

Minutes of the SCF AGM held at 10:30 at Winchester Racquets and Fitness on 15th November 2018

Present:

Aldermaston: —

Basingstoke: Alex Ball, Eirwen Bone, Charmian Harrison, Ian Harrison (Coaching)

Blewbury: Paul Wolff

Bransgore: Barry Dench (Development)

Caversham: Brian Jamieson, Carol Jamieson

Dogmersfield: Glynis Hassel

East Dorset: Gary Brennan

Eynsham: —

Great Bedwyn: —

Hamptworth: Ann Beard, Nick Beard, Richard Jenkins (Tournaments), Richard Stevens, Steve Bennett, Janet Trueman

Harwell: Steve Fisher (Secretary)

High Wycombe: Richard Peperell (Club member), Ian Shore

Littleton: Paul Dugmore

Lymington: —

Oxford University: —

Phyllis Court: Chris Roberts (Chairman, GC Handicaps), Frances Colman (CA Council, AC Handicaps)

Ryde: Vernon Gibbs, Joan Grove, Pam Sim, Roy Tillcock (GC Leagues)

Thames Valley: Lesley Hunter

White Horse: —

Winchester: Rita Nunn, Tim Stanbrook

Wingrave: —

Winslow: —

Apologies - Steve Woolnough (Aldermaston), Martin Brandt (Basingstoke), David Brown (Bransgore), Roger Barnacle (Dogmersfield), Tony Newport (Eynsham), Peter Allan (Harwell), Raymond and Pauline Wood (Phyllis Court), Norma Rayne (Thames Valley), Jan Johnston (Winchester), Richard Keighley (Wingrave)

1 Minutes of the 2017 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 re-presented a CA Diploma to Steve Fisher who had received this because of the work a club and federation website templates. There were no questions.

2.2 Treasurer - David Brown

In David's absence Chris stated that the accounts had been examined by Raymond Wood. Rita Nunn proposed that the accounts be accepted, this was seconded by Ann Beard and was approved by all. No change in subscription was proposed so it will remain at the same level. Nick Beard proposed and Ian Harrison seconded the proposal that Raymond Wood should continue to examine the accounts. This was accepted by all. Raymond, who was not present, was thanked for his work.

2.3 AC League Manager - Martin Brandt

In Martin's absence Ian Harrison told the meeting that Martin, who has managed the AC leagues well for 15 years was now very seriously ill. Chris presented the AC trophies in place of Martin.

2.4 GC League Manager - Roy Tillcock

Roy was asked by when applications for next year's leagues should be made. He said that invitations to join will be sent out in the next few weeks. The deadline will be sometime around the end of February. Roy presented the trophies, including the one for the new One Lawn league. Frances announced that the CA were creating a new GC equivalent of the Secretary's Shield. This Federation GC Shield would be a knockout season-long competition with doubles best of three and singles best of three.

2.5 Tournament Officer - Richard Jenkins

No questions or discussion

2.6 Coaching Officer - Ian Harrison

No questions or discussion

2.7 Development Officer - Barry Dench

No questions or discussion

2.8 Handicapping Officer for GC - Chris Roberts

Frances presented a joint report with Chris

2.9 Handicapping officer for AC - Frances Colman

See above

2.10 SCF representative on council - Frances Colman

No questions or discussion

3. Changes to the constitution - Steve Fisher

Steve explained that the changes, which had the support of the committee were being introduced in some cases to reflect the way the organisation actually works and in others simply to make the constitution simpler. The proposed changes were:

- 6c: change to: "Receive reports from committee members"
- 6e: replace "Officers of the SCF" with "members of the SCF committee"
- 6e: delete "for election of Officers"
- 9a: replace "The Chairman" by "The Chairman or his nominated representative from the committee"
- 9b: replace "A copy of draft minutes" with "A copy of draft minutes of a General Meeting"
- 9: move 9a, 9b and 9c to precede what is currently 10a and then delete section 9
- 10: replace "Officers" by "chairman, the secretary, the treasurer"
- 11: replace "posy" by "post"
- 12: replace body of section by: The committee may expel any member it shall consider unfit to carry out his/her duties.

