

THE CROQUET GAZETTE

ISSUE 311

DECEMBER 2007



The Croquet Association Manager

The Croquet Association is restructuring its administrative and commercial operations and will appoint a manager to lead the change.

The CA Manager will play a key role in the Association's ongoing success and will help to shape its development by bringing in-house many of its activities including the CA shop, some accounting functions and the fixtures book; recruiting additional staff as necessary.

Located in Cheltenham, this appointment is based on a flexible four-day week (28 hours). Salary by negotiation.

The Role:

- Supervise or perform the day-to-day work of the CA office.
- Maintain and improve the Association's administrative systems.
- Integrate and supervise the commercial activities of the Association.
- Manage the office and its staff.

The Person:

- Proven relevant experience and a proactive approach to problem solving.
- A high level of computer literacy including a good working knowledge of Microsoft Outlook, Word, Excel, database concepts, use of a web browser, internet search engines, and basic PC housekeeping.
- Experience in Sales & Marketing, electronic bookkeeping (ideally Sage) and education to degree level would be an advantage.
- Good verbal, written and interpersonal skills, ability to work to tight deadlines under limited supervision and a good eye for detail.

Interested candidates should forward a covering letter and CV by **4th January 2008** detailing their suitability for the role by email or post to: Jonathan Isaacs, Meers Farm, The Hollow, West Chiltonington RH20 2QA jonathansaacs@btinternet.com

The Croquet Association Honorary Secretary

A key aspect of restructuring the Croquet Association's operations will be the appointment of an Honorary Secretary to assist the Chairman and committees in conducting the CA's business.

The post will be honorary but the person will receive a modest honorarium. The appointee will be a full member of the CA's major committees and will thus have considerable responsibility and standing.

The Role:

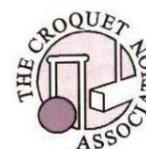
- Supported as necessary by CA Office staff, the Honorary Secretary will
- Service Association, Council, Management and Executive meetings, including calling meetings, recording proceedings, publishing reports, arranging elections and maintaining the CA's procedures and rules;
 - Take the lead in ensuring that the CA maintains the highest standards of corporate behaviour, particularly in relation to its employees and members.

The Person:

- An innovative and proactive team worker who has proven management experience in a complex organisation.
- Good verbal, written and interpersonal skills with the ability to co-ordinate work to tight deadlines and to a high standard.
- Education to degree level or equivalent, with competency in computer literacy including a working knowledge of email and Microsoft Word and Excel.

Interested candidates should forward a covering letter and CV by **4th January 2008** detailing their suitability for the role by email or post to: Jonathan Isaacs, Meers Farm, The Hollow, West Chiltonington RH20 2QA jonathansaacs@btinternet.com

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Chairman's Column

With the main croquet season now past, officers of both the Croquet Association and its member clubs devote a considerable amount of time in developing and implementing plans for the future.

Those of you who attended our recent AGM will be aware that a decision has been taken to restructure a number of the paid positions within the CA. This has been brought about by a number of factors not least the necessity for our Association to make better use of modern technology. This factor, together with the fact that a number of people will be retiring from posts during the next two years, has stimulated a fundamental review of procedures. This review was completed and presented to Council in October.

The recommendations of the report were agreed in principle by the CA Council. During this winter we are going to implement phase one which will be the appointments of a Croquet Association Manager and an Honorary Secretary. These two posts are advertised in this edition of the Gazette and are also on the CA website. I would urge any of our members who feel suitably qualified to apply for the posts.

We are intending to fill these posts during the spring of 2008. Once this has been

'Whilst a number of initiatives are started by the CA, many are started at club level'

achieved the next tasks will be to consider how we integrate the CA shop, the publication of the Fixtures Calendar along with the modernisation of our administration procedures in the CA office.

The development of our Juniors is one of our major priorities and with this in mind we have formed a cross-committee working group, chaired by our Vice Chairman to take our plans forward.

Whilst a number of initiatives are started by the CA, many are started at club level. One such example is being launched by Sussex County Croquet Club (Southwick) who are launching what we believe is England's first "Croquet Academy".

Southwick is one of the World's largest clubs based on numbers of lawns. During the last eight years the CA and the club have invested considerable monies to upgrade the lawns and make it a true centre of excellence for our sport. The Club needs to increase its revenue to ensure that they can continue to improve the facilities and, with this in mind, decided that they wanted to further develop one of their major strengths - Coaching.

The Academy is being launched for the 2008 season and will host a comprehensive range of courses covering both Association & Golf Croquet.

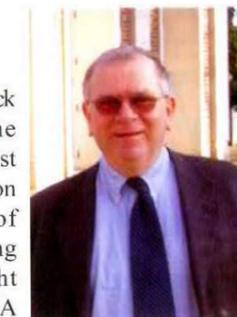
'Sussex County CC are launching England's first Croquet Academy'

Full details of their plans will be the subject of a forthcoming article in the Gazette. Details of courses will be published in the Fixtures Calendar & on a planned Croquet Academy website.

The cost of hosting major National & International events is high and the CA is continually looking for sponsorship to help defray the cost. Many of our sponsorship initiatives have been created at club level. I would ask all our members to use their contacts to identify potential new sponsors. Any positive leads should be fed through the CA office to our Marketing Committee.

Finally may I take this opportunity to wish you all a very enjoyable festive season and good fortune in 2008.

Jonathan Isaacs



Editorial

Well it's December and I know that you all really want to hibernate or maybe celebrate, excessively on some counts no doubt. I have made my New Year resolution early, in anticipation of the event and for the coming year it's going to be 'out of the comfort zone' - or in other words stop doing the same old things, in the same old way. Yes routine is good for us, up to a point, but I think every now and again doing new things or challenging how we do things is equally good for us. I haven't played seriously for a few seasons now, but I think its time to get back to the game, I miss the challenge and the frustrations and it will be good to return to playing with an open mind and play just for the sheer fun of it.

The next issue of the Gazette will be having a bit of a facelift too, something of re-design. The use of full colour has been successful and I think it adds a dimension that was previously lacking, so lets keep it moving in the right direction. I have one or two ideas I would like to try, but I could do with some help from someone with a computer and email, if you have a few hours to spare drop me a line or give a call.

In the previous issue Jonathan Isaacs, the Chairman, asked 'do whites have to be sacrosanct'? I suspect apathy rules on this, I have one letter in support of keeping them. My own view is that they impractical in our climate, feed the idea of us being elitist, and why do we need to have a uniform and be controlled? Croquet is a very individual game, why can't we wear what we want and expand on that, sure we need to have flat soled shoes to protect the courts, but what would be the harm in anyone playing in the clothes they feel most at ease in? If we want to encourage young people to play why not allow them to play in jeans? Who's to say we couldn't look for sponsorship from 'Levis'? Wouldn't that be 'trendier' than the likes of Persil or Ariel?

Gail Curry
Editor

Letters

In reply

I would like to respond to the letters in the previous issue of the Gazette, 310.

I like the idea of playing alternate stroke doubles, as Paul Castell wrote, especially when partners have very different handicaps. However step 2 suggests that the player who played the last shot of a turn plays the first shot of the next turn. The last shot of a turn could have been a missed roquet, if this player is not so good at hitting in, he could be playing shot after shot ad infinitum, maybe we should just stick to the alternate stroke play.

Ref Colin Hadley's letter, what he has discovered is parallax! You will find that using the left arm to point to the target causes the left eye to be the master. Similarly the right eye becomes the master when pointing with the right arm.

What with some of the letters, it's not difficult to understand why croquet players are regarded as strange by normal people.

Brian James

One ball, a practical solution

Michael Haslam brings up so many points in his letter in issue 310, that it is impossible to know where to begin.

I was left waiting for an appeal to resurrect wire hoops, wooden mallets, wooden balls and pegs on the west and east boundaries, to say nothing of subscriptions in guineas!

But let's just comment on 'One Ball' Sometimes games finish earlier than anticipated with perhaps half an hour to spare. Ideal for a 'quicky' One Ball.

Sometimes, as very often at Northampton where play continues throughout the winter months, it is simply too cold to play a three hour game or to sit down waiting for your turn and a 'quicky' One Ball, where play is fairly fast and you're on the lawn throughout, is desirable.

One last point: there are newer players who can't yet master the complexities of a four ball break or of planning three hoops ahead but who can benefit from hitting in, taking croquet, making an approach, running a hoop, hitting a long shot to the next hoop.

Owen Bryce

Whites - Sacrosanct

Following Jonathan Isaacs question in the Gazette about 'trendier' clothing for tournaments, I did a straw poll among a dozen of our Golf Croquet players. The unanimous decision was that 'whites' should definitely be kept, for tournaments if not for casual occasions. My own view is that the fact that other sports are adopting a more colourful approach is a very good reason for croquet to stay with white - it makes us distinctive.

As to recruiting younger players, I guess the problem lies partly with other calls on their time - studying, part-time jobs, socialising - and partly lack of publicity for the game. People, especially young people, can't be expected to take an interest in a sport they know little about and rarely see. Perhaps CA members with time and inclination should consider approaching local schools and offering demonstrations.

Mary Smith

Short croquet, is there any?

I joined the CA though the encouragement of my club, Southport, only last year so this year was my first chance to enter any tournaments. I am only a new player and was hoping to enter some short croquet tournaments to improve my play before I moved on to association, but was disappointed to find that there were no short croquet tournaments held anywhere in the country. I find all the other disciplines are there, advance, handicap, golf. This to me does not encourage people to advance from golf croquet to association croquet. I have asked my club to enter tournaments only to be told that it as been tried and there was not enough interest. I cannot see how you can encourage new players to join the CA when you have no tournaments for them to enter. Even the handicap tournaments are mostly low handicap. So I am asking you if there is a possibility to have any short croquet tournaments in next year's fixtures.

Eileen Gallagher

There are some federations that run events which do include short croquet, if anyone wishes to pass the details of those events to me for publication, then anyone like Eileen can get involved. Ed.

Pure whimsy

In October the Lawns Advisory Group ran a course on lawn management. That reminded me about sprigs.

Those of you, like me, who can't bear to dispose of old Gazettes, can turn up the

article from the USA in Issue 269 - September 2000 - which describes the (then) new National Croquet Centre in Florida. Read again that "the lawns - complete with an elaborate irrigation system - were prepared for double-sprigging". How does one double sprig, or even single sprig? What is a sprig?

In November 2001 we were on holiday in Florida and decided to pop in for a visit to the new centre, not then with the superb club house lavishly fitted out as it is today. We were met and made welcome by Bob Alman, Director of Marketing, and Archie Peck, Director of Croquet.

My home club at Southwick has a considerable financial commitment in maintaining its eleven lawns so I was interested to know how their new lawns were laid. Did you seed or use turf, I asked. Neither, I was told, too expensive, we sprigged.

Sprigs are wiry strands of a particular grass, similar to those we try hard to remove



One of the sprigs that was missed by the first cut

from our garden lawns. These are chosen for use in Florida, perhaps because of its hot and moist climate, and they are cheap. Perhaps our grass varieties won't grow there anyway.

Lorry loads of what we would describe as "thatch" were purchased for the new NCCC, spread on a prepared surface, kept watered and left to root. Presumably this was done twice to make sure of a good result. A photograph of a sprig which missed its first cut shown below.

