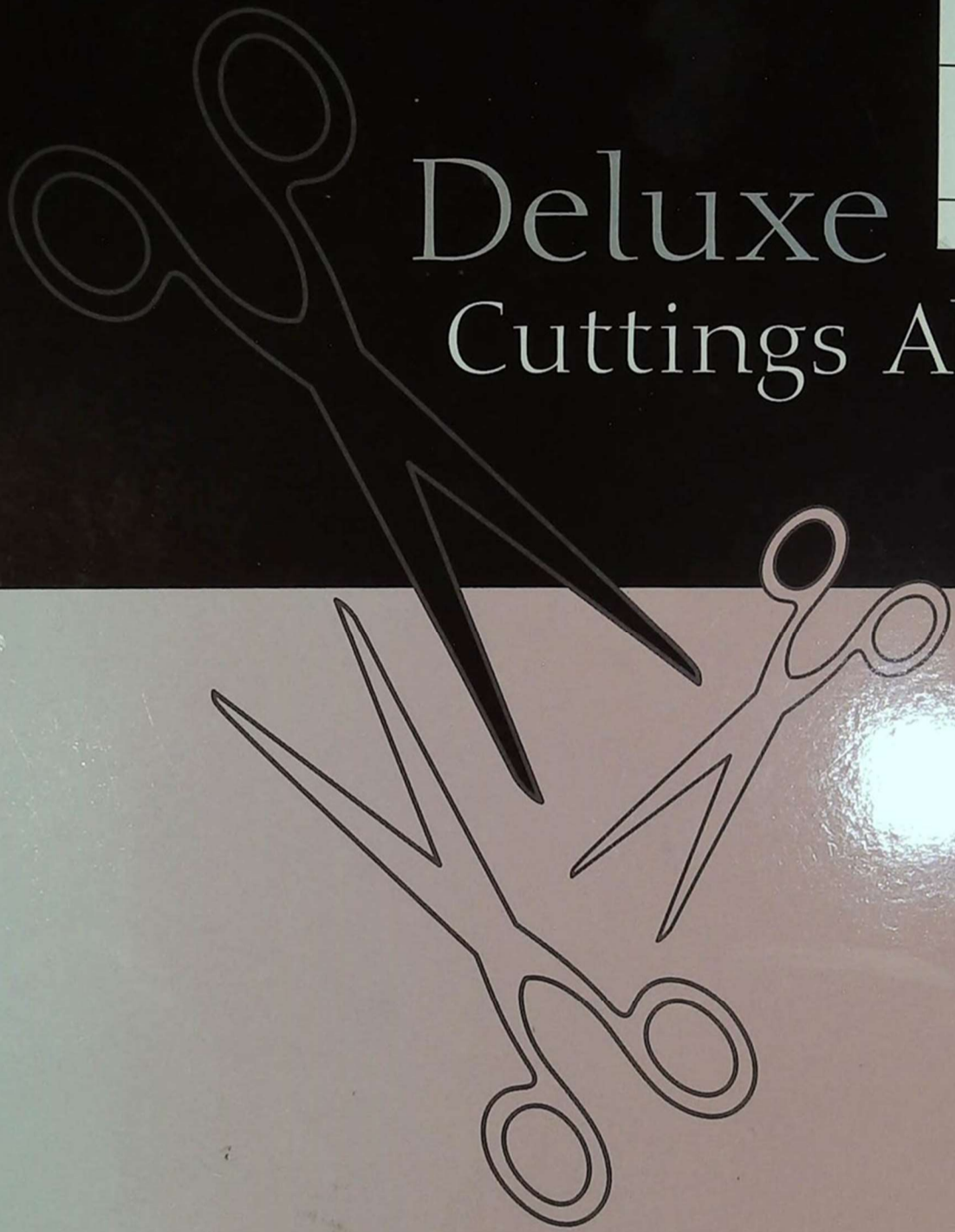


GM

Gabrielle Macadam

Deluxe Cuttings Album



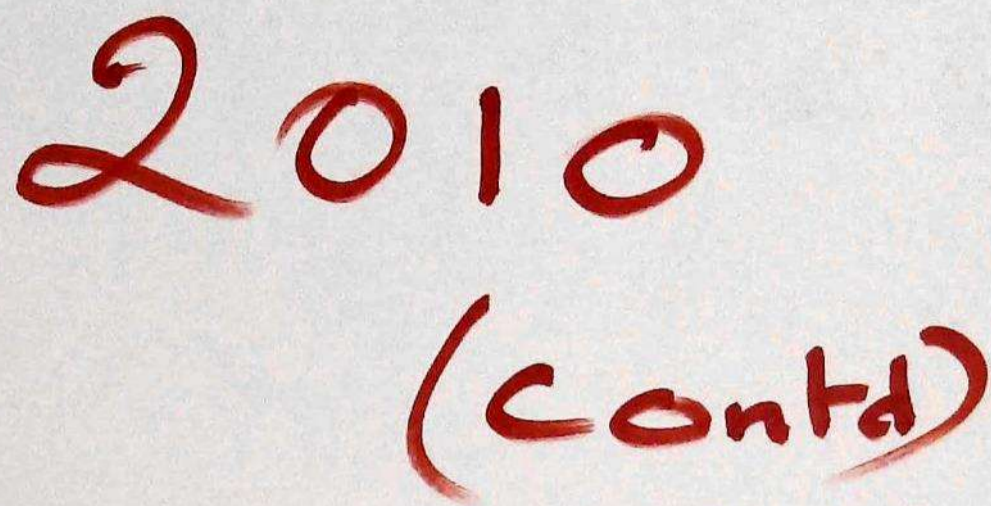
DELUXE

CROQUET
2010 - 2014

2015 - 2019

REP CODE 426
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2010
(contd)

Gabby Macadam created two scrapbooks. The earlier book is currently, August 2023, not to be found. This scrapbook starts from some point in 2010, as above.

The pages of the hard copy scrapbook have been scanned and inserted 'as is' although unused space is trimmed. This digital version is for the Club's website.

Chris Donovan
August 2023

Prestigious play at pristine Sidmouth

THE GOLF Croquet High Handicap Tournament now seems to be firmly established in the club calendar, with a total of 16 members competing again this year. It is hoped that this will encourage even more members to enter next year.

The winners were John Coombes and Dudley Ractliffe who beat husband and wife team Edward and Margaret Colman 7-5.

Edward and Margaret have done particularly well in the internal golf croquet competitions, having both reached the semi-finals of the singles event earlier in the year.

Dudley should also be congratulated on his performance after a period of absence from the game.

The beaten semi-finalists were Philip/Marian Harris and Ann Holbeche/Colin Walls.

The day ran smoothly under the management of Muriel Philpott and John Coombes.

● The following day saw 20 players take part in the Open Golf Croquet Doubles Tournament, managed again by Muriel Philpott.

The players were split into two groups of five teams and there were several closely fought group games.

The semi-final brought together Richard Mills/John Dixon against Ian Friedlander/Margaret Piper and Ken Wallman/Paul Griew against John Coombes/Colin

By Mike Taylor
Sidmouth Croquet Club



Walls. Once again, these were very close matches, with only one point separating winners and losers!

The final between Richard/John and Ken/Paul produced an exciting game, with the spectators clapping enthusiastically as each of the first four hoops were run from long distances. In the end, it was Richard and John who triumphed, winning by two hoops to gain the Cunningham Salver.

● The Spencer-Ell Cup five-day tournament was held at Sidmouth last week.

Eight competitors are selected by the Croquet Association to play in this prestigious event



GOLF Doubles Finalists Edward/Margaret Colman and John Coombes/Dudley Ractliffe (winners).

Above left: Jonathan Hills (Colchester) being presented with the Spencer-Ell Cup by Sidmouth Chairman Elaine Woodward.

Below left: Golf Doubles Finalists Richard Mills/John Dixon (winners) and Paul Griew/Ken Wallman

and Sidmouth were treated to a feast of high-level performances from players with handicaps ranging from 0 to -1.5

The lawns were in excellent condition and received nothing but praise from the players, with the tournament referee also very satisfied with the accuracy of the hoop setting (one 16th of an inch!).

The Cup was won by the favourite, Jonathan Hills (-1.5) from Colchester, who recorded 12 wins from the 14 games.

Campbell Morrison, Edinburgh, was runner-up with eight wins.

Thanks are due to groundsman Colin Whitehall and the hoop setting team of Robert Matthews and David Temple for presenting the Sidmouth facility in such a favourable light.



Thorley repeats win

THE SIDMOUTH CA Handicap Weekend attracted 16 entrants from as far afield as Croydon and Middlesborough.

The competition was run by Julie Horsley as a six round Swiss-pairing event and saw Keith Thorley (Sidmouth) and Brian Pollock (Budleigh Salterton) both finish with five wins - Keith retaining the Clarke Salver, having beaten Brian in an earlier round.

The fastest game prize was won by Derek Powell (Sidmouth).

Special mention should be made of the performance of Philip Harris (Sidmouth), who, in his first tournament, scored four wins.

Both he and Keith also met the requirements necessary to gain a Croquet Association Bronze Award.

● Earlier in the week, a team from Sidmouth travelled to Budleigh Salterton

By Mike Taylor
Sidmouth Croquet Club

for their traditional end-of-season friendly match. As usual, Sidmouth received a warm welcome, but were given no quarter by their opponents, who ran up a 7-1 lead by lunchtime.

The afternoon saw a marginal improvement, with only a 5-3 deficit.

David Clarke was the only Sidmouth player to turn in a notable performance in what has usually been a closely contested fixture.

Nevertheless, the result failed to detract from what was an enjoyable day out under fine playing conditions, all rounded off by an excellent tea in pleasant company.

KEITH Thorley receiving the Clarke Salver from Barbara Clarke.



Nelson emerges winner in Devonian Cup

THE Chairman's Garden is a strip of land between lawn 4 and the car park. Work began on its transformation four years ago with 11 pairs of willing hands taking on the task. There are still 11 members forming a working party who meet every four to six weeks to



ALL in the garden is golden - green fingered croquet players celebrate.

By Mike Taylor
Sidmouth Croquet Club

keep on top of the job.

The Garden has once again won a Sidmouth in Bloom Gold Award (third year running) and Neil Gamble, Chairman of the Sidmouth Cricket, Croquet, Tennis and Hockey Club, recently held a thank-you celebratory lunch for the working party members.

Sidmouth, having reached the semi-finals of the B League, were pitted against Nailsea SE, who they beat last year at this stage of the competition. However, this time, it was Nailsea who triumphed 4-3 and will now play Nailsea Central in the final.



DEVONIAN finalists Peter Nelson (winner) and Colin Walls.

Below: Sidmouth and Nailsea SE B League teams



Croquet pride for Sidmouth

SIDMOUTH and Bear of Rodborough Federation League finalists.

IT is a rare occurrence of great merit for Sidmouth to take part on a finals day in one of the five graded leagues organised by the South West Federation.

It means winning one of three or four mini-leagues, then maybe taking part in, and winning, a semi-final against another champion team

By Mike Taylor
Sidmouth croquet

before playing in the final on neutral lawns with an official referee and a South West Federation committee member to present the trophy.

Sidmouth achieved the feat this year after winning all four matches in their mini-league.

The Sidmouth team of Peter Hills (captain), Ken Wallman, Robert Hammond and Mike Taylor were required to travel to the East Dorset club near Poole to play the Bear of Rodborough team from Stroud. There were several telephone conversations between Peter, the Bear of Rodborough captain and the East Dorset Club as heavy rain might have made the lawns unplayable. In the end, Sidmouth defied the forecast and started off with, thankfully, the weather becoming progressively better as the day went on. East Dorset are to be thanked for providing the finalists with not only the use of their two best lawns, but also the services of their top player David Nicholson as referee and excellent refreshments before and after the games.

Mike had a good win 26-20 against their captain and Robert and Peter combined in the Doubles to win substantially 26-7. However, that, sadly, was that. The Federation League is the top handicap play league involving the use of bisques and a talented young lady player, receiving many bisques, took full advantage to easily beat both of her Sidmouth opponents.

Our former star player, Cliff Jones, was on hand to present the Federation Shield - unfortunately not to Sidmouth!

Result: Bear of Rodborough 5, Sidmouth 2.









End of season croquet awards presentation

By Mike Taylor
Sidmouth Croquet Club

MORE than 60 members attended the Sidmouth Croquet AGM held earlier this month.

Chairman, Elaine Woodward, reported on another successful season and thanked the outgoing committee for all their work during the year - in particular Barbara Clarke, Rosemarie Aldridge and Richard Mills, who stand down this year as committee members.

They will be replaced by David Temple (secretary), Helen Pryor and Mike Taylor.

Officers' reports were well received and observations from the floor were noted for further consideration. Groundsman, Colin Whitehall, and his staff, were once again congratulated for providing lawns that, throughout the year, received nothing but praise from visiting teams.

Among the glittering silverware on display were trophies for new competitions kindly provided by Gabby Macadam (High and Low Handicap Golf Croquet Singles), Elaine Woodward (Advanced Singles) and Esme Owen (Senior Advanced Singles). The prizes this year were presented by Tony Dustan-Smith, a long-serving member of the club, past chairman (six times!) and by far the strongest playing member.

Most of those attending stayed on to enjoy an excellent supper prepared by caterer Gill Hodge.

Roll of honour

Dorothy Toye Cup - Winner Keith Thorley, Runner-up Richard Mills;

Canton Trophy - Winner Mike Taylor, Runner-up Keith Thorley;

14 Point Game - Winner Colin Walls, Runner-up Peter Nelson;

Corbett Spoons High Handicap - Winner Graeme Pryor, Runner-up Helen Pryor;

Corbett Spoons Low Handicap - Winner David Temple, Runner-up Nancy Temple;

Robert Case Shield - Winner Richard Mills, Runner-up David Clarke;

Robert Case Tankard - Winner Colin Walls, Runner-up Philip Harris;

Colclough and Sidmouth Cups - Winners Ken Wallman and Philip Harris,



MURIEL Philpott receiving the High Handicap Macadam Cup.

Runners-up Ian Friedlander and Colin Walls;

Cunningham Salver Singles - Winner Colin Walls, Runner-up Diana Davenport;

Cunningham Salver

Doubles - Winners Richard Mills and John Dixon, Runners-up Ken Wallman and Paul Griew;

Hatherley Cup - Winner David Temple, Runner-up Richard Mills;

Golf Croquet High Handicap Doubles - Winners John Coombes and Dudley Ractliffe, Runners-up Edward and Margaret Colman;

Devonia Cup - Winner Peter Nelson, Runner-up Colin Walls;

Fermor Rose Bowl - Winner Nancy Temple, Runner-up Margaret Piper;

Belmont Cup - Winner David Temple, Runner-up Roger Hendy;

Adams Cup - Winner Mike Taylor, Runner-up Ian Friedlander;

Humphrey Hicks Cup - Winner Richard Wood, Runner-up Richard Mills;

Woodward Salver - Winner Richard Wood, Runner-up Richard Mills;

Owen Cup - Winner Ken Wallman, Runner-up Robert Hammond;

Macadam Cup High Handicap - Winner Muriel Philpott, Runner-up Philip Harris;

Macadam Cup Low Handicap - Winner David Temple, Runner-up Ken Wallman;

18-24 Tournament - Winner Colin Walls, Runner-up Peter Nelson;

Most Improved Player High Handicap - Colin Walls;

Most Improved Player Low Handicap - Ken Wallman.



RICHARD Wood receiving the Woodward Salver from Elaine Woodward



RICHARD Wood receiving the Humphrey Hicks Trophy from Tony Dustan-Smith

Pics: Tony Philpott.

Top tip - croquet clubs had better watch out now!

CROQUET

MEMBERS of Sidmouth Croquet Club attended golf croquet coaching, organised by Helen Pryor and given by Cliff Jones, a very experienced player, coach and Croquet Association examiner.

The handicaps of the participants ranged from 11 to five, the lower being the more experienced, writes Mike Taylor.

The two days were spent perfecting the techniques and tactics relating to golf croquet.

Tips for play were given, including "invisible aids", such as pink-spotted purple balls and imaginary hoops.

Reminders were given about "stalking the ball", not raising one's head too soon and correcting

other odd habits that occur.

This added to the relaxed atmosphere of the sessions, which were, nevertheless, taken very seriously. The experienced players learned a few new tricks and the newer players were given very good advice.

The end of last month saw Sidmouth host their annual eight-a-side association match against Budleigh Salterton. Under ideal conditions and with competitors very evenly paired by handicap, all games were well-contested in a friendly atmosphere.

By lunchtime, Sidmouth had pulled out a 6-2 lead and this edge was maintained through the afternoon, with Sidmouth winning 11-5, David Temple (captain), David Clarke and Derek Powell remaining unbeaten. Gill Hodge provided her usual excellent



▲ Sidmouth and Budleigh Salterton players.

Croquet is all very well, in its way,
If you hate all the people you happen to play
But don't be discouraged - though starting as friends,
You'll hate them like poison before the game ends.
There's something about it that poisons the spleen,
It makes you dogmatic, malicious and mean,
It plumbs, to the depths, every possible vice,
It's callous, it's cruel - it's ever so nice.

The Gentle Game

(apologies to Reginald Arkell - Mammi CC)

Great break

CROQUET

LAST week, Sidmouth hosted a visit by 14 doctors and dentists from the Essex area as part of their annual sporting break, writes Mike Taylor.

Bowls, croquet and golf matches were on the agenda, taking place at Sidmouth, Budleigh Salterton and Dawlish clubs. This was the group's fourth visit to Sidmouth. The golf croquet competition took place on a rather cold and overcast morning, with Sidmouth winning 91-71 against opponents who are, nevertheless, improving with every visit. Gabby Macadam, as usual, ensured that the event was enjoyable for all.



▲ Here come the medics - and dentists - visiting Sidmouth for the fourth year in a row.

Players find form

CROQUET



▲ Sidmouth winners

THE Budleigh Salterton May Croquet Tournament attracted 44 entrants including nine from Sidmouth. There were some excellent Sidmouth performances. Ian Friedlander won the Doubles, partnered by Chris Donovan from Budleigh, writes Mike Taylor.

Mike Taylor won the JK Brown Memorial Challenge Cup for the second year running in a final against Sue Rogers (ex-Sidmouth).

Philip Harris won the Pat Tunmer Cup, a fine performance in his first major competition. In addition, David Clarke reached the semi-finals of the Knockout and Nancy and David Temple reached the semi-finals of the Y Doubles.

Handicap reductions were achieved by Philip Harris, Peter Hills, Mike Taylor and David Temple.

The tournament was smoothly managed by the unflappable Julie Horsley and played in generally fine, if rather blustery, conditions.

A notable performance was also achieved by Colin Walls, who had previously earned the right to represent Sidmouth in the Winchester One-Ball Charity Championships held earlier this month.

The competition was played over eight rounds and Colin performed exceptionally well to finish in the runner-up spot.

Griew home and hosed

CROQUET

THE Sidmouth B League team had a successful match at home against Exeter, writes Mike Taylor

The doubles pairing of Muriel Philpott and Paul Griew quickly established a four-hoop lead, but Exeter retaliated with a three-hoop run.

The game developed into a tense battle, with Sidmouth winning 12-11 on time.

Peter Nelson's singles game was clearer cut, with him pegging out to win 14-9.

In the three afternoon singles, Nelson continued his good form and again pegged out to win 14-7.

Philpott lost to the Exeter captain 10-14 and Griew won 14-11 with 10 minutes to spare seeing Sidmouth to a 4-1 overall victory.

B team enjoyed league victory in Cornwall

CROQUET

SIDMOUTH B League team set off early last Monday for their first league match away to Cornwall at Porthpean, St. Austell, writes Mike Taylor.

Initially, the team had difficulty adjusting to the speed of the lawns and battling the strong wind, making hoop running difficult. The three morning games were closely-fought affairs, with Pam Bowra and Philip Harris winning their doubles 10-9, Peter Nelson losing 9-11 and Paul Griew's game ending 8-8. Paul, playing in his first Association match, did not realise that he should have played on for a "golden hoop". Having cleared all the balls off the lawn, the game was settled by a shoot out at the peg,



▲ The winning Sidmouth croquet team.

which Paul won. After warming up over lunch, four singles were played in the afternoon. Philip lost 9-14 to the Cornwall team captain, Pam roqueted steadily

and pegged out winning 14-9, Paul won 10-9 and Peter, after being behind, capitalised on his opponent's mistake at penult, peeled rover and pegged one ball out to win 13-11.

Overall, Sidmouth won the match 5-2 and after a very enjoyable and friendly tea, the two-hour journey each way seemed very worthwhile.

● Last weekend eight players competed for the Dorothy Toye Cup, which is the first Sidmouth internal tournament of the season. Winners of the two blocks of four played in the final and this year it was Keith Thorley versus Philip Harris, with Keith emerging victorious for the second year running. Not for the first time, the 14-point handicap games proved quite demanding for some of the lower handicap players.

Put Porthpean on the run

CROQUET

THE Sidmouth June Mid-Summer Tournament attracted 25 participants from as far afield as Worcester, Bury and Edinburgh, with nine entrants from Sidmouth, writes Mike Taylor.

In the Knockout Competition, 16 players were placed in four groups with the winners forming the semi-final placements. Group winners were Chris Donovan (Budleigh Salterton), Rosemary Bradshaw (Sidmouth), Philip Harris (Sidmouth) and Barbara Clarke (Sidmouth).

The semi-final pairings were Donovan against Bradshaw and Harris against Clarke with Donovan winning +2 and Harris winning +7. In the final, Harris was an easy winner +25, continuing his current good form and reducing his handicap to 14.

In the Handicap Competition for the Derryhouse Cup, Colin Walls

(Sidmouth) won all his games in style (reducing his handicap to 11), with Derek Powell (Sidmouth) a close second.

● The David Rawkins Cup was won by Barbara Young (Bury) who was untouchable, winning all her group games and the final, +13, against David Clarke (Sidmouth).

● Brian Pollock (Budleigh Salterton) won the Fortfield Cup by beating Sue Rogers (Worcester and Sidmouth).

● Ian Friedlander (Sidmouth)

was the winner of the fastest game prize.

● A team of eight players travelled to Cornwall to play Porthpean in the SW Federation Golf Croquet League.

This venue is renowned for its exposure to the elements, situated on a wide plateau with strong winds, even on fine days!

The match comprised 16 singles and four doubles. By lunchtime, 12 of the singles had been played, with Porthpean leading 6-4 with

two games drawn. After lunch, the remaining singles and the doubles were played, with Sidmouth unable to catch up. Final score Porthpean 11, Sidmouth 9.

Sidmouth put up a fair performance against a team having the advantage of a predominantly favourable handicap.

In spite of losing, the Sidmouth team enjoyed the day out with some good games and an excellent tea.



▲ Sidmouth and Porthpean croquet players



▲ Sidmouth trophy winners Philip Harris and Colin Walls.

with victory in federation clash with Cornwall

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Budleigh Salterton by
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▲ Sidmouth and Cornwall Federation teams.

singles. In the morning, Sidmouth's Graeme Pryor and Barbara Clarke had a convincing win +14, but Colin Walls lost a tough match against the Wellington captain, by three hoops. After lunch, in brilliant sunshine, Colin played well, beating his opponent John Pugsley +18. Graeme and Barbara both lost their matches by six hoops and one hoop, respectively. Final result: Sidmouth 2, Wellington 3.

● Sidmouth made the long trip to St Austell

for their first match in the Federation League (highest handicap league involving the use of bisques) with a new look team of four players. It was windy with occasional drizzle, which made some aspects of play, especially roquetting, particularly difficult. All players took a while to settle into their games.

Team manager, Roger Hendy, combined well with captain Peter Hills, to win the opening doubles convincingly +17. Derek Andrew,

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Dixon seals Bowra holds Duchy win her nerve

CROQUET

A SIDMOUTH team of four players recently travelled to Cornwall for what turned out to be an exciting Intermediate League match, writes Mike Taylor.

With the weather forecast more like late autumn rather than mid-summer, the team of Ian Friedlander (captain), Margaret Piper, Philip Harris and John Dixon were nevertheless in good spirits for the day ahead.

For the captain and Harris, this was another long journey as they had both played in the Federation at Plymouth the day before!

The morning session was made up of two singles and a doubles. The games had hardly started when the rain fell and the mist set in as well to make things even more difficult.

The lawns were in good condition with plenty of grass that was a little longer than Sidmouth were used to.

The singles were played on a lawn having only a small hut to shelter in; which is where Dixon and Friedlander spent considerable time whilst their opponents went round to peg 26-11 and 26-3, respectively.

Meanwhile, a new doubles pairing of Piper and Harris were involved in a dour struggle against tough opposition, but managed to win 14-9.

The afternoon began badly for Sidmouth, with Friedlander having to give four bisques away.

His opponent hit in to start, set up a four-ball break, took a bisque and then went right round to peg.

With his second ball he only reached three back before the Sidmouth skipper managed a few hoops, but, with two bisques still standing, there was no chance of a recovery.

Meanwhile, on the other lawn, Piper and Harris, with good steady play, and, despite the rain, managed to win.

Piper secured a 25-13 success whilst Harris won 26-11.

With the match score at 3-3, Dixon's game became critical.

With the lead continuing to change hands and with all four clips on Rover, Dixon managed to get in and peg out to win 26-22, giving Sidmouth a fine 4-3 win.

CROQUET

SIDMOUTH B League team's second match of the season was away to Budleigh Salterton. Due to sickness and holidays, both teams fielded the minimum of three players. The match comprised five games - one doubles and four singles, writes Mike Taylor.

In the doubles match, Muriel Philpott and Marian Harris found themselves six hoops behind after only 20 minutes. They were unable to recover from this setback and lost 14-3.

After their early finish, they were able to watch the tense end to Pam Bowra's singles game. With 15 minutes to go, Bowra was four hoops ahead, but her opponent hit a good run and ran four hoops to make the score 10-10. She held her nerve and hit in to win 11-10.

In the afternoon, Bowra's opponent, Norman Upchurch, was in top form, winning 14-5. Philpott had another tense ending, hitting in on her last turn to win 11-10. Harris, in her first Association League match, gained confidence as the game progressed, to win 9-6. The final result was Sidmouth 3, Budleigh Salterton 2.

● In a highly competitive match played in good spirits, the Sidmouth Federation Croquet team, managed by Roger Hendy and captained by Derek Andrew, beat Budleigh Salterton by four matches to three.

The match started well for Sidmouth with a nail-biting victory by just four hoops in the doubles, with Peter Hills and Ian Friedlander nudging ahead over Michael Peters and Sam Watts. Derek Andrew was not able to clinch his morning singles game against Brian Pollock, but Roger Hendy convincingly won his game against Elaine Norsworthy by 15 hoops.

The afternoon session of four singles matches was a close-run affair with Andrew and Hendy losing their games, but Friedlander for Sidmouth had a resounding success in his final game, winning quite handsomely. With the match at 3-3, the final game was won for Sidmouth by Hills who held off Pollock to win by three hoops.

● An intrepid Sidmouth Advanced Level Parkstone Qualifier team of David Temple (handicap 4.5), Mike Taylor and Peter Hills (each handicap 7) travelled to Bath to play a team whose handicaps were -0.5, 0 and 2.5. For the uninitiated, this means that they were much better players than Sidmouth! Sidmouth lost 5-0 with some rather one-sided games. Mike and Peter both threatened with good early breaks, but were eventually firmly put in their places.

Superb Win at Barum

CROQUET

SIDMOUTH'S away game in the Golf Croquet League at Barnstaple was played against a background of sunshine and showers, writes Mike Taylor.

The opening stages were not promising for Sidmouth, who found themselves four down after the first round of games.

However, over the next three sessions, they showed steady improvement to level matters at 8-8 on completion of the singles.



▲ The successful Sidmouth team that came back and then held their nerve to win at Barnstaple.
Picture contributed

The tension grew as the first couple of doubles games ended all square, leaving the outcome of the match very much in the balance with two games still to be played.

However, it was the Sidmouth pairings who held their nerve the better to win both of the last two games and so seal a splendid 11-9 victory for the team.

The best Sidmouth scores were recorded by Anne Reece, Keith Thorley and John Coombes (captain) who won all of their singles and doubles games.

● The annual 14-point High Handicap Competition, rather disappointingly, only managed to attract six entrants this year.

Nevertheless, the players were able to enjoy three games under warm and sunny conditions.

Pam Bowra and Anne Reece emerged victorious, both having won all their previous games.

The final was a close run affair with Pam emerging the victor by three hoops.

● The one-day Canton Trophy Competition was held last weekend with 14-point games played under normal handicap conditions.

With 16 entrants, each playing one and a half hour games under an Egyptian format, a winner was assured.

Keith Thorley, Ann Ractliffe, John Coombes and Mike Taylor were in contention after the first two rounds, but it was John and Mike who played off a very close final game, with Mike winning +1, thus retaining the Trophy.

Reece bags fine victory

CROQUET

THE Sidmouth Intermediate League home match against Budleigh Salterton was a hard-fought affair on a dull and rainy day, writes Mike Taylor.

By lunchtime, Sidmouth were 2-1 down with only Ian Friedlander (captain) scraping home 19-17.

The afternoon session saw no improvement, with only Ian once again winning, this time 26-13.

The overall match score ended Sidmouth 2, Budleigh Salterton 5.



▲ Keith Thorley and David Temple contested the low handicap final.
Picture contributed

The One-Ball Competition for the Corbett Spoons was held at the beginning of the month.

The low handicap players were the first to compete, with Keith Thorley beating David Temple in the final.

The following day, it was the turn of the high handicap players.

Anne Reece and Ann Ractliffe emerged victorious from their blocks with Anne Reece going on to win.



▲ Anne Reece and Ann Ractliffe contested the high handicap final.
Picture contributed.

High Bisquers win for Bowra

CROQUET

THE High Bisquers (18 point Association Croquet) Tournament was organised and managed by Nancy Temple, assisted by her husband David, with Mike Taylor and Margaret Piper as referees.

The competition was restricted to players with handicaps in the range 18-24 and saw Muriel Philpott (18) and Pam Bowra (20) reach the final.

These two players certainly justified their success and showed good basic knowledge of the game.

Pam won the game +6 and was close to pegging out at the end.

Both players showed good skills in the various shots needed in Association Croquet.

As a general observation, however, all players in the Tournament would undoubtedly reduce their

handicaps more quickly if they were to concentrate more on the tactics involved in "break play" and the use of bisques to initiate breaks.

●The Robert Case Shield and Tankard is an annual fun event, once again well-supported by Club members.

Players strive to gain points by completing a variety of Association Croquet tasks.

The Shield competition was won by David Temple, ahead of Philip Harris and David Clarke.

In the Tankard competition (where players' handicaps are added to their scores) the winner was Roger Mills, ahead of Diana Davenport and John Coombes.

Roger is a newcomer who is quickly taking to the game.



▲ Pat Bowrah and Muriel Philpott who contested the final in the High Bisquers tournament.
Picture contributed.

Temple's Eastbourne cup

CROQUET

A TEAM from Cornwall Croquet Club came to play Sidmouth in the SW Federation Golf Croquet League, writes Mike Taylor.

Having spent the night locally, the seven visitors were replete after their Devon breakfasts! However, this seemed to be to Sidmouth's advantage, as, by lunchtime, they had won seven of the 12 games played.

In the afternoon, Sidmouth maintained their lead, winning four games, losing three and draw-



ing one. The two teams are pictured below left.

Special mention should be made of Sidmouth players Keith Thorley and John Coombes, who both won their two singles, Pam Bowra, who won her two singles and drew her doubles and Graeme Pryor, who won all his three games.

Win or lose, everyone enjoyed the day. Games were played in a competitive friendly spirit.

Result: Sidmouth 11.5, Cornwall 8.5.

●The Compton Croquet Club (Eastbourne) held their Summer Tournament from June 22-26, with Nancy and David Temple and Barbara and David Clarke representing Sidmouth.

The standard in the Class singles was very high and, with four scratch players taking part, some games finished rather quickly.

The Handicap competition for the impressive Anstey Cup was won by Nancy, with Barbara as



runner-up – an excellent performance by both players.

The club is beautifully situated, but the lawns struggled to compete with the quality of those at Sidmouth.

▲Nancy Temple holds the Anstey Cup which she won at Eastbourne. David Temple and Barbara and David Clarke also competed there.

Gill's teas are just perfect

CROQUET

THE Colclough and Sidmouth Doubles Tournament was battled out over three days earlier in the month, writes Mike Taylor.

In general, there were some very encouraging performances.

There were some very close games and several of the pairs could have reached the semi-final and final stages, but for the odd point dropped.

Graeme and Helen Pryor contested one semi-final with Roger Hendy and Paul Griew, with Roger and Paul winning +1.

Tony Dustan-Smith and his partner John Davies won their semi-final against Ian Friedlander and Anne Reece +5.

The final was played out in the afternoon and it was a strange game, with chances for both sides – some were taken, some were missed. John Davies produced a series of amazing long roquets which kept his side in the game.

Roger played very defensively, protecting his partner Paul from challenges.

However, this policy, although it slowed Tony and John down, didn't actually score hoops when



▲The finalists in the doubles (from left to right), Roger Hendy and Paul Griew (runners-up), John Davies and Tony Dustan-Smith (winners).
Picture contributed

they were needed. Tony's knowledge of the game and experience of playing doubles with high handi-

cap partners came through, with the result that Tony and John won the game +4.

As usual, it was a very enjoyable social event with lunches and teas provided by Gill Hodge.

Final outing heavy loss

CROQUET



▲ Players from the Sidmouth and Plymouth croquet teams after their game, which the Plymouth side won 4-1. Picture contributed.

SIDMOUTH'S B League team were beaten 4-1 when they played host to Plymouth in their final league match of the season, writes Mike Taylor.

On a hot day, the lawns were very fast and the Sidmouth doubles pairing of Muriel Philpott and Pam Bowra found hoop running difficult.

However, the Plymouth pair quickly adjusted to the speed of the lawn and ran the hoops better, to win comfortably +7.

In the morning singles game, Ann Ratcliffe, playing her first Association League match for a couple of years, found herself five hoops down after 20 minutes, but persevered and fought back, almost catching up, to lose by only one hoop.

In the three afternoon singles, Muriel lost -5 and Pam lost -10. Richard Thurlow, however, played steadily in his first Association League match and kept ahead of his opponent to peg out and secure Sidmouth's only win by +4.

Amanda Haste acted as match referee and both teams found it helpful to be able to call on her to watch difficult hoop shots and to give rulings when requested.

Sidmouth trio land fine Bristol victory

CROQUET

SIDMOUTH'S Advanced League team of Peter Hills, David Temple and Richard Wood had an eventful visit to Bristol for their latest match, writes Mike Taylor.

An animated conversation about openings resulted in the team missing their turning on the way to the match and only Peter's local knowledge helped them backtrack through the streets of Bristol to arrive only a few minutes late.

In the morning games, Richard was quickly beaten in the singles, while, in the doubles, David and Peter were engaged in a tense battle.

They eventually took the lead in their last turn, only to watch their opponents draw level and then take the golden hoop.

So Sidmouth were 0-2 down and needed to win

all three of the afternoon singles.

Every one of these games was close-fought and at times it looked as if Sidmouth were in line for a heavy defeat.

Peter's game was interrupted by a lengthy conference when a wrong ball was played, but only discovered several turns later.

A local expert and the laws book eventually allowed the confusion to be sorted out and Peter admirably held his concentration to complete a narrow win.

With David and Richard also just getting home by four and one, respectively, the result was the narrowest of victories for Sidmouth 3-2.

This was an excellent result against a higher-ranked team and a confidence booster ahead of the last match against Nailsea next week.



▲ Peter Hills, David Temple and Richard Wood of Sidmouth Croquet Club before they set off for their match at Bristol. Picture contributed.

Thorley and Harris look sharp

CROQUET

A TEAM of seven players from Sidmouth travelled to Nailsea for their final Golf Croquet match of the season, writes Mike Taylor.

By lunchtime, after four doubles and four singles matches had been played, Sidmouth found themselves in a 5-3 lead.

The afternoon session of 12 singles matches saw Sidmouth win four, Nailsea claimed success in half

a dozen and two ended all square.

Some of the games were very hotly contested, the victor winning by just one hoop.

Mention should be made of Keith Thorley, who won three of his games and drew one.

Another to warrant high praise is Marian Harris, new to the team this year, who won two games and drew one.

Neither Keith or Marian lost a game on the day as the match score finished in an honourable 10-all draw.

