



# LEIGHTON-LINSLADE CROQUET CLUB

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## “2012 Season Round-up”



**W**elcome to the third newsletter of 2012. As per last year the interim summer newsletter never made it to press as we not only had an even busier year than 2011, but the ‘wonderful’ weather necessitated a number of cancelments, postponements and re-schedules - therefore once again we have a bumper ‘whole season’ resume. So without more ado let’s get cracking in chronological order, beginning with the Grand Opening by the Town Mayor.

### **Opening Day - Hoops Away! - 8th April**

Although a rainy forecast, we only experienced a few minutes of drizzle, and even though there was no sun, this didn’t spoil the 2012 season’s official opening ceremony. Town Mayor Councillor Gordon Perham and the Mayoress, Mrs Carole Perham were soon involved with the inaugural game, partnered by Len Buckingham and Richard Keighley. They took part with great enthusiasm and obvious enjoyment.

Some 26 members attended, all looking very smart in fresh whites – most of whom then joined in the games. After a good selection of tea and cakes – Gordon and Carole asked to take part in a second game – this time partnered by Judith Cundell and Roger Stroud, and they finally departed around 4.00pm.

### **High Wycombe Friendly - 20th April**

After a request during the winter months, John Thorp followed up the lead from High Wycombe Croquet Club who were looking to play a friendly outside of their normal Southern Area. With HW not being that far away we invited eight players to Page’s Park for a friendly, following our accepted format of pairs playing each other in the respective teams.

The two Johns (Cundell and Thorp), the two Tonys (Stammers and Wells), David Ball and Malcolm Kirby arrived an hour or so before HW were due at 10.00am and prepared Lawns One and Three. We decided to erect a



Our first match against High Wycombe started this season's competitive events.

second gazebo down by Lawn Three to serve as a shelter for the April showers that had plagued us for over a week and which were forecast to be particularly heavy on the day. We took the opportunity to mount the scoring stands in the two gazebos and John T and John C, the latter with assistance from High Wycombe's Geoff Brooks, kept these going. It was the right decision to site this gazebo as the weather deteriorated around midday, so it was agreed that we play three rounds before lunch instead of the usual two and then take lunch. This was actioned and it was touch and go as to whether or not we would find a rain free window to play the final round.

The first round of the day was a good one for HW as they won three of the four games – only David and Jean Ball winning ours. Round two was shared, with again the Balls, and this time also Erica Fogg and George Lawson winning. Round three was a pretty wet one – this was also shared with the Balls coming up trumps once more, together with Tony Wells and Tony Stammers. So at lunch the score was High Wycombe leading by 7 games to 5. A short weather window arrived during lunch, so it was all to play for. On Lawn One the two games finished pretty quickly with a good 7-2 win for Eve Buckingham and Malcolm Kirby – plus another fine win, also 7-2, by Erica and George.

So we all migrated down to Lawn 3 as these two games would decide the winning team. David and Jean had another good result – they had won all four of their games – so the remaining game between the two Tonys and High Wycombe's Geoffrey Duckworth and Don Rutherford would decide the match. A strong game for HW gained them a 7-4 victory, so the overall result was a draw. As the rain was now torrential and with black skies and thunder all round, it was decided to abandon a decider and all agreed that as a first match between HW and LL, a draw was a fitting result.

The usual tea and cakes were taken in the pavilion during which our visitors expressed that they were very impressed with our hospitality, and all stated that despite the conditions they had very much enjoyed the day. We planned to organise a return friendly towards the end of the season - see report later.

The day was a first test for using the extra storage facility of the Referee's Room in the main pavilion where

we can store our match equipment such as gazebos, scoring stands, extra. It worked very well and we are grateful for the use of the facility during the non-football playing season.

All in all a good start to the competitive season at Page's Park - despite the weather.

### **Mix 'n Match Doubles Handicap - 12th May**

The entry was initially an encouraging 26 members for this competition which was devised to attract players of all abilities to get involved in a light-hearted yet competitive event. Unfortunately, in the days leading up to the event, six members were forced to withdraw because of various medical conditions. Perhaps some of this was due to the dreadful cold and wet April and May. As members will recall, the lawns were flooded for a number of days leading up to this event, and we had already needed to cancel the first League match in early May. With another week of heavy rain, it was touch and go as to whether this event would take place, and it was only on Friday afternoon that we felt we could go ahead following last minute mowing by our Groundsman Doug Bolton in awful conditions, plus stirring work by John C and John T.

We moved the start time forward to 9.00am and were very pleased when all 20 competitors turned up as requested at 8.30am for the draw. The usual preparatory crew had been at Page's Park from 7.30am – many thanks to all concerned.

Before the draw for partners we had arranged the players into two blocks of high and low handicaps, and for the draw one player was selected from each handicap block – the idea being to create double pairings with one experienced player and one less experienced. The system worked very well and all remarked that this was a good innovation. Play commenced at 9.00am on two lawns as lawn 2 was still unplayable – apart from water polo – and continued through until early afternoon. The results of the two blocks were as follows:

#### **Block 1**

- 1st Tony Wells and Peter Cole
- 2nd Roger Stroud and Tony Stammers
- 3rd Malcolm Kirby and Erica Fogg

- 4th Pauline Lefrere and Ronnie Richardson
- 5th Sheila Beal and Margaret Lawson

**Block 2**

- 1st David Ball and John Guest
- 2nd Jean Ball and Val Jeffers
- 3rd Sheila Guest and Sally Clay
- 4th John Thorp and Vic Peddar
- 5th John Cundell and Jackie Cole

In the semis the Wells/Cole team beat Jean Ball/Jeffers by 7-4 and Stroud/Stammers beat David Ball/John Guest by 7-3.

The final started just after 3.00pm and resulted in a close match which went to the 13th hoop, with Roger Stroud and Tony Stammers enjoying the win over Tony Wells and Peter Cole – all watched by an enthusiastic audience.

We should thank John Thorp, John Cundell, David Ball, Tony Stammers and Tony Wells who had set up the equipment – and a special thanks to George Lawson who looked after the day’s scoring.

**B-Level at Watford - 14th May**

This was Watford’s fourth golf croquet One-Day B-Class Tournament. This is singles level play with those for handicaps of 3-7. There were 14 players divided into two blocks – from Leighton-Linslade, Watford, Broadwas, Chelmsford & Bentley and Northampton. We had the largest contingent with six players entered, David Ball, Jean Ball, John Cundell, Pauline Lefrere, Roger Stroud and John Thorp. Handicaps of the players consisted of five 3’s; four 4’s; two 6’s; and three 7’s.

The journey to Watford was very congested, it rained most of the day – however considering the recent weather the lawns were in the best condition we have witnessed at Watford for some time. The standard of play was very good. We had three players in each block. Pauline, in her first B-Class tournament won one of her games and also had two 13th hoop games that went against her. John Cundell managed two wins; Roger Stroud three; David Ball three; whilst both Jean Ball and John Thorp won four – Jean ending up second in her block – an excellent performance in her first B-Class tournament.

The final was between group winners The Mix ‘n Match Doubles Handicap attracted a good entry (right). The finalists, Tony Wells, Roger Stroud, Tony Stammers and Peter Cole very interested to see who has won the toss. The match went to the 13th hoop - Tony Stammers shooting to get to the correct side of the hoop. Below, three gazebos to protect the scorer and spectators - guarded by our Chairman.



Arthur Reed and Ian Parkinson, both from Watford – and the best of three final went to Arthur.

An excellent day, well organised as usual by Watford’s Ian Parkinson and Roger Nicholls, and an excellent opportunity to match one’s skills against other club’s competitors – plus meet some very nice people.

**EACF League Yellow - Letchworth**

Friday 18th May was our first League match for 2012 and featured the ‘Yellow’ team away to Letchworth. The team was Roger Stroud (6), Malcolm Kirby (8), Tony Wells (8) and Margaret Lawson (10). The Letchworth team was Colin Gregory (9), Roger Staddon (7), John Skingsley (2) and Vernon McClure (9).

The first round gained wins for Roger Stroud and Margaret Lawson; round two gave our team three wins – this time by Roger, Malcolm Kirby and Tony Wells. Another three victories followed in round three – by Margaret, Tony and Roger – so at lunch the result was a lead of 8 to 4 in Leighton-Linslade’s favour.

Roger and Margaret halved the last singles round to take the overall to 10-6. The remaining two doubles games went to Letchworth – both close matches – with Malcolm and Margaret going to the 13th hoop.

So a good start for the ‘Yellow’ team with a 10-8 win.

**EACF League ‘Green’ - Watford**

A few days later, 25th May, and it was the turn of the ‘Green’ team to play their first League match – a Home game against Watford. The weather had changed dramatically during the week and all the water had





Our first trip to Chelmsford & Bentley - John Skuse setting out the hoops on their two lawns with their club house in the background. David Ball and John Skuse assess their next shots. Lunch in front of the club house - a very pleasant setting and fine hospitality.



evaporated from our flooded lawns to produce a good surface. Warm, breezy conditions greeted our team of Jean Ball (7), David Ball (3), Pauline Lefrere (7), and Tony Stammers (9). Neither Tony or David were originally members of the 'Green' team, however due to Don Barrett and Len Buckingham not being able to play because of health problems, and with John Guest having to withdraw a few days before; organiser John Thorp asked Tony Stammers to move over from the 'Yellow' team, and David Ball to play. This year, with the advent of the Level play League, of which David is a selected member, 'Level' players are allowed to also play in the Handicap League if required. The difficulty is that the 'Level' players have good handicaps and if opponents know how to use their extra shots effectively by attacking early, then it is very

hard to come back in a 40 minute game.

Watford fielded three regular visitors to Page's Park – Steve Dennis (5), Anne Dennis (8), and Bob Croft (10), plus newcomer George Skinner (9).

The first three singles rounds before lunch resulted in some fine wins for Watford, resulting in eight wins to our four which meant we had to win all four of the remaining singles round to stay in contention. Watford were well aware of this and went on to guarantee a positive result by winning all four games. They then consolidated a fine result of 14 games to four by also taking the two doubles games.

Thanks are due to the preparatory crew of John Thorp, Tony Wells, Malcolm Kirby, Tony Stammers; cake makers Val Jeffers, Jean Ball and Margaret Lawson – and to regular scorers Irene and Peter Stevens – supported by Roger Stroud and Watford's Maureen Croft.

