

Minutes of the North West Federation of Croquet Clubs AGM

Saturday 21st November 2015

- 1 The Meeting was attended by 29 people representing:

Bowdon:	Ken Cooper, Graham Good, Steve Reynolds, David Walters
Bury:	David Barrett, Ken Eccles, Jean Hargreaves, Barbara Young.
Chester:	Sarah Andrew, David Crawford, Elmyr Hughes, John Dawson
Craig-y-Don	John Hannah, Jack Pattenden
Culcheth:	Bob & Ann Connop, Barbara Griffin, Lis Leong, Keith Woodward, Ann Woodward, Alan Wright
Fylde:	Ian Theakstone, Peter Wilson, Liz Wilson.
Liverpool	James Hawkins.
Llanfairfechan	Georgina Llewellyn, Richard Hollas.
Pendle & Craven:	Kathryn Schofield, Roger Schofield, Maureen Whitaker, Geoff Whitaker, Garry Wilson.
Southport:	John Haslam, Tony Thomas, Don Williamson.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **Apologies for Absence.** :-Richard Bellwood (IOM), Ron Welch (Development Officer – meeting at Hurlingham), Paul Kenworthy (Bury), John Shakespeare (Westmorland), Keith Roberts (Southport), Ruth Wrigley (Tattenhall), Viv Seaman (Ellesmere), Howard Bowron (Penrith), Frances Rollinson (Salford)

3. The minutes of the Spring Meeting held on 7th March 2015 were confirmed as a correct record.
Proposed – Don Williamson, Seconded David Barrett

4. Matters Arising – none

5. Reports on the Past Year

- A **Chairman – Garry Wilson** said that his time had been gainfully employed by a) finding volunteers to fill vacant Federation Offices, b) discussions on the bonus points question in both AC Advanced leagues, c) the changes to the constitution, which are required to reflect the CA changes and to update the constitution and make it fit for the 21st century, and d) discussions with Croquet North and Yorkshire Croquet regarding the Pennine Cup, which are still on going. He thanked Graham Good for his assistance in framing the revisions to the constitution and hoped that the committee would be able to call upon his expertise again to fully review the constitution in greater detail.

- B **Secretary (acting) Liz Wilson**

I have only become Acting Secretary in the last 2 months. Paul Rigge has just passed on information of one event :- As part of the CA's development program, Ian Burridge (Development Director) has decided to introduce into the Women's Development agenda, a "match" between the England Ladies and the County team who wins Division Two at the previous year's Inter-County Championship. It just so happens that last year Lancashire gained promotion into Div 1 so the fixture is set for May 7/8th at Bury's Whitehead Park, where England Ladies will play Lancashire – the downside being, that last year 50% of the county squad was female..... some of them belonging to the above Development squad, so Lancashire will need to field a team of mainly men to face this onslaught.....Any interested players who wish to be considered, please let Paul Rigge know. Obviously it could also be fun to watch, so go along and spectate/barrack and support this Battle of the Sexes.

I think it is timely to minute the deaths of John Saxby, Christine Irwin and Geoff Young. John has represented Bowdon for many years and has single handedly arranged for the meeting to finish in time for the Manchester City football match. Christine and Geoff have both served on the North West Federation Committee in various roles, as Treasurer, Coaching Officer CA Rep. Our best wishes go to all their families

- C **Treasurer - Bob Connop** – presented the accounts (see appendix i) and pointed out that Helen Brophy had stepped in to audit the accounts in place of Chris Slater who had family problems. The only large expenditure was £750 grant for a half share in a mower for Crake Valley Croquet Club. This mower will revert to the Federation if the club should fold.

- D **CA Representative - Peter Wilson**

I can confidently say that the NW Federation has led the way making their membership aware of the problems encountered by players with colour vision deficiency (CVD). Typically our players will remind the manager of their CVD and the managers will respond by allocating the correct balls. Remember, when double banking, the CVD player must account for all eight balls and clips. Sometimes, not a problem, but after oppo has had a long break and a lot has also happened in the other game as well, the catch up process of what is where is quite a challenge. In an effort to get the problem more widely recognised, Martin French wrote an article in the Gazette to which many of our membership replied. This resulted in a working party being made which then drew together a panel of CVD players from the whole country that offered many suggestions. It has been accepted that changes to the balls are impracticable. However the Equipment Committee will review options regarding the design of the clips that the CA sell. The most important result of the exercise will be to raise awareness among players and managers. That is for managers to allocate and for players to play with the balls allocated and to be aware of the problem. Consequently the AC Tournament Committee will amend the Tournament Regulations along the lines 'that appropriate balls will be allocated when possible' which will allow sufferers to point to the regulations if they feel they are overlooked by an indifferent manager. Tournament entry forms will include a check box to declare CVD. The CA membership details will have a field added to indicate CVD.

This brings me onto the work being done by the Membership Changes Implementations Group.

From those involved in that group, a membership database working party has been formed. This is looking into the minutiae of the software the CA will require to allow all croquet club members to become members of the CA. One 'off the shelf' solution used by many national sport governing bodies is being considered which would involve the CA modifying a few of their current procedures to fit in with the programme. Alongside this a different solution would allow the CA to dictate the way it operates. This solution, however, is without the security of a professional body and security features are possibly less robust. Both involve a cost which needs evaluating along with several other factors. These factors include:

The issue revolving around the difference in the date of renewal of an individual's CA membership and their club membership renewal.

The interaction of club secretaries and or individuals in maintaining individual records.

