



LEIGHTON-LINSLADE CROQUET CLUB

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“CROQUET WIDENS ITS APPEAL!”



Left: Town Mayor Mark Freeman strikes the first shot of the season on our new third lawn back on 1st April. Above: Mark stayed most of the afternoon and talked with most members. Here, John Cundell, Edna Hickman and Len Buckingham are obviously discussing something important, whilst below, the bright start to the afternoon descended into heavy rain and a mad dash and crush into our clubroom - and to all intents and purpose, didn't seem to stop until early June! All images by John Fogg.

Welcome to the third newsletter of 2006 under the joint Editorship of Richard Keighley and John Cundell.

2006 Diary

July

- 4 League Match v Wrest Park (A)
- 8 National Trust Doubles at Ickworth
- 8/9 Coaches Qualification Course at High Wycombe
- 14 Friendly v Stony Stratford (H)
- 16 Club Fun Day
- 22 Club Handicap Singles
- 30 Wrest Park Doubles

August

- 4 League Match v Letchworth (H)
- 12 Grass Roots Regional Final at Northampton
- 15 Friendly v Stony Stratford (A)

September

- 3 National Trust Singles at Ickworth
- 9 Grass Roots Final at Northampton
- 10 Centre Stage Final at Northampton
- 23 EACF League Semi Final at Newport
- 24 EACF League Final at Newport
- 30 Club Doubles

October

- 1 Club Singles

November

- 10 AGM & Party

Croquet widens its appeal

John Prescott must be congratulated for raising the profile of our game and making it such a talking point. Sales of croquet sets have tripled and the number of visits to the Croquet Association website has increased significantly (e.g., 20,000 on 30th May).

Passers by have stopped to watch our games in Pages Park and visitors to Wrest Park bombarded the Secretary with questions whilst he was managing a Coaching Course



there recently. Four of our members were receiving coaching to add to the four who braved heavy rain to be coached at Watford in May. The Secretary has embarked on a Coaches Qualification Course which continues at High Wycombe on 8th & 9th July and he hopes to qualify as a Golf Coach before the end of the season.

On 20th & 23rd June, Club members set up two small lawns in the grounds of Leighton Middle School. In the

Richard Keighley leading a group of youngsters at Leighton Middle School at the end of June. See 'Croquet widens its appeal'.





This year's Come and Try Day on 30th April was our most successful for years - the notices around the town and announcements at Page's Park Station as the trains returned from Stonehenge Works, brought us a continual flood of 'tryers' for most of the afternoon - and at one stage there was quite a queue. It was excellent to see a large number of younger people having a go. And even better was the fact that the day resulted in a number of new members.



space of each 50 minute lunchtime session, over 40 youngsters in the 9-13 age group were given the chance to play and they loved it! Many who enrolled for the first session were at the front of the queue for the second one and your Committee will now consider how this level of interest can be sustained.

Match Reports

Our first League match against Watford was settled by a shoot-out at the peg after the game score was tied at 9-9. Sally Clay hit the peg but she was not emulated by any of her team-mates and Watford won 2-1.

Watford also won a friendly fixture at Cassiobury Park by 11 games to 5 but home advantage produced a handsome win by 13 games to 3 in the return.

A Friendly against Winslow was won 8-0. Members say how much they enjoy these matches even if the score-line has a one-sided appearance as they are invariably played in a fine spirit and become entertaining social occasions.

We are now starting to liaise with our opponents before matches in an effort to field teams of roughly the same playing experience and the success or otherwise of this initiative will become apparent when our team goes to Winslow on 30th June as this newsletter goes to press.

May we thank all those members who have helped in the



staging of home matches by setting up, scoring and making and serving refreshments. This is much appreciated by the players on both sides.

Garden Parties!

As well as the club's Garden Party on the 19th August, there is another party that is open to club members being organised by Irene Davis.