A croquet friend of mine at Southwick has a daughter living in Florida and he recalls her buying turfs of this type of sprig grass, with its trailing edges ready to spread and bind with the adjoining turf, so it's in

common use out there.

Could we do this here, with our climate? I doubt it, and I am not sure we would want to. We tend to be old fashioned when it comes to grass, or are we?

Brian Kitching

Alternate stroke yes, alternate rules, no.

I read Paul Castell's letter in Gazette 310 with interest, but would counsel strongly against his change of Rule Proposal 2 ("Whoever played the last shot on the previous turn plays the first shot of the next turn (to avoid unnecessary debate).") This cannot be regarded as satisfactory for "Alternate" stroke, for several reasons. One, it will not avoid unnecessary debate, as if you cannot remember who played the last stroke, you cannot work out whether it is one person or the other to play regardless of the Rule. Two, if the previous player had one stroke - a missed roquet - then that player would have the next turn's first stroke - another missed roquet - and the next turn's first stroke - another missed roquet - until the opponents have scored their 26. Three, it actually changes the tempo, as the croquet-stroke player will not alternate as frequently at the beginning of one turn compared to another. Alternate Stroke Doubles is already an official variant, at least for handicap play, in Appendix 4 - so the principles are established, even if the game is Alternate Stroke Advanced.

Bruce Rannie

Is this yours?

Every club having open tournaments must suffer as we do at Southwick from the problem of lost property.

All sorts of things get left behind: odd socks, towels, pairs of glasses, trousers, sweaters, various types of head gear, and much else. Even a ladies vanity case - how can anyone forget that? Or, recently, a white Nike cap sporting a silver aeroplane pin - is this yours?

We have decided that enough is enough. As items are found they will be labeled with the current date and then disposed after a period of three months. Posters to that effect have been placed in the changing rooms. Of course we will always try to identify ownership, but how many of us write our name on our kit? If we are able to find an owner the item will be returned at his or her expense.

Brian Kitching

Secretary, Sussex County Croquet Club

Whatever happened to Nod Grunt?

One of the enduring legends of croquet is that of the infamous Nod Grunt. No-one knew where he came from or where he went, although most people hoped he would stay there. He could be classed as one of the all-time croquet greats - he certainly grated on most of us. As one of the few people who knew him well and is still alive, or at least still with the will to live, I feel that a review of his career is in order.

Nod always claimed to be a famous poet. I fact he used to sign his work as "Poet Laminate 1876". This seems unlikely as this would have put him as well over 100, although looking at him, one wondered.....

Other aspects of his life are also of dubious provenance such as being the love-child of Aunt Emma, holder of the Felixstowe two-ball, winner of the Rutland opens for 6 years and the husband of Dorothy Rush.

Decency and the laws of libel prohibit me from repeating most of his poetry here, but this fragment does give an example of his standard and explains why William McGonagle was inspired to write "The Tay Bridge disaster".

Croquet in the Rain

The rain came down and it was in great sheets

The players were walking around with very wet feets

The grass was all soggy with puddles everywhere

But one bold player the weather did dare

He seized his mallet and with a mighty swing

Struck the ball and made the welkin ring

It bounced a few times and missed all the hoops then it hit the peg, just on the rim

And Nod Grunt was the winner, all hail to him

Does this not stir your heart? Or at least one of your internal organs?

Despite all of this, Nod really became a household name (sink plunger was the one most commonly used) in the 1980s when a scurrilous magazine called "Taking the Bisque" appeared. To those of you too young to remember, this was a sort of croquet



The only known picture of Nod, taken at Southport, by P.C. 2426

“Private Eye” It is not clear who published this. There have been rumours that our illustrious Gazette editor was involved but I find this hard to credit. Be that as it may, Nod was in his element, searching out scandal and fearlessly reporting all that he discovered (or made up, as some would have it). He also found an ideal platform for his poetry, which may account for the magazine’s demise a few years later.

After this Nod went into a decline. He did have a short foray onto the Nottingham

board and gained the Olson Award for interesting content but it wasn’t really his scene.

Finally, after having been barred from every club in the world, Nod disappeared from view.

I had high hopes of tracking him down via the Internet, especially when Google gave over 100 hits for “Nod Grunt”. Unfortunately most of these were simply the conjunction of nod and grunt as a means of communication. Whilst this seemed most apposite regarding his attitude when playing, it got me no further. Nor did the fact that a Nod grunt is a basic foot soldier in a computer game. I tried using his name in conjunction with croquet but this yielded nothing. An attempt to link his name with some of the epithets used about him only resulted in an email from Google to say that although they were broad-minded, that sort of language would not be tolerated.

It seemed that all was lost until recently while searching through a landfill site in pursuit of my hobby (which need not concern us here) I came across a torn scrap of paper with the following writing on it.

Ode to Emma, my dear mo
Who taught me almost every
Little Jack Horner, hid in a corner
Keeping opponent away
He pulled out a bisque without any risque
And drove us all mad every day

nt, Poet L
rough Cro
ber 2000

Could Nod still live? Perhaps we will never know

Please excuse this being in crayon, but they won’t let me have anything sharp.
(There is a signature, Gail, but unfortunately it is illegible)

Don Gaunt

Well for what it’s worth I hope Nod is still out there, maybe getting ready to stage a comeback.
Ed.

Start the season off with a holiday and some coaching.

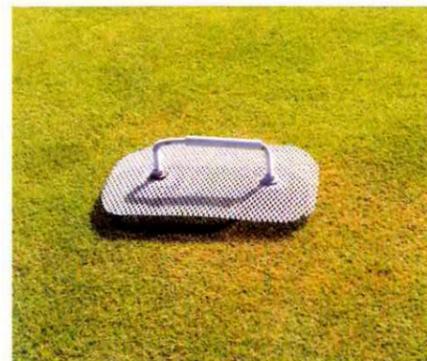
I have been approached by a few people asking about the possibility of playing or having some coaching outside our normal summer season in a warmer climate. If there is sufficient interest in organising something in April 2008 then we will do that. Possible venues would be Greece, Spain or Egypt. If you might be interested please contact Keith Aiton in the

first instance by email at kmhaiton@msn.com or phone 01400 282841

David Openshaw, President WCF

Protecting hoop holes

Earlier this season Middlesbrough club moved to two splendid bowls lawns in Albert Park. At our previous base we’d put up with the usual attentions of crows in late summer and autumn, digging around hoop holes in search of leather-jackets. However our new parkland setting obviously has a thriving wildlife population, as there is also evidence



of occasional damage by a resident fox, in addition to pecking crows! We understand that at Surbiton (and possibly other clubs) hoop-holes are protected when lawns are not in use with pieces of coarse steel mesh. We have adapted this idea and made two sets of inconspicuous lightweight ‘covers’ which locate in the hoop-holes (as shown in the photo) and can easily be removed by groundsmen. At least now the predators’ attention has moved away from critical



regions of the lawns.
Charles Waterfield

THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at The Hurlingham Club on Saturday 13th October 2007.

Present: Prof. Bernard Neal (President), Jonathan Isaacs (Chairman of Council), Dr Roger Bray (Treasurer) and Klim Seabright (Secretary).

56 Associates were in attendance.

Professor Neal took the chair and welcomed all to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance.

1. Apologies for Absence.

The President reported that, but for his recent illness, John Solomon, the Past-President, would be attending his 50th AGM without a break. The meeting therefore decided to “deem” John to be present!

There were 20 apologies for absence.

2. Minutes of the previous Meeting held on Saturday 14th October 2006.

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on the 14th October 2006 were signed as a true record of the meeting.

3. Chairman’s Report

The Chairman presented the following report to the meeting and then invited questions:

Ladies & Gentlemen,

My first year in office started on a very positive note with the GB team winning the 2006 MacRobertson Shield in comprehensive style. Many tributes have been passed to them and it was gratifying to see that not only were representatives invited to attend the BBC Sports Personality of the Year but the whole of the winning team were invited to attend this year’s Wimbledon including a period in the Royal Box.

Our thoughts have now focused on 2010 when we need to maintain our position as the leading Association Croquet nation in the world. With this in mind we are putting in place initiatives to develop the next generation of top class players.

A working party consisting of CA Council Members put forward a series of recommendations to Council as to how we can best develop both Association & Golf Croquet in our domain. As a result of their recommendations the responsibility for Golf Croquet has been partially integrated in the existing CA committee structure rather than being considered by a separate committee. Tournaments will continue to be run by separate committees but closer liaison will be implemented in an attempt to reduce the number of clashes in the fixtures calendar.

Golf Croquet is continuing to grow as has been shown in the latest survey. Association Croquet is steady with some clubs developing this variant with notable success. The Development Committee are now setting out on the task of identifying good practices in the development of both games and plan to communicate these to member clubs in the hope that we can all learn from each other’s successes.

We are working at increasing the profile of Garden Croquet. The CA web site now features Garden Croquet on its home page

and we have published the rules of Garden Croquet. The National Garden Croquet Classic has been run for the second year and I personally had the privilege of managing the regional final at Southwick. I was very impressed with the standard of play and very gratified to see a number of younger players gaining immense enjoyment from the game. With well over 250,000 garden croquet sets scattered around the country this offers us an immense opportunity to get more people playing at club level.

Earlier this year we supported the first Junior International Golf Team competition where a team of CA juniors competed against an Irish CA junior squad. Congratulations must go to our team on an excellent victory. However the most important point is that the event actually happened and will hopefully be the start of some serious junior development on the Home & International circuit.

Whilst I’m on this subject an exciting new concept in Golf Croquet is being actively considered by the Golf Croquet Tournament Committee. Called 10-10 Golf Croquet, it will appeal to clubs of all sizes over the country, but most important should attract younger players. More details of the concept will emerge over the coming months. WATCH THIS SPACE!

During the past season I have visited a number of clubs who have been the recipient of CA grants. It was gratifying to see that the monies had been put to good effect and improved the facilities at the clubs in question. One club that I visited was Pendle. This club was forced to move to a new location. The cost of setting up a new 5 lawn club complete with a club house and all the other facilities required is not insignificant. The late John Beech together with a very active team managed to raise the funds required and it was very gratifying to witness the fruits of their labours with what is proving to be an excellent facility.

Our thanks must go to John Beech for all his efforts not only at Pendle but on Council where he was a very active member. John left the Association a generous bequest and on behalf of the CA, I am writing to his wife to express our appreciation.

Our Golf Croquet Laws Committee has worked with the WCF Golf Croquet Rules Committee during the last two years to produce the new edition of the WCF Golf Croquet Rules which was published earlier this year. The necessary internal procedure to adopt these rules for use within the Domain will proceed during the winter months and the necessary comparison documents for our referees and copies of the new rules will be printed in time for our 2008 season.

The changes in the new WCF Rules do very little to change the way in which the game of Golf Croquet is played except for the wrong ball law where the rather draconian penalties for playing the wrong ball have been removed. The changes in wording are designed to assist the player in a better understanding of the intent of the rules. An opportunity has been taken to remove all the unnecessary references to the duties of a referee in charge as this form of refereeing is extremely unusual outside world championships and Egypt.

Our Laws Committee believe the new wording is a considerable improvement on the previous text but all CA members will have a chance to comment on the new wording prior to its adoption at the January 2008 Council meeting. The proposed text will be published on the CA web site during November 2007.