Andrew out in last four

CROQUET

SIDMOUTH Croquet Club were well represented in the Budleigh Salterton August Tournament in which 60+ players took part from all over Britain, writes Mike Taylor.

Sidmouth won no trophies, but, nevertheless, there were some good performances.

The main Handicap event consisted of groups of five players – in each group weaker players were helped by having bisques against a stronger opponent.

Derek Andrew and Peter Hills each managed to win their groups to go through to the quarter-finals, where, unfortunately, they were drawn against each other.

The pair, typically, produced an enthralling contest, one that was edged by Derek to the tune of a 26-25 victory.

Derek then played in the semi-final, where he met his match against an opponent having 10 bisques.

In the Class competition, Advanced rules were followed with all players in a block meeting others about the same level.

Although Sidmouth had no block winner, David Clarke, Richard Godfrey and Derek Andrew all did well to win over half their games.



▲ B Level croquet competitors at Sidmouth.

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Sidmouth to host All England Handicap Tournament

CROQUET

THIS year, Sidmouth will be privileged to hold the All England Handicap Tournament final on the September 17/18. Derek Andrew will represent Sidmouth, having beaten Rosemary Bradshaw in the final of an internal competition. Derek will go forward to compete in a zonal competition at Nailsea later this month, writes Mike Taylor.

Sixteen players competed in the annual Sidmouth B Level Advanced Tournament held over three days earlier this month. Two all-play-all groups of eight were keenly fought, with first and second places being taken by Richard Kimberley (NZ) and Robert Moss (Bear of Rodborough) in one group and Nigel Amos (Bath) and Richard Wood (Sidmouth) in the other.

The final between Richard Kimberley and

Nigel Amos turned out to be a close-run affair. An hour into the game found Nigel well ahead having just failed to make a triple peel. He did, however, manage to get both his clips on Rover before Richard made a strong comeback.

The tension was palpable as both players missed roquets, but Nigel held on to win +5 and take the Regency Salver, which was presented by club chairman, Elaine Woodward.

The tournament was ably managed by Nancy Temple and took place under fine playing conditions with the lawns running true and receiving much praise from the competitors.

▲ Pictured far left Nigel Amos B Level winner, with club chairman Elaine Woodward and the Regency Salver and, right, Richard Kimberley B Level runner-up with Elaine Woodward.

New members battle it out

GROQUET ▼

THE New Members' Doubles Tournament, organised by Howard Quarrell and assisted by David Baldock, attracted 12 entrants competing in both Association and Golf Croquet games.

Each year, the winners of this event are the proud recipients of finely crafted "Red Queen" trophies, designed and made by David.

Congratulations to Sue Winnard and Roger Mills, this year's winners, who beat Anne Gedge and Tony Salvige in the final.

Other competitors were David and Tina Jones, Kelvin and Sue Dent, Edward and Margaret Colman, Mel Randle and Paul Bitmead.



▲ Above: competitors in the New Members' Doubles tournament held at Sidmouth Croquet Club. Below right: the 'Red Queen' hand-crafted trophies and, left, winners Sue Winnard and Roger Mills.



Narrow loss at Nailsea

CROQUET ▼

SIDMOUTH'S Advanced League team of Peter Hills, David Temple and Richard Wood travelled to Nailsea for their last match of the season where they were on the wrong end of a 3-2 score line, writes Mike Taylor.

As in all the team's matches this year, they were not intimidated despite finding themselves up against higher-ranked opposition.

The Nailsea team included Ryan Cable, winner of the Sidmouth Open Golf Croquet Tournament earlier this year, making a rare appearance as an Association player.

There were mixed fortunes either side of the lunch break, with the end result being a narrow defeat.

Sidmouth has had a tough season, but the team has not been out of its depth and even managed an excellent win at Bristol earlier in the season.

Nelson win

CROQUET ▼

TWELVE competitors representing croquet clubs in the South West assembled at Nailsea Croquet Club for the All-England Handicap local area final, writes Mike Taylor.

The handicaps of the players ranged from 0.5 to 14. Each player contested five games and the outright winner was Derek Andrew from Sidmouth, who won all his games.

The final will be played at Sidmouth this weekend.

● Graeme Pryor won the Sheila Adams Cup, a handicap competition played to Advanced rules, beating Barbara Clarke +8 in the final.

● Seven members of Sidmouth Croquet Club entered the Challenge and Gilbey Tournament, held this year at Budleigh Salterton, with competitors from all over the south of England.

Of 30 in the Gilbey Tournament, which is a handicap knockout competition with bisques given from a base of six, there was an all Sidmouth final between David Clarke and Peter Nelson. In the final, Peter had eight bisques, whereas the more experienced David had only one. Peter used his bisques prudently to win +9. During the tournament, Peter also earned a CA Bronze Award for a 10-hoop break.



▲ Gilbey finalists Peter Nelson (winner) and David Clarke.



▲ Sheila Adams Cup finalists Barbara Clarke and Graeme Pryor (winner).

Thorley's hat-trick

CROQUET ▼

THE Sidmouth CA Handicap weekend attracted 16 entrants, predominantly from the Sidmouth and Budleigh Salterton Clubs, writes Mike Taylor.

For the third year running, Keith Thorley ran out the winner and was presented with the Clarke Salver.

Philip Harris once again performed well to finish as runner-up.



▲ Barbara Clarke presenting Keith Thorley with the Clarke Salver.

Croquet club scores

SIDMOUTH Croquet Club scored an It's Your Neighbourhood South West in Bloom award for transforming a herbageous border.

Members were recognised for tidying up The Chairman's Garden, which runs along a pathway from the Bedford Lawn car park to the cricket club.

The croquet club's Michael Hide said: "It was in such a bad state four or five years ago that we decided, as a small group, to clean it up and make it into a reasonable border and it has grown from there."

Fascinating Hicks finals

CROQUET



▲ Richard Wood and Tony Dustan-Smith (winner) - finalists for the Humphrey Hicks Trophy

FINALS of the Internal Club Competitions took place last weekend. Sidmouth's top two players, Tony Dustan-Smith and Richard Wood, contested a best of three final for the Humphrey Hicks Trophy, writes Mike Taylor.

In the first game, Richard set a long tice from A baulk, which Tony shot at and missed to corner two. Richard joined up with Tony's ball, only to have Tony hit-in with his second ball and run to four back. Richard quickly obtained the innings and also reached four back with a New Standard Leave, which Tony missed following a lift. This enabled Richard to start with his backward ball, but he only managed to reach hoop three before giving another chance to Tony, who reached hoop six. From this point on, Tony gradually worked ahead to eventually win the game +13.

The second game, two days later, was played under cloudier conditions. Following a standard opening from Tony, Richard played his first ball short of corner two from B baulk. Tony joining up with his own ball on the East boundary. Richard immediately hit his own tice, but only got as far as hoop three. From this point on, Tony had it all his own way. He picked up and ran a break to four back with a leave which was missed by Richard and then took his second ball to the peg with a perfect Diagonal Leave. This gave Richard one last shot, which he missed, and Tony pegged out on his next turn to win +24 and take the Humphrey Hicks Trophy.

Both games were watched by an appreciative audience - much impressed by the standard of play.

Good progress

CROQUET



▲ Devonia Cup Finalists Pam Bowra and Anne Reece (winner).



▲ Macadam Cup HH Finalists Richard Thurlow (winner) and Philip Harris

THE Macadam Cups Golf Singles Tournaments have been played over the season, writes Mike Taylor.

In the Low Handicap Competition nine players competed in two blocks, with David Temple winning through a depleted Block A and Ann Ratcliffe and Keith Thorley successful in Block B. David beat Keith +4 to meet Ann in the final, which was won by Ann +1 in a closely fought game.

The High Handicap Competition attracted 19 entries split into three groups. Paul Griew and Dudley Ratcliffe reached the semi-finals from Group A, Philip Harris from Group B and Richard Thurlow from Group C. The semi-final winners were Philip, who narrowly beat Paul +1, and Richard, who beat Dudley +5. The final was played in fine conditions, with Richard taking an early lead and Philip fighting back valiantly to draw level, but eventually losing -2.

●The Devonia Cup is a 14-point handicap competition for players in the 18-24 handicap range with all competitors receiving bisques. This year the finalists were Pam Bowra (20) and Anne Reece (22). With the sun shining and the lawn in perfect condition, both players opened cautiously, setting their balls on opposite sides of the lawn. Pam ran hoop 1, but failed to make further immediate progress.

Anne made good use of her extra bisque entitlement to get several hoops ahead, but Pam was always in touch. Nevertheless, Anne was the first to get both balls to Rover and held on to win +6 in what was an entertaining final.

Pryor nets great trophy double

CROQUET ▼

THE Owen Cup is a handicap competition for those in the 11-18 handicap range and this year there were eight entries split into two blocks of four, with Colin Walls and Nancy Temple progressing from Block A and Rosemary Bradshaw and Graeme Pryor from Block B, writes Mike Taylor.

In closely fought semi-finals, Graeme beat Colin +1 and Nancy beat Rosemary +2.

The final, which was played in rather wet conditions, saw Nancy open with both her balls on the East boundary.

Graeme hit-in on his first ball which he had placed South of corner 2 and then took-off to the East boundary balls. The game eventually resulted in a +11 win for Graeme, who added this trophy to the Sheila Adams Cup which he had won earlier.

This has been a good finish to the season for Graeme, who has also seen a reduction in his handicap.

The Woodward Salver is an Advanced Play Singles competition for those in the 2-11 handicap range. The final this year was played between Mike Taylor (6) and last year's winner Richard Wood (2.5). Luckily, the weather was fine and Mike was able to bask in the sunshine whilst Richard drifted round in an almost perfect performance to win +26. This can happen when one player is on exceptionally good form and allows his opponent only a minimal chance of hitting-in!

The Belmont Cup is open to competitors with a handicap of 16 or lower. Roger Hendy and Peter Nelson emerged as finalists after a season-long competition and, in glorious sunshine, it was Peter who reached Rover using only two of his five bisques, whilst Roger had clips on 2 and 3. Peter then took his second ball to 3 back using his remaining bisques. A rather nervous period of play followed in which neither player made much progress, but eventually Roger got going and ran eight hoops to Rover. It was too late, however, and Peter held his nerve to win +10.

Winners all

CROQUET

MORE than 60 members turned out for the Sidmouth Croquet Club AGM, no doubt attracted by the trophy presentation with supper to follow, writes Mike Taylor.

The prizes were presented by Neil Gamble. Dorothy Toye Cup – Winner Keith Thorley, R/u Philip Harris; Canton Trophy – Winner Mike Taylor, R/u John Coombes; 14 Point Game – Winner Pam Bowra, R/u Anne Reece; Corbett Spoons HH – Winner Anne Reece, R/u Ann Ractliffe; Corbett Spoons LH – Winner Keith Thorley, R/u David Temple; Robert Case Shield – Winner David Temple, R/u Philip Harris; Robert Case Tankard – Winner Roger Mills, R/u Diana Davenport; Colclough & Sidmouth Cups – Winners Tony Dustan-Smith and John Davies, R/u Roger Hendy and Paul Griew.

Cunningham Salver Singles – Winner Roger Mills, R/u John Davies. Cunningham Salver Doubles – Winners Pam Bowra and Keith Thorley, R/u Philip and Marian Harris.; Hatherley Cup – Winner Rosemary Bradshaw, R/u Peter Hills; Golf Croquet HH Doubles – Winners Pam Bowra and Diana Davenport, R/u Philip and Marian Harris.

Devonia Cup – Winner Anne Reece, R/u Pam Bowra; Fermor Rose Bowl – Winner Rosemary Bradshaw, R/u Barbara Clarke; Belmont Cup – Winner Peter Nelson, R/u Roger Hendy/Sheila Adams Cup – Winner Graeme Pryor, R/u Barbara Clarke.

Humphrey Hicks Cup – Winner Tony Dustan-Smith, R/u Richard Wood.

Elaine Woodward Salver – Winner Richard Wood, R/u Mike Taylor.

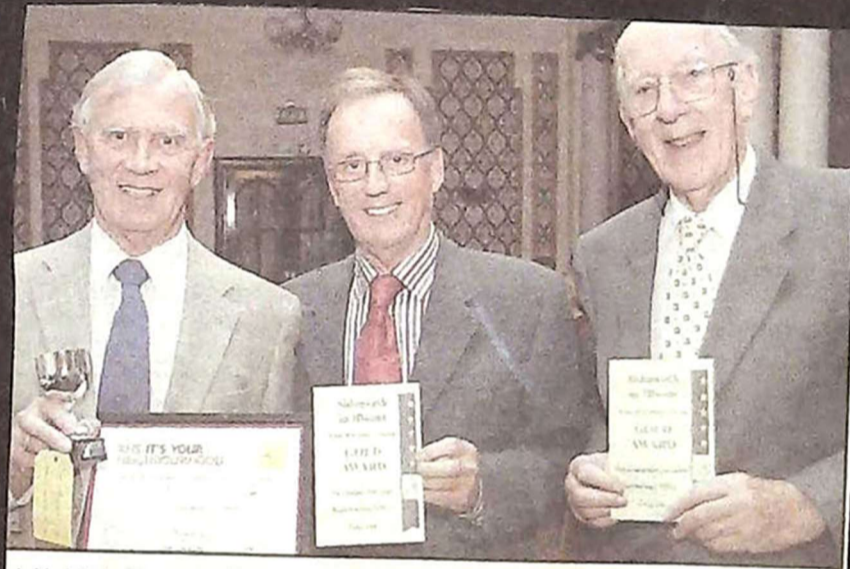
Owen Cup – Winner Graeme Pryor, R/u Nancy Temple; Macadam Cup HH – Winner Richard Thurlow, R/u Philip Harris; Macadam Cup LH – Winner Ann Ractliffe, R/u David Temple.

High Bisquers Tournament – Winner Pam Bowra, R/u Muriel Philpott; The Wheel – Winner Muriel Philpott; Most Improved Player HH – Shared by Philip Harris and Peter Nelson.

Most Improved Player LH – Richard Mills.



▲ Croquet club award winners with their trophies, presented at the annual general meeting.



▲ Neighbourhood effort: the croquet club and SVA representatives. ref shs 6546-43-11SH

2012

Ran hoops

CROQUET



SATURDAY saw the start of the croquet season with a session for prospective new members, writes Muriel Philpott.

The outfield in front of the pavilion was busy with would-be croquet players enjoying the challenge of swinging a mallet and running some hoops. They were all given encouragement and help by existing members; everyone enjoyed the bonus of some spring sunshine.

Play starts for summer

CROQUET

THANKS to the sterling work of groundsman Colin Whitehall, the croquet lawns were in magnificent condition as play opened for the new season, writes Colin Walls.

Roger Hendy opened proceedings with an informative talk on subtleties of the game. Committee members Muriel Philpott and Peter Nelson hit in with a game of Association Croquet; and Gabby Macadam, David Earwood, Ian Friedlander and Howard Quarrell enjoyed a game of Golf Croquet. The weather was stunning and many members turned out to watch and soak up the rays, and to partake of the excellent lunch that followed.

The keen players are already booking lawns to get in practice for the first tournament: the Charity One-Ball in aid of the Breast Cancer Campaign, on April 12.

Nelson wins through to final



▲ Dark clouds over Sidmouth. Pic by Susan Willey. Below: Peter Nelson and Rosemary Bradshaw. Pic by Colin Walls.

CROQUET



THE Breast Cancer Charity One-Ball Tournament was held by Sidmouth Croquet Club in very varied weather conditions, writes Colin Walls.

This version of croquet is very different from the traditional one.

The players are on the lawn for the whole 40 minutes that the game lasts, and rapid play is the rule.

One thing doesn't change, however; rain (or even hail) doesn't stop play, so the players view dark clouds with apprehension.

Warming soup was provided by club members for lunch, and the profits from that and the match fees went towards a substantial donation to the charity.

The complex organisation fitting 12 matches onto three lawns was smoothly managed by Graham Harford with assistance from Julie Horsley.

After many competitive matches Rosemary Bradshaw and Peter Nelson won all their games to get to the final, but Peter won that match in fine style to become Sidmouth's representative in the national final at Winchester.



▲ David Clarke, left in action for Sidmouth and Brian Shorney for Budleigh Salterton in the club's annual friendly which managed to beat the challenge of week's wild weather. Pictures by Colin Walls.

All tactics

CROQUET ▼

SIDMOUTH Croquet Club entertained Budleigh Salterton to the annual friendly match on the only passable day of a week of bad weather, writes Colin Walls.

Both sides fielded strong teams including players who feature in the world rankings. Sidmouth went into lunch leading 6-2, and then managed to repeat the feat in the afternoon to finish 12-4 winners.

The Sidmouth team was Pam Bowra, David Clarke, Graham Harford, Julie Horsley, Mike Taylor, David Temple, Nancy Temple and Keith Thorley. Budleigh fielded Jane Babbage, Chris Donovan, Peter Jones, Alison Maddaford (pm only) Michael Peters (am only), Brian Pollock, Brian Shorney, Barbara Thompson and Jack Thompson, so both teams featured a husband and wife pairing.

Best performance of the day was when Graham Harford beat Brian Pollock by 20 hoops, not as easy as it sounds; most games were fiercely fought. David Clarke beat Brian Shorney (ranked no 599 in the world) by 18 hoops, but was more pleased by his two hoop victory over Peter Jones, which he described as 'lovely', featuring as it did both good flowing breaks and also a lot of tactical duelling.

Congratulations to Sidmouth.

Top class croquet

BCC MAY WEEK CROQUET ▼

FORTY one players from all over the country descended on Budleigh Salterton for their traditional May Week, including 10 players from Sidmouth who did very well, writes Colin Walls.

The top class event was the Godfrey Turner Challenge Cup, won by Alain Giraud from Ealing whose eight victories saw his handicap come down from -0.5 to -1. Local player Cliff Jones actually beat Alain with a dogged triple peel in their game, but only won seven matches overall and so missed out on the cup.

In the JK Brown Memorial Cup, Sidmouth players Roger Hendy and Graham Harford each played superbly to win all five games in their respective blocks. The final between Roger and Graham was nip and tuck with both players having run 16 hoops after two and a half hours. Roger then gained the initiative and ran seven hoops to win +7.

In the Pat Turner Cup, Roger Mills from Sidmouth won efficiently by winning all four games in his block; he is undoubtedly a player to watch. Ian Friedlander of Sidmouth won the Egyptian competition by winning 5 of his 7 games played, in the process reducing his handicap from 10 to 9.



▲ Roger Mills, Roger Hendy, Ian Friedlander, Graham Harford and Philip Harris.

The final of the Y doubles competition was an all Sidmouth affair with Derek Andrew and Philip Harris playing against Graham Harford and Peter Miller. Derek and Philip won +7. Philip Harris won a Croquet Association Silver Award for achieving a break of 12 hoops without bisques, a wonderful achievement for an 11 handicap player.

Weather conditions varied from atrocious to glorious, but the lawns held up well, and even in chilling conditions the warm welcome of the Budleigh club was much appreciated by all.

High ranking play at Sidmouth

CROQUET ▼

SIXTEEN high-ranking golf croquet players from all over the country competed for the Haste Cup in Sidmouth on a wet and windy weekend.

The players, with handicaps ranging from scratch to five came to Sidmouth from as far afield as Dyfryn, Worcester and Sussex to play in this important Croquet Association tournament, which is a qualifying round for the prestigious Ascot Cup played at the Hurlingham Club in September. This was played in two American blocks 'all play all', with everyone playing seven 19-point games.

The weather on Saturday was cold, windy and, at times, wet. By the end of the day six of the seven

rounds had been played. During Saturday night the wind and the heavy rain came resulting in only one court (out of four) being fit to play for use on Sunday. This caused a problem and the tournament manager, Helen Pryor, made the decision that only the matches that were vital for getting to the semi-finals would be played. The semi-finals were shortened to one 19 point game instead of the 'best of three' 13 point games. Ryan Cabble (Nailsea, aged 19) beat Nicholas Cheyne (Surbiton) 10-7 and William Ormerod (East Dorset & Swanage) beat Richard Brooks (Sussex CCC) 8-7. The latter game was very close and was decided by a 'Golden Hoop'.

The Final - 'best of three' 13 point games - between Ryan Cabble and William Ormerod was very exciting, and eventually won by Cabble.

Played host

CROQUET

SIDMOUTH were host to a team of three players from Plymouth in their second Federation League match of the season.

Plymouth seemed to be on form and had beaten Cornwall 5-0 in a previous match so their visit was anticipated with some trepidation.

In the morning, the doubles pair of Graham Harford and Mike Taylor were on good form and won by 22 hoops, but the young Plymouth player Alain Schaffert made clever use of his bisque allocation to win his singles match against Derek Andrew.

After lunch three singles were played: Derek Andrew beat a stubborn Brian Stephens by five and Mike won comfortably by 15 against Bob Savage.

The final game between Alain and Graham looked to be going Alain's way as he had a considerable lead after an hour's play.

However, Graham steadily clawed his way back and when time was called had levelled the game, which then went to a Golden Hoop shootout. Alain hit the peg from 20 yards with his last shot to win the game, but it wasn't enough to save the overall match: Result Sidmouth 3, Plymouth 2

●The B league is for croquet players with handicaps in the range 16 to 24. The Sidmouth team, of John Dixon, Paul Griew, Anne Reece and Pamela Bowra, had their first away match of the season against Exeter on Thursday.

The morning seemed set fair for Sidmouth, who won two of the three games. In the afternoon, however, under a blazing sun Sidmouth wilted.

The four games were strongly fought but Exeter came out on top in all of them.

Result Exeter 5, Sidmouth 2

Close in croquet

CROQUET

SIDMOUTH Croquet Club played two Intermediate League matches last week and unfortunately suffered narrow defeats in both, writes Philip Harris.

The Sidmouth team of Ian Friedlander (captain), Peter Nelson, Roger Mills and Graeme Pryor lost 4-3 at home to Cornwall. In the morning one doubles and two singles games were played, the doubles pairing of Ian Friedlander and Graeme Pryor losing -6. In the two singles games Roger Mills was unlucky to lose -1 but Peter Nelson battled strongly to win his game +2. Four singles were played in the afternoon, with Peter Nelson continuing his good form and Roger Mills played more confidently, both winning their games easily. Graeme Pryor was unlucky to lose -1, Ian Friedlander struggled to get on the lawn against an experienced opponent with 7 bisques, and lost heavily.

Philip Harris (captain), Pam Bowra, John Dixon and Colin Walls played away at Budleigh Salterton. Colin Walls played confidently to win both his singles games and Philip Harris won his one singles game. Pam Bowra and John Dixon were unlucky to lose their singles games by -2 and -4 respectively. Budleigh Salterton 4, Sidmouth 3.

Talent earns cups

CROQUET

THE annual High Handicap Tournament was played on Tuesday in benign weather and the fast lawns caught out some players who had become accustomed to more swamp-like conditions, writes Colin Walls.

Combined with the rapid-play format (only one hour 20 minutes per game) scores were low in the morning. However, by the afternoon players were in the swing and scores improved. The two blocks were won by John Coombes and Marian Harris and the final between them was played with a good audience. Harris has found a new confidence this year and stormed ahead, running some difficult hoops with relaxed efficiency. Coombes struggled to get going and had only run one hoop after an hour's play. Although he then began to run hoops, it was too late and Harris won comfortably by eight hoops; a popular victory for the club's social secretary.

●Croquet players from all over the country converged on Sidmouth for the Mid-Summer Tournament.

In spite of some appalling weather, the combination of players with true British grit and groundsmen with giant sponges, saw the event successfully completed.

The Handicap Goblet was won in fine style by

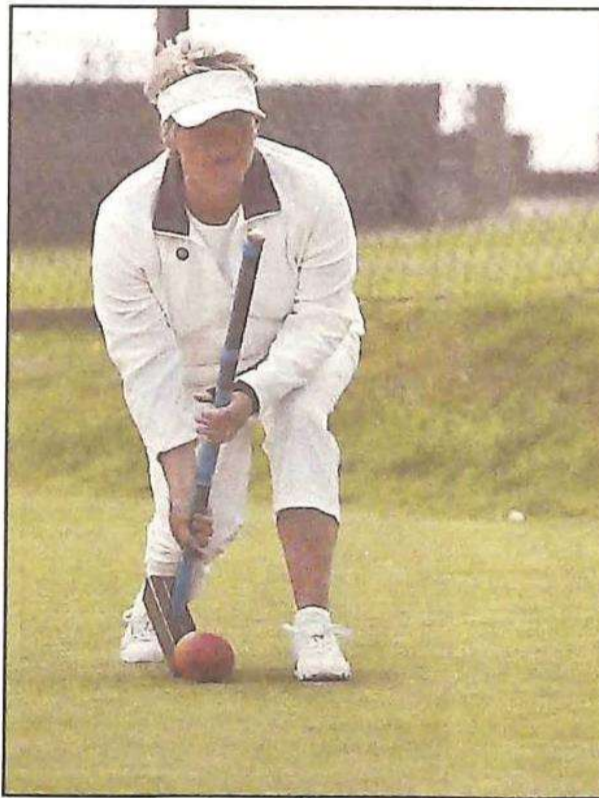
newcomer Roger Mills, who, along the way, earned a Croquet Association Bronze Award for completing a 10 hoop break and saw his handicap reduced from 14 to 12 (much to the relief of his future opponents).

The Dwerryhouse Cup, however, went to old-timer Peter Miller. Miller had a couple of years off from croquet, came back to find his swing didn't work any more, and courageously rebuilt it from the ground up into a dangerous weapon. He dominated his section and won all his games, in the process reducing his handicap from 14 to 12.

The David Rawkins Cup was dominated from start to finish by Roger Hendy. His play has progressed to a new level this season; he won all his games, earned a Croquet Association Silver Award for completing a 12 hoop break, and reduced his handicap from 7 to 6.

The top section, for the Challenge Cup, featured last year's winner Ian Mantle (ranked 369 in the world) who started well by beating local player Mike Taylor by 25 hoops. Taylor kept his nerve and won all his other games to win the section, and reduced his handicap from 5 to 4.5.

This is the first time that all sections of this tournament have been won by local players, so congratulations to the Sidmouth Croquet Club for nurturing so much talent.



▲ Marian Harris plays a roll shot. Pic: Colin Walls. Members of Sidmouth Croquet Club playing at the weekend. Philip Harris takes his shot. Picture by Alex Walton. Ref shsp 2829-24-12AW. To order your copy of this photograph, go to www.sidmouthherald.co.uk and click on myphotos24

Mills wins Canton Trophy

CROQUET



▲ Colin Walls in full swing. Picture by Alex Walton. Ref shsp 2846-24-12AW.

SIXTEEN competitors of all levels played for the Canton Trophy in blustery conditions, writes Colin Walls.

This tournament uses the Egyptian format, a modified knock-out in which everyone gets four games however they play.

The games saw some high scoring, with several peg-out finishes with all hoops run, a good achievement considering it was pretty difficult to time your swing between gusts. The morning saw Pam Bowra, Graham Harford, Roger Mills, and Colin Walls winning two games each.

In the afternoon, Roger Mills won both his games to emerge the champion, with Colin Walls second on points.



▲ Corbett Spoons winner Pam Bowra with finals opponent Robert Matthews.

Above: Marian Harris. Pics: Colin Walls.



Experience pays off for Pam

CROQUET

THE Corbett Spoons Tournament, an exciting and fast-moving tournament, features an unusual form of croquet in which each player uses just one ball, although all other rules are as for the standard game, writes Colin Walls.

The games last no more than 40 minutes and usually less, but a lot of changes of fortune can be crammed into those minutes.

The low handicap section was played in reasonable conditions. In Block B Colin Walls was a clear winner, having won five of his six games, being only beaten by Nancy Temple. In Block A, four players had four wins each and a complex formula had to be applied before deciding who went forward to the semi-finals. The final featured Colin Walls (hcap 11) and David Clarke (hcap 6), and was a rare example of a game decided by a

single shot. Colin fired from the yard line at hoop one and failed to run it, getting stuck in the jaws. David then fired at the ball and not only failed to hit it, but missed the hoop and ran on nearly to hoop two. Colin then had an easy two-ball break round to hoop four and David never recovered; spending most of the rest of the game in unsuccessful attempts at long roquets as Colin steadily ran hoops. Result 13-2.

The high handicap section was played on one of the few sunny days. Ten players, divided into two blocks, all played four games. This was followed by semi-finals in which Pam Bowra played Anne Reece and John Coombes played Robert Matthews. Both were exciting with close scores. The winners, Pam Bowra (hcap 18) and Robert Matthews (hcap 24) played the finals. Eventually the more experienced player won the day. Bowra beat Matthews by three hoops.

Federation golf croquet victory at Porthpean

CROQUET

THE Sidmouth Golf Croquet team continued their run of wins with a resounding victory at home against a team from Cornwall Croquet Club (Porthpean) in the South West Federation League, writes Colin Walls.

In all, Sidmouth won 14 games to Porthpean, three games with three drawn. Porthpean, playing with only four players, showed remarkable stamina during the 20 games against the larger Sidmouth team.

There were particularly good performances for Sidmouth by Keith Thorley, Ian Simpson, Margaret Piper and Marian Harris.

Result: Sidmouth 15½, Porthpean 4½.



▲ David White lines up a tricky shot. Picture: Colin Walls.

● On a cold and windy day Sidmouth played an Association Croquet B League match at home

against local rivals Budleigh Salterton.

The team of Marian Harris (captain), Muriel Philpott, Richard Thurlow and John Coombes played one doubles and six singles games.

In the morning, Sidmouth struggled in all three games, losing the doubles and one singles, but Richard Thurlow managed to just win his singles on the Golden Hoop in a close, hard-fought game.

Thurlow continued to play consistently well and won his second singles game in the afternoon, with wins also for Muriel Philpott and John Coombes in their singles.

Despite threatening skies after lunch, the rain stayed away and a dry day of croquet was enjoyed by all, with Sidmouth winning 4-3.

Nailbiting

CROQUET



▲ Roger Mills and Pam Bowra.

THE Colclough and Sidmouth Cups are Sidmouth Croquet Club's main Association doubles tournament, writes Helen Pryor.

At this event a low handicap player is partnered with a higher handicap player by the tournament manager. This makes for an even contest and gives less experienced players the chance to see how the experts play.

On Friday and Saturday the eight couples, divided into two blocks, played three games.

On Saturday afternoon the semi-finals were played between the top two pairs in each block (X).

At the same time, though they were not in the running for the cups, the other players played Y semi-finals. The weather was rather wet at times, but this did not dampen spirits and there were some close, and not so close, games played.

As usual, some players were disappointed with their results, and others very pleased. But that is the way of croquet! In the semi-finals (X) Roger Mills and Pamela Bowra beat Peter Nelson and Anne Reece, and Philip Harris and Graeme Pryor beat Ian Friedlander and John Davies.

On a sunny Sunday morning all players were in action to gain positions 1 to 8, some of the newer members with high handicaps playing well under the guidance of their partner. The final between Roger Mills and Pamela Bowra and Philip Harris and Graeme Pryor was exciting game. However, after the 2½ hours' time allowed, Mills and Bowra had pulled ahead and won the match by three hoops. While this was going on all the other players were in action to decide final positions. Most of the players, joined by other members, then enjoyed a good buffet lunch. Following this, there was a presentation of 'prizes for all', everyone going home with a small token as a thank you for playing! The winners will be presented with their cups at the Croquet AGM in October.

Semi-final beckons

GOLF CROQUET

SIDMOUTH'S Golf Croquet team of eight players travelled to Budleigh Salterton for their penultimate match in the South West Federation Golf Croquet League South West Section, writes Helen Pryor.

After the dreadful rainy conditions experienced so far this season, it was a pleasure to play on a beautiful sunny day on four excellent lawns.

The match comprised four doubles and 16 singles. By lunchtime, when two doubles and 12 singles had been played, Sidmouth had established a good lead of 9-5. The lead was maintained in the afternoon session when two doubles and four singles were played, despite Budleigh Salterton winning three of the six games, with one draw.

Overall, against a strong Budleigh team, Sidmouth put up a creditable performance with John Coombes gaining the most points for the team with two wins and one draw.

The final score was Budleigh Salterton 8½, Sidmouth 11½.

Having now won six matches out of six in the South West section of the League, and with only one more match to be played, against Dowlsh Wake in August, a place in the semi-final against South East beckons.

Pryor and Piper lead

GOLF CROQUET

SIDMOUTH golf croquet team completed a series of seven consecutive match wins.

The Dowlsh Wake lawns, with their steep and irregular gradients, present a challenge to any visitors and, from the start, Sidmouth found themselves struggling. By the end of the morning they were trailing with 4½ points to Dowlsh Wake's 7½ points. (A drawn game counts as half point to each side) To win the match they needed to win six of the remaining eight games in the afternoon.

Somehow the necessary resources were found and Sidmouth had seven further wins and one draw. The eventual score being Sidmouth 12, Dowlsh Wake 8.

Particularly good performances in the singles games were put in by Graeme Pryor (including a 7-1 win) and Margaret Piper. On the Dowlsh Wake side Peter Mallen was unbeaten in his three singles games with two wins and one draw. The Dowlsh Wake hosts were very welcoming and lived up to their reputation as one of the friendliest clubs in the South West.

The Sidmouth team is now looking forward to taking part in the South West League regional semi-finals.



▲ David Clarke. Picture by Colin Walls.

It's tough at the top

CROQUET

PARKSTONE Division 3 SIDMOUTH'S top croquet team compete in the regional advanced play league. In this league no handicaps are used and the format has the added complexity of lifts to provide a challenge for the top players.

This year the advanced league was split into three divisions for the first time. In Division 3, Sidmouth played each other team (Bristol B, Budleigh and Taunton Deane) twice, home and away.

At home, Sidmouth managed to beat all three teams by a single game, but never found their stride away from home, suffering three heavy defeats. Overall this was a very creditable result by the squad of Derek Andrew, David Clarke, Roger Hendy, Peter Hills, Mike Taylor, David Temple and Richard Wood, and was achieved against strong opposition and despite difficulties throughout the season with injuries and availability.

The most notable individual performance was from David Clarke, who won at least one game in every match he played, while Taylor and Wood formed a successful doubles partnership, winning all three games they played together.

The team completed a solid season on Sunday with a 3-2 home win against Taunton Deane.

As usual for the home games, Colin Whitehall's excellent lawns and Gill Hodge's teas were enjoyed by all.

Nailbiting

CROQUET

SIDMOUTH'S Federation team of Ian Friedlander (captain), Roger Hendy (manager), Graham Harford, and Phillip Harris visited Exeter for a derby clash, writes Ian Friedlander.

Although Exeter is a much larger town, their lawns are three quarter size, and Sidmouth duly spent the first half hour rescuing balls from ditches through over-hitting.

Exeter's Mark MacNair took full advantage and used his one bisque wisely to get well ahead before giving Ian Friedlander chance to recover. He went round quickly to put Sidmouth one up. Roger Hendy, however, never got a grip on the smaller lawn and Exeter's Roger Thorn pulled steadily ahead to level the score. The doubles was a thriller, with Phillip Harris pegging his ball out leaving Graham Harford the task of keeping two opponents in check on his own; this he managed to put Sidmouth 2-1 ahead at lunch.

In the afternoon matches, Hendy again had trouble with the distance of his shots. Harris never got a break going and Exeter went 3-2 up. Harford (handicap 9) levelled the score with a methodical display, using his bisques well, against Adam Wilmhurst (handicap 2.5, world ranking 444).

In the last game Friedlander had to give nine bisques to Gordon Edwards, who got to a seemingly unassailable position. But Ian managed to hit in from a long distance, ran seven hoops without error and pegged out both balls to win the game and the match.

Result: Sidmouth 4, Exeter 3

Early tea

GOLF CROQUET

A GOLF croquet team from Barnstaple Croquet Club came to play against Sidmouth Croquet Club in the South West Federation League, writes Helen Pryor.

After a glorious sunrise, by the time play started it was raining! Twelve singles games were played, resulting in a 9-3 lead for Sidmouth (eight wins and two draws).

As the weather was deteriorating fast, players decided to continue play without a lunch break.

Four doubles games were played - Sidmouth winning all four.

When the rain really came down Sidmouth had an unbeatable lead and the final four games were abandoned.

For the first time ever, tea was served, and enjoyed at 2pm!

Of the Sidmouth players who played all their allotted three games, two players won all three - Pam Bowra and Muriel Philpott.

The final result was a win for Sidmouth, 13 points to Barnstaple's three.

