



Cygnnet

Issue 25: July 2020



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

Welcome one and all to another Cygnnet. The croquet world is beginning to return to a little bit more like normal, so that's a good sign. Let's enjoy it while we can.

This issue has a wide range of news - we are really pleased to be launching the Judith Moore Bursary, thanks to the generosity of her husband Peter. We're looking forward to seeing the applications.

We have the usual updates and items of interest but we also have some very sad news about several players in our region who have passed away this year. We remember them on p 6.

The SWF held its recent committee meeting by Zoom and the minutes are on the SWF website.

Lym Valley

We're pleased to correct an item which appeared in Cygnnet Issue 24. In the write up of the first Zoom meeting we noted:

"Lym Valley, which uses local authority land, is unable to restart as is Glamorgan as it is in Wales where different lockdown rules apply."

Ken Wilcox wrote in to clarify that "this only applied to inter-club matches or contacts. All clubs will be pleased to know that club internal play is alive and well at Lym Valley and fully in accordance with the CA guidance, using an excellent booking system designed by our new club secretary. Play is restricted to one of our lawns only.



Contents

Lym Valley: correction	1
Judith Moore Bursary	2
GC B Level Series	2
Bernard Neal Award	3
AGM	3
League Play	4
Development	5
Coaching	5
Handicapping	6
Obituaries	6
SWAN	9
Feds Review Group	9
Improve your GC (<i>paid for content</i>)	10
Quiz Corner	11
Novel Approach to AC	11
Croquet Pagans	11

Appendices

Judith Moore Bursary	12
John Grimshaw Citation	15
Working with the Media	17
Feds Review update	20

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

lindawithani@hotmail.com

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

Judith Moore Bursary

Judith Moore was a well-known and well-loved figure throughout the South West croquet world. Sadly, she died in June 2019. Her widower, Peter Moore, another well-known and respected member at Budleigh Salterton, has generously established this bursary scheme to carry on her ambitions.

It was a particular desire of hers that new players should not just relax into social play at their clubs - they should engage as soon as possible in serious tournament play, the heart of croquet. She believed that croquet players should support the CA and should play outside of their familiar settings to strengthen not only their own play but to develop their appreciation of the wider world of croquet - new chums, new tactics, different ways of running things - and indeed of the wider world.



This bursary is administered by The South West Federation of Croquet Clubs, with Peter's continuing involvement. We are indebted to Peter and pleased to be able to keep Judith's aspirations and drive alive in the region.

“With tournament play happening again, this presents an excellent opportunity for players to start their tournament career,” says Peter. “There are events in the national B and C level Golf Croquet series. And don't forget - the Budleigh one day tournaments in the series are August 22nd (B Level, handicap 3+) and August 23rd (C Level, handicap 7+). If this comes over as a heavy hint to get all your friends entering that is exactly what I was trying for!

Full details of the conditions and how to apply may be found in Appendix 1 and on the SWF website.

East Dorset GC 'B' Level Tournament

And here's another opportunity for those embarking on a tournament career. Gary Brennan tells us that this has been re-scheduled (guess why!) and will now take place on

8th and 9th August 2020



illustrations of.com #1048896

They are looking for players to take part so contact Gary if you'd like to find out more:
Gary_Brennan@btinternet.com;

Bernard Neal award: a first for the South West

You may well have seen that our own John Grimshaw is to be the first recipient of a newly-created award from the CA.

Kington Langley (John's home club) and the Federation, nominated John for a CA award. His achievements were recognised but didn't fit into any of the categories at the time. We are grateful the CA chose the moment to plug a gap in the awards system and created the Bernard Neal award for services to Federations.



This is to be presented to him at the AGM in October - circumstances allowing. The full citation may be found in Appendix 2

AGM - Zoom this year

It won't be too long before you receive your official notice for our AGM along with a call for nominations to committee and proposals you'd like to put forward. Deadlines for all these may be found in our Constitution: <https://www.swfcroquet.org.uk/constitution/>



We have decided, for obvious reasons, to hold this as a Zoom meeting this year.

