



Cygnets

December 2018



Offspring of SWAN
The e-Newsletter for the South West Federation of Croquet Clubs
www.swfcroquet.org.uk

*We send Cygnets to our club contacts and ask them to pass them on to individual club members - ideally also putting a hard copy on the club noticeboard.
Cygnets is also available shortly after publication on-line on our website.*

Please send your queries, suggestions and feedback to us: lindawithani@hotmail.com

Hello everyone

We had a really well-attended AGM in the middle of November - with two thirds of our member clubs attending, we must be the envy of many an AGM.

We heard about the many achievements, said goodbye and thank you to some good friends; said hello and welcome to some new ones; and congratulations to the winning League teams.

Those who could stay til the afternoon, participated in a workshop reflecting on the drivers and barriers to club development and sharing some excellent ideas.
Meet the new committee and read about the workshop in this edition.

The draft minutes, together with the new League rules for AC and GC will be on the website soon, if not there already.

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New GC Rules: 1st March 2019

This topic caused quite a stir at the AGM and members of the committee have been working hard to find out what's going on and to ensure players in the South West are properly briefed about these. Brian Wilson, our Chair, explains what's happening:

The CA agreed back in July to introduce the revised WCF rules for GC from 1st March 2019 - a decision that was formally endorsed at their Council meeting in October. However, to date there has been very little communication between the CA and its members and no formal notice to clubs or Federations that we are aware of. Those members who have heard about this do not feel they are properly informed about the changes and are seeking clarification.

*The SWF is agreed that we have a key role in ensuring our members receive this information, and while we take the view that this is the responsibility of the CA, we are not confident this will actually happen and have therefore been planning **update seminars** in the region. At the same time, we are seeking financial support from the CA with this.*

*These are planned for **early Spring 2019** - dates and venues are yet to be arranged but we will give you as much notice as we can for these and may need to limit places to ensure that as many clubs as possible are able to have a presence.*

Cheltenham Croquet Close will be hosting a seminar on the rules changes on 16th February. Kevin Ham will be running this. Attendance is free - tea and coffee will be available for £1.00.

A limited number of places will be available for non-Cheltenham members - so please contact the Secretary, Darryl Whitehead, darryl.whitehead@gmail.com if you are interested in going. A more detailed programme will be sent to those attending.

There will also be an **article in the next Croquet Gazette** and the **SW Croquet Academy is running a 'teach in' on 28th March** - see p9 for details.



AGM Workshop Summary

Thank you everyone who took part in this lively session. It arose from discussions within the SWF Committee as they reflected on the respective but interlocking roles of the Development Officers, Coaching Liaison, GC Advisor and AC Advisor. This last role had been unfilled for some time.

The SWF Committee wants to develop a much closer working relationship with clubs and recognizes the social aspect of the game and club life. It believes it should work towards involving all types of club and understand individual requirements.



The workshop presented an opportunity to reflect on some of these issues and the role of the SWF in this.

We started out by posing the following questions:

- Where do you want to 'be' in 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 years' time?
- What are the main barriers / problems you face?
- How can the South West Federation support your club?

Numerous issues that need to be addressed were mentioned and many clubs shared examples of actions they had taken to make improvements:

- Recruitment and keeping members - there are differing needs and markets across the region
- The perceived public image of Croquet - rich, posh people who wear whites!
- How to reach, attract and keep 'younger' players
- Using Taster Days to attract new members
- Increasing participation in club activity and competitive play
- Guidance as to how to introduce AC to GC players
- Developing more integration between AC and GC players within clubs
- Finance
- Maintenance/improvement of lawns
- Availability of coaching
- Competitive play - it's not for everyone
- Using publicity and the media effectively e.g. creating interesting stories
- Use of the internet and social media, including web sites



There was widespread interest in exploring ways that clubs might achieve their goals:

- Working together and learning from other clubs
- Identifying ways of supporting geographically isolated clubs
- Learning from other sports

It was also noted that clubs would benefit from more effective marketing at a national level e.g:

- Effective targeting of potential croquet players e.g. croquet 'it makes you think'
- It is a sport that welcomes everyone
- It is an affordable sport

Clubs were urged to enthuse their members to take up standard membership of the CA - this costs them nothing as it may be done through their membership of their own club.