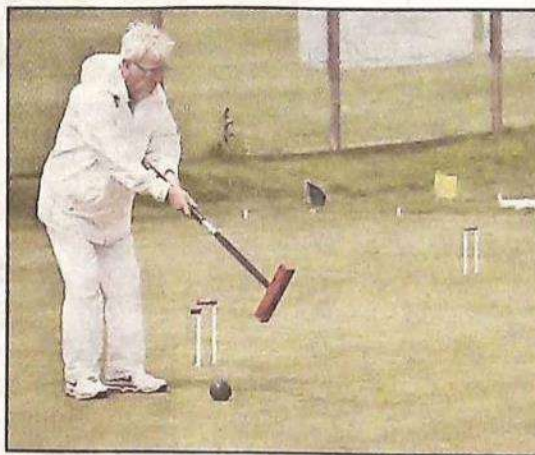
Lost by one

CROQUET

SIDMOUTH'S B League team played a home match against Cornwall, writes Pam Bowra.

The morning games were very close but, unfortunately, the two singles matches were lost. Although John Dixon and Pamela Bowra won their doubles, it was 2-1 to Cornwall at lunchtime.

In the afternoon, there were four singles matches to play, all fought for until the bitter end. Richard Thurlow won his by eight hoops and Bowra won hers by four, but the other two went to Cornwall leaving their morning lead intact and Cornwall the winners by one game.



▲ Roger Mills hits a take off shot.



▲ Left: Peter Miller with his trophies.

▲ Above right: Ann Lilley takes advice from David Clarke.



All pictures by Colin Walls.



▲ Referee Mike Taylor makes a fine distinction

Unusual competition format

CROQUET

THE Robert Case Shield and Tankard consists of a series of croquet set pieces, each based on a situation which occurs in actual games.

For instance the pegging out challenge starts with two balls near the edge of the lawn 12 yards from the peg; players have to peg both of them out using the standard roquet, croquet, continuation sequence of the association croquet game. This challenge represents the final winning sequence of a match and inspires the competitors to great efforts resulting in an average score of 6.4 out of 8.

At the other end of the scale the split shot average score was only 1.8 out of 8. In that challenge the

players have to send one ball 17 yards to the middle of the lawn, and another 10 yards to a hoop with just one hit.

David Temple (handicap 4) scored a tremendous 44 points out of 66 to win the Robert Case Shield, but Graeme Pryor's second place achievement of 41 points off a handicap of 14 was extraordinary. For the Robert Case Tankard, players' handicaps are added to their scores to give the higher handicap players something to try for. This was won by Marian Harris (handicap 24) whose score of 32 was better than that of 11 players with lower handicaps, with an honourable mention for Rob Matthews.

The afternoon was completed by Gill Hodge's usual excellent tea.

Champions

CROQUET



▲ Rosemary Bradshaw - one of the champions at Budleigh.

BUDLEIGH Salterton hosted the National Seniors' Croquet Championship this year and six Sidmouthians went along to try their hand along with some 50 or so other over 50s from all over the country.

The tournament has seven different sections and remarkably, Sidmouth managed to win three trophies. Rosemary Bradshaw won the handicap knock-out. Peter Miller and his partner won the handicap doubles, and Peter on his own won Block E.

Multi terra

CROQUET

SIDMOUTH'S Intermediate League team of Phillip Harris (captain), Nancy Temple and Colin Walls travelled to Wellington on Saturday for the final match of the season.

Wellington have only one lawn and that is not terribly flat, but they make up for it with the beauty of the surroundings and the warmth of the welcome. In the morning honours were even, with Sidmouth winning the doubles and Wellington the singles. In the afternoon three games were played simultaneously, with the third game distinguished by using balls especially striped with white paint for the occasion. The Sidmouth players were unable to construct any good breaks on the difficult terrain and lost two games to one. Although each Sidmouth player won one game and lost one, the doubles game effectively counts for half per person. Result Wellington 3, Sidmouth 2.



▲ Sidmouth Croquet Club members Marjorie and Howard Quarrell and Gabby Macadam were on hand to give croquet taster sessions at A la Ronde this week. Photo by Simon Horn. Ref shsp 2403-32-12SH To order your copy of this photograph visit www.sidmouthherald.co.uk and click on myphotos24

Cracking croquet

CROQUET

THE Croquet Association B Level Tournament is for players with handicaps in the range two to eight, in other words, just below the top level of national standard players, writes Colin Walls.

Handicaps are not used in the games themselves, which are played under Level Advanced rules. The Sidmouth tournament this year featured players from as far afield as Penrith and the Pyrenees, but also five players from Sidmouth itself.

In her valedictory remarks Elaine Woodward (the Sidmouth chairman) remarked that only a few years ago Sidmouth could only scrape up one entrant at this level, so to find five was a tribute to the high standards at the club now.

Play was conducted at first in two blocks, chosen to have a similar spread of handicaps in both. In block A David Marsh, supported by his family, won six games out of seven, as did Keith Ross. Ross has been better than scratch at times in the past, but a break from the game has seen his handicap drop to 2.5. He still plays with an ancient wooden mallet with a cane handle, whereas most of the opposition have carbon fibre. Modern technology was no help in this case. Because Ross had beaten Marsh in their game, he went on to the final.

In block B Robert Moss started strongly, being the only player to win all of his first three games, but top Sidmouth player Richard Wood eventually caught up to six games all, and, having beaten Robert in their game, went on to the final.

The final was close-fought. At one point Wood looked to have an opportunity to produce a winning break, but went off the lawn on a fine take-off. This was particularly galling as local knowledge should have told him that the movement of the whole lawn a foot to the west last winter had produced a significant slope at that point (well, significant at the level of precision play involved here). Eventually Ross held his nerve and his lead to win the game.

Gedge and Walls win titles

GOLF CROQUET

SIDMOUTH Croquet Club held its annual Golf Croquet Singles Tournaments, on a warm sunny holiday Monday, writes Colin Walls.

Fourteen of the higher handicap players competed for the Cunningham Salver Singles with handicaps ranging from 8 to 11, the latter applying to players who began playing croquet during the last two years.

Semi-finalists were Sue Dent against Margaret Colman and Anne Gedge against David Butler. Both games were well contested resulting in wins for Dent and Colman. The final between Dent (in her first competitive season) and Gedge was closely fought which either player could have won, but when time was up, Gedge won by one hoop, a worthy winner as, during the day, she had won all her games.



▲ Keith Ross hits the winning shot in the B level tournament. Pic: Colin Walls.



▲ Richard Wood goes through a hoop. Pic: Colin Walls.

On Tuesday, low handicap players (handicaps 4-7) competed for the Hatherley Cup. Twelve players, divided into two blocks, played five games. Most games were close and exciting as many of the games were between players who often play golf croquet and players with fairly low handicaps in association croquet, who do not play it very often but enjoy this annual tournament.

These players are expert at knocking balls out of the way of hoops, much to the frustration of the golf croquet players, who mostly have higher Association handicaps. The final was played between Colin Walls and John Coombes who each won all five games in their block. This was an interesting game to watch with the crafty shots of Coombes who plays a lot of golf croquet and the skill of Walls (good at Association croquet) in thwarting Coombes' attempts to run some of the hoops. The final result was a win for Walls by three hoops.

GOLF CROQUET

SIDMOUTH'S Golf Croquet team (captain Helen Pryor, with Graeme Pryor, Keith Thorley, John Coombes, Pamela Bowra, Margaret Piper, Anne Reece and Marian Harris) lost to Dowlsh Wake near Ilminster in the Semi-final of the South West Federation Golf Croquet League 12½ - 7½, writes Helen Pryor.

It was a really close-fought game but every Sidmouth player drew or won at least one game with Pamela Bowra winning two games and Keith Thorley winning one and drawing two games. Their opponents, Dowlsh Wake, were the winning team of the South-East section of the League. The home team's sloping site and undulating lawns posed a real challenge for the Sidmouth team as often the balls did not go where expected or hoped.

Handicap success

CROQUET



THE Challenge and Gilbey tournament was first held at Budleigh Croquet Club in 1900 and is still popular with players of all standards from all over the country.

The first two days are for the Handicap Knockout. The purpose of croquet handicaps is that a less experienced player can have a good game against even a top player, with a chance of winning. This was demonstrated by the eventual winner Colin Walls, from Sidmouth. In round 1, Walls (handicap 10) beat David Mooney (handicap 1) by 26-0; Mooney sits on the national handicap committee and was not best pleased to have his own system used so effectively against him!

In round 2, Walls beat Chris Donovan (handicap 2.5) by 26-0. In round 3, he beat Roger Mills (handicap 11) by 26-6; and in the final beat Cliff Jones (handicap 0) by 26-4 to win the Gilbey Goblet, incidentally beating in the process three of the four players who later won Challenge Cups.

The final two days are for the Challenge Cups. For this players are divided into divisions based on handicap, but no handicaps are used in the games themselves, which are played as Level Advanced. This format adds extra difficulty to the game to make it interesting for people who can routinely run 12 hoops in a single turn. In the lowest division the final was an all-Sidmouth affair in which Philip Harris, in spite of a dogged fight back from a poor start, was eventually beaten by Roger Mills, who thereby won the Stevenson Cup in only his second competitive season.

The Reckitt Cup was won by Susan Davies from Roehampton; her consistent play and meticulous three-ball breaks beating Sidmouth runner-up Peter Nelson. The Council Cup was won by Budleigh's croquet chairman Chris Donovan from Andrew Wise; and the top trophy, the Roehampton Cup was won by Cliff Jones from Mike Hann, in a reversal of last year's final. Cliff has been a member of Sidmouth in the past so we count him as an honorary Sidmothians.

Close game



▲ Liz Matthews. Pictures by Colin Walls..



▲ Paul Griew and Chris Gradwell.



▲ Sidmouth croquet. Picture by Alex Walton. Ref shsp 0795-36-12AW.

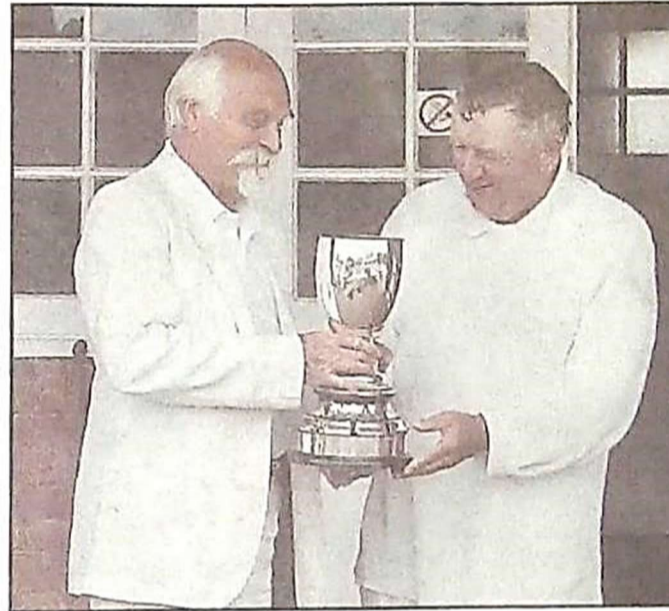
SIDMOUTH Croquet Club hosted their Open Handicap Weekend for the Clarke Salver. This three-day event is open to all, but has been won by Sidmouth's Keith Thorley for the last three years.

This year he decided to give others a chance and did not enter. The Swiss format was used in which players are paired with opponents who have won a similar number of games. Three games into the tournament only Colin Walls and Roger Mills remained undefeated, so the game between them was effectively the final and it was interesting enough to be worth describing in some detail for croquet aficionados (report on www.sidmouthherald.co.uk).

Colin went on to win his remaining two games, and therefore the tournament. Roger Mills also won his remaining two games and was a worthy runner-up. The prize for the fastest game was won by Ian Friedlander, well-known for his bold play, and the tournament was managed ably as ever by Julie Horsley. The prizes were presented by salver donor David Clarke as Barbara Clarke is recovering from a recent operation; our thoughts are with her at this trying time.



▲ Colin Walls, Paul Griew, Jo McInerney and Martin McInerney.



▲ Cliff Jones receives his Challenge Cup.



THE premier internal competition of Sidmouth Croquet Club is for the Humphrey Hicks Trophy, writes Colin Walls.

This is croquet in its purest form, using Advanced rules and no handicaps. In the semi-finals Derek Andrew overcame Mike Taylor by 17 hoops, and Tony Dustan-Smith beat Richard Wood by four hoops. The final is the best of three untimed games. Tony Dustan-Smith (handicap 1) is an old hand at this, but Derek Andrew (handicap 6) was a newcomer to the situation. The first two games of the final were dominated by large breaks, one game going to Derek by 16 hoops and the other to Tony by 11 hoops. The final game was postponed to the next day and attracted enthusiastic spectators. Both players suffered from big match nerves and made mistakes, but there were also some superb recoveries. In the end Andrew held his nerve the best and his name will be inscribed on the trophy for the first time.

Hill climb

2013

New season gets going

CROQUET



▲ Mike Taylor in action on a chilly first day of action at Sidmouth Croquet Club.

THE croquet season got off to a bitterly cold start at Sidmouth last Wednesday.

Although temperatures were close to zero the chairman, Mike Taylor, and vice-chairman, Peter Nelson, bravely started the season off with a game of Association Croquet, demonstrating the elegant tactics that illuminate this version of the game.

On the other lawn four keen people led by Gabby Macadam entertained those brave enough to withstand the icy winds with the swift changes of fortune and intricate stroke play that mark Golf Croquet.

Afterwards the spectators and players were glad to retire to the pavilion where Gill Hodge sustained all with a hearty buffet lunch.

The main training schedule has now begun, but there are still chances to get involved even if you feel the need to wait for warmer weather!

The person to contact is membership secretary Rob Mitchell on 01395 578 786 or alternatively visit the club website at sidmouthcroquet.org.uk.

Nelson bags Charity competition success

CROQUET

PETER Nelson won the Charity One Ball, just edging out Pamela Bowra, writes Colin Walls.

They were actually all level after five games, but Peter won on the who-beat-who rule.

This croquet format is very fast-moving and interactive, with games time-limited to forty minutes.

Each player uses only one ball themselves, but can still take croquet from their opponent.

The better players manage to make two-ball

breaks, which is a bit of an eye-opener for the less experienced players who can hardly believe such a thing is possible.

The event raised £175 for Prostate Cancer UK.

Because we raised over £100 we are entitled to send two representatives to the final.

However, with neither Peter nor Pamela is available, Sidmouth will be represented in Winchester on May 12, by Philip Harris.

The weather was not kind to us with players needing to wrap up well!

This made the warming soup provided for lunch all the more welcome.



▲ Early season action from Sidmouth, (left) a well-wrapped-up Pam Bowrah and (right) David Butler plays a shot with Ian Friedlander looking on. Pictures contributed.

Sidmouth finish second

CROQUET

SIDMOUTH Croquet Club did very well in the South West Federation Short Croquet at Nailsea, winning 9 games out of 16 and coming second in their group, writes Colin Walls.

Congratulations to the team, particularly Muriel Philpott and Richard Thurlow who played exceptionally well, winning three out of four

games each.

This variation of the game is played on half-sized lawns which places a premium on scoring heavily while you can; there is nowhere to hide on such a small lawn!

This annual event gives players a chance to get going at the start of the season and is a very welcome introduction to competitive play.

Refresher

CROQUET

THE Golf Croquet Refresher was a great success, writes Colin Walls.

Twenty-four members of Sidmouth Croquet Club attended the 'beginning of the season' course.

Five coaches were on hand and members' handicaps ranged from five to 11.

For the first hour, basic strokes were practised and, in particular, how to aim straight and hit the ball through hoops. Groups were based on handicaps and the higher handicapped, less experienced players, received extra instruction.

After coffee, which was very efficiently served by Marian Harris, eight of the newer players stayed together with two coaches on the half size lawns and played doubles games under further instruction.

Other players, also playing doubles games, were divided into fours in a way that ensured that they had practice in playing with and against "extra turns". (Higher handicap players receive these when playing against players with lower handicaps.)

How and when to use these 'extra turns' and tactics played an important role here. All members present seemed to enjoy this outside session, taking place on the best Saturday of the year so far - mostly sunny and reasonably warm.

I would like to thank the coaches for their time - David Temple, John Dixon, Graeme Pryor, Howard Quarrell and Ian Friedlander. Also, thanks to Marian for the coffee (and biscuits).

Consistency from Wood

CROQUET

THE first South West Federation Parkstone League Croquet match took place on Sunday when Sidmouth's top team hosted a strong team from Taunton Deane, writes Colin Walls.

The Sidmouth players were Richard Wood (captain), Mike Taylor, Roger Hendy and David Temple.

After the first three matches in the morning Taunton were ahead two to one although Wood and Taylor had secured a good win in the doubles.

In the afternoon, all four Sidmouth players rapidly improved their play and fought four highly competitive singles matches, recording a magnificent win in all four!

Richard Wood played consistently well, Mike Taylor had a narrow win against Taunton's most experienced player in an exciting finish whilst Roger Hendy and David Temple recorded emphatic victories in their singles matches.

The result was a very creditable win for Sidmouth five to two.

The post-match tea tasted especially good!



▲ Richard Wood was in fine form.

Narrow loss

CROQUET

SIDMOUTH South West Croquet team travelled to Street to play a South West Federation Golf Croquet fixture against Abbey Croquet Club, writes Roger Hendy.

This was the first match of the season and the odds appeared to be against them from the start. As the morning progressed, Sidmouth players were unable to adjust to playing on the half size, substandard lawns, which they found very challenging!

After an excellent lunch provided by the host team, Sidmouth struggled through eight more games, winning only two.

The winning games for Sidmouth were played by Michael Hide, Graeme Pryor and Margaret Piper. Michael Hide with partner Rob Matthews drew their doubles game. The final result was a resounding win for Abbey by 13 games.

There was better news for the team a few days later when they won their meeting with Budleigh Salterton.

It was a particularly good result as all seven members of the team contributed to the overall score of Sidmouth 13 Budleigh 7.

Pamela Bowra and Dudley Ratcliffe performed particularly well winning all of their matches. A very satisfactory day was rounded off with an enjoyable tea provided by Gill Hodge. Further matches are planned in a very busy season.

Cabble wins Haste Cup

CROQUET

THE Haste Cup was contested at Sidmouth Croquet Club, writes Roger Hendy.

This is a qualifying Golf Croquet tournament for the prestigious Ascot Cup run by the Croquet Association later in the season.

Fourteen players competed, including two from Sidmouth, with one coming from as far away as Northampton.

Some of the best players in the country came to play in this 'level play' tournament which was played in 'American Blocks' where all seven players in a block meet each other.

By lunch on day two all the block games had been completed. The two players in each block who had won the most games then played the semi-finals.

This saw Northampton's Lionel Tibble take on Ryan

Cabble from Nailsea, and Sue Lightbody from Dulwich play Swanage-based William Ormerod.

Cabble and Ormerod prevailed to contest the final. These two players, with an age difference of about fifty years, had quite different styles of play, and were very entertaining to watch! Ormerod won the first game only for Cabble to take the next two to claim the match and lift the prestigious Haste Cup for the third year running.

Cabble will now take his place in the Ascot Cup later this season. The match for third and fourth place, contested by the two beaten semi-finalists saw Lightbody defeat Tibble.

Unlike last year's woes with wet weather, this year the tournament was played in dry weather, but it remained cold throughout.

All visiting players enjoyed the weekend and the opportunity to play on the fine croquet lawns at Sidmouth.

Emphatic win

CROQUET

SIDMOUTH pulled off an emphatic home win against Wellington in the SWF Intermediate Croquet League, writes Colin Walls.

The morning saw wins for Ian Friedlander in the singles and also for Julie Horsley and Nancy Temple in the doubles.

Temple did particularly well to hold her own as she was a last minute replacement for the designated team member.

The afternoon saw her slip up against the four bisques of John Pugsley, but more wins for Julie Horsley and Ian Friedlander saw Sidmouth to a 4-1 triumph.

Friedlander was the undoubted star of the day, winning both his matches by pegging out inside the time limit, and in the process reducing his handicap from 9 to 8.

Walls stars

CROQUET



▲ Peter Nelson in action for Sidmouth

SIDMOUTH travelled to Cornwall in the South West Federation Croquet League in cold and windy conditions but brought back a hard fought victory.

In the morning, Colin Walls and Ian Friedlander won their doubles match and Peter Nelson won an authoritative game, pegging out while his opponent had only scored four hoops.

Having lost their other singles game Sidmouth needed to win two of the four singles in the afternoon to keep their lead.

Peter Hills and Ian Friedlander struggled against in-form opponents leaving it up to the other two team members.

Peter Nelson pulled off an audacious comeback from a deficit of 22 hoops, running two superb breaks to the peg to steal the game.

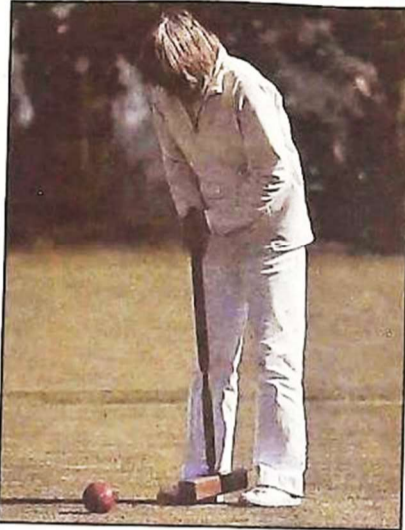
In the last game, Colin Walls found form just ten minutes from time and his four hoop break was enough to win the game and the match.

The home side were superb hosts and, as always, provided an excellent tea.

The Sidmouth team's only regret was having to leave some wonderful cakes on the table.

Derby game is a classic

CROQUET



▲ Elaine Norsworthy in action for Sidmouth. Picture contributed.

SIDMOUTH'S top croquet team faced good neighbours Budleigh Salterton in the Parkstone League, writes Colin Walls.

Fittingly the contest turned into a classic with Sidmouth battling back from an early deficit to secure a 4-3 success.

For this level of play the hoops are set so that there is just 1/16" clearance between the ball and the uprights.

To get the ball through relies on a relaxed free-flowing stroke, difficult to do at the best of times under the stress of a critical match!

On Sunday a chill wind blew from the sea, stiffening up muscles and diverting mallets.

The result was an error-prone day with few large breaks, but a good test of character. Sidmouth lost both singles in the morning, only a victory in the doubles giving some hope.

In the afternoon four doubles were played; fortunately Richard Wood, David Temple and Mike Taylor (Sidmouth's chairman) managed to win for the hosts with Chris Donovan (Budleigh's chairman) the only winner for the visitors.

Nelson lifts top trophy

CROQUET



▲ Peter Nelson with the Derryhouse Cup. Picture by Colin Walls

IN the Midsummer Open Tournament, Peter Nelson from Sidmouth won five out of six matches to win the C event and the Derryhouse Cup, writes Colin Walls.

Sue Rogers, a previous member of the club, started out on fine form, winning three out of three games and then beating Nelson, but faltered in the second half of the competition and had to settle for second place.

Nelson reduced his handicap from eight to seven as a result of his fine performance.

Sidmouth's David Temple won the B event comprehensively to walk off with the Fortfield Cup and an unbeaten record!

His strongest challenge came from Ken Wallman, fresh from the Australian summer, who beat everyone he played with the exception of the winner!

Cliff Jones, playing under the colours of Budleigh Salterton, fought off a strong challenge from John Daniels to win the A event and the Challenge Cup, the premier event in the Midsummer Open Tournament.

At the halfway point, Jones and Daniels were neck and neck and the outcome was very much in the balance as they played the final match.

Jones coped best with the thin grass, starved by a cold spring, and even tried a peel, but without success; however, he steadily built an unassailable lead from small breaks and finished in fine style to win 26-10.

This was a particularly strong event, with four players on scratch or better, so Jones certainly had no easy ride to the finish line.

The event was managed by the unflappable Julie Horsley, who had to contend with missing competitors, hard ground and difficult to set hoops.

However, she ran the event with her usual smooth efficiency. Mike Taylor, the club chairman, expressed everyone's thanks for this essential role at the end of tournament prize giving.

Fundraising

CROQUET

IAN and Euan Burr ridge completed a gruelling sequence of a game of golf croquet at 21 different croquet clubs in the space of five days last week, writes Colin Walls.

Their aim was to raise funds for Leukaemia and Lymphoma Research after a family member underwent successful treatment for Leukaemia in the first half of 2012 which really makes you appreciate the importance of research and its power to change lives.

The pair came to Sidmouth having won 15 of their 26 games, but came up against stiff opposition in the shape of Ian Friedlander and Pamela Bowra, who won 7-4, 7-3 respectively.

Euan was downcast about the result, but father and son are winning the fundraising battle and have raised around £5,000 so far, with a useful contribution from Sidmouth Croquet Club.

Wiseman in handicap win

CROQUET



▲ Wayne Wiseman receives his trophy from Julie Horsley.

Picture by Colin Walls.

SIDMOUTH Croquet Club hosted the CA Handicap Singles event last week in splendid conditions, writes Colin Walls.

The event was won by Wayne Wiseman from Bristol in fine style.

After winning all his games, amongst them a number of tough matches against good opposition, and he took home the Handicap Goblet.

On the first day he saw off three opponents including Chris Donovan, the chairman of Budleigh Salterton Croquet Club (handicap 2.5), in spite of the chairman using his brand new, top of the range, Pidcock 4000 mallet!

On the Thursday he started out by beating Ken Wallman, a previous member of Sidmouth, returned from Australia for this occasion, and finished with a victory against Julie Horsley, the event manager.

Last year every section of this tournament was won by a Sidmouth player, so let us hope that this is not the start of a trend for outsiders to take our trophies.

Griew shows experience

CROQUET

ON a wet Tuesday, four players took part in the 14-point game one-day tournament for high handicap players, writes Colin Walls.

Even though Paul Griew arrived back from holiday only the night before, he played carefully and consistently throughout to win the tournament by winning all three of his games.

In his first game he initially played tentatively but showed his experience by saving his four bisques to use in the last 20 minutes of play to beat Sue Dent 8-5. In the other game Anne Reece and John Davies were level at 4-4 on time.

Play continued until a further hoop was run by the former, for her to win 5-4.

In the second game, Griew won a low scoring game against Reece, emerging 4-1 victory whilst Davies hit form to beat Dent 11-2.

In the third game, Reece defeated dent 9-6, whilst Griew, now full of confidence, played competently to peg out against Davies to claim a 14-3 triumph.

Griew drew on his experience and his play improved as the day progressed to be a deserved tournament winner.

Thorley the Canton star

CROQUET

THE annual internal Canton croquet tournament at Sidmouth Croquet Club attracted a good field of players with varying handicaps and the weather was kind, writes Roger Hendy.

Early indications suggested that within the bounds of the Egyptian set-up that there was every chance that any player could forge ahead, but as the day progressed a number of front-runners emerged; namely David Clarke, John Coombes, Margaret Piper, Mike Taylor and Keith Thorley.

With one round to complete any one of these players could have emerged as overall winner and so, in the last round, tournament manager Roger Hendy decided to go to hoop counts.

In an exciting final round Mike Taylor played well and almost pulled ahead in hoop count, but the consistency of play of Keith Thorley throughout the tournament was the overriding factor and he emerged a very worthy victor.

Well done, Keith!



▲ Sidmouth croquet players who took part in the recent Midsummer Tournament held at the club.

Picture by Colin Walls.

Afernoon joy for Dixon

CROQUET

ON a misty Tuesday morning Sidmouth's intermediate team set off early for St Austell for their match against Cornwall, writes Colin Walls.

The morning games started in thick sea mist with players just able to see the other end of the lawn.

The doubles partnership of Margaret Piper and Philip Harris struggled with the pace of the lawn and lost minus 14.

In the singles John Dixon ran out of bisques to lose minus four.

Graeme Pryor used his bisques prudently and was level on time.

Play continued during which he drew on his experience and played cannily for 15 minutes before he ran the golden hoop to win plus one.

The mist cleared in the afternoon, but only John Dixon was able to capitalise to win plus 14.

The other Sidmouth players lost all three of their singles to lose the match 2 to 5.

The loss was compensated by the weather improving to brilliant sunshine and having Cornish strawberries and cream at tea.

Wellington well beaten

CROQUET

SIDMOUTH B league team played their second game of the season at home against Wellington on a very miserable wet day, writes Colin Walls.

The morning's games went well, Sidmouth winning their doubles and singles matches.

Luckily, after lunch, the weather improved slightly in as much as the rain had stopped.

The first two games in the afternoon were won by Sidmouth with just the last game to finish.

John Coombes of Sidmouth and John Pugsley of Wellington were equal with still a little time left on the clock.

Pugsley managed to get three more hoops leaving Coombes to hit in and catch up, which he did.

Unfortunately, after an excellent attempt, Coombes managed to only get one more hoop leaving Pugsley the winner with Sidmouth overall winners to a 4-1 score line.

And as always the day ended with an excellent tea provided by Gill Hodge.

Philpott at the double

CROQUET

SIDMOUTH B League Association Croquet team of three went to Budleigh to play their third game of the season, writes Colin Walls.

The morning went well with Pamela Bowra and Muriel Philpott winning their doubles and Derek Powell his singles.

After lunch there were three games of singles.

Philpott claimed a second success, but Powell, after a very close fight, lost by one hoop, and Bowra also suffered a narrow reversal.

Sidmouth, however, just scraped through, with the final result being three to Sidmouth and two to Budleigh.

Post-lunch comeback

CROQUET

A TEAM of six from Sidmouth travelled to Parkstone, Poole, last Sunday to play East Dorset in the South West Golf Croquet League, writes Colin Walls.

The match comprised four doubles and 16 singles games.

The morning session of four doubles and four singles proved disastrous for Sidmouth, the only win coming from the doubles pair of Graeme Pryor and Paul Griew.

After lunch, the weather improving, Sidmouth fortunes changed resulting in five wins to East Dorset's four with three drawn.

This was a much better performance against the strong home team.

Overall, the result was a convincing win for East Dorset by twelve-and-a-half to seven-and-a-half.



▲ Roger Mills in action during the Sidmouth Croquet Club Midsummer Tournament.

Second win of season

CROQUET

SIDMOUTH SW won a second match of the season against a Cornish team at rural Porthpean, on croquet lawns liberally fertilised by invading sheep, writes Pam Bowra.

In singles games in the morning the teams were fairly evenly matched, particularly in the early exchanges.

Gradually Sidmouth pulled ahead to complete the singles with a two game advantage.

They maintained the lead throughout the afternoon doubles to seal an 11-9 triumph.

The top individual Sidmouth performance came from Richard Thurlow with two singles successes and a doubles victory, the latter he secured playing alongside Edward Coleman. Thurlow also drew a third singles match.

Coleman also won both his singles and his doubles matches.

As usual, our Porthpean hosts regaled us with a splendid Cornish cream tea.

Simpson in trio of wins

CROQUET

A GOLF Croquet team from Kingston Mauward in Dorset pitched up in Sidmouth to contest a South West Federation League match, writes Helen Pryor.

As usual a full set of 20 games are played split across a morning and an afternoon session.

Before lunch the four doubles and eight singles matches were played.

By the break Sidmouth had a slight lead of seven games to five.

Many of the encounters were close, and, after lunch during which time the players got some respite from the heat, the competition was just as fierce.

With the hosts looking to seal victory, winning half of the remaining eight games to be played, they picked up two wins and two defeats in the first four.

The final four games followed a similar pattern with the hosts banking the two wins they required to seal a deserved victory at 11-9.

Players from both teams played well in the heat, and the day was enjoyed by everyone.

All Sidmouth players won at least one game, with Rob Mathews winning a brace whilst Ian Simpson won all three he played.

Play is good throughout

CROQUET

ON a glorious hot weekend 16 members of Sidmouth Croquet Club competed for the Colclough and Sidmouth Cups, writes Helen Pryor.

This is an Association Croquet doubles tournament where low handicap players are partnered with high handicap players.

Over the three days all played five games, each lasting two-and-a-half hours.

A final was planned to be held on Sunday afternoon between the two pairs winning the most games.

It was fairly obvious by Saturday tea time that one couple, Mike Taylor and John Davies, would be one of these pairs after they had secured victories in all four of their matches.

However, the other final berth was up for grabs with one pair winning three games and three other pairs winning two!

It all rested on the final games which were contested Sunday morning when the weather was even hotter!

By lunchtime Taylor and Davies and continued their dominance, winning another four matches whilst four other pairs were triumphant in three games.

To determine the second set of finalists it was decided to go back and take into account the net hoops each pair had won throughout the three days of competition.

This resulted in David Temple and Paul Griew recording a net score of plus 23, well ahead of the field.

The final was played after lunch with all the players clearly feeling the heat!

After a close-fought contest Taylor and Davies were acclaimed winners having run ten hoops whilst their opponents managed nine.

Thurlow is the winner

CROQUET

GRACED with glorious weather, Sidmouth Croquet Club held its annual One Ball tournament over two days last week, writes Colin Walls.

This is a variation of Association Croquet where each opponent uses only one ball. It is mainly a fun tournament, but it gives excellent hoop approach practice.

The objective is to get your ball through all the hoops in turn and hit the peg - before your opponent does.

Often it can be quite a battle! On Friday, eight low handicap players battled it out.

They all played against each other, playing seven games in all.

The result was a resounding win for Margaret Piper who won six out of her seven games.

Two players, David Temple and Colin Walls, managed to win four games each, and they were declared joint runners-up.

On Saturday it was the turn of the higher handicap player and nine players took part, a potentially awkward number for a competition.

They were divided into three blocks of three with everyone in a block playing each other.

A second set of three blocks was then played, resulting in all playing four games. The four players winning the most games then played semi-finals.

These were Richard Thurlow, Ann Ractliffe, Derek Powell and Anne Reece.

Thurlow and Reece won through to the final, which was eventually won by the former at 13 hoops to nine.

Having won all his game so the day Richard Thurlow was indeed a worthy.



Richard Thurlow in action in the One Ball Tournament



▲ Mike Taylor, John Davies, David Temple and Paul Griew were the four key players at the recent playing of the Colclough and Sidmouth Cups at Sidmouth Croquet Club. Picture contributed.

Sidmouth players excel at Budleigh

CROQUET

MORE than 40 players contested the National Seniors Croquet Championships at Budleigh Salterton Croquet Club, writes Charles Townshend.

The championships, being held at Budleigh for the last of a three-year run - it's being staged in Sussex in 2104 - was played out in hot and sunny conditions which left the courts to become increasingly faster throughout the event.

Day one saw the doubles played with Ken Wallman and Mike Taylor of Sidmouth seeing off the challenge of Alan Cottle and Avril Rangini Machiavelli to earn the right to hold the CA Cups as winners of the X competition.

The first round losers entered the Y competition and local pairing Barbara Thompson and Charles Townshend overcame Adrian Kirby and Wendy Dominguez.

The Open Handicap began on Wednesday and Sidmouth's Peter Miller used his bisques to great advantage and reached the final where he beat Ken Wallman (over here from Australia though formerly living in Sidmouth) to lift the Quiller Cup.

The Y event was also won by a Sidmouth player with Peter Hills defeating Jane Hull from Cheltenham.

The main event was the Class competition where groups of players with similar handicaps played level advanced games in blocks with each person meeting all the others during the rest of the week.

David Magee from Cheltenham and Simon Hathrell emerged with seven wins, two ahead of the field. Magee went on to lift the Trevor Williams Cup with a plus 16 victory over Hathrell.

The B block with eight players was eventually won by Mary Knapp who edged out Chris Donovan to land the Colin Hemming Cup.

The C block saw victory and the de Ansorena Cup for Roger Hendy of Sidmouth who had six wins with Richard Williamson and David Temple close behind.

The D block produced a clear win for Wayne Wiseman who notched up 80 points in his clean sweep of victories and collected the most modern trophy given in memory of Nigel Graves.

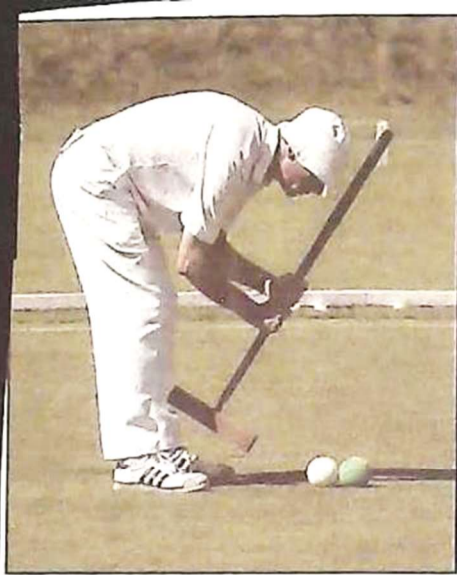
The E block was won by Jackie Hardcastle of Budleigh who managed a total of 40 points in her five victories.

