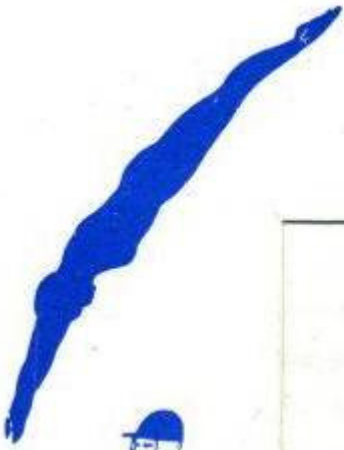




CROQUET

A DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR  
THE EASTERN REGION  
1984-87



The Eastern Region Croquet  
Development Committee  
January 1984

## CROQUET - A DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE EASTERN REGION

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- a) In early 1983, the Croquet Association launched a national initiative to encourage further development of the game of Croquet. Formerly seen as the preserve of the wealthy and with "tea and cucumber sandwich" connotations, the Croquet Association have publicised the fact that the game is increasingly a sport for all, involving young and old people across a wide social spectrum. The enormous number of garden croquet sets which are sold each year confirm that the game has a popular appeal, and the Croquet Association are keen to channel some of the enthusiasm for the garden version of the game into a more formal structure of clubs and regular participation.
- b) Part of the Croquet Association's initiative was the appointment of "Regional Croquet Advisers". These individuals were given the brief to liaise with Sports Council regional officers, Local Authority Recreation Departments and any other agencies who expressed an interest in the game, to provide advice and practical demonstrations. In the eastern region, Judy Anderson was appointed as Adviser, and formed the Eastern Region Croquet Development Committee which had the following objectives :-
- i To assist with the formation of new clubs
  - ii To encourage the formation of local leagues
  - iii To develop the game with schools
  - iv To publicise Croquet at sports events, displays and promotions
  - v To advise Local Authorities on facility provision
- c) In the first year of its existence, the Committee was instrumental in establishing croquet at Luton, Stevenage and Peterborough. It also did the ground work for the formation of several others at a later date.

Further developments were, however, hampered by lack of finance, particularly where provision of equipment, travelling expenses for coaches and widespread newspaper advertising were concerned.

- d) This development plan has therefore, been drawn up to identify the programme for the next 3 years which is necessary to reach the point where the development programme will be self supporting and will continue to attract new participants due to the momentum created in that period. In order to achieve the targets the support of other agencies - Sports Council, local authorities etc is necessary.

