



Running Hoops

The Newsletter of Kenilworth Croquet

October 2016

This edition of RH contains reports of matches against other clubs, our club matches and other items hopefully of interest.

There is also some 'members' letters to Marj and some helpful answers. - Editor

But First an article taken, by Irene Rogers, from the:

THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS SEPT. 28, 1872

THE LAST CROQUET OF THE SEASON.

Summer is pleasant, when the sun shines mildly, and the grassy lawn is a smooth carpet of living green. Croquet is very pleasant, if one happens to be a young man or a young lady, like those whom our Artist has sketched, with a gentle inclination to each other's company, with an equal degree of skill and taste for that pretty open-air pastime. Pleasant things, however, are bound to come to an end; so it is with the croquet season, and so it is with the agreeable visit to the suburban villa, which has brought these young people together. Is it so, or have they met elsewhere? Now that we look more attentively at the background of the scene, we perceive that it is not the pleasure-ground of a private mansion, but the trimly-kept field at Wimbledon, belonging to the All England Croquet Club, a view of which appeared in our Journal two years ago. Notwithstanding this comparative publicity of the situation, the players at so late a period of the season feel comfortably left to themselves. They have plenty of space, elbow-room and ankle-room, if we may so speak, for the performance of dexterous feats in the game; and the comments of those unemployed girls sitting under the penthouse cannot be heard at this distance. Miss Adeline, with uplifted mallet, is approaching her own ball, while she meditates the stroke which shall quietly send it through the nearest loop and leave it in a convenient place for passing the next stage when her turn comes round again. But it will be exposed to some danger in the mean time from an intervening ball of her opponent's, which may drive her a long way aside. Young Mr. Frank, cigar in hand, affects to be watching her play in a careless manner; but, if we can interpret the look on his face, there is something else in his mind. He is just now thinking what he shall say to her at home in the evening, when they may get half an hour by themselves, and he hopes she may be disposed to listen to a very important proposal.



And as our summer season draws to close, remember our lawns will remain open throughout the winter; subject to the usual winter limitations in order to protect the grass.

There will also be an opportunity to relive the summer season when we get together for the annual presentation evening at Haigh's one evening in late January or early February.

Situation vacant. Gordon is no longer able to fulfil the position as Editor of Running Hoops.

The job is to periodically compile the newsletter, edit and forward articles to the club PR person. Anyone who would like more information about this interesting and enjoyable position please talk to Adrian or Gordon.

Overheard snippet of a conversation:

'I once stayed up all night wondering where the sun went at dusk; then it dawned on me'

REPORT OF AC v HIMLEY/STOURBRIDGE JULY 5th 2016

It did feel as though summer had arrived as we began our fourth and final AC match in the West Midlands League. And the lawns looked truly impressive with the grass having been cut and the white lines re-done earlier in the morning.

As usual the 'dynamic (!) duo' of Alan and Phillip contested the morning doubles, unusually conceding 7 bisques, so did not have the challenge of deciding when to take bisques! However there were still lengthy discussions as to what tactics to use, but these discussions together with some accurate play from time to time led to them to set up a sizeable lead. Eventually their opponents felt the need to use their bisques but the home pair finished comfortable winners, on time, by 8 hoops.

Cliff played the morning singles and had a slender lead once his opponent had used up all of his 7.5 bisques. However his opponent, without bisques, raised his game and narrowly won +2 on time. So the half-time score was 1-1 with the three afternoon singles matches to play.

Phillip set up a slender lead, but his opponent, finally using his precious bisques, was able to turn the game round and with time running out won by 1 hoop! So Kenilworth needed to win the remaining two singles matches.

Cliff played an outstanding break early on and this break eventually proved decisive. When Cliff pegged out at the second attempt Alan was comfortably leading in his game. Showing great concentration and with some impressive break-building Alan won his game soon afterwards by the convincing margin +14.

So the match was won 3-2 and we now have to wait for other matches to be played to see if we retain the Cup that we won in 2015.