The use of the term "chairman" was questioned. Frances said that she considered it to be normal and did not imply that the post was held by a man. The use of the pronoun "his" in the new text in 9a above was also questioned. It was agreed that the pronoun could simply be omitted without changing the meaning. Finally it was suggested that the rather unusual practice of having two votes per club and an additional one vote per committee member was, at best, unusual. Steve said he did not wish to change so much text at the last moment and would prefer to defer such a change till next year. It was also pointed out that we would probably want to make changes to follow the new CA governance model within that time

scale. Vernon Gibbs seconded Steve's proposal to make the changes listed above but with the omission of the personal pronoun "his". All were in favour.

4. Promotion of short croquet as a way to get people into AC - Steve Fisher

Steve explained that he had heard from people outside the federation that Short Croquet was becoming increasingly popular both as a game in its own right and as a stepping stone to the regular AC game. He said that he thought that it was worth pursuing within the SCF.

Nick Beard said that Hamptworth found it good for:

- Conversion from garden croquet
- For new people
- As a short game for the evening

Ian Shore and Richard Peperell said that they had held a small SC tournament which was attended by four AC players and they have another one coming up which has only one space available. Though this meant having extra holes in the lawn it turns out that they are not in critical positions and both the AC laws and the GC rules permit players to take relief if necessary from hoop holes..

Paul Wolff said it had been done at Blewbury where they had used a string to divide a full sized court in two. They were advised that if a string was used it must be well fixed down so as to avoid a trip hazard. An alternative is to use tape.

SC was seen as a positive development and some clubs had found it useful though the federation has so far not organised anything to support SC.

5. Preparing for the new GC rules expected to be in force next season - Richard Peperell

Richard reminded people that the new GC rules due to come into force at the beginning of next season are significantly different and knowledge of the new rules should be widely disseminated before them. Ian Shore has prepared a course on conversion from the old rules to the new and is offering it at Phyllis Court (Saturday 2nd March) and then at Winchester (Tuesday 12th March) and at 10:00 in each case and will finish by 13:00. Clubs may nominate up to three members who, in GC, are either referee, club captain, coach or A level player. Clubs are strongly recommended to send at least one person to take the knowledge back to their clubs. Applications should be sent by club representatives to rsgoldring@gmail.com for Phyllis Court and to ian.b.harrison@btinternet.com for Winchester.

6. GC league rules - Roy Tillcock

The changes below were proposed by Roy.

Handicap League format

The first two doubles rounds will be replaced by two (additional) singles rounds.

Round 1 games: Home player 1 v Away player 4; Home player 2 v Away player 3;
Home player 3 v Away player 2; Home player 4 v Away player 1.

Round 2 games: Home player 1 v Away player 3; Home player 2 v Away player 4;
Home player 3 v Away player 1; Home player 4 v Away player 2.

A match will therefore consist of 4 rounds of 4 singles games each, making a 16 game match in which all players will play each of their opponents once.

Rule changes and additions

Teams and formats

Any necessary North v South final match will take place in September hosted by the Northern club in odd numbered years and by the Southern club in even numbered years. The date is to be mutually agreed from a choice offered by the home club. The usual match format for that league will be used.

Handicap league players must be listed in handicap order (as is currently required for Level play)

Handicap games must NOT be timed. Level games may only be timed if BOTH captains specifically agree.

Fixture making

Clubs with two or more teams in the same division must arrange the date of their mutual match(es) before any other of their fixtures in that division.

Abandonments mid-match and unplayed games

Rule 3 allows captains to agree to leave games unplayed (recorded as drawn) if circumstances prevent completion of the match.

Results

Hoop scores will be recorded but NOT used to order teams.

Steps 5 to 9 of the criteria for deciding League positions (involving hoop points) will be replaced by the following:

5. Quality of wins. Each team receives DOUBLE the number of points achieved by opponents they defeated PLUS the number of points achieved by opponents they drew with. This procedure can be repeated if necessary using the new points table.

