

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
NORTH WEST FEDERATION OF CROQUET CLUBS
The Meeting was held on Saturday 8th November 2014 at 10.00 am
at Culcheth Sports & Social Club, Charnock Road, Culcheth, WA3 5SH.

The Meeting was attended by 30 people representing:

Bowdon	John Saxby, Ken Cooper, David Walters, Steve Reynolds, Barry Keen.
Bury	Jean Hargreaves, Ken Eccles, David Barrett, Paul Kenworthy, Graham Good, Paul Rigge.
Chester	Pat Clare, John Dawson.
Craig Y Don	
Crake	Tom Griffith.
Culcheth	Eric Charles, Bob Connop.
Ellesmere	
Flixton	
Fylde	Peter Wilson, Liz Wilson.
IOM	
Keswick	
Liverpool	
LLanfairfechan	
Nannerch	
Pendle & Craven	Geoff Whitaker, Maureen Whitaker, Kathryn Schofield, Roger Schofield, Garry Wilson.
Penrith	Howard Bowron.
Salford	Irene Waterhouse, Frances Rollinson.
Southport	Don Williamson, Tony Thomas.
Tattenhall	David Boyd.
Westmorland	John Shakespeare

Craig Y Don, Ellesmere, Flixton, IOM, Keswick, Liverpool, LLanfairfechan & Nannerch had no representation.

1. Welcome by the Chairman

The NWFCC Chairman Liz Wilson started on time and welcomed all present to their AGM.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from;

Officers; Christine Irwin, Keith Roberts, Ron Welsh.

Clubs; Richard Bellwood (IOM), Georgina Llewellyn, Jack Pattenden, David Guyton, James Hawkins & Ruth Wrigley.

3. Confirmation of Minutes from the Spring Meeting – 8th March 2014

Couldn't be signed- nobody had a copy with them.

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.

Inspiration for this report comes by looking a emails received over the last year.

There have been two main issues both of which will be spoken about during the meeting. Firstly the CA Federation Working Party Report and the subsequent proposed changes to the position on the Federations within the CA. I organised a meeting over last winter for the North West Clubs to learn about and consolidate their views in advance of the CA meeting in February at Huddersfield. Since then we had a paper from Jeff Dawson asking for the committee's views on the proposed changes prior to the CA AGM in early October. He offered your Chairman and Secretary one three hours slot on his way up North on a Saturday when Fylde (Liz) and Bury (Paul) were playing an advanced Federation match. The meeting didn't happen. He then offered to come and speak to the AGM, an offer we turned down as we feel there is little enough time for the other important issues we need to discuss. These CA proposals will be discussed as briefly as possible later in the meeting with an ideas of further discussion at the Spring Meeting when the CA know exactly what they are proposing.

The second quantity of emails refers to the ever-present handicap issues. I believe we are making progress with handicap anomalies although the golf croquet handicap system seems to still need some work. I can only urge club handicappers to be vigilant and act where necessary. Idle chat back from one of the CA committees seems to be that both Club and CA Handicappers should be less frightened of complimenting players by cutting their handicaps if necessary.

I did try to organise an inter-Federation event inviting all Federations with a boundary with ours, but with only limited interest and small teams promised only from Croquet North and The Scottish CA the idea was dropped. The SCA contact

was Fergus McInnes who you may know has gone missing in Geneva. He disappeared over a month ago and I would like to extend my best wishes to all his family.

Finally I am finishing my term of office as Chairman at this meeting and I would like to thank everyone for their support – in particular David Barrett who I co-opted to help as he had knowledge of the previous three years and who is now standing down from the committee. His input has been invaluable and I hope that I can do the same for the incoming Chairman.

B. Secretary – Paul Rigge.

Liz has again covered the subjects correspondence has been flying about over, changes to CA & Banditry. I have a copy of the CA's invitation to join them here if anybody hasn't seen it. Let's crack on.

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

Noted that the new digital projector had gone down a storm at Chester. Also payment to Southport for hosting Festival.

D. CA Representative – Peter Wilson.

E. League Manager - Tony Thomas

2014 was another successful league competition for the Federation, everything seemed to run smoothly despite the hectic schedule of matches – 52 teams played 170 matches played over 28 weeks in 7 leagues, interweaved between about 26 tournaments.

It was not always possible for matches to maintain the agreed schedule but postponements were usually re-arranged without too much pressure from the League Manager. The League Rules regarding timescales for re-arranged dates were not always strictly adhered to as many captains strived to re-arrange dates rather than claim a walkover – indicative of the sporting nature of our competition – only 6 matches resulted in Walk-overs due to not being played.

Full report attached – Appendix(ii)

F. Coaching Officer – Christine Irwin.

This year we have held coaching events for everyone from beginners to A-class. We are very lucky in the North West to have so many good coaches who are willing to put time and effort into helping others. As Coaching Officer for our federation my job is made so much easier by this. I thank all those who have coached this year along with the clubs who have made their lawns available for coaching sessions.

In addition to clubs coaching their own players, the North West Federation ran 7 coaching events over the summer.