Don Williamson added that with respect to the CVD there is some discussion and changes will be made to the golf laws mainly relating to the sequencing of shots (win toss and play blue first – should have option of playing red and yellow)

David Barrett was concerned at the level of IT knowledge that would be required of club secretaries

E **League Manager - Tony Thomas** – See appendix ii

F **Coaching Officer** – No report

G **Development Officer – Ron Welch**

As I have been in semi-retirement for most of this year, there is nothing to report on new projects.

However, it is worth mentioning two large scale developments in the region. Bury with a lot of effort and some little contribution from the CA have the Whitehead Park ground active, giving them five courts in all. You will hear details in their report. Pendle and Craven have undertaken sand-slitting on all five courts this Autumn - with considerable help from the CA. Once again, you will be hearing more detail from them. The good news is that I have a replacement as Regional Development Officer in James Hawkins. As has been almost a regular occurrence, the meeting of the CA Development Committee has coincided with the North West AGM and so I am there today. If voted in James will be in office from tomorrow, so please address any matters concerning development to him then.

H **NW Championships – 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 27th and 28th June 2015. This was the 21st Year of the Championships - a Festival of Croquet – which is possibly the largest annual gathering of Croquet players in the world.

The Southport and Birkdale Club managed to produce 16 courts on 13 'full size' lawns including 7½ full size equivalent on the Club's north lawns. This year the lawns were in excellent condition and David Key, the Lawn Manager at S&B, is to be congratulated on his work. Some 265 games were played requiring 85 players to be 'on the lawns' for any one round (including those who helped as part of the Manager's Select short croquet team), 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 100 over the two days. Saturday had been touted as a warm sunny day all week and it turned out to be just that. The forecasters had predicted a wet start for us on the Sunday but the rain arrived earlier than expected leaving a cloudy morning which brightened into a lovely summer afternoon.

The Competitions – The overall Championship was won by Bury, third in 2014 with Bowdon in second place, Southport finishing third. Bury and Bowdon each had 21 points but Bury had won a Championship (Short) but Bowdon did not.

There were nine entrants of three person teams in the Golf Croquet Championship which was won by Chester with five victories from eight matches, including, importantly, a victory over Bowdon, also with five wins. The Short competition, also best of three per match, was won by Bury with five wins from six matches. Westmorland finished in second place with Southport in third place having lost to the runner up. For the third year in succession eight teams competed in the Handicap event which was played as an 18 point over 2¼ hours. Fylde was the worthy winner having won six of the seven games losing only to second place Bowdon. Advanced play continued as a doubles event and was won convincingly by the Fylde team with Southport finishing in second place. Short Croquet matches were all double banked. However, players were given plenty of time (1½ hours) to complete games and the 15 minute changeover allowed enabled them to relax a little between games. Golf Croquet players faced a little more time pressure with just 5 minutes allowed between matches. They responded admirably and the Championship Manager was both surprised and delighted to see the declaration of four results which included drawn games and teams keeping to the schedule. Only one Handicap game had to be stopped by the manager at 4.30 on Sunday enabling results to be co-ordinated and tables prepared in good time.

The Presentation. Garry Wilson, the Chairman of the North West Federation began by thanking Keith Roberts, Championship Manager and Liz Wilson who provides vital support to the Manager and undertakes a great deal of liaison with NWF Clubs. Garry went on to thank the Southport & Birkdale Club, its officers and members for their hard work in preparing for this annual event, the Event and all of the other people who stop the event leaking at the seams. The participants were also thanked, having travelled at no little expense from North East Lancashire, Cumbria and the Isle of Man. Once again, first time participants (referred to as virgins by some in the audience) were invited to stand and be applauded, they included the Craig y Don contingent. Keith then took a brief opportunity to give a personal thank you to his Event Managers, without whom the weekend would not flow as it so often does. Garry presented the Winners Shields and the overall Champions Cup. Presentations concluded at 5.15 enabling everyone to get away at a convenient time. I say everybody but the Southport members still had to finish clearing away equipment, tables/chairs and gazebos before they went home. Well done Southport and Birkdale. Another splendid Championship

I Child Safeguarding Officer – Jean Hargreaves

No Safeguarding issues regarding members under 18 years of age reported. An enquiry from one club was referred to, and discussed by the Federation Executive Committee and advice given to contact the CA.

J Pennine Cup Captain - Paul Rigge

This fixture wasn't played this year. I failed as Federation Team Manager to raise a team of six to meet t'other lot. This summer's annual contest was booked to be held at Pendle on 21st June and the Six players coming over the Pennines carried Handicaps between -1 to 14. I asked at this meeting in the spring for players, I appealed to "all" clubs via their Secretaries on the 5th June – how many of you got that notice? I even wrote and called "mates" to make themselves available. The total for all that effort? A squad of three! Three! From the largest geographic Federation in the county, pathetic! With total embarrassment, I wrote & apologetically spoke to the combined Croquet North and Yorkshire Croquet Federation's Manager to cancel the match on 17th June informing him of my ineptitude. Pendle's catering team was also then notified – I'm still seething. I don't believe that I'm the right man to cajole Federation members to play this last remaining fixture from our history, indeed I'm not even sure that this organisation has the appetite to continue with this single legacy from the old Confederation of Northern Croquet Clubs, who cares about history, right? So I'm standing down as your 'Roses' Manager after thirteen years – I wish my/any successor the best of luck. (Maybe a motion to discuss "Roses fixture" at AGM from the officers? Maybe an area on the Fed Website could be created for players to show availability).

The Chairman took the opportunity to thank Paul for all his efforts over the last 13 years.