Some minor changes to Association Croquet Laws are currently being considered by the International Laws Committee of the WCF.

M C Percival Mallets

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



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

Contact Michael Percival, The Laurels, Heath Road, Hesselton, Suffolk IP30 9BJ
Telephone 01359 270 200 M o b i l e 07780677943
Email: michael@croquetmallets.co.uk
Web: www.croquetmallets.co.uk

We cannot understate the amount of effort and time that is put into our sport by volunteers at all levels of the game. The Croquet Association is very dependant on these people who give an exceptional amount of time to enable the Association to develop. For this I am sure you would join me in thanking these unsung heroes for all they have done and are continuing to do to help Croquet to flourish in our domain. However I have a concern which I believe needs prompt attention – Some of the key roles in the Association are carried out by volunteers without back up. In business it is common when looking at succession planning to ask the question “Who will do your job if you are unable to continue your role tomorrow?”. We are vulnerable in a number of areas. As such your Executive Committee has developed a report where we are suggesting a structural change to the paid posts within the CA.

This will be debated at Council after lunch today with a view to implementing an improved system over the next 2 years. We are not proposing the construction of an enormous empire but are hoping to develop a system where there is more than one person who can carry out the key functions of the Association and a system of development for the future is put in place.

I anticipate that with Council’s blessing these changes will evolve over the remainder of this decade.

At a recent AGM the question of Charitable Status was discussed in relation to a new Charities Act that was due to be enacted in November 2006. Thanks to one of our member’s efforts a wording change was implemented where the word “exertion” was replaced by “exercise”. This important change could well mean that the CA could qualify for Charitable Status if it so desired.

A working group was appointed to determine whether it will be in our interests to change. We held our first meeting earlier this year and will need to discuss the situation further now that the Charities Commission definitive guidelines have just been published. (CC21)

Finally I would like to thank our President, my Vice Chairperson, the Treasurer and all our committees together with the Secretary and his Assistant for the excellent support I have had during the last year.

4. Accounts for the Year to December 2006 and Treasurer’s Report

4.1 The Treasurer presented the Accounts for the Year to December 2006 and gave a brief report.

4.2 The Treasurer highlighted the contribution which the CA’s commercial activities had made to the financial wellbeing of the CA. He congratulated David Collins and Jeff Dawson for their efforts in this respect. This contribution now amounted to about 18% of total revenue. He stated that it was interesting to note that sales to non-members accounted for about 80% of total sales. The Treasurer also stated that the CA owed a debt of gratitude to Jonathan Isaacs and Quiller Barrett for their pro-active promotion of the CA commercial activities.

4.3 The Treasurer noted that there was a slight decrease in applications for grants, awards and loans. It was particularly pleasing to note however that, due to the success of commercial activity, the expenditure, loans and awards could easily be perceived to be funded from external sources.

4.4 The Treasurer reported that current year income from club subscriptions showed an increase, whilst individual subscriptions remained static.

4.5 The Treasurer reported that there would be no requirement to increase subscriptions in the following year.

4.6 The President congratulated the Secretary on his effort to reduce the cost of Civil Liability Insurance by such a significant amount.

4.7 It was proposed by Eileen Magee and seconded by Dave Kibble that the accounts be accepted (nem.con.)

5. Election of Treasurer.

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

6. Election of Reporting Accountant.

The Treasurer expressed his appreciation of the work of Marian Hemsted during the previous year. Marian Hemsted was re-elected, by “acclamation”, after being proposed by Patricia Duke-Cox and seconded by Richard Hoskyns.

A vote of thanks to Marian Hemsted, was passed by “acclamation”.

7. Election of Vice Presidents

The Secretary announced that the result of the postal ballot, when added to the vote at the AGM, was overwhelmingly in favour of Andrew Hope and Colin Irwin becoming Vice-Presidents of the CA. Votes cast were, for Colin Irwin 261 (there were two votes cast against); and 249 votes in favour of Andrew Hope (there were six votes cast against). These figures include votes by member clubs.

The President congratulated Andrew and Colin on their election.

8. Election of Council Members

There being no other nominations, Jonathan Isaacs, David Openshaw, Ian Parkinson, Alan Pidcock and Ian Vincent were therefore re-elected to Council.

9. Proposed amendments to the Rules of the Croquet Association.

9.1. The Council of the Croquet Association propose that the Rules be changed to allow the option of electronic, in addition to the existing postal voting, for the election of members of Council and on motions put to general meetings.

In favour of the motion – 250 (including member clubs)
Against the motion – 11

The motion was therefore carried

9.2 The Council of the Croquet Association propose that Overseas members of the Association shall receive notice of

meetings electronically and be able to vote for the election of members of Council and on motions put to general meetings.

In favour of the motion – 235 (including member club votes)
Against the motion - 15
Abstentions - 1
The motion was therefore carried

9.3 The Council of the Croquet Association propose that the “Rules of The Croquet Association” be changed to “The Constitution of the Croquet Association”

In favour of the motion – 233 (including member club votes)
Against the motion - 7
The motion was therefore carried.

10. Benefactors’ Book.

The Secretary read out the names of the benefactors.

11. Presentations of the Apps and Steel Memorial Bowls.

11.1 The Apps Memorial Bowl was presented to Richard Dickson.

11.2 The Steel Memorial Bowl was presented to Alwen Bowker



Alwen Bowker and Richard Dickson winners of the most improved player awards, with CA President, Prof. Bernard Neal.

12. Presentations of Croquet Association Diplomas

The President presented CA Diplomas to:

Roger Morris, Richard Clarke, Gerry Eccles, Ken Mason and Patrick Alden and Diplomas were awarded to Sheila Watts, Hamish Hall, John Hobbs and Peter Stone, and will be presented at their clubs.

The citations will appear in the Gazette and on the CA Website

13. Presentation of the Council Medal to David Magee.
The President presented the Council Medal to David Magee.

14. Presentation of Lifetime Coaching Award to Don Mears.

The President presented the Lifetime Coaching award to Don Mears.



David Magee, being presented with the Council Medal, by President, Prof. Bernard Neal. The medal is awarded for outstanding contribution to the CA.

15. Presentation of the Coach of the Year Award to Jenet Blake.

The President presented the Coach of the Year Award to Jenet Blake.

16. Any Other Business

16.1 Concern was expressed about the future of croquet and information was sought about the current and possible future provision of all-weather facilities. Patricia Duke-Cox summarised the present CA provision and undertook to pass the matter to the appropriate committees for consideration.

16.2 The Secretary reported that there had been no claims against the civil liability insurance during the previous three years.

16.3 Presentation of Club Awards:

The Townsend Award for 2006 was awarded to Cornwall Croquet Club and will be presented at the Federation AGM.

The Apps Heley Award for 2006 is shared by Leven and Crake Valleys Croquet Club and Royal Tunbridge Wells Croquet Club.

The President presented the cup and inscribed plaque to Jon Diamond, representing the Royal Tunbridge Wells Club. Council member Charles Waterfield had presented Crake Valley with their inscribed plaque earlier in the year.

The Millennium award was not awarded for 2006

17. President’s Closing Address.

It gives me great pleasure to refer to the outstanding success of our MacRobertson Shield team in Australia at the end of last year. They beat New Zealand by 15 matches to 6, the USA by 19-2 and Australia by the same margin to become the holders for the sixth successive time.

The All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club invited them, together with the Manager and two constant supporters, to The Championships on the Ladies’ final day. They enjoyed excellent

hospitality, the bonus of seeing Federer in a rain delayed semi-final, and finished the day by witnessing Jamie Murray's victory in the mixed doubles final from seats in the Royal Box. A fitting reward.

I am also delighted to record that Andrew Hope and Nigel Aspinall were elected to the World Croquet Federation's Hall of Fame this year. The WCF founded the Hall of Fame in 2006 and only five new members are selected each year.

Andrew's selection recognises his work in the founding of the WCF, as I explained in the Gazette recently (issue No.304), while Nigel was chosen because of his pre-eminence in the game over nearly twenty years.

I would like to finish by thanking Council members for all their work this year. The Association is so fortunate to have such dedicated volunteers, led by a Chairman with energy and vision.

There being no further business the AGM closed at 12.15

CA DIPLOMA NOMINATIONS FOR 2007

CA Diplomas recognise those club members who have been active in club affairs over a long period. The Diplomas have nothing to do with croquet prowess and everything to do with help given to other members.

If your club would like to make a nomination for next year it must be approved by the club committee and accompanied by a citation of not more than ten lines. Applications should be signed by a club official on behalf of the committee and sent to the CA Secretary before 1st August.

Sheila Watts – Tyneside Croquet Club

Shelia has been an active member of the Tyneside Club since 1991. She has developed into a formidable player, representing the club in CA competitions and league matches. Her greatest asset to the club however has been her involvement in the Administration activities, where she had been a long serving member of the Management Committee and was for a time Club Secretary. More recently she has undertaken responsibility for the organisation of the club catering, producing lunches and teas for home matches and organising the very successful Annual Club Dinner.



Roger Morris – Tunbridge Wells Croquet Club

Since September 2004 Roger had spearheaded the project to completely upgrade the Club's facilities. This included the replacement of the existing 3 lawns; installation of the irrigation system; purchase of the necessary lawn maintenance equipment, building of the Equipment Store; upgrading of the clubhouse façade and the conversion of the neighbouring Bowls Club lawn for croquet use. All this work was completed over a 12 month period. The work was completed on time, within budget and to a standard well above expectations. His commitment had been "awesome".



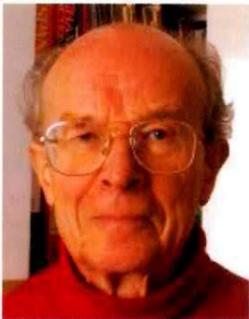
Roger Morris & Richard Clarke with CA President Prof. Bernard Neal, having been presented with their CA Diplomas.

Richard Clarke - Tunbridge Croquet Club

Richard took over as the Chairman of the Club two years ago. He has been able to mastermind the sourcing of all the required funding (£42,000). He has ensured that, during a time of great change, the Club has not been diverted from its main aim to become more than simply a traditional private members club. He has been commended for his work by the local Civic Society, which considers that he has enabled the Club to make a significant contribution to preserving and enhancing Calverley Gardens; and providing enhanced leisure facilities for the community.

John Hobbs – Tunbridge Wells Croquet Club

Most veteran croquet players know John as the master mallet maker and the "giant killer" of croquet. Members of his club would add that he was also the force behind the founding of their club in 1984. His dedication and professionalism has guided the club through its initial years. He can also be described as a committed worker/beaver during the major year of club development. He has spent many hours using a full range of construction skills. In addition he continues to make a major contribution to coaching, managing, chairing, refereeing, handicapping and captaining.



Hamish Hall – Bristol Croquet Club

Hamish joined the Bristol Croquet Club in 1986 and is still remembered by Dr. Gugan, as the most promising beginner he ever coached. Hamish soon joined the committee and was elected Chairman in 1990, 1991 and 1992. Since then, except for a break of 3 years



during which time he chaired the CA's Development Committee, he has been on the committee every year notably combining the demanding roles of Ground's Secretary and Treasurer for three years. Hamish is always there when needed, either doing the work, coaching, organising, encouraging volunteers or dispensing advice of sterling quality and superior audibility!

