

# Minutes of the SCF AGM held at 10:30 at Winchester Racquets and Fitness on 15th December 2017

Present:

**Aldermaston:** John McMordie

**Basingstoke:** Ian Harrison (Coaching), Martin Brandt (AC leagues)

**Blewbury:** Steve Fisher (Secretary), Paul Wolff

**Bransgore:** David Brown (Treasurer), Barry Dench (Development)

**Dogmersfield:** Roger Barnacle

**East Dorset:** Gary Brennan

**Eynsham:** —

**Great Bedwyn:** —

**Hamptworth:** Richard Jenkins (Tournaments), Jan Bennett, Steve Bennett, Robert Channon, Nick Beard

**High Wycombe:** Richard Peperell

**Littleton:** Godfrey Day

**Lymington:** —

**Oxford University:** —

**Phyllis Court:** Chris Roberts (Chairman, GC Handicaps), Frances Colman (CA Council, GC Leagues, AC Handicaps), Raymond Wood, Pauline Wood

**Ryde:** Roy Tillcock

**Thames Valley:** Gillian Pett (Club member), Lesley Hunter

**White Horse:** —

**Winchester:** Rita Nunn

**Wingrave:** Richard Keighley

**Winslow:** —

Apologies - Glynis Hassel (Dogmersfield), Tony Newport (Eynsham), Margaret Skeldon (Lymington), Vernon Gibbs (Ryde), Norma Rayne (Thames Valley).

## 1 Minutes of the 2016 AGM

These were accepted as a true record and were signed. There were no matters arising.

## 2 Reports

The reports had all been circulated prior to the meeting, **and are recorded as appendices to these minutes**. The minutes only record highlighted points or discussion.

## 2.1 Chairman - Chris Roberts

Chris thanked the committee for their work and especially thanked Gillian Pett who had served on the committee for more than five years. He also thanked Frances Colman for her work as GC League Manager over six and a half years. Frances had chosen to stand down from this role because of her increased responsibility in the CA (she now sits on the six-person Management Committee as well as Council and the Handicap Committee).

The chairman then presented a *Croquet Association Diploma for Services to Croquet* to former long standing SCF Treasurer Rita Nunn. The text of the citation follows the chairman's report in the appendices.

## 2.2 Treasurer - David Brown

Paul Wolff asked about the Premium Bonds shown in the accounts. David explained that these had been held by the previous treasurer informally on behalf of the SCF. This practice had been considered to be incorrect, so the bonds had been sold and credited to the SCF account which appears to have given us a higher income.

Gillian Pett asked about the engraving costs which she felt were rather high. Chris explained that we had bought two new trophies recently for the Champions Tournaments and also that there were sometimes delays in having the engraving done and dealing with the subsequent charges, so that some years the costs were higher than others.

David pointed out that the SCF tournaments were making a loss as income from entries did not always cover the lawn hire and engraving costs. There was a suggestion that entrants should be charged more but this was seen as going against the aims of the SCF to encourage competitive croquet. There was then a proposal that the annual club subscription should be increased by £5 to £25. This is not quite enough to balance income and outgoings however it was seen as a reasonable compromise and, when put to a vote, all were in favour.

## 2.3 Secretary - Steve Fisher

Steve had nothing to report but was thanked by chairman Chris for his work, especially for keeping a monthly record of decisions and actions that were carried out by the SCF outside formal meetings.

Roy Tillcock asked about the results of the questionnaire that had been held during the year to determine the best locations and times of the various SCF events. Steve summarized the results:

- Solstice and Armada should be mid-season.
- All events should be held at the weekend.
- Most clubs want the events to move around but be central with good courts and facilities - which is inconsistent. Only Ryde and Thames Valley had a consistent

response and said they would disregard centrality and the quality of the courts to allow the events to move around.

The chairman added subsequent to the meeting that the Solstice and the two Champions tournaments each require four courts and so venue options are very limited within the SCF.

## 2.4 AC League Manager - Martin Brandt

Martin gave his report and presented the AC trophies. He warned High Wycombe, who had won in the AC handicap league this year that the deadline for entry to the Secretary's Shield is imminent. Someone asked what had happened to the idea, raised last year, of having semi-finals followed by a final rather than just a straight final in the Handicap League. Martin replied that he had asked the clubs and a majority had rejected the idea as being too difficult to manage because it required extra matches to be organised at the end of the season.

## 2.5 GC League Manager - Frances Colman

Frances gave her report and presented the GC trophies, after which Richard Keighley thanked Frances for her many years of good work in organising the GC leagues. Raymond Wood asked why the clubs had freedom to arrange matches as they wanted which he thought could lead to clustering of matches. The general feeling from others was that the current arrangements were fine.

