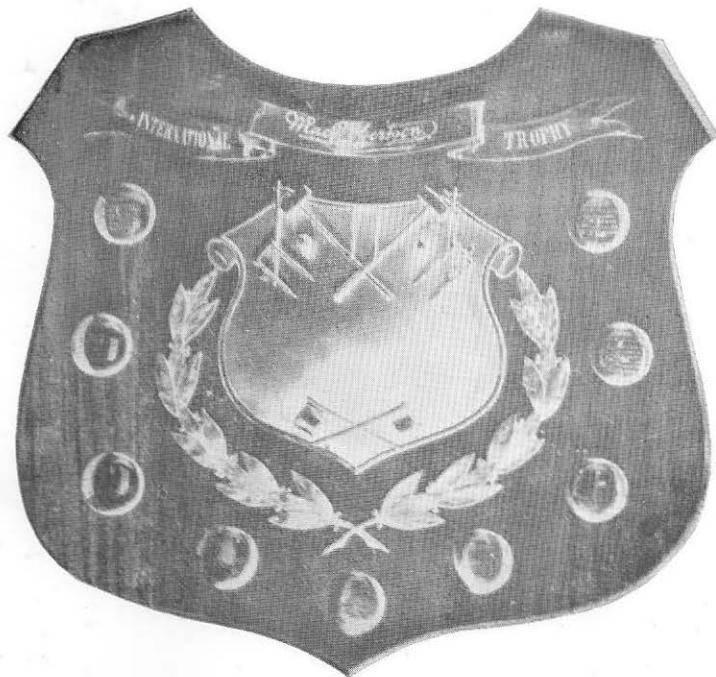


INTERNATIONAL
CROQUET
TESTS
FOR
the
MacRobertson
Shield



INTERNATIONAL
CROQUET
TESTS
FOR
the
MacRobertson
Shield

Compiled by Ada Kirk and Eric Hoare.

Acknowledgments

The compilers of this booklet wish to place on record their deep debt of gratitude to the following contributors whose willing and valuable assistance have made its publication possible.

MacRobertson Proprietary Ltd. for data concerning the donor of the magnificent trophy.

Mrs McLelland, President Australian Croquet Association.

Mrs Rawlinson, President New Zealand Croquet Council.

John W. Solomon on behalf of the English Croquet Association.

Dunedin "Evening Star" for permission to reprint photographs.

M. B. Reckitt, England.

Miss A. B. Morrison, Australia.

A. G. F. Ross, New Zealand.

Foreword

It is now almost 40 years since the Australian millionaire and philanthropist, Sir MacPherson Robertson, presented the handsome Shield, which to the croquet players of the world, represents a definite aim, as, relatively the Davis Cup does to the tennis enthusiasts.



The object of this publication is to place on record in one volume the list of International Test matches that have already been played. Information regarding the earlier Tests has been difficult to obtain, as most of the players in these matches are now deceased. As time goes on, it will be increasingly difficult to trace these records, so the New Zealand Croquet Council, as part of its programme for the Triangular Test matches of 1963 have sponsored this booklet.

A brief history of the donor of the MacRobertson International Croquet Shield, the late Sir MacPherson Robertson, of Melbourne. Born of poor parents, young MacPherson began at an early age to work towards success. His school-days were filled with the following programme: 3 a.m. to 7.30 a.m., Delivering newspapers; 7.30 a.m. to 8.30 a.m., Lathering faces for a barber; 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., School; 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. Lathering more faces. The rest of the day was his own. Even this scanty schooling ceased when the boy was

10 years of age, and he then set about earning his living. After sampling employment in a butcher's shop, which held no attraction for him, he entered the works of a manufacturing confectioner, from whom he picked up a working knowledge of the trade. Then, on a momentous day in 1880, when he was 19 years of age, he decided that his mission in life was to make sweets, so with a 6d. nail can (still preserved), to serve as a furnace, a 3d. pannikin in which to boil the syrup, and his mother's bathroom for a factory, he laid the foundations of the greatest confectionery business in Australia.

His first output was a few pounds of sugar mice and rabbits, manufactured from Mondays to Thursdays, and hawked round on Fridays and Saturdays. Certainly no captain of industry, no self made hero of fiction, began more humbly, or rose more surely than MacPherson Robertson. By 1923 he had become a millionaire, and the highest taxpayer in the Commonwealth of Australia. In June, 1933, Sir MacPherson Robertson, knighted for his benevolence and service to his country, as his personal Centenary gesture, placed the sum of £100,000 at the disposal of the State of Victoria. Sir MacPherson suggested that the money should be used for the erection of a Girls' High School, a Bridge at Grange Road, Toorak, a National Herbarium, and a fountain to be placed near the Shrine of Remembrance.

In addition, an amount of £15,000 including a Gold Cup, valued at £650, was set aside to form prizes in connection with the Air Races from England to Australia, commencing in October, 1934.

The name, MacRobertson, will endure, not only in Victoria, Australia, but in each nation where the Shield is played for, drawing the nations together in the bonds of fellowship.

ADA KIRK.

The fact that a British Croquet Team will be visiting New Zealand early in 1963 has more importance than may at first appear. When croquet resumed its normal calendar of tournaments after the war anyone could have been excused for saying that the International series would never be revived. For Croquet in Great Britain had, since the emergence of tennis as a popular sport, gradually declined—not in the skill of its exponents, but in their number—and, the most significant fact of all, there were virtually no young players taking any interest in the game.

That this present series of Test Matches will be the third since the war and the second in which a British team has departed for the Antipodes is proof of the revival of croquet in Great Britain. Certainly, it has not yet resumed its former glory—and probably never will do—yet we are greatly encouraged in our hopes for the future of the game, not only because our present team is the very best we could possibly send, but also because, for the first time, three members of that team represent the youth of British croquet. Indeed, for the first time, we consider that we have the best opportunity we have ever had of being successful, as a *visiting* team, in the contest for the International Trophy.

We look forward to three months of croquet which will probably be the toughest and most interesting croquet we have ever played, and whatever the outcome, we look forward to the spontaneous hospitality and generosity which some of us know we can expect from our hosts in New Zealand.

JOHN SOLOMON
Chairman, E.C.A.

The idea of adding to the already very great interest attached to the forthcoming series of International Test Matches being played for the MacRobertson Shield, by issuing in booklet form, a history of these contests and Trophy, will, without a doubt, give its readers an added thrill.

I am pleased to have been invited to contribute to this idea and am confident that all Australian players and followers of our historic game, will find added enthusiasm for such series of tests, both present and future, by reading and re-reading this booklet.

