



LEIGHTON-LINSLADE CROQUET CLUB

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“A New Year - A New Start?”

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2011. Happy New Year to all members and friends. In the first newsletter of 2010 we looked ahead to a busy year and the inauguration of our third lawn. The busy year certainly transpired and as well as all our ‘normal’ club and friendly events, we ran two League teams, took part in the new Inter-Club Murphy Shield where we narrowly lost the quarter final at Belsay Hall near Newcastle, and a number of members entered ‘open’ events at clubs ranging from south of the Thames to Ipswich, Hunstanton, Birmingham and Nottingham.

The third lawn was available shortly after the season started but unfortunately a combination of very wet weather in the late Winter, some vandalism and a plague of dandelions meant that the surface was not quite up to a good playing standard.

Members who attended the AGM will have been brought up to date as to what has been a momentous year behind the scenes, during which Tom Miller and Richard Keighley have been involved in complicated and far reaching meetings with the Town Council concerning the future of our club. The information update that was given at the AGM by Tom Miller is reported here and every member is requested to take note as the eventual outcome of the meetings and the subsequent agreement - which we are hopeful will be in place before the start of this season, will affect all members.

Club happenings since the last newsletter in October 2010 were all off the lawns - the award of a Croquet Association Diploma to John Cundell on 16th October, and also a ‘Service Towards Sport Award’ to John from the Leighton Linslade Sports Council in January; the Annual General Meeting on November 12th; and the indoor golf croquet competition at Soham on 13/14th November.

The Croquet Association AGM - and CA Diploma for John Cundell

Members will recall from the previous newsletter the following paragraphs from Roger Stroud.

“During the summer myself and Tom Miller felt it appropriate to nominate John for a Croquet Association Diploma for his services to both our club and also the Croquet Association. Our nomination read as follows:”

John is the Vice Chairman of our club and is a driving force behind everything that we do. This includes clubhouse and courts maintenance and internal and external competitions organiser. He is a CA and club coach and our club handicapper. John also assists with coaching at other clubs. Prior to matches or tournaments, he can always be seen checking the condition of the courts and the precise measurement of the hoops. On match morning he is invariably first there, putting up gazebos and making



John Cundell receiving a Croquet Association Diploma from CA President Quiller Barrett. Amongst the other winners was Watford's Janet Lewis (2nd from the left in the group photograph; JC is 5th from the left.) Right; Judith Cundell with Watford's Roger Nicholls and Janet at left. Photos: Elizabeth Larsson, Roger Nicholls.)



any other last minute preparations.

During the past four years, he has been actively involved in the development of the courts from two overlapping courts to our current position of three full size, fenced courts. Our courts are part of a public park and John has developed a good working relationship with the Town Council groundstaff, to ensure on-going court maintenance, achieving a good standard for EACF league and CA Inter Club matches.

John has also produced the club's respected quarterly newsletter since January 2004.

Earlier this year John - jointly with another of our members, Richard Keighley, updated the CA ‘Guide to Golf Croquet’.

John's commitment and enthusiasm for the game of

croquet, plus his service to the Leighton-Linslade Croquet Club and the wider croquet community, is an inspiration to all.

We recently heard from the CA that John has been awarded a diploma and would be presented with it at the CA AGM at The Hurlingham Club on October 16th, accompanied by Judith.”

Thank you Roger for your kind words which are much appreciated.

So, on the fine Saturday morning of 16th October, Judith and myself drove down to the Hurlingham Club which borders the Thames in Fulham and is set in 42 acres of magnificent grounds. The Hurlingham Club is a green oasis of tradition and international renown, recognised throughout the world as one of Britain’s greatest private members’ clubs. It retains its quintessentially English traditions and heritage, while providing modern facilities and services for its members – including of course some fine croquet facilities. We were very politely directed to the parking area a few yards from the fine headquarters of the house. At reception we asked directions to the meeting room, and a few moments later we met a contingent of six Watford players including Roger Nicholls and Janet Lewis – and were pleased to find out that Janet was also to be awarded a CA Diploma for the good work she has carried out for Watford club during her 14 years membership. So after a refreshing drink in one of the many restaurants/cafes in the club, we made our way to the meeting room – a beautiful room packed with CA members. We did not make an exact count but a rough estimation was at least 70 members.