6 Change to the Constitution

Section 2c) iii) states:..... The Treasurer shall at the Autumn meeting each year present an audited annual statement of accounts incorporating all grants made from the Croquet Association, and from any other sources.

It is proposed to alter the sentence to change the word 'audited'. The Treasurer shall at the Autumn meeting each year present an independently examined annual statement of accounts'.

ADD Section 4k), the Finance and General Purposes sub-Committee shall be entitled to fill casual vacancies that occur between meetings.

Proposed :- David Walters

Seconded – Tony Thomas

Votes: all in favour

7 Changes to the Federation League Rules for 2016 fixtures, Tony Thomas. Proposal from the committee – PROPOSED CHANGES TO NWFCC LEAGUE RULES FOR 2016

The NWFCC Committee propose changes to the League Rules for 2016. In essence, these changes will:

- Abolish Bonus Points in the Advanced A Level League.

- Bonus Points still allowed in the Advanced B Level League but only awarded to losing teams to recognise they have played well against superior opposition.

- A maximum of 2 Bonus Points may be awarded per match.

These changes would need the League Rules to be amended as follows:

Existing League Rule:	Proposed Amendment for 2016:								
Rule 8(a) - Two league points shall be awarded for a match win on games played and one point for a draw. In addition, for the Advanced League and B Level Advanced League, bonus points will be awarded depending on Index increases (see Rule 15 below).	Rule 8(a) - Two league points shall be awarded for winning a match and one point for a draw. In addition, in the B Level Advanced League, up to 2 bonus points may be awarded to a losing team, depending on the increase in total Team Index as follows: <table><tr><th>Total Increase in Team Index:</th><th>Bonus Points:</th></tr><tr><td>0 – 9</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>10 – 19</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>20 or more</td><td>2</td></tr></table>	Total Increase in Team Index:	Bonus Points:	0 – 9	0	10 – 19	1	20 or more	2
Total Increase in Team Index:	Bonus Points:								
0 – 9	0								
10 – 19	1								
20 or more	2								
Rule 15 - In Advanced League matches, two league points will be awarded for a Win and one league point for a Draw. In addition, Bonus League Points will be awarded to each team based on the total increase in Index changes for the team as follows: <table><tr><th>Total Increase in Team Index:</th><th>Bonus Points:</th></tr><tr><td>0 – 9</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>10 – 19</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>20 or more</td><td>2</td></tr></table>	Total Increase in Team Index:	Bonus Points:	0 – 9	0	10 – 19	1	20 or more	2	Rule 15 to be abolished, then remainder of League Rule to be re-numbered as appropriate. <i>GCG suggestion: Leave Rule 15 as 'there is no rule 15'.</i>
Total Increase in Team Index:	Bonus Points:								
0 – 9	0								
10 – 19	1								
20 or more	2								

Changes to the Federation League Rules for 2016 fixtures

continued

A League Both Bury and Pendle wanted the bonus point to remain in the A league. There was discussion about whether the A League would run if the proposal was implemented along with concern that this would result in no play for the better players. James Hawkins briefly outlined possible alternatives along the lines of individual one day tournaments at various venues. It was decided to leave these decisions until the number of entries in the A League was known.

B League John Haslam asked if the handicap limit could be changed to allow handicap ½ or scratch to compete along with a minimum team handicap. This discussion is to be continued and a proposal will be brought to the Spring Meeting in time for the 2016 season

After much discussion the proposals for the A Level and B Level were put to the meeting separately.

A League passed 5 – 2

B League passed 6 - 1.

8 Arrangements (dates and locations) for NW Federation Millennium Competitions

a) Advanced	23 rd / 24 th April	Pendle
b) Handicap –	21 st / 22 nd May	Crake / Back up Fylde
c) Short	15 th May	Chester
d) Hcp Golf	11 th June	Bury
e) Lvl Golf	14 th / 15 th May	Bury

9 Arrangements for Festival of Croquet -

A Confirmation of correction in scoring – ½ point awarded for a drawn game in golf croquet

B Clocks must be stopped if a hoop is blocked by the double banked game

The manager sent in the following comments

“Wrapping Golf in cotton wool is all very wonderful but with 9 entries there is precious little wriggle room (I mean none) and prescribing so many factors eg. all play together in a ghetto, strict adherence to rules, timing and format, may push things too far. Championship Managers have, for some time, worked hard to ensure full equality for Golf players. This has been achieved and there is no further flexibility in the overall scheduling to accommodate recent rule changes which, it seems to me, can add considerably to the time it takes for individual games and team matches and further limit the time available for breaks. I can understand pressure from bigger clubs to top the Golf ranking as it brings so many overall-Championship points whereas the Advance game is treated as a very low value. Much better to give Golf players some of the same limitations suffered by participants in other disciplines ... Short suffers from having to be Double Banked, Advanced is Doubles only and Handicap is only 18pt and extremely tight on time. It is up to the Fed to make up its esteemed mind whether it wants a Festival or a rigid formal Championships, that said, there is neither sufficient lawns nor enough time to stick to all the rules, timing or formats! I know that within the Fed there is a range of opinions and many feel, as I do, that the 'ghetto' is a mistake and we will end up with both Handicap and Short ghettos as well. One incident in June was that the Sunday schedule was altered for Golf play on the South lawns which caused confusion for the players and caused me to puzzle over what benefit that person (yes, I've a good idea who it was) thought the change would bring. This was not in the Festival spirit!”

