



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 - March 2009
Volume 10 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

“10th Anniversary Season Under Way”



Don't they look pleased? And so they should be after such an impressive result at Soham Indoor on 14th March. Tony Stammer's and Tony Wells proudly display the winners' shields. The group above comprises (left to right), Pat Dawson from Sudbury, Peter Ross from Letchworth, Tony Stammers, Tony Cooper from Letchworth, Tony Wells, organiser Chris Howell, current Croquet Association Chairman Patricia Duke-Cox, John Cundell and Richard Keighley.

Welcome to the second newsletter of 2009. Our 10th season at Pages Park promises to be an exciting one for the club. The lawns are looking well as of mid March, and the Council Groundstaff have been working hard since the cold weather relented to remove as much of the moss as possible.

The disappointing news, more later, is that the third lawn will not be ready for the start of the season. However before we get on to the diary, we have the welcome news of our Club making a superb start to the season at Soham.

Indoor at Soham - March 2009

Due to unprecedented demand from clubs throughout the East of England, we were only allocated two teams for Saturday 14th March, so unfortunately the members hoping to play on Sunday had to be disappointed.

The Saturday teams were Tony Wells and Tony Stammers, and John Cundell and Richard Keighley. Other clubs competing were Sudbury, Letchworth, Norwich, Hunstanton and Downham Market. We were obviously fortunate to get two teams entered as we understand from



the organiser Chris Howell, that she had received an excellent response from clubs throughout our region to take part this time.

The start time of 9.00am for Leighton-Linslade-2, Richard and John, meant an early start for Soham. R&J were pleased with their first match as they managed a draw against one of the country's best players, Dick Stover, who was partnered by his wife, representing Sudbury. Unfortunately, that was almost R&J's best performance of the day, as they struggled against Norwich, Letchworth, Leighton-Linslade-1 (the two Tonys - Stammers and Wells), and Hunstanton. However there was a little brightness when they beat Downham Market 7-1 and were the only team to gain the maximum 7 hoops in the restricted 40 minute matches.

Leighton-Linslade-1 on the other hand enjoyed what can only be described as one of the most proficient and overwhelming displays by a LL team for many years. Their first match was against our friends from Letchworth which they won 4-3 after a hard fought struggle. From then onwards the results were Hunstanton 5-2, Downham Market 5-1, Leighton-Linslade-2 4-2, Sudbury 3-2 and Norwich 5-2. Yes, they won 6 out of 6! Extremely well done.

Second place went to Letchworth, only beaten by the two Tonys, and third was Hunstanton. LL2 was sixth.

Playing Sessions

As published in the last newsletter, your Committee agreed that 'official' playing sessions for 2009 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

However as we have renegotiated our Lawn Rent arrangements for 2009, playing sessions can be flexible to work around the weather - either good or bad - e.g., if morning is wet we could regroup pm or even on another day; if good then stay on as required. Also, members will be 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, and the occasional Saturday, when League and Friendly matches are scheduled when no club play will be possible.

All these suggested new playing times will be reviewed after a couple of months, based on experience.

Prospects for the season

Weather permitting, the lawns will be available for play by members from 2.00pm on Saturday 21st March with the Official Opening by the Town Mayor planned for Saturday 4th April, also at 2.00pm. If

you can't make the first weekend please try and come along for the official opening. Also please note that the lawns will NOT be available on Saturday 28th and Sunday 29th March as a Croquet Association Coaches Course will be under way over those two days.

2009 Dates for your Diary

As you can see already it looks like being a busy season. We still await some EACF League and 'Friendly' dates which will follow in due course, so keep an eye on the noticeboards in the Clubroom.

March

- 21 EACF AGM - Bury St. Edmunds
- 21 LAWNS OPEN AT PAGES PARK (Weather permitting)
- 28/29 Croquet Association Coaches Course at Page's Park

April

- 4 Official Opening of the Club season by the Town Mayor
- 7 Coaching Course at Wrest Park. (Contact Richard Keighley on 01296 681235 or by e-mail to: the_keighleys@btopenworld.com.)