## 2. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE GAME

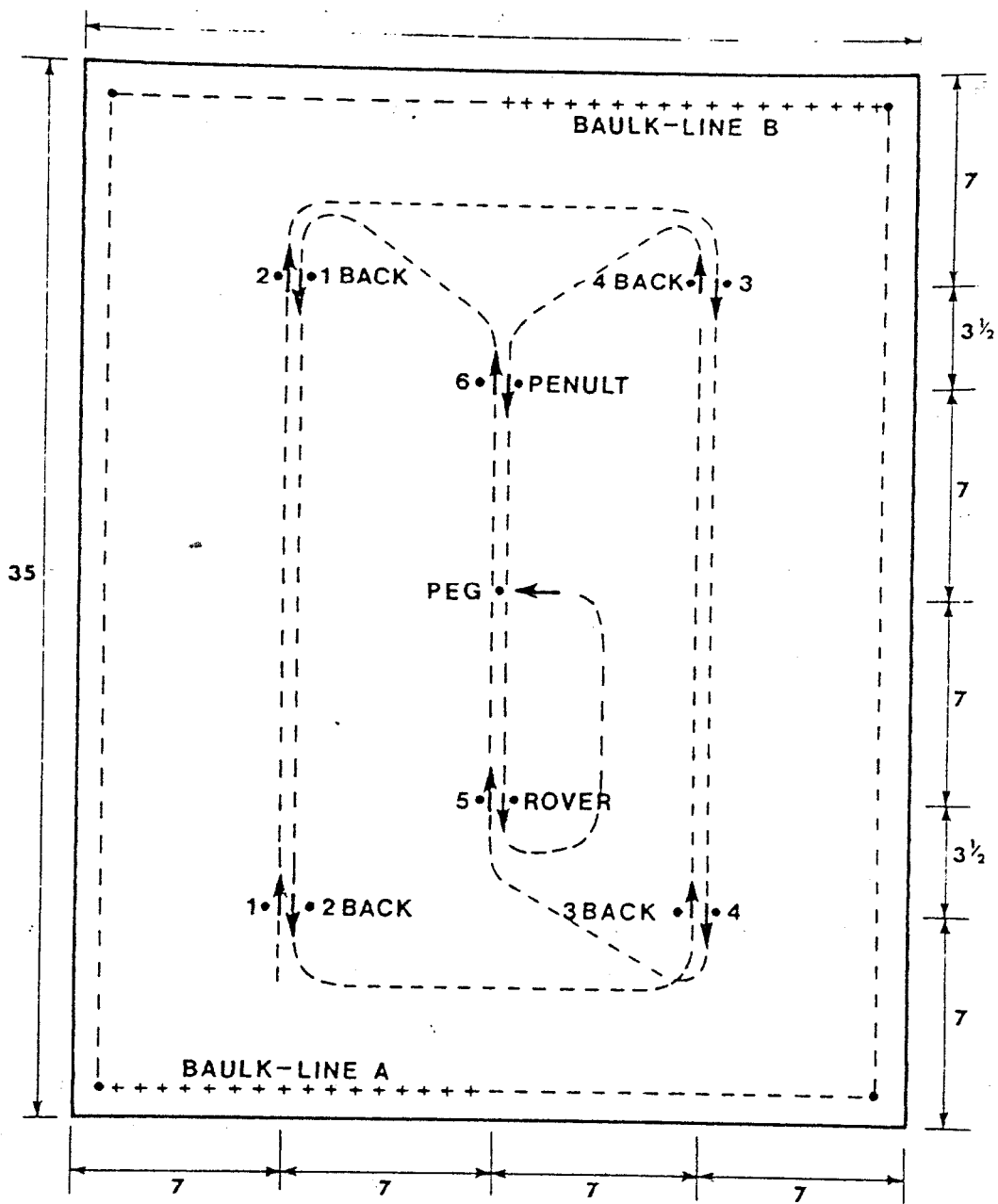
Croquet was introduced to England in 1851 from Ireland, and interest in it grew rapidly. In 1867 the first open championship was held and in 1869 the All England Club was founded at Wimbledon. Five years later, however, Lawn Tennis was invented and the upsurge of interest in this meant that by 1882 Croquet was ousted from Wimbledon.

During the period 1897 - 1914, many of today's major Croquet clubs were formed. By 1914 there were 170 registered clubs and 200 tournaments were held annually. In 1926 test matches against Australia and New Zealand were instituted, but in general, Croquet entered a period of decline. By 1946, only half the number of clubs existed compared to 1914.

From 1946 onwards however, the game made gradual progress, attracting younger players and increasing membership. The sport secured some publicity and sponsorship, and yet the nature of the game - played on a large court and taking around 3 hours to complete - has meant it is not attractive material for television, and therefore has been unable to benefit from the concomitant publicity which that can bring.

## 3. A SYNOPSIS OF THE RULES OF THE GAME

- a) The game of Association Croquet is in essence a tactical struggle with each player trying to manoeuvre both his own and his opponents balls to make careful points for his side whilst restricting the opponents chances of doing the same by careful positioning of the balls at the end of his turn.
- b) Association Croquet is played with 4 balls, blue and black versus red and yellow, on a court containing 6 hoops and a centre peg (see plan below). The game can be played as singles or doubles, each player in doubles playing with a particular ball throughout the game.
- c) Each ball must run a set course (see plan), going through each hoop twice in a specific order and direction and then hitting the peg. The side which first completes this course with both its balls, wins the game. Thus the winning side has 26 points to score (12 hoop points and the peg point with each ball).
- d) A ball scores a hoop point when it passes through a hoop in its correct order ("runs a hoop") in one or more strokes. The point is scored when the ball is struck directly by the player or by another ball.
- e) Clips coloured to match the balls are placed on the hoops or peg to indicate the next point for each ball. The clips are placed on the crown of the hoop for the first 6 hoops and on the side of the hoop for the last 6.



