



LEIGHTON-LINSLADE CROQUET CLUB

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"2015 Season Round-up"



Welcome to the third newsletter of 2015. This final publication for 2015 covers the whole season. Those of you who have internet access - currently 37 of our 46 members, will no doubt have seen most of the following - so apologies for repetition.

Opening Day - 5th April

Not only Easter Sunday, but also the club's official Opening Day was carried out by Town Councillor Alan Brandham who has been a great supporter of our club for many years. At 2.00pm, Alan struck the first official ball of the season on a dry and slightly overcast day, to acclamation by members, most smartly dressed in their whites for the occasion. Alan stayed on to play a game with obvious enthusiasm - perhaps we have a future new member - and then partook with all members of a celebratory cake and tea on our Chairman David Ball's birthday.

Wingrave Friendly - 15th April - reported by John Thorp

An early start to the season was this away friendly at Wingrave CC. Six members made the short trip and were made very welcome on a glorious warm, even hot, afternoon. Our team doubles pairings were Sheila Guest/Una Pengelly, Val Jeffers/Tony Wells and John Thorp/Diana Phelps.

The first round started with John Thorp and Diana Phelps taking on Robert Wright and Chris Harrison with John and Diana going initially four hoops down, but

Opening Day by Town Councillor Alan Brandham who after playing the opening shot stayed on to enjoy a game.

managing to win 6-5. The matches were timed and Val Jeffers and Tony Wells had won 7-2. Round two saw Sheila Guest and Una Pengelly beat Rob Chatlin and Daphne Vessey 7-3. Tony and Val drew 4-4 against Robert Wright and Chris Harrison. Round three produced another win for LL by Sheila Guest and Una Pengelly (7-4) against Robert Wright and Chris Harrison, with another draw (5-5) by John and Diana against Dave Morgan and Yvonne Gibson. Round four was a clean sweep for LL with wins by Val and Tony and Sheila and Una.

The drawn matches counted as half wins, therefore the final result was a win for LL by eight games to one.

We were then invited to tea and cakes - all home made. Thank you to our hosts for a splendid day's play.

High Wycombe Friendly Home - 1st May

The second friendly of the season was against High Wycombe on a chill but sunny day. The initial set up was achieved with help from some players turning up early.

The visitors' team paired Kay Vickery with Geoff Brook, Jane Gloster with Ralph Baker, Sally Rogers with Julian





Webster and Judy Halls with Mike Vickery. Our players were John Thorp with Jackie Cole, Phil Rowe – playing in his first competitive friendly – with Val Jeffers, Una Pengelly with Tony Wells, and Peter Cole with Gerry Halls. Peter should have been paired with one of our other members, who unfortunately mixed up his dates – but luckily High Wycombe had brought along Gerry as a ninth player who kindly agreed to play for Leighton-Linslade.

The first round was shared; in the second LL took three wins, the last two rounds were also shared. This gave an overall result of nine wins to LL and seven to High Wycombe. An enjoyable day and we look forward to the return match at High Wycombe on 9th July.

Thanks again to all those who helped set up the hoops, put up the gazebos, supplied the cakes and looked after our visitors.

EACF Level Play League - Chelmsford & Bentley - 8th May

Our first Level Play League match was against Chelmsford & Bentley at home. Our team was John Thorp, David Ball, Jean Ball and Roger Stroud. John T, Roger and David, with John Cundell acting as Team and Match Manager for the day, arrived at 8.30am to set out the lawns and equipment on a chilly overcast day. As 10.00am approached our scorers, Peggy Kenny, Peter Stevens, Roy Kemp and Florrie Jeater arrived. Normally our friends from Chelmsford are early arrivals and we began to get a bit worried as 10.30am came and went with no sign of them. However, shortly after the team of John Skuse, Paul Bridgman, Bob Jones and Tony Frewin appeared, explaining that their planned arrival of 9.30am was destroyed by major hold ups on the M1.

After our usual warm welcome on what soon became a drizzly day, play started following a ten minute practice. The rules for all EACF League matches have changed this season inasmuch as the two doubles games are played first. These were shared with a win apiece. Onto the first singles round and there were three wins for LL; the second round was a reverse with three wins for C&B. At lunch the score was therefore 5-5.

Lunch obviously helped LL as we enjoyed a clean sweep over rounds three and four. The overall result was a

Chelmsford & Bentley and our players at the EACF Level League match - Chelmsford Captain John Skuse concentrates hard.

convincing win for LLCC by 13 games to five. Well done to our team. We look forward now to Watford – another home match – on 18th May.

Thanks as usual to the cakemakers and the scorers.

Mix 'n Match Doubles Handicap - 9th May

There was a healthy entry this year from 22 members including one of our newer members, Mary Kemp, making her first appearance in a club championships event. Most competitors managed to turn up at the requested time of 8.45am to witness the draw for partners. The players had been split into two groups for the draw, based on their handicaps, with a high handicapper playing with a low handicapper. There were some interesting combinations and the pairs were placed into one block of six and one of five.

The weather started grey and was very blustery with light showers for much of the day – very similar to 2014! The playing sequence over five rounds was followed. It was pleasing to see that all players were ready and willing to get onto the lawns despite the somewhat inclement conditions in the first couple of hours play. There were no delays and the blocks were completed just before 4.00pm with the following results.

Block 1 was closely fought with both Jean Ball/Sally Clay and Judith Pengelly/Len Buckingham winning three games each. They were separated on hoop count by just one hoop.

- 1st Jean Ball and Sally Clay
- 2nd Judith Pengelly and Len Buckingham
- 3rd Tony Wells and Diana Phelps
- 4th Don Barrett and Una Pengelly
- 5th Tom Miller and Caroline Stroud
- 6th John Thorp and Mary Kemp

Block 2 was an outright win by Roger Stroud and Roy Kemp with four games.

- 1st Roger Stroud and Roy Kemp
- 2nd Peggy Kenny and Val Jeffers
- 3rd David Ball and Jackie Cole
- 4th Peter Cole and Sheila Guest



The Mix 'n Match Doubles Handicap winners were Roger Stroud and Roy Kemp, playing Sally Clay and Jean Ball in the final.

5th Malcom Kirby and Eve Buckingham

The final started in slightly calmer weather conditions between Jean Ball and Sally Clay against Roger Stroud and Roy Kemp, watched by all the remaining competitors. It was a pretty even final until Roger and Roy edged away on hoop 9 and maintained their winning form to win by 7 hoops to 5.

Roy seems to be making a habit of this competition as he won in 2013 with Don Barrett, and in 2014 with Judith Pengelly!

We should thank David and Jean Ball, Roy Kemp, and Roger Stroud for help in setting up, and particularly John Thorp and John Cundell who initially got things moving with the hoops and tents, etc., at 7.30am - and to those members that stayed on to help clear up. There were three cheers at the end of the day for Organiser John Cundell for running what is a somewhat complicated and busy event.

Watford Friendly Away - 14th May - reported by Roger Stroud

Heavy rain was forecast for all day and it did not disappoint. Our team pairings were Val Jeffers and Peggy Kenny, Malcolm Kirby and Sheila Guest, Roger Stroud and Phil Rowe, Tony Wells and Diana Phelps. Watford team pairings were Geoff and Valerie, Hazel and Val, Maureen and Ann, Kay and Janet/Roger.

We went in three cars all arriving about 10am with the barrier being opened by one of the club members.

After the first round, captains Roger Nicholls and Roger Stroud decided to have timed games of 45 minutes as



there was double banking on lawn one as well as atrocious weather. We had lunch after three rounds with the score at six all.

Geoff suggested that maybe we should have a sing-song to keep our spirits up, and anyway, playing in this weather is character building!

The final round was completed ending the match at eight all - a very appropriate result as everyone was very wet from both the rain and the water coming off the gazebos. Congratulations to Tony and Diana who won all four of their rounds. Also, well done to Phil playing in only his second friendly.

Good hospitality was given with plenty of tea and cakes but everyone was pleased to be driving home to dry out.

EACF Level League - Watford - Home - 18th May

What an awful day greeted John Thorp, Roger Stroud, David Ball, John Cundell and Peter Cole at 8.00am at Page's Park to set up Peter's large marquee, the scorers' tents, and all the other equipment. The rain was heavy and constant and stayed with us, including some very blustery winds, until just after noon.

