



LEIGHTON-LINSLADE CROQUET CLUB

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Founded 2000

NEWSLETTER - JANUARY 2016 Volume 17 Issue 1

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“Happy New Year”

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2016. Happy New Year to all members and friends. Our first report takes us back to the AGM.

Annual General Meeting

The 16th Annual General Meeting was held at Northall Village Hall on Friday 13th November 2015, and the meeting started promptly at 7.30pm as our Chairman David Ball welcomed some 28 members. Secretary Roger Stroud gave apologies for absence.

There were no matters arising. The minutes of the 2014 AGM were then duly approved.

We had circulated the Officers' Reports with the AGM Agenda Pack before the meeting therefore they were not repeated verbatim, but updated as appropriate.

David Ball added that he was retiring. He had enjoyed his five years as Chairman and went on to thank his fellow officers, committee and all members for their help and support over the years.

Roger Stroud added that one of the best aspects of our

club was the social play - he mentioned seeing one of our newer members attempt and make a good jump shot over one of the top players in the club - the look of surprise and pleasure was excellent - and of course a number of our members also enjoy more competitive events.

Len Buckingham, our Treasurer, explained that there had been a delay in our Accounts Examiner finalising the accounts due to illness, however this would be sorted shortly. He stated that he had been Treasurer for over a decade and would be retiring as soon as the club's new license with the Council, due to commence April 2017, was set up. He added that we had received written information from the Town Council's Head of Grounds and Environmental Services that our new licence will not contain a clause saying that the club would be responsible for the total rent due for the duration of the licence if the club was to fail during the licence period.

Len added that we have received three keys to enable Blue Badge holders to access the 'cricket' car park - we await designated parking places. to be marked. We are



Above, left to right: Mix 'n Match Doubles Handicap winners were Roy Kemp and Roger Stroud; runners up were Sally Clay and Jean Ball; Ladies Doubles Mix 'n Match winners were Judith Pengelly and Peggy Kenny (latter not present). Below, left to right: Ladies Doubles Mix 'n Match runners up were Sheila Guest and Jean Ball; Club Singles Handicap winner was Ross Bagni. John Fogg Trophy winners were Len Buckingham and John Thorp.





Left to right: Handicap Singles runner up was Judith Pengelly. John Fogg Trophy runners up were Roy Kemp and Malcolm Kirby. B-Level Hurlingham Winner was Ross Bagni - Roger Stroud won the Plate competition.

also in negotiation with the Council to provide security fencing around all three lawns. The committee has agreed that the club will make some contribution to the cost of the fencing.

The Officers' reports were duly accepted by the meeting.

Len proposed no increase in subscription for the 2016 season. Len also stated that 2016 would be his last year as Treasurer and he requested that all members start thinking about the need for someone to come forward to take on this post.

The Chairman then stepped down and handed over to Secretary Roger Stroud who explained that we had two nominations for Chairman - John Thorp and Malcolm Kirby. A paper vote was organised by Membership Secretary Judith Cundell and member Mary Kemp. The result was a majority decision for Malcolm Kirby to be the new Chairman. Malcolm took the Chair and asked for a round of applause for our retiring Chairman.

Whilst the vote was being determined, Roger had announced that he was standing as Secretary and Len Buckingham as Treasurer. The following were nominated as committee members - John Cundell, John Thorp, Sally Clay, Sheila Guest, Ross Bagni, Val Jeffers and Mary Kemp. They were duly proposed, seconded and accepted.

Presentation of Awards

At this point Malcolm invited our retiring Chairman David Ball step forward and present the following awards.

Left to right: Wrest Park Golf Tournament Doubles winners were David and Jean Ball. The LJB Main Trophy winner was John Thorp; LJB Plate winner was Len Buckingham. Club Doubles winners were John Thorp and Roger Stroud.



