

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE CROQUET CLUB

Founded 2000

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NEWSLETTER - JULY 2004 Volume 5 Issue 4

“What a busy season - and we are only yet half-way!”



Welcome to the July Newsletter under the Editorship of Richard Keighley and John Cundell.

2004 diary

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|------------|-------------------------------------|
| July 25 | Wrest Park Doubles |
| August 5 | Friendly v Winslow(A) |
| August 7/8 | Croquet Marathon |
| August 8 | Grass Roots Regional – Northampton |
| August 13 | Garden Party – the Phelps residence |
| August 14 | All England Handicap/Area Final |
| Sept 5 | NT Singles-Ickworth |
| Sept 12 | Grass Roots Final –Solihull |
| Sept 18 | Club Singles |
| Sept 19 | Club Doubles |
| Nov 18 | AGM |

East Anglian Golf Croquet League -South Section

In this trial year, our Club has had two trips to the seaside! On the 20th May a team comprising John Cundell, Val Jeffers, Richard Keighley and Diana Phelps journeyed to Southend to play at Southchurch Park. The lawns were a little bumpy and it was difficult to play certain shots, however we persevered and enjoyed a good win.

The second fixture was against Letchworth at home on 11th June. Again we played 16 singles and two doubles games. In the Singles Len and Eve Buckingham won two and three games respectively, Sally Clay won three and Judith Cundell won two.

At this stage we were ten games to Letchworth's six, and with two doubles to play, could not be caught. Even so, Letchworth played two spirited Doubles and won both - not enough of course, and we ended up as overall winners at ten to eight games.

The final match was at Burnham on Crouch on 6th July, however on this occasion we spoil our previous clean sheet as Sally Clay, John Cundell, Diana Phelps and Valerie Jeffers were beaten by 11 games to 7.

The overall results are very encouraging in the first year, and we may yet make it through to the Final when the results are finally compiled by the organisers.

Wrest Park Singles

Eighteen participants enjoyed over five hours of play each at the Wrest Park Golf Croquet Singles match on 27th June. Eight of our members took part and we came away with some good results. After three morning rounds to seed players into three groups of six per group and a busy afternoon's play, some games in very wet conditions, the overall results were: John Cundell 1st, Eve Buckingham 4th, Len Buckingham 8th, Diana Phelps 9th, John Fogg 10th, Yvonne Banks 13th, Erica Fogg 14th, and Edna Hickman 17th - our Group winners being JC (Group 1) and YB (Group C).

A number of our players are now looking forward to the Doubles at Wrest Park on 25th July.



Pics on this page, all by John Fogg, are of the Wrest Park Singles Competition.

Top left is the LL team (minus John Fogg who was taking the photo!)

Top right, all the players (again minus John) plus hatted in the background, Wrest Park member John Bevington who single-handed, organised the whole day. Thanks, John.

Left, tea was taken in the sunshine after we had all dried out.

Right, synchronised zipping for rain





More pics from John Fogg - this time the Friendly with Dunstable at Pages Park.

Above, Dunstable U3A and our team.

In action are Peter Stevens, Judith and John Cundell - could be captioned; 'Expectation', 'Determination', 'Frustration' - and at right, 'Consideration?'



Friendly - Dunstable U3A

Our second Friendly fixture took place on 3rd July when we were at home to Dunstable U3A. The pairs of Diana Phelps / John Fogg, Judith and John Cundell, Erica Fogg / Yvonne Banks, Peter Stevens / Sally Clay won convincingly by 13 games to three. A good tea was laid on by LL ladies, ably organised by Val Jeffers.

National Trust Tournament - 10th July

The two lawns in front of the beautiful Anglesey Abbey looked pristine but the grass was not only wet but springy, long and had loose cuttings on it. The result was that only the strongest chaps were able to accomplish long shots and the balls tended to 'bunch' around the hoops. The sun shone for most of the day though one unfortunate group of eight played through a downpour. All in all it was a most enjoyable(if long) day with enough time between matches to have glimpses of the splendid gardens and to have a cuppa in the N.T. tea-room. Twelve Eastern Region clubs were represented; each of our pairs, Diana Phelps and Val Jeffers, Sally Clay and Margaret Brown, played three of them, winning two and losing one game each. By no means a bad result.

The semi-finals, Downham Mkt. v Chelmsford and Bury St. Edmunds v Southchurch were being played when our group left for home at about 5.15pm. It is hoped that members who have not played there before will sign up next year and have the pleasure and privilege of enjoying this experience.

Friendly - Stony Stratford

Previous Friendlies with Stony Stratford have been very close - with us usually winning - however they got their own back with a vengeance on 13th July, when we visited them and lost 13 games to 3. Pairs playing were Val Jeffers and John Cundell, Margaret Brown and Edna Hickman, Diana Phelps and Judith Cundell, and Catriona Spencer and Erica Fogg. A good lunch was laid on by the Stony

Stratford ladies and we were made very welcome. We look forward to the return match at Pages Park on Wednesday 28th July when battle will resume.