Discussion was encouraged amongst the Festival Golf players. It was generally accepted that having all lawns on the same site would make management much easier. It was pointed out that this would be on the North Lawns on one day and the South lawns on the other day. Don Williamson pointed out the golf always finished within the time and that giving the extra time caused by clock stoppage would even itself out as some games finished very quickly. Both A and B above were agreed by the meeting

10 **Coordination of dates for CA or other tournaments in the NW**

25-28 March	Pendle & Craven John Beech Memorial Easter Tournament
16-17 April	Southport Advanced Weekend
23-24 April	Millennium Advanced Pendle
30Apr-2 May	Bowdon May Handicap Weekend
6-7 May	Lancashire vs Womens' Development Squad
14-15 May	Pendle & Craven B-Level Advanced Weekend
14-15 May	Millennium Level Play Golf Bury
15 May	Millennium Short Chester
21 May	Pendle & Craven B-Level Golf
21-22 May	Millennium Handicap Crake
28,29,30 May	Southport Handicap Weekend
4-5 June	Bowdon Advanced Weekend
5 th June	National Croquet Day
11 June	Millennium Handicap Golf Bury
11-12 June	Pendle & Craven Advanced Weekend
18 June	Pendle and Craven Open Golf
18-19 June	Crake Advanced
25-26 June	Festival
28 June-1 July	Solomon Trophy at Bowdon
1,2&3 July	Bury Advanced Weekend Whitehead Park
5-8 July	Pendle & Craven Midweek Tournament
8-13 July	Bowdon Northern Week
9-10 July	'B' Golf National, Whitehead Park
23-24 July	15 th Lancashire Open Golf. Heaton Park
23-24 July	Southport Super B and B-Level Advanced Weekend
30-31 July	Fylde Handicap Weekend
6-7 August	Bury Handicap Weekend Whitehead Park
12-14 August	Pendle Handicap Weekend
20-21 August	Crake Advanced
26-29 August	Bowdon North of England Championship
27-28 August	Chester Open Golf
3-4 September	All England Area Final Bury
10-11 September	Southport Advanced Weekend
17-18 September	Bowdon B-Level Advanced Weekend

Bowdon:- The club held its usual array of CA tournaments this year: the May Handicap Weekend, Northern Week, the June Advanced Weekend, the North of England Championship and the B-Level Weekend. Bowdon provided 6 club members for the Cheshire Inter-County team, as well as others representing Glamorgan, Lancashire and Warwickshire. The club had mixed success in the national CA events, getting to the semi-final of the Mary Rose competition and the Longman Cup but went one better in the Secretary's Shield where we reached the final. There were also many good individual performances throughout the year. The club was able to put out 8 teams in the North-West Federation Leagues and managed to win the Level-Play G.C. League. Bowdon narrowly lost out at the Festival of Croquet when we were unable to retain the trophy we won last year by the smallest of margins, finishing runners-up. This year's recruitment drive resulted in another 9 people joining the club, making a total of 104 full-playing members. They look to be a good crop of beginners and would appear to form a good nucleus to help the club continue to progress. We ran the usual two Taster Days besides the 6-week Beginners' Course. Unfortunately, a number of people from the Taster Days could not make the course so we put on a special one-day intensive version, which was well worth it as we recruited even more members from it. We made a concerted effort to retain them for the future by giving them weekly tuition, a monthly Sunday competition to enter and an end of season Novices Tournament to play in; now they have been allowed to enter in not only the weekly winter season one-ball competition but also to play in the two new winter competitions, a 14pt. and an 18pt. event, played at competitors' own convenience... so let the other NW clubs beware of our future potential! Next year, besides the usual CA events, we will also be holding the Solomon Trophy – which is the annual GB v. USA match, from 28th June to 1st July, so put it in your diaries and come along.

One distressing piece of news is that Trafford Borough Council has decided to replace the Jubilee Rooms in our car park. To finance it, they propose to build 4 semi-detached houses adjacent to the road, thereby taking away our club car parking facility. We have tried to oppose it but this was rejected and it has now got the go-ahead.

Bury:- We have recruited around 8 new members through initiatives mainly at Whitehead Park. However our playing membership has remained much the same due to the sad loss of Geoff Young and some other members unable to play or moved away. As previously stated we are no longer affiliated to the Heaton Park Bowling club and we have no plans to run any events there in 2016. Coronation Park lawns and clubhouse are being maintained as normal and it continues to be used as an integrated part of Bury Croquet Club. Some of you will have now played at Whitehead Park and I hope you will agree that it has great potential. There are many positives with the one unfortunate negative being that the lawns have shown a tendency to flood following any period of persistent rain. Positives are that we have three full sized flat lawns and the turf is very good considering it is new. We have a ride on lawnmower. We have developed the pavilion with a garage and storage area and all new toilets and changing facilities. We have contactors engaged now working on a new kitchen. Much of this has been achieved thanks to generous donations by our members. Only the main room remains to be completed. We believe the flooding is due to compaction of the subsoil. To solve this we will be going ahead with a process of creating over 700 one metre deep holes in the lawn injecting compressed air to create fissures followed by dried seaweed which absorbs the water and keeps the fissures open. This is a proven method with good testimonials and we believe this will solve our drainage problem. Events planned for 2016 include a 3 day association advanced tournament in July using the lawns of both Coronation and Whitehead Park and a repeat of the B level Golf that was well supported and may also use both venues if sufficient entries are received. We also plan to have a “grand opening day” for Whitehead Park possibly coinciding with National Croquet day on the 5 June. I have a feeling that the problems of league match rearrangements and cancellations may be part the meeting. I can only say for Bury club this is not bad planning or a lax attitude. It has simply been player availability from a somewhat diminished pool of players. We will be discussing at our AGM next week what teams we will be entering in 2016. I would caution that punitive measures will only discourage teams and players entering the league.

