



LEIGHTON-LINSLADE CROQUET CLUB

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Founded 2000

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“Season So Far”



Our Opening Day back in May was fortunate to find a gap between the showers on what was a pretty cold and wet weekend, as Mayor Councillor Adam Fahn made the opening shots - not as exciting as wheelie-bin racing - but he seemed to enjoy himself.

Welcome to the third newsletter of 2008. This includes an update on the season so far, some ‘housekeeping’, and includes an invitation to the annual Garden Party.

2008 Dates for your Diary

July

- 12 Club Handicap Singles
- 20 Wrest Park Doubles
- 23 Fun Evening Wrest Park
- 27 Fun Day (Original event cancelled due to weather)
- 30 Committee Meeting

August

- 6 Taster sessions for local children (see below)
- 13 Taster sessions for local children (see below)
- 16 Club Garden Party
- 20 Taster sessions for local children (see below)
- 27 Taster sessions for local children (see below)

September

- 6 B-Level event at Colchester (0-4 Handicaps)
- 13/14 EACF League Finals at Newport
- 17 Committee Meeting
- 27/(28) Club Doubles

October

4/(5) Club Singles

November

14 Club AGM and Party

Season so far

Coaching Course at Wrest Park

The first ‘organised’ event of the season on 12th April was Richard Keighley’s Coaching Course, which actually took place at Wrest Park, and a number of our members attended. Jean Ball reports:

“What a good day we had! 16 people arrived at 9.30am in the really chilly wind all dressed up like eskimos, me especially. There were four of us from Leighton-Linslade. The weather was very kind to us although it threatened to rain all day. Our tutors divided us into fours and we had some expert coaching, each group having a lawn. Their patience and kindness was overwhelming. After lunch we had a ‘pep talk’ on the rule changes before going out again to play and learn a few more skills. Let’s hope we’ll be able to remember it all and put it into practise!”

“Our thanks go to Richard Keighley for arranging the event and also to Margaret Brown for keeping us supplied with liquid refreshment throughout the day. If anyone has



The Friendly against Watford was our first opportunity to use the new scoring system - Irene & Peter Davis, and Irene & Peter Stevens in action. Left: will George Lawson run this hoop - watched by Watford's Roger Nicholls and Janet Lewis, and wife Margaret.

not been on one of these coaching days, then they are certainly missing out. Do try one, they are not only very informative but also great fun. From two very grateful beginners - Jean & David Ball.”

Golf Croquet Inter-Club

The Club joined the higher echelons of the Golf Croquet world on Thursday, 22nd May, by entering a team in the All England Inter Club Knockout Competition. The first round, at Broadwas near Worcester, necessitated a 200 mile round trip, leaving Leighton Buzzard at 6.30am. The Broadwas club has a glorious setting and the company and lunch were excellent. Unfortunately on this particular occasion LLCC's play was not, and the match was lost by 2 games to 5. Many of the games were very closely fought and the results determined by a single hoop. Also, home advantage came into effect as there was a gentle slope across the lawns which took some getting used to – so the score line was not as bad as it first appears.

Nevertheless, it was the club's first appearance in a national competition and valuable experience was gained by our team members - Richard Keighley, Eve Buckingham, Judith Pengelly, Len Buckingham and

George Lawson – who arrived back in Leighton Buzzard at 7.30pm, a little disappointed and tired, but nevertheless having had a very enjoyable day. There's always next year.

Watford Friendly

On 6th June, we played host to members of Watford Croquet Club for a friendly match.

The home team comprised the pairings of Sally Clay with Una Pengelly, Tony Wells with Diana Phelps, Margaret and George Lawson, and Eve and Len Buckingham. Each pair played a doubles game against four Watford pairs. After the first round, things looked somewhat bleak as Watford - this year sporting six new players - enjoyed a clean sweep 4-0. However a spirited comeback in round two gave us three wins from four games, and duly fortified by lunch, we halved the third round and then put in a superb performance in the last round to take all four games. The overall result was nine wins to seven in LL's favour. Well done to all concerned.