Mix 'n Match Doubles Handicap

Roger Stroud and Roy Kemp

Runners up Jean Ball and Sally Clay

Ladies Doubles Mix 'n Match

Judith Pengelly and Peggy Kenny

Runners up Sheila Guest and Jean Ball

Club Singles Handicap

Ross Bagni

Runner Up Roger Stroud

B-Level Leighton-Linslade

Roger Stroud

B-Level Hurlingham Winner

Ross Bagni

B-Level Hurlingham Plate

Roger Stroud

Wrest Park Golf Tournament Doubles

Jean Ball and David Ball

The John Fogg Trophy

John Thorp and Len Buckingham

Runners up Malcolm Kirby and Roy Kemp

LJB 70 Plus Trophy (Main)

John Thorp

LJB 70 Plus Trophy (Plate)

Len Buckingham

Club Championship Doubles

Roger Stroud and John Thorp

Runners up Sheila Guest and Malcolm Kirby

Club Championship Singles

David Ball

Runner up Judith Pengelly

Roger Stroud had promoted a competition on the website



Left to right: Club Doubles Championship runners-up were Sheila Guest and Malcolm Kirby. Club Singles winner was David Ball - runner up was Judith Pengelly. Our new Chairman Malcolm Kirby addressing the meeting - Secretary Roger Stroud taking notes. Thanks to David for presenting the 2015 awards. Below; the 2015 Winners.



during the season and the winner of a bottle of wine was Phil Rowe.

In 'Any Other Business', Tom Miller firstly thanked David Ball for his Chairmanship. He went on to say that Richard Keighley and John Cundell should be congratulated and thanked for their excellent Golf Croquet Coaching Manual that they had produced for the Croquet Association. This reflected well on our club.

John Thorp said that the club tends to rely on just a few members who carry out all event preparation, whether or not they are taking part in the day's proceedings. If a member is taking part in an event, it would be much appreciated if he or she could turn out earlier rather than arriving at the start time, to assist setting up.

John Cundell added that both he and John Thorp were pleased with the extra help they had received this Autumn concerning lawn maintenance from both male and female members. Thanks to all concerned.

Our new Chairman, Malcolm stated that when he ran his company he had an open-door policy where if anybody had anything to say, then do so to him or one of our committee members.

His second point was that we need new members, particularly younger, and asked if anyone has any ideas. Tony Wells asked why we do not have reports in the local newspaper. Judith Cundell responded that our reports were not always published, and when they were they were always 'edited' - often incorrectly. David Ball said he would try again next season. Ross Bagni said that The Croquet Association was holding a National Croquet Day on 5th June 2016, a day on which the public will be encouraged to try croquet anywhere in the country. It was agreed we should support this.

Sally Clay felt that our website was one of the best places to advertise the club.

Sheila Beal mentioned the train days held by the Leighton Buzzard Railway, and John Thorp added that we should look at providing advertising boards alongside the fence for such occasions. Tom Miller added that on these occasions we should not wear whites to forstall the image that to play our game such clothing was a requirement.

Malcolm suggested we should look as the special market days where a stall can be taken to advertise the club.

Malcolm gave the date for the Annual Dinner, 11th

March 2016, at Leighton Buzzard Golf Club. Details are later in this newsletter.

Malcolm also reminded members of the Social Club held on every Wednesday morning at Page's Park Pavilion - costing just £2.50.

Malcolm then thanked all who had attended the meeting, those who had provided the buffet food; Len Buckingham for arranging the hall; those who had set up the tables, etc.; David Ball for organising the raffle - and past member Tony Stammers who had kindly sold and folded all the raffle tickets.

Officers, Committee and Specific Duty Appointments - 2016

Thanks to all those members who responded to my recent email concerning club appointments. It is always very encouraging with the number of members who put themselves forwards for all the various tasks required to keep the club running smoothly..