AC MATCH IN WML v EDGBASTON SUNDAY 26 JUNE 2016

The match did not start well for Kenilworth. Cliff played the morning singles and encountered Tony Whately in excellent form, hardly missing any roquets and ambitiously taking on challenging hoops successfully. Cliff had a few chances but needing more lawn time to gauge the pace of the lawn was not able to capitalise on them and lost -22 after 90 mins play.

The Kenilworth pair, renowned 'faffers', Alan & Philip were receiving 6 bisques but having not made good use of three of these precious bisques were trailing the opponents by 8 hoops with time running out. However Alan used the 3 remaining bisques to make a timely lengthy break that brought them to one behind. Philip then ran one hoop before time was called. There then followed a nail-biting conclusion in which Philip scored the 'golden hoop' so the match score at lunch was 1-1.

In the afternoon singles matches Cliff, having at last found his form, soon secured a commanding lead against the Edgbaston top player Ian Slater. He maintained a strong hold on the game eventually winning +15.

Kenilworth needed to win just one of the remaining singles matches for victory. Philip had surprised his opponent Henry Fellowes, a past stalwart of Kenilworth Croquet Club, by setting up a commanding lead without using any of his six bisques. Then, with the rainy weather setting in, he donned his infamous 'lab-coat' and set about using these bisques to bring his back ball to the peg and victory +18 soon followed.



Alan in his usual dogged fashion played extremely cautiously to stop his opponent mounting a break and eventually won decisively +12 on time.

So a most satisfactory day for Kenilworth with a final score-line of 4-1.

WMF GC League Result away v Shrewsbury Friday 15th July

Their lawns played well in spite of some early light rain. The handicaps indicated some superiority on our part but it came as a surprise when we won all 4 singles games in the first round.

The second round also went to Kenilworth, 3-1 with the total hoops count even more in our favour. Was it because we were getting used to their lawns? maybe, because in the third round we did even better, winning all 4 singles games with a total points score of 28 – 11. So by lunchtime we had already won the match with 11 game points.

After lunch they put up much more resistance and only Mervyn managed to win. In the doubles Mervyn and Pauline won the game played for 2 points, while Philip and Cliff narrowly lost the other doubles game for 1 point.

Mervyn Harvey had 4 singles wins, Philip Wood and Cliff Daniel had 3, and Pauline Harvey had one, oddly enough against their best player.

The final score of 14-5 gives Kenilworth a bonus match point, so we get maximum points from the match. Thanks go to the opposition for their hospitality and graciousness in defeat.

REPORT OF THE AC MATCH V OXFORD UNIVERSITY ACC JULY 16 2016

After considerable hassle and uncertainty this match was eventually played, in glorious sunshine, at University Park Oxford.

Kenilworth was playing in this event having won the West Midlands League in 2015.

All games are played under handicap rules and include one doubles game (using the two top players from each team) and six singles games.

In the morning, Cliff and Philip played against the University top pair in which they received 3.5 bisques. Early in this game Philip took a bisque to set up a 'four ball break' and soon reached hoop 5, seemingly in good control. However through extreme bad luck found himself to be 'wired' from the pioneer then used 2 more bisques to continue the break and reached the 'three-back' hoop. Then, following an error by the opponents Cliff rapidly progressed to hoop 4, where, bizarrely, he lifted the striker's ball high and wide and so failed to run the hoop. However, later in the game, Cliff managed a decisive 6 hoop break successfully negotiating this slightly tricky hoop in both directions and soon afterwards Philip completed victory +16.

In his morning singles match Ray found his opponent to be in excellent form. Although Ray used 3 of his 4 bisques to good effect he eventually lost -14 with his 4th bisque unused.

Alan needed to be patient during his morning singles game for his opponent, a beginner, received 12 bisques!! However his patience was rewarded and, in his dogged fashion, Alan completed a win +10 on time.

So the half-time score was 2-1 to the visitors with the 4 singles matches to play in the afternoon.

Cliff played a very capable opponent with a handicap of -0.5 and was the first to finish, losing -18.

Alan lost soon afterwards but quite overwhelmed by his opponent who played outstandingly well to win +25 having achieved two lengthy breaks, one of 11 and the other of 12 hoops.

So Kenilworth needed to win both of the remaining singles games to progress in this knock-out competition.

