

Cygnet

South West Area Newsletter

Celebrating Croquet Across the Region

Issue 47: April 2024

Well, the season has really started now – despite what the weather might be saying. It's certainly putting our wet-weather gear to the test but hopefully we'll be getting out the factor 50 soon.

Meantime, here's some food for thought.

Have a great season and look out for more from us mid-season – and don't forget to send us your experiences and photos to help us keep in touch.

We start on a very sad note with some memories of Brian Shorney who was such a presence in the South West and further afield. Looking back on some of my early games, I see I first played him in 2005 when he beat me -4. Hey-ho.

Obituary: Brian Shorney

It was a very sad day for the croquet world when Brian Shorney died on 7th February this year. He was involved with and always very interested the SWF including a stint as Chair As Paul Pristavic (Glamorgan CC) reflected: he was a gentleman on and off the lawns.

John Grimshaw (Kington Langley CC) gives us some context to Brian's life.

Brian was a senior civil servant, and, on retirement, moved to Littleton Drew, near Chippenham. Early records for Kington Langley Croquet Club are a little vague, but Brian was certainly a member in 1994, so we believe that he joined the club in the early nineties. We do not know whether he learned to play here but as Jane says "he always seemed to know what he was doing," Jane Hull and Brian were known for their doubles partnership all over the country.

Brian was a member of the KL team that won the SWF federation league in 2000, 2006 and 2008, and in 2001 and 2007 the Secretary's Shield, a national competition for the previous season's regional league winners.

Photo shows the winning team with Brian on the extreme right and Jane Hull in the middle.

Brian joined the Committee at KL in 2003, and was Chairman from 2008 -2010. This was a difficult period for the club, with low membership, but Brian was determined to turn it around, and he and I leafleted the whole village which resulted in a few new members, and the club has looked up ever since.

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Cygnet is emailed to our club contacts who are requested to pass it on to individual club members.
It is also available shortly after publication on our website: www.swfcroquet.org.uk

We welcome queries, suggestions and feedback about Cygnet or any aspect of the SW croquet scene.
Contact: lindawithani@hotmail.com

Around 2010, he decided to build a house in Budleigh Salterton, but did not stay there for any length of time, and moved to Hereford. He remained a member at KL throughout and still represented the club in league matches for some time after this. He was guest of honour at the opening of the re-laid lawns at KL in 2018, and this was the last time that he played at the club, but he still played some away league matches.

Brian's contribution to the KL club cannot be overstated, but he was also involved at SWF and National level, being Chair of CA council for 3 years. He also revitalised the West Midlands Federation after his move to Hereford, and was involved in the development of Eardisley and Garway Croquet Clubs, and was also assisting at a new club in Gorsley.

Brian truly was a "croquet" man and he will be sorely missed by all that knew him.

This tribute from his most recent protégé club, Garway. Brent Watkins writes:

Many of you would have known Brian for many years would have had many battles on the Croquet lawn and would have spent many hours reminiscing about all aspects of life. From our perspective, it was slightly different.

He was pointed out to us as someone who might help via contact in Glamorgan. As it turned out he only lived 7 miles from us and although we had been playing croquet for some years at Garway Brian coming on the scene soon pointed out our many failings. So at the beginning of 2023, we joined the CA/CqE as with anything in life once you've done it it's easy.

But we had no idea of bisques, handicap, play one back or any other back. Pivot, pioneer and rover balls were all a mystery to us. On the plus side what we had been playing was a variation of the CA rules but just six hoops and following the order of colours on the peg. Thanks to Brian's knowledge of the game and contacts this soon changed.

He pointed us in the direction of Cheltenham and under the watchful eye of their coach Sarah Hayes, we soon progressed and played numerous games for Cheltenham, and to Brian's delight this year joined the Southwest Federation as Garway.

Brian not only amazed us with his knowledge and enthusiasm, we found his stamina extraordinary: after a day's play, he would leave a 7 or 8 o'clock at night to drive down to Budleigh Salterton.

The pub being close to our lawn was also a plus and him sipping a pint of cider and having banter with the other players, will always be a good memory sat there with that wry smile on his face

On a personal note him asking me to partner him in a doubles competition at Cheltenham last year, will always be special to me.

Thank you, Brian Shorney. God bless.

Keith Davis of Cheltenham CC remembers:

Reading the news of Brian Shorney's passing was a shock, and very saddening.