## 2.6 Tournament Officer - Richard Jenkins

After Richard gave his report and presented the trophies there was a request that these tournaments should move around and not always be at Hamptworth. There was some brief discussion during which people were reminded of the major constraints choosing a suitable venue - primarily the number and quality of courts. It was stated that the committee would be considering this issue in the afternoon.

## 2.7 Coaching Officer - Ian Harrison

Ian gave his report which provoked no questions. Chairman Chris thanked Ian for his enthusiasm and the volume of his coaching work, especially in reaching out to our clubs that do not currently participate in SCF activities.

## 2.8 Development Officer - Barry Dench

There were also no questions following Barry's report.

## 2.9 Handicapping Officer for GC - Chris Roberts

Chris gave his GC handicapping report; once again there were no questions.

## 2.10 Handicapping officer for AC - Frances Colman

After Frances gave her report she was asked what level of checking of handicap cards was needed. She replied that it was sufficient to check that the handicap indicated on the front of the card was in line with recent results recorded in the card. Captains are not expected to check the arithmetic of the complete card.

## 2.11 SCF representative on council - Frances Colman

Frances finished her report by mentioning the success of the BBC Countryfile Live event again. It was mentioned that someone had complained that they had not subsequently been approached by their local club to follow up on their interest. Richard Keighley also told us that Wingrave had organised a successful event in conjunction with Jacques and the National Trust at Waddesdon Manor.

## 3 A GC handicap league for clubs with one court - Ian Harrison

Ian presented his proposal for GC handicap league for clubs with one court. There was a question about clubs with more than one lawn joining the league as well. Chris explained why he thought it risked destabilising the current good arrangements with the GC handicap league. There was some discussion about Aldermaston which has two lawns but they only like to use one of them for matches. Clearly edge cases will be at the discretion of the league manager. All were in favour of trying such a league from the 2018 season onwards.

## 4 Stricter rules for fixture dates - Roy Tillcock

Roy proposed on behalf of Ryde that the league rules should be stricter concerning the definition of fixture dates and in particular that GC fixtures are to be scheduled at the start of the season, and not later than 30 April without permission from the leagues manager. The current rules state: *Fixtures are to be scheduled at the start of the season (preferably by 30 April)*. Again all were in favour. It was noted the the leagues manager would have to resolve any difficult cases.

## 5 Monetary loans from SCF to clubs - Barry Dench

Barry outlined his proposal for offering monetary loans from SCF to clubs with development needs. It was noted that these loans would be interest free - partly because of the complexities of charging interest even if we wished to do so. The possibility that a club may be unable to pay was mentioned. This was acknowledged to be a risk but it would be mitigated by examining the requesting club's accounts. All were in favour of the proposal.

## 6 Federation Working Party (Led by Dave Gunn the CA's NDO) - Chris Roberts

Chris explained that many years ago the Sports Council had made money available to fund a National Development Officer. This was at the time of the major growth in GC. Amongst other achievements he was responsible for the World Croquet Federation (1986). This year the CA decided to employ someone as National Development Officer and Dave Gunn was appointed. He is responsible for the excellent video on the front page of the CA website. One of his initiatives is to get federations to work together and with this in mind he organised what is probably the first ever meeting between federation representatives. This was to be attended by Frances, Barry and Steve but Frances had to withdraw for personal reasons.

Barry then explained that five working groups, each with about 4 members and Dave as overall coordinator, were created to look at what were considered to be the areas where we could make a difference:

- Direct Support to Clubs
- Marketing
- Player Recruitment, Retention and Development
- Communication
- Resources.

Barry is part of the Direct Support to Clubs group and Steve is in the Marketing Group. Barry will be circulating a questionnaire shortly.

Steve told the meeting that the marketing group is also looking at club websites to make it easy for a club to get something going. The communication group is concentrating on communications between the various croquet bodies: clubs, federations and the CA, rather than a club website to “sell” the club and croquet. In order to find out what a website offering should look like, Steve will also be sending a questionnaire. The questionnaires from Barry and Steve will probably be sent together to the club contacts.

## 7 Election of committee

Roy Tillcock was proposed to take over as GC leagues manager and Richard Peperell to be the “Club member”. All were in favour of electing the new committee. The table below lists the committee members and when each was appointed. Those starred will have completed 4 or more years of service in that rôle by the next AGM.

Chairman	Chris Roberts*	2012
Secretary	Steve Fisher	2015
Treasurer	David Brown	2016
AC leagues	Martin Brandt*	2003

GC leagues	Roy Tillcock	2017
Development	Barry Dench	2015
Coaching	Ian Harrison	2016
AC Handicapper	Frances Colman	2015
GC Handicapper	Chris Roberts*	2012
Tournaments	Richard Jenkins*	2012
Club Member	Richard Peperell	2017
Rep to CA	Frances Colman	2015

## 8 AOB

It was announced that Basingstoke Club will be moving in April. They will have the use of two lawns shared with a bowls club. Details are on their website.