This will be a new experience for most of us and we are busy thinking through the detail of how this can work - there is the potential for voting, so that should be fine, but we'll have to think how we manage the discussion and debate.

Many things we can circulate beforehand - reports from all the Committee members, details of proposals for example.

The committee will be proposing amendments to the Constitution - basically proposals that were left unresolved last year.

We will be circulating these beforehand, together with any we receive from member clubs. To help discussions along, we propose circulating comments on these beforehand as well. This should help all delegates give consideration to others' perspectives in advance. There will still be the chance for discussion on the day.

If you have any concerns about your club's ability to participate, or indeed, any suggestions about how to make this work well, please do let us have them and we'll do the best we can to make it run smoothly.

League Play

Stephen Custance-Baker writes: Many clubs responded to my email of June 26th asking for attitudes to league matches in the rest of this season. I also have some information given by telephone and during the zoom meeting of July 1st. My thanks to Paul for organising this meeting; it was very smoothly run and useful.

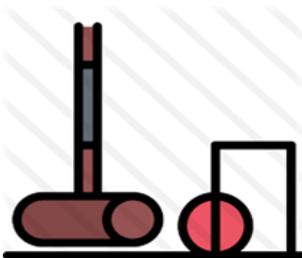
Compiling all of the information enabled me to assess the clubs' attitudes to league matches, friendly matches and team tournaments. I have information on 27 out of 29 clubs.

- Only 7 expressed an interest in league matches and, of those, only 2 would be able to host matches
- 14 might be interested in playing friendlies, but my impression is that this will not be during July.
- 16 might be interested in playing in 1-day team tournaments, if a suitable venue and date could be arranged.

The main issues affecting league matches are:

- Clubhouses closed or inadequate for social distancing
- Toilet facilities limited
- Car-sharing is needed for some teams (though not all)
- Many players will be self-isolating for several more weeks, so team squads will be limited

The main conclusion from the survey is clear - there should be no SWF league matches for 2020. The SWF committee has agreed with that conclusion and the decision has therefore been made to cancel the leagues for 2020.



Those clubs that have expressed a willingness to consider friendly matches will be sent a list of possible opponents. It will then be up to those clubs to get in touch with each other to discuss the type of croquet, the venue and the match format. There is no need for such matches to meet the SWF league match rules, but any singles games played will count on handicap cards.

I have started discussions with Cheltenham and Budleigh Salterton to see whether there is any chance of arranging for 1-day inter-club team tournaments in August or September. If it looks possible, I will offer these dates to the relevant clubs on a first-come first-served basis until the allowed places have been allocated. I will act as tournament manager for the first ones.

It must be emphasised that any match or competition should include an explicit commitment by team members on all sides that they have had no known contacts with Covid-19 in the previous 10 days.

Development

Paul Francis has inaugurated a really successful series of Zoom meetings which we now plan to hold on the second Tuesday of each month. The topic for xx August will be Club Mark - how to improve how your club operates.

And as a postscript to the session on marketing and promotion, Brian Wilson has written further notes which you can find in Appendix 3

There is a really helpful article on the CA website too.

<https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=games/clubs/info/recruitment/publicity>

Our next Zoom meeting will be on Tuesday 11th August at 7.00pm and the topic will be Club Mark - running your club effectively - a must for happy players and funders.

Here's the invitation so please do encourage a couple of people from your club with particular interest in this to join us.

Topic: SWF

Time: Aug 11, 2020 07:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87612568692?pwd=QzcwTHo0ZTBpbG13cS9ndVBQcm10Zz09>

Meeting ID: 876 1256 8692

Passcode: aF3Ekd

Coaching

Richard Jackson writes:

The Covid pandemic has prevented all on-court activity until recently, but many clubs have now re-started play in a Covid-aware way.



During the lockdown, many SWF clubs maintained their interest in the Laws (AC) and Rules (GC) by email or Zoom quizzes. I gave a 5 session Zoom AC course on break building without bisques (based on a one-day normal coaching course) to seven Bristol players, and repeated it for three further SWF players from Wellington, Budleigh and East Dorset. I will be happy to run a further course if there is a demand.