Just last year in the autumn months at Cheltenham CC on lawn 8 we were due to play our 'competition' match at 1pm, but because of delays in travelling etc we started late - nearer to

2.30pm. The evenings at that time of year were drawing in fast, and we found that it was getting much darker before 4:00 pm undeterred we battled on.

When the lights of 'East Glos' next door came on, we were rather pleased ... it helped a bit!! When the local resident fox trotted across the lawn a few times, we were distinctly relaxed and philosophical.

We swapped the lead a few times and played excellently well – (on occasions) - and proceeded in our goal of 'one' of us winning the match. We were on the cusp of victory (or defeat) and with the dusk now turned to night black it was Brian who marvellously won the day, pegging out both balls which was carefully observed and agreed. And all in the dark!!

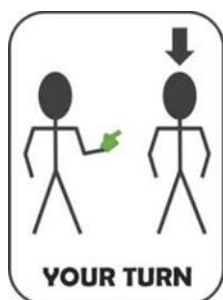
Fond memories indeed Thank you Brian.

Alternate Strokes Doubles in the SWF AC Leagues

Croquet England is trialling a change in the conditions under which ASD may be played, under which ASD may be played by one side in a doubles game while the other uses the conventional doubles format.

Stephen Custance-Baker explains:

The use of Alternate Strokes Doubles (ASD) is permitted in the AC Laws (7th Edition, 2012). The relevant Laws are 48 (ASD), 49 (ASD for Advanced) and 50 (ASD for Handicap). The Laws of Association Croquet (7th Edition)

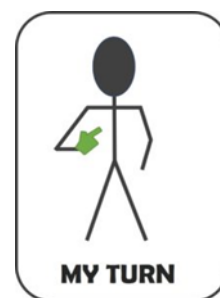


Its use has increased over the last few years and some ASD tournaments and matches have been held. Hitherto, the position has been that ASD can be played if all players in a game or match agree to it, unless otherwise specified in the event conditions. It isn't specifically mentioned in the SWF League Rules but we try to be consistent with Croquet England tournament regulations where possible.

For 2024, these additional words have been added "The AC Tournament Committee is conducting a trial, applicable to the 2024 season, which permits Alternate Stroke Doubles to be played by only one side of a game or match."

The SWF Committee has discussed whether we should join in this experiment and we have decided that it is inappropriate for our Intermediate and B League players but that we should join the trial for the Advanced and Federation leagues.

Therefore, until further notice, if a side decides to play ASD in an Advanced or Federation match only, then it may do so, even if the other side is playing the traditional way.



Match secretaries and relevant League team captains have received this information.

Do let us have your thoughts and experiences on this throughout the season.

Refereeing at South West Federation Finals

The SWF Committee tries to ensure that there is a qualified referee at each of the SWF League finals and this is usually achieved. Either a committee member or a member of the host club volunteers for the role.

However, there have been some issues related to refereeing and I thought it appropriate to set out some guidelines. Many of the less experienced players are unfamiliar with the laws and rules and would benefit from greater involvement of the referee.

- 1 The appointed referee should gather the players together at the start of the match and make it clear that players should call the referee before any questionable stroke, either by themselves or by an opponent.
- 2 In GC matches and finals, all players and referees, whether involved in the game or simply observers, are Sequence Umpires and should forestall play if a wrong ball is about to be played or has just been played. This does not apply to other spectators, who should not forestall but may draw the attention of other observers if they think that a wrong ball has just been played. (Sequence Umpires are not used in Association or Short Croquet.
- 3 A copy of the appropriate book of laws (AC/SC) or rules (GC) should be available for reference.
- 4 The appointed referee should be considered to be the Tournament Referee, but any qualified referee who is present should be invited to become a referee on call if the appointed referee is busy.
- 5 For the higher handicap finals (AC B League, AC Intermediate League, GC High Handicap and SC Restricted), the referee should appoint themselves to be a Referee in Charge. This means that they have the right to go onto a court to oversee a stroke, even if they have not been specifically called for by a player.
- 6 Such intervention should also cover cases where there appears to be a significant likelihood of damage to the surface of the court, or where such damage has occurred and needs expert repair.
- 7 Other referees, if present, should only go onto the court if requested, but may draw the attention of the referee in charge if they see that a law or rule has been infringed.



For everyone's benefit, clubs should encourage players to play to the rules even in casual games.

Reading corner

Actually this time it's music corner, or Singing Books perhaps – you just have to listen to this with thanks to Deborah Albertsen (Cheltenham CC) who posted the link on the Notts List.