The Watford team of Nick Archer (-2), Steve Dennis (1), Geoff Johnson (2) and John Walker (2) arrived just after 9.30am - all well equipped for the inclement conditions. Our similarly attired team was David Ball (1), John Thorp (1), Jean Ball (3) and Roger Stroud (3). We were ready to start the doubles round shortly before 10.00am with David

Level League against Watford - another wet day - John Thorp and two intrepid scorers - Sheila Guest and Ann Rowe. Below, Nick Archer in classic mode watched by Jean Ball.



and Jean playing Nick and John Walker, and John Thorp and Roger playing Steve and Geoff. The result was a win for Watford in the first instance and Leighton-Linslade for the second.

The first round of singles was shared, however in the second round Watford took three wins, therefore at lunch they had a 6-4 lead. Round three was also shared giving 8-6 to Watford. So with everything to play for in the last round, there was some excellent croquet in the first sun of the day. Unfortunately the round was again shared, leaving Watford the winners by 10 games to 8. The closeness of the day's play was reinforced with the hoop count - Leighton-Linslade scored 95 hoops - Watford scored 100! We don't usually pick out individual players however Jean Ball enjoyed a superb result against Nick Archer who plays off -2, beating him 7-5 to a round of applause.

Thanks to John Cundell for managing the day; and to our hardy scorers for putting up with the dreadful conditions - Sheila Guest, Peggy Kenny, Ann Rowe and Sally Clay. Thanks also to Val Jeffers, Eve Buckingham and Jean Ball for the cakes - much enjoyed at the end of a hard day by all concerned. Also, many thanks to Peter Cole for the loan of his marquee.

Ladies Doubles Mix 'n Match Level Championship - 30th May - reported by John Thorp

The day started with the draw for partners. With only ten entries it did not take long to find the five pairs. Only two lawns were required with no doubling up. The teams were Jean Ball/Sheila Guest, Una Pengelly/Sally Clay, Diana Phelps/Val Jeffers, Ann Rowe/Dierdrea Ellins and Judith Pengelly/Peggy Kenny.

In the first round Jean and Sheila beat Una and Sally 7-2 whilst Diana and Val beat Anne and Dierdrea 7-3. In round two winners were Judith and Peggy against Diana and Val 7-1, and Una and Sally beating Anne and Dierdrea 7-5. In round three winners were Jean and Sheila beating Diana and Val 7-5, with Judith and Peggy beating Anne and Dierdrea 7-3. The fourth round saw Anne and Dierdrea beating Sheila and Jean, with Judith and Peggy beating Una and Sally. The final round saw wins for Jean and Sheila against Judith and Peggy 7-4, and Diana and



Val beating Una and Sally 7-6.

At the end of the block play there were two pairs with three wins – Jean Ball/Sheila Guest and Judith Pengelly/Peggy Kenny. Judith and Peggy won the final with a score of 7-5.

All the players said they had a good day with nice weather if a little chilly.

Letchworth Friendly - Away - 1st June

No report available.

Club Singles Handicap - 13th June

All three lawns were green and in excellent condition after a couple of overnight torrential rainstorms as the two Johns, Ross Bagni, Roger Stroud and David Ball arrived shortly after 8.00am to set out three gazebos and hoops for this year's competition. The weather was pretty awful for the whole day – constant light rain interspersed with frequent heavier showers – fortunately it was not too cold, but once you got wet, you stayed wet! 'Flaming June!'

Fifteen of the sixteen entrants arrived on time, and play was under way by 9.45am on all three lawns – with the delayed player arriving a few minutes after play commenced. The players were drawn into four blocks of four. John Cundell had produced a playing list based on a schedule suggested by John Thorp, and all the necessary paperwork which allowed the day to run very smoothly. There was a 60 minute time limit which was not required to be invoked throughout the day.

Play continued at a good speed into the early afternoon and by 2.00pm we had four block winners. The results were as follows:

Block 1

- 1st Roger Stroud
- 2nd Tom Miller
- 3rd Una Pengelly
- 4th John Thorp

Block 2

- 1st Ross Bagni
- 2nd Sally Clay
- 3rd Caroline Stroud
- 4th Eve Buckingham

Block 3

- 1st Malcolm Kirby
- 2nd Jean Ball

The finalists at the Ladies Doubles Mix 'n Match Level Singles Championship were Sheila Guest and Jean Ball playing Judith Pengelly and Peggy Kenny - Judith and Peggy winning.



3rd Peggy Kenny
 4th Ronnie Richardson
 Block 4

1st Judith Pengelly
 2nd Len Buckingham
 3rd David Ball
 4th Mary Kemp

Most of the players assembled to watch the semi-finals between Roger Stroud and Ross Bagni, and Malcolm Kirby and Judith Pengelly. Despite the still inclement weather, both semi-finals were excellent matches with exciting and competent play, both going to the 13th hoop. Ross pipped Roger and Judith pipped Malcolm.

The final between Judith and Ross was also hard fought, again with some excellent croquet played at a brisk pace that was exciting to watch. The 13th hoop also produced a tussle with Ross winning after Judith tried to clear Ross's in-the-hoop ball, and knocked it through. Well done both

Ross and Judith for providing a fine end to the day. A new name on the Singles Handicap Trophy – Ross Bagni.

Golf Croquet Inter-Club Murphy Shield - First Round - Phyllis Court - 15th June

This national 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 best of three.

This year there were 22 teams entered, split into two regions – North and South. We were drawn against Phyllis Court at Henley. The venue is chosen by draw that we lost, therefore we had a pleasant journey to reach Phyllis Court at 9.00am. Our team consisted of David Ball (1), Jean Ball (3), John Cundell (3) and Ross Bagni (5). The Phyllis Court team was Mike Fensome (2), Frances Colman (3), Don Rutherford (3) and Roger Goldring (4).

Our Doubles pair, David and Jean, won the first match of their best of three, but lost the second. Ross won his singles match and John lost his. So at lunch we were all square with the final third and deciding game of the doubles still to be played after the afternoon's singles – if

Yet another day for the wet gear. Players at the Singles Handicap competition were - top row, John Thorp, Tom Miller, Mary Kemp and Judith Pengelly. Middle row, Caroline Stroud, Len Buckingham and David Ball, Eve Buckingham, Peggy Kenny. Bottom row, Sally Clay, Malcolm Kirby, Ross Bagni, Judith Pengelly and Roger Stroud.





A panorama of the super Phyllis Court club house and lawns - the left hand lawn looks over the River Thames and The Henley Regatta course. Below, the nerve-tingling final doubles game which decided the result. Left is Frances Coleman and Mike Fensome with Jeam Ball clearing, watched by David Ball. Being under the Heathrow flight path, there are plenty of 747's passing overhead.



required. We were treated to a fine lunch in the Orangery at Phyllis Court Club, overlooking the River Thames.

After lunch, the singles round started with both Ross's and John's games being decided by two of the three games scheduled – this time Ross lost and John won. In their singles games, David was successful, but Jean lost. Therefore with the score at 3-3 it was necessary to play the last games of the doubles to decide the match.

It was a superbly fought game with excellent shots and tactics from all four players, watched by a growing and very interested group of Phyllis Court players and Ross and John. David and Jean got off to an excellent start and moved slowly to a 6-3 position. Ross and John were quietly confident and even began thinking of our next round that would be the quarter finals against Guildford and Godalming. But Mike and Frances had other ideas and fought every hoop tenaciously. Once more there were some tremendous long shots from Mike and David and some hard fought clearance duels between Frances and Jean. The Phyllis Court pair fought back to 6-6 and to the 13th hoop showdown. After a number of shots at the hoop which didn't come off by both teams, Mike Fensome shot a long ball and the game was won by Phyllis Court.

Very disappointing for our team, and especially David and Jean. We all felt that the overall score line of 4-3 matched the play and in a way it was a shame there had to be a losing side after such an excellent day's competition.

We joined the winning team for a celebratory drink and finally made our way home, disappointed in the result, but all agreed we had enjoyed a wonderful day's croquet. There is always next year.

