



THE MALLET

Quarterly Publication of the Chatswood Croquet Club
APRIL 2010

YOUR EDITOR SAYS...

A great deal of variety in this edition of 'The Mallet'. I am sure you will find it entertaining.

The Stan Hall Cup Final is reported in detail, including the croquet and social aspects of it. The bad news is that our wonderful chef is moving to Melbourne. His farewell menu at the Stan Hall Cup was just outstanding. We will need another chef as a matter of urgency. Please let Joan Booth know if you want us to try your hand, perhaps at the next President's Day!

After watching a few Stan Hall matches I thought we had to re-visit Using Bisques, and Ian Plummer from Oxford University has kindly obliged. Very clear and instructive.

Did you know that Sextuples are practised at CCC every week! We knew that was coming after watching Rob Fulford doing 10 septuples in Lawn 1 (Fulford Lawn?) during the Australian National Championships in 2006.

Not only that, Gateball is part of CCC life now. A very successful trial day and now we play the game with the tiny mallets and wide hoops every Monday afternoon!

And, Surprise Surprise! A report on Croquet in Russia by Yuri Ilyukhin. He is promoting the game in Moscow, where he lives, and through his web site to Mother Russia. You will see Yuri playing croquet in the snow!

Enjoy your magazine.

YOUR LETTERS [My email address: rencoret@optushome.com.au]

Dear Rudy,

In this, the January 2010 issue of the Mallet, you have managed a wonderful balance between, club news & information, desirable croquet skills to be mastered by all of us, as well as helpful hints from Lawrie in Lawn Order.

I know that all of us who have known Tony Bradshaw for several years will be so delighted that you have re-introduced him to us in a very special way. I can actually hear him laughing when he reads some parts of the article about himself.

Rudy, you are to be congratulated, on this first presentation of our CCC Mallet for 2010, along with all that you have done for CCC in 2009.

May the goodwill that you have engendered continue well into 2010 & beyond.

Kind regards,

Pat.

Goed gedaan, jonge man! Ik heb het gelezen en het is uitstekend!

All this means in the language of the Pays-Bas: The new Mallet makes excellent Xmas reading - well done! I've read it and it is excellent!

My best wishes for an excellent 2010.

Martyn

YOUR PRESIDENT SAYS...

We have had a busy quarter, lots of things are happening in our Club. You have read about some of them in the March Committee News flyer. My Committee has been superb. We really enjoy our meetings. The six of us are so different, so it is unavoidable to hear new ideas cropping up every month. Delegation is vital for us, not only within the Committee but involving other members in the running of our dear Club.

I am sure you have noticed the improvement of our lawns. Our gratitude to Alison, Ted and Robert. You have done a sterling job. We are controlling the kikuyu runners on lawns 2 and 3. Spray has been used but thanks to our members for pulling those runners out.

Alan is organising the powdercoating of our hoops. The painting of the hoops 1 and 5 crossbars is a bit tricky as the paint does not stick at the beginning. We will persist until our hoops are perfect. It seems to me that the conditions of the lawns and hoops are the best indications about the standards of a croquet club.

We have a new web site! You will find it at [www.http.chastwoodcroquet.org.au](http://www.chastwoodcroquet.org.au). We are very grateful to the vital contribution of David Archer, a regular member of our Gold Invitationals. His advice was invaluable and he is going to help us to maintain it. We would love to hear your opinions about it.

One of our main concerns have been the promotion of CCC with a view to increasing our membership. Delegation has been at work here too. Neil Hardie's report and advice has been extremely useful. The new web site is part of it, so is the introduction of Gateball. Pat and Martyn have been the great movers in the introduction of this variety of croquet. Pat is also designing flyers to spread the word about our Club. I have contacted University of Technology, Sydney, as we are the 'local' croquet club for their Lindfield Campus.

Martyn Prins have worked hard using his computer expertise in drawing all the annual calendars of our Club life. They are reported in 'The Mallet' and our new web site. Martyn is also involved in the organisation of the Chatswood Open Tournament to be held in June.