Philip played a fine tactical game, always making it difficult for his opponent to set up a break. He proceeded with some excellent hoop-running and long roquets to build up a demoralising lead and eventually won +23.



All attention was now focused upon Ray's game. Once his opponent had used up all of his bisques Ray was quite adventurous and did not mind leaving his two balls close together in the middle of the lawn, often quite close to a hoop required by one of his opponent's balls and aided by his excellent swinging action, (much envied by other players!) continued to make long roquets often oblivious to the consequences of missing!. With time running out and both balls on the peg Ray calmly made yet another very long roquet and completed an excellent win +19 to rapturous applause from the spectators!



What ever it takes!!

July AC Tournament

The second of the club's annual two day Association Croquet Tournament was held on Wednesday 20th and Thursday 21st July. Some Last minute withdrawals reduced the numbers to six and the format was amended so that all six played each other.

Playing croquet on a summer's day is a pleasant pastime unless you choose the hottest two days of the year when there is an advantage to being the out player where you can sit in the shade and watch your opponent swelter in the heat.



On Wednesday Ray Clipson was leading having won all three of his matches with Alan Richardson, Esther Jones and Tony Whateley (both from Edgbaston C.C.) all with two wins. Round four on Thursday morning were key games. Alan and Ray were level when time was called but Alan won the golden hoop so they now both had three wins from four games. At the same time Esther beat Tony to join them on three from four.

The same law that ensures a slice of buttered toast will always land face downwards prevailed as the final round saw all three win their matches to provide a three way tie. To complicate it further, Ray had beaten Esther, Esther had beaten Alan and Alan had beaten Ray so the Manager who incidentally had lost every single game decided to commit suicide, to which Alan dryly commented that "It was not all bad news then" To break the tie the winner would be the player that using a rush from corner 4, a croquet stroke, running hoop one then rushing to hoop two and so on. Esther managed one hoop Ray got through two and almost managed hoop three. Alan then ran three hoops to break the tie and claim the victory.

B CLASS Advanced Association Croquet Tournament

Five Kenilworth members, Adrian, Bill, Peter, Cliff and Philip, were joined by two from Northampton and one from Edgbaston to compete for the B Class trophy for players of handicap 2-8.

After the qualifying rounds, Adrian was the only Kenilworth member to reach the semi-finals although Philip had performed well and earned a handicap reduction to 5.

Adrian progressed to the final with a clear victory over Northampton's Peter Stansfield. The other Semi was very closely fought with Mike Hills taking a good lead over Ian Slater in the early stages but Ian made a good comeback but it was not quite enough, finally succumbing by just three hoops.

The final was another tight affair and could have gone either way. Adrian was ahead on Peg and Rover but Mike came through and pegged out Adrian leaving himself on Peg and 4B. A very accurate roquet by Adrian was prevented when the ball hit a dip in the lawn caused by some recent repairs and flew over the target ball! Mike then unusually blobbed 4B leaving Adrian and easy victory.

A very enjoyable two days croquet with many complements on the state of the lawns – thanks Ray and Idris

SECRETARY'S SHIELD V MIDDLESBOROUGH AUGUST 2016

Having beaten the holders, Oxford University, of this National Competition Kenilworth were faced with the long journey to play the semi-final at Middlesborough.

Our team comprised Cliff, Alan, Ray and Mervyn, playing his very first AC team match, agreed that it would be sensible to stay one night in Middlesborough so that we would not have to face 7 hrs travelling and 7hrs croquet during one day!

We set off from Kenilworth around 6.40 a.m. on Monday 29 August, bank holiday, with a very warm sunny day forecast for the Midlands and the north of England. We were pleased to encounter so little bank holiday traffic on the motorways that we could have a 45 minute comfort stop at the services and still arrive at Middlesborough Croquet Club around 9.45 a.m. in good time for a practice on the lawns before starting our match around 10.45 a.m.

During the morning we were set to play one 'doubles' and two 'singles' games.

Even though Alan & Cliff received 4 bisques they knew that their opponents, with handicaps 0.5 and 2, would be formidable and so it proved to be. The Kenilworth pair did not make the best use of their bisques and also made too many simple errors losing 6-26 after 2 hours play.

