

Cygnnet

South West Area Newsletter

Celebrating Croquet Across the Region

Issue 42: June 2023

Welcome to the June issue of Cygnnet – lots for you to mull over as you relax over your chosen refreshments and ponder the day's play.

A Referendum of Referees?

In the last issue of Cygnnet, Tony Mayer asked what the collective noun for a group of referees might be and started us off with an Assembly of Arbiters. Stephen CB immediately came back with a Marker of Referees.

Since then, we've had further suggestions. Dave Kibble (Bristol) is sure it should be a Confusion of Referees, while Chris Frew (also Bristol) came up with a Solomon of Referees, with this ingenious rationale: This implies both wisdom and the capacity to get a grip.

Dave K has also contributed a Reluctance of Referees – though the SWF referee qualification and refresher programme should soon consign that category to the extinction list.

Thanks all and enjoy this timely scene at the Spring SWF Short Croquet Tournament where players and referees try to sort out what happened and what the remedy should be!



New ref: Ed Dolphin

And while we're on the subject, Ed Dolphin (Sidmouth) tells us about his experiences in becoming a referee.

'The game should be played according to the Laws' is a favourite saying of one of my mentors who has helped me to enjoy playing croquet, yes Laws, I play AC. The same is true of GC and its Rules.

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

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

I think we should all know the Laws and Rules of the game we play, then we wouldn't need referees so often. Sadly, many players have only a fleeting grasp of the basics, particularly of the Laws of AC. This is hardly surprising because the 152 page AC Laws book is not a page-turner, but we should all know the highlights, the situations that come up most frequently.

Last year I decided I wanted to get a better understanding of the Laws and set about becoming a referee. Settling down to actually read the Laws book was not a good idea. I soon got lost in the cross referencing, I needed help. One of the hardest things to do was to find an approved referee course. I have to say that I was disappointed with CA headquarters who do not seem to think it is their job. They said that was for the academies and federations and simply referred me to the tournament calendar which also lists some courses, there were none anywhere near the south west.

After a lot of asking around, I found that the Chiltern Academy was planning a three-day weekend course for this spring and booked a place. The course was led by Cliff Jones and was challenging but thoroughly enjoyable. Cliff peppers his sessions with anecdotes to make different points. We worked through the different sections methodically but it was made very clear that we were not expected to know everything, that is why referees carry a Laws book.

This is built into the assessment, yes there are three exams. The first is a short test on the basics. It is a test of memory but it is multiple choice so the answers are there. The second is a set of more complex scenarios, but you are allowed to have the Laws with you. The third test is a practical where you are asked to referee situations that are relatively common, for example is the ball wired or was it hoop and roquet? Again, you have the Laws in your back pocket.

I didn't get them all right, apparently nobody does, but I reached the pass mark and I am now able to help out at tournaments by refereeing when needed. The course was a very interesting and worthwhile experience, I wish more players would take it on. The downside was I had to travel and stay in a hotel. I am delighted to say that the CA and my club, Sidmouth, subsidised the course cost and the SWF very generously paid my travel costs to and from High Wycombe. I still had three nights in a hotel to pay but I combined it with an extra couple of days of holiday in the area.

Welcome to Cripplegate CC

We are delighted to welcome a new club to the SWF. Martin Jones introduces them:



We are a Consortium Bowls Club located in Cripplegate Park on the west side of Worcester. Having the luxury of three greens but with a reduction of playing members the decision was taken to form a Croquet Club for both members & non-members using the under-used third green.

With initial helpful advice resulting from a visit to our nearest Club at Norton, we have been delighted by the help & support from the CA mainly from Paul Francis in his role of Chairman of Sports Development Committee.



Paul has overseen our journey throughout the joining process to the CA & the SW Federation & been our ever-available contact for help & advice. We have decided to delay the offer of coaching at present & concentrate on the introduction of Golf Croquet as although we have people participating on a play & play basis we feel we need to build the Club gradually, encouraging their friends & family's to try it out.



Hopefully with this approach & also encouraging existing Bowls members to participate, we will be in a position to generate a large enough group of players to call on the expertise within the SW Federation to take us forward in the future.

We look forward to them playing in the Leagues next year.

