

It is intended to publish this newsletter quarterly with your help in providing articles to try keep you all informed about pétanque in the region. Articles from clubs, notices and reports about events, coaching tips, umpiring questions will all feature at various times.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

DEVON REGIONAL CHAMPIONS 2017



Lesley Drakatos
Singles Champion



John and Rose Thatcher
Doubles Champions



Rosie Earl
Doubles Runner Up



Sue and Peter Smith
Doubles Plate winners



Ged and Ann Barton,
And John Phipps
Devon Triples Champions



Ian Ash, Simon Rapsey
and Mike Anderson
Devon Triples Runners Up



LEAGUE CHAMPIONS were Pig On The Hill

DEVON PETANQUE REGION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2017

The Annual General Meeting spent some time discussing the proposal from the EPA's Management Committee to change the status of the EPA from a Sports Association to a Charitable Company by Limited Guarantee. This proposal will be determined by a ballot of all EPA members as at 30th November 2017. The actual Ballot will take place during January with the final date of voting being 29th January. Information regarding the ballot will be posted out to all members in early January.

Other matters discussed at the meeting, other than the formalities required by our Constitution, included the playing calendar and league rules for 2018. On completion of the formalities there was a buffet supper before the Championship trophies were presented.

Then to my surprise I was asked (no, told!) to sit down while Ged Barton, our new President, proceeded to make a very much appreciated presentation to me of a decanter, glasses and malt whisky and a bottle of wine to Rose. I would like to thank all of you for this very unexpected gift. After 18 years as President of Devon Petanque Region I am not going to "run away" but will still be playing as much as possible and will always be there for any questions about anything to do with Devon Petanque. If I do not know the answer then I will do my best to find out and help wherever I can. I wish you all a very merry Christmas and look forward to seeing you all in 2018 at League matches and open events.





DEVON PETANQUE NEWSLETTER

December 2017

Ged Barton's comments at the Presentation to John

It gives me great pleasure to be able to make a few comments about our recently retired President John Thatcher.

John has successfully held the reins of this Region almost continuously since 1999 a period of some 18 years. In current legal terms that is more than a life sentence.

He has been a strong supporter of Petanque throughout this time, having seen our National Association changing from its founding title of British Petanque Association to becoming a Federation, made up of the home nations, through to our current title English Petanque Association. Even this title may well change again in the near future. In addition to his Presidential duties he has also undertaken, and passed, all the necessary umpire examinations, culminating in him becoming our National Umpire for many years.

This work was not just being an Umpire at Competitions but also being actively involved in training and examining other umpires throughout England. Together with Mike Pegg, our current European President (who by the way have their Head Offices in Luxemburg obviously some sort of tax advantages!!) They were and still are a formidable pair on the circuit. Even me, a very calm and placid person who would not argue!!, can remember disagreeing with John on occasions especially at Brean Sands when we were 4-0 up and were told we had to restart the game. I would add this was an Organisers call, not his... I did apologise later!

In Devon John has worked very hard for the Region, helping and visiting new clubs take off the ground as well as willingly giving advice when asked. Competition preparation, organising and running; attending executive meetings in Devon as well as travelling to London for National Meetings, which in his earlier years were numerous, are just a few examples of his work load.

In his spare time his club have recently opened their new piste. All of the above takes time and a great deal of effort. For that we give our thanks.

In mentioning the above one must remember Rose, who has supported John throughout the time he has involved himself with Petanque. We in Devon would like to recognise this and would ask you (Rose) to accept this small gift to mark our appreciation. *(A bottle of wine was presented)*

When we heard from John that he was retiring this year a few of us thought we ought to mark the occasion, this was after the cheers had died down!! We organised a collection but after paying for the gift for Rose we are able to present you with this card there being no other money left *(A farewell card was given with all those members present signing on behalf of all clubs and teams as well as individual donors)*

I lie, there was some money left over. In fact donations from the Region's Clubs and teams together with a donation from the Kernow region and individual donations from members of the Devon & Kernow regions have enabled us to present you with the following in appreciation of your services to Petanque in Devon.

A Dartington crystal spirit carafe, engraved with his name, the dates of his Devon Presidency along with the emblem of the Devon Petanque Region.

A bottle of single malt to fill the carafe with a pair of crystal whisky glasses.

We also understand that you supposedly play golf at the local pitch & putt club in Budleigh Salterton. The professional there, Trevor Underwood, suggested we give you this voucher, *(a voucher to the value of £68 was given)* rather than buy a wood, driver, putter etc. so that you can save some money when you have to buy some new golf balls, which I am told is a regular occurrence as you lose so many!

