



Cygnets

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September 2020



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

Hello everyone.

Well normally at this time we'd be closing up the season's play, preparing for finals and generally taking a more laid-back approach in this mellow time of year. So, what's the mood in your neck of the woods? I know Bristol has just started a series of competitive games, so not much winding down there!

But here's some interesting reading for the longer evenings and wetter days of early autumn.

AGM

Preparations are well in hand for our venture into Zoomland for this. We've had a test run for the voting process and we're thinking about all the issues that might arise. We probably won't think of them all, so if you have any queries or concerns do share them with us in good time so we can do our best to resolve them.



The deadline for nominations to the committee has passed. None of the places are contested and we will be looking for people to be co-opted or who might be interested in helping out with various tasks without taking on a committee position.

We're a large geographical area so there's opportunity to work locally in a range of ways, or do you have a particular interest - recruitment, website, publicity, lawns management, coaching, development ...?

Let us know - we'd love to talk with you about this.

Zoom meeting

The notes of this month's meeting may be found in Appendix 1. The main topics were planning for next year's League matches and coaching.

We were particularly pleased to learn of Stephen's plans for a series of short Zoom coaching sessions for all GC players: Playing to the Rules. We will be promoting these nearer the time but

*if you have any suggestions for these please do contact Stephen:
webmaster@tauntuncroquet.org;*

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Please send queries, suggestions and feedback about Cygnets or any aspect of the SW croquet scene to:

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

Lawns



This photo (*left*) of Moreton in Marsh lawns was taken at the end of July - part of the bowls club house may be seen in the background. The next task was stone picking and fine levelling.

And more problems for Nailsea. This photo (*right*) was taken after just 15 minutes of heavy rain, and just after some re-seeding had taken place.



Coaching



This topic was featured in our recent Zoom meeting the notes of which may be found in Appendix 1.

We explored what clubs have been able to do this year and begun to think about how the SWF can support coaching across the region.

Richard Jackson is our Regional Coaching Officer and has recently updated the coaching page on our website. <https://www.swfcroquet.org.uk/coaching/>

The CA coaching page is another good place to start:

<https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=members/docs/committees/coaching>

Lockdown has been a good opportunity to think about alternative ways of developing our play and there is a plethora of on line and hard copy coaching manuals, sessions, courses, routines and videos. How on earth do we make sense of all this?

We have some ideas ourselves and we'd really like to hear from you – what methods and materials have you found helpful, what pathway through the materials would be helpful, how do you create a culture of improving your game in your club?

Please send your ideas and comments to Richard: richard.jackson@yahoo.co.uk;

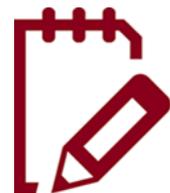
Handicapping Hint

A handy hint from Ken Wilcox at Lym Valley CC:

I would urge all Handicappers of small clubs to make the effort to play all their members as the best way of assessing their handicaps.

The club is running a novice's competition this year.

The reward? promotion to a lower handicap? and a trophy too!!



Obituaries

In the last issue of Cygnet, we carried the sad news that Roger Buckley had passed away. We have since learned of the passing of croquet legend, William Ormerod. They are each remembered here.

Roger Buckley

Doug Norfolk, President of Weston super Mare CC remembers Roger.

“It is with we deep sadness that Weston super Mare CC announce the passing of Roger Buckley. Roger was a well-known figure throughout the South West Federation due to his involvement serving a period as Chairman of the committee and various roles in developing and coaching croquet throughout the region.

As a club member Roger was the main driving force in moving our club from Clarence Park to our current home at Bleadon, enabling us to move forward in the croquet world by entering teams in the both Association & Golf leagues and he was delighted at the progress we made. He had one main aim and that was to captain a Weston team in the A.C. Federation league and his delight when this was achieved was a joy to see.

On the administration of the club Roger served terms of President & Chairman and In addition was an active member of the committee up to the time of his passing. As a playing member Roger captained Federation & Intermediate A.C teams a Golf League team and was a keen playing member of the Golf level play team.

Roger was not alone in his club activities he was always supported by his wife Shirley who was invariably by his side playing with or supporting him on the lawns. Roger and Shirley were both our club qualified coaches.