6. The result of the singles match 1 v 1, or in a doubles match the result of the final 1&2 v 1&2 match. NOTE this step will apply should any North v South final finish as a draw.

Roy presented the reasons for his changes: avoid the doubles games in the handicap league to ensure that more singles games are played to increase the number of games on the handicap card, reduce the weight of the N S finals, avoid timed handicap games - which are inherently unfair and use a fairer way of deciding the winner in a closely fought league.

During discussion it was noted that the sentence on fixture making did not convey the intended meaning and should be changed to “Clubs with two or more teams in the same division must arrange the date of their mutual match(es) to be played before any other of their fixtures in that division.”

The only issue which caused some controversy was the removal of the doubles games from the handicap league. The main argument against was that it would be too threatening for newcomers. Others claimed that with the ability to lose 40 index points some might choose not to play. Two votes were held - the first was on everything except for the change in format of the handicap league (and one item dependent upon that) - and the second was for the rest. Roy proposed and Paul Wolff seconded the motions. The first was unopposed but the second required counting of votes by clubs. Nine clubs were in favour and three were against so it was not necessary to include the committee specific votes and both motions were carried with the small wording change noted above.

7. Dates for the SCF events

These will be held at Hamptworth:

- Sat.30th March AC “Champion of Champions” Handicap Singles
- Sun.31st March GC “Champion of Champions” Handicap Singles
- Sat.1st June AC “Armada” Handicap Doubles
- Sun.2nd June “Solstice” Level Play Doubles

8. Development initiatives - Barry Dench and Dave Gunn

Dave had arrived and set up his equipment but it was decided he should make his presentation immediately after the meeting.

9. Election of committee

The table below shows the current members and when they were elected. Those starred had completed 4 or more years of service in that rôle. Nobody was put forward to contest any of these positions and all were willing to stand again.

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

Chris mentioned again the long years of service that Martin had provided to the SCF. There was a proposal by Vernon Gibbs to elect all together except for the Rep to the CA which was to be dealt with separately because of the expectation that this would be a three year appointment. The proposal was seconded by Ian Shore. The votes were made and in each case all were in favour.

A note from the secretary: A couple of days after the meeting we learned that Martin had, sadly, died the day before the meeting at which those present had thought to elect him.

10. AOB

Janet Trueman thanked Chris and the rest of the committee for their work

“Croquet Matters” by the CA’s National Development Officer, Dave Gunn

Dave gave a very brief summary of “Croquet Matters” <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=clubs/croquetmatters>. Unfortunately people had ordered their lunch for 13:00 so he had very little time to explain the relevance of this program to clubs.

The meeting formally closed at 13:03

After lunch, the plan had been for Dave to speak to the committee about how “Croquet Matters” might be applied at the Federation level. It turned out that a number of people were waiting for the committee meeting to finish because of car sharing, so given that he had had very little time to speak it was decided to ask people if they would like to hear what Dave had to say and to follow this by a brief, closed, committee meeting.

Croquet Matters is a self assessment mechanism making use of a tool developed by Sports England called “Club Matters”. The idea is the traditional one that you have a set of metrics and you consider how your club or federation scores on each and set a target for where you want to get to in a fixed time. Then presumably you come up with a plan to get there - but Dave did not get so far. Those present at the open presentation appeared to like what they saw and heard. Dave explained and demonstrated primarily how it might be applied at a Federation level.

Appendix - Reports

Chairman's report

I hope to see as many of you as possible at our AGM at Winchester on Friday of next week, 16 December, for a 1030 start. In an effort to shorten proceedings and to allow time for discussions, as last year, 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.

New Club

I am delighted to see that Abingdon School CC is now registered with the CA. We will discuss with them the formalities of joining the federation. The promotion of croquet to a younger audience is one of our aims that we share with our National Governing Body, The Croquet Association (CA), so it especially pleasing to see the croquet activity at Abingdon formalised in this way. We will continue to offer the support to Abingdon School which was initially undertaken by Coaching Officer Ian Harrison and we are grateful to Blewbury CC for their assistance too, both in the provision of their courts and the coaching offered by their some of their members.