All distances are in yards.

Only the outer continuous line (the Boundary line) is marked on the court.

The Yard-line is one yard from the Boundary line and parallel to it. It is indicated on the plan as a dotted line on which the two starting, or Baulk, lines are shown.

The order of making the hoops is indicated by arrows starting from Hoop No. 1.

The starting hoop has a blue crown and the final, or Rover, hoop has a red crown.

- f) The sides take alternate turns. In the first 4 turns, the 4 balls are played from one of the starting lines ("baulk lines") at each end of the court. There is no strict order of playing the balls. Once the 4 balls are on the court a side chooses which of its 2 balls it shall play in turn.
- g) A turn consists initially of one stroke only, but extra strokes can be earned in two ways :
  - i If the player's ball runs a hoop, he is entitled to make another stroke.
  - ii If the player's ball hits another ball ("makes a roquet"), he places his own ball in contact with the other ball and then strikes his ball so that the other ball moves or shakes ("takes croquet"). After this the player is entitled to one further stroke.
- h) The player may roquet and thus take croquet from each of the other 3 balls in succession in any turn : each time his ball runs a hoop he may repeat this process. Thus by a combination of taking croquet and running hoops a series of points can be scored in turn ("making a break").
- i) A turn ends when the player has made all the strokes to which he is entitled, or if he sends a ball off court when taking croquet, or if he makes a fault as defined in the laws. A turn does not necessarily end if a ball is sent off court in any stroke other than taking croquet.
- j) At the end of each stroke any ball which has been sent off court is placed a yard inside the boundary ("on the yard line") nearest to where it went off, and any ball lying between the boundary and the yard line, except the player's own ball, is also replaced on the yard line. When a ball has scored its last hoop point ("becomes a rover") it can score the peg point either by the player hitting it onto the peg or by being hit onto the peg by another rover ball. The ball is thus "pegged out" and removed from the court.
- k) In handicapped games the weaker side receives a number of extra turns ("bisque") which may be taken singly or in succession at the end of any turn.
- l) Golf croquet is a good introductory form of the game which teaches beginners to swing the mallet and hit a ball. It also takes much less time to complete a game.

#### 4. FACILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR ASSOCIATION CROQUET

##### a) Court Size :

A standard court is 35 yards x 28 yards and is marked out with a white line. A distance of one yard is required beyond the boundary line to provide room for swinging a mallet to hit balls which have come to rest near the boundary line.

It is often sensible to provide smaller courts for beginners, or where it is desirable to reduce the time taken for each game. This may be achieved by dividing a full sized court into 2 courts, each of 28 yards x 16 yards.

b) Court Surface :

A true, firm grass playing surface is required, free from hollows and bumps. Because Association Croquet does not involve rapid movement, players wear flat soled shoes and lawns rarely wear badly even under heavy usage.

c) Equipment :

Each lawn will require 6 hoops, a centre peg, corner flags, scoring clips, 4 balls and 4 mallets.

A ball stop is normally required around each court, the simplest form being 10ft lengths of 2 inch x 2 inch timber with 9 inch cross pieces of the same material to keep the timber off the ground. When fixed in position, this will provide a 4 inch high ball stop which is inexpensive, simple to make and easily moved for mowing.

d) Ancillary facilities :

A small hut or pavilion will be necessary, both as a meeting point and as a store for equipment. It will be needed to accommodate officials for matches and tournaments.

Croquet courts should ideally be enclosed by a low hedge or a fence to protect them from casual walkers.

e) Conversion and maintenance of croquet courts :

Tennis courts and bowling greens which have fallen into disuse can be converted into croquet courts of a reasonable standard by normal maintenance treatment over several seasons. Other flat grass areas make good conversions, but generally require reseeding to ensure a good playing surface. Routine maintenance tends to be a good deal less than for bowls facilities.

