

# Cygnets

March / April 2020



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

Well hello everyone - this certainly isn't the newsletter we thought we'd been sending out this month - what terrible times for us all.

Our thoughts are with you all and we hope it's not too long before we see you again.

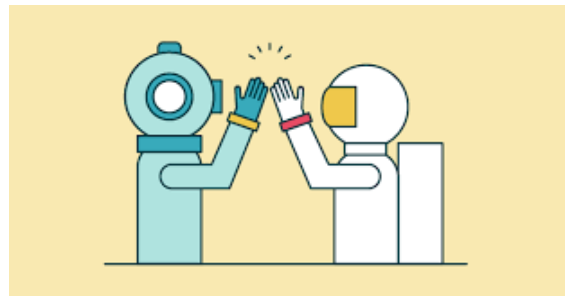
### A message from your Committee: Keep safe and help your community

Everything is now shut down and that means no more croquet - for the time being National, Regional, Local and Club matches and tournaments have been cancelled until May/June.

But the croquet community 'keeps faith' with its members

One thing is certain; those people in the 'high risk' categories represent that majority of club members - and clubs are supporting their members. Many clubs have told us what they are doing - yes there is still activity going on - and one that makes you proud of our inclusive sport.

Whilst there is no play, many clubs are in the process of contacting their members, who are in the 'high risk' category to make sure they are - ok - to keep in touch: you are not on your own - to find if they cannot get out for shopping etc and then finding someone who can help them.



Newsletters and emails keep people in touch - some clubs have use their 'whatsapp' group or other Social Media to keep in contact and to remind people that they are not alone

Let's us look forward to the summer, when it may be possible for some form of croquet to be played

You can be assured that your South West Federation will keep you informed and we'll do everything we can to support croquet

On behalf of the Committee - Keep safe - follow the guidance - look after yourself and look after others

Brian Wilson. Chair SWF

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

Remember- we send Cygnets 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 Cygnets is also available shortly after publication on-line on our website: [www.swfcroquet.org.uk](http://www.swfcroquet.org.uk)

## Committee activities

We held a virtual committee meeting over the last few days - the minutes are on the SWF website: [www.swfcroquet.org.uk](http://www.swfcroquet.org.uk)

We will be in frequent contact over the coming weeks and will keep you informed - you may see more frequent (but shorter) Cygnets appearing in your in-boxes, so keep looking out for these.

## League Play

Stephen Custance-Baker, our League Secretary sent the following notice to all Club League Secretaries and we will keep you informed of any changes in our plans:

The SWF committee has decided to postpone the start of the inter-club league season until at least the first of June. This decision will be reviewed during May, when we will have better knowledge of the spread of the virus, but it is likely that a further delay will be necessary.

This means that all matches arranged for dates between now and May 31<sup>st</sup> are cancelled, but I would be happy for you to get in touch with each other and arrange alternative dates for later in the season. If you do then please let me know so that I can keep up-to-date with the latest schedule.

The predictions are so uncertain that there is no guarantee that we will be able to get any proper season of play but I will try to organise something when we know more.

## Other sources of information and support include

- ✓ The CA website: [www.croquet.org.uk](http://www.croquet.org.uk)
  - See details of the Emergency Assistance Fund in Appendix 1
  - See details of the Entry Fee Donation Scheme in Appendix 2
- ✓ Sport England website: [www.sportengland.org](http://www.sportengland.org)

## The Club that used to be known as Dyffryn

Dyffryn CC has changed its name and venue. It is now part of the Glamorgan Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club.

For those of you travelling there the postcode is CF32 0LR.

Sadly they were badly affected by the floods in February and now, like all of us they have Covid19 to contend with.

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## SWAN

We were so looking forward to delivering our new-look SWAN this year - Rhona has worked really hard to bring it all together and arrange delivery. The League dates are now completely disrupted but there is other information which you won't have seen in this format before so do look out for it when you can.