Our most sincere sympathies are with Shirley at this time for the great loss in her life. Not only will the croquet world mourn the loss of Roger so will his beloved “Baggies” a keen supporter of W.B.A football team he never lost an opportunity to bend your ears to the virtues of his team.

Rest in Peace dear Roger, your absence on the lawns and in life will be greatly missed.”

Roger was a stalwart of the SWF Committee for some years and we have received tributes from those who knew him in that capacity. These may be found in Appendix 2.

William Ormerod

William was a legend throughout the croquet world but his roots were in the South West. *Martin Murray, Bristol CC, leads the tributes.*

“With the death of William Ormerod croquet has lost perhaps its last living connection to the croquet of the 1950s. For William, born in 1936, was an active tournament player from the tender age of 15, when he played his first tournament at Parkstone in 1952.

By 1956, having played only a handful of A class games, he was included in the England team for the last two MacRobertson Shield matches against New Zealand. Admittedly the Shield was already won by that time, and the novelty of a promising young player must have emboldened the Selectors to give an early opportunity to William. This proved to be a wise move, as William

rapidly became an elite player. In 1958 he made his first appearance in the President's Cup, and was a regular both in that event and in the England/Great Britain team for the next twenty years. He won the President's Cup once (in 1966) and was on the winning side in the MacRobertson Shield on all the four occasions he played (a minor record itself).

While his playing record was distinguished, William will be remembered more for his character, personality, and unique style of play. I first met him in 1962, and thought he was twenty years older than me, rather than the eight years he really was. He himself admitted he was "born middle aged", but he never seemed to change. He was deliberate in everything he did, and his croquet was no different. Both his tactics and his stroke execution were unique, which could prove frustrating for opponents. Indeed John Solomon, who dominated the croquet scene during William's career, found William a difficult opponent.

After the 1963 Test Tour in New Zealand, William stayed there for a year or two, and on his return settled in Corfe Castle, where he practiced as a GP. He remained an active member of the Parkstone Club and the Dorset Inter-counties team until his death. Although his top-class career effectively ended in 1978, when an ear infection caused his retirement from the President's Cup, and failure to be available for the following Test Tour, his style of play seemed age-proof, and he remained a player not to be taken lightly. Indeed, later in life he took up Golf Croquet, recording a remarkable victory in the Kate Jones Memorial Trophy in 2014, no less than 60 years after winning the Golf Croquet Open Doubles in 1954. A true testament to longevity!

The two characteristics of William's personality which set him apart from others were his humour and his politeness. Funny stories about him abound, and there was always a suspicion that he took a delight in stretching, if not actually distorting, the truth. One of his favourite sayings was "let nature take its course", so one got the impression that his success as a doctor was more due to his bedside manner than any great scientific knowledge, an impression he did little to disown.

He similarly took a pride in his reputation for slow play, and liked to pretend that quick-fire breaks, and flashy manoeuvres like triple peels, were "not the way to play". But he really was a keen competitor; he just liked to play along with his own reputation.

His politeness, even when I first met him, seemed from an earlier era. After a game, win or lose, he would invariably complement his opponent - "you played sooo beautifully" and, if you lost "you were very unlucky". It always made a game against him a real pleasure. We're not likely to see his like again.

More tributes to William may be found in Appendix 3.

Match reports

Who would've thought we had a section with this heading, but Dave Kibble tells us:



*Richard Smith (Bristol and Kington Langley) achieved very notable success with a career-first recently when, playing for the first time since the February World Championship in Australia, in a **national Inter-Club Championship** match for Bristol at High Wycombe: he defeated his opponents on the sixth turn in both his games with a perfect score of 26TP.*

For those who have difficulty appreciating that: In both games, with the fourth ball played onto the lawn, Richard hit and made a break to 4-back with a leave that the opponent missed on the fifth turn, and then Richard completed a break on the sixth turn comprising 12 hoops, three peels and a peg-out. Croquet doesn't come much better.

And John Grimshaw reports: *although the National Short Croquet Competition did not go ahead, Kington Langley hosted Bristol in a friendly run on the format of the national one, and Bristol won 8-7 in a great day's croquet. This will probably be the only match played anywhere in the SWF this year!!*



SWAN

We asked you in the last issue of Cygnet for your thoughts of making SWAN an electronic document only. Thank you to those of you who sent us your thoughts on this. The general tone was that of a recognition that this was inevitable with melancholic undertones of times gone past. Ken Wilcox (Lym Valley), caught the tone nicely:

I would be loath to see the familiar SWAN annual publication disappear into the clouds but we must move on. Yes, the money could be spent by reducing other fees or developing new initiatives.

