



Cygnet

August 2019



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

Welcome to another delicious edition for us to devour - the list of contents says it all - so what are you waiting for - make that drink and settle down to a good read!

Wot! - Not more elections?
Oh yes! - Representatives to CA Council

Well nominations have closed for these positions and 3 out of 7 regions in England have enough candidates to trigger a ballot for representation at CA Council.

The SW is one of these and we think this is a great achievement demonstrating a healthy level of interest in the wider croquet world and an enthusiasm to ensure our views are represented.

Our candidates have done their bit - now it's your turn, so **PLEASE VOTE**

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Each CA member will receive information on how to do this direct from the CA.

On p12 you'll find information about all five candidates - their personal statements as on the official nomination paper and their responses to the questions we have posed them.

Do take the time to read these carefully - don't worry if you've already voted by the time you read this. You can change your vote as often as you like - only your most recent vote will be counted - all previous ones will be automatically void.

<https://www.croquet.org.uk/vote>

Ballot boxes close on 3rd September

Please send queries, suggestions and feedback about Cygnet or any aspect of the SW croquet scene to:
lindawithani@hotmail.com

Remember- we send Cygnet 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 Cygnet is also available shortly after publication on-line on our website: www.swfcroquet.org.uk

Nominations for SWF Committee

While we're on the subject - it's time to submit nominations for the SWF Committee. A nomination form may be found in Appendix 2 p24. Please circulate this to your members - we'd love to hear from them.

Nominations close 31st August

This has already been sent to club contacts but the post of Regional Coaching Officer was omitted from the list - this is also up for election and the post has been included in the updated version of the nomination form.

SWF AGM 17th November 2019

This will soon be upon us and it's not too soon to think about any changes to our League Rules or our Constitution you might want to suggest.

We're giving a fair bit of thought to this - prompted by the change in representation to CA Council. This seems like a good time to give these a bit of a re-vamp so have a think about it and let us have your suggestions.

A formal invitation for proposals will be sent out nearer the time but just to remind us all:

A Resolution for inclusion in the Agenda of the Annual General Meeting may be proposed either by the Committee or by a Member club (duly signed by its Secretary or delegate) and must reach the Secretary in writing not later than the 30th September.

Proposals to the AGM will not be tabled if they were considered in the previous AGM.

We also hope to be running another workshop in the afternoon so do let us have your suggestions for topics.

Top Local AC Players: a correction and an apology

The table presented on p31 of this year's SWAN omitted Robert Wilkinson, for which the compiler apologises.

That means the previous No 7 and everyone below slips down one and David Foulser drops off all together!

Never mind David - you'll be back!

Robert's entry should have read:

Place	Player	Grade	Games	Wins	Club
7	Robert Wilkinson	2218	108	52	Bristol



Norman Connor

It was with great sadness we learnt that Norman - our previous Treasurer - passed away earlier this year. We sent this letter of condolence to his family on behalf of the SWF.

“Your father was our Treasurer for several years and is remembered as the person who brought some discipline to the SWF accounts in this role. After many years of haphazard accounting, Norman's professionalism put things back on track.

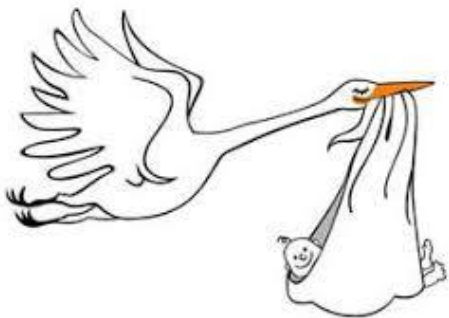
We were all very upset to learn that he passed away and will miss seeing him around. He was such a pleasant man and someone with great enthusiasm for our wonderful game. People have also remembered his ‘wicked sense of humour and love of life’

Those who had the good fortune to play against him remember each game as ‘a treat’ and that he played in a spirit of good sportsmanship - always friendly and welcoming and a formidable opponent on the lawn.

He retired from the committee a couple of years ago because of his health and we do hope that this made the time for him to enjoy the game and his other loves and interests.

Please accept our condolences at this sad time.”

We're expecting a new arrival!



Exciting news - a new croquet club is emerging in Moreton-in-Marsh Gloucestershire and they'd welcome our support:

Wanted

The club's committee are about to acquire a site in the town with room for three full size lawns. It's a reasonably level site and they want to start playing and attracting new members as soon as possible. Can you help them to start mowing their new home?

Has any club in the SWF any of the following lawn equipment to lend, donate or sell?

- 45-55 cm wide cylinder mower
- White lining machine
- Any other lawn equipment

Please contact: Paul Francis SWF Development Officer paulwfrancis@icloud.com or 07411044109

Extra Strokes and Behaviour - clarification and pointers from Stephen

It's his first year as our League Secretary and Stephen Custance-Baker (who is also a referee) has been asked to adjudicate on some unfortunate incidents during inter-club league matches. To avoid these happening again he takes us through the key issues.



We will also be reviewing the content and wording of the League rules to help clarify matters, and intend bringing recommendations to the AGM. If you have any suggestions about these, then please contact Stephen and we can consider and incorporate these.

There are three relevant areas:

- Understanding the SWF league rules about eligibility
- Agreeing (and displaying) the number of extra strokes and the rule governing one used in error
- Behaviour during disagreements

SWF league rules about eligibility



The latest SWF rules state that players with handicaps up to 10 may play in the Handicap teams and those with handicaps 8 and above may play in High Handicap matches. In addition, a Handicap team may include one player with a handicap of 11 or 12.