After some years of planning by selected committees, we are now on the eve of this contest when first class players from the three competing countries will come into action for this coveted Trophy. What a feast of croquet for those who are able to follow the teams!

On behalf of the members of the Australian Croquet Council, I have much pleasure in sending greetings and best wishes to the President, Mrs Rawlinson, and members of the Host country for a successful Carnival.

E. M. McCLELLAND
President, Australian Croquet Council.

I need hardly say that the production of this book entailed a considerable amount of work on those whose time was already well occupied in other directions. The necessary effort, however, took the form of a pleasant duty and I believe the energy thus expended is not wasted.

The motive that lead to this issue was an earnest desire to preserve for posterity a collection of photographs and articles recording the history of the MacRobertson International Test Series 1925-1963. I trust that this book will prove easy to read and give pleasure to those who browse in it and promote international goodwill through croquet.

Greetings and a sincere welcome to our overseas visitors.

M. L. RAWLINSON
President, New Zealand Croquet Council.

England in the Tests

by Maurice B. Reckitt

Our first contacts with Antipodean players of championship class were made many years before the initiation of the International Trophy. One of New Zealand's most brilliant players, Keith Izard, was a student here between 1908 and 1914 and proved himself more than a match for all but our very best, and well able to hold his own even with these. He appeared among our 'Best Tens' for the Beddow Cup, with success on four occasions, and was once a runner-up for the Open Championship—and this at a time when perhaps croquet in England had a larger number of first class players than it had ever had before or has had since. Another brilliant young performer was the jovial Australian, J. Tuckett. He too won a place in our 'Best Ten' (in 1913), and though not much fancied, tied first with the great Cyril Corbally, though losing to him in the play-off.

The International Trophy was of course initiated by Sir MacPherson Robertson some ten years later than this, and a team from Australia very sportingly travelled to England to play for it. Unfortunately several of Australia's best players were unable to make the journey, as had been hoped, and only two of those who did so were of Test match class, J. C. Windsor and W. J. McCleery, F. J. Crabb and G. A. Stephen being admittedly B class performers. Neither Windsor nor McCleery were at their best in the Tests, showing signs of nervousness on these occasions, though they had many victories to their credit in tournament play. Certainly the opposition which they had to encounter was formidable in the extreme, Miss D. D. Steel, P. Duff Mathews, D. L. G. Joseph, W. Longman and G. L. Reckitt being at the height of their powers at this time (Miss Steel won our Open Championship and Longman the 'Best Ten' in this year). Test matches were played at Roehampton, Cheltenham and Brighton, and of the eighteen encounters involved in these contests, Australia only won one of them—a Double.

It was not surprising that Australia should hunger for revenge, and our Association made haste to offer them the opportunity for this, though it was well aware that it could not hope to muster anything like its best team. Of those who played for England in

1925 only Miss Steel was able to set out, with four others, in the autumn of 1927, though the 'others' were by no means to be despised since they were Col. Du Pre, who had most fortunately returned to the game in time to assume the captaincy, Sir Francis Colchester-Wemyss, the most genial of team managers, a very enterprising player in W. Windsor Richards, and as reserve Miss J. Retallack, an English hockey international. Australia, croquetically speaking, was at Test match level, equated at this time with the state of Victoria, and the three Test matches were played at Melbourne. These matches were closely contested, England winning the first by 4-2 and Australia the second by the same score. But the climax of the contest proved to be even closer still. The courts were fast, with a strong wind blowing on the two last days; the English team were due to depart for Sydney en route for New Zealand soon afterwards. If there was a tie, as seemed not improbable, the series would be left without result. It was therefore agreed that in this case the contest should be decided on the number of games won by either side in the completed series. There was a tie, 3 all, and the final tally showed 20 games to Australia and 19 for England. Never can a Test series have been decided by a closer margin. Australia had been represented in all their matches by Mr and Mrs Cyril Miller, in addition to their stalwarts of 1925. In face of such a strong combination on its own courts the English team justly considered that it had done pretty well.

The team then crossed the Tasman Sea for some croquet in New Zealand, including a 'Test Match' played at Palmerston North, with Miss Retallack coming into the side in the place of Windsor Richards. This was the first international encounter in which that great player Arthur Ross appeared, and he signalled the occasion by defeating the almost invincible Miss Steel. But England won the other games fairly easily.

The next international contests were held in Melbourne in 1930 to which New Zealand sent a team of six players, but England did not take part in this year. In 1935 came the first series of 'Triangular Tests' for the MacRobertson Trophy, played at Melbourne as being the home ground of the holder nation; but on this occasion Arthur Ross was not able to captain the New Zealand team as he had done in 1930. It was no doubt largely in consequence of this that this dominion failed to make much of a showing and did not win any of its six matches.

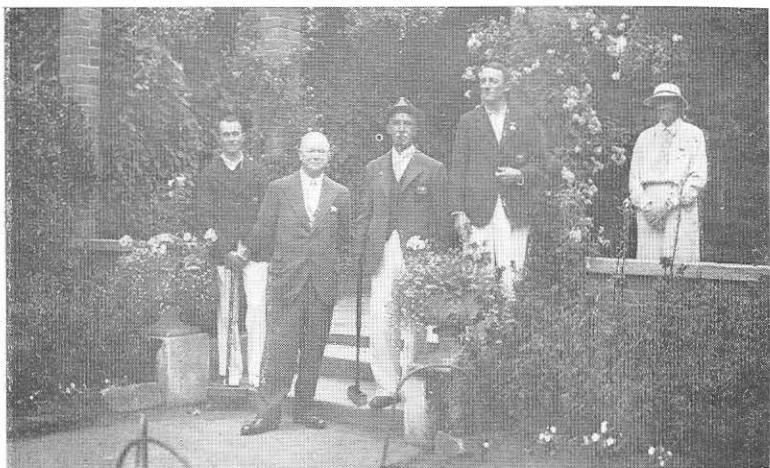
The English team, though by no means the strongest that might have been sent, did remarkably well. Du Pre and Wemyss returned to the field of their endeavours of eight years earlier, and E. L. Ward Petley, then at the height of his form, and H. R. Poulter, who made a good partner for him, completed the team. England

lost to Australia in their first match by 4-2, tied in the second with 3 matches each, and did so again in the third, but Australia had won more games in the three contests and their total points in the whole series added up to 1821 to England's 1651. The matches caused immense interest and enthusiasm, more than 1,000 people being present at one of these in a stand specially built for the occasion and loud applause greeting each properly completed break. Australia's side included not only Windsor and McCleery, but a very promising young player, Edward Hunt, Miss Agnes Morrison (on two occasions) and above all Cyril Miller, about whose prowess Wemyss wrote home with the greatest enthusiasm —'a magnificent player; he has strokes which no one else can do'.

