

## Development Officers report for AGM Saturday Nov 18th 2023

The only outstanding grant application is Lodsworth where the CA Grants Committee are seeking more detailed estimates. George Noble and Richard Carline know more than me.

How are we doing at recruiting youth?

What really concerns me is our lack of PUSH to get croquet going in our universities and colleges. We still have no university/college teams in the South East.

My neighbouring D.O. reports -

### **Successful recruitment of young players in Southern Region.**

*The main clubs that are successful in recruiting young players are Oxford University, and Abingdon College, Radley College, Bradfield College, and Shiplake College.*

I've visited Guildford and Canterbury and seen how far their lawns are from their universities. Brighton and Sussex Uni's are also some distance from the local clubs. It seems we need to set up lawns on campus.

Should we set up a working party to plan an approach to our Surrey, Sussex, Brighton and Kent universities? The following have held university posts and have tried, or expressed interest in forming university clubs:-

Guildford have a retired Surrey Uni Prof, Hove Beach have a retired Brighton Uni Prof, Rottingdean have an active Lecturer and Coach. Hove Beach have a guy doing his phd at Oxford.

The C.A.'s full-time *Next Generation Officer* seemed to do nothing with universities in her year in post but I'd like to draw your attention to the last thorough C.A Report of 2011. <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=ca/schemes/RecStrategy>

The 2011 CA paper went on to explore the characteristics of the people who might be recruited to play croquet and to suggest where they might be found. It was not intended to be a complete blueprint of how to implement a new Growth and Recruitment Strategy. However, it was intended that the strategy should influence CA Marketing, Development and Coaching, as well as how our sport was financed. It still has resonance in 2021.

Some of the ideas explored were:

People in their 60s and 70s dominate croquet in this country; two-thirds are retired and less than 8% are aged under 40. There are few who do not believe that we need to recruit more younger people to the sport, not least because younger players tend to be more competitive.

While every support should be (and usually is) given to schools offering croquet, this is a very difficult source of new youngsters to target proactively, with a disappointing return for those clubs which put in the effort. **However, there is considerable enthusiasm for the idea of introducing croquet into more universities. In those where success has been achieved in the past the results have been spectacular. A large proportion of this country's top players first encountered croquet at either Oxford or Cambridge.** Their "Cuppers" competitions (which receive modest sponsorship from the CA) have proved very popular and the numbers involved are little short of astonishing.