There has been a case in which a home team non-playing captain insisted that a visiting player with a handicap of 14 was not eligible to play in the High Handicap league. This was supported by documentation that turned out to be 3 years out of date. *(I have also received a results sheet for a Handicap match in which both sides had too many players with handicaps 11 and 12!)*

The consequence was that the player was forced to play as a 12 for the remainder of the match, which is wrong on two counts:

- 1 They were perfectly eligible to play as a 14 - there is no reason why a player with handicap as high as 20 may not play in this league, as long as the handicap is justified by competitive singles games properly recorded on their handicap card.
- 2 Under CA rules, no player is allowed to play off a wrong handicap in order to enter a tournament and the same applies to our leagues.

In an AC Intermediate match, the home team captain insisted that the visiting team could not field a player with a handicap of 20. The player was made to play as an 18 in the afternoon and lost a game. Once again, the ruling was wrong and the player should have played as a 20.

This illustrates the importance of team captains at all levels making themselves familiar with the relevant league rules. In fact, the best way would be for all team captains to download a copy of the relevant SWF league rules and take them to matches.

Before the first games in any match it is advisable for the captains to give each other a list of the players' names and handicaps. The handicap cards should also be there for perusal and so that they can be filled in immediately and in consultation with the opponent.



There have been two examples of players appearing for a team when they were not eligible to do so. In both cases the player had already played for another team in a different block of the same league. The rule on this is that any games won by such a player are awarded to the opposing team.

Agreeing and displaying the number of extra strokes

In one case that has been brought to my attention a player was accused of using an extra stroke to which they were not entitled.

The results sheet I was sent showed that they were entitled to that extra stroke and won the game 7-5. The visiting team captain had written the player's handicap incorrectly on his sheet and claimed that it had been agreed with the home team captain that the game should be scored as a 5-5 draw.

This is wrong because (a) the player had not committed any fault (b) the home team captain was not aware of any such agreement (c) the resolution was incorrect under the GC Rules. Also, as this affected the final match score, it is clear that this was not agreed between the captains when the match finished.

If a player does use an extra stroke to which they are not entitled then it becomes a simple case of wrong ball. The player has played out of turn (Rule 10.6.1) and the opponents can impose the penalty (Rule 10.6.3). If the opponent does not notice and continues play then the error has been condoned and there is no restitution.

In a different case, a team was twice accused of using an extra stroke incorrectly. It turned out that the accuser had an extra stroke pebble left in a pocket from a previous game or match and had therefore miscounted the number used.

This leads to the question of the best way to record the use of extra strokes. The most important thing is to ensure that you know who has how many in your game, particularly in doubles. Whatever system you use, make sure that the token is handed over or discarded before the extra stroke is played. Three possible systems together with their advantages and disadvantages are set out in Appendix 3 p25.

Behaviour during disagreements

I have not personally witnessed any incident involving unacceptable behaviour this season, either on or off the court, and I believe that such incidents are rare. However, there have undoubtedly been some examples that would cause a referee, if present, to warn a player about their behaviour under Rule 16.2.5: "A player argues aggressively or continuously with or is aggressive towards another player."



Now, Y'all
just behave!!

I'm sure we all agree that such an attitude, which can amount to bullying, has no place in our sport. In GC High Handicap matches, in particular, it is likely that several players will be inexperienced and, in the absence of a qualified referee, will be reluctant to hold their ground in the face of such pressure. The captain of the offending player's team should be the first to warn them and, if a player persists in such behaviour, then their club should consider excluding them from the team in future.

We all play croquet for pleasure and any behaviour that detracts from that pleasure should be avoided. Apart from any other considerations, we want to attract more people to join us and that won't happen if there is overt ill-feeling on the court.

Additional Points

Some other matters have come up so I thought I would cover them here as well.

There is no specified period for 'warming up' before a match but lawns are very variable around the region and even within a club. If a visiting team turns up in good time then they should be invited to practise on all of the lawns that are going to be used during the day. I would recommend a typical warming up period of about 10 minutes. No further practise should occur before later rounds but a player who joins the match late should be allowed some time to get the 'feel' of the lawn before they start playing.

It is reasonable for the home team to ask that hoop-running during the warm-up period should be gentle. Hard hoop-running is unnecessary for warming up and will only cause the hoops to loosen.

The rules (17.3) allow for clocks to be stopped if two double-banked games interfere. The other times when clocks may be stopped by mutual agreement are when delays occur that are not part of the normal game. Examples could be:

- ✓ A ball lost in a hedge
- ✓ A refereeing decision that is very slow because the rule book needs to be consulted.

Thanks for all this Stephen - there's useful reminders there for all of us.

Lawns Workshop

A lawn care workshop will be held at Budleigh on Thursday 26th September this year. This will be run by the company Dennis SISIS. Invitations have been sent direct to clubs by Dennis SISIS and further information about the day may be found in Appendix 4 p26. Please contact them direct to book - the SWF is not organising this event.

George Lang from Plymouth CC has attended a previous session of theirs and put them in touch with us - so it comes well recommended.

And thanks to those clubs who offered to host the workshop - it was good to see this level of interest.

Bleadon Hannah!