5. CROQUET IN THE EASTERN REGION - THE CURRENT SITUATION

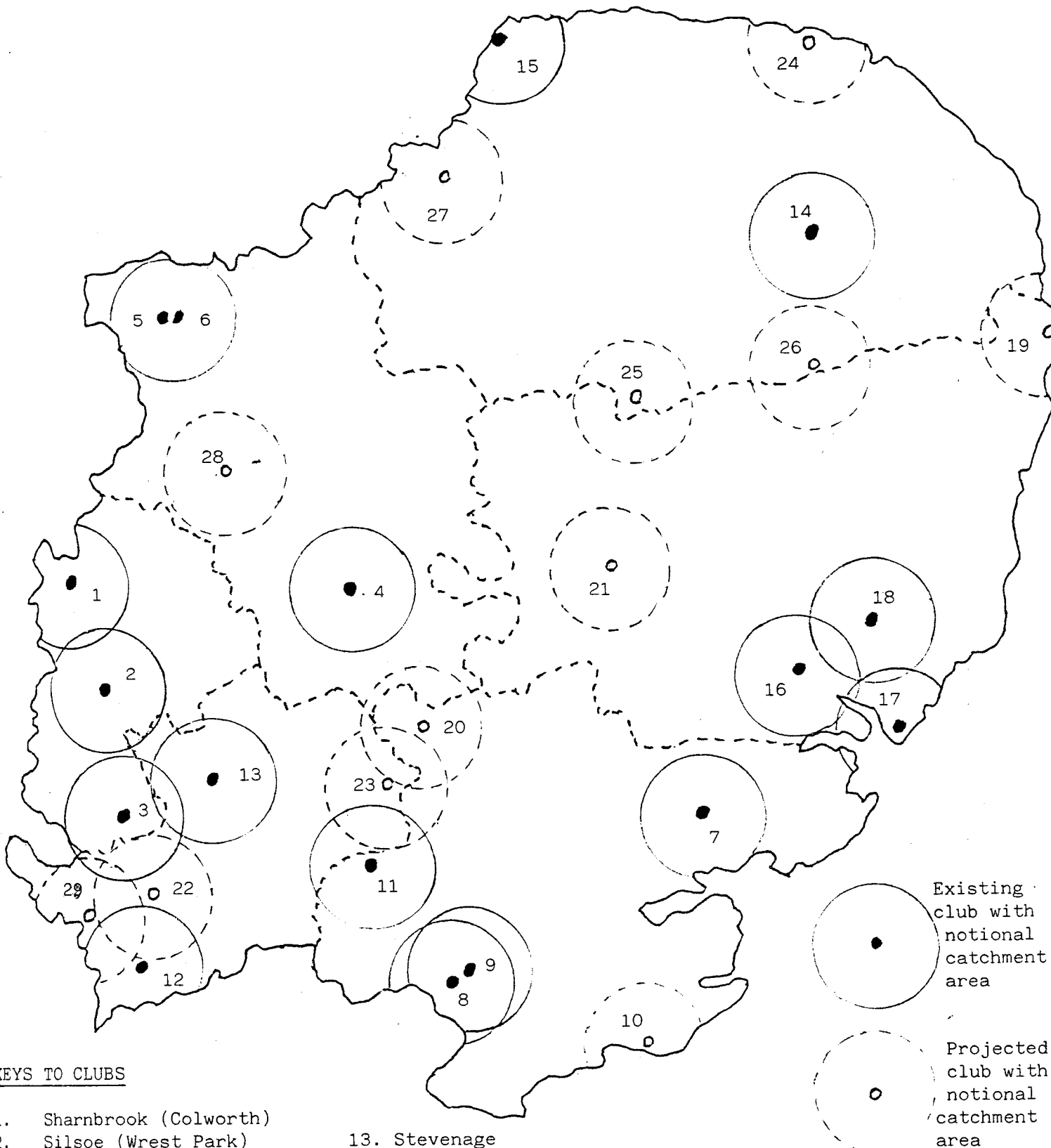
a) At present there are 17 established clubs in the eastern region. These are located at :

- i Bedfordshire : Sharnbrook (Colworth)      Silsoe (Wrest Park), Luton\*
- ii Cambridgeshire : Cambridge (University), Peterborough\* (Werrington), Peterborough (Thomas Cook)\*\*
- iii Essex : Colchester, Brentwood (Bentley), Ingatestone, Harlow (Beechams)
- iv Hertfordshire : Stevenage\*, Watford (Cassiobury),
- v Norfolk :            Norwich, Hunstanton
- vi Suffolk : Ipswich, Felixstowe\*\*, Woodbridge (Farlinghay School)