Phyllis Court went on to beat Guildford and Godalming CC and Hamptworth CC. They met Nottingham, winner of the Northern Division, on 26th September in the Final, which was won by Nottingham.

National GC B-Level Tournament - 20th June

Our first B-Level tournament attracted twelve players in 2014 with six from outside the club and six of our players. This year we extended the entry to fourteen players and the following took part:

- Ian Shore (High Wycombe) (4)
- Richard Peperell (Phyllis Court & HWCC) (4)
- Jayne Stevens (Northampton) (6)
- Christopher Heath (Guildford & Godalming) (2)
- Jean Ball (Leighton-Linslade) (3)
- Roger Stroud (Leighton-Linslade) (3)
- David Frost (Enfield) (1)
- Roger Goldring (Phyllis Court) (3)
- David Widdison (Bishop Monkton) (4)
- Andrea Widdison (Bishop Monkton) (8)
- Michael Manning (Maldon) (3)
- Marian Manning (Maldon) (5)
- Paul Gunn (Wingrave) (4)
- Derek Heath (Tunbridge Wells) (6)

The fourteen competitors were drawn into two blocks of seven, keeping clubs separated and husband/wives similarly as far as was possible – and to maintain an equitable level of handicaps. All competitors had arrived by 9.00am – some having stayed locally overnight. After a warm welcome on what was yet another rather dreary day weatherwise, Tournament Manager John Cundell briefed the players on the day's programme. After 15 minutes practice to introduce the players to the vagaries of our lawns, play commenced. These were singles games with no time limit, doubled up on all three lawns. The visitors were extremely impressed with our scoring system which was staffed all day by a number of our club members – including Sheila Beal, Sally Clay, Diana Phelps, John Thorp, Una and Judith Pengelly.

The 42 games proceeded throughout the day, with competitors taking their lunch breaks between games.



B-Level Tournament. Far left: Ian Shore from High Wycombe playing Andrea Widdison from Bishop Monkton (Yorks and Humberside); right David Widdison. Middle row, left to right, Paul Gunn from Wingrave; Ian Shore playing Roger Stroud in the final; Roger's winning red. Bottom; the finalists Roger and Ian; third and fourth places to Jean Ball and Roger Goldring from Phyllis Court. Roger Stroud receiving his glass trophy from John Cundell.



Light rain fell for most of the morning, cleared for an hour or so around early afternoon, but it turned torrential as we approached the end of the blocks play, with even some thunder in the distance. There was some minor flooding on lawns 1 and 2, however play continued with just one short 15 minute break when the rain was really heavy.

At the end of the block play, our Roger Stroud was a clear winner in his block, with Roger Goldring from Phyllis Court second; in the other block the winner was Ian Shore from High Wycombe with Jean Ball second.

The play off for third and fourth places was therefore between Jean and Roger Goldring – the final was between Roger Stroud and Ian Shore. Both matches took place simultaneously on Lawns 2 and 3 – avidly watched by competitors whilst enjoying a fine spread of cakes.

Roger Stroud moved into an early lead and maintained this to take a good win by 7-4 against Ian Shore. In the 3rd/4th play off, Jean Ball and Roger Goldring had a long, hard fought game which inevitably ended up at the 13th hoop which Jean won 7-6.

David Ball thanked all the helpers, scorers, tournament manager and cake makers – and particularly Peter Cole, the two Johns and Roger Stroud for turning up with him at 7.15am to erect the large marquee and prepare all the other equipment.

John Cundell announced the full results and Roger Stroud came forward to receive an engraved glass with the LLCC logo and the words 'WINNER – B-LEVEL 2015'.

Roger thanked everybody for excellent competition, our well-received scoring system and our overall management of the day. Some of the competitors even stayed on to help clear up which was much appreciated.

A Note from our Chairman - David Ball

John Cundell is to be congratulated on the manner in which he organised and ran the National B-Level Tournament at Page's Park. Although it rained, it ran extremely smoothly and all the members and competitors remarked on how they enjoyed the day and what a well

run event it was.

Also congratulations to the winners - our own Roger Stroud who beat Ian Shore from High Wycombe; Jean Ball from Leighton-Linslade was third and Roger Goldring from Phyllis Court fourth.

Also a very big thank you to all members and competitors who at the end of the day assisted in packing up and putting away our equipment.

EACF Handicap League - Northampton Mallets - Home - 26th June

Our first Handicap League fixture this season was against one of the two Northampton teams, this one named 'Mallets'.

Our team was captained by Jean Ball, not playing in this match, and comprised Val Jeffers (10), Sheila Guest (10), Sally Clay (10) and Roy Kemp (12). The Northampton team was Marilyn Robinson (6), June Pendergrast (8), Jillian Carrick (10) and Bill Malloy (11).

The visitors arrived bright and early at 9.45am, and after morning coffee and ten minutes practice, play commenced on a dry, warm day. The first round was the doubles match and honours were shared with a win by Sally and Roy for LL and Marilyn and June for Northampton. The singles then commenced and round one went to LL with wins by Sheila, Sally and Roy. Round two was a good one for Northampton with three wins – only Sheila winning for LL. Therefore at lunch the score was equal at five games to each side.

Round three of the singles was a clean sweep for LL with two of the games going to the 13th hoop. The last round of the day was shared, with wins for us by Roy Kemp and Val Jeffers. The overall result was a good win for LL by 11 games to 7.

Thanks are due to the two Johns, Roy Kemp and Jean Ball for setting up and to our scorers Sheila Beal, Florrie Jeater, John Thorp and Jean Ball – and to Val Jeffers and Jean Ball for the cakes.



First EACF Handicap League fixture was home to Northampton Mallets. From left to right; Bill Malloy, Marilyn Robinson, June Pendergrast, Sally Clay, Val Jeffers, Jillian Carrick, Sheila Guest and Roy Kemp.

**EACF Club Champions Tournament -
Wrest Park - 28th June - reported by
Terrey Sparks**

This is the first time that the East Anglian Croquet Federation has staged one of its Golf Croquet events at Wrest Park. Despite hosting regular Association visitors and despite the weather not being as forecast, this did not detract from the standard of play and the welcome received from the home club. This is the fourth year this annual event has been staged, and it is proving to be a most popular addition to the region's diary of events. Split into two groups of eight, one level and the other handicap, this year it attracted players from nine of our clubs and was managed by Tournament Organiser Terrey Sparks.

Each group was split into four, with the first games to determine knock-out opponents. Once this had been determined the groups then proceeded to a knock-out stage, so every player played at least five games.

In the level play group, which had a handicap range of -2 to 3, the semi-finals were made up of Chris Sheen (Colchester) v Rich Waterman (Maldon) and Martin French (Ipswich) v Jeff Race (Hunstanton), resulting in a final between Chris and Jeff. Jeff who had played immaculately all day, maintaining his form ran out a 7-3 winner, the second time he has lifted the trophy.

Not to be outdone the handicap group, comprising a handicap range of 2-7, proved to be just as competitive, and the semi-final rounds were made up between Peter Brown (Hunstanton) v Judith Pengelly (Leighton-Linslade) and Alan Clark (Watford) v last year's winner Barrie James (Mid-Suffolk). This resulted in a final round between Barrie and Peter, making it a Hunstanton appearance in both groups. However, Barrie's grip on the trophy remained and he ran out the winner of a tight game.

**EACF Handicap League - Wrest Park -
Home - 29th June**

Just three days after the win against Northampton Mallets, the same team were back in action for the second Handicap League match of the season, this time against Wrest Park. The two Johns, with latterly assistance by Roy Kemp, had set out all the equipment ready for the

Right, the players for the League match against Wrest Park. The day's proceedings were interrupted by a police car chasing the car below after it smashed it's way through the fencing by the cricket car park, watched by the police helicopter.



Judith Pengelly did well to reach the semi-finals of the Club Champions Tournament at Wrest Park - seen here in action. The winners were left of picture Jeff Race in the Level event and Barrie James in the Handicap.

arrival of the team just before 10.00am. Our team was Sheila Guest, Val Jeffers, Sally Clay and Roy Kemp. Our visitors from Wrest Park were George and Susan Savage, Tony Meredith and Peter Lovell.

