any combination of Australia, New Zealand and England until 1963, since when all three nations have played in a round-robin format. England soon widened its selection criteria to



Gary Fox, President of the Australian Croquet Association, Presents Robert Fulford (GB Capt) with the MacRobertson Shield.

encompass the rest of Great Britain, and the USA was invited to participate in 1993.

Tests are played concurrently between the four countries, and the teams of six play a combination of singles and doubles matches (all matches are best-of-three games). Each test comprises nine doubles and twelve singles matches.

The Teams

Great Britain entered this year's event as firm favourites. Robert Fulford, Chris Clarke and David Maugham have featured in each of GB's previous four teams, and, on the strength of their rankings, they could be expected to surpass any other contenders. Mark Avery is the veteran of three Macs, and two highly ranked first-timers, Keith Aiton and Jonathan Kirby made up the six.

The November scheduling certainly proved something of an advantage for the Brits. Selections were made at the height of our season, allowing the pick of the best in-form players. The home side, on the other hand, had much less time to play themselves into form, particularly the serious out-of-condition Trevor Bassett. Some (minor) controversy beset the opening proceedings, with Australia's team sheet listing Bassett at Number One. The event demands players to be drawn in order of merit, by rankings and grading index. The US queried the order, the other two nations supported the challenge, and a couple of meetings resolved the issue with Trevor Bassett's position swapped with that of third-



David Maugham and Robert Fulford celebrate the end of the final match with Jonathan Kirby.



Keith Aiton, undefeated in Singles Play

placed Bruce Fleming. In the history of croquet, maybe this marks an inconsequential sequence of events, but it was this incident, rather than any achievement on the pitch which caught the interest of the British media, with passing comment made – between the dismal cricket reports – on BBC Radio Five Live.

One selection worthy of some note was that of the US co-captain, Damon Bidencepe, who became the first player to represent two countries in the Mac (he played for Australia in 1986). The US team has been bolstered greatly since their first outing in the event; Jerry Stark remains a constant fixture, as he has been in each of the last five series, but the current team brings with it more experience than previously. Even so, the World Rankings put them as extreme outsiders.

The First Test

GB made a slow start to the first day against New Zealand. Aiton and Maugham, both shaking off a cold, took until 6pm to lose to Robert Lowe and Brian Wislang. Plenty of waiting around, then, for Fulford and Clarke, who polished off their match +26tp, +19tp before morning coffee time. A two-nil loss for the other pair left the favourites fighting to catch up.

The Brits suffered no loss on Day 2, with three doubles wins. By the third day, Clarke, Aiton and Fulford looked in unbeatable form, and control was well and truly with GB. Match of the Day, though, was that between David Maugham and Aaron Westerby. They halved the first two games. David had a third turn ball round in the decider, and Aaron yet again hit the lift. Aaron took on the tpo and had two balls off. With Maugham heroic glory turn of 1993 on everyone's mind (a 12-hoop, two-ball break to win the match, test and series), Maugham approached 1 and set off on a two ball break, unfortunately getting cross-pegged after running 5. Aaron got going, but stuck in 2b. David proceeded, but again came to grief when he clanged a longish 2b. Westerby hit, finished, and brought the scores to GB 8 – NZ 4.

By 11am on the fourth day, GB had won two of their three doubles matches, the four NZ players between them managing only one croquet stroke in the four games. Jonathan Kirby was left to wrap the test up with some long hoop running, to leave the scores at GB 11 – NZ 4, with six singles matches to play.

The final day was something of a formality for the British. Even so, quality from both sides remained high. All 14 games of the day were won with triples. Four of the matches went the way of the title-holders, with a final score of 15 – 6 in the British favour.

The Second Test

While the nation's cricketers languished in Brisbane, the croquet news was rather better. Britain took a rather flattering 3-0 lead on Day 1 of the test against the United States after some struggling.

Rich River's freshly mown bowling green proved tricky for the players used to something slower. Not least to suffer from this was none other than Robert Fulford. He and Chris Clarke were pushed all the way by Lamm and Soo, and at one point in the second Robert sent his own ball off the lawn on consecutive croquet strokes. (When was the last time anyone saw that?) From a game down, the GB pair took the other two with some fine control from Clarke in the third game.