Miller arrived in England two years later with what appeared to be a formidable team—Windsor (his second visit), Hunt and Miss Morrison. But the series proved what has been evident throughout the whole history of these contests, how difficult it is for a visiting team to reproduce its best form in another country. Of the five test matches played, Australia failed to win one. Certainly they had to face strong opposition. Du Pre was for a third time England's captain; his team for the first match included Miss Steel, J. A. McMordie, an Ulsterman who had won the Gold Medal in this year, and C. F. Colman, who had won the Open Championship. England won all six matches, and lost only a single game (in the Doubles). This was at Hurlingham; in the next match at Cheltenham England again won all the matches, but Australia won three games in the Singles. In the third match at Buxton, McMordie withdrew and Robert Tingey, then at his best, took his place. Australia won the first match played (a Double) but lost the remainder. But the margins of England's victories were getting closer. In the fourth match, at Roehampton, the same team represented England, but won only by 4-2, Du Pre losing to Miller and Tingey to Miss Morrison. In the final match at Brighton, Tingey and Colman withdrew and Edmund Longland and Maurice Reckitt came in to the English team. Australia won two very close contests in the match, a Single and a Double, but the final result was 4-2 to England.

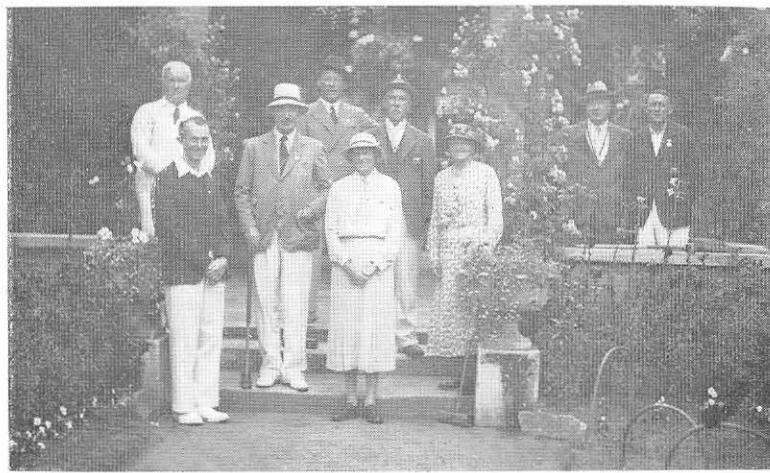
Miller's croquet was impressive for its wonderful pass-rolls and angled cut rushes, but he had not the relentless accuracy of most of the best English players. But the quickness of the Australian players was favourably commented on as setting a good example to English ones. The visitors, though naturally disappointed not to win a match, generously declared that they could not have wished for better conditions nor more friendly contests, and added that 'in no other country of the world would one find such sporting feeling'.

AUSTRALIAN TEST TEAM IN ENGLAND 1937.



Left to Right: E. M. Hunt, Sir Frances Wemyss (Referee), J. C. Windsor, C. J. Miller (Captain), Miss A. B. Morrison.

1937



Left to Right:

Back Row: J. A. McMordie, Lieut.-Col. W. B. Du Pre, H. Coleman, J. C. Windsor, Sir Frances Wemyss, C. J. Miller.

Front Row: E. M. Hunt, Miss A. B. Morrison, Miss D. D. Steel.

Taken at Roehampton

New Zealand were now naturally anxious to join in and a tour was planned to start from England in the ill-fated year 1939, but preparations had not gone far before croquet had to be put far away at the back of the Englishman's mind. The project was not forgotten, however, and England felt a strong obligation to send a team to New Zealand as soon as possible, even though it might not include all her best players. But the team which did set out in the autumn of 1950 was not very far short of full strength with D. J. V. Hamilton-Miller as captain, H. O. Hicks, the reigning champion, Ward Petley (now resident in South Africa, however, and somewhat out of practice), Mrs Kingsford, and the brilliant nineteen year old John Solomon, Mrs G. Ozanne travelling as reserve. Tests were played at Auckland, Wellington and Dunedin, and as events turned out success or failure depended on the result of a single game in a single match in the first Test, which New Zealand won 4-3. The second match went to that country more easily by 5-2, but England, despite Ward Petley being unable to play in consequence of a motor accident, won the third match 4-2. New Zealand had a fine team in Arthur Ross, Ashley Heenan, Clem Watkins, Claud Bryan, Miss Claughton and Mrs Kirk, and with such an array of talent to confront, the victory of John Solomon in the Dominion Championship was a notable one and foreshadowed the mighty deeds he was to accomplish in the following years.

In 1956 it was New Zealand's turn to make their first visit here and a formidable team was sent, with Ross as its captain. But their prospects were much impaired by the early breakdown in health of Clem Watkins, who was only able to play in the first of the five test matches, all of which England won. Patrick Cotter played—and acted as captain—in four of these, Solomon, Dr Wiggins and Major Freddy Stone in five, Leslie Kirk-Greene in three, Humphrey Hicks, Mrs Rotherham, William Ormerod and Maurice Reckitt in two. As is often the case with visiting teams in these contests, the challengers did not all show their best form in the Tests, but they won many individual victories during the tour, notably Ross who had carried off the Open Championship in 1954 and Mrs Kirk in winning the Women's Championship, while the play of Miss Wainwright and Mrs Watkins was particularly admired. Had Ashley Heenan been able to come, New Zealand would have certainly done better, and his captaincy of the Dominion's side in 1963 will guarantee leadership on the highest level, in addition to his great prowess as a player.

So all is set for what will surely prove to be the finest Test series of all. England is sending a good team, but we know how formidable will be the opposition it will have to meet, and shall be proud indeed should our players turn out to be the first visiting team to carry off the trophy.

The Australian Angle

The first representative croquet team from England to play in Australia arrived in 1927 when Misses D. D. Steel, Retallack and Messrs Windsor, Richards, R. H. Poulter, Lieut.-Col. Du Pre and Messrs Windsor, Richards, R. H. Poulter, Lieut.-Col. Du Pre and Sir Francis Colchester-Wemyss provided the personnel from which the team was drawn.

In the 1935 triangular test England was represented by Lieut.-Col. W. B. Du Pre (Captain), Messrs H. R. Poulter, E. L. Ward Petley and Sir Francis Colchester Wemyss.