We also present you with this net *(a small fishing net)* so you (John) can recover even more balls from the water hazards which, we are informed, you regularly visit

Once Again from all of us Thank You

Ged Barton

(Comments in italics describe what happened)



CLUB NEWS

ISCA PETANQUE CLUB by Colin Salter

As another calendar year end approaches and the dark cold nights seem to go on forever some crazy people are still playing petanque with various ingenious methods of keeping warm. I'm not sure about the legality of boiling your boules prior to playing or thermostatically enhancing their molecular structure by heat transference but if it means that you can keep on playing then why not. I'm sure there will be a section on this somewhere in the copious notes recently circulated from the EPA but I think that at present they have other things on their minds to worry about other than adulteration of boules!

Reflecting back on the last couple of months then our "Thanks" must go to John Thatcher for his previous sterling work as President of the Devon Petanque Region. Hand in hand with this must go our welcome to the new El Presidente. This is not the pop rock band from Glasgow formed in 2002 but Ged Barton from somewhere North in Devon. Thank you Ged for picking up the mantle from John as Elisha did for Elijah.

Turning now to other matters and the thought of a Christmas Stocking filler then I can recommend a good read "Beating the French at Petanque" written by Clive Essame. It takes you through a joyful ride through France to the sunny south west department of Lot-et-Garonne where wine, cheese and good living, along with the game of petanque, are an essential part of life. It follows Clive and his long suffering wife's adventures as they discover if they can bear to cut all their ties in the UK and live together in France. Clive wastes as much time as he can discovering if he can beat the French at the game that is in their very DNA, while Barbara soaks up the sun and samples the local vin de table. It also serves as a useful reminder of some rules of

Petanque.

Generously sprinkled with characters from different parts of the EU 'Beating the French at Petanque' is the first book by Clive recounting his adventures in France. It is available in various formats from various outlets. No commission is being received in case you were wondering and other books are available no doubt!

And finally – sometimes you just can't make it up! You finish one end of a game put the scores up and then throw the jack/coche/but/cochonnet to start the other end. But what if when you go to take your first throw you find the jack still in your hand and your boule sitting where the jack should be? Still trying to find a rule to sort that one out!!

OTTERY ST MARY PETANQUE CLUB

by Dave West

At the time of writing we're looking forward to our annual club dinner, this year at The Hare and Hounds, on 13th December. The next event on the Ottery calendar will be the AGM on 24th January at The London Inn followed by the usual great buffet provided by mine host.

Not that we're always in public houses! Work is now nearing completion on the installation of lighting for our terrain. While a digger has been used for trench work and the services of an electrician, major contributions have come from Pete Marles and our ever active chairman, John Thatcher. By agreement with our landlords, the town council, we won't be paying for electricity in exchange for our services in cutting the grass on the whole field. Thanks are due to the team of club members who have completed this work throughout the summer and autumn; a well-earned rest awaits them over the winter period. Sadly we lost Clive Essame recently and some of us attended an event to remember his life; our thoughts were expressed to his widow, Linda. Those of you who knew Clive will recall all the difficulties he overcame in life with a cheerful determination that was an example to everyone.

PLYMOUTH PETANQUE CLUB

by Robert Preston



Plymouth Petanque continues to flourish. However nothing especially noteworthy has happened since the last newsletter. We have not held any special events other than our AGM which was well attended this year with around 30 of our members turning up for the meeting, then staying on for a lovely lunch before retiring to the terrain for an afternoon of pétanque. Otherwise we have just been holding our regular Wednesday and Sunday social sessions. On Sunday 29th October we did however have our highest ever attendance at a normal session with 42 players hitting the pistes. That got us wondering quite what it is that makes our members turn up time after time on such a regular basis.....so we asked them! Here are some of their replies.

Good companions, plenty of fun,

A cuppa and chatter, a biscuit and bun (*Chris*)

The welcome and help given to us on joining the group (Maureen and Frederick)

It's the people as it's the friendliest club we have ever been part of. (*Liz and Baz*)

Why do I play Petanque? The game constantly challenges my skill level and trying to find the consistency necessary to win games is the holy grail. We have a strong social and charitable element to the club which have developed friendships and spin-offs into other activities. The charity work has built links to the local community. We have a great and supportive group of members who keep the club friendly (Mike)

Through playing Petanque we have made some much loved friends! (*Stu and Bren*)

Ian and I have been waiting to play pétanque since 1991. We had to retire first before we had time. It has not disappointed and we have played in so many places since then and the clubs are always welcoming and friendly!! (Ian and Sue)

Because it's a great game played with a fantastic bunch of easy going and supportive, friendly helpful, people. (*George*)

*It's the game of pétanque
That I have to thank
For fresh air and friends
That I hope never ends. (Jim)*

Petanque - why do I keep coming back?

