

# Cygnets

## South West Area Newsletter

### Celebrating Croquet Across the Region

#### Issue 39: December 2022

Another year almost over but as ever lots of people are very busy over the winter months – caring for lawns, equipment and property; arranging league teams and fixtures; reading lots of inspiring articles on how to play our game – the list goes on.



Whatever you're doing, enjoy it and make good progress, and if you think the Federation might be able to help in some way, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

### AGM

It was great to see so many at our AGM in November – the draft minutes are now on our website along with the updated League rules, and, as ever, you can keep in touch with what the Committee is up to by checking out minutes of our meetings on the website. <https://www.swfcroquet.org.uk/>

There is always scope for lively discussion and debate on occasions such as these and it's not always easy to keep up with it all, but we all came through on the other side. Thanks to those of you who made helpful suggestions for the future and thank you everyone for managing the discussion protocols so well.

### Care to join us?

As we said at the AGM, and indeed we say in pretty well every opportunity we have – we'd love to have you join us on the Committee or supporting our work in other ways.

We're particularly looking for people interested in handicapping, and website development, but there's plenty of things you could do to help.

Perhaps we're not doing something you think we should be, perhaps you have your eye on one of the currently-filled roles – we'd like to hear from you all.

Why not have a chat with one of us and if you'd like to take it further, just write a short profile including why, what and how you'd like to help.

You'll be invited to observe a committee meeting (held by Zoom) and your application for co-option will be welcomed.



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Cygnets 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](http://www.swfcroquet.org.uk)

We welcome queries, suggestions and feedback about Cygnets or any aspect of the SW croquet scene.  
Contact: [lindawithani@hotmail.com](mailto:lindawithani@hotmail.com)

## Advantage GC

Do put this date in your diary – we'll be holding an extra Zoom meeting to discuss Advantage GC on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> January at 7.00pm.

The invitation will be sent out nearer the time and discussion will include:

- Clubs' experiences
- Consideration of the handicap range playing in SWF leagues
- Timed endings and calculating the score
- Possible implications for our League rules of the range and timed endings
- Possibility of holding one or two day-long events in the SW to trial the process

And don't forget to let Stephen know what your club's experiences are of any AGC that you've played during the year and what your plans might be for 2023.

## Safeguarding

*Andru, our Safeguarding Officer updates us on what's happening here.*

At the AGM I reported that this has been a rather uneventful season with regards to Safeguarding at least as far as my Regional Safeguarding Officer role goes.

All well and good you may say, however I recently checked the CA database and of our 39 member clubs only 7 have named LSOs recorded. Although this may be because you do not know where or how to add this information. Clubs will soon receive a request to supply contact details for your LSO so I can contact you directly to help improve this situation and provide advice and updates as they come along.

*So do look out for this and if you want to contact Andru you can do so on [andru@bluboy.uk](mailto:andru@bluboy.uk)*

## Development support

This role is now shared by Paul, Klim and Brian. Here's who you should contact:

North & Wales Klim Seabright <a href="mailto:klimseabright@gmail.com">klimseabright@gmail.com</a>	Central & East Brian Wilson <a href="mailto:brian@europaassociates.co.uk">brian@europaassociates.co.uk</a>	West & South Paul Francis <a href="mailto:paulwfrancis@icloud.com">paulwfrancis@icloud.com</a>
Beckford	Abbey	Barnstaple
Broadwas	Bath	Bude
Llandaff	Bradford on Avon	Budleigh Salterton
Llandoverly	Bristol	Cheltenham
Moreton in Marsh	Camerton & Peasedown	Cornwall
Mumbles	Charlton	Dowlish Wake
Worcester Norton	Kington Langley	Glamorgan
	Lansdown	East Dorset
	Lym Valley	Exeter
	Cary Valley	Fowey
	Nailsea	Winterborne Valley
	Palace Wells	Plymouth
	Swindon	Sidmouth
	Taunton Deane	St Agnes
	Tisbury	Swanage
	Wareham	
	Wellington	
	Weston super Mare	

## Obituary: David Temple

It is with sadness that Sidmouth Croquet Club records the death of David Temple, one of our more active and influential members.