A similar initiative on the GC Rules by two prominent GC Referees is planned - watch this space in a future Cygnet!

Lockdown caused a strong resurgence in interest in Croquet by the general public. **Croquet is almost certainly the best socially-distanced sport available and clubs should try to strike while the iron is hot.**

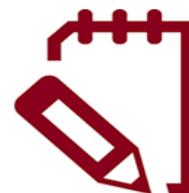
We have had about a dozen enquiries at Bristol without any advertising or our usual open day, and have invited them to come as individuals or pairs to a taster session. Those who wish to continue are being supported as individuals or pairs on a six-lesson socially-distanced course. Preliminary results suggest that this method may be more effective than our normal larger group sessions.

Please keep us informed with items about reverting to the new normal so we can include them in future Cygnets.

Handicapping

And more from Richard - this time on handicapping.

The pandemic has massively reduced the number of AC and GC games played at clubs and tournaments which count towards the Automatic Handicapping System, but in informal games, some players, especially those in their first two seasons will be making massive improvements in play and will be ready to take on lower handicapped opponents.



Club handicappers will need to work harder than usual in the absence of AHS results.

They will be helped by improving players who ask to have their handicaps reduced, (many do, and are delighted with their handicap reductions!), and also by opponents saddened by being beaten by upstarts by large margins with bisques still standing.

Handicappers will find it useful to look at the results of informal games so that club play can continue with enjoyment. As the Federation handicapper, I will be happy to discuss problems preferably by phone. We will avoid visits by CA Handicappers as far as possible until the pandemic is over.

Club handicappers should be more cautious about changing the handicaps of established players, but players getting less mobile with age may be glad of a modest handicap increase to keep them competitive.

Obituaries

Weston super Mare has been having a terrible time, losing three valued members. Doug Norfolk, President, remembers them.

“Weston super Mare Croquet Club with deep sadness announce the passing of two of their stalwart members during the period of lockdown.

William “Bill” McAllister

Bill died very suddenly whilst out walking with his wife Pauline.

Bill was the club's referee and handicapper and from October 2018 the person in charge of ground maintenance. He had also represented the club in golf and level play leagues. A great enthusiast and very active member participating in all club activities.

Because of Covid19 Bill's funeral had a restricted attendance. In an emotional show of respect to Bill a large number of members lined the route in the crematorium and clapped the passing of his coffin on the way to the chapel.

With the opening of our shortened croquet year Bill and his cheery smile will be sadly missed by all. R.I.P. Bill

Edmund "Ed" Coia

Ed passed away after a long battle with illness.

He had a long history with Weston super Mare being an original member who was amongst those instrumental in the club moving to our current home from Clarence Park in 2005, a keen team member of the association teams representing the club at intermediate and B level. Not afraid to enter open competitions and in fact on two separate occasions was a winner at Bristol.

He was an active participant of club competitions and entered both golf and association in "in house" events, winning the association pairs no less than five times. He was very willing in helping golf players switch to and enjoy AC with his patient and excellent coaching.

Ed we will miss you R.I.P."

Roger Buckley

Shortly before going to press we learnt that Roger had passed away. He was well known throughout the Federation and he will be remembered fully in the next issue of Cygnet. We send our condolences to his wife Shirley who served as Federation Secretary for some time.

Derek Beard: 1932 - 2020 Taunton CC

Derek Beard died at home in Taunton, on 4th July.

Born in Mansfield, where his father was in the Motor Trade, he had a lifelong interest in cars, the faster the better. After National Service in the RAF, Derek trained with the Rootes Group and then joined the family business. He took part in the RAC rally in the 1960's and moved to the South West, with periods living in Wincanton, Frome and Bideford.

While at Wincanton, he took up gliding and became a qualified instructor at the gliding club at RNAS Yeovilton. At Bideford, he started a new career as a chiropodist and finally settled in Taunton in the 1980's, where his passion for croquet began.

A founder member of the Taunton Deane Croquet Club in 1985 and Chairman during the early years at Cheddon Road and the move to Taunton School, Derek was at the heart of the club for the rest of his life.