We were also reminded that the SCF has an indoor croquet carpet (28x21ft) that may be borrowed through Ian Harrison.

Steve Fisher asked if clubs thought it would be useful for the SCF to have its own measuring equipment to find the size of hills and valleys in the lawn. There was some interest. Richard Peperell referred to an article that had been in the croquet gazette some years ago advocating the use a tool hire shop to gain access to such equipment. The CA's own equipment is very out of date.

*The meeting concluded at 13:00*

# Southern Croquet Federation

## Chairman's report AGM 2017

I hope to see as many of you as possible at our AGM at Winchester on Friday this week, 15 December, 10:00 for 10:30. In an effort to shorten proceedings and allow time for discussions, as agreed at last year's meeting, we are circulating committee officers' reports beforehand, rather than have them read out in full at the meeting. The hope is that this will not only save time but allow you to absorb more of the information therein, and feel more engaged with your Federation.

We are very interested in your comments and ideas and invite you to discuss these with us at the AGM in person, or later by correspondence. We cannot promise to answer all questions immediately as some will doubtless require consultation and/or research in order to give a full response, but all will be addressed as soon as practicable.

### **John Munroe**

The Southern Croquet Federation was saddened by the loss of John Munroe in May. John was a former committee member of the SCF serving as its Development officer from 2006 to 2014 and was a force for good in croquet at both National and club level too. His gazette obituary recalled that he was well known for never having missed a Federation of CA meeting when in office and was the 'go to person' for advice on grant applications not only for our Federation but countrywide. John was an AC Assistant Referee, held coaching qualifications for both AC and GC and was named 'Coach of the Year' in 2007. At Club level, he started out with Thames Valley, held office at Blewbury and later further afield at Cheltenham and The Bears; and it was Blewbury that nominated him for a deserved CA Diploma in 2011.

### **The SCF Committee**

I thank all the SCF committee members for their hard work on your behalf in this past year. Standing down today from one of her jobs, that of GC Leagues Manager is Frances Colman, who we thank most sincerely for transforming our GC competitive offering during her time in office. She inherited just one League, which still survives today as our 'Doubles Only League', with relatively few clubs taking part. Frances set about the introduction of our current much improved three league-offering offering, in which we now have our Level League (which employs a best-of-three level play matches with an all-day format) and our Handicap League, which was immediately popular enough to require a two-division geographical split. Participation has grown year on year to the extent that we now provide league competition for no less than 29 teams!

Standing down fully this time, is our Officer Without Portfolio, Gillian Pett, who has served on the committee for five and half years and has been a useful and informed voice from the Thames Valley Club.

All our committee posts are up-for election every year (*with the exception of the Representative to the CA, which is a three year appointment*) and I am pleased to see that the remaining incumbents are willing to stand again for their positions. Also standing for election are Roy Tillcock (Ryde) and Richard Peperell (High Wycombe) for the GC Leagues Manager and Officer Without Portfolio positions respectively.

## **SCF and the CA**

The SCF continues in membership of our sport's governing body, the Croquet Association, and shares its objectives, the major ones are of which are commented on below.

I am pleased to report that our desire to support a main objective of the CA to promote competitive play has been continued this past season and yet another increase in entries for our team league competitions in 2017 are evidence of that success.

The decline of AC is still a major concern for the CA and we have all noticed AC numbers dropping at most of our clubs in recent and not so recent years. The CA's five-yearly Survey of Croquet players made stark reading in 2012, and one is hopeful, but not confident, that the returns of the recently completed 2017 survey will show that the decline has been addressed. For our part, we seem to be pretty stable with the numbers of teams entering our AC Leagues, but I think that we all know that this hides the truth that nearly all clubs face a constant difficulty in finding sufficient players to keep those teams going. A change in lifestyles is undoubtedly a contributory factor in AC's decline in popularity; whereas the relaxed nature of an (up to) three-hour game was once appealing, the competing pressures on current leisure time from other activities and responsibilities often hold sway. The shorter duration variant of 14-point AC is becoming more popular at clubs and so apparently is 'short croquet' (but this has the inbuilt negative of having to halve, or more correctly re-mark courts), so it would be worth trying to promote this at your clubs.

As most you will know from Gazette articles and correspondence, the CA now employs Dave Gunn as its National Development Officer and one of his main tasks is to address the AC decline, so watch-out for his initiatives in this and other regards.

## **Communication**

Reports by Committee members with the briefs for the management of various SCF activities will be circulated (or already have been) and I urge all readers to communicate with the committee member concerned, if you have matters you would like seen addressed or if you have ideas for future development.

