

South East Croquet Federation

Chairman's Report 2023

Another Croquet season completed, where does the time go. The weather was not so extreme in 2023 as it was in the previous year and Covid although still with us, and likely to remain that way, is now part of everyday life. However post Covid there has been a change in that club members seem to be more reluctant to travel distances and clubs are finding it difficult to make up teams to play in leagues and tournaments. This has led to the changes that will be discussed later in the meeting.

2023 saw two World Championships take place in our area with the AC World Championships taking place at Hurlingham and surrounding clubs with the winner Robert Fulford coming from England. The Women's GC World Championships took place at Sussex County Club with an Australian Jamie Gumbrell beating Rachel Gee from England.

Our own tournaments in the South East went ahead successfully and John Low has set out all the winners in his report. Congratulations to all the successful clubs. Thanks are due to John for all his hard work in arranging the tournaments and to the managers and volunteers whose support is vital in making all these events successful.

Congratulations are also due to the winners of the leagues with the clubs taking first place in the handicap leagues now having the chance to go forward and compete in the national events of the Federation Shield and the Secretaries Shield. Chichester and Fishbourne went forward to the Federation Shield this year and had a very successful run getting through to the final but just missing out on top place.

This was the first year that the GC handicap league was run under the Advantage GC rules and as far as I am aware there have been no significant problems. Feedback from the clubs is however always welcome.

It was good to see that Clubs in the South East were also very successful nationally and internationally with Dulwich winning the inaugural GC European Club League and Hurlingham winning the GC Inter-club Championship beating Dulwich in the final.

The Federation is not here just to run leagues and tournaments. We want to support clubs in whatever ways we can. Mike Akester is our Development Officer and will talk about the work he has undertaken during the year and don't forget that he is there to support clubs if they want to seek loans or grants from the Croquet England. We will be happy to organise Webinars, particularly during the winter months on issues facing clubs at the present time. Thinking of such things as safeguarding, attracting younger and more diverse members Just email me with your ideas and we will see what we can do.

I would like to thank all members of the Federation Committee for their support during the year and our recently co-opted member Bob Clark from Littlehampton. I would however make an appeal for more people to put their names forward to join the Federation Committee as we do have vacancies at the present time. Mike Akester has a big job in acting as development officer for the whole

London and South East area and would welcome some assistance and we do need a secretary to manage the administrative side of the Federation.

If you feel you could help us in any way, please get in touch by emailing me, details on the website.

I look forward to seeing many of you, if not during the winter months, then during 2024 which promises to be another busy year.

Andrew Stewart

Chair – South East Croquet Federation

November 2023.