



LEIGHTON-LINSLADE CROQUET CLUB

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

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NEWSLETTER - MARCH 2010 Volume 11 Issue 2

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

“Not Long to Wait Now!”



What a lovely day we enjoyed at the 10th Anniversary Celebrations last year. Let's hope this season is as enjoyable.

Welcome to the second newsletter of 2010. Our 11th season at Page's Park promises to be an exciting one for the club. The lawns are looking good although at the time of writing, in early March, some of the work to be carried out by our hard-working groundstaff has been delayed by firstly the extended snow and latterly by too much wet stuff. It has been impossible to get on the lawns until very recently and even after three dry days they are still very wet. Accordingly there is still some levelling and other work to be carried out on our new third lawn. The persistent cold weather has stopped any grass growth and there are still a few bare patches and dips that need work to improve the level. So what does all this mean? Well, we will have to wait for a few more weeks before we can use the new lawn. We should be able to open lawns one and two on the promised date of 20th March, unless there is another marked deterioration in the weather, but lawn three will not be available until early April. If there is any delay caused by unforeseen circumstances with respect to lawns one and two then we will endeavour to let everybody know as soon as possible via email and/or telephone - so check your emails daily as we get nearer to the 20th March.

It's a shame that we will not be able to start the season with all three but surely all members will understand that after the coldest and wettest winter for 30 years, our groundstaff have worked wonders by even getting the lawns to their present state. We've waited ten years so four more weeks is not the end of the world.

Playing Sessions

The Committee agreed that 'official' playing sessions for 2010 will be as follows:

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

- 10-1.00 Wednesday
- 10-1.00 Thursday
- 10-12 Saturday
- 2-5 Saturday
- 10-12 Sunday (Singles Handicap)
- 2-5 Sunday

As per 2009 we have renegotiated our Lawn Rent arrangements for 2010, therefore playing sessions can 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 Groundstaff are working on the lawns, then they will have priority and members 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.

Prospects for the Season

As stated above, weather and lawn conditions permitting, the first two lawns will be available for play by members from 2.00pm on Saturday 20th March with the Official Opening by the Town Mayor planned for Sunday 28th March, also at 2.00pm. If you can't make the first weekend please try and come along for the Official Opening.

2010 Dates for your Diary

As you can see it looks like an even busier season than 2009. We already have dates from Watford for League and Friendly matches - the others will follow in the next newsletter due out in late April when Tony Wells gets responses from other clubs.

March

- 13/14 Soham Indoor Croquet
- 17 Club Dinner
- 20 EACF AGM - Bury St. Edmunds
- 20 **LAWNS OPEN AT PAGE'S PARK**
- 28 **Officially open season - Town Mayor - 2.00pm**

April

- 9 Coaching at Page's Park - (see below)
- 18 Coaching Course at Watford. (Contact Richard Keighley on 01296 681235 or by e-mail to: the_keighleys@btopenworld.com.)

May

- 3 'Come and Try Day'
- 10 *B-Class at Watford. For players with a handicap between 3 and 7. Contact Roger Nicholls on 01923 236068 for details.
- 15/16 Club 'Mix 'n' Match' Doubles
- 17 Watford Friendly Away

June

- 1/2 Littlehampton Friendly
- 4 EACF League - Leighton-Linslade 'A' v Watford (Home match)
- 9 Committee Meeting
- 12/13 Club Ladies Doubles 'Mix 'n' Match'

July

- 7 *B-Class at Nottingham. For players with a handicap between 4 and 8. Details at www.nottinghamcroquet.org.uk
- 10/11 Club Handicap Singles (see later note)
- 18 Club Fun Day
- 23 EACF League - Leighton-Linslade 'B' v Watford (Home match)
- 25 Ipswich Level Tournament. (Open to all members of EACF Clubs. (Entry form from John Cundell or Tony Wells).
- 28 Committee Meeting

August

- 7 Club Garden Party
- 7/8 Hunstanton Invitation Weekend (see later note)
- 14/15 Club Mens Doubles 'Mix 'n' Match' 'The John Fogg Trophy'
- 20 Watford Friendly Home.

September

- 14 *B-Class at Edgbaston. For players with a handicap between 5 and 8. Details at www.edgbastoncroquetclub.org.uk.
- 25/26 Club Doubles
- 29 Committee Meeting

October

- 2/3 Club Singles

November

- 12 AGM & Party

* B-Class tournaments are organised by clubs on behalf of The Croquet Association. To take part you have to be a full Tournament member of the CA. Details of costs etc., can be obtained from John Cundell, Eve and Len Buckingham or Richard Keighley.