Under Julie Horsley's able and experienced management play came to an end by Sunday teatime with a prize giving in which Brian Shorney spoke on behalf of the Croquet Association.

He thanked the members of the club for hosting the event and providing excellent lawns and perfect setting for the event.

Players were warm in their appreciation of the food and drink provided at lunch time, tea time coffee time and the admirable Tournament Dinner.

The flag came down once again to mark the end of another successful and enjoyable occasion.



▲ Richard Wood in action at Sidmouth. Picture by Colin Walls.

Jolliff is triumphant in Advanced event

CROQUET

THE Sidmouth Croquet Club held the annual B-Level Advanced tournament recently, writes Colin Walls.

This very popular event attracted sixteen players and several reserves in the eight-to-two handicap range.

Six of the players were from the Sidmouth Club and others were from as far away as Penrith, Canterbury, Nottingham and the south of France.

Sidmouth managed to provide good weather for the first two days, as well as nice sea views, and all the players enjoyed three games a day of intense competition with varying results.

The first part of the tournament took the form of two blocks with eight players in each. Richard Wood (Sidmouth, handicap 2) and Chris Donovan (Budleigh, h2) competed for the top spot in Block A, Wood pulling off a narrow victory by three hoops on time. In Block B Tim Jolliff (Taunton, h2.5) beat Keith Ross (unattached, h2).

The final was contested on a wet and most unpleasant afternoon by Richard Wood and Tim Jolliff.

The conditions did ease slightly during the after-

noon and the game was keenly contested.

Both players started well and Wood appeared to be taking an early lead when he unfortunately jammed in hoop six.

Jolliff seized his chance and gained control of the game for a long period. However, his breaks were not without mistakes and Worth hit in with a long roquet when the opportunity arose and then started to catch up. He had the opportunity to overtake on the last turn of the timed game, but his difficult approach, with his second ball, from corner two to hoop one back was not quite good enough and he failed to run the hoop giving Jolliff the game, plus three on time.

Tim Jolliff was, therefore, the overall winner of the tournament and was presented with the Regency Salver by Sidmouth Croquet vice chairman Peter Nelson.

The players all agreed that the tournament was thoroughly enjoyable and we suspect that Howard Bowron (Penrith, h6) enjoyed it as much as anyone because, playing level, he beat both Keith Ross (h2), last year's winner and Tim Jolliff (h2.5), this year's winner, the two lowest handicap players in his block. Bowron quickly became known as 'The Giant Killer'.

LAST week, Sidmouth Croquet Club held its annual Golf Croquet Singles tournaments, writes Helen Pryor

On Monday, it was the high handicap players competing for the Cunningham Salver (singles).

Players ranged from experienced players to a novice who had only joined the club this year.

Play was in two blocks, players each playing four games. Three rounds of games were played before lunch and two after.

In one block (six players), David Butler, a comparative newcomer, was the only one to win three games (others mostly winning two) thus earning himself a place in the final. In the other block (seven players), the result was more even, with three players each winning three of their games.

The player who went through to the final, Paul Griew, had beaten each of the others so, by The Croquet Association rules, he went into the final. In the final Griew, the more experienced player, managed to beat Butler by five hoops to three.

The following day, the low handicap players competed for the Hatherley Cup.

This was played in two blocks of seven, all players playing four games. As with the previous day, there were three rounds before lunch and two rounds after lunch. In each block one player won all his games, thus ensuring a place in the final.

Keith Thorley and Ian Simpson, both keen Golf Croquet players and members of the South West Federation Golf Croquet teams, did well to beat some of the club low handicap Association Croquet players who can hit hard, clearing balls away from hoops and off the court, but lacking the tactics and subtlety of play of regular Golf Croquet players.

They deserved to be in the final which, after a fast game, was won by Thorley, the more experienced player. The score was Thorley seven, Simpson two.

Well done to all the finalists, and to all players who took part in these enjoyable tournaments, on lovely sunny days.

Griew lands top honour

CROQUET



▲ Keith Thorley and Ian Simpson in action during the Sidmouth tournament.

Challenge and Gilbey time

CROQUET

YESTERDAY (August 29), sees the start of the Challenge and Gilbey, one of the oldest tournaments in the Croquet Association calendar at Budleigh Salterton Croquet Club, writes Elaine Marsh.

Players have travelled from as far afield as Scotland, Tyneside, Northampton, London and Cheltenham to play at this prestigious event. Spectators will be made very welcome at the tournament which continues until Sunday.

The tournament consists of two events, the Gilbey Goblet for handicap singles and the Challenge Cups for advanced and level play singles.

The Challenge event is stratified by handicap into four

separate groups, pitting players of similar abilities against each other without the benefit of bisques (extra turns received by the higher-handicapped player in handicap play).

Last year, the winners of four of the five trophies were members of Budleigh or Sidmouth Croquet Clubs. Colin Walls (Sidmouth) prevailed in the Gilbey Goblet, while Cliff Jones (Budleigh) won the Roehampton Cup for the A class, Chris Donovan (Budleigh) the Council Cup for the B class and Roger Mills (Budleigh and Sidmouth) the Stevenson Cup for the D class.

All four will be defending their titles alongside Susan Davies (Roehampton) who won the C class in 2012. Budleigh and Sidmouth clubs are well-represented in this year's tournament entry and will be hoping for at least as much success again in 2013.

Gedge and Gradwell win salver doubles

CROQUET

LAST Monday and Tuesday, Sidmouth Croquet Club held the annual Golf Croquet Doubles Tournaments, writes Colin Wallis.

On Monday, the High Handicap Doubles was played. This is for players with handicaps in the range eight to 12, some players getting an 'extra turn'. Six pairs all played a game against each other.

It made for 15 games in total, some of which were 13-point games and were interesting to watch; games being won by the pairs with higher handicaps and less experience. After the five games played by each pair, two couples, John Davies and Rob Matthews and Paul Griew and Michael Cuncliffe had each won four games. Because Davies and Matthews had beaten Griew and Cuncliffe they were declared to be the winners, with second place going to the latter pair.

Cuncliffe only started to play croquet this year, so it is quite an accomplishment for him!

The third placed couple were Diane Whitehouse and Kathie Simpson - who won three of their games. This was the first time Whitehouse had entered a competitive tournament. It is a pity that only 12 members entered this competition, as it is good experience in playing, and learning the game and, also, a pleasant way to spend a lovely sunny day.

On Tuesday, The Cunningham Salver Doubles

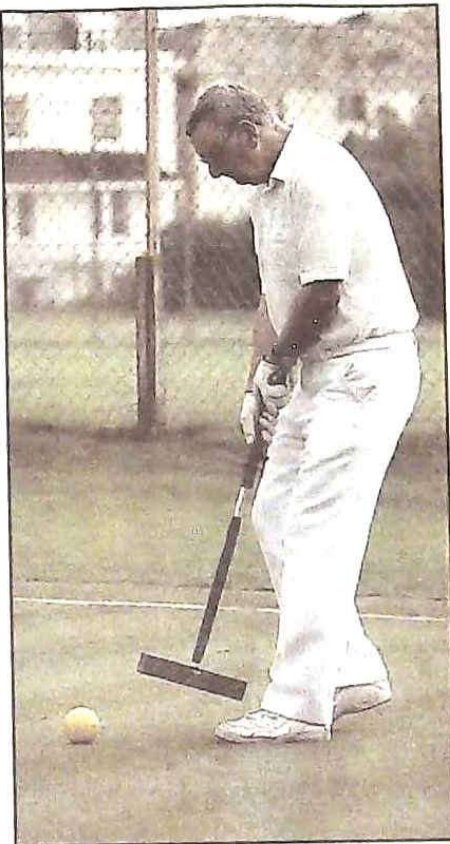
was played.

This is played by all handicaps, which this year ranged from three to 11. As this is a handicapped competition, some players get up to four 'extra turns'. With 28 players, the games were played in two blocks of seven pairs. Everyone played five games. Once again there were a few surprise results.

Some of the low handicap Association Croquet players were well beaten by the Golf croquet players, showing that the 'extra turns' were well used. After all games had been played, in one block the winners were outright winners in the form of Michael Hide and John Dixon who won all four of their games.

In the other block three pairs had all won their games. Using the usual Croquet rules regarding draws, Graeme Pryor and Paul Griew were eliminated as they had the least net score. The other two couples tied on net hoops so, as Anne Gedge and Chris Gradwell had beaten John Coombes and John Davies, they went into the final. Another first outing - Chris Gradwell - who joined the club last year and this was his first attempt at competitive croquet.

The final saw Anne Gedge and Chris Gradwell get off to a flying start, hold the lead and eventually defeat Michael Hide and John Dixon by seven hoops to one. It was good to see such a turnout for this tournament, and everyone appeared to enjoy the day.



▲ Some of the winners from another splendid season at Sidmouth Croquet Club and (right) Peter Nelson who won the Belmont Cup for the third successive year. Pictures contributed.

Trophy time

CROQUET

TROPHIES were presented to Sidmouth Croquet Club tournament winners by Sheila Adams, president and honorary member of the Sidmouth Cricket, Tennis and Croquet Club last Wednesday, writes Sue Dent.

The event formed part of the Croquet Section's AGM held in the Fortfield pavilion, attended by over 50 members.

The AGM was chaired by Mike Taylor who summarised the club's successful season.

In addition to the internal tournaments the club has competed successfully against other teams in the South West in both association croquet and golf croquet.

During 2013 the club also hosted four croquet association open events and a selectors' tournament bringing some of the country's top players to Sidmouth.

A membership of 118 playing members demonstrates how thriving the club is; the club sessions and competitive programme is interspersed with a variety of social events.

The role of chairman has now passed to Peter Nelson.

For those who would like to try their hand at croquet, a taster session will be held at the beginning of March (2014) on the croquet lawns with tutors and equipment available.

More details will be published nearer the time or contact Sue Dent, secretary, for details on 01395 514291.

Nelson lifts Belmont Cup for third time

CROQUET

SIDMOUTH Croquet Club's 2013 Finals Weekend was a great success, writes Colin Walls.

The highlight was arguably the outstanding achievement of Peter Nelson, who lifted the Belmont Cup for the third year running, but does not get to keep the cup to the chagrin of his grandson!

Nelson did, however, reduce his handicap significantly during the year, and therefore won an additional cup for the most improved handicap in the club.

This is the club's major handicap competition and always attracts the most entries of any competition, so well done to the winner and commiserations to runner-up Peter Hills.

The top level-play cup is the Humphrey Hicks.

Last year's winner, Derek Andrew, was in the final again this year, but came up against an in-form David Temple who was simply unstoppable!

Andrew can take some of the credit, however, as Temple was having trouble with his swing earlier in the season, and it was Andrew who had detected the flaw and passed on tips how to combat it, with astonishing results!

The Fermor Rose Bowl, the main ladies' competition, was won by Margaret Piper who edged out Nancy Temple in a thrilling encounter.

The latter had the consolation of winning the Owen Cup for handicap singles.

Other names to feature on the winners list were: Anne Reece, Graeme Pryor and Paul Griew; well done all the winners, and everybody who took part.

2014

Great show

CROQUET

LAST weekend 16 Golf Croquet players arrived in Sidmouth to play for the Haste Cup, a qualifying heat for the English National Golf Croquet Championship, (Ascot Cup), writes Colin Walls.

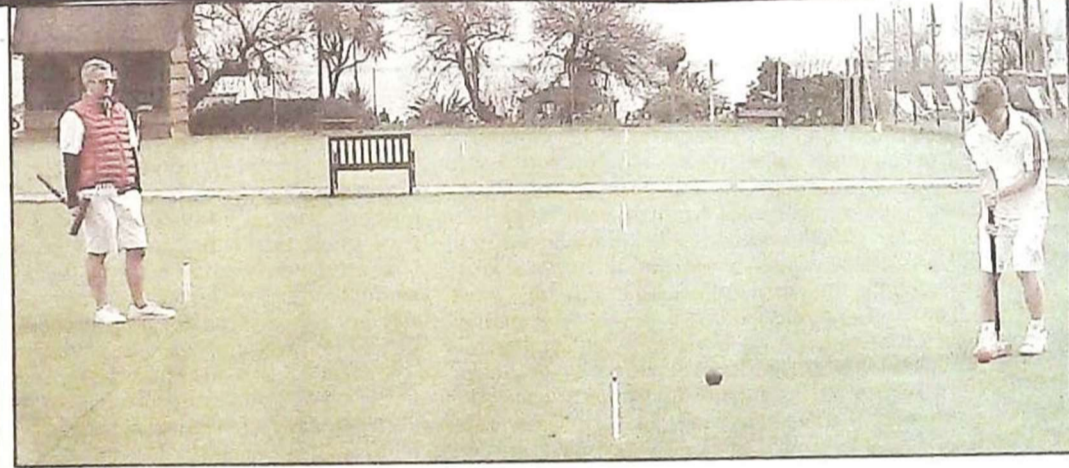
A couple of the players live in the area, but the others came from as far afield as Dulwich in the East and Leicester in the North. Handicaps ranged from minus one to eight, but, as this was a level play competition, all players play on an equal footing.

On Saturday, with a gloomy wet weather forecast, everyone played six games in two all-play-all American blocks. After a heavy shower, the sun came out and, for the rest of the day's play, it was very windy and cold with occasional sunshine, but dry!

After six games there were no clear winners of the blocks, though one player, David Bell from Leicester, had won all his games. Many retired to the pavilion to warm up and for refreshment.

Play resumed on Sunday, when all played the last game in their blocks. Following this were the usual semi-finals played by the first and second in each block. This was followed by the final. The final matches were all the best of three games. Whilst these four players were battling it out, the other players continued to play games in a cross-over way to put them all in positions five to 16. During the final, between Ryan Cabbie (Nailsea) and Guy Scurfield (Dulwich), play had to be suspended, at one game all, because of a very heavy downpour, including hailstones.

●Read more now at www.sidmouthherald.com.



▲ Action from the Haste Cup croquet meeting between Guy Scurfield and Ryan Cabbie that the latter won for the fourth time to seal a place in the Ascot Cup later this year. Picture contributed.

Hide is the day's star

CROQUET

SIDMOUTH Croquet Club Golf Croquet SW team were hosts to the Cornwall Porthpean team from St Austell, writes Helen Pryor.

Twenty games had to be played, and the clubs seemed to be well matched when, by lunchtime, the score was six games all.

Four games later the score was eight-all, so the result rested on the last four games to be played!

The first two of these resulted in a win for each team and the third was a draw.

Unknown to the remaining two players, John Coombes of Sidmouth and Rhona Bell of Cornwall, the final result rested with them! Those watching saw the players each run four hoops.

Time was running out and, just at the end, John luckily ran another hoop winning the game and gaining a victory for Sidmouth.

The final score was Sidmouth ten-and-a-half, Cornwall nine-and-a-half.

The players of note on the day were Michael Hide, who was successful in his doubles game, two singles games and drawing a third singles game, whilst Anne Gedge won the doubles game with Michael and two singles games.

All team members won at least one game, contributing to the success of their first match of the season.

Victory over neighbours

CROQUET

SIDMOUTH B League Croquet team played their first match of the season against Budleigh, writes Colin Walls.

The teams consisted of four players and Sidmouth's team had two new players to the scene of competitive croquet.

Andrew Thomas only joined the club last year and Sue Dent a couple of seasons ago.

Andrew was Pamela Bowra's partner in the doubles and won their match by three hoops and Sue won both her singles matches.

Both Sidmouth and Budleigh teams overall played very well, but Sidmouth turned out to be the better team and won by three matches to two.

Sidmouth in narrow win

CROQUET

NAILSEA Croquet Club visited Sidmouth this weekend to play Sidmouth Croquet Club SE Golf Team in the Golf Handicap League, bringing a strong team of six players for a full day's play in the sunshine, writes Ian Simpson.

Honours were even at lunch after four single and four doubles games but the first hour after lunch saw Nailsea move ahead by two games.

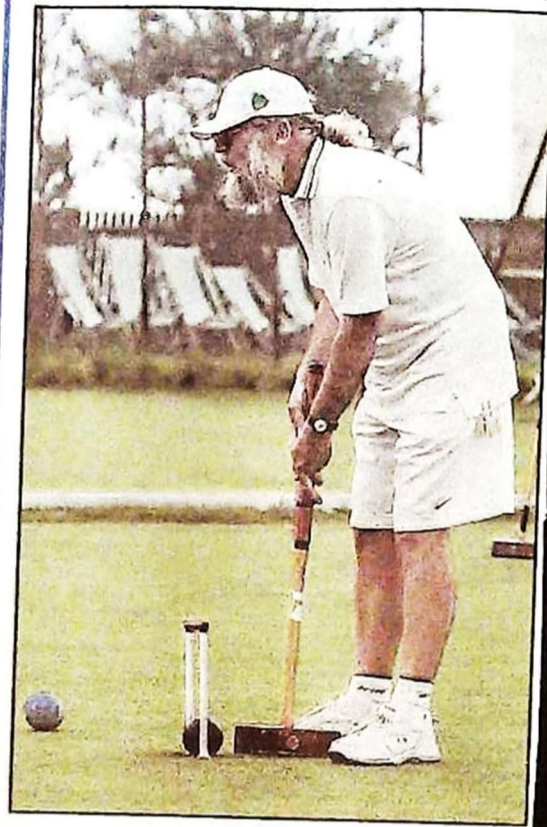
Sidmouth then took the next four games to retake the lead, but the final hour's play was tense and it saw a fight-back from the visitors.

However, Sidmouth finally recorded a narrow victory by ten-and-a-half to nine-and-a-half.

The margin on hoops run was wider with Sidmouth running 112 to Nailsea's 96.

The most successful player on the day was Robin Hendry of Nailsea who won all four of his games with some impressive hoop running.

All Sidmouth players won at least one game with Margaret Piper and Ian Simpson performing well, both winning three of their four games.



Ian Simpson in action at Sidmouth Croquet Club. Pictures contributed.

Thurlow is the winner

CROQUET

LAST Saturday ten members of the Croquet Club played a club internal tournament, the Corbett Spoons, which is a one-ball competition, writes Helen Pryor.

Normally in a singles game of croquet a player has two balls to play with, and run hoops.

This competition is a light hearted game, but with a serious object, that of learning to play with a single ball.

In an advanced game a player could be left to finish the game with one ball if the opponent had 'pegged out' the other ball.

The ten players each played four games in blocks.

The winners and runners-up of the blocks went through to the semi-finals which saw Richard Thurlow play against Pam Bowra and Richard Croft, a fairly new player, take on Muriel Philpott.

Thurlow got off to a good start and held the lead throughout to defeat Bowra.

The other semi-final was won by the experienced Philpott, using a combination of good skill and clever tactics.

In the final it was Thurlow who continued his excellent form to claim victory.

In general the rain held off to make it a most pleasant day for all concerned.

Cornish cream whipped

CROQUET

SIDMOUTH hosted a team from Cornwall in the Croquet Federation League and won handsomely by six games to one, writes Colin Walls.

In the morning Sidmouth won the doubles and both singles. Particular credit goes to Peter Hills who beat Richard Griffiths (ranked 187th in the world) by 26 points to 12.

In the afternoon Richard had his revenge and

squeezed a 26 to 23 win against Nancy Temple, but all the other Sidmouth players won, with Mike Taylor having a particularly emphatic win 26 to 11 against Ian Wilson.

The lawns had dried out rather bumpily in the recent sunshine, and presented problems to those trying for subtlety, so the winning strategy was to play the percentage shots and not get carried away.

Thanks to Gill Hodge for an excellent lunch as usual.

Coombes is team star

CROQUET

LAST week a team from Swanage visited Sidmouth to play in the South West Federation of Croquet Club's Golf Croquet Level Play League, writes Helen Pryor.

The weather was fine and the lawns fast, two ingredients for a good day of croquet.

By lunchtime, after three doubles and nine singles games had been played, Sidmouth were in a commanding position having won eight of the games.

However, post lunch the visitors fought back to win four of the eight remaining games. Most of the games were well fought and very close, but the final result was a win for Sidmouth with a score of 12 to Swanage's eight.

Sidmouth, justifiably, should feel proud to win the match as they were battling against three of Swanage's best players, one of whom is a scratch player (handicap nought).

On the day, five of Sidmouth's players each won two of the games they played and David Temple (handicap three) managed to beat William Ormerod, the Swanage scratch player.

The stand-out individual contribution however, came from John Coombes who won all three of his contests. Well done, John!

Fortfield Cup joy for Sidmouth's Clarke

CROQUET

WITH players from as far afield as Colchester and Edinburgh, Wednesday saw the start of The Sidmouth June tournament with the handicap singles, writes Julie Horsley.

Players were arranged in four American Blocks and, at the end of the day, the block winners were: David Clarke (Sidmouth), Jamieson Walker (Edinburgh Meadows), Colin Hemming (Colchester) and Huw Rees (Kingston Maurward).

The semi-finals saw David Clarke beat Colin Hemming and Huw Rees beat Jamieson Walker.

In the final Rees used his bisques to great effect to defeat Clarke 26-0.

Friday saw the start of the Class event, which was Advanced Play for all blocks.

Block A, for the Challenge Cup, saw a tie for first place with two players each with five wins - Cliff

Jones (last year's winner) and David Richards (Nailsea).

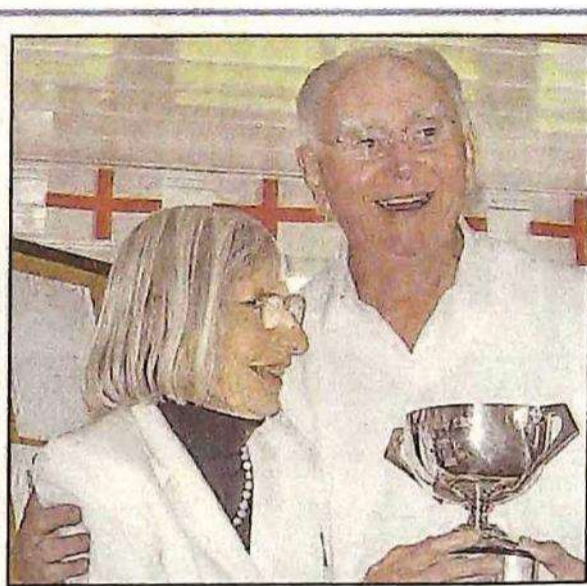
To determine an outright winner it was based on who had won between the pair earlier in the day and this left Jones retaining his title.

Block B for the David Rawkins Cup saw David Temple also bag a second successive success as he retained the cup for a further year.

Block C for the Fortfield Cup again saw a tie for first place with two both netting five wins - David Clarke and Roger Mills, both from Sidmouth.

Once again it was taken back to previous game results between the two on the day and, as a result, Clarke was crowned winner.

The tournament was organised with her usual cool efficiency by Julie Horsley, and the main prizes were presented by Esme Owen, the club's oldest playing member at 92. Proof, if any were needed, that croquet keeps you young!



▲ The Sidmouth Croquet Club June tournament was a huge success. (Top left), Esme Owen with Challenge Cup winner Cliff Jones, (top right), Esme Owen and Fortfield Cup winner David Clarke, (bottom left), Esme Owen and David Rawkins Cup winner David Temple and (bottom right), tournament organiser Julie Horsley with competition champion Huw Rees. Pictures by Colin Walls

Good show

CROQUET

SIDMOUTH SW were worthy winners when they entertained Exeter, writes John Coombes.

The visiting team included an outstanding young player in the shape of Ben Rolf.

The university student won all four of his matches in some comfort.

In the early stages of the match (which consists in this competition of 20 games played in five rounds) the teams performed very evenly, with four games each at the end of the second round. In the third round Sidmouth started to pull ahead, only for Exeter to catch up by the end of the fourth round, at eight-all.

However, in the final round, Sidmouth managed to pull out all the stops, winning all four games by a smallish margin, so winning the match by twelve games to eight.

The only Sidmouth player to win all games played was Anne Ratcliffe who claimed victory in all three of her matches.

Michael Hide also won three, but lost his fourth to the formidable Ben Rolf.

Sidmouth SW are next in action when they entertain Barnstaple on July 24.

First year

CROQUET

THE latest match in the South West Federation Golf Croquet Level Play League saw a team from Sidmouth Croquet Club play against a side from East Dorset at Parkstone near Poole last Sunday, writes Graeme Pryor.

Against very strong opposition of good calibre players, the Sidmouth team provided little serious competition.

At the end of the morning session East Dorset had won all four doubles games and four singles games. Sidmouth's fortunes in the afternoon session of 12 singles games improved slightly when four of these games were won by Ian Friedlander, Tony Dustan-Smith, Ian Simpson and Keith Thorley. However, despite those successes, the final result was a decisive 16-4 win for East Dorset. This is the first year Sidmouth Croquet Club has entered a team in this level play league. So far, with four matches played, Sidmouth has only managed one win and clearly there is room for improvement!

Comfortable

CROQUET

THE Sidmouth Intermediate team continued their run of wins by beating Cornwall 4-1 last Tuesday, writes Philip Harris.

Play began in grey and overcast conditions and the doubles partnership of Philip Harris and Barbara Clarke struggled against the pair from Cornwall to lose, minus two.

In the singles Julie Horsley beat Rosemary Bradshaw plus one. At the lunch break the match was level at one-all. When play resumed the sun broke through and the brighter conditions certainly inspired the Sidmouth players as all three of the singles matches went their way!

Duo land top title

CROQUET

LAST weekend Sidmouth Croquet Club held its annual Association Croquet Doubles Tournament, playing for the Colclough and Sidmouth Cups, writes Helen Pryor.

This year there were only eight pairs playing, whereas in the past this tournament attracted twice that number. The pairs were divided into two blocks, with everyone playing the other couples in their block (three games each).

On Saturday afternoon, after the three games were played, there were two semi-finals to be played by the winners and runners-up in each block.

Mike Taylor and Rob Matthews, (Block A) had won all three of their games and now played Derek Andrew and Ian Friedlander, runners-up in Block B, both winning two games.

The other semi-final was between David and Barbara Clarke, winners of Block B (two match wins) and John Dixon and Anne Reece runners-up in Block A (also with two match wins).

While this was going on, all the other players played a 'friendly' game with players from the other block.

The finalists then elected to have tea, before contesting the final rather than returning to play it on Sunday morning.

The forecast rain never came and the final was played to a conclusion with David and Barbara Clarke taking on the pairing of Mike Taylor and Rob Matthews.

After a slow start, this proved to be a very entertaining match to watch as some hoops seemed to be almost impossible to run.

Barbara's first two hoops were run for her by the opposition and Mike took five attempts to run his final hoop!

Mike and Rob, who because of a higher combined handicap than David and Barbara had two bisques to play with, pushed ahead and towards the end were well in the lead.

With David, then Mike reaching the peg, followed by Rob it was up to Barbara to catch up.

After a valiant try, with time passing, she was set an impossible task, and Rob 'pegged out' to finish the match and land he and his playing partner an 18-12 victory.

Victory in final outing

CROQUET

SIDMOUTH'S Croquet B team played its fourth and final match of the regular season when they took on a strong team from Cornwall, writes Pam Bowra.

Sue Dent, Richard Thurlow, John Coombes and Pamela Bowra were the Sidmouth team and the morning games went well with the hosts winning two of the three matches contested.

After lunch four more games were played, each one was fiercely fought with a high standard of play on both sides, but in the end Sidmouth won them all to run out 6-1 winners.

The B League team is Sidmouth's most successful team, having won all its matches so far this season.

Prior to this latest success they had beaten Budleigh Salterton, Exeter and Wellington and will now go on to play a semi-final later this summer against the winners of the South East area; then with all fingers crossed, if they win, a final.

Golden Hoop is the key to pairs success

CROQUET: The Golf Croquet Doubles Handicap Tournaments were played last week, writes Pam Bowra.

First up was the event for the high handicap players and a rather small entry of seven couples took part. David Butler and Michael Cunliffe led early on, but the eventual winners were Kathie Simpson and Di Whitehouse.

The second tournament was open for mixed handicaps and attracted 24 pairs.

The final was contested by Sue and Kelvin Dent and Ian Simpson with David Butler.

The match was level at six hoops all as time was called so that a golden hoop was played to decide the game.

Ian and David were the victors. These two matches made the Simpson household a very happy one!

●Read more now at www.sidmouthherald.co.uk

All square at lunch

CROQUET



▲ Graeme Pryor keeps a close eye on a difficult manoeuvre.

Picture contributed

A TEAM from East Dorset Croquet Club provided the visiting opposition for Sidmouth for a South West Federation Golf Croquet League encounter, writes Helen Pryor.

After the first six matches of four doubles and two singles the lead was held by Sidmouth at four-and-a-half to the visitors' one-and-a-half.

The next four singles saw East Dorset win three and Sidmouth one to level the overall match up at five-all at which stage lunch was taken.

The opening singles post lunch did not change the score as it ran seven-all, then nine-all.

With just two matches to be contested the visitors put forward their best two individual players: Jonathan Wood, playing with a handicap of minus two, and John Speigal with his handicap of five.

Not surprisingly the visitors won the final two singles and that sealed for East Dorset an 11-9 success.

Most Sidmouth players won at least one game, but three players won more!

Graeme Pryor and Nancy Temple, the latter is new to the team, each won both of the doubles matches they played and also claimed success in a singles match each.

Philip Harris won two of his singles and was the only player to beat East Dorset's star player, Jonathan Wood.

John Speigal of East Dorset won all his four singles games, resulting in his handicap being lowered to an impressive four.

The final result does not indicate the closeness of some of the well-fought games and the enjoyable day that both sides had on the lovely, sunny, warm day.

THERE'S more sports reporting available on the Sidmouth Herald website.

This week check out the latest action from the Somerset Rebels speedway team and there's also an in-depth report on a National KO Cup defeat for Exeter Aces in a cycle speedway match.

There's more from the world of cricket and football and if the wider East Devon sporting news is your thing then why not try our sister papers' websites. Visit www.sidmouthherald.co.uk, www.midweekherald.co.uk and www.exmouthjournal.co.uk

Sidmouth well beaten on visit to Parkstone

CROQUET: Sidmouth's SW B League team were well beaten at Parkstone Croquet Club in East Dorset in their semi-final meeting, writes Pam Bowra.

The home side, benefitting from playing on their home lawns, were comfortable winners.

For Sidmouth, Andrew Thomas and Pamela Bowra and Richard Thurlow had some success.

●Read more now at www.sidmouthherald.co.uk

Best score to date

CROQUET

FAIR weather and good fortune favoured Sidmouth SW golf croquet team in their home match against Barnstaple, writes *John Coombes*.

The final score was one of 18 games won and just two lost from 20 contests and this is almost certainly the best score ever achieved by a Sidmouth golf croquet team.

The two morning rounds of eight games went entirely to Sidmouth. In the afternoon Barnstaple were joined by veteran player Michael Fane, who won two of his three games, but the remaining 10 games all went to Sidmouth.

Two Sidmouth players - Michael Hide, and Anne Gedge - both won all four of their games. Michael displayed a masterly command of jump shots at several hoops.

Three further Sidmouth players - John Davies, John Coombes, and Margaret Colman - each played three games and won all of them.

This successful day was all the more remarkable as two of the team's best players, Keith Thorley and Pam Bowra, were unable to play; though it should be pointed out that Barnstaple were also unable to field their top player.

Sidmouth SW now look forward to their forthcoming match against Cornwall.

Super lunch

CROQUET

SIDMOUTH SE Golf Croquet team travelled to Swanage last Thursday to play against Swanage Croquet Club, writes *Helen Pryor*.

The team had been advised that the lawns would not be up to the standard of Sidmouth's lawns, being on the outfield of the local cricket club!

In spite of this warning, the Sidmouth players were surprised at just how rough and uneven the outfield proved to be.

They could not get the feel of the lawns until a few games had been played, by which time it was too late to win many.

At lunchtime the score was eight-and-a-half to Swanage and three-and-a-half to Sidmouth. After a superb lunch provided by the hosts Sidmouth managed to win only another three out of the remaining eight games!

The final result of the match was a resounding win for Swanage with a score line of thirteen-and-a-half to six-and-a-half.

However, two Sidmouth players each managed to win three games; Phillip Harris won a doubles with partner Margaret Piper and each also won two singles games. Margaret also drew another doubles game.

In spite of the poor result, the Sidmouth team all enjoyed the lovely sunny day and the wonderful hospitality of the Swanage club.

Mixed fortunes

CROQUET

SIDMOUTH'S team in the Southwest League for Advanced Play has had mixed fortunes over their first five matches, beating Budleigh twice and Bristol B once, but losing both home and away to Taunton, writes *Richard Wood*.

Sidmouth's division is always closely contested, and this year three of the five matches have been decided by games that went to that closest of results, plus one on time.

Such has been the improvement in play at the club over recent years that manager Richard Wood now has a good pool of able B class players to choose from and has been able to employ some squad rotation.

All members of the squad, Derek Andrew, David Clarke, Roger Hendy, Peter Nelson, Mike Taylor, David Temple and Richard Wood, have contributed important wins and this bodes well for the future. Sidmouth's final match is the return encounter at Bristol next Tuesday (August 12) and they need to win to retain an outside chance of reaching the promotion play-off.

Nearly every type of weather extreme has been endured over the matches so far; cold, heat, wind, flood and hail, so the team are preparing for some August snow to complete the set!

Sweltering

CROQUET

DOWLISH Wake Croquet Club were hosts to Sidmouth SE Golf Croquet team last Friday, to play a match in the South West Federation Golf Croquet League, writes *Helen Pryor*.

It was another sweltering hot day and the hosts had, very thoughtfully, filled the fridge with jugs of cold water, to which was added ice cubes - everyone could help themselves.

The lawns at Dowlish Wake are well known to the teams in the South West Federation for the odd way they slope in all directions.

The Sidmouth team had a difficult task mastering how to play on them, the balls not going where expected!

After four doubles and two singles had been played the scores were equal at three-all, but this was to change!

After the next six games had been completed the home side were leading 8-4!

After a lovely ploughman's lunch provided by the host club, play recommenced. Sidmouth players managed to win just three of the remaining eight games and so lost the match 13-7. In spite of the overall score, some of the games were very close. Two Sidmouth players managed to win a game by just one hoop, and three were lost by only one or two hoops!

Ian Simpson and Graeme Pryor each managed to win two games; all other players had one win, including a doubles match.

What's clear is that few clubs in the South West can match the manicured level lawns we have in Sidmouth!

Colman shines against Cornish opposition

The Sidmouth SW Golf Croquet team have now finished the last two matches in this year's series, writes *John Coombes*.

Earlier in the month they played Cornwall (Rosevear) at St Austell. During the morning Sidmouth established a short lead, and managed to increase it in the afternoon rounds to win 11 games to 9. A week later they were in action at Budleigh Salterton where they were well ahead by the end of the morning, leading eight games to four.

However, in the afternoon Budleigh rallied strongly, drawing level at the end of the first afternoon round by winning all four games. Parity was maintained in the last round, and the match was drawn at 10 games all.

With all three previous matches in the series won, Sidmouth SW qualify for the regional semi-finals later in the summer. The most notable performance by a Sidmouth player in these two recent matches was by Edward Colman. At Cornwall he won his doubles game and three singles.

At Budleigh he drew in his doubles and won all three of his singles. This was a fine showing for a relative newcomer to the team!

Lawn conditions leave plenty to be desired!

A team from Sidmouth Croquet Club travelled to Kingston Maurward for their final match of the season in the South West Federation SE Golf Handicap League, writes *Ian Simpson*.

This was the third away match to be played on lawns of a quality that would not be acceptable to members of the Sidmouth and Budleigh clubs. We are exceptionally fortunate with the standard of our lawns at the Fortfield.

Kingston Maurward has one half size and one almost full size lawn set in the gardens of the Agricultural College.

Sidmouth struggled with the lawns in the morning and at lunch had only won two doubles and one singles game out of nine played. The teams then enjoyed a sociable lunch provided by the hosts. The afternoon play proved more successful for Sidmouth with four singles games won and two drawn however Kingston Maurward ended 12-8 winners.

All Sidmouth players won at least one game with Phillip Harris the most successful with two singles and a doubles win. Ian Simpson managed to win two singles and then draw his final game.

