



President's Report 2016

Welcome

I would like to welcome you all to the English Pétanque Association 2016 Annual General Meeting and my first full meeting as President.

It has been an interesting first year getting to grips with the organisation and all of its constituent parts, although I have been playing the sport for many years and on committees for almost as long, being in the "big chair" is very different.

I started out writing this report thinking we had not done too much in the last 12 months, but as I summarised the year it brings it home how much has been done over that period. This report attempts to cover a summary of that and also to look to the future on what we are looking to achieve over the coming years.

Maurice Abney-Hastings - Founder President British Pétanque Association

I had the pleasure of visiting Maurice last month after I received an email from him.

Among the pride of his possessions were 4 old boules: 2 being the pair reputedly made for Ernest Pitiot, one of the two creators of pétanque as a static form of Jeu Provençal in 1924. These were given to Maurice as the Founder President of the BPA in Barcelona in 1974 when the association was first accepted by the FIPJP. They were a welcoming gift from the Federation Francaise. Another is the boule used by the Italian tireur, from the winning team of that year's worlds and the fourth is a 15th Century bow cannon ball found several miles inland of Portsmouth Harbour indicating that some form of game was played away from ships 500 years ago.

Maurice has very kindly donated these boules to the Association and they are here today.



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Coaching Commission

Looking back on 2015, the programme the commission set out to implement achieved some credible success by establishing the association's new Club Coach Course and development programme.

In the period from February to December the Commission had:

- Eleven regions enter applicants.
- Conducted seven Club Coach Courses.
- Adjudicated and passed twenty four new Club Coaches.

With two current courses at the mid-way point and expected to be completed shortly.

The new Advanced Club Coach Course design has been completed and details will be on our website in the next day or so. I know there has been some good work done on putting the next piece of the jigsaw in place, the County Coach Course, watch this space.

Colin has Coaching Commission Meeting scheduled for the 30th April, if invited please support.

Umpiring Commission

Umpiring is unfortunately not seen as the glamorous side of our sport, with people wanting to play. It is however a vital role within the sport and we have a very limited pool of people in these roles.

Being an Umpire does not mean you have to give up playing, all we look for is for people to give some time back into the sport. We have a number of umpires, John Edmondson, Neil Stevenson and John Thatcher for example that balance playing, organising and umpiring (not at the same time I must add!) If we had more umpires then the work can be shared amongst a wider pool of people and not always foisted on a diminishing population.

I know there was an Umpiring Course last weekend and I await with anticipation the outcome.

Bob Parker, the Chair of the Umpiring Commission, is also looking to get a Commission meeting in the diary very soon.

If you want to be involved or get on a course then let Bob know.

DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) Checks

In July we were given 3 days' notice that the firm carrying out checks on our behalf would cease providing the service. This was a wholly paper based system with the process requiring members key documentation to be posted around the country to allow verification to take place.

Fortunately we had been doing some background research and was able to implement a new system, hosted by Kent County Council, fairly quickly. The benefits of the new system are:



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- It is an on-line system, saving the need to post out applications ;
- The application form is much simpler than the previous paper based form;
- We can have local ID verifiers, saving the need for members to send their vital documents around the country;
- In the past the end to end process could take more than a month to complete, with the final check itself taking 2 or 3 weeks to be received. Now it can all be done in 3 or 4 days. The quickest I have seen is once I had completed the verification step at 17:00 one evening, by 09:00 the next morning I had received the result.

We are still getting to grips with the devolved process but I am pleased with the system.

Membership

I would like to thank Ray Keemer-Richards (and his wife Ajay) for all of their efforts with Membership it is one of the most visible of all of our functions and generally a thankless task.

As at 18th March we had:

- 2133 Members plus 68 manual applications that had arrived in the post in the last couple of days;
- 133 Clubs;

Membership Database

The Management Committee are well aware of a number of issues around our current membership system. The year-end process was exceedingly painful for Ray, David Baxter and myself. Rolling over membership years should not be that difficult!

We are looking for alternatives and you will see that we have made provision in the accounts for that. The objective is to have the new system in place in time for the 2017 year.

We have introduced new Licences cards this year, we hope you like them.

For Competitions we will require players to present their licence with photo inside or licence supporting photographic identification. The purpose of this is to prevent unscrupulous individuals sharing licences.

Insurance

We have remained with the same broker – Mann Broadbent – but under their recommendation we have moved to a different insurer this year to minimise the cost increase. Our cover remains the same.

Playing Commission

At last year's AGM the Management Committee were charged to enact the



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constitutional provisions for a Playing Commission during 2015.

I am pleased to confirm that the Playing Commission is in place, under the leadership of Martin Hughes. They have met and delivered to the Management Committee their first report, the outcome of which is the National Playing Programme 2016.