## **Thank you all**

I thank all member clubs for your membership and especially for your participation in our competitions and tournaments. For those not yet engaging in competitive play, I do encourage you to do so, as we offer opportunities for all skill levels and it would, of course, be nice to have you aboard.

## **Closing**

Before I close, please can I again ask you to highlight the SCF website to your membership, as this lists all the croquet activity in our Federation area and is the best organ for getting information out to you. Please send everyone this link, now and at the start of the next summer season [www.southern-croquet.org.uk](http://www.southern-croquet.org.uk)

The committee elected at this AGM will convene a meeting of its own this afternoon and set out plans for the next season. I am confident that we can all look forward to another successful and enjoyable croquet season in 2018.

*Chris Roberts*  
Chairman of the Southern Croquet Federation



# *The Southern Croquet Federation*

## **Croquet Association Diploma awarded to Rita Nunn**

*The Southern Croquet Federation wished to mark the second retirement of their long-standing Treasurer Rita Nunn, by this nomination for a Croquet Association Diploma for Service to Croquet.*

*The CA made the award at their AGM on 12 October 2017, when Rita was unfortunately unable to attend.*

*It had always been the SCF's intention to re-award the Diploma at their own AGM on 15 December 2017.*

### **Citation**

Rita has served on the Southern Croquet Federation committee for over ten years as Treasurer, a task which is far from straightforward given the infrequency of meetings and the different ways member clubs handle their finances. The Federation is particularly indebted to Rita, who having first retired before the start of the 2016 season for more family time, answered a distress call to return, when her replacement as treasurer sadly passed away within months of taking office. Rita didn't have a moment's hesitation in helping the Federation out in its hour of need by taking on the Treasurer role again for the remainder of that year.

Rita has also been an equally vital part of her own club, Winchester. Not only has she over the years served on the committee as Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary, but has also devoted much time to coaching beginners and managing tournaments at Club and Federation level.

For this length of service Rita, the Southern Croquet Federation is most grateful, and the awarding of this Croquet Association Diploma is most richly deserved.

**Chris Roberts**  
**Chairman**  
**The Southern Croquet Federation**

# Southern Croquet Federation

## Treasurer's Report for AGM 2017

### **Income**

Bank balance - 31/10/2016    £3983.77

Bank Balance - 31/10/2017    £4229.66

Surplus - £245.89 (however see note below)

*It should be noted that £500 was credited to the bank account on 12/12/2016 following the encashment of Premium Bonds. Therefore total expenses exceeded income in 2016-2017 by £254.11*

### **Outstanding Expenses**

Engraving for 10 Cups (approx £280)

On taking over from Rita Nunn, with the approval of the committee online banking was set up with TSB, speeding up the payment process. TSB recently closed their nearest branch to me in Bournemouth, but have now introduced the facility to pay cheques into our account via the Post Office, minimising the need to travel to TSB premises.

I have presented the Income and Expenditure Account in a different format this year. Competition income showed a loss of £101.00. Together with engraving costs this expenditure accounts for most of annual subscription income received from clubs. The £20 difference between club subscriptions this year was as a result of Great Bedwyn paying twice.

Engraving costs of £115.40 have already been paid since 01/11/2017.

**Southern Croquet Federation**  
**Income and Expenditure**  
**01/11/2016 - 31/10/2017**

**INCOME**

**EXPENDITURE**

	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>		<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>
Subscriptions	460.00	440.00	Sec/Admin	49.10	14.40
Armada Trophy	60.00	120.00	Armada Trophy	105.00	496.00
Soltice Trophy	160.00	340.00	Soltice Trophy	140.00	as above
Champions Tournament	260.00	200.00	Champions Tournament	210.00	as above
AC/GC Finals	0.00	0.00	AC/GC Finals	126.00	as above
Premium Bonds	500.00	0.00	Course Refunds	155.00	0.00
			Travel Expenses	29.80	0.00
			Engraving	379.21	247.31
			Development Grant	0.00	82.80
			Donations	0.00	50.00
<b>Total Nett Income</b>	<b>1440.00</b>	<b>1100.00</b>	<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>1194.11</b>	<b>890.51</b>
<b>Excess of Income over Expenditure</b>	<b>245.89</b>				
Cash Reserve 01/11/2017	3983.77				
Cash Reserve 31/10/2017	4229.66				

# AC leagues for 2017

5 teams took part in the AC Advanced A League with Blewbury being the winners and High Wycombe the runners-up.

4 teams took part in the AC Advanced B League with High Wycombe being the winners on games won and Blewbury the runners up.

12 teams took part in the AC Handicap League, which was divided into Northern and Southern Divisions. High Wycombe won the Northern Division, with Oxford University being the runners up. Winchester won the Southern Division with Littleton being the runners-up. The play-off between the 2 divisional winners was held at Blewbury and went to the wire, with High Wycombe winning the very last game to be the champions. They now qualify to represent the SCF in the CA's Secretary Shield next year.