An attacking and accomplished player, he captained the club's Federation Team and became a popular and encouraging coach and mentor for new players and members, also becoming a referee.

Always ready to put his hand to any task in the club he managed the maintenance of the lawns and surrounds with thoroughness and enthusiasm for many years. A member of the three-man team responsible for the move to our present home with The Taunton Vale Sports Club, Derek was an indispensable member of the club, together with Jean, his ever-supportive wife and their accompanying dog.



Not content with all his other interests Derek was also a committee member and treasurer of the South West Federation of Croquet Clubs for a number of years. I always enjoyed our many encounters on the lawns, despite having to record that the last time we played, last year, he beat me 26-1. We shall all miss him.

John de Winton: President Taunton CC

Charles Townshend Budleigh Salterton CC

John O’Gorman, Chair of Budleigh Salterton CC pays tribute to Charles Townshend.

“It is with sadness that we have to let you know that the Rev Charles Townshend has died.

Charles joined the club in 1987 as a country member, and having moved into the area in 2007, became a full member. He lived with his wife Gill in a house rather appropriately called ‘Mutterings’ in Colaton Raleigh.

He had been playing croquet since University days, over 50 years, and this wealth of experience stood him in good stead as he became a very good Association player, both in club games and CA Tournaments. He was involved in many aspects of club life including Bar Manager, where he organised some wine tastings, and was also Croquet Chair for a period.

I have spoken to a few people about Charles, one told me that last year he played a game with Bob Donald, which according to Bob they both very much enjoyed. Everyone had very fond memories of playing with him, and I certainly remember very pleasant conversations with Charles, drink in hand. A man of character who will be missed.”

SWAN

Very few of you will have seen a hard copy of SWAN this year - our distribution schedule was stymied by Covid-19 restrictions. This has meant most of us have had to use the on-line version.



But this got us thinking. Even in good years there were often many copies of SWAN left hanging around at the end of the season, apparently superfluous to each club's needs. So, we asked ourselves, do we still need a hard copy - would it be just as accessible on line?

If so, League contact details would be removed and circulated separately to clubs to protect everyone's privacy, and the League match schedules would be on the website - both sets of information would be available by the end of March.

The committee has come to an 'in principle' decision to print no more issues, but before we confirm this decision, we'd like your views. Here are the perspectives we considered:

- It costs £700 or so each year to print - there's all sorts of mileage and postage on top of that which doesn't always get claimed, and there's a lot of hard work goes into meeting deadlines, contacting the printers and arranging the distribution.
- If we were to lose this cost, we're estimating a potential saving of 20 - 25% on the Full Membership and League Fees.

So, we're asking you - do you think it represents value for your money?

Send us your thoughts and suggestions please: lindawithani@hotmail.com

Feds Review

Brian Wilson is a member of the Federations Review Group and his update on what they have achieved so far may be found in Appendix 4.

This is Chaired by Ian Cobbold who is also Chair of the CA's Efficiency Working Group. One aspect they are considering is devolving administration (see Croquet Gazette385 p7) - so it could have real implications for us.