EACF Golf Croquet League and Selection Committee

Members will recall from our report on the AGM in this

year's first newsletter that there had been some comment concerning the method of selection and our recent poor performance in the League, particularly in 2009.

The committee applied to the League to enter two teams in 2010, an 'A' team consisting of five or six regular players (as many other teams do), with the intention of accommodating all others who wish to play in the League in the 'B' team - as per 2009. This will allow more chance of playing and hopefully improve our performance.

To facilitate this we have formed a selection committee for the League and Inter-Club Shield competitions consisting of Len Buckingham, John Cundell, Eve Buckingham, George Lawson, John Thorp and Tony Wells.

We made representation to the League organisers at the end of last year that the 30 minute time limit for League games should be extended to give players of very different handicaps a chance to even up the game. We are pleased to be able to tell members that the time limit has been extended to 40 minutes for 2010.

Friendlies and Littlehampton

This season we will be playing friendlies with Stony Stratford, Watford and Letchworth - as per previous years. It is also hoped that we can repeat the Hunstanton Friendly.

Additionally, a similar 'stay away' event to that with Hunstanton, has already been agreed by our Fixture Secretary Tony Wells with Littlehampton for the dates of 1st and 2nd June. It is expected that a team of eight will play Singles and Doubles on the 1st (with a fish and chip lunch break, plus a variety of events on the 2nd. There may be a small green fee charge on the second day. Those attending will need to arrange their own accommodation.

There will be a draw for the team and an entry form with more details will appear on the club noticeboard in due course. The committee has decided that if you put your name down for Littlehampton and are fortunate in the draw, you will not be able to enter for the later Hunstanton Friendly - date yet to be arranged - unless there is a shortfall from other applicants.

As regards 'normal' Friendlies it was decided at the AGM that the same system for drawing teams used for 2009 by John C would be continued for 2010. As before all draws will be made 'in public' at Page's Park.

Hunstanton Invitation Weekend - 7/8 August

Please note that this event in the calendar is **NOT** the Hunstanton Friendly. This event is an open invitation weekend tournament that is organised by Hunstanton and is open to all clubs. It consists of two separate Singles events on the Saturday, one of Level play for those with handicaps of 4 and below; and one of Handicap play for those with handicaps of 5 and above. The Sunday is a Pro-Am Doubles where partners are allocated per Handicap by the organisers. Entry fee is £7.50 per player per day. If any member requires an entry form I or Tony Wells can email or forward you a copy. Closing date is 1st July.

Inter-Club Championship/Shield

We entered the Inter-Club Championship in 2009 and gained an insight into the skill levels of 'top' clubs. This

event was designed to give emerging competitive players their first taste of the higher levels of our sport, and for a number of clubs, including ours, the difference in skill was a bit of a shock and an eye-opener.

Accordingly the Croquet Association has created a new event this year which will appeal more to clubs such as ours at the current stage of our development. It is to be run along very similar lines to the Championship but with the restriction that players must not have a handicap below 2, and also that only one player can have a 2 handicap. Also, the total handicap of the team of four must be at least 12. The competition is to be called the Golf Croquet Inter-Club Shield and we are entering for 2010. The initial draw as to which club we will be playing will be made around 1st April by the Croquet Association organisers!

'Come and Try Day'

It has been three years since we last had a 'Come and Try Day' which has often been the club's best opportunity during the year to recruit new members. Now we have - or soon will have - three lawns, we can accommodate more members. New blood is essential to any club, so we are asking all members to spread the news that we are on a recruiting drive! Perhaps you belong to a group which may be interested? Have you a friend or friends you would like to bring along? Hopefully we can benefit from the publicity of the Town Mayor opening our 2010 season in the local press, and the chosen date for the Come and Try Day is the May Bank Holiday, Monday 3rd May. The event will run from 10.00am until 4.00pm, so as well as helping explain the game to visitors on the day and encouraging their participation in the hope that they join us, you will almost certainly be able to get in a bit of practise. Leighton Buzzard's German and French twin towns, Titisee-Neustadt and Coulommiers are understood to be visiting the town for the May Day Celebrations and sports clubs have been asked to let the Council know if they would be interested in joining in some of the activities with their continental counterparts. So as well as introducing croquet to prospective members, you might be called upon to show off our traditional English game to German and French visitors. It would be nice if whites are worn.