*Martin Brandt*

# Southern Croquet Federation

## Golf Croquet League Manager's report - AGM 2017

I am pleased to report that, all clubs played their part in the smooth running of the GC leagues programme, all matches were played on time and the results have been available on the web site throughout the season.

We had no instances of problems with eligibility as we had in past years.

All clubs without exception are using the official scoresheet for reporting their results which enables me to monitor handicaps on a game by game basis and to know that handicap cards are being presented. On the rare occasions when cards were not presented at the time of the fixture, they were forwarded to me within the statutory deadline as stated in the league rules. Really well done with this again everyone.

I would like to thank Chris at this point, for entering all the league results on to the website and the following is the final outcome:

### Level Play League

There was an exciting 'cliff hanger' ending to the season with the possibility that three different clubs could win this league depending upon the result of that very last fixture. That fixture was itself one that had been re-arranged due to flooded courts earlier in the season, and saw Phyllis Court entertain High Wycombe.

- Any win for High Wycombe would give them the title.
- Phyllis Court needed to win 5-2 or better.
- Winchester, needed a 4-3 Phyllis Court win.

In the event, all the balls ran well for Phyllis Court who achieved their target plus a bit and so they tied on 10 league points with Winchester but with a better 'matches won' tally.

### Handicap League

The winners of the two divisions were undefeated in the 'regular season'. Blewbury eclipsed their first North Division title last season by winning again, this time by a clear three points. Hamptworth ended Bransgore hopes of a hat-trick of South Division titles and won by four points.

Winchester again hosted the final, which saw Hamptworth wrap up victory in the early afternoon against Blewbury.

### Doubles Only League

We had a tie on league points once again. High Wycombe and Eynsham were involved in a three-way tie that went the way of Harwell last year, but this time it was just the former two that finished level. High Wycombe (29 game wins) got the nod over Eynsham (23 game wins).

I look forward to presenting all the League trophies at the AGM.

*Frances Colman*  
SCF GC Leagues Manager

# **SCF Tournament Officer's Report 2017**

## **Solstice and Armada Doubles Tournaments**

These were held at Hamptworth in June. Unfortunately the AC Armada Doubles was undersubscribed with only four pairs, instead of the normal six or eight.

The Solstice also had fewer entrants with only eight pairs from six clubs instead of the normal maximum of 16 pairs with only one entry from each SCF club.

Views on the reason for this decline would be very welcome.

## **AC and GC Champion of Champions**

These tournaments, now in their fourth year, are going from strength to strength. It looks like moving the date from October to the early spring of the following year has worked. We had 14 entrants in each of the GC and AC events.

## **Advertising**

I am here to help any club with their advertising and obtaining entrants within the SCF and beyond. So just ask!

*Richard Jenkins*

# Southern Croquet Federation

## Coaching Officer's Report for 2017

### Background

1. I succeeded Richard Keighley as SCF Coaching Officer at the 2016 AGM. Federation Coaching Officers are *ex officio* members of the CA Coaching Committee but beyond that there are no hard and fast guidelines as to the nature of the job.

### CA Coaching Committee

2. The Committee meets twice a year in February and November. In February 2017 Jonathan Isaacs succeeded Dave Kibble as Chairman (and as of the CA 2017 AGM, Jonathan has now been succeeded by Sarah Hayes).

3. The Committee has instituted two new Golf Croquet coaching grades to bring GC into line with AC. The GC grades are now "GC Coach", "Senior GC Coach" and "Elite GC Coach".

FCOs were asked to nominate an initial cadre of new Senior GC Coaches in their Federations – I nominated Chris Roberts and Richard Keighley (as the joint author of the CA's GC Coaching Manual). No "Elite" coaches have as yet been appointed : they will be few in number and concerned with coaching at international level.

We have yet to decide on an on-going system for nominating future Senior GC Coaches.

### Coaching and referee courses

4. Three formal GC coaching courses have been held within the SCF area during the year, all organised by Ian Shore. In March Cliff Jones was the tutor on a course at High Wycombe intended for upgrading existing coaches. In April and June Ian himself was the lead coach at Hamptworth on courses intended for GC improvers.

5. Ian Shore has also run several "fun" coaching sessions at High Wycombe as well as regular coaching attached to mix-ins at the Club.

6. For the third year, Richard Keighley has undertaken "missionary" GC coaching for U3A members at Buckingham, and his Wingrave Club has offered "have a go" croquet over 6 days at the Waddesdon Manor Summer Games event.

7. Roger Barnacle ran a GC Referee course at Ryde (IoW) where four people passed the examination.

8. Take up of last year's SCF offer to refund course fees for people undertaking coaching and referee courses has been fairly weak – only three bids have been paid, but no doubt welcome to the recipients.