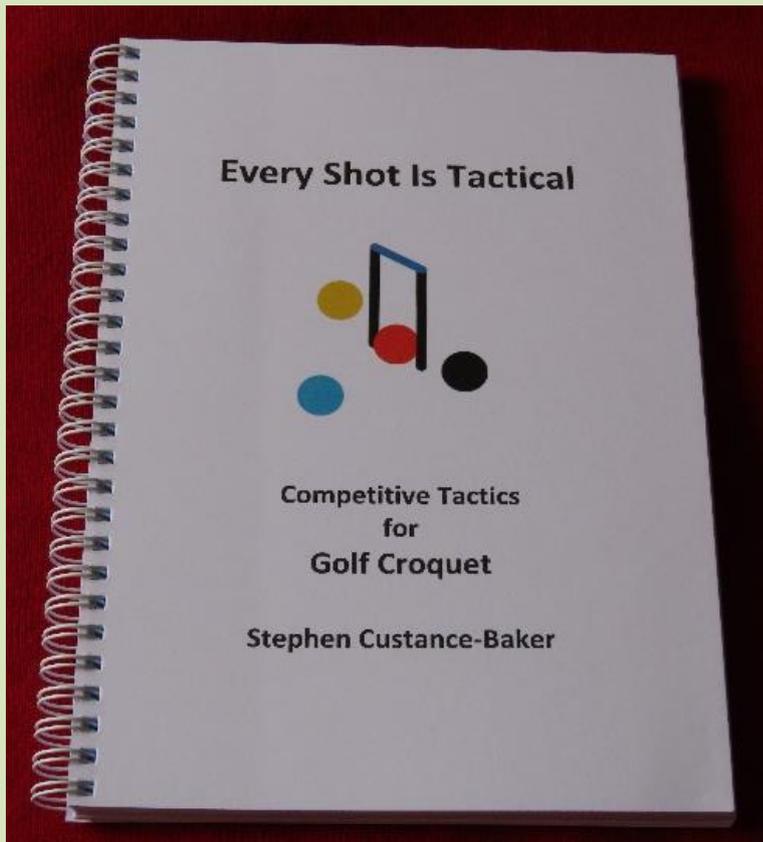
Please do let us know if you have any views on

- what the CA and the Federations do, what they might do, what they might do better
- the nature of the relationship between the two - should Feds carry delegated responsibility for undertaking certain tasks, should all Feds do the same thing
- anything else relating to the work of each body



Do you want to improve your Golf Croquet tactics?

Dr Jenny Clarke, winner of five GC World Championship medals, wrote *“I definitely hope people will read your book and play a bit more intelligently as a result.”*



The core principles of good tactical play are described with 140 clear diagrams.

“GC Croquet has waited for this publication for a long time. The game will benefit hugely from this and it should work well for all levels.” Richard Carline, Director of The Croquet Academy and Championship Referee

Available at £8.50 + p&p from
StephenCB@MyCroquet.me

Quiz Corner

We seem to have run out of steam with these - no new contributions this time, but here are the answers to Dave Kibble's deceptively simple questions.

How long did the Hundred Years War last?	116 years
Which country makes Panama hats?	Ecuador
From which animal do we get catgut?	Sheep and Horses
In which month do Russians celebrate the October Revolution?	November
What is a camel's hair brush made of?	Squirrel fur
The Canary Islands are named after which animal?	Dog
What was King George VI's first name?	Albert
What colour is a purple finch?	Crimson
Where are Chinese gooseberries from?	New Zealand

Tony Mayer used editorial privilege when he made this comment:

The final question surely should be 'Where do Kiwi fruit come from?'

The answer is central China as they were once known as Chinese gooseberries but re-branded for marketing by NZ growers. As the question is 'Where do Chinese gooseberries come from?' the correct answer is 'China'!!!!

A Novel Approach to AC

Chris Southworth from Worcester Norton CC writes:

"We are having a bit of a push to try and get some of our GC players to try/play more AC during the lockdown. After one said they were tempted to 'move to the dark side', we prepared this meme as a hook for the campaign"



Always happy to share a good marketing idea Chris!

Calling all Croquet Pagans



Dulwich isn't quite our neck of the woods but you just have to read this piece by their President, Guy Scurfield.
<https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=press/news&NewsID=7026>

He and fellow member, Pete, took on a 25-hour solstice croquet marathon to raise funds for the club and local hospice, St Christopher's.

It sounds brilliant - anyone up for this next year?

This got us thinking - was Stonehenge perhaps the first croquet court?

Appendix 1

Judith Moore Bursary Fund

Judith Moore was a well-known and well-loved figure throughout the South West croquet world. Sadly, she died in June 2019. Her widower, Peter Moore, another well-known and respected member at Budleigh Salterton, has generously established this bursary scheme to carry on her ambitions.

It was a particular desire of hers that new players should not just relax into social play at their clubs - they should engage as soon as possible in serious tournament play, the heart of croquet. She believed that croquet players should support the CA and should play outside of their familiar settings to strengthen not only their own play but to develop their appreciation of the wider world of croquet - new chums, new tactics, different ways of running things - and indeed of the wider world.