The team has finished the season having gained considerable experience of playing on lawns of variable quality and seen improved handicaps for several of the team's players.

Thorley edges out Harris

CROQUET

Last week saw the playing of the two-day Croquet Tournaments starting with Monday's Cunningham High Handicappers, writes Pam Bowra.

There were 10 entries only this year, but all were keen to have a good day of croquet.

David Butler of Block A and John Davies of Block B won all their games and David went on to win in the final against John by five games to two.

On Tuesday it was the turn of the Low Handicappers in the Hatherley Tournament.

Fourteen entered making three blocks. Keith Thorley won all his

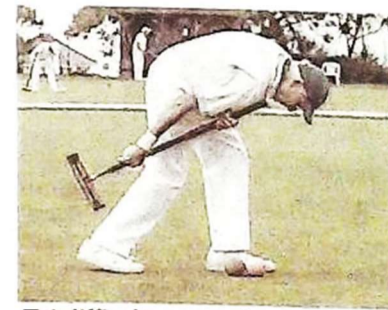
games in Block A. Richard Thurlow won all his games in B and Margaret Piper won three of her four games in Block C.

There had to be a semi so to make the numbers up Philip Harris was the best runner-up. The semi-finals were played and Keith beat Margaret and Philip beat Richard.

This led to a final between Keith Thorley and Philip Harris.

A few of the day's players had stayed on to watch and everyone was getting a bit desperate for a cup of tea and something to eat!

This issue was swiftly resolved by a member popping out for doughnuts and milk. Coffee was then served with doughnuts as the final was



■ A difficult croquet shot is played by David Temple.

played.

It was a close affair, ultimately won by Thorley by one hoop. Post match, both winner and runner-up enjoyed coffee and doughnuts!

Walls makes Jolliff work hard for title



■ The players that took part in the Sidmouth B-Level Advanced Tournament.

Picture: SUBMITTED

CROQUET

Sidmouth B-Level Advanced Tournament was held earlier this month, writes David Temple.

Once again the event proved popular and had been fully subscribed early in the year.

Most of the players were regulars at the event and knew each other well. Nancy Temple managed the tournament for the fifth year.

In Block A, Tim Jolliff (Taunton, handicap 1.5) won five games out of six. Peter Nelson (Sidmouth, handicap 5) was the only player in the block to beat him.

Andrew Webb (Pendle and Craven, handicap 3.5) had also won five games and so Webb and Jolliff met to determine the A block winner.

Jolliff won the game in spectacular fashion 26-0 including a triple peel. Howard Bowron (Penrith, handicap 5) and Roger Hendy (Sidmouth, handicap 5), also did very well in the block matches with four wins each.

“Maybe the Jolliff shuffle will catch on now!”

Tournament competitor

In Block B, Robert Moss (Bear of Rodborough, handicap 2), Peter Balchin (Dyffryn, 3) and Colin Walls (Sidmouth, 7), all won five games out of a possible six. Colin had beaten Peter B and beat Robert in the decider and so won the block.

The two block winners, Tim Jolliff and Colin Walls, met in the final which proved to be a fascinating encounter in a clash of two very different styles.

Jolliff had his characteristic 'shuffle forward' approach to each shot whilst Walls was more direct with his free swinging style.

After a superb match it was Jolliff who retained the title he won last year and he also picked up the

Croquet Association Gold Award for the 26-point win and triple peel earlier in the competition.

Walls was a most valiant runner-up and he had a handicap cut of two after his tournament exploits.

After the end of play at least one competitor was seen to be taking instruction in the 'Jolliff shuffle' from Tim.

Maybe it will catch on! Peter Nelson, chairman of Sidmouth Croquet, organized the presentation of the Regency Salver and other prizes for the runner-up and the fastest game.

The 'fastest game' prize was won by Peter Balchin and he received a bag of Sidmouth fudge in an attempt to slow him down!

Nancy Temple was presented with a bottle of her favourite wine and the chairman thanked all the helpers associated with another very successful tournament.

●Read more at www.sidmouthherald.co.uk

Macadam Cup is a family affair at Sidmouth

Last weekend Sidmouth Croquet Club held its Finals Weekend, writes Helen Pryor.

The winners of ten internal tournaments held throughout the season were decided.

On Friday morning Ian Friedlander beat David Clarke in the Sheila Adams Cup, (Advanced Handicap Association) and Sue Dent beat her husband Kelvin, winning the Devonia Cup, the first cup for high handicap players.

Ann Ractliffe had a victory over Anne Gedge in the Macadam Cup - golf croquet tournament for low handicap players.

Ian Friedlander was playing again in the afternoon when he beat Philip Harris in the Woodward Salver, (Advanced level play Association croquet). Colin Walls beat Graeme Pryor in a Corbett Spoon, a One Ball competition and Kelvin Dent beat his wife Sue in the High Handicap Macadam Cup for golf croquet.

On Saturday morning the Owen Cup (doubles) was played for, a high handicap player being partnered by a low one.

After a closely fought game David Temple and Sue Dent beat Richard Wood and Richard Croft. The Belmont Cup (Handicap Association) was also played and won by Philip Harris, beating Colin Walls.

In the afternoon the final of the Golf Croquet level play tournament was held between Keith Thorley and Graeme Pryor.

This best-of-three game match was very close, but Keith managed to win two games, thus winning the match.

Played on lawn one was the Humphrey Hicks Cup - level play Advanced Association Croquet for low handicap players - the best of three un-timed games.

Both players, Richard Wood (Handicap one-and-a-half) and Colin Walls (handicap five) had played in the morning.

Richard Wood had a bit of a tussle during the first game, but he won it 26-10.

The second game was a faster game which Richard won 26-1, with a superb triple peel, only the second of his playing career. Having won two of a possible three games, Richard was the winner.

Congratulations to all winners and hopes that those who came second will still be pleased - after all they were successful in the earlier rounds, winning matches to get to the final!

All trophies for these tournaments will be presented to the winners at the Croquet Club AGM in October.

●There's more croquet now at www.sidmouthherald.co.uk

Mr Seagull is resident at the Sidmouth club!

CROQUET: Sidmouth's Croquet Team had its second friendly match against Budleigh this year, writes Pam Bowrah.

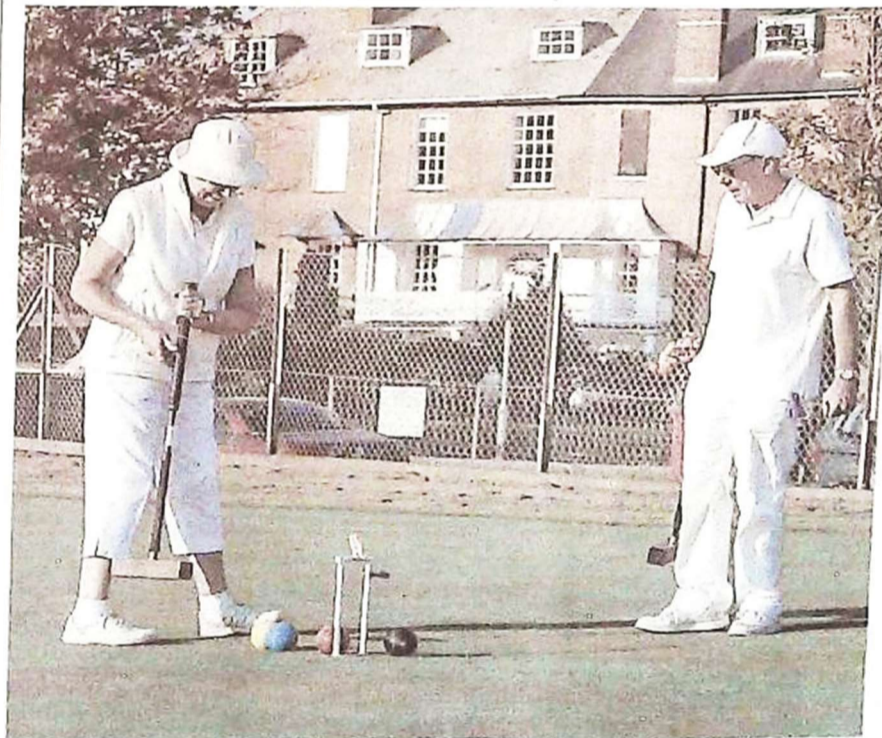
The match was contested for the prized possession of a trophy known as 'a seagull' made by Chris Donovan of the Budleigh Croquet Club.

This is always a popular match and this year's was no exception.

Sixteen games were played in all. Budleigh brought some of their top players in an effort to retain Mr Seagull.

By lunchtime Sidmouth were two in the lead. So it was all systems go to stay ahead, something Sidmouth did with aplomb to secure a 9-7 success.

That all means Mr Seagull sits proudly on a shelf in the Sidmouth clubhouse for all to see.



■ Kelvin Dent defeated wife Sue in the High Handicap Macadam Cup for golf croquet at Sidmouth Croquet Club. Picture: [unreadable]

2015

New croquet season dawns at Sidmouth



■ David Butler goes for the hoop at Sidmouth Croquet Club

Picture: COLIN WALLIS

CROQUET

Sidmouth Croquet Club is seeking to recruit new members as another outside season draws near, writes Colin Walls

The club has four full size lawns in a beautiful location on East Devon's Jurassic Coast overlooking the sea, adjacent to cricket and tennis facilities, in the south of the town. There are currently in excess of 100 active members of all ages and both sexes, ranging from complete beginners to players at county and regional standard.

Recently, some members of the club have invested a great deal of time and energy improving the general facilities around the lawns adding greatly to the general ambience of the layout.

New members are especially welcome, and we organise an introductory and very flexible coaching programme every week in April using some of the experienced play-

ers in the club. Those interested in this and other aspects of the club are warmly invited to contact the secretary Sue Dent (01395 514 291 or email at sueandkelvindent@gmail.com).

There is also a special new players meeting at the Fortfield Pavilion on Saturday, March 7, commencing at 10am, when a number of experienced players will be on hand to supply further information and encourage you to swing a mallet!

We play all variations of croquet - handicap, advanced, golf, and one ball, in a season stretching from April to mid October. You can book lawns and play the game at whatever level you prefer. There are also golf croquet and association croquet club sessions where you can just turn up without booking, together with a variety of other events throughout the year, which greatly enhances the general friendliness of the club.

The croquet club shares superb facilities with cricket and tennis as part of the Sidmouth Fortfield

Sports Complex. Croquet was played in Victorian Sidmouth as early as 1900 as part of the original Sidmouth Cricket, Tennis, Croquet and Hockey Club. Members enjoy full clubhouse facilities with bar and in-house catering. The club has a friendly atmosphere and an ongoing social life including events such as dinners, demonstrations, illustrated talks, fun events, wine and buffet evenings and other activities. After a croquet session, it is good to be able to watch a top-class game of cricket over a well-earned drink!

As well as hosting national tournaments, the croquet club holds its own competitions and is a member of the South West Federation League, competing at beginners, intermediate and advanced levels.

There is also an ongoing mentoring scheme to support all players of all abilities.

Please visit the club website for further details www.sidmouthcroquet.org.uk

President takes wraps off new facilities in pavilion

CROQUET

The croquet season got under way at Sidmouth with the official opening of the lawn three pavilion extension, demonstration games, and the Spring lunch, writes Colin Walls. Maureen Bess, president of the club, cut the ribbon to open the extension, revealing a vastly improved facility.

A number of volunteers have worked all winter on this project and members now have the ability to make a cup of tea without walking all the way up to the main pavilion.

Andrew Thomas was the leader of this project, managing the work and spending uncounted hours there himself.

As the chairman, Peter Nelson said: "Without Andrew we might have had the square footage, but we would never have had the quality and attention to detail which makes the finished result so splendid."

Gabby Macadam then led the golf croquet players on to lawn four for a demonstration game.

Lawn three featured a match between the chairman and Philip Harris and the vice chairman's partnership of Colin Walls and Roger Hendy.

This light-hearted game saw some remarkable play from those who had not touched a mallet for six months, and was cut short by the imminence of lunch.

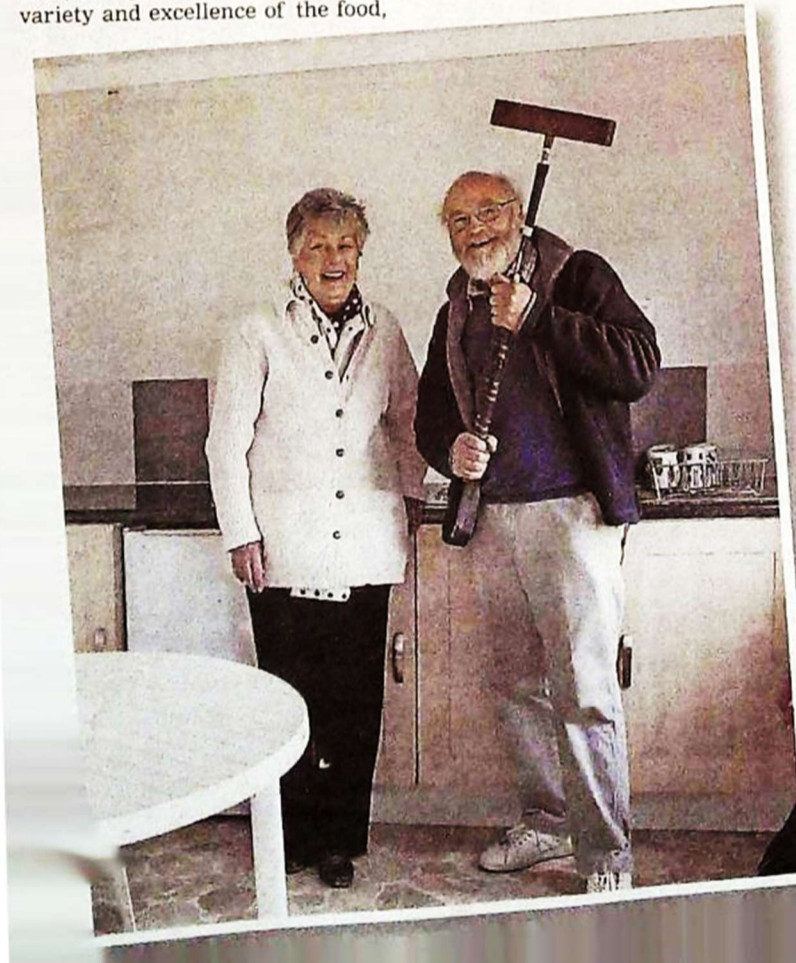
Gill Hodge produced a lunch which exceeded even her high standards, and people remarked on the variety and excellence of the food,



■ Club president Maureen Bess (above) cuts the ceremonial ribbon flanked by chairman Peter Nelson. Right: A thank-you for project manager Andrew Thomas. Below: Maureen and Andrew admire the new facilities.

washed down as usual by drinks from Julie Clayden's bar.

In summary, a fine start to the season.



Sidmouth earn promotion at first attempt

CROQUET: The first competitive event in the South West Federation of Croquet Clubs was a Short Croquet tournament at Nailsea Croquet Club last Saturday, writes Dave Butler.

Sidmouth entered two teams, one of which won their division and gaining promotion.

Due to relegation last year both teams played in the Fourth Division along with teams from Abbey, Budleigh Salterton and Camerton and Peasedown.

The short croquet game is a 14-point Association game played on half-sized lawns. Both players have bisques and each game lasts 75 minutes.

One Sidmouth team comprised Barbara Clarke, Rob Matthews, Paul Griew and Richard Croft, all high-handicap players.

They struggled with the pace of the lawns, discovering them to be much faster than our Sidmouth lawns that they had practiced on the previous week.

As this was the first time for all the team members to play in this tournament they scored a creditable three points.

Richard Croft won two games and Paul Griew won one. The experience gained will be of benefit to them next year.

The second Sidmouth team called themselves Sidmouth Fortfield and comprised lower handicap players, three of whom had played in the tournament last year.

They drew on their experience and quickly adapted to the speed of the lawns and won 12 points to win the division and gain promotion back to Division Three.

Each team member contributed by winning some games. Ian Friedlander won twice, Julie Horsley and David Clarke each won three, and Philip Harris won four. This was very satisfying having being relegated last year.

Satisfactory win over Cornwall

CROQUET: Sidmouth's level play golf croquet team entertained Cornwall in their first match of the new season.

Sidmouth got off to a very good start in both the doubles and singles played in the morning session.

With Philip Harris, Roger Hendy and Michael Hide winning all of their games, Sidmouth had a commanding lead at the lunch break.

Sidmouth continued to press their advantage in the afternoon with Graeme Prior and Ian Simpson playing particularly well.

The match finished Sidmouth 15½-Cornwall 4¼ - a most satisfactory result for the home team.

Thanks go to Gill Hodge for providing a lovely lunch.

● Budleigh Salterton and Sidmouth Croquet Clubs met recently for their twice-yearly 'supposedly' friendly match in which they compete for the Seagull trophy, writes Elaine Marsh.

Budleigh won him back from Sidmouth with a resounding victory of 12-4.

CROQUET

Close encounters of the friendly kind

After their earlier success against Cornwall, Sidmouth's level play golf croquet team entertained local rivals Budleigh Salterton on a blustery, showery day, writes David Butler.

Against a very strong Budleigh team Sidmouth got off to a fine start winning five of the eight singles matches held in the morning session, with the four doubles games being shared two each.

Michael Hide, Philip Harris and Ian Simpson all secured valuable points for the home team. Sidmouth's lunchtime lead proved short, however, with Budleigh fighting back in some very closely contested games. After nearly five hours of competition, the final match was played between the two team captains - Graeme Pryor, who had won all his previous games for Sidmouth, against Rob Weeks, Budleigh's strongest player.

A very tense game ensued with Graeme securing a six-all draw to narrow the scores to a difference of just one point, with Budleigh running out overall winners with ten-and-a-half points to Sidmouth's nine-and-a-half. It was, none the less, a very creditable result for the home team in a hard-fought contest played in the friendliest way, which was concluded with a fine tea provided by Gill Hodge.

Sidmouth bag big Exeter win

Sidmouth croquet team claimed another South West Golf Federation League win when they secured a 14-6 success on a visit to Exeter, writes David Butler.

The Exeter team were mostly inexperienced players with high handicaps (10-12) compared with the Sidmouth team that carried handicaps from four to nine.

This meant that the low handicap Sidmouth players would be facing the many extra turns (bisques) that the host team were entitled to. This can be very daunting when the bisques are used correctly!

After the first two rounds, consisting of four doubles and four singles, Sidmouth led 5-3.

It took the Sidmouth players some time to adjust their play to the smaller than normal size lawns as they tended to hit the balls off the lawn!

However, gradually, during the afternoon sessions, Sidmouth extended their lead, winning nine of the final 12 games to secure that overall 14-6 success.

A few of the Sidmouth players deserve a mention. Graeme Pryor won all his four games. Margaret Piper won three games and drew one, whilst Philip Harris won three of his four games.

A newcomer to playing for the Golf Croquet League team, Andrew Thomas, played five games. He lost one doubles, drew another doubles game and won his three singles games. Well done, Andrew!

Having had some good games in lovely sunshine, the hosts then provided an excellent tea, which rounded up a most enjoyable day.

Sidmouth South East hold their nerve to seal victory in close encounter with Dowlish Wake

CROQUET

Sidmouth South East enjoyed victory when they entertained Dowlish Wake South East, writes David Butler.

The match was played in brilliant sunshine and it was the home side who ended the day with a narrow success.

The match was played in five rounds of four games each (four doubles and 16 singles).

Sidmouth led at the end of the first round only for Dowlish Wake to have levelled things up at 4-4 by the conclusion of round two.

In the third and fourth rounds, Sidmouth moved ahead again to hold a 9-7 advantage after four rounds.

In the final round the visitors got back into contention, but Sidmouth held their nerve to seal a ten-and-a-half to nine-and-a-half success (half points are handed out in drawn games).

The highest individual score of the day was recorded by John Coombes who won his doubles (playing with Margaret Colman) and both his singles.

The next best in terms of home success was the performance of Margaret Colman, who won her doubles (with John Coombes) and one single, whilst Anne Ractcliffe also won her doubles (playing with Michael Hide) and one singles match.

Piper stars with four wins in derby victory

CROQUET

Sidmouth took the bragging rights with a 12-8 success when they met Budleigh Salterton, writes David Butler.

The South West Federation Golf Croquet match was played on a sunny, but breezy day. The visitors pitched up with a slightly higher handicap and this gave them the advantage of having more 'extra turns'.

The first two sessions each comprised of two doubles and two

singles games. Sidmouth won two doubles and lost two whilst in the first four singles there were two Sidmouth wins, one draw and a single defeat to give them an overall four-and-a-half to three-and-a-half lead.

The next stage of the match saw four singles played and this resulted in one win for Sidmouth, two wins for Budleigh and one game was drawn and the match went into the luncheon interval with the score six-all!

After lunch, eight further singles games were played. After four of

them had been completed the overall score was still all square – now at eight-all.

It was across the final four games that the Sidmouth team showed their class. They won all four to seal a 12-8 overall victory.

Margaret Piper was the 'star player' for the victors, winning all four of her games. Meanwhile, Graeme Pryor drew one game, and won three whilst Andrew Thomas also won three of his games.

All players enjoyed the day of croquet, but some were happier than others by tea time!

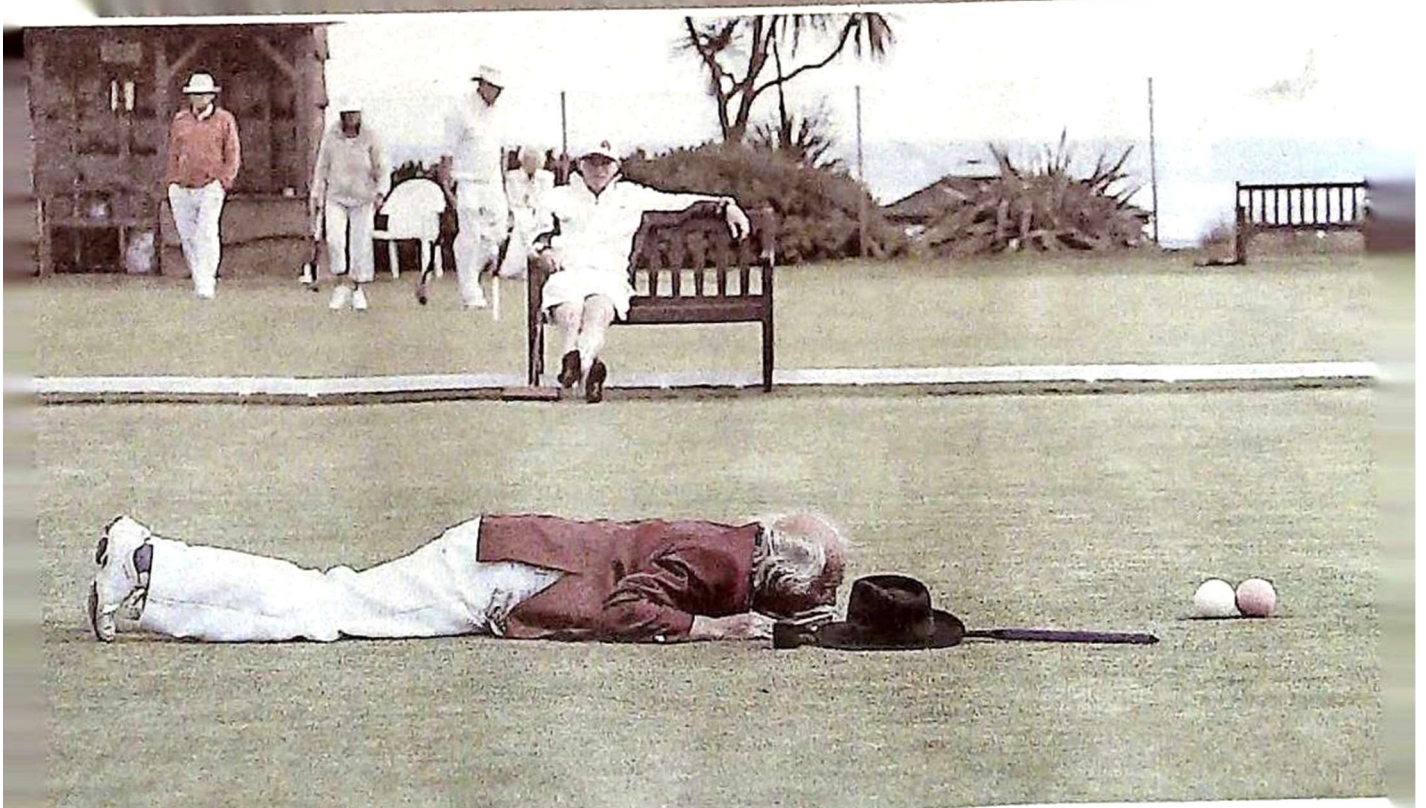


■ Sidmouth player Barbara Clarke in action at the June CA Tournament. Ref shsp 8963-23-15SH. Picture: Simon HORN



■ Sidmouth player Susan Rogers is pictured taking part in the Sidmouth June CA Tournament this week. Ref shsp 8960-23-15SH.

Picture: SIMON HORN



Cliff Jones checks out a peel alignment during the Sidmouth tournament.

Picture: CONTRIBUTED

Hemming wins handicap singles

The Sidmouth June tournament was played last week with players competing from as far afield as Sweden and Colchester, writes David Butler.

Wednesday saw the start of the tournament with the playing of the handicap singles. Players were arranged in four American blocks and, at the end of the day the block winners were; Brian Shorney (Eardisley and Budleigh Salterton), Philip Harris (Sidmouth), Georgeen Hemming (Colchester) and Mike Taylor (Sidmouth).

The semi-finals produced some fine play and saw Georgeen Hemming beat Brian Shorney (+8) and Mike Taylor beat Philip Harris (+8). In the final Georgeen beat Mike (+9).

Friday saw the start of the class event, which was advanced play for all blocks.

Block A for the Challenge Cup saw a tie for first place with three players each recording four wins from six matches.

The three were, last year's winner, Cliff Jones, Colin Hemming and Swedish player Simon Carlsson.

The latter had played in the Golf Croquet (GC) European Championships in Budleigh Salterton the previous week and is over in the UK for another few weeks combining sightseeing with a few other croquet tournaments!

Luckily for the tournament manager it was easy to determine the winner as Simon had beaten both Cliff and Colin. Cliff was runner-up having beaten Colin.

Block B for the David Rawkins Cup was won, very convincingly, by Richard Williamson (Bristol) with six wins from his six matches.

All the runners-up (with three wins from their six matches) were from Sidmouth, notably, David Clarke, Peter Nelson and Roger Hendy.

Block C for the Fortfield Cup was won by Philip Harris with five wins from his six matches. The results for this block were very close with three other players having four wins from six; Kathy Wallace (Nailsea), Brian Shorney and Sidmouth player Brian Pollock.

Georgeen Hemming won a bottle of wine for the fastest game during the tournament and Vera Henderson - a long standing member of the club - presented the cups at the conclusion of another exceptional event.

Sidmouth Federation team suffers second league defeat of the term on visit to Cornwall

CROQUET

The Sidmouth Federation croquet team suffered a 5-2 defeat in their second league match away to Cornwall, writes David Butler.

The Sidmouth doubles partnership of Julie Horsley and Mike Taylor had five bisques against the Cornwall partnership of Richard Griffith (sporting a minus half handicap) and Des Honey, and they used their bisques tactically to win

plus eight on time. In the two morning singles games Ian Friedlander played Peter Cutting and Philip Harris played Ian Wilson. They were unable to adjust to the slower lawns and lost minus five and minus eleven respectively.

Four singles were played in the afternoon. Mike Taylor was drawn to play Richard Griffith. Mike had four-and-a-half bisques and, having seen Richard hit in and run four hoops with only three balls on the lawn, decided to use his bisques

immediately. He won in less than two hours to peg out and win, plus 20. Ian and Philip continued to struggle and lost their singles minus 18 and minus 13 respectively.

Julie Horsley played confidently and determinedly against Des Honey and was unlucky to lose minus one on time.

The team were not downhearted because the sun shone all day and they enjoyed the Cornish tea and strawberries provided by their hosts.

Thurlow and Coombes the team stars

CROQUET

Sidmouth southeast went down 12-8 when they entertained Abbey in a croquet match, writes David Butler.

It proved to be another lacklustre day for the Sidmouth players who, in the early rounds, won only one of the four doubles games.

The visitors continued to hold the advantage throughout the 16 singles matches. The leading scores for Sidmouth were by Richard Thurlow and John Coombes.

They each lost their doubles and one singles game, but both managed to win their remaining two singles.

Cornish cream are defeated

Sidmouth made it three wins from three South West Federation League outings when they saw off Cornwall (Rosevear), writes David Butler.

With both teams having similar handicap range, the home side expected to have a day of challenging croquet.

However, before lunch, four doubles and eight singles games had been played, resulting in eight wins and a draw for Sidmouth and three wins and a draw for the Cornish side.

Two of the visitors had proved to be very proficient at jump shots, causing the striking ball to jump over the opposition ball already settled in the hoop, thus 'stealing' that hoop!

In the afternoon, eight further singles were played and the home side dominated proceedings winning seven of the eight remaining matches.

This resulted in a decisive 15.5 to 4.5 success for the home team.

The Sidmouth Man of the Match award went to Andrew Thomas who won all his four games.

Margaret Piper was close behind with three wins and a draw, with Muriel Philpott, Ian Simpson, and Graeme Pryor close behind each having lost one game and winning three games.

The team has three more matches to play.

Exeter inflict narrow defeat

Sidmouth were edged out in what proved to be a most enjoyable home meeting with Exeter, writes David Butler.

After careful and prolonged team member review, the manager, Richard Thurlow, chose Richard Croft, Andrew Thomas, John Coombes and himself to play for Sidmouth.

A warm and pleasant day, with both teams sending four players a side, with one double and two singles in the morning and four singles after lunch.

Sidmouth narrowly lost the doubles. (John and Richard C), Richard T lost the singles and Andrew won his singles in the morning.

Sidmouth needed to win all matches in the afternoon and tensions were high as the effects of the lunch time inspirational team speech and coffee and crisps took their hold.

Unfortunately for Sidmouth, they could only win two singles, (Richard T and John), with Andrew and Richard C being narrowly beaten.

Philpott and Walls net the top honours

CROQUET

Sidmouth Croquet Club held its annual One Ball tournament last weekend, *writes David Butler*.

In this fun competition, played with a serious side to it, each player plays with only one ball, rather than the two normally used in a game. Sometimes, in an Association Croquet game, a player could be left with just the one ball, if his or her opponent had pegged out the other one.

Getting off to a good start in this

game, by running the first hoop is highly beneficial as it can be difficult for the other player to catch up, or overtake.

But it does happen, especially if the opponent has bisques (extra turns) to use.

Day one was the turn of the lower handicap players, with handicaps ranging from one to 16. All players played four 13 point games. Some of these were very close matches. The semi-finalists were Ian Friedlander (7) playing Jeannette Pollock (16) and Colin Walls (5) against Peter Nelson (4.5).

Ian and Colin then played the final, resulting in a win for Colin, running 13 hoops to Ian's seven.

Saturday was the turn of players with handicaps 18 to 24. The semi-finalists were Edward Harford (20), a new member, playing against Muriel Philpott (18) and Andrew Thomas (18) playing against Anne Reece (18).

The final between Andrew and Muriel, resulted in an excellent win for Muriel - another score of 13-7!

Both tournaments were managed efficiently by Helen Pryor, the croquet club's internal tournament manager.

Thomas the star -again!

Sidmouth Croquet Club played host to a team from East Dorset in the South West Federation Golf Croquet League, *writes David Butler*.

The first two sessions consisted of four doubles games and two singles games.

Play during the first three games was interrupted by a heavy shower but, after play continued, Sidmouth lost all four doubles games, winning the two singles.

Another four singles games were then played, each side winning two and losing two. So when play stopped for lunch East Dorset held a 6-4 lead.

The first four games after lunch produced three Sidmouth wins to see the overall score to 7-4.

The next four games again saw Sidmouth win three and lose just one to take the home side into a 10-8 lead.

For the final two games (20 were played in the match), East Dorset played two of its better players.

Roger Parsons, with a handicap of seven, which meant three 'extra turns', beat Sidmouth's (handicap four).

The contest therefore was down to the final game with Andrew Thomas, one of Sidmouth's recent additions to the team, who is proving his worth in both golf croquet and association croquet, playing for the home side needing to avoid defeat for the team to claim overall victory.

Andrew, with three 'extra turns' played John Speigal, a very experienced player.

At the eleventh hoop, the score was 6-5 to East Dorset, when the time went.

When time is called eight more shots are played - two for each of the four balls, in the usual order of play. Andrew did well to promote one of his balls by hitting it with his other one, so it lay near the hoop.

With his turn for that ball he then hit it into the jaws of the hoop. John then attempted a 'jump shot', hoping to jump over Andrew's ball and win the game (having forgotten that he was already in front!), but it knocked Andrew's ball through!

This meant the game between the gentlemen ended 6-4 and that meant an overall Sidmouth match success ten-and-a-half to nine-and-a-half.

Unsurprisingly, Andrew Thomas, for the second match running, was named Man of the Match as he had come through the day unbeaten in four games with three wins and that last gasp draw.

Both Margaret Piper and Ian Simpson had two wins, the other three team players each winning one game.

Well done, to all the team, who played well against a club who are well known as worthy opponents.

CROQUET

Butler stars in first defeat of season

Sidmouth SW Golf Croquet team travelled to Cornwall (Porthpean) to play in their fifth match of the season.

Having so far won all four matches played, their luck was about to run out! Three of the Sidmouth players have handicaps of four, three have handicaps of seven and one has a handicap of 10.

They were up against a team with two medium handicap players (five and six) plus an eight, two on 9, a 10 and an 11.

Play followed the usual pattern of starting with doubles' games. After these had been played the score was two-and-a-half to one-and-a-half in Porthpean's favour.

In the following eight singles' games, Sidmouth players struggled against the high handicap players to such a degree that just one produced a Sidmouth success whilst two were drawn.

This left the overall score eight-and-a-half to three-and-a-half in favour of the Cornish side.

Sidmouth did manage to win three of the final eight games, but all that left Porthpean winning 13.5 to 6.5.

The only Sidmouth player worthy of mention from an otherwise disappointing show is David Butler who secured wins in two of the three matches he played, and he drew the other!

In spite of a dampish conditions and the disappointing match result, Sidmouth enjoyed their visit to Porthpean, and the usual good tea provided by the hosts, who always make visiting teams very welcome.

Walls' victory seals success

The Sidmouth croquet team had a narrow 4-3 win at home to neighbours Budleigh Salterton in their third Federation League match, *writes David Butler*.

The Sidmouth doubles partnership of Mike Taylor and Philip Harris had to give six bisques to the Budleigh Salterton partnership of Wendy Dominguez and Rosemary Bradshaw. Mike and Philip had to play tactically to force Wendy and Rosemary to use their bisques.

After one-and-a-half hours Sidmouth were trailing by seven hoops, but with all the bisques used they were able to play more aggressively and won (plus six on time).

In the two morning singles games Ian Friedlander found Sam Watts on scintillating form and lost (minus 14) in less than two hours.

Colin Walls played carefully against Alan Rush to peg out and win (plus 15).

Four singles were played in the afternoon and all the games ended by a peg-out. Mike Taylor had to give five bisques to Wendy Dominguez who used them sensibly to win (plus 19) in quick time.

Philip Harris managed to curtail Sam Watts to win (plus nine). Ian Friedlander played determinedly against Alan Rush, but lost (minus five).

The match was delicately balanced at 3-all with Colin Walls still playing Rosemary Bradshaw. Colin had to give Rosemary seven bisques and, after two-and-a-half hours of tactical play the bisques had been used and the game was finely balanced at 15 hoops each. Rosemary had laid up with her two balls on the boundary. Colin hit them and then proceeded to run seven hoops and eventually won the game (plus 11) to secure the match win.

Everybody enjoyed the after-match tea provided by Gill Hodge.

Harris and Hendy are impressive

Sidmouth Croquet Club hosted a very strong team from East Dorset CC in the Golf Croquet Level Play League, *writes David Butler*.

The visitors had an average handicap of two which was half that of the Sidmouth players and hence a major challenge to the home team although a number of games were very close.

By lunch time Sidmouth had only won a third of their games. The day, however, saw strong performances from Philip Harris with three wins and a draw, and Roger Hendy with two wins and a draw.