The President, Quiller Barrett opened the meeting promptly at 11.00am and smoothly and efficiently took the meeting through the Chairman Patricia Duke-Cox’s report; the presentation of Accounts; election of Secretary, Treasurer, Accountant; and then voting on some changes to the CA Constitution – mainly procedural matters on voting rights for Individual Associates and Member Clubs. He then moved on to election of Council Members before we got to the presentations part of the meeting. All the above was handled within 45 minutes.

Initially there were presentations to Most Improved Players – most of these being Association players, followed

by Coach of the Year award and Council medals to those who have given long service to the CA Council. We then got to the award of the Diplomas – there were twenty presented and for alphabetical reasons I was the first up to be presented with the Diploma by Quiller Barrett who gave a brief resume of the accompanying notes about each recipient – which were also supplied printed in full for all members present. Shortly after me, Watford’s Janet Lewis received her Diploma. Other recipients came from Weston Super Mare, Northampton, Durham, Ashby, Canterbury, Cheltenham, Sussex County, Southport & Birkdale, Llanfairfechan, Woking, Crawley, Bowden, Tyneside and Dyffryn.

Finally, Keith Aiton who was Captain of the Great Britain team that recently won the MacRobertson Shield, an absolutely magnificent trophy, was again congratulated on the fine and excitingly close win, and he was very magnanimous in his praise and thanks for all who had helped the event to be such a success. (This competition is regarded as the Association Croquet World Team Championship and has been played 20 times since 1925 with Great Britain winning on eight occasions previous to 2010 – no pressure then! The other teams came from Australia, New Zealand, and the United States.)

The meeting closed just after 12.15pm and we made our way outside for the official and unofficial photographs to be taken, then it was off to the bar and restaurant for lunch, following which Janet Lewis, who has played Association games at Hurlingham, took us on a guided tour round the grounds – very impressive. Taking leave of our good friends from Watford, we made our way back along the A4/M4/M25 having enjoyed a super day.

Once again I would thank Roger and the committee for putting my name forward for this award. I am very honoured and hope that the award helps in some small way to put our club further forward on the Croquet map. I am also well aware that there are a number of people in our club who I consider are more deserving than myself and that the award is also in some small way a thanks to them as well.

Annual General Meeting

The 11th Annual General Meeting was held at Northall



Above left; members await the presentation of awards. Right; Mix ‘n Match Handicap Doubles winners John Thorp and Peter Stevens; Sheila Beal was one of the runners up - her partner Sally Clay was in ‘Oz’.



Two new trophies were donated by Erica Fogg - the first was the Mix 'n Match Ladies Doubles - winners were Eve Buckingham and Margaret Lawson, the latter on holiday - runners up were Judith Pengelly and Caroline Stroud - the latter was unable to be present. The second award was The John Fogg Trophy, won by John Cundell and David Ball, and runners up (far right) were Richard Keighley and Roy Kemp. Right; Richard Keighley and John Cundell sign an archive copy of their 'Guide to Golf Croquet' book available from The Croquet Association.



Village Hall on Friday 12th November 2010, and the meeting started promptly at 7.30pm as our Chairman Tom Miller welcomed some 31 members and our Examiner of Accounts, Marjorie Cliffe. Secretary Roger Stroud then gave 17 apologies for absence.

The Minutes of the 2009 AGM were duly approved. We had circulated the Officer's Reports together with the last 2010 newsletter before the AGM therefore they were not repeated verbatim at the meeting, but updated as appropriate.

Accordingly Chairman Tom initially apologised that his report was a bit lengthy due to what has been a difficult year – the main reasons of which had been detailed in his written report. However before continuing with the update, he wished to pay tribute to Len Buckingham and Tony Wells who had a difficult year with hospital problems, and Roger Stroud with house problems, and had soldiered on in their club roles.

