



Congress of County Regions - 2008

held at Luton Regional Leisure Centre
on Saturday 19th July 2008
Commencing at 11:15

Minutes

The President asked the Congress to observe a minutes silence in memory of those members who had passed away over the last 12 months.

1. **Date of Notice**

The date of notice was confirmed as the 31st May 2008.

2. **Attendees:**

Management Committee

Mike Pegg – National President
Kevin Moss – National Secretary
Mick Bourton – National Treasurer
Corinne Cooter – National Membership Secretary
Martin Eggleton – Director of Playing
John Roberts – Director of Promotions
Richard Baker – MC Regional
David Baxter – MC Regional

Regions

Chiltern, East Midlands, Isle of Wight, Kent, London, Southern, Thames Valley, West Midlands

3. **Apologies for Absence.**

Apologies for absence has been received from the following County Regions:

Kernow
Northern
Sussex

and the following Officers

John Thatcher
David Lavelle

4. **Adopt the Minutes of the 2007 Congress**

The minutes of the 2007 Congress were adopted by a unanimous vote

5. Reports – Congress 2008

President's Report

This is the very first EPA Congress meeting when the President's report has not had to focus on the problems and failings of the British Pétanque Federation.

The reason is because on the 24th November 2007 the BPF Executive met and agreed that the BPF would cease as the organisation for Pétanque representing the whole of Great Britain. The formal acceptance of the BPF's final accounts and the decision of what to do with its assets, such as they are, will take place at a meeting to be held during the 2008 Home Nations Championship in Dartford. However, even with this final formality yet to be staged a letter informing of the BPF closure was signed by the Executive and sent to the Fédération Internationale de Pétanque et Jeu Provençal (FIPJP)

Within a few days of the letter I sent a request for EPA membership to the FIPJP and the Confédération de Européenne Pétanque (CEP) which I am delighted to report was immediately accepted and meant that the EPA could seek membership of the International North Sea Pétanque Tournament (INSPT).

The English Pétanque Association is now the internationally recognised governing body for the sport of Pétanque in England.

Until our membership of these organisations had been accepted we could plan, but not publish, the events we would hold in 2008. In particular we had to debate how we could decide which teams would be invited to represent England at the North Sea, European and World Championships. Changes to competition rules, entry forms etc had to be completed along with a new Calendar of Events for the coming year. Perhaps the most important part of this process was the changes to the EPA's 2 years budget which now had to include international membership fees, assistance for teams representing the Association and of course a new international team kit.

So it was not until January that we were able to finalise and publish the 2008 Calendar of Events and competition pack which was sent to each of our 15 County Regions and all registered Clubs.

We are now mid-way through the playing season and have had a little more time to reflect on what and how we do things. Your committee have recognised it is time to make some radical changes to the English playing structure if we are to reverse the apparent decline in attendance and interest by those at the top level of our sport. Today you will have the opportunity to debate and vote on the MC's motion to change our playing structure. We believe this to be the way forward and perhaps with some adjustments today followed by ratification at our AGM we will see the start of a new era in our sport.

Remaining on a positive note I am very happy to report that the EPA has had some international success this year.

In May we sent a junior and an espoirs team to Freiberg, Germany where they competed against some top Germany and Luxembourg teams. Whilst our juniors Jack Barrington, Alex Bruce, Rob Cooter and Andy Willis may have not fared so well our Espoirs team Dean and Scott Ashby, Greg Davenport, Sarah Huntley and Dean Seville won 2nd place a great result at this new tournament.

More recently at the North Sea tournament in Denmark our Squad consisting of an Open team Martin Baker, Jerome Rousseau, Herve Bavazzano and Philip Claydon, a Women's team Myra, Sarah and Amy Huntley, an Espoirs team Kris Smith, Matthew Shrimpton and Dean Seville put up a good show but the stars of the event for our Association was the Junior team Robert Cooter, Alex Bruce, Reece Gould and Andrew Willis who having won 8 of their 10 games were the top EPA team and tying in number of games won with the Netherlands they missed out on the award of top INSPT Junior team by just 2 points.