The first round of doubles was shared with wins by George and Susan for WP and Sally and Roy for LL. The first round of singles saw three wins for LL - Sheila, Sally and Roy. Round two was shared with LL wins by Sally and Val. At this point lunch was taken - followed by round three seeing three wins for LL by Sheila, Val and Roy. At this stage the overall score was LL with nine wins, WP with 5. Therefore WP needed to win all four of the last round to force a draw. This wasn't to be as Sally, Sheila and Val all won. Another excellent result for the Leighton-Linslade team - an overall win by 12 games to six.

Thanks are also due to our scorers, Peter and Jackie Cole, Sheila Beal, Florrie Jeater, John Thorp, Jean Ball and David Ball - also to cake makers Val and Jean.

Well done team - three more games to come - Watford, Stony Stratford and Northampton Hoops.



Dunstable Friendly - Home - 6th July

No report for this match – just a result sheet. It was a Friendly with Dunstable, but played on our lawns as they only have one lawn. Our team was John Thorp with Ann Rowe, Sally Clay and Val Jeffers, Sheila Guest and Una Pengelly and the final pair was Florrie Jeater and Roy Kemp. Sheila and Una won all four of their games, as did John and Ann, with three wins for Sally and Val and also Florrie and Roy – giving an overall result of 14 wins to Leighton-Linslade and two to Dunstable.

High Wycombe Friendly - Away - 9th July

No report for this match apart from a results sheet and a group photograph. Our pairs were John Thorp/Ross Bagni with four wins; Jean Ball/Sally Clay with two wins; Phil Rowe/Diana Phelps with one win; Malcolm Kirby/Sheila Guest with three wins. This gave a good win by LLCC with 10 wins to 8.



Nottingham B-Level - 15th July - reported by Roger Stroud

Four club members (see photo below) made the trip to Nottingham Croquet Club on Wednesday 15th July for their B-Level Tournament. The members were John Cundell, Jean Ball, Ross Bagni and Roger Stroud.

There were 24 entrants grouped into four blocks giving everyone five games; the winner of each block would compete in the semi-finals.

Both John Cundell and Roger Stroud made the semi-finals and played each other in one of the semi-finals with Roger making it to the final. Roger lost to Jayne Stevens (Northampton CC) in the final.

The weather was fine all day making it a good but a tiring one, having set out at 6:30 am and getting back at 8:30 pm.



Leighton-Linslade (C-Level) Singles Play Tournament for High Handicap Players - 17th July

As mentioned in earlier newsletters, this new competition is a singles level play event aimed specifically at those players whose handicap falls between 8-14, designed to give the less-experienced players a chance to play in open competition, and hopefully to tempt them into entering more senior Croquet Association events.

The entry was open to local clubs and to our members. We received five entries from outside the club - one from Wingrave, one from Northampton and three from High Wycombe. Seven LLCC members made up the 12 players with handicaps ranging from eight to twelve which were split into two blocks of six.

An early morning of 7.00am was necessary for John Cundell, John Thorp, Peter Cole, David Ball, and Roger Stroud to set up all the usual equipment, plus the large marquee recently granted for use by us by Peter Cole. This was not an easy task as the wind was already blowing at 15mph and increased to 20mph as the day progressed.

Nevertheless all entrants arrived before 9.00am and after the usual welcoming coffee and tea, they were given up to 30 minutes practice on our lawns. Promptly at 9.30am, the timed games of round one commenced and early winners were David Higgins from Northampton, Roy Bradbury from Wingrave, Ralph Baker from High Wycombe, and Peter Cole, Sally Clay and Len Buckingham from LL.

Two more rounds were played before lunch - in the lead were Roy Bradbury from Wingrave in block one with three wins, and in block 2 Ralph Baker from High Wycombe - also with three wins.

The final two rounds resulted in the following:

Block 1

- 1st Roy Bradbury
- 2nd Peter Cole
- 3rd Jane Gloster
- 4th David Higgins
- 5th Sheila Guest
- 6th Roy Kemp.

Block 2

- 1st Ralph Baker
- 2nd Jackie Cole
- 3rd Sally Clay
- 4th Len Buckingham
- 5th Peggy Kenny
- 6th Mike Vickery.

Tea was served as the finalists - Roy Bradbury and Ralph Baker started the final. Roy moved into an early lead, although Ralph was fighting hard. As hoop 12 approached the score was 6-5 to Roy. A hard fought last few minutes had all the spectators wondering if the game was going to the 13th hoop until Ralph missed a clearance shot, and Roy Bradbury ran the hoop to become the first winner of this inaugural competition.

He was presented with a glass memorial trophy and a cash prize of £20, which he generously donated to our club and expressed his thanks for a superb competition, organisation and great hospitality. His words were echoed by all the other competitors. We look forward to the good news being spread back to our visitors' clubs and to other



The players for our first C-Level Tournament; David Higgins, Mike Vickery, Len Buckingham, Roy Bradbury, Peggy Kenny, Jackie Cole, Peter Cole, Sally Clay, Jane Gloster, Roy Kemp, Sheila Guest and Ralph Baker. Below; Peter Cole and Roy Bradbury, Sheila Guest, Sally Clay.



Right, Ralph Baker misses the clearance shot on the 12th hoop allowing Roy Bradbury to later run the hoop. Below, Jackie Cole and Peggy Kenny in action.



clubs in the area and that we receive a larger outside entry next year.

Thanks all those members who helped in many ways - the scorers, tea and coffee makers, equipment and lawn setup, clearing up at the end of the day, etc. Altogether a fine advertisement for our club.

Buckingham Friendly - 20th July

Buckingham Croquet Club is a part of Buckingham U3A and play at Buckingham Cricket Club. They are a relatively new group and have played very few competitive games with other clubs. Earlier this year Richard Keighley and John Thorp carried out a coaching course at their club and John T suggested to them that they might like to visit us for a Friendly. The date was agreed and it was also decided that it would be a friendly gesture to Buckingham that we pair up one of their players with one of ours. As

Buckingham unfortunately had one of their eight players drop out a few days before the match, we agreed to supply one of our members to make up their eight. Also, to add a competitive edge, we created two teams - 'Leighton-Linslade-Buckingham' and 'Buckingham-Leighton-Linslade'. The teams were:

LLB - Val Jeffers and Roger Edwards; Caroline Stroud and Dave Hamer; Sally Clay and Carolina Keneally; Sheila Beal and Mike Booth.

BLL - Mary Kemp and Hazel Bailey; Peggy Kenny and Nigel Yates; Sheila Guest and Pete Harland; Roger Stroud and Diana Phelps.

The day dawned dry, overcast and the forecast strong

The happy players at the inaugural friendly with Buckingham CC.



winds fortunately did not materialise as John Cundell and Roger Stroud arrived at Page's Park at 8.00am to set out the lawns, erect gazebos, etc., - ready for the players who all arrived promptly on time. After introductions, etc., play commenced around 10.30am and the first round resulted in wins for MK/HB, PK/NY, SC/CK and RS/DP. Round two saw wins by SB/MB, RS/DP, MK/HB and PK/NY. At lunch therefore, 'BLL' led by six games to two.

After lunch wins in rounds three and four went to RS/DP, VJ/RE, PK/NY, SC/CK, PK/NY, SB/MB, RS/DP and CS/DH. This gave an overall result of 10 wins to 'LLB' and six to 'BLL'. Best pairs were Roger Stroud/Diana Phelps and Peggy Kenny/Nigel Yates with four wins each.

After tea and cakes, Buckingham expressed how much they had enjoyed the day and that they very much looked forward to further meetings.

The following email was received from Roger Edwards of Buckingham CC.

Just a short note to once again thank you and your fellow croquet players for a really good day's croquet today. Thank you for the hospitality, your excellent organisation, the croquet tips and the cake - we all had a very enjoyable time and would very much like to repeat it some time in the future. As suggested, perhaps we could play a return 'home' match at your venue and we would provide the cakes. Something to think about for next year perhaps. Anyway, thanks again and enjoy the rest of the summer.

Best wishes, Roger Edwards.

EACF Level League - Enfield - Away 5th August

No report available. The result was a win for Enfield by 14 games to four.