Tom outlined the problem we encountered at the beginning of the year with respect to the Social Club where we were informed by the Town Council that the hire fee was to rise retrospectively by a large amount. Tom presented our case to the Leisure and Community Committee and thankfully the increase was rescinded until April 2010. For this Winter Tom presented an amended strategy to the L&C Committee in October – after information was gained by Len, Tony Stammers and John Cundell on alternative venues. The L&CC resolved that we would be charged an increase of 2% until April 2011, and then 5% until April 2012 – which all concerned considered was a good result.

Tom then moved on to our endeavours to obtain a written agreement with the Town Council to give us some security of tenure beyond the single season. A great deal of work has gone on through the year by Tom, assisted by Richard Keighley and support from the Committee, and Tom was pleased to be able to report that hopefully we will have an agreement in place for the start of the 2011 season which will give us tenure for six years. If approved the club will

be taking on some of the maintenance tasks for the lawns which will of course create additional expenditure.

Tom announced he would be retiring as Chairman from the AGM but stated that he was willing to continue, along with Richard, the progress of the agreement with the TC as required. A proposal from David Ball to accept the Chairman's Report and statement to the meeting was seconded by John Thorp and accepted unanimously.

Secretary Roger Stroud thanked Tom Miller and Richard Keighley for the immense work they had carried out for well over a year now, with support from other members, in the negotiations with the TC which should give us a fine base for the future.

Roger also remarked that our newsletter is very well respected and enjoyed not only by our club members, but by many other clubs. It was this that prompted Roger, assisted by Tom, to approach the Croquet Association to suggest John Cundell be awarded a CA Diploma, that he was duly presented with at the CA AGM in October.

The Treasurer also started his report by stating that all members owed an awful lot to Tom and Richard for their superb work. He then presented examined accounts for the period to 31st October 2010. The closing balance was satisfactory and our careful strategy for many years would now assist with the extra costs to be entailed by our new relationship with the TC. He then stated that the initial subscription proposal in his written report would probably result in a shortfall but this could be covered initially by our capital balance.

Also in 2011 we will be paying the full Croquet Association levy as was agreed at previous AGMs; this is considered better value than individual insurance fees that would otherwise be necessary.

He also remarked on the excellent flexibility we have in being able to play at any time. The membership fee for 2012 will depend on our actual costs for 2011. **The proposal for 2011 subscription fee of £65 was seconded and agreed unanimously.**

Marjorie Cliffe kindly agreed to stand as our Accounts



The Handicap Singles Champion was John Thorp - runner up John Cundell. The scratch Doubles Champions were David and Jean Ball with John Cundell and Tom Miller runners up.

Examiner once again and was duly proposed, seconded and passed unanimously.

The Secretary's and Treasurer's reports were then duly proposed, seconded and also accepted by the meeting unanimously.

Officers, Committee and Specific Duty Appointments

Tom then stated that he was retiring and that David Ball had been nominated as Chairman and was duly elected unanimously. David stated he was honoured to serve.

Officers

Chairman	David Ball
Secretary	Roger Stroud
Treasurer	Len Buckingham

Committee

Ex officio members

Vice Chairman	John Cundell
Fixture Secretary	Tony Wells

Members

Val Jeffers	Tony Stammers
Eve Buckingham	John Thorp

Specific Duties & Non-Executive

Membership Sec.	Judith Cundell
Welfare Secretary	Judith Cundell
Competition Organisers & Managers	John Cundell, Len Buckingham, Tony Wells, David Ball
Handicappers	John Cundell, Len Buckingham
Lawn Layout and Maintenance	John Cundell, David Ball, John Thorp, Len Buckingham and Tony Wells
Catering Manager	Val Jeffers
Assisted by	Eve Buckingham, Margaret Lawson, Jean Ball & Judith Cundell
Quartermaster	Eve Buckingham

Newsletter	John Cundell
Registers	Len Buckingham and Judith Cundell
Archivist	Volunteer Required (see below)
Scoring Manager	Irene Davis
Sports Council	Tony Wells
Publicity/Press	David Ball
Child Protection	Richard Keighley
Coaching	Richard Keighley, John Cundell, David Ball, Eve Buckingham
Schools Liaison	Tony Wells
Selection Committee	John Cundell, Len Buckingham, Eve Buckingham, George Lawson, John Thorp & Tony Wells
Safety Officer	John Thorp

Presentation of Awards

Before the main presentation Tom said that there was one person who had helped him tremendously with the negotiations during the year, with invaluable expertise and support, and who should be recognised – and that was Richard Keighley. Tom presented him with a book on the Ashes – cricket is another of Richard's sporting loves.

