



Cygnnet

May 2020



The e-Newsletter for the South West Federation of Croquet Clubs

Here we are again - hoping that this issue of Cygnnet finds you well and in a positive frame of mind. And thanks to Stephen Custance-Baker for the photo - a cygnet Mute Swan.

Thank you too, to those who have sent us items for this issue and a reminder to everyone else - we'd love your contributions. Don't be shy - any croquet or club-life related piece will be very welcome. If you're not sure, then just drop Linda an email to talk it over. lindawithani@hotmail.com

Phoenix from the Flames: Zoom Croquet

We're giving Zoom a go. Paul, our Development Officer and experienced Zoom host, will lead us through the process and writes:



This is an invitation to all SWF member club reps to meet in order to share how their clubs are coping during these times and will be followed by a chance to share all our ideas on how SWF clubs can get back to normal as soon as possible.

It's likely we will focus on recruitment and financial survival but are open to suggestions. There will also be an opportunity to meet and put questions to our CA representatives.

If you have more suggestions, please contact Paul in advance of the evening:
paulwfrancis@icloud.com

The session will take place on Wednesday 27th May 7.00 - 8.30pm

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89820134439?pwd=ckVJajVyWIRCCdhpeWw5WnhEQVZkUT09>

Meeting ID: 898 2013 4439

Password: 9qq70T

You don't need to have a Zoom account to join in but if you want to become familiar with how it works, check out: <https://zoom.us/>

Please send queries, suggestions and feedback about Cygnnet or any aspect of the SW croquet scene to:
lindawithani@hotmail.com

Remember- we send Cygnnet to our club contacts and ask them to pass them on to individual club members - ideally putting a hard copy on the club noticeboard. But Cygnnet is also available shortly after publication on-line on our website: www.swfcroquet.org.uk

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Grants for Croquet Clubs

Club Secretaries will have received an email from Roger Staples - it is reproduced in Appendix 1 p12.

Local Authorities are running a Small Business grant scheme and your club may be eligible to apply for a £10,000 grant. The basic requirement is to be in England and in receipt of Small Business Rates Relief or Rural Rates Relief.



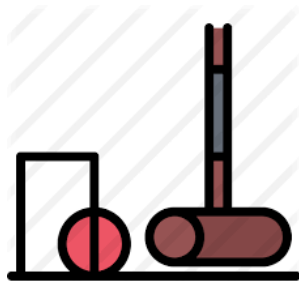
We are aware of three clubs in the SW which have received this - Bristol, Cheltenham and Sidmouth - and would be interested to know how successful other clubs have been.

Please drop an email to Paul, paulwfrancis@icloud.com with the following info:

- Have you received the grant?
- Did you apply for it or did you just receive it?
- Have you applied / made enquiries of your Local Authority?
- If so, what response have you received?

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-your-retail-hospitality-or-leisure-business-is-eligible-for-business-rates-relief-due-to-coronavirus-covid-19>

League Play?



There's not very much we can report on this at the moment.

There are many issues for individuals and clubs to think about: personal vulnerability, club facilities, cleansing facilities, handling the balls, provision of food and drink, and so on.

All these will need to be informed by Government guidance and hopefully, guidance from the CA (which has a small task force keeping things under review) and other sports bodies.

If you have any particular concerns affecting your club's circumstances, then do share them with us or contact the SW Reps to CA Council - their details are on p5.

Stephen, our League Secretary, writes:

“There seems little purpose in forward planning for ‘after lockdown’ or ‘after Covid-19’ until we know more. Until we have more detailed guidance on the timescale for reducing lockdown, the conditions that will still apply and the sectors of the population who will be affected, our plans will be too woolly to circulate without causing confusion.

I am hoping that we will have some government guidance soon but there is now no prospect of League play until after June. This will be reviewed in late June. In the hope of accelerating the leagues when we can re-start, I am working on a range of formats which we will be sharing at the appropriate moment.”

Coaching

Break Building Without Bisques

Richard Jackson, our Coaching Liaison Officer writes:

“Bristol Croquet Club (along I am sure with many others) has been offering its members quizzes on rules, laws and situations.

I have been experimenting with a Zoom Virtual AC Course for handicaps 14-8 on "Break Building without Bisques" based on a normal one-day croquet course which I have given several times.

The emphasis is on what to do to get a break going in unpromising situations, rather than doing it, which makes it easier in a virtual course as you do not have to execute the manoeuvres! We are halfway through a course of 4 x 40-60 minute sessions.