Bleadon, the home of Weston-super-Mare Croquet Club may not have grass surfaces to match some of our croquet opponents' lawns. But being tenants as opposed to owning the land or having a long "lease" we are restricted from spending vast sums on somebody else's land, but we think it has other assets to be proud of -

- ✓ a beautiful setting
- ✓ a friendly group of members
- ✓ a highly recommended service when it comes to catering for our visiting teams with our lunches receiving very favourable compliments from our opponents - we sometimes think they only come for the lunch.

As most of you will be aware, we had two marquees joined to make a facility to cater for the lunches and the other food related social events which we run each year.

But recently we had an unwanted guest "Hannah Storm". In her wisdom she decided we had the marquees in the wrong position and lifted them into the air to reposition them 50 yards away on a neighbouring bungalow.



The occupants, going on holiday that day, didn't need the 6.00 am alarm call as they were awakened by the marquee embedding itself in the roof, demolishing part of the chimney and planting a few holes in the roof, narrowly missing 2 cars in their driveway.



The fire brigade attended, making the structure safe, returning when Hannah ran out of steam, to remove our demolished marquee.

Tables and chairs strewn all over the outfield necessitated a clear up by volunteers, and the purchase of 2 new marquees but we were up and running within 3 days - just leaving the insurance claim to process, so fingers crossed.

New members still welcome excluding any "Hannahs"

SWAN



With Cygnet providing more regular updates to SWF members, we've been having a think about the future of SWAN.

It is always keenly anticipated, well used, and a jolly handy size - but we're thinking about making it a SWF handbook containing more information about the committee, our policies, bursary schemes and main objectives for the year.

If you have any suggestions about what you'd like to see in SWAN just drop us a line: lindawithani@hotmail.com

Handicap Changes - don't let them confuse you!

Robert Moss guides us through some puzzling aspects of croquet's handicap changes process:



When I was asked to help develop the efficiency of handicapping, I was surprised by how many people were confused about the position concerning handicap trigger points. This resulted in some people playing off the wrong handicap.

The problem arises when someone plays well and triggers a handicap change but then loses a few games and assume their handicap reverts to the previous number. This is not correct.

Let me illustrate this with a GC example - the AC system is exactly the same but with a different index points table.

- Fred has an index of 1090 and has the correct GC handicap of 14.
- He then wins two games in a league match gaining 20 points and his index is now 1110 - so he has crossed the trigger point for handicap 12.
- **He celebrates.**
- The next day he plays in another league match and loses two games so 20 points come off his index sending it back to 1090.
- He thinks he has crossed back over the trigger point and reverts to 14.
- **WRONG!**

Once your handicap has changed, it does not change back until you reach **THE NEXT** trigger point.

- So, having gone to 12, he would not go back to 14 unless he loses enough games for his index to reach the trigger point for 14 which is 1050.
- Fred would have to lose a further four games to get back to handicap 14 again.

This is a common mistake and is one reason why club handicappers check your cards regularly and why you should get your handicap changes “signed off” straight away - it can save a lot of embarrassment and ill-feeling.

On-line lawn booking - the Bristol Fashion

Electronic lawn booking - well established in some clubs - newly initiated in others - keenly anticipated or dreaded in many more.

Ray Ransom from Bristol CC talked us through their experience of introducing this for the current season.

You've been operating the on-line lawns booking system since the beginning of the season Ray - how is it working out so far?

From my own point of view, the success of the system has far exceeded my expectations. I think that the same is true of the Bristol Committee where some doubts were expressed on the likely acceptance of the replacement of the manual diary system.

Most of all, I'm delighted with the way in which the members have taken to it and as a result, in my opinion, there is better utilisation of lawns.

Bristol runs a huge number of internal competitions as well as a full programme of SWF and CA events. No longer do you have to ring the club and hope that someone answers or waste time and fuel travelling in order to scribble in the diary. You can now book a lawn from the comfort of your own home and the benefits are clear to all.



What got you to the point of making what is quite a momentous decision?

Many of our members have expressed a view that an automated diary would provide benefits but it seemed that the development cost would probably be prohibitive. There are many off the shelf online booking systems available, some of which have free options.

They are mostly aimed at appointment, hotel room and holiday bookings and really did not match our requirements.

However, we had a member who had experience of the Littleton Croquet Club lawns booking system which was based around a spreadsheet. The concept was simple and I thought that it would form a good starting point.

The first step was to build a system which replicated our manual diary, since it seemed likely that this would prove more acceptable to our members. Once a working system had been produced, bugs were ironed out using help from a few Club members and finally a test system was released generally for all to use for familiarisation. In the event, the test system was little used, so the decision to implement was an act of blind faith.

Which system did you choose and why?

Whilst it was clear from the start that our favoured option was the Littleton system using Google Sheets, it was necessary to justify the choice by ensuring that it fulfilled certain basic criteria applicable to any online system. Any system introduced had to operate in real time, be secure and easy for our members to use. These were the paramount requirements.

Google Sheets met all these requirements. Once a user makes a change to the diary, that change is visible to any other viewer with no noticeable delay.



There are two aspects to security. Firstly, it's important that the diary is protected from unauthorised changes and this is dealt with on two levels. Editing access is granted to Bristol playing members only, from a password protected Google account and some parts of the diary are further protected from any change.

On the second level, the information held in the diary must be protected from equipment failure and this is comprehensibly handled by Google. A facility is provided which allows me to scroll back through the various changes to the diary and, if necessary, reinstate a previous iteration.