### Coaching Officer activities

9. Early in the year I became aware of croquet being played at certain schools in the Federation (Abingdon School, Radley College, Winchester College, Portsmouth Grammar School and Chandlings – a prep school near Oxford). Some of these schools arrange inter-school matches, but facilities for croquet are usually less than ideal! I volunteered to help with coaching at Abingdon School and did so on several afternoons in the summer term. Hopefully, Abingdon boys will be able to play at Blewbury on Monday afternoons in 2018 under the guidance of Avril Rangoni-Machiavelli. I introduced the croquet tutor at Abingdon (Mrs Su McRae) to her counterpart at Portsmouth GS (Mrs Miranda Worley) with some gentle AC and GC coaching at Winchester and hopefully they may be able to establish on-going links.

10. As a member of one of the smaller clubs in the Federation I am aware of the difficulties such clubs face and have visited several (eg Thames Valley & Lymington) to assist with coaching and general outlook. There is a tendency for people not to progress much beyond non-competitive GC, which is a pity as quite a few members of these clubs are keen and capable.

Some from Caversham have been coming to Basingstoke for my regular Friday afternoon coaching sessions (alternating AC and GC). This experience has been the catalyst for the “One lawn League” proposal.

11. Although not directly concerned with the FCO role, I have continued to make videos on “Playing Golf Croquet“ which are available on the Basingstoke website ([www.basingstokecroquet.co.uk](http://www.basingstokecroquet.co.uk)); these videos have attracted attention from a wide spectrum of players, literally around the world! Now that the 6 GC modules are complete I will think about a similar AC series – a rather more difficult proposition! If anyone would like a copy on DVD (£10) please let me know.

### Coaching Pods

12. Following a “toe in the water” in 2016, we introduced an AC Coaching Pod based at Aldermaston CC and led by Andy Myers (member at Aldermaston and in the England AC squad). Four sessions have been held, using material prepared by Ian Burrige who was charged with building the Pod concept by the CA. The sessions are aimed at people in the AC 0 – 7 handicap range and all have been excellent. Attendance has been around 5 – 6 people each time, which is probably as many as we could cope with on one lawn. We are looking at how to improve matters for 2018.

13. The CA was keen to inaugurate commensurate GC pods but they have not yet happened in the SCF area, partly due to time commitments and partly due to not having quite the same package of coaching material for GC as we have for AC.



### Countryfile Live event

14. Although not strictly coaching, this event (BBC Countryfile at Blenheim Palace in August) is worth a mention because it demonstrated the potential popularity of croquet and the need for people who can "put it across" in a lively and interesting manner.

### Coaching issues

15. The prime issue for me is to know what is going on at local level around the Federation. Apart from the formal courses I have to assume that Clubs use their qualified coaches to some extent, but I do not know what or how: or indeed, to what extent players who are not formally qualified by the CA offer coaching (and whether or not that is significant). Although I send coaches occasional e-mails I very rarely get any feedback or requests for help.

16. There is a rather similar disconnect with the CA in that they seem not to inform FCOs of prospective new coaches (people who have attended relevant courses) within their Feds: I will be taking this up at the Coaching Committee.

Ian Harrison

8 November 2017

## Development Officers Report for the SCF AGM December 2017.

### Summary

There has been a low level of activity in the region this year. There has been only one application for a grant from High Wycombe and one enquiry from Aldermaston CC regarding help with a second lawn but this was a long term project which has yet to get to the initial stages.

**Ryde** CC completed their new Pavilion project. I saw it as a work in progress during the early summer and it was looking very promising.

**Bransgore** CC purchased the Allett lawn mower it wanted using a CA grant in part payment. The results have been better than could have been hoped for and the investment well worth the money. The improvement to the grass has been spectacular.

I contacted **Portsmouth** Grammar School as there was the possibility croquet was being played. It turned out there is an enthusiastic teacher leading a modest contingent of pupils in the AC code. In conjunction with the SCF Coaching Officer (Ian Harrison) who had been visiting **Abingdon** School to help them with coaching we got the two teachers to meet up at Winchester. We spent a few hours coaching them in both AC and GC. The teachers both reported this was very helpful. They highlighted there seemed to be very little support for schools by the Sports governing body. They were to arrange a game between both their schools.

The situation at **Andover** has gone cold (technically in the SWF). The initial enthusiasm of the leader of the project to start a club in Andover was dealt a blow when only one or two of the U3A members who were playing socially, were interested in forming a proper club.

On behalf of the South Western Federation, I paid a visit to **Henstridge** Golf Club as the owner had a piece of land that could be used as a croquet lawn. As it transpired, there was no one connected to the club who had any knowledge of croquet to drive a new club. Currently, there are enquiries out in the local area to see if an existing club would be looking to move to a good facility and provide the catalyst to start the project.