Ray made an excellent start in his game, biding his time whilst his opponent squandered 5 of his 6 bisques running only a few hoops in the process. However Ray did not make the most of the situation and when his opponent found some good form, losing 12-26 with about 25 mins left for the game.

Mervyn also made an excellent start to his game. He managed to establish a slight lead without using the 2 bisques that he was entitled to. However, having used his bisques and with only 20 mins of play left, the score was very close indeed. Each player had chances to secure a winning break but squandered opportunities. With time having been called Mervyn came to the lawn trailing by one hoop and proceeded to play very calmly indeed and managed to tie the scores by running 1-back. He then separated his opponent's balls and set himself ready to run 2-back. So the game reached 'golden hoop' situation with the next hoop scored deciding the game. With the Middlesborough player missing the long roquet Mervyn ran 2 back and to the relief of all the Kenilworth team the visitors reached lunch 1-2, needing to win 3 of the afternoon singles games.

Cliff's game was the first to finish. Cliff, after squandering all of his 3.5 bisques, managed to make a pleasing break of 8 hoops, taking his forward ball to 4-back. He then had two excellent chances to set up a decisive break with his backward ball. However opportunities were lost, one with his opponent making a very long roquet and the other with Cliff missing a relatively short roquet. When the top Middlesborough player finally secured victory he confessed that for some considerable time he had feared defeat.

The next game to finish was Ray's which reached a very interesting stage. Ray, behind for much of the game, had managed to reach 'peg' with his forward ball and 'peg out' one of his opponents' balls thereby setting up a 3 ball ending which was entertaining to watch. However the Middlesborough player managed two long roquets in separate turns and was then able to run the few hoops needed by the backward ball and when he won the game the home team had secured an unassailable 4-1 lead.

Mervyn found his opponent to be playing at a standard much better than that indicated by his handicap. So, conceding 4 bisques, he was always facing a difficult challenge and eventually lost 17-22 on time.

In the other game Alan was able to make some impressive breaks to secure a substantial lead but with time running short he made a tactical error of leaving all four balls in open play. When starting his last turn the home player hit a long roquet and then, aided by running a particularly difficult hoop (referred to by one spectator as needing a 'German Chancellor' i.e. an 'angular miracle!'), secured victory by one hoop.

So the final score was 6-1 to the home team, but knowing that they could have been trailing 1-2 at lunch and noting that all four afternoon games had been well contested, readily admitted that the score-line rather flattered them.

WMF GC Match Kenilworth v Edgbaston home Thursday September 1st

The conditions and weather were good and the lawns were fast. On paper, based on handicaps, we were the better side. We won the first round of singles 3 games to 1. The next round was tight at 2 games all. Each of the last two rounds we won 3-1 giving us an unassailable lead in the match at 11 games to 5.

There followed one round of doubles, one game for one point and one game for 2 points. Mervyn and Pauline Harvey won their doubles comfortably but it was for only one point and the other doubles game we lost. Had our doubles win been the game for 2 points, we would have got a bonus league point for scoring a 'big win'. As it was, we won overall by 12 game points to 7.

Mervyn Harvey, Philip Wood and Ray Clipson each won 3 singles games and Pauline Harvey won 2.

Taylor Cup final

Taylor Cup is a handicap AC tournament, played over 14 hoops on half-lawns. Eight members entered, and played in two blocks of four, from which the first two in each block went through to the final. As with all handicap competitions, it comes down to who adapts better to the conditions on the day.

Having booked lawn 2 when rain was not due until after the expected end time, the finalists decided to go for it, even though heavy rain was now expected by lunchtime. In the first round, Mervyn Harvey got revenge for being beaten by Ray Clipson in the blocks, and John Leader overcame Frank Hibbert with comparative ease. The rains came soon after we started the second round – John v Mervyn and Frank v Ray, and the players had to adapt to much slower conditions. Mervyn has struggled to make full use of his bisques, and in this game was disappointed to have only a 4 hoop advantage by the time they had all gone. This was never going to be enough against an in-form John, who ran out a winner 14-9. Frank had the better of the early exchanges in his game against Ray, and, as in the other game, used his bisques to gain a 4 hoop advantage in a very tactical game. With time running out, Ray was unable to put together enough good shots to claw his way back, and Frank used his experience to hold on to his advantage. And so it was that in the tightest game of the tournament, Frank won 11-6 on time.

