



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

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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 400512 or 374620

"Another Year - Somewhat Drier We Hope"

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2013. Happy New Year to all members and friends. In the first newsletter of 2012 we looked ahead to a busy year and better play from our third lawn. The busy year certainly transpired and as well as all our 'normal' club and friendly events including the competition for the over 70's, we ran two Handicap League teams and one Level Play Team; took part in the Inter-Club Murphy Shield; lost the Hunstanton Leighton-Linslade Golf Croquet Challenge Trophy; enjoyed Friendlies with our regulars and welcomed for the first time High Wycombe and Dunstable; took part in the EACF Champion of Champions tournament and the EACF High Handicap Singles; and a number of members entered 'open' events at clubs ranging from Watford, West Park, Newport, Hunstanton, Edgbaston, Phyllis Court and Nottingham - and some impressive results were gained.

Add to that the very successful Jubilee Weekend and our seven Club Tournaments and you can see how busy we were.

This all took a lot of organising and I do not intend to pick out all the individuals that made this work so well - however I would like to highlight the excellent work carried out by our new Events Secretary, John Thorp, for the enthusiastic and efficient manner in which he fixed up many of these events in what was his first year in this post. The task was not made any simpler by the number of events that had to be cancelled or re-arranged due to the frequent flooding of our lawns!

The third lawn was much improved and is now probably our most level surface. Lawns 1 and 2 suffer from being the two nearest to the clubhouse so they tend to be over used - the remedy is obvious! One bonus in 2012 was that we didn't suffer the dandelion plague of 2011 - they

probably all drowned. More about the lawns later.

Members who attended the AGM will have been brought up to date as to what has been a busy year behind the scenes; a full report on the AGM follows.

Annual General Meeting

The 13th Annual General Meeting was held at Northall Village Hall on Friday 9th November 2012, and the meeting started promptly at 7.30pm as our Chairman David Ball welcomed some 33 members, plus our Financial Examiner Marjorie Cliffe, and Diane Kirby. Secretary Roger Stroud then gave six apologies for absence.

There were no matters arising and the minutes of the 2011 AGM were then duly approved.

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

David Ball reiterated that we had enjoyed a successful year in competition outside the club, starting off at the March Soham Indoor which was won by John Cundell and Richard Keighley, and echoed throughout the remainder of the season by many other members. The awards gained were displayed for all to see, together with the usual club cups and trophies. David asked for a show of appreciation for all those members who have done much to help the running of the club.

Roger Stroud highlighted that this was the first year where we had the responsibility of maintaining our lawns. We had built up equipment and knowledge as the year progressed, and due to the excellent work of a small number of members, our lawns are looking as good as they ever have been.

Winners' Parade. Most of the 2012 award winners at the Annual General Meeting. Details of who won what over the page.





Top to bottom, left to right: Richard Keighley and John Cundell - Soham GC Doubles; Tony Stammers and Roger Stroud - Mix 'n Match Doubles Handicap; runners-up Peter Cole and Tony Wells (not present); Pauline Lefrere and Judith Pengelly - Mix 'n Match Ladies Doubles; runners-up Jean Ball and Sheila Guest (not present); John Cundell - Wrest Park Singles; Chairman David Ball presented Marjorie Cliffe with a thank-you gift for acting as our accounts examiner for some 12 years.

Len Buckingham, our Treasurer, asked if there were any questions following the earlier circulation of the annual financial reports. He went on to say that in the current economic climate, the Council can only provide what is required due to our Licence terms and no more. Len attempted to negotiate a change in our annual 5% increase of the yearly rent however this was rejected at a Council meeting, so basically, apart from mowing and white lining which is handled by the groundstaff during the playing season, we are responsible for all other work. Len went on to say that the only way we are going to be able to keep the fees down is for as many members as possible to help John Cundell and John Thorp carry out this work. The good news was that Len proposed no increase in subscription for the 2013 season. He also requested that as many members as possible should try and attend the Wednesday morning social as the small £2.00 charge went a long way to boosting the funds.

Len explained that Marjorie Cliffe has been examining our accounts for some twelve years and she has decided that she would like to retire. Len thanked Marjorie for her continued support over the years and at this point David Ball presented Marjorie with a floral tribute and some

chocolates. Len then stated that he had been fortunate in locating a neighbour who was willing to take over the task of examining our accounts as from this year.

Ross Bagni asked if we had considered trying to obtain a higher rate of interest for our capital funds. After a brief exchange it was agreed that Ross would forward to Len some relevant information that might assist in this area.

The Officer's reports were duly accepted by the meeting.