I know that the majority of our membership is in the 40+ age range, but in a minority sport it is ironic that our greatest success so far this year has been from the minority age group, under 23.

Last weekend we sent a ladies team Fay Golder, Lynda Shrimpton and Sheila King to an invitation event in Luxembourg, we could have sent a junior team with them but I am advised that none of our CRB screened coaches were available. However, I am pleased to report that the ladies had a great time, played their best although their results were not quite as good as the level of hospitality afforded to them over the weekend.

Over the same weekend David Lavelle and Richard Pratt attended an FIPJP Coaching Course run by the Centre International d'Enseignement Pétanque (CIEP). By investing in this level of training for David and Richard we hope they will bring a new level of skills and knowledge in coaching to our Association. I'm sure David will have some news of the course for you in his report.

Earlier in the season we advertised for the vacant post of National Youth Development Officer using the role description that was drawn up with the assistance of the previous post holder in 2005. Unfortunately to date no applications have been received and this post remains vacant. However, as with any sport it is our younger members that we must invest in to ensure we have a future. With that in mind we asked Kevin Moss, David Lavelle and Richard Baker to take the lead in making the arrangements for the first EPA Cadet/Minor Open Day.

I am pleased to report that the event took place on Saturday 12th July with a dozen young people aged 6 to 13 being given coaching lessons on different aspects of play from our qualified coaches with help and support from some top players and our national umpire. After all the tuition, practice and of course games the day ended with a presentation of medals and certificates for each young person and a BBQ organised by Richard Baker.

My thanks go to Kevin Moss, Richard Baker, Brian Stote, Dave Hancox and David Mason for all their hard work and of course the parents and young people that attended the event making it a successful day of pétanque.

As for the future, the West Midlands Pétanque Association has indicated that they are interested in hosting a second event in the late summer and the EPA through our National Secretary will start work on incorporating this initiative into our plans to hold a quarterly event within the structure of a new Academy of Pétanque for Minors and Cadets.

In accordance with the decision taken at our last AGM we advertised for a candidate to be appointed to the new role of National Squad manager. We had one candidate who has expressed an interest and he is currently preparing a "role description" to present to the MC for consideration.

So what else has been going on well you know in November 2007 we held our first "International Open" competition, inviting teams from the Netherlands, Spain, Slovenia and Denmark to take part. Although open to all holders of an FIPJP recognised licence it was very disappointing to have such a low turn out from EPA members.

However, the event was a great success, the venue proved to be more than adequate with a difficult playing surface and good catering facilities. Despite the low number of entries the MC have decided to hold a 2nd International event at the same venue over the weekend of the 1st and 2nd November. Once again we shall be inviting international teams and trust that we will have a good number of entries from within the EPA.

The competition will be limited to 64 teams, 4 of these places are reserved for our invited teams so you need to get your entry in early to avoid disappointment.

Another new event in 2007 was the successful National Club Knockout competition that replaced the National Club League. There were a few mistakes in the original design of this event but taking on board the comments we received throughout the year we have drawn up a new set of rules, restructured the draw and are now committed to running an improved version of the competition through the remainder of 2008 and early 09.

Some of you will know that I am a member of the CEP board, for the last 3 months I have been helping with the review of the CEP statutes and competition rules. If agreed at the European Congress there will be a few changes to the European Cup for Club teams which the winner of our event will be entered. Simply put instead of one club team travelling to

another club to play the proposal, if accepted, will see 4 teams being drawn together to play the host would be the first drawn in each group.

In addition to this European post I am also a member of the FIPJP's International Umpires Commission. Over the last few months we have been discussing various changes to the rules and in March our recommendations were put to the FIPJP Executive spring meeting. I am told that our recommendations, with a few amendments, will be presented to the World Congress in November and subject to agreement a new rule book will be issued in early 2009.

Earlier this year the EPA Management Committee approved and welcomed the appointment by the existing Directors of Richard Baker as a new and additional Director of our company. We wish Richard every success in this role and have every confidence that his participation will contribute to the continued success of our company

No report would be complete without my congratulations to all our members who have won a title this year. I include those that have achieved International representation and I am sure you all join me in wishing the teams taking part in this years Home Nations, European and World Championships the very best of luck.