Gerry Eccles – Cheltenham Croquet Club

Gerry has, during his long membership of the Cheltenham Croquet Club, been active in many aspects of club life. Gerry joined the Club Committee in 1990 and, in his quiet undemonstrative way, immediately set about making himself extremely useful. Throughout his years of service to the Club, he continually sought out those often tedious, sometimes unattractive jobs that need doing in any organisation. These are the tasks that are rarely life threatening and never reach the forefront of most people's attention but tasks that make the difference between a smooth flowing organisation and one that creaks and groans. Gerry has never sought to advertise his contribution and will probably be embarrassed by the citation but it is an undoubted truism that every Club should have an Eccles.



Peter Stone - Cheltenham Croquet Club

Peter is a quiet but major contributor to the standing of the Cheltenham Club. A relatively recent convert to the game, he has nevertheless found time to look outside his efforts to improve his own game, to areas where he might make a more total contribution to his new sport. Soon after joining the Club he started to take a keen interest in the state of our playing surfaces and he now devotes a considerable amount of his time and effort to improving their quality. He has also applied his practical skills and technical knowledge to the design and making of many labour-saving devices that have greatly improved the presentation of our courts throughout our busy tournament schedule. His input before and during the 2005 World Championships would merit a medal on its

The John Hobbs Mallet

The mallet that adjusts to your grip.

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

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

Light aluminium shaft, nylon shock absorber, variable weight heads - see web site:

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

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

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For details or discussion, contact Alan Pidcock,
Tel & Fax 01772 743859

e-mail pidcock@manorh.u-net.com

The Manor House, 1 Barn Croft, Penwortham,
Preston PR1 0SX

own. Peter willingly makes himself available for those club events where beginners to the game rely heavily on the help and goodwill of more experienced players.

Ken Mason – Sussex County Croquet Club

Ken joined the club some ten years ago and immediately joined the winter working party. He is a skilled DIY'er and has developed many facilities to improve and maintain the club premises. He has designed and built the huge working table in the kitchen; redesigned and built a new Bar and has recently constructed and fitted out a service counter. He has also made and fitted new back gates and also designed and built a workshop and store.

Ken designed and made the eleven scoreboards used for the World Golf Croquet championships.

Ken now organizes the winter working party which meets weekly to keep the club in good condition.

Ken's playing abilities have been affected by his physical disabilities, but he has played Golf Croquet to a particularly high standard, having represented England at the World Championships in Cairo. The club is deeply indebted to Ken and he is a very valuable and valued club member

Patrick Alden – Sussex County Croquet Club

Patrick became the club Treasurer in 1991. His banking experience put the club "back on track" and he kept a close eye on income and expenditure. He introduced fund-raising activities and soon the club began to flourish again. Patrick put an enormous amount of time into the club and kept meticulous records, accounts and graphs which have proved invaluable to all members. The Auditor has praised the "competence and thoroughness" of Patrick's work. He is a great supporter of club activities and has made generous donations.

Patrick resigned from his financial responsibilities in 2006. He has a great sense of humour and is a very valuable member of the club.



OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO COACHING AWARD - DON MEARS



Don Mears of the Sussex County Croquet Club at Southwick is the first recipient of the CA's new Life Time Coaching Award for long and meritorious service to coaching.

He was originally trained and assessed as a Grade 1 coach in 1989 by Ron Welch and immediately joined Bryan Teague coaching on his formal club courses. Don soon also qualified as a Grade 2 coach. Since then he has had an unbroken involvement as a coach in the annual CA Silver Courses and SECF Improvers and Bronze courses run by Bryan as well as giving his unstinted time and effort to his club's internal coaching program. He has been a leading member of the coaching team at the SECF Summer School through the reigns of David Collins and currently Daphne Gaitley. Along with other coaches at Southwick, he has coached at local clubs including Ringmer,

Rottingdean and Preston Park.

He has coached literally hundreds of players with patience and good humour and drawing on his detailed knowledge of stroke play and tactics. He has an impressive reputation both for the quantity and quality of his coaching, his dedication to the sport and the energy and time he has devoted to others. Such a record makes him truly worthy of having the honour of receiving from the CA its first Life Time Coaching Award.

COACH OF THE YEAR 2006 -

Ms JENNET BLAKE

by Michael Hague, Coaching Committee



Jennet's first major initiative on the croquet stage was to found the Eynsham Croquet Club in Oxfordshire of which she is still chairwoman. But her horizons were broader and she became a devotee and passionate promoter of Golf Croquet. To enable herself to spread the GC gospel actively, she looked to becoming a coach and attended in 2001 at Surbiton the very first Coaches Qualification Course (CQC) and the following year, encouraged by the then Coaching Committee Chairman, Bruce Rannie, she ran an abbreviated CQC focused on GC where players could have instruction on being Golf coaches.

Meanwhile, she and Gerald Mitchell had written "A Guide to Golf Croquet" which sold over 500 copies in the first 3 years. She assisted Michael Hague on a GC

CQC in 2003 at Edgbaston. In 2004, she and John Munro ran a one-day GC coaching course at Blewbury and two more courses in 2005 (Blewbury and Leighton-Linslade). This was the beginning of a series of one day GC courses and two day CQC's (now called Training for Coaches courses) across the country. These have not only coached GC players but more importantly trained up Club GC coaches, many of whom have been later assessed as fully qualified GC coaches.

Coach of the Year

Nominations are invited for the 2007 Coach of the Year award. The Coaching Committee wishes to ensure that suitable candidates are not overlooked through ignorance. So if you know of someone you consider worthy of this award, please send their name to me, at my address – email or postal, together with the reasons you consider them special. Nominations close on 31 January 2008.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Lawrence Whittaker
Chairman, CA Coaching Committee
Lawrence Whittaker
24 Stoneyagte Court
298 London Road
Leicester
LE2 2AH
flwhittaker2@waitrose.com

Notice to Club Webmasters

If you update your site, why not send a link to the Editor?

There is not enough time to check all of the websites but if you send a link when you update your site it could be very helpful.

In most of these courses and assessments she was one of the instructing staff. She has also put a great deal of effort into encouraging others to run GC tournaments in clubs around the Federations.

Her work is now well established and a range of GC courses co-ordinated by her has become a regular feature in the coaching section of the annual CA Fixture Calendar. She has displayed much determination and initiative when playing a leading role in getting GC recognised as a croquet discipline in its own right. She has trodden on a few toes in doing so no doubt, but her unflagging efforts have resulted in the outcome she had set her sights on some years back, results of which she can be justly proud.

Coaching Notes

by Keith Aiton

These notes are intended for coaches of groups or individual players who aspire to A-class croquet or better.



IV. LEAVES

Under the laws of advanced play there is a strong incentive for the player of the first break to make no more than nine hoops. When making his leave after making those nine hoops he has to take account of the options then available to the opponent, namely the option to lift either ball and play from baulk. The basic requirements of a good leave are to leave the opponent without a short shot (less than 13 yards), and to give yourself good chances of picking up the second break whichever shot is taken and missed.

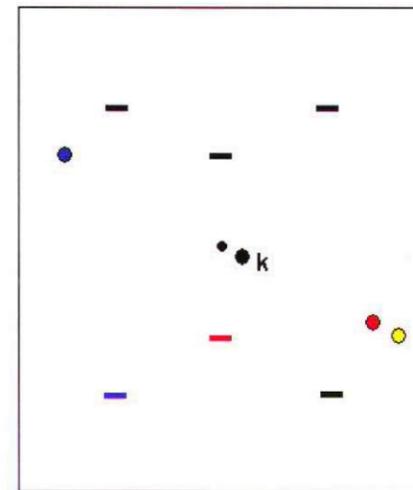
One of the best leaves that achieves these aims is the diagonal spread. In this leave you have your balls between three and seven yards south of peg high on the east boundary with a rush for the hoop 1 ball towards the peg. One of the opponent's balls is close to the peg on the east side such that it is hampered from shooting at your balls and the opponent's other ball is cross pegged from that ball and near the west boundary.

The opponent's shortest shot is usually to lift the ball near the west boundary and shoot at the ball near the peg from the end of A baulk, a shot of roughly sixteen and a half yards. That shot can be dangerous as missing the ball, hitting the peg and staying somewhere in the middle of the lawn makes your task (of finishing with a triple peel) a lot easier. Usually therefore the opponent lifts one of his balls and shoots at your balls from corner three. Assuming he misses you have a rush to his other ball and the chance to set up a three ball break, hopefully converting that into an attempt at a triple peel by picking up the ball that will be near fourth corner after you have made hoop 3.

There is another leave, called the New Standard leave, in which the only difference from the diagonal spread is that the opponent's ball at the peg is instead left just north and east of hoop 4 in a position where it is hidden from A baulk and cannot shoot at your balls. The advantage of this leave is

that if the opponent lifts his ball near the west boundary and shoots from corner three missing into corner four you can croquet that ball towards hoop 2 as a pioneer obtaining a rush to hoop 1 on the ball near hoop 4. If successful you will obtain the chance of setting up a standard triple peel.

A third leave that is used is the Maugham Standard leave which is the same as the New Standard leave save that the opponent's ball near the west boundary is instead left just south and west of hoop 2 (preferably "glued" to the west upright of the hoop), and you have a rush pointing more or less due west which can be taken as a rush to hoop 1. If the opponent lifts the ball at hoop 4 and shoots from corner 3 missing into corner 4 then this leave enables hoop 1 to be made off partner which can then be sent as a pioneer to hoop 3. There is then a chance to set a standard triple peel. (Note, this is likely to involve playing a big roll stroke from corner 4 going up to the pioneer

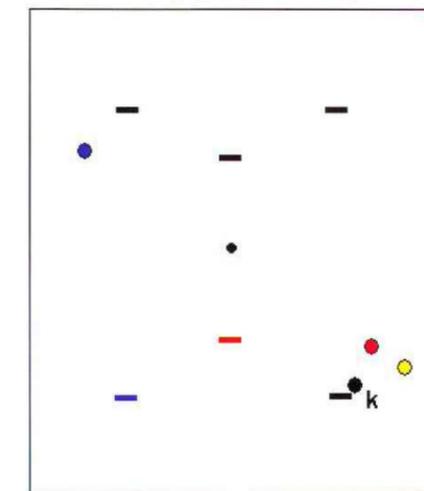


The Diagonal Spread

at hoop 3.)

Next I shall describe the process of making the diagonal spread leave (the one most commonly made). The only difficult part of making this leave is placing the ball at the peg. Therefore it is worthwhile trying to place a ball near the peg as soon as is convenient. The method I use is to make

sure partner is the pioneer at 2-back and then have the opponent's balls as the pioneers for hoop 6 and 1-back. After making hoop 6 rush well north of the pioneer at 1-back and try to send a ball near the peg. After making 1-back rush to near the ball at the peg and either send a ball to 3-back, tidy up the ball at the peg with a little rush and take-off to the pioneer at 2-back, or croquet a ball nearer the peg and rush the other ball west of the pioneer at 2-back in order to send it as a pioneer for 3-back. After making 2-back you can either revisit the ball at the peg for a bit more tidying, or go directly to the pioneer at 3-back. Either way you should place partner a few yards to the east of the ball at the peg. After making 3-back rush towards the ball at the peg and then croquet a ball



The New Standard Leave

towards the west boundary. This is the final opportunity to move the ball at the peg, but by now it should be in or nearly in the desired final resting place. Then rush partner to the east boundary and leave your rush towards the peg.

