



LEIGHTON-LINSLADE CROQUET CLUB

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“2016 Season Round-up”



Welcome to the third newsletter of 2016. This final publication for 2016 covers the whole season. Those of you who have internet access - currently 39 of our 45 members, will no doubt have seen most of the following - so apologies for repetition.

No grand opening ceremony this season as we were waiting for installation of the new fence as the season started. It was certainly worth the wait though - what a huge positive difference it has made to playing at Page's Park - see before and after pics above and below. And we are not finished with the improvements as yet. We are promised by the Council that the steps to assist safe access to lawn three will be completed shortly - and we have just received a couple of benches from the Council. Some of our gazebos are nearing the end of their life and we will be looking at replacing them in due course. There are also other ideas in the pipeline to improve our area.

We have enjoyed another busy season with over 30 events taking place - ranging from an excellent win in the National Inter-Club Shield competition and the EACF Inter-Counties Shield, through to B-Level and area tournaments, friendlies, etc. We owe a great debt to those who helped arrange the dates for the fixtures, organised and managed the events and teams, the caterers, those who maintained and set up the lawns, our scorers, launderers, and also to our officers and committee members.

Dunstable Friendly - Home and Home! - 9th May

Our first competition this season was a Friendly with Dunstable CC that is categorised as a 'Home' event for both teams as Dunstable have only one small lawn and it is somewhat difficult for them to stage a competition. Therefore, as well as bringing themselves along, they also bring some cakes for tea!

Dunstable have been pretty unlucky over previous visits to Page's Park where it always seems to rain on them. But not this time as they were greeted with another of the glorious few days we enjoyed at the beginning of May with temperatures just right in the high teens and a pleasant breeze.

The visitors all arrived early and we got off to a good start before the 10.00am advertised start time. Dunstable play most of their games over just 7 hoops so 13 hoop games and larger lawns are a bit of a disadvantage for them and they got off to a shaky start on Round 1 as LLCC made a clean sweep - with Dunstable scoring just 14 hoops from their four games. However in Round 2 the visitors scored 17 hoops and won their first game. Improvement continued for them in Round 3 as they scored 19 hoops and again took one of the games at the thirteenth hoop.

At this point lunch was taken. Unfortunately the break ended Dunstable's climbing hoop count as in Round 4 they





Above, the finalists of the Mix 'n Match Doubles - Val Jeffers, Sheila Beal, Len Buckingham and Judith Pengelly. Winners were Judith and Val.

only managed 11 hoops – but did win one of the games. The overall result was a win for the LLCC team by 13 games to 3.

Well done to our team of Mary Kemp/Sally Clay; Deirdrea Ellins/Tony Wells; Roy Kemp/Judith Pengelly; and Peggy Kenny/Val Jeffers.

Mix 'n Match Doubles Handicap - 14th May

Not such a healthy entry this year with just 18 members participating giving nine teams. 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 five and one of four.

The weather was a bit nippy at 12 degrees with a moderate northerly breeze. The playing sequence over five rounds was followed. The smaller entry and odd-numbered block meant that there was inevitable sitting out – however this did allow most games to be played without doubling up and also allowed the advantage of untimed games. The blocks were completed just before 4.00pm with the following results.

Block 1 was a clear win for Judith Pengelly and Val Jeffers, with the remaining four pairs fighting for the second place right up to the last hoop of the last game. Second, third and fourth places all had the same number of wins and were separated by just seven hoops on countback.

- 1st Judith Pengelly and Val Jeffers
- 2nd Ross Bagni and Deirdrea Ellins
- 3rd Peggy Kenny and Roy Kemp
- 4th Tony Wells and Sheila Guest
- 5th Jean Ball and Diana Phelps

Block 2 also had clear winners with Len Buckingham and Sheila Beal followed by Roger Stroud and Una Pengelly.

- 1st Len Buckingham and Sheila Beal
- 2nd Roger Stroud and Una Pengelly
- 3rd Eve Buckingham and John Thorp
- 4th David Ball and Sally Clay

The final started on Lawn One between Judith Pengelly and Val Jeffers against Len Buckingham and Sheila Beal, with the play off for third place on Lawn Two between Ross Bagni and Dee Ellins against Roger Stroud and Una Pengelly, watched by all the remaining competitors. The winners were Judith and Val by 7-4. Len and Sheila fought back from a weak start – however they could not catch the



winning pair. The third place win went to Roger and Una by 7-5 after a close fought game.