After retiring from a long career as a veterinary David, and his wife Nancy, retired to Sidmouth. Here, at Nancy's urging, he joined the Club and they both became major 'players' in the Club's activities. Their names appear on many club trophies, both AC and GC, reflecting their growing development as proficient croquet players.



However, for most of us, David will be remembered as one of those key members on whom many clubs depend. The always willing volunteer, the one who sees a job needs to be done so just gets on with it. He coached new members, turned his hand to practical issues, like producing a very artistic 'tea and coffee perambulator' for tournaments, and many other unheralded jobs. The mundane tasks that are actually so important and form the solid base of a successful club. He served on the committee, member and Chairman and was ever available as a 'sounding board' helping to ensure the Club worked for all.

David was also a reliable member of the General Management Committee which oversees the running of the Sidmouth Cricket, Tennis, Croquet [and then] Hockey Club. He fought the croquet section's corner but, also, was able to take the overarching view on the best way forward for the club as a whole. His strengths were recognised when he was asked to serve as the main club's president. Having initiated the lawns watering system, orchestrated the funding and seen the installation come into use he was, indeed, a useful, multi-talented man to have in any organisation.

For these and many other reasons both he and Nancy were finally recognised with CA Diplomas in 2020. Unfortunately, this coincided with David's major decline in health and his final years were difficult for him. He died peacefully in the early hours of 20<sup>th</sup> September with Nancy and his daughter, Sarah, at his side.

David was a true friend of the Club and a dedicated family man Our condolences go to Nancy and his four children; Sarah, Kate, Rachel and Richard and his 12 grandchildren.

## SWF Autumn Short Croquet Team Tournament Budleigh Salterton 8 – 10 October 2022

Another weekend of enjoyable croquet when our annual Autumn tournament took place at Budleigh Salterton. I am very grateful for the immaculate lawns provided by the club and to Chris Donovan for his management over the weekend.

Once again there were a few problems putting teams together and the changes at the last moment did cause a few fraught moments in the week leading up to the competition. However, with the aid of a few guests, we did manage to get 25 teams playing, so a full complement in five divisions.



## Division 1

The standard in this division was very high. All teams had a 2P or 3P player at No. 1, and the highest handicap No. 2 was 1.5.

Kington Langley Bruins were attempting to defend the trophy and they made a good start winning 7 out of 8 in the first two rounds. However, Glamorgan had a bye in the first round and they met in the third round which resulted in a 3-1 win for Glamorgan, with Taunton Terriers also closing the gap.

A 3-1 win for Glamorgan over Taunton in Round 4 effectively ended Taunton's hopes, and with Kington Langley sitting out, Glamorgan drew level going in to the last round. Kington Langley drew 2-2 with Taunton and Glamorgan were standing at 2-1 over Nailsea Trendlewood with the last game still on court and Glamorgan several hoops behind. A shoot-out at the peg looked inevitable, but Glamorgan, in the guise of Kevin Ham, took his backward ball to peg, and time was called.

Both players were now on peg and 6, Nailsea shot and missed and Kevin scored the golden hoop to give Glamorgan overall victory.

In the relegation battle, Nailsea's 3-1 victory in Round 4 over Budleigh Salterton Roquets proved vital.

Glamorgan 11, Kington Langley Bruins 10, Taunton Terriers 8, Nailsea Trendlewood 6, Budleigh Salterton Roquets 5 Paul Pristavec (Glamorgan) and Paul Arbos ( Nailsea) had 4 wins out of 4.

## Division 2

Another very exciting finish for the honours, which in fact went to a shoot-out at the peg, and also a last-round relegation battle.

Going in to the last round, Sidmouth Fortfield were two wins ahead of Kington Langley Aardvarks but had to sit out the last round, and Bristol Blues were a further two wins behind. It appeared that the title was between Sidmouth and Kington Langley, but Bristol had different ideas. The last round saw them beat Kington Langley 4-0 to draw level with Sidmouth and leave Kington Langley still languishing two wins behind.