The New Zealand team was composed of Captain F. L. Hartnell (Captain), H. P. Stratton and Mesdames W. N. Corbet and W. E. Caldow while the Australian team was drawn from Mrs E. Terry (1st test), Miss A. B. Morrison (2nd and 3rd test), C. J. Miller (Captain), J. C. Windsor and E. M. Hunt.

Matches were played at Melbourne Club and at Warleigh, which latter has since been purchased by the Victorian Croquet Association as its headquarters.

As this was the year Melbourne was celebrating its Centennial an elaborate programme was arranged by the Centenary Sports Committee. On the 2nd of February, 1935, the International championship for the title "International Croquet Champion" was won by J. C. Windsor.

From February 8th to the 23rd was taken up with a series of Test Croquet matches, the outcome being a win for the Australian representatives. Two years later the following Australian team went to England to do battle for the Shield: C. J. Miller (Captain), J. C. Windsor, Miss A. B. Morrison and E. M. Hunt.

The English team was drawn from Lieut.-Col. W. B. Du Pre (Captain), Miss D. D. Steel, J. A. McMordie, C. F. Colman, R. Tingey, M. B. Reckitt and E. Longland.

Five tests were played at Hurlingham (July 12th and 13th); Cheltenham (July 23rd and 24th); Buxton (July 30th and 31st); Roehampton (August 20th and 21st); and Southwick (September 4th and 6th), the result in each case favouring the home team.

Chief referee for the above test series was Sir Francis Colchester Wemyss.

by *MISS A. B. MORRISON*

1930 MacRobertson Shield Contest

NEW ZEALAND V. AUSTRALIA

After the visit of the first English team to New Zealand in January, 1928, and acting upon the advice of the English players, New Zealand challenged Australia for the MacRobertson Shield. This challenge was a matter of great importance to New Zealand as it resulted in the Dominion emerging as a Croquet Nation.

As a Nation entering the contest for the first time, New Zealand had no say as to where the Tests would be held; the Victorian Croquet Association nominated Melbourne so, in spite of the fact that the last contest had been held there and there was a clause in the conditions stating that the contests should be held in a different country each time, the New Zealand team travelled to that city.

New Zealand players showed great interest in the project and sufficient funds were collected to cover expenses without difficulty, though it must be recorded that Victoria billeted two of the women.

In January, 1930, only three days after the completion of a series of games held in Palmerston North in order to relieve selectors of the embarrassment of choosing team members, the following set forth to do battle for the honour of their Home Land!

A. G. F. Ross (Captain), Canterbury; H. P. Stratton, Hawkes Bay; Archdeacon R. Creed Meredith, Wanganui; Mrs C. Watkins, Hawkes Bay; Mrs E. A. Smith, Canterbury; Mrs W. Cole, Auckland.

The party was met upon arrival in Sydney by members of the New South Wales Croquet Association and entertained during the day by that organisation, departing that evening by train for Melbourne.

After a long and tiring journey which lasted until 2 p.m. on the following day and involved a change of trains in the early hours of the morning the travellers arrived at their destination and were hurried to a hotel to take part in the first of the many entertainments the Victorians had arranged for them—a luncheon that lasted from about 2.30 until just after 5 o'clock! They were then escorted to their lodgings and at about 7 p.m. were taken to the Warleigh lawns for an evening of play by electric light. Lobster supper was provided at about ten o'clock and so ended the first day in Melbourne.

1950—ENGLISH AND NEW ZEALAND TEAMS IN NEW ZEALAND.



Back Row: A. D. Heenan (N.Z.), C. Watkins (N.Z.), A. G. F. Ross (Captain, N.Z.), D. Hamilton-Miller (Captain, England), H. O. Hicks (England).

Front Row: Mrs C. Bryan (N.Z., Referee in Charge), Mrs W. H. Kirk (N.Z.), Mrs W. Kingsford (England), Miss M. Claughton (N.Z.), C. Bryan (N.Z.), J. W. Solomon (England). In Front Holding Shield: W. H. Kirk (N.Z., President).

The three Tests took about four weeks to play off and during that time Melbourne Croquet players excelled themselves in their efforts to make the visit a happy one in spite of the fact that Australia gave our team a sound beating. The Australian team consisted of five men and one woman as follows: Mrs Miller and Messrs Miller, Windsor, McCleery, Witherow and Crabb; all of these players came from Melbourne and proved themselves too strong for our representatives though many of the matches were well contested.

New Zealand won one match in each Test. In the first Stratton and Mrs Watkins beat the Champion pair of Victoria, Mr and Mrs Miller; in the second A. G. F. Ross beat McCleery, and in the third Stratton and Ross beat the Millers.

At the end of the series the New Zealand captain had the privilege of holding the Shield in his hands for a few minutes, after which he handed it back to the Captain of the Australian side. The party returned to New Zealand from Melbourne to the Bluff; they had not won the Shield but had succeeded in "putting New Zealand on the International Croquet Map".

A. G. ROSS

The 1950-51 Test Matches England (Holders) Versus New Zealand

PLAYED IN NEW ZEALAND

By Ada Kirk

As stated in Mr Reckitt's article, "England in the Tests", New Zealand hoped to stage the MacRobertson Shield Test matches as part of the Centennial attractions in 1940, but the projected visit of the English players was necessarily cancelled.

When croquet once more resumed its normal course after the war, New Zealand extended an invitation to England to visit our shores, and issued a challenge to play for the Shield. England, depleted of players and lawns as she was, sportingly accepted the challenge, and arranged to send a team of five players and one reserve. The team was: Mr D. Hamilton-Miller (Captain), Mr H. Hicks, Mr E. Ward-Petley, Mr John Solomon, Mrs W. Kingsford, (Reserve) Mrs T. H. Ozanne. The New Zealand team was: Mr A. G. F. Ross (Captain), Mr A. D. Heenan, Mr C. Watkins, Mr F. C. Bryan, Miss M. Claughton, (reserve) Mrs W. H. Kirk.

The English team arrived in Wellington on November 6th, one of the coldest and wettest days that Wellington could produce. They were met at the ship by Mr W. H. Kirk (President of the N.Z.C.C.) and a number of Executive members and friends. An official welcome luncheon followed. Due to an alteration in sailing dates after the Test itinerary had been approved, four of the players arrived in Wellington on the 6th instead of at Auckland at a later date, where the other two members of the party, Messrs Hamilton-Miller and E. Ward-Petley joined them. This meant that the four players who landed in Wellington had to travel to Auckland to play in the first Test, commencing on November 27th.

The Wellington Croquet Association, and all other Associations en route to Auckland, rose to the occasion as croquet players always do, and did their utmost to make the visitors welcome. In return, the English played exhibition games which delighted their hosts.

