

# LEIGHTON-LINSLADE CROQUET CLUB

Founded 2000

Secretary:  
Richard Keighley  
The Old Vicarage  
Leighton Road  
Wingrave  
HP22 4PA  
Tel: 01296 681235  
Email: the\_keighleys@btopenworld.com

Membership Secretary:  
Margaret Brown  
40 Miles Avenue  
Leighton Buzzard  
LU7 3LG  
Tel: 01525 373860  
Email: tonybrownhome@freeuk.com

## NEWSLETTER - JANUARY 2004 Volume 5 Issue 1

### A HOOPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL!

**W**elcome to the first Newsletter under the Editorship of Richard Keighley - compilation / distribution by John Cundell. First off is an update on the new Officers and Committee for 2004.

#### Officers

Chairman	George Lawson
Secretary*	Richard Keighley
Treasurer	Len Buckingham
Membership Secretary*	Margaret Brown

\*Subject to ratification by AGM/Committee.

#### Committee Members

Sally Clay  
John Cundell  
Erica Fogg  
Edna Hickman  
Val Jeffers  
Diana Phelps

#### Committee Meeting

Committee Members please note that the first meeting of the year is to take place by kind invitation of the Chairman at 7 Taylor's Ride, on Thursday 19th February at 7.15pm for 7.30pm.

#### Diary Dates

14th March EACF AGM  
11th July NT-Anglesey Abbey Golf Doubles  
5th Sept NT-Ickworth Golf Singles

#### Annual General Meeting

The best attended AGM in the Club's short history was agreeably brief but included the presentation by Joan Slow of the cups she had kindly donated to the winners of the Club's Knockout Competitions. They were Audrey Bunn and Val Jeffers (Doubles) and John Cundell (Singles).

It was resolved that members entering outside Competitions on behalf of the Club would normally be expected to pay their own entry fees. The handicap system was to be used in any play offs for places.

In the absence of any nomination, no new Secretary was appointed to replace Margaret Brown who was retiring. However, discussions afterwards led to Richard Keighley offering his services with kind offers of support from others. Notably, Margaret is willing to continue as Membership Secretary.

A jolly party followed with an abundance of food and drink, hilarious games and a raffle prize for almost everyone! Thanks to all who made this possible!

Special thanks also to Erica and John Fogg for the excellent Archive display.

#### Croquet hits back in summer-sport row

This item appeared on the BBC Sport Cricket pages on their website in September - written by Tom Fordyce.

Croquet has struck back in what threatens to become a vicious war of words with cricket. Former ECB chairman Lord MacLaurin warned that, without drastic action, cricket could become like croquet - "a summer sport that was". Croquet is not the sort of sport to take a slur like that lying down.

"Not to put too fine a point on it, [MacLaurin] shows a total ignorance of the croquet scene," Nigel Graves, secretary of the Croquet Association, told this website. "There is a stereotyped view of the sport. People are unaware of quite how active the croquet world is. Croquet, unlike cricket, is content with the state it finds itself in as the 21st century unfolds. Playing numbers have stayed constant for the last 30 years, meaning there is no need for a Twenty20-style re-branding of the sport as a high-octane game for kids in search of mallet kicks."

In fact, Graves takes umbrage at the mere suggestion that croquet might involve any form of ungentlemanly tactics. To people who understand croquet, it can be fascinating to watch, stated Nigel Graves. "The image of belting everything away into the shrubbery is nonsense, nothing to do with the game at all," he says.

England also enjoys the sort of dominance of the international croquet scene that its cricket team can only dream of. The current world champion is an Englishman, 40% of the world's top 100 players are British and the GB team went into a Test series against Australia, New Zealand and the USA in November as clear favourites.

Sure, the average age of a player is 60. But the Test team is led by Jersey's 20-something tyro Matt Burrows, and current world champion Robert Fulford is in his 30s.

There are 180 tournaments around Britain per year, with about 1,200 of the 4,000 players taking part regularly in competitions.



*A brilliant piece of strategy, arranging to play the doubles final in January. They won't turn up and we claim the match...*

**PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW!**

### **Golf Croquet All England Handicap Area Final**

Eight players assembled at Solihull Croquet Club early on 16th August to try to win through to the National Final at Colchester at the end of September. Our club was represented by Diana Phelps and Richard Keighley.