It's such a simple, gently active game that's so addictive through one's desire to be better, open to all with a common purpose and relaxes soul and body through fun and humour. Vivre la petanque et les petanqueurs! (*Rosie*)

And finally from a member on his first visit.

I have thoroughly enjoyed myself and was hooked from the very first throw! (*Bruce*)

So now we know why!

TORRIDGE U3A by John Stotesbury

Since the September newsletter, the region has elected a new President, Ged Barton, from our own club and everyone in the region wishes him well, as he takes us all into a new pétanque year. No mention of President should be made without paying tribute to John Thatcher, who served Devon for so many years.

Our group continues to play three times a week, with up to 24 being on our four pistes. By the nature of our membership, with all our members being retired, all our play takes place during the day. As a group, within the Torridge U3A, we are part of an organisation, which offers us the chance to take part in a vast number of activities and the talk on the piste is often more on breaks made on the snooker table or

injuries sustained walking or playing badminton! The U3A is an organisation that provides so much enjoyment, to so many of us oldies. If other clubs have not got a local U3A involved on their pistes, then go on the U3A website and you may increase your membership and talent pool!

We sent three triples to the U3A National Championships at Hayling Island, when 152 players, from 16 U3A clubs met at the same venue as the EPA Championships, the weekend before. The Devon triples champions (Ged, Ann & John) lost in the final to old rivals Kings Hill & District from Kent. The event was reported in the U3A National publication, "Third Age Matters".

Since October, 12 pairs from Torridge and the Pig, have been involved in the new North Devon Winter Pairs League (run by Ged). This takes place on one Sunday morning a month. The first two months have seen every pair win games, with some surprises and it has allowed more players to enjoy competitive match play, in a friendly, but wetter and colder, environment. Hopefully, next year, the South might have a similar competition (rules from Ged) and then we could play off against each other. The League Tables are on the Devon Region website.

The club is intending to have a melee on the beach, on New Year's Day. Any pétanque player will be welcome (if any other club member is in the area and fit!). Meet at the Slipway, Westward Ho! for our usual 10.30am start. We are all looking forward to a rather different and larger piste and hope that it will improve our play on "rollers"!

On the last Petanque day in November, we had 16 members, gloves and hats had come out, balls were heated and the wind was whipping in from the sea. The coffee and chocolate in the Village Inn didn't half taste good. Proper job!

PIG ON THE HILL by Mike Anderson

We are playing in an Inter Winter Comp at the moment against the U3A club players mixing it up a little by playing home and away games. I am sure it will keep us busy over the colder months.

We had a nice evening at the regional AGM meeting friends old and new and of course we were presented with our league winners medals and trophy which keeps it in North Devon for three years running.



LEAGUE CHAMPIONS

We all know of the changes within the region. John Thatcher stepping down from President, we must of course give John a huge thank you for the sterling job he has done over the years. And of course a big congratulations to Ged Barton, our new president, I am sure he will do a great job

We had the pleasure of representing Devon in the Champion of Champions but I am going to let Simon tell you all about our weekend.

Reflections from the Champion of Champions at Oxshott by Simon Rapsey

On Saturday 7th October Ian Ash, Mike Anderson, and myself, along with Ged & Anne Barton and John Phipps travelled up to Oxshott together to represent Devon at the Champion of Champions triples tournament. Initially we were unsure whether to go as we'd been forewarned about the high standard we would come up against – with a very probable likelihood that we'd return home very quickly.

However we decided that the chance to play against the top triples teams from each region was too good an opportunity to miss – purely for the learning experience it would provide.