The First Test

Brilliant sunshine favoured the opening where speeches of welcome were delivered by the Mayor, Sir John Allum, and the N.Z.C.C. President, Mr W. H. Kirk. The Mt. Hobson lawns were lined with spectators, many seated on the ground. The number of onlookers was estimated at 800. Two doubles were played the first day. Hamilton-Miller and Hicks versus Ross and Heenan, the latter pair playing very well to win two games in the rubber of three. Solomon and Ward-Petley won against Bryan and Miss Claughton in two straight games.

2nd Day—Two sets of singles were played, both being decided in two straight games; Solomon defeated Watkins to score for England, Miss Claughton maintaining New Zealand's equality, by defeating Ward-Petley.

3rd Day—Next morning, a crowd of almost 1,000 assembled to witness the final day's play. With the score two all, the tension had reached a high pitch and enthusiasts from afar had travelled many miles for the high-light of New Zealand's croquet history. Picnic baskets and thermos flasks helped to cope with the strain on the kitchen facilities.

Play was exciting, the game between Hicks and Ross attracting a large gallery. Both players opened cautiously, then, after Hicks had made a break to 4 back, Ross hit in a splendid shot, which gained him the victory in the 1st game. Hicks, however, with his long roquets and beautiful rhythm, took the next two games.

Heenan had a best of three tussle with Hamilton-Miller, but emerged triumphant in the third game.

Miss Claughton defeated Ward-Petley in two straight games, bringing New Zealand's total to 4 games to England's 3.

Second Test, Wellington

Weather conditions were unfavourable, the first day's play being marred by a high wind, which affected the players, and had an effect on the attendance of spectators, who, although present in goodly numbers, fell short of the crowds at Auckland. Two doubles were played, or, rather, commenced, the top one taking until 4 p.m. the following day to complete. As the "*Dominion*" printed in black headlines next morning, "Play by the top four in the second croquet test between England and New Zealand at Lower Hutt yesterday was very poor."

All players broke down at the hoops, and the game took five hours to complete. For England, players were H. O. Hicks and D. Hamilton-Miller. A. G. F. Ross and A. D. Heenan represented New Zealand.

The second game of the rubber will be played today."

Play in the lower four was much more interesting, and the result was always in doubt. E. Ward-Petley and J. W. Solomon finally beat C. Bryan and C. Watkins in the first game 26-25. In the second game Solomon played brilliantly, and the English pair won 26-9.

Second Day—The unfinished double opened with a battle of tactics, Ross and Heenan finally winning owing in large measure to Heenan's excellent long shooting. The third and final game, after a prolonged struggle, resulted in a win for New Zealand.

C. Bryan defeated Mrs Kingsford in two straight games, Solomon and Watkins one game each at close of play.

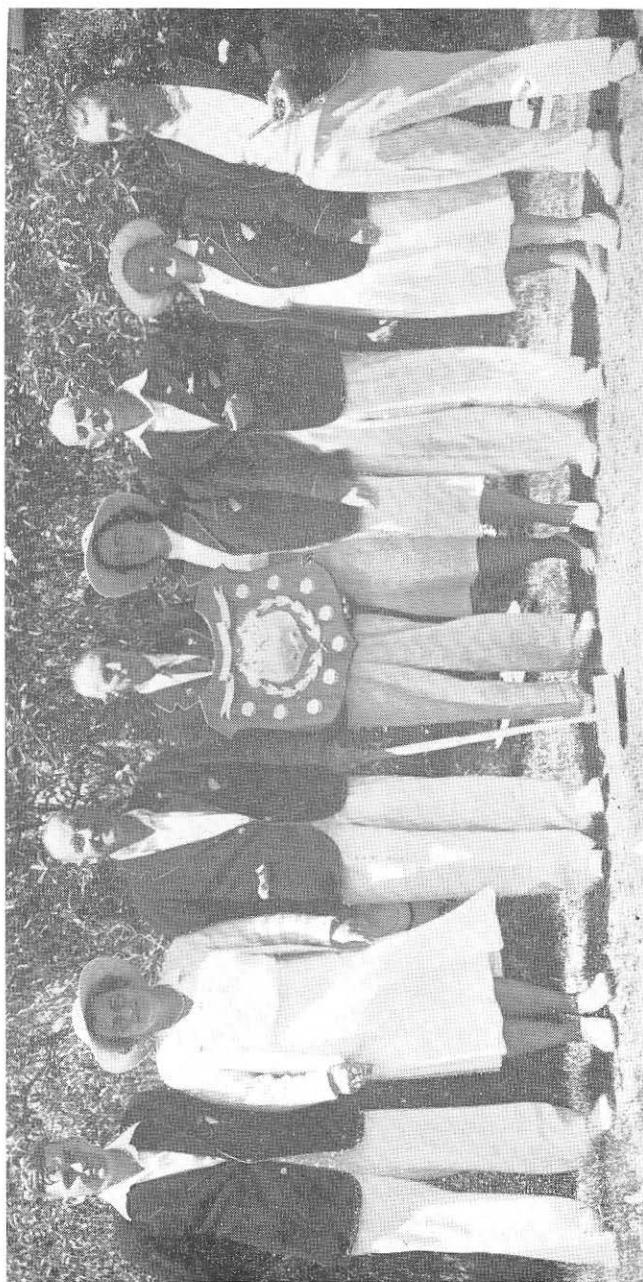
3rd Day—Weather conditions wet and miserable, showers persisting most of the day. Watkins won the third game from Solomon. Miss Claughton defeated Ward-Petley by a good margin 26-11, 26-18. Heenan played two splendid games against Hamilton-Miller, the score being 26-5, 26-1. Heenan played perfect strokes, and his breaks were faultless.

The match between Hicks and Ross was a pleasure to watch. Both played outstanding croquet, Hicks proving the victor in spite of having been pegged out in the second game. Nothing daunted, he hit in, and made a fine 3-ball break to finish. In spite of heavy rain at times most of the players made all-round breaks, and it was no uncommon sight to witness what seemed a certain victory turned to defeat when the opponent got control, making a complete round break.

Final result—New Zealand 5 games, England 2 games.

To celebrate New Zealand's first winning of the International Trophy, Mr and Mrs Kirk entertained both teams and officials to a supper party.

1950—THE NEW ZEALAND TEAM



From Left: A. D. Heenan, Mrs F. C. Bryan (Referee), C. Watkins, W. H. Kirk, President, N.Z.C.C., Miss M. Claughton, A. G. F. Ross (Captain), Mrs W. H. Kirk, F. C. Bryan,

Third Test, Dunedin

Good crowds of spectators witnessed the play in the 3rd Test in spite of the fact that the winners of the Shield had been determined. Otago players were interested to see the visitors play, and were in no way disappointed.