The final result of 13-7 in favour of the visitors was disappointing for Sidmouth, but a creditable performance given the strength of the visiting team.

CROQUET: The Sidmouth South West Golf croquet team travelled to Barnstaple to play their final league match of the campaign, *writes David Butler*. What made the fixture all the more intriguing was they needed to win the match to be certain of being crowned champions.

The Sidmouth players not only had to get used to slower lawns, but also had to give away free turns in nearly every game.

The Barnstaple team handicaps ranged from six to 12 while Sidmouth's ranged from three to 10.

The match started with two doubles, with each side winning one. Sidmouth then lost the next four singles to trail 5-1 after two rounds.

In the third and fourth round of singles, each side won two rubbers each and so, by the fifth round of matches, Sidmouth were coming to terms with the lawns and won three of the four, drawing the other.

This all left the overall score after five rounds, Barnstaple nine-and-a-half to Sidmouth's eight-and-a-half 3 singles. The final two doubles matches were tense games with Sidmouth narrowly losing both 7-5 and therefore losing the match to a score of eleven-and-a-half to eight-and-a-half.

Rob Matthews and Graeme Pryor were the only two players who played well, each winning two singles and one of their doubles. Margaret Piper, Marian Harris and Philip Harris each won one of their singles. Sidmouth now await the results of other matches to see if they retain their top spot!

Sidmouth end league campaign in style

CROQUET

The Sidmouth Federation croquet team completed their league campaign with a convincing 4-1 win home to Exeter.

In the morning, the Sidmouth doubles partnership of Ian Friedlander and Philip Harris had three-and-a-half bisques and both

played confidently to win plus 24 in just over one hour against the Exeter partnership of Adam Wimshurst and Lloyd Kimber.

In the singles game, David Clarke initially struggled against Mark MacNair, but once he found his form he played confidently to peg out and win plus 11.

Sidmouth were pleased to lead 2-0 after the morning session.

Three singles were played in the

afternoon. Philip and Ian, both confident after the morning doubles win, pegged out to beat Mark and Lloyd plus 10 and plus 9 respectively.

David had four-and-a-half bisques against Adam and played determinedly, but eventually lost minus two.

The 4-1 success means Sidmouth finish second in the league

Belmont Cup glory for Wood

Sidmouth Croquet Club held the finals of tournaments played in blocks throughout the summer, *writes David Butler*.

The first of the finals saw David Clarke beat Philip Harris 26 hoops to 21 in the Woodward Salver for Association Advance Croquet.

Mike Taylor took on Graeme Pryor in an advanced handicap game for the Sheila Adams Cup.

Pryor had no fewer than 10 bisques and led for much of the way before the greater experience of Taylor came to the fore and he won 19-18.

The first of the Golf Croquet finals saw Chris Donovan defeat Philip Harris 7-6, 7-6 in a 'best of three' match.

The Devonia Cup for high handicap association players saw Jon Ball defeat Richard Thurlow 14-2.

The last of the first day of finals saw the playing of the Macadam Cup Golf Croquet tournament for high handicap players.

The greater experience of Edward Coleman saw him ultimately edge out Sue Dent, a member of the South West Federation Golf Croquet team, 7-5, 7-5.

Day two began with the Humphrey Hicks final, an un-timed affair and again played across the 'best of three'. David Mundy, who sports a very low handicap of minus a half, eased to success over five-handicapper Colin Walls, 26-12, 26-12.

Philip Harris, in his third final of the weekend, played Peter Nelson in the Macadam Cup (Golf Croquet) for low handicap players which Nelson won two games to one, 6-7, 7-2, 7-6.

The Fermor Rose Bowl, an association tournament for ladies, was played on lawn three between Sue Rogers and Julie Sorrell.

Sorrell, the higher handicap player, started well, using her four bisques to get a lead in the game, but Rogers began to hit well and, with the three hours-fast running, pegged out the game with one minute to spare to win 26-12.

The Owen Cup is an association doubles tournament where a low handicap player partners a high handicap player and this saw David Monday and John Ball defeat Philip Harris and Kelvin Dent 21-12.

The last of the finals saw Richard Wood play Peter Miller for the Belmont Cup. This is a handicap association tournament, Wood (handicap of two) giving 12 bisques to Miller (handicap of 14).

Once all four balls were on the lawn, Miller used five bisques to get his red ball to the hoop, and one more to separate Wood's balls and set up a rush to hoop one. Wood fired and missed so Miller then used three more bisques to reach hoop seven with his yellow ball. Wood then got in, took his black ball to the peg and pegged out Miller's red ball, leaving his opponent to play with only his yellow one. The remainder of the game was very tactical and fun to watch with Wood finishing off the game in style, winning 26-23.

A one-day golf croquet competition was also held with Andrew Thomas again being the winner to complete a clean sweep.

Due to airline weight limitations some redistribution of luggage was necessary to enable all the trophies to be repatriated.

It is understood that EDDC may shortly receive a planning application for an extension to the trophy room at the Thomas home!

Greek glory for Andrew Thomas



■ Andrew Thomas in action at the Greek Open tournament.

Picture: CONTRIBUTED

Three Sidmouth players entered the Greek Open Croquet tournament played in Corfu earlier this month, *writes David Butler*:

All three Sidmouth players progressed to the second round of the main event (handicap singles) where, due to the vagaries of the draw, Peter Nelson was eliminated by his Sidmouth colleague Richard Thurlow!

Meanwhile, the third Sidmouth entry, Andrew Thomas, was making serene progress through the early rounds, meeting Richard Thurlow in the semi-final before emerging as overall champion by beating Peter Cutting comprehensively in the final.

As if this was not enough, Andrew, in partnership with John Dawson, won the supplementary doubles tournament, with Richard Thurlow and partner Liz Wilson the runners-up.

Sidmouth secure a second promotion

CROQUET

Sidmouth croquet players won promotion for the second year running at a tournament in Somerset.

The Short Croquet competition at Nailsea Croquet Club was the first competitive event in the South West Federation of Croquet Clubs.

Short Croquet is a 14-point association game played on half-sized lawns. Both players have bisques and each game lasts an hour and 15 minutes.

Sidmouth's stronger team, comprising lower handicap players, having gained promotion last year, played in Division 3 against teams from Budleigh Salterton, Llandaff, Swindon and Weston-super-Mare.



■ Sidmouth's promotion winners (left to right) Philip Harris, Richard Wood, Julie Horsley and Ian Friedlander.

They drew on their experience from last year and quickly adapted to

the speed of the lawns and won 12 points to win their division and gain further promotion.

Each team member contributed by winning some games. Julie Horsley won all four, Ian Friedlander and Richard Wood won three each, and Philip Harris won two.

To win their division and gain promotion in consecutive years was very satisfying. They are all looking forward to playing in Division Two next year.

Sidmouth's second team, comprising Andrew Thomas, John Coombes, John Dixon and Richard Thurlow, played in Division Four against teams from Bristol, Camerton & Peasedown, Nailsea and Taunton.

This was their first year at this tournament and they struggled against more experienced players.

Thurlow played exceptionally well to win all four of his games. The experience gained will be of benefit to them next year.



■ Players from Sidmouth took part in a two-day croquet association tournament in Budleigh last weekend for high handicap players. Pictured are Julie Sorrell, Sue Dent (who finished third overall), Kelvin Dent and Richard Croft. Anyone who is interested in playing croquet should contact Sue Dent on 01395 514291 or go along to the club to take part in National Croquet Day on Sunday, June 5.

Harris guides team to victory

Sidmouth pulled off a remarkable victory when they defeated visiting Weston-super-Mare in a thrilling South West Federation Golf Croquet Level Play League match.

The contest, one of 20 games, saw two West of England teams going head-to-head.

With just three games remaining, the visitors held a two game lead at nine-and-a-half.

Sidmouth's Graeme Pryor then served up a convincing 7-1 success and this was followed by a 7-3 triumph for Andrew Thomas.

It was left to captain Philip Harris to guide his team home and he delivered the goods to win the final game 7-3 to seal a single point success for the home team.

Resounding home win

Sidmouth Croquet Club sent a team of four to Budleigh to contest a midweek South West Federation Association League match and the visitors recorded a resounding 6-1 victory.

The contest was one of seven games in total; one doubles and six singles matches, each having a time limit of three hours.

The morning session saw the doubles and two of the singles' matches played and lunch was taken with Sidmouth enjoying a 3-0 lead.

The afternoon session proved equally successful with Sidmouth winning three of the four games played.

The only home success was achieved by Roland Smith who, until time was called, trailed by three hoops. However, he staged a grandstand finish to run six hoops during the extension period to defeat Sidmouth captain Graeme Pryor.

The three other members of the Sidmouth team; Peter Miller, Sue Dent and Jon Ball, all had decisive wins.

Croquet club raises a glass to Her Majesty

CROQUET

Sidmouth Croquet Club held their first competition this season for club members.

The competition was a light-hearted, friendly one-ball competition, part of a countrywide event, in aid of Myeloma UK.

Twenty-four players took part and used the event to refresh their skills and socialise with other members after the winter break.

The day was also the Queen's birthday so the players, at lunch time, raised a toast Her Majesty.

Play continued in a jovial atmosphere in the afternoon and £150 was raised for the charity.

Most players played seven games, with Julie Horsley and Richard Thurlow each winning six of theirs.

Equal third were Peter Nelson, Graeme Pryor, John Coombes and Kelvin Dent who all won five games.

Everybody enjoyed the day and thanks were expressed to Julie Horsley for managing the competition and Julie Sorrell for arranging the bunting and the provision of the sparkling wine.

● Sidmouth's annual golf croquet championship for the Haste Cup was played out over the weekend.

The tournament is a qualifier for the English National Singles Championship, the Ascot Cup, held later in the year.

The prestigious tournament attracted 16 top-class players from as far afield as Leicester and Sussex.

With handicaps ranging from -1 to 4, these players are well worth watching, for the variety of styles of play and for the speed and accuracy of their hits.

On Saturday the players played in two American Blocks. Matches against each player in the block gave all players seven games to play.

On Sunday, the top four players in each block took part in a play-off - quarter-finals in the morning and the semi-finals and final in the afternoon.

Jim Gregory (Nailsea) played Chris Roberts (Henley) and William Ormerod (Swanage) played Andrew Dymond (Dulwich) on one court.

Roger Goldring (Henley) played Richard Brooks (Sussex) and Tom Weston (Dorset) played Tony Forbes (Cheltenham) on another court.

All matches were best of three games. Two of the matches finished after two games, the other two went to a third game.

Roberts beat Gregory (7-5, 7-3). Dymond beat Ormerod (7-4, 4-7, 7-3). Goldring beat Brooks (2-7, 7-2, 7-6)

and Weston beat Forbes (7-3, 7-3).

The other eight players took part in an Egyptian tournament.

Most players played four or five games. After lunch, the losing quarter-finalists joined in. This continued in the afternoon while the semi-finals were being played.

In the semi-finals, Roberts played Dymond and Goldring played Weston. Roberts won in two games (7-2:7-4), but Weston needed three games to beat Brooks (6-7:6-5:4-2).

The final was between Chris Roberts (-1) and Tom Weston (1). Both are superb players - especially at clearing balls away from hoops.

Roberts beat Weston in two games (7-6:7-5) winning the Haste Cup for the second year running. He won 11 games out of the 13 he had played over the weekend, so was a worthy winner. Well done.

While the final was being played there was a match for third place between Dymond and Goldring, who won in two games (7-4:7-5).

The Haste Cup was presented to the winner by the croquet club chairman Peter Nelson. The runner-up received a bottle of wine.

Peter also presented a bottle of wine to the winner of the Egyptian tournament, Helena Jansson - the only lady in the tournament, and also to tournament manager Helen Pryor.



■ Sidmouth Croquet Club members raise a glass to the Queen during a break in their charity tournament.

Thurlow continues his stunning form

CROQUET

Sidmouth (SE) narrowly lost their first match of the season against Nailsea (SE) at home, writes David Butler.

The day began quite positively for Sidmouth. After the two opening rounds of four doubles and two singles they were ahead by four games to two. This lead was maintained in the third round with each side winning two singles. After lunch, however, Nailsea advanced positively. In the fourth round, they

achieved two-and-a-half singles to Sidmouth's one-and-a-half singles (a drawn game gives each side a half point). In the final two rounds of six singles, they won four games to Sidmouth's two, to win the match by one game with a final score of ten-and-a-half to nine-and-a-half. In this match, Sidmouth welcomed Pamela Bowra back to the team after a year's break due to illness.

Pam made a good return to competitive croquet by winning her doubles (with John Coombes), and one singles, though she lost her other singles game.

Undoubtedly, Richard Thurlow was Sidmouth's man of the match.

Though he lost his doubles game (with Edward Colman), he was the only player to undertake four singles; and of these he won three and drew the other. This almost equalled his recent successes in two short croquet tournaments, in each of which he won all four of his games. In three consecutive matches therefore (of short croquet and golf croquet), this man with the magic mallet has played 12 singles in which he has won 11 and draw one - that is formidable play indeed!

'New boys' are impressive

Having played at East Dorset Croquet Club the previous week in a Level Play Golf Croquet match (and lost), Sidmouth Croquet Club sent a team of six players to East Dorset, to play in the South West Federation Golf Croquet Handicap League.

As usual with all these matches, 20 games are played - four doubles and 16 singles.

After some tense moments, under rather wet and damp conditions, the morning ended with Sidmouth winning three of the four doubles, losing three of the four singles and having two games drawn. The score at lunchtime being four-all.

There remained 12 singles to be played after lunch and, under brightening weather conditions, Sidmouth excelled - winning eight of the 12 games.

Mention must be made of the creditable performance of the 'new boys', playing their first match in the team - Paul Bradley with three wins and John Maynard with two wins and a draw.

Opening game is a losing one

Sidmouth Croquet Club's first match in the South West Federation Golf Croquet Level Play League saw them go down 13-7 to last year's league winners East Dorset.

Team captain Graeme Pryor, Philip Harris, Ian Simpson and John Coombes travelled to Parkstone, Poole for the encounter.

In these matches a total of 20 games are played, comprising four doubles and 16 singles, each game timed at 50 minutes.

By lunchtime, four doubles and four singles were completed with East Dorset winning all but one doubles game. Sidmouth fared better in the afternoon, winning five games and drawing two.

Bears are tamed by Sidmouth

Sidmouth enjoyed an emphatic 6-1 success when they entertained The Bears in a Parkstone League meeting, writes David Butler.

In 2014, The Bears were asked to vacate their home at The Bear of Rodborough Hotel near Stroud due to the hotel needing to expand and have not had a home lawn to play on for the last year.

However, The Royal Agricultural University, close to Cirencester, came up trumps and provided a one-lawn facility which they also maintain.

Narrow loss at Cheltenham

Sidmouth Croquet Club's second Parkstone League match was contested last week, writes David Butler.

Sadly for the Sidmouth team, a visit to Cheltenham ended in another narrow defeat, 4-3.

The match, however, was not without tension, because, in the morning, two games were level on time and play continued until another hoop was run.

The Sidmouth doubles partnership of Derek Andrew (6) and Philip Harris (6) was level against Daryl Whitehead (4.5) and Klim Seabright (5) and Derek hit in and ran the deciding hoop to win the game plus one.

Colin Walls (4.5) was also level against Graham Roberts (4), but Colin missed his hit in and so lost minus one.

Peter Nelson (4.5) lost minus 11 to Roger Willbourn (3.5).

In the afternoon the four singles games were more clear cut with Derek and Philip continuing to play well, winning plus 17 and plus five against Klim and Daryl respectively.

However, Colin and Peter struggled with Colin losing minus 10 to Roger, and Peter losing minus five to Graham.

The club is strong for its size, with six of its members having a handicap of five or better.

On the day, teams of four were fairly evenly matched.

In the morning, the doubles pairing of Mike Taylor and David Clarke narrowly beat Keith and Kate

Apperley (plus 1) and in the singles Dave Mundy beat Robert Moss (plus 14) and Roger Hendy beat Richard Way (plus 9).

After a fine lunch provided by our caterer Gill Hodge, the remaining four singles were played, with Dave Mundy beating Richard Way (plus 23), David Clarke beating Kate Apperley (plus 15), Roger Hendy beating Keith Apperley (plus 6) and Mike Taylor losing to Robert Moss (minus 11).

CROQUET

Bradley and Thomas are both outstanding

Sidmouth's Golf Croquet team travelled to their furthest west opponents at St Agnes on Monday to play a Handicap League fixture, writes David Butler.

The St Agnes club was formed two years ago and members describe its lawns as being 'an ex pony field'; certainly the balls jumped around more than they would on Sidmouth's level lawns!

All of the St Agnes players had high handicaps, which gave them many extra shots against the more experienced Sidmouth team.

Honours were even across the first two rounds, but Sidmouth took charge in round three to hold an 8-4 lunchtime advantage.

The afternoon session brought more success for Sidmouth with the final score being a decisive 14 games to six in favour of the visitors.

Andrew Thomas and new team member Paul Bradley were outstanding, winning all four of their games. Philip Harris won three games and drew two despite giving away between five and seven extra turns in each of his games, a very impressive performance on away lawns.

Harris stars as Cornish side are sunk

Sidmouth entertained Barnstaple in a South West Federation Golf Croquet League encounter, writes David Butler

The Sidmouth team got off to a slow start losing the first four games, which were two doubles and two singles.

Improvement was shown and a post luncheon run of wins saw Sidmouth into a 9-7 overall advantage.

However, Sidmouth managed only to win one game of the last three and that left the match ending all square at 10-all.

It was Ann Ratcliffe who won her final game to ensure that Sidmouth were not beaten on the day!

Three Sidmouth players won two singles each; Margaret Piper, Anne Reece and Paul Bradley.

Another home game was contested against Cornwall Porthpean and this was certainly not close!

On this occasion, the home team got off to a flying start winning seven of the opening matches with the other one drawn!

The next four matches produced three home wins to leave Sidmouth comfortably ahead with an unassailable ten-and-a-half to one-and-a-half lead.

Then the forecasted rain arrived and, during the afternoon session, the elements took charge with wet and windy weather testing both sets of players' resolve!

Croquet players are a resilient lot and battled on throughout with Sidmouth staying in charge to ultimately complete a 17-3 victory.

Philip Harris, who won all five of the games he played, was deservedly named the Man of the Match.



■ The Sidmouth players who won silverware at the National Veterans' Championships held at Budleigh Salterton.

Picture: CONTRIBUTED

Rogers and Harris success

Budleigh Salterton Croquet Club hosted The National Veterans' Championship over the final week of June, writes David Butler.

Forty players participated, mostly from the South of England with one visitor from Australia.

The week started with The Longman Trophies (Sussex Trugs) doubles competition.

Twelve pairs entered this knock-out competition and, after three rounds had been played out the final was reached.

That match was between the Sidmouth pairing of Sue Rogers and Philip Harris and Elizabeth McKenzie-Gray and Ian McDiarmid from Woking, and it ended with victory for Rogers and Harris with a plus one score.

The Veterans' Championship, The Rothwell Challenge Cup (Advanced Play Singles) was

competed for by 12 very low handicap players (handicap range from minus one to one-point-five).

Sidmouth's Dave Mundy won, plus 17, in the final against Australian player David Wise.

Twelve low handicap players (ranging from two to seven), played for The Felixstowe Cup (Advanced Play Singles).

Sidmouth player Roger Mills won his block, but unfortunately lost minus 17 to Tony Bower from Budleigh Salterton in the final.

Eight medium handicap players (handicap ranging from eight to 14) played for The Strickland Cup (Handicap Singles).

After five rounds had been contested, Sidmouth's Peter Miller was the winner having won four of his five games, making this a very successful tournament for Sidmouth players.

Two wins for Friedlander

The first competitive event in the South West Federation of Croquet Clubs was a short croquet tournament contested at Nailsea Croquet Club last Saturday, writes David Butler.

One Sidmouth team comprised Barbara Clarke, Rob Matthews, Paul Griew and Richard Croft, all high handicap players.

They struggled with the pace of the lawns, discovering them to be much faster than our Sidmouth lawns that they had practised on the previous week.

The second Sidmouth team called themselves Sidmouth Fortfield and fared very well.

Ian Friedlander won two games, Julie Horsley and David Clarke each won three, and Philip Harris won four.

●Read a more in-depth report from the event now at www.sidmouthherald.co.uk

CROQUET

Good win over Cornwall

Sidmouth Croquet Club convincingly won their fifth Federation League match, beating visitors Cornwall 5-2, writes David Butler.

In the morning, the Sidmouth doubles partnership of Mike Taylor (3.5) and Ian Friedlander (9), had a tense game against Cornwall's Peter Cutting (4.5) and Des Honey (8) and lost minus seven.

The two singles games were more decisive. Philip Harris (6) easily beat Tony Backhouse (8) plus 20 and Derek Andrew (6) playing Ian Wilson (6) had both his clips on the peg after 90 minutes.

Ian, however, then frustrated Derek for an hour before Derek was able to peg out to win plus seven.

That all gave Sidmouth a lunch-time 2-1 advantage.

Four singles were played in the afternoon. Ian Friedlander, with four-and-half bisques convincingly beat Peter Cutting plus 20.

Philip Harris continued his morning form and beat Ian Wilson plus 13. Derek Andrew trailed for much of his game, but managed to hit in late in the game and ran six hoops to draw level on time. Play continued and Derek ran one more hoop to win plus one.

Mike Taylor had to give four-and-a-half bisques to Des Honey and lost minus eight. The 5-2 victory was Sidmouth's third win this year, which moves them to second place in the league behind Kingston Maurward.

Edged out by two games

Sidmouth were edged out by a margin of just two games when they entertained the six-player team from Kingston Maurward Croquet Club contesting a SWF Croquet Level Play League match.

In this contest, 20 games are played, comprising four doubles and 16 singles, each lasting 50 minutes.

Two of the Kingston Maurward team were 'scratch' players, having handicaps of minus one, and one which made the visitors stiff opposition indeed to the higher handicap Sidmouth team.

In perfect playing weather, the morning session of four doubles and eight singles ended with Sidmouth trailing four-and-a-half to seven-and-a-half.

The home side rallied after lunch and, in the afternoon period, the singles matches ended four-and-a-half to Sidmouth, three-and-a-half to Kingston Maurward.

CROQUET



■ The finalists at the Sidmouth Croquet Club handicap doubles competition. Picture: CONTRIBUTED

CROQUET

Rogers and Thomas joy in croquet handicap doubles

Over the weekend, Sidmouth Croquet Club held their annual Association Handicap Doubles competition, writes David Butler.

In this competition, a high handicap player is paired with a low handicap player to give them experience of doubles play.

Eight doubles partnerships played in two groups of four pairs in each group.

The new Croquet Association handicap system penalised the pairings with a lower handicap player and therefore it was no surprise that two partnerships of medium handicap players reached the final.

Brian Pollock and Graeme Pryor won all three of their group games.

Andrew Thomas and Sue Rogers and Mike Taylor and Paul Griew each won two of their group games. Andrew and Sue progressed to the

final because they had beaten Mike and Paul in their group game.

The final, with Brian Pollock and Graeme Pryor against Andrew Thomas and Sue Rogers, was a tense game with neither pair able to make progress and there was only a maximum of two hoops difference in the score for most of the game.

With 20 minutes to go, Brian and Graeme were one hoop ahead. Sue Rogers then hit in and ran a five hoop break for her partnership to lead by four hoops.

This proved decisive because neither Brian or Graeme were able to run another hoop in the time remaining so Andrew and Sue won the game plus four.

This is Sue's second doubles victory this year having won the national veterans' championships doubles two weeks ago.

CROQUET

Pearson stars as croquet team lands first win of the season

Steve Pearson was the star of the show as Sidmouth SE defeated visiting East Dorset in a South West Federation Golf Croquet League meeting, writes David Butler.

The match was played out on the hottest day of the year to date, and some of the play matched the delightful weather!

The visiting side had a team of seven with their lowest handicap being one, whereas the home side of five had a lowest handicap of four.

After the morning session of three doubles and nine singles, it was eight-and-a-half to three-and-a-half in favour of the visitors.

During the session, the Sidmouth players had difficulty playing East Dorset's low handicap players with only John Coombes enjoying a good win over one handicap player Mark Hamann.

Lunch came at a good time with the players clearly delighted to escape the heat!

Sidmouth won three of the first

four post-luncheon singles and so reduced the overall deficit to three.

With only four singles remaining, it certainly seemed as if the home comeback might end in glorious failure. However, Sidmouth were successful in the next two games, sealing a 7-4 win and then enjoyed a 13th hoop victory by Richard Thurlow (7-6). This levelled the match scores up with one game to play! Steve Pearson was charged with playing the final game and, after five minutes of excitement

and apprehension, Steve, a player in his second year, won the match, beating East Dorset's more experienced player six hoops to four.

It all meant an overall ten-and-a-half to nine-and-a-half win for Sidmouth SE, their first victory of the season! Most players played five games and the Man of the Match has to be Steve Pearson, who won four and drew the other in his five games.

●Read more now at www.sidmouthherald.co.uk

League term ends with terrific win

Sidmouth Croquet Club's Golf Croquet Team (SW) travelled to Budleigh Salterton to play its final game of the South West Federation GC League, *writes David Butler*.

With handicaps ranging from three to nine, Sidmouth fielded a stronger team than Budleigh, who had a team with handicaps six to 11.

When seven games had been completed, Budleigh led 5-2 and by lunchtime the score had become 9-3.

Of the final eight matches Sidmouth won five and Budleigh three, which left Sidmouth winning overall to the tune of a 14-6 score line.

Though everyone on the team won at least two games, Philip Harris and Paul Bradley excelled by winning all four that they played and John Maynard won three and drew one in his four.

Sidmouth SW has played well this year, winning four matches, drawing one match and losing just one.

However, this was not enough to win the section and progress to the next round.

The team to go through, East Dorset, had five wins and one loss, Sidmouth beating them in the very first game of the season back in May!

CROQUET

Exeter are well beaten

Sidmouth Croquet Club's Association Croquet Intermediate League team continued its winning run at Sidmouth with a convincing win over Exeter Croquet Club, *writes David Bishop*.

As expected, both teams were fairly evenly matched in handicaps with all the seven games incomplete after the time allowed.

Sidmouth, however, prevailed by winning six of the seven.

Exeter's sole win was a closely fought game between John Patterson and Sidmouth captain Graeme Pryor who, despite leading for most of the game, lost 15-17 after a spectacular comeback by his opponent.

Hide stars as SE team are derby victors

Sidmouth SE croquet team has played its final match of the South West Federation Golf Croquet League season, *writes David Butler*.

In a rearranged match, Sidmouth had only six players (including two who normally play Association Croquet, but had agreed to play) and the visitors, Budleigh Salterton SE, had only five due to sickness!

This required a change in the order of play so the match could be played in five rounds.

However, the usual four doubles' games and 16 singles matches were still contested.

Sidmouth got off to a good start by winning five of the first eight and, by lunchtime, after four more had been played the overall score was six-and-a-half to five-and-a-half in favour of Sidmouth.

Of the eight games played after lunch, Sidmouth won six and Budleigh claimed the honours in the other two.

In spite of most Sidmouth players having to give 'extra turns' to the opposition (in one game there were six, as a Sidmouth player with a four handicap was competing against a ten handicap Budleigh opponent), they still managed a convincing win.

Most Sidmouth players won at least two games.

However, the stand-out player on the day for Sidmouth was undoubtedly Michael Hide, who won all his four games including a brace of doubles that he played with Steve Pearson.

The final result was a win for Sidmouth by twelve-and-a-half to seven-and-a-half.

Ball nets first major victory

A dozen players from as far afield as Cambridgeshire, Herefordshire, Cornwall, Somerset and Wiltshire joined local players for Sidmouth's C Level Advanced Play weekend Tournament, *writes David Butler*.

The tournament had been fully subscribed but for the late withdrawal of four players, mainly due to illness.

Sidmouth's Jon Ball, who has only been playing the sport for just over two years and was also competing in his first CA Tournament, won the Connaught Cup with six wins out of six.

The runner-up was another Sidmouth player, David Clarke who won four of his six matches.

Third place was shared in a three-way tie with Nailsea's Kathy Wallace, Budleigh Salterton's Alan Rush and Sidmouth player Ian Friedlander all winning four from seven.

Players relaxed on Saturday evening when they adjourned to a local hotel for dinner.

Deafeated in final match

Sidmouth Croquet Club's team that play in the South West Federation Level Play Golf Croquet League were well beaten in their final outing of the league season, *writes David Butler*.

They travelled to Budleigh with a team of six and ended soundly defeated by a very strong home team.

On immaculate lawns, and in perfect conditions, Sidmouth started well, winning two of the four doubles meetings.

However, from there it all went downhill as they won just two of the 16 singles to lose 16 games to four in the 20 game match.

Overall, in this league, against six other clubs, Sidmouth won twice, defeating Weston-super-Mare and Cornwall and they lost to East Dorset, Kingston Maurward, Swanage and Budleigh Salterton.

Same again as Sue Rogers and Dave Mundy retain cups

Sidmouth Croquet Club held the finals of tournaments played in blocks throughout the summer, writes David Butler.

Sue Rogers and Dave Mundy retained the cups they won last year.

All but one of the finals were played over a week and were advertised to club members so they could watch and hopefully learn tactics from the finalists.

The first of the finals was the Macadam Cup Golf Croquet tournament for high handicap players between Steve Pearson and John Maynard, both new players in their second year playing croquet.

Although the best of three games, Steve won in two games 7-6, 7-4.

The Macadam Cup Golf Croquet tournament for low handicap players was played between Anne Reece and Richard Thurlow.

This match went to three games and Richard won 7-5, 3-7, 7-4.

The final of the Fermor Rose

Bowl, an association tournament for ladies, was played on lawn two between the holder Sue Rogers and Muriel Philpott.

Both players found the strong wind gusts difficult to play in and after one hour the game was fairly even with Sue ahead plus one.

However, Sue then began hitting-in regularly and retained the trophy by winning plus 17.

On Friday afternoon, Julie Sorrell played Ian Friedlander for the Belmont Cup.

This is a handicap association tournament with Ian giving Julie five bisques.

Ian hit in with his second ball and promptly ran four hoops. Julie used her bisques sparingly, but could not overcome the more experienced Ian who eventually won plus 10.

The Devonia Cup for high handicap association players was played between Kelvin Dent and Paul Griew.

Both players had bisques and Kelvin used his more effectively to beat Paul plus two.

The Humphrey Hicks Cup is our top association competition in the club so several club members watched the games.

This is an advanced association competition for low handicap players and two of the club's best players competed in the final.

Dave Mundy, the holder, played Chris Donovan (handicaps -0.5 and 1.5 and UK rankings 87 and 177 respectively).

The final was the best of three untimed games. In the first game Dave Mundy won the toss and chose to start first.

He set up a rush to hoop one, Chris missed his hit-in and Dave ran 9 hoops setting up a leave.

Chris missed again so Dave ran another 12 hoops, and kept his advantage to eventually win plus 22. In the second game Chris started

first and used the same game plan that Dave had used against him in the first game to win the second game plus 17.

After a lunch break Dave started first in the third game.

By this time he had the measure of the speed of the lawn and produced a demonstration of precision croquet to win this third game plus 26, thus retaining the cup.

Roger Hendy beat Ian Simpson 7-4, 7-3 in the golf croquet level play final.

Ian's ball placement was good, but Roger's superior hoop running and roqueting proved decisive.

In the last final, delayed a week, Philip Harris played Peter Hills in an advanced handicap game for the Sheila Adams Cup.

Although both players each made a seven hoop break, Peter, with six bisques, played tactically to win the game plus four.

SIDMOUTH CROQUET

Sidmouth Croquet Club were involved in two exciting matches last week; one under croquet 'golf' rules, the other under 'association' rules, writes Richard Thurlow.

In 'golf' croquet, players accumulate points for running hoops, each hoop being contested consecutively, with the first player running the hoop winning a point, before moving onto the next hoop.

In 'association' croquet, each player has to run all the 12 hoops in turn, using the other balls to help.

Having drawn their match against Exeter earlier this month, the club's level play golf croquet team hoped to do better against a team of five from Cornwall on Thursday, May 25.

Sidmouth started well, winning three of the four doubles games, but of the six singles games that followed in the morning session, five were lost and one drawn.

By lunchtime, Cornwall were leading by six-and-a-half games to three-and-a-half, with 10 singles games still to play.

But what a transformation after lunch! Sidmouth's team of six somehow found their form, winning seven, with three drawn games and one game lost.

The last game, in particular, was exciting.

With the score at five hoops each, time expired and with the final ball to be played, Steve Pearson managed to run hoop 11 to clinch the victory.

Well done, Steve - no games lost this match!

This all left the final score as

Sidmouth 11.5, Cornwall 8.5.

Meanwhile, the club's association 'federation' team won their second league match away to Lym Valley last Thursday.

Lym Valley is a small club in Uplyme with only 15 members.

They play their croquet on one three-quarter size lawn and a full-size lawn on the cricket outfield, challenging conditions for our players used to much better playing surfaces!

The morning doubles game was played on the three-quarter size lawn, and, despite having to give away six bisques, the Sidmouth partnership of Philip Harris and Jon Ball, after conditioning themselves to the lawns, played tactically to beat the Lym Valley pairing 26-18.

Andrew Thomas played the singles game on the wetter cricket outfield lawn against Ken Wilcox and never came to terms with the slowness of the lawn, losing 26-2.

Three singles games were played in afternoon.

Andrew played his game on the dryer three-quarter size lawn and, quickly getting the pace of the surface, played more confidently to win 26-12.

Philip had to give seven bisques away and lost 25-11 on time.

Jon, having gained confidence from winning the morning doubles, and despite having to play on the wetter lawn, played carefully to win his singles game 26-11.

This all led to an overall 3-2 success for Sidmouth who sit top of the Federation League after two matches.

● See tables on page 50.

CROQUET - Philip Harris wins 'Fastest Game' award

Two match reports this week, the first on a national Association Croquet tournament that Sidmouth CC regularly hosts with players from all over the country, and the second, an internal Golf Croquet tournament that attracts the best and the greatest players from the wide spectrum in the club, writes Richard Thurlow.

First up, the Association Croquet and the weather did not live up to expectations, but at least the one heavy downpour did occur whilst players were having lunch.

Players were divided into two blocks.

In Block A, Peter Nelson (Sidmouth CC) and Robert Moss (The Bears CC) both had five wins out of seven played.

On 'who beat whom' Peter was declared the winner.

In Block B, Andrew Webb (Pendle and Craven CC), Roger Mills and Philip Harris both from Sidmouth CC all had five wins out of seven.

Net points scored determined the winner and hence Andrew won with Philip in second place.

In the final, Andrew beat Peter Nelson plus eight to take home the Regency Salver.

Ian Friedlander (Sidmouth CC), who with a handicap of eight was the highest handicap

player in the tournament, attained his Silver Merit Award with two devastating breaks in his game with Peter Nelson.

Philip Harris finished his game against David Houston (Edinburgh CC) in just under one hour and 30 minutes to win the fastest game.

The prizes were presented by Nancy Temple, who had managed the tournament for many years, but had retired from this duty last year, Julie Horsley now taking over the organisation.

So to Golf Croquet, and the second tournament, the internal Golf Croquet handicap doubles (the Cunningham Salver), was played in humid and sultry conditions last week (the weather, not the players).

Some pairings were selected by the tournament organiser, other pairings were the result of marital agreement (which also showed the strength or otherwise of partnership relations).

Each doubles team played at least four matches over the day in two blocks; the final being between the winners of each, Edward and Margaret Colman and Ian Friedlander and Margaret Piper, with Edward and Margaret carrying off the silverware in fine style and thus ensuring marital harmony and happiness.

2017

Croquet lawns are open for new campaign



■ Sidmouth Croquet Club members on the greens which opened for the new season last weekend.

Picture: CONTRIBUTED

Sidmouth croquet players were cock-a-hoop last Saturday at the opening of the lawns for this season's croquet, writes Richard Thurlow.

The weather was fine; the freshly cut lawns were a delight to play on and the hoops, newly painted, shone in the spring sunshine.

