

# Meet the youngest umpire in the British Isles

World Bowls Laws Advisory Group's Allan Thornhill had the pleasure of spending a weekend on the beautiful island of Guernsey to run a workshop and assessment session for their existing umpires and three new candidates.

Explained Allan: "The island is fortunate to have around 12 qualified umpires many of whom are top class players, including Alison and Ian Merrien and Lucy Beere. Their deep understanding of the sport at a high level is a great advantage to being an umpire and applying the laws of the sport in a practical way.

"The process for Guernsey umpires is standard practice found elsewhere in umpire training programmes. Prior to the weekend, the new candidates completed a question paper on the laws which gave them a good introduction to the law book. This allowed us to concentrate on discussing some selected practical laws on day one such as displacement, foot-faulting, rink possession and dealing with other anomalies.

"The afternoon of the first day was spent practicing the various measuring exercises which test the use of the key items of equipment. This set the scene for the second day comprising the assessment.

"Each candidate was expected to complete a selection of measuring exercises demonstrating their competence in the use of the equipment and the basic principles



From left: Allan Thornhill with the three new umpires Catherine Snell, Martyn de Carteret and Nicole Le Noury

of measuring. There are also a set of laws questions asked orally to test the retained knowledge of the candidate.

"Existing umpires are reassessed every four years or so and they go through a similar process. I am pleased to say that all existing umpires passed their assessment.

"It is always gratifying to see candidates pass their assessment but even more so during this weekend when three new candidates passed with very high percentage marks.

Many congratulations to Martyn de Carteret and Catherine Snell, but special mention to Nicole Le Noury who becomes, what we believe to be, the youngest qualified umpire in the British Isles currently.

"All talented players in their own right which I believe gave them a good grounding in understanding how the laws are applied. Congratulations to all."



From left: Ian Merrien, Josh Bonsall, Catherine Snell, Allan Thornhill, Alison Merrien, Nicole Le Noury, Kris Lowe and Martyn de Carteret

## ALL ABOUT NICOLE

### How old are you?

I am 19.

### What club are you a member of?

I play for the Guernsey Indoor Bowling Association.

### Who else in your family plays?

All my family play – my mum, dad and younger brother. My brother's name is Bradley. His biggest achievement is the winning the Channel Islands mens Under 25s, then going on to play in the British Isles. My dad is Steve and he won the Channel Islands men's singles (2022) – the same year as Bradley won the Under 25s and open triples this year. My mum Heidi Le Noury was a WIBC quarter-finalist but some years ago now.

### How and when did you start playing bowls?

I've been playing bowls since I was about seven. I started playing because my parents did.

### What are your achievements to date?

I have represented Guernsey and the Channel Islands (at a junior level) numerous times. My biggest achievement to date is winning the Channel Island Under 25 singles and then going on to play in the British Isles Championships.

### What made you decide to want to be an umpire?

I decided to become an umpire so that I could gain a better understanding of the rules and so that I could help out more at the club.

### How long did it take to qualify?

It took about a week to qualify.

### What are you most looking forward to being an umpire?

I look forward to being able to help out during competitions.

### Will you be umpiring at the forthcoming NatWest Games?

I haven't done any official umpiring yet. I don't think I will be umpiring at the NatWest Games, but I believe I'm marking a few games.

### What do you like most about bowls?

I like that bowls is for everyone, anyone can play. I enjoy both the social and competitive aspects.

### What's your advice to anyone thinking of becoming an umpire?

Do it! The course is really useful; there's lots to learn and I think learning the rules is really helpful in improving your game.