Inter Club Murphy Shield - Leighton-Linslade v Nottingham - 20th April

Our first round match in this year's competition was against last year's winner of this National Tournament – Nottingham. The match was due to be played at Leighton-Linslade, however as this needed to be played by the end of May, and we were not sure of when our fencing would be completed, we asked Nottingham if we could impose on their hospitality to play the round at their lawns.

They kindly agreed and our four team members, John Cundell, Ross Bagni, Roger Stroud and Jean Ball left LL at 7.00am and arrived at Nottingham's croquet lawns at 9.00am – to be warmly greeted and treated to beans on toast for breakfast – a much appreciated gesture from Nottingham's team captain, Kath Wright.

Play started with John and Ross playing the doubles round against Chris Jackson and Kath Wright. These rounds are the best of up to three games as required. Meanwhile Roger and Jean were playing their opposite numbers in singles – with wins by both of them. So by noon we were three games ahead. Play continued with four more singles matches – with lunch taken as possible by the various combatants. This time John, Ross and Roger were all defeated as Nottingham fought back. However, Jean Ball came to our rescue by beating Nottingham's Irmgard Finnigan by 7-4 and 7-3. Therefore we won by four games to three.

Jubilation for our team, especially beating last year's Shield winners.

Our thanks for the excellent hospitality from Nottingham – especially considering the circumstances.

We look forward to our next round which will be against Northampton or Hunstanton.

Scores

Leighton-Linslade members named first:

John Cundell and Ross Bagni beat Chris Jackson and Kath Wright 7:5; 4:7; 7:5

Jean Ball (4) beat Bob Thompson (4) 7:5; 5:7; 7:1

Roger Stroud (3) beat Irmgard Finnigan (6) 6:7; 7:5; 7:4

John Cundell (3) lost to Kath Wright (3) 3:7; 3:7

Ross Bagni (3) lost to Chris Jackson (3) 5:7; 7:6; 4:7

Roger Stroud (3) lost to Bob Thompson (4) 2:7; 3:7

Jean Ball (4) beat Irmgard Finnigan (6) 7:4; 7:3

High Wycombe Friendly - Away - 24th May - reported by Jean Ball

Our team of eight players arrived at about 10am on a sunny morning. We were welcomed with tea / coffee and biscuits in their new pavilion which looked wonderful, fully fitted with running water and electric.

The two lawns were in excellent condition and play got under way about 10.30am. Our team / pairings were, David and Jean Ball, Malcolm and Sally, John Thorp and Ross and Roger and Peggy.

After the first round Leighton-Linslade were in the lead by 3-1, continuing to dominate throughout the day resulting in the final score of 14-2.

There was an excellent tea at the end of the match with many home-made cakes.

We look forward to welcoming High Wycombe at our club in a friendly match on 2nd September.

Ladies Doubles Mix 'n Match Level Championship - 28th May

A fresh but dry and sunny day greeted the two Johns, David Ball and Tony Wells at 8.00am as they prepared the lawns and equipment for the Ladies Mix 'n Match Doubles. The build up to the event was a trifle awkward as initially we had ten members put their names forward that gave five pairings. Another member then showed interest, and after some persuasion, yet another member agreed to make up the perfect arrangement of 12. John C had worked out the playing sequences before he disappeared on a week's holiday. Unfortunately, one of the first entrants had to withdraw, therefore John persuaded Caroline Stroud to play, restoring the 12. Whilst on holiday, another of the original ten had to withdraw through an injury. John's wife Judith agreed to stand in and make up the 12. Unfortunately, she succumbed to a severe cold and cough at the end of her holiday and would not be able to play – hence it was with regret that John had to ask Caroline to withdraw as we were now down to 11 players which makes playing doubles somewhat difficult. Apologies to Caroline and many thanks for originally stepping in.

Therefore the ten remaining competitors arrived at Page's Park prior to the draw for pairs which resulted in the following: Sally Clay/Diana Phelps; Jean Ball/Una Pengelly; Ronnie Richardson/Val Jeffers; Sheila Guest/Sheila Beal; Judith Pengelly/ Ann Rowe.

The odd number of blocks meant that one pair had to sit out one of the five rounds of play – and that only two games could be played per round. These took place on

Lawns 1 and 2 and left the third lawn free for any social players.

Three rounds were played before lunch and two after. There were some excellent hard fought rounds and by early afternoon with one round left to play, there were two pairs with three wins – Jean with Una and the two Sheilas. Of the remaining pairs there were two with one win – Ronnie with Val and Judith with Ann, and one pair with zero – Sally and Diana. Therefore the match between the pairs with three wins would obviously decide the winners.

This was an excellent game to watch and at one stage the two Sheilas were leading Jean and Una by 5-2. Was it all over? Certainly not as Jean and Una fought back to 6-6 and we looked forward to the 13th hoop. After some more excellent croquet the winning hit was made by Una Pengelly.