- The coaching season kicked off in April when Ken Cooper and Lorna Frost held an *improvers course* aimed at people who had started playing AC last year. The course was held at Bowdon and attracted 18 players.
- In June Colin Irwin led a *Silver Gilt* course for AC players in the 6-10 handicap range to introduce them to advance rules. This course was aimed at players who were getting ready to compete in North West Federation "B" Advance League. It was attended by about 10 players.
- In July Colin held another session for AC players in the 6-12 handicap range focusing on *How to Play With Less Bisques*. 16 players attended this.
- Ian Burrige's innovation of *Coaching Pods* for A-class players was received enthusiastically here in the North West and in July and August there were 4 pods held – 2 led by Matt Holmes at Bury and 2 led by Colin Irwin at Bowdon. All players in the North West were invited to both venues. Over the 4 sessions over 20 players took part and we will certainly continue with these in 2015.
- Golf Croquet was not forgotten and Bob and Anne Coonop carried out a golf croquet coaching session at Flixton in September. It was very much a first principles session covering handicaps, rules and basic shots. Plans are to hold another there at the start of the 2015 season
- I ran a *Coaching for Coaches* course at Chester in late August attended by 8 people. 6 were interested in association croquet coaching and two in golf croquet. There are 2 people in the Lake District interested in taking this course too but the travel distance to Chester prevented them attending the course there. So if any of the clubs towards the north of the region are interested please get in touch with me and hopefully we can hold another course next year.

As always, please consider your clubs' coaching needs over the winter and let me know if you want a *Flying Circus* next season. The earlier we can arrange these, the more successful they are.

One new thing I am thinking of is the success of the A-class coaching pods and the coaching needs of B and C class AC players. I am wondering whether the pod format is worth trying there too – a series of 2 hour sessions on a specific topic. I have a few ideas of topics that I will try to write up as pods over the winter months. If any other coaches are interested I would welcome your comments, ideas and involvement too. Please let me know.

E. Development Manager – Ron Welsh

Firstly may I apologize to the meeting for my absence. The Development Committee has a new Chairman who was unable to make the usual October meeting. This was rescheduled for (of course!) 8th November, so I am in London at the moment. Unfortunately this means I can't yet report on the progress of two applications for CA grants by North West clubs to be considered by the Grants Committee.

I have found it difficult to move into my Development role as I had no hand-over at all to begin with. I am endeavouring to get familiar with all our clubs, but essentially have dealt with those seeking assistance this year. The following is a summary of recent events

The following is a summary of recent events.

Bury CC A very ambitious project has been undertaken, the first phase of which has involved converting two crown green lawns and their surrounds into a space for three full-size croquet lawns. This has been completed as far as levelling and sowing the new turf. It has also been paid for.

The second phase embraces the reconstruction of the existing pavilion with a target for completion in the Spring. The club has applied for a maximum CA grant towards the cost of the works. I am sure you will be hearing more about this enterprise during the meeting.

Craig y Don This recently formed club is expanding but has found itself short of storage space after acquiring more equipment. The Federation is not contributing to this project and the club is unwilling to approach the CA at this stage.

Ellesmere Sadly, this club entered the Golf Handicap League but had to pull out. I hope we can assist them in growing in the future.

Pendle & Craven Pendle suffers from poor drainage and is embarking on a project to improve it for next season. At the moment exploratory diggings have been done and it is hoped to finalise a programme and commence work shortly.

Penrith & North Lakes The club suffered a setback when access to a mechanical aerator, shared with the cricket section, was lost. They have a chance to buy a reliable second-hand machine and have made a modest CA grant application to cover half the cost.

Tattenhall The ground for two new lawns was prepared and seeded in September and prospects for play next year are good.

H. NW Festival of Croquet Manager – Keith Roberts.

The North West Federation of Croquet Clubs held its annual Club Championships at the Southport & Birkdale Club (S&B) over the weekend of 28th and 29th June 2014.

This was the 20th Year of the Championships, which we call the Festival of Croquet, and we still believe that this is the largest annual gathering of Croquet players in the world.

S&B managed to produce 16 courts on 13 'full size' lawns including 7½ full size equivalent on the Club's north lawns. Some 228 games were played requiring 78 players to be 'on the lawns' for any one round, but most Clubs brought extra people to give all of their members the opportunity to participate in this very special event. In all we estimate the number of individual participants to be in excess of 110.

Although the Manager had promised that the sun would shine the first day started cloudy and there were occasional threats of rain which failed to materialise. Sunday started bright with some sunshine and presentations were made under a clear blue sky.

The overall Championship was won by Bowdon with Southport in second place, Fylde finishing third.

There were eight entrants of three person teams in the Golf Croquet Championship which was won by Bowdon with six victories from seven matches, Culcheth took the runner-up spot with five wins.

The Short competition, also best of three per match, was won by Chester with four wins from five matches. Chester could well have made a clean sweep were it not for one of a number of voided or replayed games, in the Golf and Short disciplines, caused by teams not playing their games in handicap order. S&B was in second place.

As in 2013, eight teams competed in the Handicap event which was played as an 18 point. The Handicap Championship returned to three singles per match having been one singles and one doubles in 2013. It was won by Westmorland which has had notable successes in league handicap play in the last couple of years. Pendle was runner-up.

The fourth event, Advanced play, was, once again, a doubles event played almost exclusively on Southport's Lawn 1. Although a serious affair, which included many County and International players, it was also the one with the most colourful participants.