Chester:- With a vigorous recruitment process our numbers have gone over 100 and our beginners' courses went well. Our weekly club sessions and internal competitions have continued to thrive. This year the club has played in six of the seven Federation leagues but we won no trophies (just a near miss in the Advanced B). We again entered the Mary Rose and Longman competitions; we exited early but only to defeats at the hands of the clubs who figured in the national finals (Surbiton and Bowdon). We were well represented in the NW regional events and were pleased to win the GC handicap competition in the Southport Festival. 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. The council has installed a substantial new fence (which will hold our countless croquet groupies at bay.) It was constructed (fortuitously) just before we hosted the All England AC Handicap Final, our first venture onto the national stage. It went well, was enjoyed by all and marked by the completion of day1 after dusk courtesy of car headlights. We have had a quiet year on the coaching of our mature players which we plan to rectify in 2016. Chester has moved onto the international stage with a visit in August by Russian journalists as part of the Alice in Wonderland celebrations and in April 2016 we host a visit by Zurich croquet 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.

Crake Valley:- Unfortunately due to bad weather the Millennium Handicap Event had to be cancelled. We would like to put this on again –(with Fylde as the back-up club if the conditions are bad again). We suggest the middle to end of May. We ran our usual two Advanced Tournaments. We have put our member David Lloyd in for the CA Apps Memorial Bowl for the most improved player for the 2015 season

Craig-y-Don:- Our 2015 season with an active playing membership of 30, finished with a flourish on Sunday 27th September with a well-attended social and the lawn in the best condition since croquet began three years ago. Maintenance work on the lawn to improve it yet further, for winter crown green bowling and summer croquet, began early the next morning, scarifying, top

dressing and re-seeding. Our playing season will start on April 1st 2016. Winter weekly outdoor croquet sessions commenced on Monday 5th Oct with most of the playing club membership scheduled to take part on a member's purpose laid croquet lawn.(1/3 dimensions of a short lawn). We also have a weekly winter indoor table games program which started on Tuesday 6th October. Our Autumn luncheon took place on 28th October with 41 attendees. It was a great success, good food, good company and a raffle that raised over £100 toward club funds. A Christmas social has been booked on the afternoon of 9th December, which will be our final meeting in 2015. The club has been successful in gaining a People's Health Trust Award of £8645.00 which will be used to expand our existing club house from 10 ft x 8 ft to a 28 ft x 8 ft with electricity and mains water connections. We hope to have the enlarged club house operational in a basic fashion for the start of our 2016 playing season. As part of our undertaking to the People's Trust we are in discussion with the Blind Veterans Association, the Local Secondary School and other groups in the area to attempt to bring the benefits of playing Croquet to as wide a population as possible. The club has very few players who have played competitively and the majority of members want to simply play social 'Golf' croquet. However during the 2015 season we asked for, and received, a basic skills coaching session from the NW Federation Coaching team in Golf Croquet, which was very well received by those who attended. This was followed up by appointing a handicapper who then ran some sessions which means we do have now a dozen or so members with up to date handicap cards, but this did allow for our first ever team of four to attend the Southport Festival. This season, we played friendly home and away short-lawn games of 'Golf' against Chester, Tattenhall and Llanfairfechan in which we were quite successful. We hope to extend this to include some short-lawn Association next season. Whilst we hope to bring more players to Festivals in the Centre or SW of the NW Federation territory, we do not see our club being able to offer a league team within the current NW structure. Our age profile, which must be close to 70, is simply not conducive to driving long distances.

Culcheth:- The club has had a pleasant year and morale is high. This year we have increased our membership again. We are grateful for this as because of the financial state of the Culcheth Sports and Social Club our lawn maintenance costs are becoming greater each year. Our team entered in the Golf League as usual, finishing second and also the Golf Level play league, finishing a little lower. 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 a level competition. Throughout the season we had continued our coaching sessions on Golf Croquet led by our own club coaches. All sessions 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, such as Brownies. This year we continued our policy of Croquet days at Ellesmere and Flixton Croquet Clubs. The usual fun was had by all. Successful social events were our Quizzes and Annual Dinner. We are fortunate that we have members who are prepared to work hard, selling tickets and organising these events. 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. Our Committee has three new faces, Ann and Keith Woodward and Barbara Griffin. They replace three stalwarts, Anne Connop, Captain, Pat Barlow, Social Secretary and Brian Poynton, Secretary who have given long and dedicated service over many years. One new venture is The Culcheth Croquet Club Newsletter which we hope will be essential reading for our membership. It will be if we can persuade them to supply articles and photographs for inclusion. The final touches are being put to the First Draft ready for the New Year. Our Annual Dinner is on Friday 15th January 2015 and will cost £20. Menu and order forms are available for you today!

Ellesmere:- We have a growing membership especially due to the fact that the local Advertiser Newspaper contacted us and did a very nice article about us. Our lawn is being extended as the club is allowing us to play on the cricket field, where we can have two extra lawns. Unfortunately these lawn can't be used when cricket is being played. This mainly happens on Saturday afternoon so morning play is allowed. It's still difficult for us to join the N.W Croquet League due to the Ellesmere Sports Clubs facilities. However the members are enjoying visiting other Croquet Clubs and them returning to us for friendly games. The Croquet Club is looking at applying for grants to improve the lawn area.