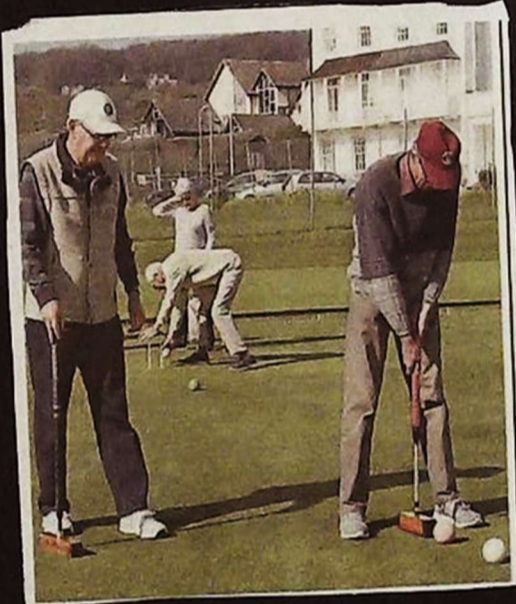
Two demonstration matches, one of association croquet and one of golf croquet were played, the whiteness of the players' attire dazzling the eye.

These matches allegedly showed the spectators how croquet should really be played. However many of them, unable to reconcile their own mean skills with those being demonstrated on the lawns, had drifted off to enjoy the further delights of the spring lunch and the refreshments that preceded it.

Seriously though, a very enjoyable afternoon, which we hope will continue through the season.

Over 100 members have rejoined for this season and we are hoping to attract more this coming Saturday (April 8) at our 'Taster' session for new members.

The taster session gets under way from 10am and all-comers are going to find themselves made very welcome.



CROQUET

Super turnout

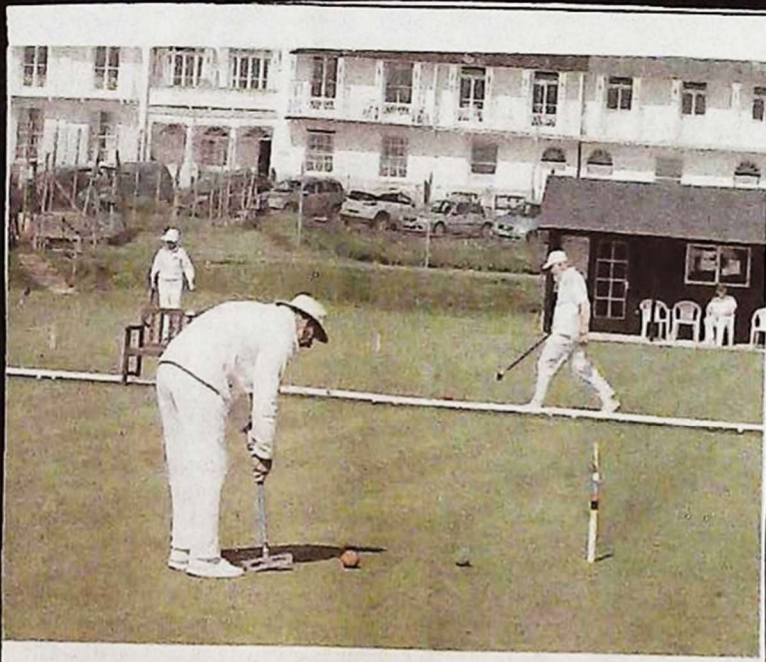
The Croquet Club hosted its new members day on Saturday, April 8, in amazingly fine weather, writes Richard Thurlow.

This event welcomes those who might have an interest in Croquet, giving them a short introduction to the game and a chance to try it.

Twenty-eight visitors turned up, many signing up for four training sessions, which are to be held over the coming few weeks. This should enable them to become competent players over the course of the season.

Anybody who missed the 'Taster Day' and who wants to try out the game, should contact Sue Dent on 01395 514292.

There will also be a chance to try it out on National Croquet Day, which is being held on June 4.



■ Action from the Sidmouth croquet greens.

Picture: CONTRIBUTED

CROQUET

Thomas triumph sees team to victory

Sidmouth Croquet Federation team won their first league match of the season, defeating Nailsea 4-3, writes *Richard Thurlow*.

On a sunny, but windy day and 11 days after the beginning of the summer croquet season, both the Sidmouth and Nailsea players had to rehone their skills and tactics after the winter break.

In the morning, a doubles game and two singles games were played.

The Sidmouth pairing of Mike Taylor and Andrew Thomas played the Nailsea team.

All four players appeared rusty and shots were missed. However, as the game progressed confidence grew and longer breaks were made. After two-

and-a-half hours the game was evenly poised, but a mistake by Sidmouth let in a Nailsea player who ran seven hoops. This was the deciding break and Nailsea won the game 25-16.

David Clarke played one of the morning singles. Again both players were rusty and made mistakes. Sidmouth lost 24-6.

The second singles game between Peter Nelson (Sidmouth) and a Nailsea player was a complete contrast.

Right from the start Peter had the measure of the lawn; he hit in and made an 11 hoop.

He then soon managed to get his second ball around and ran 11 hoops with this ball. Peter finally pegged both his balls out to win 26-5, and this

meant that at the luncheon interval, Sidmouth trailed 2-1.

There were four singles matches post lunch and the home side needed to win three of them to take the overall match honours.

Peter Nelson continued his good form of the morning and won 26-7. Mike Taylor won his game 26-6, but David Clarke lost 26-14.

That left the overall score at three games each with one to play.

The Sidmouth fate rested in the arms of Andrew Thomas. Both he and his opponent played confidently and each made five and six hoop breaks, but it was Andrew who finally won the game 22-18, securing Sidmouth a 4-3 match victory.

CROQUET

Thurlow off to Surbiton after One Ball competition success

The 'One Ball' competition was played on the penultimate Thursday of April.

This year it seemed a most appropriate title given that it was real 'brass monkey' weather!

Every croquet club in England runs its own 'One Ball' competition, with the winners going to the national final.

This competition is an annual England-wide competition in aid of charity. This year the organiser's chose Parkinson's UK, the national parkinson's disease charity. Entry fees for the tournament and other fundraising goes to the charity.

'One Ball' croquet is as its title says, a version of the game in which each player is matched

against one other, each having one ball to hit through 12 consecutive hoops. Striking the opponent's ball results in extra turns which can aid progress through the hoops.

Twenty-nine players entered the competition (a record for the club). Players, becoming colder as the day wore on, played five games; fewer players at the end than the start as frostbite, hunger and boredom set in.

The eventual winner was Richard Thurlow, with Jeanette Pollack and Andrew Thomas runners-up.

Richard has the dubious honour of going to Surbiton for the national final in May.

A total of £155 was raised for the charity.



■ Sidmouth Croquet Club chairman Peter Nelson in early season action.

Picture: CONTRIBUTED

So impressive on Sunday!



■ The Sidmouth Sunday side that did so well at Nailsea. Picture: CONTRIBUTED

Sidmouth sent two teams to Nailsea to play in the Somerset club's 'Short Croquet' tournament, writes Richard Thurlow.

One team was in action on the Saturday in Division Four and the other team the following day in Division Two.

Short Croquet is a fairly recent version of the game, not as may be inferred, designed for those under 5ft 8ins, but played on a half lawn, with a reduced time limit of one hour and 15 minutes.

These modifications, together with a few minor rule changes, makes, it is thought, a brighter, more lively game, although with a 7am start and an 8pm finish, liveliness was not particularly evident on either day!

Each player plays four games against four other teams in their division, scoring a point for a win, so the maximum points available is 16 in the day.

The Sidmouth Saturday team of Pam Bowra, Roger Hendy, John Coombes and Paul Griew, unfortunately, did not live up their games sufficiently, winning only three of their 16 games. Division Four will remain their home for a while.

The Sidmouth Sunday team of Richard Wood, Philip Harris, Jon Ball and Richard Thurlow, promoted last year from Division Three, did well in the morning, but at lunch, had to win three out of four games in the afternoon to be top of their division.

They managed to do so, scoring 12 points in the day, one ahead of the team from Bath, who had 11 points.

As a consequence, the team was promoted to Division One for the next tournament; we should probably retire now!

Burrige in Haste Cup triumph



■ Ian Burrige receives the Haste Cup from Amanda Haste. Picture: CONTRIBUTED

It's the start of a busy season for Sidmouth Croquet Club, writes Richard Thurlow.

We field three Golf Croquet teams and four Association Croquet teams in the South West region leagues, playing at home and away, as well as numerous internal and external club tournaments, and three Croquet Association three-day events.

Our lawn manager, Andrew Thomas, is kept very busy, moving hoops to avoid grass wear and changing their clearance settings for the different standards of tournaments.

The final weekend of April saw the club hold its annual Open Golf Croquet Championship.

Sixteen players played for the Haste Cup, a qualifying tournament for the Croquet Association English National Singles Championship.

As usual, this tournament attracted excellent players from clubs throughout England whose handicaps ranged from minus four to four.

With eight players in each of the two blocks, everyone played seven matches on the rain-free Saturday against the other players.

Many of the players hit the balls very hard, to the amazement of some of the club's newer players who were watching. The top four players in each block qualified to play in the deciding matches on Sunday, unfortunately none from Sidmouth.

On Sunday, although with only a few spectators due to the continuing rain, Ian Burrige, ranked ninth in the UK, and Jonathan Powe, ranked 25, entertained them with what was a good, fast and entertaining game.

The result was a 7-4, 7-4 success for Burrige, who received the Haste Cup, presented by Amanda Haste, visiting the UK from her home in France.

Sidmouth Croquet Club A team travelled to Exeter Croquet Club to play their first tournament of this season's South West Federation (SWF) Golf Croquet Level Play League fixtures, writes Richard Thurlow.

The usual 20 games were played, comprising four doubles and 16 singles.

The home side got off to a good start, winning three of the doubles, but Sidmouth came back winning two of the four singles with another drawn which left the lunchtime score one of Exeter four-and-a-half, Sidmouth three-and-a-half.

The afternoon action saw the playing of the remaining dozen singles matches and these proved to be equally matched.

After 11 of the 12, the overall score was nine-and-a-half all!

That left everything dependent on the outcome of the final game which saw Sidmouth represented by John Coombes, and the hosts by Adam Wilmhurst.

When time was called, the score was five hoops each with only eight hits remaining - it could not have been much closer!

Whoever ran hoop 11 would win the match. In the event, despite near misses, neither player was able to run the hoop and the game ended in an honourable draw!

The final result was therefore Exeter 10, Sidmouth 10 - a fair result after a splendid day of croquet.

Earlier in May, the club hosted the annual "visiting Medics" event.

The 'Medics', a disparate group of medical doctors, gather for an annual reunion and play a bit of croquet and golf, in between less formal activities.

The day started off with medicinal honey vodka and sloe gin, and finished with medicinal honey vodka and sloe gin, some croquet being played in between.

The forecast rain held off for most of the day when the club held its annual short croquet internal competition, writes Richard Thurlow.

Twenty-two intrepid players, attired (what a splendid word), in their full white competition regalia, glinted in the early morning sun.

The introductory instructions by Philip Harris galvanised those not already excited by the instant coffee in the clubhouse, as they ambled onto the lawns, to play the first of their four matches in the day. With two matches being played before lunch, those with 120 points glowered at each other over their sandwiches, while those with 80 points, wept into their soup!

After the lunch, the excitement continued as Peter Hills swept into a 140 point unassailable lead, followed by the runners up, Jon Ball, Penny Ball, Kelvin Dent, Muriel Philpott and Richard Wood, all on 130 points.

Richard managed to improve his handicap from one peel to two peels, (an arcane term which I will not bother to explain, but which will give him considerable angst in other such competitions).

The croquet column last week focussed on match results, and to those who enjoy the game in all its forms, this will have provided some interest, writes Richard Thurlow.

The problem is, as with most local sports reports, that these are only really of interest to those who partake and to parents who support their offspring.

Unfortunately, there are not many croquet players whose parents are still alive and able to watch from the sidelines.

That croquet demonstrates a thrilling demonstration of humankind's ability to conjure up magnificent moments of multi-faceted skills is not a popular opinion.

Even the great croquet player W C Grace was heard to say that he would take up cricket if croquet did not manage to provide him with more excitement.

But how wrong they are!

I have several times broken my oatmeal biscuits in excitement as a player 'pegged out'... not physically I hasten to add

Despite this, we are undergoing somewhat of a renaissance as croquet is a game which combines cunning, ball co-ordination and forethought; very appropriate to our times.

About 20 new players have joined the club this year and other clubs have reported similar rising interest.

We now have about 120 members, our lawns are usually fully booked and we are almost breaking even on the funding for tea and coffee supplies.

Our time has come.

So, when next you see the Sidmouth lawns fully populated, remember that croquet is the game of the future.

By the way, our intermediate team lost 4-3 to Budleigh Salterton last week.

CROQUET - Canton Cup joy for Muriel

One day I shall write a monologue on the 'Effect on Croquet of the Difference in Weather patterns', although as we already have several prominent members of the Meteorological Office amongst our members, on reflection, perhaps I won't, writes Richard Thurlow.

What gave birth to this thought though was that two weeks ago, we had to abandon a match against Cornwall, when gale force winds and heavy rainfall made the lawns unplayable because of the cold and wet.

Yet last weekend, we had two days of the very hottest weather, which, on Sunday made it nearly impossible to play because of the heat.

We croquet players are hardy souls, and used to the vagaries of the weather, battling it out come rain or shine.

However, within two weeks we have seen extremes of climate that have made even our younger players tremble in their

shorts.

Despite the heat on Saturday (June 17), the higher handicap players fought for the Canton Cup, played over 14 points, ie only once round the hoops with two balls each.

Muriel Philpott won all four of her games. Penny Ball and Sue Dent were equal runners-up winning three of their four games played.

The following day, which was even hotter, six lower handicap players played an identical game for the Owen Cup, with each player scheduled to play a match against all the other players, ie five games each for one hour and twenty minutes each game.

After four rounds, Phillip Harris had won all his games and therefore was unbeatable, so we decided to crawl off the lawns, watch the cricket and drink a beer or two.

If only all croquet matches ended so pleasantly.

Perhaps climate change is not a bad thing!

SIDMOUTH CROQUET - Nelson wins Rawkins Cup

For those who crave more detail, I will be writing about three different events this week, even mentioning names for those who bask in public approbation, writes Richard Thurlow.

Firstly, our unbeaten level (ie no handicap) team played at Weston-super-Mare last week with five rounds of four games each, played in good weather conditions.

At lunchtime the score was level at six games each. The next round saw Sidmouth later trailing 9-7. But pure spirit and some luck saw us winning the final round, with both teams scoring 10 games.

Andrew Thomas (the mass of croquet) played some extraordinary jump shots through the hoop, not one of which was successful.

Next up, one of our two Golf Croquet teams, the SE team, played East Dorset in Poole for the latest round of the handicap league.

The team lost seven-and-a-half to twelve-and-a-half, despite a fine performance from Anne Reece, winning one doubles match and two singles.

Finally, last week, from Wednesday to Sunday, we hosted the annual Croquet Association midsummer tournament at the club, in four events, a singles handicap competition and three advanced play single competitions.

This attracted competitors from the south of the country, some even coming from Budleigh Salterton. The weather was dreadful and only the sheer doggedness and determination of the players enabled them to survive the aqueous conditions.

Fortune favoured those not wearing glasses, but perhaps webbed feet and a snorkel should also be encouraged in the event that the weather is bad next year.

Eventually your correspondent won the handicap singles the Dwerryhouse cup; Ian Friedlander (Sidmouth), won the Fortfield Cp; Peter Nelson (Sidmouth), won the Rawkins Cp, with Dave Kibble being the only non-Sidmouth player to win, taking the Challenge Cup. More exciting news next week, watch this space.

SIDMOUTH CROQUET - 'Win some and lose some'

'You win some, you lose some'; those the were the buzz words after mixed fortunes in terms of results over the past week, writes Richard Thurlow.

Last week, the club fielded some of our Association Croquet players in three of the league competitions, namely the 'Federation', the 'Intermediate' and the 'B'.

We managed to lose all of them, some outstandingly (the Federation captain at six games to one against, explains his loss as being the consequence of Sidmouth being too good and having to give away extra turns).

To rub salt in the wound, two of the matches were played against Exeter on consecutive days.

In an even more fanciful mode, the captain of the B league team explained his loss as being due to the wonderful lunch provided by the opposition.

I quote: "We snatched defeat from the jaws of victory when we played Budleigh last Tuesday. Penny Ball, Pamela Bowra, Richard Croft and Kelvin Dent finished the morning in a commanding position with the dream doubles pairing of Penny and Pamela beating their opponents convincingly.

"Then Budleigh played their trump card and provided a lunch of such magnificence that Sidmouth mallets wilted in the searing afternoon sun and the players' killer instinct deserted

them.

"Only Kelvin was able to win his second match of the day. Richard played well but avoided troubling the handicap committee.

"Budleigh squeaked home by four games to three after an enjoyable match on probably the hottest day of the year."

There was no explanation from the Intermediate team captain (your correspondent), perhaps because he lost all his matches.

In contrast, Sidmouth Golf croquet teams, (our SW team, and SE team) won all three of their matches.

SW were winners against St Agnes and also against Porthpean, while SE were winners in their meeting with Kingston Maurward.

The victory over Kingston Maurward seemingly came at the end of an exciting contest that was described to me as is described below.

"The usual 20 games were played and at lunch the scores were level at five games each. The lunch seemed to invigorate the Sidmouth team (unlike against Exeter!), who in the fourth round won four of the five games played, making the score 9-6. In the fifth round Graeme Pryor and John Maynard won their games to secure the Sidmouth victory with an 11-9 win.

"Paul Bradley was the most successful Sidmouth player winning three games."

More exciting reports on our successes next week!

CROQUET - Narrow defeat to Budleigh

There was a plethora of matches for Sidmouth croquet players over the past week, writes Richard Thurlow.

I use the word 'plethora' to try to confuse you.

This continues the practice whereby the form of the game called 'association croquet' (AC) uses arcane terms to define the most straightforward actions, in the hope that beginners will be so worried and confused about the words that they will blob their shots.

For instance, last week I mentioned the word 'bisque' as a term used in croquet to define, in 'association' croquet, an extra turn which is given to a weaker player when they play one with a lower handicap.

Thus an AC player may be given anything from one to more than 20 bisques in a game.

In 'golf croquet', this is known as an 'extra turn'.... a quite straightforward word which conveys its meaning well.

Although, I suppose that this is little different from cricket where the wood uprights are known as stumps and a position close to the stumps is known as a wicket keeper, (I forbear to mention 'silly mid-off').

I suppose that all games have their own words and mystique, but AC croquet seems to have more than most.

Where for instance is a hoop known as 'rover' and why? (answers on a postcard please from non croquet players only).

Anyway, I digress and will

write about the plethora of matches, since I know that you are salivating to hear the latest results from the various teams that we thrust upon the croquet world, and I hesitate to keep you away.

The Sidmouth SE golf croquet team went to Budleigh Salterton to play in the South West Federation League where, after four doubles and four singles games had been played, the score was Sidmouth four-and-a-half to Budleigh's three-and-a-half.

Budleigh won three of the next four singles games, reversing the lead.

After lunch (another sumptuous offering by the hosts), Budleigh won three of the next four games and so held a nine-and-a-half to six-and-a-half lead. This all meant Sidmouth needed to win the final four games to win the match.

Sadly, just three were won leaving Budleigh the match winners at ten-and-a-half to nine-and-a-half.

The final result was harsh on Paul Bradley, who had won all three of his singles contests.

This match must have been the most closely fought this season. Both sides (except Sidmouth of course) had their 'lucky shots' and 12 of the 20 games played were won/lost by only one or two hoops.

Budleigh ran a total of 117 hoops to Sidmouth's 115. We really must do something about Budleigh's lunches.

If I were to emulate Sidmouth Golf, Cricket or Football clubs, who write a separate piece on each event, then, as the croquet club's only correspondent, I would spend most of my days writing match reports, writes Richard Thurlow.

Suffice to say, I have better things to do with my time, for instance playing croquet!

For this reason, each week you read a summary of our many events, which reach a peak about now as it is the height of the croquet playing season.

Apart from recording other exciting things that happen. For example recently, one of our players had to cancel an internal match because of the presence of a fox in his house!

His eyesight, when playing croquet, must be much better than in observing wildlife since, when the RSPCA arrived, the creature turned out to be a seagull!

However, onto the match reports. Our Federation League Association team lost against Cornwall, going down 4-3 at St Austell 4-3, your correspondent managing to lose both his matches!

However, his omission from the next match against Taunton, and bringing back the usual grouping of Phillip Harris, Jon Ball, and Andrew Thomas, resulted in a 4-3 win.

Interestingly the contrast between the lawns at those events was very marked; that at Cornwall playing so slowly that

St John Ambulance should have been on hand to repair strained wrists, while the lawns at Taunton were so fast that it felt as though we were playing ice croquet, (now there's a new game to conjure up for the winter)

Our SWF Golf croquet match at home against Swanage on proved to be a disappointment for our SE team.

Twenty singles and doubles games were played during the day, with a point to the winners of each game; at lunch we were only one point adrift of Swanage.

We improved after lunch, and with four games still to play, were level with Swanage at eight points each.

However, we could not maintain our momentum and only finally scored a total of nine-and-a-half points against Swanage's ten-and-a-half.

Philip Harris won all his singles; he is surely truly a renaissance man of Sidmouth Croquet, excelling at Association and Golf Croquet, managing tournaments and being a force for good in this evil croquet world

Finally, I have to make an apology for misleading avid readers for an error in my last match report.

I have been asked to point out that Budleigh did not provide lunch when we played away against them last week; we provided our own sandwiches and they provided tea.

Please amend your records immediately.

CROQUET - Sidmouth meet their Waterloo against Wellington

Sidmouth met their Waterloo when they played Wellington in an Association Croquet B League match, not on the playing fields of Eton, but on the playing fields of Sidmouth, writes Richard Thurlow.

This was a right old battle with players pegging out their opponents (a croquet term, not necessarily fatal) and with games won by the narrowest of margins.

The home team of Penny Ball, Pamela Bowra, Richard Croft and Paul Griew fought a rearguard action to the end, but

were left reflecting on what might have been.

Pam, afterwards, echoed Napoleon's words when she said: "I should have won that battle."

The final score saw Wellington win by four games to three.

● Sidmouth croquet team had a merry dance against a team from Plymouth in a SWF Golf Croquet Match, writes Richard Thurlow.

Plymouth fielded a team of eight players with handicaps ranging from plus 10 to minus one which represents a huge range!

We played 20 matches in total

and the final result was Sidmouth 13, Plymouth 7; fortunately their minus one player lost all his games as he had a huge number of extra turns as a handicap against him.

The top Sidmouth player on the day was Steve Pearson, who won the four games he contested.

Michael Hide was a close second, he won three games.

This was a third win of the season for the Sidmouth team and, as I don't know how many matches we've played, I can give you no indication of how good a result this is!

After a week away and therefore supplying no croquet news, I have a large number of results to entice you with, writes Richard Thurlow.

In fact there are so many that the casual reader will be amazed at the wide range of external and internal tournaments and types of play that we aged, but multi-dextrous players engage in.

So many results though that the editor of the sports pages may well cut them. So if you have done well and don't see your name here then blame him, not me!

First up, in a recent croquet association tournament in Budleigh, our players did well against a wide variety of players from various parts of the UK, and even one from Australia.

Philip Harris and Susan Rogers won the final of the doubles, Roger Mills got to the semi-finals of the handicap singles, (but won the consolation event) and Jane Babbage won the D block.

Richard Wood did well in the B block for the Colin Hemming Cup with five wins out of seven completing a triple peel, (not as in bell ringing, but guiding his own and his other ball through hoops three times), with the result that his handicap was reduced from 1.5 to 0.5!

Secondly, our B association croquet (AC) league team played Exeter last week.

The home team of Penny Ball, Richard Croft, Paul Griew and Roy Hubbard battled bravely, but it was not quite Sidmouth's day.

One must look for positives where one can and both Richard Croft and Roy Hubbard managed to win their games by pegging out; Richard Croft by design and Roy Hubbard by accident.

In fact, Richard Croft played so well, winning both his games, that he is now in severe danger of troubling the handicap committee.

Our internal AC handicap doubles tournament was played over three miserably wet days in July.

Even hardy sailors have commented on our survival skills in this storm-lashed weather.

In a tense final (at least for them), Andrew Thomas and Robert Matthews won 14-12 against Dave Mundy and Rob Baylis with Andrew and Robert using all their skills to keep their opponents confined to the outer reaches of the lawn.

Two internal golf croquet tournaments were held last week, the Cunningham Handicap singles and the Hatherley Level singles

Unusually the weather was good for the former.

The first of the semi-finals was between Richard Croft and Rob Baylis with the second involving Rob Matthews and Michael Cunliffe.

It all resulted in Michael Cunliffe and Rob Baylis contesting the final which, at six hoops all, led to a final, deciding, 'golden hoop', which went the way of Michael, who served up a stunning shot that combined both his natural flair and a certain amount of luck.

The latter tournament was played in less clement weather.

The last saw Philip Harris taking on Michael Cunliffe while Rob Baylis took on Anne Reece.

Two well-fought contests resulted in Philip and Rob meeting in the final, one that Philip won 7-5.

The wet weather intervened again when our South West Federation (SWF) golf croquet team travelled to Barnstaple.

The elements did not deter us as we won four of the first five games of doubles.

We continued to win some games (but not in sufficient numbers), so the Barnstaple team managed to win overall to the tune of a 12-8 score line.

And finally, 34 players participated in our skills tournament which was played on a rare rain-free day!

It served up an afternoon of light-hearted fun with players attempting a range of different croquet shots and scoring points accordingly, for both forms of the game.

For the first time this year we ran a golf croquet skills competition as more club members now play golf croquet.

The AC competition was won by Andrew Thomas (highest score without handicap) and new member Rob Baylis won the handicap competition.

The golf croquet competition winners were Philip Harris (highest score without handicap) and Roger Hendy won the handicap competition.

So, there we are then, I have mentioned a number of people, and I hope that they are pleased.

I have been told though, that one person who I haven't mentioned is Julie Sorrell, our social secretary and biscuit provider.

Well, let's put that right and mention her right now!

CROQUET - Budleigh beaten to end season on a high

It seems amazing, but the season is drawing to a close; another two to three months of play, but the tournaments are winding down, and only the Sidmouth Club grand finale day, on September 29, largely remains, writes Richard Thurlow.

If I am to continue the croquet news, I will have to start padding it out with other stuff such as: 'Can Donald Trump be encouraged to take up croquet', or perhaps 'How will Brexit affect the lawns in Sidmouth?'. No doubt you will be anxious to read such items of interest.

Anyway, on to our last few results.

On the first day of August the SE Golf Croquet team were hosts to five members of a team from Dowlish Wake.

Sidmouth intended to field a team of six, but unfortunately, one of our team fell off his electric bicycle on his way to the ground and was unable to play (he certainly reached the ground sooner than he had intended...).

By lunchtime four doubles and six singles games had been played and Sidmouth led five-and-a-half to four-and-a-half.

That left 10 singles games to be played in three sessions.

After eight of these games, with only the final two remaining, the visitors had gone into a nine-and-a-half to eight-and-a-half lead.

To win, Sidmouth had to pin their hopes on John Maynard

and Anne Reece to succeed.

Anne, playing well against the more experienced Dowlish Wake captain, lost 7-3. John, however, won his game 7-4.

Paul Bradley, our new star, excelled, winning three and drawing one!

Graeme Pryor won three of his four games.

The last AC Federation game was played in almost continuous drizzle last Saturday at Budleigh (it is almost a forgotten experience to play in the dry these days).

While the cricket team waited for the weather to improve the croquet team carried on regardless wondering when the drizzle would stop.

During the morning, Mike Taylor and Ian Friedlander took the allocated three hours to beat the Budleigh partnership of Alan Rush and Tim Liles 26-17.

Sam Watts (Budleigh) played swiftly and confidently to beat David Clarke (Sidmouth) 26-14 in quick time.

Andrew Thomas (Sidmouth) played carefully to beat Wendy Dominguez (Budleigh) 26-11.

The cricket match was duly abandoned, but the croquet players continued with four singles games in the afternoon during which time Sidmouth won three of the afternoon games with Mike, David and Andrew winning their games.

That all led to an overall match score of 5-2 in favour of Sidmouth and the victory left the team finishing third in the league.



Action from Sidmouth Croquet Club. Ref shsp 27 17T1 6463

Picture: TERRY IFE

Although the season is winding down, and we are preparing to encase our precious mallets in their winter covers, one or two matches are still being played, writes Richard Thurlow.

The contrast in results is certainly interesting and lessons should be learnt, although I'm not sure what they are!

We begin with the golf croquet news and the club's level play team have won all their matches this season, and had their penultimate match against old foes Budleigh Salterton last Sunday.

The six Sidmouth players got off to a splendid start, and, by lunchtime, held a 10-4 lead.

However, the first three matches of the six to be played post lunch went the way of Budleigh.

The losing run for Sidmouth was stopped by Phil Harris and Steve Pearson, who won the next two games to seal Sidmouth an overall 12-8 success.

Sidmouth are now currently top of their league with one

remaining game to complete.

That last match is away at Taunton Dean, who have in their ranks one of the top ranking players who sports a minus two handicap!

A win or a draw would ensure remaining top of their league and win a place in the play-off stage, leading, hopefully, to the final. Watch this space!

As for association croquet, the club's intermediate team were in Monday action in Cornwall at St Austell.

This was the match that had been abandoned earlier in the campaign owing to heavy rain that washed out the contest.

The team travelled south west for two hours, mainly in the rain and then the following six hours saw all six games lost - played, for the most part, in the rain, before another two hour journey home - and yes, you guessed correctly, that too, took place in the rain!

I forbear to mention our players' names, including mine. There must be more to life than croquet.

Your correspondent has been mildly admonished for saying that the season is drawing to a close and that we are now winding down; I am told that there are still a few exciting matches still to come, writes Richard Thurlow.

In terms of association croquet, Sidmouth's advanced play team finally opened its account with a narrow win against visitors Cheltenham B in the Parkstone Trophy. (Advanced play is an even more complicated version of the game for those who might have a passing interest.)

After defeats for Sidmouth in the first two matches of the season, our team of Jane Babbage, Peter Nelson, Colin Walls and Richard Wood wanted to salvage some respectability, and they certainly looked as if they meant to, as they arrived resplendent in their new club shirts.

Most of the visitors had decided to make a weekend of it, and instead of arriving, as usual, bleary-eyed after a 7am start, they appeared bright, early and ready for action after a full English at their bed-and-breakfast. So much for home advantage!

On paper the teams were closely matched, but the day started well for Sidmouth, with the Cheltenham players hardly getting onto the lawns in the first hour or so.

Richard kept up this early momentum for a quick win, but

in the doubles Jane and Peter were unable to capitalise on their good start, the Cheltenham pair gradually clawing their way back to take a narrow win on time.

Last to finish before lunch was Colin, who in a difficult game just nosed in front to win, plus one on time. Little did we know how important this was to be.

After lunch, battle resumed in the afternoon singles. The first two games to finish went one to each team, leaving Colin in a game where he was always just behind, and Peter in a nail-biting battle where both players ended up within touching distance of victory.

To the relief of the watching Sidmouthians, Peter hit a long shot at the crucial moment and completed a narrow plus four win, to secure a 4-3 match victory for Sidmouth.

An enjoyable day was had by all, and thanks are due to the club's amazing body of behind-the-scenes volunteers who ensured that everything went smoothly on the day, and to the steady trickle of spectators who turned up to support the team at different times.

Unfortunately the same AC team was unable to keep up its winning ways, losing 3-4 at Nailsea a few days later, despite wearing the new club attire, and finishing the league season with one match win from four. Something to build on next year!

The final fixture in the SW Federation Golf Croquet Level Play League saw Sidmouth venture to Somerset to meet Taunton Deane, writes Richard Thurlow.

Sidmouth had a good chance of retaining the top spot in their division in this league, provided the result was a win or a draw, but this was not to be.

Taunton Deane, with a team of

six low handicap players, (including one with a minus one handicap), proved too strong for the Sidmouth players who were trounced 14.5-5.5.

This was the only defeat that the Sidmouth Level Play team sustained this season. On the whole a very good performance, and again something too build on next year.

Finally, on a lighter note, your correspondent was seen this

week, plaintively wandering around the lawns looking for his back pack, on his way home after having suffered a mentally bruising defeat in a match against another member. It was only after 15 minutes of such searching that it was laughingly pointed out to him that it was actually on his back.

Such is life; next year we do need some new members with more mental robustness!

CROQUET - Open tournament triumph for Jon Ball

The season draws to an end with only the club finals to be held - they are being played this weekend, writes Richard Thurlow.

September did see the staging of the Open Tournament, an event that was open to players with handicaps ranging from six to 12.

The tournament attracted players from as far away as Norfolk, a county so flat that one might have thought that croquet would take the place of cricket in every village!

Play was advanced level association and the tournament was 'managed' on the well-known Egyptian format - readers will, by now (the end of the season), know exactly what this means, so I won't explain!

The only two local players at the tournament, Jon Ball and Ian Friedlander, both started well, one by default and one by his play.

The former, Jon Ball, was beaten in his opening match by an opponent who subsequently fell sick and retired from the tournament, making this result void.

Thereafter Jon never looked

back and won all his remaining five games.

His crouching style, precision and bronzed legs (displayed despite the weather) drew gasps of admiration from spectators - well, gasps anyway.

The latter, Ian Friedlander, won all his matches on the first day, but fell away thereafter. In a reversal of the norm, his game did not pick up after the clubhouse bar opened at lunchtime.

Jon Ball emerged as the clear winner with Richard Jelly (Bath) in second place and Linda Shaw (Nailsea) in third. Jon therefore retained the Connaught Cup.

The tournament was graced by the presence, as a player, of the chairman of the Croquet Association who played Jon in the tournament.

This had repercussions as this august gentleman was later seen in earnest discussion with the local handicap committee, the result being a major downward adjustment to Jon's handicap 'by inspection'.

The lesson here is not to humiliate national officials if drawn against them in competition.

CROQUET - Sidmouth croquet players enjoy the delights of Dublin

Following visits in the past two years to Corfu and South Africa, some of our Association Croquet players recently went abroad again to demonstrate our skills, writes Richard Thurlow.

The destination this time was Dublin, at the Carrickmines Croquet and Lawn Tennis Club, an upmarket facility so far removed from our own sweet rustic club that we seemed to be in croquet heaven.

I hasten to add that selection depended not on skills but on the ability to afford to go.

Sidmouth eventually rustled up a team led by Peter Nelson, with Jane Babbage, Julie Sorrell, Andrew Thomas, Barrie Huxley, and your correspondent. Barrie was a temporary Sidmouthian, but thank goodness he was co-opted, as he was the only person to win all his matches.

We travelled two days before the tournament to acclimatise

and carry out on-the-spot training, which peaked in the hours before the match, strengthening our arms through lifting copious draughts of Guinness and wine.

On the first day of the tournament we were collected from the hotel in style by two luxurious limousines. One particular vehicle had every extra possible; the ladies have not yet recovered from overusing the heated massage facility for the front passenger seat. The weather for the tournament was cold and overcast, with the wind hurtling down from the hills. Our team, though, was not dismayed, some even having had the forethought to bring and even wear thermal underwear.

The first three matches were doubles; the remaining eighteen, played over the remainder of the two days, were singles, a point being scored for a win for every match. We were 2-1 down after the

three doubles in the morning and won three of the six singles in the afternoon, so that the result was that Carrickmines was one point ahead at the end of the first day at five games to four.

We were magnificently entertained that evening by the Carrickmines members, a cunning plan of theirs which further proved our undoing.

The second day we played the remaining twelve singles matches, six in the morning and six in the afternoon. These were hard fought; eventually Sidmouth and Carrickmines won six matches each. So the final score was Carrickmines eleven and Sidmouth ten.

We presented Carrickmines with the newly handcrafted 'Cock and Ball' trophy, which it is hoped will be competed for very year.

Did we improve our croquet? Probably not, but we had a most enjoyable time made possible by our wonderful Irish hosts.

2018



Sidmouth CC and Devon county player Josh Bess presents the winners' shield to Peter Nelson, the captain of Croquet Misfits, after the successful quiz held at the Fortfield. Read a report inside on page 46. Picture: CONTRIBUTED

CROQUET - Thurlow wins 'One Ball' competition

The annual charity 'One Ball' competition, the first internal competition of the season, enjoyed some rare dry April weather.

Every croquet club in England runs its own 'One Ball' competition, with the winner going to the national final.

This competition is an annual England-wide competition in aid of a particular charity and this year the organisers chose the Down's Syndrome Association.

Entry fees for all the tournaments and other fundraising goes to the charity; this year Sidmouth CC raised £130.