The Bowdon pair was unbeaten in their five games with Pendle a solid second losing only to the Champions.

Entry levels were much the same as in 2013 with just one fewer Golf Croquet team competing, resulting in 84 games compared with 108 last year. The number of games was further reduced as last year's schedule called for Short Croquet teams to 'all play all' twice - 90 games - this year there were half that number. These reductions allowed an additional 28 games of Handicap play due to the change from a two game match (one single/one double) in 2013.

These changes in format, ie. the reduction in the number of games, appear to have been received favourably by Golf and Short Croquet players as the previous year's schedule was a tad hectic. Handicap players were delighted to be able to play a full singles format.

The Manager is of the opinion that the Advanced players enjoyed playing all of their games on the same lawn as it allowed for greater interaction with the gallery (a euphemism for banter!)

Although we don't have data on the number of Handicap games resulting in a finish at the peg, from your reporter's perspective it appeared to be the case that a significant proportion of games were completed in this manner.

Keith Roberts, Manager (and reporter) began the presentation formalities by thanking Liz Wilson, the Championship Secretary, and highlighting the work of the Event Managers – the people who keep everything rolling along – they were Sue Hardman, Golf Croquet; Brian Lewis, Short Croquet; Liz Wilson, Advanced. Keith event managed Handicap. Keith also thanked Colin Irwin for being Referee of the Tournament, Brian Lewis, Chairman of S&B and all of the members of the club who worked hard to prepare lawns in the weeks leading to the Championships and at the weekend. Keith's final thank you was for all of the participants over the two days, many of whom had travelled some distance and at no little cost, to play in the Championships. He made special mention of the Tattenhall Club which was enjoying its first experience of the Championship and acquitting itself well by winning two of its Golf Croquet matches.

Liz Wilson, now in her role of Chairman of the Federation, thanked the Southport and Birkdale Club particularly the clubs organisers and caterers, those wearing bold colours, the Championship Manager and went on to highlight the range of croquet skills and experience from Great Britain internationals, County players (two from Cheshire, one from Yorkshire and several Lancashire representatives) to the first timers who were invited to stand and were applauded. Shields were presented by Liz.

Another splendid Championship, I'm looking forward to next year.

I. Child Protection (sic) Safeguarding Officer – Jean Hargreaves.

There have been no reports of any problems from the clubs themselves.

Two clubs approved who are also applying for CA grants

J. Pennine Cup - Paul Rigge

Lancashire croquet squad lift the trophy, or they would have done if t'other lot had brought it back.

This match is the last remaining fixture from the old Confederation of Northern Croquet Clubs (under Mike Evans), and as such, is always played in great spirit and this year wasn't an exception – good fun was had in the fine dry sunny weather at Pendle.

The few players who had made themselves available to the Squad Manager (Paul Rigge), were rewarded by being turned out as the *under-dogs*, being weaker card vs card (19 Vs 16.5), than the visitors from the East but under Tom's Captaincy they bagged the majority in the morning doubles to lead 2-1 at lunch (it could have so easily have been all 3). The East's quickly levelled as the single results started to be recorded, so it came down to the captain's rubber to cross the line, with Tom pegging out just as time was called to give us our first win in five years.

The final victory was by the same margin as last year, 6-3, and for the first time ever in this friendly, all the games were played to advanced rules – well done to both teams and Pendle for again hosting.

I again had to *arm twist* to gather the required six players to step forward! – really? With twenty clubs should I still be doing this for an annual event! Volunteer, I might even turn up and get the drinks in!

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

- a) Advanced - offers from Pendle 25/26th April '15.
- b) Handicap - Crake 9/10th May '15.
- c) Short - Fylde 30th May '15.
- d) Golf (Hcp) – Bury 10th May '15.
- e) Golf (Lvl) – Chester 31st May '15.

Dates (& offers) must be submitted by 31st December '14

7. Federation League Rules.

The following Rule changes regarding player's handicap cards where discussed and passed unanimously (single abstention) :

Remove references to Handicap Cards in Rules: 20(a); 20(c); 24(a);

In the General section: extend Rule 5 as follows:

5 (a) A club may be represented only by members of that club. No player may play for more than one team in a particular League in any one season unless authorised by the League Manager.

5 (b) *Clubs should ensure that players are aware of their responsibility to keep a current Handicap Card which should be presented at all league matches.*

5 (c) *If a player cannot produce a current Handicap Card, their captain is responsible for verifying the Handicap claimed by the player. If the opposing captain wishes to contest this claimed handicap, they should write to the League Manager, after the match, who will contact the players club for clarification. If any games have been played off the wrong handicap, they will be retrospectively conceded and the match result amended accordingly.*

Advanced Play – Captains **must** submit both scores & bonus points earned to Tony (unanimous).

Advanced 'B' to remain unchanged.

