

President's Report to the Regional AGM 20/10/07

I would again like to thank all of last year's committee. Running the region is not easy and volunteers continue to be in short supply. In particular I would like to thank Bill who as Membership Secretary and Treasurer continues to put in a large amount of work behind the scenes and also Pete as Playing Officer for running regional tournaments.

2007 was another good year for Northern.

The highlight was the Northern squad finishing 3rd at Brean Sands for the second year in a row. This time with a record number of wins (60) and only 4 wins behind first place.

The challenge squad also did well finishing in 4th place of the 12 regions taking part and also with a record number of wins..

Congratulations to all 52 Northern players who took part (including 7 playing in the EPA combined squad in division 2) and a special thank you to the 3 squad managers Barbara Hardisty, Chris O'Rourke and Ruth Borrowdale who are an essential part of the squad.

Congratulations to several Northern players who did well in national tournaments ;

- Andy Willis, Richard Marston and Jack Barrington finished 2nd in the BPF Junior Triples. All three were also selected to play for GB in the North Sea Tournament.
- John Gaughan along with Shirley Hiscock from the Isle of Wight finished 2nd in the mixed pairs.
- Luke Howard and James Hart finished 2nd in the champion of champions pairs.

I would like to congratulate the winners of the regional tournaments this year who were
Singles- Mike Walkley.

Pairs - Luke Howard & James Hart who won the pairs for the 3rd year in a row.

Triples - Mike Walkley , Neill Rank , Sue Swift and Alan Swift

Tournaments continue to be well supported and we have one of the fullest and most competitive playing calendars in the country which in my view is a major factor behind our success.

However I must also point out the negative points which could cause problems if they are not addressed.

None of the following points are intended as a criticism of individuals. They are intended as comments but if they are read as criticisms it must be taken as a criticism of all of us.

- Individual membership of the region fell by 10%. There were only 6 new members last year which was not enough to replace the numbers leaving.
- 40% of the individual membership is over 60 (16% over 70).
- Unless we can find new junior members the regions junior membership will fall to 3 next year (all from 1 club and all in their last year as a junior). It will be very difficult to stay in division 1 without a junior team.
- There are several potential new clubs but can the region do more to encourage them. ?
- There has been no progress with developing an umpiring structure and a coaching structure.
- There have been instances during the year where individuals have caused what could have been serious disciplinary problems.
- We have failed to meet our constitutional requirement to hold four regional meetings this year. Not having a meeting since January has possibly contributed to some of our problems.

To avoid finishing on a pessimistic note I would like to congratulate the EPA management committee for the way they suggest dealing with the problems of the BPF (a copy of Mike Pegg's letter is available on the EPA website). Also the changes to the EPA clubs competition show positive and innovative thought and these have led to several Northern clubs taking part although there had been zero involvement from Northern before this year.