

SPRING MEETING

NORTH WESTERN FEDERATION OF CROQUET CLUBS

The Meeting was held on Saturday 2nd March 2013 at 10.00 am
at Culcheth Sports & Social Club, Charnock Road, Culcheth, WA3 5SH.

The Meeting was attended by 30 people representing:

Bowdon:	Steve Reynolds, John Saxby.
Bury:	David Barrett, Graham Good, Jean Hargreaves, Paul Kenworthy, Jean Oldfield, Paul Rigge, Barbara Young, Geoff Young.
Chester:	Janet Davies, John Dawson, David Guyton.
Culcheth:	Pat Barlow, Alison Charter, Anne Connop, Bob Connop, Di Mitchell, Alan Wright.
Fylde:	Lee Hartley, Peter Wilson, Liz Wilson.
Liverpool	James Hawkins.
Pendle & Craven:	Kathryn Schofield, Roger Schofield.
Salford	Frances Rollinson.
Southport:	Eileen Gallagher, Don Williamson.
Westmorland	John Shakespeare, Ivan Wheatley.

1. Welcome by the Chairman

The NWFCC Chairman Liz Wilson started on time and welcomed club representatives to the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Keith Roberts, Tony Thomas, Jack Pattenden(Craig y Don), Tom Griffith (Crake), Ron Welsh (Pendle), Howard Bowron (Penrith & North Lakes),.

3. Confirmation of Minutes of the AGM – 3rd November 2012

The minutes of the last meeting were approved. – proposed by David Barrett, seconded by Jean Hargreaves.

4. Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes

There were no matters arising from the previous Minutes not covered by today's agenda.

5. Reports from the Officers

A. Chairman – Liz Wilson.

The off-season is now officially over!

All quiet on the North West Front over the winter break. Nothing contentious has come up and there has been nothing of significance to deal with.

The talk I arranged by Keith Aiton was over-subscribed. The talk was thought provoking and well received (no-one fell asleep). Bowdon did a splendid job of hosting this with plenty of lunch, a well stocked bar and a well organised one-ball competition. They even through in good weather!

Good promotional news from the North West has come in the form of two grants – one slightly larger than the other. Liverpool Croquet Club has been granted a large sum of money jointly with the tennis club – some £49,000 to renovate their club house. And Fylde have just won The Apps Heley Award – a trophy plus £250 from the CA. I would like to offer my congratulations to both.

Good luck to all clubs this season – let's hope for some sunshine.

B. Secretary – Paul Rigge.

Confirmation received that Colin Irwin is well and is continuing as Cheshire County Captain. It was also announced that anyone wishing to be considered for Cheshire should contact Colin directly or show availability on the CA website. As agreed at AGM, no Croquet on the North leaflet has been produced this year and Croquet North & East had been informed.

The new prototype *indoor* hoop was available for inspection at the front of the room.

Requested to write to CA Chair of Tournament Committee clarifying reasons for Chester's repeated failure of hosting bids.

C. Treasurer – Bob Connop presented the current statement of accounts: A copy is attached - Appendix (i).

Showing slight net increase in funds over winter.

D. Development Officer - Janet Davies

As usual I have a problem with the Development report as most of the good news concerns individual clubs who will be reporting a bit later in the meeting and I don't want to steal their fire. However I will do my best.

Since the AGM last November there have been two meetings of the Development Committee and thus two rounds of development grant applications, plus the biennial consideration of awards for clubs who have made the most progress in two consecutive years of the past three. I'm happy to say that our two new clubs, Craig y Don (Llandudno) and Tattenhall, who both applied for grants, have been awarded them in full.

In addition Fylde who entered the contest for the Apps Heley Award (for the Club with 3 or 4 lawns which has made most progress) share the award with West Worthing. After a long discussion last Saturday we decided that it was impossible to choose between these two very different but excellent clubs. There were no other applications for grants or awards from North West Clubs so we have achieved a 100% hit rate.

The other bit of good news concerns Liverpool, which has obtained a grant of £49,900 from the Lottery Fund via Sport England, to enable the renovation of the pavilion in Sefton Park which the club shares with the Mersey Bowmen Tennis Club. All the credit for this belongs to James Hawkins. We are now expecting great things!

The Nannerch Village Sports Club have been considering whether to start a croquet section this season. The decision was to be taken at their meeting last Thursday 28th Feb, and they have decided to go ahead. They will however need a lot of support as they have no in house expertise.