\* Indicates play started 1983

\*\* Indicates club not affiliated to the Croquet Association

CROQUET IN THE EASTERN REGION



KEYS TO CLUBS

- |                               |                                    |                       |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Sharnbrook (Colworth)      | 13. Stevenage                      | 23. Bishops Stortford |
| 2. Silsoe (Wrest Park)        | 14. Norwich                        | 24. Cromer            |
| 3. Luton                      | 15. Hunstanton                     | 25. Thetford          |
| 4. Cambridge (University)     | 16. Ipswich                        | 26. Diss              |
| 5. Peterborough (Werrington)  | 17. Felixstowe                     | 27. Kings Lynn        |
| 6. Peterborough (Thomas Cook) | 18. Woodbridge (Farlinghay School) | 28. Huntingdon        |
| 7. Colchester                 | 19. Lowestoft                      | 29. Hemel Hempstead   |
| 8. Brentwood (Bentley)        | 20. Saffron Walden                 |                       |
| 9. Ingatestone                | 21. Bury St Edmunds                |                       |
| 10. Southend                  | 22. St Albans                      |                       |
| 11. Harlow (Beechams)         |                                    |                       |
| 12. Watford                   |                                    |                       |

b) As the map indicates, most of these clubs are located around the edge of the region, which creates great problems in terms of travelling time and expense and matches, and also means that Croquet is unavailable for potential participants in the centre of the region.

## 6. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS

a) Due to the current geographical imbalance in where Croquet is played in the region the Eastern Region Croquet Development Committee will aim to establish croquet clubs in areas where no croquet is played at present. Owing to the difficulties of setting up clubs at a great distance from existing players and coaches, the process is likely to be one of "contagious defusion" whereby the central parts of the region will eventually be catered for as the club network spreads from the periphery.

b) Liaison links have been established with a number of local authorities who are interested in establishing Croquet, particularly those who have appointed 50+ or active retired motivators (age groups for whom the game is eminently suitable.)

c) On the basis, the Committee aims to establish three new clubs each year for the next three years, and the proposed locations are as follows :

<u>1984</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>Other possible locations</u>
Saffron Walden	Bishops Stortford	Diss	Cromer
Bury St Edmunds	Southend	Kings Lynn	Lowestoft
St Albans	Thetford	Huntingdon	Hemel Hempstead

These locations have been chosen for a number of reasons. In some cases Local Authorities have already expressed an interest in Croquet, and in others, proximities of existing clubs will make the establishment of a new club easier. In addition to the setting up of these clubs, the Committee will encourage other agencies to form clubs, particularly under the auspices of the active retired schemes operating in several locations in the region.

d) Croquet demonstrations have already been held at a number of large events like county shows and festivals of sport. This practice will continue as a means of publicising the games, especially in areas where club formation is imminent. It may be that it is more effective to launch a new club in conjunction with another major promotional event, and the Committee will continue to co-ordinate such displays.

e) The following procedure for the establishment of clubs will be adopted :

i A suitable site for a croquet court will be identified in conjunction with the Local Authority.



- ii An experienced croquet player/coach from the nearest established club will be enlisted to assist with the formation of the new club.
- iii Widespread publicity for a "Come and Try It" weekend will be circulated in the local press, on local radio and in poster form. Leaflets will be distributed to large local employers and to local schools.
- iv The names of all participants will be collected and they will subsequently be circulated with details of club nights etc.
- v Regular coaching sessions will be organised involving equipment loaned by the Eastern Region Croquet Development Committee, and grant aided by the Sports Council. This equipment will be loaned for 2 years, by which time the club will have become established enough to purchase its own.
- vi The new club will be involved in competitions with adjacent clubs as soon as it is strong enough to do so. Each club will aim to attract 30 members initially, and will continue to organise promotional events to attract others to boost the membership.

e) Financial implications :

The cost of implementing the plan over the next 3 years is as follows :

1983/4

Expenditure	£
4 sets of croquet equipment*	850
Publicity costs	600
Coaches fees	150
Administration	<u>100</u>
Total	£1700

\* 4 sets of equipment will be purchased so that an additional set will be available for loan to clubs established by Local Authority motivators.

