



# LEIGHTON-LINSLADE CROQUET CLUB

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## NEWSLETTER - MARCH 2015 Volume 16 Issue 2

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### "It's Time to Get Your Mallet Out!"

Welcome to the second newsletter of 2015. With only a few days to go now before the playing season commences on the 28th March, we are pleased to be able to report that the lawns are looking pretty good - despite the damage caused by the footballers over the Christmas/New Year break. It seems there is little we can do to stop this disrespectful behaviour - although we have made representation to the Town Council and various ideas have been suggested - the main one being that the Council should look at installing an all-weather surface to the football playing area adjacent to Lawn 1, as this would hopefully encourage the footballers to play in the area designated for five-a-side, rather than ruin our lawns.

The lawns will be rotary mowed over the next few days to get them down to a suitable level for the Town Council groundstaff to cylinder mow down to the normal playing level. We have just purchased a second mower - another Honda. This one is 2ins wider than our existing machine, which will cut down the number of runs across each lawn and should halve the mowing time from its current three hours plus.

We are pleased to report that the time spent at the end of last season by John Thorp and Ross Bagni in raising the dip by hoop 4 on Lawn 2 has been very successful. A couple of bare patches have been reseeded and some top dressing was applied a week ago.

The hoops will be positioned next week. The removal of the section of fencing adjacent to the right hand side of lawn 1 has given us extra space which will enable the hoop positions on lawn 1 to be relocated in a slightly different position to previous years, so avoiding the somewhat worn areas. It will also allow us to bring the left hand edge of lawn 1 away from the awkward slope. Also next week, the clubroom will be given a spring clean. Thanks to those members assisting in these tasks.

All in all, we are confident that the lawns will be available for the season opening day of 28th March.

Members will also be pleased to hear that Len Buckingham is ordering two new sets of secondary colour balls to replace those that are now of indeterminate colours!

This newsletter issue is mainly to give you the current diary and competition information. There are no changes to the handicap system for this season - the trial handicapping system brought in for 2014 will be extended for 2015. As reported in our last newsletter the Croquet Association's Handicapping Committee has collected and is analysing thousands of handicap results from the last couple of years and is intending to come up with a fairer GC system in due course.

There is a change in the make-up of the EACF Handicap

League for this season, which is detailed later in the newsletter.

Enjoy the season and let's hope for another warm, sunny summer.

### Playing Sessions

Below is a reminder of the 'official' playing sessions for 2015 - no change from 2014:

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

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

**The only provisos are that a) if the Council Groundstaff or our own members are working on the lawns, then they will have priority and players will have to wait until they are finished; and b) certain Mondays and Fridays when League and Friendly matches are scheduled when no club play will be possible. On rare occasions there may be events on regular session play days which will be highlighted on the club noticeboards.**

### 2015 Dates for your Diary

Our Fixtures Secretary John Thorp has already been busy working on this year's calendar and it looks like we will have another busy season. All fixture dates so far arranged are included below.

Remaining EACF League dates, etc., will be posted in the Clubroom as and when these become available. An innovation this year is the second column below which gives the day of the week!

**PLEASE NOTE THERE ARE SOME DATE CHANGES FROM THOSE PUBLISHED IN OUR FIRST NEWSLETTER IN JANUARY SO PLEASE CHECK AND CHANGE YOUR DIARY ENTRIES NOW!**

#### March

28 SA LAWNS OPEN - weather permitting

#### April

5 SU Official Opening by Councillor Alan Brandham - 2.00pm

## May

- 1 F High Wycombe Friendly - Home  
9/10 SA/S Club 'Mix 'n' Match' Handicap Doubles  
30/31 SA/S Club Ladies Doubles 'Mix 'n' Match'

## June

- 2 TU Trinity Church Fellowship Group - 6.30pm  
6 SA East Anglian Counties Tournament -  
Hunstanton  
13/14 SA/S Club Handicap Singles  
17 W Committee Meeting  
20 SA CA B-Level Tournament (3-8) - Leighton-  
Linslade  
28 SU East Anglian Club Champions Tournament -  
Wrest Park