Secondly, Tom reminded members that the Croquet Association's book on 'A Guide to Golf Croquet' had been updated by Richard and John. Tom then asked them both to sign the book for the club's archives.

Marjorie Cliffe had kindly agreed to present the trophies as follows:

Mix 'n Match

Handicap Doubles

Runners Up

Peter Stevens and John Thorp

Sheila Beal and Sally Clay

Mix 'n Match

Ladies Doubles

Runners Up

Eve Buckingham and Margaret

Lawson

Judith Pengelly and Caroline Stroud

The John Fogg Trophy

Runners Up

David Ball and John Cundell

Richard Keighley and Roy Kemp

Handicap Singles

Runner Up

John Thorp

John Cundell

Doubles

Runners Up

David and Jean Ball

John Cundell and Tom Miller

Singles

Runner Up

David Ball

Sally Clay

Finally, John Cundell and Len Buckingham echoed the appreciative words that had been said about the work of Tom and Richard this year – and John went on to remind Tom that back in 2008, he had remarked to Tom that the Chairman's role was not particularly difficult! John could not have been further from the truth. There was no way we could let Tom move on without some memento of his superb two years. As you can see Marjorie presented him with a lead-crystal whisky glass engraved with the club logo and the words 'Tom Miller O.B.E., Chairman 2009/10'.

Finally we presented Marjorie with a horticultural gift for acting as our Examiner and presenting the awards – and it was stated that a similar gift had been made to Diana Phelps a day previously for graciously allowing us to invade her house and garden for the Annual Garden Party.



Clockwise from top left; David Ball was Singles Champion. Richard Keighley was presented with a book on 'The Ashes' as a thankyou for his invaluable help in 2009/10. Len Buckingham thanked Marjorie Cliffe for performing the presentations. John Cundell with his Croquet Association Diploma. Left; Tom Miller was delighted with his engraved glass.

In Any Other Business Tony Stammers was thanked for organising a very successful raffle and David Ball gave details for the Annual Dinner and booking forms were handed out at the meeting and sent to other members afterwards by email and letter.

Tom closed the meeting by stating that he was absolutely delighted with the gift and that he had considered it an honour to be Chairman over the last two years, but also that he was now looking forward to returning to 'the back benches'.

He reminded us that at last year's AGM he had referred to a statement by the Chairman of Letchworth CC that our club is a beacon for collective contribution to running a club. At the end of the recent meeting with the Town Council the Deputy Town Clerk had remarked that our approach had been very honourable. Tom concluded by saying that if we are known as an honourable club that was more than enough for him and was a great reflection on our members.

David Ball's closing remarks asked for a further round of applause for Tom and Richard's work. David then remarked on what an excellent season we had enjoyed with respect to three lawns; 'A' and 'B' teams in the League – 'A' just missing out on the area win and 'B' with a good run at the end; we travelled to Newcastle for the Inter Club Shield; purchased equipment for hoop setting and lawn plugging; travelled to CA matches at Nottingham, Watford, Edgbaston; friendlies at Hunstanton, Littlehampton, Watford, Stony Stratford, Northampton; indoor at Soham; the update of the 'Guide to Golf Croquet' by Richard and John; plus a lot of fun, enjoyment and competitive and social play; culminating in the CA Diploma to John.

The Treasurer Forgot!

The Treasurer, Len Buckingham, forgot to say in his report to the meeting that in the event of his being unable to carry out the duties of Treasurer at anytime in the future, would someone who is computer and spreadsheet literate be good enough to contact him so that he may introduce them to the system he is using to keep detailed track of the Club's financial affairs.

This will not mean that he or she is agreeing to be Treasurer in the event of his not being available, but will ensure that someone will at least have some idea of how to operate the system. This will make him feel that at no time will the Club be without a person to pass information on to anyone who may become Club Treasurer. Len is on 01525 221079 and would love to hear from you!