A very pleasant surprise on 26th May was the cake and grand turn out of many members for your editor's 70th Birthday. Novel use of the scoring stand highlighted the occasion - as did the cards and gifts. Many thanks to you all. It was a lovely day and much appreciated.

**EACF Level - Chelmsford & Bentley**

Our first match in this year's new Level Play League was against Chelmsford & Bentley. Our team consisted of David Ball, Richard Keighley, John Cundell and John Thorp – and on Friday 1st June they enjoyed a remarkably trouble free journey on the M1, M25 and A12 – arriving at C&B at 9.15am – rather surprising organiser John Skuse who had just turned up to set out the lawns, and who was expecting us around 10.30am at the earliest. We were made very welcome and enjoyed the hospitality of tea and coffee in the club's relatively new clubhouse in the grounds of Writtle College's Sports Field.





The ten entrants for the Ladies Doubles Mix 'n' Match - winners were the centre duo - Pauline Lefrere and Judith Pengelly. Below, Jackie Cole plays her shot watched by partner Judith Cundell, and the pair of Dierdra Ellins and Margaret Lawson. An added attraction on the adjacent Leighton Buzzard Light Railway was steam locomotive 'Jack'.

Play commenced just after 10.00am and we enjoyed a clean sweep in the first round of singles. Perhaps we then got a bit too confident as we faltered somewhat for the rest of the day – to the point when we needed to win both doubles to secure a draw. Unfortunately that was not to happen, and C&B's organiser – the very hospitable and friendly John Skuse - enjoyed the pleasure of striking the winning ball on the 13th hoop. C&B won by 10 games to 8. The detailed results showed a hoop count of 102 for C&B and 103 for Leighton Linslade – it couldn't have been much closer.

Despite the loss it was a very enjoyable day with superb hospitality from C&B, and we even managed the trip home with very few problems.

We will get our own back when they come to us next year!

### Ladies Doubles Mix n' Match - 2nd June

The third year of this competition attracted a small but very keen entry of ten ladies. Last year Judith Cundell withdrew to even up the numbers when there was a last minute withdrawal due to unforeseen circumstances – however this year the reverse occurred! Judith was at home enjoying a morning coffee, the Daily Telegraph crossword and a day without your editor – when he telephoned to request her presence following a late withdrawal.

The excitement of the draw created the following pairs – Margaret Lawson and Dierdra Ellins; Judith Cundell and Jackie Cole; Pauline Lefrere and Judith Pengelly; Sheila Guest and Jean Ball; and Una Pengelly and Caroline Stroud. The gave a block of five which meant each pair played four games.

With a block of five, only two games at a time can be played, so it was decided to double bank on just lawn one with no time limit. An enjoyable but relatively chilly playing session started at 9.15am, and continued until just after 2.30pm. Scorer George Lawson then carried out the mathematics and the result was a fine win for Pauline Lefrere and Judith Pengelly who won all four of their games. Well done to you both. Runners up with three wins were Sheila Guest and Jean Ball. The other positions were Margaret Lawson and Deirdra Ellins third, followed by



Judith Cundell and Jackie Cole, and the wooden spoon went to Una Pengelly and Caroline Stroud.

Thanks to the two Johns and David Ball for the morning preparation and to George Lawson for scoring.

### Diamond Jubilee Page's Park - 4th June

We only became aware of this event a couple of months previously when David Ball, Len Buckingham and John Cundell were attending a meeting at The White House to discuss other croquet matters. The organiser was happy when we expressed our desire to hold a Come & Try day on the occasion, and we also offered some hopefully helpful advice about us and Page's Park. The organiser was a little concerned about lack of refreshments on the day, and David and Len felt that we might be able to help.

A lot of thought and work went into organising the subsequent supply of lunches served in the Pavilion by the club, plus the Produce Stall, the Table-Top Sale – and the opening of the lawns to the general public to have a go at croquet.

Despite the chilly weather, the day was a great success in all aspects – the Ploughman's Lunches almost all sold out, the Produce Stall and Table-Top sale did sell out, and action on the lawns was non-stop all day with literally hundreds of people having a go or making enquiries.

Almost half of the club took a very active role in making this work and we would congratulate and thank all those members who helped to make the day such a great success. You all worked so hard and made the day very enjoyable.

Apart from what can only be described as an excellent promotional day for the croquet club in the eyes of the Council and the public, we even had one person who joined



on the day, and had a number of email contacts from a dozen or so who expressed considerable interest in joining. These have been contacted since by email.

Financially the day was a great success for the club. Our Treasurer Len reports that the Pavilion lunches raised a profit of £167; the Produce Stall £207; the Car Boot/Table Top sale £48; totalling over £420. In addition, one new member joined at the reduced fee for the remaining part of the season at £40. The photos give a good idea as to some of the activities.

All in all a very satisfactory day.

### **EACF Golf Croquet Inter-Counties Tournament - 'Ken Wheeler Shield'**

This tournament at Hunstanton on 9th June was the second GC team competition between the six counties comprising the East Anglian Croquet Federation. The teams from Bedfordshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Suffolk – plus a team of players nominated as EACF Select, as Cambridgeshire was not able to field a team – were competing for the 'Ken Wheeler Shield' donated by the President of Hunstanton CC who also acted as the Tournament Manager. There were four players per team and the total aggregate handicap for each team was not less than 8 at the time of team entry. Ken Wheeler organised the competition to take place over a single day and included singles and doubles games for all players. All games were level play.

The competition format was that each team played a match against each other over the first five rounds with a match comprising two singles games and one doubles. In the first round the team captains could elect to allocate players in any role (singles or doubles) irrespective of handicap. In the second round the singles/doubles roles

were reversed, and in round three roles reverted to those of the first round. This continued until all five rounds had been played.

The three leading teams then qualified for a 'Gold Medal Round' and played two doubles games each – using different pairs to round one if desired. The GMR teams carried forward a point for each of their games won in the first block, and were awarded two points for a win in the GMR. The winners would be the team with the most points. This all looked somewhat complicated at first glance, but it soon became clear after Ken Wheeler's briefing, and all players quickly understood and took to the format well – remarking on its obvious success at the end of the day.

The Bedfordshire team was John Cundell as Captain, David Ball, Richard Keighley and John Thorp. We had left LB at 6.30am and had a good run to Hunstanton – arriving just before 9.00am. The lawns were in immaculate condition and the weather was sunny if a little chilly, and still quite breezy following the previous day's storm. The first three rounds took from 10.00am until lunch and most teams were equally matched with wins and losses shared. The remaining two rounds were completed in the afternoon and there were many games which went to 7-5 or 7-6.

The three teams to make the Gold Medal round were Hertfordshire, EACF Select and Norfolk. Bedfordshire was a close 4th – an improvement on last year's 5th!

After a short break the Gold Medal Round started with all three teams playing their two doubles pairings. When the points were added up, once again Hertfordshire came out as winners. Their team was Peter Ross, David Tutt, Keith Rhodes and Nick Archer.

The force behind the idea of this tournament – Terrey



Two shots from the Inter-Counties Tournament at Hunstanton: left, David Ball and John Thorp; in background Richard Keighley. Above: "Will it go?" - Hertfordshire's Peter Ross getting down to it, watched by his partner Nick Archer.

Sparks (EACF Secretary) – expressed his thanks to all who made the day such a success – the Team Captains and players, the members of Hunstanton CC who worked hard all day, the catering ladies, and Hunstanton President Ken Wheeler for conceiving the format, managing the day – and finally presenting the fine shield plus commemorative plaques to the successful Hertfordshire Team.

The whole day was played with a fine and fair competitive spirit by all teams with very little work for the referee. Congratulations to all concerned. We enjoyed ourselves immensely and rounded off the day with dinner at Heacham, arriving back in LB just after 9.00pm.

### **EACF League Yellow - Northampton - reported by Malcolm Kirby**

The second match for the Yellow team was against Northampton away on Friday 15th June. The overall result was an 11-7 win to LLCC Yellow team. At the end of the first round of singles the score was 3-1 to LLCC; 5-3 after round two and 8-4 to LLCC prior to the lunch break. LLCC halved the fourth round, going in to the Doubles at 10-6.

Roger Stroud and Tony Wells won all their singles matches and Val Jeffers and Malcolm Kirby won one and lost three. The Doubles partners were Tony and Malcolm who won 7-2 and Val and Roger who lost 3-7.

A good day was had by all and the weather was very kind as we only had two very short showers, which did not affect play.

### **Wrest Park Singles - 17th June**

As this is likely to be the last year we can play on the superb lawns at Wrest Park, the club was hoping for a maximum turnout to celebrate the end of an era. Richard

The fine entry at the last Wrest Park Singles competition to be held on the superb Wrest Park lawns. Organiser Richard Keighley is at far right. John Cundell is pictured receiving the trophy from last year's winner Peggy Kenny.



Keighley organised this event and succeeded in getting the maximum entry of 24, meaning all six lawns were in action with doubled up matches. And even better, Richard had organised probably the best playing weather that we had so far experienced this year!

The 24 players were split into four blocks of six, and play commenced just after 10.00am. Three rounds were played before lunch, with the remaining two following. The block winners were Judith Pengelly, John Cundell, and Roger Stroud, plus Keith Palmer from Wrest Park. The semi-finals were between Roger and John, and Judith and Keith. Keith and John were winners and played the final in front of an enthusiastic crowd. It was an enthralling game which see-sawed between John and Keith until the ultimate 13th hoop situation was reached. John decided to take the bull by the horns and played an outrageous shot from the baseline to secure the win.

Last year's winner Peggy Kenny presented the trophy, followed by a group picture and some cakes and drinks from the Wrest Park ladies. Thanks to all for a fine day.

### **EACF Handicap League Green - Stony Stratford**

This re-scheduled match against Stony Stratford took place at Page's Park on 18th June on one of the slightly better days weatherwise this season – it wasn't particularly warm but there was NO rain!

John Thorp and David Ball prepared the lawns and gazebos and everything was ready for SS with the first round starting just before 10.00am. Our team consisted of Eve Buckingham, Jean Ball, Pauline Lefrere and Don Barrett. Stony Stratford played old adversaries Rex Hale and Marian Holland plus two newcomers Doug Smith and Susan Ellis. The visitors got off to a fine start by winning



Our four 'Green' team players against Stony Stratford - Jean Ball watches Rex Hale; also in action are Eve Buckingham, Don Barrett and Pauline Lefrere.

seven of the first eight games which made up the initial and second rounds – with only Jean Ball managing a win against Rex Hale.