First of all the club's event will be on Saturday 19th August, starting at 3.00pm. However please note that the venue has changed from previous years - following a very kind offer, this time it will be at Irene and Peter Davis' home at Waterways on the A5 just north of Hockliffe. Details concerning the party are on Page 4. A booking slip is enclosed.

Irene and Peter's separate party is on 22nd July at the same venue. This will be from 2.00pm until 5.00pm and there will be games, a quiz and croquet. The entry charge is £3.00 - contact Irene for more details on 01525 210260. All proceeds are in aid of the Keech Cottage Childrens' Hospice.

News of our members

It has of course been a very sad year so far with the sad loss of Peter Edwards a few weeks back.



The club's round of the Grass Roots competition was held on 10th June. Those taking part are pictured at left with the top two kneeling, Sheila Beal at right and Joan Ferris at left, and third placed Norma Morris at right. The other players were Maureen Leach, Tony Stammers, Edna Hickman, Ann Smith and Bryan Ferris. A number of the players will hopefully go on to the Regional Final at Northampton in August. Below, the top four (4th was Maureen Leach) playing together. Above, the new gazebo has come in very handy this year, and we must thank George Lawson, pictured, and John Cundell (taking the photograph) for organising the day's competition.



We also have to report that Margaret Brown's husband Tony is currently in hospital. We are sure that all members will join in expressing their best wishes to Tony for a return to good health. Please see a message from Margaret over the page.

Diana Phelps attempted some football in her garden on the morning of the Grass Roots Club event at which she was intending to help John C and George L with the organisation. After a nasty fall, what Diana thought initially was a bad sprain turned out to be three broken

metatarsal bones! Bit drastic to get out of helping we thought! We hope the bones mend quickly!

Len Buckingham is now a force to be reckoned with following the successful removal of a cataract on his second eye. Now he can see the hoops, his Handicap is expected to decrease rapidly.

Irene Stevens has not been able to make many visits to Pages this season due to poor health, so we send her our good wishes, and hope to see her on the lawns again soon.

Also our new Welfare Officer, Judith Cundell - see later -



PETER THROSSELL EDWARDS 1922-2006

We were all very sad to learn of the sudden illness and passing away of Peter in hospital on 13th June. Although Peter was a fairly new member to our club, most soon became aware of his lovely, warm, friendly, personality which together with his cheerfulness and sportsmanship, we shall all miss very much. We searched through our picture files and felt that these photographs will bring back fond memories of Peter. Tuesday Handicap play afternoons, which Peter enjoyed very much, will never be the same again.





The club's round of the Centre Stage competition, for players with a handicap of 5 or less, was held on 17th June. Those taking part are seen at top left; Margaret Lawson, Eve Buckingham, George Lawson, Len Buckingham, Tony Wells, Linda Bawden, Irene Davis and John Cundell, with Matthew Houseden and Richard Keighley kneeling; and at right we see a number of differing shot styles by some of the competitors - George Lawson and Len Buckingham, Margaret Lawson and Richard Keighley, Eve Buckingham and Irene Davis; and left, our youngest player, Matthew Houseden, and our more senior, Irene Davis, met in one of the semi-finals, which Matthew won by 7 hoops to 4. The second semi-final was between Eve and Richard which Richard won by 7 hoops to 5. It was a long and excellent day of croquet, with an eventual exciting final between Richard Keighley and Matthew Houseden, with Matthew winning by 7 hoops to 4. Best of luck to those that go forward to the Centre Stage Final later in the year.



is making slow progress following the recent Carpal Tunnel Syndrome operation on her right hand. There is no truth in the rumour that the slow progress is due to John's prowess at cooking and housework!

From the Chair

Margaret Brown has asked us to include the following message.

'I would like to thank all who have so kindly enquired after Tony. I am now able to tell him about your greetings and he smiles his appreciation. He is feeling brighter every day but there are difficult times ahead.'