Ross was the only one of the New Zealand players who struck form, and his singles match against Hicks was the highlight of the Test. The three games were closely contested, Hicks winning the first. Ross played splendidly to win the next two. Score, 17-26, 26-21, 26-23. A most exciting match.

Ross and Watkins won their doubles match, but Heenan and Bryan lost to Hicks and Solomon. Solomon and Heenan played an interesting single, which could have meant victory to either side, but Solomon played the steadier game to win 26-17, 26-21.

Both Miss Claughton, playing against Hamilton Miller, and Mrs Kirk, playing against Mrs Kingsford, failed to strike form. In both games, after the opponent was left with one ball, these two players considerably improved their position, but good long shots played by both Hamilton-Miller and Mrs Kingsford respectively, won the two games for England.

Result, England 4 games, New Zealand 2 games.

At the close of play Mr D. Hamilton-Miller (Captain, English team) formally presented the Shield to Mr A. Ross (Captain, New Zealand team).

A farewell dinner was given the teams in Dunedin as some players were not going on to compete in the New Zealand Championships at Christchurch. Hicks, Solomon and Mrs Kingsford entered the Dominion tournament, with marked success. Solomon won the New Zealand Open Championship, with Hicks runner-up. As partners, they also won the New Zealand Doubles Championship. The meteoric rise of Solomon during the tour was remarkable.

The tour was a marked success and fostered the International spirit amongst the players of New Zealand. It stimulated interest amongst the general public, and, more than anything hitherto in the history of the game in New Zealand, helped to rid the public mind of the idea that the game was played by women only, and elderly ones at that.

During a sight-seeing trip, as guests of the Nelson Association, two of the English players were involved in a motor-car accident. As a result, Mr Ward-Petley, not severely injured, but suffering from shock, did not play in the 3rd Test. Their reserve, Mrs A. H. Ozanne, was rather severely injured and had to be admitted to the Nelson hospital. A very unfortunate occurrence.



1956—Farewell Function given by the Prime Minister (the late Sir Sidney Holland) to members of the team prior to their departure for England.

Left to Right: Mrs W. H. Kirk, W. H. Kirk (Manager), A. G. F. Ross (Captain), The Prime Minister, G. D. Rowling, Mrs C. Watkins, C. Watkins, Miss I. Wainwright, Mrs C. McKenzie-Smart.

1956—THE NEW ZEALAND TEAM IN ENGLAND.



Back Row (from Left): A. G. F. Ross (Captain), W. H. Kirk (Manager), C. Watkins, G. Rowling.

Front Row: Miss I. Wainwright, Mrs W. H. Kirk, Mrs G. McKenzie-Smart, Mrs C. Watkins.

The 1956 Test Series Played in England

By Ada Kirk

When the English players sailed away from New Zealand in 1951, they took with them a promise that a return visit would be made as soon as it was practicable. Preparations to honour this promise began almost immediately, and in April, 1956, the "Kiwi" contingent set sail for England to play five Tests for the MacRobertson Trophy, and one representative match, versus South of England.

The New Zealand team was comprised of: Mr A. G. F. Ross (Captain), Mr C. Watkins, Mrs C. Watkins, Mr G. Rowling, Miss I. Wainwright, Mrs G. McKenzie-Smart and Mrs W. H. Kirk. Mr W. H. Kirk (Manager) was responsible for the safe transit of the Shield, which, by this time, was becoming a seasoned traveller.

A warm welcome awaited the New Zealand party at Southampton, and again at Waterloo station, from old friends, and new ones that until then had been just a name in "Croquet". A welcome dinner was a highlight, as was a match day held at Roehampton, where the visitors were made honorary members of the Club for the duration of their stay. Hurlingham Club also extended membership privileges, and, at a later date, gave a dinner party. Speeches at this function were well up to the British standard with their traditional humour.

The English Championships, Men's and Women's Singles and Doubles (the Gold Caskets) were held prior to the Tests, and the New Zealand team had a good opportunity to become used to changed conditions.

A. G. F. Ross reached the final in the Men's Championship, but was defeated by H. O. Hicks, the holder. Mrs Kirk won the Women's Championship, with Miss Wainwright as runner-up. G. Rowling and Mrs Mackenzie-Smart won the Doubles, with C. Watkins and Mrs Watkins runners-up.

First Test, played at Southwick

Before the opening, the seven New Zealand players and Mr Kirk were presented with a handsome medal, a British lion's head, silver, set in a surround of blue enamel, by the Croquet Association.

The lawns were in first-class order. On the first two days there were intermittent showers; the final day was perfect. There was one triple-peel, beautifully executed by John Solomon, in the doubles against Ross and Miss Wainwright. E. P. Cotter, Solomon's partner, made to 4-back early in the game; Ross and Miss Wainwright failing to hit in, Solomon engineering the "triple" from an awkward position, finished the game in 1 hour.

1956—THE NEW ZEALAND TEAM AT WELLINGTON PRIOR TO DEPARTURE FOR ENGLAND



From Left: W. H. Kirk (President, N.Z. Croquet Council, Manager), Mrs W. H. Kirk, A. G. F. Ross (Captain), C. Watkins, Miss I. Wainwright, Mrs G. McKenzie-Smart, Mrs C. Watkins, G. D. Rowling.

M. B. Reckitt and Dr Wiggins won the first game from G. Rowling and Mrs Mackenzie-Smart, but, after a tussle, the New Zealand pair won the second, and quite comfortably, the third.

The Watkins double against Major Stone and L. Kirk-Greene was a disaster for New Zealand. Watkins missed a 6 yard peg-out, and England won by the narrow margin of 1 point.

In the Singles, Ross and Cotter both played well, and their 3 game rubber was an exhibition of skill and strategy. Ross won the first game, and made a fair bid to win the second; an unfortunate failure at 2-back was his downfall. Cotter had a comfortable win in the third game.

G. Rowling made short work of his first game against Major Stone, but in the two succeeding games Stone had it all his own way, winning the third game in 50 minutes 26-0.

Mrs Watkins had an easy victory over M. Reckitt, who failed to strike form.

J. Solomon and C. Watkins opened their match with cat and mouse tactics, but eventually Solomon got control, and had an easy win. Watkins in the second game made an all-round break, his partner ball on 3-back, Solomon's clips both for the first hoop. Solomon hit in, made an "all rounder" and pegged Watkins out. A wiring game followed, but Solomon gave Watkins a good chance when he failed at 4-back. Watkins, however, "fluffed" his hoop at 3-back, and so lost the game.