The SCF Committee

I thank all the SCF committee members for their hard work on your behalf in this past year. Roy Tillcock and Richard Peperell, who joined the committee at last year's AGM, have both had good first years and made valuable contributions to croquet in our area.

At the CA's AGM last month, Frances Colman who is our Representative on the CA Council and AC Handicapper, was confirmed as the new the Chairman of the CA's Handicap Committee, which oversees that crucial area of croquet activity nationally. Frances has chaired one meeting already and amongst other initiatives has started work on a framework that seeks to eliminate regional and 'club to club' differences in handicap interpretations of similar skill levels – This is something that I know has exercised croquet players recently (and for a long time before that) and where action is long overdue. See the joint report by our AC & GC Handicap Officers.

We were asked to put forward representatives to work with the Croquet Association's National Development Officer (NDO) Dave Gunn, and I was delighted when our own Development Officer, Barry Dench and our Secretary, Steve Fisher volunteered to take this

on. Barry's report will doubtless detail the work undertaken and I am pleased that we will be joined at our AGM by the NDO, Dave Gunn, who will give a short overview of his work to the assembled attendees, and a more detailed address to our committee meeting which follows in the afternoon.

Under the NDO's initiative, Steve Fisher developed a website template for clubs which have little or no web presence of their own, and for this hugely valuable contribution, Steve was deservedly nominated by the SCF for the award of a CA Diploma for Services to Croquet.

He was presented with his Diploma at the CA's AGM in October and I will be re-presenting it to him at our upcoming SCF AGM.

Congratulations and thank you Steve.

All our committee posts bar one are up-for election every year. The exception is that of the Representative on the CA Council, which is a three year appointment, and that three-year cycle comes around this year. I am pleased to report that all the incumbent committee members are willing to stand again for their positions.

The SCF and The CA joint objectives

The SCF continues in membership of our sport's governing body, the Croquet Association, and shares its objectives, some of which are mentioned 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 2018 evidence that success. The introduction of our GC One Court Clubs Handicap League followed an inspired idea by our Coaching Officer Ian Harrison and brought two clubs into the competitive GC arena for the first time and encouraged one other to return.

The decline of AC is still a major concern for all in croquet and raising sufficient players to participate in team matches is a recurring headache for all our clubs.

On the one hand, we in the SCF appear to be pretty stable with the numbers of teams entering our AC Leagues holding-up, but the lack of new players (or GC converts) taking up AC does not bode well for the future. In part to address this, the CA is keen to promote Short Croquet – which is AC played on a smaller or half sized court with just a few minor law changes and a 90-minute time limit – in the hope that this will make for an easier introduction to the full AC game. Short Croquet is growing in popularity in the South-West and North-West Federation areas in particular. More locally Hamptworth have been trying it out and so have High Wycombe (I was invited to 'have a go' by fellow SCF committee member Richard Peperell). The variation, certainly does have something to offer, and many GC players will find the shorter games more attractive.

The promotion of croquet to a younger audience has been pursued beyond the activity at Abingdon School; Coaching Officer Ian Harrison has found other pockets of croquet being played at a few other educational establishments in our area and has offered encouragement. And of course, we do have the veritable 'croquet production line' that is

Oxford University where Ian Plummer has continued to oversee activities that yield a steady stream of AC players to the A class tournament circuit.

Communication

Reports by Committee members with the briefs for the management of various SCF activities have been circulated and I urge all readers to communicate with the committee members collectively or individually if you have matters you would like to see addressed.

Thank you all

I thank all member clubs for your membership and most 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. Please send everyone this link, now and at the start of the next summer season <http://www.southern-croquet.org.uk>

The committee that is elected at this AGM will convene a meeting of its own this afternoon and set out plans for next season. I am confident that we can all look forward to another successful and enjoyable croquet season in 2019.

