



# LEIGHTON-LINSLADE CROQUET CLUB

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Founded 2000

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## NEWSLETTER - January 2008 Volume 9 Issue 1

The newsletter Editor is John Cundell. Items for the newsletter can be sent to 18 Saxons Close, Leighton Buzzard, Beds LU7 3LT; or emailed to john.cundell@btinternet.com. Tel: 01525 400512 or 374620

### “A New Dawn - FULL SIZE Lawns!”



Here they are! The new extended lawns in fine, if wet condition (25th January), surrounded by the new fencing and a fair amount of mud! The surrounding areas have been re-seeded and will be rolled when conditions improve. Roll on the end of March and let's hope for better weather.

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2008. Our 9th season at Pages Park promises to be an exciting one for the club as we look forward to playing on our full-size lawns with no annoying overlap; the improved fencing (see later); and a number of other new developments.

The start of 2008 was saddened with the news of the passing of 'Jim' Phelps - husband of long-standing club member Diana, and also of our Membership Secretary John Fogg. There are tributes to both later in this newsletter.

Taking club happenings since the last newsletter in October 2007 almost chronologically, we will start off with the Annual General Meeting in November. Before moving on to the reports and subsequent follow up, here is the list of members appointed to various jobs for 2008.

#### Officers

Chair	Margaret Brown
Vice Chairman	John Cundell
Secretary	Roger Stroud
Treasurer	Len Buckingham
Fixture Secretary	Tony Wells

#### Committee members

Irene Davis	Val Jeffers
Brian Ferris	Tony Stammers

#### Specific Duties & Non-Executive

Membership Secretary	Judith Cundell
Welfare Secretary	Judith Cundell
Minute Secretary	Ann Smith
Competition Organisers & Managers	Len Buckingham, John Cundell & Tony Wells
Catering Manager	Val Jeffers
Quartermaster	Eve Buckingham

Newsletter	John Cundell
Registers	Len Buckingham
Archivist	Tony Stammers
Sports Council	Margaret Brown & George Lawson
School Sports Liaison	Margaret Brown & Richard Keighley

#### Annual General Meeting .... and follow up from January's first committee meeting

Margaret Brown welcomed 31 members and their guests to our 8th AGM at Northall Village Hall on 9th November. She was particularly pleased that Elaine Newman was coming to the party, as she and her husband had helped to establish the Club in its early years.

In her Chairman's report she remarked on how much the club has progressed from the inaugural session on 8th May 2000 with two half sized lawns and about two dozen members to the full size lawns and almost 50 members.

Margaret felt that the club is fulfilling its constitutional aim "to foster and promote the sport of croquet, providing opportunities for recreation and competition in the Leighton/Linslade area" - and added that the provision of social activities out-of-season for members and friends could only enhance the aims.

Margaret emphasised that the club is characterised by its values of friendliness, fun, help to newcomers and a willingness of members to take a turn at the domestic, administrative and management roles to ensure the club runs so well. The turnover of members is small so that numbers have steadily increased and it is good that so many members have had a turn on, or outside the committee in various capacities. Margaret considers that our values are supported if people feel they would enjoy, and indeed should, serve a turn in these ways. Please think, she remarked, what could YOU offer to do this

coming season!

As to ambitions, she felt that these must be to continually improve facilities, encourage training, and to be aware of the need to develop a balanced membership in terms of age, gender, new and experienced players - perhaps in the future a thriving Junior section and maybe even our own clubhouse and grounds.

### **Richard Keighley's report**

In his last report as Secretary, Richard Keighley informed us that he had been pleased to use his qualifications as a CA Club Coach and Golf Croquet Coach to arrange coaching sessions for members of our Club and some 33 keen players at Waterways. Coaching is fun and satisfying and he hoped that other members will wish to attend a qualification course in the near future. We can inform members that there is already a course organised at Wrest Park on 12th April starting at 10am, cost £10, and if any members wish for further information on this or who would like to take part in future sessions to be held by Richard at Pages Park this season, then please contact him on 01296 681235 or email:

The\_Keighleys@btopenworld.com.

Richard reported that our membership has reached a record number of 48 members and it has been a pleasure to welcome many new members this season. On the basis that numbers will continue to rise steadily, the need for a 3rd lawn has become both essential and urgent. Further to Richard's report we can now confirm that work is expected to start on levelling the third lawn to be sited just 'below' our existing two lawns towards the railway station. This will commence as soon as the weather relents from trying to turn Pages Park into a swimming pool, hopefully by April. It will then be seeded and we might even be able to get on it before the end of the season. It will also be fenced as per the two existing lawns.