EACF Handicap League - Watford Away - 6th August

The result was a win for Watford by 11 games to 7. Our team was Tony Wells, Malcolm Kirby, Sally Clay and Peggy Kenny. The Watford team was Geoff Johnson, John Walker, Anne Dennis and Maureen Croft. Tony Wells scored three wins; Sally Clay scored two wins; Malcolm

Kirby scored one win with his other three games all going to the 13th hoop; Peggy Kenny scored one win. No detailed report available.

Wingrave Friendly Home - 7th August

A superb day - warm sunny periods and hardly any wind - greeted Wingrave CC for their return home visit to Page's Park. The two Johns had set out the lawns and raised the two gazebos, etc., by 10.00am as the nine visitors were warmly welcomed by ten of our members. Our team consisted of Val Jeffers with Jackie Cole, Peter Cole with Sally Clay, Peggy Kenny with John Thorp, and Peter and Irene Davis pairing with Len and Eve Buckingham - each pair playing two of the four rounds. Similarly, three of the Wingrave members shared the pairings over the four rounds.

The first round was shared with wins for LLCC by Val/Jackie and Peggy/John. Round two followed with another sharing, again our winners as per the first round. Lunch was taken and round three produced another win for Peggy/John, plus a win for Peter Davis and Eve Buckingham - overall score was now six games for each team.

With all to play for, Peggy and John soon wrapped up a 7-0 win, followed by Val and Jackie winning on the 13th hoop. Peter Cole and Sally Clay lost 3-7, therefore the final result as to which team would win came down to the match between Eve and Irene against Richard Skidmore



A lovely day, for a change, for the Friendly against Wingrave CC.



Irene Davis and Eve Buckingham deciding on their next move at the deciding last round of the friendly against Wingrave.

and Chris and his partner. Eve and Irene – with a combined age of 172 – were 6-2 up and it looked like they and hence LLCC would win – however a brilliant comeback led by Richard took the match to the 13th hoop. After an excellent fight, Richard ran the hoop to win 7-6.

The result was eight games to each side – a fitting conclusion to an excellent and very enjoyable day's croquet.

Thanks to the cake makers – Val Jeffers, Eve Buckingham and Jean Ball, to John C for managing the day, and to all those members who stayed on to help clear up.

John Fogg Trophy - 8th August

This is one of our mainstay competitions, in memory of John Fogg, for many years our Membership Secretary. John was very much a social player with a wicked sense of humour, rather than a serious competitive man, and the idea behind this was to have a sociable, fun, but

still competitive event. Now in its seventh year, the match format is only for men, and is a doubles event where the competitors have no idea as to who their partner will be until a few minutes before the competition starts. Also, the competitors are split into two equal groups – one with low handicaps, the other with high.

This year's ten entrants gathered at 9.00am on a gorgeous sunny day. The low handicappers were David Ball, John Thorp, Richard Keighley, Tony Wells and Malcom Kirby – the high handicappers were Don Barrett, Peter Stevens, Peter Cole, Len Buckingham and Roy Kemp. After the draw the following pairs were: John and Len, Malcolm and Roy, Tony and Peter Cole, David and Peter Stevens and Richard and Don.

The five teams were all in one block. This meant there would be five rounds with one pair sitting out each round – the remaining four teams playing two matches. Lawns were chosen for each round by the toss of a coin. Three rounds were played before lunch and two after. Not one pair dominated and at the end of the five rounds Richard Keighley and Don Barrett unfortunately didn't manage a



Len Buckingham in good form at the John Fogg Trophy event - partnered by John Thorp - playing here against Peter Stevens and David Ball.

win. There were two pairs with two wins – Tony Wells with Peter Cole had beaten David Ball and Peter Stevens – therefore Tony and Peter were third with David and Peter Stevens fourth. That left two pairs with three wins each. Malcom Kirby and Roy Kemp had been beaten by John Thorp and Len Buckingham, therefore Malcolm and Roy were runners up, with John and Len winning the John Fogg Trophy.

An excellent day's play, much enjoyed by all present. Thanks to the two Johns for setting everything up at 8.00am, with assistance from David Ball, and to John C for managing the competition.

Watford Friendly - Home - 14th August

The weather forecast was absolutely dreadful – overcast, drizzle, then torrential thundery showers by late afternoon, as John T, David Ball, Ross Bagni and John C arrived at a bleak and damp Page's Park to set up for the return Friendly with Watford. The earlier Away Friendly with Watford was also a very wet affair! We must have upset somebody.

Watford's team of Anne Dennis/Maureen Croft, Brenda Theobald/Hazel Archer, John Smallbone/Veronica Fitzgerald, and Valerie Cambridge/Steve Dennis arrived before 10.00am, despite the fog en-route. Our team was already assembled, David Ball/Peter Cole, John Thorp/Una Pengelly, Ross Bagni/Peggy Kenny, and Tony Wells/Jackie Cole.

After the briefest of briefings by John C, where John suggested that the matches be timed and that we keep the day moving along to try and finish before the promised afternoon deluge – play commenced in what could only be described as a heavy drizzle which soaked everything and everyone.

The first round was halved with wins by David/Peter and Ross/Peggy. Round two was good for Watford with three wins – only John/Una winning for LL. A short lunch break was taken – and as Round three commenced it actually stopped raining. There must have been something in LLCC members lunch as they promptly won all four games in less than 45 minutes.

This excellent form continued into Round four with three more wins – only Tony/Jackie missing out. Therefore the

overall result was a good win for Leighton-Linslade by 10 games to six.

Tea and cakes and some good conversation between the two teams, plus a group photo, rounded off a very pleasant occasion despite the weather's attempt to spoil the day.

EACF Handicap League - Stony Stratford Away - 19th August

The result was a draw by nine games to nine. Our team was Tony Wells, Malcolm Kirby, Sheila Guest and Roy Kemp. The Watford team was Marian Holland, Steve Barber, Jackie Berry, John Burrridge and Rex Hale. Tony Wells scored three wins; Malcolm Kirby and Sheila Guest scored two wins each; Roy Kemp scored one win; in the doubles Tony Wells and Malcom Kirby won. No detailed report available.

EACF Level League - Letchworth Away - 22nd August

One of the hottest days of the year – hooray!! - the excellent lawns and hospitality at Letchworth – and an exciting and close match. What more could we want? The LLCC team of John Thorp, David Ball, Jean Ball and John Cundell were warmly greeted by old friends and rivals Duncan Hector, David Tutt, John Skingsley and David Mathews. Our handicaps added up to 9; Letchworth's to 4, therefore it was obvious we were in for a hard match. Play commenced with the Doubles round – the two Johns couldn't find any initial form in their match whilst David



Above, Peggy Kenny goes for the hoop, watched by partner Ross Bagni and Watford's Anne Dennis. Below, the LL and Watford players.



and Jean reached the 13th hoop, only to be pipped at the post.

Round one of the singles was good for LLCC with wins by John T, David and Jean. Round two singles was shared with wins by our two Johns. Therefore at lunch the match was all square at five games each.

With the temperature building to around 28 degrees, Round three commenced at a leisurely pace with regular top ups of water, and was again shared with wins by John T and David Ball. It was looking more and more like we would have a draw – however Letchworth enjoyed a winning fourth singles round with only John T gaining a good win for LLCC. Well done John, winning all four of his singles games.

The overall result was a win for Letchworth by ten games to eight.

The day was rounded off with a lovely tea of cucumber sandwiches, jam and cream scones, Danish pastries and a chocolate cake. Well done to Letchworth and thanks for an excellent day's croquet.

EACF Level League - Northampton Away - 24th August

What a change – from 27 degrees Centigrade at Letchworth on Saturday last to 17 degrees and rain all day at Northampton just two days later. Despite the conditions our team of John Thorp, David Ball, Roger Stroud and John Cundell arrived at a damp Northampton just before 10.00am to be warmly met by players Mike Hills, Lionel Tibble, Les Heard and Pete Dowd – plus Jayne Stevens as tournament manager, coffee and tea maker and scorer. It was nice to see Mike Hills playing after a somewhat lengthy bout of ill health.

It looked like we were in for another tough match as Northampton's combined handicap total was 0, and ours was 8! The first round of doubles confirmed this with both games going to Northampton by 7-5 and 7-3.