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=PUvtWwUAR3k&si=TFI9I02-n4SNN5BG>



Celebrating: Intermediate League Final 2023

Very late news I'm afraid – but thanks to Brent Watkins, Garway CC, who pointed out we hadn't reported on the Intermediate Final for the last season. Many apologies for this which is due to a last-minute change of SWF Rep who hadn't been made aware that we needed a report.

Nevertheless, we do have this excellent photo of the winning team (minus Simon Collinson) being presented with the trophy by Ed Dolphin (Sidmouth CC)

The Final saw Cheltenham facing up to and beating East Dorset. The photo shows (L-R) Phil Stapleton, Ed Dolphin, Tony Mason and Brent Watkins.



Celebrating: Best in the West

Duncan Reeves remembers the day and sent us the photo:

The AC Best in the West event, held at Budleigh Salterton Croquet Club on Sunday 3rd March, ended up with a convenient 4 competitors, with even the organiser David Warhurst disappearing off to warmer climes!

Chris Williams, Dave Kibble, Aston Wade and Duncan Reeve enjoyed a relatively warm and sunny day, with Dave exposing his legs to the Spring sunshine and Duncan having to take off his thermals.



Aston Wade, Duncan Reeve with the coveted trophy, Dave Kibble, Chris Williams

A highlight of the day was Liz Williams' excellent hot lunch.

A point of note was Chris hitting a long lift shot down the East boundary of lawn 7, demonstrating that the lawn levelling efforts are showing good results. This shot was previously 'impossible' to hit, with the ball hilling off by 3 feet.

The croquet was as interactive as might be expected for pre-season, with Duncan scraping 3 wins to retain the AC Best in The West trophy.

Celebrating: Croquet England's Most Improved

A double success for the South West in our game's national awards. Dominic Aarvold (Bristol CC) won the Spiers Trophy for the Most Improved Male GC player (in the left photo) and David Fuller (East Dorset CC) won the Apps Memorial Bowl for the Most Improved Male AC player (in the right photo).

<https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=/tournament/honours/MostImproved>

Congratulations to them both and thanks to Alwyn Bowker (Cheltenham CC), for the photos which show them each receiving their awards from Patricia Duke-Cox, President of Croquet England, at Cheltenham's Easter Tournament.



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The third of Stephen Custance-Baker's GC books
GOLF CROQUET The Thinking Sport
is now available

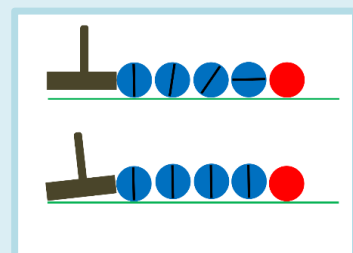
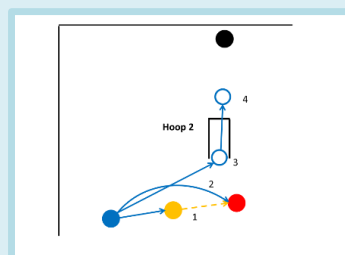
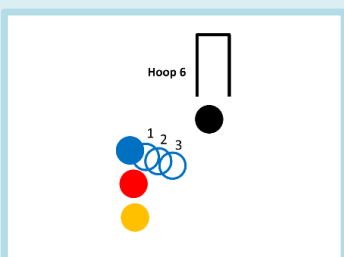
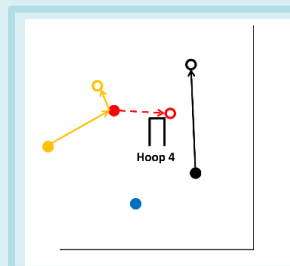
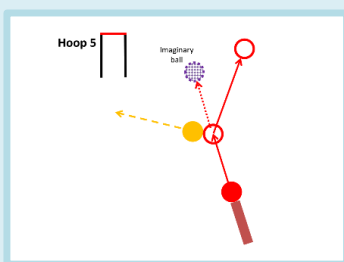


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*Stephen's first two books have been recommended by coaches
around the world. This book has over 130 diagrams and is linked
to a website with over 80 films.*



Coaching: one person's perspective

Klim Seabright (Cheltenham CC) shares his views:

"I am prone to pick fancy titles and came up with KKK - Klim's Koaching Klinik! I decided to take a slightly different approach to my coaching during the winter and hope I have helped the 10 people who signed up. I feel that I got so much out of it as a coach. The offer to GC and AC players was to work one-to-one with them on a particular skill with which they may be struggling. Strategy would only be touched on if really necessary. A session would be about one hour plus, which is also quite helpful in the winter months.