The rain then got even heavier, and so we all agreed to adjourn. John then realised that he had beaten both of the players who could also amass two wins, and so had already won the cup. Nevertheless, we all came back three days later to play the final round.

In the contest for second place, Frank hit some good roquets early on, but a mistake let Mervyn in, and with a combination of steady play and leaving nothing easy for Frank, Mervyn ran out a comfortable winner. As John had already won the tournament, the only thing to play for in the game between him and Ray was pride. This can sometimes allow players to relax and play their best croquet, but not on this occasion. In the end, John made fewer mistakes, and so went through the entire tournament unbeaten – and joins Nigel Haslam as a four times winner of the Taylor Cup.



WMF GC Match Kenilworth v Broadwas home Thursday Sept 8th

Only a week after our victory against Edgbaston we faced Broadwas, the top side in the League, in fine weather with good lawns. Our handicaps were a good deal higher than theirs and indicated that we were in for a tough contest, even though we were playing at home. Nevertheless, we were 2 games all after one round of singles with Philip Wood losing a very close game 6-7 against their top player Stuart Smith

The next round went to form and we only won one game, but in the third round we won 3 games to level the match, Pauline Harvey beating Smith 7 Games to 6 to great applause (since other games had finished and many were watching).

In the last round of singles we went down 1-3, making the score 9-7 to Broadwas with the doubles still to play. By winning both doubles (for 2 points and 1 point) we could win the match. Philip and Cliff managed to win their game but we lost the other. This made the final score 11-8 to Broadwas. In the singles Mervyn Harvey, Pauline and Philip won 2 games each and Cliff won one.

All in all this was a very creditable performance, notably from Pauline. Broadwas now have an unassailable lead in the League as we went into our final match at Himley, away on Tuesday 20 September.

Report on WMF GC Match Himley v Kenilworth Tuesday September 20th

We arrived at Himley at 10 a.m. in grey but dry weather but in the afternoon it improved to become sunny and warmer. The lawns were damp and soft but played reasonably well. On paper our handicaps were slightly better than theirs, but the first 2 rounds were very keenly contested and we ended level at 4 games each.

In the third round we won all 4 games and their whole team scored only 14 hoops in total. The last round ended 2-2 so the singles ended Himley 6, Kenilworth 10.

In the doubles Mervyn and Pauline Harvey won their game (for 1 point) but we lost the other game which was for 2 points.

In the singles Philip Wood won 4 games, Robin Moore 3, Mervyn 2 and Pauline 1. The final score was therefore Himley 8, Kenilworth 11 and we got a bonus point for an away win. Thus we ended the season with 3 matches won, and one lost to Broadwas who won the League.

This West Midlands Federation season ended with a small Tournament for the 4 top Clubs, each sent 3 players to Himley on Sunday October 2nd.

Kenilworth Festival GC Doubles Tournament Sat September 17th

We were blessed with fine weather, stratus cloud like a flat corrugated ceiling lasting much of the day, with no rain as had been forecast earlier. The lawns were in good condition, rather slower after rain earlier in the week.

Six pairs played all-play-all three games to 13 points, and this was followed by a final game played between the top 2 pairs.

Of the 6 pairs, 2 were from Northampton, one was from Broadwas and three were from Kenilworth: Peter Kristunas and Paul Samson, Ian Robertson and Nick Hegan, and Mike Cheeseman and Philip Wood. The visitors won, respectively 1, 2 and 2 games out of 5. Mike and Philip won 4 games and the other Kenilworth pairs won 3 each. In the final Mike and Philip beat Ian and Nick.