It has been distributed to some clubs already - you will be informed by your secretary if this is the case. Currently the rest of the copies are being held in a venue near Budleigh - not the club so please don't go there.

So if you're likely to be in that area over the next few weeks and can take those for your club - or even for clubs near to you - then please contact Robert Moss to discuss further. [robert.moss444@btinternet.com](mailto:robert.moss444@btinternet.com)

It's been good to work with someone who's based a bit further away than many of us (Rhona is based in Cornwall) and we are aware that clubs and players there may feel a bit distant. I hope this has done a little bit to make the SWF a bit more of a presence down there. It's certainly felt good from our point of view.

### Putting your heritage to good use

Does your club have a long and interesting history?  
Do you have some interesting architecture?  
Are you celebrating a significant birthday?  
Then what about National Heritage Days?

*National Heritage Days could be worth investigating and may also be a good source of recruitment suggests Klim Seabright.*

National Heritage Days arranges for interesting buildings, which are not usually open to the public, to throw open their doors to the public during the early part of September.

Last year I visited a couple of interesting buildings in Cheltenham (nothing to do with Croquet) and then wrote to Cheltenham Civic Society asking if Cheltenham Croquet Club could be included. The reply came quickly and was "Cheltenham Civic Society would be delighted to include Cheltenham Croquet Club".

Nationally the scheme comes under the National Trust but they sometimes use a local partner, Hence the Cheltenham Civic Society.



A quick look around the South West shows nearly every county is involved in some way. Not only is this a potential for recruitment but helps croquet clubs have other links with the local community e.g. Budleigh: Britain in Bloom and Cheltenham: Gloucestershire Arthritis Trust.

**Do let us know of your initiatives and we'll share them via Cygnet**

## Tournaments

You will know that the CA has cancelled its own tournaments for the time being as have many clubs. The CA has modified the on-line Tournament Entry System (TES) to allow for the easier processing of refunds. Anyone affected has the option of donating their entry fee to the host club to support them. See Appendix 2

Roger Mills (SWCA and Budleigh) has an alternative suggestion:

*There will be a number of players who are actually better off - in financial terms - as a result of the C-virus. For example, the cancellation of tournaments means that I am about £500 wealthier due to returned tournament entry fees, and travel and accommodation costs.*

*Friday is Food Bank day in Sidmouth, when the Food Bank gives out weekly food parcels to those in need. I met the manager this morning, and asked her if she expected supplies & donations to drop off and demand from clients to increase in the coming months. Her answer was yes and yes.*

*So, I will be passing on some of my tournament savings to support the Food Bank. In a sense it cost me nothing to do this.*

*Roger Mills, SWCA*



## South West Croquet Academy

The Southwest Croquet Academy at Budleigh has cancelled all of its 2020 coaching courses for the time being.

It's not only the delegates on the courses who are disappointed. The team of people that run the SWCA and all our Lead Coaches who were looking forward to meeting and coaching the many players who had enrolled for our courses are similarly disappointed by the situation. But this is the only sensible course of action in order to protect everyone's health

Our intention is to reinstate and run our 2020 programme of courses as soon as circumstances permit – we will be back in touch!

## OBE Tournament, Nailsea

This 10-shot, level play AC competition for the 79+ player, was scheduled for Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May. This has been postponed with no new date set as yet.

If you'd like to be kept informed of a new date, do contact Terry Young: 01934 707475, [terandlib@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:terandlib@yahoo.co.uk)

And please note that the last Cygnet carried two inaccuracies about this day:

- ✓ the incorrect charge for lunch was published - the actual cost will be £2.50 - a real bargain!
- ✓ Terry's phone number which is correctly stated above

## Clubs' round-up



Last week we asked you for your responses and experiences so far. Thanks to those who replied - please remember that this was all written before the latest isolation guidance so this is given in the spirit of sharing and keeping us connected. It is not suggestion or advice, it is a simple sharing of experience.

Do keep us in touch with what's happening in your neck of the woods and we'll publish your comments in the next Cygnet.