8. NW Festival – 28/29th June 2015 – no changes predicted in either the date or format....

9. Coordination

Currently we have:

3-6 April	Pendle & Craven John Beech Memorial Easter Tournament
11-12 April	15 th Lancashire Open Golf. Heaton Park
11-12 April	Southport Advanced Weekend
2-4 May	Bowdon May Handicap Weekend
16-17 May	Pendle & Craven B-Level Advanced Weekend
23-24 May	Southport Handicap Weekend
30-31 May	Bowdon Advanced Weekend
13-14 June	Pendle & Craven Advanced Weekend
27-28 June	<i>Festival</i>
4-5 July	<i>Manchester/Bury's Advanced Weekend Whitehead Park</i>
7-10 July	Pendle & Craven Midweek Tournament
11 July	'B' Golf National, Whitehead Park
10-15 July	Bowdon Northern Week
18-19 July	Southport Super B and B-Level Advanced Weekend

25-26 July	Fylde Handicap Weekend
8-9 August	Manchester/Bury's Handicap Weekend Whitehead Park
15-16 August	Pendle Handicap Weekend
28-31 August	Bowdon North of England Championship
5 – 6 September	CA All England Hcp area Final @Pendle
12-13 September	Southport Advanced Weekend
19-20 September	CA National Handicap Final (@ Chester)
19-20 September	Bowdon B-Level Advanced Weekend

10. CA Changes – Fundamental Change to CA Structure and Constitution

Deferred to spring meeting

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

i) **Bowdon, John Saxby reports;**

Croquet wise we have had a super year. We have won the Longman Cup and the Secretary's Shield. Our inter-club advanced team got to the semi-final and our inter-club level play golf team. Membership now well north of 100.

ii) **Bury, Paul Kenworthy Reports;**

I am starting with some self congratulation. I won my first tournament since starting playing 9 years ago by winning the NW Millennium Handicap at Crake Valley. Also Bury Peelers, whom I captain, won the NW Federation Handicap League. Other club successes I would like to mention are Graham Good for being the first to hold All England trophies in both Golf and Handicap events in the same year. Ken and Margaret Eccles for coming first and second in the Heaton Park B Level. Andy Brandwood for his B Level win at Edgebaston and Matt Holmes for winning the Spencer Ell.

Bury CC has become a 3 venue club.

Our home venue Coronation Park continues as normal and I believe our lawn turf continues to improve thanks to Mac Hardman and his team's efforts. The Heaton Park lawns continue to disappoint due to inadequate maintenance. We are no longer affiliated to Heaton Park and any events we run are achieved by renting the lawns and clubhouse at the costs levied by the bowling club. We have secured the Lancashire Golf for the 11 + 12 April 2015 but have not booked any other event dates as we hope be able to utilise Whitehead Park for some events in 2015.

Whitehead Park was a 2 crown green bowls club and is about a mile west of Bury town centre. The crown lawns have been dug up, extended, levelled and re-turfed to create 3 full size lawns using money from a Virador grant. It is very difficult to predict how well these will develop initially as things like the weather will play a part. Progress so far is good and we are hopeful that they will be at a reasonable playable level next season and that we can run some events on them. We also intend to purchase a ride on lawn mower to reduce the physical effort of cutting the grass. Whitehead Park clubhouse is being used for club meetings and social evenings and is large and perfectly habitable. However we are still pursuing various grant opportunities for money to upgrade the clubhouse.

Membership has remained stable. However a big challenge for 2015 is to recruit more members. Partly to cover the running costs of Whitehead Park and also to fully utilise the facilities we have available.

iii) **Chester, John Dawson Reports;**

The 2014 season did not get off to a good start with the loss of two of our stalwart members towards the end of 2013. Mollie McBride, who had contributed much to the life and development of the club, died suddenly and Janet Davies, who had managed the regeneration of the club from the doldrums in the mid 1990s and had initiated our successful annual beginners' course, suffered a stroke on the same day. However the membership numbers have remained strong in the low 90's and our weekly club sessions and internal competitions have continued to thrive. This year the club has played in six of the seven Federation leagues and we are delighted to have won three trophies, the AC Advanced, the AC midweek handicap and the GC handicap which is our best ever result. A good performance in the GC level league was also achieved reflecting maturing strength and confidence. We again entered the Mary Rose and Longman competitions; we exited in the second/third rounds but only to defeats at the hands of the clubs who ultimately won the national trophies (Nottingham and Bowdon). We were well represented in the NW regional events and were pleased to win the AC short lawn competition in the Southport Festival. We were grateful to Christine Irwin who ran an excellent coaching skills course for us in August and a handful of members have attended the Advanced skills pods run at Bury and Bowdon. Our social and community events have all been successful with good attendances, both promoting our profile in the local community and making a useful contribution to club funds. We are particularly pleased that our lawns have been maintained in excellent condition. The council maintenance staff can not alter the slopes of the lawns but otherwise have done a great job. After many years of wading through local government bureaucracy we have finally managed to conclude a 25 year licence agreement to safeguard our access to the croquet pavilion and lawns which we hope will provide long term security for the club. And, as always, our thanks go to the Federation officials for providing a very effective and efficient structure for our competitive play and to Tony Thomas for his mastery of the league calendars/rules and to Christine Irwin for her coaching inputs.

Lastly, we would like to report that we have expressed our strong support to the CA regarding proposals to incorporate regional federations within the formal structure of the CA and to recognise all individual members of clubs as members of the CA. In this context we are grateful to the Federation for facilitating discussions on this subject and pleased to note that the AGM of the CA has started the process of reform

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

I am glad to say the club continues to thrive with around 35 regular and keen players. Most are playing Golf but with a small nucleus of Short which we are hoping to increase next season.