The Development Committee timetable has been revamped and the autumn meeting will be held a month earlier than previously – on October 26th. So if any of clubs hope to begin development projects next winter, please discuss them with me well before the end of the season, as applications for grants will have to be sent in at the end of September.

You should also consider the possibility of applying to Sport England for lottery grants, as they seem to have quite a lot of money around at present now the Olympic Games are over.

Equipment Audit attached - Appendix (ii).

E. League Manager - Tony Thomas

A big thank you to everyone and especially all team captains who have perused my fixture lists through the development stages and corrected the odd typos or negotiated new dates so very efficiently. The process has run very smoothly this year thanks to the information provided by everyone prior to Xmas – that really is the critical step.

We have expanded our league programme for 2013 with the introduction of the new Level Play Golf League and although only four clubs (Bury, Culcheth, Fylde, Pendle) have ventured forth, I think this league has the potential to really excite new players and even spectators. Westmorland have expanded their ambitions by joining the Short league for the first time increasing the number of teams to eight, whilst Crake have re-joined the Advanced League increasing that league to 8 clubs.

The Handicap and Golf Croquet leagues remain the same as last year with ten teams in each whilst the Midweek League retains the same eight teams as last year.

The season commences at Easter with the popular John Beech Memorial tournament at Pendle and the finishing date will be 30th September 2013. This gives us 25 weeks in which to fit 180 league matches interweaved between 83 days of club tournaments and open days. As some of you have discovered re-negotiating alternative dates without clashing with other events or indeed just finding available lawns can be quite a challenge!

The League Rules for 2013 have been amended in accordance with our decisions at the meeting last November – please remind yourselves of the new procedures for abandoned, postponed and void matches. I have also added four new rules to cope with the new Level Play Golf League – our procedure requires you to ratify these by a vote – may I suggest you agree these without too much discussion, since they have already been agreed by the only four clubs who have entered this league.

Rules;

Level Play Golf Croquet

25 All matches shall be played according to 'The Laws of Golf Croquet (3rd Edition)' - available on the CA website or can be purchased from the CA shop.

26 Each team shall consist of three players, with each match consisting of 18 Singles games - all play all - twice.

27 There are no time limits for games.

28 Each game will be level play and changes in individual handicap will be calculated as per the 'Level Play' index on the official CA handicap card.

The website (www.croquetnw.co.uk) has been updated and contains contact details for all clubs and team captains, blank scoresheets for different format league matches, the calendar of course and the latest league rules. As always I will endeavour to keep it up to date with summaries of results and current league tables.

I would be grateful if captains can report results and any changes as soon as possible. Email or text is probably the best way since wherever I happen to be, provided I have access to the Internet, I can update the pages.

So keep in touch and have a successful but most of all, an enjoyable season.

The New Rules were passed – proposed by James Hawkins, seconded by Paul Kenworthy.

F. Coaching Officer – Roger Scholfield

I took over from Ken Cooper at the AGM. Ken has been giving me a drip feed on what to do and I have been doing my best to keep up.

The Flying Circus will be appearing at Bowdon on the 18th of April and at Pendle on the 20th. It's an improver's course at Bowdon which is full and a bronze course at Pendle, for which there are a limited number of vacancies. Ken is running the Bowdon course assisted by Liz and me. Ron Welch is running the Pendle course. Those of you who are willing to assist him please let me know either now or later. I am still working on a gold course at Southport and other courses at Chester.

David Barrett and Liz Wilson proposed Ken Cooper as coach of the year which was accepted by the CA coaching committee a fortnight ago.

Requests and discussion about courses for Club Coaches and Referee courses was had.

G. CA Representative – Geoff Young

Reported that still nothing had been decided over the winter on how to finance the CA in future, from the report presented at our AGM.

Also reported that discussion had been had over splitting the strong southern federation into three as well as the feasibility of parachuting clubs into the barren areas – interesting but inconclusive.

Geoff offered advice to his replacement on which CA committee's to apply for and wished them well.

The meeting thanked Geoff for his service as our voice on the CA with a round of applause.

H. NW Festival of Croquet Manager – Keith Roberts.

Nothing to report, however, remind people that they can send their (constructive) ideas to me, they will be considered along with the only one I have received so far.