Flixton:- No report

Fylde :- 13 new Members joined the Club in 2015 swelling the ranks to 39 by the end of the season, primarily through a presentation to a local U3A group. One winter lawn will be maintained and the usual series of social events are planned which will help to maintain interest and continuity. The Club took part in six of the NW Fed Leagues in 2015, fulfilling all but one of its commitments. Although only 17 Members played in NW Fed League matches, the Club triumphed in the B Level Advanced, Midweek Handicap and Handicap Leagues. In addition, Members played successfully in other competitions at home and abroad and Liz Wilson was selected to play for Lancashire. The Club won the Advanced and Handicap Trophies at the Festival of Croquet at Southport. The Club hosted the NW Fed Millennium Short and the CA Jubilee Handicap.

Isle of Man:- The IOMCA is still exploring possible sites for a new ground and will keep you posted on any news. We look forward to seeing you at next year's Festival.

(Keswick):- Not a member

Liverpool:- A slow start to the season, but the keen recruits from 2014 have been retained. There was a flurry of recruitment activity from August onwards, and things are looking more buoyant. It's likely that the 2016 season will start with between 15 and 20 members, either prepaying with a late season deal or pledging to join next Easter. Of those roughly half are retired, and half are in the age group 25-40. For the first time ever, cashflow has allowed extensive reseedling and some top-dressing. To date, the biggest problem for the club has been to get people enthused enough to come and play on a regular basis. With some

obsessive newcomers, that no longer appears to be a worry. The lawns stayed open until well into October, when two significant milestones were achieved - (1) I had to instruct members how to double bank, and (2) I had to repair rabbit runs in the hoops. It's still too soon to promise a presence in any Federation leagues, but the new intake seem to show ambitions to play competitively at both golf and short.

Llanfairfechan :- Last January we held our Annual Charity Beetle Drive and were able to donate a respectable sum to Marie Curie Cancer Care. We opened the season, as always, with hot cross buns on Easter Sunday when many of the playing and social members turned out. At the end of April we held a very successful Taster Weekend. Our members worked extremely hard on the publicity for this event which resulted in 19 turning up on the Sunday but only 4 on the Saturday because of the foul weather. We had 2,000 professionally printed posters/handouts which were circulated far and wide and one poster drew the attention of an ITV Wales News reporter that later developed into a 2 minute slot on Welsh TV. See it on our Facebook page!

April saw us celebrate our 25th Anniversary and we had a special croquet cake made – by Asda!!!! Take a photo to the bakery department and they will print it on a party size cake for you. I was a very disappointed Secretary and joint Club Founder this last season when, as Captain of the Short Team, I had to pull the team out of the League. Association players moving on to other fields and work coming in the way of play! Never mind, I had after all, unexpectedly been lumbered with the Captaincy of the Golf Team where my team came mid-way in the League. To keep this team in the League, I had volunteered to drive to away matches. I ended up being Captain, driving and playing! We had a visit from Don Williamson during the early season when 5 members took advantage of his expertise in Association. Unfortunately we have no in-house coaches to carry on his good work so we look forward to the Flying Circus again next season. Another season went by without a Llanfairfechan Team taking part in the fun weekend at the Festival of Croquet but two members made themselves useful by helping out other teams – I think they were helpful anyway! Our finances look a little better at the end of this season as opposed to this time last year and we might end up showing a profit. This, though, is **ONLY** because our green's man (knowing our financial difficulties) lowered his charges **AND** we dispensed with the services of the firm who did the heavy work on the lawns – scarification etc. We managed the 'weed and feed' in house also the worm cast and mole problems! But that is all. We also raised our subs by £5 but this would not have had any impact on the balance sheet. Hope to have a more uplifting report for you next year!

Nannerch:- As you know we joined the Federation the other year and you were kind enough to loan us a set of equipment to facilitate developing the game here in Nannerch. Unfortunately we were unable to raise sufficient interest (we are a small village) and recently the equipment has been returned to the Development Officer. Under the circumstances we need to resign from the NW Federation

Pendle and Craven:- In addition to our usual calendar this year we have had 2 teams in the LPG. In September we had our lawn sand slitted and we are buying a sit on lawnmower. Next year we are planning to introduce 2 new Golf Croquet tournaments.

Penrith and North Lakes:- For the first time Penrith CC entered a national CA competition. The All England Handicap qualifying competition included players from Keswick CC and Penrith. John Henderson (Penrith) was runner up in the regional event and won two games out of five at the national final played at Chester. We are still some way off entering the Mary Rose!

Salford:- Salford Croquet is doing very well and the members continue to meet throughout the winter months. Best wishes to everyone

Southport and Birkdale:- We have had a good season there are 104 members including 15 new this year. The new path to the Club House is a great improvement. There has been much work carried out on the lawns at the South's have been mown three times a week and the North's twice our volunteers have worked very hard to improve the lawns. The Festival went well and we hope everyone enjoyed it. We hosted the CA Chairman's eight and received compliments on the lawns. Unfortunately we had to cancel the September Advanced Weekend due to the low level of entries. We were pleased to win the Golf Handicap League.

Tattenhall:- We have enjoyed a good season although membership has remained static. We have continued to work on our new lawn and look forward to playing on it next season.

Westmorland:- It's been a mixed year for W.C.C this year. On the downside our membership has dwindled from 41 to 33 with at least one more current member not returning next season. Despite members hard work our lawns have not improved and we need to do more next year to reduce the unevenness and to recruit new members. On the upside it's fair to say that all our remaining members enjoyed a good season with splendid weather for Croquet and excellent social events. Early in the season we became aware of a rumour that we were being evicted from our lawns at Levens Hall. We never found out where the rumour originated but we were happy to deny any truth in it.