The process for making the NSL and MSL is different. It is probably still best to have partner as the pioneer at 2-back, but a ball is left behind after making 1-back. That ball will either be tight to hoop2 (MSL) or near the west boundary (NSL). After making 2-back rush partner over to 3-back and leave it a couple of yards north and east of the hoop. Make the hoop in such a way that you can roquet and croquet the opponent's ball into the desired position just north of the east upright of hoop 4. This will take a little practice to achieve with accuracy. Then rush partner to the east boundary and leave the rush required.

Diagrams courtesy of www.oxfordcroquet.com

The Eights

LOUISE BRADFORTH WON THE TREASURER'S TANKARD (4TH EIGHT)

East Dorset, Parkstone 5th-9th September

by Dave Trimmer

At the end of day four, our esteemed manager, Dave Kibble, at last got Nelson to teach us how to play golf croquet but as he (Nelson) played the wrong ball three times before we'd got past hoop two and the fact that the most advanced advice he gave his partner was "go for the hoop", neither Dave or myself felt any wiser after the event. Maybe these GC aficionados are sworn to secrecy concerning in depth tactics or perhaps "go for the hoop" is code for something else. Or did Nelson consider it would be a case of pearls before swine? I guess we'll never know.

As day five dawned, there was the possibility of a three way play off, as Bradforth was leading with nine wins, Kibble and Trimmer on eight.

Steve Lewis kept the possibility alive by beating Bradforth with a triple.

Trimmer twenty-sixed Kibble. (DK's shooting was rubbish but as we don't wish to give him a complex about it, we'll put the word around that all his shots hilled off!) Bradforth 9. Trimmer 9. Kibble 8.

The final round saw Trimmer going round fourth turn, with



(L-R, B-F: Nick Butler, Bruce Rannie, Dave Trimmer, Ian Vincent, Dave Kibble, Louise Bradforth, Steve Lewis, Nelson Morrow

a (very uncharacteristically) neat diagonal, and Nick Butler miss-hit the shot down the east boundary to the right by about two feet and hit the inner ball. A tidy Tpo followed, finishing with an accidental peg out of both balls. 1 v 1. After some interaction, (and crap tactics from Trimmer) Nick picked up a good two-ball break and finished.

Ian Vincent, after having had quite a bad tournament, suddenly remembered how to play and beat Dave Kibble. (or did all the manager's shots hill off again??)

Meanwhile, Louise Bradforth was maintaining her smooth style against Nelson.

There was great hitting in from both of them but after a final classic "Nelson Twitch" at a four-foot penult, Louise won the game and, well deservedly, the Tankard.

PS. There were loads more triples in the TT than in the Spencer Ell !! What happened lads??

The lawns were timed on day 3 at just over 11 seconds.

| | | | | | | | | | | wins | pos |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-------|-------|-------|----|------|-----|
| Bradforth | | +1 | +3 | +13 | +23 | +8 | -4 | +24 | 10 | 1 | |
| | | -11tp | +11 | -17 | +4 | -14tp | +5tpo | +11 | | | |
| Trimmer | +1 | | +24 | +14tp | -17 | -5 | +17 | +26 | 9 | 2 | |
| | -11tp | | -8tpo | +26 | +25 | +26tp | -25 | +16 | | | |
| Butler | -3 | -24 | | -10 | -16 | +16 | +5 | +17tp | 8 | 3= | |
| | -11 | +8tpo | | -9tpo | +24 | +16 | +22 | +20 | | | |
| Kibble | -13 | -14tp | +10 | | -25 | +26tp | +26tp | -16 | 8 | 3= | |
| | +17 | -26 | +9tpo | | +4 | +26 | +19 | -16 | | | |
| Morrow | -23 | +17 | +16 | +25 | | -26 | -4 | +22 | 6 | 5= | |
| | -4 | -25 | -24 | -4 | | +12 | -6 | +25 | | | |
| Lewis | -8 | +5 | -16 | -26tp | +26 | | +17 | +13 | 6 | 5= | |
| | +14tp | -26tp | -16 | -26 | -12 | | +25tp | -5 | | | |
| Rannie | +4 | -17 | -5 | -26tp | +4 | -17 | | -17tp | 5 | 7 | |
| | -5tpo | +25 | -22 | -19 | +6 | -25tp | | +16 | | | |
| Vincent | -24 | -26 | -17tp | +16 | -22 | -13 | +17tp | | 4 | 8 | |
| | -11 | -16 | -20 | +16 | -25 | +5 | -16 | | | | |

BEN ASHWELL WON THE SPENCER ELL CUP (3RD EIGHT)

Southport & Birkdale 5th - 9th September

by Chris Williams

The Spencer Ell finished on a 3-way tie with 9 wins for Ben Ashwell, Chris Williams and Jerry Guest. Ben completed triples in both play-off games to win the event.

The tricky conditions at Southport led to many long games with many pegged-out endings. Three games ended +1, with Dave Mundy losing two of them, one at +2, and eight at +3. In fact we only completed two and a half rounds on the third day with play from 0930 to 2000. One game was pegged down twice, much to



In the picture, L-R, B-F: Jerry Guest, Dave Nick, Bob Burnett, James Tuttiett, Dave Mundy, Roger Jenkins, Chris Williams, Ben Ashwell.

Bob Burnett's glee (since it included Dave Nick) and ended after nearly 5 hours play.

The play-offs started just after 4pm with play possible to 8pm - we managed to finish at 7.

A history of ties

Since the selection events started in 1902 I can find only four examples of three-way ties and two of those occurred this year. The bye holder has won three times - I am the first not to have done so!! Also I have been involved in two of the 3 way ties!!

Chairman's

2007 bye holder won (Tony Le Moignan)

1981 bye holder won (John McCullough)

Spencer Ell

2007 bye holder lost (Chris Williams)

1993 bye holder won (Lewis Palmer)

| | | | | | | | | | | wins | pos |
|----------|-------|--------|-----|-------|-------|--------|-------|-----|---|------|-----|
| Guest | | -3 | +9 | -16 | +11 | +21 | +3tpo | +13 | 9 | 1= | |
| | | -15 | -18 | +10 | +9 | -14 | +10 | +2 | | | |
| Ashwell | +3 | | -3 | +8 | +1 | -12tpo | +17 | -5 | 9 | 1= | |
| | +15 | | +26 | -26 | -16 | +16 | +3 | +23 | | | |
| Williams | -9 | +3 | | +3 | -11 | +17 | +3 | +23 | 9 | 1= | |
| | +18 | -26 | | -9 | +4 | -3 | +1 | +12 | | | |
| Burnett | +16 | -8 | -3 | | +24tp | +19 | -24 | +17 | 8 | 4 | |
| | -10 | +26 | +9 | | -16 | +14 | +12 | -10 | | | |
| Mundy | -11 | -1 | +11 | -24tp | | -1 | -5 | +8 | 6 | 5= | |
| | -9 | +16 | -4 | +16 | | +9 | -7 | +5t | | | |
| Nick | -21 | +12tpo | -17 | -19 | +1 | | +18tp | -5 | 6 | 5= | |
| | +14 | -16 | +3 | -14 | -9 | | -7 | +3 | | | |
| Jenkins | -3tpo | -17 | -3 | +24 | +5 | -18tp | | -13 | 5 | 7 | |
| | -10 | -3 | +1 | -12 | +7 | +7 | | +5 | | | |
| Tuttiett | -13 | +5 | -23 | -17 | -8 | +5 | +13 | | 4 | 8 | |
| | -2 | -23 | -12 | +10 | -5t | -3 | -5 | | | | |

Play-Off

Ashwell beat Guest +25tp, Ashwell beat Williams +17tp

TONY LEMOIGNAN WINS CHAIRMAN'S SALVER SIDMOUTH 5TH - 9TH SEPTEMBER

- 1= Evans 9 wins
- 1= Patel 9
- 1= LeMoignan 9
- 4. Dawson 8
- 5. Goacher 7
- 6= Tudor 6
- 6= Lines 6
- 8. Magee 2

Play off: Evans bt Patel +16tp
LeMoignan bt Evans +26tp

JAMES DEATH WINS HIS FIRST PRESIDENT'S CUP HURLINGHAM 6TH - 9TH SEPT

Report by Robert Fulford

This year's 'Pres' was back to its usual date and back to its one time home Hurlingham. The playing conditions looked extremely straightforward with the lawns a little slower than they had been during the opens. The field was significantly strengthened by Reg Bamford being available. Ed Duckworth was making his debut. Ed despite having been playing for over twenty years, had only been to Hurlingham before for one day in

the 80's, a fact that left the old hands, who can measure the amount of croquet they have played at Hurlingham in months, slightly agast.

The start to the tournament was rather shambolic. With the threat of a continuing Tube strike, a couple of players were given late starts and the others told to organise themselves. Reg and Ed started at 11am and possibly only that early to appease the few spectators who hadn't been warned and had turned up at 10. Ed won sixth turn by 11.45.

The next couple of games started around 12.15. James Death beat Robert Fulford no croquet though, conceding an extra shot after taking a divot playing a routine rush. Stephen Mulliner got off to a great start completing the first sextuple against Keith Aiton aided by a 45° two yard 3-back peel.

Round 2 saw Bamford's first sextuple attempt. The turn got off to a great start, as Reg's often do, rushing in front of 1-back and then peeling rolling to 1. However by hoop 6 he was struggling, with the latest peel attempt of 3-back having bounced off comprehensively. Eventually he was left peeling 4-back trying to go through a tight gap between hoop and ball with the striker's ball to get a rush back to 3-back and nicked the ball. That still didn't stop Reg though, he just took off to 3-back and ran a 4 yard straight hoop back up to 4-back and finished.

Elsewhere Fulford, having missed his first four shots of the day, was gifted his first chance by Maugham. Dave blobbed an angled 3-back cobbling together a leave after a failed cross-wiring at 1-back. Rob peeled Dave's back ball to 3. Dave took an aggressive lift shot which he was unlucky to hill off and Rob had a standard TP.

