

**The Irish Pétanque Association**  
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2010**

**REPORT OF THE HONORARY SECRETARY**

**1. GENERAL SUMMARY**

1.1 The year 2009 was one in which underlying concerns remained about (a) our ability to field a strong national team (b) interest in our national competitions and (c) membership numbers, despite the impetus provided by our hosting of the Celtic Challenge competition, more of which later.

**2. MEMBERSHIP**

2.1 Membership numbers did increase, but it is clear that the main driver for this was the fact that Ireland, as hosts, had to field 8 triple teams in the Celtic Challenge, and that, in broad terms, the additional 4 triples teams required, brought with it the additional membership numbers and revenue.

**3. IPA COMPETITIONS**

3.1 (a) The Annual Triples competition took place at the Frankfield Club, Cork, as scheduled, on 19 April 2009. It was well supported, and was won by John O'Grady, Martin Lovisek and Jack Di Pizzo who defeated Jim Ryan, Jackie Broderick and Fayaz Sookharry in the final.

3.1 (b) The Annual Doubles and Singles competitions took place, as scheduled, on 6/7 June 2009 respectively, at North Down. John O'Grady and Fayaz Sookharry retained their Doubles title and Fayaz Sookharry retained his Singles title.

**4. THE CELTIC CHALLENGE**

4.1 It was Ireland's turn to host the Celtic Challenge competition and we were superbly represented in that regard by the Frankfield Club in Cork. Praise is due individually to Jim Ryan who attracted significant sponsorship for the event, to Sue Ryan as Tournament Director, and collectively to the various members of the Frankfield club who took responsibility for the associated piste preparation, transport, accommodation, catering arrangements etc. In the closest finish ever, Wales took the honours with 29 wins followed by Ireland A with 28 wins and Scotland with 27 wins. This was an improvement on our 4<sup>th</sup> position in the previous year's event and, while problems remain for us in terms of eg. membership and interest in national issues, we should take encouragement from the fact that despite small playing numbers, lack of clubs and local competition, we still seem to be able to compete at the Celtic Challenge level.

4.2 The 2010 Celtic Challenge will be held on 1/2 May at Wenvoe, Cardiff. While the same difficulties have emerged again with the composition of an Irish team, to the extent that no qualifying competition was required, we should still look forward to the event with enthusiasm and optimism.

## **5. EUROPEAN/WORLD COMPETITION**

5.1 The qualification process for entry to the World championships changed during the year. Henceforth, the 'Worlds' will be held bi-annually ( 2010 being apposite ) and entry will be confined to 48 teams which make it through what can broadly be described as continental championships. These championships are also held on a bi-annual basis ( Nice, 2009 being apposite ) The Confederation Europeene de Petanque ( CEP ), through which Ireland must qualify, has been allocated 24 places in the 'Worlds'. Membership of both the CEP and FIPJP is a pre-requisite to participation in the competitions. The IPA's competition policy has been amended to reflect the change in qualification policy.

5.2 The Irish team ( Richard Elvin, John O'Grady, Pierre & Jack Di Pizzo ) were placed in a strong group and failed to make the final 24.

## **6. CLUBS:**

6.1 The North Down club has enjoyed another successful year. The club is financially sound and new members have been added this year. A full programme of well-supported competitions will be completed.

6.2 Regrettably, this year saw the death, through cancer, of long-standing member David McHenry, who also had many friends in the IPA. Suitable condolences were extended on the IPA's behalf to his wife Brenda and family circle.

6.3 The emergence of the Park PC in Bushy Park, Dublin was a very welcome development during the year. In the hands of seasoned players and IPA members, we look forward to increased membership and many years of activity from that quarter.

6.4 The Cahir Petanque Club remains dormant. While the club is no longer affiliated to the IPA, your Hon. Sec. continues to provide material via email, but nothing has been forthcoming from the club over the last few years.

6.5 Material also continues to be sent to the contact in the Galway area, and the Dublin based Cabinteely club, but no news is forthcoming.

6.6 Regrettably, the Sligo club appears to have problems. Your Hon. Sec continues to provide information to known contacts, however, the club's website is no longer accessible and emails have not elicited any responses for some time. It is noted that the club did not affiliate to the IPA in the last year.

6.7 Your Hon. Sec received an email during the year from an individual in Wexford to the effect that a number of players were meeting regularly there and might be interested in formalising things through IPA membership and participation in competitions. Email information is regularly provided to the Wexford contact and developments are awaited.

6.8 I leave it to representatives of other clubs/groups here today to comment on the state of play in their particular corner of the Irish Petanque world.

## **7. COUNCIL**

The full IPA Council did not meet this year. Any business required has been adequately conducted via email. Of particular note, from a decision-making point of view, was the decision to reject an application to re-join, from an ex-member of the IPA.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

The impetus provided by our hosting of the 2009 Celtic Challenge has all but gone, and we are probably back to the persistent issues of stagnant membership and the effort to engender greater interest in National and International matters. The parochialism highlighted in the Hon.Sec's report to the AGM last year has already shown itself in our struggle to field a team of 12 for this year's Celtic Challenge, when only last year we had 27 competing for the 8 triples teams for the Challenge in Cork.