In the first round of singles our sole winner was David Ball by 7-5 over Mike Hills. The second round was a clean sweep for Northampton. We all squeezed into Northampton's club building for lunch with the score Northampton 9-2.

Round three saw a win for Roger, also on the 13th hoop against Mike Hills. The final singles round saw yet another 13th hoop ending – this time between John Cundell and Mike Hills – John winning after a hard fought match.

The overall result was a convincing win for Northampton by 15 games to three. Jayne served us a couple of superb

cakes, tea and coffee – there was some interesting discussion on golf croquet in general, and we said our farewells for this season – and journeyed back to Leighton Buzzard – and it was still raining!

EACF Handicap League - Northampton Hoops Away - 26th August - reported by Ross Bagni

As we left Leighton Buzzard with torrential rain falling we just hoped that the weather forecast would be correct and it would improve by lunchtime. Luckily by the time Peggy Kenny, Roy Kemp, Malcolm Kirby and myself arrived the rain was clearing.

The morning began with the doubles matches being shared and we had a narrow lead until lunchtime. On the third round of singles, Northampton won three of the four games and took a lead of one into the final round. We unfortunately only won two out of four and so went down 10-8 on the day.

The company was excellent and the cakes to dream about! Northampton Hoops were more excited that they had beaten their 'other' club team in the League, Northampton Mallets, than having beaten us.

Hurlingham B-Level - 29/30th August - reported by Roger Stroud

Early in the summer Ross Bagni decided he would like to enter the Hurlingham B-Level and persuaded Roger to join him. It was a two-day event on Saturday and Sunday. The format was 16 players, two blocks of eight, so seven games for everyone on the first day - the top two in each block playing in the semi-finals. The second day was the semi-finals (best of three) followed by the final, again best of three. The twelve players not in the finals played a 'Plate' competition on the second day.

In the block play on Day One, Ross won his block with six wins out of seven, thereby making the semi-final with Andrew Carpenter second in the block. During the day Ross noticed his mallet shaft seemed broken internally. Although still usable he brought his spare mallet on Day Two. In Roger's group, three players won five of the seven games; Roger Stroud, Roger Goldring and Andrea Huxley. Due to the who-beat-whom ruling, Roger Goldring and Andrea Huxley made the semi-finals.

Day Two - Semi-Finals and Final - saw Ross beat Andrea (2-1) - he played the last two shots with his spare

Ross Bagni and Roger Stroud collecting their awards for winning the Hurlingham B-Level and the Plate event. Well done to both.



mallet after the other finally gave up the ghost, and Andrew beat Roger Goldring. In the final Ross beat Andrew 2-0 in a tightly fought contest. In the first game Ross was 6-4 down but fought back to win 7-6. In the second game at 6-5 to Ross, he missed a 'sitter' at the twelfth but eventually won that hoop and the game 7-5. Ross won two engraved glasses as the overall winner.

In the Plate competition, Roger Stroud won all his games thereby winning the 'Plate' – and a bottle of wine.

On both days the weather was good and the lawns were immaculate - the organiser (Tom Wills-Sandford) said that the person who looks after their lawns gives advice to Wimbledon. There was a BBQ for lunch on the first day and tea midway through the afternoon. Lunch in the restaurant on the second day was excellent. Travelling was no problem with sat-nav, although Ross knows London as well as the satnav. Both Ross and Roger thoroughly enjoyed the weekend - this B-Level is one to be recommended.

Friendly Letchworth Home - 4th September

Our last Home Friendly of the season was on one of the coldest September days for many a year – the thermometer just reached 14 degrees with a light but northerly wind blowing across Page's Park. It was a day for jumpers and fleeces. David Ball and Len Buckingham were brave enough to wear shorts – it wasn't long before David had donned his waterproof trousers though Len bravely bore the chill!

Letchworth arrived a few minutes after 10.00am following a slight delay on the A505. After a warming cuppa play started with the first round of doubles. The team for Letchworth was Andrea Carr and Peter Aspinall, Colin Gregory and Margo Leach, Graham Styles and David Clancey and Tracy

Below, LL and Letchworth players. Right: Roy Kemp and Tony Wells enjoyed an excellent day's play, winning all four singles. Far right, Eve Buckingham and Judith Pengelly discussing their next move.



Martin and Robert Staddon. Our team was Len Buckingham and David Ball, Roy Kemp and Tony Wells, Mary Kemp and Ross Bagni, and Eve Buckingham and Judith Pengelly. The total handicaps for Letchworth were 62; Leighton-Linslade's were 56, therefore in theory we should have the strongest side.

The first and second rounds were shared, so at lunch the score was four games each. A short lunch break, due to the cold wind, was followed by the third round – three wins for LL – then the last round which was a clean sweep for LL. Must have been something in the food.

Tony and Roy enjoyed a clean sweep with four wins, Eve and Judith and Len and David won three games each, and Ross and Mary won one – that should add up to 11. Letchworth scored five.

The teams huddled together in the gazebo and enjoyed some excellent cakes from Val Jeffers, Jean Ball and Eve Buckingham – and there were kind words of appreciation from both sides for organisers John Cundell and John Thorp, plus David Ball and Ross Bagni for setting up the lawns and other equipment.

An excellent day with the chill driven away by the warm friendship and good humoured competition.

Garden Party and Fun Day

Following last year's successful amalgamation of the Garden Party and Fun Day, this season's date was September 5th at Page's Park. Unfortunately the weather did not live up to last year's warm day, however by all

reports the cold breezy conditions did little to diminish the overall enjoyment and warmth that was obvious during the day.

Upwards of 50 members and friends came along and enjoyed six hours of convivial fun, croquet and food. The latter was a sit down cold meal with excellent meats, pork pie, salad, followed by some equally fine deserts and a superb cheese board - all beautifully and expertly prepared by Val Jeffers, Jean Ball and Eve Buckingham – with help from Judith Cundell looking after the washing up and other general duties.

There was fun and games on lawns one and two led by David Ball and assisted by Peter Cole, whilst John Thorp looked after those who wished to play croquet on lawn three – then adding the other two lawns after lunch.

A considerable interest was shown by many of the friends and relations in taking part in the fun games and then being introduced to croquet. We are more than hopeful that this will result in some welcome new members for next season.

Again, an excellent day much enjoyed by all. Thanks are due to many members for helping make this event a great

success – in particular the ‘food’ ladies mentioned above – and the hardy souls who erected the marquee and gazebos in wind and rain, set up all the necessary equipment and generally kept things moving along and tidying up at the end of the day. Images below depict some of the hospitality and games.

70 Plus LJB Trophy - 12th September

As the season draws to a close we had the first of the remaining club championship events on successive weekends. This was the LJB (Len James Buckingham) Trophy - a very different competition to most of our others during the season – it is knockout rather than blocks, and the games are 19 hoops rather than 13. The competition is designed around 16 competitors who are initially drawn into eight singles level play games. The winners then carry on into a quarter final round, a semi-final round and a final. The losers from the first round go into a Plate competition. It is difficult to understand why we have difficulty in finding 16 players to take part in this friendly competition which provides a leisurely, enjoyable day. This year we had 12 entries which requires a bit of juggling to





Edgbaston GC B Class on 8th September saw the strongest ever entry in the 9th year of the tournament. Players converged from all over the UK and our contingent was Jean Ball, Ross Bagni and John Cundell. The weather was dry but gloomy, with freshly mown lawns. Two blocks of six created stern competition. Our three entrants were in the same block. In the first Semi Final, Mick Haytack from Ashby enjoyed a 100% record. The other semi was won by Northampton's Jayne Stevens. In the final Mick couldn't find that necessary spark and Jayne won with an error-free display of defensive and attacking croquet. Tournament Manager Richard Thompson remarked that B-Class Tournament play is now indistinguishable from all but the very top A-Class players. Catering from Chairman, Nick Hyne, was well received and appreciated and the atmosphere at the club and between the competitors was warm and friendly. Left to right: Richard Peperell (Phyllis Court), Ross Bagni, Nick Haytack (Ashby), John Cundell, David Thirtle-Watts (Hunstanton), David Widdison (Bishop Monkton), Jean Ball, Derek Buxton (Ashby), John Edwards (Luctonians) - seated: Libby Morris (Ben Rhydding), winner Jayne Stevens (Northampton) and Eileen Buxton (Ashby).

create a workable game plan. Don't be frightened of playing a 19 hoop game – one big advantage is that if you have a poor start – say 3-5 down at the eighth hoop – there is still time for a comeback. Anyway – to this year's event.