*We believe that the club and lawns are an ideal place to get exercise and fresh air whilst still semi isolating. We may have to sit a bit further apart though!  
We will see a visitor drop and income drop though.*

*George: Plymouth CC*

*Charlton Croquet Club calling! We had a socially distanced chat at the lawn today about whether to open on 7 April as planned and if so, what measures we should take re club equipment. We have several mallets and of course sets of balls available for members to use, if they don't have their own. We came to the conclusion that probably we should take the club mallets out of use to avoid spreading germs.*

*We'd be interested to hear what other Clubs are planning to do about this.*

*We think we'll probably stop Club afternoons on Tuesdays and Thursdays and just allow members to book the lawn on line.*

*Dorian, Charlton*

*At Bath, we have closed down all tournaments, croquet gatherings and club days and advised against using the clubhouse for refreshment breaks. The lawns are, however, open for practice and play, preferably singles, to give members the opportunity for gentle exercise.*

*Hester, Bath*

*One of our members, John Hancock, had the idea of contacting the local newspaper. He thought the Sports writers would be stuck for copy with no local sport happening. They immediately offered him 650 words plus photos.*

*Our member has written an article - just general stuff about croquet but you too could have a blank canvas! I know we can't recruit at the moment but if it sows a few seeds, it has to be worth it.*

*Kathy, Nailsea*





## Alternatives to croquet

Yes - there are other things to do during the summer. Here are a few ideas to be going on with.

### Practice the mental approach

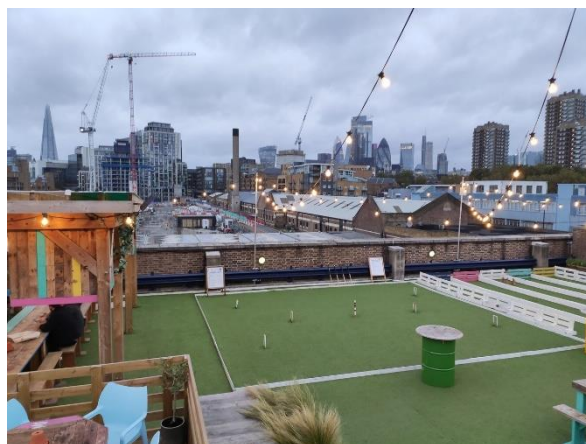
Read those coaching notes and play the game in your head

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

<http://www.oxfordcroquet.com/coach/index.asp>

### Novel coaching ideas

Think about how to get new players enthused. Eugene Chang, Chair of the CA's Marketing Committee, came across this pub recently in London which offers 'Skylight Croquet.' Taking turns, the idea is to take one ball through six hoops in order and hit the peg, gaining an extra stroke when you run a hoop and if you strike another ball. The winner is the first person to hit the peg.



### Help the SWF

You can do this from the comfort of your own home knowing you're helping make the SW Croquet scene even better:

- ✓ **Website improvement:** so far no one has responded for a call to help with our website, so here's a more specific request. Could you spend an hour or two looking at all the Federations' websites, looking at their style and content and making suggestions about how we could develop ours. Contact Linda if you're interested in helping with this. [lindawithai@hotmail.com](mailto:lindawithai@hotmail.com)
- ✓ **Constitution review:** following our AGM we have established a Constitution review group which works by email exchange of views. More members would be welcome. Again contact Linda if you're interested

### Help yourselves

Now is a good time to be thinking about the ways you'd like your club to develop. Paul Francis, our Development Officer would be delighted to help you plan this and to think about possible sources of financial support. Contact him on: [paulwfrancis@icloud.com](mailto:paulwfrancis@icloud.com)

### Help combat inequalities

The croquet world, including the SWF, is predominantly white, male and middle-aged. Wider representation is needed at all levels - competitive play, club management, regional and national management. For example, we'd love to recruit a wider range of people to the SWF committee - so come on everyone who doesn't fit the stereotype - please get in touch with us.