The third and fourth rounds were both excellent for SS, with just Don Barrett winning his two games.

The Doubles were halved with Jean and Pauline beating Susan and Doug. So an emphatic win for Stony Stratford by 14 games to 4.

### Letchworth Friendly Home - 22nd June

Once again this season we were on edge as to whether or not this match would be played. After three, yes three, sunny and warm days, we got back to normal with overnight heavy rain followed by a very windy, showery day at Page's Park as we hosted our good friends from Letchworth.

Once again the trio of David Ball, John Thorp and John Cundell braved the elements at 8.00am to set out the lawns and attempt to put up two gazebos in gale force winds. Letchworth team arrived promptly at 10.00am and play got under way. The showers came and went – nothing too heavy – but still quite annoying in the wind. The Leighton-Linslade teams of David Ball/Roger Stroud; Sheila Guest/Val Jeffers; Una Pengelly/Tony Stammers; and Pauline Lefrere/Peter Cole got off to a fine start by winning the first four doubles games. They all then very impressively won the next four of the second round, so at lunch the score was 8-0 to the home team.

Lunch was taken in the nicely warm pavilion and must have helped Letchworth as they halved the next round. Not to be outdone, LL won three of the last round matches, therefore the overall result was a good win of 13 games to three.

Letchworth sportingly stated that they had very much enjoyed the day, despite the weather and losing – and added how they always look forward to coming to play at Page's Park.

Thanks again to the scorers, Dierdrea Ellins and John C, and to George Lawson for managing the day.

### B-Level at Wrest Park - 23rd June

This was the second B-Level Level Play Singles tournament to be held at Wrest Park – ably organised by Richard Keighley. Thirteen players arrived at WP at 9.15am and wended their way through the maze of buildings and security gates to arrive at the lawns which

were in excellent condition – despite the attention of a few busy squirrels that like to hide their nuts under Lawn Six!

After the necessary coffee and briefing, play commenced just before 10.00am. The thirteen players were split into two blocks, one of six and one of seven. There were eight participants from Leighton-Linslade – in block A were David Ball, John Thorp, Roger Stroud and Martin Field, whilst block B had Pauline Lefrere, Jean Ball, John Cundell and Richard Keighley. From other clubs were Ian and Jean Cobbold from Reigate Priory, Terrey Sparks from Hunstanton, John Edwards from Broadwas, and Jane Collier from Colchester.

At lunch block A was led by John Thorp who had won his first three games, and John Cundell was in a similar situation in block B. As the afternoon commenced John T continued his march towards a clean sweep, whilst John C slipped back, and at the end of the block play, there was a close finish with two players on four wins – Richard Keighley and Terrey Sparks, and three others on three wins. As Terrey had beaten Richard, he went through to the final against John Thorp.

This was an excellent battle, enthusiastically watched by all the other players. It see-sawed up to the inevitable hoop 13 where John Thorp kept his cool and won. This was the second year John had reached the final of this competition – runner-up last year – but now he is the Wrest Park GC B-Level champion.

Thanks to Richard for his organisation and we all left Wrest Park feeling rather sad that this was most likely the last time this event would be held at such a fine venue.

John Thorp, winner of the B-Level Tournament at Wrest Park, pictured centre with organiser Richard Keighley at left and runner-up Terrey Sparks.





### **EACF High Handicap Singles (8-12) - Bury St. Edmunds - 24th June - report by Terrey Sparks**

Nine competitors originally entered the inaugural Golf Croquet High Handicap Tournament, restricted for those having a handicap of between 8 and 12. Unfortunately, due to a date mix up three failed to attend. This gave the Manager Terrey Sparks a last minute problem as having originally intending to use an Egyptian Format this had to be hastily revised to an all play all. However, despite the last minute adjustments and the fact that the lines had to be re-marked due to overnight rain, play managed to start on schedule despite adverse weather reports.

The dry sunny conditions were not to last and play continued throughout the occasional showers and rather gusty winds. By mid afternoon the husband and wife team of John and Sheila Guest were leading the field closely followed by Ruth Cole (Hunstanton) and home club player Edme' Robinette. Despite the Manager's best efforts to keep them apart John and Sheila continued on their winning ways until it became evident that they were going to meet in a final decider. This proved a very close tie with John just running out the winner. However, no one was sure whether Sheila had been diplomatic to maintain marriage bliss. (*Wouldn't think so!! Ed.*)

This was the first year that the Federation has staged this type of tournament and the overall level of entries was poor to say the least. However, from small acorns oak trees grow and we shall persevere next year hoping more high handicappers will feel that there is nothing to be afraid of and enter this type of tournament.

### **EACF League Yellow - Watford**

Monday 25th June was the date for the re-scheduled May match against Watford which was postponed due to our first occasion of flooded lawns. We couldn't believe it when we inspected the lawns on Sunday 24th to find that Lawns One and Two were once again unplayable.

A couple of hours on the telephone on Sunday evening by the two Johns enabled us to resite the match to Watford. Many thanks to Roger Nicholls and Anne Dennis of Watford for making this possible. So on the 25th, David Ball and John Cundell made an early trip to Watford to help set up the equipment, and were joined shortly by the 'Yellow' team of Malcolm Kirby, Roger Stroud and George and Margaret Lawson. The team had won their previous two matches against Northampton and Letchworth and were keen to add to their success.

They were playing against Watford's Anne and Steve Dennis, Robert Archer and John Smallbone. The weather was excellent – dry and sunny, a trifle cool, but brilliant

compared to the rest of flaming June! The first two rounds were shared with wins by Roger Stroud, Margaret Lawson and Malcolm Kirby. Round three was a great result for Watford as they won all four games. Unfortunately the comeback for LL was not to happen and round four went to Watford, apart from a good win by Malcolm Kirby.

One of the Doubles went to the 13th hoop, however both of these were wins for Watford, therefore the overall result was a good win for them by 13 games to five.

### **Golf Croquet Inter-Club Murphy Shield - Quarter Finals - Dulwich - 27th June**

We were pleased when this year's draw was announced to find that we wouldn't have to travel a long distance to our opponents – Dulwich in South London. The distance was short but the journey certainly wasn't! Two and a half hours was our journey time there – and also back at the end of the day!

This competition requires a team of four who play level in the following format: the two strongest players in handicap play a doubles and the other pair play their opposite numbers in singles; after lunch the morning singles pair swap opponents and the morning doubles pair play their opposite numbers in singles. All games are the best of three. We elected to play at Dulwich as we felt their lawns were less variable in levels and also we wanted to visit one of the top clubs in the country. The weather was the best we had experienced so far this season and we arrived at 10.00am to a very warm welcome, coffee and biscuits. The club has three excellent lawns, well protected and at the edge of a very large sports complex. They have a fine clubroom and access to a large sports club with all the facilities you could wish. The complex was in use all day by groups of schoolchildren enjoying their sports days and the atmosphere was excellent.

Our team was David Ball (3), Richard Keighley (4), John Thorp (4) and John Cundell (5). David and Richard had a hard fought doubles match – losing their first game of three which happened to most of us as we learnt the foibles and speed of the lawns - then unfortunately lost the second game on the 13th hoop. John C lost against Guy Scurfield and John T had a good win against the only lady player, Ann Laver. In the afternoon singles Richard was our sole winner against Simon Whiteley – the two Johns and David all took their matches to three games and as the end of the day approached, Dulwich were getting a little twitchy as three singles wins would have given us the match by 5-2 – however it was not to be and they held on to gain the 5-2 win.

Despite the loss we enjoyed the game and particularly the fine hospitality from a club which last season

Panoramic view of Dulwich lawns and club house where we enjoyed some fine hospitality for our Inter-Club Murphy Shield quarter final.





Despite the dreadful conditions the first visit to Page's Park by a team of ladies from Dunstable proved a great success.

celebrated its centenary. Dulwich went on to beat Dyffryn to reach the Final against Watford who beat Belsay Hall in their semi-final. The Dulwich v Watford final, held at Surbiton, was won by Dulwich 4-3 after a very close fought match only decided on the 13th hoop of the final game.

### EACF Level - Enfield

Our second of three competitions in the new Level Play League was at home to Enfield on 29th June. Three of the players – David Ball, John T and John C arrived at a damp and windy Page's Park at 8.00am to set out the lawns and the necessary equipment for the match – and we managed to get in a few minutes relaxation and a little practise before the visitors from Enfield arrived promptly at 10.00am. After the usual welcome, coffee, briefing etc., play started at around 10.30am with the first round of singles. By now it was raining and blowing hard – fortunately the rain eased after an hour or so, but we were fighting the very blustery wind all day.

Our scorers, Peter and Irene Stevens, Dierdrea Ellins and Roger Stroud braved the conditions and saw some enthralling croquet.

The Enfield players included Ken Pickett at scratch, plus three others at handicaps of 5, 6 and 8. The first round was shared with two wins each, however round two saw the visitors take three wins to our one. The third round was also shared so we went to lunch with Enfield leading by 7-5.

The final singles round after lunch was again shared – so we entered the doubles needing two wins to draw the match. There was a fine display by Richard Keighley and David Ball on Lawn One and John Thorp and John Cundell on Lawn Three with both games being won 7-3. Hence the overall result was a draw at 9 games each so both teams share the points.

Thanks again to the scorers and to George Lawson for the administration. Next stop will be Watford away.

Players at the EACF Level Play match against Enfield - John Cundell, David Ball, David Frost, John Thorp, Brian Dawes, Richard Keighley, John Street and Ken Pickett.



### Dunstable Friendly - 2nd July

This was our first Friendly with Dunstable, arranged between John Thorp and Don Barrett – Don is a member of Dunstable and LLCC. Don acted as a non-playing Captain and arrived promptly at 9.30am leading a group of eight ladies in whites.

After the usual welcome and introduction to our lawns and facilities, plus a welcome cup of coffee and biscuits on what was another 2012 Summer's day – wet, windy and cool – play commenced with the usual 'Friendlies' doubles format.