So, what did I get out of it and how did it help to refresh my coaching skills? I think there are three elements to this and they are "habit", "presenting issues" and "neurodiversity". Let's take, as an example, a player who wants help with hoop running.

Habit: *plonk a ball down in front of the hoop and show how to run a straight hoop and an angled hoop. You are unaware that for some that is working but others are struggling. I have always coached it this way, lazy approach or what?*

Presenting Issue: *does the problem start before actually being in front of the hoop? Find out how a player controls a length of shot in order to gain the best hoop running position for them (GC) or sorting out hoop approach shots (AC). The aim is that a player "hits" the mark, which is ideal for them, on most occasions.*

Neurodiversity: *We tend to learn in many different ways. Personally I find a demonstration or a YouTube easier to absorb than the written word. If I am choosing a croquet book then I look for good illustrations. Have I looked for clues which will guide me to the best method for them? Perhaps ask the question?*

So, thanks to all who came to KKK you have really refreshed my coaching and have a great summer season."

Note from the editor: Players wishing to improve their AC skills and measure their improvement might like to have a look at the CqE AC skills test:

<https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=games/coaching/resources/acSkillsTest>

GC Coaching pods at Taunton Deane CC

Stephen Custance-Baker will be holding two coaching pods in late April for up to 16 players each, with one assistant per 4 players. The charge for each pod is £10.

Wednesday April 24th from 3:30 to 6:30 pm AC strokes for GC

Considering and trying the possible strokes when two balls are touching, and how to play them to achieve different outcomes. We will also look at the benefits of controlled hoop-running in GC. GC handicaps 10 and below (those with higher handicaps may apply and will be put on a reserve list).

Thursday April 25th from 3:30 to 6:30 pm Making the most of a hoop

Alternative choices when a ball is in a hoop. How the choices differ if the ball is partner or opponent, and if the hoop is odd- or even-numbered. GC handicaps 2 to 9 (those outside this range may apply and will be put on a reserve list).

Please contact Stephen on webmaster@tauntoncroquet.org if you would like to reserve a place.

Are we trustworthy?

With Croquet England getting its teeth into being a Charity and with many clubs having constitutional objectives to increase participation, a recent report by the Charity Commission provides some interesting reading.

Titled 'Public trust in charities and the role and experience of trustees, it summarises the findings of 10 years of research. The report may be found here:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-trust-in-charities-and-the-role-and-experience-of-trustees?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm_source=3b27568d-9b01-4832-b4de-f48312896733&utm_content=weekly

The following extract is particularly interesting:

Responsible use of funds remains the most important factor in trust

Across all sectors of society there is consensus that to demonstrate trustworthiness, charities need to show that they:



- *use funds responsibly – with donations being spent highly efficiently, prioritising the services, activities and people that advance the charitable cause*
- *make a positive difference (have an impact) through their work*
- *consistently follow and apply ethical values and principles in every aspect of their work*

Ensuring that the money is used well is consistently reported as the most important factor of trust in charities. People want to know their money is making a difference on the front line.

Interested in Crowdfunding?

Check out the Top 100 crowdfunding projects here:

 Crowdfunder crowdfunder.co.uk/100

Useful Links	
Croquet England	https://www.croquet.org.uk/
Croquet England Youtube channel	https://www.youtube.com/@CroquetEngland/streams
Croquet England slo-mo videos	https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=games/golf/refereeing/slomo
Oxford Croquet - coaching	http://www.oxfordcroquet.com/
Chris Clarke - coaching	https://clarkecroquet.com/
Reg Bamford – the psychology of it	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qw_jiBpnCug
Hit Inn – Alison Maugham chats with the Croquetratti	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bf5gM-cswiQ
Canva – a free poster / flyer / logo design tool	https://www.canva.com/en_gb/

Advertising in Cygnet

All adverts must be sent fully formatted in such a way as they can be easily inserted (copy and pasted) into Cygnet. We are not in a position to undertake any artwork or correct for errors or omissions.

Charges include a 2/3-line entry in the Diary Dates column in up to three subsequent issues.

Charges

Full Page: £12 Half Page: £6 Quarter Page: £3

Do get in touch

We'd love your account of matches and tournaments you play in – a personal experience is always worth sharing and a photo can paint a thousand words – so don't forget us when you're playing this year.

Send them to: lindawithani@hotmail.com