



CROQUET NORTH---(www.croquetnorth.org.uk)

Secretary's Report for 2021

Continuing covid restrictions resulted in our January Executive Meeting and our March AGM being held virtually via Zoom. Our October meeting returned to a physical format at Tyneside CC.

We have welcomed Backworth CC into the federation, bringing our number of clubs to eight. Backworth, being a GC only club, increases further the dominance of this code of play in the region. Only half of our clubs offer play of both codes and only Middlesbrough and Tyneside offer AC inter-club competitive play.

There was minimal croquet play in 2020 due to Covid 19 restrictions and the 2021 season started cautiously. CN competition formats were changed to accommodate concerns about travel. Shorter travel distances and friendlies seemed to be favoured, but bolder more committed players travelled much further. Durham represented CN in the GC Federation Shield and entered in the GC Murphy Shield resulting in playing four other clubs over the course of the season.

The CN GC Div 1 League was played in two groups, North and South. The 'play off' between the groups resulted in Bamburgh winning and Durham being runners up. The Div 2 League was not played. CN AC League resulted in the winning Tyneside team being beaten by a Middlesbrough hybrid team at Middlesbrough. AC Championships were played but not GC. The GC Team event at Bamburgh was again very successful. The CN GC Open Singles was played for the first time at Durham where manager Peter Tymms retained the Turner Goblet from 2019.

The content of the CN website continues to grow and is now the main communication medium with the wider membership and public. There was no separate Newsletter because so much is now on the website; and we lost our Newsletter Editor *John Fitzpatrick after his battle against cancer. John, who had until recently also been CN Development Officer, will be missed by all of his many croquet friends and associates.

Early in the year our Chairman outlined challenges facing us. These included addressing Adult and Child Safeguarding, Inclusivity & Diversity and Promoting Competitive Croquet, Members with an interest and willingness to contribute are being sought .

and from club reports—

Alnmouth -An average 25 (of 42) members played at the club twice per week during the season. Two new club competitions were introduced, one for high bisque players and the other a ladder and these will be repeated next year. Two teams entered the CN GC Div 1 League. The club won the Alice Fleck Trophy at the CN GC Team Event at Bamburgh.

Auckland.— A better year at Chilton with facilities more readily available. However lawn maintenance leaves a lot to be desired. Efforts to increase membership from the area resulted in three new members bring to total to 14, including one associate and one non player. 5 of the eleven entrants at the CN GC Open Singles at Durham were Auckland members. Eugene Brady lost second place to Phil Errington. Jane Pringle and Marcia Henderson played in various GC Tournaments.

Backworth— A slow return to more normal conditions after covid restrictions. Very happy to be invited to play a friendly at Ripon. Three members played in the CN CG Singles (Turner Goblet). Tony McCann, who is also a Durham member, played in several national competitions. At the end of the season club play continued on winter lawns.

Bamburgh -The club has now completed its 14th season with a further expansion of members (to 47). A third lawn introduced to address covid restrictions may now become a permanent feature. Introductory, tactical and advanced GC courses were offered at the beginning of the season. The Campbell Morrison court booking system is now used and is highly recommended. The annual GC Team Event was held in August (rather than June) and appeared successful and enjoyable despite rain on the day. For the first time the club won the CN GC Div 1 League and there remains interest in AC.

Belsay Hall—As a result of a recruitment drive over the past few years the club has experienced a 23 increase in new members this year bringing the total to 58. GC coaching has been given to new members and a fun Racing Coquet event was organised for all members to help integration of new members with established members.

The lawn remains good due to the maintenance work over recent years. Internal competitions were limited to 3 divisions of Golf Leagues and up to 8 members met on Wednesday afternoons to play AC.

Croquet Durham—Following good maintenance of the lawns over the winter and into the season a full croquet programme was possible but total membership fell from 25 to 20, primarily due to 'the ageing process'. The club won the CN GC Div1 League within the south except for Ripon, but lost to Bamburgh in the final. The club represented CN in the GC Federation Shield and entered the Murphy Shield. These national competitions required play at Henley, York, Ashby and Nottingham and involved some 1,300 miles of travel! Peter Tymms managed and played in the CN GC Singles at Durham and retained the Turner Goblet that he won in 2019. Tony McCann and John-Paul Moberly both had a busy and successful year.

Middlesbrough—The Charity One Ball was cancelled but otherwise play approached something like normal. There remain concerns about the state of the lawns because of a reduction in maintenance by the council. Very limited use of the pavilion is allowed making it difficult to access toilets and water. Proposals for a new toilet and water facility slowed but now seem brighter. It is hoped that the visit to the park by the Mayor and a brief outline of our sport to BBC Radio Tees will attract new members.

Tyneside—Membership is 38 and attendance at club is encouraging. Members that recently joined also contributed to ensuring that almost all club competitions ran. The CAAC handicap ran as a 2 day event but the CAAC Advanced was cancelled due to covid concerns and the state of the lawns. Particularly disappointing is that reseeding of the Pavilion lawn last year did not result in the expected improvements because early season drought and the difficulty of access for watering. Members cut back hedges etc and contractors are expected to scarify and tine soon. Top dressing and further re-seeding is expected in the spring of 2022.

David Millener—(2) January 2022

*Obituaries, when available, are now posted to the CN Website and may also appear in the Coquet Gazette