

**Minutes of the 32nd Annual General Meeting
of the South East Croquet Federation
held at Surbiton Croquet Club on Sunday 27 January 2019**

The following 21 Clubs were represented:

Canterbury (R Hughes; D Buckman); **Caterham** (F Collins; A Reade) **Cheam** (B Maddocks; H Clarke; J Cobbold; I Cobbold); **Compton** (H Smith); **Dulwich** (P Newton ; J Reddish); **Ealing** (M Sherratt; S Tuke); **Ember** (M Lambert); **Guildford & Godalming** (H Bird); **Hayes, Bromley & Keston** (A Besgrove); **Hurlingham** (J Bowcott); **Littlehampton** (P Sherwin; W Payne); **Merton** (C Doswell; N Furse); **Purley Bury** (C Driver); **Ramsgate** (T Longman; C Martin); **Reigate Priory** (M Peacock); **Roehampton** (M Pattison); **Royal Tunbridge Wells** (N Barton; J Chapman); **Surbiton** (M Pulsford; A Maugham; G Noble); **Sussex County** (W Arliss; J Low; J Isaacs; R Sutton); **West Wittering** (J Cooper) and **Woking**.

Apologies for absence were received from:

J Diamond (Royal Tunbridge Wells); E & B Williams (West Wittering); R Barnacle (Dogmersfield); S Vallis (Angmering); J Waite (Cheam); H Brown (Lodsworth); K Lennon (Ivychurch) ; L & G Taylor (Merton & Surbiton); D Clemenson (Hayes, Bromley & Keston); J Greaves (Rottingdean); J Munt (Preston); L Farrow (Sussex County); D Carter (Worthing); D Beck (Surbiton); J & J Sheridan (Sydenham); M Wheeler (Sydenham); R Loram (Canterbury); Ramsgate & Committee); H Bryant (Canterbury) and E McKenzie Gray (Woking).

The minutes of the 31st AGM held on Sunday 25 February 2018 were approved as a true and accurate record. There were no matters arising.

Approval of the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2018

The Treasurer (Hilary Smith) presented the accounts. Entries for the leagues and events had continued to strengthen – an indication that competitive play was alive and well in SECF clubs. The accumulated cash assets of the Federation had increased to £6,543 as at 31 December 2018. This was a disappointment. The Committee really did want to give grants for development within clubs. These were usually supplements to grants from the Croquet Association.

The coaching and development costs went down in 2018. This expenditure largely consists of payments of subsidies for players training to become coaches and referees. The numbers of coaches and referees need to be increased.

Members should expect secretarial and website expenses to increase in 2019 because the website registration is paid every other year and 2019 is the year.

The Treasurer issued a “Spam Alert”, reporting that she had been subjected to several phishing expeditions recently.

The Treasurer also reported that Lawn and Ball hire rate fixed by the CA would be increasing in 2019 from £33 per lawn, per day to £40 per lawn, per day for tournaments and to £34 for more general usage. This, she said, would go some way towards meeting the actual cost of providing excellent lawns for SECF tournaments. It would not pay for the expense of maintaining clubhouse facilities and lawn surrounds or for providing tea, coffee and other refreshments. She urged all players who go to tournaments to take part fully in the tournament by supporting the host club’s catering. SECF tournament fees were designed to enable the event to break even rather than to make a profit. It would be seen that, whilst the cost of league entries would remain unchanged, tournament fees would be increased as follows.

AC Teams Weekend (Southwick) £50 per team

One-Ball Teams Tournament: (Canterbury) £45 per team including lunch

Ladies AC Day: (Southwick) £45 per team

Ladies GC Day: (Southwick) £45 per team

The Southern Challenge: Divisions One and Two (Southwick): £85 per team

Golf Croquet Teams Day: (Southwick) £29 per team

There will be no Southern Challenge Division 2 North at Surbiton in 2019. Surbiton had not taken their decision to decline to hold this event lightly but had done so to ease the pressure on both lawns and volunteer effort.

The Treasurer expressed her thanks to Clive Hayton (Sussex County) for again undertaking the duties of Independent Examiner.

A proposal that the accounts should be approved was carried *nem. con.*

Annual Subscription for 2019

The Treasurer proposed that, the annual registration fee having been increased to £15 last year, there should be no further increase this year. This was carried *nem.con.*

Chairman's report

The Chairman (Bill Arliss) said that the Federation had again gone from strength to strength. He had again reviewed the number of "player days" of competitive croquet in the period from 2008 to 2018 and had again discovered that there had been continuing growth in that measure. The Ladies' Days at Southwick had been particularly well attended.