The sound advices and encouragement of Margaret and the dedication of Alan have impressed me greatly. Not only that, Joan is attending a computer course to serve you and our Club. I am very grateful indeed to all the members of my Committee, for their commitment (sic!), and especially for their camaraderie and goodwill.

STAN HALL FINAL DAY Saturday February 20th

What a great day we all had. Perfect weather and good croquet of Lydia and Alan. Somebody had to win, Lydia. Congratulations Alan.
But the main thing was the wonderful and happy atmosphere we had. CCC at its friendly best!
Superb food prepared by our wonderful Chef Harley and excellent wines to go with it.
The photos will give you an idea what a great final that was.



Le Referee



Les Champions



Le Chef



L'atmosphère de l'amitié



FAREWELL HARLEY!

Harley Antill left our Club in a blaze of glory after the Stan Hall Cup Twilight Barbeque. He planned the scene for the gathering from making the commencement time half an hour later than other years, to the several courses of delicious food on skewers.

It was memorable evening, just relaxing on chairs around the barbeque, enjoying a few wines and lots of good chat and laughs.

Thank you Harley! We wish you the best that life can offer you in Melbourne.

Joan Booth.

STAN HALL CUP FINAL CROQUET REPORT by Lawrie Griffiths

FINAL OF THE STAN HALL CUP

The final of the Stan Hall Cup tournament for 2010 was held on 20 February. It was a bright, sunny afternoon, warm, but with a pleasant cooling breeze. The finalists were Lydia Mitchell and Alan Crapp. Although all matches in the Stan Hall Cup are handicap games, both players had the same handicap so there were no bisques given. As the games are for 22 points the first hoop in order was No. 3. Alan won the toss and elected to play first; Lydia chose to play Black and Blue.

Alan played Yellow from B baulk to the W boundary near Corner II and Lydia played Blue from A baulk also to the W boundary. Both players then played their second ball from the same baulks as before and again to the W boundary. Alan's balls were close together but Lydia, perhaps attempting to roquet Blue, had her balls well separated. Alan then played Red onto Yellow and in the croquet stroke rolled both balls towards Hoop 3. Lydia played Blue towards Black but did not roquet. Her balls were then joined up but this may have been a mistake as it is rarely advantageous to join up if your opponent is already joined up. However Alan failed in his attempt to capitalise on it.

He played Yellow, roqueted Red and made Hoop 3; he then roqueted Red again and split-shot Red to near Hoop 4 while going towards Lydia's balls. He roqueted Black but in the croquet stroke failed to get a rush on Blue which he simply roqueted, and went to Red. He hit Red with Yellow and placed Yellow as though to take croquet but he had roqueted Red immediately after making Hoop 3, something he had apparently forgotten, and so it was not live. Play was stopped and the position rectified.

In subsequent play, Alan roqueted Black and then Red with Yellow but failed to gain a useful position, giving Lydia the chance to open her score by making Hoop 3 with Black, using Alan's balls. However she was unable to develop a break and in his next turn Alan's possible nervousness betrayed him again into playing a wrong ball after achieving a favourable position to have made Hoop 3 with Red. At this stage then, the position was just 1 all and two turns later Lydia brought all four balls into play in a promising sequence which netted her Hoop 3 with Blue to put her in the lead, 2-1.

However, Alan then apparently overcame his nervousness and in a 3-ball break with Black and Blue, playing Yellow, he made Hoops 4, 5 and 6. A period of play totalling 14 turns of little interest then ensued with no long breaks and only two hoops scored; Hoop 4 by Blue and Hoop 3 by Red. Then Lydia, playing Black, rushed Blue into Corner Square III where Yellow was already a corner ball and so she had a cannon which she exploited to gain Hoops 4 and 5. Then Alan played a 4-ball break with Yellow, scoring five hoops, from 1-back to Penultimate.