Grass Roots

This is a national competition for beginners and high handicap players. The first round is played as a club event and this took place at Pages Park on Saturday 17th July. We were blessed with good weather in this rather indifferent Summer, and with play starting at 10.00am, the event was run at a brisk pace by Umpire / Referee George Lawson with assistance from Judith Cundell, so that the Saturday normal afternoon play session was not disrupted. We thank them both for their help. The eight players enjoyed seven rounds of progressive doubles, from which the top four went into semi-finals and a final. The winning two players will now go forward to Northampton for the Regional round against six other clubs on August 8th.

The results were: 1st Richard Keighley; 2nd John Cundell; 3rd Una Pengelly; 4th Len Buckingham; 5th Sally Clay; 6th Diana Phelps; 7th Eve Buckingham; and 8th Valerie Jeffers.

All who took part agreed that this is a good and exciting competition, and it would be excellent if more members could be encouraged to take part next season. OK, there is an entry fee of £40 payable (at the moment by those taking part) - but at least 16 can participate in this round which means the cost per person would only be £2.50! Members' views would be appreciated to any committee member.

Is the grass greener...?

One of the benefits of taking part in tournaments and matches away from Pages Park is the opportunity to compare the lawns and facilities of other clubs with our own. Wrest Park apart, evidence is mounting that we are very fortunate in what we have at our disposal.

For instance, take Southchurch Park at Southend where we played our first league match in May. The

Park is within a stone's throw of the beach and is the home of a croquet club formed three years ago with a membership of 35, all over the age of 55. The Club has two full size lawns which it hires from the local Council for £640 (but soon rising to £800) for the season for possible use every day of the week.

Members pay a sub of £40 and have exclusive use of a pavilion which lacks an electric point. Luckily, there is a well-run and reasonably priced café just a few yards away. They have problems with vandals and often find football being played on their lawns. On one occasion, a properly organised six a side match was taking place there!

All this may sound familiar, but the significant difference was in the quality of the upkeep of the lawns. The grass was very long and the playing surface distinctly uneven. We are very lucky to have such a competent and cooperative groundsman at Pages Park and such a supportive local Council.

All England Handicap

Our Club has entered this competition for a second time. It must send one representative (identity as yet unknown) to Newport in Essex for the Area Final on 14th August.

It's almost Garden Party time again

Diana Phelps has graciously agreed to host this event again this year at her home at 135 Hockliffe Road on Friday 13th August. Let's face it – it cannot possibly rain on that day of all days! Thanks also in anticipation to Diana's husband Jim, our genial co-host.

The separate invitation form with this newsletter needs to be completed and sent to our Treasurer, Len Buckingham. We enjoyed almost a full attendance by members last year - despite the 'only' rainy day of the Summer. Memories!

A welcome

Margaret Brown, our Membership Secretary, asks us to extend a warm welcome to five new members; Catriona Spencer, Ann and Vernon Smith, Anne and Geoff Tegardine. This brings our happy band up to the mid thirties.

Noah's Flood

Margaret also writes to say that following a mini-Noah's Flood in the Clubroom, Len and John C. have effected a permanent plumbing job on the connections to the urn. Even the Council were impressed. Many thanks from us all.

CA Golf Croquet Coaching Day - by John Fogg

You may have noticed on the front of the last newsletter a short paragraph about a Golf Croquet Coaching Day aimed at players with large handicaps? Well, Erica took me along as apparently that sums up our relationship. She plays – I'm the handicap.

It was with some trepidation we sent off our £8 each and booked places at the event being held near Didcot at the Blewbury Club. The bookings were confirmed and it was suggested that, if we did not already have a copy, then it would be worth looking at "A Guide to Golf Croquet" the Croquet

Association's (CA) basic introduction to the sport. It was some time before the penny dropped that the organiser of the day was Jennet Blake and one of the Coaches was Gerald Mitchell, co-authors of the publication. The publication itself is a neat gem of a booklet with some very straightforward but very valuable advice and information.

If you think the wind can sweep across Pages Park some Sundays then you should try the blast that comes across the Berkshire Downs to the Blewbury Club's immaculate little ground with its twin courts and neat little Club House built with the aid of a Sports Lottery grant. Obviously the money ran out because one of the features of the day was being escorted on a lengthy trek to the nearest loos in a Cricket Pavillion including an expedition through a churchyard. "Please Miss can we go to the toilet?" was an oft repeated cry. It was the only part of the day which was like being back at school.

Eighteen players came, mostly from the local Thames Valley and Berkshire area. Gloucestershire and Bedfordshire were the long-distance pilgrims. It was an activity packed day with two coaches, two assistant coaches and Jennet supervising the participants. A start was made with some basic analysis of how we held the mallets and addressed the balls when running hoops from various angles. Tutorial sessions and demonstrations were followed by closely supervised tutorials.