Despite a pretty dreadful weather forecast of heavy showers and rain, the 12 players assembled at Page's Park

at 9.00am as the last light shower of the morning blew away in what was a breezy but warm wind. After the draw for who plays whom, the first games started with wins by John Cundell over Len Buckingham, Malcolm Kirby over Phil Rowe, John Thorp over Eve Buckingham, Roger Stroud over Sally Clay, Peter Stevens over Roy Kemp and Peggy Kenny over Diana Phelps. It was then necessary to find two more players for the quarter finals from the first round losers as we only had 12 rather than the required 16. This was achieved by promoting the losers with the



Left and right, the two 70+ LJB finals - Main and Plate between John Thorp and Roy Kemp, and Len and Eve Buckingham. Above, enjoying the finals are Peter Stevens, Peggy Kenny, Phil Rowe, Caroline Stroud and friend, and Diana Phelps. It was a grand steam day on the light railway - not just passenger trains but some goods as well.



highest number of hoops – easy with Roy Kemp who had scored eight – however the second player needed to be chosen from Len, Phil and Diana who had all scored five hoops. This was done by a draw and Diana was the lucky one.

The next round saw John C beating Malcolm, John T beating Roger – a very close game at 10-9, Peggy beating Peter, and Roy beating Diana – another close 10-9 game. At the same time Len beat Phil, and Eve beat Sally in the Plate semi-finals. At this stage lunch was taken.

The next round was the semi-finals for the main competition – John T beat John C and Roy Kemp beat Peggy Kenny. The two finals were played at the same time on Lawns Two and Three, whilst Lawn One was available for club members to play socially. The Main competition final was a win for John Thorp by 10-5 although initially Roy played some excellent croquet, however the handicap difference of one for John and twelve for Roy proved too much. The Plate final between Len and Eve on Lawn Three drew a number of the players down to the lawn to watch as Len and Eve had a long, excellent match – finally won by Len with ten hoops to eight.

An excellent day's competition played in good friendly and competitive play under an ever improving sunny and warm September day. Why don't you decide to take part next year? – as long as you are over the age of 70 of course!

Thanks to the two Johns, Roger and Malcolm for setting

up the equipment and to John C for organising the day.

Club Doubles Championships - 19th September

At long last – a lovely warm, sunny day for croquet – shame we had to wait until 19th September! The late sunrise meant that the lawns were pretty damp when the two Johns arrived at 7.45am to swish thousands of worm casts off the lawns, to remove the carpet of leaves on lawn two and position the hoops. David Ball and Roger Stroud helped put out the remaining equipment prior to the other 12 competitors arriving around 9.00am.

The eight doubles teams had been drawn into two blocks of four earlier in the week, and the first four games got under way as the lawns were quickly drying out under a warm sun. All blocks were completed by 13.00 hours and lunch was taken. The results of the blocks was as follows:

Block 1

1st	John Thorp and Roger Stroud	3 wins
2nd	David Ball and Jean Ball	2 wins
3rd	Una Pengelly and Sheila Beal	1 win
4th	Eve Buckingham and Sally Clay	0 wins

Block 2

1st	Sheila Guest and Malcolm Kirby	3 wins
2nd	Judith Pengelly and John Cundell	2 wins
3rd	Peggy Kenny and Len Buckingham	1 win
4th	Diana Phelps and Rose Gillett	0 wins

The finalists, John Thorp and Roger Stroud playing



Left: Club Doubles finalists - winners Roger Stroud and John Thorp flanked by runners up Malcolm Kirby and Sheila Guest. Right; Roger's winning shot on the 13th. Below: John Thorp on hoop 5 - watched intently by the other players.



Sheila Guest and Malcolm Kirby started their final on lawn two watched by the remaining competitors. Sheila and Malcolm got off to a good start winning the first three hoops, then John and Roger took the next three to a score of 3-3. The next two hoops were shared to a 4-4 score. This see-saw continued until hoop 12 and the score was 6-6. Roger and John had two good first placements, however they couldn't build on them – therefore a good battle commenced until Sheila and Malcolm missed a couple of difficult clearances allowing Roger to run the hoop to win the Doubles Championship for John Thorp and Roger Stroud.

All present helped clear up and we looked forward, hopefully, to similar weather conditions next Saturday for

the Singles Championship.

Club Singles - 26th September

Wow! Yet another glorious late September day - sunshine and calm. All was prepared for the 9.00am start as the 12 competitors assembled for the Singles. Initially this was planned to run over two days, but entry changes leading up to the day dropped the initial 16 players to 15, then 13 and finally 12.

That meant two blocks of 6 players which is the ideal set up for three lawns, allowing all to play over five rounds.

Three rounds before lunch and two after gave the following results:



Players at the Club Singles. Left: Roy Kemp and Sheila Guest; right, John Thorp.

Below: Una Pengelly, Jean Ball, Ross Bagni and Val Jeffers.

Bottom: Una Pengelly and Peggy Kenny, David Ball and Roger Stroud, Sally Clay.





Top, watching the Singles final on Lawn Three. Above, Judith Pengelly running hoop 2. Right, finalists Judith Pengelly and David Ball.

Block 1

- 1st Judith Pengelly
- 2nd John Thorp
- 3rd Sheila Guest
- 4th Roy Kemp
- 5th Peggy Kenny
- 6th Una Pengelly

Block 2

- 1st David Ball
- 2nd Jean Ball
- 3rd Roger Stroud
- 4th Sally Clay
- 5th Ross Bagni
- 6th Val Jeffers

The final between David Ball and Judith Pengelly was played on lawn three watched by all the other players. After four hoops the game was all square, however David stepped up a notch and a couple of errors by Judith led to a clear win by David at 7-2.

Over the last six years this trophy has been won by:

- 2010 David Ball
- 2011 Roger Stroud
- 2012 Richard Keighley
- 2013 John Thorp
- 2014 David Ball

Well done David. Who will prevail in 2016?

Golf Croquet Coaching Manual.

For a couple of years, Richard Keighley and your Editor have been working on producing a Golf Croquet Coaching Manual for The Croquet Association. The first edition has now been completed and can be downloaded for free from the CA website. The following link takes you to the introduction by the Chairman of the CA Coaching

Committee, Roger Staples. To then access the manual simply click on the blue “Golf Croquet Coaching Manual” in the first sentence of Roger’s introduction - or type in the following link to your web browser:
<https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=news/newsdb.asp&NewsID=5157>

News from New Zealand

Many members will recall Brian Gillard, our visitor from New Zealand who played at Page’s Park for a couple of months earlier this year. Brian sent John Thorp a couple of pictures of his club at Waikanae. Brian said he had a wonderful time playing croquet at LLCC. We are invited to go to New Zealand and play on their lawns.



Birthday Honour for Jean Ball

Jean was recently awarded the MBE in the Queen’s Birthday Honours list for her services to the communities of Stanbridge & Tilsworth.

Jean has been running a Luncheon Club for the elderly since 1993 in these communities and it is particularly poignant that for many of the elderly it is the only time they get out. In the early days there were seven regular

attendees in Jean's conservatory. That has now spread to 35 and takes place at the Stanbridge & Tilsworth Community Hall.

Club Website

Members with computers have no doubt found the club website by now, but for those still not aware it can be found at www.leightonlinbladecroquet.org.uk. A recent introduction is a quiz spread across the website and there will be a prize of a bottle of wine donated by our website organiser Roger Stroud to be presented at the Annual General Meeting.

Roger is to be congratulated on setting up and managing the website which is an excellent advertisement for the club as well as keeping members up to date on an almost daily basis. Congratulations Roger.