The first round saw a 3-1 win for Leighton-Linslade, and this was followed on the successive three rounds by a clean sweep – overall a 15-1 win. Dunstable have not played many friendlies and were a little tentative and worried that they were not up to the standard of our players. The results need to be looked at in detail as many of the games went to 7-6 and 7-5 – and there were no 'whitewashes'. Indeed on hoop count, LL scored 110 hoops and Dunstable 60. A little more confidence and competitive play is all that is required.

Despite the loss, they expressed considerable pleasure and enjoyment and are looking forward to more matches.

Our winning team consisted of John Thorp and Florrie Jeater; Judith Pengelly and Roy Kemp; Sheila Guest and Diana Phelps; and Len Buckingham and Tony Stammers.

### EACF League Green v Letchworth - 4th July - reported by Jean Ball

We were warmly welcomed by Letchworth on Wednesday 4th July. This game had been postponed due to very wet weather on the earlier date, however this proved to be one of the better days this summer although we still had to dodge a couple of showers.

The LLCC team were Eve and Len Buckingham, Sheila Guest and Jean Ball. The games were fairly close run with some going to the golden hoop. At lunch the scores for the singles matches were equal at 8-8. Following lunch the two doubles were played. As there was an Association match scheduled on one lawn, it was necessary to double up and there were some hold ups and one team was timed out with equal scores, therefore requiring an extra hoop to be played.

After a long tussle and some twenty minutes later, Letchworth managed to score the hoop – after which the other team re-started their match – unfortunately then being timed out with Letchworth in the lead.

Therefore the overall result was a Letchworth win by ten games to eight.



### Club Singles Handicap - 7th July

All three lawns were green and welcoming on the morning as the two Johns and David Ball arrived shortly after 7.00am to set out the three gazebos and hoops for this year's competition. This event was in the middle of the Wimbledon Finals and Silverstone weekend that was plagued with even more awful wet weather across the country - and we had considered ourselves fortunate to miss most of Friday's deluge.

Saturdays' forecast was for heavy showers later in the day, so we started early with all 17 contestants arriving promptly as requested, and play was under way by 8.50am on all three lawns. The 17 players were drawn into four blocks, three of four and one of five. Play continued rapidly until just before 13.00. The blocks were almost completed when the heavens opened, complete with thunder and lightning, and after a few minutes, three flooded lawns! After half an hour or so we managed to complete the blocks, dodging between more heavy showers and wading though the water, with the results as follow for the semi finals - David Ball playing Jean Ball, and Roger Stroud playing Pauline Lefrere. David won 7-3 and Pauline by 7-5.

The final was played on Lawn Two following a modified route as hoop 1 was flooded. It was a good final and Pauline Lefrere gave David Ball a good challenge, but David came out as the winner by 7-3. Eight hardy souls stayed to the end, helped clear up the equipment, and went home to a fine sunny evening!!!

EACF Champion of Champions - winner of the Handicap competition Colin Crawford from Sudbury (left), with Winner of Level Play competition Mike Percival from Ipswich. Right: Jean Ball and Mike Percival contemplating the conditions before the flood brought the competition to a close.



Anyone for water polo? John Thorp wielding the broom to try and remove the flood which affected the end of the Club Singles Handicap competition - winner was David Ball, beating Pauline Lefrere by 7-3.

### EACF Champion of Champions

This is a new event to find the Champion Level Singles Player and Champion Handicap Singles Player in the East Anglian Croquet Federation. It was scheduled for earlier in the year at Newport, Cambs., but was one of the first events to be postponed due to this year's weather. The re-scheduled date was 9th July - still at Newport. Our representatives were Roger Stroud playing in the Handicap Play competition and Jean Ball in the Level Play. In addition to our LLCC players, there were champions of the following clubs present: Sudbury, Watford, Ipswich, Hunstanton, Colchester, Chelmsford & Bentley, Letchworth and Newport.

The Handicap competition, which attracted six players, consisted of a single block. The handicaps ranged from 4 to 12 - the latter being a substitute player from Watford. Roger was playing off 4 and was not in his usual good form in three matches completed by 2.00pm.

Jean, in the Level play competition, and Chelmsford's John Skuse were the only 7 handicappers - the remainder including four at 1, one at 2, one at 4 and one at 6. This competition was played to a system that we have not come across before - a slight variation devised by organiser Terrey Sparks based on the 'Egyptian' system. To describe this fully would take up considerable space - suffice it to say that it is a good system when you have too many players for single or double blocks to be played in a day, or not enough players for blocks of four. Each player is given the same index on arrival and as they play one another, in no particular order, their index rises or falls. The increase or decrease of the index is governed by a table similar to that used in level handicap play. The system requires a minimum of three games per player to be played - there is no maximum limit to the number of games played -

however obviously the more games then the more accurate the result. The players soon got the hang of the system and play continued until 2.00pm - as per the Handicap event.

By this time Jean Ball had enjoyed a superb morning, winning against Barry Joyce (4) from Hunstanton, Clive Cassidy (6) from Newport and Paul Strover (1) from Sudbury - so at this point she was just behind Mike Percival of Ipswich, who had also won three games. Jean drew Mike next and their game was completed with a win for Mike just as the deluge started! After a brief delay, more hardy competitors took to the lawns, but unfortunately a combination of another heavy downpour plus a stream of water running on to the lawns from an adjacent higher field put an end to play for the day as the lawns became flooded.





The happy group enjoyed a fine day's competition in the Friendly with Watford. From left to right, John Cundell, Margaret Lawson, Robert Archer, Hazel Archer, Maureen Croft, Hilary Isham, Sally Clay, Nick Archer, Don Barrett, Anne Dennis, Steve Dennis, Linda Williams, Peter Davis, Eve Buckingham, John Thorp and Len Buckingham.

A great shame as the competition was building to a grand climax. Terrey Sparks decided to bring the event to a close and the winners were worked out on results to that point. In the Level competition Mike Percival was therefore the winner with Jean Ball runner-up. In the Handicap the winner was Colin Crawford from Sudbury

All present thanked the host club Newport for their fine hospitality and looking after everyone in very trying weather conditions. All in all a satisfactory start to this inaugural competition and we look forward to better conditions next year!

### **Watford Friendly Home - 12th July**

This event was originally scheduled for the 4th May but was the first of this season's postponements due to the weather. After a couple of reasonable days with only frequent showers! – we were looking forward to dry lawns. However on Thursday evening before the match, once again the heavens opened and we thought 'Oh no, not another postponement'. So it was with some trepidation that the two Johns arrived at Page's Park to set out the equipment. We were lucky in that even though Lawn Two was slightly 'puddled' it was playable by 9.30am – just as our friends from Watford arrived.

We agreed that the match should start as soon as possible as more rain was forecast for later in the day. Our team was the two Johns, Len Buckingham and Margaret Lawson, Eve Buckingham and Don Barrett, and Peter Davis with Sally Clay. Watford had sent a strong team: Anne Dennis and Maureen Croft, Nick and Hazel Archer, Hilary Isham and Robert Archer, and Steve Dennis with Linda Williams.

The first three rounds were played before lunch with three wins by John C and John T, one by Sally and Peter, and another by Eve and Don. Lunch was then taken, and still the sun shone, although the temperature was a bit chilly for mid July. Lunch was not a good idea for us as all four pairs lost the last round.

So a good result for Watford, winning by eleven games to five. Thanks to our scorers, the Stevens and the Davis's, plus Ann Rowe – and to George Lawson for invigilating.

### **Wrest Park Doubles - reported by David Ball**

Sunday 15th July saw 26 croquet players arrive at Wrest Park for their annual Doubles match. Of the 26, 18 players were from our club. The day started off well with 24 players making 12 pairs with one pair sitting out. By lunch the scores were fairly even.

After lunch battle commenced and by 2.30pm all games had been played, leaving the semi-finals and final to come. The semi-finalists were Peggy Kenny and Judi Priestley against Jean and David Ball; and Vera Pearson and Linda Potton against Pauline Lefrere and Martin Field.

After well fought matches Jean and David won 7-3, and Pauline and Martin by 7-4. The final commenced with very strong play from both sides, resulting in a win for Jean and David Ball at 7-3.

Wrest Park Doubles winners Jean and David Ball (right) with runners-up Martin Field and Pauline Lefrere.





Fun Day teams - 'Sparrowhawks' top left, 'Buzzards' top right. Left: playing the striped lemons, Above: putting up the gazebo and mallets to the ready. Right: Sheila Beal in charge of the cream tea.



### B-Level at Nottingham - 18th July

This year we had six members entered into the B-Level competition at Nottingham: Jean Ball, Eve and Len Buckingham, John Cundell, Richard Keighley and Roger Stroud. Two cars departed from Leighton-Linslade at 6.45am and arrived at Nottingham at 8.45am for a welcome cup of coffee in the club's excellent pavilion. There were 14 other players from clubs covering much of the country: Tyneside, Lincolnshire, Hunstanton, Ripon, Ashby, Guildford and Nottingham – with handicaps ranging from 4 to 8.

The five Nottingham lawns were in excellent condition, extremely smooth and fast. The weather was light showery rain. The twenty players were split into five blocks of four with three games to be played in the first round. The winners of these blocks were automatic quarter-finalists and the further three places were determined by best second places from all blocks based on hoop difference. John Cundell, Richard Keighley and Roger Stroud made it through to the quarter-finals and both John and Roger were victorious against their opponents – Andrea Huxley from Guildford, and Omied Hallam from Nottingham. Richard was beaten by Maggie Cowman from Ripon.

John C played against Hunstanton's Terrey Sparks in the first semi-final and lost to Terrey on hoop 13 after being 6-3 up at one stage. Roger Stroud won against Maggie Cowman and went through to the final against Terrey. This was a hard fought match and like many others ended up on the 13th hoop with Terrey finally winning the hoop after a long battle.

Tea was taken followed by the presentation of the challenge cup to Terrey who then thanked John Handy for organising a fine competition.

As we left the lawns the heavens opened with an incredible storm, the main roads were flooded within a few minutes and our cars were spectacularly washed and 'sandblasted' with hailstones. The rest of the journey entailed a few diversions and jams – however a very enjoyable day and a good result for the club even if we didn't manage to repeat David Ball's winning 2011 form.