Camerton & Peasedown Croquet Club

www.camertonpeasedowncroquet.co.uk

Open GC Level Play Doubles Tournament

Present holders:
Linda Shaw & Dave Kibble

Tuesday 19 September 10:00 Start





£15 per person inc. drinks /cake
Enter as a pair max, 16
Bring your own Lunch

Entries to Mo Boys 017929733640 or
moboys@talktalk.net by 30 August

SWF Spring Short Croquet Tournament

John gives us the results of the first of this season's 'must-do' events held at Nailsea from 14-16th April

Division 5

27 teams were scheduled to take part in this year's tournament, and the seven teams in Division 5 duly turned up on Friday. Unfortunately, the weather did not comply, the lawns were waterlogged and the rain continued.

At 9.15 it was clear that no play was going to be possible until mid-afternoon at the earliest, and this would not leave enough time for a meaningful competition, so play was abandoned.



Right: John looks out for that patch of blue

Left: Height of play on Friday!



This means there will be no promotion from Division 5 and, of course, no relegation from Division 4. The lawns had dried out by Saturday, which was a very nice day, so we were able to play Divisions 1-4 over the next two days.

Compare and contrast: height of play on Day 2



Division 4.

There was a surprise conclusion to this division. After two rounds, Glamorgan were 4 points ahead and looked certain to win. Their nearest rivals were Exeter A on 3 and Taunton Tiggers on 2. Exeter then won all 4 games in the next round, but after four rounds, Glamorgan were still 4 ahead of both Exeter and Taunton who had to play each other, with Glamorgan sitting out the last round.

Exeter repeated their third-round exploits and won 4-0, thus necessitating a shoot-out to decide the winner.

By this time, one Glamorgan player had disappeared leaving them a shooter short, and Exeter subsequently won and are promoted.

| | | | |
|------------------------|----|---|---|
| Exeter A | 11 | Taunton Tiggers | 7 |
| Glamorgan | 11 | Budleigh Salterton Rushes | 2 |
| Exeter B | 9 | | |
| Special mention | | Colin Lovell (Exeter A) won all his four games. | |



Adam Wimshurst receives the shield from John Grimshaw, on behalf of the Exeter A team.

Division 3

This was not a close-run thing! East Dorset won their first 12 games and could not be caught after the third round. Surprisingly they dropped two games to Bath Buns in their last match, but this could not save Bath Buns from relegation as they needed to beat Sidmouth Connaught in the last round but lost 3-1.

| | | | |
|------------------------|----|---|---|
| East Dorset | 14 | Taunton Terriers | 5 |
| Bristol Boys | 9 | Bath Buns | 4 |
| Sidmouth Connaught | 8 | | |
| Special mention | | Jonathan Powe and Steven Leonard (both East Dorset) each won all four of their games. | |

Hannes, non-playing but very supportive captain, holds the shield on behalf of East Dorset flanked by the team (L-R): Jonathan Powe, Chris Rice, Dave Fuller, Steve Leonard



Division 2

Swindon, who had been promoted from Division 3 last year, triumphed again to earn a place in the top division next year. They won 7 of their first 8 games and looked good favourites after the second round, but Bath Salts were keeping pace with them. Round 4 saw them play each other and it was a 2-2 draw. This gave Bath a one point lead going in to the last round, but they had to sit out. So, Swindon needed 2 to win, and in fact won 3-1 against the unfortunate Budleigh Salterton Roquets who were relegated.



Photo shows: Swindon Division 2 winning team: from L to R Harvey Smith, Tony Mayer (captain), Andy Smith and Terry Clements

| | | | |
|------------------------|---|----------------------------|---|
| Swindon | 12 | Kington Langley Aardvarks | 7 |
| Bath Salts | 10 | Budleigh Salterton Roquets | 3 |
| Nailsea Avening | 8 | | |
| Special mention | Andy Wagstaff (Bath Salts) and Harvey Smith (Swindon) each won all four of their games. | | |

Division 1

This was a very close finish. Kington Langley Bruins won 7 games in the first two rounds to have a 4-point lead going in to the third round, but Nailsea and Sidmouth Fortfield had only played once at this stage.

