

Cygnnet

South West Area Newsletter

Celebrating Croquet Across the Region

Issue 48: June 2024

Welcome to the 'summer' edition of Cygnnet. Despite the sunshine there seems to be an awful lot of cold- and wet-weather clothing on the courts – let's hope we can pack them away soon.

SWF AGM

Already we're beginning to think about preparations for the SWF AGM which will be on 24th November and held on Zoom.

We will be putting the official call-out for nominations for committee and proposals to the AGM by the end of July and these need to be with us by 13th October. With club committees meeting perhaps monthly or bi-monthly, there's not really much time to give some thought to these.

- ✓ Would you, or someone you know, enhance the SWF committee – we're keen to hear from you
- ✓ Have you got ideas for how the League Rules or Constitution might be improved – then get your club to consider and propose these

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Do make sure this is on your club committee's agenda



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

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

Obituary: Jonathan Wolfe



It is with great regret that we report the sad death of a member of Taunton Deane CC. Tim Jolliff remembers his friend Jonathan.

Dr Jonathan Wolfe passed away during Saturday (May 25th) night after a successful day's play at the AC inter-counties tournament. He was 72.

Jonathan went to school at Loughborough Grammar and then did an undergraduate degree at Cambridge, followed by a PhD in Genetics at Oxford. He was married to Amy and they had three children. He was a very energetic man, with always a lot going on, smallholding, beekeeping, gardening, shepherding and looking after grandchildren.

He had two croquet careers, first learning the game at Cambridge playing with his three close friends from Corpus Christi. His 'stag do' was a week-long croquet tour with his friends where lots of croquet was played, curries consumed and beer drunk.

He reappears in the croquet rankings in 2009 after a substantial gap away from the game and first played in Taunton Deane's advanced team in 2012, becoming a stalwart of the team. Jonathan was primarily an AC player who played what GC he did 'for shooting practice'.

He was very good at AC reaching handicap -0.5 and playing 567 advanced singles games on the ranking list. He reached a world ranking of 179, played in the Treasurer's Tankard and for Somerset. He won some tournaments, including Bristol B level, the veterans (twice), and the Edgbaston Tompkinson Shield.

He had a remarkable memory of the games he played in and often in the journey back from a match his team-mates would be treated to a blow-by-blow account of his games.

During Covid we started playing croquet each week in my garden, sledging each other's play with great humour whilst we sipped beer from the sidelines. He was a close friend, and I will miss him tremendously.

Marcus Evans (Nailsea CC) posted this tribute:

As many of you will have already heard, Jonathan Wolfe passed away of natural causes overnight during the AC Inter-County Championship. He was delighted to be competing for Somerset once again and had played well on the first day, winning one match and only narrowly losing the other, both against strong opposition.

A fuller obituary will appear in the Gazette in due course but as everyone who knew him will agree, Jonathan approached both life and croquet in a wonderfully carefree and joyful manner, though the permanent smile on his face belied what a tough competitor he was on the court.

On the long journey to Brighton the day before he died, he had explained to us how he and 3 friends had embarked on a week-long tour of the southwest's croquet clubs 50 years before, just prior to his wedding. The other 3 also became well-known names in the croquet world: Andrew Bennett, John Meads, and Martin Kolbuszewski, and Jonathan remarked he was the last man standing - sadly, no longer.

Rest in peace Jonathan and condolences to your family and friends.

SWF Spring Short Croquet Tournament: Nailsea 12-14th April 2024

After the deluge of 2023 which caused the abandonment of Division 5, it was pleasant to turn up at Nailsea with the sun shining. A complement of 25 teams meant a full five divisions with 102 players (two teams played 5 players) taking part over the weekend.

Division 5.

Bristol Brunels always looked likely winners after they won 7 of their first 8 games. However, WSM kept pace with them, but a 2-2 draw in the match between the two in Round 4 was insufficient for them as they had to sit out the last round, and Bristol beat Glassblowers 4-0 to clinch the trophy and promotion.

At the bottom of the table, this place was held by Bradford on Avon going into the last round, but a 3-1 victory over Camerton & Peasedown B, leapt them into 3rd place and left C&P with the wooden spoon.