The fact that the booking system diary is simply a spreadsheet means that any learning curve is shallow and we've found that adequate help is available from many sources.

Other important aspects of the system were speed of development, ease of maintenance and overall costs (basically zero).

Were there any objections or concerns from members of the club about introducing this?

There were a few objections, which was understandable since not everyone has a smartphone, tablet or a computer and as a result would be unable to access the system. Also, changing from a simple, tried and tested manual system to a technological replacement is bound to give rise to doubts and concerns. In general though, members were supportive and very willing to give the new system a chance.



How have you overcome these?

Those without the means of access have to rely on friends or opponents to make bookings for them. This has not been a problem since members have been very willing to help others.

One good news story; a member with no history of tech usage now owns a smartphone and uses it frequently.

At the beginning of the season we arranged a session where we provided instruction on using the system. Feedback on this was positive and I think that it helped to allay any doubts and instilled a level of confidence. Since then we have provided any necessary support.

A minor problem was the necessity for users to have a Gmail address. Most did, but for those that didn't, we gave instructions on how one could be acquired. All those without the necessary account subsequently set one up.

Are there any lingering concerns?

I do have one major concern about the hosting of the system. At the moment the booking system resides on my Google Drive which cannot be a long-term solution. An enterprise version of Drive is available but the operating costs look to be prohibitive. Whilst there is no urgency at the moment, we will, eventually, have to source a replacement.

What would you say to any other club considering setting up such a system?

I don't think that there is any doubt that our online lawn booking system has been successful for our members and our lawn utilisation. I cannot see any reason why it shouldn't be so for other croquet clubs, and although our particular system may not be right for all clubs, I think that those with 4 or fewer lawns would do well to give it a try. I would be happy to provide information and advice if requested.

What development plans, if any, do you have for the future?

Our system was based around an old manual diary booking system where the day was divided into 3 slots of 3 hour(ish) playing periods. This was fine for AC games but not very efficient for lawn use as the number of GC games increased. We have tried to overcome this by introducing special slots within the diary for GC bookings, but this has not been very successful. Some clubs, an example would be Nailsea, divide their day into 1-hour intervals.



This idea would work well for GC and also for AC where contiguous slots can be booked and I intend to try this out later in the year as a test system.

Google Drive is a fantastic resource for providing online group information and I can see it being used for coaching notes, membership lists, Club competition entry and many other things. Drive is especially useful for storing photographs of club activities.

For the sake of completeness that Microsoft, Apple and Amazon as well as smaller players, all offer cloud storage at little, or no cost. However, only Google bundle in word processing, spreadsheet and presentation facilities for free.

Thank you so much Ray - I've certainly found this a great help when I want to book a lawn and to see if something's going on that I'd like to see. Good luck with the next stage.

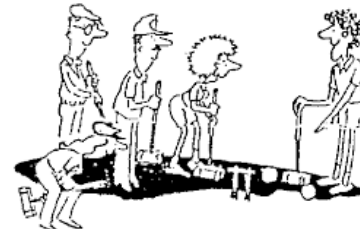
If anyone else has views to share on this topic - or if you've done something you're really proud of or have learnt masses from - Cygnet readers would love to hear from you. Ideas and suggestions as ever to Linda please.

A corporate approach to recruitment

Following Klim's article in the last issue of Cygnet encouraging clubs to try new ways of recruiting players, he heard from Stuart Smith at Broadwas CC:

I run two to three corporate events for local accountants / lawyers / corporates where I have contacts and the format that we have works very well as follows:

- ✓ We try to get around 24 people coming and need 6-8 club members to help.
- ✓ Start with a 15-minute session on the lawns teaching the basics and demonstrating shots, shot selection and basic rules.
- ✓ Then call them all back in and, having already been randomly paired, they go out to play for about a 30-minute game with our members now refereeing and answering questions.
- ✓ The bell rings and everyone comes back in and a Swiss event continues with winners playing winners and losers v losers.
- ✓ Hopefully before it goes dark, we have overall winners and we retire to the clubhouse for food and drink provided by the corporates for all.
- ✓ I try and charge £25 a head.




It's a stimulating evening enjoyed by all that allows good networking and team building - some firms have been every year for the last four years.

*Do others have other experiences they would like to share?
Has anyone translated this into recruiting new members?*

Appendix 1: SW Representatives to CA Council

Follow the link to: <https://www.croquet.org.uk/vote> to vote electronically or to down a paper ballot form.

Ballot boxes close on 3rd September

Candidate: Dave Kibble Bristol CC	
Proposed by: David Magee Cheltenham CC	
Seconded by: Ray Ransom Bristol CC	
Personal statement If the CA didn't exist, would you need to invent it? I believe the answer is "yes", and I want it to change so you do too. I served on Council for many years and you'll find my name in most minutes: asking a probing question or suggesting an improvement. I'm not in it for grandeur, I want to improve how croquet is governed. The CA attracts some excellent minds who generate great ideas; but the organisation seems unable to execute policies through to conclusion and its committees lack accountability for delivering change. It is well placed to find good club practices and to share them to help other clubs flourish; it does a poor job and must do better. It has information from surveys, and recommendations from working parties, but has not capitalised on them. It must recognise the problems that many clubs have recruiting (and retaining), and provide resources to help them be more successful. I want the CA to be more open: proceedings and decisions should be available to all members (except for the few truly confidential matters); useful stuff should be shared with all who might benefit. This transformation of structure creates an opportunity to make the CA fit for purpose. I've given a lot to croquet: creating and maintaining the CA website and its many systems, training referees and coaches, coaching both AC and GC at all levels (holding all coach qualifications), and competitively playing both codes. I want to do more: I want to make sure that this new structure works for croquet, not just "The CA".	

