

**THE RUGBY FIVES ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - SEPTEMBER 2016**

General Secretary's Report

Given the status of Rugby Fives as a minority support it is probably inevitable that good news will always be balanced by bad over a twelve month period. A good example of this can be found in the West Country. Due to the enthusiasm of the master in charge, King's College Taunton is re-introducing the game on its single (atypical) court whilst Mount Kelly (formerly Kelly College) is benefiting from coaching support from local RFA members. Both schools have received "starter packs" of gloves and balls free of charge from the RFA. Less positive is the news that fives is coming to an end at King's School Bruton with the conversion of their single Winchester court.

Other court related news includes the completed enclosure of the courts at Derby Moor thanks in large part to the financial contributions of the club members and the unceasing efforts of Stuart Kirby. Floor painting has taken place at Radley whilst the Head at St. Edmund's College Ware has expressed a strong interest in using his courts. It appears also that Stoke Newington School is happy to offer fives if funding can be found for a staff member to coach the game. Less positive news from the town of Bedford, however, as the lights at Bedford Modern have still not been replaced whilst efforts to relay the floors at Bedford School appear to have ground to a halt.

Ladies fives continues to break records in terms of participation in tournaments with twenty five entrants to the National Championships whilst the National Girls recorded a very impressive sixty eight players. T-shirts and publicity flyers have played a significant part in promoting and popularising these events whilst the newly introduced rankings have provided a further competitive edge.

The men's tournaments continue to be well supported in the main as demonstrated by a record entry of fifty nine in the National Singles followed by a very successful Under 25s tournament. As ever, thanks are due to the indefatigable efforts of the organisers to coax sometimes reluctant entrants and run what are invariably successful events.

The RFA Club reported another successful season both in terms of wins and matches played. Thanks are once again due to Hamish Buchanan and Ed Hatton for both arranging the calendar and chasing recalcitrant match managers for scores and interesting stories.

Communications continue to take account of rapidly changing taste and technology with the introduction of pdf versions of the Pocketbook and Annual Review which are both now delivered by e-mail to the majority of Association members. AGM papers are also now sent out electronically.

Work has started on finding a permanent "home" for the Association's archives. The plan is to digitise the documents and locate the trophies, balls, gloves and other

memorabilia at an accessible location in or around London.

The number of qualified coaches continues to increase with the Association now having ten at Level Two shortly to be joined by two (female) coaches.

Although membership numbers have dropped, this is due to the removal of non-payers from the records (despite repeated reminders) and in fact the number of paying members has gone up. It is of course incumbent on all of us to encourage players to join the RFA and help safeguard the future of the sport. Manchester YMCA has taken a very positive initiative by inviting youngsters to come and sample the game on Saturday mornings.

The ceaseless march of time has seen the departure of John Howe, Ron Swash, Jerry Cooper, Reeve Wood and Jerry Fear. As ever, a time of reflection for those of us who had the pleasure to play against and socialise with such fine people who shared our love of the game.

Finally, Ian Fuller has decided to retire both as Treasurer and Board member. As many of you will know, Ian has performed sterling service to the RFA both as General Secretary and Treasurer over a number of years. His knowledge and wisdom will be missed and he departs with our heartfelt best wishes. We are very fortunate to have secured the services of David Parlby to carry out the duties of Treasurer

Phil Atkinson
General Secretary
August 2016