### EACF Level Play - Watford

The last Level play match was away to Watford on 19th July. Our regular team of David Ball, John Cundell, Richard Keighley and John Thorp arrived at Watford on a brisk, showery morning and play commenced at 9.30am. Watford played their top team of Nick Archer (1), John Walker (2), Ian Davidson (3) and Janet Lewis (3) so we knew we were in for a tough game.

After the first three singles the score was six games all – John C winning three, David Ball and Richard Keighley with two wins. The last singles round following lunch was a good result for Watford as they won three games with only Richard coming good for LL.

So we needed both doubles to draw the match. The games were hard fought and went to the 12th and 13th hoops – however Watford turned up the wick and won both games, therefore winning the match by 11 games to 7. They scored two points, giving them a total of six. Well done Watford who had now won the East and West Area. The full results for this competition will be reported later in this newsletter.

### Olympics Fun Day - 21st July - reported by David Ball

Thirteen members turned up for the annual Fun Day which was organised Sheila Beal, Erica Fogg, and Helen Wilkinson.

The members were divided into two teams, named as 'Buzzards' and 'Sparrowhawks'. The fun started with a relay of team members dribbling tennis balls through three hoops; followed by the usual four golf balls on tees; and then a three-legged relay around three hoops.

After these exertions we stopped for a superb break with scones, strawberries and cream, etc. Next we enjoyed the delight of throwing bean bags into a bucket, followed by a six hoop game with lemons which had coloured tapes attached to them!

At the end of all this activity it was a draw! As a decider, the team captains, Dierdrea Ellins for the 'Buzzards' and David Ball for the 'Sparrowhawks' had to go through three

hoops covered in paper – the winner was Dee for the ‘Buzzards’.

Lots of laughter and fun was had by all, and we were all presented with Gold Medals with soft centres – chocolate of course!



The two John's enjoyed a good day at Newport - John Thorp winning.

**B-Level Newport - 22nd July**

Five members attended the B-Level tournament at Newport, Essex and what a pleasant change to play for a whole day in warm sunshine! For some reason there was no interest from other clubs apart from us and the rest of the twelve players were from Newport. A shame as this is a superb

venue with excellent facilities and a very friendly and welcoming club.

The five LL players; John Cundell, Sheila and John Guest, Richard Keighley and John Thorp arrived at 9.00am to the usual coffee welcome. Organiser Ernie Turkington had already circulated all players with order of play and tournament rules, so only a short briefing was required before play commenced promptly at 9.45am. We were split into two blocks of six, so playing five games – three before lunch.

In block one John Guest enjoyed a good morning, winning all three games – as did John Thorp in block two. After a pleasant lunch, both Johns continued their stately progress in the afternoon period, again winning all their games – so they were clear finalists. Richard Keighley scored four wins; Sheila three and John C one.

We made ourselves comfortable on the raised veranda to watch the final, a good win for John Thorp by 7-1. Well done John T; commiserations to John G.

This is an excellent tournament and can be entered by

any member of an EACF club – you do not have to be a Croquet Association tournament member to take part, so why not give it a try next year?

**Dunstable U3A Croquet Group Fun Day - reported by Ronnie Richardson**

Twenty-four members of Dunstable U3A Croquet Group came to Leighton Buzzard Croquet Club on Monday 23rd July to participate in their annual fun day on a very hot day after all the rain of the previous weeks.

Names were picked out of the hat to see who would partner each other. The twelve teams were then split into two groups. Each game was of 30 minutes duration. The winners from each group would then play in the finals. Peter Cole took on the onerous task of time-keeper and he did a marvellous job keeping an eye on the teams when they had to stop due to hold ups by the first colours.

All matches were very close.

**Group A**

1st	Ronnie Richardson/Alan Morris	30 pts
2nd	Florrie Jeater/John Marr	26 pts
3rd	Barbara Steurs/Peter Hudgell	22 pts
=4th	Janet Terry/Ann Warren	21 pts
=4th	Kay Hudgell/Gean Carmen	21 pts
6th	JennyMarr/Ann Hardie	20 pts

**Group B**

1st	Wendy Smith/John Clancy	27 pts
2nd	June Black/Eve Eason	26 pts
3rd	Roy Kemp/Richard Barnes	24 pts
4th	Pauline Morris/Don Barrett	23 pts
=5th	Ann Elmett/John Wrigh	22 pts
=5th	Joy Harris/Ann Buchanan	22 pts

The final was between ‘Ronnie Richardson/Alan Morris and Wendy Smith/John Clancy. It was a tight game with Wendy and John taking the lead with John getting two clean hoops. But in the end Ronnie and Alan managed to win after playing the best of 13 hoops.

This was the first time Dunstable U3A Croquet had played at LLCC and we appreciated the help of John Thorp, John Cundell and David Ball in putting up the gazebos, chairs and tables for us, and Peter Cole for his time-keeping and scoring. We were made most welcome and hopefully we can come back next year and bring lovely weather with us again!



Dunstable U3A winners – Ronnie Richardson and Alan Morris receiving their cups from last year's winners Wendy Smith and Don Barrett.





**Hunstanton/Leighton-Linslade Friendly - 28/29th July**

This year's annual Challenge Trophy event was not blessed by the usual wall-to-wall 'Sunny Hunny' weather, but it was still pretty good when compared with this season's widespread washout. It was warm, as was the welcome, and we escaped the wet stuff for most of the day – it certainly didn't spoil the occasion.

Ten players from each club played alternate games of singles and doubles with everyone playing six games. Our team was John Cundell and Malcolm Kirby, Pauline Lefrere and Martin Field, Sheila Guest and Sally Clay, John Guest and Peter Cole, and Tony Stammers with Peter Davis. The trophy had been won by LL in 2009, by Hunstanton in 2010, LL in 2011 – so obviously we were very keen to hold on to it, and Hunstanton wanted it back. After a full day's play the trophy was won back by Hunstanton by the very small margin of one game - by 23 to 22! Once again a very close result.

This was followed by a fish and chip supper plus a sports quiz which had everyone very excited at the result – including some hilarity when one table admitted to employing the help of 'Mr Google'. Needless to say they

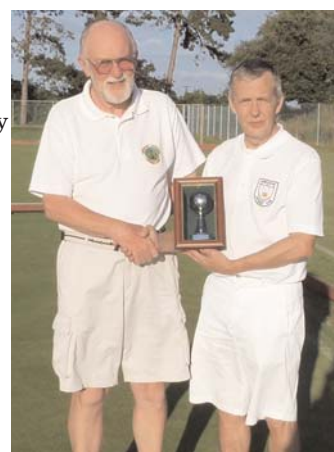
Above: the players for this year's Hunstanton/Leighton-Linslade Challenge Trophy - this year won back by Hunstanton by the closest of margins - one game. Above right: John Cundell presents the trophy to Hunstanton's David Thirtle-Watts. Below are the winners of the Hunstanton Invitation Weekend - Roger Stroud won the Handicap Trophy for the third year running - despite playing off a handicap of 4 - seen here receiving his trophy from Hunstanton President Ken Wheeler. Middle is winner of the Level Play competition, Hunstanton's Jeff Race, who only dropped in at the last minute due to illness of one of the competitors (as you can see he was supposed to be working), borrowed Ken Wheeler's mallet and went on to win! Below right, winners of the Doubles competition, our John Cundell and Hunstanton's Mary Coombs.

ended up with the booby prize!

On Sunday morning seven players enjoyed some friendly doubles games together with our Hunstanton hosts.

**Hunstanton Invitation Weekend - 4/5th August.**

This event is an annual two-day open tournament aimed at providing competition for all levels of golf croquet players from within the local club and from visiting clubs. This is achieved by three separate competitions – on Saturday the Singles event is held with the 24 players split into four blocks – two being handicap and two level. These two groups are run separately and a winner would be found by a final of the two block winners in each case. John Cundell was in Level Block 1 which contained handicaps of players 0-6, whilst David Ball's block contained a similar mix from 1-6. The





The players in The John Fogg Trophy - won by David Ball and John Cundell - standing either side of Irene Davis holding The John Fogg Trophy which will be presented at the Annual General Meeting along with all our other awards.

two handicap blocks ranged from 7 to 10 – although Jean Ball had to play off a 6 in her block and Roger Stroud from a 4 in his – due to their recent good performances which had lowered their handicaps considerably since the entry date for the competition.

The weather had deteriorated throughout the week and there were many breaks for very heavy showers and thunderstorms during both days. David managed two wins and John just one in their blocks against some very experienced players – quite a learning curve. The eventual winner was Hunstanton's Jeff Race who is also the club's groundsman. He had been working very early in the morning and only dropped in to see how things were going. One of the players had not arrived due to unforeseen circumstances and Jeff was immediately pressed into playing, borrowed a mallet, and then went on to win to much acclaim.

In the handicap games Jean had one win, however Roger won four of his five games and therefore got through to the semi-final against a player from Watford, winning 7-1 – then played an excellent game against Hunstanton's David Boxell in the final to win 7-3 – the third year in a row Roger has won this competition – a great result in as much as he was having to play from his current handicap of 4 – giving away a large number of extra shots. Well done to Roger and a great birthday present for him.

So to Sunday and a very different competition – the Doubles Challenge where 24 players were split into two blocks of six couples – each playing five games. The winners then played the seconds from opposing blocks in semi-finals, followed by a final. John Cundell, David Ball, Jean Ball and Roger Stroud were in different blocks and the pairing is done by putting together a Hunstanton player with a visitor, and also taking into account their handicaps – for example a player with 3 handicap would be paired with a 12 – a 7 with an 8, etc.

After the five matches John Cundell, playing with Mary Coombs from Hunstanton won their block and ultimately their semi-final. Roger Stroud got through to the other semi, but unfortunately lost to Susan Boxell and Robert

Donner, who were John and Mary's opponents in the final. After an intense game, dodging the heavy showers which had delayed proceedings somewhat during the afternoon, John and Mary won by 7-6 around 6.00pm.

After the prizegiving and goodbyes, we enjoyed an uneventful and relatively speedy journey home – so ending two weekend's competitions with friends old and new.

### **EACF League Green v Northampton - 10th August**

This was the 'Green' team's last match before the home derby against the 'Yellow' team scheduled for 20th August. This was an away match against Northampton and our team was John Guest, Pauline Lefrere, Don Barrett and Sheila Guest. Pauline halved her four singles games; John, Sheila and Don had one win each. Both doubles were wins for Northampton. The match was closer than the results indicate with ten games going to the 12th or 13th hoop.