Delegates were reminded that under forthcoming CA governance changes, local representatives to Council would be elected by CA members - no membership: no vote

The way forward:

We only had time to scratch the surface of these complex issues and the SWF committee would be very pleased to receive further thoughts and ideas on this.

Our next committee meeting is on 2nd February 2019 so if you have any further thoughts, ideas, suggestions, experiences to share - please send them to us. We can try to get a Cygnet out in January to share these more widely.

Some things to think about:

- Would a visit from someone with relevant experience be helpful?
 - What would you wish to explore with them?
- Would it be helpful to divide the Federation into smaller areas?
 - Perhaps there is scope for creating more local hubs



We look forward to hearing from you.

Brian Wilson brian@europassociates.co.uk 07970 922867

Role of CA handicappers in GC League games

This was raised in general discussion about the GC League rules and we undertook to seek views via Cygnet.

As they stand the GC League Rules state in Section 4e:

A CA handicapper, who is a member of a team, may not alter the handicap of a member of the opposition without that player's consent.

The query is: should this be included as it runs counter to the powers of a CA handicapper?

Do let us have your views - it may be that a club, or the Committee, may wish to submit a proposal to next year's AGM on this topic.



We're all ears!

Welcome to the Committee ...

Brian Wilson is our new Chair. He started croquet in 2008 and has twice come 3rd in the Golf Croquet All England GC Handicap Tournament His club is Camerton and Peasedown - his GC handicap is 3 (going on 4!) and had just started AC (working to improve from 22!!)



Brian went to University at Sheffield - he taught for 2 years, then went into industry (head of Technology, Quality and Purchasing). He moved into Management Consultancy concentrating on company turnaround, went back into Further and Higher Education ending up as Head of Marketing and Funding. He started his own consultancy focussing on EU and other competitive funding. He is now retired, but is now more involved than before in his favourite sport (croquet), not forgetting music (singing with 3 choral societies), beekeeping and gardening. 'One day I'll find out what I want to do!!'

Brian has recently finished his 4 years as Chair of CA Marketing Committee and has been re-elected to the CA Council

Brian is proud to be South West Federation Chair. "My objective is 'more people, more clubs playing more croquet'. 'Croquet is for everyone - croquet is what you want it to be' "

First of all, may I thank you for allowing me to be your Chairman - following on from Marcus, I have some 'big shoes' to fill.

My objective is simple - more clubs, more people playing all codes of croquet

We sometimes do not appreciate that Croquet is a growing sport - where everyone can take part - equal opportunities - no need for expensive equipment and so on.

Following the feedback from the workshop at the AGM, Brian will be leading a team to visit clubs to discuss their future and barriers to success. 'We will then look to see how the South West Federation can help your club'

'The South West Federation is very lucky to have a Committee with such a wide range of skills and experience - people who give their time for croquet. But let us not forget the myriad of people who give so much of their time for croquet and their clubs - without them, nothing would happen'

Stephen Custance-Baker is our new League Secretary. He first played croquet in the 1950s on his grandparents' lawn and continued to play garden croquet for the next 50 years.

It was not until 2008 that Stephen decided to take it seriously and joined Taunton Deane Croquet Club to play AC, starting as a 14-handicapper. He tried GC in 2009 and was given a handicap of 7. Since then his handicaps have reduced to their current levels of 0 (AC) and -2 (GC) as a result of playing for several club teams and, in recent years, in more and more tournaments in both codes. In recent years he has represented Somerset in the GC Inter-counties competition.



He qualified as a Club Coach and a GC referee in 2015, then added Grade 1 Coach qualifications for AC and GC and AC referee in 2016 and Grade 2 (Senior) Golf Coach in 2017. In 2018 he was appointed as a CA Handicapper in AC and GC.

He is a Lead Coach with the South West Croquet Academy and has given 1-day courses for High Handicap and Improver GC players and also gave the inaugural 1-day course for Short Croquet, which has an increasing following in the South West. At Taunton, Stephen has held three GC Coaching pods which all been well supported and attended by delegates from many of the clubs in the region.

