

Cygnnet

South West Area Newsletter

Celebrating Croquet Across the Region

Issue 56: November 2025

Hi everyone

The news is piling up and there will be more to come in the next issue following what is building up to be a very interesting AGM – what is that ancient Chinese blessing – may you never live in interesting times?

So this issue is largely devoted to finals results.

In the next issue we can look forward to news of our Volunteer of the Year Award, a report on the Short Croquet Tournament at Budleigh, Regional successes, summary of our AGM decisions, and any other news, snippets and photos that you'd like to send in.

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Next Generation

Ian Draper, Director for Sport Development at CqE has asked us to promote this CqE initiative which aims to attract younger players to the game and part of this involves running an annual Under 18s tournament. He writes:



"This is the national schools, clubs and juniors tournament open to entries from all clubs and schools and for juniors in the age categories under 11, under 14 and under 18.

It will be held on June 20th and 21st 2026 at Nottingham Croquet club.

I would appreciate it if you could ensure that all Federations have this information to pass through to clubs.

In the first instance I would be very happy to be contacted about any Club or individual wanting more information.

Many thanks again

Ian may be contacted: ian.draper@croquetengland.org.uk

Don't Forget

SWF AGM Sunday 23rd November

10.00 by Zoom

Papers will be with you in a couple of weeks

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

Watering and Irrigation

This has been a hot topic for many for several years and this summer's weather has brought it to boiling point for some.

John Guy at Broadwas has found this really helpful so do check it out for inspiration

<https://plantexuk.com/products/travelling-sprinkler-rain-train>



Leagues results and reports

A very busy season came to a head over two weekends in September with an exciting set of Finals matches.

It is an achievement to make it to that stage so well done to both the winners and runners up. And many thanks to the host clubs for their work in preparing the lawns and facilities and to the Referees for being on hand to practice their craft.

And a round of applause for Gill Wheeler, supported by Stephen Custance-Baker, for all the organisation and problem-solving; and to Tony Mayer for getting the arrangements in place for the Finals.

The winners:

AC Advanced (Parkstone Trophy)	Cheltenham
AC Federation	Garway
AC Intermediate	Kington Langley
AC B League	Bristol
Short Croquet Open	Bradford on Avon
GC Level Premier	Bristol
GC Level 5+	Budleigh Salterton
GC Handicap	Swanage
GC High Handicap	Bude

Federation League

Budleigh Salterton	0	v	Garway	5	Venue: Sidmouth
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Andru Blewett gives us the lowdown on this match.



Following a week of positively balmy conditions with almost wall to wall sunshine, Saturday turned out to be rather different with a day of overcast skies, a significant drop in temperature and a fresh breeze coming straight in off the sea.

These were the conditions for the Final of the Federation Shield between Budleigh Salterton and Garway. Where's Garway? Apologies but I had to look it up.

In the event both sides fielded teams of three, and we were soon underway with one singles and a doubles. Stuart Smith playing off a $\frac{1}{2}$ for Budleigh had the first opportunity to get on the score board, but unbelievably blobbered.

Bryan Gidley for Garway, playing off 9 was in. As the game unfolded judicious use of his $8\frac{1}{2}$ bisques saw him build his score. Stuart did get a couple of chances to hit in from 25+ yards but although very close, a miss is a miss, and let Bryan back in to eventually close it out at 26:0.

The doubles went to time, again in Garway's favour ending 21:5.

A quick lunch and a chance to warm up a little then back to it for the afternoon's 3 singles. Stuart again faced an uphill struggle against Garway captain Simon Collinson playing off 8. The bisques just seemed to be there when they were needed.

Stuart scraped to 7 but then it was all over for him. The other games involved fewer bisques and Kevin Wright for Budleigh was chasing hard but timed out 3 behind at 13:16 to Bryan Gidley. Meanwhile Budleigh's Paul Whittall giving away $4\frac{1}{2}$ bisques ended up some way behind at time to Andrew Bailey with a final score 22:9.



It's all over, all five games to Garway, congratulations - what a way to win a final!