This bursary is administered by The South West Federation of Croquet Clubs, with Peter's continuing involvement. We are indebted to Peter and pleased to be able to keep Judith's aspirations and drive alive in the region.

Who can apply?

There are two types of application.

1. First CA Fixture
2. Second and Third CA Fixture

A CA Fixture is one that is promoted in the CA Fixtures Calendar which is published annually and may be found on the CA website:

<https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=tournament/CACalendar>

First Fixture

An application to the Bursary Fund may be made by a croquet player in the South West Federation region who:

- Is a member of a croquet club which is itself a member of the SWF
- Has not previously played in a CA Fixture
 - They may have played in club competitions and SWF League matches

Second and Third Fixtures

An application to the Bursary Fund may be made by a croquet player in the South West Federation region who:

- Is a member of a croquet club which is itself a member of the SWF
- Is a Premium Member of the Croquet Association
- Has not previously played in more than two CA Fixtures
 - They may have played in club competitions and SWF League matches

What costs will be covered?

The Bursary will be awarded to cover the Tournament Entry Fee only.

Process

An application may be made at any time on the application form below. It must be sent to the SWF Secretary to arrive at least 3 weeks before the start of the Tournament that the applicant wishes to enter.

The application will be checked for accuracy verified by a panel of three. This will normally include Peter Moore and two members of the SWF Committee.

The applicant will be informed of the Panel's decision within two weeks of receipt of the application.

Should the application criteria not be met, the applicant will be informed of the reasons for this and will be invited to apply again once the full criteria are met.

Judith Moore Bursary: Application form

Name			
Email			
Which club are you a member of?			
Are you a member of the CA? <i>(please tick as appropriate)</i>	No	Standard	Premium
Which CA Tournament do you wish to enter?			
What is the Tournament Entry fee?			
Payment will be made by BACS - please provide these details	Name of account		
	Sort Code		
	Account number		
What is the first day of this Tournament?			
How many CA Tournaments have you played in?			
I confirm these details are correct and that I am eligible to be awarded this Bursary			
Signed - <i>this is not necessary if this form is being submitted by email.</i>			
Date			

The monies will be paid on receipt of proof of attendance and play throughout the tournament. This would normally be a signed statement from the Tournament Manager confirming attendance and play.

Judith Moore Bursary: verification	
Name of Tournament	
Dates	
Name of applicant	
I confirm that I am the Tournament Manager for this event and that the named Bursary applicant attended the Tournament and played all their necessary games.	
Name	
Signed	
Date	

Appendix 2

John Grimshaw Citation

In recognition of a long, outstanding meritorious contribution to the development of competitive croquet in the South West Federation

In the late 1970s John responded to a local advertisement promoting a croquet demonstration and, being a chess player, was immediately interested in a sport that required both tactical and technical skills. He followed this up with lessons at the Bath Club where he took to the game like a duck to water and joined the Club.

Employment then took him to South Wales where, in 1986, he single-handedly set up the Dyffryn Club, negotiating for the site, advertising for players and coaching them so successfully that in only its third season the Club won two leagues of the South West Federation. He also set up the Welsh CA and was its Secretary from its formation in 1986 until 2003. He was instrumental in getting international teams to visit the Club. These were notable achievements as cited in a Diploma in 2001 proposed by the Dyffryn Club.

In 2004 John became League Secretary for the South West Federation, an area which covers 7 counties and South Wales, a post he held for 14 years, retiring in 2018. During that period the number of matches increased considerably:

100% increase in the number of teams competing between 2005 and 2018
130% increase in matches (AC and GC combined)

Both codes of the game being played at all levels and forms.

In 2018, 137 teams took part in our Leagues, playing almost 400 matches. John has singlehandedly managed all this. He has been a passionate advocate of competitive play and persuaded many of our smaller Clubs to participate in League competition for the first time. Now, 35 Clubs play in at least one of our competitions.