We have played 4 'friendly competitive' matches this year against Llanfairfechan, Chester and Tattenhall and our overall skills are improving. It is our intention to field a team(s) at next year's festival once interested members are properly handicapped.

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

In a year when, after (more or less) sorting the drainage on our lawns, we were going to make a determined and systematic attempt to find some new members to play on them. We currently have just under 30 members, almost half of whom are either far country or non-playing. So only 15 playing members.

Taking advice from Howard at Penrith, we did a number of the right things (contacted parish magazines, contacted local press and radio, put out leaflets and fliers, bought a flag to make ourselves more visible), and had a very successful open day. Successful in that 30 people came to it, they all seemed to enjoy themselves, and at least a dozen went away saying they would without question be back for the follow-up coaching sessions.

When it came to it, nobody came back for the follow-up sessions, apart from two friends of mine from the pub who said they had no intention of joining, but they'd come along to show support anyway. We subsequently, in the second half of the season, picked up six (or maybe seven) new members, none of them in any way as a result of the open day. There seem to be four possible explanations of this outcome:

1. Chaos theory: membership of croquet clubs is largely a matter of butterflies and rain forests, too complex for normal human understanding.

2. Morphic resonance: the raised awareness of our club among those who came to the open day communicated itself (by morphic resonance) to other people who didn't come to the open day, and these other people then joined the club.

3. Blind chance: people join or don't join croquet clubs either randomly, or for reasons which have nothing whatever to do with any of the efforts the clubs make to attract them. This is the most appealing theory, because it means there is no point in putting any effort at all into recruitment.

4. Divine providence: God helps those who help themselves.

Be all that as it may, the upshot is that, after being forced to withdraw from the handicap league for 2014 because of the difficulties we were having raising a team, we hope to be back in the handicap league again for 2015.

vi) **Culcheth, Bob Connop Reports;**

The club has had a pleasant year and morale is high. This year we have increased our membership to 29, which is our highest ever total. Our team entered in the Golf League as usual and also the Golf Level play league, finishing fourth in both competitions. We also took part in the Festival of Croquet at Southport.

Several of our members have taken part in external competitions and we have several internal competitions for our members, Golf singles and doubles and short croquet are run on handicap lines and we also organised an open competition. Throughout the season we had coaching sessions on Golf Croquet led by our own club coaches. All sessions were well attended and proved helpful. Because of our small membership we have to seek methods other than subscriptions to augment our income. Our lawns are regularly used by U3A, the University of the Third Age and several corporate events have been organised as well as the annual Croquet competition held between the Lions and the Rotary Club. We have also organised sessions for community groups.

This year we have had several Fun-themed Awaydays at Ellesmere and Flixton Croquet Clubs and they came to us as well. We also ventured abroad into Wales, at Holywell, where we had a pleasant day playing on the croquet lawn of the Green Pea Café.

Everyone enjoyed the perfect weather and the croquet. The tea, cakes and sandwiches were also appreciated.

Successful social events were our Quizzes and Annual Dinner- more about those later. We are fortunate that we have members who are prepared to work hard, selling tickets and organising these events.

Thanks to our fund raising efforts we were able to purchase a new set of hoops which we use for League Games.

During the winter we play on our indoor mat and welcome members from other clubs to spend the day with us. This year we will be continuing the indoor competitions for Golf Singles and Doubles. Several of our members also regularly meet together during the winter to play cards and indoor games.

Now to the Advertising Section.

On Saturday 15th. November we shall be holding another of our quizzes. Tickets are £3.50 and available from Club Members. Our Annual Dinner is on Friday 16th January 2015 and will cost £19.50. Menu and order forms are available for you today!

vii) **Ellesmere – Viv Seaman reports**

In 2014 the Club is thriving with an increase of membership.

Also we have been promised in 2015 two more Croquet Lawns made available on Ellesmere Sports Club cricket field. These lawns are only playable during the week, due to weekend cricket and flying cricket balls!!!!!! Well weekday play is better than nothing. The Club had to put Association Croquet on the back burner due to little interest being shown by members.

Unfortunately the Club's experience of entering this year's North West Federation of Golf Croquet was fraught with disaster - One of our players fell after her game bracing both her wrists. The player Mrs Joan Walker has now fully recovered and back playing. Another problem reared its head when Ellesmere Sports Club decided that the Croquet lawn was a suitable place to hold various unannounced social events. So the Croquet Club had no options but to withdraw from the competition.

We apologise to all these we let down.

viii) **Flixton, no report received.**

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

Fylde managed to enter teams in all leagues and particularly enjoyed the B level. We were surprised not to be totally whitewashed in the A League and were particularly proud that some of our new members were keen to participate in the

golf. Unfortunately we will be losing many of our association players next year. Notably Terry Vernazza has moved to Newcastle upon Tyne and Ian Theakstone is selling up and moving back down South to Essex. Others are giving up due to a combination of travelling distance and increasing years!.

Sadly we will not be entering all the leagues next year

x) **Isle of Man, Richard Bellwood reports;**

We still do not have a ground but hope to send competitors to some of next year's events.

xi) **Keswick – no report**

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

A disappointing first half of the season. I recruited several keen young players in 2013, but they're more keen to spend their summers going to weddings, getting pregnant or going to Glastonbury. I ran out of time implementing recruitment campaigns for the start of the season, so it's been difficult getting players to attend regularly.