In a few minutes you will receive the reports from our National officers but before you do I wish to record my thanks to and respect for all members of this Management Committee. I am proud to be their chairman and most grateful for their support, encouragement and the many hours that they spend not only running the administration of the EPA but also the efforts they put into developing their individual disciplines.

Mike Pegg - National President

DL (West Mids) applauded the EPA for investing in our coaches by sending them to the CIEP Coaching School and said that this should pay dividends.

Treasurer's Report

The Association's Accounts for the year 2007/08 are currently with the auditors and will, as usual, be presented for approval at the AGM.

I am, however, able to confirm that the Association did make a surplus of income over expenditure. This was mainly due to budget holders being careful with their expenditure with only playing exceeding their budget figure. In fairness to this function they did have a higher income figure than was expected.

The biggest savings were on administration where the costs for the store room, insurance, the management and travel fell below the budgeted amounts.

As usual Petanque Promotions Limited was able to transfer a sum of money to the EPA at the end of 2007. In the past this has been referred to as "Management Fees". It is now considered inappropriate to refer to this amount by this name and P.P.Ltd requested that as from last year the amount paid over be used as sponsorship for a nominated event or function. The Management Committee requested that last year's amount of £1,500 be classed as sponsorship for Junior events and P.P.Ltd readily agreed to this.

Following receipt of the audited accounts this money, along with some of last year's surplus will be placed in named reserve accounts. The money being used for events nominated by the Management Committee.

The finances for this year are running in line with the proposed budget figures. However rising costs, the poor exchange rate against the Euro and the increased cost of petrol/diesel will bite into the Association's finances and it is now necessary to review the budget on a regular basis to make alterations where thought necessary.

At the beginning of 2008 it was agreed the Association should change its Bankers. A new account was opened with HSBC Bank plc and the balance at the Yorkshire Bank has been reduced to zero pending closure of the account. The change enabled the Membership Secretary and the Director of Playing to pay funds directly into the bank without sending receipts to the Treasurer for banking. In addition to the current account, operated without

any charges, HSBC were able to give the Association a Long Term Deposit account and a Variable Deposit account. £20,000 was paid into the Long Term account for an initial period of 12 months at an opening rate of 6%, the interest being paid monthly to the Association. The Variable Deposit account allows money, not needed immediately, to be transferred from the Current account and gain interest whilst in this account. No notice of withdrawal is required so the money can be transferred back as and when required.

Finally, although this year's finances are currently running within budget it may be that certain areas exceed budget before the end of this financial year. It will be necessary to consider whether a small increase in the membership fee for 2009/10 will be required. A better indicator of this will be available at the time of the AGM.

Mick Bourton – National Treasurer

JS (Chiltern) asked what was the difference in finances between the BPF and EPA. MB said the EPA would gain an extra £9k. ME said that this would allow us to drop player contributions from 40% to 25% for this current year.

Director of Playing Report

This is my first report as Director of Playing and has been an interesting first year. It has been a learning experience and some areas have gone well whilst others could have been done differently.

May I remind that you that I and my fellow committee members are volunteers, we do these roles so that you can play this sport in an organised and competitive manner. So far this year I have been sworn at and threatened for doing a voluntary job. Please think before you shout, moan, complain or worse we are here as volunteers and are doing our best.

National Titles

There was a fantastic turnout, despite the weather, for the Titles Weekend with 80 taking part in the Singles, 71 teams in the Doubles and 57 teams in the Mixed Doubles. With victory going to the following:

Singles - Rachid Hannache

Doubles - Dean Little & Keith Flack

Mixed Doubles - Royston William & Clare Brooks

Over 50's

This will be held on 21st September at Doncaster.

Junior Doubles, Triples and Shooting

Our Junior Title winners for 2008 are:

Shooting - Matt Silvester

Doubles - Reece Gould & Sam Blakey

Triples - Rob Cooter, Alex Bruce, Andy Willis & Jack Barrington.

Qualifying Series

We saw a continued decline in entries with a total of 35 Teams taking part over the three qualifiers. From this it was obvious that the Management Committee had to review the format going forward and our recommendation is in front of this meeting today.