In the remaining eleven turns of the game, some interesting developments looked likely but then fizzled out. First, Alan made Hoop 4 with Red off Yellow and was able to roquet Black and Blue as well for a potential 4-ball break but was able to bag only Hoop 5 before it broke

down. Three turns later Lydia made Hoop 6 with Black after setting up in front of the hoop in her previous turn. Finally, with the two-hour time limit looming, she was able to add 1-back and 2-back to Black's total. In his final turn, during which time expired, Alan made Hoop 6 with Red. In her extra turn in the extension period, Lydia played Blue and roqueted Red but sent the ball out in the croquet stroke, bringing the match to an end.

Alan scored 9 hoops for Yellow and 4 for Red making a total of 13 while Lydia made 2 with Blue and 6 with Black or a total of 8. So Alan won the Cup for the second year in succession.

OUR NEW CLUB WEB SITE <http://www.chatswoodcroquet.org.au/>

As part of our promotion programme we have created a new web site for our Club. We discussed it at length in our Committee and decided to ask David Archer to help us setting it up. This was accomplished very rapidly in a few days ('the fastest website I ever created', said David). He recommended a hosting company with a plan with quite favourable terms for our Club. David has been so patient with us, accepting our changes after it was set-up. Thank you very much, David.

The site has been well received. Ian Plummer, with his great web site Oxford Croquet had this to say: 'It is excellent that you have produced a web site so quickly! I am used to clubs taking months to decide things and get them implemented. The site is fine – although a psychiatrist would probably have theories on the red writing on a black background. Ian had to be told that cherry red is our Club colour and that psychiatrist consultation was not required!

John Prince: Your site looks very good, well done, just the right amount of information for attracting new players and a most welcoming photo on the Home page, although I did notice the mallet! Pat, the photographer, handled me her weapon before she took the shot and that was noticed by JP!

So there we are. We have the site, where you will find all the Club events and also contacts links within the Club and to outside sites. Please use it and let us know what you think of it. Not too many suggestions at this stage, though, we do not want to upset David Archer!

SEXTUPLE PEELS AT CCC

You may remember Rob Fulford doing 10 sextuples peels in Lawn 1 (the Fulford Lawn) during the Australian National Championships in 2006.

The sextuple, the most challenging croquet manoeuvre, has rubbed on to some of our Club members. For the last year or so Mark Callan and your scribe have been trying sextuples every Thursday morning. We alternate shots and point to each other the exact position the balls have to have. It is such a confusing job just remembering what hoop you have to run and which is the one to send the peelee through. We are getting there, though, and at least we know quite well where the balls have to be. I can assure you that sextuples are the best practice you could ever have, especially regarding long rushes and accurate balls positions.



On Thursday February 25th Alison Sharpe and Alix Verge joined Mark and myself on our Weekly sextuple venture. The ladies managed to finish with a straight triple. All the manoeuvres involved were discussed in detail and we all learned a lot from each other.

The photo shows Mark making sure that Alison's ball finishes where expected while Alix looks on.

COMPETITIONS OF THE NEXT QUARTER

GOLD CHAMPS Entries Open: May 15th Entries Close: June 1st Play Starts: June 2nd
SILVER CHAMPS Entries Open: April 1st Entries Close: April 15th Play Starts: April
ROSE H PENNY TROPHIES Entries Open: May 27th Entries Close: June 24th Play Starts:
July 3rd

CORRECTION.

In the January 2010 Mallet it was not mentioned that Kay Sheather was the Runner-Up of the Golf Croquet Competition. Please accept my apologies, Kay.

THE CHATSWOOD OPEN by Martyn Prins

This year the Committee has decided to run an open handicap tournament from 4 to 6 June. The Open will accommodate 16 players over 4 divisions, ranging in handicap from 0 to 20. Play will be advanced in the top 3 divisions, and ordinary for the 4th division. An entry fee of \$50 will allow us to offer prize money for the top 2 players in each division.

The tournament will be open for entry from mid-April onwards, either by entry form or email advice to Martyn at martyn@prins.com.