On the plus side, the clubhouse is now complete, and the Council have granted the money for replacing security fencing. I still need to pin the tennis club "committee" down on a number of matters, which is likely to occupy much of my winter. I got a grant of £1000 from Sport Relief, and that income is enough to cover lawn maintenance costs. For the second year running, the income and expenditure accounts are in the black.

Things improved by the end of the season. I've been contacted by several members of Upton CC in the Wirral, who are bored with their version of garden golf croquet. Three have already paid their 2015 subs. I've also got some interest (via a contact at Craig y Don) from the twentysomething professionals who live adjacent to the park.

In total, I've lost a few of my 2013 players, but replaced them with keener 2015 players. My plans for recruitment for next year remain the same, but I need to do them better and earlier. In particular, I intend to lean more on members from other clubs for assistance, and I'll come armed with a strategy to the Spring meeting

xiii) **LLanfairfechan – no report;**

xiv) **Nannerch – no report.**

xv) **Pendle and Craven – Roger Schofield reports;**

We have had the best weather for some time and working under instruction from Duncan Hector our playing surface is coming on well.

As well as running our usual tournaments, we managed to enter a team in all of the North West Federation leagues, The Longman Cup, The Mary Rose and the East of Pennine's League.

We also hosted the Pennine Cup, The Spencer Ell Eight, the northern regional final of the All England Hcp and the national final of the All England Hcp Golf.

We had a good showing in the Festival and we were the inaugural winners of the new "B" level Advanced League.

We intend to run a very similar programme next year.

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

New members who took up croquet in 2013 made for a busy season this year. Our landlords agreed to our request for an additional weekday during the season when we have use of the lawns at Langwathby cricket club for croquet. This was needed to accommodate the additional number of competition games throughout the season as more members and 'guests' want to play in our competition leagues. Social games at club sessions were also very well attended when four short lawns were often needed. The grants we received at the end of 2013 from Eden District Council for the purchase of a fourth set of hoops and balls was put to very good use. We also had a full programme of matches against other clubs recording notable wins against Middlesbrough CC and Westmorland CC in handicap matches.

xvii) **Salford Frances Rollinson Reports;**

Another year blessed by good weather which has been a bonus.

Our lawn was cut regularly by the park staff and has therefore been in a much improved condition though still far from ideal.

We have however had some very good news. One of our members has had a lovely birthday gift off her brother, he is going to re-do (very technical term) both of our lawns as a special present to her. Salford council have given him the go ahead to start the work. So if all goes well, this will mean starting 2015 with a brand new surface on which to play.

We have had a good turnout from our members and visited Flixton for a friendly match, much enjoyed by us all.

Our funds are enough for us to purchase some new equipment for the next season.

A good year all round!

xviii) **Southport - Tony Thomas Reports;**

Fairly successful season as the club continues to invest in the future. The Short Croquet team won the Federation Short League and Don Williamson won the Fed Millenium Golf Croquet event. Recruitment has been very successful with 22 new members this year and we have even persuaded three of them to become involved with the 2015 committee.

Despite being a successful club with 110 members, we still struggle to put out league teams, many of our members preferring the enjoyment of social croquet to competitive league play. We were disappointed our inaugural Golf Croquet Weekend Tournament did not attract any competitors and have decided not to offer it in 2015.

We continue to invest in the club via equipment, lawn treatments and maintenance and we have just been successful in obtaining a 50% grant towards the cost of renovating the access path to the clubhouse which is subject to flooding in wet weather. Our infamous North Lawns have received a lot of attention and are currently looking better than ever.

We have an active social programme for the Winter months and look forward to welcoming you all to our lawns next season

xix) **Tattenhall, David Boyd reports.**

Our membership remains static at #17, and most play golf. However, we have made progress this year in acquiring additional ground at Tattenhall Recreation Club which has allowed the development of two almost full sized lawns. We are hopeful that this will encourage both increased membership, association croquet and eventual application to join one of the

NW Federation leagues! In the meantime we continue to hold very successful fund raising social events. Next year's project will be the purchase of a mower.

We have enjoyed playing friendly matches against Craig y Don and ventured to the Southport Festival this year.

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

We end the season with 41 members which is a record for our club.

Its good to attract new members but we must ensure that their croquet development is encouraged as pressure on our lawns on club days means that competitive play is difficult and this is something we will continue to address.

We fielded 3 league teams again who acquitted themselves well, winning one trophy.

We have a number of internal competitions and this year we introduced a level play block so perhaps in a season or two we may field an advanced team.

12. Federation Equipment (via Ron Welsh)

Bowdon	None	Keswick	None	
Bury	None	Liverpool	CA start up set	.
Chester	None	Llanfairfechan	None	
Crake Valley	None	Llandudno	CA start up set	I have also a 'CA
Craig y Don		Nannerch	CA Dev Officer's Set (till end 2013) (6 hoops, 4 primary balls, peg, 4 mallets)	
Culcheth	None	Pendle and Craven	None	
Ellesmere	3 mallets	Penrith and North Lakes	4 mallets, 1 set hoops, 1 peg	
Flixton	None	Salford	CA start up set	
Fylde	None	Southport & Birkdale	None	
Harlech	None	Tattenhall	Set 2ndary balls + CA start up set, 2 garden croquet mallets 5 mallets	
Isle of Man	None	Westmorland	1 set primary balls 1 set 2ndary balls	

Development Officer's set' to be used for demonstrations and short term loans (currently at Nannerch), and a private garden croquet set.

