



# LEIGHTON-LINSLADE CROQUET CLUB

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## “A Busy - If Damp - Season So Far!”



Our Opening Day back in May was blessed by good weather, and retiring Town Mayor Mark Freeman stayed on and enjoyed a game or two. Whatever Len was doing with the toilet roll is not recorded



**W**elcome to the third newsletter of 2007 under the joint Editorship of John Cundell and Richard Keighley.

### 2007 Dates for your Diary

#### July

- 21 Club Handicap Singles
- 22 B class tournament at Newport
- 22 Wrest Park Doubles
- 27 Friendly v Winslow (H)

#### August

- 2 Committee Meeting
- 3 League Match v Letchworth (H)
- 4 All England Area Final at Newport
- 11 Club Garden Party - at Diana Phelps' home
- 17 Friendly v Watford (H)
- 25/26 B class tournament at Surbiton
- 31 Friendly v Stony Stratford (H)

#### September

- 8 Centre Stage Final at Edgbaston
- 18 B class tournament at Edgbaston
- 22/23 EACF League Finals
- 22/23 All England Handicap Final at Ramsgate
- 27 Committee meeting
- 29/(30) Club Doubles

#### October

- 6/(7) Club Singles
- 20/21 Soham Indoor Tournament

#### November

- 9 AGM & Party
- 17/18 Soham Indoor Tournament

### Match & General News

"Flaming June" has been often used to describe the last month with so many rain-affected playing sessions and tournaments.

### Centre Stage

The Centre Stage Golf Croquet Competition is sponsored by the Croquet Association. Clubs throughout the country are invited to participate. The event begins with a club round and 12 members from Leighton-Linslade took part. The group was split into 2 blocks of 6 players, with each

This year's "Come & Try Day" enjoyed a reasonable attendance and there were a number of seemingly interested people who enjoyed the afternoon and who were sent follow-up literature by our Membership Secretary John Fogg.





14 pupils from Leighton Middle School children enjoyed a "Friendly" competition at Pages Park. Our thanks to Richard Keighley, Margaret Brown, Tony Wells and Tony Stammers. Members may have seen the school's report in the LBO.



playing everyone in his or her group. In the 1st block, George Lawson edged out Richard Keighley. Each had recorded 4 wins but George won on hoop countback. Bryan Ferris was a very creditable 3rd with 3 wins. In the 2nd block, John Cundell and Margaret Lawson each had 4 wins but John won by the narrowest of margins on countback. Irene Davis defied her years and the heavy showers to take 3rd place.

Rain caused the final stages to be postponed twice. In the semi-finals, George Lawson risked domestic discord by defeating his wife Margaret by 7 hoops to 4, and Richard Keighley beat John Cundell by the same score. In a closely contested final, Richard recovered from 3-5 to beat George 7-5. Now the Club awaits the call to the Regional Final with the National Final taking place at Edgbaston in September.

### EACF League

The West area of the East Anglian Croquet Federation Golf Croquet League features 5 local clubs and is being keenly contested. Leighton-Linslade travelled to Wrest Park in the knowledge that this was a "must win" match. Their team comprised Eve & Len Buckingham, John Cundell and Richard Keighley. Each player had to play 4 singles games and take part in a doubles game. Fortunately, all players found good form in their singles with Richard scoring 4 wins, John & Len 3 each and Eve 2 wins. Len and Eve also won their doubles. The match score was 13-5 in Leighton-Linslade's favour.

### Wrest Park Singles

Wrest Park was also the venue for a Singles tournament on yet another wet day and 3 members from Leighton-Linslade took part. Sally Clay and Richard Keighley progressed from the group stages with Yvonne Banks just missing out. In her semi-final, Sally beat the tournament favourite Linda Potton by 7 hoops to 2 but Richard lost 4-5 in his timed match.

In the Final, Sally played well and her running of the 10th hoop with a clean angled shot from 15 yards levelled the score and brought warm applause from spectators. However, her opponent rallied to win hoops 11 & 12 to pip Sally by 7 hoops to 5.

### Into July

Midsummer is the peak time for playing croquet, and members dodged the heavy showers and took advantage of the break in the bad weather to participate in four successful events in just over a week as June turned into July.



### Winslow Friendly

On 29th June, members of Winslow Croquet Club were entertained for a Friendly match at Pages Park. The pairings of Sally Clay with Martin Field, and Sheila Guest with Val Jeffers were victorious by 4 games to 2 in a Doubles Match managed by Tony Wells. At present, Winslow do not have a lawn to play on as theirs has been re-seeded so they are coming to Pages Park again on 27th July for the "reverse" fixture.

### Leighton Middle School

The Club has forged a link with Leighton Middle School over the last two summers and members have supervised lunchtime playing sessions on the school lawns as well as participating in enjoyable PTA events. On the truly soggy afternoon of 3rd July, 14 pupils from the school accompanied by Christine Boardman arrived somewhat bedraggled for an After School Tournament in Pages Park. The format was doubles on a best of 3 hoops basis. Great fun was had by all and the winners were presented with trophies just before the skies opened again. Taking part for the Club were Margaret Brown, Richard Keighley, Tony Stammers and Tony Wells. A letter is going out from the School to the parents of the keenest pupils to enquire if they would like to take part in coaching and playing sessions during the school holidays.

### Stony Stratford Friendly

A team of 8 members travelled to Stony Stratford for a Friendly match, which was won by 9 games to 7. Each pair of players had to play 4 13 hoop games against the opposition. Both George and Margaret Lawson and Len and Eve Buckingham won 3 of their 4 games. Bryan Ferris and Sheila Beal contributed with 2 wins and Margaret Brown and Una Pengelly with one win to seal the victory.