Pre-Entry

With regard to pre-entry this has caused a number of contentious issues and to alleviate these going forward we will be making changes for 2009. We will continue with pre-entry, however, we will also allow entry on the day of the competition. As part of this pre-entries received by the designated closing date will be at one entry fee and entry on the day will be at a higher rate. Overall entries will be limited to the capacity of each venue, preference will be given to pre-entered teams and the remaining slots on a first come first served basis on the day.

Trophies

There has been a range of feedback on Trophies and their availability on the day of competition and this is an area we will endeavour to have in place for 2009.

International Representation

International North Sea Petanque Tournament

Our squad this year was comprised of the following teams:

Senior Martin Baker, Jerome Rousseau, Herve Bavazzano & Phil Claydon

Ladies Myra Huntley, Sarah Huntley & Amy Huntley

Espoirs Dean Seville, Kris Smith & Matt Shrimpton

Juniors Alex Bruce, Rob Cooter, Andy Willis & Reece Gould

The squad had a great performance winning 20 from 40 games, given that there were only 6 nations entered and 4 teams per nation this was our best performance for many years. The Juniors were the best performing English side winning 8 of their 10 games and narrowly missed out on being the overall best Junior side by 2 points to the Dutch.

Senior World Championships

Our team for the Senior World Championships in Senegal will be:

Matt Eversden, Steve Zimmerman, Robert Silvy, Ben Gallimore

Ladies World Championships

We have now heard that these will be held in Samsun, Turkey on the weekend of the 10th – 12th October. Our squad will be chosen at the Ladies Top 8 on the 27th July.

Junior European Championships

Following on from their success at the INSPT we will be sending the following side to the Junior European Championships at Nieuwegein, in the Netherlands:

Alex Bruce, Rob Cooter, Andy Willis & Reece Gould

Other International Opportunities

We have also had the opportunity to send sides to competitions at the following competitions:

Junior and Espoirs – Freiberg, Germany

Ladies – Kayl, Luxembourg

And plan to send sides to the following competitions:

Juniors – Les Milles

Seniors – Zurich

We continue to see a reduction in the number of “traditional” invites that cover the majority of a representative side’s’ costs and are seeing more and more “advert” invites where no costs are covered. The Management Committee do continue to look for representative opportunities.

Home Nations

We have recently held the Home Nations Qualifier at Dartford and look forward to holding the Home Nations there in August. I would like to congratulate all of the teams and players that have had success this year or have represented England.

Team Managers

One of the ongoing challenges we have is having people available to support our international teams. The Management Committee continue to look for a Squad Manager, but in parallel to that I would like to create a pool of people who we could draw on to support our teams as appropriate. If you would like to be considered then please let me know.

The skills that I would be looking for are:

Experienced Player;

Coaching Experience;

People Management Experience;

Playing in 2009

To move our sport forward it is vital that we develop players at all levels in the sport and provide top competition for our top players. I will take you through the Management Committee’s proposal for the playing structure later in the meeting.

Thank you for your support this year.

Martin Eggleton Director of Playing

Director of Promotions report

Literature and promotional material

Some further work has been carried out on the EPA information sheets, many of which are available to download from our website. In addition I have been asked to produce custom-built flyers for several clubs, this service is available to all EPA Clubs.

The most recent addition to our promotional material is the "How to Play" poster compiled jointly by Klaus Eschbach the German President and Mike Pegg (an example is here at congress for you to see). This is an ideal product for clubs to display alongside their terrains. It is simple to obtain, just send a stamped addressed A5 envelope to me and you will be sent a disc.

EPA International Open Tournament

Whilst the numbers were slightly down on what was expected, the 2007 event was agreed by all as a very successful tournament. The venue came up to all expectations. The event was won by the invited Spanish Team. The main problem then for the future of this event was finance. It was very expensive to organise.

Plans for the 2008 venue are now well advanced. Some modifications to the budget have been agreed and most importantly sponsorship has been obtained from Petanque Promotions Ltd and Estate Darré Vétois, a producer of Burgundy wines.

Entries are now being received and there is every expectation of a full house.

