



LEIGHTON-LINSLADE CROQUET CLUB

Secretary:
Roger Stroud
Corks Cottage
180 Common Road
Kensworth
Dunstable
LU6 2PJ
Tel: 01582 873793
Email: rogerstroud302@hotmail.com

Founded 2000

NEWSLETTER - JANUARY 2015 Volume 16 Issue 1

Membership Secretary:
Judith Cundell
18 Saxons Close
Leighton Buzzard
LU7 3LT
Tel: 01525 374620
Email:judith.cundell@btinternet.com

The newsletter Editor is John Cundell. Items for the newsletter can be sent to 18 Saxons Close, Leighton Buzzard, Beds LU7 3LT; or emailed to john.cundell@btinternet.com. Tel: 01525 374620

“Looking Forward to Another Busy Year - and our Second CA Tournament”

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2015. Happy New Year to all members and friends. In the first newsletter of 2014 we looked ahead to a busy year and it was certainly that. There were some 58 fixtures in last year’s calendar fitted into approximately 180 days! It looks like 2015 will certainly match that!

One of the highlights of last year was the club organising our first Croquet Association tournament with the B-Level in June. Another fine first was the very successful combined Garden Party and Fun Day. Both these events will be repeated this year - plus another new competition open to members and visitors - a C-Level event. More on this later.

Annual General Meeting

The 15th Annual General Meeting was held at Northall Village Hall on Friday 14th November 2014, and the meeting started promptly at 7.30pm as our Chairman David Ball welcomed some 28 members. Secretary Roger Stroud gave apologies for absence.

In matters arising Tom Miller raised a point concerning

our increasing licence fee and suggested a clarification amendment to the minutes which was agreed. The minutes of the 2013 AGM were then duly approved.

We had circulated the Officers’ Reports with the AGM Agenda Pack before the meeting therefore they were not repeated verbatim, but updated as appropriate.

David Ball added a thank you to all those members who worked hard to keep our lawns and the club running smoothly.

Roger Stroud added that a lot of lawn improvements were going on at the moment which looked promising for the new season. He stated that our finances looked very healthy and asked the meeting to thank Len Buckingham for his excellent work as Treasurer over the years. Roger encouraged our newer members to take part in our friendly competitions which are a great learning curve. Finally, he stated that over the last few months we have been in contact with the Town Council over a number of matters concerning the facilities we have, and we are hopeful that in 2015 we may have improved facilities.

Len Buckingham, our Treasurer, asked if there were any



Above, left to right: Mix ‘n Match Doubles Handicap winners were Roy Kemp and Judith Pengelly; runners up were Roger Stroud and Sheila Guest; Ladies Doubles Mix ‘n Match winners were Judith Pengelly and Jean Ball. Below: Club Singles Handicap winner was Judith Pengelly; runner up was Jean Ball; Colchester B-Level winner was David Ball.





Left to right: Hunstanton B-Level winner was John Cundell; the John Fogg Trophy Trophy winners were John Thorp and Roy Kemp; runners-up were Richard Keighley and Peter Cole.

questions following the earlier circulation of the annual financial reports. There were no queries.

Len then felt that in view of the increased maintenance that we now have to carry out, we really do need to try and get some younger members. He further explained that the present situation of a dedicated few carrying out the maintenance was saving the club a considerable sum that would otherwise have to be paid to contractors. He stated that although we had tried a number of schemes to raise new members, the most successful method is through friends and families. He also requested that members support the Wednesday morning social as the small £2.00 charge went a long way to boosting the funds.

Len proposed no increase in subscription for the 2014 season. The proposal was put to the vote and passed unanimously.

The Officers' reports were duly accepted by the meeting.

The Chairman then informed the meeting that the agenda item to discuss the proposed amendment to our Constitution had been withdrawn as the whole subject needs further discussion in committee due to changes with the Croquet Association's constitution and our impending discussions with Leighton-Linslade Town Council concerning renewal of our Licence in 2017.