## Reasons to be cheerful 1: WCF AC World Championships

The AC world Championships took place at the Victoria Croquet Club in Cairnlea, Melbourne, Australia. The final stage and was played between Reg Bamford, a South African residing in London and Matthew Essick, an American. Reg won for the fifth time against Matthew's debut appearance.

Five players from the South West played in the event: Richard Smith and Robert Wilkinson, from Bristol; James Galpin from Nailsea; Tom Weston from East Dorset and Pete Trimmer (ex-East Dorset and Bristol) currently living and working in the USA. Both Richard and James managed to make it to the main event knockout but both lost in the first round. Richard managed to make it to the semi-final of the Bowl (the event for 1<sup>st</sup> round losers in the main KO) but lost.

Ray Ransom, Bristol

## Reasons to be cheerful 2: Victory for Cheltenham

Cheltenham Croquet Club Quiz Team had a successful run on the BBC Radio Gloucestershire morning show. Each morning we were subjected to a test of our Gloucestershire knowledge - did you know gold was mined here?

Although we were delighted to do so well (tie for first place), the main aim was to gain publicity for our sport and our club. Mission achieved I think!

The photo shows, left to right: Jan Lugg, Bob Knight, Adam Moliver, Klim Seabright, Libby Stewart, Naomi Whitehead (Captain) Pat Francis, not pictured was also in the team.



Klim Seabright, Cheltenham

## Update from Council

Thanks to Klim Seabright, one of the SW Reps to CA Council, for the following.

### Marketing

An Interim Report from the Marketing and Communications Working Group identified 1- and 3-year objectives. The 3-year plan is to increase levied members from 8,000 to 10,000; attract £50K in advertising; attract £25K in sponsorship. Strategies to achieve this include a regular e-newsletter, sponsorship, advertising, increasing use of PR initiatives etc.

A new design for Croquet car sticker is nearing completion so we should see the word "croquet" in as many car parks, supermarkets and on street parking spaces as possible.

## **Handicap Committee**

I hope the work on ensuring an up to date list of the various active Handicappers is complete. If you have not let Frances Colman ([frances@luxtersfarm.com](mailto:frances@luxtersfarm.com)) know of your current status please do so soon.

## **Safeguarding**

The policy document has been updated by Jean Hargreaves. I will be suggesting one addition to the Regulated Activity section. The word “coaching” does not appear. I am sure that is just an oversight because many words which are similar do appear. The issue can be quite complicated so if you have questions about Safeguarding which are not included on the website then please contact Jean on ([jwjh47@gmail.com](mailto:jwjh47@gmail.com)).

## **Equal Opportunities Working Group**

Sometimes it falls upon a member of Council to become involved in some negative aspects of our sport. I have been a member of a working party (Patricia Duke-Cox, Samir Patel and Eugene Chang) reviewing the CA policy(s) which includes the subjects of bullying and harassment.

I believe our policy (Constitution Item 8 and Appendix 1) plus our Equal Opportunities Policy would seem to cover most things. Some amendment to the wording is needed to include use of social media.

One aspect of our sport which appeals to me is the very high standard of sportsmanship which we usually enjoy. I am sure we all strive to keep up a high standard. I hasten to add that the matter causing my involvement had nothing to do with a member our Federation



## Appendix 1

### CA Emergency Assistance to Full Member Clubs in Financial Difficulty

This has been sent to all clubs by the CA

The CA has established the “CA Emergency Assistance Fund” to assist Full Member Clubs in the most serious financial difficulty in these testing times, those that expect to be unable to pay bills as they fall due in the foreseeable short-term ie for the six months or so through to the end of the season because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose is to prevent the closure of an existing club because of unforeseen financial demands which cannot be met from the club’s own resources.