CCPR

BingLotto

The EPA has signed up to this project and after only a few weeks of the pilot launch we are to receive an initial grant £1K.

Some details have been released with the details of Congress about a new initiative the "BingoBuddies" initiative which might be a way that our clubs can increase their incomes. Fuller details will be released in a few weeks time.

Over the next few months we may well become more involved with other schemes with the CCPR. I have a meeting with the Secretary of CCPR on the 14th August.

Petanque Promotions Ltd

Part of my EPA brief is to keep a watch over PPL.

Merchandise All clubs have received the 2008 catalogue which has a different lay out and includes some new items such as pin badges.

Going towards 2009 it is hoped that we will have a new website as the present one is very difficult and quite expensive to alter.

In January of this year PPL handed over a cheque for £1500 to the EPA which has been put into a special reserve for use of the Juniors.

Promotional We have just recently reorganised the annual Rapleys charity event held in Regents Park. All 64 teams were guaranteed a minimum of three games this year. 124 games in all in the space of five hours! My sincere thanks to those EPA members who gave up a day to help.

Rapleys raised £15500 for the Red Cross and PPL had a surplus of about £2000 to plough back into the sport, a great improvement on the previous year when the surplus was split two ways and PPL's share was only just over £900.

Personnel During this year PPL has appointed a fourth Director, Richard Baker.

John Roberts, EPA Director of Promotions

Membership Secretaries Report

The final membership figures for 2007/8 were 2,571 adults, 178 juniors giving a total of 2,749 members.

This was a nett loss of 30 members on the previous year. There were 199 registered clubs and 3 registered leagues.

Membership figures so far this year are 2,479 adult members 152 juniors given a total of 2,631 with 194 clubs and 3 registered leagues.

Earlier this year I attended a membership workshop at the CCPR. Along with membership secretaries from other sports who all had the same objective of how to keep and attract members. I came out of the workshop full of ideas.

Next year we will be introducing an information pack for all new members joining the association. We will also be asking the regions for information to be included in the pack to customize it for new members from that particular region.

If the packs are well received we would like to put a pack together for all members the following year I would like to finish by thanking all the membership secretaries for all their hard work.

Corinne Cooter - National Membership Secretary

AE (Kent) thanked Corinne for putting up with the returns from the Regions.

GE (southern) asked how many espoirs were registered with the association.

CC replied 140.

National Umpire's report (read to the meeting by MP)

Since last year's Congress it has been a very busy time with The Inter Regional Championship and Challenge tournament, the Open International event at Godmanchester and umpires courses being held to refresh and upgrade existing umpires and qualify new umpires. The 2008 events have also been coming on thick and fast with the continuing problem of finding umpires suitably experienced and qualified to officiate at the events we hold. The Junior and Espoirs triples events being cancelled because of snow did not help but we managed to put three umpires into the re-arranged event which finally passed off very well.

The Inter Regional Championship and Challenge Tournament was a very tough weekend with only 3 umpires to officiate 99 lanes of play. It was easier with one playing area but as the event becomes more and more popular with more regions putting teams into the challenge event it does place a bigger demand on the available umpires. Most players only notice an umpire when they call for one to measure or give a ruling but I can assure you that there is a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes.

Mike Pegg and I ran three umpires courses over the past 12 months, at Oxshott PC, The Ring of Bells PC and the Rayne Swan PC. One course that was scheduled to be held in Leicester was cancelled due to lack of support. A total of 20 people attended these courses. Two umpires were upgraded from grade 3 to grade 2 and 5 people passed at grade 3.(2 of the passes were from the SPA as the courses were conducted under the remit of the British Petanque Umpires Board)

The current number of umpires in the EPA is 31 which looks a very healthy state. However of those 31 only 8 are currently active and of those 8 there are 4 who choose to play in national events rather than umpire. I do not have any evidence of any umpiring taking place in any region at all. I suspect that some umpires are playing and umpiring in regional qualifying events. This is not at all satisfactory as the demands of playing and umpiring mean that neither of the two disciplines is performed properly. As during the last 12 months I have not received any umpire reports other than from national events this is an educated guess.