Our visitors were most appreciative and appeared to enjoy the day, and they were keen to take photos to record play during the day as well as at the trophy presentation. It was a pity we saw no sun and it was quite cool all day. We thank John Leader for his support in coming to watch for a while

Secunderabad Cup Final: Philip Wood v Mervyn Harvey

In one of the closest AC finals for many years, Philip beat Mervyn 26-24, thus avenging his 19-17 defeat in the blocks. The match was characterised by the very few errors made by either player. In the end, the difference was Philip's greater accuracy at the longer distances, combined with Mervyn's not using all of his bisques to his best advantage. Both players also controlled the ball well on the fast (and beautifully manicured) lawns. This meant that there were very few "gimmees".

Philip and Mervyn would like to thank John Leader, who not only was the only spectator present during the entire match, but also used his trusty fork to keep the lawn fairly clear of leaves before and during play. Thanks also to Pauline H for the providing tea and scones; it's just a shame that there weren't more people to enjoy them.

Finals round up

	<u>Winner</u>	<u>Runner-up</u>
Kenilworth Cup	David Green	Ian Robertson
Kenilworth Plate	Derek Fairburn	Pauline Dennis
Pindi	Philip Wood	Stella Gill
Ladies Trophy	Pauline Harvey	Irene Rogers
St George	Adrian Morris	Bill Sidebottom
Castle Cup	Adrian Morris	Philip Wood
Bill Browne	Philip Wood	Ray Clipson
Secunderabad	Philip Wood	Mervyn Harvey
Taylor Cup	John Leader	Mervyn Harvey

School visit to Kenilworth Croquet (a report sent to the Press)

Kenilworth Croquet hosts visits from organisations whose members wish to try croquet. Typically sixteen guests play four successive games of golf croquet in pairs against different opponents over a period of around two hours. The play is structured to offer a match between two teams of eight or four teams of four if that is a need. Most guests arrange a supper in the club-house afterwards. This activity has grown to generate donations to club funds in excess of a thousand pounds each year, equivalent to the subscriptions of several additional members.

Among other methods, the club attracts new members by holding a couple of open days early each summer. This year a family of four arrived and played, the youngest member of around eight nearly outshining his father, a teacher at a nearby school. Before leaving the latter asked if it might be possible to bring a number of pupils, newly entering the sixth form, to try a new sport and as an aid to team-building. The visit took place early in September and seems to have been a success, judging by the school's internal report:

"A group of sixth form pupils were guests at the Kenilworth Croquet Club for an introductory session. They were accompanied by Mr C. and Miss B. as they were instructed in the fundamentals of the game. As the evening progressed and confidence grew, some of the games became quite tense as they took on board some of the tactics involved, realising that smashing their opponents ball out of the way was almost as satisfying as shooting a hoop. By the end of the evening we were reluctant to leave and our perception of croquet had changed a great deal. This proved to be a great way of experiencing a new sport as well as the pupils getting to know the members of their new form group."

This seemed a great opportunity to expose croquet to the younger generation while offering the school and its pupils something of value. The club is to publicise the initiative locally and would not be surprised to have requests for further visits from this school or others.



Man walks into a restaurant, and orders the squid. The chef, Gervais, asks him to choose a live one from the tank. The man chooses a little green one with a very big moustache. Gervais exclaims, "No! Not that one! He's my favourite, look at his little face (As the squid wiggles its cute little 'tache), but the customer insists. Gervais reluctantly takes the squid into the kitchen, raises his knife, but just then, the squid wiggles its little moustache again, and Gervais chickens out. He tries several more times, but he just cannot perform the task.

He calls Hans, the kitchen dish-washer to come and help him. Hans is a big, tough, beefy lad who wouldn't let a little thing like this affect him. He lifts the knife, but then the squid wiggles its cute little green face, and Hans bursts into tears. The moral of the story is: "Hans that does dishes can be soft as Gervais, with mild green hairy lipped-squids"

Dear Marj

I've been playing for many years, but in a recent match against another club there were two situations which I have not come across before.

The first is that I had understood that you always started from within a yard of the corner near hoop 4. I played blue from there, whereupon my opponent (their captain) played red from further up the East boundary. When I queried this, he said that the CA rules allow for it where the corner is not in a good state, and just added that local rules apply because of this. After further discussion, he eventually offered to let me replay my ball from where he played his. What should have happened here?