Chris Roberts
Chairman of the Southern Croquet Federation
Chris Roberts, 07973 787710, info@kickphoto.co.uk

Treasurer's Report

Income

Bank balance - 31/10/2017 £4229.66
Bank Balance - 31/10/2018 £4270.66

Surplus - £41

Outstanding Expenses

Engraving for 10 Cups (approx £200)

Online banking has speeded up receipts and payments, into and out of the bank account. Many clubs are now paying by bacs transfer and all payments are now made by bacs.

All clubs have paid the annual subscription of £25. Engraving costs for the current year usually fall into the following years accounts. This is due to the time it takes to recover and engrave the various cups. Engraving costs of £177.60 were paid in this years accounts relating to the previous year.

Refund of course fees was similar to last year at £165. The various competitions resulted in a loss of £62 against a surplus of £54 in 2017.

No expenses were charged this year following the introduction of online banking.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st OCTOBER 2018

Income	2018		2017
	£		£
Subscriptions	550.00		460.00
Armada Trophy	60.00		60.00
Solstice Trophy	160.00		160.00
Champions Trophy	200.00		260.00
Total Income	970.00		940.00
Expenditure			
Secretarial /Admin,	0.00		49.10
Armada Trophy	64.00		50.00
Solstice Trophy	128.00		110.00
Champions Trophy	160.00		160.00
AC/GC Finals	130.00		106.00
Course Refunds	165.00		155.00
Travel Expenses	0.00		29.80
Engraving	282.00		118.40
Total Expenditure	929.00		778.30
	41.00		161.70

BALANCE SHEET			
Assets			
TSB Bank Account	4270.66		4229.66
Total Assets	4270.66		4229.66
Represented by			
General Fund brought Forward	4229.66		4067.96
Excess of Income over Expenditure	41.00		161.70
Balance carried forward	4270.66		4229.66

I have examined the above Income and Expenditure Account for the year to 31st October 2018 and Balance Sheet as at 31st October 2018 and I confirm they are in accordance with the cash book, bank statements and explanations given to me.

C R Wood FCA

10th November 2018

David Brown
Treasurer

AC League Manager's Report

The Advanced A league was won by Aldermaston. The Advanced B League was won by High Wycombe in a close contest on games won, with Oxford University and Hamptworth having the same points. Eynsham won the Northern Division of the handicap league and Ryde the Southern Division. Eynsham won the the play off and will represent the SCF in the Secretary's Shield in 2019.

Martin Brandt
AC Leagues Manager

GC Leagues Manager's Report - AGM 2018

The existing league management system continues to serve our needs very well with invitations to enter being sent out following the AGM in November and the proposed league structures published by the end of February.

The inaugural One Court league attracted an encouraging entry of five teams, including three clubs making their first appearance in GC competition. A dozen or more players gained match experience for the first time and feedback suggests that Coaching Officer Ian Harrison's brainchild was a success that should be repeated.

Match captains (or club contacts) generally filed results with due speed and diligence and most of the limited number of problems I had to deal with involved deputising captains who were not fully aware of their obligations. I would urge clubs to make a special effort to ensure that their match players, and captains in particular, are given every opportunity to familiarise themselves with league rules, perhaps as a requirement of team selection.

An unexpected, but important, matter became apparent at an early stage in the season when I learnt of a 1 hour 45 minute handicap doubles game that not surprisingly disrupted the match schedule and led to the imposition of time limits for the remainder of the match. It may be helpful here to highlight the fact that GC rules hold *all* players responsible for fair and correct application of the rules and in the case of excessive shot times the aggrieved party must raise the issue at an early stage in the match. I am proposing some rule changes for 2019 aimed at simplification and removal of a few ambiguities as well as a more fundamental change to the Handicap league format. I will be able to explain my thinking more fully at the AGM and I hope you will feel able to support them.

I would like to thank Chris Roberts for keeping the website up to date throughout the season with both fixture dates and results and league tables. The information is available for all to see, please encourage your members to use it.

League results and summaries are as follows:

Level: East Dorset replaced Harwell this season but could only finish third. Just three clubs have ever held this trophy and it was the turn of **Winchester** this year who dented Phyllis Court's unbeaten record by winning the final match of the season 4-3.