One-Ball Croquet

On Sunday mornings, 1st and 8th June, Howard Bottomley from Wrest Park, kindly visited Pages Park to



Our first League match was against Wrest Park which we won 11-7. At left we have Roger Stroud waiting for Wrest Park's Ann Lee to take her shot, with scorers Tony Stammers and Richard Keighley watching on. Right: Sally Clay lines up her shot playing against Judy Priestley. Below left: Roger Stroud and Bryan Ferris in action in the Doubles match; middle: Judith Cundell joins Tony Stammers on scoring duty; right: Val Jeffers looks to see if it's through or not in her match against Peggy Kenny.



show us the game of One-Ball croquet. This is a much simplified version of Association Croquet and the rules are very simple. To play the game you need to be able to understand roquets, use rolling shots and angle shots - not difficult when explained by Howard and those who attended soon got the hang of it. Whilst these types of shots are not used frequently in Golf Croquet, there are occasions when they are very useful - and the need to be able to hit other balls from a distance in this game certainly rapidly improves one's accuracy.

It was a shame that despite the publicity given to this event in the clubroom only four club members turned up on the first weekend - and eight on the second. Both weekends were blessed with fine weather, especially on the 8th.

If anyone is interested in learning more about the game they can contact John Cundell, Tony Wells, or Len & Eve Buckingham.

We extend our grateful thanks to Howard.

Fun Evening - Wrest Park

Irene Davis' first Fun Evening of 2008 was held on 4th June. The weather was good and some 24 people, including a fair number of LL members, enjoyed a very pleasant evening. The format is straightforward - you play a short 20 minute doubles game with any one of the 24 people, then the winners move on to the next lawn and change partners. This continues for a couple of hours play - you note your hoops won, and the winner is the person with the most number of hoops. The winner was our David Ball who was really on form.

The next evening is on 23rd July. There might still be places left, so if interested contact Irene on 01525 210260.

EACF League Match - Wrest Park

Our first game in the 2008 East Anglian Croquet Federation League took place at a cool but dry Page's Park on Friday 13th June, which turned out to be a lucky day for LLCC. Opponents were Wrest Park, near Silsoe.

At the end of the first three singles rounds, results were all square with six games each - our winners being Sally Clay (1), Roger Stroud (2), Bryan Ferris (2), and Val Jeffers (1).

However after lunch, duly fortified, we produced a fine clean sweep, taking all four games in the remaining singles round - and then shared the two doubles games with Wrest Park. The overall result was a more than satisfactory win for LL by 11 games to 7.

Four more matches remain - Watford (see below), Letchworth, Stony Stratford and Northampton.

Wrest Park Singles

Sorry, but I don't have a report on this.

EACF League Match - Watford

Again, I don't have a report on this match - just the results. The match was at Watford on 27th June and was won by Watford with 12 games against our 6. Our team of Martin Field, Val Jeffers, Len & Eve Buckingham put up a good fight, but it was not to be our day.

Fun Day

The Fun Day planned for 6th July was cancelled due to inclement weather, although five hardy souls turned up to support Tony Stammers. It will now be held on Sunday 27th July, starting at 2.00pm.

Club Handicap Singles - 12/13th July
Entrants were drawn into the following blocks by an unbiased member on 6th July. Please note the event will start at 9.00am on the 12th. It will only need to run into Sunday if we suffer inclement weather.

Block 1: Erica Fogg, Margaret Brown, Irene Davis, Diana Phelps, Tony Wells.

Block 2: Tony Stammers, George Lawson, John Cundell, Sally Clay, David Ball.

Block 3: Val Jeffers, Tom Miller, Bryan Ferris, Sheila Beal, Norma Morris.

Childrens' Taster Sessions - 'Give it a Go'

Under the School Sports Partnership scheme 'Give it a Go' campaign, publicised by the LB Observer, there will be taster sessions for children during the school holidays on the Wednesday afternoons in August listed in the Diary above. We will need Club members to assist in helping the children go round the course - please contact Margaret Brown if you can help.

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. It is not particularly onerous, but your Editor and Secretary are already well committed with other Club duties. 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.

Hoop Placing/Removal

There have been a number of occasions recently where the incorrect hoops have been used. The 'Townsend's' (the name is on the top bar of the hoop) must go on Lawn 1 - nearest the clubroom; and the 'Davidson's' on Lawn 2. The reason is that the hoop sets have different shapes and spacing on their pegs which go into the lawn, and using them incorrectly leaves large holes and incorrect spacing, which leads to loose hoops and extra maintainance.

Also, when removing hoops, please don't waggle them sideways to loosen them as again this makes the holes large. Just a gentle tap on the underside of the top bar with the mallet will loosen them.

Scoring Stands & Scoring Manager

As reported in the last newsletter the club now owns eight superb scoring stands. We are pleased to report that four of these were used for the Friendly against Watford and the League match against Wrest Park, under the overall management of Irene Davis. Our visitors were much impressed and they added a really professional touch and were of tremendous help to players, organisers, and spectators. Our grateful thanks to Irene and the club members and friends who turned up to man the stands under chilly but dry conditions.