Terry Marsh was proposed and seconded and approved as our Accounts Examiner for 2015.

The Chairman then stepped down and handed over to Vice-Chairman John Cundell who, after examination of the Nomination Forms, declared that David Ball was the only nomination for Chairman, proposed on a number of forms. David was duly accepted by a unanimous show of hands.

David resumed the chair and conducted the appointment of officers and committee for 2015. Roger Stroud was

Left to right: the LJB Main Trophy winner was John Thorp; LJB Plate winner was Sally Clay; David and Jean Ball were Club Doubles Champions.



elected as Secretary and Len Buckingham as Treasurer.

Tony Stammers, who has been a committee member for many years is standing down and was warmly thanked for his service by David Ball and all members. The ex-officio members are Vice Chairman John Cundell and Events Secretary John Thorp. Committee members are Peter Cole, Sheila Guest, Malcolm Kirby, Eve Buckingham - plus two new members - Sally Clay and Ross Bagni.

Presentation of Awards

At this point David invited our Treasurer Len Buckingham to step forward and present the following awards.

Mix 'n Match Doubles Handicap

Roy Kemp and Judith Pengelly

Runners up Sheila Guest and Roger Stroud

Ladies Doubles Mix 'n Match

Jean Ball and Judith Pengelly

Runners up Jackie Cole and Diana Phelps

Club Singles Handicap

Judith Pengelly

Runner Up Jean Ball

B-Level Colchester

David Ball

B-Level Hunstanton

John Cundell

The John Fogg Trophy

John Thorp and Roy Kemp

Runners up Peter Cole and Richard Keighley

LJB 70 Plus Trophy (Main)

John Thorp

LJB 70 Plus Trophy (Plate)

Sally Clay



Left to right: Club Doubles Championship runners-up were Judith Pengelly and John Cundell; Club Championship Singles winner was John Cundell; runner-up was John Thorp. Thanks to Len Buckingham for presenting the 2014 season awards. Photos by Peter Cole, John Thorp and John Cundell.

Club Championship Doubles

Jean Ball and David Ball

Runners up John Cundell and Judith Pengelly

Club Championship Singles

John Cundell

Runner up John Thorp

In 'Any Other Business', Judith Cundell, our Membership Secretary, mentioned that during the year a number of members had been worrying about our membership declining dramatically. Judith had examined the records and reported that in 2000 there were 35 members. This year we had 46 members. In 2013 we had 49 - however we must take into account that two members who had joined for many years, but who had made very few appearances at Page's Park did not rejoin in 2014 - we also lost two members who moved away - and also one of our long standing members who did not join for 2014 due to health reasons who will definitely be back in 2015. We also have firm promises from two others who attended the Fun Day/Garden Party that they will be joining in 2015. She requested that when people show interest in the club, then please take time and every effort to make them welcome. Most of us joined through that method.

David Ball stated that forms were available for the annual dinner. (See later for further information).

John Cundell thanked John Thorp for his excellent work in arranging most of our fixtures - a difficult and sometimes thankless task. He also thanked all those who had helped out with lawn maintenance - particularly John Thorp, Ross Bagni and Malcolm Kirby. John also explained that we would be repeating our B-Level competition in 2015, but we are changing the date from a Friday to a Saturday to encourage more attendees from clubs around the M25.

John Thorp then informed members that we intend to organise a C-Level event for those with handicaps between 9 and 12. This would be open to members and outside visitors. There would be a small entry fee. Again, more details later.

The meeting was officially closed by David who wished all present a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, after which the party commenced. This was enjoyed by all, as well as the excellent raffle organised by Tony Stammers and Len Buckingham, which raised a good sum.

Officers, Committee and Specific Duty Appointments - 2015

Your editor made an unfortunate error when compiling the presentation list for the AGM which resulted in the Ladies Doubles runners-up trophy being presented to the wrong pair. This was realised after the event and the trophy has since been re-engraved with the correct winners - Jackie Cole and Diana Phelps. Diana is pictured receiving the shield at a later date. Apologies to all concerned.