Club Handicap Events

Please note that it was agreed at the September 2009 committee meeting that all members who wish to take part in club handicap competitions **must play at least 10 handicap games, preferably against a variety of players, in the available sessions** in that season prior to the competitions.

Competition Ladder

John Thorp will be running a 'Competition Ladder' during 2010. This will be a non-handicap event although where possible John will use existing handicaps to set up the initial ladder. The idea is to add a little bit of friendly competition to social games. Full details will appear on the noticeboard at the start of the season and we can tell you that there will be an unusual prize for the person who finishes at the top of the ladder at the end of the year. So please join in - it promises to be fun.

Ball Protection!

We would like to remind all members that the policy of returning balls to the vicinity of the clubhouse from lawn two - and now lawn three - is essential if there is no-one waiting to play. Lawn three is a tidy way from the clubhouse so it is even more important that the balls are not left vulnerable. They are expensive items - around £200 a set!

Golf Croquet Coaching - Page's Park

In the last newsletter we asked if any members would like a coaching day at Page's Park for Beginners and Improvers early this season. A healthy number have put their names down for this which will take place on Friday 9th April. Richard Keighley will lead the course, assisted by David Ball, Eve Buckingham and John Cundell. If you are interested there are still a few places remaining so please let John Cundell know and also advise whether you consider yourself a Beginner or an Improver!

Child Protection Policy

At the 2009 AGM, our Chairman agreed to distribute copies of the Club's Child Protection Policy. Accordingly, your copy accompanies this Newsletter. A copy will also be displayed in the Club Room, along with the list of our three volunteers - Margaret Brown/Richard Keighley/Tony Wells - who are CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) checked, specifically for the Club, via Leighton Middle School. Please read and adhere to it. It is for everyone's protection, including yours and the Club.

Club Badges

There are still some Club Badges available. If you want one then get in quick as the supplies are running low. They are 3ins in diameter, cloth embroidered and can be ironed or sewn on to items of clothing. The cost per badge is £3.50. Contact me on 01525 400512 or email john.cundell@btinternet.com.

Visitor/Guest Reminder

As we start a new season the committee would like to remind all members that you may bring along friends, relations and visitors free - on up to three occasions during the season. Also, if you bring a guest, please try and come at a quiet time. Although we try to be welcoming to all, it is not fair to paying members to be sitting out while beginners/guests are being taken over the court. Also, please mark all visitors on the register as 'friend of'

And please don't forget to mark the registers - don't just assume that someone else has done it.

Club Membership

If you haven't yet paid this year's subscription you will find another membership application form with this newsletter in case you may have mislaid the original copy. Please complete this and send with the appropriate remittance 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.





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This Policy was agreed by the General Committee on 27th January 2010 and supersedes that agreed prior to the 2009 AGM.

LLCC and Children

The following policy has been agreed, as a way of clarifying the LLCC position, and will be issued to all existing and new members when they formally join the Club.

- 1) The LLCC's Child Protection Policy will be based on the Croquet Association's model policy at the time. Therefore, the Club's Child Protection Officer is Richard Keighley and, under the 1989 Children's Act, children are defined as *persons of less than 18 years of age*.
- 2) The Club will openly welcome children to try the game without payment or commitment and to join as playing members.
- 3) The Club would like to actively help any organisation which approaches it representing a disadvantaged group, e.g. Bedfordshire MIND, to experience croquet as a recreational event.
- 4) If approached, the Club is willing to show a group with a distinct affiliation (e.g. a local school) how to play the game either, and preferably, at special sessions at Pages Park or by "one-off" arrangements at the school or other location. Subsequent progression of the young people to playing the game will either be by: i) the affiliate driving the issue on their site and with their equipment, or ii) the young person/people joining the Club. If the former, the Club will make efforts to assist via its CRB checked volunteers but this cannot be assumed. In any circumstance, the "group" concerned will be responsible for child protection and should ensure any LLCC volunteer meets any legal requirement regarding vetting or registration.
- 5) When not associated with a "group", children will only be allowed to play, at Page's Park, if one of the Club's volunteers, who has a current CRB registration, is present or the child's parent or the responsible person accompanies them.
- 6) It will be the responsibility of the volunteer to obtain CRB clearance. From November 2010, all new volunteers, who want to work with children must be Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) registered.

27.01.10