If anyone in this handicap range would like to participate in a second course of this kind, please email me richard.jackson@yahoo.co.uk and I will start a new series when we have finished the first one and tweaked it.”



Bristol Quiz



The April AC Quiz, pioneered by Bob Whiffen with support from Pat Jackson and Linda Shaw, targeted at last year’s beginners and higher bisquers, resulted in certificates for two lucky people. Neil Purchase won, with our own David Enticknap a worthy runner up. They were clearly overjoyed:

Neil said:

“Many thanks for my certificate which will be framed and occupy a prominent position in my Croquet Trophy Room. I have to admit that I am a much better croquet player when the lawns are closed!”

While David was similarly impressed:

“Thank you for the certificate. It will be cherished and displayed proudly between my cycling proficiency and junior speed skating certificates.”

On-line Coaching

Klim has just completed a 6-week email GC coaching course. It is aimed at people in the earlier stages of learning the game and encourages competitive play and effective use of extra turns.

He issued notes on a Monday and did a Q and A on the Wednesday. He plans to continue with one session a week including some social chat and support. Contact him ffi: klimseabright@gmail.com

The Mental Approach #2

Dave Kibble's item on the mental approach to croquet last month generated some interesting responses.

Brian Wilson said: "I have a problem following Dave's advice - I visualise a game, my shots are accurate, my clearances are tremendous, I score from very acute angles, it is one my best days - and then I wake up from my dream!!"

While Robert Moss asks for a follow-up article: "Please can we have some more tips from Dave - particularly how to convince our families that we are not really asleep in the garden / sitting room / bath but really playing croquet."

Decision Making Skills

Articles in Cygnet earlier this year set Ivor Brand (Worcester Norton CC) thinking. Pondering why he was writing the article and why we should read it, he says:

"I can answer the first question by referring back to me reading the February 2020 edition of the Cygnet where Klim Seabright sparked my interest with his insightful and poignant article on 'So why did you lose'?"



My fuse was really burning in the following April 2020 edition where David Kibble wrote a fascinating article on 'The mental approach'.

Well that was it, both articles rang true for me and with this present 'lockdown' I thought I would add my humble perspective from nearly 40 years of navigating my way through the highs and lows of this most enjoyable and yet at times most frustrating game.

The answer to the second question is of course down to you and your decision-making skills that have been at work since you started reading! That is, you are processing the information you have available to you and asking the question, what's in it for me? e.g. does this article have any knowledge for me or does it interest me enough to continue, etc. Once considered, your outcome will be to read on or not?

You can read his full article in a separate attachment - formatting problems have defeated the editor trying to make it a part of this document!

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable People

The CA is shortly embarking a review of its policy on this issue and Linda will be involved in this. To help inform our discussions it would be really helpful to know:

- Does your club have a Safeguarding Policy?
- Does it cover
 - Young people
 - Vulnerable adults
 - Both
- Have you used the CA suggested policy as a basis for this?
 - If yours is very different, it would be really helpful if you could email me a copy
- What do you think of the CA policy and the support it provides?
 - Good points
 - Areas for improvement
- Do you have experience in working with children / vulnerable adults that you could bring to bear on this review?

Please send your thoughts to Linda: lindawithani@hotmail.com

CA Council

CA Council has been meeting by Zoom and minutes are on the CA website. Ian Vincent, CA Secretary, kindly sends the SWF a summary of discussions - if any club would like to receive these please let Linda know and she will forward them.

Some of the items discussed were:

- it was agreed in principle to introduce an intermediate award, to fill the gap between Diplomas and the Council Medal
- Introduction of a members' newsletter
- Working with Federations to improve publicity and PR The next items covered publicity and public relations
- Re-styling the website
- Clubs use of CA membership database
- Legal status of the CA

If you want to find out more, please contact one of the SW Reps:

Peter Nelson peter@nelson01.eclipse.co.uk
Dave Kibble DaveKibble@gmail.com
Klim Seabright klimseabright@gmail.com



News from around the croquet world

Greetings from Austria

Robert Moss sends us some inspirational news from abroad:

“Austria eased its rules on some sporting activities on 1st May allowing croquet to resume.

Several clubs from our region have visited Wolkersdorf Croquet Club near Vienna and their chairman, Heinz, sends this photograph of their re-opening club day which they celebrated with a mini-tournament, cake and G+T, and they send their best wishes to all who know them.



We hope that when conditions permit, socially distanced croquet could easily be achieved here and we will be able to follow our Austrian friends' example. In the meantime, we will just have to settle for the cake and G+T.

British visitors to the Austrian club include members from The Bears, Cheltenham, Sidmouth, Budleigh and Cornwall CC in addition to regular visits from Hurlingham and Surbiton members.”

