Hello everyone

This issue has somehow turned into the Christmas edition of the Rocket. Well, it is that time of year after all.

It was great seeing everyone at the Christmas party on Saturday: the perfect place to chill out and unwind after a busy year of play and tournaments. A big thank you to everyone who helped make the party such a success and also to everyone who has supported the club through the year making it the great club that it is. Take a look at the pictures taken at the party on the back page.

Merry Christmas to all and hope next year has as many challenges and opportunities.

Georgia Bray
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Croquet

President’s canon – Elizabeth Mountain

Elsewhere in the Rocket we lightly mention that half the Croquet NSW state team comes from Canberra and that Tim Murphy has been selected to play in the World Championship in Association croquet. This is a tremendous achievement by the individual players and reflects wonderfully on the calibre of the play in the club. However, one of the real strengths of the Canberra Club is the depth and breadth of the players. We are able to provide opportunities for play from the very lowest to the highest level in three forms of mallet sports – Association and Golf Croquet and Gateball. I am sure not many clubs can make that claim.

Personally, I am also proud that while the club revels in the achievements of its senior players, it spends much more time worrying about and providing opportunities for its less able players. The Playing Committee has provided several general coaching classes this year, not terribly well attended mind you. We now have a thriving Golf Croquet group playing on Tuesday and Saturday afternoons and our Gateball players are indomitable. Many senior members are willing mentors and will help junior players at any time which is wonderful.

At the last committee meeting, we looked in depth at our recruitment strategy, although I must admit it was hard not to get sidetracked on to the equally important issue of retention. Although we agreed that the most likely target group was the 50-55 year olds, especially those nearing retirement, the first strategy we decided to try will in fact target the 30-55 age groups. We have decided that early next year we will approach a few government department social clubs and give them some special offers. Such offers may be a champagne-fuelled special come and try event on
a Friday afternoon (non pay week) associated with a special coaching offer of 2 for $60. We are thinking that we may get better retention if a person comes with a friend.

We are also conscious that we must make sure that when people come and try they are given a real understanding of the difficulty and complexity of Association Croquet and that we have a mechanism of streaming some people into Golf Croquet if that is more their thing. Perhaps we need a streaming into Gateball as well since I have learned that old fogies can play that as well as the young fogies. Whatever approach we take we must ensure that the effort that members put into initial coaching is cost effective in terms of our membership.

Well, that’s all for the moment. Have a safe and happy festive season.

**Australian Open Singles and Doubles Championships – Stephen Richards**

Six members of the Canberra Croquet Club participated in the 2007 Australian Singles and Doubles Championships held in Melbourne from 2-11 November 2007.

In the 54-strong singles field, Tony Hall played exceptionally well to finish 5th overall while Tim Murphy finished 10th. Jonathan Bowen was the runner-up of an intensely fought plate competition, which also featured the playing skills of Alan Honey and Chris Wilson.

The new 12-lawn croquet complex at Cairnlea in Melbourne’s north-west is an excellent facility and I’d encourage members to consider entering the championships in future years to enjoy the venue and the opportunity to watch some top class play.

**News from around the club**

24 November may have been election day but it was a red letter day for one of our members Richard Meacock was playing Peter Freer, well perhaps demolishing may be a better word, on a lovely Saturday in November AND HE MADE HIS FIRST TRIPLE PEEL IN 18 YEARS! Richard has been playing since 1982-83, such is the addictive nature of the game. Well done Richard!

**Lawns**

Work began on Monday 26 November on our lawns annual maintenance. The renovation work was completed two days later with the top-dressing.

**Half of the Croquet NSW state team comes from Canberra**

We are bursting with pride yet again with the impressive line up from our club in the CNSW team. Our Stephen Richards is CNSW Captain once again and Tim Murphy and Nerida Taylor are on the team with Tony Hall as a reserve. Stephen tells me that the team comprises 8 players and 2 reserves. What a talented lot! Congratulations.

**Tim Murphy gets a wild card for World Comp**

Congratulations to Tim for receiving a wild card place to compete in the 11th World Croquet Federation World Association Croquet Championship, 2-10 February, 2008 in Christchurch, New Zealand. He will be one of 13 Australians competing in the premier individual world Association Croquet event. Last year Tim also competed in New Zealand so he is well on the way to world dominance. Great work Tim and good luck.

**Charitable news**

You are a generous lot. The Pasks said that of the five Seeing Eye dogs which have been supported by various members of the club, one has been determined as too curious and has been returned to be a breeder, one has already been taken home by a blind person who is at a NSW University and the others are likely to be successful guide dogs as well.

Elizabeth also thanks club members who have bought her products. Through sales of jams and donations, the total raised exceeds $1000. She also sends heartfelt thanks. Every jar of jam adds to what can be achieved in terms of building the school on Tanna Island, Vanuatu.
Club competition results

Congratulations to the following members for their success in Club competitions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Association Croquet Handicap Singles</th>
<th>Association Croquet Veteran’s Singles</th>
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<tr>
<td>winner: Greg Diprose, runner-up: Eddie Kowalski</td>
<td>winner: Chris Wilson, runner-up: Tony Hall</td>
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Tournaments

Canberra Croquet Club Easter Carnival

Entries are open for our 2008 Easter Carnival. A flyer and entry forms are in the club house, and also on the web site. Entries have started to come in – so you may need to be quick.