- 13 The following Captains were elected for the Counties Teams in 2016
Colin Irwin for Cheshire and David Openshaw for Lancashire
Colin Irwin & Paul Rigge will be the organisers for respective counties

Presentation of Trophies

14 **Association**

Advanced	Pendle and Craven
B Level Advanced	Fylde
Handicap	Fylde
Mid-week	Fylde
Short	Bury

Golf

Level Play	Bowdon Bandits
Handicap	Southport

15 **Election of Officers**

Prior to the election of Officers the Chairman gave a personal vote of thanks to Ron Welch who was not standing for re-election and was absent from today's meeting as he was undertaking his final task on behalf of the Federation as part of the CA Development Committee. Garry went on to make special mention of the selfless service to the Federation by Paul Rigge, who had decided not to stand for re-election and whom for many years and in many different roles had been the pragmatic presence, maintaining the continuity from year to year. The Federation thanked Paul for all his efforts.

Officers were elected as follows

Chairman;	Garry Wilson
Secretary;	Liz Wilson
Treasurer	Bob Connop
Independent Examiner	Chris Slater (Auditor*)
League Manager;	Tony Thomas (This will be Tony's last year)
Coaching Officer;	Elmyr Hughes
Development Officer;	James Hawkins
Child Protection Officer;	Jean Hargreaves
NW Festival of Croquet Manager;	Keith Roberts
Pennine Cup Manager;	To be discussed at Spring Meeting

Please note - CA Representative; Peter Wilson (3rd year – election at the spring meeting)

The Committee will be proposing an amendment to The Constitution 2b in the fullness of time

16 Any Other Business

Graham Good wanted to bring the attention of the Federation to the disparities in handicaps between the North West Federation, Croquet North, Yorkshire, East Midlands and the Southern Federations. Bowdon had travelled to the South and their handicaps seemed to be far lower than the teams they played. This was referred to Don Williamson and Peter Wilson

He also warned about the timing of the Secretaries Shield match which seemed to suit the team Bowdon played rather than both teams

17 Next Meetings Spring Meeting on 5th March 2016 at Culcheth, Autumn AGM on 19th November 2016 at Culcheth, Spring Meeting on 4th March 2017 at Culcheth.

NW FCC 2014-2015 Income & Expenditure Statement

Current Year to 30 September 2015

		Amount	Account	2013-2014
Income & Expenditure				
<i>Member Club Affiliation Fees</i>	Affiliation Fees @ £20/Club	<u>£380.00</u>		
			£380.00	400.00
<i>Development</i>				
	Income	£0.00		
	Expenditure	<u>£0.00</u>		
			£0.00	-35.38
<i>Miscellaneous Income</i>				
	Crake Millenium Tournament	£60.00		
	Pendle Millenium Event	£58.00		
	Fylde Millenium Tournament Fylde	£30.00		
	Interest	<u>£14.56</u>		
			£162.56	32.91
<i>Festival of Croquet</i>				
	Income	£984.00		
	Expenditure	<u>-£750.00</u>		
			£234.00	186.00
<i>Miscellaneous Expenditure</i>				
	Coffee/Tea at AGM/Spring Meeting	-£60.00		
	Crake Mower	-£750.00		
	Website Expenses	<u>-£29.99</u>		
			-£839.99	-456.61
<i>Coaching</i>				
	Llandudno	<u>-£34.40</u>		
			-£34.40	126.92
				↓
Nett income (loss) during year			<u>-£97.83</u>	<u> </u>
Opening Balances				
Cash			£0.00	0
Current Account			£1,271.17	£1,197.16
Deposit Account			£3,180.13	£3,127.22
Total Opening Balances			<u>£4,451.30</u>	<u>£4,324.38</u>
 Total as at 30 September 2015				
			<u><u>£4,353.47</u></u>	<u><u>£4,451.30</u></u>
 Bank Balances as at 30 September 2015				
Cash			£0.00	£0.00
Current Account			£1,048.78	£1,271.17
Deposit Account			£3,304.69	£3,180.13
Total as at 30 September 2015			<u><u>£4,353.47</u></u>	<u><u>£4,451.30</u></u>

Accounts as at 30th September 2015 certified as correct

 R Connop, Treasurer

 Helen Brophy, Auditor

Dated 22.10.2015

A hectic season of 177 matches, generating issues with implications for the league structure. We seem to have had a record number of postponed matches and the issue of Bonus Points in the Advanced League has again caused consternation.

Fylde had a wonderful season, winning the B Level and both the Weekend and Midweek Handicap Leagues. The B Level was won by the narrowest of margins being decided on net winning games difference.

The number of teams in the B Level League has increased whilst the A Level teams have decreased in 2015.

Pendle & Craven won the Advanced League despite only winning 50% of their matches but accumulating 5 Bonus Points. Bowdon coming second, won all their matches without earning any Bonus Points.

Bury won the Short League in a very close finish by winning a net 4 games (out of 80) more than second placed Bowdon.

The Golf Leagues produced clear winners – Southport winning the Handicap Golf and Bowdon Bandits the Level Play Golf.

The Level Play Golf League seems to be developing very well, with more teams entering each year (2013-4; 2014-6; 2015-7), anecdotal evidence suggesting the shorter times taken to play a match is seen as an advantage.