Sidmouth then beat Kington Langley 3-1 and Nailsea won 4-0 against Camerton and Peasedown.

So, going in to the last round Nailsea were one point ahead of the Bruins, with Sidmouth a further point behind. Nailsea had to play Kington Langley and drew 2-2, eliminating Kington Langley from the equation, and leaving Sidmouth requiring a 4-0 win to force a shoot-out. Sidmouth duly won their first 3 games, and the very last game on court was in a tense position, but Nailsea Trendlewood won that game to enable their club colleagues to win the title. Camerton and Peasedown are relegated.

| | | | |
|------------------------|---|----------------------|---|
| Nailsea | 11 | Nailsea Trendlewood | 6 |
| Sidmouth Fortfield | 10 | Camerton & Peasedown | 3 |
| Kington Langley Bruins | 10 | | |
| Special mention | Paul Arbos (Nailsea) won all four of his games. | | |

Many thanks to the Nailsea club for providing the facilities and tea and cakes. An awful lot of work goes in to laying out 8 Short Croquet lawns and we are very grateful to the members who give up their time to undertake this task.

Me and Croquet - Part 3 - To the End of the Season

David Fuller, (East Dorset) completes his trilogy.

Previously on 'Me and Croquet': I started to feel more comfortable talking about myself, noting that it is possibly my favourite subject, but also (hopefully) passing on a little enthusiasm for this fantastic game and the exercise regime for the mind and body that it is.

The list of players who have helped me in my first six months of playing this game is almost endless. Another good friend of mine at East Dorset, David Williams, had been providing me with some insights as to how much more difficult it would be as I started to play lower handicap players. He also showed me how to play that cheeky little pass roll with your feet level with the balls. Brilliant. Perfect for a saving croquet shot from C2 to H2.

My next tournament was at Budleigh Salterton. What a gorgeous setting. If you haven't played there yet then you must do something about that! Five Advanced Level-Play games over two days and I played very well to win my block and come down to a 4 handicap. My second game was against the extremely affable Ed Dolphin from Sidmouth CC. Unfortunately, it was somewhat one-sided as on this occasion, Ed just didn't seem to be able to play with any porpoise. Sorry I couldn't resist.

I had a nice chat with Roger Mills and asked him to sign his book (I know! How embarrassing for a 59yo! But I did think it would be nice to leave the books at East Dorset when I am taken from the lawn in a wooden box. Reasonable?). I also met Cliff Jones and we talked about his TP course in 2023.

Meanwhile, East Dorset was hosting some top players, so it was time to watch and see how it is really done!

In August, the Dorset Open GC Championship (possibly a warm-up for the Worlds?) allowed me to watch Rob Fulford hitting balls 15 yards to a blade of grass. Tim O'Donnell was also showing that he can mix it with the best, narrowly losing to Rob in the KO semi-finals.

In September, East Dorset hosted the Chairman's Salver (the second tier of top English players). Chris Weedon and I started our hoop-setting career at this point, which was slightly unnerving, but it did mean that we had to watch many of the games. It was inspiring to watch these players executing TPs and TPOs for fun, but also (rarely, I will admit) missing the odd shot. And what a nice bunch!

It was interesting to chat to Alison Maugham about her efforts to stream live play and commentary [Stop Press: look at Alison's recent croquet podcasts]. Aston Wade won all of his games bar one. I congratulated him and he paid me a great compliment by saying that he had heard that I was improving fast. I wouldn't worry about it too much Aston, but thanks anyway!

My point is: if you haven't watched any top-level croquet, get out and watch some. It really helps understand and play this game better.

So, to the back end of the season. The East Dorset Longman Cup team narrowly lost to Roehampton in the Final at Surbiton. I got roasted +25 by Andrew Wilson who played some fantastic croquet and only gave me one half chance. Well done Roehampton.

Finishing my first season with a handicap 4 and under no illusion that next season will be much tougher. I got a nomination for the Most Improved Player 2022, which was won by Aston 'How can he swing that mallet so straight' Wade. I suppose the winter is for practice. But how do you actually

get better? What do you need to change? Ah well, it doesn't matter too much as long as you are enjoying yourself and you win a few along the way.