Senior Citizen’s Association Croquet Handicap Singles

Dates: Saturday 15 December 2007 to Sunday 2 March 2008
Entries close: 15 December 2007
Open to: all members aged 55 and over

The format is aligned as much as possible to follow the format of the Croquet NSW Senior Citizen’s Tournament. It will be played as a round-robin (if more than two entrants there will be a final). It is played as full-bisque handicap singles with a base handicap of 5. The winner of the event receives entry into the Croquet NSW Senior Citizen’s Tournament (being held between Monday 7 and Friday 11 April 2008. The club pays the winner’s entry fee.

A flyer and entry forms are in the club house and on the web site. Entries have started to come in so be sure you don’t miss out.

Gateball

Australian Gateball Championships 2007 – Glen Whitehead

Cairnlea, Victoria, 23-25 November 2007 – Fifteen gateball teams from Australia, China and Japan converged on Melbourne for the fourth Australian Gateball Championships. Japanese and Chinese teams hit the practice courts early, keen to adapt to the unique Australian conditions. Friday 23 November included a training session for several Canberra referees. Tim Goodland, Gilon Smith and Glen Whitehead received a workout under the watchful eye of the Japanese teachers.

Teams were well fed at the opening ceremony which included speeches by John Fransen, president of Croquet Australia, Valerie Brown, president of the Victorian Croquet Association, Keiichi Imagawa, Director General of the World Gateball Union and Gilon Smith, Australian National Director of Gateball. Japanese and Chinese visitors showed their appreciation to their Australian hosts by presenting a number of beautiful gifts. The opening ceremony was closed by a
Above: International participants at the Gateball Championships. Below: Kimberlee Trent and Gilon Smith from Canberra preparing to referee a match between Queensland and Japan.

A rousing song of friendship performed by one of the members of the Petro China Sports Association team.

The round robin matches underlined the strength of the international teams. Japan A and Petro China Sports Association both went undefeated to top their respective groups.

Canberra Croquet Club was represented by Gilon Smith, Kimberlee Trent, Tim Goodland, Glen Whitehead, Kristina Huynh and Ben Hollway in the Canberra team. The Canberra team played strongly in many of their matches achieving 4 wins and 3 losses but were unable to match the accuracy and consistency of the Chinese teams. This placed Canberra fourth in their group, the top Australian side.

Tony Hall played for the international team Jade which finished the tournament with 1 win. Team Jade was made up of players from Japan, China, Canberra and Victoria. The semi-finals saw Japan B and Petro China Sports Association move into the final with wins over Japan A and Shaxi Wuqi respectively.

The final was a tough battle in the early stages until Petro China Sports Association dominated the last 20 minutes by playing flawless Gateball. The large crowd enthusiastically applauded the precise stroking and sparking as Petro China Sports Association won the match by scoring the maximum 25 points, a ‘perfect game’.

At the presentation ceremony Gilon Smith, National Director of Gateball, paid tribute to Elaine Coverdale, Victorian Director of Gateball and event organiser, and her team for organising an outstanding event. Gilon also thanked the Australian Croquet Association and the World Gateball Union for their ongoing support of gateball in Australia.

The championships were closed with the invitation to the youth of the world to assemble in Queensland in two years for the fifth Australian Gateball Championships.
Profile: Louisa Swan

For more than 20 years Louisa “Louie” Swan has been playing croquet at the Canberra Croquet Club with what seems like natural talent.

“I became interested in croquet when my retirement was looming, and as I now had something else to do I didn’t need much prodding to leave work,” Louie said.

For someone who hadn’t played any ball games since hockey at school, Louie distinguished herself by winning many tournaments some of which are recognized on the wall plaques in the clubhouse.

“I didn’t practice much but won competitions because I entered them and spent years playing the game,” Louie said.

“My competitive days are now over”, says Louie. “I enjoy playing the game socially and like to encourage others.”

“Being a coach and referee is also something I enjoy very much. I met another referee from Sydney and we traveled to tournaments in New South Wales as players and referees sharing accommodation, meeting lots of people from all around in places like Foster, Dubbo, Young and Bundanoon and having a good holiday,” Louie said.

At the Canberra Croquet Club she was popular amongst high handicap players in this year’s Easter Carnival which they played out under her guidance. She thought they were a laugh a minute and they thought it was ‘excellent having a full-time referee observing our shots and telling us the rules’.

“I enjoy using my coaching abilities to supervise corporate groups coming to the club and new players undertaking their first lessons.

“I am looking forward to the Bundanoon Croquet Club’s Autumn Carnival next March where I will be a ‘suitable person’, in other words a referee,” Louie said.

Before croquet Louie was a purchasing officer at the ANU’s John Curtin School of Medical Research for 13 years before she retired. She bought everything from screws to chemicals for the scientific workshop where instruments were built for the use of medical scientists.

And before that she was born in England 85 years ago and came to Australia in 1965 with her husband Tony and two sons, Brian and Mark.

In England the family lived in Walton Pool in Clent, a hilly region where they used to go hiking in the Clent Hills. Louie originally came to Australia for two years only as her husband came to work at Orroral Valley in Namadgi National Park; part of NASA’s world wide spacecraft tracking and data network which had just been opened to track Earth orbiting satellites.

“As an electrician Tony helped set up a lab which gathered data, including weather data which was despatched to America, maintained the antenna and onsite equipment,” Louie said.

“The whole family enjoyed mountain climbing and walking. Once we discovered caving at the Yarrangobilly Caves in the Snowy Mountains we decided to stay.

“In climbing you see where you are going but in caving you don’t. Exploring caves is full of surprises as you suddenly enter a huge cavern after negotiating a tight squeeze.”

And if you are in a tight squeeze in a croquet game, and don’t know the rules, you would be well placed to ask Louisa.
Christmas party pics