Commiserations to Budleigh who just seemed to be up against it on Saturday, but who took the loss stoically.

Intermediate League

Camerton & Peasedown	1	v	Kington Langley	6	Venue: Camerton & Peasedown
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Thanks to Paul Francis for this report.

The morning games were the usual mix of nervous tension and anticipation. A typical doubles encounter went to time with Camerton and Peasedown edging the game 17 – 14 mainly due to a few nice mini-breaks by Ann Munton.

The highlight of the morning was Kington Langley's Robert Corbin's impressive 12-hoop break with no bisesques which turned his game against Simon Munton. Robert eventually triumphed by just two hoops. Ted Crossley's 8 hoop winning against Si Dunk was the most comfortable of the morning and so Kington Langley led by one game.

In the afternoon, Robert Corbin maintained his good form with another 12-hoop break with two bisesques. He went on to defeat John Rowley in just one and a half hours. However, the other three games were much closer and were swinging back in forward. Kington Langley secured their fourth win in the game between Alan Braunton and Si Dunk. The game could have gone either way with Alan edging it by 26 – 23 in a tense finish.

Right: Alan pegs out



Meanwhile, Gill Wheeler and Simon Munton were doing their best to copy Alan and Si's game. Once again, the final score was 26-23 with Gill Wheeler adding another win for Kington Langley. The final game to finish also saw a Kington Langley win for Ted Crossley against Ann Munton. So, a final score of 6 -1 to Kington Langley. However, this result doesn't reflect the close nature of many of the games.

Congratulations to both teams for their sporting attitudes and, particular congratulations to Robert Corbin. His morning 12 hoop break would have earned a Silver Award in a Croquet England event and his afternoon one a Bronze Award.



Ted Crossley, Gill Wheeler, Alan Braunton, Robert Corbin, Margaret Murray (all KLCC), Ann Munton, Simon Munton, John Rowley, Si Dunk (CPCC)

SC Open League

Bradford on Avon	10	v	Budleigh Salterton	6	Venue: Kington Langley
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Thanks to Tony Mayer, SWF Committee, for this report.

The Final took place in dry and partly sunny conditions, albeit with a cold northerly wind, at Kington Langley. The club had done a great job in preparing the lawns for the final and, after the recent rains, they were green, flat and true.

Both teams arrived early allowing for a prompt start and we all enjoyed a full day of competitive short croquet played in a great spirit. Bradford on Avon A, having defeated their fellow club members (BoA B) in the semi-final were the titular 'home' side. BoA got off to a good start winning the first round 3- 1 and followed up with the same score in the following round so that, by lunchtime, BoA had established a strong 6 -2 lead.

After lunch, BoA clinched the win with another 3-1 round with the fourth and final round going to Budleigh by the same margin resulting in a final score of 10-6 to BoA as worthy winners of the 2025 SC trophy.



Duncan Reeve (Budleigh Salterton) setting up one of his 16 peels

Bob Race, for BoA scored 4 wins out of 4 with Duncan Reeve also on 4 wins which he achieved with a total of 16 peels (4 per game) – quite something. Perhaps the best was in his final game when with only two hoops left, Duncan needed two more peels. He peeled through hoop 5 but initially failed at the final hoop. He was able to play of an opponent's ball and complete the peel, then left a difficult long 'hit-in' and, in his next turn was able to easily peg out. We all enjoyed watching this display!



Tony Mayer (SWF Committee) presents the Short Croquet (Open) Trophy to Martin Alabaster (Bradford on Avon A) with both teams of finalists looking on.



The winning Bradford on Avon A team L to R Bob Race, Martin Alabaster, Carl Brown and Peter Hall

A special thanks goes to Margaret Murray of Kington Langley for looking after us everyone all day long.

GC Level League

On a rather wet and windy day Bristol and arch rivals Nailsea played what turned out to be the deciding game in this League.

A complex set of conditions outlined by our shields and trophies guru, Tony Mayer indicted that Nailsea needed to win both this match, and the one the following day against Taunton Deane, to win the trophy.