In a 3 game rubber, with in and out play, Miss Wainwright playing well in the latter part, defeated Dr Wiggins.

L. Kirk-Greene, who hit remarkably well, defeated Mrs Mackenzie-Smart in two straight games.

Result, England 6 games, New Zealand 3 games.

Second Test played at Nottingham

This Test stands out in the New Zealand's memory as the unfortunate place where C. Watkins collapsed with a heart attack, and had to be taken to hospital. The kindness of the Nottingham players who visited him there, and gave hospitality to Mrs Watkins, will never be forgotten.

England, in this Test, was strengthened by Humphrey Hicks, who, with Mrs Rotherham, replaced M. Reckitt and L. Kirk-Greene. The Test opened with Doubles. E. P. Cotter and J. Solomon playing brilliantly against A. Ross and Mrs Mackenzie-Smart. In the first game, the New Zealand pair scored 12 points, but the second was a nil score, and the match, commenced at 10 a.m., was finished before lunch. Test officials hurriedly arranged an exhibition game to fill the lawn.

Mrs Watkins and Mrs Kirk put up a good fight in the first game against H. Hicks and Mrs Rotherham, but were defeated by 5 points. In the second game they were quite outclassed, the English pair winning in two breaks.

G. Rowling and Miss Wainwright played well against Major Stone and Dr Wiggins, losing the second game by 2 points after winning the first. The third they won by a good margin.

Ross struck good form against Hicks, after losing the first game by 18 points. In the final game Hicks failed to score.

Mrs Watkins took one game from Solomon, but failed to score in the second, and gained only 4 in the third.

Major Stone, with four all-round breaks, completely out-classed Mrs Kirk in both games, 26-1, 26-2.

Dr Wiggins and G. Rowling were very well matched. Rowling won the first game, but failed to score in the second. The third game was a tussle, Wiggins winning by 3 points.

Mrs Rotherham had won the first game against Miss Wainwright, and had lost the second by 2 points. The third was in progress when heavy rain set in, and, the result being already decided, it was abandoned.

Result, England 6 games, New Zealand 2 games, 1 unfinished.

Third Test played at Hurlingham

Heavy rain fell during this Test; the second day was cold and wet from start to finish. It was extraordinary how beautifully the lawns played. In New Zealand, such rain would have flooded the greens and made play impossible.

Once again Doubles were played on the first day. A. Ross and Mrs Mackenzie-Smart made a bid for the first game against E. P. Cotter and J. Solomon, but the latter pair overtook them and left their score at 17 points. In the second game, Cotter and Solomon, making good breaks, won easily by 22 points.

G. Rowling and Miss Wainwright scored 9 and 8 points respectively in their two games against H. Hicks and Dr Wiggins.

The third double, Mrs Watkins and Mrs Kirk versus Major Stone and L. Kirk-Greene was closer contested, the New Zealand women winning one game, so taking the rubber to three.

In the singles, G. Rowling had a good chance to take a game from John Solomon, but he landed in trouble from an unfortunate peg-out which gave Solomon the game. From this lucky break, Solomon recovered his customary fine touch, and won the second game with little effort.

Once again Major Stone played with extreme accuracy, completing two games against Mrs Watkins with the devastating scores 26-2, 26-0.

Mrs Kirk made a break to 4-back in each game against L. Kirk. Greene, who was on top form with his roquet shots, hitting in the lift shot each time and making good breaks. Mrs Kirk got one more innings in the second game from which she scored three

more points when Kirk-Greene made the wrong hoop. The innings was short lived, however, as Kirk-Greene did not miss a single roquet. These 6 games to England's credit, decided the fate of the Shield. This, however, did not affect the interest shown in the final day's play, nor in the two subsequent Test matches.

3rd Day—The game between A. Ross and E. P. Cotter attracted the greater gallery, and very good play was witnessed. Cotter opened in his most brilliant mood with an immediate break. Ross hit in a fine shot, and was all set to do likewise, but stuck at a hoop, from which advantage Cotter soon finished the game. In the second game, Cotter, after making one point failed in a hammer shot. Ross played a fine game, to level the score. In the third game Cotter played a classic triple-peel with beautiful precision. The scores were 26-4, 1-26, 26-0. Test croquet, beyond doubt.

H. Hicks and Dr Wiggins accounted for Miss Wainwright and Mrs Mackenzie-Smart with identical scores, 26-6 in all four games.

Final result, England 9 games, New Zealand 0 games.

It was interesting to note that this Test did not commence until 11 a.m. daily as the games were being finished too early for the spectators.

Fourth Test played at Roehampton

Although play each day did not commence until 11 a.m. many games were finished by early afternoon. Singles were played the first day, and E. P. Cotter played two perfect games against G. Rowling, the scores speaking for themselves, 26-1, 26-0. Cotter's play was so good, the balls coming to rest in exact spots, that it appeared mechanical.

Mrs Watkins won the first game from Dr Wiggins, but lost the next two.

W. P. Ormerod, appearing as English representative for the first time, won both games from Mrs Mackenzie-Smart, although she played well in the second, gaining 22 points.

Doubles day followed, with Cotter, partnered by Solomon, still in fine form. A. Ross and Mrs Watkins scored 0 and 2 respectively against these two croquet "giants".

G. Rowling and Mrs Mackenzie-Smart, after losing the first game, played well to defeat Dr Wiggins and Mrs Rotherham in the next two.

Major Stone and W. Ormerod accounted for Miss Wainwright and Mrs Kirk in two games, after in and out play, earned by good roquets in the first game.

The final day's singles were yet another victory for England, A. Ross, Miss Wainwright and Mrs Kirk losing to J. Solomon, Major Stone and Mrs Rotherham respectively, in two games.

Result, England 8 games, New Zealand 1 game.

1956—ENGLISH AND NEW ZEALAND TEAMS



Back Row: W. Ormerod (England), F. Stone (England), C. Watkins (N.Z.), R. Wiggins (England), G. Rowling (N.Z.), J. W. Solomon (England). Front Row: Mrs C. Watkins (N.Z.), Mrs E. Rotherham (England), A. G. F. Ross (Captain, N.Z.), E. P. Cotter (Captain, England), Mrs G. McKenzie-Smart (N.Z.), Mrs W. H. Kirk (N.Z.), Miss I. Wainwright (N.Z.).

Fifth Test played at Budleigh Salterton

Mrs Watkins, through ill-health, was unable to play in this Test, and, in order to field a team of 6, Mrs Rowling, who as Miss Claughton, had represented New Zealand in 1950-51, and had accompanied her husband to England, was available, and came into the team on short notice.