We must not say goodbye without thanking all the past contributors, distributors and compilers but move on we must. Things will never be the same again after CV19 but it is proving to be a pandemic of change. I shall remember the printed copy with nostalgia and affection.

As Cygnet has emerged, SWAN's role was clearly up for review, so there will be no further printed issues.

It's the passing of an era. The magazine served us well for many years and we'd like to thank the editors who've worked so hard each year to collate the material and distribute it across the region - ably assisted by a network of contacts. We asked some blasts from the past to share their memories with us.



This certainly stirred up some memories. We are indebted to Sue Mackay and Ray Ransom for their recollections which may be found in Appendix 3.

As far as we can ascertain these are the editors who, apart from 1999 have kept SWAN going:

- Ian Maugham (father of David Maugham) was the original editor. SWAN was produced twice a year, spring and autumn - as 4 x A4 pages. Printing costs were sponsored by Cheltenham & Gloucester Building Society
- In 1988 it became a single spring issue and increased to 8 x A4 sides
- Hamish Hall became the editor in 1991 - but he didn't have a computer (!) so Ray Ransom took on responsibility for preparing the copy for printing
- 1995 and Issue 14 was the first to appear in its current A5 format
- 1997 saw Shaun Carter take over the editorship
- 1999 - no printed issue!!!
- 2000 and Sue Mackay saved the day - see her account of this in Appendix 1
- 2016 when Maureen Smith took over the reins
- 2020 and Rhona Foster edited what turns out to be our final issue

Thank you to all of them - you have earned your place on the honours list.

The archive Sue refers to is certainly worth a look - lots of well-known names there writing really interesting articles. The editors certainly worked hard to make an interesting read. Rhona too, has been going through the archive she's inherited and found similarly entertaining articles. We're thinking about bringing the on-line archive up-to-date - any offers of help with this?

National Heritage Open Days

Klim writes:

Last year I visited several local buildings which aren't usually open to the public. National Heritage Open Days is operated by the National Trust. In Cheltenham this is sub-contracted to Cheltenham Civic Society, which is a much-respected organisation in the town.

This got me thinking - why shouldn't Cheltenham Croquet Club be part of that?

- *The club has an interesting history*
- *Becoming a regular listing would also cement the club's place in the town's history*
- *It's a way for the club to be a part of its wider community*
- *It would offer a potential for recruitment*

I approached Cheltenham Civic Society and their response was "we would be delighted for Cheltenham Croquet Club to join in". I recruited a team of volunteers and designed a short training course and we were all ready to greet visitors in September.... then COVID hit!

I found myself writing an apologetic letter explaining the position.

"OK" they said "but we would like to include your details in the local Heritage Open Day programme, the National Heritage Open Day program and we could also include something about you on our more general website ... and we look forward to you fully joining in 2021 ... is that OK with you? ... um ... let me think about it!!!"

So why don't you think about this for your club in 2021.

Eye to Eye

Klim Seabright has come up with an interesting situation. He writes:

I have recently been coaching someone with a Colour Vision Defect (CVD) and the early onset of wet macular degeneration (WMD) and I am looking for suggestions.

I spoke to my optician about WMD and she suggested that we blank off the poorest eye - but not with a black patch, since she felt it important that light got through. That does seem to help.

On the CVD question... I know that statistically more men than women are affected, and that red/green or yellow/brown problems seem to be in the majority. I was thinking that I might try a mixed set of balls - red/yellow, pink/white?

Any suggestions gratefully received at klimseabright@gmail.com"

Wearing Whites

A bit of a debate about the wearing of whites has emerged again - did it ever really go away?

Some insist on whites at all club games (not just competitions) and when coaching; some see this as a deterrent to potential players; some love the atmosphere wearing whites creates and feel it has a positive impact on their approach to the game.

The CA rules do allow for the wearing of team colours, so already there is a way round this for those who want it - but that doesn't cover individual entry to tournaments.