Bristol Brunels	13	Nailsea Glassblowers	6
Weston super Mare	10	Camerton & Peasedown B	5
Bradford on Avon	7		



Special mentions:

- Neil Purchase, Bristol Brunels won all 4 games
- Jon Knowler, Weston super Mare, won all 4 games

Division 4.

Bath Buns were triumphant with a magnificent 14 wins from their 16 games, but it was not quite as straightforward as this score might imply. Going into the last round, Bath and Glamorgan each had 10 wins and they were to play each other. A comprehensive 4-0 win gave Bath the trophy and promotion.

At the other end, Budleigh Salterton Ruses had a difficult time and were on 3 wins after 4 rounds and sitting out the last. However Taunton Tiggers were also on 3 wins so a 4-0 defeat for them would have seen a shoot-out, but they beat Bristol Allsorts 3-1, to condemn the Ruses to relegation.

Bath Buns	14	Taunton Tiggers	6
Glamorgan	10	Budleigh Salterton Ruses	3
Bristol Allsorts	7		

Special mentions:

- Peter Miles and Lynne Passfield, Bath Buns, won all 4 games
- Margo Soakel, Bristol Allsorts, won all 4 games



Division 3

Round 2 proved decisive in this division when Sidmouth Connaught beat Budleigh Salterton Roquets 3-1, and from there went on to win the trophy and promotion. Budleigh were one game ahead going into the last round, but had to sit out, and Connaught duly gained the necessary wins to finish 2 games ahead.

The relegation battle was close. Exeter needed a 3-1 win against Taunton Terriers to force a three-team shoot-out, but could only manage a 2-2 draw, and therefore are relegated.

Sidmouth Connaught	12	Bristol Boys	6
Budleigh Salterton Roquets	10	Exeter	5
Taunton Terriers	7		



Special mentions:

- Richard Croft, Sidmouth Connaught, won all 4 games

Division 2

After the first round, Kington Langley Aardvarks looked the team to beat, as they won all 4 games. That was the peak of their success though, and they won only 2 further games in the subsequent rounds.

After a quiet start, Nailsea Avening got into gear and won their matches in Rounds 2, 3 and 4 by a 3-1 score, putting them in a position going into the last round, in which they were sitting out, knowing that only a 4-0 win for Bath Salts would require a shoot-out. Bath won 3-1, but it was not quite enough and Nailsea Avening were champions.

The 4-0 win in the first round for the Aardvarks was decisive and left Camerton & Peasedown A with an ultimate 3 wins and relegation.

Nailsea Avening	11	Kington Langley Aardvarks	6
Bath Salts	10	Camerton & Peasedown A	3
East Dorset	10		

Special mentions:

- Dave Clarke, Nailsea Avening, won all 4 games



Division 1

This division produced the closest ever finish in the history of this competition. It was clear from the start that all teams were evenly matched, and, in fact, there was not one 4-0 scoreline in any match.

After 4 rounds, four teams could win the trophy and all 5 could be relegated depending upon the results of the final round. As it happened, both matches were drawn 2-2, so all teams stayed in the same relative position, except Nailsea who were sitting out. This ultimately proved to be their downfall.

So, Nailsea Trendlewood and Swindon both finished on 9 wins, but the story of the last round needs to be told. Trendlewood's 2 wins against Sidmouth Fortfield were both 12-11, and in the

other match, the final game between Swindon and Kington Langley Bruins went to a golden hoop. Several hoops were missed by each player before the Swindon player scored the vital point. Had it been the other way, Bruins would have been in the shoot-out rather than Swindon.

It was therefore necessary for a shoot-out for both the championship and relegation. In the championship shoot-out, Trendlewood scored the only hit to win the trophy. Unfortunately for Nailsea, they had three shooters only for the relegation shoot-out, and subsequently lost 2-1 and are relegated.