Handicap: Seven teams in the North division and eight in the South led to some close competition; in fact High Wycombe and Blewbury (North) were level on points, games and drew their match so that an unprecedented recourse to hoop points gave High Wycombe the narrowest of wins. **Hamptworth** were clear at the top of the South division but despite home advantage in the final were unable to retain the title which

High Wycombe won 5½ - 1½.

Doubles: Bransgore did not enter this year and High Wycombe won all four of their matches to follow up on last year's success.

One Court: A remarkably tight finish with Aldermaston, Caversham and Dogmersfield all gaining 3 wins out of 4. Number of game wins just gave the title to new entrants Caversham; a great debut result and hopefully an incentive for more of our clubs who have yet to dip their toes in the competitive waters.

Roy Tillcock
October 2018

Tournament Officer's Report

Champion of Champions 2017 Finals

At the AGM last year I said that I was very encouraged with the positive response I had concerning the entries for the AC & GC "Champion of Champions 2016" finals, which took place at the end of March 2017 at Hamptworth, when we had 14 entries for both AC & GC. We thought that this increase in entries was because we had moved the events from the October of the year in question, to the March of the following year! Unfortunately this year, in March, for the 2017 champions, we only had 8 players for the AC & 12 players for the GC. This is disappointing. Would anyone know why that should be ?

**The 2018 Champion of Champions tournaments will be held at Hamptworth in 2019:
AC on Saturday March 30th GC on Sunday 31st March**

SCF 'Armada' & 'Solstice' Doubles

Both these tournaments were held at Hamptworth.

The AC "Armada" Doubles on the 2nd June had a few more entries with six pairs this year instead of the four last year. However it has to be said, three of those pairs were from the host club, Hamptworth. In fact the winners ended up being a Hamptworth pair. Many of the SCF AC playing clubs were conspicuous by their absence! There was one pair from each of Phyllis Court, Winchester and Blewbury.

Again, disappointing as we have had at least ten pairs in the past. Please, can anyone say why the entries for this event have diminished over the years?

However, this year the GC "Solstice" on the 3rd June was back to its normal maximum attendance of 16 Pairs. However a number of clubs were again absent. The 16

Pairs were made up of four from Ryde, two from each of Bransgore, East Dorset, Thames Valley and Wingrave and one pair from each of Hamptworth, High Wycombe, Littleton and

Phyllis Court. The major reason for this year's welcome improvement was probably the fact that players can now represent their club by entering on their own behalf instead of having to ask, or be selected by, their club to enter.

The 2019 AC 'Armada' will be held on Saturday 1st June and the GC 'Solstice' on Sunday 2nd June. Both at Hamptworth.

Trophies

AC 2017 Champion of Champions - Tim O'Donnell (Hamptworth)

GC 2017 Champion of Champions - Steve Bennett (Hamptworth)

AC 2018 Armada - Richard & Diana Stevens (Hamptworth)

GC 2018 Solstice - Roy Tilcock & Sue Peters (Ryde)

Richard Jenkins
Tournament Officer

Coaching Officer's report

1. This has been a relatively quiet year on the coaching front: there have been no applications for subsidised attendance on coach training or qualification courses nor have clubs in the Federation run courses for wider attendance.
2. I am not aware of any new coach appointments in the Federation this year.
3. In Basingstoke I have offered coaching (alternating AC and GC) on Friday afternoons for the first half of the season. Members of other Clubs in the vicinity – eg Caversham and Dogmersfield have joined in these sessions.
4. I visited Thames Valley CC (Abingdon) in May and gave the members there some GC help and coaching, but have had no other requests for coaching from Clubs in the Federation. I was pleased that Steve Fisher and Avril Rangoni-Machiavelli offered to essentially take over the coaching that I been doing with Abingdon School, as they both live in that vicinity. I was also grateful that Blewbury CC offered to host Abingdon boys on Monday afternoons – under the guidance of Steve and Avril – in order to give them experience of playing on a proper croquet court.
5. The series of AC coaching pods at Aldermaston has continued with a small but enthusiastic group of players benefiting from Andy Myers' excellent coaching. We have not yet managed to get a similar series for GC players off the ground.