My professional life included many years in process improvement: analysing organisation working practices and structure, and recommending successive manageable change.

Well-known for my tenacity and sense of what's right, I can help to create a better CA.

Why are you standing for election?

I have a passion for croquet to be well governed and played more widely and I believe I can make a difference.

What do you see as the 3 most important key issues facing the CA?

The most important issue facing croquet is the decline in competitive play, especially AC. This change in the CA's structure, if seen-through and implemented well, can create an organisation much better at supporting clubs to recruit members who play more and better croquet. So: decline, resurrection, and onward croquet players!

What skills knowledge and experience would you bring to this role?

I have spent many years in quality systems audit and process improvement: understanding what teams and divisions are trying to achieve, analysing how they are organised, and aligning changes in their structure and processes to better suit their purpose.

I have an analytical mind and a well-honed ability to see clearly the consequences of decisions and ways of working. I have attention to detail without losing sight of the big picture.

What would you hope to achieve during your 3-year term of office?

I would hope to see strategic objectives in place that clubs and members support, and a CA organisation changing towards a focus on implementing those objectives. I want to see less done at individual whim and more done collectively and democratically in line with goals.


How would you communicate with CA members in the South West?

In any manner the electorate may want, but at least reporting through the Federation's news channels. To develop good policy, it will be necessary to have dialogue with the Federation, clubs and members.

I am often around and about in the region, playing and coaching, and am always open to a discussion. I believe that Federations and "The CA" should be much more integrated and (if possible) a single organisation, with decision-making at the places nearest those it affects.

Is there anything else you would like to say?

I'll have a lot to say if elected - no one should doubt that! 😊

Candidate: Peter Nelson Budleigh Salterton CC	
Proposed by: Julie Horsley Budleigh Salterton CC	
Seconded by: Roger Mills Budleigh Salterton CC	
<p>Personal statement</p> <p>I have been playing croquet for 11 years and have been an active member of the Sidmouth club during that time. I play association competitively, representing the club and entering many open events. I have also played competitively in Austria, Corfu, Ireland and South Africa. My current handicap is 1.5. I play golf croquet socially.</p> <p>I have served as treasurer of the Sidmouth club and have been chairman for the last 6 years. During this period I believe that the club has thrived and the membership has increased. I shall be standing down from this post in October and am keen to become involved in promoting the sport in a wider context.</p> <p>I am particularly interested in promoting short croquet and developing competitions in which players from both codes can compete and which may be a vehicle through which more players may be encouraged to transition and enjoy both forms of the game.</p> <p>I am retired from my career in civil engineering. Professionally I managed an engineering consultancy being responsible for over a thousand staff. I believe that this background has enabled me to develop the communication and strategic thinking skills which a council member requires.</p> <p>Why are you standing for election?</p> <p>I believe that the clubs in Devon and Cornwall should be represented on Council and as I am shortly to give up the chairmanship of Sidmouth Croquet Club I will have the time to devote to council matters.</p> <p>What do you see as the 3 most important key issues facing the CA?</p> <p>The CA has an aging membership and I consider the development of youth schemes in schools and universities important as well as at club level; as an adjunct to this I believe that the profile of the sport needs to be improved and attract wider publicity. I also wish to see and encourage a larger proportion of the membership participating in open events.</p> <p>What skills knowledge and experience would you bring to this role?</p> <p>I have been an active member of the CA for 11 years playing association off a reasonably low handicap (currently 1.5) and golf croquet socially and at club level. I am a grade 1 coach and an assistant referee. I have acted as treasurer and as chairman for the last 6 years of a club which continues to thrive. Before retirement I managed a large engineering consultancy, a role which required problem solving, good communication skills and strategic thinking. I believe these are relevant attributes for a CA council member.</p>	

What would you hope to achieve during your 3-year term of office?


The CA Council is responsible to direct policy and strategy rather than to manage so personal goals are not necessarily relevant, however I hope to be able to communicate with membership so that rank and file have a much better understanding of the way in which the CA operates and makes decisions. I will also endeavour to influence policy towards the issues outlined (in 2) above.

How would you communicate with CA members in the South West?

I will establish a point of contact with each cub (usually the secretary) keep them briefed on council matters and seek their opinions on matters which come before council. I also propose to open a separate Facebook page relating to croquet news and issues with particular emphasis on the region.

Is there anything else you would like to say?

It would be a privilege to represent the South West on Council and if elected I will bring energy and commitment to the role.