The second was that my softly-spoken opponent went to jump his black over my red, which was in hoop 4. It failed, and skidded off the hoop to near the half-way line. I went to my yellow, some yards away, to send it near the half-way line. When I came back to run my red, I noticed a line in the lawn, and enquired whether that was caused by the jump shot. (I have to add that the lawns were not in a great state, and so you had to be quite close to notice this.) He said that it was, and that he had told me. I had no reason to doubt this, but I am a bit deaf, and certainly heard nothing. It was too late for me to do anything about it. It must have been obvious that I had not heard his confession, but does he have a duty to make sure I had heard?

Alek N Allass

Dear Alek

I have a feeling that you are not going to like either answer.

To your first question, yes, the CA rules do allow for local rules to apply "to reduce wear on corner IV", but say nothing more of help in your situation. I must say that in every match I have played where local rules apply, this has been clearly communicated to all the players before the start. It seems that this may not have happened, but your opponent did the next best thing in allowing you to take your shot again.

I have had many letters relating to how "striking fault" disputes can be resolved in un-refereed matches (basically, unless the dispute concerns a misunderstanding of the rules – there is no satisfactory way), but the subject of your letter is a first for me! The fundamental point is that nowhere do the CA rules say that the person committing the fault must alert their opponent to that fact (query – should they?), let alone ensure that their opponent heard their confession. There is, of course, the presumption that players will "call" their own faults in matches where there is no referee, as is the case in golf and snooker, to name but two games generally played to the same high standard as is expected of croquet players. You accept that your opponent did this, and are maybe looking for a rule which puts the onus in him to ensure that you heard. I can sort of understand that, given that there must be many croquet players with hearing loss, because of our average age, but the lesson here is to be close enough to your opponent to ensure that you can spot an infringement.

Dear Marj

I am confused about **wrong balls**, and this is the second time I have written to you about it. In your previous reply you said that the rules had been simplified, in that those for doubles were now the same as for singles. So, last week, when it was yellow to play, and my partner, who usually played red, hit yellow by mistake, I was quite sure that the balls should be replaced and replayed, without penalty. However, our local rules expert said not. Then, yesterday, when I was playing singles and my opponent hit his red instead of his yellow, he took some convincing that this was a fault. Help!

Willy Jumpit

Dear Willy

Oh dear, I can see your confusion. If you re-read my previous reply, you will see that it dealt specifically with "red's owner" playing red when it was yellow to play. As with singles, that is indeed now "replace and replay". Space did not allow me to set out all the rules. I hope it will now suffice to say that any time a player hits a ball they personally do not own, it is a fault, and the full penalty applies (no point scored; opponents can leave the balls where they are or have them replaced; restart play with either ball).

If it is any consolation, I was recently talking to a scratch player who once started playing with red and yellow, finished up playing with blue and black, and neither him nor his opponent knew until it was pointed out to them by a spectator after the match. They both kept count of the hoops they had run, and the result quite rightly stood. The one rule to which there is no exception is – there is no question of it being a wrong ball until someone stops play because they think that something has gone wrong!

Marj



This is a story of self-control and marksmanship by a brave, cool-headed woman with a walking stick against a fierce predator. Here is her story in her own words:

"While out walking along the edge of a creek just outside of our house in Darwin, with my soon to be ex-husband discussing our property settlement, kids and other divorce issues, we were surprised by a huge 5 metre crocodile which suddenly emerged from the murky water and began charging at us very fast with its large jaws wide open.

The Croc must have been protecting her young and her home because she was extremely aggressive.

If I had not had my little \$5 Reject Shop walking stick with me, I would not be here today!

Just one hard whack to my estranged husband's knee cap was all it took; the Croc got him easily and I was able to escape by just walking away at a brisk pace.

The amount I saved in lawyer's fees was really incredible and I got the lot".

Please continue to send me lots of exciting articles, photographs, opinions and comments on any thing remotely related to croquet and our section.

I can be contacted on 01926 855376 or gordonhenderson28@gmail.com

Gordon Henderson. Editor