The overall result was a win for Northampton by 13 games to 5.

### **The John Fogg Trophy - 11th August**

Once again there was a good entry in this Mix 'n Match Doubles competition for the fine trophy in memory of John Fogg. Some 14 members – almost everyone of our male members who was in a position to play took part – those absent due to health problems and one or two family commitments.

The players assembled at 9.00am on one of the best playing days of the year – warm and sunny with a light breeze which made playing very enjoyable. The first task was the draw, carried out by a number of the players and witnessed by all present. This resulted in the following pairs; Peter Cole and John Thorp, Roger Stroud and Tony Stammers, Len Buckingham and George Lawson, Tony Wells and Don Barrett, Roy Kemp and Peter Stevens, Malcolm Kirby and Richard Keighley, and John Cundell with David Ball.

The games were of 50 minutes on each of the three lawns with no doubling up. Only one game – the last of the day,



ran out of time. The seven teams all played each other and after the first four rounds a short lunch break was enjoyed.

At the end of the block play it was clear that there was an overall winning pair of David Ball and John Cundell with six wins. Runners-up were Richard Keighley and Malcolm Kirby with four wins.

### Trinity Church Group Visit



The Trinity Church Group visited Page's Park on the evening of July 24th to find out all about golf croquet. The weather was excellent – the week leading up to the Olympics when the rain stopped. Organisers Irene and Peter Davis would like to thank the following club members for their help and guidance: David and Jean Ball, Sheila Beal, Pauline Lefrere and Martin Field. Nineteen of the Church Group played, watched by a number of others, and they all thoroughly enjoyed a wonderful evening. Before leaving they all said "Please can we come again?"

### EACF Handicap League 'Yellow' v Stony Stratford Away - 17th August

I don't have a report for this match. I understand that there was a bit of confusion as to whether it was an away or home match with us travelling to Stony Stratford to find that they were on their way to Page's Park. However after a few telephone calls, Stony Stratford's team returned home and the match went ahead. Stony enjoyed a 10-8 win, so obviously a closely fought match.

### B-Level at Phyllis Court - 17/18th July

This was the first B-Level tournament to be organised by Phyllis Court, a club in the Southern Croquet Federation. The club is the croquet section of The Phyllis Court Members' Club of Henley on Thames – a country club of distinction which enjoys a splendid location on the bank of the River Thames opposite the finishing line of the famous Royal Regatta Course. The picture gives an idea of the lawns and facilities which are second to none.



Richard Keighley and John Cundell had entered this two-day event held over two of the hottest days of the year. Temperatures were in the high 20's on both days. There were 16 entries from nine different clubs ranging in handicap from 4 to 8. The two days allowed every entrant to play all the others which meant eight games on Friday and seven on Saturday. They were timed level play games and not one game went over the 50 minute allowance.

The organisation by Chris Roberts and Frances Colman was superb. On arrival we were briefed in one of the reception rooms at the club, given details of all required facilities, and made very welcome. Information concerning round details, player details, results, current progress, etc., was readily available over both days. Morning and afternoon coffee and tea was available courtside; there was a refrigerated water supply on tap which was very welcome in the heat, plus shaded seats and areas for the little amount of relaxation between games! For lunch one ordered sandwiches each morning which were prepared and ready for players as and when required.

The standard of play was excellent all round and many games went to the 12th or 13th hoops. After two excellent days' play, as we approached the last round it was Phyllis Court player Raymond Wood and Eynsham's Dan Ellis that were in line for the inaugural Smokey's Cup, both with 11 wins. Richard Keighley then played Dan in the last round and won, so Richard ended up as runner-up. John was to play Raymond Wood, also in the last round, however at that stage Raymond could not be beaten as he had 11 clear wins to Richard's 10. The match between Raymond and John was held over towards the end of the day in order that Raymond would finish the last game of the tournament. They enjoyed a long game up to 4-4, with one hoop taking over 20 minutes – however a superb shot by Raymond, running hoops 9 and 10 almost in one stroke, left John with too big a task. So well done to Richard for an excellent second place.

The presentation of the cup was made amidst much acclaim with thanks to Chris and Frances for organising an exceptionally good first B-Level tournament at Phyllis Court. We look forward to next year.

### EACF Handicap League - 'Green v Yellow'

The final match to be played in this year's Handicap





The final moments of the 'golden' hoop drama at the 'Green' v 'Yellow' match. Top left, all balls were short after the first shots and the four players march determinedly to the 13th hoop. Above, Len Buckingham has to make the decision - remove the blue ball or go for position. He decides to remove it - and (far left) is unsuccessful. Left, Val Jeffers steps up and takes the winning shot, followed by celebrations with her fellow team member Malcolm Kirby.

League Western Division was the 'home-away' between our 'Green' and 'Yellow' teams.

The preceding few days had seen a mini-heatwave with temperatures over the weekend in the high 20's, therefore the decision was taken on Saturday for the Monday League match to be started at 9.00am to avoid the heat of the day. Yes, you've guessed it – the day turned out cloudy and there were even a few showers in the morning, and it was relatively cool compared to the weekend! However this didn't put a damper on the match which was fought tooth and nail for the whole day.

The 'Green' team was Jean Ball as captain, with Pauline Lefrere and Eve and Len Buckingham – the 'Yellow' team was Malcolm Kirby as captain, together with George Lawson, Val Jeffers and Roger Stroud. The total handicap difference between the teams was just one!

After round one the position was all square with four wins by the 'Green' team – however the result must have gone to their heads as after round two, it was all square with four wins by the 'Yellow' team! So on to rounds three and four – both of which were halved. Therefore it would be down to the doubles – and yes, you've guessed it again – there was a win apiece - with the result at nine wins each it was on to the play-off, the first time this year in our area.

The team captains made the decision to play doubles format rather than singles. The play-off consists of the chosen team pairs – Malcolm and Val for the 'Yellows' and Len and Pauline for the 'Greens', playing from corner one to hoop three. Most of the first shots were short, so after playing up, Val's blue ball was in prime position to run the hoop. Len needed to clear it with his yellow but was unsuccessful, so Val stepped forward and won the match for the 'Yellow' team followed by cheers from her team mates.

All in all a fitting end to a good match and a shame there had to be a losing team.

Thanks to the organisers, David Ball, John T and John C – and particularly to our scorers, the two Peters and Irenes – Davis and Stevens.

### EACF League Round-Up

The Handicap League was very competitive and was well supported from the Western and Central areas with six teams each; there were four teams in the Eastern area and only two from the North. In our area, Watford won five matches, Stony Stratford four, our 'Yellow' team had three wins, Letchworth had two, Northampton had one and our 'Green' team failed to score a win.

Chris Howell, League Organiser, reports that at the close of season the GC League results gave Enfield, Norwich, Sudbury and Watford the opportunity to represent their areas in the semi-finals of the competition held at the Bury St Edmunds CC, the latter three clubs not having been as successful in recent years. Norwich, as an inexperienced team in competitions, performed well against Watford and gained in confidence throughout the match. The final score of 14-4 to Watford did not reflect the close scores of some games. Sudbury competed strongly against Enfield but were unsuccessful, losing by 6 games to 12.

So Enfield, the previous winners, challenged Watford in the finals. Both teams, having knowledge of the undulating Bury lawns from the semi-finals, could concentrate on their opponents' play. All was level after the first round of games, but from then on Enfield took the lead. At lunch they were in front by 8 games to 4. Post lunch the results including the doubles were shared, so Enfield retained the trophy by 11 games to 7. Steve Dennis and Robert Archer from Watford played consistently, losing only one game each in their singles. Equally Brian Dawes and David Frost headed up the wins for Enfield. Thanks to Chris for the above information.

In the new Level Play League, there were four teams in the East & West area, won by Watford; and three teams in the North & Central area which at the time of writing was headed by Colchester with one game left to play! Our team put up some good performances and were unlucky to lose against Chelmsford, see earlier report, and managed a good draw against Enfield. The winner of the Level Play League is determined by a points system and cannot be determined until the outstanding match between



Watford Away Friendly - from left to right: Hilary Isham, Robin Barry, Linda Williams, John Smallbone, Una Pengelly, Robert Archer, Diana Phelps, John Cundell, Ross Bagni, Hazel Archer, Tony Wells, Sally Clay, John Bee, Nick Archer, John Guest and Peter Cole.

Colchester and Hunstanton is played. It is to be hoped that more teams enter the LPL next season, and we will be suggesting that a semi/final day is held.

### Watford Friendly - Away - 30th August

The home friendly against Watford in July was a win for the visitors by 11 games to 5, so we were after satisfaction on our return visit to Cassiobury Park on 30th August. The day was a little chilly and wet for our arrival but the usual warm welcome and coffee soon got us into better spirits. The first game of the day started promptly at 10.00am under the excellent management of Roger Nicholls. Our team was John Cundell and Diana Phelps; Sally Clay and Tony Wells; John Guest and Una Pengelly; and a new pairing of Peter Cole and Ross Bagni. It was Ross' first croquet competitive match which he was looking forward to despite the fact that he was somewhat tired, having arrived home at 3.00am from attending the Paralympic Opening Ceremony.

The first round was halved with wins for Cundell/Phelps and Guest/Pengelly. In round two Clay/Wells added to the scoreboard as well. We decided to play round three before lunch as the weather was looking like closing in - this round was a winner for Watford as they took all four games.

So lunch was taken and battle recommenced for the final round of the day. With three matches completed and with wins by Guest/Pengelly and Clay/Wells - it all depended on the new duo. They fought a long and sometimes frustrating match with Ross' brown ball being particularly hesitant about going right through the hoops - however he came up trumps on hoop 12 where Watford for once didn't



On 4th July, Pauline Lefrere, Martin Field, Judith and John Cundell went on a USA trip to Peckover House at Wisbech and came across a croquet lawn and a very old set of mallets and balls - so they just had to play a game. Pauline and Martin won!

manage to shift it from behind - so the game was won, giving an overall result of 8-8 - a draw!

All considered this was a good result for a fine day's play and enjoyment. Thanks again to our wonderful hosts.

### Stony Stratford Friendly - Away - 31st August - reported by Roger Stroud

Our team for this friendly match at Stony Stratford was Peter and Irene Davis, John and Sheila Guest, Pauline Lefrere, Jean Ball, Ross Bagni, and myself.