A SWF Short Croquet Tournament was introduced at Nailsea CC in 2006. Originally it was played as a one-day event, in which any club within the Federation could enter with a team, or teams, of 4. John became involved two years later and by 2012 it had become a 2-day event with 3 Divisions. A 4th Division was playing by the following year and a 5th in 2018 - it is now a 3-day event. It is a most enjoyable competition with clubs competing from all over the Federation region. It is held at Nailsea in the spring and at Budleigh Salterton in the autumn where at each event over 120 players with a wide range of handicaps compete. This is truly an outstandingly successful innovation. It is not only in this role that John's contributions were valued by SWF members and committee. He was unfailingly supportive and brought invaluable insights into its deliberations.

John was instrumental in raising a team to represent Wiltshire in the annual Inter- Counties Championship, was for some time its Captain and still enjoys representing his county.

In 2006 John returned to Wiltshire and joined the Kington Langley Club where he immediately helped with recruitment and coaching, which continues to this day. He was

Chairman, is the Club handicapper, was for many years the Competition Secretary efficiently organising the Club's many internal competitions. He started mowing the courts 12 years ago and continues to do so. As Captain of the Federation Team he successfully led the team to victory in 2018, which gave entry to the current National Secretary's Shield competition.

Croquet owes John a huge debt of gratitude for his unstinting commitment to the development of the game in the South West region for over 40 years. John is always happy to give demonstrations and encouragement, whether to clubs or individuals, he is a great ambassador for the game. With his quiet and unassuming approach, coupled with humour and enthusiasm, he is well known and much respected throughout the region.

Appendix 3

Working with local media

Getting your message across

Working with your local media is the way forward

Introduction

- This is a general guide and a collection of ideas for your club to consider when developing and running your own media campaign
- We can highlight the general principles, but your club's campaign will depend upon what you want to achieve and your local situation

General Guidelines

- Remember: - You can just write a few articles for your usual local press - but there are more opportunities for you to get your message across

1. Who leads on Press Releases at your club?

- Ensure you have one person who leads the team
- Involve other club members, especially team captains

2. Know your local media

2.1. Your key contacts may well include:

- Paid for media - both hard copy and on line
- Free media - both hard copy and on line
- Local Councils - Regional, City, Town, Parish - both hard copy and on line
- Other organisations with Newsletters e.g. Churches, Scouts/Guides, Special interest groups etc
- Local Radio and even TV

2.2. Get to know them - raise your profile

This may well mean time spent in phoning each media outlet to find out: -

- Media contact - name, title, telephone and email
- Ideally find a general story as well as a sports journalist
- Readership - numbers and geographic spread
- When does the media 'go to Press'
- When does a story have to 'be in' to make the next publishing date?
- What stories are they looking for and how many words (long articles will be edited and your key points may well be 'lost')
- What print style do they look for - font, size, line spacing etc
- As a guide 300 to 400 words will be printed without editing
- How do they like Press Releases to be presented - see example
- What are the specifications for photos i.e. minimum pixels
- Where will your Press Release be printed - Sports or General or Local interest

- Can this be changed e.g. for a beginners' course you need the general section
- Are there any benefits of linking a Press Release to paid for advertising i.e. advertorial?
- Read their output - what stories do they cover - look at the quality of their journalism and that of others who send in Press Releases - make sure yours will stand out!

3. How to get a regular a series of interesting, eye catching articles in the Media

3.1. Plan your Media Campaign

- Look at your club over the next 12 months
- Map out what's happening and dates e.g. start of your year, beginners'' courses, social events, visiting teams, special events etc
- Bearing in mind when your Media 'goes to press' you know when to send in a relevant Press Release
- Now identify times of the year when there is a 'gap' i.e. nothing seems to be happening for you to report
- Create an event and a story - this is an opportunity for your club to look at another eye-catching event e.g. the time to invite visiting teams (especially those from 'abroad'). What about working with a local Charity 'Croquet supports local hospice etc'
- This is your forward Media Campaign - but do not forget there will always be stories and events that suddenly appear during the year