In summary, this is a great game (AC and GC!). You get all the mental and physical training that you need. You meet a lovely, though slightly, possibly, neuro-divergent, group of people (for clarity, I include myself firmly in that group!). There is usually a bar.

PS. Blimey. Only went and did a TP in a club match early January. Did I say I was hooked? My 6-year-old grandson Freddie calls me a 'Croquet Herbert'. Perhaps I am, whatever that means.

Media Coverage

There's been quite a lot of this for croquet recently as you can see from the following – it's worth following up the links.

Plymouth got into print with the article on the right taken from the Plymouth Herald on 15th May this year.

Paul Francis appeared on BBC Radio Cornwall. The chat starts 16 minutes into the broadcast.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/p...>

John O'Gorman, (Budleigh Salterton), tells us:

Our club featured on the Rick Edwards show on BBC Radio Devon. John O'Gorman, Liz Cummings and Linda Hicks took part in a light hearted feature about our Club and how to play croquet.

The interview with Richard Green is in two parts - the first being about 13 minutes into the programme and the second at about 38 minutes into the programme.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0fm7ksn>

Having a go at the tough old sport of croquet

From left: Linda, Sue and Shelagh of Plymouth Croquet Club, in Hartley ELLIOT BALL

FAMILY ATMOSPHERE AT CLUB IN CITY

By ELLIOT BALL

THE sun is shining, the sunscreen is already running out and, most importantly, the sea is flowing. It can only mean one thing – summer is fast approaching.

So it's the perfect time to play a bit of sport and make the most of some good weather. Now, if you're looking for something gentle and easy-going, I'd suggest something 'like football', but, if you're after a thrill and want to show your ruthless side, there's only one sport for you – croquet!

The game dates back to 1856 and it generally comes with the stereotype that it's for 'posh ladies', and anyone who plays it is seen as 'elitist'. Not my words – but the words of Plymouth Croquet Club chair Sue Marples.

Sue had never played the sport before joining the club and admitted she 'wasn't convinced' before picking up her mallet for the first time. However, it didn't take long for her to realise just how competitive and addictive it truly was – 30 minutes, to be precise.

"I joined it about nine years ago", she recalled. "I came along to try it for about half an hour then I decided it was my game".

Plymouth Croquet Club, located near Hartley Park, on Mannemead road, was formed in the mid-1990s and, unlike any other sports club in the area, they play on top of a reservoir, which club secretary Linda Lang described as slightly 'disconcerting'.

Linda joined her local club in 2010, after moving to Plymouth from Hampshire with her husband. She explained she saw the club as a 'networking' opportunity with a 'ready-made family'.

She said: "I joined the club in 2010, my husband and I moved from Hampshire and had been playing locally for a year. When we moved back to Plymouth, it was networking to begin with, just somewhere we could play a bit, but you've got a ready-made family".

Sue added that those in the club regularly get together for a ploughman's lunch, or a spot of tea. But it's much more than tea-sipping – it's a serious sports club. Members play across two different South West federations.

Linda said: "We are a serious sports club. We have two teams and we have one team playing under a handicap system so, in effect, it means anyone who is competitive can have a space in the team."

"On Wednesdays and Saturdays, the majority of people come for a social game. We manage to fit in a couple of games and on a nice day like this we stop and have a cup of tea at the end and a chat. Fridays is when the serious stuff happens."

At the end of last summer, the club had around 50 members. Those of you interested in joining the club can head over to its website ([below](http://plymouth-croquet.org.uk/)). Memberships cost £110 for the year and, as Linda points out, that is considerably cheaper than your average golf club.

Be warned, though. The first thing I want to make clear is croquet is not by any stretch of the imagination as easy as it looks. I was watching 65-year-old members hit the ball twice as far as I could – genuinely, it was impressive.

Although I should have expected it, Linda did warn me how 'vicious' the game can be while talking me through the different forms of croquet.

"What we're playing today is called golf croquet, which is basically professional around six hoops, and it's not one of those gentle games," she said.

"It's quite ruthless because half the thing is knocking people out of the way. If you ever watch the world championships online, that's all it is. It's people knocking each other out of the way until they can get through the hoop."