Nailsea Trendlewood	9	Sidmouth Fortfield	7
Swindon	9	Nailsea	7
Kington Langley Bruins	8		



Special mentions:

- Rob Royffe, Nailsea Trendlewood won all 4 games

Many thanks to the Nailsea club for their hospitality, the provision of excellent lawns, and the constant supply of hot beverages to keep us warm, for, despite the almost continuous sunshine, there was a cold easterly wind blowing quite strongly all day.

Cornwall CC Crowdfunding

Felicity Owen, Chair, puts us in the picture:

Cornwall Croquet Club needs to be able to purchase their current croquet grounds of 2.85 acres together with the club house, storage sheds and toilets. The owners of the site are not willing to extend the lease that expires in September 2026, but have indicated that they will consider an offer from the Club of £60,000. Including legal costs, the total cost is estimated at £65,000. We have raised £32,000 to date through donations, a grant, and an interest free loan from Croquet England.



Relocation is not financially viable with the cost of each lawn costing £20,000 to create.

Our crowdfunder is now live on the crowdfunding site. To kick it off we need lots of supporters and amounts as small as £2 can really help boost our profile.

- Remember to tick the gift aid box if you are happy too which enhances your donation by 25%.
- The crowdfunder site automatically adds on a hefty percentage to help their work and you can adjust this to zero if you want to.
- If we reach £10,000 through the crowdfunder we hope to get some match funding from Sport England.

So here is the link. Have a look at it dear fellow croquet players!! :)
<https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/cornwall-croquet-club-1207502>

And of course, if you find yourselves in Cornwall do come and pay our lovely lawns a visit. Thank you.



Neil Morrison Memorial Trophy

AC Level Play (Advanced) Class C Tournament

Saturday and Sunday 24/25 August 2024

Swindon C C announces a new AC tournament for moderate handicap players (Class C – handicaps 7 and above)

There are only a few opportunities for AC players of moderate handicaps (7 and above) to play level play AC (Advanced rules). This tournament, in memory of Neil Morrison, will be held over 2 days as a ‘Swiss’ competition with a maximum of 8 entrants.

To enter please use the Croquet England ‘Compete- Fixtures Calendar’ and enter online see <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=tournament/caCalendar>

Allocation Date: 1 July Closing Date: 12 August

For further information please contact: Tony Mayer Email: aesmayer@yahoo.co.uk

Neil was a stalwart of the Swindon club acting as Treasurer, leading the grounds maintenance and was responsible for gaining the grants that have allowed the club to expand (currently 3 lawns and hopefully 5 in years to come). Neil was a very good AC player but will be especially remembered for his encouragement and coaching of new and improving AC players at the handicap range of this tournament.

Report of Glamorgan v Cheltenham 16.6.24 well ... sort of!

Klim Seabright (Cheltenham CC) gives us his take on a recent visit to Glamorgan.

Being the only driver in the household and being brought up in the days when windscreen wipers only worked by removing the foot from the accelerator or knowing how to stick your right hand out of the window for a left indication, we decided that the drive was a bit long so we would make a weekend of it... and boy are we glad we did!

Our accommodation would certainly win the "The most subtle" award in Grand Designs. It had taken the owners 3 years to gain planning permission and the interiors and exteriors were completed to exceptionally high standards. The breakfasts matched the high standard of the accommodation.

There are some fabulous boulder beaches around here and long stretches of golden sands.

At Llantwit Major the Windsurfers were out um... well ... windsurfing, assisted by an excellent breeze. The surfers followed on.

Somewhere to eat? Go to Frolics (other restaurants are available) and you will be greeted with hugs and kisses by an effusive Portuguese lady in charge of front of house. Every sentence ends in "Darlink" and makes "careful the plate is hot" sound sexy. Forgot to say, the food is very good.

On the day of the match locals were out enjoying a leisurely Sunday, which would make a good sound tape for The Archers. The click clack of croquet balls, the distance shout of "out" from the tennis courts and the clip clop of horses passing the croquet lawns. There was even a man pole-fishing in the local stream, but of course you couldn't actually hear that. An idyllic scene of the population taking its Sunday at leisure.

The breeze at one moment was wrapping you in a warming insulating westerly and the next minute had turned around and was "biting yer bits"!



The lawns were undoubtedly the "truest" I have experienced for some time and the hospitality in the form of a "pop up" camper van was excellent.