I am still waiting to hear from some umpires that are trying to qualify to play for their regions as to their availability to umpire at the Inter Regional Championships this year. So far there is Bob Parker from Eastern Region and me.

During the forthcoming year I do not see any changes if any in the status quo. Mike Pegg and I will be conducting umpire courses in the New Year. So far only the Isle of Wight has definitely asked for a course to be run in their region. It is a constant cause for concern that our two largest regions, Kent and Southern do not have an active umpire between them. Currently they have expressed interest in courses but no more than that

Umpiring is a role that many players aspire to in order to "improve their knowledge and their game" however to umpire properly the role is more of a vocation than just attending a course for individual betterment. The EPA needs committed umpires across all regions in order to improve the playing standards with continuity and standardised officiating.

Players attending courses are often mature players who "want to give something back to the sport". This is very laudable but the EPA needs younger active umpires who can progress through the grades to grade 1. They would then be able to sit the International exam and thereby have the opportunity to umpire in Europe and further afield. This will allow them to gain more knowledge of the game in higher standard events and hopefully pass that knowledge on to others.

If we had a nucleus of 12 committed umpires then the opportunity to play would still be there as the umpiring duties could be spread around the group enabling all umpires to be able to rotate and play in those events applicable to them.

Do not wait until kneeling down and getting up again is too difficult. Consider being an umpire now. The EPA needs YOU NOW!

John Thatcher - EPA National Umpire

ME asked for a date to be put in the diary for a course in Kent and Southern

MR (IOW) said that they were also keen to host a course

JS (Chiltern) said that he was concerned about the poor pass rate 7 out of 20.

MP replied this was because the candidates were not suitable prepared.

JS (Chiltern) asked how do we raise the pass rate?

MP replied that regional umpires prepare their candidates and they should ensure the candidate is suitably prepared. JT and MP were both available to assist/guide the regional umpires.

GS (Chiltern) said that he felt he was well prepared by the communication from JT and MP prior to the course.

National Coach's Report

Since the AGM the following coaching activities have been undertaken:

Grade 3 Courses

Courses have been run in Kent and Great Western Regions, further work with potential candidates has been ongoing in the East Midlands and Northern Region to find prospective candidates.

Following attendance at the recent International Trainers Diploma Level 1 Course it is necessary to make some further enhancements to the Grade 3 course and examinations. These amendments will be incorporated into the Grade 3 in the next month or two and will then formally advised to current coaches at the same time as their introduction to future Grade 3 courses. The changes required will see an additional session within the course that will cover how to run coaching sessions to assist newly qualified coaches to get started and to ensure all coaches begin to coach in the same format moving forward.

Additional Grade 3 Courses are being planned for to cover perspective candidates in the Southern, Chilterns and Anglian Region later this year.

Grade 2 Course Development

Work on a new Grade 2 has continued and is expected to be available by the end of the year. The current timetable being worked to for the delivery of a new course is as follows:

- Production of the course content and exam papers (End August 08)
- Trial of the new course with existing Grade 2's (October 08)
- Refinement and production of the final course material (End November 08)
- First Grade 2 Courses to be run (December 08 / January 09)

The Course will build upon the Grade 3 course content, developing the areas covered on the Grade 3 whilst looking at other areas such as team management. The Grade 2 will be modular based with each module having its main emphasis on developing and applying a

standardised way of practical coaching within the EPA based around the Centre International D'Enseignement Pétanque's pedagogical approach to coaching.

Coaching Clothing Kit

A new coaching clothing kit for coaches will be introduced in the next couple of months. All CRB checked Grade 3's and Grade 2's will have the opportunity purchase kit once available. This will hopefully be available to order by the end of August.

Once new kit has been made available all new candidates on the Grade 3 and then the subsequent Grade 2 will be given a polo shirt after passing the courses.

International Experience

This year the EPA has sent a Junior and Espoirs team to play in a competition in Friedberg in Germany. This was seen by the players to be a worthwhile event.

CIEP International Trainers Diploma Level 1 Course

On 12th-14th July Richard Pratt and me attended and undertook the CIEP International Trainers Diploma Level 1 Course as approved by the FIPJP in Paris.