EACF Leagues - Handicap and Level

This was the second year of the much amended EACF Leagues. The new organiser, Jason Carley of Watford CC, had to stand down during the year for personal reasons and the management was taken over by John Noble, assisted by Tracy Martin, both from Letchworth CC. The system worked well in its second season, with just one or two niggles - particularly the Handicap League Rule 3 which states:

'3. Substitutes in matches shall be allowed by prior arrangement between the Team Captains.'

Our club's League Contact and our Captains, plus your committee are unhappy with this arrangement which we deem is unfair to visiting clubs. It also make life awkward for our contact person/captains when they are asked to accept last minute substitutions. Just to make it clear the substitutions are not player for player - for instance if someone is ill - but allows one player to play in the doubles and/or any of the singles, and a different player to be substituted at will any time throughout the match. We also came across one match where the captain wished his substitute player to take part but using the handicap of the previous player!!

The Handicap League

There are four areas. The North & Mid Area has six clubs and the winner was Hunstanton. The Eastern Area had five clubs - Southchurch Park won. Central Area winner from the six clubs was Enfield East - whilst our region, the Western, had six entries. Winner was Watford with eight points. Second was Stony Stratford with six points. We had five points as did Northampton Hoops and ended up fourth having lost to Northampton Hoops. Two of our results were very close losses and one was a draw - so near yet so far.

Congratulations to our joint captains Jean Ball and Ross Bagni who effectively managed a small team which really needs more support from members.

In the semi finals Hunstanton repeated last year's semi and beat Watford 10-5 after rain stopped play with flooded lawns. In the other semi Enfield and Southchurch Park tied at 9-9, and in the subsequent playoff Enfield won on the 13th hoop! The final will be played at Wrest Park on 4th October.

The Level Play League

This has only two areas - Colchester won the North & Central Area whilst Watford won the East & West Area

with a clean sweep. Our Level team won against Chelmsford & Bentley, lost by one game against winners Watford and Letchworth, and lost heavily against Enfield and Northampton. The final is not until 18th October.

There are now some very low handicap players taking part in this League and the standard of play has certainly moved on considerably from previous years. Nevertheless we will continue to support the League and strive to improve our abilities. The only way is to take part and learn from the experience.

Winter Social Club at Page's Park

The Wednesday morning social club will meet for the first time this winter on Wednesday 7th October in Page's Park pavilion at 10.00am. The fee is £2.50 per session, and for that you get refreshments and the opportunity to play many board games, darts, snooker, dominoes and card games. 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. This group raised the magnificent sum of over £300 per year towards club funds over the last couple of years, so why not give it a try?

Lawn Maintenance

As most members know, 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.

As we reported in the previous newsletter the lawns were looking pretty good at the start of the season - despite the damage caused by the footballers over the Christmas/New Year break - however more on this later.

As well as a second mower, we also purchased a petrol driven scarifier at the beginning of the season. Both these tools will make life a little easier this winter and help us to further improve the lawns. Tining, top dressing, reseeding and fertilising will be carried out on 6th October. Rotary mowing will take place during the winter months as required to keep the level down to around 10-15mm, and further treatment in late February/early March will include more fertilising and moss treatment, plus scarifying. Any member prepared to help our small team with this work is asked to contact John Cundell.

Football and Other Problems

Your officers and committee have raised with the Town Council the problems arising from the five-a-side football area where balls were coming over the fencing and striking our members for much of the season. There was also considerable damage, particularly on lawn one, caused by the mainly teenage groups who refuse to respect our lawns and play football on the lawn when the five-a-side area is muddy and/or crowded.

Also, in the light evenings, the steps outside the club room are a mecca for teenage groups who not only play games on the lawn, but also leave considerable rubbish behind. In the short term, the Council have resited the

football area to another part of the park, which has removed the flying balls hazard, however as soon as wet winter weather causes flooding and their play area deteriorates markedly, they will inevitably move onto the croquet lawns.

After a meeting with the Town Clerk and the Head of Grounds and Environmental Services in August, we have reached the following stage. It is proposed to erect a new 1.8 metre high green mesh fence around all three croquet lawns. Quotations for this work are in hand by the Town Council, following which there will be a proposal put forward to the Leisure and Community Committee meeting - hopefully in November. If this is approved, the bulk of the cost will be borne by the Town Council - our club will be offering a contribution towards the cost. We should know more by the time of our Annual General Meeting.

Car Parking

Also at the above meeting it was also agreed that the club can have three parking places adjacent to the green container for disabled parking - those with blue badges. This is limited to three cars maximum and in due course we are promised three keys to the parking pole by the car park nearest to the cricket pitch.

Playing Sessions at Page's Park

At a recent committee meeting it was proposed by Eve Buckingham that our regular playing sessions on Wednesday and Thursday be extended from the present

10.00am to 12.00 noon - to run through into the afternoon. This was agreed by a majority of the committee and will start as from next season.

Expenses

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

Annual General Meeting

You will find an announcement concerning the AGM at the end of this newsletter. 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.

Roger Stroud has already sent out the Information Pack for the meeting on Friday 13th November at 7:30 pm in Northall Village Hall. The meeting should last an hour, followed by a party with a buffet. 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.

Within the Information Pack is a 'Nomination Form' where you can nominate a member to be one of our Club Officer's or to be on our committee. Do please use this form but please ask the person you are nominating if they would like to do the job.



Bryan Ferris

5th June saw the passing away of Bryan Ferris after a long illness. Bryan was a member of our croquet club until he and Joan moved away to Kent, in the Medway Towns.

Joan and Bryan are the reason that I am a member of the club; they introduced Caroline to the club, after which Caroline thought I might like another interest.

I played croquet with Bryan many times and always enjoyed his company; he was always so thoughtful, kind and had a terrific sense of humour.



Bryan, far right, bending in typical humorous manner, pictured at the Club Singles Handicap Tournament in 2007.

Bryan certainly had his moments on the croquet lawns. My first year at the club at the Club Singles Handicap Tournament, I recall Bryan won all his games in his block, only losing to Len in the Semi-Final.

Joan asked if I could mention his passing to members who might remember him. Florie Jeater and Roy Kemp were regular visitors to Bryan and Joan in Kent. Also, John and Judith Cundell had met them whilst on holiday in Tenerife.

The following passage is an entry on Facebook posted by Chrissy Ferris, Bryan's daughter:

"We lost our Dad to Parkinson's and Alzheimer's today, with Joan by his side. A fantastic Dad/Grandad, who will be remembered for his antics, his sense of humour, his cheesy 'dad' jokes and funny dancing. The care home staff described Dad as a polite gentleman, right to the end. Joan Ferris, Alice Ferris, Nick Ferris and Susan Reynolds."

Roger Stroud



Roll of Honour 2015



Leighton-Linslade Croquet Club Tournament Winners

Mix 'n Match Doubles Handicap	Roger Stroud and Roy Kemp
Ladies Doubles Mix 'n Match	Judith Pengelly and Peggy Kenny
Club Singles Handicap	Ross Bagni
B-Level Leighton-Linslade	Roger Stroud
The John Fogg Trophy	John Thorp and Len Buckingham
B-Level Hurlingham	Ross Bagni
LJB 70 Plus Trophy (Main)	John Thorp
LJB 70 Plus Trophy (Plate)	Len Buckingham
Club Championship Doubles	Roger Stroud and John Thorp
Club Championship Singles	David Ball

Attendance Breakdown - 2015 - by Membership Secretary

Our Membership Secretary Judith Cundell has extracted the following information from the attendance sheets for 2015. There were 27 weeks of play. Figures include all matches - players, helpers and spectators.

Sessions	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Average attendance	14	12	3	6	14	11	3
Highest attendance at one session	30	32	13	12	22	17	17

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There was one week with 77 attendees

Most attendances by members:

John Thorp	108	These include work days.
Peggy Kenny	75	These include work days.
John Cundell	72	These include work days.
David Ball	60	These include work days

Most attendances in one week:

John Thorp	7 x 1; 6 x 3
John Cundell	6 x 2
Peggy Kenny	6 x 1

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 46 members.

Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held at Northall Village Hall at 7.15 for 7.30pm on Friday 13th November 2015, 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 should have received Agenda, AGM Details, reports, etc., by now. 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 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!

(All photos this issue by John Cundell, David Ball, John Thorp, Ross Bagni, unless stated otherwise)