Officers

Chairman	David Ball
Secretary	Roger Stroud
Treasurer	Len Buckingham

Committee

Ex officio members

Vice Chairman	John Cundell
Fixture Secretary	John Thorp
Members	Eve Buckingham, Malcolm Kirby, Peter Cole, Sheila Guest, Ross Bagni, Sally Clay

Specific Duties and Non-Executive

Archivist	Malcolm Kirby
Catering Manager	Val Jeffers
Assisted by	Eve Buckingham, Jean Ball
Child Protection	Richard Keighley
Coaching	Richard Keighley, John Cundell, Eve Buckingham, David Ball and John Thorp
Competition Organisers & Managers	John Cundell, John Thorp, Len Buckingham, David Ball, Judith Cundell
Event Preparation	John Cundell, John Thorp, Len Buckingham, David Ball, Roy Kemp and Malcolm Kirby
Club Handicapper	John Cundell
Assisted by	Len Buckingham, John Thorp, David Ball

Lawn Maintenance	John Cundell, John Thorp, Malcolm Kirby, Ross Bagni, Helen Wilkinson, Roy Kemp, David Ball and Phil Rowe
Membership Secretary	Judith Cundell
Newsletter	John Cundell
Publicity/Press	David Ball
Quartermaster	Eve Buckingham
Referee	Len Buckingham
Registers	Len Buckingham, Judith Cundell
Safety Officer	John Thorp
Scoring Manager	Sheila Beal
Selection Committee	John Cundell, David Ball, John Thorp
Sports Council	Tom Miller
Tea Towel Laundry	Jean Ball, Eve Buckingham and Malcolm Kirby
Welfare Secretary	Judith Cundell
Floating (will help anywhere as required)	Sally Clay

Service to Sport Award to John Thorp

Your committee is pleased to announce that at the Leighton-Linslade Sports Council meeting on 24th November, the Council unanimously agreed to John Thorp receiving its Service to Sport Award for 2015.

The Town Mayor, Councillor Ray Berry, presented John with the Award at 7.00p.m. at The White House on Monday 19th January.

The nomination for John to the Sports Council was as follows:

Leighton-Linslade Croquet Club would like to put forward John Thorp for the male 'Service Towards Sports Award' for 2014/15.

John Thorp has been a member of LLCC since 2008. He is a very enthusiastic player and became a Croquet Association Golf Croquet Coach in 2011. He is always very helpful to encourage new members and to assist players in improving their techniques and skills.

However it is behind the scenes that John has given service well above the norm.

Since the club became responsible for all lawn maintenance during the close season from 2011, John has been at the forefront both leading and being on call for aeration, scarifying, mowing, etc. In addition to this he is always one of the small group that turn up early to prepare the lawns and equipment for both internal and external competitions - as well as looking after the general maintenance within the clubroom. An example of his dedication was that within hours of returning from the Falkland Islands he was on site preparing for a croquet competition. His sheer level of hard work is outstanding as well as his practical engineering skills in the design of various tools to assist our operation.

John is a member of the committee and since 2012 he has taken on the duty as Events Secretary - responsible for liaising with and fixing dates with other clubs for friendly competitions, East Anglian League competitions, and some national events. This is a particularly time-consuming task, especially as our annual fixture list now runs into 30 plus events. John's enthusiasm and persistence in getting dates from often less committed contacts results in our yearly calendar being pretty near complete at the start of the season.

We would be very pleased if the Committee would

consider our nomination for John Thorp as very deserving of this award.

Sports Council Grant

In addition to John Thorp being awarded Leighton-Linslade Sports Council's Service to Sports Award at the last LLSC meeting, our representative Tom Miller was also informed that the club has been awarded a £300 grant. This will go towards the purchase of two sets of secondary Sunshiny balls which are £200 per set.