The Chairman also drew attention to the forthcoming changes in the GC Rules which, he suggested, would result in significant improvements. He was in the process of producing one of his "Idiots' Guides" to those Rules which he would circulate in due course. He also hoped to introduce a "Letters' Page" on the web-site for use by those with views who wished to air them.

Webmaster's report

The Webmaster (Jon Diamond) presented a written report which, in his absence, the Secretary read out. He reported that the website had continued to operate successfully without any noticeable interruption throughout the year. No significant changes had occurred, although some minor changes had been made, particularly to the league results displays, by the new Leagues Manager. Almost all league results had been submitted through the website. JD said that he would like those who still submitted results by email to submit their results through the website, since that would minimise any remaining errors in submission. The initial 2019 Diary was now available. Several clubs who had run events in 2018 had not yet provided updates. He would welcome updates from them and from all clubs who run open events. There is also a page on the web site showing other tournaments in the CA fixture book that are held in the SECF domain. JD would like clubs to save him a bit of work by sending him the basic details for 2019 so that he did not have to scan the Fixture Book and create entries with the possibility of errors or omissions. There were no current plans for changes to the web site this year but JD would welcome any suggestions for changes and/or updates and especially news of activities from member clubs that he could add to improve the news pages.

Technological suggestions from the floor included the creation of a Facebook page; a Chairman's newsletter and a WhatsApp group. The Secretary agreed to refer all of these for consideration by the Committee.

Secretary's report

The Secretary (John Reddish) said that the Federation consisted of 45 member clubs in 2018 (as in 2017) though this was reduction from the peak of 47 in an earlier year. The registration and entry forms for 2019 would be sent out on or about 1 February for return no later than 3 March 2019.

Report on 2018 Leagues and Events

The Secretary invited acclamation for the following:

AC "A" League winners: **Surbiton**

AC "U" League winners: **Ramsgate**

AC "B" League winners: **Sussex County**

AC "S" League winners: **Cheam**

GC Level League winners: **Sussex County "A"**

GC Level Restricted League winners: **Cheam**

GC Handicap League winners: result of a playoff between **Ealing** and **Littlehampton** awaited

AC Team Doubles Champions: **Cheam**

One Ball Teams Champions: **Surbiton**

Ladies' AC Team Champions: **Sussex County (The Sussex Sizzlers)**

Ladies' GC Team Champions: **Reigate Priory**
Golf Croquet Team Doubles Champions: **Reigate Priory**
Golf Croquet Team Singles Champions: **Reigate Priory**
The GC Southern Challenge Division One Champions: **Dulwich**
The GC Southern Challenge Division Two North Champions: **Merton**
The GC Southern Challenge Division Two South Champions: **Canterbury**

Representatives of the winning Clubs collected the trophies and were applauded.

Development Officer's report

The Development Officer reported that he had taken over from Michael Hague in April 2018. He would be a very difficult act to follow, given his vast experience. He had done the job for at least 17 years. Member would have seen that he was deservedly awarded the Council's Medal at the CA's AGM in the autumn for his services to croquet. Little had happened in IC's first few months. He had not had any approaches to start new clubs and he had had very few requests to submit applications for grants to the CA. Canterbury had received a grant for a new mower but the other possibilities had yet to get to the stage of being submitted. Unfortunately, IC had been approached by two clubs which were having problems with their landlords. Ealing were fighting hard to prevent the loss of one of their lawns and had at least got a stay of execution. In the last few days, Hayes, Bromley & Keston had told him that their existence is threatened unless they can find another site. Dave Gunn would be talking later about his role as National Development Officer and particularly about "Croquet Matters" which helps clubs review various aspects of their operations and how they can improve where they need to. DG and IC had been through the process with Ealing and would be doing so with Littlehampton on 28 January 2019. After having heard DG's presentation other clubs might wish to follow suit. 2019 is a year for the biennial award of the CA's awards to clubs which have made particularly good progress with improving their facilities or membership. 2 years ago SECF clubs won 2 of the awards – Sussex County and Cheam. This time 5 SECF clubs have applied for the 3 different awards. New or renovated clubhouses are the main factor in most of these applications. We should wish them well and hope for a clean sweep this time.