We can report that the fencing contractors finished their work on 23rd January after working for ten days in appalling conditions. There were a couple of setbacks where some of the less enlightened youth of today thought it would be great fun to pull the fencing poles over before the concrete had set! However we will keep everything crossed that the fencing will go some way to prohibiting those who love to use our fine lawns for football practise before the start of the season. Our grateful thanks are due to those at Leighton Linlade Town Council; Linda Carter, John Connew, Doug and the groundstaff lads, who have done so much to provide and maintain the lawns.

We can further report that the Council has agreed to signage above our clubroom announcing who we are! - and for signs to go on the fencing asking for football not to be played on the lawns. You can't say we aren't trying!

The lads that put in the fencing used our clubroom as their base so due to the weather, as you can imagine it is rather muddy! The opportunity will be taken to renovate the room to make it easier to use and store our growing equipment and to make the best of what is a relatively small area. This will take place before the start of the season and if you would like to help please let either John Cundell or Len Buckingham (01525 221079) know.

Returning to Richard's report at the AGM, he stated that our link with Leighton Middle School has also

continued to flourish and a tournament was arranged for the youngsters at Pages Park in July. (*This is to be repeated this year. Editor*). At least one other local school has expressed an interest in taster sessions. To accommodate all these young players, the Club has acquired five childrens' mallets and another 4 are on loan from the East Anglian Croquet Federation.

Richard reported that club tournaments had been very popular in 2007 with a significant increase in the number of entries and also in the general standard of play. The Fun Day also proved to be exactly what it said on the tin, thanks to Tony Stammers and his obsession with fresh fruit. The club did not enter the Grass Roots competition but George Lawson was our representative at the National Final of the Centre Stage competition at Edgbaston and narrowly missed out on a semi-final place. We also did not apply for places at the two National Trust tournaments at Ickworth, near Bury St Edmunds owing to insufficient interest and a long each-way journey. (*See later concerning this season. Editor.*)

The League in 2007 comprised 20 clubs with 5 clubs in our West Area section. Watford progressed to the Final (and duly won it!) by winning all 4 matches including their opening fixture against us. It was our only defeat and we were runners up in our section with 3 wins out of 4.

Members also enjoyed friendly fixtures against Watford, Stony Stratford & Winslow and the prospect looms of matches against Letchworth next season.

EACF organised a Class B Singles Tournament at Newport in Essex in which Eve and Len Buckingham and Richard took part and he managed to reach but lose in the Final.

We were also well-represented at the 2 Indoor tournaments at Soham and John Cundell and Richard won the one in which we took part in January.

Richard paid tribute to John and Len for organising all the home events so well and to all those members who helped out with time-keeping, scoring, catering and general preparation. He also thanked Tony Wells for becoming Fixture Secretary and for his contribution to the organisation of teams and matches.

He remarked that his contribution as Joint-Editor of the Newsletter had paled in comparison with that of John who had been entirely responsible for the October edition. The Newsletter is now published in full on the EACF website and it has been complimented for its quality and interest.

Ann Smith has kindly stepped up to be the Minutes Secretary at committee meetings and her succinct note-taking and quiet efficiency has been much appreciated.

Richard concluded by stating that he had enjoyed being Club secretary for four years and wished his successor well, and assured him or her of the full support from the Officers and Committee.

I'm sure all members will join me in thanking Richard for the superb stint as our Secretary for those four years. His efficiency, legal knowledge and sheer enthusiasm for the game and for the club and members, has moved us on over those four years to a club that is growing, developing, and which is acknowledged as one the friendliest and successful in terms of all golf croquet activities in the East Anglia Federation and area. We are a force to be reckoned with at competitions, yet have retained our approach to welcoming others both young and old to take part in



Presentation of trophies and certificates at the Annual General Meeting in November. The details of what was won are listed in the 'Trophies Presented' paragraph below and we are sure you will know all these fine people - but for the record they are (top, left to right) Margaret Brown with our new Secretary Roger Stroud - and to the right of Roger you can just see the top of one of our fine new scoring stands; Val Jeffers; Len and Eve Buckingham; Tom Miller; whilst at left are Judith and Una Pengelly; and right Richard Keighley and John Cundell. Photos by Judith Cundell.



croquet - much of this due to Richard's enthusiasm. Once again, our hearty thanks for a job well done. We look forward to seeing you on the new lawns.