Rutger had the first chance to finish against James failing

| | | | | | | | | | | wins |
|---------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----|------|
| Death | | -19tp | -26qp | +24tp | +17tp | +26tp | +24tp | +26tp | 10 | |
| | | +13otp | +15tp | -9tpo | -3tp | +26tp | +8tp | +16sxp | | |
| Mulliner | +19tp | | -15tp | +26sxp | -26tp | +25sxp | -17 | +23 | 9 | |
| | -13otp | | +17tp | +26tp | +22qp | -26tp | +15tp | +26tp | | |
| Bamford | +26qp | +15tp | | -25tp | +26qnp | +26sxp | +23qp | -26tp | 8 | |
| | -15tp | -17tp | | -9sxp | +26sxp | +26qp | -26tp | +17sxp | | |
| Fulford | -24tp | -26sxp | +25tp | | -26tp | -20tp | +16tp | +16sxp | 7 | |
| | +9tpo | -26tp | +9sxp | | -8tp | +16qnp | -26sxp | +26tp | | |
| Beijderwellen | -17tp | +26tp | -26qnp | +26tp | | -26tp | -14tp | +26tp | 7 | |
| | +3tp | -22qp | -26sxp | +8tp | | +26tp | -2 | +26tp | | |
| Aiton | -26tp | -25sxp | -26sxp | +20tp | +26tp | | +4tp | +5tpo | 6 | |
| | -26tp | +26tp | -26qp | -16qnp | -26tp | | -24tp | +21 | | |
| Maugham | -24tp | +17 | -23qp | -16tp | +14tp | -4tp | | -25tp | 6 | |
| | -8tp | -15tp | +26tp | +26sxp | +2 | +24tp | | -12 | | |
| Duckworth | -26tp | -23 | +26tp | -16sxp | -26tp | -5tpo | +25tp | | 3 | |
| | -16sxp | -26tp | -17sxp | -26tp | -26tp | -21 | +12 | | | |

hoop 1 with the game at break all. With Rutger's ball finishing on the wire, unrunnable James shot from 1 to 2. Rutger turned down a shot from between hoop 4 and peg to hoop 2 with his 4-back ball and played into corner 4 from hoop 1. James hit his 6 yarder and finished.

Round 3 was much more clinical. Aiton and Bamford both won fifth turn against Beijderwellen and Death respectively, Keith aided by a brave 6 yarder into corner 2 after hoop 2 to dig out a standard triple. Maugham had chances for an even earlier finish. Having run a two ball break to 3-back second turn his attempt at a quad fourth turn ended at 1-back with two peels done. Stephen went to 4-back. Dave hit and polished the game off. The first ball round in Duckworth versus Fulford was in comparison a sluggardly

Continued on page 22

NEW VENTURE AT ROTHER VALLEY 'SHORT CROQUET CHALLENGE'

report by Peter Cole

September 1st and 2nd saw what is believed to be the first short croquet inter-club tournament in the south, between five invited clubs at Rother Valley's delightful grounds in Sussex, situated between Petworth and the South Downs. Tournament Manager and referee was Michael Hague, and the clubs taking part were Chichester & Fishbourne, Reigate, Rother Valley, West Chitlington and Woking.



Competitors in the first Rother valley Short Croquet challenge, having the 'Egyptian' system explained by Michael Hague.

Following the Egyptian format we played on five short croquet lawns, and the club whose four players scored the most was Chichester & Fishbourne. Their captain, Julian Lawrie, was presented with a finely carved new trophy, already christened the 'Acorn Trophy' by Peter Cole, chairman of Rother Valley. All four members of the winning team also received engraved glass trophies. The winning individual, Paul Robinson, also from Chichester & Fishbourne, received a bottle of wine and a pack of cartoon cards revealing the lighter side of croquet.

At the start of the tournament Michael Hague officially 'opened' our new club house and the new short croquet lawn, which will be known as the Nick Waters memorial lawn.

In the course of the hectic two days, 90 timed games, all singles, were played. The weather was kind, the hospitality and refreshments provided by Katharine Minchin and helpers were excellent, and it is believed that everyone went home tired, but happy.



Chichester & Fishbourne, winners of the first challenge. L to R, Bob Clayton, Chris Coot, Julian Lawrie (capt.)

FLOODS JULY 2007

by Jennet Blake

It seems invidious to boast about the flooding of our courts at Eynsham, but we can top the excitements experienced by Tyneside and John Jeffrey. However it is nothing we ever wish to see again.

Three to four inches of rain fell on Friday, July 20th over our area and by the Saturday evening the catchment area of the Evenlode valley had produced so much surface water that it blocked the A40 for 24 hours, flowing over our field and eventually reaching the Thames. Our raised hut was flooded to a depth of 3 feet with all the mallets immersed and the engine of the mower covered with water. The water level had reduced to some extent by the Monday and our Treasurer was able to wade (with water over his boots!) to the hut (photo) and dry the mallets and the cutting cassette of the mower. Nine days later, he was able to get the mower onto the grass which had appeared, clean the engine and, much to his surprise, find that it had suffered no damage. The mallets also appeared to have escaped damage.



Brian Hitchins wades out to the hut, which was under half a metre of water.

Our 2-year old courts had some water still standing on them 2 weeks after the flood. We tried to get information about how to treat the courts after such severe flooding, but no one could help. After more than another two weeks, they were dry enough to mow and we were surprised how well the surface had survived though the grass was looking rather yellow. By September the courts were playing well with very little long-term damage to the levels.

We also have four adjacent half-sized courts mown down on the field and the two higher of these came into use during August, with the 2 lower ones only being playable by October. We hope that this experience was a once-in-a-lifetime occurrence and that none of us will ever see such flooding again. However we are prepared for occasional winter floods of shorter duration and less intensity as our courts lie on the flood plain of the Evenlode.

THE INTER-COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS

A firm base for determining player eligibility

By Bill Arliss

Looking back in the record books, one finds that there has been a 'Counties' competition in croquet for over 110 years. It started to build up before WW2 but went back to a very small competition after that war. It has since gradually grown until the present day when we have a situation where, even using two venues, it is very difficult to accommodate more than 22 teams even though more than 22 counties are showing interest.

Until the late 90's 'Counties' always meant the croquet jamboree that was staged at Southwick and Compton at the end of May, and of course was Association doubles. However a 'new kid on the block' came along in the late 90's in the shape of the Golf Croquet Inter-County Championship. The initial staging of this event was again a very small affair played out on the slopes of Northampton CC. It is very pleasing to note that having copied the formula from Association Croquet, this event also seems to be taking off in popularity, with thirteen counties currently vying for the twelve places available.

So exactly what makes both these competitions so popular with our players? Certainly there is nothing special about the eligibility criteria for playing in the event. Being born in the county, living in the county or belonging to a club in the county can hardly be regarded as anything special or unique. It is simply a formula that works and brings together at one venue a very large number of the best croquet players in the country; over 150 players participate in the Association Croquet event, and around 60 in the Golf Croquet. Both events have almost taken on the character of an annual croquet players' reunion with a good slice of play added. This certainly makes both events the biggest in their particular discipline, and in the case of Association Croquet probably the biggest regular croquet event in the world.

Some years ago the Tournament Committee decided the best way forward for the AC Counties was to operate as two divisions. At the time there was much muttering that this would be the end of Counties as we knew it. Luckily it produced just the opposite effect. Because of the promotion and relegation possibilities, most teams had much more to play for throughout the whole of the event and competition quite often remains extremely fierce right to the end. Golf Croquet has not followed on identically but has chosen a mixture of singles and doubles for its format and this appears to be extremely popular.

Whilst there is nothing special about the eligibility criteria, once the formula is set it generates quite a fierce rivalry, and teams

try every trick in the book to try to prove that the better players are eligible for their team. Some years ago we had to restrict the club criteria to full members only, after it was discovered that far country membership was being used to bend the regulations. The whole basis of our eligibility rules is of course the county, but virtually every government in the past 50 years has contrived to muddy this definition by changing county boundaries, eliminating some counties and creating new ones, and then reversing some of the changes. Hitherto the Tournament Committee has tried to fix the goal posts by defining the counties as those that existed before the 1972 act. Whilst this gave some justification for retaining teams such as Middlesex the rules had to be bent to allow an Avon team to continue to play. When an application was received from Somerset, a county that includes a large part of the territory comprising the former county of Avon, the Tournament Committee decided that it was time to seek a definition of county status which would so far as possible avoid future disputes.

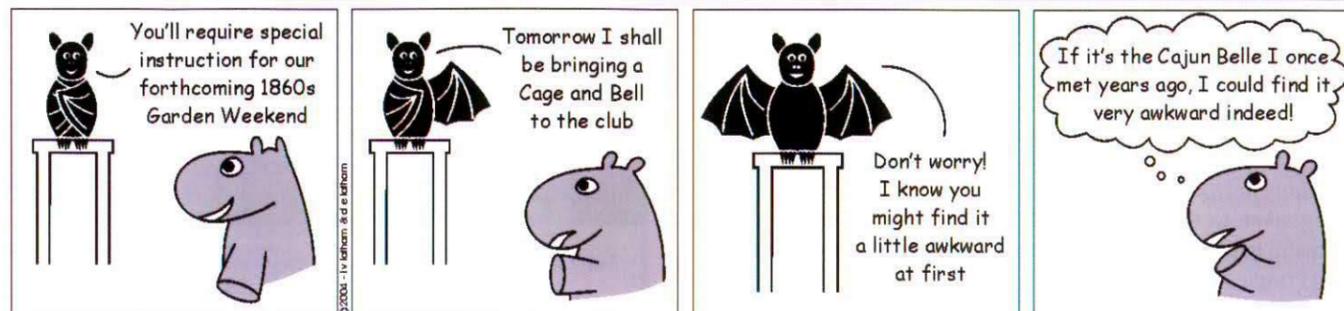
A search on the internet brought to light the existence of The Association of British Counties, a society dedicated to promoting awareness of the continuing importance of the 86 historic (or traditional) Counties of Great Britain, and encouraging their use as a basis for social, sporting and cultural activities. The most significant feature of this Association is that it produces a gazetteer of the whole country which lists over 50,000 place names in England with their traditional county; importantly, whilst new place names may be added, existing entries are not subject to change. One can obtain a copy of the gazetteer for archive purposes at a nominal cost, and it is available on line, at www.abcounties.co.uk.

On this basis the AC Tournament Committee felt that adoption of the ABC definition of counties was ideal for our purposes, and would be effective immediately. The only exception would be the inclusion of the Channel Islands as a county in its own right. To regularise the present situation the committee also decided that the anomaly of Avon could continue no longer and the present Avon team should be redesignated Somerset. and players who had played for Avon would be deemed to have played for Somerset. It is hoped that this change of counties definition will not cause any major problems, but should any arise the Tournament Committee would look at each case individually and try to deal with it sympathetically.

The Golf Croquet Tournament Committee already use the counties definition as given for the AC Inter Counties and will of course fall in line with this change. It should be noted that for purposes of determining eligibility the two competitions are considered as separate events; playing for a particular county in one event will have no bearing on a player's eligibility to play for a different county in the other.

HOOPOPOTAMUS

by Victor



The 2nd WCF Women's World Golf Croquet Championship - Egypt triumphant

Hosted By The Croquet Association Of Ireland
Venue: Carrickmines Croquet & Lawn Tennis Club & Herbert Park, 3rd to 9th Sep 2007

Report by Evan Newell

An entire week with no rain, ensure plenty of Irish sunshine, ample wine, trumpets and drumming from the Army Number One Band and add in a Minister of Sport running his first ever croquet hoop. Now you have the right atmosphere for "The 2nd WCF Women's World Golf Croquet Championship". And so it was that the event, with its 40 varied Golf Croquet Players from all corners of the Globe, launched forth to ascertain who would be the No.1 and champion for 2007.



Iman El Farnsawi, of Egypt, winner of the 2007 World championships, beating her fellow compatriot, Marwa Moustafa 5-7, 7-4, 7-4, 7-3.

Nine Countries were represented including Australia, England, the host country Ireland, New Zealand, Palestine, South Africa, Scotland, and the United States of America. But as usual it was the Egyptian Team leading the challenge with eight accomplished players setting the standard, including of course the 2005 Champion Nahed Hassan. A typical format was employed of 8 blocks of 5 competitors that allowed for 4 to go through from each block to the 32 knockout stage. All matches in the blocks and knockout were best of 3 to ensure a true test.