Stephen adds: David Widdison and I contested the 1st Austrian GC final in 2019 (he won). Therefore, Ripon Spa and Taunton Deane have also been there.”

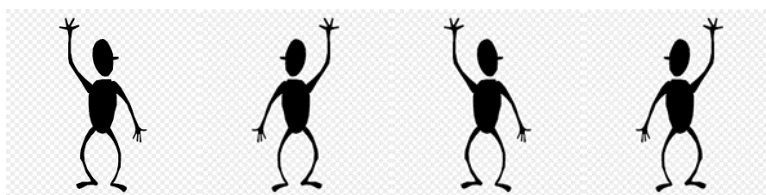


Swindon players are staying positive: **Colin Brain**, writes, “Keeping in practise playing ‘rough’ croquet in the paddock. All home games so far!! Eagerly awaiting first away match!”

Tony Mayer writes: “In Swindon, we have been exchanging info on activities and I have received at least two quizzes from members plus a refereeing decision to make on an offside issue in a small garden!”

Camerton & Peasedown have established a What’s App group to keep in touch - and to encourage friends to take up the game.

Bath holds a weekly Zoom Quiz and get an average of 15 attending.



Do you do 'corporate'?

Klim Seabright, one of the SW reps to CA council sends best wishes to all and is interested to hear about your experience of corporate events. He writes:

“At my own club corporate events produce a very welcome extra income. All participants seem to enjoy themselves and some are persuaded to sign up for our beginners’ course (but don't subsequently materialise).



The problem is that I cannot think of a single corporate participant subsequently becoming a member. What is your experience?

We do handouts...we do the sales pitch while they break for refreshment....we explain that we can offer evening and weekend coaching...we demo AC during the break (events are always GC due to time constraint).....we don't let them escape without taking contact details.

Are you having more success or do I just accept that we are producing an income stream and leave it that? It would seem a terrible waste of a recruitment opportunity.

Do let me know about your experience and perhaps we could together some helpful guidelines. Thanks.”

Croquet set sales increase as people look to beat lockdown boredom

It's good to know there may be a plus side to the current lockdown for croquet. The CA Marketing Committee have issued a press release (summarised below) so let's hope we get some longer-term interest as a result.



“The Croquet Association has seen a sharp increase in sales of croquet sets since lockdown began, as people look for creative ways to entertain themselves at home.

On the wave of this demand, the CA is encouraging more people to try croquet during lockdown - even if they don't have a garden!

They have set up a website

www.trycroquet.co.uk/ to provide some short

croquet challenges, and to get people sharing creative videos of themselves playing, using the hashtag #lockdowncroquet”

The full text may be found in Appendix 2 p13

Who was Chastel Tivy?

Chris Frew, Bristol CC, was asked for photographs and War stories from Bristol CC, for an upcoming issue of the Croquet Gazette. He found only two photos, and Committee minutes barely touched on the War. But this led him on an extraordinary journey of discovery about the club and some of its noteworthy luminaries - amongst them the amazing Chastel Tivy.

Many themes that are familiar to us today: search for suitable grounds, falling membership, loss of equipment, utilities supply. Bath and Weston super Mare Croquet Clubs each play a role during Chastel's era. It's a fascinating read so do have a look.

Here's a couple of snippets to whet your appetite, but check out the full story on Bristol CC's website <http://www.bristolcroquet.org/croquet/bristol/historyCF.htm> which also has some lovely photographs.

... The Bristol Croquet Club also faced many existential threats before, during, and after the war and without Mr Tivy, I suspect we would have no Club...

... Mischief at the Club grounds by boys ... When an elderly lady had stones thrown at her while playing, we decided to sympathise with the police and seek pastures new...

... In readiness for sweeping modernisation, the accounts for 1939 record £8 received from "sale of horse roller". A horse presumably being incompatible with the new lawn maintenance programme...



... a strong Boy able to push a 12-inch mowing machine at 30/- a week ... would pay the Club, as his services would [then] be available to Members for their Gardens in the afternoons ...

*... Just when it looked like the Club would go under, Miss Tivy (Chastel's sister)'s Bring and Buy sale in October 1946 netted £54 - greater than the Subscription income - enabling the gale damage of September that removed the Verandah Roof to be repaired. Her reward was an invitation to join the Committee!
...*

Does this inspire you to look through your club's archives?

Do share your findings with us.

Quiz Corner

We have a new set of questions for you this time:

Some toughies from Pete Trimmer

First of all -

How many circles (milling grooves) do you think there are on a standard (Dawson 2000) croquet ball?

