

## TWO (croquet) VIRGINS RETURN FROM COUNTY WEEK HIGHLY SATISFIED!

As many of you will know Adrian and Cliff had been selected to make their debut in the Inter Counties Championship this year. This event, involving 22 County Teams, has been described as the largest festival of croquet in the world for it involves approximately 150 players – the vast majority of whom are A Class Standard – competing intensely over 4 days on lawns at Eastbourne and Southwick.

Naturally both of us were a little nervous playing in such illustrious company without the benefit of any bisques. However we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves and generally played our part in getting our ball to '4-back', thereby giving our partners a chance to convert the situation to victory!

Our captain, Martin Grainger-Brown, was an excellent leader and was always encouraging us. He was particularly impressed with Adrian's 'composure and break-building' (his own words) and felt that we had both acquitted ourselves admirably.



The highlight of the week for me was my contribution late in the final game of the first day. Time had been called and I had only managed 3 hoops in 3 hours play – and one of those was a generous peel by our opponents! As I approached the lawn I knew that I had to make – in this final turn- a 10 yard roquet and take my ball from hoop 4 to the peg and then peg out my ball to make the scores level! Against all the odds I achieved precisely that and so my partner (Paul Swaffield) had a slender chance of completing an unlikely victory. He did have one attempt at a difficult hoop but sadly there was no fairy tale ending!

At the end of 4 days play Warwickshire-with only 2 wins out of 10 matches- found themselves in last position and therefore, even though we had achieved better results than in 2011, we retained 'the Wooden Spoon'!

However both Adrian and myself both feel we have benefitted immensely from the experience and would dearly love to play again next year. And, if selected, we know a very quirky hotel - somewhat resembling Fawltry Towers - that we would again choose for our accommodation!

Cliff Daniel