Before moving on David read out a letter of thanks for the card and good wishes sent to Bryan and Joan Ferris, members for many years who have now moved to Kent. They stated how much they will miss the club – from playing croquet to the winter social club where Bryan was a regular attendee. They have already located a nearby croquet club in Kent and also joined a retirement group with many attractions.

The Chairman then thanked all officers and committee for their sterling efforts in the last year. He 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 2013. There is no change except for the addition of Peter Cole as a committee

Left to right: John Thorp - Wrest Park B-Level; David Ball - Singles Handicap; runner-up Pauline Lefrere; Jean and David Ball - Wrest Park Doubles.





Top row: Roger Stroud - Hunstanton Handicap Singles Open; John Cundell - Hunstanton Doubles Open (paired with Mary Coombs from Hunstanton); John Cundell and David Ball - The John Fogg Trophy; runners-up Richard Keighley and Malcolm Kirby.

Right: John Thorp won the LJB 70 Plus Trophy (Main) and David Ball the LJB 70 Plus Trophy (Plate) - pictured with competition inaugurator Len Buckingham.

Thanks to Margaret Brown who graciously presented all the awards.



member and who has taken on the role of our Sports Council representative. The appointments, together with other members who take on specific duties, are listed later.

Presentation of Awards

At this point David invited Founder member Margaret Brown, who has performed almost every post in the club since its inception, to step forward and present the following awards. This year, as well as the Club awards, we decided to 'present' trophies and awards won by members outside the club – and to also allow all present to see how successful we have been this year.

Soham GC Doubles

John Cundell and Richard Keighley

Mix 'n Match Doubles Handicap

Tony Stammers and Roger Stroud

Runners up Peter Cole and Tony Wells

Ladies Doubles Mix 'n Match

Pauline Lefrere and Judith Pengelly

Runners up Jean Ball and Sheila Guest

Wrest Park Singles

John Cundell

B-Level Wrest Park

John Thorp

EACF Handicap Singles (8-12)

John Guest

Club Singles Handicap

David Ball

Runner Up Pauline Lefrere

Wrest Park Doubles

Jean Ball and David Ball

B-Level Newport

John Thorp

Hunstanton Invitation Handicap Singles

Roger Stroud



Left: John Cundell - Edgbaston B-Level. Above and right: Club Championship winners - Singles by Richard Keighley - Doubles by John Cundell and Richard Keighley. Runners-up of both were newcomers to our awards - Ross Bagni for Singles - Jackie and Peter Cole for Doubles.



Hunstanton Doubles Challenge**John Cundell and Mary Coombs****The John Fogg Trophy****David Ball and John Cundell**

Runners up Richard Keighley and Malcolm Kirby

B-Level Edgbaston**John Cundell****LJB 70 Plus Trophy (Main)****John Thorp**

LJB 70 Plus Trophy (Plate)

David Ball

Club Championship Doubles**John Cundell and Richard Keighley**

Runners up Jackie Cole and Peter Cole

Club Championship Singles**Richard Keighley**

Runner up Ross Bagni

Any Other Business

Judith Cundell reminded members that she had negotiated a supply of club branded clothing from a local supplier. The quality is excellent and orders as low as one item can be made. Available are fleeces, sweat shirts, polo shirts and baseball hats. Contact Judith for more details. She also added that the club now has a new supply of sew-on or iron-on club badges which can be obtained from David Ball.

Margaret Brown pointed out that a number of members, for instance the Membership Secretary, are not committee members, but they all carry out the many tasks that keep the club moving along. The usual list of such tasks is detailed below.

David asked Roger Stroud to minute thanks to Malcolm Kirby for keeping up the archives which were on display adjacent to the trophies.

The Chairman then gave his closing remarks and reminded members that they should have received by email and post details of this year's annual dinner scheduled for Friday 15th March at the Leighton Buzzard Golf Club – and also that we had managed to negotiate a slightly lower cost than 2012.

The meeting was officially closed by David who wished all present a Merry Christmas and a Happy Croquet New Year, after which the party commenced. This was enjoyed by all, as well as the excellent raffle organised by Tony Stammers, which raised a good sum. There seemed to be enough prizes for all present!

