

# **2022 E.A.C.F. Annual General Meeting**

## **Secretary's Report**

Another difficult year but, hopefully 2022 will prove to be much better and we will return to something like pre Covid -19 levels of play. Currently membership of the Federation stands at 32 clubs of which 28 are Full Members and 4 Associate. In our number we welcome Finchley Victoria who joined us from the Southern Region to avoid travel in and across the London Area. Normally we would have listed Doddington but, they had trouble getting started so did not register. However, it is likely they will return this year. Also, I am pleased to announce that after a successful dialogue by Simon Hathrell, Cambridge University have joined our ranks. Due to restricted travel arrangements have opted to enter and play in the Essex/Suffolk handicap league where I am sure they will be most welcome.

I would like to say that the Eastern Committee works together extremely well particularly between myself, The Treasurer Arthur Reed and webmaster Simon Hathrell who both carry out their tasks at a high level of competence. In addition, I have received full co-operation from all of our clubs which makes life a lot easier, who incidentally are all on the web. However, one small gripe, I wish if you have an enquiry refer firstly to the Federation website before picking up the telephone. Simon has spent a considerable amount of time and effort transferring records and updating all current events so it all there for you to check.

Despite the minor adversaries all leagues both AC & GC were completed despite reduced entries resulting in adjustments to the size and reallocations of the clubs, but overall, a favourable final result. I'm pleased to report. Full reports are printed on our website as they are all throughout the summer.

Likewise, all our Inter - Federation Tournaments and other events were satisfactorily completed with a good and above number of entrants. Again, full reports are available on the website for you to peruse if you so wish.

During 2021 clubs and members had some success in National Events with Mark Avery of the Colchester Club the overall winner of 'The Presidents Shields', Nick Steiner also of Colchester taking the Secretary Weekend. For GC we have Tony Butcher of Southchurch winning the Veterans 'The Alan Oldham Trophy. Congratulations all on a brilliant effort. Next, we have Letchworth beating Hurlingham to win the 'Longman Cup' and Watford also beating Hurlingham to lift the 'Murphy Shield'. Still, I'm sure we will still get a warm greeting on our proposed trips to South London. I hope so as I play there several times over the summer. Finally, commiserations to St. Albans losing out to Sheffield in the final of 'The Secretary's Shield', still a valiant effort.

Finally, after holding the post of Secretary for the last 5 years my second term in the last 20 years I find myself at odds with the current direction the C.A. is taking which I consider is to far politically motivated and myself not being able or willing to spend my time on subjects that I consider have no relevance to croquet. However, believing that Federations exist for developing and running the game in our regions I am willing to continue running such events as leagues and tournaments at a local level. I trust you will give the new Secretary whoever they are, your full support which I have always received.

# Annual General Meeting 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022

## Treasurer's Report

### 1. Accounts 2021

The 2021 accounts which are enclosed show a surplus of **£449.76**. All events are budgeted to breakeven but an unexpected surplus was achieved on the GC leagues because of reduced participation resulting in less semi-finals and finals being necessary. Hence less expense was incurred in hiring lawns. Financially this was fortuitous but is unlikely to be repeated as we hope participation will return to pre-pandemic levels this year. Because of Covid only 2 weekends of indoor croquet at Soham could be arranged- in November and December. Due to a combination of fears about Covid and the proximity of the December booking to Christmas participation was lower than expected resulting in a loss of £360.

The funds carried forward are **£10,803.69**.

It has not been necessary to issue any cheques in 2021 as we have been able to make all payments by bank transfer now that the online banking system is working effectively.

Three people have taken advantage of the £25 subsidy we have introduced for course entry fees and I expect this number to increase in 2022 as more people become aware of the scheme.

### 2. Development Grants

Over a number of years of generally modest surpluses the Federation now has reserves of over £10,000. Whilst there is a need to hold reserves to cover items such as:

- a) unforeseen losses on events, particularly on indoor events where we have to commit to hall bookings at Soham well in advance
- b) losses of equipment. It is not economic to cover this with insurance
- c) replacement of the indoor carpet at some future date
- d) other unforeseen contingencies such management of the website

the Committee has decided that some reduction in the reserves is now appropriate so has earmarked £3000 of the reserves as a Development Fund. A Full Member Club can apply to the Federation Development Officer (FDO), currently Jonathan Toye, for a small grant of up to **£300**. **It should be stressed that these grants are strictly intended to help a club develop.** They will not be provided to cover ordinary running costs including the replacement of equipment or regular lawn maintenance. This is because clubs are expected to make provision to meet such costs from their own resources including insurance cover where appropriate.

A club will only be entitled to one grant in any 3 year period. It is suggested that any club which might be interested in applying should contact Jonathan to discuss the matter. He can provide a more detailed policy and procedure document together with an application form. Applications will be considered by the FDO, The Treasurer and one other Committee member.

It is appreciated that these grants are not large enough to finance a project but could be a small top up to other sources of funds or could be a useful contribution to the cost of a single item of equipment or of organising a special event to increase membership.