And so to the shoot-out. By now, one Sidmouth player had gone home, but this did not deter them, and with their three remaining players won the shoot-out to gain promotion.

Relegation was decided in the last round as Camerton and Peasedown and Cornwall both with 4 wins had to play each other. Camerton and Peasedown won 3-1.

Sidmouth Fortfield 10, Bristol Blues 10, Kington Langley Aardvarks 8, Camerton and Peasedown 7, Cornwall 5

Des Honey (Cornwall) and Bob Whiffen (Bristol) won all four games.

## Division 3

Another very close finish. Going in to the last round there were 4 teams on 6 wins and Bath on 8. Unfortunately for Sidmouth Blackmore, they had to sit out this round, so they were effectively out of the running, and, unless one of the other matches finished 4-0, they were going to be relegated.

Exeter A and Taunton Tiggers drew 2-2, so it was down to the match between Bristol Allsorts and Bath to determine the winner. Bristol won 3-1 to set up a shoot-out for the title, which they went on to win.

Bristol Allsorts 9, Bath 9, Taunton Tiggers and Exeter A 8, Sidmouth Blackmore 6

#### Division 4

This was not a close finish. In fact, Budleigh Salterton Mallets had won with a round to spare.

This did not look to be the likely outcome after two rounds, when Mallets, Budleigh Salterton Rushes and Sidmouth Connaught all had 4 wins, and East Dorset had 2 but had played only one match. But then the Mallets took control and won their next two matches 4-0. They were able to sit out the last round comfortable in the knowledge that no other team could catch them.

Sidmouth Connaught beat Lym Valley A in the relegation shoot-out, scoring the only hit on the thirteenth shot.

Budleigh Salterton Mallets 12, East Dorset and Budleigh Salterton Rushes 8, Sidmouth Connaught 6  
Lym Valley A 6

Rosemary Bradshaw (Budleigh Salterton Rushes) and David Fuller (East Dorset) won all four games.

#### Division 5

Yet again there was a very competitive ending to this division. After 4 rounds, Nailsea had 10 wins, and Kington Langley Coyotes and Exeter B had 9. Exeter had to sit out the last round so Kington Langley were to play Nailsea in the title decider. A very tense match saw a 2-2 draw resulting in Nailsea as the champions.

The wooden spoon was decided in the last round when Winterborne Valley beat Lym Valley B 3-1. Lym Valley struggled the whole day, but I am eternally grateful to them for putting out a second team to enable us to have a full complement of 5 divisions.

Nailsea 12, Kington Langley 11, Exeter B 9, Winterborne Valley 7, Lym Valley B 1

Brian Roynon and Terry Young (both Nailsea) and John Grimshaw (Kington Langley Coyotes) won all 4 games.

#### Erica's off to New Zealand

Erica Malaiperuman is well known on the SW circuit and further afield and we are surely all delighted that she has a place in the Women's AC World Championship in New Zealand next year from 7<sup>th</sup> til 15<sup>th</sup> January.

She was invited to write a few words about this but she's done much better – she's written this poem!

Well, I had the ranking, so I must have the game  
I'll have to skip winter here, such a shame.

At first I was scared of what it meant,  
Get a hotel or a place to rent?  
Where would I stay, how would I play,?  
If I injured myself I'd have to stay away?

The more I pondered the better it seemed  
I know I can hit 7 yarders or 10,  
I know how to start and how to end,  
So what's the big deal? There's nothing to lose,  
Much better than going on a cruise.





She adds: "My husband encouraged me to say I was available on the CA website back in May, I never thought anything would come of it. But we are now both going on a holiday in New Zealand.

Everyone has been very encouraging from the start, I was very apprehensive at first, but my confidence has increased. I met the rest of the team for a weekend in Nottingham and learnt a lot about my game and my mental approach. Hopefully we will bring back the trophy!

Many thanks to all the players who have given up time to give me a game and support, Kriss's coaching during the summer is always invaluable. Also, a big thanks to the NHS for improving my eyesight (cataract op)."