We all arrived about 10am and the weather was fine. Stony had three lawns available - the three quarter size lawn, half size lawn and their full size lawn on the cricket pitch.

Alfred Sawbridge was organising the event and arranged for everyone to draw a marked stick so that a Stony person would partner a LL person - the stick also indicated the lawn and the colour ball for each person. Handicaps were also used giving appropriate players a number of free shots.

Play started with no time limit on games although as the day went on a time limit of 40 minutes was imposed, reflecting our late morning start and the number of games Alfred would have liked to play. We played three games before lunch and two after.

I was so pleased to see that Pam is still playing for Stony - she is 95 this year and she played well, limiting herself to four games. Alfred had a challenging time organising the event with Stony players not turning up and some deciding to go home early.

My own preference would be for the more usual format of pairs of LL playing against pairs of SS creating a more competitive environment, which many of us prefer.

### Wingrave Friendly - Away - 5th September - reported by Malcolm Kirby

The members of Wingrave Croquet Club made everybody from LLCC very welcome and allowed us some time before the match to get used to the slopes of their croquet lawn. (some chance!!)

The LLCC teams were Irene Davis/Martin Field, Malcolm Kirby /Erica Fogg and Peter Davis/Val Jeffers.

The competition consisted of five rounds with a total of seven games. At the end of these seven games, LLCC won by four games to three, with Irene and Martin winning one



The LJB 70 Plus Trophy and Plate enjoyed a dry day and the winners were John Thorp for the Trophy and David Ball for the 'plate' - pictured left with runners-up Don Barrett and Sally Clay.

of their two games, Malcolm and Erica winning two of their three games (the third game was lost on the 13th hoop grrrr...) and Peter and Val winning one of their two. Peter and Irene needed to leave after the seven games had been played because they were going out on the 'lash' with Jean and David Ball.

As there was still some time left and the weather was perfect, it was decided to play two more doubles games limited to 30 minutes - with Val and Martin teaming up and Erica and Malcolm as the other pair. Val and Martin won their game and Erica and Malcolm lost theirs.

Both teams then adjourned to the club house for a wide choice of cakes which were washed down with mugs of tea. All together a really fabulous day, enjoyed by all.

### **B-Level Edgbaston - 11th September**

This year there was only one representative from LLCC at this event, one of the last B-Level tournaments in the calendar - and that was your editor. Edgbaston demands an early start due to the rush hour traffic in and around Birmingham - hence a 6.15am departure - and I arrived at the lawns at 8.45am, in time for a welcome cuppa and a few minutes of practise on the three lawns before the 9.15am briefing from organiser Richard Thompson. I have included Richard's report as follows:

'John Cundell of LLCC won the September Edgbaston GC Tournament in fine style. The Handicap Range for this event has remained fixed over its seven year history, but the standard is noticeably better - both in shot-making execution and in tactical 'nowse'. Players from seven different clubs, and many hundreds of miles, came to Birmingham for



John Cundell with the rather large trophy he won at the B-Level Edgbaston tournament.

this well-supported tournament. No-one left without at least one win, nor did any player escape unbeaten. Surely a good sign of tough, even competition. Good planning and scheduling, along with expeditious play, meant that time limits were never required.

The four semi final places were all in doubt right up to the final round of block matches - most players bemoaning a particular 6-7, when 7-6 would have seen them placed. In many ways, the Final was untypical of the day's play. John, showing why his Handicap HAD been better than this range, played quite imperiously to secure a comfortable victory over John Steel of Broadwas. There are times when an opponent can just do nothing against consistent excellence. This was one such instance and all the more unusual for being in the key game of the day. All the other competitors watched in awe, while enjoying their deserved afternoon tea. Good to see a full spectator gallery for the Final.' End quote.

Richard presented me with the huge trophy and I even managed to escape most of Birmingham's traffic before the evening rush hour. A very enjoyable day and as well as winning, it was nice to meet old friends and new.

### **The 70 PLUS LJB Trophy - 14th September**

The title of this event says it all - entrants may be male or female, 70 years old or over, and competing for a 'main' trophy, a 'plate' trophy, and a consolation award. It was devised by Len Buckingham as a rather different and fun event. The competition is the best of 19 hoops for sixteen competitors (this time ten men and six ladies) and is run on a knockout basis. After the first 16 have played, the eight players knocked out are moved into the 'plate' competition.

John Thorp, John Cundell, David Ball and Malcolm Kirby had prepared the lawns and equipment after an early start at 7.15am, so all was ready for Len's opening remarks and the draw for the eight teams at 9.00am. Judith Cundell acted as scoring manager and together with Jean Ball and Ross Bagni, they kept players on the correct course of the 19 hoop marathons.

In the LJB trophy the following moved on to the quarter finals: Peter Cole, Sheila Guest, John Guest, Don Barrett, Margaret Lawson, John Thorp, John Cundell and George



The two lawns and Bassetsbury Manor House was the lovely venue for our first away friendly with High Wycombe Croquet Club.

Lawson. Those going through to the 'plate' were Tony Stammers, David Ball, Peter Davis, Irene Davis, Jackie Cole, Sally Clay, Len Buckingham and Diana Phelps. After the quarter finals those going through to the semi finals were Sheila Guest v Don Barrett and John Thorp v George Lawson in the LJB; and David Ball v Irene Davis and Sally Clay v Len Buckingham in the 'plate'.

After lunch, Don Barrett and John Thorp won through to the LJB final; David Ball and Sally Clay to the 'plate'. Both finals were held on Lawn One in front of an enthusiastic audience and after two excellent games the winners were John Thorp over Don Barrett by 10-4, with David Ball beating Sally Clay by 10-5 in the 'plate'. The consolation prize will go to Diana Phelps.

### High Wycombe Friendly - Away - 18th September

Six members attended our first away Friendly at High Wycombe on a dry but very breezy and chilly day - the fleeces were much in evidence. Our team was David Ball with Sally Clay, Eve Buckingham with John Cundell and John Guest with Val Jeffers. Only six can play at a time as they have one full size lawn and a second smaller lawn that is not large enough for doubling up pairs games.

We arrived to a friendly welcome and coffee/tea in the very impressive Bassetsbury Manor that is the club's current headquarters. Unfortunately the house and grounds are about to be sold and turned into a school, therefore the club will lose the facility, however there are plans in hand for new lawns at another site.

We enjoyed two rounds in the morning session - two wins each by Eve and John C and Sally and David - and one by Val and John G. A relaxing lunch and chat followed in the Manor. The remaining afternoon round featured wins again by Buckingham/Cundell and Clay/Ball - so the overall result was a win for LLCC by seven games to two.

A fine tea followed with cakes and hospitality to match the grand surroundings. A lovely end-of-season day and we look forward to return matches with High Wycombe CC next year.

### Club Doubles and Singles Championships

The first event of the club tournaments, the Doubles, was played on 22nd September and attracted 24 players. John

Below: Club Doubles finalists Jackie and Peter Cole, John Cundell with two balls in the air, and the winners and runners up. Bottom: Richard Keighley and John who won on the 12th hoop; the players after a good day of croquet.



C, John T, David Ball, Richard Keighley and Tony Wells had carried out the usual preparation from 7.30am until 9.00am on a dry but nippy Autumn morning, with an unusually early grass frost on the lawns.

The draw had been carried out previously at the LJB Trophy and featured two blocks of six pairs, each playing five games to find two finalists. There was a slight breeze and the day was sunny and soon warmed up a little from the cold start - the games also warmed up and there was some exciting play from players old and new to this event. By mid afternoon our block winners were as follows:

<b>Block 1</b>		Wins
1st	Jackie and Peter Cole	4
2nd	Pauline Lefrere and Martin Field	3
3rd	Una Pengelly and John Guest	3
4th	Eve and Len Buckingham	2
5th	Judith Pengelly and Sheila Guest	2
6th	Diana Phelps and Rose Gillett	2

Club Singles Championships. Finalists Ross Bagni and Richard Keighley; Richard's winning shot. Middle row clockwise: Ross and Len Buckingham; Jean Ball and Richard Keighley were semi finalists; all 19 players; Ross attempting a jump shot.



<b>Block 2</b>		Wins
1st	John Cundell and Richard Keighley	5
2nd	John Thorp and Malcolm Kirby	4
3rd	Jean and David Ball	3
4th	Sally Clay and Tony Wells	2
5th	Margaret and George Lawson	1
6th	Shelagh and Ross Bagni	0

The final was set up on Lawn Two in front of an enthusiastic and good humoured audience. It was a fine game with Richard and John moving into a strong lead of 5-2, then there was an excellent comeback from Jackie and Peter which took the game on to hoop 12 with the score at 6-5 to Richard and John. After some strong positional play from both teams, Richard and John took the hoop to win 7-5. This was Jackie and Peter's first entry into this competition - an excellent start.

One week later and we were back for the Singles. Once more we were lucky with the weather - again it was bright and sunny with a cool but gentle breeze. The two Johns arrived at 7.15am, set hoops and swished the lawns to remove wormcasts, and were aided at 8.00am by Richard Keighley and Tony Wells to set out gazebos, tables, chairs, etc.

The draw had been carried out at the previous weekend and consisted of three blocks of five and one of four. Play continued under the organisation of Judith Cundell until the early afternoon and the block winners were as follows:

<b>Block 1</b>		Wins	<b>Block 2</b>		Wins
1st	Ross Bagni	4	1st	Jean Ball	4
2nd	Roger Stroud	3	2nd	Peter Cole	3
3rd	John Guest	2	3rd	Eve Buckingham	1
4th	David Ball	1	4th	George Lawson	1
5th	Sally Clay	0	5th	Roy Kemp	1



<b>Block 3</b>	Wins	<b>Block 4</b>	Wins
1st Len Buckingham	3	1st Richard Keighley	3
2nd John Cundell	2	2nd Tony Wells	2
3rd Malcolm Kirby	2	3rd John Thorp	1
4th Sheila Beal	2	4th Jackie Cole	0
5th Pauline Lefrere	1		

The semi finals were played on Lawns One and Two - on the first lawn Ross Bagni in only his second major club competition enjoyed a hard fight with Len Buckingham, and Ross came out the winner on the 12th hoop. On the other lawn Richard Keighley played a strong game to beat Jean Ball by 7-3. The final took place on Lawn Two in front of all the day's players, and was between Ross Bagni and Richard Keighley. Even though this was Ross's first final he was not overawed by the experienced Richard and he played a thoughtful and attacking game. In the end Richard's tactical knowledge and excellent hoop running of angled shots proved too much for Ross, and Richard won the final on the 12th hoop by 7-5.