'Also, the Club is blessed by many hard-working members and, as Chairman, I would like to extend very sincere thanks on everyone's behalf to those who carry out all those day-to-day tasks to keep the sessions running; also those like Richard, Len and Eve, John C, John F, George, etc., who have stepped in to fill gaps which I have had to leave. Especial thanks to those involved in the

exciting new development of working with the school-children at Leighton Middle School - Richard, Tony S, Matt and Matt's friend, James Saddler. I feel sure this venture will lead to great things. Anyone who has tried coaching youngsters will know how demanding and tiring it can be, but the future of the Club (and the sport) depends on the younger element in the long run.'

Club Badges

Club Badges are always available. 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. If you want one or more, just contact John Cundell on 756971.

Welfare Officer

Members are asked to note that Judith Cundell has taken over the post of Welfare Officer from Diana Phelps, so if you are aware of any member who may benefit from a card and some kind thoughts, please contact Judith on 756971.

Toffs abound!

The Prescott furore brought out the usual clichés about croquet being a summer lawn game favoured by toffs . The Secretary regrets to report that he found evidence of this state of affairs when he took part in a golf croquet tournament at Cheltenham recently.

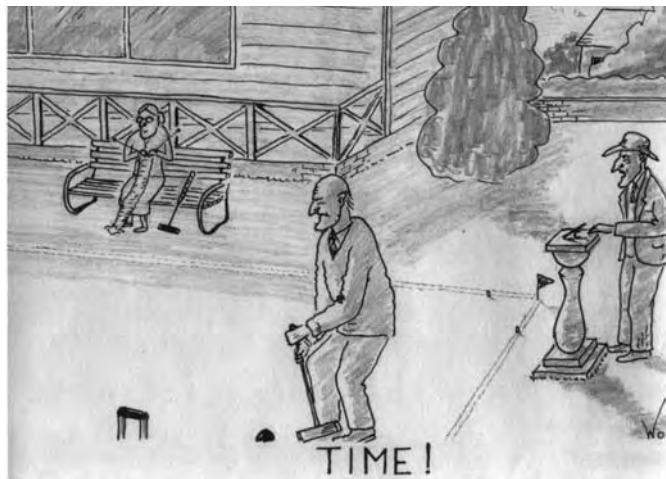
Cheltenham is one of England's premier clubs. Its grounds are about the same size as the whole of Pages Park. There are 11 laser-levelled lawns with a scattering of summer-houses dotted around the tree-lined boundaries. The Club has over 200 members who pay an annual sub of £197 if they live within 15 miles but this plummets to a measly £91 if they are more than 25 miles away.

Some of the Golf Croquet members were taking part in the tournament. They explained that they could not play on certain lawns as these were reserved for Association croquet only. Worse, their playing times were restricted. What was even more surprising was that the drive for new members was aimed at Association players or potential players only.

It was a truly fabulous place to play but you were left wondering when the Club would step into the real world.

Our subs!

Forget what was said in the previous paragraphs as Martin Field has raised two points for discussion about the subs payable to belong to our Club. Decisions about subs



"The correct way to make opponents play faster, is of course to play slower yourself."

are matters for the full membership at the AGM but what do you think about Martin's proposals:-

"The Junior membership fee should apply to anyone engaged in full time education up to the age of, say, 25 years. A substantially reduced membership fee should be charged for adults in full-time employment who would 'typically' be unable to play on weekdays, say £30.

I feel that both these measures would help attract/retain younger people and would be much more equitable for them."



GARDEN PARTY



We will be holding a Garden Party for members plus guest(s) at Waterways, Watling Street, Hockliffe on Saturday 19th August from 3.00pm - only £5.00 per person

FOOD, TEA, COFFEE, SOFT DRINKS PROVIDED

but please bring your own alcoholic drink, glass, plate and cutlery!

Please send the Booking Slip enclosed together with your cheque made out to 'Leighton-Linslade Croquet Club' to:

Len Buckingham,
2 St. Mary's Glebe,
Edlesborough,
Nr Dunstable, Beds.
LU6 2RB

by 5th August at the latest!