There is an issue about whether we should be offering coaching for “improvers” at Federation level or leave it to the “Academies” – whose continued existence depends on having a hinterland of players willing to attend their courses.

6. Members will be aware of the coaching videos that I have posted on the Basingstoke CC website: at today’s date the very basic AC video has been viewed 16,793 times and the six GC modules a total of 14,375 views. As a result of the impending changes of rules for GC, those modules will need to be re-made.

I had hoped to start on a series of modules for AC this year, but the weather conditions and pressure on lawn time at Basingstoke has precluded that.

I have added some AC “problems” and practice routines for GC and AC to the website.

7. I encourage all Clubs to ensure that they have at least one qualified coach among their members and that coaching is offered as a regular activity during the season.

I stand ready to help Clubs and prospective coaches who wish to improve their offering to their members.

Ian Harrison
16 October 2018

SCF Development Officer Report

2018 has not been a very active year for Development of clubs. For my part, I attended the Development Committee meeting in January and gave a presentation to the DOs present on behalf of the National Development Officer, Dave Gunn. This was on the theme of how Sport England’s ‘Club Matters’ could aid all clubs and Federations with development. I also presented a paper on the subject of Student Sponsorship for Clubs in collaboration with Roger Staples.

I co-presented with Dave Gunn, a workshop in London to FDOs on the subject of using ‘Club Matters’ and the development of ‘Croquet Matters’ which included all help and support available to FDOs.

Some Development work included:

Winslow CC ongoing discussions with Elizabeth Kinsell regarding a possible relocation of the club.

Winchester CC applying for a grant to replace their club hut.

Great Bedwyn CC requesting a grant for new croquet balls. (CA grants are not usually given for equipment at established clubs). A loan facility was offered.

Ryde CC requesting a grant for new mallets. Same comment as above. A loan facility was offered.

Purley on Thames. I had a discussion with a John Murphy who had seen croquet at last year's Countryfile Live. He was interested in starting a croquet club in his vicinity. I put him in touch with two clubs Blewbury and Phyllis Court and also offered my help and support. However on following up, John has had two major health problems this year and therefore the project has all but died.

The Marlborough secondary school in Woodstock. Recent inquiry from this school as a result of this year's Countryfile Live event. Early days as I have just replied to the teacher and have yet to hear back.

Barry Dench
October 2018

Southern Croquet Federation

SCF Handicapper (AC) and SCF Handicapper (GC) joint report

We have continued to monitor results from all SCF administered league and tournament games. With the exception of one rapidly improving player at Hamptworth, it has not been necessary for us to consider making any manual adjustments to individual players handicaps this season. The Hamptworth player was being well observed by his experienced club handicapper, who our opinion has made the necessary adjustments throughout the season at well-judged intervals.

We are well served in the SCF by our GC Leagues manager Roy Tillcock, who has taken over the administration task of forwarding results to the National Rankings Officer and Chris Roberts continues to perform that roll for the AC results. This means that there has continued to be two sets of eyes looking at all results as they happen, watching for anomalies like individuals winning (or losing) a larger number of games than expected. There have been no such occurrences that have come to light this season.

SWCF Handicapping Workshop

We were both invited to contribute to this innovative event held at Cheltenham CC in Mid-March. Unfortunately, a bad bout of flu 'floored' Frances for nearly three weeks and, after preparing for the event, she was unable to attend. Chris did attend, was used as a presenter and discussion leader for a group workshop that discussed the difficulties in minimising regional differences in handicap grades. Whilst it is the role of CA Appointed Handicappers to undertake the task of creating a level field of handicap grades across the country, this is difficult to achieve when there are no guidelines as to what a certain level of player 'looks like'. We were delighted that this topic was at the centre of the discussions that took place at this workshop, and that we were so involved with the process of trying to

resolve the matter. Starting with an older work by croquet doyen Don Gaunt, the workshop took in the opinions of about 40 representatives of nearly all the SWCF clubs and listened to contributions from SWCF officers Ros Key-Pugh and Robert Moss. It also heard from CA Handicap committee member Chris Williams, who is the designer of the World Ranking System for both AC and GC.