Officers

Chairman	Malcolm Kirby
Secretary	Roger Stroud
Treasurer	Len Buckingham

Committee

Ex officio members

Vice Chairman	John Cundell
Fixture Secretary	John Thorp

Members

Ross Bagni, Sally Clay, Sheila Guest, Val Jeffers, Mary Kemp

Specific Duties and Non-Executive

Archivist	Malcolm Kirby
Catering Manager	Val Jeffers
Assisted by	Jean Ball
Child Protection	Richard Keighley
Coaching	Richard Keighley, John Cundell, Eve Buckingham, David Ball, John Thorp
Competition Organisers & Managers	John Cundell, John Thorp, David Ball
Event Preparation	John Cundell, John Thorp, David Ball, Malcolm Kirby, Roy Kemp, Roger Stroud
Club Handicapper	John Cundell
Assisted by	Len Buckingham, John Thorp, David Ball
Lawn Maintenance	John Cundell, John Thorp, Malcolm Kirby, Ross Bagni, Sheila Beal, Mary Kemp, Sally Clay, Roy Kemp, Phil Rowe
Membership Secretary	Judith Cundell
Newsletter	John Cundell
Publicity/Press	David Ball
Quartermaster	Eve Buckingham
Referee	Len Buckingham
Registers	Len Buckingham, Judith Cundell
Safety Officer	John Thorp
Scoring Manager	Sheila Beal
Selection Committee	John Cundell, David Ball, John Thorp
Sports Council	Tom Miller

Tea Towel Laundry	Jean Ball, Eve Buckingham, Malcolm Kirby, Sheila Beal
Welfare Secretary	Judith Cundell

Sports Council Grant

Our representative Tom Miller was also informed at the recent Leighton-Linslade Sports Council meeting that we have been awarded a grant of £250. As in the past, the cheques will be presented by the Mayor at the meeting on Monday 18th January. This will go towards renovation of our hoops, which is currently under way, and to our annual lawn maintenance costs.

Well done to Len Buckingham for the application and to Tom Miller for promoting our case at the meeting.

Leighton-Linslade Social Club

The Wednesday morning social club is meeting regularly during the close season at Page's Park pavilion from 10.00am to 12.00, and on average a dozen or so members have been present. The fee is still only £2.50 per session, and for that you get refreshments and the opportunity to play many board games, darts, snooker, dominoes and cribbage. The activities generally finish about noon, and the hall is already warm on arrival, so please support this venture if you possibly can. Friends of members are welcome for same attendance fee.

Annual Dinner

This year's dinner will be at Leighton Buzzard Golf Club, Plantation Road on Friday 11th March 2016. You should have found the Booking Form with the email that this newsletter was sent with - or in your envelope for those who are not on email. Please complete the form and send to Len Buckingham together with the required deposit as soon as possible. This has always been a very pleasant evening, good company and good food. The price is a very reasonable £23.00 - no increase from 2015 - for a three course meal with a selection of four choices per course, and including coffee or tea with after-dinner mints!

2016 Dates for your Diary

March

9	Committee Meeting
11	Annual Dinner - Leighton Buzzard Golf Club
26	LAWNS OPEN - weather permitting

April

2/3	Official Opening. DATE AND TIME TO BE CONFIRMED
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May

14/15	Club 'Mix 'n' Match' Handicap Doubles
28/29	Club Ladies Doubles 'Mix 'n' Match'

June

5	National Croquet Day
11/12	Club Handicap Singles
15	Committee Meeting
18	CA B-Level Tournament (3-8) - Leighton-Linslade

July

15	C-Level Tournament (8-12) - Leighton-Linslade
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August

6/7	Club Mens Doubles 'Mix 'n' Match' John Fogg Trophy
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8 U3A Dunstable Visit Fun Day

10 Committee Meeting

September

3 Club Garden Party and Fun Day at Page's Park
(10.00am - 4.00pm)

7 Committee Meeting

10 LJB 70+ Trophy

17/18 Club Doubles

24/25 Club Singles

November

11 AGM & Party

The dates for other events such as League Matches, Inter-Club Shield, other local Friendlies, etc., will be published in the next newsletter in early March.

National Croquet Day - 5th June

This event mentioned above in the Diary Dates is an initiative by The Croquet Association for a day on which the public will be encouraged and be able to try croquet anywhere in the country. It is a project coordinated by The Croquet Association Marketing Team and the key objectives include:

- Showing that croquet is a game for everyone.
- Showing that croquet is a sport with a competitive edge.
- Providing an opportunity to motivate people to visit their local club to try 'The Croquet Experience'.
- Grasping an opportunity to dispel negative and inaccurate images of croquet.

In the run-up to the day, The Croquet Association will send out a series of national press releases to arouse public interest, and clubs could both support and capitalise on this by aligning a Club Open Day and publicity to this media interest. We shall be supporting this at Page's Park.