I would also like as much notice as possible on how many teams (of what discipline) that each club intend to enter this year – planning on this scale is ***not*** done overnight!

I. Pennine Cup - Paul Rigge

Nothing to report, however, usual appeal for players with AC Hcp < 12 to make themselves available for this year's match at Pendle & Earby 23rd June.

J. Child Protection Officer – Jean Hargreaves.

Reported that all sorts of changes are on the way; possible portable CRB's, free CRB's for voluntary organisations etc. and that the CA can't act as an umbrella organisation in this area due to membership/costs. However these ideas haven't yet been crystallised by government. The Federation and the CA are working very closely in this area and all the latest available data is kept current on the Federation website

6. Arrangements (dates and locations) for NW Federation Millennium Competitions.

- a) Advanced 20-21 April - Heaton Park
- b) Handicap 11/12 May - Pendle
- c) Short – 1st June – Fylde
- d) Golf 4th May - Heaton Park

Entry Forms were handed out at the meeting and would be emailed out by Liz to the clubs.

7. Election of Officers

- i) CA Representative - In line with new constitution this post now tracks the CA "year". Barry Keen has withdrawn his nomination in favour of Peter Wilson. Proposed – Roger Schofield, Seconded – John Saxby. Duly Elected to post.

8. Club Reports and Announcements (to be taken in alphabetical order).

i) Bowdon, John Saxby reports;

Continued their policy of keeping two lawns open throughout the winter with two taken out for top dressing and over-seeding. As of this week four lawns are now available for the season.

Our Wednesday comp. which is 3 X 14 point games in the summer changes to 4 X 13 point one-ball games for the winter with only a modest drop in attendance.

Our annual dinner used to be just a very good meal for limited numbers. This winter we changed to joining a function at our next door Cinnamon Club and provided about one third of the audience of 200 for dinner and dancing to Dominic Halpern and the Honeybees. We are doing the same this year and therefore we will be inviting as many members of the Federation as wish to come. Nov 22nd £30.

Finally we must add that we very much enjoyed hosting you all and Keith Aiton on the 9th of Feb and the weather obliged us.

See you all on the lawns

ii) **Bury, Reports;**

Our usual winter activities of ten pin bowling, party games & teas have been held to keep members in touch.

iii) **Chester, Janet Davies Reports;**

We are entering the Mary Rose and the Longman National competitions again this year, and have also decided to enter the All England Association Handicap competition for the first time despite having to travel to Colchester to the finals if we do well enough to send a candidate on that far. We have offered to host the area finals for the All England at the beginning of September this year and believe that we will be doing that. We have also again submitted a bid for the National Finals of the All England in 2015, undaunted by the fact that our similar bid for the Finals in 2014 was not only unsuccessful, but also we were not informed of the result of our bid – only discovering it when the entry forms came out this February and revealed that Colchester were hosting the competition again in 2014.

We are investigating the possibility of introducing junior players to association croquet by means of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Await more news in November.

Sadly our two Honorary Members, Margaret Povey and Hasting Wang, founder members of the Club in 1977, both died in December, at the ages of 92 and 87 respectively.

iv) **Craig y Don (Llandudno), Jack Pattenden Reports;**

I reported at the AGM that we were fundraising to acquire a new secure equipment shed. I am pleased to say that we have been able to raise the necessary thanks to a generous donation from Croquet Ass. and a grant from Conwy County Council. A substantial sum was also contributed by members. The total cost was £2141 and the shed is now in use awaiting our opening on 1st April.

We have had regular meetings to keep ourselves in touch during the winter, playing cards and other table games every fortnight.

Our first AGM was held in January at which a management committee was elected. At present we have 40 paid up members to start the season and the club is in good financial state.

v) **Crake Valley, Tom Griffith Reports;**

Problems with age and illness of members continue. We have a huge amount of moss on the lawns (from 3 years of standing water on them) . . . BUT . . .

. . . we think we may, just possibly, have resolved the drainage problem which resulted in the standing water. This season will show, but we hope that efforts to tackle the moss may have a better chance of success this year. And we do have a handful of new members, so it is not all doom and gloom.

vi) **Culcheth, Alan Wright Reports;**

Once again we are looking forward to another enjoyable year. As well as competing in the Golf League we shall also be entering a team in the new Level Play Golf league. The financial difficulties being experienced by the Culcheth Sports and Social Club have meant that we are still spending more on our Lawn maintenance costs. This we have been able to do from our reserves.