1984/5

Expenditure	£
4 sets of croquet equipment	890
Publicity costs	630
Coaches fees	160
Administration	<u>110</u>
Total	£1790

198 5/ 6

Expenditure	£
Publicity costs	650
Coaches fees	170
Administration	<u>120</u>
Total	£940

7. CONCLUSIONS

Despite the image that Croquet traditionally evokes, it is a rapidly developing game in which many Local Authorities have expressed an interest. Its attractiveness to a number of Sports Council target groups, most notably women, 45-59 and retired sections of the community, makes it an important way of generating participants to contribute toward the Sports Council's targets for outdoor sport. With financial support and the enthusiasm of the Eastern Region Croquet Development Committee, the sport can really take off in the east.

Relevant agencies are urged to consider support for the E.R.C.D.C. in order to encourage development of croquet and implementation of the development plan.

## EASTERN REGION CROQUET CLUBS

Secretaries or Contacts AddressesBEDFORD :

Luton (Memorial Park, Tennyson Road)  
(1)

George Collin, 12 Apsley End Road,  
Shillington, nr Hitchin, Herts  
Tel : h) Shillington (9677) 489  
o) Harpenden 5234

Wrest Park (Wrest Park, Silsoe, Beds)  
(6)

Dr Adrian Williams, The Millstone,  
7 Church Street, Langford, Biggleswade, Beds  
Tel : h) 0462 700066  
o) Silsoe 0525

Colworth (Unilever Research, Sharnbrook  
Beds)  
(1)

Mrs Judy Anderson, 16 Wellpond Close,  
Sharnbrook, Bedford  
Tel : h) 0234 781783  
o) 0234 781781

CAMBRIDGE :

Cambridge University

Tim Harrison, Sidney Sussex College,  
Cambridge CB2 3HO

Peterborough (Werrington Sports Centre)  
(2)

Adrian Kirby, 1 Yew Tree Walk, Longthorpe  
Peterborough, Cambs

Peterborough (Thomas Cook, HQ Thorpe Wood)  
(1)

Tel : h) 0733 266664  
o) 0733 502037

ESSEX :

Beecham Pharmaceuticals (croquet Section)  
(1)

Stephen Cooper, Medical Research Centre,  
Coldharbour Road, The Pinnacles, Harlow  
Tel : h) 0279 726165  
o) 0279 29631

Bancroft R.F.C. (At Bancroft School)  
(1)

S B Thirsk, 4 Bentley Way, Woodford  
Green, Essex IG8 0SE

Colchester (Elianoore Road, Colchester)  
(4)

David Purdon, 53 Malting Green Road,  
Layer de la Haye, Colchester CO2 0JJ  
Tel : 0206 34605

Bentley (Pilgrims Hall, Bentley,  
Brentwood)  
(1)

F Hugh Northcote, Millbrook, Hillwood Close,  
Hutton, Brentwood, Essex  
Tel : 0277 212864

Havering (Upminster Court)  
(2)

Mrs P Obourne, 3 Guysfield Drive,  
Rainham, Essex  
Tel : 040 27 57191

Ingatstone (Recreation Ground)  
(1)

Lt Col A W D Nicholls, 40 Willow Green,  
Ingatstone, Essex CM4 0DQ  
Tel : 027 75 3527

## CROQUET - A DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE EASTERN REGION

### 1. INTRODUCTION

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OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS

The Croquet Association

The Hurlingham Club  
Ranelagh Gardens  
London SW6 3PR

Tel : 01 736 3148

The Croquet Association  
Development Committee

Chris Hudson  
Chairman  
The Oaklands  
Englesea Brook  
nr Crewe  
Cheshire

Tel : 0270 820296

Eastern Region Croquet  
Development Committee

Mrs Judy Anderson  
C.A. Regional Adviser  
16 Wellpond Close  
Sharnbrook  
Bedford

Tel : 0234 781781 ex 2344 (o)  
0234 781783 (h)

The Sports Council (Eastern Region)

26 Bromham Road  
Bedford  
MK40 2QP

Tel : 0234 44281