And we might add, thanks to the British weather and the wet Sunday afternoon that allowed Erica to create this for us. Her team companions are Beatrice and Sophie McGlen, Debbie Lines and Gabrielle Higgins.

Good luck Erica, we'll be rooting for you and the rest of this great team.

## Snippets

### Fancy a game?

If you're in the vicinity of Bude CC over the next few months, why not get in touch to see if anyone is around to give you a game or two of GC. They plan to be open throughout the winter and would love to hear from you. Contact Frances [franceshornblow@aol.com](mailto:franceshornblow@aol.com) in the first instance.



### Curtain Up!



Here's another way you might raise your club's profile – Bristol CC were approached by a local acting school who wanted to borrow a couple of croquet mallets for their next production. What an opportunity for some product placement!

### Lawns care

Lots of sources of support are coming along as you will know from Paul's updates at our Zoom meetings, in the meantime you might like to check up the UK Lawn Care Group on Facebook which, our sources report, is a useful group to follow.

## GC Inter-Counties Revisited

*Many thanks to Keith Southern for completing the picture for us:*

Issue 38 (September) of Cygnet carried an article about this year's GC Inter-Counties competition focussing on the success of Devon and Somerset in gaining promotion to Division 1 for next year. In so doing the performance of another of the region's teams was overlooked. Dorset finished 3rd (of 12) in this year's Division 1 with 7 wins from 11 matches, headed only by the might of Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire / Durham.

But it was a roller-coaster ride, winning the first three matches, losing the next four, and then finishing with four straight wins including a victory against Yorkshire / Durham. With a very small pool of strong players on which to call, the overall result showed Dorset punching well above their weight; based on the strength of players participating a mid-table result (5th to 8th) might have been expected.

Each match consisted of one doubles and two singles games, so the squad of 5 permitted some rotation. The players involved (Jonathan Powe, Steve Leonard, David Kendrick, Keith Southern and Michelle Leonard) are all members of the East Dorset club although most are also members of other clubs in the South West Federation.

*And remember, 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 away next year. And talking of which, John Grimshaw takes us through the Autumn SC Tournament ...*

## Finals Reports

*Thanks to everyone who wrote these reports and took the photos – I'm afraid I've lost track of who you all were, but you are appreciated. There's a few missing so if you have a report on these, please send them to me: [lindawithani@hotmail.com](mailto:lindawithani@hotmail.com) and they'll appear in the next issue of Cygnet.*

## Federation League: Winterborne Valley complete the 'Double' again!

On a cool but sunny Saturday in late September Winterborne Valley (WV) completed the 'double' of winning both the GC Level Play and the Federation AC Handicap finals for the second year in succession.

The AC Federation League is the SWF's oldest competition dating back to 1985. During this time, a wide variety of clubs have won this competition including both finalists – Bath (winners three times the latest being in 2017) and WV (twice before 2022, once under the guise of Kingston Maurward in 1998).



This year's final was played at Cheltenham between two teams of three players, all of whom had to travel some distance to reach the venue – the WV players from South Dorset and two of the Bath team coming to Cheltenham from Cornwall and Keswick).

Playing on green and relatively slow courts, the players quickly acclimatised and some interesting and entertaining games ensued. In the morning doubles, Paul Francis & Neil Pinker (Bath) were up against Steve Leonard and Neal Unitt-Jones, conceding 4 bisques. It took a little time for both sides to get going with the game being eventually timed out with WV ahead 19 to 11.

Again, in the accompanying singles, the game was timed out with Martin Strange (WV), who had 11 bisques) just ahead of Peter Miles 19 – 16. In the afternoon singles, two games went to peg-out: Martin Strange completed two wins out of two beating Paul Francis +25 while only using half of his bisque allocation of 8 while in the other game Steve Leonard eventually beat Peter Miles +7 with both players constructing good breaks including spectacular peels.

