

**Minutes of the 24th Annual General Meeting
of the South East Croquet Federation
held at
Surbiton Croquet Club
on Sunday 20 February 2011**

The following 25 Clubs were represented:

Angmering (S Pollard and D Vallis); Caterham (T Reade and F Collins); Canterbury (J Byers and Y Hill); Compton (H Smith); Crawley (L Nash); Dulwich (D Collins and J Reddish); Ealing (D Wedmore); Ember (R Dollimore and M Lambert); Dogmersfield (J and R Catt); Hampstead Heath (G Higgins and R Hilditch); Hurlingham (P Browne); Littlehampton (J Hoptoff; R Wootton and C Thornton); Medway (R Parkins and J Wright); Merton (C Doswell); Purley Bury (J Davey and P Davey); Ramsgate (A Mitchell); Reigate Priory (M Bottomley); Roehampton (D Mooney; T Salem and P Siddall); Rother Valley (D Smith and J Kinnear); Royal Tunbridge Wells (J Diamond); Surbiton (D Beck; M Pulsford; J Overell and G Noble); Sussex County (W Arliss); Temple (D Whyte); Woking (M Hague; B Jones and M Holland); Worthing (D Luker; M Murdoch and R Longhurst)

Apologies for absence were received from:

D Gaitley (Sussex County); D Morgenstern (Hampstead Heath); E McKenzie-Gray (Woking); S Wheatley (Worthing); R Tillcock (Ryde); F Lee (West Worthing); A and A Sugarman (West Chilton); A Rew (Sussex County); M Thompson (Guildford and Godalming); S Carter (Sydenham) and S Whiteley (Dulwich).

The minutes of the 23rd AGM held on 28 February 2010 were approved as a true and accurate record.

Matters arising from the minutes

The Chairman (W Arliss) drew attention to the web site at www.southeastcroquet.org.uk.

Approval of the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2010

The Treasurer (H Smith) presented the accounts as approved by the Independent Examiner and explained their contents, drawing attention to the financial benefit of electronic communication. The Treasurer also noted that the deficit (of £458) was deliberately incurred as grants (amounting in total to £750) had been made. The accumulated cash assets of the Federation (£6,612 as at 31 December 2010) would, she said, continue to be distributed by way of development grants and loans to members of the Federation as the Committee thought appropriate. Applications for financial assistance for suitable projects were invited. The Chairman pointed out that the Federation's objective was that the tournaments would be "self financing" and that this had been achieved. The accounts were approved *nem. con.*

Annual Subscription for 2011

The Treasurer's proposal that the annual subscription rate should be maintained at £10 was approved unanimously.

Report on 2010 events

The League Organiser (R Hilditch) reported the following successes:

"A" League winners: **Woking and Surbiton** (who had agreed to share the yet to be acquired trophy rather than play again)

"U" League winners: **Reigate Priory B and Sussex County** (who had not yet played to determine the entrant to the Secretary's Shield)

"B" League winners: **Caterham** (with a 100% record)

GC Level League winners: **Woking** (again)

GC Handicap League winners: **Littlehampton** (clear winners in a league of 20 teams)

Representatives of the winning Clubs collected the trophies save that M Bottomley (Reigate) suggested that the U League Shield should be taken by the Chairman to Southwick from where the Captain of the Reigate Priory B team would collect it following their anticipated victory in the forthcoming play off.

The Secretary reported the following further successes in 2009:

AC Team Doubles Champions: **Caterham**

Ladies' Team Champions: **The Dolly Mixtures** (a mixture of West Chiltington, Purley Bury and Sussex County players)

Golf Croquet Team Doubles Champions: **Medway**

Golf Croquet Team Singles Champions: **Reigate Priory I**

One Ball Team Champions: **Sussex County**

The Chairman noted that competitiveness was thriving in the SECF.

Development and Coaching reports

The Development Officer (M Hague) reported (after his delayed arrival) that two new Federation clubs had been established during the year. Croquet players in the multi-sports Epsom Sports Club were doing well and Club East in Bethnal Green had created a flurry of activity and an excellent impression. A group of young people had started playing croquet in a local park. The Club joined the CA and the Federation. They were rewarded with one set of equipment from the CA and another from the Federation, including a ball of string. The Club had a core of thirty players with other occasional participants. They had "big plans for next season" and they had produced a refreshing article for the Croquet Gazette. Surbiton Croquet Club had completed the installation of an irrigation system and four flag poles in time for the MacRobertson. Both of these projects had received grants from the CA and the Federation. The Federation had also agreed to make a grant of £250 to the Worthing Croquet Club towards the cost of their new storage hut.

The Secretary recited the substance of a report in writing by Daphne Gaitley to the effect that coaching courses had been run at Crawley, Hurlingham, Littlehampton, Rother Valley, West Chiltington and Worthing (all Clubs with members playing both Association and Golf Croquet).

Election of Officers and Committee for 2010-11

The following persons offered themselves for election and were elected unopposed:

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

Secretary: **John Reddish** (Dulwich)

Treasurer: **Hilary Smith** (Compton)

Committee members: **David Collins** (Dulwich); **Daphne Gaitley** (Sussex County); **Michael Hague** (Woking); **Richard Hilditch** (Hampstead Heath); **George Noble** (Surbiton).