The result? It was such an enjoyable day that one is almost really tempted to say "it's the taking part that counts" Well almost! For the record one of the teams came first and the other team were second

Thanks Glamorgan - better than any therapy



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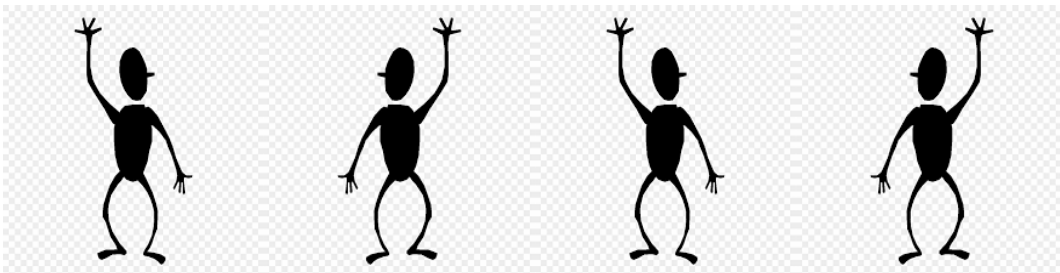
South West Federation: Volunteer of the Year

SWF committee have been thinking about introducing this award and before we decide, we'd appreciate your views and suggestions.

We know that

- Many clubs struggle with volunteers.
- Those who do volunteer might not be the best players (unlikely to win leagues etc.)
- Many volunteers sacrifice their own development for the benefit of their clubs
- Clubs are not always great at recognising their volunteers' contributions.

We wonder if the creation of such an award would encourage us all to reflect on how we encourage people to take on roles – which probably take them away from actually playing – and to raise their profile within the club and across the region.



We suggest the process is something along these lines:

- Clubs nominate their Volunteer of the Year
 - This would not relate to any croquet prowess or achievement
 - All nominees would receive a certificate
- The Committee considers the nominations and decides on a short list of 4
 - Should we invite an independent person to be part of this?
 - All those shortlisted receive a medal
- The Committee nominates the Volunteer of the Year
 - The winner receives a trophy (to be returned at the end of the year)

So what do you think of it so far!

If you like it, should we introduce it this year and present the awards at the AGM, or should we launch it at the AGM and make the awards in 2025?

Photo round-up

Afternoon sunshine for the **Budleigh Salterton May Tournament**: (L – R) John O’Gorman BSCC Chair; Neil Kingston, Bristol; Dave Kibble, Bristol; Roger Mills, Sidmouth; Stephen Tetlow, BSCC; David Warhurst, Manager. Photo by Chris Williams.



A sunny but chilly day for **Bristol’s Charity one ball** – loads of other clubs posted on Facebook – and probably other social media too – a great event managed at Bristol by Kathy Wallace. Photo by Marian Hilton.



Are your croquet courts full size?

A timely reminder from our Handicapper, Mike Rice:

It is important to know if your courts are full size, $\frac{3}{4}$ size or $\frac{1}{2}$ size if you play Association Croquet. It is even more important if you play AC in one of our leagues. If your courts are $\frac{3}{4}$ size or $\frac{1}{2}$ size then the number of bisques players receive in a handicapped game is reduced.

- Note that there is no equivalent change when playing handicap GC on small courts.

There is a schedule on the Croquet England website headed "Schedule of Bisque Allocation, Depending on Court Size." This shows how the number of bisques is reduced on a smaller court.