Do you have any strong feelings on this? If so, do share them with us.

Appendix 1

Notes of Zoom meeting 15.9.20

Clubs represented: Abbey, Cheltenham, Swanage, Bristol, Camerton & Peasedown, Sidmouth, St Agnes, Taunton, Bath, Plymouth, Mumbles, Kington Langley,

Apologies: Chris Southworth, Worcester Norton; Linda, SWF; Dave Kibble, Bristol & SW Rep to CA Council. Peter Nelson, SW Rep to CA Council; Richard Jackson SWF

Updates

St Agnes	recruitment going well
Swanage	doing well, good finances, members half rate fee this year
Sidmouth	12 new members - waiting list 17, recruitment by word of mouth
Bristol	received enquiries despite no attempt to recruit - 10 new members but coaching presented different problems: wide range of ability, less opportunity to meet each other or other members.
Taunton	some new members but lost some - club block competitions run monthly so good turnover of people playing each other and some beginners playing in GC blocks
Cheltenham	National Heritage days a possibility for recruitment
Camerton & Peasedown	Buddy system helpful way of including new members

Leagues

Stephen reported

- he is planning on the basis that more or less normal conditions will apply next year - if this is not the case, adaptations will need to be made
- we won't know til January how many teams will enter so it is not possible to carry forward the dates arranged for this year - also other dates will change e.g. tournaments
- Short Croquet trial postponed to 2021

This approach was understood but there are concerns about travel - these cannot be dealt with until we know the situation

Coaching

Clubs were asked what they're doing and suggestions for how SWF could support coaching across the region.

Examples of coaching being undertaken include

- Zoom - useful but not a substitute for on-the-lawn sessions
- Bristol offering series of 5 topic-based sessions - 40 members have expressed an interest
- Beginners' coaching
- Bristol website has new coaching page which includes links to videos, practice routines etc

Issues include

- Numbers limits
- How much access players have to their lawns
- Lack of people taking up coaching
- Lack of coaches in some clubs

Noted

- Some clubs have little access to coaches
- Be helpful to have access to information about where coaches are and if they are happy to travel to other clubs
- Some clubs have coaches in one code only - again an opportunity to share
 - Members who are not coaches are often providing coaching
- SWF website might be developed further

Actions

As the SWF Coaching Officer, Richard Jackson is asked to explore these issues and suggest ways of addressing them

GC Modules: Playing to the Rules

Stephen outlined the series of short Zoom sessions he is preparing targeted at GC players and coaches and designed to improve awareness and understanding of GC rules.

The series will begin on Wed 14th October at 7.00pm

Topics will include: when to call a ref, wrong ball, boundaries, jump shots, hammer strokes, extra strokes, ball marking, offside, deeming, ball marking, faults.

The sessions will be recorded and available for future reference.

Future SWF Zoom meetings:

Confirmed that these sessions will be held on the second Tuesday of the month - this month was a blip!

Next month will include some discussion about the AGM and other topics to be covered at some stage are: internal competitions, lawn maintenance

A recording of this meeting may be found at:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/JcHqAC69dpH5jgC5r0oMSJH1IUytSyNg9JDvYzWgvJdwh_H3BfK7bTF1xDfjF0QJ.E9PY9N_xJcXhKKZ8

Appendix 2

Roger Buckley

“Roger served the SWF with distinction for many years in various roles, including Youth Officer, Coaching Officer, and Chair. He had a great knack for identifying who would be best to tackle whatever tasks needed doing, and persuading them to do it, as well as providing organisation and support. He was particularly keen on encouraging youth croquet and was a great help and inspiration to me both personally and in this area generally. Overall, he made a huge contribution to the development of croquet in the SWF and will be very sadly missed.”

Marcus Evans, past Chair SWF.

“He was the inspiration behind Weston super Mare (then playing at Clarence Park) and it’s move to Bleadon and the development of the club to where it is now. His commitment to croquet was absolute and his service to the SWF and the CA exemplary. We used to josh each other about football as well, for he was an ardent supporter of WBA”

John Grimshaw, past SWF League Secretary

“I’ve known Roger for many years and served on the SWF Committee alongside him for quite a few of them. He was very adept at getting 'volunteers' to undertake tasks but never afraid of stepping in himself. He will be sorely missed by the Weston Club and his many friends throughout the SWF.”