This scheme will be reviewed by the committee annually.

### 3. Subscription rates for 2023

I recommend that the rates for 2023 remain unchanged i.e. £25 for Full Members and £12.50 for Associate Members.

Arthur Reed

## EACF Development Officer's Report Jan 2022

Frinton have created a new lawn which they hope to be using this year alongside their half lawn on a tennis court. They require more equipment. I have suggested applying for a loan from the CA.

Peterborough have taken delivery of two Rolls Royce wheelchairs following interest shown locally by a wheelchair user keen to play croquet. They received a grant from the Lottery's Awards for All scheme.

Northampton have received grants from the CA and elsewhere towards the costs of establishing their new lawns.

I will be coaching 6th formers and other years at Wymondham College ( a state boarding school outside Norwich) from April with the aim of establishing croquet as a regular sporting activity at the school.

I have entered Downham CC details on Active Norfolk's "Every Move" website. (On Norfolk County Council's website). This is a very useful way of promoting sporting activities and clubs.

Ipswich are planning to create four lawns at Trinity Park, Ipswich ( where the Suffolk Show is held). They will be submitting applications for grants for this major project. Advice being given by Duncan Hector.

Bury St Edmunds are trying to negotiate a lease with the Sports Ground owners in order to be able to apply for grant aid to improve their facilities. Given their location I advised also exploring the possibility of sharing with a bowls club. Spoke about Foxy hoops.

Jonathan Toye  
20 January 2022

## **Soham Indoor Croquet Update for EACF AGM**

The hall was booked for the dates below and an Eventbrite site established to enable advance booking and a reserve list. Unfortunately the hall hire increased to £520 per weekend this means at £20 a head we need 26 people across the weekend to break even. An article about Soham appeared in the November Gazette and has been a regular in the CA E-news throughout the season in an effort to bring in wider support as well as inviting directly all those who have taken part in the past few years. Despite this the threat of Covid hanging over participation especially pre-Christmas and the sad reality that many of our regulars are getting less active; attendance has been down on previous years and we are projecting to make a loss of £400 across the season. The alternate stroke events seem very popular and perhaps we should have more of these in 2023.

### **November Total 20 people loss £120**

Saturday November 13th 2021 Inter Counties, normal speed doubles without bisques , winners Essex (D & A Maugham) only four teams participated or 8 people.

Sunday November 14th 2021 MLP Mallets normal speed doubles, winners Socks (D & A Maugham) 6 teams, 12 participants.

### **December Total 14 people loss £240**

Saturday 18th December 2021 Rose Bowl, normal speed doubles, winners Pebo (A Kirby & P Hetherington) 3 teams, 6 participants.

Sunday 19th December 2021 Soham Trophy, normal speed doubles, winners (D Hector & P Ross) 4 teams, 8 participants.

### **January Total 28 people surplus £40**

Saturday 15th January 2022 Belgian Cup, alternative shot doubles, winners Pros N Mountfield & G Higgins) 8 teams, 16 participants.

Sunday 16th January 2022 The Soham Trophy, normal speed doubles, winners (D Hector & P Ross) teams, participants.

### **February Total 21 people loss £100 projection**

Saturday 12th February 2022 The Martins Trophy, progressive doubles, 8 entries at present.

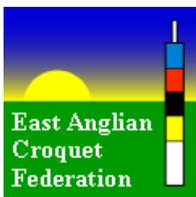
Sunday 13th February 2022 Albert Lawrence Trophy, normal speed doubles, 13 entries at present, 7 teams.

### **March Total 27 people surplus £20 projection**

Saturday 12th March 2022 The Cornelius Cup, normal speed doubles, 16 entries, 8 teams

Sunday 13th March 2022 The Millennium Cup, normal speed doubles, 11 entries at present, 6 teams

***Paul Hetherington 01/02/22***



## 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 remained at about the same level as last year, around £40 per annum including the domain registration fee, though fluctuating slightly with changes to the Sterling-USD exchange rate.