May

- 11 B-Level at Watford. For players with a handicap between 3 and 7. Contact Roger Nicholls on 01923 236068 for details.
- 15 Letchworth League (Home)
- 16/17 Club 'Mix 'n Match' Doubles (see below)
- 29 Watford Friendly (Home)

June

- 3 Committee Meeting
- ** 100th Anniversary Pages Park
- 22 Watford League (Home)

July

- 4 Garden Party at Waterways (Charity Event)
- 5 NT Golf Doubles at the Norwich Croquet Club (Entries by 30th April)
- 11 Club Handicap Singles
- 19 Club Fun Day
- 26 Level Singles Tournament at Ipswich (Entries by 30th June)
- 29 Committee Meeting

August

- 8/9 Hunstanton Golf Croquet Tournament (see below)
- 10 Watford Friendly (Away)
- 15 Club Garden Party

September

- 13 NT Short Croquet - Ickworth. Teams of 2. Details from Jonathan Toye on 01366 382280 (jonathantoye@hotmail.com)
- 13 NT Golf Singles at Ickworth (Entries by 30th April)
- 16 Committee Meeting
- 26/27 Club Doubles

October

- 3/4 Club Singles

November

- 13 AGM & Party

EACF Golf Croquet League

This season will be as 2008 in regards to the teams taking part in our area - Letchworth, Northampton, Stony Stratford, Watford, Wrest Park - and of course Leighton-Linslade. The playing format will also be as per 2008. Members who wish to be considered for selection will be invited to enroll at the beginning of the season.

Some dates are already in the calendar. Keep an eye on the noticeboard calendar for future dates.

Friendlies

This season we will be playing friendlies with Stony Stratford, Watford and Letchworth. Some dates are already in the calendar. As above, once again keep an eye on the noticeboard calendar for future dates.

Inter-Club Championship

We have again entered this competition for 2009 which is for emerging competitive players to gain their first taste of the higher levels of the sport. The Championship is a knockout competition and each match will consist of four players from each club playing singles and doubles matches of three and seven legs respectively. The winning team is the one that wins more of the seven legs. The first round will be against a relatively local club, and if we were to get through that, then we could be playing future rounds anywhere in the country. More news in the Clubroom when available.

Club 'Mix 'n Match' Doubles

This is a new Club event which has been requested by a number of members. It will follow a similar format to the existing Club Doubles at the end of the season - however partners will be chosen by a draw so you won't have a clue who you are playing with until the morning of the event! We anticipate a healthy entry, hence the two day format. At stake is a fine trophy which has been donated by George Lawson.

Weekend away with Hunstanton

As reported in the previous newsletter Tony Wells has been making enquiries about a friendly over a couple of days with Hunstanton. As this is some distance, Tony had asked for some feedback from members who might be interested in a 'play and stay' event. Each team member would take wife, husband or partner and could enjoy a short break, taking a day to drive there, stay overnight, play the friendly game, return home then or perhaps stay over and return on a later date. There has been some interest from club members for this.

Events have moved on and we can now report that there is to be tournament at Hunstanton over Saturday/Sunday 8th and 9th August. This will not be a straight friendly between us and Hunstanton, but is open to all clubs. On Saturday there will be Singles in two sections; level play for those of handicap range 3 and below; plus level play handicap range 4 and above. Sunday will be a Pro-am doubles with partners allocated as per Handicap. Entry fee will be £7.50 per player per day. If you are interested in taking part an entry form can be obtained from John Christmas on 01328 710924 or j@jchristmas.fsnet.co.uk - or your editor can provide you with an entry form.

10th/100th Anniversary Celebrations

2009 is also the anniversary of the gift of Pages Park to the town. We understand there are likely to be celebrations some time in June, therefore if possible we could combine this with our 10th Anniversary event.

Coaches Training Course - March 2009

As part of our 10th Anniversary celebrations the Club has invited the Croquet Association to run a training course for golf croquet coaches on Saturday and Sunday, 28/29th March 2009. This is to train people to become Golf Croquet Coaches.

The course can cater for a maximum of 16 people. Currently there are attendees from Leighton-Linslade, Watford and Stony Stratford clubs. As of 15th March there are three places left if any club member would like to take advantage - the cost is £16.00. If you are interested ring Len Buckingham NOW on 01525 221079.

Also we require a number of club members to come along between 10.00 and 12.00 noon on Sunday 29th to act as 'guinea pigs' for those being trained to experiment with! Again contact Len Buckingham to confirm if you can help.

Please note that the lawns will not be available for normal play on these two days.