Candidate: Klim Seabright Cheltenham CC	
Proposed by: Brian Wilson South West Federation	
Seconded by: Robert Moss South West Federation	
<p>Personal statement</p> <p>I represent the South West Federation of Croquet Clubs on the Council of the Croquet Association. I am keen to retain a link through the Federation. I am particularly keen to encourage young people to play our sport. I have also been working on giving Croquet a higher profile within sport and have recently led a team pressing for Croquet to be included in the Commonwealth Games 2022. It has been indicated that Croquet would be suitable for inclusion in the Urban Games section of the Commonwealth Games.</p> <p>I was Secretary of the Croquet Association for 3 years and implemented significant cost saving during my tenure and also a wide range of publicity for our sport. I served as Secretary of Cheltenham Croquet Club for 8 years.</p> <p>I am a qualified coach and particularly enjoy coaching those who are new to our sport. I have also organised and run coaching at two clubs other than my own club. I was selected by the WCF to coach in India. I organised and ran a coaching session between British and Chinese politicians.</p> <p>In 2018 I was awarded the Croquet Association Diploma for services to croquet (see citation for further information).</p> <p>I led the CA Team on many occasions specifically against the Swiss, Scottish and Iris Croquet Associations. I held responsible positions in both the public and private sectors. I became the Production Controller for the Hydraulic Division of an American company manufacturing earth moving equipment. I was also a member of the Careers Service County Management Team for the County of Hereford and Worcester. Both gave me considerable responsibility for policy, staff and budget control.</p> <p>I also ran my own events business for 5 years. Clients included a well know sports car manufacture, the European Bank of Finance and also Central Government supported organisations.</p> <p>Why are you standing for election?</p> <p>I currently represent the South West Federation of Croquet Clubs on the Croquet Association Council. As such I am also a member of the CA Marketing and Handicap Committees and wish to continue this work.</p> <p>I have many ideas about how our sport can be developed and therefore feel it important to be part of the policy making body of our sport.</p> <p>What do you see as the 3 most important key issues facing the CA?</p> <p>Using all means possible to raise awareness of our sport.</p>	

Making every effort to lower the age profile of our sport
Continue to “modernise” the CA committee structure and delegate more powers via the Federations.

What skills knowledge and experience would you bring to this role?

I believe that I am a good communicator which I believe I have demonstrated through feedback to the SW Federation Committee; Coaching; Leadership (as Captain of the CA Team) against the Croquet Associations of Switzerland, Ireland and Scotland and also administration of a significant sized croquet club.

I have had three years experience as the Secretary of the Croquet Association and therefore have a good understanding of how the CA operates.

In my previous careers I have reached senior level in both the Public and Private Sectors (see main nomination paper).

I have also run my own small events business which included as a sub contractor of the CA.

What would you hope to achieve during your 3-year term of office?


I would like to strengthen the role of Federations. I would like to broaden the understanding of croquet as a sport. I would like the CA Council to meet around the regions. I would do all that I can to lower the age of participation.

How would you communicate with CA members in the South West?

I would hope to be invited to join the South West Federation of Croquet Clubs Committee. I will continue to submit items to SWAN and Cygnet. I intend to play at as many SW clubs as possible in order to listen to “grass route” views. I am also thinking about how best to hold “surgery” sessions across the Federation.

Is there anything else you would like to say?

No

Candidate: Linda Shaw Nailsea CC	
Proposed by: Kathy Wallace Nailsea CC	
Seconded by: Martin Leach Bristol CC	

Personal statement

I believe that belonging to an organisation means you should play a role in supporting it and contribute to its development. The CA needs an injection of new blood in its organisation and I am keen to use the skills, experience and enthusiasm I have to help move the CA forward.

A team player, I believe everyone has views worth hearing and debating. The CA seems a complex organisation and no one person has all the answers, but Council can achieve a lot by working co-operatively with its committees and members: individuals, clubs, federations.

Receiving so much support when learning croquet, I determined to show the same consideration for others and to help my club develop. I assisted coaches with the beginners' sessions, subsequently becoming a club coach and recently a Grade 1 coach. I have served on my club's committee - as secretary, club competitions manager and coaching co-ordinator. I enjoy playing club competitions, League matches and in tournaments further afield.

In 2017 I joined the South West Federation committee as its secretary. This broadened my understanding and appreciation of the skill, knowledge and enthusiasm there is for our game throughout the region. As Secretary I help bring together an informed agenda and minutes for committee meetings and the AGM and have introduced Cygnet - an electronic newsletter facilitating communication between member clubs.

I worked with Dave Gunn during his tenure as Development Officer, helping collate ideas on making the best use of club members and others as volunteers. This further widened my appreciation of the work being undertaken by so many clubs.

Now retired, my professional background is social work and the voluntary sector in both front line and managerial roles. If selected, I look forward to bringing my experience to Council working towards a stronger and meaningful CA.

Why are you standing for election?

I enjoy a challenge! The CA is both amazing and frustrating - it has been well served by many long standing, skilled people but seems to have difficulty recruiting new people to Council and its committees that broaden the perspectives currently represented. Good ideas and innovation seem to get lost in transit and/or take ages to bear fruit, and many grass roots members have a limited appreciation of its role and potential. The current restructuring programme provides a great opportunity to strengthen the good bits, improve the not-so-good bits and introduce new initiatives.

During my working life I was appointed to several completely new roles and successfully developed these into sustainable posts, achieving respect for this and thoroughly enjoying the team work this involved. I have continued to set myself challenges in my retirement: for example - getting married for the first time, playing bridge - as well as the croquet-related tasks described in my personal statement.

I am enthusiastic about becoming a part of the newly structured Council and to supporting a thorough review and improvement of the CA's activities as it rises to meet the challenges inherent in being the national governing body of an apparently fragile but hugely rewarding sport.

What do you see as the 3 most important key issues facing the CA?