There are some very exciting developments this year, including the introduction of competitions to form an England Women's Squad, building on the experience we have gained from the Junior Coaching Programme. We are also in the early planning stages of introducing a similar system for the Men in 2017.

Please see the Playing Programme for full details.

In 2015 we introduced the ability to enter our National Competitions via email with payment via bank transfers, to make entry easier. We will be continuing that in 2016 and I would encourage entry via that means.

Junior Coaching Programme

The Junior Coaching Programme was put in place 3 years ago to provide a structured approach to the training and selection of our Junior International Squad under the stewardship of Matt Blyton, Claire White and Colin Roper. Thank you to you all.

This led to one our best performances with a silver medal in Nations Cup at the World Championships in Thailand in November 2015.

As part of our 5 Year Plan we are continuing to invest in the programme to enable it to develop and continue forward, under the leadership of Matt Blyton who has put a great team in place to assist him.

They held the first selection day on 12th March and had an excellent turnout of 36 juniors and by all reports a great day was had by all.

I wish them every success for this year.

Espoirs Coaching Programme

Building on the success of the Junior Programme we have introduced this year an Espoirs Coaching Programme.

This is in the very capable hands of Simon Bird and Tony Mann. Simon brings to the programme years of experience as a senior player and coach. Tony has been a manager of representative sides at international tournaments on a number of occasions and brings a wealth of experience in that area.

I look forward to seeing the squads develop and grow over the coming years and wish them every success.



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Home Nations

This year will be hosted by the Scottish Pétanque Association in Edinburgh. Based on a couple of conversations that I had at the Men's European Championship, Jersey Pétanque Association will be introduced into the Championship for the first time to make it a four-way tournament. This along with the excellent preparation our hosts are putting in are laying the foundations for an excellent tournament this year.

Titles Weekend

In 2015 we returned to ISCA Pétanque Club in the Devon Region for our titles weekend. We were blessed with great weather and an excellent turn out of participants.

The doubles and mixed doubles did take some time to complete, but those who stayed to see the finals were treated to some great pétanque.

With the Playing Commission we are reviewing the playing structure to hopefully mitigate against too late a finish.

Thank you to John Thatcher and his great team for making it an enjoyable weekend.

I am looking forward to going back this year.

Inter-Regional Championships

We continue to partner with IoW Tours and Mill Rythe Holiday Park to host our Inter-Regional Championships. IoW Tours provide the majority of the logistical support in the accommodation arrangements and on-site liaison. This takes a huge administrative burden off the EPA. They also bear much of the risk of the event.

I had great trepidation before the weekend, because Mike and the Team had set such a high standard. It all went very well from my point of view and it was a very enjoyable weekend and I hope everybody enjoyed it as much as I did.

I did thank them at the event, but I wish to record my thanks formally to the team on the ground that ran the weekend, meaning I could play.

Thank you to:

- Adrian & Faith Thomas who with Annette Eggleton ran the control desk;
- Steve Snudden for his work before the event on the scoring system;
- Bob Parker, John Edmondson & Robin Ralph the Umpiring Team;
- The volunteers during set up and take down of the terrains, especially Mari Gravell from Southern, who was not playing over the weekend, but gave up her time to come and build the terrains.



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We will be asking regions in the near future for their commitments on squads for this year's Tournament and will then work on the logistics.

We are introducing a number of changes for this year:

- Champion of Champion Shooting
- Junior Shooting Competition

We are also in negotiations to put in place lighting on some of the pitches to allow for the Shooting competition in the evening and in the case of late finishing games.

We are also looking to have new scoreboards with the scores on both sides.

Roll of Honour 2015

EPA Life Members Tony Moulding East Midlands Region

International Representation

Junior World Championships - Thailand - Nations Cup Silver Medal

Connie Bell, Daniel Raine, Chris Wilmot, Ollie Zimmerman

Managers Claire White & Matt Blyton

Women's World Championships – Thailand

Kim Lachani, Lisa Edmondson, Myra Huntley, Sarah Huntley

Manager Tony Mann

Men's European Championships – Bulgaria

Scott Ashby, Kevin Spillett, Rowland Jones, Jack Blows

Manager Dave Hurren

National Champions

English Triples (Men) Scott Ashby, Kevin Spillett, Rowland Jones, Jack Blows

English Triples (Women) Sarah Huntley, Emma Longstaff, Sabrina Seville, Tracy Turner