Although we did not have a nomination for Secretary at the AGM, immediately after the meeting Roger Stroud bravely stepped forward, and his offer was accepted with open arms. Roger has stepped into the task with efficiency and enthusiasm and we warmly welcome him to the job and I am sure that all members will be gentle with him initially!

### Len Buckingham's report

Treasurer Len presented accounts kindly audited by Marjorie Cliffe for the period to 31st October 2007 where the closing balance was £2,214. The meeting gave authority for £1,000 to be spent on the lawns if required.

It was subsequently agreed that the Subscription Rate for 2008 should remain at £50.

### Amendment to Constitution

The Social Club which was started in 2006 by Len as an experiment has been successful, and after discussion it was agreed unanimously "To amend the Objects clause (Clause 2) of the Constitution by the insertion of the words 'and associated activities.'" The Club meets every Wednesday morning at Pages Park Pavilion between 10am and 12 noon and is financially self supporting - so much so that to date almost £400 has been raised after operating expenses which has gone into the main club funds.

A new copy of the Club Constitution will be appended to our next newsletter in March so that all members have an up-to-date copy.

If you are looking for a friendly social morning where you can join upwards of 10 club members and friends, playing card games, dominoes, snooker, table tennis, Scrabble,

chess, and other games, etc. - or simply just enjoy a coffee or tea and a biscuit - all provided for the princely sum of £2 per morning, then you know where to come.

### Club Dinner

Sally Clay kindly agreed to arrange the Club Dinner and as all members will know, the date is 8th February at Tilsforth Golf Centre and we can report that the event is fully booked with 38 attending.

### Trophies presented

Before the party commenced, Chairman Margaret had the pleasant duty of presenting the Club's trophies. The Club Handicap Singles Trophy went to Roger Stroud and the Runner Up Shield to Len Buckingham; the Club Doubles Trophy to Una & Judith Pengelly and Runner-up Shield to John Cundell & Richard Keighley and the Club Singles Trophy to Richard Keighley with the Runner-up Shield to Tom Miller.

She also presented certificates to members who had contributed outstanding service to the Club, namely Val Jeffers, Eve Buckingham and John Fogg. She thanked John Cundell and Len Buckingham for their efforts during the year.

Finally, amidst enthusiastic applause, she thanked Richard Keighley for his services as Club Secretary over 4 years.

### 2008 Dates for your Diary

#### February

8 Club Dinner

#### March

15/16 Soham Indoor Croquet (Contact Tony Wells on 01525 379107 if interested)

19 Committee Meeting

29 EACF AGM - Bury St Edmunds

- 29 LAWNS OPEN AT PAGES PARK (Weather permitting)
- TBA Club Grass Roots (Provisional)
- April**
- 5/6? Official Opening of the Club season
- 12 Coaching Course at Wrest Park (Contact Richard Keighley on 01296 681235 for details)
- 26 Coaching Course (1 day) at Blewbury (-1-2H)
- 30 Last day for entries to NT tournaments
- May**
- 10/11 East Anglian Open Championship at Colchester
- June**
- 4 Committee Meeting
- 4 Fun Evening Wrest Park
- 14 B-Level event Northampton
- 22 Wrest Park Singles
- July**
- 6 Club Fun Day (Provisional)
- 5 NT Golf Doubles at Ickworth
- 12 Club Handicap Singles (Provisional)
- 20 Wrest Park Doubles
- 20 Level Singles Tournament at Ipswich (Entries by 31st May)
- 23 Fun Evening Wrest Park
- 30 Committee Meeting
- August**
- TBA Club Garden Party
- September**
- 6 B-Level event at Colchester (0-4 Handicaps)
- 7 NT Singles at Ickworth
- 13/14 EACF League Finals at Newport
- 13/14 Centre Stage Finals at Northampton
- 17 Committee Meeting
- 20/21 All England Handicap (0-6H) Final at East Dorset
- 27/(28) Club Doubles (Provisional)
- October**
- 4/(5) Club Singles (Provisional)

The dates for other Club events will be published in the March newsletter, including Club Handicap, Fun Day, Garden Party plus the League Matches, Friendlies, Centre Stage, etc.

Anyone wishing to enter the NT events or the Level Singles Tournament at Ipswich should contact Tony Wells or John Cundell for entry forms before the closing dates above.

### **Prospects for the season**

Weather permitting, it is hoped to make the lawns available for play by members from Saturday 29th March with the Official Opening planned for 5/6th April.