The result of this splendid initiative, is a document that describes and deals with the aforementioned difficulties. It crucially includes some 'benchmark' descriptions of players different abilities and what handicap grade one would expect them to be on. This is the long-awaited answer to all handicap officers' payers.

This document has been adopted by the SWCF and we believe that it should be considered for adoption by the SCF too.

Frances Colman to Chair the CA Handicap Committee

Frances has been appointed as Chairman of this influential committee, who's first meeting will be next month. She will propose the SWCF document (detailed above) be adopted as CA policy to be adhered to nationally.

Frances will also tackle the poor AC practice of allowing higher handicapped players to participate in events which are beyond their handicap grade, so long as they 'play-off' the ceiling grade of that event. This of course is quite wrong and against CA Tournament regulations (H1a) which states that 'a competitor must play each game at his correct handicap'.

Caversham CC and Winslow CC

In preparation for Caversham's introduction into the new SCF GC One Court Clubs League and AC handicap League, we arranged a pre-season visit to assess their handicaps. Unfortunately, this also coincided with Frances' incapacitation and so she luckily avoided the appalling weather that day and the bout of pneumonia that might well have resulted. Chris did attend and press-ganged in experienced GC player Roger Goldring of Phyllis Court to help him. The constant rain and unmown rough court (it was unplayable really) severely hampered the accuracy of the assessments that were attempted, but it was better than nothing. A similar exercise was arranged for Winslow CC but also rained off, was rearranged to take place at Phyllis Court but this also floundered due to their players other commitments.

Frances Colman (AC) & Chris Roberts (GC)

Southern Croquet Federation

Federation Representative to the CA Council report

I have attended the two meetings of the CA Council since my last report. I was invited to join the nine-person Management Committee during the year and have attended two meetings at London and at Cheltenham. In addition to attending these meetings, there has of course been much e-mail correspondence and phone conversations besides.

CA Club membership fee

Of particular interest to SCF Clubs will be business of Club membership of the CA and the way that the club fee is calculated. This is of course by means of the per capita calculation on the number of players in membership of the club concerned. There was a proposal circulated to clubs that all playing members should be included in that calculation, thereby changing the current arrangement that only players who have declared that club as their 'primary club' would be counted.

I received two emails from SCF clubs expressing unhappiness with this proposal, and replied that I would canvas the opinions of all the other SCF clubs so that I could represent their views correctly. I duly e-mailed all the SCF Clubs and only received two additional replies who did not support the proposal, and of the others that replied, all were in favour.

I have latterly learnt, that the CA Secretary did receive other replies from clubs around the country that were not in favour of the proposal. Consequently, the proposal has been withdrawn from the Council meeting tomorrow (20th October).

Croquet at BBC Countryfile

Following last year's successful first appearance of croquet at this huge event at Blenheim Palace, the CA were invited to repeat the exercise in early August this year.

I again took on the not inconsiderable task of recruiting approximately 60 volunteer croquet playing helpers to staff this four-day event. All SCF clubs were circulated and sufficient volunteers were eventually found to cover the commitment, with a team leader taking charge each day. Volunteers numbers were bolstered by prominent figures in UK croquet.

I was pleased to be able to attend on three of the days, leading one, and the feedback was that the whole exercise was great success, both in terms of giving croquet a presence and likely recruitment of future croquet players for clubs nationwide.

Eynsham CC, the most local club to the event, played a prominent role in preparing the playing area, providing the equipment and clearing away afterwards, and a big thank you is due to them.

SWF Handicapping Workshop

Along with Chris Roberts, I was invited to contribute to this innovative event held at Cheltenham CC in Mid-March. See our joint Federation Handicappers report.

Frances Colman