The following day started on a rather sombre note, as Chris Clarke informed the players that his mother had, not unexpectedly, passed away overnight. Under the circumstances Chris did well to maintain his concentration well enough to win his match against Damon Bidencepe in fifteen turns, Damon failing to take the brief chance he had in the second. Meanwhile, Jeff Soo achieved a fifth turn shut-out of Robert Fulford, to score +26tp and go one-nil up. Fulford's response was a couple of assured sextuples to take the match with no further croquet taken by his opponent.

Two hours after Chris Clarke and Mark Avery each finished their matches, Jonathan Kirby pegged out his first 3-hour-and-20-minute game against Bob Cherry. Game 2 was another marathon, with Jonathan failing to take croquet for the first 100 minutes. The decider was all over in a blink, as Kirby took a seventh turn victory, to leave GB with a 9-0 advantage.

All ran smoothly for Aiton and Kirby the next day, with a swift couple of triples. It was Clarke's peg-out which decided the test, with the match score at 11-0. Then Avery and Maugham took the third match of the day, to send the US home for the evening with little consolation.

With three days down, Chris Clarke dropped the Brits' first



Mark Avery completing another win for GB

match of the test, against Danny Huneycutt. Meanwhile, Fulford had two-sextuple win against Jerry Stark, despite Jerry's best efforts. Stark hit his 40-yarder in the first, and gave the hoop-one crosswire back to Robert. A tiny sliver of a ball was visible, which Robert hit to finish. The second game was Robert's, only after snatching back the innings from the American's third turn ball round to 4-back. He retained his form into the last day, knocking off another sextuple, and narrowly failing a sixth in the last doubles. Stark and Bidencepe took a final consolation against Aiton and Kirby to take the final score to 19 – 2 to GB.

The Third Test

At this stage in the series, and as might have been expected on ranking form, Great Britain and Australia had each beaten the USA and New Zealand. Now the two were finally to go head to head in the decider.

The initiative was well and truly with the Brits on the first morning, with all three doubles matches over and done with by noon. The following day, St Andrew's Day, proved fortunate for the Scottish pair of Aiton and Kirby, gifted with a win by Martin Clarke's accidental cross-wiring of himself when on the point of finishing. And Maugham and Avery were, if not exactly presented with a gift, at least given the unexpected opportunity of taking their match. Ian Dumergue and Harley Watts were for peg and peg against David, for 2 alone. Dumergue had the chance to peg out his own ball, and leave an almost unloseable position. Instead, he inexplicably put his two balls in corners three and four, with a lift due. Maugham played a roll approach to hoop 2 from the fourth corner, thrashed through the difficult hoop, made hoop 3,



David Maugham in play.



Chris Clarke on his way to completing another triple peel.

and finished from there with a laid break. GB were 6 – 0 up with the chance of clinching the title with two days to spare.

The British team entered the 13th day of the Championship resolving not to act complacently. Within two minutes of play, however, all six players had embarked on their first laid breaks to 4-back. With no points on the scoreboard for Australia for the first 40 minutes, it seemed that the GB victory was in the bag. Indeed, Britain had reached the 10 – 0 mark by 11am, with just Aiton and Kirby still to finish. It was fitting that Keith, in possibly the strongest debut performance the MacRobertson Shield has ever seen, was the one to clinch victory with his peg-out against Ian Dumergue. Jonathan followed soon after, leaving the scores at GB 12 – Australia 0.

With some pressure lifted from both sides, Australia salvaged a couple of matches over the next two days to avoid a total whitewash. Despite this, the final transpired to be a very one-sided affair, with the eventual scoreline of 19 - 2. Fulford brought out another two sextuples to bring his tally to six over the course of the 15 days, and David Maugham added one of his own to the team's total.

In the play-off for third place, the US faced New Zealand. Form deserted the Kiwis as the series progressed, and a strong performance in singles saw the Americans reach the winning post with a respectable 13 – 8 score. A surprise, perhaps, for many, as the US players fail to make much mark on the World Rankings. The scarcity of top-class events in the States surely accounts for some of this, and the team clearly relishes the opportunity to prove itself on the international stage.

As for the victors, the results speak for themselves. Great Britain arrived in Australia as firm favourites, and romped home with their defence of the title, in the most convincing display of the MacRobertson Shield's history. Congratulations to them, and to Phil Cordingley, team manager and organiser, for their record-breaking campaign.