The Committee hopes that some members may like to become coaches or referees. Courses will take place at various venues throughout the year. Further information available from Margaret Brown on 01525 373860.

Last season, there was little take up of places for the National Trust tournaments at Ickworth. In the circumstances, the Committee only proposes to apply for places for 2008 if members indicate they would like to take part by 25th April latest. Entry Fee is £5 per pair and £3 per person for the singles. Please see calendar for dates.

It is proposed to invite players from other local clubs to join in a tournament organised on "Grass Roots" lines for beginners and high handicappers. No date yet fixed.

Details of EACF League fixtures are awaited. The Committee proposes to adopt a policy of selecting the strongest available team, by reference to handicap and perhaps form, for each match. Members who wish to be considered for selection by John, Len & Tony will be invited to enroll at the beginning of the season.

Various B Class tournaments (players of say 4-1 handicaps) are being organised for good Club players by the Croquet Association or local Federations. These are shown on the Calendar. If you are interested, please notify John or Tony.

**The Committee agreed that playing sessions for 2008 will be Tuesday afternoon (Singles Handicap) 2-4pm; Wednesday and Thursday mornings 10am-1pm; Saturday afternoon 2-5pm; Sunday morning (Singles Handicap) 10-12noon; Sunday afternoon 2-5pm. We will not be repeating the evening trial as that was not successful for a number of reasons.**

### **Other matters**

#### *1. Press Communicator!*

For the last four years Richard Keighley, John Cundell and John Fogg submitted reports about club activities to the local press. It would be excellent if we could find a volunteer to take over this task for 2008. It is not a particularly onerous task, but John is already well committed with club duties and Roger is in his first year as Secretary. It simply involves compiling a brief report with a photo or two (we can help with the photography part) of club events and submitting this to the Observer and Citizen offices either by hand, post or preferably email within a day or so of the event.

If any member is prepared to take this on please contact Roger or John.

#### *2. Lawn care*

Now we have two full size lawns which are in excellent condition after the rain, can members please make sure that they only wear flat shoes when playing. It was noticed that a number turned up last year with high heels - and they were not all female!

#### *3. Scoring Stands*

Those who attended the AGM were very impressed with the scoring stand that had been kindly made for the Club by a neighbour of Len's, one Nigel Clark, who owns a manufacturing company in Leighton Buzzard that makes lightweight metal stands for the music/audio industry. After discussion with Martin Field and Len, and some experimentation, the finished item duly appeared at the AGM. We are pleased to report that through Nigel's generosity, the club now owns eight! of these scoring stands.

What we now need are willing volunteers at our League and Friendly matches to operate the stands which are simple to use and removes the fumbling around with bits of paper, etc. Perhaps there is a member who would be prepared to take this over as Scoring Organiser for the season? If so please contact Len or John.

And of course we would like to register our profuse thanks to Nigel for his generosity. It is hoped we may see him and his wife playing at Pages this year.

#### *4. Other help at events*

There are always numerous small tasks at our events - looking after visitors' needs, making drinks, just keeping an eye on things in general, etc. So please don't be shy - just offer your services and muck in!



Living History Heritage Day in Leighton Buzzard in October was blessed with a reasonable day that was at least dry, and after a slow start Len turned himself into a sandwich board man and circulated All Saints Church, emerging with a throng of visitors which kept us very busy for a couple of hours. Richard Keighley and Tony Stammers stood just inside the church gates and directed people to the Vicarage Gardens where amongst others, Margaret Brown was soon getting involved with some obviously happy players.



### 5. School Sports Partnership

At the Sports Council meeting earlier this month, attended by Margaret Brown and George Lawson, a representative of the Schools Sports Partnership was present and urged clubs to 'tap into the considerable funding available to encourage youngsters to take part in sports.' The Sports Council is to organise a series of taster sessions for children in the summer holidays and asked if our club could offer some. Following discussion at Committee it was agreed to offer four 90 minute sessions on Wednesday afternoons during August. This offer will go to the March meeting of the Sports Council so that the programme of 'Taster Sessions' can be widely publicised. We will probably need some extra helpers with the children so if this does come about and you would like to help then contact Margaret initially.

### Living History Heritage Day

This is one of the town's most popular events, arranged by the Town Council, and the theme for last October's event was 'Popular Pastimes'.

We set up a small croquet lawn on the Vicarage Gardens at All Saints Church - by kind permission of Father Grant Fellows - together with our gazebo and information about the Club.