## July

- 6 M Dunstable Friendly - (Away) - played at Page's  
Park!  
9 TH High Wycombe Friendly - Away  
17 F C-Level Tournament (8-12) Leighton-Linslade  
24 F Wingrave v Phyllis Court - Southern League

## August

- 8/9 SA/S Club Mens Doubles 'Mix 'n' Match' John Fogg  
Trophy  
10 M U3A Dunstable visit Fun Day  
12 W Committee Meeting

## September

- 5 SA Club Garden Party and Fun Day (10.00am -  
4.00pm)  
9 W Committee Meeting  
12 SA LJB 70+ Trophy  
19/20 SA/S Club Doubles  
26/27 SA/S Club Singles

## November

- 13 F AGM & Party

## Official Opening by Councillor Alan Brandham

All members are warmly invited to attend the official opening of the season by Councillor Alan Brandham at 2.00pm on Sunday 5th April. Alan is Chairman of Leighton-Linslade and District Sports Council and has always been a strong supporter of our club. Please make every effort to come along and be in attendance by 1.30pm. It would also be nice if whites are worn.



Members will recall from our last newsletter that John Thorp was to be awarded Leighton-Linslade Sports Council's Service to Sport Award for 2014.

John was presented with his award at The White House, Leighton Buzzard on 19th January. Unfortunately there was no photographer present at the meeting, therefore we have made this omission good!

## Social Club finishes 1st April

The Social Club at Page's Park on Wednesday mornings has been well attended for most of the winter months with upwards of 14 attendees. Even though the croquet season starts on 28th March, the pavilion will be available up to and including 1st April, therefore if we are unlucky with the weather, there will be somewhere warm and sociable to meet and enjoy a game of cards or dominoes.

## Annual Club Dinner

The dinner held on Friday 13th March at the Leighton Buzzard Golf Club was attended by 37 people - members, wives and guests. A very pleasant evening was enjoyed by all with some excellent food and convivial conversation in excellent surroundings. The whole party joined in thanking David Ball and Len Buckingham for organising an excellent evening.

## EACF Club Champions Tournament

Two years ago David Ball won the Handicap trophy at this event. This year the venue has changed from Colchester to Wrest Park (Hooray!), where each club in the region is invited to send both their level play and handicap club champions from the previous year, or suitable substitutes. Our representatives will be John Cundell in Level and Judith Pengelly in the Handicap category.

## Leighton-Linslade High Handicap (C-Level) Tournament

As we mentioned in the January newsletter, this season we intend to run a High Handicap tournament (sometimes referred to as C-Level). This event is aimed specifically at those players whose handicap falls between 8-12, designed to give the less experienced player a chance to play in open competition, and hopefully to tempt them into entering more senior Croquet Association events.

We hope that a good number of our members will take part, as well as inviting entrants from other local clubs. This will be organised similarly to the B-Level Tournament (see below) with an entry of 14 players. There will be a small entry fee of £5.00 to cover costs and a trophy. The only entry proviso is that your handicap lies between 8 and 12. The date is 17th July. Entry forms will appear in the clubroom in due course.

## Leighton-Linslade GC B-Level Tournament - 20th June

This competition was initiated in 2014 by Chris Roberts, the Editor of The Croquet Gazette, to try and bring a climax to the series of B-Level Tournaments held throughout the country. Chris's idea was to enlarge the competition by getting more clubs to take part and rationalising the events to allow play from the same handicap range which was finalised from 3-8. Winners of each round automatically qualified for a two-day final at the end of the year. The whole series was very well supported.