Postponement of matches became an issue this season - 35 matches postponed, about half of these within eight weeks of the start of the season. This, despite plenty of time allowed for clubs to study the draft fixture list available since early January. Inexplicably, 14 postponements in the Handicap League.

Four matches were unavoidably postponed due to weather but others caused opposing captains some problems. The League Rules state if an opposing captain cannot agree a new date, the match can be conceded or declared void. More captains have claimed the match this year, a strategy I would support. One club now has a policy of claiming a match if the opposing side postpone the agreed date and I would encourage more clubs to follow this lead. Eventually, six matches were conceded and three not played, fortunately, these issues did not effect the league titles.

However, the issue of Bonus Points had a dramatic effect on the Advanced League title. The League title was won by virtue of Bonus Points rather than winning most games. I think this is illogical and surely time this system was either changed dramatically or was scrapped.

The new B Level League also has Bonus Points and fortunately both the first and second teams each gained the same number of bonus points but if one player had lost one game, it could have effected the league title. In other words, Bonus Points (based on Handicap Differences and individual games) can have a greater influence on the league than team performance.

Finally, thank you to everyone who has kept me fully informed about matches, especially those where I have to send data to CA Rankings Officers. Your prompt information enables the website to be kept up to date. Thank you.

Tony Thomas, League Manager, November 2015

ADVANCED 2015	P	W	L	D	Games	BPts	Pts
PENDLE & CRAVEN	4	2	2	0	21-15	5	9
Bowdon	4	4	0	0	27-09	0	8
Bury	4	1	3	0	10-18	1	3
Fylde	4	1	3	0	10-22	1	3
Crake Valley	4	1	3	0	15-21	0	2

B LEVEL 2015	P	W	L	D	Games	BPts	Pts
FYLDE	5	4	1	0	19-06	2	10
Chester	5	4	1	0	15-10	2	10
Southport	5	3	2	0	12-13	1	7
Pendle & Craven	5	2	3	0	12-13	0	4
Bury	5	1	4	0	09-16	0	2
Bowdon	5	1	4	0	08-17	0	2

HANDICAP 2015	P	W	L	D	Games	Pts
FYLDE	9	7	2	0	39-23	14
Pendle & Craven	9	6	3	0	36-27	12
Bowdon Firs	9	6	3	0	34-29	12
Chester *	8*	4	4	0	33-23	8
Bowdon St Marys	9	4	5	0	29-30	8
Crake Valley*	8*	4	4	0	27-30	8
Birkdale	9	4	5	0	26-37	8
Southport *	8*	3	5	0	25-31	6
Bury Caesars	9	3	6	0	27-36	6
Bury Peelers *	8*	2	6	0	21-32	4

NOT PLAYED:
Chester v Crake;
Bury Peelers v Southport.

MIDWEEK 2015	P	W	L	D	Games	Pts
FYLDE	7	6	1	0	32-17	12
Pendle & Craven	7	5	2	0	24-25	10
Chester	7	4	3	0	27-21	8
Bowdon Earls	7	4	3	0	27-22	8
Westmorland	7	3	4	0	23-26	6
Bowdon Griffins	7	3	4	0	22-26	6
Bury	7	2	5	0	21-28	4
Southport	7	2	5	0	19-30	4

SHORT 2015	P	W	L	D	Games	Pts
BURY	5	3	1	1	48-28	7
Bowdon	5	3	1	1	48-32	7
Westmorland	5	3	2	0	43-37	6
Pendle & Craven	4*	2	2	0	27-37	4
Chester	4*	1	2	1	27-37	3
Southport	5	0	4	1	27-49	1

NOT PLAYED:
Chester v Pendle.

GOLF 2015	P	W	L	D	Games w l d	Pts
SOUTHPORT	8	7	0	1	96-38-02	15
Culcheth	8	5	3	0	81-57-02	10
Chester	8	4	2	2	67-71-04	10
Pendle & Craven	8	4	3	1	67-61-00	9
Llanfairfechan	8	4	3	1	64-60-02	9
Westmorland	8	3	5	0	59-76-01	6
Bury North	8	2	5	1	58-85-02	5
Fylde	8	2	6	0	63-77-05	4
Bury South	8	1	5	2	56-86-02	4

LEVEL PLAY GOLF	P	W	L	D	Games	Pts
BOWDON BANDITS	7	7	0	0	93-25	14
Bury	7	6	1	0	76-50	12
Bowdon Sinners	7	3	3	1	58-68	7
Chester	7	3	4	0	57-69	6
Pendle Foresters	7	2	4	1	56-70	5
Pendle Tykes	7	2	4	1	52-74	5
Culcheth	7	2	5	0	58-68	4
Fylde	7	0	4	3	46-72	3

PLEASE NOTE DUE TO A TYPOGRAPHICAL ERROR PENDLE TYKES NOW HAVE 5 POINTS NOT 3 AS REPORTED AT THE AGM.

Appendix iii

Equipment Spring 2016

Bowdon	None
Bury	None
Chester	None
Crake	Mower (50%)
Craig-y-Don	CA Start up Set
Culcheth	None
Ellesmere	3 Mallets
Flixton	None
Fylde	None
Harlech	None
IOM	None
Keswick	None
Liverpool	CA Start up Set
Llanfairfechan	None
Nannerch	None
Pendle	None
Penrith	4 Mallets, 1 set hoops, 1 peg
Salford	CA start up Set
Southport	none
Tattenhall	CA Start up Set + set of 2 ^{ndary} balls,
Westmorland	5 Mallets, 1 set primary and 1 set secondary balls
Secretary	One projector