Well done to Len Buckingham for the application and to Tom Miller for promoting our case at the meeting.

Leighton-Linslade Social Club

The Wednesday morning social club is meeting regularly during the close season at Page's Park pavilion from 10.00am to 12.00, and on average a dozen or so members have been present. The fee is still only £2 per session, and for that you get refreshments and the opportunity to play many board games, darts, snooker, dominoes and cribbage. The activities generally finish about noon, and the hall is already warm on arrival, so please support this venture if you possibly can. Friends of members are welcome for same attendance fee.

Annual Dinner - STILL SOME SPACES!

This year's dinner will be at Leighton Buzzard Golf Club, Plantation Road on Friday 13th March. Forms were distributed at the AGM and by email and post thereafter. There are still a few spaces left for what has always been a very pleasant evening, good company and good food. The price is a very reasonable £23.00 for a three course meal with a selection of four choices per course, and including coffee or tea with after-dinner mints! If you would like to come then contact **Len Buckingham** **urgently** on 01525 221079 for further details. In case you have mislaid the form sent out last November, a copy is appended to this newsletter.

2015 Dates for your Diary

March

- 11 Committee Meeting
- 13 Annual Dinner - Leighton Buzzard Golf Club
- 28 LAWNS OPEN - weather permitting

April

- 4/5 Official Opening by Town Mayor Ray Berry
- 2.00pm - DATE TO BE CONFIRMED

May

- 9/10 Club 'Mix 'n' Match' Handicap Doubles
- 30/31 Club Ladies Doubles 'Mix 'n' Match'

June

- 13/14 Club Handicap Singles
- 17 Committee Meeting
- 20 CA B-Level Tournament (3-8) - Leighton-Linslade

July

- 6 Dunstable Friendly - (Away) - Played at Page's Park!
- 17 C-Level Tournament (8-12) - Leighton-Linslade

August

- 8/9 Club Mens Doubles 'Mix 'n' Match' John Fogg Trophy
- 12 Committee Meeting

September

- 5 Club Garden Party and Fun Day at Page's Park
- 9 Committee Meeting

12 LJB 70+ Trophy
19/20 Club Doubles
26/27 Club Singles

November

13 AGM & Party

The dates for other events such as League Matches, Inter-Club Shield, other local Friendlies, etc., will be published in the next newsletter in early March.

Leighton-Linslade High Handicap (C-Level) Tournament

For the last three years the EACF has organised a High Handicap tournament (sometimes referred to as C-Level), and hopefully this will again take place in 2015 - although the entry was rather disappointing last year. This event is aimed specifically at those players whose handicap falls between 8-12, designed to give the less experienced player a chance to play in open competition, and hopefully to tempt them into entering more senior Croquet Association events. In previous years the event has been held at Newport or Colchester in Essex, both of which involve a relatively long journey. We do not yet know where this year's EACF event will be held.

Accordingly, your committee has agreed to a proposal from John Thorp, that we run such an event at Page's Park to try and encourage some of our members to take part as well as inviting entrants from other local clubs. This will be organised similarly to the B-Level Tournament (see below). There will be a small entry fee to cover costs and a trophy. The only proviso is that your handicap lies between 8 and 12.

Leighton-Linslade GC B-Level Tournament - 20th June

This competition was initiated in 2014 by Chris Roberts, the Editor of The Croquet Gazette, to try and bring a climax to the series of B-Level Tournaments held throughout the country. Chris's idea was to enlarge the competition by getting more clubs to take part and rationalising the events to allow play from the same handicap. This was finalised and the handicap level was 3-8. Winners of each round automatically qualified for a two-day final at the end of the year. The whole series was very well supported.

Our round in the tournament received six entries from other clubs and six from our own club. The event was successful and we received a number of kind remarks from the competitors for an excellent competition and for our overall management of the day - also our scoring system was well liked. Many of the competitors announced how nice it was to see so many club members supporting the day.