The blocks produced no surprises for the seeded players with only Salwa Saleh having any difficulty getting through after being taken to three games by Linda Pullman and surviving a dramatic late night floodlit and 13th hoop game all finish against Jane Pringle.

The Seeds also progressed through the early stages of the

knockout although Manal Ali Mohsen had to play both consistently and strongly to subdue the threatening challenge of Dallas Cooke from New Zealand. Another NZ competitor, Erica Stephens, also looked dangerous against the Egyptian No. 2 Abir Moustafa and in a hard-hitting match lost narrowly 7-6, 6-7, 7-3.



David Openshaw, President of the WCF, presents Marwa Moustafa with her runners-up trophy and medal

Meanwhile the 3rd New Zealand player, Jenny Williams progressed steadily to the semi-finals without being under much threat other than dropping the odd game to Mavis Brogden (yet another New Zealander) and then to Abir. The semi-finals were a different matter though and it was decided that the matches would be best of 5: and Jenny took Iman El Farnsawi to the fifth and final game in a wonderful match that stretched both players. If there was one defining moment it was in the final game and at 3 hoops all (can you get any closer?) with Jenny in complete control of hoop 7. Iman was on distant boundaries and Jenny, although straight in front, decided to jaws. In time-honoured tradition, the ball drifted through a short distance leaving but a single ball to compete for hoop 8 against Iman's two. The next hoop was immediately lost and we had the distinct impression that the disappointment perhaps slightly affected Jenny's concentration for the vital hoop 9 as her first approach was significantly short. Iman capitalised in typical fashion, thus turning the tables and winning the final game 7-5.



Jenny Williams of New Zealand, losing semi-finalist, and Carole Jackson of South Africa, winner of the plate event.

C.A. Inter-club Events National Finals at Wrest Park, 9th October 2007

Inter-Club

Bristol beat Bowdon 6 - 1

by Martin Murray

Bristol beat Bowdon to become the first club to hold the Beddow Cup. This magnificent trophy, which readers will (should?) know was rescued from an uncertain fate by Tom and Judy Anderson and John and Pandora Wheeler many years ago, has now been most generously donated to the CA as the trophy for the Inter-Club. There was a veritable orgy of photography after the presentation.

In the other semi final Marwa Moustafa overcame Hemat Moustafa in 3 games despite a fifteen minute battle for hoop 12 in the first game. Hemat, though losing, was always competitive and is certainly a player of the future.



England's players in the event, Irene Burns, Julie Hudson, Freda Vitty, Jane Pringle and Kath Burt.

So Marwa and Iman contested the final. These are two very different players, one stylish and brilliant, the other strong and brilliant: and strength won out in the end. Perhaps, because it was a single country final, the absolute passion of the semis wasn't there. But none the less we witnessed what Golf Croquet is all about and where the other world players must aspire to. Particularly impressive is Iman's determination to recover. Phyllis Young also from New Zealand defeated Iman in her first block match, but she got better. Iman also lost her first game to Jenny but it made no difference. And of course she lost the first game to Marwa, but it is Iman who is the Champion.

The week concluded as it started with many a ceremony, many a flower, many a gift and a thousand thanks to as many people. Medals and speeches abounded. An extraordinary "hoop and ball" cake which was consumed at an enormous rate. And then it was all over and Players, Officials and Spectators wended their way home to study the comprehensive website (courtesy Campbell Morrison) of the entire Event and 300 and more photographs to prove it all really happened. If you wish to know or see more visit: www.croquetireland.com



Martin Murray, Roger Jenkins, David Goacher and Dave Kibble, the winning Bristol team, with the Inter-club shield and the Beddow Cup.

Dave Kibble's TP finished with a combination pegout, which might need explanation. It was quite a good one. What should have been a fairly routine triple for Dave ended up with a straight rover peel, which only just struggled through, leaving the striker's ball too close for an easy jump.

Inevitably, it clipped the peelee as it went through. (That might have been fortunate, since he had no good deep ball). Dave rolled the peelee to about 3 feet from the peg, then rushed an oppo ball about 4-5 yards away. The angle was about 45 degrees, so not easy. No doubt about the impact though. Dave says it was his first.

His quad in the second game was also not without incident. After an excellent 3-back peel after 4, which went down close to

db David Barrett

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4-back, he failed to peel before 6, so peeled before 2-back, which was made without difficulty.

Some indifferent play (despite getting an excellent forward rush out of 3-back) left him a straight double, the penult peel barely got beyond the peg, but he got it through rover, if only just. The jump cleared it, and this time he had a getaway ball well placed. His effort to clear the peelee from rover was only partially successful, but he got a good rush on the fourth ball (which was north of the peg), and managed to rush the peelee past the side of rover to about 4-5 yards from the peg. On the flat lawn that was good enough.

So Bristol's numbers 3 and 4 managed twelve peels between them (I only managed two peels of a straight triple against Ken Cooper), proving merely that we can play breaks when given the balls on a slowish and flat lawn. Fortunately for Dave, I've forgotten (lost count of) how many times he approached the first hoop with his first ball in his game against Ken!

Results: Bristol names first.

David Goacher (-1.5) & Roger Jenkins (-1) lost to Ian Lines (-2) & Colin Irwin (-1.5) -18

Dave Kibble (-.5) beat Martin Granger-Brown (-.5) +16TP

Martin Murray (-.5) beat Ken Cooper (-1) +19

David Goacher beat Ian Lines +14TP

Roger Jenkins beat Colin Irwin +15

Dave Kibble beat Ken Cooper +17QP

Martin Murray beat Martin Granger-Brown +20TP



Peter Wilson, John Filsak, Liz Wilson and Robert Essler of Pendle & Craven enjoying that winning moment.

Mary Rose

Pendle & Craven beat Surbiton 4-2

Report by John Bevington

Pendle made a good start in the Mary Rose final when John Filsak made light of the conditions to beat Bob Stephens, and Liz Wilson made a great recovery to beat Ian Parkinson +3 in what turned out to be the crucial game of the match. The doubles was pegged down at lunchtime with Pendle on peg and penult against Surbiton on 3-back and 4-back. Having taken part in several finals himself manager and ROT George Collin was well aware that the Mary Rose, with no time

limits, is the one to keep an eye on. If the doubles is unresolved and the afternoon games fail to start in good time you can find yourself at 3-3 with the light fading fast and wishing you had hired floodlights.

In the afternoon Liz continued her good form with a win over Bob, but Surbiton then recovered to 3-2 when Ian clawed his way back to beat John and Mary Knapp, whose smooth hoop running was exemplary, overcame Peter Wilson +3. Mary, against peg and rover, hit the long lift shot and laid up outside corner 1 for peg and peg. Peter missed a 20 yarder but Mary rushed partner into hoop 1 and had to split the opponents and lay up south of rover. Peter missed and that was it. Manager and ROT George Collin then had to impose a time limit on the game between Robert Essler and David Mooney, but Robert eventually finished to take the game and the match. It wasn't until everyone had left that we realised that two of the scores were missing from the sheet.

Results: Pendle & Craven names first

Robert Essler (2) & Peter Wilson (2.5) v David Mooney (1.5)

& Mary Knapp (2) unfinished

John Filsak (2.5) beat Bob Stephens (3.5) +10

Liz Wilson (3) beat Ian Parkinson (2) +3

Robert Essler beat David Mooney +5

Peter Wilson lost to Mary Knapp -3

John Filsak lost to Ian Parkinson -6

Liz Wilson beat Bob Stephens +16

Longman Cup

Fylde beat Dyffryn 5-2 to win the Longman Cup



L-R: Betty Bates, Martin Bradshaw, Leonard Ainsworth, Terry Vernazza

Results: Fylde names first

Leonard Ainsworth (18) & Betty Bates (20) lost to Les Bowker (7) & Marian Clancy (14) -5T

Martin Bradshaw (11) beat Alwen Bowker (9) +22

Terry Vernazza (18) lost to James Clancy (10) -6

Martin Bradshaw beat Les Bowker +26

Terry Vernazza beat Alwen Bowker +24

Leonard Ainsworth beat James Clancy +7

Betty Bates beat Marian Clancy +9T

Secretary's Shield Final

At Bath Croquet Club

Kington Langley beat Hamptworth

Report by John Grimshaw

The winners of the Federation leagues across the country are entered into the next season's Secretary's Shield, so Kington Langley represented the SWF in this year's competition. Having beaten Pendle (5-2 away) and Tyneside (4-3 at Nottingham), they reached the final at Bath against Hamptworth. So what had started as a national competition really became the Championship of Wiltshire. Although Hamptworth (nr Salisbury) are members of the SWF, they play in the Southern Federation leagues.

K Langley:

John Grimshaw(1)

Brian Shorney(5)

Jane Hull(8)

Jim Wallen(12)

Hamptworth:

Rita Nunn(2)

David Williams(2.5)

Ivor Nunn(6)

Richard Smith(16)



Left to right; John Grimshaw, Jim Wallen, Jane Hull (captain), Brian Shorney, Bob Whitaker, President Bath Croquet Club.

Unusually the doubles was the first to finish. David quickly got a break to Rover, but a failed H1 by Ivor set John up nicely, but he failed to clear H1 himself. However John and Jim were in the fortunate and, for John, unusual, position of having bisques, so John duly made H1 and proceeded to peel David through Rover and peg him out. A few turns later Jim pegged out (26-16). In the singles Brian used his bisques early and with the last one, finally

got going. Rita could not hit in when Brian stopped, and he played a confident break with his second ball to win comfortably (26-5). Jane and Richard were involved in a tactical battle, with Richard just having the edge until about 5 minutes from time. Jane seemed to have closed the gap to 2 with a ball to 2B and laid up in a promising position. However Richard claimed that she had not run H5 and that her turn should have ended when she inadvertently ran H6. Jane was sure she had run H5 but could not demonstrate this, and, after taking advice from a number of spectators, the referee decided that Richard's claim was correct and replaced the balls. Time was up, and although Jane hit with her last shot, she could not make enough hoops to retrieve the game (13-16). Lunch 2-1 to K Langley and this proved to be just enough.

Rita comfortably disposed of a below-par John (11-26) despite conceding a lift with a ball in baulk and another at John's hoop. Jane put the morning's traumas behind her to beat Ivor (26-13), and Jim played steadily against Richard but could not overcome the bisque disadvantage (11-17). The clinching game was Brian's win over David (23-21). Brian appeared in complete control with balls on peg and penult against 2 and 5, but David took his 2 ball around and pegged Brian out. He then executed a marvellous 2-ball break from 5 to 4B where he decided to lay up rather than approach from 20 feet. Brian's half-bisque proved decisive as he disrupted David's game and with time called ran for the corner. David missed and that was that.

The lawns were in excellent condition and thanks must be given to the Bath club for being superb hosts, and especially to Bob Whitaker who acted as referee and Audrey who supervised the teas.

Golf Croquet Inter-Club

Final

Blewbury beat Ashby 6-1

Kenilworth, 30th September

Report by John Spiers

The final was played at Kenilworth in fine conditions. Ashby reached the final after securing an excellent win against Surbiton - champions in 2005 and 2006. Blewbury made one change to their Semi-Final team, bringing in Robin Brown (UK AC ranking 42) for only his second GC tournament.

