

2021 Annual General Meeting

Secretary's Report

To say that the year ending 31st December 2020 had been anything but unusual would be an understatement to say the least. Unless you have been living in splendid isolation you do not need a reminder from me that the whole world including our own UK have been weighed down with the pandemic Covid-19 which, of course has reeked devastating havoc with all forms of organised sport including our own croquet.

First indications appeared early in the year affecting firstly the indoors programme at Soham when we struggled with numbers but, the real problems surfaced in the spring when it became obvious because of Government lockdowns that things were about to become critical. With travel becoming difficult there appeared no other option then to call off the planned 2020 summer programme with the hope we might be able to salvage something later in the year if things improved. This proved to be a forlorn hope and it was decided to cancel the whole programme and refund to our clubs all the entry fees received.

Membership held up and despite limited croquet available mainly strictly restricted to among club members we only lost one Associate Member. However, for the coming year we are seeing a small surge in our membership which currently stands at 31. Of these 25 are Full members with the remaining 6 being Associates.

The next problem to rear its ugly head was that the 2020 A.G.M. scheduled for Saturday 21st March 2020 also because of lockdown could not be held at the Newport Club as had been arranged. Fortuitously as all our Club Secretaries are internet users it was decided by the Committee that it would be conducted virtually over the period 6th to 30th April 2020 by e-mail. This was set up by the Secretary who acted as Invigilator supported by Arthur Reed and John Noble as Examiners. The whole procedure went smoothly and was very well supported by the clubs and we experienced the best although virtual attendance in years.

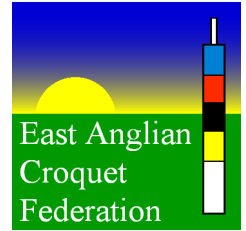
There was at least one chink in the armour that arose near to the end of the summer in that during a brief period it proved possible on the 26th/27th September to stage at Wrest Park both the AC and GC Club Champions Tournaments. Despite a break in the weather which up to then had been fine and sunny became rather overcast, chilly and with occasional rain, however the whole week-end attracted a full entry and was well received.

During the limited periods when play and travel was permitted St. Albans managed to win through to The Longman Cup final round where they unfortunately lost to Hampstead Heath by the narrowest of margins 3 - 4. Also, as our 2019 AC league winners they represented the region and as the previous year's winner in the Secretary's Shield and are yet to meet High Wycombe in the final round. We wish them success if it is eventually played.

With regards to the forthcoming year so far, the Committee have only been able to carry out the most basic of admin tasks such as registration and keeping the web-site up to date. It is planned to stage a full programme of our usual leagues and tournaments but, having to wait to see what will happen regarding lockdown. Once the position is made clear by the Government and what regulations permit, we will be contacting all clubs outlining what we propose for the remainder of the summer.

In the mean-time stay safe and I look forward to some lawn time in the near future.

EAST ANGLIAN CROQUET FEDERATION



Treasurer's Report to AGM 29th March 2021

Zoom Meeting

1. Bank Accounts

The Nationwide Treasurer's Account has now been closed as Nationwide are not continuing these accounts. The closing balance, as shown in the accounts, has been paid into the Barclays account. The Committee has agreed that this should stay in the Barclays account for the time being as interest rates are very low unless we accepted restriction on access.

On-line banking on the Barclays account is working for George Collin and myself and we have made the first payment by this method. Terrey Sparks, as the other signatory, will be added when possible but it has proved difficult to progress this matter during the pandemic.

2. Statement of Accounts for 2020

An examined statement of accounts for 2020 has been circulated. The surplus of **£1561.90** is largely accounted for by the exceptional payment of £1250 from New Hall School for the equipment which it had on loan and subsequently lost. Without this the surplus would have been **£311.90**

Entry fees for all cancelled events were refunded.

3. Registrations for 2021

18 clubs had paid their subscriptions as at 21st March.

4. Subscription rates

At the 2020 AGM undertaken by e-mail it was agreed that the subscriptions for 2021 should be raised to £25 for Full Members and £12.50 for Associate Members. However, as the coronavirus prevented us running any of the leagues last year, the Executive Committee has agreed that this increase should be deferred until 2022. **The rates therefore remain as £20 for Full Members and £10 for Associate Members.** The rates for next year will be reviewed again at the end of the 2021 season when the continuing impact of the coronavirus can be assessed.