Very recently I have been working with **the High Wycombe CC** on a reworking of their grant application for ground work improvements to prevent flooding. I am happy to report High Wycombe have had approval from the Development Committee for their project and have been offered a grant of £3,957. This supersedes the offer made earlier this year.

Since the appointment of Dave Gunn to the position of National Development Officer, I have attended a conference and a working group on behalf of the SCF. There will be developments stemming from this activity in the very near future which should benefit clubs directly in areas such as finance, recruitment, retention and communication.

Barry Dench, Development Officer.

# Southern Croquet Federation

## GC Handicap Officer's report - AGM 2017

I am pleased to again report that I was not made aware of any problems with GC handicaps this season. Thanks to the universal use of the SCF Scoresheet, keeping track of individual players' results and handicap grades was a relatively easy task, thanks to the clear way that the results are displayed. There were only one or two instances of handicap cards not being presented at league games. In each case this was down to forgetfulness and resolved by the players concerned forwarding copies of their cards to the GC league manager within the time allowed and all were found to be in order.

As I mentioned last season, other Federations have adopted this policing system too and I have heard via Frances Colman (our Federation AC Handicap Officer who sits on the CA Handicap Committee) that the feedback is all good from those following our lead. It is for everyone's benefit that handicap rules have been made and followed to the letter; and I thank all our clubs that are playing competitive GC for acting so responsibly.

It is a CA requirement that all Clubs should have a named member who is their Club Handicap Officer (or possibly two individuals, one each for GC & AC). Please ensure that such a person is identified at your club, because I have a few gaps on my list and I will be seeking to fill those in the off-season months. If any club is unsure of the duties of that role, advice is at hand from Frances or myself. Once your club handicap officer(s) has been identified, assistance is only a phone call away for them too.

We still have a few clubs who do not, for whatever reason, engage with GC handicap play. This is a shame in my view because croquet has such a lot to offer by way of inclusion for all, and only by using handicaps can players of different abilities play each other on an equal footing. I appeal to those at the helm of such clubs to please at least consider exploring the introduction of handicaps for the benefit of your members. Please start by giving me a call on the number below – I will be delighted to hear from you and even come to see you about it.

Thank you all again, for making my GC Handicap Officer's role a relative easy one to fulfil.

*Chris Roberts*  
SCF GC Handicap Officer

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# Southern Croquet Federation

## AC Handicap Officer's report AGM 2017

I am pleased to report that the instances of 'seemingly incorrect' handicaps being employed by players in our league competitions have seen a reduction in 2016, but there is still some good way to go with this.

I have no doubt that the reduction in reports (nearly all verbal) coming to me, is down to the employment of the official scoresheet system. This displays prominently that handicap cards must be shown to the opposition at all SCF league fixtures.

Whilst I know that there is some opposition to this, ranging from the irritation at having to fill in a form (or more than one for a split fixture) through to the more 'this shouldn't be necessary because we should be able to trust everyone', I have to tell you that either we address the concerns that clubs expressed about handicaps or we don't.

The fact is that until we introduced the 'all cards must be shown and recorded as having been seen' rule, we had evidence that several players actually didn't even have a handicap card at all! So it was little wonder that they played-off the same handicap for years, irrespective of results, or that their captain simply guessed at, or made-up, a likely handicap on the spot (and sometimes they weren't even consistent with that from one week to the next!) The handicap cards and scoresheets rules solve all this nonsense. However, we have not had 100% compliance as GC teams manage to achieve with no fuss at all.

There were occasions this season when the rules were not followed in the AC Leagues and I am still seeing, via AC Leagues Manager Martin who copies all results to me, evidence that (from one or two quarters) results are still coming in as loose bits of e-mail text or scraps of paper. This makes my job very difficult because I cannot easily analyse results when the reporting styles are all different and of course it is not at all clear to me when handicap cards have been shown and when they have not. It is a requirement of the Croquet Association that handicap cards are shown at all CA listed tournaments, and the SCF extended this to cover all our League Fixtures and tournaments a few seasons ago.

As an AC and GC Croquet Association Handicapper, and member of the CA's Handicap Committee, it is my duty to see that regulations are adhered to. I call on all Clubs who are not already doing so, to help me in my duty by complying with the above.

*Frances Colman*  
SCF AC Handicap Officer

# Southern Croquet Federation

## Federation Representative to the Croquet Association's report AGM 2017

I have represented the SCF on the Council of the CA, contributing to discussions at four meetings and more frequently by e-mail correspondence, on a number of subjects including some of those mentioned below.

Of particular use in these discussions is the 'view from the regions' that Federation representatives are able to provide – and these views vary widely because of the different sizes of clubs and level of activity in different areas of the country. These views influence opinions greatly, because the decision making process has to be founded on what the practical results of any changes of arrangements are likely to be, and that can only be learnt from those who are in touch with croquet activity within their region.