Officers, Committee and Specific Duty Appointments - 2013**Officers**

Chairman	David Ball
Secretary	Roger Stroud
Treasurer	Len Buckingham

Committee**Ex officio members**

Vice Chairman	John Cundell
Fixture Secretary	John Thorp

Members

Val Jeffers, Eve Buckingham, Tony Stammers, Malcolm Kirby, Peter Cole

Specific Duties and Non-Executive

Archivist	Malcolm Kirby
Catering Manager	Val Jeffers
Assisted by	Eve Buckingham, Jean Ball and Margaret Lawson
Child Protection	Richard Keighley
Club Clothing	Judith Cundell
Coaching	Richard Keighley, John Cundell, Eve Buckingham, David Ball, John Thorp
Competition Organisers & Managers	John Cundell, John Thorp, Len Buckingham, David Ball, George Lawson
Event Preparation	John Cundell, John Thorp, Len Buckingham, David Ball, Tony Wells, Malcolm Kirby
Handicappers	John Cundell, Len Buckingham, John Thorp, David Ball
Lawn Maintenance	John Cundell, John Thorp, Malcolm Kirby, Ross Bagni, Vic Peddar, Sheila Beal, Helen Wilkinson, Roy Kemp, Pauline Lefrere, David Ball
Membership Secretary	Judith Cundell
Newsletter	John Cundell
Publicity/Press	David Ball, John Cundell
Quartermaster	Eve Buckingham
Referee	Len Buckingham
Registers	Len Buckingham and Judith Cundell
Safety Officer	John Thorp
Scoring Manager	Irene Davis
Selection Committee	John Cundell, Len Buckingham, Eve Buckingham, John Thorp, George Lawson
Sports Council	Peter Cole
Tea Towell Laundry	Tony Stammers, Jean Ball, Eve Buckingham, Malcolm Kirby
Welfare Secretary	Judith Cundell

2013 Dates for your Diary**February**

19 Committee Meeting

March

15 Annual Dinner - Leighton Buzzard Golf Club

16/17 Soham Indoor

30 LAWNS OPEN - weather permitting

April

6/7 Official Opening (To Be Confirmed)

10/11 Coaches Training Course - Letchworth

? EACF AGM - Bury St. Edmunds

? EACF Club Champions Tournament - Newport

May

11/12 Club 'Mix 'n' Match' Handicap Doubles

June

1/2 Club Ladies Doubles 'Mix 'n' Match'

? East Anglian Counties Tournament - Hunstanton

12 Committee Meeting

22 Wrest Park B-Level Tournament - TBC

23 CA B-Level Tournament (3-7) - Wrest Park

24 EACF Handicap Singles (8-12) - Bury St. Edmunds

July

- 6/7 Club Handicap Singles
- 14 Club Fun Day
- 20/21 Hunstanton Leighton-Linslade Challenge
- 22 U3A Dunstable Visit
- 27/28 Hunstanton Invitation Weekend (see below)

August

- 7 Committee Meeting
- 10/11 Club Mens Doubles 'Mix 'n' Match' John Fogg Trophy
- 15 Dunstable CC Fun Day

September

- 4 Committee Meeting
- 13 LJB 70+ Trophy
- 21/22 Club Doubles
- 28/29 Club Singles

November

- 8 AGM & Party

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

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 £2, 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.

Following a recent request from the Town Council's Senior Operations and Administration Manager, Len Buckingham has sent a Press Release to publicise the Social Club and the Croquet Club in the Leighton-Linslade Town Council Newsletter and on the LLTC website.

Sports Council Grant

Our new club representative on the Leighton-Linslade Sports Council is Peter Cole, who attended his first meeting on 5th December. Peter explained to the meeting that we are now responsible for lawn maintenance outside the playing season, and that we had recently applied for a grant to assist in this area. We are pleased to report that the meeting agreed that we will receive £300. Well done to Len and John C for the original application and to Peter for promoting our case at the meeting.

Annual Dinner

This year's dinner will be at Leighton Buzzard Golf Club, Plantation Road on Friday 15th March. Forms were distributed at the AGM and by post thereafter. There are still a few spaces left for what has always been a very pleasant evening, good company and good food. As David Ball remarked in his closing words at the AGM, we have even managed to negotiate a price reduction for this year - £22 for a three course meal with a selection of four choices per course, and including coffee or tea with after-dinner mints and a gratuity! If you would like to come then contact David Ball urgently on 01525 211988 for further details.

Soham Indoor

The annual Soham Indoor Golf Croquet weekend will be on 16/17th March. Saturday will be handicapped play, Sunday will be level. I am still waiting for full details from the organiser however I hope we will be able to enter two teams of two players each on both days. Cost is not yet determined.

If you are interested in taking part then please contact me (John Cundell) asap.

Coaches Training Course

This course on Wednesday and Thursday 10/11th April, to be held at Sheffield, is for relatively experienced players who wish to become Golf Croquet coaches. The Manager is Richard Keighley, assisted by John Cundell and coaches from other clubs. Further details from Richard or John.