The conditions were perfect for croquet. The lawns were flat and mown closely. It was bright and sunny with a slight breeze. The players were split up into two groups of four. Each player had to play the best of three 13 point games against the others in the group, with a time limit of two hours for the three games. Handicaps varied from 0 to 6, but it was clear that most players had vast experience of tournament croquet. Two players had been allocated a handicap of 6 by their clubs without having submitted to the setting process which our club has adopted. Diana and Richard each have a handicap of 3 and were at a disadvantage when playing them.

Diana's first opponent was the top seed with the handicap of 0. She made a flying start and led 5-1 in the first game but was eventually pegged back and lost narrowly 6-7. The second game was not as close

but Diana was congratulated by the organiser for her accurate striking. In her second match, the high handicapper prevailed in straight games and the youngest competitor was too strong for her in her third match.

Richard's first opponent was a former Wales Open champion with a handicap of 1. The first game took 70 minutes which Richard lost 5-7. He won the next 7-2 and the third was still in progress when time was called. He was deemed to have lost by a single hoop. His next opponent won the first game 7-4. Richard drew level by winning the next game by the same score but was pipped 5-6 in the decider. After lunch his opponent beat him in straight games 7-4, 7-6.

At the end of the day when players had played for almost six hours with short breaks, it was clear that both Diana and Richard had been eliminated. In her discretion, the organiser adjusted Diana's handicap to 4 but left Richard's (just!) intact. Both felt it had been valuable experience and made them think that it would be a good idea to play more handicap matches on club days.

---

## **PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW!**

### **FEE UNCHANGED £45**

#### **Practice makes Perfect! - Acting Membership Secretary Margaret Brown makes the case**

Did you know that 21 members played over 20 sessions of croquet last season?

Top attender John Cundell played on 71 occasions and went on to win the Singles!

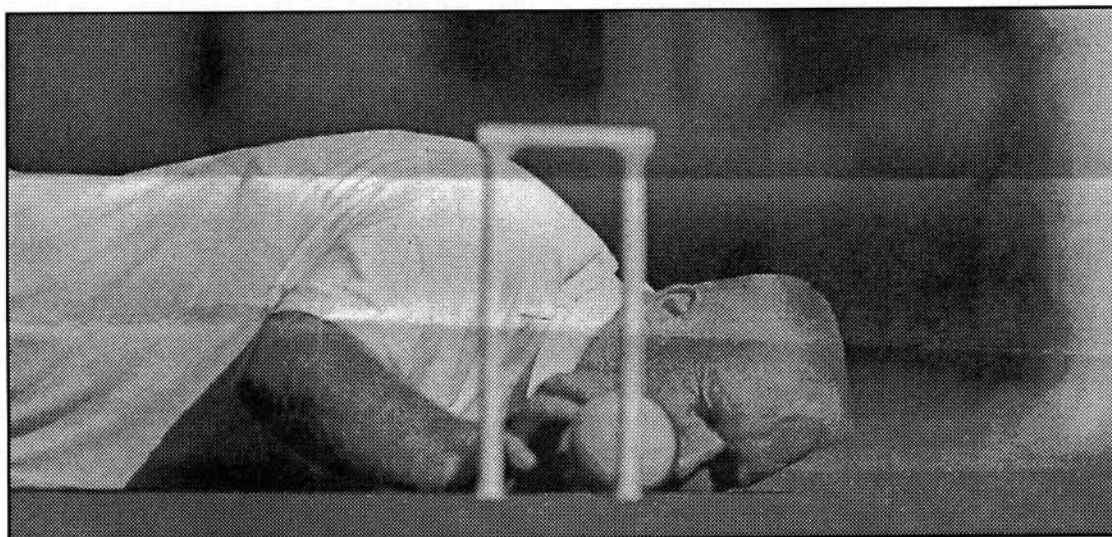
It cost him less than 64p per session- a bargain or what!

#### **Membership Renewal 2004**

It would be very helpful if all you keen members

would send or give me your cheques as soon as possible ready for next season - it spreads out the work. A renewal form is enclosed with this newsletter.

If you know of anyone who might like to join, or rejoin, please let me have their details and I'll contact them promptly with an invitation they cannot refuse! Where else could you get up to nine hours of recreation with such lovely company and coffee/tea for £1.75 per week?



---

"If I blow hard enough....? Lawn ranger:instructor Jerry Stark, the captain of the American team, gets a down to earth view on the Meadowood croquet lawn in California. OK, Pages Park is not California, but neither are our fees