It is clear that we are going to have to expand our membership and raise extra funding from Social events such as the Quizzes which have been very successful. We are fortunate that we have members who are prepared to work hard, selling tickets and organising such events. We hope to attract new members from these events.

Members from Bury were welcome guests at our annual dinner in January and some of our members have attended the Bury annual dinner.

During the winter we play on our indoor mat and were pleased to welcome members from Bury on several occasions. Other club members are welcome to join us. We also recently held a fun day when members from Chester enjoyed playing on the mat. Some of our members also meet together during the winter to play cards and indoor games.

We shall be holding our usual club competitions and once again will be urging members to play their games earlier in the season rather than leaving everything until September.

vii) **Ellesmere – no report**

viii) **Flixton – no report**

ix) **Fylde, Peter Wilson reports;**

Fylde are holding the Millennium Short Competition on Saturday 1st June

We are also holding our CA Handicap Event again this year on 27th and 28th July. We can't guarantee Robert Fulford again this year but you never know!

We are proud to announce that we have won the Apps Heley Award jointly with West Worthing and we would like to take this opportunity to thank Janet Davies for all her help and support.

x) **Isle of Man - no report**

xi) **Keswick – no report**

xii) **Liverpool, James Hawkins reports;**

Been having *fun* over the rebuilding of hut with Tennis, to the point of physical contact! Not all the last 4 years been totally to waste then. Might get some play this year, if the weather plays ball with us that is, so am hopeful to have club open for business by May/June.

xiii) **Llanfairfechan, Anwen Lloyd Williams Reports;**

We held our AGM on Tuesday and Mr Bill Lewis was elected as the new President for a 3 year term, he took over from Mr John Wynn Hunt, also Jack Pattenden as the short croquet captain and Roger Edwards the golf croquet captain.

Our Friday Café has gone from strength to strength with around 20 members meeting every week for soup and sandwiches provided by members, on a rota basis, the last Friday café will be on the 15th of March when this will be our first fundraising event in the form of a Hot Pot., with a limit to 30 people at a cost of £5.00

In January we held our Annual Charity Beetle Drive, this year we made £100 for talking books.

We played host again this year to Chester Croquet Club for a game of indoor croquet at the leisure centre at Llandudno Junction.

Season starts on Easter Sunday where hot cross buns will be served, and our annual open day, will be on Sunday 12th May,

Group bookings are already coming in all we need is good weather.

xiv) **Pendle and Craven – Ron Welch reports;**

At long last our lawns have dried and work on them has begun with tining and sanding. We have been investigating our drainage system, which had been overwhelmed by last year's rain. Lawn 4 is already out of use since the middle area of turf was drowned, so we are using this as a pilot for improvements, and hope to follow with the others in the Autumn.

We only lost one evening of our Winter social programme to bad weather and this was, as usual, enjoyable and profitable.

We have a full list for the John Beech tournament at Easter and hope this is a good omen for the coming season

xv) **Penrith and North Lakes, Howard Bowron Reports;**

The club is holding it's first Open Day on May 14th, - except ours is an 'open afternoon and evening'. We're hoping some visitors will join 'introduction to AC' sessions in the subsequent three weeks. The most noteworthy event since the end of last season was the marriage of two members, - to each other! You don't get a lot of that in croquet clubs. They provided a champagne toast at our AGM which lifted the usual business to a higher plane

xvi) **Salford Reports;**

Like everyone else the rain did not help us in any way during the 2012 season. We struggled on and even managed to attract new visitors. Most did not stay however and we can only blame the wet weather as they seemed to have fun on the day.

We also invited some sixth form students to have a test croquet game after their exams had finished, eight pupils and teacher enjoyed themselves very much so we shall extend the idea further this year.

We interacted with Flixton, Bury and Worsley Croquet groups for friendly matches.

We plan to invite more groups this season as we now have the use of the pavilion where we can shelter if necessary, brew up and even spend a penny.

We received a grant from Claremont Waste Community Committee which enabled us to purchase a metal store cupboard to hold all our equipment, its lovely to not have to lug it around all the time.

Salford Council has cut back the park staff to the bare minimum so keeping the lawn good will have be our next priority. At one stage our lawn was invaded by groups of footballers and due to the weather it soon became a mud bath, this hopefully has been sorted amicably and the lawns seems to be recovering.