### **Fun Day**

Sunday 8th July was Fun Day on the lawns at Pages Park. It was not quite Alice in Wonderland stuff owing to a shortage of flamingos, but 20 members took part in silly games involving everything but proper croquet balls and at one stage were blindfolded. The Final was played not with balls at all but with fresh lemons. Puns were strictly forbidden, so suffice to say that George Lawson and Roger Stroud squeezed out Arthur Murgatroyd and Sheila Beale and pipped them on the final hoop.

Congratulations to Tony Stammers (ably assisted by Len Buckingham) for organising such a novel, enjoyable event!

### **League v Stony Stratford**

Friday 13th July was perhaps not the most auspicious day for Leighton-Linslade Croquet Club to entertain a team from Stony Stratford at Pages Park for a must-win league match in the West area of the East Anglian Federation Golf Croquet League.

However, the fates were kind and Leighton-Linslade won convincingly by 12 games to 6. The format was that each of the 4 team members played one 13 hoop singles game against each member of the opposition team, followed by 2 doubles games. The home team comprised Eve Buckingham, Bryan Ferris, Richard Keighley and George Lawson. It was Bryan's first appearance in a league match but the selectors' confidence in him was rapidly justified when he was the only winner in the first round of singles. That was the low point for the home team as they won all 4 games in the 2nd round, drew 2 games all in the 3rd round and won the 4th round by 3 games to 1.

A match score of 10-6 meant that the results of the doubles games became academic but Leighton-Linslade won both. Bryan and Eve had each won 3 of their 4 singles, and Richard and George 2 each.

The outcome means that the team must win their final home match against Letchworth on 4th August to maintain a challenge against Watford, the unbeaten league leaders.

The match was well managed by John Cundell, assisted by Diana Phelps and Tony Stammers as scorers. Len Buckingham was the match referee and won admiring

The victorious team and our visitors from Stony Stratford at the recent League Match. From left to right: Tony Stammers and Diana Phelps who were scorers, Eve Buckingham, George Lawson, Bryan Ferris, Roy Healey, Susan Ellis, Rex Hale, Alfred Sawbridge, and the immaculate referee Len Buckingham. Organiser John Cundell was behind the camera! More pictures over the page.

glances for his immaculate attire. If it had been Crufts, he would have been a contender for "best in show".

### **Next Up**

In the meantime, the Club is staging its Singles Handicap tournament at Pages Park on 21st July and members are also taking part in tournaments at Wrest Park and Newport in Essex on 22nd July.

### **Lawn Extension and Third Lawn**

One benefit of the wettest June on record is that the grass has grown strongly on the newly sown lawn extensions. Members have also answered the rallying call to pick up stones from the area adjacent to the former tennis court and your efforts have been much appreciated. The next step is to measure out the 2 lawns to include the extensions and the safety strip dividing them as this will enable the Council groundstaff to erect permanent fencing to provide far greater protection from vandals for us. John and Len have been active on this front in the last few days.

Good news too on the 3rd lawn front. Council officers have agreed in principle to a new lawn being created below the present ones but at a distance of about 8 metres from them. This decision is subject to funding and your Committee is at present investigating grant possibilities. The need for such a lawn became clear when record numbers of you turned out to play on Saturday afternoons and occasional Wednesday mornings in May.

### **Living History Heritage Day**

A date for your diary is Saturday 13th October 2007 when your Club is to take part in an event organised by the Leisure and Promotions team of the Town Council. Popular pastimes are to be featured by local clubs and societies with venues including All Saints Church, Leighton Middle School, North St and Market Square. Ann Smith has kindly persuaded the Vicar and his wife to allow croquet to



Above left: Richard Keighley plays Stony Stratford's Rex Hale. Above middle: this was Bryan Ferris' first competitive League Match, and what a triumphant debut it was too. Above right: match referees also have to do the washing up! Below: a couple of action shots. What a splendid looking park!



be played on the vicarage lawn so a suitably genteel atmosphere will prevail.

**Coaching by Richard Keighley**

Richard, who gained his coaching spurs last season, writes:-

“Coaching sessions have proved to be very popular. Irene Davis kindly invited me to coach 6 groups of her lady members at Waterways. My wife did a double-take when I mentioned that I would be teaching a total of 33 women to improve their stroke play in 6 separate 2 hour sessions.

I was then invited to be one of 4 coaches at a Croquet Association course at Eynsham on 6th June. 16 players

The lawn extension just a couple of months back. The rain has been a pain as far as play is concerned, but how many of us thought that the grass would grow so quickly and strongly. Now we just need the fencing.



attended including 9 from Winslow and our own Sue Cross. Finally, 20 of you signed up for coaching at Pages Park and I have very much enjoyed taking groups of 4, sometimes concentrating on specific topics such as the use of bisesques or strategy but also covering improvement in general play with help with shot-making and a better understanding of faults and their consequences. I would be happy to organise further sessions on request towards the end of the season or perhaps at the beginning of next so please do not hesitate to let me know if you would be interested.”

**Garden Party**

It's that time of the year again! And with a little luck this year's will be a drier affair than 2006 - we hope! The date is Saturday 11th August at the home of Diana Phelps, 135 Hockliffe Road, Leighton Buzzard (opposite the Garden Centre). Our thanks to Diana and husband Jim for their kind offer. Details concerning the party have already been available in the Pages Park clubroom for a week however they are repeated here for those who haven't managed to get to Pages recently. The party starts at 3.00pm.

**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.