Play began with Doubles; A. Ross and G. Rowling played J. Solomon and M. Reckitt. The first game had an unusual opening, all four balls being left in line along the boundary near the 4th corner. From this interesting situation, Ross made a 4-ball break to 4-back. The English pair, however, soon took control, and won the game by 12 points. The second game had a good gallery, but did not provide anything spectacular in and out play again resulting in a win for England by 10 points.

In spite of Mrs McKenzie-Smart hitting 3 out of 4 long roquets, she and Mrs Rowling went down to Dr Wiggins and Mrs Rotherham 26-17, 26-4.

Mrs Kirk and Miss Wainwright combined well in their match against Major Stone and W. P. Ormerod. The first game was very exciting, both sides hitting in well to change the complexion of things several times, the New Zealand pair finally winning by 3 points. In the second game, Mrs Kirk set out on a triple peel, peeling 4-back and penultimate, but failing at rover. Miss Wainwright in the next turn made her remaining hcop, and pegged out 26-15. This was the first occasion in this Test series that a New Zealand double had been won in two straight games.

Miss Wainwright played well in her singles against Dr Wiggins winning the first game 26-14, losing the second 26-1. Dr Wiggins, in this game, played beautifully, making no errors. The third game could well have gone to England, if an enemy ball near the boundary, had not been hit plumb in the centre by a full length roquet by Miss Wainwright. From this very fine shot, she finished the match, 26-13.

Solomon and Ross played well in two games, each making initial breaks to 4-back in both games. Solomon in the two games was the steadier player and won 26-10, 26-9.

Mrs McKenzie-Smart almost won the first game from M. Reckitt, who hit in a long shot when she was for the peg and took the game. The next game went to New Zealand 26-15, but Reckitt played well to win the third, 26-10.

The third day saw W. Ormerod in good form beating Mrs Rowling 26-2, 26-0.

Mrs Kirk and Mrs Rotherham had an exciting first game, Mrs Rotherham hitting in magnificently to win 26-22. In the second game, after some in and out play, Mrs Rotherham gained control and won easily 26-9.

1956



Civic Luncheon given the New Zealand team by the Lord Mayor of Nottingham, where the Second Test Match was played.
Left to Right: W. H. Kirk, G. D. Rowling, Mrs W. H. Kirk, The Lady Mayoress, The Lord Mayor, Miss I. Wainwright,
Mrs G. McKenzie-Smart, A. G. F. Ross, Mrs C. Watkins.

The last match, G. Rowling versus Major Stone, produced some very fine croquet and was watched by a large crowd of spectators. Stone won the first game 26-10, but the second was dominated by Rowling, who played two beautiful breaks, to win 26-2. In the third game, Rowling attempted a triple peel, which failed, and Major Stone made a splendid 4-ball break, exercising great control to win 26-14. In this game, he shewed his versatility, playing with the finest touch. Quite a contrast to the famous Stone "basher" strokes.

Thus ended the play in the 1956 series of MacRobertson Shield Tests.

Representative Match, New Zealand v. South of England, played at Eastbourne.

This was a one-day match, and consisted of 3 doubles and 6 singles. England staged four of her Test players, E. P. Cotter (Captain), H. O. Hicks, L. Kirk-Greene, M. B. Reckitt, G. Rothwell and Miss D. Lintern completed the team. Mrs McKenzie-Smart had by this time left for home, and C. Watkins and Mrs Watkins, unable to play on account of ill health, New Zealand also fielded 4 Test players, A. G. F. Ross (Captain), G. Rowling, Miss Wainwright and Mrs Kirk. Mrs Rowling and W. H. Kirk completed the team.

Cotter and Hicks had a close game against Ross and Miss Wainwright, but eventually won 26-22. W. H. Kirk and Mrs Kirk won against Kirk-Greene and Rothwell 26-12. The third double, G. Rowling and M. Rowling against M. Reckitt and Miss Lintern was unfinished.

Singles — Ross and Cotter had another excellent game; the tables being turned. Ross won 26-22.

Rowling played well to defeat Hicks 26-18. Kirk-Greene gave Miss Wainwright little chance and won 26-4. Mrs Kirk had some strong opposition in Reckitt, who hit well in the beginning of the game, but she emerged the winner 26-13. W. H. Kirk and Rothwell both made breaks, Kirk pegging out with Rothwell at 17 points. Miss Lintern and Mrs Rowling staged a long, close game, the issue in doubt until Miss Lintern gained the victory 26-23.

Result, New Zealand 5 games, England 3 games, 1 unfinished.

Farewell Dinner to the New Zealand Team

Sir Compton Mackenzie journeyed from Edinburgh to London to take the Chair at this important event. After the repast, the assembled company were entertained by several scintillating speeches. Sir Compton presented each member of the New Zealand team, and Mr Kirk, with an autographed copy of one of his famous books. These, with the medals presented at the first Test, are treasured souvenirs of the 1956 Test Series.

1963 — Tests

Australia v. N.Z. at Invercargill, January 3rd, 4th and 5th

Doubles

.....	V	.....
.....	V	.....
.....	V	.....

Singles

.....	V

England v. N.Z. at Dunedin, January 10th, 11th and 12th

Doubles

.....	V	.....
.....	V	.....
.....	V	.....

Singles

.....	V

Australia v. England at Christchurch, January 17th, 18th and 19th

Doubles

.....	V	.....
.....	V	.....
.....	V	.....

Singles

.....	V

Australia v. N.Z. at Wellington, January 24th, 25 and 26th

Doubles

.....	V	.....
.....	V	.....
.....	V	.....

Singles

.....	V

England v. N.Z. at Napier, January 31st, February 1st and 2nd.

Doubles

.....	V	.....
.....	V	.....
.....	V	.....

Singles

.....	V

England v. Australia at Palmerston N., February 7th, 8th and 9th.

Doubles

.....	V	.....
.....	V	.....
.....	V	.....

Singles

.....	V

Australia v. N.Z. at New Plymouth, February 14th, 15th and 16th.

Doubles

.....	V	.....
.....	V	.....
.....	V	.....

Singles

.....	V

England v. N.Z. at Hamilton, February 21st, 22nd and 23rd.

Doubles

.....	V	.....
.....	V	.....
.....	V	.....

Singles

.....	V

England v. Australia at Whangarei, February 26th, 27th and 28th.

Doubles

.....	V	.....
.....	V	.....
.....	V	.....

Singles

.....	V

Published by the New Zealand Croquet Council, 31 Richards Avenue, Papanui,
and printed by A. & C. Arts Ltd., 269 Durham Street, Christchurch.