With one round left to play, the best possible result for Nailsea would have been a draw so Linda Shaw presented the trophy to Bristol Captain, David Goacher, while the rest of the team: Martin Leach, Martin Murray, Dave Kibble and Richard Smith look cheerfully on.



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GC Level 5+ League

Budleigh Salterton	12	v	Broadwas	4	Venue: Bristol
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The day before the Final, host club Bristol was in a bit of a tizz about the state of the lawns – recently-applied fertiliser, heavy rain, worm-casts and a broken mower were doing their best to disrupt affairs.

The finalists were warned but 36 hours of no rain and early morning swishing helped enormously though care had to be taken on rather muddy patches and surrounds. A forecast of 90% chance of rain cast a shadow, but a light shower after lunch caused no one any problems. Budleigh subsequently diplomatically referred to the lawns as 'difficult'. They also want to thank everyone involved in helping prepare the courts.

Good natured play supported by a delicious selection of biscuits led to an unbeatable score of 12:4 to Budleigh and with rain looking imminent, both teams agreed to forgo the last round.

Tea and cakes all round, cheery presentations and photo calls and the teams went on their way back home.



The winning team: Neil Purchase , Ervine Kewley, Brenda Duplock, David Green, Martin C Leach



Back Row: Neil Purchase, Ervine Kewley, David Green, Martin C Leach, Barry Kirby, Howard Freeman, David Kaner, Malcolm Armstrong (holding the broom which was in constant use in the club house!)

Front Row: Brenda Duplock, Linda Shaw (SWF) Eileen Holt, Jackie Guy

Photos Martin Leach

GC Handicap

Glamorgan	8	v	Swanage	12	Venue: Nailsea
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Two overnight mobile home guests at Nailsea were surprised to wake at 7.30 to the sights and sounds of lawns being swished, grass cut and hoops being reset. A negotiated late start still left heroic Marcus Evans, assisted by Steve Durson – who was there all day in his capacity of Referee – a tough task but one that was really appreciated by the players.

Sustained by a bottomless tin of freshly made Welsh cakes, muscles flexed during the warm-up and with the (weak) sun on their backs, the players entered into good-natured battle.

Throughout the day, Swanage led the field, but by the last round a win for Glamorgan was still in their sights – they just had to win all four games. They won the first one to finish and the Captains started fretting about the calculations needed to determine the winners in the event of a draw. But then Swanage won a game and the rest of the day, in what was now beautiful sunshine, was spent appreciating the play in the remaining games.

Keith Southern, Captain of the winning team, comments:

When it comes down to it, the match was decided in the doubles, Swanage winning these 4-0 with the singles shared 8-8. There were many close games (8 at 7-6) and several long ones, contributing to a match of over 7 hours of play.

This was the first match this season in which Swanage had higher handicaps than their opponents, so it was a welcome change for them to be on the beneficial side of Advantage starting scores.

Photos Steve Durston on Mike Wells camera



Sandra Allen, Helen Diconimos, Martin Jones, Nigel Balchin, Virginia Claridge, Keith Southern, Mike Wells, Ron Barker, Robert Upton, Sarah Melvin, Greg Vaughn, Kevin Ham.



Sandra Allen, Greg Vaughn, Keith Southern, Mike Wells, Helen Diconimos, Virginia Claridge, Ron Barker.

GC High Handicap

Bude	12	v	Broadwas	8	Venue: Taunton Deane
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Report by Stephen Custance-Baker

The conditions on Sunday September 28th were perfect for this match, with lots of sun and a very light wind. Both Bude and Broadwas brought 8 players and several supporters, and stayed in Taunton overnight. This meant that we had quite a gathering from early on and were able to get the match started slightly early.



It had been agreed to set a time limit of 60 minutes but, in the end, no games were timed out. All the games were played in a very good, competitive spirit, with Chris Ham sharing the refereeing with me.