EACF Club Champions Tournament

This, which was a new event at Newport last year and where each club in the region is invited to send both their level play and handicap club champions from the previous year, or suitable substitute, will be held in 2013. More details in due course.

EACF High Handicap Tournament

This was also inaugurated last year and is aimed specifically for those players whose handicap falls between 8-12, designed to give the less experienced player a chance to play in open competition relatively locally, and hopefully to tempt them into entering more senior Croquet Association events. Date and further details again in due course. John Guest was the winner in 2012.

Get Well Soon - John Guest

We have to report that John Guest has endured a horrible winter. He underwent an operation to have stents inserted at the end of last season, and has been undergoing chemotherapy prior to Christmas. Unfortunately he picked up a virus and had to be taken to hospital on New Year's Eve. He is home now but is quite poorly. We wish him all the best, a speedy recovery, and look forward to enjoying his usual good-humoured banter on the croquet lawns.

League

Following 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 be tried again this year. We intend to enter both competitions with one team in the Level Play League and hopefully two in the Handicap League.

The following changes to the Handicap League were agreed at the last EACF Committee Meeting in late October:

1. The minimum aggregate handicap to be reduced from 24 to 20.
2. Substitutes to be allowed by prior agreement between the team captains (e.g. to cater for players who find a whole day's play too tiring).
3. Instead of a 'golden hoop' to determine the winner when scores are tied, drawn matches will be allowed. Matches will be scored with 2 points for a win and 1 point for a draw.



Just to give you some idea as to what is required to enable us to facilitate the out-of-season lawn maintenance, this is what the clubroom looks like in early January. Aerator, rotary mower two scarifiers, moss treatment, seed, top dressing, rakes, worm cast swisher, hoses, cabling, spreaders - as well as all our playing equipment!

4. Start time left to agreement between the teams concerned.

5. The time limit per game to be increased from 40 to 45 minutes.

There do not appear to be any changes in the Level Play League however we await final details from whoever the new organiser will be, as the long-standing manager of these Leagues, Chris Howell, is standing down after four excellent years. Thanks to Chris for her enthusiasm and drive which has put these competitions into a fine position.

Selection Committee

The general consensus from members was that the 'selection committee' arrangement for last year was successful and the committee has agreed that it will continue for 2013. The committee members are Len Buckingham, John Cundell, Eve Buckingham, George Lawson and John Thorp.

'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 2012 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.

Lawn Maintenance and Equipment Storage

After an initial year of looking after the lawns during the close season, we are rapidly learning what needs to be done and have also accumulated the necessary equipment to help us carry out the work required.

The lawns suffered badly in 2012 due to the excessive rain and flooding which certainly kept the grass green but also encouraged the moss to proliferate, especially on Lawn 2 which seems more prone to flooding than 1 and 3. Accordingly the following programme has been put in hand for this winter. I have detailed what has been done. Our small Lawn Maintenance team is listed on page 4.

At the close of the season we paid the Council to re-seed

and top dress the right hand third of Lawn 2 to improve the overall level.

On the 1st November, John Thorp, Malcolm Kirby and John Cundell deep raked, mowed, re-seeded and top dressed the left hand part of Lawn 1. This area is the most played on for the obvious reason that it is nearest to the clubroom, and it certainly needed some tender loving care. We are pleased with the result so far.

On 16th November JT and JC covered three small areas with chicken wire over some of the top dressing on the treated area of Lawn 2 which were being continuously disturbed by dogs and children. This seems to have solved the problem as the new grass had showed its face before Christmas. Thanks to Len for the chicken wire. We will need to re-seed these areas before the new season starts.

As stated previously a lot of moss appeared on the left and middle on Lawn 2 and some on 1. We have bought some moss treatment which is being applied as required.

On 19th November JT and JC swished Lawn 1 to remove worm casts, scarified the untreated two-thirds, mowed it and then tested out our moss treatment on the right hand quarter of the lawn.

On 22nd November, JT and JC aerated Lawn 1. We had hoped to carry out quite a lot of work on that day and had arranged with other members of our working party group to come along, but we were beaten by the wet conditions. It has been a bit of a nightmare trying to do much of the work due to the very changeable and wet early winter. One can only plan at very short notice to try and fit the work in around the conditions and it is not always possible to contact volunteers at short notice.

We were lucky with the conditions on 29th November and JT, JC, Malcolm Kirby and Ross Bagni aerated and mowed Lawn 3, plus scarified and mowed the area of Lawn 1 to remove the dead moss.

