

## **John Grimshaw to receive the Bernard Neal Award for exceptional services to croquet**

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

Employment then took him to South Wales where, in 1986, he single-handedly set up the Dyffryn Club. He also set up the Welsh CA and was its Secretary from its formation in 1986 until 2003.

In 2004 John became League Secretary for the South West Federation, an area which covers seven counties and South Wales, a post he held for 14 years, retiring in 2018. During that period the number of matches increased considerably, both codes of the game being played at all levels and forms. John has been a passionate advocate of competitive play and persuaded many of our smaller clubs to participate in League competition for the first time.

A Federation Short Croquet Tournament was introduced in 2006. John became involved two years later and by 2012 it had become a two-day event with three Divisions. A 4<sup>th</sup> Division was played in the following year, and a 5<sup>th</sup> in 2018. This is truly an outstandingly successful innovation.

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

In 2006 John returned to Wiltshire and joined the Kington Langley Club where he immediately helped with recruitment and coaching, which continues to this day. He was Chairman, is the Club handicapper, and was for many years the Competition Secretary efficiently organising the Club's many internal competitions. He started mowing the courts 12 years ago and continues to do so.

Croquet owes John a huge debt of gratitude for his unstinting commitment to the development of the competitive game in the South West region for over 40 years.