This is one for guesstimation - only one person so far has got within 10 of the correct answer.

Now some anagrams - there are a couple of clues and a further one is that the answers to each are in alphabetical order of surname! Expect to find more than a dash of SW players alongside some top rankers.

1 brag formed - *the best player!*

2 flourish aborted

3 brain guider

4 shark circle

5 jam headset

6 mama tune - *the worst player!*

7 jams leaping

8 goad archived

9 alls energy

10 avows android-hero

11 balked vibe

12 perky biter

13 yarn roams

14 surly hold - *very tricky to rank!*

15 lawn dashi

16 musk rater

17 blown raisin

A different sort of challenge - "hic!"

This one's from Klim- let's hear what you come up with

Try the Lockdown Croquet Cocktail Challenge - the aim is to design a Primary Punch or a Secondary Slammer.

Each cocktail must show different colour bands of liquid (alcoholic or non-alcoholic). You get extra respect if you know enough about specific gravity to end up replicating the centre peg.



And the answers to the old questions:

Have you been on tenterhooks waiting for these? One person has sent in the results of his labours - our previous Chair, Marcus Evans has had a stab at them all. He wrote:

“Thought I'd have a crack at some of the teasers, without any outside assistance (Google or otherwise), I don't know most of them so I don't expect to score very well! Stephen's was my favourite. I have seen a similar question before but his is more elegantly put. I believe **the answer is "four"** You're quite right Marcus.

Stephen's Brain-Teaser was: "Precisely how many letters are there in the answer to this question?" Yes, I had to ask for an explanation too ... Stephen tells us:

"Four is the only word that contains the same number of letters as the number it refers to. There's an interesting follow-on.

If you ask the question in:

- German (or Dutch), the answer is vier 4
- Spanish, the answer is cinco 5
- Italian, the answer is tre 3
- French, there is no answer."

Richard Jackson postulates: *An alternative answer to Stephen's question would be 23 - The number of letters in "the answer to this question"*

Brian's fallacy: he posed the following -

The situation:

Let $a = b$
 Multiply both sides by 'a' to get
 $a^2 = ab$
 Take b^2 from both sides to get
 $a^2 - b^2 = ab - b^2$
 Factorise to get $(a + b)(a - b) = b(a - b)$
 Divide by $(a - b)$ to get $(a + b) = b$
 But $a = b$
 Therefore $a + a = a$
 Or $2a = 1a$
 Hence $2 = 1$ (or does it?)

The explanation:

The fallacy is that at $(a + b)(a - b) = b(a - b)$ I divided by or cancelled out $(a - b)$ to get $a + b = b$
 But $a - b = 0$ (as $a = b$)
 If you divide by 0 you get infinity
 So, I should have said infinity = infinity
 So, this shows that 2 does not equal 1!!

Then Brian posed 10 puzzlers:

1	Why is Max Yasgur's farm in the Catskills famous?	1969 Woodstock Festival
2	What was Che Guevara's real first name?	Ernesto
3	In which sport are left-handed players banned?	Polo
4	Coulrophobia is a fear of what?	Clowns
5	Denis the Menace features in which comic?	The Beano
6	The fuppence was a silver coin worth 4 old pence and was discontinued in 1856 - how is it better known?	The groat
7	Where is Queen Maud Land?	Antarctica
8	Food given to patients in Battle Creek sanatorium in 1894 is now better known as what?	Kellogg's corn flakes
9	How many times does the digit '7' appear in the numbers from 1 to 100?	20 (there are two '7's in 77)
10	Which fictional submarine was captained by Troy Tempest?	Stingray

Marcus worked hard on this. His answers were:

1	No idea - Thoreau had something to do with the Catskills I think, so I'll guess that's where he wrote all his books or something.	☹️
2	Cheryl, of course. Had a terrible effect on his childhood in those less tolerant times and hence caused socialist resentment to build up inside him.	☹️
3	I think there might be more than one but I'll say fencing - I suspect hockey (both types) is another where the way you hold the stick is prescribed, but I suppose you hold it with two hands so it's less clear. <i>Richard Jackson adds: "(field) hockey has to be played right-handed. For ice hockey, I suspect you have to face off right-handed but you can play with either face of your stick."</i>	☹️
4	Is it a fear of misspelling colours? I will kick myself when I see the answer as I feel I know this but can't remember. I will guess baldness.	☹️
5	The Beano	😊
6	Is it a goat?	😊
7	Antarctica?	😊
8	Is this the story of how cornflakes were invented? I have a vague memory they were originally intended to suppress certain urges!	😊
9	20 I believe. Can't be bothered to count them to make sure!	😊
10	Action stations: Stingray! Stingray! Dada daa-daa daa-daa.	😊

A bit of a rocky start Marcus, but you came good in the end - well done, but no prize I'm afraid - just the glory.