The course was a three day course which covered all the elements of the Grade 3 and proposed Grade 2 courses and provided guidance on a more structured way to run and develop coaching sessions in the future. I am pleased to advise that both candidates successfully passed the course.

Whilst in France we also took the opportunity to visit the CIEP Coaching School in Sergines to understand the exact set up. Now that we have been to the venue we are in a better position to determine when it would be worth sending teams to train there in the future.

Minims & Cadet Day

The first minim and cadet day was run on the 12th July at Harrow PC. 12 Minims and cadets attended the day which was led from the coaching perspective by Brian Stote, Dave Hancox and Dave Mason of the West Midlands Region.

In future events I hope we will be able to integrate the pedagogical approach to coaching into these types of days.

Junior Weekend of Excellence

Another Junior weekend was held in November last year and I am hoping that another event will be run this year in November. As soon as I have confirmation of dates I will be writing to Regions to invite them to attend.

David Lavelle - National Coach.

Pétanque Promotions Limited

As people are now aware, I was recently asked to become a director of Pétanque Promotions and I was honoured to accept.

It was only after accepting the position that actually I began to think about what Pétanque Promotions is, what it does and how it does it. We all see Mick, John and Fred at Brean Sands and have a look at all the boules, clothing and other assorted accoutrements that they have available, but do we ever think how it gets there, or how much time and effort it takes to set things up and then take things away at the end of each day. I know I didn't, although now I have a feeling that this year I will be getting a crash course in what does happen and how.

Many people have asked "Is it not possible for PPL to attend all the national competitions" and the simple answer to this is no. Due to ever increasing fuel costs, it is not financially viable for PPL to attend each and every National competition. However, we have supplied Martin with a catalogue and a selection of essential small items, such as jacks. He has these at every competition and so, if you find you need something, it is well worth asking him.

The majority of players now either buy their equipment at Brean Sands or via the Boulesales website and both these options are well used. But, every business, and PPL is no different, needs to keep up to date and improving the things it does and the services it provides its customers.

There are plans being developed to redesign the website, to improve the quality of the pages and to increase its functionality. We are also considering expanding the range of boules and other equipment that we stock. There are always things that need to be considered and increasing the choice of equipment that you as players have been asking for is just one of the things that is being looked at.

I was beginning to think at this stage, that actually PPL does quite a lot. Then I received a call from John Roberts asking if I wanted to attend the Rapleys event. It transpired that Rapleys are a Commercial Property & Planning Company and they hold a pétanque tournament every year as a charity fund-raising event in aid of the Red Cross.

It was hard work, but at the end of the day all the players, spectators and organisers were tired, but a great day was had by all. The Red Cross benefited with over £15,500 raised and PPL came away with a substantial management fee.

This was swiftly followed by a trip to the Hereford Open to sell quite a lot of sets of boule, so actually I've been quite busy. However, I don't think that things will stop there; PPL will be at Brean and also PPL has a big commitment to the International Open at Godmanchester, (get your entries in early as it was a fantastic event last year).

I am looking forward to the challenges that being a director of PPL will bring, but remember, it is a business and it is run for the benefit of EPA members. The profits are returned to you, the members, and used by the EPA MC to add value to our sport.

Richard Baker – Director, Pétanque Promotions Ltd.

6. Motions - Congress 2008

EPA Playing Structure - EPA Management Committee

The Management Committee have undertaken a review of competition and international representation level pétanque in England.

In order to provide the following:

- A focus for the top level of the sport in the country, including regular competition both in England and in Europe;
- More local competitions to reduce travel;
- Clear criteria for representative opportunities.

The Management committee are therefore proposing the following motion to change the playing structure for 2009.

Senior Competition

The proposal is to create a two tier system consisting of a Premier League and Combined League. There will be annual promotion and relegation between the Premier League and the Combined League.

The Premier League will consist of 8 teams and will play seven matches through out the year, envisaged to be on the 1st Sunday each Month (March – September).

The format will be Rolling Barrage, with points awarded according to position on each day. There will be a small entry fee for each days play. The cumulative points will be totalled and a league table produced.