Leighton-Linslade GC B-Level Tournament - 18th June

This competition was initiated in 2014 by Chris Roberts, the Editor of The Croquet Gazette, to try and bring a climax to the series of B-Level Tournaments held throughout the country. Chris's idea was to enlarge the competition by getting more clubs to take part and rationalising the events to allow play from the same handicap. This was finalised and the handicap level was 3-8.

Winners of each round automatically qualified for a two-day final at the end of the year. The whole series was very well supported in 2014 and even more successful last year. Chris Roberts reports in The Croquet Association Gazette that the 2015 series enjoyed full or oversubscribed fields at 15 of its 18 tournaments - including ours. Even with the loss of some of the regular players, who no longer qualify for its handicap of 3 to 8 restriction - including our David Ball and John Thorp, it's difficult to imagine that the popularity of this series will do anything other than improve still further this year.

The national roster increases by one more tournament in 2016, with the addition of Budleigh Salterton as a 19th qualifier, all leading towards the end of season National Final, which will also be at Budleigh.

The full list this year has events at: Sussex, Watford, Wrest Park, Ealing, Northampton, Leighton-Linslade,

Colchester, Hunstanton, Bury, Nottingham, Bath, Middlesbrough, Hamptworth, Guildford, Phyllis Court, Ashby, Budleigh, Hurlingham and Edgbaston.

There is also a growing list of other clubs wanting to join the B-Level Series and these will also be listed as stand-alone events in The CA fixtures book.

Our round in the 2015 tournament received twelve entries from other clubs - and two from our own club - one of which, Roger Stroud, won against some excellent competition. The event was successful and we received a number of kind remarks from the competitors for an excellent competition and for our overall management of the day - also our scoring system was well liked. Many of the competitors remarked how nice it was to see so many club members supporting the day.

To play in any of these events you need to join The Croquet Association as a Tournament Member. You can find information about this at www.croquet.org.uk and click on the 'CA Information' tab. New tournament members pay an introductory rate of £14.50 for single and £22.50 for dual membership in their first year. In the second year the rate is two-thirds of the full rate prevailing at that time. The full rate applies from the third year of membership - £48.50 for single and £73 for dual.

If you want further details about joining and/or the B-Level tournament, speak to one of the following: John Cundell, David and Jean Ball, Roger Stroud, John Thorp, Ross Bagni or Richard Keighley.

Leighton-Linslade High Handicap (C-Level) Tournament - 15th July

The C-Level tournament is aimed specifically at those players whose handicap falls between 9-12, designed to give the less experienced player a chance to play in open competition, and hopefully to tempt them into entering more senior Croquet Association events.

We ran such an event at Page's Park last year to try and encourage some of our members to take part as well as inviting entrants from other local clubs. This was organised similarly to the B-Level Tournament. To get entries initially proved a little difficult, however with some arm twisting and gentle persuasion, we ended up with twelve entries - five from outside clubs and seven from LLCC. There was a small entry fee.

The event was much enjoyed by all competitors and resulted in some exciting croquet from all concerned throughout an enjoyable, friendly and sociable day's play. We look forward to the good news being spread back to our visitors' clubs and to other clubs in the area and that we receive a good entry in 2016.

EACF Leagues

The 2016 East Anglian Croquet Federation's League competitions will be run to a similar format to last year. At the moment it looks like there will be six teams in North & Mid Area, six in the Central Area, five in the Eastern Area, and six in the Western Area - our area - comprised of Watford, Stony Stratford, Wrest Park, Northampton Hoops, Northampton Mallets and Leighton-Linslade.

For those not aware of the 2015 results, the Handicap League was won by Hunstanton, and the Level League by Colchester.

The selection committee for EACF League teams this year will be John Cundell, David Ball and John Thorp.

Lawn Maintenance

In our fifth year of looking after the lawns during the close season, we are becoming more proficient and knowledgeable as to what needs to be done to maintain, and over the longer term to improve, our lawns. We are also accumulating the necessary equipment by purchase - in 2015 a second rotary mower and a scarifier - or borrowing/hiring to help us carry out the work required. At this point we would like to thank the Town Council and particularly the Head Groundsman Doug Bolton for assisting us in the loan of some of the Council's equipment.