After the first round, the teams were tied 2-2. Bude took 4 of the 6 singles in the second round, to lead 6-4, then they shared the next round, also 6 singles, leaving Bude winning 9-7 with one round to go. Broadwas took the first, but Bude won the last 3 games to give them a well-deserved 12-8 victory.

The victorious Bude team plus supporters.

There was the usual array of wrong ball decisions but no faulted strokes. One feature of the refereeing that was very unusual was the six occurrences of playing for the wrong hoop, including one case of actually running it. One was spotted by the players involved, but the other five all resulted in a penalty area restart.

I presented the trophy and plaque to the Bude non-playing captain, Colette Ham, shown here being congratulated by the Broadwas captain Malcolm Armstrong.



Advanced League Division 3

Bristol B	3	v	Nailsea C	4	Venue: Bristol
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A very close South West Croquet Federation, Association Croquet, Advanced League, Division 3 decider was held at Cedar Park in Bristol on Tuesday 23rd September; a lovely, sunny, autumnal day.

Both Bristol "C" and Nailsea "B" came into the match unbeaten; with 3 wins each from their matches against Bristol "D", East Dorset "B" and Sidmouth "B".

The morning singles were shared 1-1, with Andrew Wise (Bristol), narrowly edging out Robert Upton (Nailsea) and Andrew Wimshurst (Nailsea) beating Wayne Wiseman (Bristol); all on the partly shadowy Lawn 1. However Nailsea took honours in the doubles on sunny Lawn 3, with Erica Malaiperuman's & Geoff Hughes' triumph over Eric and Margo Soakell.

A pleasant, convivial, outdoor lunch in the sun preceded the four afternoon singles.



Richard Williamson, Wayne Wiseman, Eric Soakell, Bob Scott, Robert Upton (sitting), Andrew Wimshurst, Geoff Hughes, Maggie Soakell, Andrew Wise

Nailsea then extended their lead with Andrew Wimshurst, who had a very good day, prevailing over Bob Scott on Lawn 1. However, Bristol fought back with Andrew Wise, who did a perfect 4 ball break to penult before then pegging out against Erica Malaiperuman (Nailsea Captain / Manager). Richard Williamson (Bristol Captain / Manager) then beat Geoff Hughes on Lawn 3.

In a nail-biting finish to the last singles game, Robert Upton beat Eric Soakell by +1T (on time) after the lead had changed hands several times on Lawn 1.

So, Nailsea "B" won 4-3 and were crowned 2025 Champions of SWF, AC Advanced Play, Division 3 and gained promotion to Division 2 for 2026. They were presented with a SWF commemorative plaque by Linda Shaw, the South West Croquet Federation Chair.



Both teams enjoyed drinks, chocolate cake, apple pies and a chat at the conclusion of play.

The winning Nailsea team: Robert Upton, Erica Malaiperuman (Captain), Geoff Hughes and Andrew Wimshurst receive the plaque from SWF Chair, Linda Shaw

Useful Links	
Bisques, Extra Strokes and Advantage Calculator – Brian Wainman's life-saving tool	chc.eu.pythonanywhere.com/
Croquet England	www.croquetengland.org.uk/
Croquet England Youtube channel	www.youtube.com/@CroquetEngland/streams
Croquet England on Facebook	www.facebook.com/search/top?q=croquet%20england
Croquet Hub on Facebook	www.facebook.com/groups/1658937214910559
Croquet England slo-mo videos	www.croquet.org.uk/?p=games/golf/refereeing/slomo
Oxford Croquet - coaching	www.oxfordcroquet.com/
Chris Clarke - coaching	clarkecroquet.com/
Reg Bamford – the psychology of the game	www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qw_jiBpnCug
Hit Inn – Alison Maugham chats with some successful players	www.youtube.com/watch?v=bf5qM-cswiQ
Canva – a free poster / flyer / logo design tool	www.canva.com/en_gb/
Try Croquet – an eclectic selection on a range of croquet topics	www.trycroquet.co.uk/
Tournament Management: Chris Roberts	www.youtube.com/watch?v=1V2adRweWZg&t=10s
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