Arthur Reed

Hon. Treasurer

EACF Dev Officer's Report Feb 2021

Frinton and Hethersett clubs have both been supported in bids for grants from the CA Funding Committee. Frinton want to build a lawn to re-establish croquet at the club. Hethersett, who share their ground with a Cycle Speedway Club, want to build a new clubhouse and accessible loo.

Equipment is out on loan to Frinton and Doddington. I hope to offer the latter more coaching at some stage. Frinton have made an excellent start with coaching from Rich Waterman.

Plans to get 6th formers at Wymondham College playing croquet (as part of extra-curricular activities/D of E award) were scuppered in 2020. Will wait to see if it is feasible later this year.

I hope to acquire a set of Sunshiny secondary balls from the CA for the equipment store. I will take sets of hoops for refurbishment to Mike Percival in Suffolk when permitted by travel rules.

Jonathan Toye
16 Feb 2021

East Anglian Croquet Federation

Indoor Carpet (Soham) Report 2020

It was early January 2020 and the first signs of the pandemic became obvious when Paul Hetherington and myself jointly splitting the management of the Indoors Tournaments found it difficult to recruit sufficient entrants for the Soham events which up until Christmas had been reasonably healthy. It was apparent that following warnings from the Government to avoid social mixing was taking effect.

Over a normal weekend the indoors events would over the two days attract 32 entries totaling 96 in numbers over the 3 months that they would be run. This would give us a total credit of £216. In fact overall, our total numbers only amounted to 67 and in fact led to an overall loss for the period of £190.

Still with some creative managing from Paul and myself the weekends play went well and play was most enjoyed as it usually is.

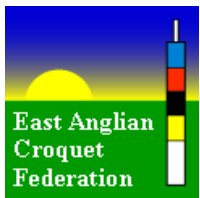
As I have been managing the Indoor events since 2012 a total of 8 years, I felt I was becoming a bit jaded and we needed to find a new pair of fresh hands to inject some new ideas, I was pleased when Paul Hetherington came forward as a willing volunteer and was due to take over the management the coming October.

Unfortunately, we all know the outcome as the country went into complete lockdown and the Soham Sports Centre has been closed since. However, the management has confirmed that once they are given the all clear our normal bookings are safe.

Hopefully, these popular indoor tournaments will re-commence next October and I wish Paul all the success. I am sure you will all give him your support as you have done for me over the years.

Terrey Sparks

1st March 2021



EACF AGM - Webmaster's report

The EACF website has continued to operate normally for the last year without any particular problems. The hosting service cost has reduced slightly with the strengthening of the Sterling-USD exchange rate over the course of 2020, and now costs under £40 per annum including the domain registration fee.

The website grows each year as pages for the current year are added and the previous year's pages are archived. It now contains over 500 pages, 1,500 assorted photos and documents, and 22,000 hyperlinks.

To date there have been nearly 2.5 million hits, of which roughly half appear to come from real users and the other half from a multitude of web-crawlers or "robots" including Google, Bing and the Chinese and Russian equivalents Baidu and Yandex. The most popular page is now the "Day" view of the Court Booking System, which has taken over the top spot from the EACF home page.

Further improvements have been made to the security of the website, designed to prevent a variety of possible malicious attacks – which are frequent and come from all over the world – and it now scores an "A+" rating or equivalent on several independent website security assessments. (For comparison, Lloyds Bank scores an "A" on the same scale.)

Court Booking System

Use of the CBS has grown considerably as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic and the requirement to manage the numbers of players with some kind of advance court booking. There are now 16 clubs in the EACF using the system. It has also now been made freely available to croquet clubs outside the EACF, and another 16 clubs from 5 other CA Federations have started using it during 2020. There are now over 1100 registered users who have made over 75,000 bookings on over 150 "virtual" courts. (Each physical court is commonly represented as two "virtual" courts in order to enable double-banked bookings.)

Several enhancements have been made to the CBS during 2020, the most notable of which are a modernised and less cluttered user interface, better usability on mobile devices, the addition of an all-courts summary view per week and per month, and the option of a new "widget" which enables clubs and their members to see a real-time summary of their own court bookings for the next few days embedded directly in their own club website.

Simon Hathrell

February 2021