The success of the B-Level series has encouraged even more clubs to take part this year. There will be tournaments throughout the season as follows: Sussex, Watford, Wrest Park, Ealing, Northampton, Leighton-Linslade, Colchester, Hunstanton, Bath, Bury,

Nottingham, Middlesbrough, Hamptworth, Guildford, Phyllis Court, Ashby, Hurlingham and Edgbaston. The final will be at Hunstanton.

I am pleased to say that our event has almost reached it's quota of 14 competitors with entries from Wingrave, Maldon, Phyllis Court, Enfield, Guildford, Northampton, Bishop Monkton and Leighton-Linslade.

To play in any of these events you need to join the Croquet Association as a Tournament Member.

### **EACF Leagues**

After the introduction of a Level Play League as well as the long running Handicap League in the East Anglian Croquet Federation in 2012, this will again be part of the 2015 season, running under similar rules.

Last year's Handicap League incorporated a number of changes, mainly to do with the team handicaps allowed - basically there were no restrictions either to personal handicap level or the total for the team. After a long discussion with our League Manager John Thorp, the EACF League Manager, Jason Carley, has considered bringing back some restrictions for 2015 to encourage higher handicap players to take part. The resulting change in the rules is as follows:

### **5. Handicaps:**

*a. Each player shall have a handicap within the range -2 to 12 (effective handicap in the range -6 to 12) and shall play off their current **EFFECTIVE** handicap on the day of the match.*

*b. The team shall have a minimum aggregate **ACTUAL** handicap of 16.*

*d. No more than one team member may have an **ACTUAL** handicap less than 3 on the day of the match.*

This should remove those teams that played last year with four very low handicap players.

As per last year, we will be running one Level Team and one Handicap Team. Entry forms will appear on the clubroom notice board as soon as the season commences.

### **Scorers**

Sheila Beal will be acting as Scoring Manager for 2015. Our scoring system has been much admired by visiting clubs and once again we will be using it for League, Murphy Shield, and our B-Level and C-Level events.

As soon as we have some dates available a list will appear in the clubroom for volunteer scorers to enter their names.



## **Revd. Vernon Smith 1933 - 2015**



**Reverend Vernon Smith died on 23rd January after a very short illness. Vernon was well known throughout the town for his tireless work for All Saints Church - as well as conducting weddings and baptisms, he was the face of the Church. As well as his pastoral work, for a number of years he and his wife Ann were enthusiastic members of the croquet club. Vernon worked in the motor industry for much of his life. He was made priest in 1987, was church administrator at All Saints, and also took up duties in Bourmemouth and Newbury before returning to Leighton in 2003 - helping the parish in so many ways. Vernon always had time to chat and time to listen. Our photograph shows Vernon and Ann at our garden party in 2008.**

### **Subscription Reminder - Club Membership**

In case you haven't yet paid this year's subscription and have mislaid the form sent out in January, you will find another membership application form overleaf. If you have an email address please include this as we would like to send as many newsletters and other communications as possible by this method. Postage costs are very expensive and as club outgoings have risen significantly now that we are doing much of our own court maintenance, then every penny we can save is important. Also please include a mobile number if you have one. Those on email will receive acknowledgement that your subscription has been received. The small number of members who are not on email will be telephoned. The membership cards will be distributed as the season commences.



# MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION - 2015 SEASON



I/we wish to join / rejoin the club.

Name(s): .....

Address: .....

..... Postcode: .....

Tel No: ..... Mobile No: .....

Date: ..... Email: .....

I am happy to receive all communication by email, including 'return forms': YES  NO   
A subscription for the full season is £75 per person. Potential new members may also pay a £5 fee for two trial sessions. This fee will be deducted if full membership is subsequently taken out.

I / we enclose a cheque for £..... payable to Leighton Linslade Croquet Club.

Please return this form and cheque to: Judith Cundell (Membership Secretary), 18 Saxons Close, Leighton Buzzard, Beds. LU7 3LT. Tel: 01525 374620.  
Email: [judith.cundell@btinternet.com](mailto:judith.cundell@btinternet.com)