### **Changes to the CA's membership arrangements**

The inaction of the well-publicised changes to the CA's membership arrangements, has been greatly delayed by the desire to introduce a new bespoke designed database for recording members' details. Because of the need to have a fully integrated system that will eventually be a very useful tool for clubs to use to organise their own memberships as well, it was not possible for the CA to purchase an 'off the shelf' product and instead, work has been in place for some good while now on a system that will be fit for the CA's purpose. This is being designed largely by volunteer effort from within the croquet community and as such it is not surprising that it is taking longer than had been anticipated.

### **New data protection regulations**

In the meantime, the ground has shifted somewhat with new data protection regulations coming into force in April 2018, the nub of which is that organisations such as the CA (and indeed its member clubs) will have to have positive permissions from individuals before they can keep their personal information – including contact details. It will no longer be allowed for organisations to assume permission has been granted to hold personal data by dint of an unmarked 'opt-out' box. From April 2018 onwards, organisations will have to be able to show (if challenged) that they have not only asked for such permission but that they have received a positive response – most likely this will be an 'opt-in' tick box that individuals will have to have specifically marked. This will doubtless affect the numbers of croquet players deciding to join the CA under the new free 'ordinary membership' arrangements that are being offered to all members of CA member clubs.

What had been the previously hoped-for default, that all such club members would become CA members simply by their club secretary forwarding their details to the CA, has just got a lot harder because permission to share the data in that way, will now have to be backed-up by an expressed permission to do so. The Secretary of the CA, Ian Vincent, has written an article explaining this in further detail for the December issue of the Gazette (which is currently at the printers). However, should anyone wish further discussion on this, I will be happy to oblige, by personal correspondence.

## **BBC Countryfile Live at Blenheim Palace**

Although the prominent appearance of croquet at this huge and well publicised event was not an SCF matter, I volunteered to be involved in the CA's organisation of their activity because the venue is within our area. Accordingly, I got the job to recruit the large number of individuals needed to staff the volunteer teams that would deliver the 'croquet experience' to the thousands of visitors attending the show. An enormous amount of e-mail and phone call traffic ensued and resulted in over 50 croquet people being organised into four daily teams under one experienced team manager.

I thank all the SCF club contacts for forwarding on my calls for their members to come forward to help – a good number provided a member (or several) and the most local club Eynsham were highly praised and thanked by the CA Council for their staffing effort and particularly for preparing the playing surface and providing equipment.

Several hundred visitors got to see and try croquet and a good proportion left their details in order to be directed to clubs near their homes. The whole thing was a lot of work but was a huge success, so very worthwhile. The CA is hoping to be involved with BBC Countryfile Live again in 2018 and you will be hearing from me as soon as I know.

## **Sharing of good practice with other Federations**

I was due to attend the Federations meeting that was organised by National Development Officer Dave Gunn, along with other SCF committee members Barry Dench (Development) and Steve Fisher (Secretary), but a family matter prevented me going at the last minute. I know that Steve and Barry will report on this, but before that meeting, the idea of sharing ideas with other federations has always been useful.

There are at least two other federations that have brought their League rules into line with ours following 'best practice' discussions and the fact that we run our two 'Champion of Champions' tournaments is as a direct result of learning of this idea from the Croquet North Federation.

## **Closing**

Going back to the beginning of this report – I need to hear about clubs' activities, successes, failures and general concerns outside those areas which the SCF organises, so that I can feed this into CA discussions. Please help me to better represent you by keeping me informed.

*Frances Colman*  
Federation Representative to the CA

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# Southern Croquet Federation

## A GC handicap league for clubs with one court

### Background

1. Clubs with only one court find it difficult to enter the existing GC leagues where two courts are required.
2. Such clubs may find less to attract them to SCF activities, which may restrict their progress in the game.
3. Some one court clubs do participate in the current leagues but they are disadvantaged by having to play all their matches “away”.

### Relevant Clubs

4. The relevant SCF clubs are currently: Aldermaston, Basingstoke, Caversham, Dogmersfield, Great Bedwyn, Lymington, Wingrave and Winslow

### Proposal

5. A GC handicap league for clubs with one court will be established, for those clubs having only one lawn and where this lawn is at least half size.
6. Teams shall consist of two players.
7. The format shall be:
  - Round 1 – a doubles game
  - Round 2 – home 1 v away 2; home 2 v away 1
  - Round 3 – home 1 v away 1; home 2 v away 2allowing each fixture to be completed in a morning or afternoon session.
8. The singles games shall be entered on handicap cards in the usual way.
9. The league will commence in the 2018 season.

*Ian Harrison with the support of the SCF committee.*