The final afternoon singles timed out with Neal Unitt-Jones beating Neil Pinker 23 -19 thus completing a 5 – 0 win for WV who completed the 'double' and returned south with this venerable shield which now has very little space left for the winner's 'mini' shield. Many congratulations to WV and commiserations to Bath.

Thanks go to Cheltenham for hosting the final and especially to Sarah Hayes who ensured that all the preparations were in excellent order and who acted as the referee for this important match.

*The photo shows winning Winterborne Valley team (l to r) Neil Pinker (with the winner's plaque), Steve Leonard (captain holding the Federation Shield) and Neal Unitt-Jones*

### Intermediate League

*Richard Wood writes:* Teams of four from Kington Langley and East Dorset gathered at Sidmouth Croquet Club on a fine September morning to contest the Intermediate final.

After the early morning hoop setters had recorded a temperature of 5°C, the sun got into a competition with a cool northerly breeze, with the result that layers were being donned and shed all through the day.



Kington Langley (Ian Wills, Margaret Murray, Ted Crossley and Caroline Tarran) were nominally the 'home' team, but the East Dorset team (Mike Rice, Chris Rice, John Freeman and Neil Cleverly) had won the semi-final at the same venue only a few days previously, so were possibly more attuned to the conditions.

*The two teams line up before the final. John Freeman, Mike Rice, Chris Rice and Neil Cleverly (East Dorset), Margaret Murray, Ian Wills, Ted Crossley and Caroline Tarran (Kington Langley). Photo: Ed Dolphin*

The opening exchanges were cagey and many hoop attempts were either blobbed or over-run by several yards – maybe reflecting 'final nerves'. Margaret and Chris sparred for over half an hour before the first hoop was scored, but eventually Margaret got going with a nice break and eventually ran out a winner on time. Ted and John were meanwhile progressing a hoop or two at a time. Eventually Ted's six bisques ran out, but he managed to keep in the game with some excellent hitting in. The result was in doubt to the end, but eventually John's greater experience counted and he got home +2 on time. In the doubles (Ian and Caroline vs. Mike and Neil) both pairs struggled to get going, but Mike and Neil were the eventual victors on time. East Dorset led 2-1 at lunch.



In the afternoon the sun got to work on the lawns, making conditions quite challenging, and quite a few balls went off the court in croquet strokes, to the good-natured frustration of their strikers.

However, John got off to a flying start against Caroline with a 4<sup>th</sup> turn break of 5 hoops, which proved to be the game-winner, as thereafter they traded hoops, with John ending up +4 on time winner. Ted continued his excellent hitting from the morning, eventually overcoming Neil, while Ian played steadily to defeat Chris, these last two games being the only ones of the day to be completed with a peg-out. This left the score at 3-3, and with most of the players and spectators around lawn 2, we anxiously awaited news of the final game between Margaret and Mike, some 80 yards away on lawn 1. Margaret had drawn ahead with some useful turns, and in the end, Mike needed peels on his final turn which weren't forthcoming. So, Margaret ran out the winner and the final score was 4-3 to Kington Langley.



Congratulations to Kington Langley, commiserations to East Dorset, and well done to both teams on a close match that was played in a competitive but friendly spirit.

*The Kington Langley team (Margaret Murray, Ian Wills, Ted Crossley and Caroline Tarran) receive the Intermediate trophy from Richard Wood. Photo: Ed Dolphin*

## B League

The B League Final was held at Swindon in almost perfect sunny Autumn weather. With the heatwave summer and the prolonged drought, the lawns were somewhat patchy and certainly lightning fast which made controlled croquet on half courts tricky. Bristol were the designated 'home' team against Weston-super-Mare and the game was a full bisque over 26 points.

The morning session consisted of a very close doubles that ended with a 'golden' hoop after time was called with the result being a win for the husband and wife pairing of Sue and Doug Norfolk. Weston won the two accompanying singles (which went to time) and established a 3 – 0 lead by lunchtime.