In addition to regular competition amongst the top teams the aim is to also encourage them to participate in competitions across Europe. In order to support them with this the EPA will grant bursaries to the Top 4 ranked teams (anticipated to be around £150 per team), which will be paid in April, May, June, July, August, September. This bursary is to be used to take part in suitable European Competitions (for example as per the FIPJP Calendar) and will be paid out based on the submission of a completed match report to the Director of Playing.

All International Representations (Senior World Championships, formal invitations etc) will be fulfilled from within the top 4 ranked teams at the time that entrants are required.

Combined League

The Combined League will be run around a series of regionalised competitions, but will not be region specific. It will consist of 4 – 5 simultaneous competitions run on a league and knockout system. There will be a small entry fee for each days play.

There will be six competition days through out the year, it is envisaged that these will tie in with the Premier League and play on the 1st Sunday each Month (April – September)

The competitions are to be run by the hosting region, which will retain a portion of the income as a commission for running the event and to fund necessary expenses.

Points will be awarded based on position that each team finishes on each day. All teams across all of the feeder competitions will be ranked in a single table based on their accumulative points awarded.

For both the Premier League and Combined League Competitions each Team must have at least one player under 23.

Promotion and Relegation

Promotion and relegation will be via a Play Off day, which will take place in October.

The play off will consist of the Top 12 Ranked Teams from the Combined League and the bottom 4 from Premier League. Play will be 2 Barrage Rounds after which the top four teams will be promoted to the Premier League.

There will be no fee for the play off day.

Transition

To determine the initial 8 sides to form the Premier League the two qualifiers in 2008 will be used. The Swiss system will be used.

Other Groups

Espoirs

Teams must be made up of 4 players. All qualification series will be based on the current European Competition system. In that teams will play in two rounds against each other, the first round will consist of 1 Triple & 1 Single game; the second round will consist of 2 Doubles games. The winner being the team with the most game wins, in the even of the teams being tied on games points difference will be used.

There will be 3 competition dates with the winning team from the series being eligible to represent England.

Juniors

Will follow the Espoirs format of 4 players per team with matches played over two rounds. There will be 3 competition dates set and the winning team of the series will eligible to represent England.

Titles Weekend

Will continue as is and will take place over the May Bank Holiday.

Ladies

Will continue as is with Two Qualifiers and a Top 8 Play off.

Proposal presented by: Martin Eggleton – Director of Playing

(For and on behalf of the EPA Management Committee)

There was a long debate from the floor about the playing proposal, it was agreed that the section referring to an under 23 playing being attached to teams be removed from the proposal.

The remaining proposal was then voted on.

Premier League For - 19, Against – 6, Abstentions - 1.

Combined League For – 13, Against – 10, Abstentions – 1.

It was therefore agreed that the amended proposal would go to the AGM for ratification.

Southern Counties Pétanque Association Motion:

1. That for all National (EPA) competitions, trophies are to be awarded on the day, and not at the Inter-Regional Championships, where the names of the winners should be read out.
For – 7, Against – 10, Abstentions – 5
Proposal Fell
 2. That for all National (EPA) junior/cadet /minor competitions, trophies are to be awarded on the day, and not at the Inter-Regional Championships, where the names of the winners should be read out.
For – 22, Against – 0, Abstentions – 3
Proposal accepted
 3. That the EPA should not use the BHN ranking system for any junior/cadet/minor competitions.
Proposal withdrawn
 4. That the EPA should not use the BHN ranking system for any competitions (adult, espoir, junior, cadet and minor) where there are 16 teams or less, excluding Top 16 and Top 8 finals.
Proposal withdrawn
- Proposal Presented by: Graham Elcome**
(For and on behalf of the Southern Counties Pétanque Association)

Due to the limited time remaining for the use of the room and that only Officers and Delegates are present, the President combined the Open Forum and Any Other Business as one agenda item.

7. Open Forum

DM (West Mids) said that Congress was well presented
GE (Southern) asked for more time between 48 days and 18 day notice periods

MP thanked all delegates and officers for their attendance at this meeting.

Congress closed at 14.05.

Minutes approved Congress of County Regions – 18th July 2009

Signed:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Pegg". The signature is stylized with a large, looping 'P' and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Mike Pegg
National President