



NEWSLETTER

December 2012

Your attention is again drawn to the SECF web site at www.southeastcroquet.org.uk. This contains details of all of the Federation's current activities and some of its illustrious history. The site has been enlarged but does not yet include a copy of this newsletter. A copy of the draft Calendar for 2013 will be prepared soon. If you have any Club event that you would wish to advertise as being open to non-members, please communicate with the Secretary (John Reddish) by email (info@southeastcroquet.org.uk or jreddish@virginmedia.com). Events which will appear in the CA Fixtures Book are not included in the SECF Calendar.

We have installed a list of the Federation Clubs on the web site. If you would like to establish a link from the SECF site to your own club's site, just email info@southeastcroquet.org.uk with your request. 48 clubs were registered in 2012. This was an increase from 43 in 2011.

The dates for the programme of tournaments for 2013 have been fixed as follows:

AC Teams Weekend: Sat/Sun 18/19 May

Ladies Day: Wed 3 July

The Southern Challenge: Sat/Sun 6/7 July

Golf Croquet Day: Sun 4th Aug

Possible AC Tournament (see below): Sat/Sun 10/11 Aug

Congratulations should be extended to the following winners of the 2012 Leagues:

Association A League **Woking**

Association U League **Rother Valley**

Association B League **Woking**

Golf Level League **Dulwich**

Golf Level R League **Merton**

Golf Handicap League **Guildford & Godalming**

On 27 May 2012 the Association Croquet Team Doubles Tournament (for club teams of 4) was won, by **Ramsgate**, with **Dulwich** as runners up.

On 4 July 2012 the 23rd annual Ladies' Day was held, as usual, at Southwick. Winners of the Shield were **Rother Valley** (Nancy Allen, Anne Sugarman, Katherine Minchin and Wendy Bennett) by the narrowest of margins from **Preston**.

On 8 July 2012 the inaugural Southern Challenge was completed. The winners of Division One (at Southwick) were **Dulwich** (Pierre Beaudry; Simon Carter; Sue Lightbody; Andrew Dymond and John Reddish) with **Sussex County** runners up. Winners of Division Two (at Surbiton) were **Merton with Canterbury** runners up. **Merton** will be promoted to Division One for 2013 to replace relegated Littlehampton

On 5 August 2012 the winners of the Golf Croquet Team Competitions held at Southwick were **Sussex County 1** (Doubles) and **Sussex County 2** (Singles).

Trophy engraving

The plan is that all trophies should be returned to the Chairman by the end of the calendar year so that they can be engraved at the Federation's expense and presented (or re-presented) at the AGM.

Development news

The 2012 season was a tough one for many clubs. The wet weather ruined the first half of the season. With numbers of entrants down for tournaments, income from them was reduced still further by cancellations due to the flooding of courts and the resultant losses of the normal profit from lunch and bar sales. However, all the grants awarded by the CA for the past season produced excellent results, as has been reported by the clubs concerned in the Gazette.

West Worthing CC made a good start - doubling its membership in its first season. It now enjoys the use of four courts, sharing two of them with the tennis section. It was given a loan from the CA to buy Dawson balls for its competitive activities and was able to take part in some of the SECF leagues in its first year of existence.

Both **West Wittering CC** and **Ember CC** made good use of their CA grants which allowed the clubs to complete their irrigation projects after fundraising and, in the case of Ember, much self help. These were investments for drier times.

Crawley CC received confirmation from the Borough Council that the Heritage Lottery Fund was going ahead with its £40K project to restore the park to its former Victorian glory, embracing the re-laying of the two and a half croquet courts and the installation of irrigation. The Fund was precluded from assisting with the replacement of the dilapidated wooden hut presently used by the club. The club raised £13,000 including a £2,000 grant from the CA towards acquiring a "log effect", chalet style and vandal proof pavilion which would fit into the character of the site, with a project estimate of £25,000. However, the project came to a halt when the Council suddenly demanded a licence and a lease which would cost annually more than the club could possibly afford. The new club chairman went back to the Council and found that a change of officials had resulted in a more amenable attitude. There is now a possibility that water and electricity will be provided for the pavilion by linking with the services installed for the irrigation. Connection to a sewer is being investigated and so the club may be able to install a toilet. They are also investigating the possibility of installation of a septic tank. The Council did not raise again the requirement for a more costly lease and licence. The club has decided to re-start fundraising and at the same time to look for a cheaper option for the pavilion. The timescale is now for work to be started on the pavilion in October 2013.