Ideally we would have liked a larger number of outside entries, and discussion later in the season at a number of other clubs revealed that some potential entrants were put off by the need to travel around the M25 on a Friday. Accordingly we have changed the day for 2015 - now a Saturday - the 20th June.

The success of the B-Level series has encouraged even more clubs to take part this year. There will be tournaments throughout the season as follows: Sussex, Watford, Wrest Park, Ealing, Northampton, Leighton-Linslade, Colchester, Hunstanton, Bath, Bury, Nottingham, Middlesbrough, Hamptworth, Guildford,

Phyllis Court, Ashby, Hurlingham and Edgbaston. The final will be at Hunstanton.

To play in any of these events you need to join the Croquet Association as a Tournament Member. You can find information about this at www.croquet.org.uk and click on the 'CA Information' tab. New tournament members pay an introductory rate of £14.50 for single and £22.50 for dual membership in their first year. In the second year the rate is two-thirds of the full rate prevailing at that time. The full rate applies from the third year of membership.

If you want further details about joining and/or the B-Level tournament, speak to one of the following: John Cundell, David and Jean Ball, Roger Stroud, John Thorp, Ross Bagni or Richard Keighley.

EACF Leagues

After the introduction of a Level Play League as well as the long running Handicap League in the East Anglian Croquet Federation in 2012, this will again be part of the 2015 season, running under similar rules.

Last year's Handicap League incorporated a number of changes, mainly to do with the team handicaps allowed - basically there were no restrictions either to personal handicap level or the total for the team. After a long discussion with our League Manager John Thorp, the EACF League Manager, Jason Carley, is considering bringing back some restrictions for 2015 to encourage higher handicap players to take part. This will probably take the form of one player being allowed with a handicap of 3 or lower, with the handicap total for the team of four players to be no lower than 16. We will keep you informed.

As per last year, we will be running one Level Team and one Handicap Team. Entry forms will appear as soon as the season commences.

Handicap Survey

Whilst on the subject of handicaps, Croquet Association members who receive The CA Gazette and others who have looked at the CA website recently will be aware of the following note from Martin French of the CA Handicap Committee published in December last:

The GC automatic handicap system has run for more than a decade, but it had become clear by late 2013 it had one or two problems. The most obvious and severe was that very low handicap players (0, 1 etc.) seemed to have an advantage in handicap play and were able to win far more than half their games - which was unfair. Closer examination by the Handicap Committee (HC) last winter revealed further problems affecting other groups.

So for 2014, the HC introduced a trial system which expanded the range for low players down as far as -3. The number of additional Extra Turns they would give in handicap play was further magnified by introducing Effective Handicaps that ran down to -6. The first of these changes clearly re-established something more like a fair chance for both players when a low handicap played a high handicap. But the Effective Handicap solution used for the trial wasn't popular.

The HC is now gathering results (copies of handicap cards) from both the 2014 trial season and the earlier pre-trial system, and has engaged a group to examine the evidence and advise how best to set the trigger points, etc., to make the system work as well as it can. The group - Jonathan Kirby, James Hopgood and Robert Fulford - are all

knowledgeable about the maths and statistics which are behind handicap and ranking systems. We expect the group to report in the New Year, and hope an improved GC handicap system can be introduced in time for the 2015 season - though this will be very tight. (Martin French.)

As our club handicapper I forwarded details of six of our players who had played in a number of level and handicap games throughout the country. Martin has reported that the HC have received information from 250 or so players and they now have a database of about 6,350 handicap games under the earlier system, and 1,900 under the 2014 trial system. We look forward to their findings with considerable interest.

Selection Committee

The selection committee for EACF League teams this year will be John Cundell, David Ball and John Thorp.

Lawn Maintenance

In our fourth year of looking after the lawns during the close season, we are becoming more proficient and knowledgeable as to what needs to be done to maintain, and over the longer term to improve, our lawns. We are also accumulating the necessary equipment by purchase or borrowing/hiring to help us carry out the work required. At this point we would like to thank the Town Council and particularly the Head Groundsman Doug Bolton for assisting us in the loan of some of the Council's equipment.