Ray Ransom, past Chair SWF

“He persuaded me to go to Weston and Bleadon to coach in the early days of the club. I also remember that he sometimes held SWF meetings at his home. He was also instrumental in finding a new "home" for SWF AGMs when we moved from Taunton Deane to Batch Country House. My condolences to Shirley and all his friends and family. He will be very much missed by members of Weston-super-Mare Croquet Club and the South West Federation.”

Peter Dyke, Nailsea CC

“I wonder how many can claim to have held so many positions within the Federation as Roger. I know that Roger enjoyed visiting other clubs within the Federation, both as Chairman and as Development Officer. I think he found it invaluable in seeing how other clubs ran/their facilities etc and he did not find it a chore driving long distances to visit the rather remote clubs - he was glad to offer them help/assistance as necessary.”

Julie Horsley, past SWF Secretary

“It is with much sorrow that I learn of the sad news of Roger’s death. Others have made well-deserved tributes to Roger for his enormous contribution to Croquet throughout the South West and, in particular, to his lengthy, exceptional service to the South West Federation. I wholeheartedly concur with these accolades and I have little to add. But I would like to say that he was a true gentleman who epitomised the ideal of voluntary service to his associations. He was always willing to put his shoulder to the wheel and, from time to time, to put the interest of the SWF before his own.”

Brian Shorney, past CA Chair

Appendix 3

William Ormerod

Roger Jenkins, Bristol CC remembers:

I first met William at the Counties about 30 years ago and I assumed, by his general demeanour and manner of speech, that he was about 12/15 years older than me, i.e. early sixties. About 10 years later I was amazed to discover that he was only five years older! This rather bears out the remark that William was born fifty years old!

I do remember I once called William "Bill." I was put right in no uncertain terms.

William was a well-known figure at Swanage CC. Keith Southern writes:

In 2005 the late Roy Smith started an initiative to establish Swanage Croquet Club. On discovering that a former England international lived nearby, in Corfe Castle, he quickly enrolled William's assistance which was willingly given. William helped find initial equipment and provided coaching to the early membership. Without the efforts of Roy and William, both of whom worked tirelessly to get croquet off the ground in Swanage, the Club would probably not exist today and members would not be experiencing hours of friendship and pleasure each summer.

In the years since then he continued to give his time and knowledge unstintingly to all members, whatever their level of ability; his patience and regular encouragement were truly exemplary. He was also a source of seemingly endless anecdotes about the people he had met during his croquet career.

In the years before Swanage decided to enter the SWF League competitions William used his broad spread of contacts in other clubs to organise a yearly tour to other parts of the south of England for club members; these were enjoyable social events as well as serious competition. He was an enthusiastic supporter of the Club's League team, both home and away; loud cries of 'Come on Swanage' could often be heard.

Even when his health began to limit the number of games he could play, he continued to put in regular appearances at the ground to enjoy the company of his friends. He played his final game on Wednesday July 29th. The Club will miss him tremendously.

Away from the Swanage Club I had the pleasure for several years of being involved with William's participation in the Dorset team in the annual GC Inter-Counties competitions. The journeys to Southwick, although often problematic on the roads, were never dull due to William's consummate conversational ability, not just on the subject of croquet but also on a whole range of life experiences from his medical background. One incident I recall from these competitions was the unusual sight of William in a hurry. Although widely regarded as never being hasty, on that occasion I saw him move with unaccustomed rapidity almost to the point of running! The reason was that he was a hoop behind with the time limit approaching and, in those days in that competition, that involved a hard stop with no extra turns available. Just a pity no video evidence exists!

David Williams from East Dorset writes:

Anyone who ever met William will have a 'William' story to tell I'm sure. I have many. From our first meeting when he gave me such encouragement, shortly after I took up the game, to partnering him in the Inter-counties and memorable trips to away matches when he had a story for every village we went through. One such quiet little peaceful village in Dorset, William

zestfully related, held a dark story where the Lord of the Manor murdered his chauffeur who was 'paying too much attention' to the Lady of the Manor, with guess what.....a croquet mallet!

But the enduring memory of this exceptional man was the time when he visited us at home on Poole harbour and hearing that my daughter Bethany, aged 12 at the time, was due to sing 'Panis Angelicus' in a duet at the school concert, encouraged her to sing to him. She took great strength from his kind supportive words and ever after William asked after her.