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

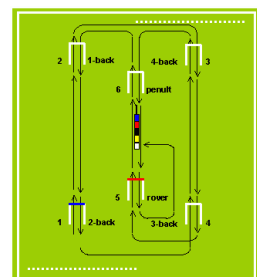
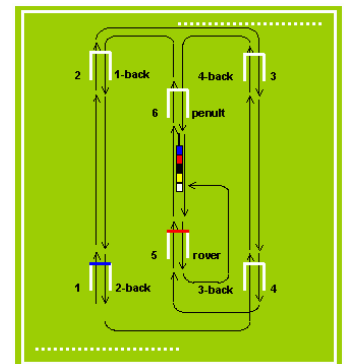
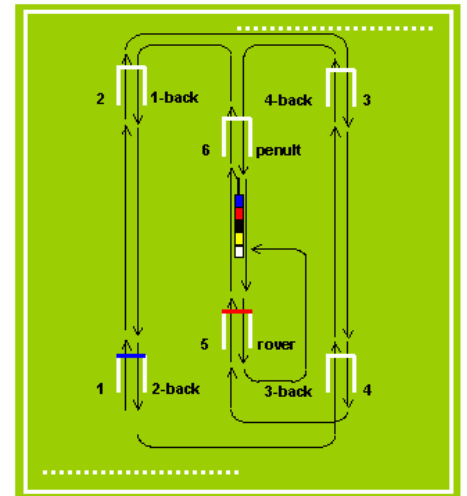
How do you calculate if your courts are full, $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$?

- The boundary of a croquet court measures 126 yards.
 - If your boundary is between 117.25 and 126 yards it is full size.
 - If your boundary is between 99.75 and 117.25 yards it is $\frac{3}{4}$ size.
 - If your boundary is less than 99.75 yards it is half size.

Once you have determined which size your court is then the appropriate number of bisques should be used.

However, as far as the SWF committee is concerned, it is really important that you let any of your opponents visiting you for a league match know. Ideally it should go out on the pre-match information communication as well as letting the opposing captain know on their arrival.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me
Mike Rice, Handicapping Officer SWF mikerice7981@icloud.com



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Further details from: Brian Wainman
at the Plymouth Croquet Club

Please can I ask for a £25.00 deposit, last orders for Christmas
7-12-2024



Lawns Seminar

Bristol CC hosted an excellently presented lawns seminar thanks to the Howardson group and Paul Francis. We've received some very positive feedback about the day:

- ✓ I must say it was excellent and very well organised.
- ✓ I found the issues raised informative and thought provoking and feel we may need to rethink our plans for lawn improvement.
- ✓ I thought that the day was first class. It was well structured and kept to its published timetable. The presenters were first class too. Above all, the whole day was interesting and informative.
- ✓ I found the mornings sessions very informative and full of very useful basic issues that confront every lawn manager. What could have been dull and tedious was interesting.
- ✓ I learned a lot.
- ✓ The sessions on the equipment was very helpful and pointed the way forward to what we need at although we cannot yet afford it we now have a goal to aim at.
- ✓ Altogether it was a most useful and illuminating day. Thanks for instigating it.



I expect you'll hear more from the enthused participants when you bump into them so do look out for more of these days – they're really worthwhile.

Budleigh Salterton Open Short Croquet Tournament

BSCC, Westfield Close, Budleigh Salterton, Devon EX9 6ST

Tuesday, Wednesday 1st – 2nd October 2024



Short Croquet is a form of AC played on a half lawn. Perfect for beginners and experts alike.

All AC handicaps welcome

SC handicaps will be allocated to those without one
9+ timed games guaranteed

Manager: Chris Donovan

Entry Fee: £28 inclusive of tea/coffee

N.B.: Catered lunches are not available for this 2-day event. Entrants should bring a packed lunch.

Max entries: 32 “first come first served”

Closing date: 28th September 2024

Format: American Blocks depending on numbers (AMD) [to give maximum play]

Entry via club system: <https://tinyurl.com/muy3j3uj>



Useful Links	
Croquet England	https://www.croquet.org.uk/
Croquet England Youtube channel	https://www.youtube.com/@CroquetEngland/streams
Croquet England slo-mo videos	https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=games/golf/refereeing/slomo
Oxford Croquet - coaching	http://www.oxfordcroquet.com/
Chris Clarke - coaching	https://clarkecroquet.com/
Reg Bamford – the psychology of the game	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qw_jiBpnCug
Hit Inn – Alison Maugham chats with the Croquetratti	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bf5qM-cswiQ
Canva – a free poster / flyer / logo design tool	https://www.canva.com/en_gb/

Advertising in Cygnet

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

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

Charges

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

Do get in touch

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

Send them to: lindawithani@hotmail.com