Keeping in touch

We're particularly aware of the value of this at the moment, but maybe we're establishing some good habits for the future too.

Clearly there's the CA website which is regularly updated. www.croquet.org.uk. On a smaller scale our own website contains current and archive material including Cygnet and SWAN. Any of our officers will be pleased to hear from you too. Our contact details may be found on the website: www.swfcroquet.org.uk

You may be aware of the Notts List - it is not an official CA means of communication - although some participants seem to treat it as such - but you might find it a useful way of keeping in touch with a wide range of croquet issues.

Dave Kibble (one of our SW Reps to CA Council) writes:

Are you on the croquet chat email list "The Nottingham List"? If you are, you will know there's been a 25-minute online quiz for croquet players around the world running three evenings each week (8:05PM).

Anyone with a web browser connected to the Internet can join in. Linda and I had great fun on the first Wednesday, though we didn't trouble the leader board. Details of the chat list: <http://nottingham-lists.org.uk/mailman/listinfo/croquet>

And let's not forget Sport England's club matters which is a hugely valuable resource - some of the language can be a bit off-putting, but loads of good stuff there. www.sportengland.org



Appendix 1

Dear Club Secretary

Small Business Grant Scheme

We are writing in case you are unaware of this scheme, under which clubs are potentially entitled to a £10,000 grant. The basic requirement is to be in England and in receipt of Small Business Rates Relief or Rural Rates Relief (NB not to actually pay any rates). Please see the link below in particular items 6 & 11.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/878082/small-business-grant-and-retail-leisure-hospitality-grant-guidance-for-businesses-v2.pdf

In theory, if you are eligible, you should not need to do anything to claim the grant and it should be forthcoming from your Local Authority (items 3 & 5). However it is obviously important that you are aware of the scheme should this not prove to be the case.

We are aware of one club which has already received £10,000 from this scheme.

Please note that the Small Business Grant Scheme is entirely separate to the Business Rate Relief Scheme announced in the March budget. Clubs with a property with a rateable value should be aware of both schemes

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-your-retail-hospitality-or-leisure-business-is-eligible-for-business-rates-relief-due-to-coronavirus-covid-19>

Kind Regards

Roger Staples

Chairman Executive Board

Landline: + 44 1642 570490 Mob: 077 78 841 625 Skype:roger-staples

Snail mail: Brackenside, 1 Darlington Road, Long Newton. TS21 1PE

Appendix 2

Press release CROQUET SET SALES INCREASE AS PEOPLE LOOK TO BEAT LOCKDOWN BOREDOM



The Croquet Association (CA), the sport's governing body, has seen a sharp increase in sales of croquet sets since lockdown began, as people look for creative ways to entertain themselves at home.

On the wave of this demand, the CA is encouraging more people to try croquet during lockdown - even if they don't have a garden! They have set up a website www.trycroquet.co.uk/ to provide some short croquet challenges, and to get people sharing creative videos of themselves playing, using the hashtag #lockdowncroquet .

About croquet

Similar to snooker but played on grass, croquet is a mallet sport that calls for skill, strategy and tactics, and enough exertion to get your daily exercise in. Players in a competitive croquet match cover 4km; perhaps as much as Captain- now-Colonel- Tom's 100 laps!

Quotes

The CA's Marketing Director Eugene Chang said: "Whilst virtual entertainment such as Zoom quizzes and Houseparty have become mainstream due to the pandemic, croquet is a great physical activity to engage your family and get competitive."

Croquet and lockdown

Whilst domestic and international croquet fixtures have been hit by COVID-19, croquet players have found new ways to satisfy their fixes. The worldwide community has been brought together via weekly croquet quizzes run by former World No 1 Chris Clarke, and clubs have been utilising virtual croquet programs (developed by croquet players) to run coaching sessions for their members. The Association Croquet World Championship concluded in February, just before lockdown commenced, averting the need for the Champion, London-based Reg Bamford, to sharpen his e-croquet skills.

<https://www.trycroquet.co.uk/>

<https://www.croquet.org.uk/>

FB/Twitter/IG: [@croquetengland](https://www.instagram.com/croquetengland)

Contact: Linda Gavigan - cainfo@croquet.org.uk 01903 366953 / 07890 027385

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