Thanks from Tom

"What a wonderful surprise! Thank you all very much for your kind words at the AGM and especially for the magnificent engraved glass. I will treasure it as a permanent reminder of 'exciting times' as Chairman and the continuous improvement that the Club has made throughout its eleven year life."

Soham Indoor Croquet - November 13/14th

There was more interest in this event this year and on Saturday we were represented by Irene and Peter Davis and the two Johns – Cundell and Thorp; whilst on Sunday the pairings were the Balls and the two Tony's – Stammers and Wells. There was a healthy and a strong entry on both days. The report below is from the organiser of the event Chris Howell who once again did a superb job and is to be thanked and commended on her enthusiasm and commitment to this event.

'The golf croquet on Saturday was level play. Competition was keen yet cautious in the early rounds, five teams registering drawn games. These included Letchworth, Leighton-Linslade, Hunstanton and Bury/Ipswich. Post lunch all teams recorded wins having mastered the pace of the carpet and improved their accuracy when running hoops. The Bury St Edmunds/Ipswich pair, Michael Percival and Peter Allnutt were challenging the Hunstanton team of Jeff and Timothy Race for the number one position, unfortunately Michael and Peter recorded a second drawn game and finished as runners-up.

'The atmosphere for Sunday's handicapped play was calmer. Teams carefully weighing up their opponents strengths and weaknesses, selecting when to gain advantage from extra turns. Newport, Leighton-Linslade and Downham Market gained early points but it was the Downham team of David and Heather Mainwaring who



Some of the action from Soham. The two Tony's did well on Sunday and gained second place. Top; Jean Ball going for a hoop - always a challenge at Soham - hit them too soft and the balls can be deflected by the hoop carpet square; hit them hard and unless you are spot on the hoops move! Top right; Peter and Irene playing Letchworth's Peter Ross and partner Ian Mantle - we always enjoy playing this team. Above middle; generations apart as Irene Davis plays Hunstanton's Timothy Race - one of the country's best young players who hits the ball even harder than our Martin Field! Right; it was nice to meet up with friends from Hunstanton on Saturday - Irene and Peter with David Thirtle-Watts and Pat Baillie.



proved to be the most consistent, winning the day.
 Thanks for the report, Chris. On Saturday neither of our teams found their best form and although many of the matches were extremely close we never managed the vital last hoop. On Sunday, the two Tony's ended up second to Downham – so very well done to them.
 The late winter event will be on 12/13th March and teams are already chosen so we hope for a win.

2011 Dates for your Diary

March

- 2 Committee Meeting
- 12/13 Soham Indoor
- 19 EACF AGM - Bury St. Edmunds
- 25 Annual Dinner - Leighton Buzzard Golf Club
- 26 LAWNS OPEN - weather permitting

April

- 2/3 Official Opening (To Be Confirmed)

May

- 14/15 Club 'Mix 'n' Match' Handicap Doubles
- 31 Littlehampton Friendly Away

June

- 4/5 Club Ladies Doubles 'Mix 'n' Match'
- ** Improvers Coaching Day (Date awaited)
- 11 Inter Counties Match at Hunstanton
- 15 Committee Meeting
- 22 B-Level Tournament Wrest Park

July

- 9/10 Club Handicap Singles
- 16/17 Hunstanton Friendly Away

- 24 Club Fun Day
- 24 EACF One Day Level Tournament Ipswich - open to all members of EACF clubs - details from Peter Allnutt on 01473 221204 or email: peter.allnutt1@ntlworld.com
- 27 Committee Meeting
- August**
- 6/7 Hunstanton Invitation Weekend (see below)
- 13/14 Club Mens Doubles 'Mix 'n' Match' John Fogg Trophy
- 20 Come & Try Day
- September**
- 24/25 Club Doubles
- 28 Committee Meeting
- October**
- 1/2 Club Singles
- November**
- 11 AGM & Party

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

Club Handicap Events

Members will recall that it was agreed for 2010 that all members who wish to take part in club handicap competitions must have played at least 10 handicap games, preferably against a variety of players, in the available sessions prior to the competitions. This policy will continue into 2011 but should not cause the problems that arose in 2010 as most interested members completed their required number of games in 2010.