In late September John Thorp, Malcolm Kirby and John Cundell borrowed the Council's Scarifier and scarified and mowed all three lawns. In early October, and with the assistance of Ross Bagni, we solid tined all three lawns – this means just making the holes – not removing cores as per last year. We then re-seeded and fertilised all three lawns and applied 18 bags of top dressing.

As October progressed we swished away the wormcasts regularly, removed fallen leaves, and due to the mild weather, it was necessary to mow again at the end of October.

In mid November, John T and Ross filled in the dip by hoop 4 on lawn 2 by lifting the turf and applying dressing to raise the area whilst John C re-mowed the lawns. Another mowing was required in early December, this time by the two Johns and Malcolm. It is likely that we will need to carry out at least two more mowings before the season commences. We are investigating the purchase of a second rotary mower, slightly wider than our existing one. The main reason for this is to cut down the amount of time

it takes to mow our three lawns - currently one and a half hours per lawn - but also to provide backup when our first mower requires maintenance. So far this Winter some 85 hours has been put in by our small group. To cut the mowing time by 50% will be very acceptable.

We have been very pleased with the way the work has turned out and by the end of December all three lawns were looking excellent.

Imagine therefore, our extreme frustration and disappointment when on our first visit to the park after New Year's Day we found that a group of footballers have been playing on lawn 1 and have caused significant damage - stud marks, slides, holes - and parts of the fence broken. This is so disheartening - they must know the damage they are causing and obviously have no respect.

We are in contact with the Town Council to try and come up with some way of preventing this.

We are also promised by the Town Council that the damaged and loose fencing around lawns 1 and 2 will be repaired before the season starts.

'Instant' Newsletter

Please include your email address when you complete this year's membership form. The newsletter will normally be distributed by email. As per 2014 please mark on your membership form if you are happy to print out your own copies of any other forms which may be required. Postage costs are now very expensive.

Also please add your mobile telephone number. This is very handy for chasing up those who forget they have entered a competition! - and also for members to arrange visits to the lawns outside of the regular playing sessions.



Long standing members will be sad to learn of the passing of Arthur Murgatroyd on 23rd December. Arthur was a member of the club for a number of years up to 2009. He was a regular social player who enjoyed his croquet until illness prevented him. We extend our sympathies to his wife Mary.



MEMBERSHIP FEE DUE!!!

It's that time of the year again - the membership fee is due. Accompanying the newsletter is a membership application form for the 2015 season.

Please complete this and send with the appropriate remittance, which for this year remains at £75, to the Membership Secretary, Judith Cundell, whose contact details are on the form and on the masthead of this newsletter.

If you have an email address please include this as we would like to send as many newsletters and other communications as possible by email to reduce postage and delivery costs.

Also, for 2015 we will not be sending your membership cards back to you by post. Those on email will receive acknowledgement that your subscription has been received. The small number of members who are not on email will be telephoned. The membership cards will be distributed at the Social Club, Annual Dinner or Clubroom as the season commences.

AND PLEASE DON'T FORGET TO INCLUDE YOUR MOBILE TELEPHONE NUMBER.



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION - 2015 SEASON

I/we wish to join / rejoin the club.

Name(s):

Address:

.....

..... Postcode:

Tel No: Mobile No:

Date: Email:

I am happy to receive all communication by email, including 'return forms': YES NO

A subscription for the full season is £75 per person. Potential new members may also pay a £5 fee for two trial sessions. This fee will be deducted if full membership is subsequently taken out.

I / we enclose a cheque for £..... payable to Leighton Linslade Croquet Club.

Please return this form and cheque to: Judith Cundell (Membership Secretary), 18 Saxons Close, Leighton Buzzard, Beds. LU7 3LT. Tel: 01525 374620.
Email: judith.cundell@btinternet.com