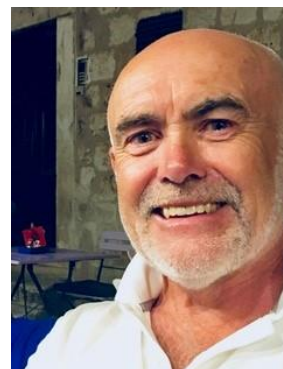
He has won AC trophies at B-level and GC trophies at A-Level at Cheltenham and Ryde in 2017, which enabled him to win the 2017 National GC A-Level Series Trophy. In 2018 he was selected to represent England in the Over-50s GC World Championships in Egypt in October

Although Croquet is now his only sport, Stephen has in the past played many sports at college and club level (tennis, basketball, badminton, table tennis) and in archery he became Somerset County Champion for two years. As a skier, he worked in the Swiss Alps for 3 years as a paramedic skier with the Swiss ski patrol service.

Academically, Stephen was a failed zoologist before finding his niche in statistics and applied maths. He gained a degree and later a PhD in this field and worked as a consulting mathematical modeller until his retirement in 2017. He continues to develop spreadsheets for the recording and analysis of croquet scores and handicaps. His main activities outside croquet are bridge, reading, travel and bird photography. He is married with two daughters and three grandsons.

Paul Francis is our new Development Officer North and is looking forward to helping existing and new clubs.

He trained and worked as an accountant for 12 years mainly helping small/medium sized businesses with financial management. He still teaches - business, economics and accounting - after being a deputy head for many years.



He is a member of Bath CC which he joined in 2009 and has been on the committee since 2011. His main duties there cover the maintenance and improvement of their four lawns. "I play both codes and firmly believe that we will only thrive as a sport if we equally encourage GC and AC! I'm a qualified GC and AC coach and GC referee.

In 2016, with Camerton and Peasedown, we successfully co-hosted the World Team GC Championships. I was on the committee for the event and worked with colleagues to ensure we not only made the event enjoyable for players and spectators but put in place sponsorship, products and marketing to ensure the club made a financial surplus.

I am currently working on our sub-committee to acquire a new clubhouse and ensure Bath Croquet benefits from our neighbour's (Bath Rugby) plans for a new stadium on Bath Recreation Ground."

Handicapping workshop



A further handicapping workshop is being planned for early next year to replace the one at Budleigh which had to be abandoned because of snow. The date and venue will be sent to all clubs when they are confirmed but we are hoping for a date in late March.

Golf Croquet Federations Shield

We received some exciting information from Frances Coleman, a member of the CA's GC Tournaments Committee and Director of The Golf Croquet Federations Shield:

"I am pleased to announce that we are offering a new Inter-Club competition to start in the 2019 season. This will be a golf croquet version of the AC Secretary's Shield to be called 'The Golf Croquet Federations Shield'.

Full competition rules will be published shortly and these will be in keeping with the existing GC Inter-Club competitions.

Each Federation may select one Club to enter this event to be determined by the results of Federation handicap competitions, in any way a Federation decides.

In future years, the holder club may enter in addition to their Federation's selection."

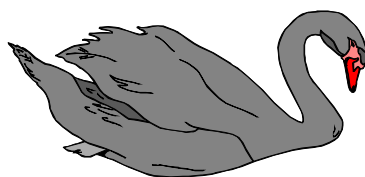


We were asked to identify the eligible club in the South West - this was Abbey who are now in contact with Frances. So, congratulations Abbey and good luck.

SWAN 2019: Content Wanted

Maureen is compiling the 2019 SWAN and is requesting items for inclusion - as soon as possible please. **The final date for submissions is 1st February.** Items received after this cannot be guaranteed inclusion.

"Listed on the next page are some of the usual items - for these to be interesting and accurate I rely on SWF members to supply the facts - I am only the Editor!" says Maureen.



1. **2019 League Captains** - very important for these to be correct - please include the contact details that the relevant people have agreed be published.
2. **News Articles** - e.g. coaching - club development/s - interesting events - notable members in your club - anything of interest to our Croquet community.
3. **Advertisements:** for Club Tournaments, Competitions and Coaching (Charges are: £24/£12 full/half page)
4. **Ideas** - e.g. for increasing club membership
5. **Obituaries**
6. **Photographs**
7. **Quizzes**
8. **Letters to the Editor:** thoughts, limericks, musings and suggestions

Here's wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year
Maureen Smith editor@swfcroquet.org.uk

Croquet Association Awards

CA Diplomas are awarded to people who have given outstanding service to croquet, usually at the club level over a considerable period of time. Playing ability is not important; areas considered include coaching, administration, catering, maintenance, grounds - often a combination of these.