His regular 'and how is your lovely daughter Bethany?' always touched me as does the memory of him sitting on the sea wall absolutely fascinated by her. What a man.

And finally, the words of the great man himself. He updated his profile on the CA database in August 2019 when he wrote:

First Tournament played aged 15 at Parkstone in 1952; opponent was Miss Hedges, Lady Barbarolli's aunt. When she knew that I was musical playing the 'cello, she said don't let's play this silly game, we'll go inside and play some music.

60+ years later I'm still enjoying AC and GC at Parkstone and Swanage, Dorset with many memories of past players, croquet partners and team members:- with H.O.Hicks won Open Doubles 1960 with Humphrey busy knitting with his back to the lawn; President's Cup won 1966; Men's Championship won 1970 final v Pat Cotter, amazing multisports player, scratch golfer, bridge international, crossword setter and Senior Classics Master at St.Paul's school; with G.N.Aspinall lightning-fast 15-20 mins. triples won Open Doubles six times between 1971/8: member winning teams for England and GB 1956 in England; 1963 in NZ; 1969 in Australia;1974 in England, all AC. Losing finalist to John Solomon in NZ Open Champs.1963; Losing finalist in British Open Champ. 1962 (to Pat Cotter) and 1977 (to Michael Heap). In 1962, when I spent a long time pondering what to do, having over-approached hoop 3 with partner ball on 4 back, Pat Cotter called out:- Di Ecce hora!

Member England A Team v USA at Palm Beach in 1981 with Bernard Neal, John Solomon and Nigel Aspinall; won American Rules Croquet and AC and maybe helped with USA interest in AC. **Member Dorset AC County Team winning Intercounties 1996; member Dorset GC Inter-counties team winning trophy 2004;** longstanding member of AC and GC County teams.

Now enjoying GC at Swanage started by Roy Smith ACA where I have coached nearly 100 members as complete beginners becoming improvers and some league players. Also enjoying excellent lawns for AC at Parkstone (East Dorset). In my opinion, it takes 2 weeks to learn and play Golf Croquet, but 2 years for Association Croquet. Both are excellent games for players of all ages; and for types from Smith to Lord Rosebery.

Most memorable AC Match v Keith Wylie in 1982. He quadrupled my 3back ball out, and peeled his partner ball from hoop 1 to hoop 5 in one turn ,then pegged out both forward balls, leaving his on 5 and mine on Hoop 1; 22point turn. My contact left me in position at 1 with Keith near corner 3 . He hit 35yard shot, and went out on 2 ball break!

Most memorable GC Match was winning Kate Jones Memorial Trophy in 2014 v Chris Roberts 7/6 7/6 with a stymie at golden hoop and able to say my first winning trophy at GC since winning Open GC Doubles in 1954 (60 years ago) partnered by Great War and Second World War hero Brigadier A.E.Stokes-Roberts, So, with or against a Roberts it's a great personal occasion.

Finest players I've seen in 68 years to rival Keith Wylie:- Reg Bamford equalled by Robert Fulford. Now there's fence-sitting! Finest Swings and shooting prowess (apart from above):- John Prince, NZ, Nigel Aspinall, David Maugham, Rutger Beijderwellen, Harry Dodge, Tobi Savage and Jonathan Powe (when he has days when his swing is straight!)

Appendix 4

The Life Cycle of SWAN

South West Federation History - Ray Ransom's Farewell Address to the AGM 2009

Cast your mind back to November 1984. Reagan had just won a second term as American President; the £1 note was withdrawn to be replaced by a coin; and Charles was still married to Diana. The IBM Personal Computer had been in existence for just 3 years and the World Wide Web was still 5 years away. Most significant of all, the South West Federation of Croquet Clubs came into being on the 11th of that month as the result of its very first AGM. Although the SWF has been in existence for just 24 years, this is in fact our 25th AGM.

Of the initial membership of 15 clubs only two, Coal Research and Tracy Park, are no longer with us. Current membership stands at over 35 clubs, a very satisfying growth, and certainly we are the most successful of the 9 Federations in terms of recruitment.