"The original game is association croquet, so that's more like snooker. You've got the four balls and you're playing one of them and the idea is by great skill to get your ball all around the hoops without making a mistake."

Linda, Sue and all the members at Plymouth Croquet Club are incredibly welcoming. So much so, I was invited to play again.

■ <http://plymouth-croquet.org.uk/>

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And of course, there's **lots of activity on Facebook** – other forms of social media are available but remain a mystery to me. It all helps raise the profile and attract new players.

Then it's down to us to get them enthused and playing.

In praise of Graded Level Play

A personal view from Tony Mayer (Swindon and Chair of SWF)

For the average player, like myself, who is reasonably competitive and wants to take part in tournaments, one finds that most are level play with the occasional handicap tournament. The only exceptions are in some of the SWF Leagues and the occasional tournament in the CA fixtures list.

When I started looking for tournaments, I discovered the GC B series and found that this was level play but, effectively, in bands of handicaps so one was always playing one's peers in terms of handicap ability. This meant that the chances of winning were reasonably good and one also learned a lot from seeing the style of play from people from clubs other than one's own and one travelled and experienced facilities at other clubs. So, I was hooked.

It also meant that one received a 'D grade' in the World Croquet Federation (WCF) rankings which meant that it was easier to qualify for future tournaments.

Attending the SWF GC Level Play final, a couple of years ago, where the highest handicap player from both teams was 1 and the rest were all below scratch (including international and World Championship) it was quickly apparent that the average club team could not really compete in level play. Now SWF has introduced a restricted handicap level play league (handicap 5 and above).

Having taken part in matches in this league it is like taking part in the GC B and C series tournaments playing against other players of similar abilities, and of course, contributing to the WCF ranking system. Interesting the matches in which I have been involved were all close matches and games with one having 8 out of 20 games with 7 – 6 results. I think that this demonstrates the competitive that 'banded' level play produces.

It is a somewhat different story with AC. First of all the number of AC players is much lower than for GC so those playing Advanced AC (which is level play) is an even smaller number. In my own club, for example, no one plays Advanced. Most tournaments for Advanced attract very low handicaps so that the average player has no chance of winning or even coming close. Now, a class system is in operation with A, B and C categories as with GC.

Having taken the opportunity to play in a Class C tournament against players of a similar standard (who had already played Advanced competitively, I relished the challenge and found it both an interesting and challenging experience. I am now 'hooked' and have entered another advanced tournament! As a bonus, I now will have a WCF ranking (even though an exceedingly low one).

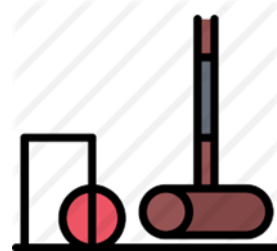
So, all in all, I can recommend graded level play for both AC and GC codes. My message is – join your club level play teams and enter all the level play tournaments that you can manage. It will be a great learning experience and, what's more, it will be fun!

Reporting your League results: AC and GC

Please take heed of this timely reminder

Please ensure that results that are sent to me are typed, rather than hand-written. If they are typed, I can copy or scan them into my spreadsheet for submission to the ranking lists; if they are hand-written, I have to copy them out which not only takes time, it's also a potential source of errors.

Stephen Custance-Baker



Coaching corner

GC performance analysis

We are grateful to Dave Kibble for stepping into the breach created by Stephen's internet blackout.

Dave introduced us to Jenny Clarke's work on measuring stroke performance in GC as a tool for identifying where further practice is needed.

<http://www.croquetworld.com/Game/quantifying-golf.asp>

Dave is keen to develop a similar tool for AC – any suggestions for this to him please:

DaveKibble@gmail.com

SWF Coaches' training

Paul informed us that the hybrid coaching model we introduced in 2021 has been approved by the CA Coaching committee and we will be resuming these in the autumn.

We will be focussing on accrediting Club Level and Grade 1 coaches (AC and GC) and the aim is that no one will need to travel more than 14 miles / 1 hour, to attend. A number of clubs have been identified as hub-clubs so we aim to have the whole region covered.

The course will consist of 6 x 1 hour zoom sessions followed by a 1-day on-lawn assessment. Participants will develop their own portfolio.