English Doubles Ashley Jamieson Lee Jamieson

English Mixed Doubles Jack Blows Sarah Huntley

English Men's Singles Sean Prendergast

English Women's Singles Samantha Thatcher

English Veterans (55+) Not Held

English Over 50s Lee Jamieson Didier Chassot

English Junior Triples Connie Bell, Daniel Raine, Chris Wilmot, Ollie Zimmerman

EPA EuroCup Champions Baldock Town PC



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Champion of Champions

Champion of Champions Triples Sewell	Matthew Eversden, Phil Winston, Jonathan
Champion of Champions Doubles	Ross Jones Phil Winston
Champion of Champions Shooting	Sofiane Lachani

Inter-Regional Championships

Inter-Regional Division 1 Champions	Kent
Inter-Regional Division 2 Champions England	Heart of
Inter-Regional Challenge Trophy	
Inter-Regional Challenge Trophy Division 1 Champions	Devon
Inter-Regional Challenge Trophy Division 2 Champions	Combined
Inter-Regional Junior Champions	Chiltern

Finances

Our finances are in a good shape and Cary our Treasurer will take you through those in detail later.

We continue managing our overheads closely. The Management Committee have held more meetings this year but we are using a more cost effective meeting place, which reduces the cost of the actual meeting place and travelling costs. We are also making use of modern technology through the use of conference calls.

As part of our 5 Year Plan we have introduced two key changes:

- National Titles Competitions are to net zero cost;
 - o The net proceeds of all events will be used to generate a cash prize fund which will be allocated to each competition;
- International Player Give Back;
 - o As part of representing England in International Tournaments players are required to contribute to the overall costs. This year we are introducing a mechanism whereby those players can receive “credit” for those costs through give back to the pétanque community through assisting our Coaching Programmes or supporting Regional and Club competitions;

Club Small Grant Fund

We have had limited applications this year for the Club Small Grant Fund

May I take this opportunity to remind all of our clubs of this fund, which is there to assist them with non-infrastructure development of their clubs.

We will review activity and effectiveness over the coming months.



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Future

Our financial strength has allowed us start to pull together a plan and invest to take our sport forward over the next 5 years. We are going to look at 5 key areas - Coaching, Youth Development, National Performance, Communication and Organisational Growth.

The 5 areas will have key aims and goals with metrics to track our performance against them. Some of these goals are aspirational and stretching, but they are all realistic if we work and pull together.

Below is a summary of the projects and actions that we are working on. In some cases these are the “what”, the “how” is work in progress and we will develop as we go forward. When we achieve something we will move forward again and set the next objective.

	Project	Actions
1)	Coaching	1. Develop Modular coaching programs
		2. Develop Promotional Material
		3. Investigate and identify potential external grants
		4. Hire an International Coach
2)	Youth Development	1. Develop existing modular approach for Junior development
		2. Prizes / Incentives aimed at encouraging participation.
		3. Additional International events for other juniors
3)	National Performance	1. Review performance of National squads at International Championships
		2. Prizes / Incentives aimed at encouraging participation.
		3. Maintain and consolidate Junior squad
		4. Implement an Espoirs squad based on the Junior Model
		5. Develop squad system for Women's International Representation
		6. Develop squad system for Men's International Representation
4)	Communication	1. Appoint a Communications Officer
		2. Evaluate use of social Media - training courses
		3. Find sponsorship for outgoing communications
		4. Review existing opt in / out Options
5)	Organisational Growth	1. Identify and Implement new Management System
		1. Increase number of registered clubs
		2. Increase number of registered members



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		3. Develop external organisational relationships
		4. Deliver best practice and knowledge from external relationships to Clubs & Members

Thank You

Firstly I would like to thank Pétanque Wallingford for hosting us today. Rather than host our AGM in an anonymous room in a hotel somewhere, the MC decided to see if we could hold it at one of our clubs. We were over whelmed with the number of clubs that volunteered, thank you to you all. Wallingford was chosen due to its location and access to transport links. Taking our meetings around the country is something we will look to continue going forward.

I would like to thank all of the Management Committee, everyone has taken a very active part in what we have done this year and have been a great help to me personally. I appreciate their counsel and honest feedback on what we are doing and trying to achieve. I enjoy working with them. Thank you.

I would like to thank all of the clubs that host our EPA Competitions and the support they provide us over the year.

This is a voluntary sport, everyone involved is doing it for fun and giving up their time to play or organise a sport that they love. Things may not always be perfect, or be to everyone's liking but the committee do try to the best of their abilities and always with the best intentions. Without people volunteering we would not have a sport.

It is a great Management Committee, but it could be better, when I spoke at the Inter-Regionals in 2015 I said that we do lack diversity and we still do. I would love to have some younger members on the committee to represent their views, similarly, representation from our women members would also be very welcome.

We have lots to do over the coming years and if you wish to be involved come and speak to any of the committee.

Martin Eggleton
EPA President



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