

## **Presidents report**

Welcome to the meeting and thanks to Epping for hosting the 2009 AGM. Thanks to all committee members for their work and support this year. Also to those members who have helped at competitions across the region and the Team managers who worked so hard at Brean in September. Thanks also to the landlords who support us. Without the terrains we have no game.

The region has had a lot of success at National and regional level this year and congratulations to all that have won or come close to winning events in 2009. To call the roll of honour would take too long but thanks to Ivor and Clare (and her band of reporters and photographers) we get a regular update of results on the ECR website. At club level we have a lot of activity. These competitions are played in great spirit and although hotly contested, the sportsmanship is of the highest standard.

Brean was a weekend of two halves for both squads. The main event saw us struggle on Saturday but climb the table on Sunday. The challenge team saw a reverse of fortunes on the Sunday. Although never challenging for the titles, all the teams should be thanked for their efforts on behalf on the region. The squad members rallied to support their team mates throughout the weekend and had a few laughs along the way. For the record, I had a pedometer with me at Brean. On Saturday and Sunday, I walked nearly 16km. If you add the Wadworth brewery tour on Friday, a few trips to the Vic and a Monday stroll on the beach, the total distance was 20km.

The influx of new members, both adult and junior is particularly good. I attended a carpet bowls EGM recently and the Essex committee are desperate for younger blood. The number of active clubs has dropped by 25% in just ten years as the average age of members grows. Thankfully, I believe we are seeing an opposite trend. I also attended the recent EPA AGM and I have a few notes to review later. However the state of the National game and competition setup is still a concern and 2010 will be a year where the EPA will be under a lot of pressure to 'get it right' for the members.

The titles weekend will again be on the Isle of Wight in 2010. The numbers of ECR players who attended the 2009 event was small but in the current economic climate it is hard to justify this event and the cost of going to Brean. There were a few issues this year that took a little gloss off all of the good things happening in the region. I will not go into details except to say that there is a new disciplinary code and umpiring commission which will be in force in 2010. Also, I believe we should review the rules that are sent out with the ECR qualifier paperwork to ensure all members are aware of the commitment and expectations that go with entry to the event. Again, we can review later in the meeting.

My own personal highlight for the year, even beating the chance to play with Sofiane, Simon and Lorne in the triples, has to be the juniors beating the Welsh at Brean. What a great moment.

Looking ahead to 2010, I have a few ideas that I hope will meet with the approval of the committee. We have a group of elite players who compete at National level. A lot of competitions are won, in the main, by the same group of players. It would be great to acknowledge the club players who regularly play league games without too much recognition at regional or national level. I believe that we should encourage matches against adjoining regions, picking the club stalwarts, new players and juniors to represent the region. Call it the Presidents Select as they do in cricket!!

How about bridging the north/south divide in the region by getting the Hertfordshire leagues to play a match v the Braintree league?

I believe this would help the region to get more experience of competition, to encourage members to play at higher standards while recognising members at club level. If re-elected, I would be happy to look at these options for 2010.

Finally, good luck to all in 2010. Have a great Christmas and a winning New Year.