AUSTRALIAN MENS AND WOMENS OPENS - MARCH 2010

The annual Mens and Womens Opens are being held in Cairnlea, Melbourne, at the moment along with the Gold Medal and Interstate Cup. The Gold Medal has been won by Adelaide-based Kiwi Paddy Chapman.

Here is a brief overview of Chatswood members involved in the Opens.

Alison Sharpe: beat Jannine Hawker 2-0, then lost to Rosie Graham 1-2; 5 wins from 7 in the Y event

Alan Walsh: beat Keith McLeod 2-0 and then Ian Bassett 2-1 after a pegdown and long battle; lost 0-26TP 6-26TP to Robert Fletcher in the Y event

Martyn Prins; beat Jock Capobianco 26-9 26TP-1; lost to Kevin Beard 0-2; 3 wins in the Plate, including 4 peels in one game and a second triple peel in another

Mike Hughes: lost 0-2 to Albert Rutten; 2 wins in the Plate

Neil Hardie: lost 0-2 to Paddy Chapman; 2 wins in the Plate

Gareth Bushill: lost to Malcolm Fletcher; 4 wins in the Plate, including a notable victory over State player Ken Edwards

Congratulations to all, we are proud of you. Especially to Alison, Number 10 in Australia, and To Martyn, two competition Triples!. Well done (Ed.)

PRESIDENT'S DAY will be held on Saturday May 15th. Please mark it in your Diary.

IMPROVING YOUR GAME: USING YOUR BISQUES by Ian Plummer

I watched a number of handicap matches at our Stan Hall Tournament. What I saw quite often was that players with a fenceful of bisques were not using them properly and wasted wonderful opportunities to get the innings and eventually win the game. We have discussed in previous Mallets this important aspect of handicap games tactics, but I thought it would not go amiss to including it in your magazine for this quarter.

Ian Plummer from Oxford University has kindly allowed me to print this for you. His ideas are so clearly expressed and easy to understand. We all need to review this when we expect to play somebody with a lower handicap. This is particularly the case in Australia where handicap games and competitions are not very popular. To play a better player is a terrific opportunity to excel yourself with your tactics and to learn from your opponent.

USING BISQUES by Ian Plummer

Bisques are free turns awarded to the weaker player in handicap play. The weaker player is given the number of bisques which is the difference in the handicaps of the two players. A bisque can be taken at the end of any turn whether it is a normal or bisque turn. Bisque turn can immediately follow bisque turn. In every new turn all the other balls can be re-roqueted again. The only constraint is that you have to continue playing with the same coloured ball. There are also half bisques, these are bisque turns in which no points can be scored for any balls. They are very useful for positioning balls prior to taking a full bisque.

1. The only way to cope with a lower handicap player is not to give them a chance and, when you have to give them the innings, make it as difficult as possible for them.
2. As you will be receiving bisques you should put the opposition in to play if you win the toss. To win you are going to have to maintain a four-ball break to the peg. By going second all the balls will be on the lawn at the end of the fourth turn, when you can start to build your break. If you let them in second then there is the chance of them hitting in fourth turn and gaining many hoops.
3. You must prepare yourself to build breaks by taking bisques. You must play knowing that you are going to take bisques. As an example you do not shoot hard at a ball if you intend to take a bisque should you miss - you will end up far away and could waste the bisque if you subsequently miss the return roquet.
4. You cannot afford to 'get used to the lawn' before taking your bisques - this gives your opponent the chance to do the same! You must start to take your bisques at the earliest opportunities.
5. There is a saying that it is possible to build a four-ball break from any position of balls on the lawn using only two bisques. This is almost right but there are some situations ...
6. How you use your bisques depends on how many you have. They can be used to attack, repair and defend, preferably in that order. We start by assuming that you have 10 [bisques] or so.

7. Attack.

To build a break using bisques the general recipe is: identify a hoop ball and a bisque ball. A hoop ball is the ball which will be sent accurately to the hoop you want as a pioneer during the first bisque turn. The bisque ball is the ball you end up next to at the end of the first bisque turn ready to start the second turn. Unfortunately you are going to have to think and solve the problem as to how to make the break from the scattering of balls you are initially presented with.