If you would like to help in the future then simply pop your name in the appropriate column on the entry forms for the various events as they appear in the clubroom.

Club Membership

We currently have 53 members - the highest in the club's history.

Complaints

We understand that three members have expressed misgivings about a) the handicaps being published; b) members addresses on display in the Clubroom; and c) emphasis on competition play which made some people feel 'left out'.

The committee wishes to reassure members that such comments are considered as soon as they are brought to a committee member's attention.

As Editor I would add the following comments:

a) If we are going to play Handicap games it is essential that the cards, and therefore why not the current listing, be displayed in the Clubroom

b) The address list was removed as soon as this was brought to my attention and changed to just telephone details and email addresses. This is again essential as there have been a number of occasions when we have had to locate players for events on the day due to unforeseen circumstances.

c) There is not an 'emphasis' on competition play - but to be realistic surely the prime idea of playing any game is to at least have some desire to do well and hopefully win. It is appreciated that some members join purely for the social aspect and/or exercise - and our club's policy has always been to try and involve members of all levels of experience to mix in. That is the whole idea behind the card/peg system - to stop 'elitism'. Having visited and talked to other clubs' members, it is apparent that we are most successful at this and a number have joined our club purely because of our friendly/welcoming attitude. Our increasing membership level proves the point.

However there are many members who also want to improve their game, gain experience, and to compete at an ever improving level, and to take the club onto successful competition. If that's not for you then there is no problem. We have four sessions a week devoted to 'social' play and only two to slightly more competitive play - and all our competitions are played outside the normal sessions. No-one is forced into competitions - the choice is yours.

Cards/Pegs

John and Len have received a number of complaints via third parties that a few members are not happy with the card/peg systems we use to designate playing sequences on busy days.

The card system was initiated immediately after the first good weather day we had. Four people got to the session early to put out the hoops etc. - then the 20 plus others arrived - the peg system was then used and two of those who got there early to prepare didn't get a game for over an hour. So we came up with the numbers idea which has worked well, despite some early teething problems. It does exactly the same as the peg system if used correctly. On the first day we used it - a handicap afternoon - some 18

people enjoyed three to four games each against different opponents. It saves all the confusion that seems to arise after initial peg selection when most people manage not to listen or note who they are playing with and on which lawn.

The committee's suggestion is that we utilise the card system for the first round and switch to pegs for subsequent play.

It's not possible for Len, myself and George to always be around to make sure that people follow the system. It is amazing how often a group finishes a game then sits around waiting for everyone else to finish until the usual trio motivate them into action!

Croquet Association Membership

It was agreed at the June committee meeting that it would be beneficial for the Club, both financially and for better information, to become a full rather than an associate member Club of the Croquet Association. This change is in hand.

Dogs

Some members dislike or are not happy with dogs close to or within the clubroom. Those members with dogs have been approached and have agreed that their animals will be tied up away from the clubroom door.

10th Anniversary

As Margaret Brown mentioned in her report to the Annual General Meeting last November, 2009 will be our 10th Anniversary. It would be excellent if we could lay on something special in the way of celebrating this, so if you have any ideas, then please let Roger Stroud know. His number is 01582 873793.

'Instant' newsletter

If you included your email address when you completed this year's membership form, you will have received this newsletter via email. If you still receive yours through the post and now have an email address then please email john.cundell@btinternet.com.

Club Badges

There are still some Club Badges available. If you want one 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. A number are always available at the Clubroom.

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.

AND FINALLY - FOOTBALL HOOLIGANS STRIKE AGAIN!

After all the hard work by the Council's ground staff and the fencing and notices which we hoped would put an end to the use of our lawns for football, etc., it is extremely discouraging and frustrating to report that in late June, on a Thursday evening, a large group of young teenagers played five-a-side football, causing stud damage etc., to both lawns. They even brought their own goalposts!

Very disappointing.



GARDEN PARTY

We will be holding a Garden Party for Members plus guest(s) at 135 Hockliffe Road on Saturday 16th August from 3.00pm - only £3.00 per person

AFTERNOON TEA - PLUS TEA, COFFEE, SOFT DRINKS PROVIDED but please bring your own alcoholic drink and glass!

Please send the Booking Form together with your cheque made out to 'Leighton-Linslade Croquet Club' to:

**Len Buckingham,
2 St. Mary's Glebe,
Edlesborough,
Nr Dunstable, Beds.
LU6 2RB**



by 9th August at the latest!