Golf Croquet Coaching Day at Wrest Park

On Tuesday 7th April, Richard Keighley is organising a coaching day at Wrest Park which is aimed at Beginners or near Beginners. Numbers will be limited to 16 players and the group will be split up into fours with a qualified coach to each four. The course will last from 10am to 4pm with breaks for refreshments and it is an ideal opportunity for those new to the game to learn the rudiments before the season starts. The cost is £16 and participants will need to bring a packed lunch.

If you are interested, please contact Richard either on 01296 681235 or email: the_keighleys@btopenworld.com by 27th March at the latest.

(PS If you are unable to attend, but would appreciate some early season coaching, please also contact Richard as he proposes to organise some coaching sessions for our members at Pages Park during April).

Croquet for disabled people - a new event

As we all know, croquet is a wonderfully inclusive sport. All sorts of people, old and young, fighting fit or with the occasional faculty missing, play it to a very high standard and what's more have a whale of a time.

Following a very successful day with a local Stroke Support group, two Croquet Association members, Paul Strover and Jonathan Toye, have come up with the idea of a competition purely for disabled people.

This will be run on similar lines to the All England Handicap, with players competing against one another at their local club and the winners going on to a final. They will be playing Golf Croquet. The competitive part will be preceded by coaching sessions over a month or so, to prepare players thoroughly and also to check their

commitment.

This will initially be a regional event although the organisers hope to roll it out on a national basis in the future with the possibility of approaching the Paralympic Committee. For further details please contact either: Jonathan Toye - 01366 382280 (jonathantoye@hotmail.com) or Paul Strover - 01787 374006 (paul-strover@btconnect.com).

Holiday in Corfu

Following two very successful Association events in 2007 and 2008, the Croquet Club of Corfu invites entries for the first Golf Croquet tournament in Greece from 21st to 30th September 2009. Events include Singles and Doubles, Level and Handicap play. Croquet available for up to six days plus two days reserved for excursions. Price is 675 Euros, which includes nine nights at a 4-star hotel, entry fees, Gala dinner and a one-day excursion. (Book your own flights from about £150 return.) For further information see www.corfucroquet.com or contact Michael Hague on 01483 776190 or email mj.hague@virgin.net.

Club Dinner

On 13th February, a substantial contingent of club members and partners and friends turned up at Tilsforth Golf Club for the annual dinner - one week later than planned due to the snowy conditions. It was a very enjoyable evening and the food and service were excellent and good value.

Our Chairman, Tom Miller, rounded off the evening by thanking, on behalf of all present, David & Jean Ball for organising such a successful event. In commenting on the year past, he said it had been a very good year for 'leisure and pleasure' at the Club. He went on to congratulate Margaret Brown on her winning the Leighton & Linslade Female Sports Award and thanked her and George Lawson for their sterling service, over a number of years, as our representatives on the local Sports Council. George was also thanked for donating the cup for the new Club Doubles competition.

Sports Council Representatives

After several years of excellent service representing our Club and, on occasions chairing the LLD Sports Council, both Margaret Brown and George Lawson have decided to stand down. We are pleased to advise members that the two worthy replacements will be Margaret Lawson and Tony Wells.

Third Lawn

Sadly we have to report that the third lawn will not be ready for the start of the season - the weather has of course not helped. Although the levels are pretty good, a considerable amount of work has yet to be done to make the surface playable. The committee is investigating ways of progressing the situation as an urgent priority.

Attendance Register

As we have more playing hours available this season the attendance register format will be changing. This year it will be weekly and all you have to do is tick the appropriate box for the day you attend - whether it be morning or afternoon.



The six new sets of International balls which will be used for League, Friendly and Club Championship competitions - our grateful thanks are due to the Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation which gave us a grant of £1000 towards the cost.

Welcome Grants

In our last newsletter, we mentioned that we have been granted £1000 from the Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation which will allow us to upgrade our playing equipment to national standards. This, with other measures we intend to put in place this season, will go a long way towards us reaching the situation where we can host national competitions. We again thank the Foundation for their very generous grant, and can now report that the six sets of International standard balls have arrived after their long journey from Australia.

The accompanying photograph shows the balls in immaculate pristine condition ready for the new season. The balls are stored in the brown tubes under the table and are only to be used for Friendly, League and Club Championship matches. Please continue to use the balls in the equipment cupboard for social play.

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.



Our final photograph shows the two Tonys waiting to see what Sudbury's Dick Strover (Handicap 0) intends to do for his next shot. Dick refereed the 2004 World Championships and has taken part in many top level events.