On 2nd December JT and JC aerated Lawn 2, and on the 8th and 9th December JC managed to find a weather window when it wasn't wet or frozen to mow Lawn 2.

On 10th December JC scarified and mowed the right hand side of Lawn 1 to collect the remainder of the dead moss; and put some moss treatment on Lawn 2. The cold spell arrived the next day and then it was Christmas.

On 7th January, JC and JT (the latter just 24 hours after his return from The Falklands), scarified and mowed the moss treated areas on Lawn 2 - this was the first day we managed to get on the lawn without Wellington boots!

I may have gone on a bit about this but it is important that members realise just what is required to maintain and improve our lawns. So far the hours spent by our small group add up to 37.

In the next few months we need to keep an eye on grass length, plus scarify where we have put moss treatment, aerate all three lawns, repair any rough areas around the hoop positions, and re-seed where necessary. We will also need to aerate all lawns during the summer months to try and improve the drainage to a point where the lawns don't flood every time we have heavy rain. For this we will try and set up a rota system and carry out the work on playing days.

We were pleased that the allocation of the Referees Room as a storage arrangement for our maintenance equipment and some playing equipment worked well last year, and we

have had confirmation from LLTC that we will have this facility again for 2013 for which we are grateful.

Pavilion Refurbishment

At the end of December and the first two weeks in January, the Pavilion was emptied of all equipment and was re-decorated by contractors employed by LLTC. We are promised that the toilets will also receive a commercial clean before our season commences which will hopefully improve the ambience somewhat!!!!

Pavilion Shutters

You will recall that for the latter part of last season we struggled with the roller shutter door at the 'Croquet End' of the pavilion which frequently jammed shut, and even when it worked it was very heavy and difficult to open. You will be pleased to learn that in December both pavilion end doors were replaced by new shutters which operate electrically.

To facilitate this LLTC has rented us an electronic key fob to open the 'Croquet End' door. This fob will be located on the wooden key board, as was the original normal key in the past.

1. PLEASE TREAT THIS FOB AS IF IT WAS YOUR HOUSE KEY!

2. DON'T LEAVE THE KEY BOARD ON THE TABLES OUTSIDE THE CLUB HOUSE AS THE FOB WILL NOT APPRECIATE BEING WASHED IN THE RAIN!

3. AS MENTIONED ABOVE THE KEY IS RENTED FROM THE TOWN COUNCIL FOR A CONSIDERABLE SUM.

4. IT IS NOT EASILY REPLACEABLE. THERE ARE ONLY TWO IN EXISTENCE - ONE WITH THE TOWN COUNCIL AND ONE WITH US.

5. LOSING IT WILL CAUSE MAJOR PROBLEMS AND EXPENSE.

To use the fob you simply press the 'UP' arrow once and the door will open fully. To close the door you have to press and hold the 'DOWN' arrow button whilst the door closes until it stops moving. One short press will not work - the button must be held down until the door is fully closed. This is obviously a safety measure so that you or others cannot be trapped. Also, please ensure you close the small sliding cover over the buttons after use as an inadvertent press of the buttons will operate the doors from some considerable distance. See the accompanying photographs.

In view of the above it is imperative that you sign the register on EVERY visit as we need to keep track of comings and goings.

Hopefully enough said!

Playing Sessions

Below is a reminder on the 'official' playing sessions for 2013 - no change from 2012:

10-12 Tuesday (Singles Handicap)
2-4 Tuesday (Singles Handicap)
10-1.00 Wednesday

This is the key fob for opening the pavilion croquet end roller shutter door. It is pictured here at actual size.



In the top picture the button cover is closed. It is shown open in the lower picture. Keep the cover closed except when using the buttons.

The triangular marked buttons open and close the shutter door. The smaller buttons stop the operation.



10-1.00 Thursday

10-12 Saturday

2-5 Saturday

10-12 Sunday (Singles Handicap)

2-5 Sunday

Our Lawn Rent arrangements allow for playing sessions to be flexible to work around the weather - either good or bad - e.g., if morning is wet we can regroup pm or even on another day; if good then stay on as required. Also, members are able to go along for practice sessions at will.

The only provisos are that a) if the Council Groundstaff or any Contractors or our own members are working on the lawns, then they will have priority and players will have to wait until they are finished; and b) certain Mondays and Fridays when League and Friendly matches are scheduled when no club play will be possible.

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 2013 season.

Please complete this and send with the appropriate remittance, which is held for this year at £70, 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 2013 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.