3.2. Work with your local Media and other groups

- Bear in mind that the public invariably has a distorted image of croquet - old, rich people, toffee nosed, old fashioned, never heard of it etc
- We know this is wrong and your Media campaign will start to show croquet and your club in its true light
- Print out or have ready to email, a Press Pack that contains information about croquet and your club, plus club contacts
- So invite your local Media - journalists and staff ('come and try your own croquet experience'). Make it a fun, or even a team building, day with tea and cakes
- Use the opportunity to chat to the Media - give out your Press Pack - talk about the interesting stories you have planned for the year

4 Writing the Press Release

- Keep it simple and concise
- Do not try to cram in too many facts
- Create more than one story if there are 'lots to tell'
- Get the readers' attention straight away
- Ask others to read it first - look for presentation, spelling and grammar
- Remember the articles that others have presented - which ones got your attention and those who did not - learn from others
- Use short phrases to 'drum home' croquet's true image e.g. 'Croquet - fund, sport, friends, health' or 'Croquet - the sport for everyone' - emphasise that croquet is for all ages, that men and women play on equal terms - stress the social side
- Whatever the story - always end up with an invite to your readers to find out more - e.g. 'please contact Fred Blogs on 01234 455667 or follow us at (web site address)'

5. There are more opportunities

- Social Media
- Facebook and similar
- How many of your members are 'on' Facebook or use similar Social Media?
- Invite them to pass on your poster for events and copies of all Press Releases
- Invite them to pass it onto their friends
- Look at other Social Media e.g. Whatsapp to get your message across

6. Photos

- These are vital
- Check with the Press as to the minimum and ideal photo size and quality
- Check if your local newsletters can accept HD photos (some still use old systems or service providers that cannot accept large files)
- Action photos are better
- Is there anyone in your club who is a photographer - get them involved - even better if they are a new member.
- Chris Roberts will tell you more

Appendix 4 Federations Review Group

What have we achieved so far?

- This is led by Ian Cobbold and includes Federation Chairs - a group of 12
- We meet by Zoom and it has been a very useful series of meetings

In the beginning

- At first the discussion centred around 'structure' but we soon appreciated that the overall approach should be more focussed

Step 1. We should provide a vehicle for the CA, Feds and Clubs consider:

- Where are we now?
- Where are we going?
- How to get there?
- What are the barriers i.e. the negatives?
- How can we minimise them?
- What do we do well i.e. the positives?

Looking ahead:

- This information, would enable a clear forward plan to emerge, with defined, achievable and measurable targets, all within a given time frame and with allocated resources
- Once we had this information, the structure, to enable these objectives to be achieved, would come to the fore

Step 2. The CA and Federations - who does what?

- In simplistic terms we viewed the CA/Feds/Clubs as a Venn diagram - each with their own areas of sole responsibility, whilst others involve all parties.
- We reviewed, in some detail, the roles and responsibilities of the CA/Federations and Clubs
- This highlighted some areas lacking 'clarity' - it showed how easy it is for confusion to appear identifying improvements needed in communications
- However, we were able to shine a light by identifying the principal roles of the CA, Federation and Clubs

Step 3. Where are we now?

Each Federation looked at a series of topics:

- Federation Leagues
- Federation tournaments for teams/individuals
- Coaching and other seminars
- Communications
- Current Priorities

Whilst there were similarities - it was evident that not all Federations are same

- Everyone organised League matches
- Most organised Tournaments
- Most organised seminars, some only using their local Academy

- Communications - everyone had a web site and used emails, but the South West stood out with the frequency and quality of our Newsletter.
 - Not all Federations use zoom to communicate with clubs and to provide seminars/discussion groups on a wide series of topics. I was pleased to highlight the quality of our zoom meetings and their increased popularity
- Current Priorities - here there was a wide range - they included
 - . Croquet in schools
 - . Countering decline of AC
 - . More referees/handicappers
 - . Improve communications within the Fed, between clubs and with the CA
 - . More seminars e.g. coaching and social media
 - . Supporting new and existing Clubs
 - . More competitive play

What's next?

- Feds have identified 'where we are now' and had a quick look at our current priorities
- We have advised that the CA carries out a similar exercise (we understand one is in progress)