Congratulations to Richard and well done Ross. For the second week running a newcomer to croquet had fought through to one of the Club's Championship competitions.

Finally, we were pleased to see Bryan and Joan Ferris who visited at the end of the day to say 'goodbye' to all the friends they had made over the many years they have been members. They are moving shortly to Chatham in Kent. We wish them well.

### **From a Member**

Now that the season has finished we must say a huge thank-you to any member involved in any way in keeping our club running so successfully. When we arrive to play either on a club day, or for competitions, a huge amount of work has already been done 'behind the scenes' by many members.

A special thank-you must go to John Cundell and John Thorp, for the huge amount of work they do to keep our lawns playable, and for liaising with the Council staff, and for setting up/running events, whether they are playing or not.

### **Other Matters**

#### **All Saints Flower Festival - June**

The club was pleased to support this event at All Saints Church in June. A thank you from the organiser follows:



*To Leighton-Linslade Croquet Club*  
On behalf of the Flower Guild at All Saints Parish Church, Leighton Buzzard, I would like to thank you sincerely for your recent support as a sponsor of our flower festival. We are delighted that local businesses, organisations and individuals became involved with the event, and you have all helped it to be a success.

The Flower Festival attracted a great many visitors who came to see the flower arrangements and find out about our sponsors, as well as listening to music and being able to spend time exploring All Saints' Church.

With the support of all our helpers and sponsors, over £2,300 was raised for All Saints Church and the All Saints Preservation Trust and we are delighted with this result.

Thank you once again for supporting us. We would like to stage another Flower Festival in a few years' time, and we would hope to make it another opportunity to involve the local community.

Yours sincerely - Katrina R. Grant.

### **Winter Social Club at Page's Park**

The Wednesday morning social club will meet for the first time this winter on Wednesday 10th October in Page's Park pavilion at 10.00am. The fee is £2 per session, and for that you get refreshments and the opportunity to play many board games, darts, snooker, table tennis, dominoes and crib. The activities generally finish about noon, so please support this venture if you possibly can. Friends of members are very welcome for the same attendance fee, refreshments included.

### **Annual Club Dinner**

Preparations are in hand for this which is scheduled for March 15th 2013 at The Golf Club, Leighton Buzzard. Full details will be announced at the Annual General Meeting.

### **Club Clothing**

We can supply club branded clothing such as polo shirts, fleeces, sweatshirts and caps. For further details contact Judith Cundell (contact details on Page 1).

### **Club Badges**

David Ball has obtained a new batch of cloth club badges. These are available direct from David at £4.14 each. Contact David on 01525 211988 or email him at davidjean.ball@btinternet.com.

### **Lawn Maintenance, Equipment, Storage**

As stated at the end of last season, the club is now responsible for all maintenance work on the lawns that is required during the closed season - plus the normal work that we undertake during the playing season. The Council groundsmen mow for us once a week during the playing season and mark the white lines. Any other treatment is down to us either doing it ourselves or paying others to carry out the work. The following should give you some idea as to what this entails: Scarification (this means removing the matted and fibrous growth to reduce the thickness of the thatch); Aeration (puncturing the surface to allow air to penetrate and create better drainage and growth); Fertilisation; Re-Seeding and Top Dressing (improve levels and playing surface); Winter mowing.

We can do some of this work ourselves - and in order to facilitate this we have purchased a new rotary mower and a scarifier/lawn raker. We have a small group of members who have agreed to give their time during the close season to carry out local aeration with a spiker loaned to us by the Council, and to scarify and mow the lawns as required during the winter. We have asked the Council to carry out other work such as fertilisation and weed/moss control for which we will be charged. We have also applied to The Croquet Association for a grant towards 50% of the cost of the rotary mower and we understand that our request will go to the relevant committee in November.

Storage is obviously a problem with regard to our extra equipment - obviously the club room is too small. We have been fortunate in obtaining permission from the Council to store our excess equipment in the Referees Room in the



A small tribute and thanks to some of this season's scorers - above: John Thorp watched by Carole Thorp; Roger Stroud with Watford's Maureen Croft; Peter Cole and Dierdra Ellins in the rain - left is Peter Davis - right, Scoring Manager Irene Davis with Peter and Irene Stevens.



pavilion during the playing season. This has worked very well this season and we are grateful to the Council for this. The Referees Room was obviously needed as soon as the football season commenced at Page's Park, so all equipment required for our winter maintenance work will be stored in the Club room for the winter months - plus use of the Council's storage container for items such as the scoring equipment.

Our priority for 2012 was to replace the rough, poor area of lawn at the right hand side of Lawn Two. This was carried out at the end of last season and the grass has grown very well. Unfortunately, as you all know, the surface is still bumpy, although there has been considerable improvement as the year has progressed. Work is scheduled for the immediate future for the Council staff to scarify this area, lay top dressing and level as much as possible. This will be charged to the club.

### Costs and Capital Reserves

We have heard comment that the club is well off and so why are we trying to raise money? If we were to carry out all the recommended treatments during the closed season which were previously handled by the Council, we would be looking at £3,450 per year. Our income from subscriptions is around £3,900 per year. 'No Problem', I hear you say! Don't forget that we have to pay the Council £1654 for 2012 (increasing by 5% annually), plus insurance via The Croquet Association at around £400.

So we have approximately £1800 per year to run the club (milk, biscuits, cakes, pavilion hire charges, membership of EACF, repairs to equipment, etc., etc.) - and what is left can go to lawn maintenance costs - obviously not £3450!

And, finally and most importantly, due to the financial agreement between the club and the Town Council covering a six year period (April 2011 to April 2017) we currently need a minimum balance on account of £7,500 to cover our total rent over the remaining four years. Under normal circumstance the total rent payable over these four years would be spread over the whole period payable

annually; however, if our club was to cease, the remaining rent for the whole four years would still have to be paid to the Council and is therefore a potential liability.

David Ball, John Cundell and Len Buckingham are guarantors for this liability and Len has recommended that we hold enough cash balance to cover this. The overall liability reduces each year as the annual rent is paid, therefore in theory reducing the necessary reserve to hold on this account. However in 2017 the agreement will need to be renegotiated and it is likely to be in a similar format.

### For Sale

Margaret Brown has a brand new pair of Ventilite/Teflon coated (posh) waterproof white trousers, size large, which lie unopened in her cupboard. If there is anyone in the Club looking for such a garment perhaps they would offer a small sum towards her next year's membership fee! Margaret can be reached at [mjbrownhome@talktalk.net](mailto:mjbrownhome@talktalk.net) or 01525 373860.

### Expenses

If any member has any claims for expenses please note these must be with Len by 10th October.

### Annual General Meeting

You will find an announcement concerning the AGM below. Guests are welcome to accompany members but please make them aware that they may not participate in the business part of the AGM, and also to keep information they hear during the AGM as confidential.

Members are reminded that it has been tradition for the after-meeting party to take along some buffet finger food of your choice. If you need any guidance then a call to Val Jeffers on 01296 688543 might help.

Also, we will be holding a raffle to raise funds for the club and would be pleased to receive any **good quality** items you may wish to donate. If you can help please contact Tony Stammers on 01525 757940.







## Roll of Honour 2012

### Leighton-Linslade Croquet Club Tournament Winners

Soham GC Doubles	John Cundell and Richard Keighley
Mix 'n Match Doubles Handicap	Tony Stammers and Roger Stroud
Ladies Doubles Mix 'n Match	Pauline Lefrere and Judith Pengelly
Wrest Park Singles	John Cundell
B-Level Wrest Park	John Thorp
EACF Handicap Singles (8-12)	John Guest
Club Singles Handicap	David Ball
Wrest Park Doubles	Jean Ball and David Ball
B-Level Newport	John Thorp
Hunstanton Invitation Handicap Singles	Roger Stroud
Hunstanton Doubles Challenge	John Cundell and Mary Coombs
The John Fogg Trophy	David Ball and John Cundell
B-Level Edgbaston	John Cundell
LJB 70 Plus Trophy (Main)	John Thorp
LJB 70 Plus Trophy (Plate)	David Ball
Club Championship Doubles	John Cundell and Richard Keighley
Club Championship Singles	Richard Keighley

### Attendance Breakdown - 2012 - by Membership Secretary

Our Membership Secretary Judith Cundell has extracted the following information from the attendance sheets for 2012. There were 26 weeks of play. Figures include all matches - players, helpers and spectators.

Sessions	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Average attendance	19	11	5	9	13	10	3
Highest attendance at one session	44*	27**	31***	14	29	20	19****
	*John C's 70th	**Opening Day	***Jubilee Day			****(LJB Trophy)	

Best week was week ending June 1st with 102 attendances.

Most attendances by members:

John Thorp	105
David Ball	98
John Cundell	75

Most attendances in one week:

David Ball	6
Jean Ball	6
Peter Cole	6
John Thorp	6 (Three times)

All figures very approximate as we know that not everyone marks the register - please try to remember to do it. If you bring a visitor, please come at a quiet time. Although we try to be welcoming to all, it is not fair to paying members to be sitting out while beginners are being taken over the court. Also, please mark all visitors on the register as 'friend of .....', and log them into the Visitors Book - this is mandatory to cover us for Health & Safety. We currently are 55 members.

### Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held at Northall Village Hall at 7.15 for 7.30pm on Friday 9th November 2012, followed by the traditional jolly party. Every member is entitled to bring a guest to join in the fun, but the meeting itself is an opportunity to raise any matter of interest or concern. It is also an opportunity for a member to volunteer his or her services to the Club. All members will receive Agenda, AGM Details, reports, etc., shortly. Please come along to the meeting and party. You are all very welcome!

**YOU MAY FIND IT HELPFUL AND INTERESTING TO READ THE OFFICER'S REPORTS WHICH WILL BE SENT TO YOU PRIOR TO THE MEETING.**

### And Definitely Finally...

Perhaps not the first - but have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Croquet Year!