- 7.1. A typical start of game with 10 bisques could be; the opponent lays up on the East boundary, you knock your first ball into the centre of the lawn - because you know that you

will be taking bisques later. The opponent shoots at their partner ball and misses, you then shoot at the opponent's balls. The ball in the centre of the lawn is to make building your break with bisques easier and leave your opponent with a long shot which, if they miss, will feed the break.

7.2. We'll assume that you miss in the fourth turn. You now take your first bisque and roquet one of the opponent balls. One of these will be your bisque ball. It is a good idea, but by no means essential to have your bisque ball just off a boundary - you will see why shortly. Let us make this first ball the bisque ball - if we play a small roll we will be able to move it from the boundary and place our striker's ball near to the other opponent's ball to get a rush anywhere into the middle of the lawn. This ball would be suitable as your hoop ball. We now rush to the middle of the lawn.

7.3 The aim of the first bisque turn is to accurately stop shot the hoop ball to be a perfect [receiver] on your hoop. From the centre of the lawn we stop shot the opponent to hoop 1 and end up anywhere near our partner [pivot] ball. This we roquet and place in a position useful for the four-ball break. We can stop it up to hoop 2 as a pioneer, or leave it in the middle as a pivot. After doing this we shoot back to our bisque ball so as to get a rush on it to bring it into the break. In summary, in the first bisque turn we have placed an accurate hoop ball and returned to another (bisque) ball leaving ourselves a rush into the lawn.

7.4 By leaving the bisque ball near a boundary we can] shoot off behind it with little care for the strength of the shot, whilst getting the correct position when it is brought back on to the yard line. We are now ready to take our second bisque and start the break.

7.5. Had we put a ball to hoop 2 in the previous bisque turn then we would get the rush on the bisque ball to the centre of the lawn to make it the pivot. Alternatively had we already got a pivot we would plan to rush the bisque ball to the centre of the lawn and stop it to hoop 2 whilst going to pivot. Once at pivot you take-off to your pioneer at your hoop and start the four-ball break.

7.6. Having established the break you use bisques to repair any accidents - however you can gain full value from these bisques by leaving off from the break pattern, shepherding the other balls into accurate positions then resume the break.

8. Repair.

We have discussed how to use bisques attackingly above, but some inevitably end up being used for repairing a break which has gone wrong.

8.1. The time to consider the use of a bisque is your penultimate [next-to-last] shot of a turn.

8.2. A frequent mistake is not to take a deep breath and look around the lawn when you make a mistake. The first (incorrect) thought is to repair the damage that your mallet has just inflicted.

8.3. You see frequently players roll into a hoop and fail to get into a hoop running position. The line of options you see tried are, starting from the brainless to the more sophisticated:

- a). Stab the ball at the hoop then take the bisque.
- b). Knock the ball in front of the hoop then take the bisque to run it.
- c). Play the ball to get a fresh rush on your pioneer then take the bisque to re-approach the hoop.
- d). Obtain a rush on a remote ball, take a bisque rushing it into position then take-off to your hoop and re-approach the hoop.

8.4. You should generally look up when you make a mistake and review the whole lawn. You should look for the balls which are out of your break, say at a boundary. You would get full value from your bisque by aiming at that boundary ball intending to get a useful rush on it. You will then take your bisque, rush the boundary ball into the lawn, then take-off to your

reception ball at the hoop at where you broke down. There may also be the opportunity to go via the other ball to the reception ball giving you the opportunity of also improving its position.

9. Defence.

You will on occasion be forced to use a bisque to prevent an opponent gaining an advantage. A good example of this is where you use a bisque to create a good leave. This could involve a cross-wiring. A good leave is worth a break.