*Photo shows the winning Weston team. (l to r) Gerry Williams, Jan Scotchmer (captain), Sue Norfolk and Doug Norfolk*

All the singles in the afternoon session were timed out with Weston winning three out of the four. Unfortunately, one had to be conceded by Bristol as one its player had to withdraw due to a medical problem midway through the game. Gerry Williams (Weston) won both his games in only his second competitive AC match, although he is a very low handicap GC player.



So, it was 'Congratulations' for a 6-1 win for Weston, which regained the B league trophy after 9 years, and commiserations for the Bristol team as both sides returned home along the M4 having played the final in a very competitive match.

Thanks must also go to the Swindon ladies (Ann, Liz and Wendy) who kept both teams fed with coffees and teas throughout the day.

*Photo: Tony Mayer (Swindon) SWF Chair presents the B League Trophy and Plaque to Jan Scotchmer, captain of the winning Weston team*

### Short Croquet Open League

Eight clubs competed in two blocks, North and South, in the new Short Croquet (Open) League. The winners of the two blocks, Exeter and Taunton Deane, competed for the trophy at Nailsea on a warm, calm and dry day.

An excellent day was enjoyed by both teams on lawns beautifully prepared and set out by Nailsea club members, who were also generous with their hot drinks and cake.

The first round went to Exeter, with three wins to Taunton's one. This lead was maintained for the remainder of the match, with the next three rounds all being 2-2, to give Exeter the match, 9-7.

The cup was presented to Mark Macnair, the Exeter captain, by Stephen Custance-Baker, SWF League Secretary and referee. With Mark on the Exeter team were Patience Kimber, Colin Lovell and Lloyd Kimber.



The Taunton Deane team comprised Mike Balch, Dave Lusk, Sue and Stephen Custance-Baker.





## GC Level Play

Following a minute's silence to mark the death of the late Queen, an up-beat gathering of teams from Winterborne Valley and Camerton & Peasedown enjoyed the sunny, if rather chilly, lawns and hospitality at Bristol CC for this final.

Camerton & Peasedown clearly missed one of their key players who was unavailable and overall, the team found it hard to withstand the skills of the Winterborne players.



However, the overall result of 13:2 to Winterborne Valley disguises the fact of several 7:5 games so the match certainly presented its excitements during the day.

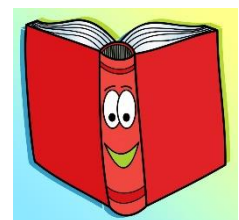


*Still smiling at the end of the day, the two teams with trophy presented by Linda.*

## Reading Corner

In the last issue of Cygnet we drew your attention to a murder mystery set on a croquet lawn: A Rush on the Ultimate by H R F Keating.

Brigit got back to us from Nailsea: "I like your literary allusions - have read several H.R.F. Keating books but haven't come across his croquet tale before."



She went on to tackle the mystery quote:

*The Lord Chancellor of England was a small, fat, ugly man with steel-rimmed spectacles which gave him the schoolboy look which led to his nickname 'The Owl of the Remove'. He was given to fits of teasing when he would laugh aloud at his own jokes and unpredictable bouts of biting sarcasm during which he would stare at his victims with cold hostility. He had been, for many years, the captain of the House of Lords croquet team, a game in which his ruthless cunning found full scope.*

Apparently, Billy Bunter of Greyfriars School was referred to as The Owl of the Remove but this was a red herring I'm afraid. The quote is actually taken from a rollicking Rumpole narrative by John Mortimer: Rumpole and the Tap End, with no doubt, a deliberate nod to the original.

As a footnote, Brigit writes:

"Billy Bunter's ... weekly adventures were originally set out in the boys' weekly The Magnet by Frank Richards (pen name of Charles Hamilton). The famous books followed."

So, do you fancy another quote to source one evening? OK, it's Christmas, let's have two! The first with a local connection:

*The Swindon I knew in 2002 had a lot going for it. ... We had our own 40,000-seater croquet stadium.*

And the second:

*She said, 'Is there anything you can't do?'*

*'I can't play the saxophone, I don't know the rules of croquet, I can't remember my wife's face. My navigation is crap, I can't pole-vault, and I'm hopeless at fist-fighting.'*



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