If anyone wants to upgrade from Club Level coach to Grade 1, let Paul know and he'll do his best to make the necessary arrangements.

A notice and call for nominations for the course will be sent out by Paul, but do let him know if you're interested. paulwfrancis@icloud.com

For information on the criteria please see:

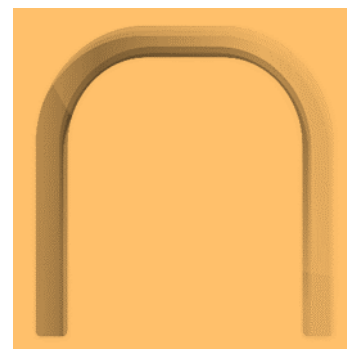
<https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=tournament/caCalendar&calInfoID=6>

Golden Hoops

This is a phrase we've all heard and think we understand and probably heard others use it in different ways from us.

Stephen has provided this really useful definition – so no excuses for using the wrong term now.

Golden Hoop is the term for a hoop used to resolve a timed game that was drawn, AC or GC. It could be the 13th hoop, but it could be any other odd-numbered hoop.



Dress code

Thank you to those of you who responded to our article in the previous Cygnet about wearing whites. From the very small sample, opinion favours abolishing Whites as the dress code.

Robert Moss (Budleigh Salterton) says:

Having read Lisa Bailey's suggestion, I am happy to support her proposal without hesitation or reservation.

Wayne Wiseman (Bristol) writes:

Most sports have moved away from the White dress code in recent times, including tennis (except for barmy, old-fashioned, stuck-in-the-past Wimbledon, which I believe now requires only "predominantly white"). Croquet should too.

Let those with servants to do the washing wear whites if they wish, but let normal folk wear normal clothes. Croquet is meant to be fun, and we want it to be inclusive, so let's drop the pretentious Whites that add nothing to the game except erecting a barrier.

Coffee stains (*see right*), wine, chocolate, grass – how many stains can you collect in a day?



On the other hand, wearing Whites (or team colours), can imbue a sense of occasion and *esprit de corps*, which is valued.

Whites in competitive play is currently a requirement of the Tournaments Regulations which the SWF applies in League play. However, it is within our jurisdiction whether or not we apply that. We'd like to get a wider view as to the opinion in the region and will be writing to all League Secretaries and Team Captains asking them what they think.

One question that jumps out is: If not Whites – then what? Do we opt for mufti or do we e.g. go for white tops and black bottoms (if you get my drift)?

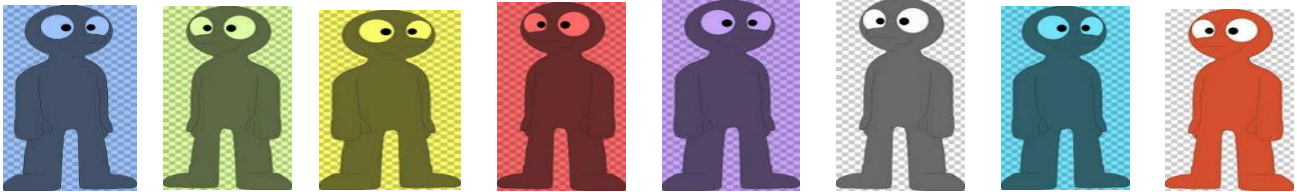
The topic was raised at the Federations' Focus Group meeting where it was noted that other sports are changing their guidelines on wearing whites and that in the last quinquennial survey, 30 comments were received about dress code. There could also be some impact on recruitment and reaching some sectors in the population. However there does appear to be some thought being given to the topic at various levels and Federations are seeking their members' views.

We'll keep you updated on this, meanwhile, just for fun:

A bit of very cursory research came up with the following which might get creative juices flowing. Please note this is just for fun and the amount of evidence supporting these views is completely unknown (at least to me).

- Red is the best colour for sports as it represents energy and vitality.
- Blue is a calming colour in sports. It represents a team or individual that is honest, calm, truthful, and sincere.
- There are a lot of stereotypes associated with black. So black is not intrinsically evil; it just takes on a particular cultural meaning within particular contexts.