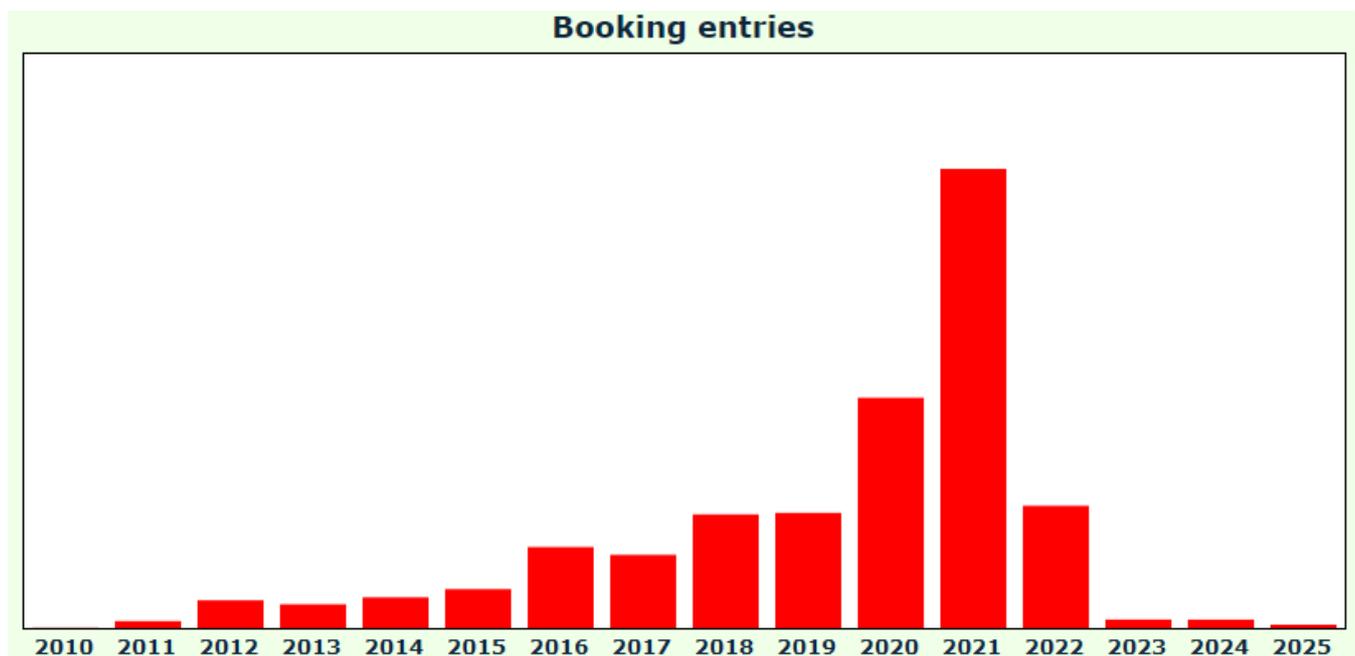
The website continues to grow each year as pages for the current year are added and the previous year's pages are archived, and it now contains over 550 interlinked pages.

To date there have been over 3 million hits, of which around 55% appear to come from real users and the other half from a multitude of web-crawlers or "robots". The most popular page by far is now the "Day" view of the Court Booking System, which now receives nearly 10 times as many hits as the next busiest page, the EACF website Home page, with almost all visits to the CBS made by real users.

Technical upgrades to the underlying database and script processing software on the server were successfully carried out in late 2021. These upgrades are necessary every few years in order to remain within the software support life-cycles, and typically require several small adjustments to several website scripts to retain compatibility as the software evolves.

### Court Booking System

Use of the CBS continued to grow in 2021 as more clubs from around the country have started to use the system. There are now 16 clubs in the EACF using it, and a further 21 in other Federations. There are now nearly 1500 registered users who have made nearly 118,000 bookings in total on 189 "virtual" courts since the system started operating, of which about 40,000 bookings were made in 2021 alone, double the number made in 2020.



Simon Hathrell  
January 2022

# **2022 Annual General Meeting**

## **A.C. Handicap league Report**

15 teams from 14 clubs entered the AC Handicap league during 2021 the same number as the previous year. The Beds/Herts region attracted 6 Entries and was won by Wrest Park. The Essex/Suffolk region, attracted only a low entry of 3 clubs, due mainly to Covid and the loss of Ipswich (Lawn difficulties) and was won by Newport. The Cambs/ Norfolk region had 6 entries from 5 clubs an increase of 3 teams on the previous year and was won by Great Dunham.

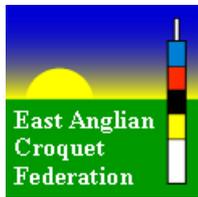
All three successful clubs took part in the regional play-off held at Watford on 2nd October ably managed by Simon Hathrell on a wet, cold and blustery day, and despite the unfortunate weather condition the day which was a very close and competitive affair was narrowly won by Newport which went right down to the wire.

Newport being winners will represent the region in 2022 in the national event the 'Secretary Shield'.

All League and Play-Off results are published on the Federations web-site.

Terrey Sparks  
AC League Organiser

February 2022



## Beds & Herts AC league report

The Beds & Herts AC league format has been stable for several years now, comprising matches of 6 games - two doubles and four singles – between teams of 4, except when played at clubs with only one court when it reduces to two doubles and two singles played by teams of 3.

After a season without competition in 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the league resumed near normal operation in 2021. It was contested between 6 clubs, with Enfield returning from their sabbatical in 2019 to replace Meldreth, as the latter was unable to raise enough players to participate in 2021.

The league schedule was completed on time and with all matches played, and with Wrest Park emerging as the winners for the first time since 2009 with a comfortable 3-point margin, denying St. Albans their hat-trick. Northampton managed to compete in spite of having no usable courts at home for much of the season, by agreeing to play their nominal “home” match against Watford away – which Northampton managed to win anyway, their only win of the season.

Simon Hathrell

January 2022