There are many inter-related strands to the CA but I would highlight:

1. Reviewing the aims, structure and performance of the CA encompassing:
 - a. the role of each committee, its key objectives and achievements
 - b. Improving internal and external communication, tracking and transparency
2. Establishing a clearer role for Federations creating a true partnership with the CA e.g.:
 - a. Their greater involvement and responsibility in the identification and provision of support to clubs and players
 - b. Their being more significantly involved in the allocation of resources
3. Raising the profile of grass roots play - it's not all about A Class play - a huge number of croquet players enjoy lower levels of competitive and friendly play, the challenges it provides and the companionship - these are the foundation of current and future success and sustainability

What skills knowledge and experience would you bring to this role?

To the information included in my personal statement I would add that I have been playing for many years and have enjoyed the highs and suffered the lows of the game. I think I am in touch with a fairly wide range of grass roots players and am developing an appreciation of what motivates the higher-level players.

Initially working for Local Authorities as a social worker with people with learning disabilities, I moved on to worked in the voluntary sector running an organisation providing county wide support to voluntary groups and representing them to Council, and to working as a self-employed project worker.

This made me aware of the huge number of ways people support each other and their communities and gave me the skills and confidence to work at county level with Local and Health Authorities and with politicians. I was responsible to a volunteer Board of Trustees and am currently myself a Trustee with a local charity which provides pre-school support to children with additional needs and their families.

I know the value of honest communication (however difficult this might be) and a supportive approach. I have an ability to express my point of view and to seek and understand those of others. I am not afraid to change and to try something new. I

consider therefore that I have a wide range of experience, skills and knowledge to bring to this role.

What would you hope to achieve during your 3-year term of office?

I would like to see measurable progress in the aims I set out above. I would also like the CA to have greater relevance for individual members - difficult to evidence but this may be demonstrated e.g. by contributions to the Croquet Gazette, increased involvement in Club and Federation committees, more people playing competitively.

How would you communicate with CA members in the South West?

This is something that needs to be explored between the three representatives for the South West and to include discussion with the SW Federation about how the new relationship between representatives and the Federation will work.


At this stage I see Cygnet as being one key method for informing members, eliciting their views and engaging in debate and discussion.

There are the standard ways: email correspondence, face to face discussions but there are other ways that should be explored: regular meetings, blogs, Facebook group etc etc. I'm open to suggestions.

Is there anything else you would like to say?

This would certainly be a challenging role and I am quite sure that it will not be possible to please all of the people all of the time. Its success depends on creating opportunities for dialogue and on a culture of support.

I should mention that I am married to Dave Kibble who is also standing - we would obviously be discussing issues together. We agree on a lot but each have our own views and are good at handling differences of opinion!

Candidate: Brian Wilson Camerton & Peasedown CC	
Proposed by: Klim Seabright SWF Rep to Council	
Seconded by: Ros Key-Pugh Camerton & Peasedown CC	
<p>Personal statement</p> <p>Why am I standing for election? Recent changes in CA Membership have encouraged the CA to face a challenging yet bright future. The new Council is vital to ensure that the CA delivers what you, it's members, require.</p> <p><u>I play both GC and AC</u> at Camerton and Peasedown, supporting beginners/improvers as a Grade 1 GC Coach and playing in Club, Federation and National Competitions I am currently a <u>member of the CA Council</u>. For 5 years I <u>chaired the Marketing Team</u>, supporting clubs to increase membership (National Croquet Day) In 2018 I was elected <u>Chair of the South West Federation</u>. We support clubs defining their goals, increasing membership and securing their finances.</p> <p>What will I be working towards?: - Key Drivers - More: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People playing croquet • Younger players • Coaches, Referees etc • Playing AC and variants • Playing competitive games. <p>Key Issues: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the CA in croquet's continuing success, • Ensuring that Federations and the CA work together • That the CA reflects your individual, Club and Federation needs <p>What skills/experience would I bring to the role? My <u>Management Consultancy experience</u> includes - Business finance, Company turnaround, Business start up, lecturing at F.E. and H.E. levels <u>Major business analyses</u>, working in teams to highlight problems, developing ways forward <u>Extensive experience in setting Forward Plans</u> that are challenging, measurable and achievable, <u>Monitoring performance</u> using straightforward techniques identifying adverse trends and <u>developing remedial actions</u> <u>Assessing management structures</u>, quality of decision-making, management performance and <u>good governance</u> prior to major investment</p> <p>Finally I will continue to visit and communicate with clubs, keeping abreast of your problems as well as your achievements; cascading these to others, principally in the South West. I will continue to work for the CA's and Croquet's continuing success</p>	

Why are you standing for election?

- Because I am committed to supporting the future of all croquet players – all codes, all skill levels - i.e. everyone
- The new Council is vital to ensure that the CA delivers what you, it's members, require.

What do you see as the 3 most important key issues facing the CA?

Key Issue 1: - Growth including: -

- More people playing croquet with more clubs
- More younger players
- More Coaches, Referees
- More people playing AC and all its variants
- More people taking part in competitive croquet, at all levels

Key Issue 2: - Strategy, Policy and Scrutiny, including: -

- Ensure the CA has clearly defined and measurable strategic objectives i.e. numerical targets and 'due dates'
- Ensure these strategic objectives are regularly monitored and highlighting adverse trends well before they reach the 'problem stage'
- Scrutinise the work of the CA Executive to ensure that it maximises opportunities and corrects adverse trends
- Ensure that the CA operates good governance practices and monitor their operation

Key Issue 3: - CA, Federations, Clubs and Players

- Ensure that the CA and Federations work together to create a sleek, elegant and well-run machine for all croquet players and clubs
- Where there are gaps, duplications and inefficiencies, take immediate action
- Always remember that the CA should reflect your individual, Club and Federation needs

What skills/experience would you bring to the role?