The elected SECF CA Representative **David Mooney** (Roehampton and Surbiton) is also a member of the Committee

There was therefore one vacancy on the Committee. An invitation was issued, particularly to any Club member from the otherwise unrepresented county of Kent, to offer himself or herself to fill that vacancy.

Election of Auditor (Independent Examiner)

The Treasurer proposed Graham Thompson (Compton) as an appropriately qualified candidate and the meeting approved his appointment *nem. con.*

Report on Golf Croquet handicapping

The Chairman reported that the CA was concerned about reported difficulties in relation to the handicaps of some Golf Croquet players who entered competitions. In some areas,

handicaps had been found to be seriously inconsistent. The SECF had been obliged to confront some problems during the year, though nothing to be compared with those being experienced in the North West and elsewhere. The Chairman was pleased to announce that a CA committee under the chairmanship of Nigel Graves (Surbiton) had been considering how best to proceed. The Handicap committee had already approved the appointments of CA and Club Handicappers specifically for Golf Croquet (to match those already in existence for Association Croquet). An appeal had already been made for suitably experienced players to become CA GC Handicappers and some appointments would be announced before the start of the season. Clubs would also be approached to nominate their own GC Handicapper. Definitions of the powers and duties of the CA and Club handicappers would be issued shortly. The initial duties of the CA GC Handicappers would be to set some "benchmark" handicaps in the smaller clubs on which all other handicaps in the club could be based. The SECF Chairman and the SECF CA Representative, David Mooney are both members of the national Handicap Committee.

C Doswell (Merton) observed that careful scrutiny of handicaps in her Club had resulted in team players being consistently handicapped at a lower level than their opposition. J Diamond (Tunbridge Wells) highlighted the problem of volatility and probability of error if insufficient games were recorded. R Wootton (Littlehampton) commented adversely upon the prescribed contingency plans for experienced players without ascribed handicaps. Other representatives offered a variety of thoughts as to why handicaps might be, or might appear to be, inconsistent with the real skills of the players.

In response to an enquiry as to who would be the lead person for Golf Croquet handicapping problems in the SECF, the Chairman offered to nominate himself. He proposed that all clubs entering teams in SECF Golf Croquet handicap leagues and team events should be required to nominate a member who would be the "Club handicapper" or the "Club handicap co-ordinator" to whom reference could be made in the event of difficulties. This proposal received widespread approval.

The 2011 League Rules

The Secretary observed that there was a proposal for a rule change arising from the foregoing discussion of the problems of Golf Croquet handicapping. It was proposed that all Clubs entering teams in the Golf Croquet handicap leagues and events should be required to nominate a "Club handicap co-ordinator". An amendment (proposed by D Beck (Surbiton)) to the effect that this obligation should be extended as well to Clubs entering teams in the Association Croquet handicap leagues and events, was accepted and the proposal, as amended, was approved without dissent.

The League Organiser (R Hilditch) opened a debate on several matters arising from the current rules. His proposal that the rule relating to the award of a "walk over" should be amended by adding the words "with the agreement of the other team" was rejected as unnecessary.

It was agreed that any Club wishing to limit to 2 the number of home games it was required to play in any League competition would be at liberty to record that wish on the entry form.

R Parkins (Medway) raised the issue of how players given a high, odd-number AC handicap by the CA should be treated by the Federation. The League Organiser agreed to look into the matter. It was not thought that this was a widespread problem.

Proposal for a new Golf Croquet League

The Secretary outlined a proposal that there should be a new League in 2011 reflecting the CA Murphy Shield competition i.e. Level Play Golf Croquet with a minimum handicap level for a team. Several representatives indicated that their Club would probably enter such a League. After discussion it was agreed that such a League was "worth a try" and that each team of 4 playing in the new "B Level" GC League should have a combined handicap of at least 16 and the format of a match would be the same as that in the Level Play GC League.

Other 2011 Events

The Secretary announced that the dates for all of the 2011 events save the GC Individual Championship had been fixed and would be published on the Calendar which was presently in draft but would be published soon. The dates were 21/22 May: AC Team Doubles; 6 July: AC Ladies' Day; 7 August: GC Team Doubles and Singles and 14 August: One-ball Teams. The Chairman agreed to publish the rules for the One-Ball event on the web site.

The Chairman reported that the GC Individual Championship had not been held in 2010 because of insufficient entries. After discussion it was agreed that, in this "World Championships year", there should be no SECF GC Individual Championship; that a replacement "B Level" tournament would not be appropriate and that the event should be reconsidered next year.

Other business

J Byers (Canterbury) invited the Chairman and Committee to consider how they might achieve greater publicity for croquet. The Chairman accepted that it was difficult to persuade the media to report in anything other than a condescending manner. D Mooney (Roehampton) referred to an open access television sports channel which might be used to promote proper interest in the game.

The Chairman issued an invitation to anyone who might be able to assist as a scorer, or in some other, administrative capacity, at the forthcoming GC World Championships (to be held at Hurlingham and Surbiton) to contact John Spiers. D Beck (Surbiton) added that there would also be vacancies for drivers to convey players in mini-buses between the two venues and that suitably qualified volunteers should make themselves known to him.

There being no further business the meeting closed and Club members' representatives partook of a magnificent lunch prepared and served by George Noble and his staff.

After lunch, George Noble conducted a short but informative symposium on lawn care.