After a quiet start with just one or two visitors taking a look, things really picked up and for a couple of hours we had adults and children queuing up to 'have-a-go'. At the end of the day around 60 people had tried our sport and a

number said they would have a look at Pages Park when the season starts - and would consider joining. Whether or not we gain any new members is immaterial as we really succeeded in raising our profile in the town which can only help our cause.

We received a letter of thanks from the Leisure & Promotions Officer Donna Hughes, who commented that there was a lot of interest in our display and that visitors appreciated the opportunity to learn a little more about the many leisure activities available locally.

We would like to thank those members who helped with set up and who acted as guides during the day - also those in the Church who loaned us tables, etc.

### Match Reports Soham Indoor - December

The only competitive events during our close season are the indoor matches at Soham. Enthusiastic croquet players from clubs throughout East Anglia gathered at the Ross Peers Sports Centre on 15th December for the first Indoor Golf Croquet Pairs Tournament of the close season. A second event is scheduled for 15/16th March - see calendar for contact details.

We were represented this time by three pairs - Irene Davis and Margaret Brown, Una and Judith Pengelly, John Cundell and Richard Keighley.

Probably mainly due to the closeness to Christmas, there was a smaller entry than previous years, with three teams

from us, two from Hunstanton, one from Bury and one from Downham. The format this time did not involve semis and finals after block play - every team simply played against the others, six matches, and the result was decided on wins, then hoops for and against.

Richard and John got off to a fine start and continued this with four straight wins, and although they rather fell apart in the afternoon with two losses, managed to retain

#### Soham Results

	Wins	Losses	Draws
Leighton 1 (RK&JC)	4	2	0
Downham	3	3	0
Hunstanton A	3	2	1
Hunstanton B	3	2	1
Leighton 2 (UP&JP)	2	3	1
Bury	2	2	2
Leighton 3 (ID&MB)	1	4	1

the title they won last year. The winners received a bottle of fine red wine.

#### Club Badges

There are still some Club Badges available. If you want one for this season then get in quick as the supplies are running low. 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 400512.

#### Social/Welfare Officer

Members will have noticed from the earlier list that Judith Cundell is continuing in this post for 2008, so if you are aware of any member who may benefit from a card and some kind thoughts, please contact Judith on 01525 374620.



The first few days of 2008 saw the sad passing of two good friends of Leighton Linslade Croquet Club.

#### JOHN CHRISTOPHER FOGG 1942-2008



John Fogg lost his long and courageous battle with cancer on 7th January.

John was the Club's Membership Secretary for several years, a part which he ably fulfilled until his death.

There was a private committal at Crownhill Crematorium for family only, followed a

few days later by a Service of Celebration of John's life at All Saints Church, Leighton Buzzard. The packed church heard testimonies from friends and colleagues of John, and everyone joined in the hearty singing of some well chosen hymns.

Those of us who had only known John in recent years were interested to hear of his earlier life, especially his involvement in the scouting movement from the age of 8, graduating to be a Scout Leader - and then to Scout HQ where he was Director of Communications



John in a typical photographer's pose.

until he retired when his illness started to take its toll.

The Service was a joyful celebration of John's life, notwithstanding the loss we all felt. I feel sure John was looking down, approving and appreciating the whole thing.

We will miss John at Pages Park - his refusal to take the game too seriously, his barracking from the sidelines, his ability to always have a camera pointing in the right direction at the right time, and above all, his wicked sense of humour.

Our condolences go to Erica and family at this sad time.

*Erica and family have asked us to convey their thanks to all club members for their cards, and donations to the Macmillan Cancer Support Fund.*

#### JAMES ARTHUR PHELPS 1928-2008



On 2nd January, 'Jim' Phelps - husband of Diana - died after a very short illness. Although not a member of the Croquet Club, Jim was known to many of us, and was for several years, the welcoming host of the Club Garden Party.

Jim's funeral at Crownhill Crematorium was attended by so many friends that some found it was standing room only. Along with his family were friends from his childhood, work, and the many clubs of which he and Diana were members.

Our condolences go to Diana and family at this sad time.

*Judith Cundell*

## Membership Fee Due - NO INCREASE!!!

It's that time of the year again - the membership fee is due. Accompanying the newsletter is a membership application form for the 2008 season.

Please complete this and send with the appropriate remittance to the Membership Secretary, Judith Cundell, whose contact details are on the form and on the masthead of this newsletter. If you have an email address please include this as we would like to send as many newsletters and other communications as possible by email to reduce postage and delivery costs.