Tuesday 27th October saw four members of our Lawn Maintenance Group mowing all three lawns which had grown considerably since the end of our playing season. At the same time as our work was progressing, two members of the Town Council's groundstaff were strimming around all three of our fences and were removing the spoil and the mounds of leaves. Work started just before 10.00am and finished at 13.00. We were so lucky with the weather, giving us firm lawns and even some late morning and afternoon sun, resulting in almost short sleeve temperatures not far short of 20 degrees! As Malcolm remarked "I'd rather be warm than cold and wet!"

Thanks to, in alphabetical order - Sheila Beal, John Cundell, Malcolm Kirby and John Thorp.

A second mowing was required in November due to the continuing unseasonable warm weather. The weather was wet as the small team arrived at 9.45am, however the rain stopped around 10.00am and the team managed to mow all three lawns plus maintenance on some small areas which needed re-seeding and top dressing. Work started with lawn 3, then lawn 2 - and finished on lawn 1 around 12.30pm as the heavy rain started.

Thanks to Sheila Beal, Sally Clay, John Cundell, Malcolm Kirby and John Thorp.

Due to the continuing warm conditions, at least one more mow is now well overdue and will be attempted as soon as we get a couple of dry days!

Council and Fencing Situation

The previous newsletter carried the following paragraph:

'After a meeting with the Town Clerk and the Head of Grounds and Environmental Services in August, we have reached the following stage. It is proposed to erect a new 1.8 metre high green mesh fence around all three croquet lawns. Quotations for this work are in hand by the Town Council, following which there will be a proposal put forward to the Leisure and Community Committee (L&CC) meeting - hopefully in November. If this is approved, the bulk of the cost will be borne by the Town Council - our club will be offering a contribution towards the cost. We should know more by the time of our Annual General Meeting.'

Unfortunately we didn't know more by the AGM as the application was not put before the L&CC in November or December. The next meeting is in early February - we live in hope!

Improvers Course

A number of newer members have asked for an

Improvers Course. We hope to organise this relatively early in the season, probably mid to late April or early May. More details in due course.

Croquet in Corfu

The Corfu Croquet Club, in conjunction with the Kontokali Bay Hotel & Resort, has organised its first GC Croquet Holiday, following several very successful AC events. Richard Thompson, who manages the very well run Edgbaston events, is managing this event, to be known as the 'First Greek GC Championship' - to be held from 4th to 13th May 2016.

Corfu is a Greek island in the Ionian Sea. It has an area of 600 sq km and a population of 112,000. This lovely, green island, steeped in history and antiquities, has long been a popular holiday destination. The temperature in May will typically be mid twenties C.

The Croquet Club of Corfu is the first croquet club in Greece and was set up in 2006 at Kontokali, 7km north of Corfu town. It is beside a marina and well positioned for hotels and restaurants. The club has three lawns of a good standard, in idyllic settings. The croquet programme will be flexible, and will not be just a croquet tournament, it will be a croquet-based holiday with friends.

If you would like a copy of the Programmes and Information Brochure, please email or ask me for a copy.

Instant' Newsletter

Please include your email address when you complete this year's membership form. The newsletter will normally be distributed by email. As per 2015 please mark on your membership form if you are happy to print out your own copies of any other forms which may be required. Postage costs are now very expensive and we would rather spend it on the club than the Post Office.

Also please add your mobile telephone number. This is very handy for chasing up those who forget they have entered a competition! - and also for members to arrange visits to the lawns outside of the regular playing sessions.



As we mentioned in the previous newsletter, Jean Ball was awarded the MBE in the 2015 Queen's Birthday Honours list for her services to the communities of Stanbridge & Tilsworth. Here she is receiving her award from HRH Princess Anne at the Windsor Castle Investiture in November.



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION - 2016 SEASON

I/we wish to join / rejoin the club.

Name(s):

Address:

.....

..... Postcode:

Tel No: Mobile No:

Date: Email:

I am happy to receive all communication by email, including 'return forms': YES NO

A subscription for the full season is £75 per person. Potential new members may also pay a £5 fee for two trial sessions. This fee will be deducted if full membership is subsequently taken out.

I / we enclose a cheque for £..... payable to Leighton Linslade Croquet Club.

Please return this form and cheque to: Judith Cundell (Membership Secretary), 18 Saxons Close, Leighton Buzzard, Beds. LU7 3LT. Tel: 01525 374620.
Email: judith.cundell@btinternet.com