We received some excellent coaching from the Bury Croquet Group which was not only helpful but very enjoyable.

During the winter months we have met regularly for tea and chats and are now ready for the start of play in 2013.

Gloria Egan Chairman

Irene Waterhouse Treasurer

Frances Rollinson Secretary

xvii) **Southport - Brian Lewis Reports;**

As with other North West Clubs we have experienced the wettest winter in memory. The South Lawns have been flooded since November and the North Lawns, although not as bad have been wet enough to be 60% covered in moss. With the end of June NWF Festival in mind we are treating the moss this weekend and, later in the month, getting a contractor to mow and remove the long grass ready for us to treat the weeds and cut regularly with our greens mower. Hopefully, with some dryer spring weather, they should be ready to host you all at the Festival. We are paving and roofing the area between the club house and the storage shed, so the information board will be under cover. We are also putting a gate in the north lawn fence at the nearest point to the club house. This should prevent, at least, those playing in the near side of the cage from being knackered before they reach the lawn of play.

xviii) **Westmorland (Levenshall) John Shakespeare reports.**

Our season does not start until the end of March but we are busy preparing for what we hope will be another good year for Westmorland Croquet.

Last year we launched our Golf Team into competitive action and they acquitted themselves well with an end of season third place in the league.

As we all know opinions vary about Golf Croquet and in particular the danger of it becoming a dead end. This may be true for some but a number of our Golf team found that playing competitively gave them the confidence for other challenges and so this year we have also entered a team in the Short Lawn League.

We plan to take part in the Southport Festival again and maybe improve on last years handicap trophy win and overall second place and with a number of intra-club competitions we are in for a busy year.

9. Any Other Business

A member (Eileen Gallagher) tabled a question about handicapper's at club level, this quickly opened a discussion about this role at CA, Tournament and Club level. It was the mood of the meeting that a refresher course aimed at club handicappers before the start of the season would be beneficial to all members, the aim, to get all Federation Clubs following 'best practice' principles.

[Post meeting this forum was arranged – 17th March @ Lytham with James Hawkins & Don Williamson CA Hcp'ers]

Paul Rigge put out and appeal for players with Hcp sub 12 to contact him if they wished to be considered for this years McWeeney in Dublin (28/29 Sept)

10. Date, time and location of next meetings

AGM, 2nd November 2013 & Spring Meeting will be on 1st March 2014. Both at Culcheth Sports Club.

11. Close of Meeting - Meeting closed at 12:20

NWFCC**2012-2013 Income & Expenditure Statement****Current Year to 20 February 2013**

		<u>Amount</u>	<u>Account</u>
Income & Expenditure			
<i>Member Club Affiliation Fees</i>	Affiliation Fees @ £20/Club	<u>£140.00</u>	£140.00
<i>Development</i>	Income		
	Expenditure	_____	£0.00
<i>Miscellaneous Income</i>	Aiton Talk	£48.00	
	Interest	<u>£1.03</u>	£49.03
<i>Miscellaneous Expenditure</i>	Coffee/Tea at AGM		-£33.00
	Website Expenses		-£29.99
			£0.00
Nett income (loss) during year			£126.04
Opening Balances			
	Cash		£0.00
	Current Account		£691.85
	Deposit Account		£3,036.09
	Total Opening Balances		<u>£3,727.94</u>
Total as at 20 February 2013			<u>£3,853.98</u>
Bank Balances as at 20 February 2013			
	Cash		£0.00
	Current Account		£728.86
	Deposit Account		£3,125.12
Total as at 20 February 2013			<u>£3,853.98</u>

Note: Affiliation Fees are outstanding from 11 clubs at present. Could those clubs please either give me their fees at the meeting on 2nd March or send them to me (Bob Connop, 12 Burnham Close, Culcheth, Warrington, Cheshire, WA3 4LJ) by post.

Appendix (ii)

Equipment Report

NWFed equipment lent out is as follows:

Ellesmere: 3 mallets

Penrith: 4 mallets
1 set hoops
1 peg

Tattenhall: 1 set secondary balls
2 garden croquet mallets

Westmorland: 5 mallets
1 set primary balls
1 set secondary balls

CA Start up sets: Salford - issued in 2011
Llandudno - issued in 2012
Tattenhall - issued in 2012

Held by Development officer: 1 Development Officer's set held for demonstrations and short term loans only