Blewbury made a poor start in the doubles, going 3-0 down and facing the likely loss of hoop 4 until Spiers Senior managed to get in the jaws from 25 yards. From thereon they began to hit straighter while King & Mounfield had several close misses. On the singles courts both matches were very tight and went to the third but overall at lunch Blewbury had the comfort of a 3-0 lead. Having nearly thrown away a similar advantage in the first round the captain tried unsuccessfully to restrict the food intake of his team. The deciding match was won by Robin Brown who made up for an inevitable shortfall of GC tactical knowledge with some precision shooting. Butler retired after getting the shakes (he was present against doctor's orders). Benson Spiers came back after losing the first game of the match for the second time that day with some characteristic long-range hoop shots.



Blewbury's winning team, Robin Brown, John Spiers, Benson Spiers and Nick Butler

For the fourth consecutive year Blewbury had succeeded in winning a CA National Tournament (Longman 2004, Mary Rose 2005, Secretary's Shield 2006) and two of the players in this side were involved in each of those campaigns. Increasingly it appears that there are benefits in playing both AC and GC. The former develops good skills for cut rushes and positioning around hoops, the latter improves shooting.

Scores:

J Spiers & N Butler beat T King & R Mounfield: 7-4, 7-5
 B. Spiers beat D. Buxton 6-7, 7-4, 7-5
 R. Brown beat M. O'Brian 7-6, 6-7, 7-4
 J. Spiers beat T. King 7-5, 5-7, 7-5
 N. Butler lost to R. Mounfield 7-6, 4-7, Scratched
 B. Spiers beat M. O'Brian 5-7, 7-6, 7-6
 R. Brown beat D. Buxton 7-3, 7-4

continued from page 15

fifth turn by Ed. Fulford hit the lift shot he was given and finished in two turns with a sextuple.

The last round of day one saw the two favourites meet, Fulford winning fifth turn after Bamford missed his lift by a coat of paint.

Day two started with a dubious opening by Rutger. Thinking Reg would be worse for wear from the night before, Rutger played first ball to just off B-baulk giving Reg a dolly rush to 1. Reg made his rush and took his two ball break as far as running 1-b without obtaining a forward rush. After trying a speculative take off to 2-b Reg played away to the east boundary. Rutger hit and made a leave but Reg hit a 19 yarder down the boundary 4th turn and completed his quin.

Reg carried on in a similar vein for the rest of the day, finishing with a complete set of peeling turns, triple, quadruple, quintuple and sextuple, hitting everything without a sniff of an error.

Rob's Friday was much worse. Stephen repeated his feat of first thing on Thursday completing a sextuple against him. Keith went off the lawn against him but got back in by hitting a tea lady shot and Rob never took croquet again.

James won 2 of his first 3 of the day to reach 5/7 and be co leader with Reg at the end of the first series. James played Rob in

the last round of the day. James peeled Rob to 2 and 2 on his first break to 4-b. Rob hit the lift but forgot about the peels and went through hoop 1 to find he hadn't earned a continuation stroke. James missed a 13 yarder with two balls at his hoop and Rob was able to go to 1-b with a leave akin to a ladies sextuple one, with James cross-wired at 4 and Rob's 1-b ball able an inch in front of its hoop. James played into corner 1 and Rob TPOed and pegged two balls out to leave 1 versus 2-b. Rob won the two ball game fairly comfortably, +9tpo.

Round 9 started with a crunch game between Reg and James, James hitting a key lift shot and then Reg missing his.

Mulliner played Fulford in what looked like a "must win" game for both of them. Stephen completed a routine 5th turn triple and was somewhat surprised by the amount of applause. With his win Stephen passed John Solomon's previous record mark of 244 wins in the President's, a fantastic longevity record.

Aiton from being in a promising position at the start of play was to have a day to forget. He lost without troubling the scorer against Beijderwellen and in round 10 was beaten 5th turn by James in the same manner.

Round 11 saw a crunch game between James and Stephen, which James won. Reg looked to be in control against Rob but very uncharacteristically failed a straight forward 1-b on a well progressed sextuple. Rob took full advantage and had a sextuple of his own.

Keith failed 3 against Dave in his only turn of croquet to slip out of contention.

James now the outright leader played Ed in the last round and opted to go to 1b. James got as far as penult and penult without getting peelee in position for a peel so it looked like James was probably going to be laying up giving contact but this wasn't allowing for James outrageous flair. After penult James tried to cannon the peelee into the jaws so he could rush it up to rover, but played this so well he was unlucky enough to peel it. He was still able to rush the ball by going through the hoop, though trusting to luck a little more. The peelee finished by the peg but that didn't stop him peeling rover almost cleanly from there! +26sxp

Bamford fell back again, this time losing no croquet to Maugham. Mulliner and Fulford had just kept themselves in it, Mulliner with a quad against Beijderwellen and Fulford with a quin against Aiton in what had otherwise been a poor game.

Sunday started with quick no croquet wins for Mulliner, Bamford and also Maugham, who eliminated Fulford's chances with a sextuple.

Death did a much better job of building the suspense. With Rutger on 2 and 4b, James was having another tight end to a sextuple. Rutger picked up from a poor contact leave and made the TP to win.

The final round left Death playing Maugham and Mulliner playing Bamford. If James won the Cup would be his, if he lost he would face a best of 3 play-off with the winner of Reg and Stephen.

Dave had the first chance against James and was soon embarking on a sextuple. In the other game Stephen had hit Reg's sextuple leave and was going to 1-b himself.

Dave's sextuple started a little slowly but had reached the point where he played a goodish rush to 2-b with the other balls well situated to peel 4-b getting a rush to 3-b. Sadly for Dave the rush ended in a spot just west of directly behind the hoop where it was impossible to get a rush back to 4b and from there nothing went right and Dave broke down on 4b and 4b.

In the other game Stephen had failed one without any peels.

Reg tried to make another 1b leave with partial success, getting the wiring, but only leaving about a 20 yarder which Stephen hit with his 1-b ball. Stephen took that ball to 4-b but with a poor leave.

James after his 2 previous scrappily ending sextuples though better of it this time and went to 4-b. Dave missed the lift and James just had a TP to do.

Reg hit his lift and went to 4-b with his 1-b ball. James completed his TP in routine fashion. As it was Stephen hit the lift and finished but by that stage it was academic (well, Stephen gets a very diddy cup for second!).

This was James's first win of a major event, in fact James has never previously won a championship event either. I'm sure more wins will follow soon. Hugh Carlisle who has watched many great croquet players said that James reminded him of Nigel Aspinall in how incredibly relaxed he is. James is great to watch with his speed and flair and a certain amount of unpredictability. Here his shooting and hoop running were very consistent. His choice of opening going second against a supershot opening of shooting gently at it from corner 1 seemed to work better for him than his previous more aggressive attempts to go round second turn. He was a deserved winner.

OBITUARY

BERT DICKENS Feb 1921/May 2007

To many of us older members Bert Dickens WAS Northampton Croquet Club. Back in 1986 Bert was one of four to start the club, then in Beckett's Park, a council owned park and recreation area. In those early days Bert taught us all so much about the game.

He was an unashamed Aunt Emma, positively revelling in defeating better players by his relentless tactic: one hoop, split the opponent, lay up far away with a perfect rush: another hoop, split, lay-up. It worked for him and it took me ten years to beat him.

This by the simple expedient of not getting annoyed, knowing that after nine misses I would hit-in and overtake his six one-at-a-time hoops with a break of seven. But we had such fun together for Bert was a dedicated humorist, shocking newer members by his repeated allusions to what Viagra was doing for him. All in the mind of course!

Bert spent the war years on bomber missions to Germany and elsewhere, readjusting to life in civvy street by walking the beat as a Police Officer. One suspects that his old fashioned policing method was a really good talking-to at the scene of the crime rather than mountains of paper-work and a six-months jail sentence.

A staunch Conservative he nevertheless stoically stuck to his NHS guns by refusing private treatment for a painful knee problem on the justifiable grounds that he'd paid for it all his life. Unfortunately his delayed op. saw the onset of Parkinson's but he persevered for some years.

Many of us will treasure his appearance a year ago at our club dinner when Chairman Lionel Tibble read out Bert's letter of thanks for making him an honorary life member. He had asked me to read it out but I just couldn't: it was so funny and had tears streaming down the eyes of the roomful of members as he relived his many victories over opponents by his devastating leaves!

He will be sorely missed, by all of us and by his lovely wife Edna.

Owen Bryce

All-England Handicap Final

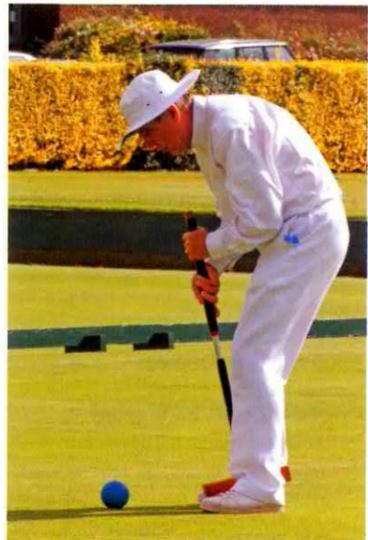
Barry Gould wins the all-England Roehampton 15 - 16 September

Report by Mike Porter

The All-England Handicap tournament must be more or less unique in sport in the way it allows novice players to compete for a national title on equal terms with those at the top of the game. This year, following forty-one club tournaments involving over 350 players, and five regional finals, sixteen players from as far afield as Cornwall and Southport, and with handicaps ranging from 16 to ?1, descended on Roehampton early on a sunny Saturday morning - some earlier than others - to contest the finals. The format was a five-round Swiss with three-hour time limits, with three rounds on Saturday and two on Sunday.

A number of players took some time on the first morning to familiarise themselves with faster-paced lawns than they were accustomed to, but all were impressed with the true playing surfaces. By the end of a gloriously sunny September day, there were, inevitably, two players with a 3/3 record - these were Andrew Webb (Pendle) and Barry Gould (Guilford & Godalming). Equally inevitably, six players were only one game behind, on 2/3.

Sunday morning dawned a little chillier, with a wind brisk enough to destroy at least one parasol. Andrew and Barry battled for the tournament lead on the garden court, with Barry eventually prevailing +7t. Barry could therefore secure the title in his post lunch game against Mike Porter (Newport), but were he to lose, Mike and at least one of Andrew Webb, Robert Wilkinson (Huddersfield) and Mike Bottomley (Reigate) would be tied with Barry on 4 wins.



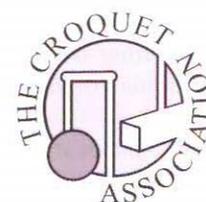
Barry Gould in play at Roehampton, on his way to winning the All-England Handicap

In the event, any possibility of late drama (and managerial headaches) was rapidly dispelled as Barry polished off his game +26 with a couple of bisques still standing, to claim the title with a perfect 5/5 record, and Robert Wilkinson defeated Mike Bottomley to guarantee second place. Both Barry and Robert earned handicap reductions, to 6 and 5 respectively.

Thanks go to the Roehampton club and its members for their hospitality, and in particular to Douglas Gurney both for his excellent management and for providing such great weather!

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