Initial funding was provided by sponsorship of £250 from the Cheltenham and Gloucester Building Society and a grant of £957 from the S W Regional Sports Council. The negotiations were carried out by Ian Maugham, John McCullough and Martin Murray. The S W Sports Council also made direct grants to a number of SWF clubs.

Martin Murray was the first Chairman and steered the Federation through the first 3 years of its existence. **John McCullough** played a major role in the formation of the SWF and was its secretary from inception to his departure to York in early 1988. John was also instrumental in setting up the National coaching scheme. **Ian Maugham** acted as treasurer for the Federation from 1984 to his untimely death in March 2000. Our strength owes much to Ian's financial management. The fourth member of the committee was **Peter Dyke**, and although he had no initial defined responsibilities, he later became Schools' Officer and did sterling work in the development of youth croquet.

Team competitions started in 1985 with the Senior and Beginners' Leagues. Bath hosted both finals with Bristol winning the Senior match against Nailsea, and Parkstone (now East Dorset) were successful in the Beginners' match against Bath. 8 teams played in the Senior League and 11 in the Beginners' League. In subsequent competitions the League names were changed to 'The Federation League' and 'The B League'. An Intermediate League was added in 1990, the two Advanced Leagues in 1994 and 1999 and the Golf Croquet League in 2006. So compared to the 19 teams taking part in 1985 we see the 2008 totals of 77 Association and 20 Golf Croquet teams competing.

This growth has meant more work for committee members, and since inception the committee has grown from 4 to its current level of 9 following the additions of Coaching Officer, League Secretary, Publicity Officer, Development Officer and Golf Croquet Adviser.

The South West Area Newsletter (SWAN) has been continuously (with the exception of the 1999 issue) produced since 1985. Initially it was produced twice a year, in April and October, and each consisted of 4 sides of A4. The April edition provided news and Club profiles whilst that for October gave match and other results. The Cheltenham and Gloucester Building Society undertook the printing. In 1988 it reduced to an annual newsletter and in 1993 C & G sponsorship ceased. In 1995 SWAN switched to the format which we see today. From what I remember the 1999 edition was never produced since it resided on a laptop which was stolen from the back of a car. So even the SWF is not immune to data theft - I don't know whether the information was encrypted!

Since issue 18 (April 2000) **Sue Mackay** has been producing SWAN and has made a first class job of it. SWAN is the envy of the other federations. Sue has also produced and maintains the SWF website

containing comprehensive data on past results together with news items and information for clubs and individual players.

Throughout its existence the aims of the Federation have been to promote croquet in the South West and to develop facilities for playing the game by encouraging new and established clubs. I am sure that you will agree with me that the Federation has more than met its aims.

<https://swfcroquet.org.uk/archive/SWAN/swfhistory.htm>

Sue Mackay delved deeply into her astounding memory banks and recalls the very early issues being edited by Hamish Hall. She remembers:

They did have some useful articles by Allen Parker which I reproduced when I started up the first SWF website.

I remember having GREAT difficulty re-doing the hand-drawn illustrations for the article on cannons, as whenever I uploaded them the circles for the balls would spring apart. I used to have the same problem when I was playing!!

Some of those early articles are still worth a read and people might not realise that they are still available on the website, albeit archived on my old site.

(See <https://swfcroquet.org.uk/archive/SWAN/index.html>, accessed via the SWFC Archive button at the bottom of the new website home page.)

The editor before me was Shaun Carter - I think he may have been the one to move to the A5 booklet. I had started playing in the B League and CA tournaments in Nailsea, Bristol and Cheltenham in the mid-90s, once I realised that if I was going to have to drive my teenage son to tournaments I might as well play myself.

When Shaun put out an appeal for copy, I wrote a short article for SWAN encouraging high-bisquers to get involved. Shortly after that I saw an email he had sent to clubs saying that he wouldn't be able to continue with SWAN if he didn't receive anything, so I contacted him to check he had received my article. I also made the mistake of suggesting lots of things he could put in SWAN that didn't require anyone to write an article. Next thing I knew, when I drove James to the Counties, I was being approached by David Magee and Ian Maugham and told that Shaun had named me as his successor!!

p.s. I have realised that there is a misprint in the index - Robert Moss is not really old enough to have written an article in 1012!! - but I am no longer able to edit it.