Coaching Officer's report

The Coaching Officer (Jonathan Isaacs) reported that, in 2018, 182 people had been through an Academy course. This was slightly down on the previous year. GC Pod sessions had been introduced at 2 centres (Guildford and Southwick) and 3 sessions had been run at each. These sessions had been centred around helping improving tournament players by giving them a range of practice routines to aid their game. One to one coaching sessions had been run, mainly at SCCC. Attendance at AC coaching had continued to decline but recent local activities at Southwick had seen a number of GC players starting to learn a bit about AC - some to take it up, others to use the skills to better their GC play. Since a large number of coaches had qualified through the Academy, considerably more coaching was taking place at local level. There were encouraging numbers of players applying to become coaches on the 2019 courses. The 2019 Academy programme had been launched and bookings could be made by visiting the Academy website www.thecroquetacademy.com. The courses had been published on the CA website and in the CA Fixtures Calendar, which would go live on 1st February. The Academy were making a few changes and introducing some new courses in 2019. Club Coaches' qualification courses were being split from graded qualification courses to enable the Academy to pitch the courses more specifically to each audience. Specific courses using video analysis to help improve play would be introduced. AC & GC sessions would be run separately. It had been decided to use video analysis following success when using it on a trial basis during some of the Pod sessions. The AC Triple Peel Course had been reduced to a 2 day course to enable more people, especially those in work, to attend all of the course.

The Academy were running both an AC & a GC Referees' qualification courses in 2019. They encouraged as many people as possible to apply since there was a real need for more referees.

The Academy had been very fortunate to secure the services of Rick Waterman to run a course entitled "Croquet Mind over Matter". Rick is one of the country's leading sports psychologists and his one day course would provide excellent help to those seeking to improve their competitive mental attitude towards the game.

The GC Masterclass would be run this year by Jonathan Powe. He entered the croquet scene fairly recently after an illustrious career in the army. He had rapidly ascended the rankings and had performed exceptionally well in the last GC World Championships. He is Chairman of the CA GC Tournament Committee. His rise to fame was a lesson to all that, with the right application, it does not take a lifetime to become a top GC player. JI commended JP's Masterclass to the Federation.

Election of Officers and Committee for 2019-20

The following persons offered themselves for election and were not opposed.

Chairman: **Bill Arliss** (Sussex County)

Secretary: **John Reddish** (Dulwich)

Treasurer: **Hilary Smith** (Compton)

Committee members: **Ian Cobbold** (Cheam); **Jon Diamond** (Royal Tunbridge Wells); **Jonathan Isaacs** (Sussex County); **Roger Loram** (Canterbury and Ramsgate); **John Low** (Sussex County) and **George Noble** (Surbiton).

The elected SECF CA Representative is now **John Reddish**. He is already member of the Committee and does not therefore require co-option (obviously).

Election of an Independent Examiner

The Treasurer proposed Clive Hayton (Sussex County) as an appropriately qualified candidate. He had not yet agreed to continue but it was anticipated that he would do so. The meeting approved his appointment by acclamation.

A proposal for the introduction of a short croquet league in 2019

The Secretary had conducted a consultation but this had failed to generate an enthusiastic response. The response at the meeting was similarly muted. The proposal was therefore rejected.

The 2019 League Rules

Several motions proposing changes to the Rules were debated with outcomes as follows:

Philip Sherwin (Littlehampton) proposed that:

The Rules of the GC Handicap League shall be revised so as to obviate the need for a play-off between the East and West sections of that League after the end of the season. The GC Handicap League shall be split into two separate Leagues (with each League having a declared winner and trophy and there being no play-off.

This was accepted *nem.con*. It was therefore unnecessary for the meeting to consider the alternative proposals.

Simon Tuke (Ealing) proposed that:

In the AC Handicap B League, handicap play shall be with full bisques with a base of 6.

This was accepted *nem.con*.

John Reddish (Dulwich) proposed that:

In the AC Handicap U and S Leagues, handicap play shall be with full bisques with a base of 6.

This was rejected by 7 votes to 2.

John Low (Sussex County) proposed that:

In the AC S League there shall be a different pairing of players for each of the doubles games.

This was accepted *nem.con*.