- My Management Consultancy experience includes - Business finance, Company turnaround, Business start up, lecturing at F.E. and H.E. levels
- Major business analyses, working in teams to highlight problems, developing ways forward
- Extensive experience in setting Forward Plans that are challenging, measurable and achievable, Monitoring performance using straightforward techniques identifying adverse trends and developing remedial actions Assessing management structures, quality of decision-making, management performance and good governance prior to major investment

What would you hope to achieve during your 3-year term of office?

- A clear plan of action, with measurable, achievable, yet testing strategic objectives as outlined in question 2 (the three most important key issues facing the CA?)
- Having agreed these targets, monitor and scrutinise the work of the Executive Board to ensure their achievement
- Ensure that the CA and Federations work closer together

How would you communicate with CA members in the South West?

- I will continue to visit and communicate with clubs, keeping abreast of your problems as well as your achievements; cascading these to others, principally in the South West.
- I look forward to receiving your ideas as what should happen in the future either face to face, by telephone, social media, email, letters etc
- The best ideas invariably come from players and clubs

Is there anything else you would like to say?

- It is pleasing to see that there are 5 people who are standing for election to CA Council it shows a healthy interest in the CA and croquet in the South West
- Please encourage all CA members in your Club to vote for your choice of 3 Council members - do not forget you can vote on line

Appendix 2: SWF Committee nomination form



South West Federation of Croquet Clubs Nominations for Committee 2019

Yes, it's that time of year again - we're seeking nominations for people to stand for election to the SWF Committee. Election will take place at our AGM on Sunday 17th November 2019 at the Batch Country Hotel.

We are looking for enthusiastic, skilled and reliable people to join the committee in one of the following roles and would particularly love to hear from people in clubs not currently involved directly with the committee.

Chair	League Secretary	Publicity Officer
Treasurer	Development Officer	GC Adviser
Secretary	Youth Officer	Regional Coaching Officer

Please note that we are not seeking nominations for the post of Regional Rep to CA Council as the new CA constitution means these are now elected by separate ballot.

To be eligible to stand you must be a member of a fully paid-up Full Member Club. If you are not sure - ask your club committee, check out our website www.swfcroquet.org or email lindawithani@hotmail.com

Do contact us if you'd like any more information about what's involved.

If you'd like to stand for election, your nomination should reach the address below by 31st August. Please use this form or ensure that all the requested information is provided in an email or letter.

SWF of Croquet Clubs: Nomination for Committee	
Name of nominee	
Please state the role/s you wish to be nominated for	
Proposed by	Name
	Email
	I am a member of - please insert name of club
Seconded by	Name
	Email
	I am a member of - please insert name of club
Consent to nomination	Name
	Email
	I am a member of - please insert name of club

Please send this form to lindawithani@hotmail.com or Linda Shaw, 21 Grove Avenue, Coombe Dingle, Bristol, BS9 2RP to arrive by 31st August.

Appendix 3: Extra turns in GC - seeing is believing

Tokens, i.e. glass pebbles, beads or poker chips

Advantages:

- ✓ Usually easy to store in a pocket and to give to an opponent before playing an extra stroke.
- ✓ Carried round during the game and therefore easily accessible.

Disadvantages :

- ✓ Invisible to the opponent or audience.
- ✓ An enquiry by an opponent as to how many are left can act as a reminder.
- ✓ Easily overlooked and left in a pocket after a game, giving rise to possible confusion in later games.
- ✓ Awkward if a large number is required.

Hairbands or rubber bands on the mallet handle

Advantages :

- ✓ Visible to all, though not at a distance.
- ✓ Easy to store on most mallet handles.
- ✓ Easy to give to an opponent before playing an extra stroke.
- ✓ Carried round during the game and therefore easily accessible.

Disadvantages :

- ✓ Many mallet handles have a varying shape along the length and the band will only fit at some points.
- ✓ It is not obvious to observers whether a band on a mallet handle is a used or unused extra stroke.
- ✓ Some players grip all parts of the handle for different strokes and could find the bands off-putting.
- ✓ A player looking down the handle might be put off by a varying sight picture.

Markers at the side of the lawn (like AC bisques)

Advantages :

- ✓ Visible to all.
- ✓ Can be colour-coded to make it clear which player has how many remaining.
- ✓ No need to carry anything around the lawn.

Disadvantages :

- ✓ Someone needs to go and remove one before each extra stroke (not a problem if there are players watching).
- ✓ A club would need to procure (or make) and store the markers.

An example of the markers, as used at Taunton Deane.

These are painted pencils, colour-coded for all eight standard ball colours. They can be stuck in the ground or put in simple stands.



Appendix 4: Lawns Maintenance Seminar

Thursday 26th September 2019
Budleigh Salterton CC



Outline programme

- 9.00 Registration and refreshment
- 9.30 Introduction and welcome
- 9.45 Lawn assessment and surface preparation
- 11.00 Refreshments
- 11.15 How to get the best performance from your mower
- 12.00 Complimentary lunch
- 12.45 Demonstration: aeration, scarification, brushing, mowing
- 2.00 End of season renovation
- 2.45 Q&A

Telephone: 01332 824777

Internet: www.dennisuk.com

www.sisiss.com

Email: sales@dennisuk.com

info@sisiss.com

Your club secretary will have received further information so do speak to them in the first instance.