Leighton-Linslade Social Club

As mentioned in the AGM report the Wednesday morning social club is meeting regularly during the close season and on average a dozen or so members have been present. The fee is £2, and for that you get refreshments and the opportunity to play many board games, darts, dominoes and cribbage. The activities generally finish about noon, and the hall is usually already warm on arrival, so please support this venture if you possibly can. Friends of members are welcome for the same attendance fee, refreshments included. Organiser Len Buckingham looks forward to seeing you on any Wednesday morning from 10.00am.

Selection Committee

The general consensus from members was that the 'selection committee' arrangement for last year was successful and the committee has agreed that it will continue for 2011. The committee members are Len Buckingham, John Cundell, Eve Buckingham, George Lawson, John Thorp and Tony Wells.

Hunstanton Invitation Weekend

This is an annual open event at Hunstanton over 6/7th August. (This is not our annual Friendly event). Saturday is all Singles in two sections - (A) Level play for lower handicaps; and (B) Handicap play. Sunday is Pro-am Doubles where partners will be allocated by the club as per Handicap. The entry fee is £10 per player per day which includes light refreshments. For an application form go to www.hunstantoncroquetclub.co.uk.

Welcome Grant from LLSC

Your Treasurer, assisted by one or two other members, applied for a grant from the Leighton Linslade Sports Council. Tony Wells, our Sports Council representative, reports that we have been very fortunate to receive £300 allowing us to further improve our expertise. We thank them very much for their continuing support.

'Service Towards Sport Award' for John Cundell

Unbeknown to your Editor, Tom Miller had put my name forward to the LLSC in consideration for this award. Tony Wells reported to our January Committee meeting that the LLSC had decided I would share the award with a recipient from another local organisation. This together with the Club grant mentioned above will be awarded in January.

Annual Dinner

This year's dinner will be at Leighton Buzzard Golf Club, Plantation Road on Friday 25th March. Forms were

distributed at the AGM and by post thereafter. All spaces are now filled.

Archivist Required

You may have noted from the list of roles published within the AGM report that we are looking for a volunteer to look after our archives. This has been built up over 11 years and records the Club's activities in photographic and the printed word, plus Margaret Brown's history of the Club's first ten years, John Cundell and Richard's booklet on Golf Croquet, and other information. The present Archivist is Tony Stammers who wishes to retire from the post. If any member is interested in taking on this interesting task, in the first instance please contact our Secretary Roger Stroud.

Possible New Competitions

There is a possibility that for 2011 there will be two EACF League competitions - the existing one for Handicap play will remain - however organiser Chris Howell is considering adding a Level play League aimed at the more senior/experienced players. We have expressed our strong interest for this and await developments.

Also under consideration is an Inter-County one-day tournament for the six Eastern Counties, possibly to be played at Hunstanton in June. Again, we will keep you informed.

EACF AGM

Sharp-eyed members will have noted the date for the East Anglian Croquet Federation AGM in the 'Dates for Your Diary' above. Tony Wells and I will be attending again this year and there are two spaces in the car for any other members who would like to accompany us. The venue is Bury St. Edmunds and the date is 19th March - meeting commences at 2.00pm.

Playing Sessions

The Committee agreed that 'official' playing sessions for 2011 will be as follows - no change from 2010:

10-12 Tuesday (Singles Handicap)
2-4 Tuesday (Singles Handicap)
10-1.00 Wednesday
10-1.00 Thursday
10-12 Saturday
2-5 Saturday
10-12 Sunday (Singles Handicap)
2-5 Sunday

As per 2009/10 our Lawn Rent arrangements allow for playing sessions to be flexible to work around the weather - either good or bad - e.g., if morning is wet we can regroup pm or even on another day; if good then stay on as required. Also, members are able to go along for practice sessions at will.

The only provisos are that a) if the Council Groundstaff or any Contractors we employ are working on the lawns, then they will have priority and members will have to wait until they are finished; and b) certain Mondays and Fridays when League and Friendly matches are scheduled when no club play will be possible.