13. County Captains.

The CA will again be notified in November that;

County Captains (Colin Irwin for Cheshire and David Openshaw for Lancashire)

Colin Irwin & Paul Rigge will continue as Managers for respective counties.

13. Trophies

The Federation's League Champions were presented with the Trophies by Liz Wilson – Federation Chair.

Advanced	Chester	John Dawson
Adv 'B'	Pendle	Gary Wilson
Handicap	Bury Peelers	Paul Kenworthy
Short	Southport	Don Williamson
Midweek	Chester	David Boyd
Golf - Level	Bury	Ken Eccles
Golf - Handicap	Chester	Pat Clare

14. Officer Elections

Chairman – Garry Wilson, proposed by Liz Wilson, seconded Tony Thomas.	Duly elected.
Secretary – Paul Rigge.	Unanimously re-elected.
Treasurer - Bob Connop	Unanimously re-elected
Auditor – Chris Slater, proposed by Peter Wilson, seconded Jean Hargreaves	Duly elected.
CA Representative – Peter Wilson.	Unanimously re-elected.
League Mgr – Tony Thomas.	Unanimously re-elected.
Coaching - Christine Irwin	Unanimously re-elected
Development - Ron Welch.	Unanimously re-elected
Festival – Keith Roberts.	Unanimously re-elected.
Child Safeguarding – Jean Hargreaves.	Unanimously re-elected.
Pennine – Paul Rigge.	Unanimously re-elected .

15. Any Other Business

- a) Request to consider running a new Refereeing course for more refs at both codes.
- b) Reminder from Tony for Team Applications to enter the leagues before year end.
- c) Reminder from Bob about club fees now due...

16. Date, time and location of next meetings

Spring Meeting will be on 7th March 2015 & AGM, 21st November 2015 at Culcheth Sports Club.

17. Close of Meeting - Meeting closed 12:01 and lunch was taken.

NWFCC**2013-2014 Income & Expenditure Statement****Current Year to 30 September 2014****12-Oct-13**

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Account</u>	
Income & Expenditure			
<i>Member Club Affiliation Fees</i>	Affiliation Fees @ £20/Club	£380.00	
	IoM Late payment 2013/4	£20.00	
		£400.00	£380
<i>Development/Coaching</i>	Income		
	Expenditure	<u>-£35.38</u>	
		-£35.38	£0.00
<i>Miscellaneous Income</i>	Fylde Millennium Tournament	£30.00	
	Interest	<u>£2.91</u>	
		£32.91	£75.13
<i>Festival of Croquet</i>	Income	£936.00	
	Expenditure	<u>-£750.00</u>	
		£186.00	£322.00
<i>Miscellaneous Expenditure</i>	Coffee/Tea at AGM/Spring Meeting	-£60.00	
	Bury CC (Moss Treatment Heaton Park)	-£49.80	
	NWFed v Yorks. Lawn Fees		
	Video Projector	-£306.03	
	Website Expenses	-£40.78	
	Handicap Forum Expenses		
		-£456.61	-£180.69
Nett income (loss) during year		£126.92	£596.44
Opening Balances			
Cash		£0.00	
Current Account		£1,197.16	£691.85
Deposit Account		£3,127.22	£3,036.09
Total Opening Balances		<u>£4,324.38</u>	<u>£3,272.94</u>
Total as at 30 September 2014		<u>£4,451.30</u>	<u>£4,324.36</u>
Bank Balances as at 30 September 2014			
Cash		£0.00	£0
Current Account		£1,271.17	£1,197.16
Deposit Account		£3,180.13	£3,127.22
Total as at 30 September 2014		<u>£4,451.30</u>	<u>£4,324.38</u>

Accounts as at 31st September 2014 RPP Connop, Treasurer

Certified as Correct
Date: 15 Oct 2014

P Wilson, Auditor

NWFCC 2014 LEAGUE MANAGERS REPORT

NWFCC 2014 FINAL LEAGUE TABLES

2014 was another successful league competition for the Federation, everything seemed to run smoothly despite the hectic schedule of matches – 52 teams played 170 matches played over 28 weeks in 7 leagues, interweaved between about 26 tournaments.

It was not always possible for matches to maintain the agreed schedule but postponements were usually re-arranged without too much pressure from the League Manager. The League Rules regarding timescales for re-arranged dates were not always strictly adhered to as many captains strived to re-arrange dates rather than claim a walkover – indicative of the sporting nature of our competition – only 6 matches resulted in Walkovers due to not being played.

Congratulations to our 2014 Winners:

CHESTER – who won three titles this year – Advanced, Midweek and Golf Croquet leagues.

BURY – the Peelers won the Handicap and Bury East who won the Level Play Golf League.

PENDLE & CRAVEN – won the B Level Advanced League.

SOUTHPORT – won the Short Croquet League.

Congratulations also to three teams – Bowdon (Advanced League), Bury East (Level Play Golf Croquet League) and Southport (Short League) – who were unbeaten all season. We should also congratulate three clubs, who despite not having the membership resources of some of our larger clubs, still manage to enter teams in every one of our leagues – well done to Bury, Pendle and Fylde – remarkably, Bury entered 10 teams in our leagues this year.