The bulk of the afternoon was spent actually playing doubles with the coaching team monitoring the games and stopping play to discuss possible tactics and interpretation of the (current) rules. We were told that revised rules are expected to emerge later this year. This all took place despite the rain which was by now being assisted in its travel by both gravity and the wind off the downs.

Apparently this was actually the first ever Golf Croquet Coaching Day organised under the auspices of the CA and as far as the participants were concerned, it was a valuable and useful experience. If you see the opportunity advertised again, then the day does come highly recommended.

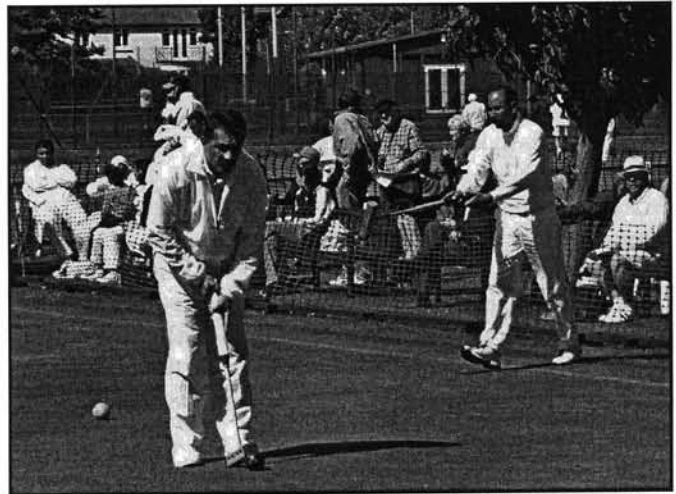
Perhaps our distinguished Committee might even consider organising such a training session next year? Certainly the Coaches we spoke to expressed a willingness to travel to Leighton-Linslade and help if necessary.

Get well soon

We understand that Les Jones has not been too well recently, so to him and to any other members not in the best of health, we wish them a speedy recovery and return to the therapy of playing Croquet.

Handicaps!!

Members may have noticed the racks that have recently appeared on the rear wall of our club-room at the Pavilion, kindly provided by Peter Stevens, to house members' Handicap cards. If you have a card from previous years when we initially set Handicaps, you can now leave this in the club-room in the racks rather than remembering to carry it around with you.



We know that many members are a little hesitant about making use of the Handicap System. This is a great shame as by using the system, games between members of differing ability would be much closer. Handicaps can be used in both Singles and Doubles play to level the playing field, so to speak. Your Handicap changes as you get better or worse from that initially set, as after each game your card is adjusted according to win, lose or draw.

Initially it seems rather complicated, but those members who have been forced to use their Handicaps at some matches with other clubs have quickly picked up the basics, which are not too daunting.

If you want some help please ask either John C, Len B, or Richard K.

Also, if you have not had your initial Handicap set please ask John C. It only takes a few minutes and can be fitted in at any session. If you have already been 'Handicapped', and have mislaid your card, new cards are available at the club-room, and we have a list of the original settings. Again, please ask John C. or Richard K. at the club-room to provide you with a new card.

Treasurer needs help! - from Len B.

I am finding it difficult to keep a check on who has paid what for various competitions. This is due in the main to being given monies at odd times and venues when it is not convenient to make other than a mental note. Unfortunately the old brain box is sometimes found wanting.

My records as of the 14th July were posted in the clubhouse on the 15th July. As you will see, it shows who has paid what. If this is incorrect in any way please see me to discuss same. If of course you are also suffering from memory loss perhaps our joint effort will reach a mutually acceptable compromise, or indeed the correct solution.

Thanks for your forbearance; I will try to do better in the future. Tat-Ta! from Len.

World Championships

Len Buckingham, Diana Phelps and John Cundell visited the Sixth WCF Golf Croquet World Championships at Sussex County Croquet Club, near Brighton on 25th June. The event was held over a week. There were 64 players from Australia, Austria, Belgium, Egypt, England, France, Germany,

The Southwick Croquet Club, near Shoreham, boasts eleven superb croquet lawns, a substantial pavilion with changing rooms, dining room and bar! Our picture shows just six of the lawns!

Above are the two ex-World Champions preparing for their quarter final. Note the protective boards and fencing.

Right, another Egyptian, Mrs Naheed Hassan has played in the Worlds on three previous occasions and has been Egyptian Lady Singles Champion five times.



Ireland, Italy, Isle of Man, Japan, New Zealand, Palestine, Scotland, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, United States and Wales. We saw the end of the Block Play to find the best 16 - and we also saw the first quarter final. This was between the World Champion of 1996, 1998, and 2002 - Khalid Younis from Egypt, and the 1997 and 2000 Champion - Salah Hassan also from Egypt. Nothing was hit less than 40mph by the Egyptian players, hence the reason for the surrounding boards and protective fencing you can just see in the pictures. Neither of these two ultimately reached the final on Sunday which was won by another Egyptian, Ahmed Nasr who beat New Zealand's Dennis Bulloch with a combination of high speed, powerful and very accurate shots.

A fascinating day out and when it comes to the UK next, perhaps we can organise a club trip.