9.1. At the start of a turn, when faced with a joined-up opponent, you should aim to get both of their balls away from the boundaries - otherwise they will just rejoin in the next turn. You should aim at them, then use a bisque to rush one of them away from the boundary. You then take-off back to the other one and play a croquet shot to place it in a position useful to you - typically at your hoop. You are now probably one bisque away from a four- ball break. Even if you do not have bisques to spare you have prevented your opponent joining-up again.

10. The above paragraphs have assumed that you have an ample supply of bisques. When you have a small number left you should always weigh up the power of keeping just one bisque standing. This will still modify your opponent's tactics. They will not be able to set up easy breaks when they know that if they fail the bisque will let you in. It will also deter them from joining-up too close to their partner ball, etc. In short it will cause them to play tactics which make their game more difficult.

11. It is VITAL to realise when you are facing the prospect of playing your last turn. That is, from which position can your opponent stand a good chance of pegging out? This detail is crucial in dictating whether you must use your bisques for all you are worth, or chance getting another turn.

12. Remember also that bisques cannot be used in the extension period after Time is called in a Timed Game. If Time has been called during your turn you may not use bisques at the end of that turn. If Time was called during your opponent's turn then you may not use bisques in your following turn. These turns are the extension period. If both sides still have the same number of points at the end of these turns, then bisques can be used in subsequent turns starting with the player in whose turn time was called. Therefore you should plan some intense bisque activity just before Time is called. There are no prizes for having any bisques left at the end of a game you have lost!

MEMBERSHIP PROMOTION

In recent years CCC has not been very active in attempting to recruit new members, who had not been previously exposed to our sport.

The present Committee believes that we need to reinvigorate interest in attracting new members to the club.

The first stage in this process has been to produce an attractive Flyer, which will be ready for distribution shortly. In it, we promote Association & Golf croquet as well as our latest mallet sport, Gateball.

Many of you are aware that several photographs have been taken at the club in recent days and from these the best will be selected for the Flyer.

The new Flyers will be available to all current members to distribute within your interest groups, on your Community Notice Boards, or anywhere you think there could be a spark of interest in any one of the 3 Mallet Sports, now on offer at CCC.

Those of you who reside in the Willoughby Municipality, will be aware that many of our fellow residents are from Asian countries, where Gateball is played by several million people. We are hopeful of attracting some of these people as future members.

So friends, let us all look to attracting more new friends to the Croquet circle.

Pat Nosworthy.

MEASURING LAWN SPEEDS AT CCC

Lawn Speed is measured in Seconds (Plummers) being the time taken by a ball hit by the mallet to reach precisely the opposite N/S boundary, that is to cover a distance of 35 yards. All you need is one player to hit the ball and the other to read the time taken with a time-clock. We want to encourage you to do it. It is fun and useful.



We intend to measure the lawn speeds on some Thursday mornings and enter our observation on the board. Of course you should expect a lot of variation depending on the Season, time of the day and the length of the grass.

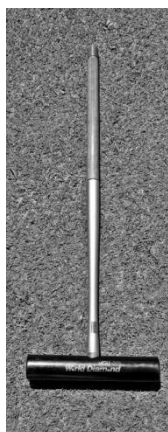
But, as our lawns are getting better, we think it will be a useful information for our playing members.

The photo shows Mark Callan timing the Plummers.
!

PULLING KIKUYU RUNNERS OF LAWNS 2 & 3

I am sure you have all noted the invading kikuyu runners on the edges of Lawns 2 and 3. I hope you have also noticed a great improvement lately after herbicidal spray. But the best way to control them is just to pull them out, which is not a difficult job to do. If you are the outplayer on those lawns, can I please ask for your help. I can assure you that to pull out a really long runner will give you great satisfaction, while your opponent is going round with a long break. Better than moaning your missed roquet!

GATEBALL TRY DAY by Martyn Prins



Sunday 7 March saw the Club holding its first Gateball Come-and-Try Day. It was pleasing to see at least 15 people attending with some not having played the game at all.

Our special guests were the four coaches from Canberra who had sacrificed their normal Sunday match to come and teach us the game.