John Low (Sussex County) proposed that:

The league winners shall be determined by the Leagues Organiser. The teams with the most league points will be declared as winners. Where two or more teams have gained an equal number of league points, ties will be broken, first, by the results of head to head matches, if applicable. Where all matches have been played by all contending teams, then ties will be broken by reference to the percentage of games won and then by a play-off of two or more teams. Where one contending team has received a walkover, then the tie will be broken by reference to the percentage of games won and then by a play-off of two or more teams. Where one contending team has received a walkover, then the tie will be broken by a play-off. Any play-off will be held before the end of June in the next year”.

This amendment (i.e. the proposal that where one contending team has received a walkover, then the tie will be broken by a play-off) was rejected by an overwhelming majority.

John Low (Sussex County) proposed that:

In all of the AC Leagues (A, B, S and U), if all four players agree, prior to the start of a doubles game, then Regulation L4 Alternate Stroke Doubles Play Variation (Association Croquet) shall apply; otherwise conventional doubles play laws shall apply to that game.

This was accepted by a substantial majority (with only 4 votes against acceptance).

John Low (Sussex County) proposed that:

Time limits are defined in the rules pertaining to each league. Only in very exceptional cases should a game end in a draw (for example, if a player is taken ill). In all other cases a winner is required. For Association Croquet matches, CA Tournament Regulation T2 shall apply. For Golf Croquet matches CA Tournament Regulation T4 shall apply.

This was accepted *nem.con*.

Paul Newton (Dulwich) proposed that:

The SECF shall use the old method of calculation of the extra strokes in GC doubles matches (rather than the new WCF method of calculating extra turns) in its own time-limited games i.e. in the GC handicap league, the GC Teams Day and Ladies GC day.

This was rejected by an overwhelming majority (with one vote in favour of acceptance).

Ian Cobbold (Cheam) proposed that:

The SECF League Rules shall be amended to add a provision that Rule 16.(3) in the new GC Rules (which provides that organisers of tournaments and matches must say in advance if the one minute rule for playing a shot is to apply) shall be applied to all SECF GC league matches.

This was accepted by an overwhelming majority.

2019 Events

The Secretary announced that the dates for all of the 2019 events had been fixed and were published on the web site. The dates were **AC Teams Weekend**: Saturday/Sunday 18/19 May at **Southwick**; **One Ball Teams Tournament**: Sunday 2 June at **Canterbury**; **Ladies AC Teams Day**: Wednesday 3 July at **Southwick**; **Ladies GC Teams Day**: Wednesday 17 July at **Southwick** **The Southern Challenge Division One**: Saturday/Sunday 29/30 June at **Southwick**; **The Southern Challenge Division Two** Saturday/Sunday 6/7 July at **Southwick**; **Golf Croquet Day**: Sunday 11 August at **Southwick**.

Report by the SECF Representative on the Council of the Croquet Association.

The representative (John Reddish (Dulwich)) said that he would defer to the Chairman of the Council to report recent events.

Address by John Bowcott (Hurlingham) Chairman of the Council of the Croquet Association.

The Chairman of Council reported that, at the meeting held on the previous day, Council had approved the proposal brought forward by the Governance Changes Implementation Group (chaired by Vice-President Jonathan Isaacs) which would result in a major reform of the governance of the game. There would be an elected Council of 12 voting members (which would convene with three non-voting members – the Secretary; the Treasurer and the Chairman of the Executive Board). They would confine themselves to consideration of matters of policy and would leave implementation to others but they would scrutinise decisions taken by the Executive Board and the Committees. The voting members would represent all parts of the country on a proportionate basis (with the South East constituency returning 3 members). There would also be improved transparency and communication with Individual Members of the Association.

The Constitution would have to be amended to implement the changes. These had been considered and formulated by the GCIG. There will be a Special General Meeting on 30 March 2019 which will be asked to approve the necessary amendments. A 6-4 majority will be required. The SGM will be held at Hurlingham and needs a quorum of 25. Individual members from the SECF should attend if they can. However, all individual (premium and standard) members of the CA will have a postal/email vote. Details will be published on the CA website and in the forthcoming edition of the Croquet Gazette.

Address by David Gunn (Nottingham), the Croquet Association National Development Officer.

The NDO introduced himself and said that he would be conducting a “Workshop” after lunch (which he did to good effect).

Other business

Alison Maugham (nee Jones) (Surbiton) drew attention to a matter that had already been covered before she arrived at the meeting and was shouted down in favour of lunch.

There being no further business, the meeting closed and those attending moved furniture and partook of another excellent lunch prepared and served by George Noble and his team of Surbiton members.