'One Ball' croquet is, as its title says, a version of the game in which each player is matched against another, each having one ball to hit through 13 consecutive hoops. Whilst it is possible to go around without making use of the opponent's

ball, managing to hit it enables an extra turn which can aid progress through the hoops.

Players with differing skills are given handicaps consisting of extra turns to try to even them up.

Twenty-six players entered the competition this year, each starting off with 100 nominal points, and played five other opponents.

A win gained 10 points; a loss meant 10 points lost. Players played five games, so that the maximum points were 150.

Both Penny Ball and Richard Thurlow scored 140 points in their first four games, and so were matched together in the final, which Richard just managed to win, giving him 150 points.

The runners-up were Andrew Thomas, Penny Ball, Dave Mundy and Steve Pearson each on 130 points.

The final is to be held in Surbiton later in the year.



Sidmouth Croquet Club players at the briefing before the start of play in the 'One Ball' competition. Picture: CONTRIBUTED

Sidmouth Croquet Club (SCC) play Budleigh Croquet Club biannually, for the sought-after Seagull Trophy, a wooden replica bird that for some reason the clubs battle over for the honour of keeping it on their shelves, writes Richard Thurlow.

Sidmouth won it in spring 2017, drew with Budleigh to retain it in the autumn, and were hoping to do so again in the match played last week.

The morning's games were played in harsh winds at Budleigh; in fact so cold that a male member of the Sidmouth team, unprepared and in an effort

to keep warm, had to wear a ladies' jacket far too small for him which rather hampered his game. He did look good in it though.

Six games were played, including one doubles, and at the end of the morning session SCC were one game down, at 3-4.

The afternoon, which had been promised to be even colder, was actually quite benign, and we hoped our results would improve accordingly.

They did, with SCC winning seven of the eight games played. The overall result was thus 10-5 to Sidmouth, which will enable us to keep the bird for another six months.

● Sidmouth Croquet Club were hosts to a team from Exeter in the first SW Federation Golf Croquet Level Play League fixture of this season.

The Sidmouth team got off to an encouraging start by winning three of the four doubles games.

With 16 singles games to play, however, events changed dramatically in favour of Exeter.

Despite a strong performance from Steve Pearson, who won all his three singles games, Sidmouth managed to win only four of the singles while Exeter won 12 and this all left the final score being 13-7 in favour of Exeter.

CROQUET - Jon and Richard to meet another day!

Sidmouth Croquet Club held its annual 'Short Croquet' internal competition and the event was graced with splendid sunny weather, writes Richard Thurlow.

Short Croquet is not, as the words imply, a game for those physically challenged, but is a shortened form of Association Croquet, played by passing through 12 hoops instead of 24 and with a reduced playing time of 80 minutes instead of 180.

Twenty-two players, in their competition whites, glinted in the sunshine, those men brave enough to wear shorts exhibiting a full range of knobby knees.

Philip Harris, the organiser, gave a stirring introduction to the playing requirements and at 10am prompt, the players ambled onto the lawns to play the first of their four matches in the day.

The scores were recorded in a manner known to croquet aficionados as 'Egyptian' (part of the mystique of croquet is its use of arcane words, specifically

designed to confuse the uninitiated).

In the real world this means that everyone started from a base of 100 points, with 10 points gained for a win, and 10 points lost for a defeat.

Two rounds were played before lunch, during which those players with 120 points were able to gloat at those with only 80 points, but it was evident that the latter did have a better class of homemade sandwiches so perhaps that might be the reason.

After lunch, the excitement was almost uncontainable as the players started their third and fourth games.

After three games, Jon Ball (last year's runner-up), Julie Horley and Richard Thurlow were the leaders with 130 points.

In the fourth round, Julie lost to Jon, whilst Richard won his game, so at the end of the afternoon, Jon and Richard were the joint leaders with 140 points each.

Time ran out so they will have to play the decider in due course.

CROQUET - Hide scores almost half the team points

Sidmouth SE Golf Croquet Team travelled to Kingston Maurward to play in the South West Federation Golf Croquet League, writes Richard Thurlow.

The club here must have one of the prettiest settings of all croquet clubs as it is in the grounds of Kingston Maurward College and surrounded by large mature trees of many varieties.

Kingston Maurward has two lawns - one almost full size and one half size, which makes for an interesting experience for visitors.

The first three games, a double and two singles, were won by Sidmouth, but by the time 12 games had been played the score was in favour of the home team at

7.5 to 4.5.

The Sidmouth team managed to win only three of the eight remaining games, thus Kingston Maurward won with a final score of 12.5 to 7.5

Sidmouth's Michael Hide lost an early doubles match, but then went on to win a doubles and three singles, thus scoring over half Sidmouth's total.

Many of the games were won by the players of the home side because of their skills in jump shots (this is when a ball is in or near the hoop and the opposition player jumps the ball over it, through the hoop.)

Without this skill, the result may well have been different, so Sidmouth took home an important lesson.

The 'dangerously addictive' summer game that's like 'snooker on grass'

There's something quintessentially English about croquet on the lawn. And there can be few places better to play it than in Sidmouth near the seafront on a sunny day.

"It's like snooker on grass," said Richard Thurlow, only half joking.

Sidmouth Croquet Club chairman Peter Nelson described the game as 'fun and dangerously addictive'.

With the exception of the war years, croquet has been played at Sidmouth since 1902 and the Fortfield lawns have become a popular venue for open and national tournaments.

The home club flourishes with more than 120 players.

"Most games are either the traditional association croquet

RICHARD WRIGHT

Richard.Wright@archant.co.uk

where all balls must run each hoop in order, or 'golf croquet', which has a simplified format and is also very popular," said Peter.

Current club champion is former England international Dave Mundy but the club caters for all skill levels and new members are predominantly beginners who receive suitable coaching.

All equipment is provided and the only requirement is that players have flat-soled shoes.

Sidmouth's most celebrated player was Humphrey Hicks who dominated the sport in the 1930s and 40s, winning 46 national titles.



Julie Sorrell, Andrew Thomas and Jon Ball of Sidmouth Croquet Club.

Picture: RICHARD WRIGHT

These days the club fields seven teams in various South West leagues as well as running a number of internal and open competitions.

Andrew Thomas was the Greek Open winner in 2016, although he admits the field was limited.

Members of Sidmouth Croquet Club enjoyed their annual short

croquet competition at the Fortfield lawns last week. Short croquet is one of a number of variations of the game and played on a half-size lawn.

Branching out further afield, a team was sent to play Dublin last year, and later this season, a team is going to Vienna.

In recent years, individual

members, who value winter sun, have also travelled to Australia, Greece, New Zealand and South Africa to play.

New members are always welcome. To find out more, visit www.sidmouthcroquet.org.uk or call secretary Penny Ball on 01395 519161.



Sidmouth Croquet Club players at the June Tournament meeting.

Picture: CONTRIBUTED

Sidmouth Croquet Club June Tournament success for the impressive Andrew Thomas

Sidmouth Croquet Club hosted the Croquet Association's annual June tournament, writes Richard Thurlow.

The competition was played across five days with two of them dedicated to handicap play and three to level play.

Sidmouth's a popular place and our club is very friendly, so as usual the tournament was fully subscribed with a waiting list!

At the end of the first day of the handicap event, Colin Hemming (Colchester CC) was in the lead followed by his wife, Georgeen Hemming, Andrew Thomas and Julie Horsley (both from Sidmouth CC).

The next day, Andrew beat Julie and Colin beat Georgeen, effectively making the afternoon

CROQUET

game a final between Colin and Andrew which Andrew narrowly won by two hoops. In the meantime, the chair of the association, Brian Shorney, had crept up with two wins to take joint second place with Colin.

The level play event started on the Friday with three blocks of players each playing six games.

In Block A on the first day, Roger Mills (Sidmouth/Budleigh Salterton CC's) had two significant wins, over prominent players Dave Kibble, (Bristol CC), and Dave Mundy, (Sidmouth CC), but was then beaten, plus 26, by Keith Ross.

The winner of Block A for the Challenge Cup was Richard Wood

(Sidmouth CC) with five wins from six matches and the runner-up, with four wins from six, was Dave Kibble (Bristol CC).

Nigel Amos (Budleigh Salterton CC) won Block B for the David Rawkins Cup with five wins from six and there were no fewer than three Sidmouth payers who tied for second place - Philip Harris, Andrew Thomas and Colin Walls, all recording four wins from six matches. Georgeen Hemming won Block C for the Fortfield Cup with her record being a splendid six wins from six matches and the runner-up was Sidmouth's Ian Friedlander, who won five out of six.

Andrew Thomas was able to celebrate his win and his birthday with fellow players at the Bedford Hotel on the Saturday night.

CROQUET - 'Let us play' at Sidmouth Croquet Club

Sidmouth Croquet Club (SC) recently hosted the Exeter Retired Clergy Association for an informal gathering, writes Richard Thurlow.

A dozen members of the association from around East Devon, four already being members of SCC, got together for a social game in fine sunny weather on a sun-kissed Monday afternoon.

Many of the others hadn't played croquet for many years, but they soon found their form. The ability to play the game is not a requirement of being clergy, and many found that trying to run hoops was more difficult than threading a camel through the eye of a needle.

A number of 'Golf' croquet games were played with the players improving all the time in their skills, concentration and competitiveness. Unfortunately, though, there was not as much charity being exhibited as might have been expected from men and women of the cloth, although no-one was actually injured during the afternoon. The highlight of the afternoon was a splendid last supper, provided by Gill Hodge in the Fortfield Pavilion.

The organiser, Canon David Scrace, a member of the Croquet Club, said that he hoped to make it a regular annual fixture and maybe attract some of the retired clergy to join the club.

Canton Cup joy for Richard before 'golden hoop' Owen Cup success for Graeme

Three enthralling items for you this week, writes Richard Thurlow.

On June 14, the Budleigh Salterton Golf Croquet team played the Sidmouth SE team.

The visitors brought a team of four to play against Sidmouth's seven, which meant that the Budleigh players each had to play six games; an arduous task in the warm and sunny weather.

Mention must be made of two Sidmouth players: Paul Bradley, who won three of his four games, and Margaret Piper, who won the three games she played.

After some very hard-fought games, Budleigh, always slightly ahead of Sidmouth, managed to win the match by one game, with the final score being Sidmouth SE

CROQUET

nine-and-a-half, Budleigh Salterton ten-and-a-half.

Our Association Croquet members played in two internal tournaments, one on Saturday (June 16) for the Canton Cup and the other on Sunday (June 17) for the Owen Cup.

On Saturday, the weather was bleak and the number of entrants low, so low in fact that the Canton Cup was almost awarded to the first person who arrived, but the four who played had an enjoyable time we understand.

Each player won two of their three games, the winner being Richard Croft who, despite losing to Sue Dent in his game, ran more

hoops than Sue in total and therefore emerged victorious.

The Owen Cup was played in similar conditions; rain, wind and no sun, and the eight players entered felt as if they had been transported back to April conditions.

Philip Harris, the tournament organiser, had arranged a parallel mini tournament to avoid complications of deciding the winner, should an equal number of matches be won.

Nobody understood this, but gamely took part!

The final was between Richard Thurlow and Graeme Pryor, the former losing narrowly to Graeme, who succeeded in 'hitting in' and making the final 'golden' hoop to take the individual honours.



(Left) the Devon Clergy on their visit to Sidmouth Croquet Club.

Philip Harris impresses during busy time for the Sidmouth croquet players

Last week Sidmouth CC played three golf croquet matches - rather a lot in one week, writes Richard Thurlow.

First up, the Sidmouth SE side welcomed a team from East Dorset.

Sidmouth did not get off to a good start and, after 10 games had been played, just three had been won - one double and two singles with another singles drawn.

After lunch, despite the team's best efforts, things did not improve, Sidmouth winning only three more games!

Anne Reece won two singles games and Rob Matthews won a single and a doubles, but three players did not manage a single win as Sidmouth lost 13.5-6.5.

The next match took place at Swanage on a very sunny, hot day. Despite Swanage's sub-standard lawns, in reality, marked out areas of the cricket outfield, the team played better.

After eight games, Sidmouth SE

Croquet

was in the lead with four-and-a-half to the three-and-a-half of Swanage.

Twelve games were played after lunch, but the Sidmouth players could not get to grips with the very uneven surfaces and managed to win only five more games.

The handicaps were better balanced, but the home side had the advantage of knowing the lawns.

The players of the day were Margaret Piper and Roy Hubbard who each won three games. Anne Reece did well again and managed two wins and a draw. Swanage took the match honours, 10.5-9.5 with the home captain commenting that he was surprised that Sidmouth had won nine and -a-half games on their difficult lawns!

The final match of the week was an away match against East

Dorset in the Level Play League.

With Sidmouth's handicap range of 2-5 against East Dorset's 1-4, the Sidmouth team was up against it. There could be no complaints about the quality of the lawns which were excellent.

Before lunch, Sidmouth managed to win only one singles game and draw a doubles out of the eight games played.

In the afternoon, as the sun continued to beat down on the players, Sidmouth managed to win three more games, out of the 12 played. Most of this result was down to the superior skill of the home side, some of whom play in many of the Croquet Association Open Tournaments.

The Sidmouth player who had the greatest success on the lawns was Philip Harris (handicap of two), who won two games and drew another - resulting in over half of Sidmouth's tally of games!

The final score was a resounding win for the home side, East Dorset 15.5, Sidmouth 4.5.

Croquet - Sidmouth edge out visitors from Dublin

Sidmouth Croquet's efforts to broaden their playing base continues, writes Richard Thurlow.

Early last month, we played an Austrian team in Vienna and then, last week, six Irish players from the Carrickmines club in Dublin visited us. This was a return match from last year when we visited them.

In an effort to impress our visitors (whose own club is very beautified), lawns were swished till they shone, white lines were burnished and we wiped the seagulls' mess from the seats, so that at 9 o'clock, when the Irish arrived, we were exhausted.

We played three doubles games in the morning of the first day, winning all of them.

In the afternoon we managed to win five of the six singles games, thus after the first day's play we were eight games to one up.

In the evening, several of the players from both sides played what turned out to be our first International Darts match, which we won after about two hours of indecisive throwing. Perhaps the beer had an effect.

The second day was kinder to Carrickmines as, of the twelve singles games played, both sides won six.

So, the final result was fourteen games to Sidmouth and seven to Carrickmines. The presentation of the trophy to the winning side would have been more successful and relevant if the Irish, who won the match last year, had remembered to bring the trophy.

The visitors apparently enjoyed themselves, although we all had to admit the delights of Sidmouth after 7pm in the evening did not remotely approach those of Dublin.

A return match is scheduled for next year, Brexit permitting.



The Sidmouth and Carrickmines match teams.

Picture CONTRIBUTED

2019

Croquet - Haste Cup joy for Jonathan Powe



Jonathan Powe is presented with the Haste Cup by Amanda Haste, a long-standing member of Sidmouth Croquet Club.
Picture SIDMOUTH CROQUET CLUB

Jonathan Powe (East Dorset) won the Haste Cup at The Sidmouth Golf Croquet Championship held over the final weekend of April, writes Chris Donovan.

This is a qualifying event for The English National Golf Croquet Singles Championship with 16 players coming from all over the south of England including Brighton and Watford and as far north as Manchester.

Eleven of the 16 players are ranked in the top 100 players in England.

On the Saturday, the weather was very windy, making accurate shots difficult with strong gusts moving balls.

The players were split into two groups of eight where they played each other.

At the end of the day the quarter-finalists were Jonathan

Powe (East Dorset), Richard Brooks (Sussex County), Stuart M Smith (Northampton), Tim Jolliff (Taunton), Ryan Cabbie (Nailsea), Graham Good (Bowden), Tim King (Ashby) and Ivor Brand (Cheltenham).

On the Sunday, the wind abated so playing conditions were easier, although the weather was still cold.

Jonathan Powe, ranked 13 in England and with a handicap of minus four, proved his ranking to win all his games and win the championship.

The event was enjoyed by 30 club members who saw balls being regularly hit from 25 yards and hoops run from four yards, something to aspire to.

The Haste Cup was presented to Jonathan by Amanda Haste, a long-standing member of the Sidmouth Croquet Club.

Croquet - South West Croquet Federation round-up

The South West Croquet Federation runs league matches at all levels for Association and Golf Croquet, writes Chris Donovan.

For Association Croquet, there are three divisions at the top-level where teams compete in level, advanced play for the Parkstone Trophy.

A 4-1 success in their final match of the season over Nailsea B confirms that Sidmouth will play next year in Division One.

Readers may recall the very

close match with Bath reported last week.

Bath fielded a minus 1.5 handicapped player but, nevertheless, the match was only decided in the last-to-finish game, which went into extra time when the 'Golden Hoop' was played for. Bath won 4-3, but Sidmouth triumphed in the return match, winning 5-2 and so, with an 8-6 aggregate win, together with that final match win means a very pleasing outcome to this campaign - though we do face a very challenging season for 2020.



The Sidmouth Croquet Club B league team of Pamela Bowra (captain), Penny Ball, John Coombes and Rob Bayliss, who opened a new league campaign with victory over Exeter. Picture CHRIS DONOVAN

Croquet - Sidmouth B making winning league start

A home win opened the season for the Sidmouth Croquet Club B league team playing Exeter, writes Chris Donovan.

The team was captained by Pamela Bowra and included Penny Ball, John Coombes and Rob Baylis.

Well done Rob for winning both of his two singles games and well done the team, no doubt leading by example for the rest of the club to hopefully follow.

Away from league action, Rob Baylis went on to beat 19 club members in the weekend Short Croquet Tournament.

Twenty members had between

them 106 bisques (extra turn - the handicap system) and at least seven games to play over the two days.

Managed by Chris Donovan, it was a tight finish with the favourite Philip Harris unexpectedly whitewashed by Ian Friedlander in his last game, who took two turns to run both of his balls through six hoops and peg-out in just 17 minutes!

This then led to a situation where a final win by Baylis would win the tournament. Fortunately, and to the manager's relief, Paul Griew fell victim to Baylis who thus ensured an undisputed victory.

Croquet - Sidmouth B net whitewash win over Lym Valley

Sidmouth B bagged themselves a superb league victory when they entertained Lym Valley, writes Chris Donovan.

The team, captained by John Coombes, also included Paul Griew, Duncan Hasell and Lionel Stock.

The format for South West Federation League matches is one game of doubles and six singles games; ie seven games of two-and-

a-half hours each, which ensures there is a winning team at the close of play.

The morning's action began with Hasell winning with the best singles score of the day, 14-6, and was level at 'time' with the score 9-all and, when the pair played on for the 'golden hoop', Stock prevailed to secure a 10-9 victory.

In the afternoon session, Lym Valley improved their average score, but failed to secure any

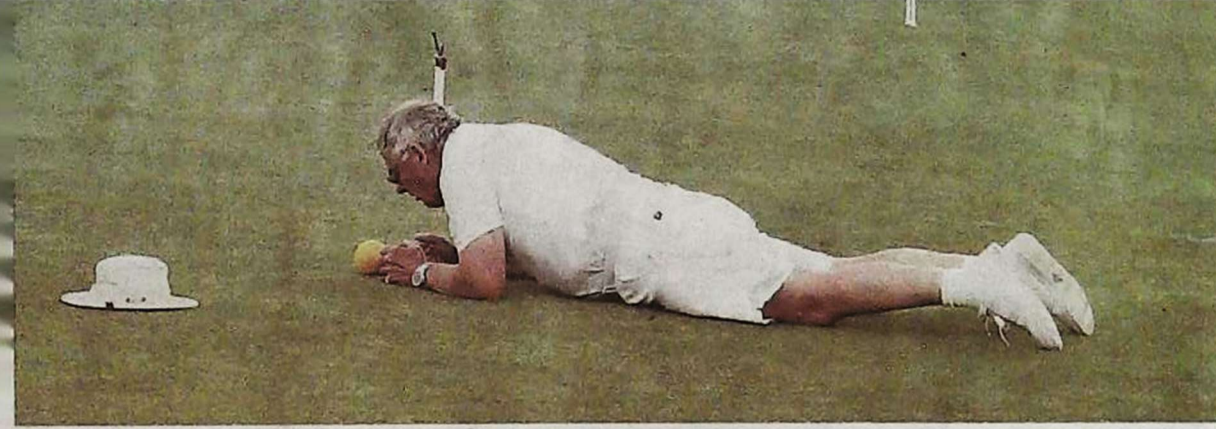
wins.

This left Sidmouth victorious in all games.

What's more, it all amounted to a veritable 'whitewash' with the final score being Sidmouth 7, Lym Valley 0.

This was another successful win for Sidmouth.

Hasell and Stock having only recently joined the club and deserve particular commendation for winning their games.



(Above) Chris Donovan lines up a shot during the championship and (below, left to right); Chris Donovan, Jon Ball and Richard Wood receive their respective trophies from David Temple. Pictures: SIDMOUTH CROQUET CLUB



Donovan, Wood and Ball ensure trio of tournament trophies stay in Sidmouth

Sidmouth Annual June Tournament started as usual with two days of Handicap Play followed by three days of Level Advanced Play, writes Chris Donovan.

The handicap event was played to an Egyptian format which means players may play as many matches as they wish in the time available, but need to play a certain minimum number to be 'in the running'.

At the end of the first day, Chris Donovan was in the lead having won all three games. On day two he extended this lead by winning his next two games and thus won the Derryhouse Challenge Cup. Colin Walls was in second place with 4/5 and Peter Nelson in third place with 3/4. All three are Sidmouth CC players.

The class event was due to start at 9.30am on the Friday, but, after heavy overnight rain and continuing rain during the morning, play did not start until after lunch.

This necessitated all games being reduced to two-and-a-half

Croquet

hours rather than three to fit the time remaining. There was a tie for first place in Block A between last year's winner Richard Wood (Sidmouth CC) and Martin Guentner (Sportsunion Wölkersdorf CC [Austria]) both with 5/6 wins, but as Wood had beaten Guentner then Wood was again the winner and received the Challenge Cup.

Block B for the David Rawkins Cup was won by Jon Ball (Sidmouth CC) with 5/6 wins. Runner-up was Philip Harris (Sidmouth CC) with 4/6 wins having beaten Nigel Amos (Budleigh Salterton CC), also with 4/6 wins.

Block C for the Fortfield Cup was won by Peter Cutting (Cornwall CC) with 4/5 wins. Three players tied for second place, Jane Babbage (Sidmouth CC), Georgeen Hemming (Colchester CC) and Richard Way (The Bears CC) all with 3/5 wins. Georgeen Hemming won the prize for the fastest game.

The event saw much play in the rain which did not deter players from throwing themselves down to line up 'peg-outs' – it really is the only way to guarantee hitting the peg with both balls in succession if some seven or more yards away.

Saturday evening saw many of the players attending a tournament dinner at the Bedford Hotel before the final day's play. Many outcomes were possible, but the players 'behaved themselves' such that the tournament manager, Julie Horsley, did not have a mind-bending problem to work out class block winners.

David Temple, the president of Sidmouth Cricket, Croquet and Tennis Club, presented the trophies and Peter Nelson, croquet chairman, thanked everyone for coming to the tournament with a special welcome to the two players over from Austria.

He also thanked everyone at the club who had helped in the organising/running of the tournament with particular mention, and a bottle of wine, to Philip Harris – every club needs such a stalwart.



The Sidmouth 'Parkstone' A Team were narrowly beaten by Bath: (left to right) Roger-Hayes, Chris Donovan, Richard Wood, John Grimshaw, Peter Nelson, Daniel Gott, Jon Ball, Paul Francis.

Picture:SIDMOUTH CROQUET CLUB

Sidmouth croquet team 'outgunned' but held to the golden hoop in final game

The Sidmouth 'Parkstone' A team met the Bath team in a close fought match-day despite a Bath player being a real 'star', writes Chris Donovan.

The Parkstone or South West Federation Level Play League is played, as all Association Croquet League days, as two single matches and a doubles in the morning with four single matches in the afternoon.

This, of course, means there is no clear winner at lunchtime; well, usually not absolutely clear, and all to play for in the afternoon.

Clubs put their lowest handicapped players in these teams and handicaps above four are seldom seen.

Association Handicaps have a maximum of 24 and then reduce by two to 12; then by one to five and finally by half steps.

Each step is a net 50 point increase in a base index starting at 800. Thus a 'scratch' player is on an index of 2000.

However, thereafter a minus half requires 100 clear points, minus one 150 points and a further 150 points to minus one and a half.

Croquet

level, but Bath brought along Daniel Gott on -1.5 – definitely challenging!

The day was very hot and the lawns were running very fast with every small bump and lump exacerbating already challenging ball control such that three-hours-and-fifteen-minute games threatened to be not long enough for a peg-out finish!

Well, it was challenging for the mere mortals, but Daniel Gott managed to Triple Peel in both games – a difficult proposition at any time, and finished in well under 90 minutes. We could only offer congratulations at this impressive play.

And so the results:

Morning: Richard Wood [S] [0] beat Roger Hayes [B] [0] by 26 - 18 hoops; Daniel Gott [B] [-1.5] beat Chris Donovan [S] [3] by 26 - 5 hoops [Triple Peel]; Peter Nelson [S] [1.5] & Jon Ball [S] [4] beat John Grimshaw [B] [2.5] & Paul Francis [B] [4] in a very close game

After lunch: Gott beat Wood 26 - 0 hoops [Triple Peel]; Roger Hayes beat Nelson 26 - 16 hoops;

hoops and, and with 45 minutes to go the teams were level.

Six players watched the Ball versus Francis game with 'great interest' with quiet discussion following every shot played by the two highest handicapped players in play.

Ball finally had a good run and caught up with Francis with only one hoop adrift.

Francis missed his next shot and Ball managed to peel one of his balls through the last hoop [known in the sport as 'rover'] and the scores were level.

Time was called and Ball was able to set himself up for his next turn to score the one critical winning hoop; known as 'the golden hoop'.

Unfortunately, Francis had not been given a copy of the script and he decided to make an excellent 'hit-in' over a long distance that Ball had assumed to be 'safe'.

Francis then 'took-off' for the peg, rather than trying to get in front of an actual hoop to run it, and pegged his ball out as one may do in level play. Francis thus scored the final point and victory went to Bath. Well done, but a tighter finish there could



(Above, left to right), Advanced Play Tournament runner-up Keith Pound; Philip Harris and Nigel Amos; and Wendy Dominguez.

Pictures: CHRIS DONOVAN

Amos and Harris share the honours of playing the fastest game

The ever-popular annual B Level Advanced Play Tournament at Sidmouth suffered a couple of late withdrawals due to illness and/or injury, writes Chris Donovan.

Consequently, thirteen fellows and one lady reported on Thursday morning for the three-day event and the sun shone!

Play went as planned on Thursday with all games played and no clear winner emerging.

However, the forecast for Friday was accompanied by a Yellow Warning for high winds and rain.

Even the most optimistic optimist would have been seriously challenged to be sanguine about the next day's play, let alone seasoned, cynical croquet players. Thus, Friday dawned after heavy rainfall overnight and the Met Office's radar showing unremitting black clouds all day.

Undaunted, the non-playing manager [Julie Horsley] sent the players forth and games were duly completed. Lunchtime saw many players walking about barefoot having loaded any available radiator with socks in the forlorn hope that trench foot could be avoided. Keith Ross's cunning plan to bring spare, dry socks was thwarted when he retrieved them from his waterproof jacket pocket to discover 'waterproof' ain't necessarily so.

As predicted, the rain continued unabated and even got worse but, once again, the manager sent our heroes forth

Croquet

and amazingly all scheduled games bar one was completed.

Oh, frabjous joy for Chris Donovan and Keith Pound scheduled for a bye / Egyptian who very quickly declined to play.

Keith Pound wrung out his socks and asked about trainer availability in Sidmouth; Chris headed straight for Mountain Warehouse's sale and bought new waterproof trousers and an 'extreme weather' jacket'. [Other wet weather stores are available!!] The third games of the day were abandoned and entrants canoed home.

As is so often the case, the following day dawned with blue skies and warm weather and all was right with the world.

All games scheduled were completed with slightly reduced timing but at no detriment to the outcome.

The final was between Robert Upton (Dyffryn / Nailsea CC's) [3.5] and Keith Pound (High Wycombe CC) [1.5] on his first visit to Sidmouth.

It was a one-sided game in the greater part. Robert, ignoring all accepted wisdom and practice, played straight for hoop one; blobbed it and stuck in the jaws. Then he failed to hit it with his second shot! (Thus, dear reader the cautions re hoop one stand).

Now Keith managed to roquet it with his second ball (and at that, a very fortunate bounce off the wire) but was unable to capitalise on it. (Well, maybe there are



Robert Upton receives the trophy after his win.

Picture: CHRIS DONOVAN

exceptions.) From there on Robert made an almost faultless turn to 4-back and Keith could not hit in, having done so throughout the rest of the tournament. With Keith still on Hoop one with one ball Robert was on 'peg & peg' but missed the peg-out with his first ball.

This let Keith progress cautiously and now Robert could not hit-in. Eventually a missed two back hoop let Robert in and he pegged out with 20 seconds left on the clock.

Robert Moss (Budleigh Salterton CC) beat Colin Walls (Sidmouth CC) for third place.

The fastest game was jointly won by Nigel Amos Budleigh Salterton CC and Philip Harris

Sidmouth CC with identical times of one-hour-and-thirty-minutes. Richard Way is still pondering the equity of the final sentence on the law on 'lift when not entitled'; Ian Friedlander attacked his own leg with his mallet and had an impressive blood stained trouser leg; Des Honey had a very character building three days and Wendy Dominguez caused dismay with her prowess, particularly hitting-in and was awarded 'the Ladies Prize' of a bottle of wine.

It was an interesting three days rounded off by Peter Nelson, Sidmouth Croquet Club chairman, presenting the trophies and thanking all involved in putting on the tournament.

Croquet

One of Sidmouth Croquet Club's newest members, Stuart M Smith, travelled up to Pendle and Craven Croquet Club, north of Bury, to compete in the Kate Jones Memorial England CA Selection Second 8 tournament, writes Chris Donovan.

Stuart was joined by two other competitors from the south coast area, Steve Leonard from East Dorset and Stephen Custance-Baker from Taunton-Dene as part of an eight player event.

As the name might suggest, competitors are within the top 16 selection of players within the UK as chosen by the Croquet Association and are invited to participate.

Over the three day tournament, all players play each other in the best of three games to win (which is then termed the match) and the top four of the eight players with the most match wins then contest for the title in a semi-final and final.

Steve Leonard and Stuart M Smith both made it through to the semi-final knockout stages, where sadly Steve Leonard was beaten by Tim King from Ashby Croquet Club in Leicestershire.

However, Stuart M Smith took an early lead in the semi-final against Raouf Allim from High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire, and took the match win 2-0 securing his place in the final.

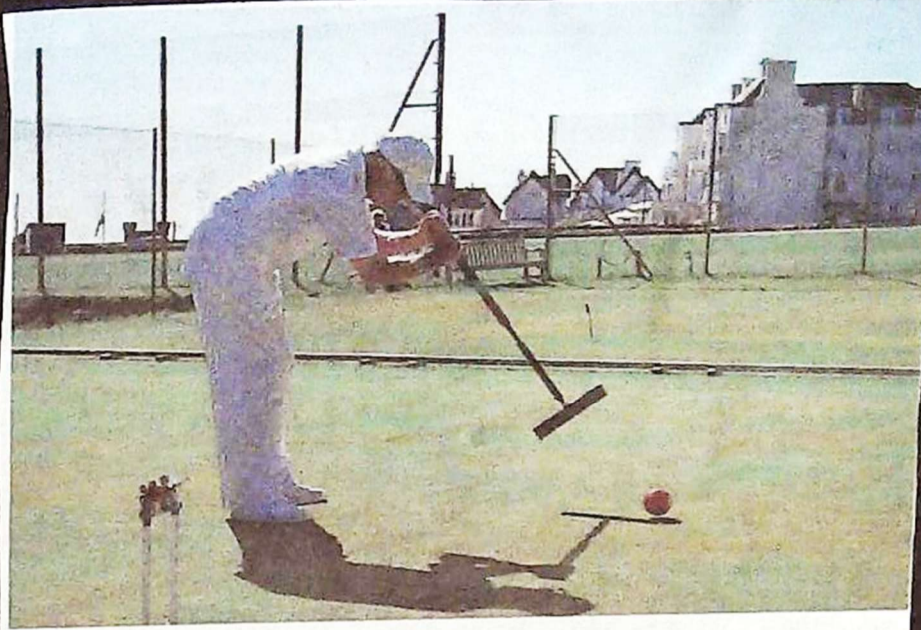
The final was against Tim King, where Stuart took a decisive win 7-1 from the first game, with the second game finishing at 7-6 giving Stuart the match win 2-0, and overall tournament victory.

Having moved to Devon with his family earlier this year from Northamptonshire, Stuart and his wife, Louise, are relatively new to croquet having taken up the game in 2015, but both enjoy playing at a high competitive level around the country.

Stuart won the Spears Trophy in 2018, awarded to the most-improved player in the UK, and has also won the high level Golf Croquet A Level Series tournament this year.

He is now ranked in the top 20 best players listed in the UK and 103rd in the World, with a win ratio of 69 per cent.

It is therefore likely that Sidmouth Croquet Club, which already has a long prestigious history as one of the best clubs in the game of croquet, will add a few more victories to its name.



Photos from Sidmouth Croquet Club v Budleigh Salterton. Picture: MARK EBURNE

Croquet - Belmont Cup success for Colin Walls

The Belmont Cup is Sidmouth Croquet Club's premier handicap competition, writes Chris Donovan.

It is played for throughout the season and block winners play-off in a final.

The 2019 final was a dramatic affair contested by Colin Walls, who has a handicap of 3.5, and Roger Mills, who has a handicap of 1.5.

This year's final saw some outstanding play by both finalists and, after 'bisques' aplenty and

even a 'hot wire' at hoop one, it was Walls who prevailed to win the coveted trophy with the final score being 26-14 in his favour.
● Read a detailed 750-word report on a compelling final now at www.sidmouthherald.co.uk

Croquet - League title joy for Sidmouth team

The Sidmouth Croquet Club competes in a number of South West Federation Leagues that cater for a range of handicaps, writes Chris Donovan.

Sidmouth's 'B' League team for the 2019 season was captained by Pam Bowra and also included; Penny Ball, Rob Baylis, John Coombes, Richard Croft, Sue Dent, Ed Dolphin, Paul Griew, Duncan Hasell and Lionel Stock.

Most teams consist of four players; although consistency has hardly been the word with other commitments highlighting the necessity for nine to be available overall!

The team won five of the six matches they played and they took the block honours overall by beating Wellington on net games wins.

Each match comprises two singles games and a doubles in the morning (ie, no definite winner by lunchtime), and four singles games in the afternoon.

Games are time limited to two-and-a-half-hours during which time 24 hoops must be run (six out and six back with both balls) and then 'peg out' - 26 points in all.

The 'B' League caters for those playing off handicaps in the range 16 to 24. In this range there will frequently be 'new to the game' players whose skills are improving all the time.

Such proved to be the case this year with some players improving their handicap and making themselves ineligible to

compete later in the season, Pam Bowra was pleased for the players but not for the subsequent difficulty in team selection.

Nonetheless, such difficulties were overcome and the remaining players went on to success.

As Sidmouth were winners of the South West League, they played the winners of the North West league (Bristol) in the grand final.

This match was played on neutral territory provided by Taunton Dene Croquet Club and took place on the final Saturday of September

Sidmouth's team for the final was: Baylis, Croft, Dolphin and Hasell accompanied by, this time non-playing captain, Pam Bowra.

The usual seven games were played with Sidmouth managing to win all three, hard fought, morning games.

After a very pleasant lunch play resumed with the final four matches.

Croft and Hasell won two more tight matches thereby securing the win.

The two final games were quite 'nail biting', but Baylis and Dolphin again won through securing a clean sweep victory for Sidmouth. Well done all.

Final South table	P	W	L	F	A	NG
Sidmouth	6	5	1	27	13	14
Wellington	6	5	1	20	8	12
Weston-super-Mare	6	5	1	23	13	10
Budleigh Salterton	6	3	3	16	18	-2
Exeter	6	2	4	15	21	-6
Lym Valley	6	1	5	14	24	-10
East Dorset	6	0	6	6	24	-18

NG = net games



The Sidmouth team that won the Grand Final: (left to right) Duncan Hasell, Rob Baylis, Richard Croft and Ed Dolphin
Picture: CHRIS DONOVAN