Two lawns were set up (within our lawn 1) and teams selected at random after an initial talk. The coaches' knowledge and enthusiasm was infectious and we had two most enjoyable hours on the grass.

It is the Club's intention to continue promoting the game and investing in some better equipment. Also after more feedback from the players, we hope to allocate some fixed Club times on the calendar. Members are already playing informally on Monday afternoons at 1pm.

IMPORTANT CHANGES TO THE ACA'S ASSOCIATION CROQUET HANDICAP SYSTEM

As there will be no distinction between short- and long-running events any more, handicap changes may now occur at the end of any game.

This - and other ACA changes to the handicapping system - will be effective from 15 March 2010.

Full details are available from the ACA website at www.croquet-australia.com.au.

PLAYING KPOKET IN RUSSIA (КРОКЕТ В РОССИИ)



John Prince introduced me to Yuri Ilyukhin (Юрий Илюхин) from <http://www.croquet-club.com/>

I asked Yuri about information on Croquet in his country and he, very kindly, sent me the following, based on his research done at the Russia State Library (Leninka)

Yuri consulted a number of books, including "Croquet: Guidelines for Educators and Youth" by MD EM Dementieva, 1911; "Croquet: Garden Game: Guidelines and Rules of the Game" by Yuri Petrov, 1913; "Croquet: The General Rules of the Game" by M. Volkov, 1916.

Россию крокет пришел из Англии в середине 19 века, примерно в 1875 году, That means Croquet came to Russia from England in the mid-19th century, around 1875.

Count Leo Tolstoy was a keen player and the game is described in his famous novel Anna Karenina, written in 1875-76. In 1876 IS Turgenev wrote his poem 'Croquet in Windsor'.

The game became quite popular, especially among the rich and royalty. 'There is no decent school, that has not introduced croquet' - so wrote the Russian newspapers of the time The czar family played croquet. The game was played in lawns of private homes. Up until 1917 'croquet remained a game of aristocrats'. They played 'Russian Croquet' consisting on team games starting from opposite sides of the lawn from one peg to the opponent's peg and then back to their own peg. In the middle of the lawn there was a 'mousetrap' (double hoop) and roquets were only allowed after running it. Among the famous croquet players were Feodor Chaliapin (bass singer with an amazing voice), Anna Pavlova (dancer), Levitan (artist) Repin (artist), Lev Tolstoy (writer), Mendeleev (chemist), Chekhov (writer), Ulyanov - Lenin (revolutionary) was an 'avid croquet player'. Even Yuri Gagarin, the first astronaut, played our game. Croquet was popular until World War II. Presently, not much croquet is played in Russia but 'it is reviving and popularised by enthusiasts'. There is a 'inter-regional' league in St. Petersburg where they play by its own rules of Russian Croquet.

Yuri created www.croquet-club.com in 2006. Association Croquet will be introduced in 2010. There is only one supplier of croquet equipment in Russia.



To promote croquet in Russia, Yuri has 'decided to hold a photo contest. The participation of foreign players will make the event more visible and meaningful in Russia <http://www.croquet-club.com/events/rover2010>. I invite you and all your friends', he says.

The photo shows Yuri playing croquet the Russian way.

You can contact Yuri at croquetrussian@gmail.com. He will love to hear from CCC members. You can write to him in English unless you know the Cyrillic alphabet!

CROQUET AT HORSHAM by Lowana Chapman



I spent last Christmas in Horsham and my friend there said as a young child she used to accompany her granny to the croquet club and watch the women play.

She has now sent me some interesting information re the Horsham Croquet Club ...a little of which follows. If anyone is interested I have left more information in a folder by the library shelf but please leave it in the club house.

In the 1920's, perhaps even earlier, croquet was played on gravel at the rear of the Temperance hall in Horsham.

Some players decided to look for a more suitable area..others stayed with the gravel..for how long I don't know.

The 1st general meeting was held on 8th May 1923 and after much fund raising, by October 1924, the new lawns adjacent to the Botanic Gardens were ready for play. Visitors were charged 6d. for a game of 40 minutes. By 1926 the annual subscription was 2 guineas.