Interestingly, for the first time, the Bonus Points system in the Advanced and B Level leagues, proved critical in determining the title winners, especially the Advanced League where Chester accumulated six bonus points enabling them to finish ahead of Bowdon who were unbeaten all season – but you know my views on this system!

The closest finish occurred in the Midweek Handicap League where Chester and Westmorland only lost one match each, however, Chester had the superior winning games difference.

Sadly, two teams withdrew from the league during the season due to difficulties in finding suitable players – Crake Valley (Handicap league) and Ellesmere (Golf Croquet League).

The main issue of concern was the Handicap system with the usual comments about accuracy of players handicaps but that is a problem for Club Handicappers, however there is an issue about what happens if a player cannot produce a Handicap Card – we have different practices in our various leagues ranging from no action (Advanced, Handicap and Level Play Golf Leagues), play off scratch but depends on captains (Short League), or play off zero (Golf Croquet) - and I have a proposal on the Agenda for dealing with these inconsistencies for 2015.

May I remind clubs to submit their League Entry forms for 2015 by 31 December 2014 and ensure they contain as much information as possible regarding preferred playing days and dates when lawns are not available.

Finally, thank you to everyone, especially team captains, for keeping me informed throughout the season on re-arrangements and results - this is an essential part of the process of keeping everyone in the Federation aware of the current state of the leagues via the website. Thank you.

Tony Thomas

NWFCC League Manager, 8 November 2014

2014 ADVANCED CROQUET LEAGUE							
	P	W	L	D	Games	BPts	Points
Chester	5	4	1	0	28-12	6	14
Bowdon	5	5	0	0	33-12	1	11
Fylde	5	2	3	0	19-26	3	7
Bury	5	2	3	0	15-26	0	4
Crake Valley	4	1	3	0	16-19	1	3
Pendle & Craven	4	0	4	0	10-26	1	1
<i>Crake v Pendle - Void - not played</i>							

2014 B LEVEL ADVANCED CROQUET LEAGUE							
	P	W	L	D	Games	B Pts	Points
Pendle & Craven	4	3	1	0	14-10	2	8
Bowdon	4	2	2	0	11-09	2	6
Fylde	4	2	2	0	10-12	0	4
Southport	4	2	2	0	08-12	0	4
Bury	4	1	3	0	10-10	1	3

2014 HANDICAP CROQUET LEAGUE							
	P	W	L	D	Games	Points	
Bury Peelers	8	7	1	0	32-21	14	
Southport	8	5	3	0	31-25	10	
Chester	8	5	3	0	30-26	10	
Bowdon St Marys	8	4	4	0	31-25	8	
Fylde	8	4	4	0	30-26	8	
Bury Caesars	8	4	4	0	25-31	8	
Bowdon Firs	8	3	5	0	28-28	6	
Pendle & Craven	8	3	5	0	26-30	6	
Birkdale	8	1	7	0	17-37	2	
<i>Crake Valley (Withdrawn from League)</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>06-08</i>	<i>0</i>	

2014 MIDWEEK HANDICAP CROQUET LEAGUE							
	P	W	L	D	Games	Pts	
Chester	7	6	1	0	35-14	12	
Westmorland	7	6	1	0	29-20	12	
Pendle & Craven	7	4	3	0	26-23	8	
Southport	7	3	4	0	26-23	6	
Bowdon Griffins	7	3	4	0	20-29	6	
Bury	7	2	5	0	22-27	4	
Fylde	7	2	5	0	20-29	4	
Bowdon Earls	7	2	5	0	18-31	4	

2014 SHORT CROQUET LEAGUE							
	P	W	L	D	Games	Points	
Southport	7	5	0	2	64-48	12	
Pendle & Craven	7	4	3	0	65-47	8	
Llanfairfechan	7	4	3	0	54-39	8	
Westmorland	7	3	3	1	55-50	7	
Fylde	7	3	3	1	54-51	7	
Chester	7	3	4	0	55-57	6	
Bowdon	7	2	4	1	49-61	5	
Bury	7	1	5	1	32-74	3	

2014 GOLF CROQUET LEAGUE							
	P	W	L	D	Games w-l-d	Points	
Chester	9	8	1	0	100-60-02	16	
Pendle & Craven	9	6	3	0	84-60-04	12	
Westmorland	9	5	3	1	83-78-00	11	
Culcheth	9	4	4	2	82-84-02	9	
Bowdon	9	4	5	0	82-78-00	8	
Bury North	9	4	5	0	74-83-02	8	
Southport	9	2	4	3	73-85-04	7	
Llanfairfechan	9	3	5	1	58-86-02	7	
Fylde	9	2	5	2	70-89-02	6	
Bury South	9	2	5	2	69-90-03	6	

2014 LEVEL PLAY GOLF CROQUET LEAGUE							
	P	W	L	D	Games	Points	
Bury East	5	4	0	1	67-23	9	
Chester	5	3	2	0	51-39	6	
Culcheth	5	3	2	0	49-41	6	
Fylde	5	2	2	1	45-45	5	
Bury West	5	2	3	0	36-54	4	
Pendle	5	0	5	0	22-40	0	