- Yellow is the radiant and energetic colour of sunshine and warmth. There is no individual who would not feel cheered and comforted when surrounded by vibrant yellow. This is also applicable to sports. Yellow makes for one of the best sports dress colours as it helps where mind power is needed
- Green represents the will to win and be cheerful.
- Indigo is a great colour for those individuals or teams that wish to enhance their sense of intuition
- Violet is not the best of sports dress colours as it indicates a team or individual that is both sensitive and unrealistic in their goals and desires.
- The colour white often evokes ideas of purity, simplicity, and cleanliness.



A uniform is apparently a great and effective way to unite members of staff. Wearing similar clothing with the company logo clearly displayed allows employees to feel a sense of connection and unity with one another. When staff wear a uniform, they feel part of a group and a sense of team spirit is fostered. And it seems they increased their abstract thinking and productivity.

If you'd like to do some research of your own, this is where the above info was found:

- <https://www.color-meanings.com/color-psychology-in-sports/>
- <https://www.hbcw.co.uk/news/the-psychology-behind-work-uniforms#:~:text=Promoting%20teamwork,of%20team%20spirit%20is%20fostered.>

Rewilding Croquet

Ok, we know that not all wildlife is welcome on our courts, but it does have its cute side. I well remember a chicken strutting across the old Kingston Maurward lawns and who can fail to have noticed the amazing swallows and martins at Budleigh (and probably elsewhere) and the kites at Swindon.

A couple of shots of what's been seen this year – do send in your photos to share in the next issue of Cygnet.



Rob Wilkinson (Bristol) snapped this fox dropping in for tea at Cheltenham while a pheasant pays a visit at Budleigh (yes he is there in corner 2!)

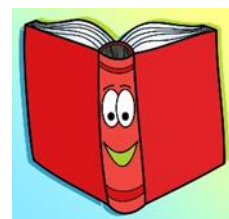
And let's not forget some of the amazing catering that is on offer –here's the tea time display at Cheltenham – (more photos of your favourites please).



Reading Corner

Your task in the last issue of Cygnet was to ascertain the role of the croquet box in solving the murder mystery.

You were given two clues: the author and a description of where the box was kept.



The book was the Red House Mystery written by AA Milne of Pooh fame and this series of extracts provides some background:

The shed was two or three yards to his left ...From where he lay he could see almost entirely inside it. Everything seemed to be as they left it. The bowls-box, the lawn-mower, the roller, the open croquet-box, ---

"By Jove!" said Anthony to himself, "that's neat." The lid of the other croquet-box was open, too. ... And out of the second croquet-box came Cayley's black head. ...

They made their way down to the shed, and while Bill was putting the bowls away, Anthony tried the lid of the closed croquet-box. As he expected, it was locked. ...

The [secret] passage [from the library] came out into the floor of the shed, and probably it was Cayley's idea to put a croquet-box over the trap-door, so as to hide it more completely.

So, the secret passage was the means for the murder victim to escape before he was killed, the ghost to appear, and for a couple of red herrings to hide.

The second teaser was sent in by Brigit Clayton at Nailsea who wanted to know if anyone recognised where this came from:

The croquet lawn was well used and Compton Mackenzie, who began to visit President Benes regularly in 1944, noted with amusement that the croquet hoops had all been widened at the base.

In fact, it's from a recent (2018) book: *Our Uninvited Guests* by Julie Summers which is about some of the country houses that were requisitioned, for schools, hospitals, spies, displaced governments etc, etc, during WW2. This one is Aston Abbotts Abbey in Buckinghamshire where the President of Czechoslovakia ended up.

I would never have known that, so many thanks Brigit.

Rainy day viewing

If you're stuck for something to do on a wet club afternoon why not pay a visit to the CA's webinar archive.

A range of useful topics for clubs – why not get a few like-minded people together and watch them as a group. A useful focus for discussion for your own club's development.

The sessions are recorded and may be accessed at
<https://www.youtube.com/c/CroquetEngland/videos>



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

Charges

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

Diary dates

14 – 15th August Cheltenham High Bisquers (AC) Tournament

Entries via CA website (TES) preferred: <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=tournament/caCalendar>
admoliver@btinternet.com for any queries.

Do get in touch

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