Games played on special days were Dog's Hind Leg, New End of Game, Skittles, Ring Croquet, Hoop and Rings and Clock Pegging. (does any one know how to play Dog's Hind Leg?).

Initially membership totalled about 15; over the years it grew to 40 but during the war, by 1942, membership was down to 25. In October 1956 70 women attended the start of the new season, opened by the Mayoress.

These days the club currently has 49 members who play Association Croquet on special tournament days. Golf Croquet is the preferred game of most players. During the warmest months Tuesdays play is at 7pm and Thursdays and Saturdays at 8.30am. Membership fees are now \$105 and green fees \$3.

If anyone is travelling to Horsham with their Mallet in their bag, I am sure the members would welcome them for a game.

Lowana tells us about some friends....Catherine Vaux, Esma Dempster and Anita Fritschy.

I spoke to Catherine recently, she is still her cheerful bright self though not playing croquet any longer, but she may come to visit on one of our special days and sends her best wishes to all.

Esma is in the San Antonio da Padova Village at Ryde. Her niece who I spoke to said she is very cheerful and though her memory not so good, she always welcomes visitors.

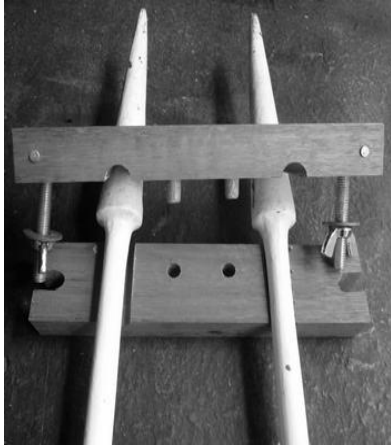
Anita who I saw recently is in Lourdes at Killara and would enjoy a visit from any of her old friends. Anita's daughter Sonia visits her Mum very regularly.

Thank you, Lowana. Please give our love to Esma, Anita and Catherine next time you see them.

A PRESIDENTIAL WATCH FOR CCC

One of the most entertaining books of our Club library is David Appleton's 'The Lighter Side of Serious Croquet'. You must read it, it is a wonderful book.

The construction of a 'Watch' is described in detail on pages 62 and 63 of David's book.



The Watch is basically a 'wooden appliance to clamp hoops'. With the hoops clamped the setting process becomes very easy indeed. You place the block just above the carrots clamp it with the butterfly nuts and knock the hoop into the ground with the rubber mallet. All your hoops will be set to exactly the same width in no time. Isn't that clever?

With the expert help of my wood turned friend Keith, we have made a Watch.

It is my pleasure to present it to my Club. You will find it on the left side storage locker, next to the hoops.

A MIRACLE MALLET by Kevin Carter

A funny thing happened to me today. I was out in the countryside when all of a sudden the sky went dark above my head and a great voice boomed out from above: "It's God here. For all of your adult life you have denied my existence and ignored me. Now I shall conduct a miracle to show how wrong you were. I shall allow you one wish, which I shall satisfy, and then you will have proof that I am real."

Well, this brightened my day somewhat and I gave some thought to his offer before making my decision. "I would like you to provide me a croquet mallet that would never miss long-shots or blob hoops".

God seemed a little miffed by this seemingly trivial request; clearly our game does not figure highly in the list of celestial pursuits (though it is said that GC is a feature of purgatory). But he had a think about it, then said: "Mmm; it would have to be made of a completely new material; in fact, the design would be revolutionary; I might even have to rewrite the laws of physics, which would be tedious ... you have asked for a tricky one there". He went on: "Can you really not think of something else; something of benefit to the whole of mankind".

I had a think and came up with another idea. "I wish that all men could better understand women, that we can know how they feel inside; why they cry but say nothing is wrong, why they are frequently silent and tight-lipped; how we men can make women truly happy".

God replied: "Now, this mallet - what weight would you like it?".