Mike, Ian and Simon

We arrived on the Saturday in time to watch the doubles final, where we witnessed Sean Prendergast and Sofiane Lachini triumph 13-1 and we were left in no doubt as to what to expect the next day. None of us had witnessed petanque of that standard before, it was awe inspiring, and we decided that our goal the next day was firstly try and not get beaten to nil and then just see how many points we could get in each game. In a sense we felt the pressure was off and that we should just try to enjoy ourselves. In our first round one game against Wessex 2 Ian started well with the perfect point, not too close to the coche, about a foot away. We nodded in approval and then up stepped their shooter who nonchalantly proceeded to spot carreau Ian's ball. Welcome to the champion of champions! We actually played reasonably well in that game losing to 5 and then our next game was against East Midlands 1 containing the beaten doubles finalists from the previous day. We did ok in that game too losing to 6 (one more than last

time – progress !) Our final round one game was against Chiltern 1, a team consisting of 3 current England players...hmm this could be interesting. We lost 13-2 but celebrated each point as if we'd won the match. That match was a real experience and it was incredible to play against players of that standard and to see how they approached the game – always pointing high lobs (very high they had snow on them) and attacking all the time. It was no surprise at the end of the first round that we found ourselves in the plate competition. In the first round of the plate we came up again against Wessex 2 who had beaten us in the first round. This time we fared better and actually managed to win! and from there we progressed well, ending up in the semi- final of the plate against Thames Valley. In that game it was initially quite level but unfortunately we lost 13-9 and afterward we were disappointed as we felt we could have won that game.

Throughout the day all the games were played in good spirit, there was no gamesmanship or squabbling over the rules and good chat and humour between all present. If I could take one thing away I would say it was how teams went for it with attacking play being the default rather than being defensive. Often in our club and league games, when things get tight we have managed risk differently, generally opting for the safe option. After our loss in the plate semi-final I was chatting to their main shooter who said that he couldn't call which way our match was going to go until at 8-10, when with our final shot we elected for a defensive point rather than shooting. They were holding one and I didn't point close enough but had I successfully fired we would have been holding one. They would have still had one to come but the pressure would have been on them. After that he said that then they knew the pressure was getting to us as a team and they had the upper hand. It was interesting to reflect that that was the first time all day that the pressure had got to us when things were tight and we felt we had a chance. Up until then we'd just expected to lose and as a result had all played really well probably the best we'd played as a team together. Definitely an experience to learn from.



Mike, Ann, Ian, Ged, Simon and John

All in all it was a great weekend and special mention should go to Ged, Anne and John – normally our noisy neighbours from down the road – who were really supportive throughout and we felt there was a real sense of comradery between us all. All in all it was an excellent weekend and should any Devon teams find themselves in the position of being able to go I would thoroughly recommend it.

Simon Rapsey.

HONITON by Chris Bigmore

With reasonably good weather in the Autumn we enjoyed healthy average attendances at sessions which were, somewhat surprisingly, higher than in Summer. We put this down to seeing more of our band of caravanners who travel around home and abroad in Summertime. Plus of course members doing competitions and other distractions. Partly for that reason we decided to hold our first ever club competition in early October. This was a closed doubles tournament for members and some invited guests, and we had a good entry list of ten teams. We were fortunate in having fine weather on the day and after coffee & croissants in the morning we played in two league groups with a knockout phase following lunch. The gold medal was won by Ronnie Hutchinson with guest player Paul Puddicombe. Ronnie only started playing at the club in late Summer so must think this game is easy! But congratulations to them after a hard fought 13-11 win over myself and Jenny Lavender in the final.

We took the Silver medal whilst the Bronze medal (subsidiary) competition was won by Paul Morgan & Ian Welland, who defeated Terry & Penny Salter 13-11

in another close final. All finalists received a bottle of wine as prizes. From my point of view everything on the day went very smoothly and all there enjoyed good competition played in the right spirit. And agreed that we should try to make it an annual event.



Ronnie and Paul

At the end of November we held our AGM where the usual business, familiar to all clubs, was conducted. We firstly paid tribute to Clive Essame who lost his battle with cancer in October, and was far too young. Clive was a big support to me when our club was setting up and played regularly at Honiton till the onset of his illness in 2016. There was a celebration of his life held in November and well attended by Petanque friends from both Honiton and Ottery St Mary. His ebook 'Beating the French at Petanque' is still available and will stand as his legacy. Also at the AGM our three officers were re-elected but Andy Mills and Doreen Lomax stood down from the committee. In their place we welcome Cecily Young and Jenny Lavender whose involvement we look forward to next year. We are pleased to end a year of good progress for us with now 29 members.

Our festive Social session is being held on the Thursday before Christmas, followed by a two week shutdown before sessions begin again. We hope that all in the Devon Petanque community enjoy their festive break too, and wish you all good fortune for 2018 – with the exception of your visit to Mountbatten Park!

**A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO**



DEVON PETANQUE NEWSLETTER

December 2017

ALL OUR READERS