A £275 grant from the CA and the SECF for publicity allowed Jean Cobbold to advertise for the new club at **Cheam** and to recruit 75 paid up members. The one-court club will be entering SECF GC leagues in its second year and is also training up some Association players. The Federation provided coaching courses for the membership in 2012 - essential support for any new club to get it off to a flying start. Unfortunately, the wet weather deterred a number of players from attending regularly and there might be a drop in numbers for the 2013 season.

A new club at **Lodsworth** in West Sussex asked the CA for a £1,000 grant towards the construction of its first court. However, the grant was turned down because of the financial risk if the new club failed. A loan was offered in lieu. The club, which joined the CA in May of this year, appealed against the ruling and the application will be reviewed by the CA Development Committee. The new Club has good prospects. A SECF grant of £250 will be made to assist Lodsworth if they receive support from the CA.

The SECF pool of equipment remains out of hoops and decent balls. We again appeal to clubs for any equipment which becomes surplus, including such minor items as clips and corner flags. They

will be gratefully received by Development Officer, Michael Hague and made available to new and/or expanding clubs as required.

Future playing opportunities

The 2013 Calendar will have all the details of the SECF events and Club events open to non-members. These will include tournaments at Southwick, Surbiton, Tunbridge Wells, Dulwich, Woking, Roehampton, Littlehampton and Ramsgate.

Response to the circulated proposal for a "Southern Triathlon" was lukewarm. Was the proposed format wrong? The theory is that there should be an AC equivalent to the Southern Challenge. It needs rethinking. Bill Arliss and Jonathan Isaacs have agreed to come up with a different format with a view to placing it before the 2013 AGM.

The vexed question of handicaps

As part of his role as coordinator for handicapping in the SECF, the Chairman (Bill Arliss) carried out periodic inspections of the handicap cards at major federation events in 2012. Bill is pleased to say that the general standard of the handicap cards has been maintained. He did find a few problems in one club that needed some attention and he took this up with the Club Handicapper.

Although Golf Croquet is now very widely played, it is only in the Federations that handicap play takes place. Thus, maintenance of the handicap system falls directly on the shoulders of each Federation. The national Handicap Committee can do little more than advise as the only national competition played to handicap laws is the All England. Some might ask why all senior players in the national level play programme religiously keep handicap cards. By doing so they are establishing country-wide standards of play corresponding to the lower handicaps and thus setting common anchor points for each Federation around the 4 to 6 handicap levels. It is the primary duty of the CA appointed GC Handicappers to ensure that these mid-range handicaps are interpreted correctly in each Federation.

The Chairman proposes that, as GC now plays a major role in the SECF program, the Committee should concentrate upon establishing a good discipline for maintaining the handicap system for GC. It is fair to say that the SECF now leads the rest of the country in running the GC handicap system. The few who do not follow the rules tend to destroy the credibility of the system. To help smooth a few of our own rough corners, Bill has put a document together entitled "The Role of the Club Handicapper" as a guide for all taking on the role of Club Handicapper in the SECF.

It is proposed that, as a SECF policy starting from the beginning of the 2013 season, it should be a requirement that all initial handicaps or changes outside the automatic system, must have an authorising name and date clearly visible on the front cover of the Handicap Card. The recent inspection of some cards highlighted that some players do not interpret the columns headings as expected. To help the Club Handicapper get his or her message across, a simple one page document has been prepared.

The players who have been appointed as CA Handicappers are: Bill Arliss - Sussex County; Alan Cottle - Sussex County; Don Beck - Surbiton and Simon Carter - Sydenham and Dulwich.

Approval will be sought at the AGM in 2013 for the proposed SECF requirements.

2013 AGM

The **Annual General Meeting** of the Federation will be held on **Sunday 27 January 2013** at Surbiton Croquet Club, Alexandra Drive, Surbiton, KT5 9AA. The meeting will commence at 10.45 a.m. and will be followed by lunch. You will receive an invitation to disclose how many from your Club will be attending the meeting and the lunch and a copy of the formal agenda nearer the time.