Nominations should be accompanied by a short citation, signed by a club official, and sent to the CA Office by the end of July. For a better chance of success, enthusiastic endorsement by the club committee is valuable! We have had several diplomas awarded in the SWF region in the past few years, to members of both large and small clubs. Please consider making a nomination, it is an excellent way of showing your appreciation of outstanding club members.



Nominations are also open for **Coach of the Year** award and the **Lifetime Coaching** award. The Coach of the Year award normally though not necessarily covers activities wider than a single club, and the lifetime coaching award covers exceptional activity over a long period of time and is not necessarily awarded every year.

Nominations for these awards need to be submitted to the Chair of the CA Coaching Committee by 31 January 2019 - if you are considering a nomination we suggest you discuss this with Richard Jackson in the first instance - he will also advise about CA Diploma applications.

Then there are the CA Club Awards

The CA makes awards biennially in three categories, to clubs that have made exceptional progress in providing a good playing environment over the previous two years.

- **The Townsend Award** for clubs with one or two lawns that has made exceptional progress in providing a good playing environment over the previous two years.
- **The Apps Heley Award** to the club with three or four lawns that has made most progress a national or local level in the last two years.

- **The Millennium Award** to the club with five or more lawns that has made the most progress at national or local level in any two of the previous three years.

These awards are presented at the CA AGM in October, and beside a certificate, a cheque for £250 is given to winning clubs.

Applications for any of these awards should be made to your SWF Development Officer. Form <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?d=330&pup=y> should be downloaded from the CA website and 'convincing' photographs demonstrating the improvements, should be supplied.

The deadline for submission is 1st January 2019 - so if your club is interested in applying, please contact

- Paul Francis in the North: paulwfrancis@icloud.com;
- Adam Wimshurst in the South: a.wimshurst@btinternet.com;

New GC Rules Teach-in 28th March 2019 South West Croquet Academy

In case you haven't heard, a brand-new set of new GC Rules will be introduced on March 1st next year. This new set of Rules will govern club play as well as league and competition play, and there are some major changes being introduced - so you can't afford to ignore them!

As part of its new coaching programme for next year, the Southwest Croquet Academy at Budleigh has arranged for Cliff Jones to do a one-day 'teach-in' on March 28th to explain the dramatic changes being made.

Cliff is one of the foremost GC Referees in the UK, and will not only explain the new Rules, but also discuss how they will affect your play. In addition, Cliff will provide a refresher on other important (but, unchanged) GC Rules. There is a charge of £10, to include tea, coffee, and the famous Budleigh afternoon cake.

If you are a keen GC player, coach or referee, this is a day not to miss! There are 50 places available, but demand is expected to be high, so please book early.

Full details are on the SWCA website: www.southwestcroquetacademy.co.uk

Events at Camerton & Peasedown Club 2019
www.camertonpeasedowncroquet.co.uk

3 April	Wednesday	AC One Ball Tournament	All Hs	9.30 – 5.00	Min £10 in aid of the Alzheimer's Society
30 April	Tuesday	CA "B" Level Series (GC)	H 3-8	9.30 – 5.00	Apply on CA Website –details in Fixture Book.
8 May	Wednesday	GC Improver's Course	H 7-14	9.30 – 4.30	£10pp Coaching notes provided.
11 June	Tuesday	CA "C" Level Series (GC)	H 7+	9.30 – 5.00	Apply on CA Website – details in Fixture Book
3 September	Thursday	GC Open Doubles Tournament	All Hs	9.30 – 5.00	£20 per pair BYO lunch
29 September	Sunday	"64" Challenge Progressive Doubles	All Hs	9.30 – 5.00	£15 pp including Lunch

Members from all SW Fed clubs are welcome to enter any of these events on a first come first served basis. For non CA events please send entries with your name, handicap and cheque to Ros Key-Pugh 8 The Linleys, Bath BA1 2XE or tel: 01225 427525 or email: roskeypugh@yahoo.co.uk

Don't forget to look at the attachment for full details of the SWCA schedule for 2019

That's all for now folks!