#### Outline of Key Details

- General terms will be unsecured interest free loans of 3 years duration (no repayment due on first anniversary, 50% on second and 50% on third).
- All Full Member Clubs are eligible to apply
- Qualifying criteria based on expected inability to pay bills as they fall due
- Awards will only be made to clubs believed to be otherwise financially viable
- There will be a moratorium on Development Grants and Loans for the remainder of 2020 (those already approved are unaffected)
- Initial Sum of £50,000 in total to be made available

Any club which believes that it might need to apply for a loan from the fund should in the first instance now advise incoming CA Hon. Treasurer Ian Burridge ([burridge.ian@googlemail.com](mailto:burridge.ian@googlemail.com)) that it may need to do so, with an indication of the likely sum required. This is not part of the formal application process, rather the planning process for the development of the scheme and further support that it might be possible to offer clubs.

Details of the formal application process will be announced shortly but will require the submission of two years annual accounts, a cash flow forecast and a plan indicating why a loan is necessary for the club to survive and the level of funding required.

A specific committee will be established to award the available funds appropriately and in a timely manner. Once established it will publish full details of the application process and criteria.

Jonathan Isaacs, Chairman Council  
Roger Staples, Chairman Exec Board

## Appendix 2

### Tournament Entry Fee Donation Scheme

This has been sent from Ian Vincent on behalf of the CA's Coronavirus Task Force to Tournament Secretaries and host clubs and to Federations. So individual Tournament entrants may not yet be aware of this.

Clubs that were due to host tournaments may be particularly badly hit financially by the Coronavirus outbreak. The CA has therefore enhanced the online Tournament Entry System to enable players withdrawing from a tournament, or unable to play in one that has been cancelled, to donate their entry fees to the club, should they wish to do so, rather than be refunded.

This is done by providing an additional tick box when confirming withdrawal from a tournament to indicate that the entry fee is to be donated. Donations will be paid to the club in full, without any administration fee or levy.

Donations of entry fees for CA Organised Tournaments will go to the club that was going to host them, rather than the CA itself.

To take advantage of this scheme, the recommended way of cancelling a tournament in the Tournament Entry System is for the Tournament Secretary to proceed as described in the online help at <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=members/entry/tesGuide#cancelling>

## Appendix 3

### CA response to Coronavirus so far

This has been sent to all club secretaries and is reproduced here.

This message summarises what the CA has been doing in response to the outbreak of Coronavirus, to support its members: individuals, clubs and federations, during this unprecedented event.

As soon as the scale of the rapidly developing situation became apparent, it set up a task force to respond to it, which is continuing to review the situation on an on-going basis.

The task force consists of:

Roger Staples (Chairman Executive Board)

Jonathan Isaacs (Chairman of Council)

Ian Vincent (Hon Secretary)

Ian Burridge (Incoming Hon Treasurer)

Mark Suter (CA Manager)

The CA Council will be meeting (by teleconference) on Saturday, 28<sup>th</sup> March, to review its decisions and plan more strategically for the next few months and beyond.

A [news item on the CA website](#) has been updated with its advice as official guidelines have changed. Please follow that link to see the current recommendations.

National Croquet Week has been cancelled for the time being, with the option to re-instate it later in the season if that becomes possible.

The likely financial impact of this on clubs is being considered and it has already introduced an [Emergency Assistance Scheme for Clubs](#) and a [Tournament Entry Fee Donation](#) scheme in an attempt to mitigate it. The CA Tournament Entry System has been swiftly upgraded by Dave Kibble to better handle tournament cancellations, mass withdrawals and refunds.

Remote access to the office has been established to enable staff to work from home. More generally, it is aware that clubs and their members will be affected in other ways. Please keep in touch with each other and to look out for your more vulnerable members.

For some people, social media and teleconferencing facilities are helpful in maintaining communications and also to conduct business where necessary. A number of groups within the CA have been using the [Zoom teleconferencing service](#). They offer free accounts that enable people to host a meeting of up to 100 participants for up to 40 minutes and have one-to-one calls of unlimited duration.

We trust you stay safe and look forward to being able to start playing again when that becomes possible.

Jonathan Isaacs. Chairman of Council