Congratulations to Jean Ball and Una Pengelly. The other positions were second for Sheila Beal/Sheila Guest; third for Judith Pengelly/Ann Rowe; fourth for Ronnie Richardson/Val Jeffers, and fifth for Sally Clay/Diana Phelps.

This was an excellent competition with some good croquet from all concerned and an enjoyable day's play for the competitors.

Bedfordshire win the Shield - report on the Eastern Counties Wheeler Shield - 4th June - by Terrey Sparks

For 2016 there is a new name 'Bedfordshire' on the shield, who comprehensively saw off all the other opposition on Saturday 4th June at a not so Sunny Hunstanton where the weather could only be described as midwinter Southern Antarctic as a viciously cold northerly wind blew in a sea fret for most of the day. Luckily the rain stayed away so, at least although damp the day was dry.

However, not to be discouraged the six teams set about their games with spirit and the few hardy spectators experienced some pretty good golf croquet.

The likely favourites and last year's winners Hertfordshire, plus Norfolk, another strong contender, both set the mark by recording 3-0 wins. Bedfordshire, the dark horses, not to be outdone also recorded another 3-0 win against Cambridgeshire. In the following rounds the three leaders continued to slug it out with both Herts and Norfolk succumbing to Bedfordshire. However, Beds did fall to the unfancied Suffolk side.

Ladies Doubles Mix 'n Match winners were Jean Ball and Una Pengelly, seen below flanked with runners-up Sheila Guest and Sheila Beal.





The successful Bedfordshire team at the Eastern Counties Wheeler Shield tournament at Hunstanton - Roger Stroud, John Thorp, Judith Pengelly and John Cundell. Photo: Terrey Sparks.



After the first round Bedfordshire with four match wins and 11 game wins were in the undisputed lead, closely followed by Herts, Norfolk and Suffolk all on three wins. However, Herts and Norfolk with their nine game wins proceeded to the Gold Medal round, ahead of Suffolk with only seven game wins.

Just as the final round began, at last the sun broke through, but this had little effect on the overall temperature that was still being dominated by the cold wind. The final games proved very close with neither team giving much away. The first game to finish saw Herts record a win over the Bedford first pair 7/5, closely followed by the second Norfolk pairing coming home with a 7/4 win against Herts. This meant that winners of the remaining game between the second Bedford and Norfolk pairing would win the day. This proved to be a long and dour game with little being given away by either pair. However, the ending was rather dramatic when at 5/6

down Norfolk, in attempting to clear a ball at the 12th hoop, accidentally peeled the opponent to give Bedfordshire the day.

The successful Bedfordshire team was Roger Stroud, John Thorp, Judith Pengelly and John Cundell.

Club Singles Handicap - 11th June

All three lawns were green and in good condition as John C, Roger Stroud, Tony Wells and Malcolm Kirby arrived around 8.00am to set out the gazebos and hoops for this year's competition. Despite a poor forecast the weather was warm and dry for the day. The entry was very small compared to previous years, with just 10 members putting their name down initially. Two members had to withdraw on the day for health reasons, and one other attendee had forgotten to enter initially, therefore some last minute changes to the playing order were actioned, resulting in two blocks, one with five players, the other with four.

Play continued into the early afternoon and by 2.00pm we had two block winners. The results were as follows:

Block 1

- 1st Jean Ball
- 2nd Malcolm Kirby
- 3rd Una Pengelly
- 4th Ann Rowe

Block 2

- 1st Sheila Guest
- 2nd Tom Miller
- 3rd Roger Stroud
- 4th Tony Wells
- 5th Judith Pengelly

All the players assembled to watch the final between Jean Ball and Sheila Guest. Sheila had been in tremendous form during the block play and she got off to a good start at 3-1. However Jean battled on and Sheila started using up her extra shots as Jean moved on to a 5-3 lead. The rest of the game was closely fought with Sheila hanging on until the 12th hoop where Jean came home to victory at 7-5.

National GC B-Level Tournament - 18th June

Our third B-Level tournament attracted twelve players with nine from outside the club and three of our players. The following took part:



The Singles Handicap Championship this year ended up with an all-female final between Sheila Guest and Jean Ball - with Jean Ball ending up winner on the 12th hoop.



Michael Manning (Colchester) (4)
 Marian Manning (Colchester) (4)
 David Boxell (Hunstanton) (6)
 Richard Bilton (Nottingham) (4)
 Michael Bilton (Richmond Park) (4)
 Chris Heath (Guildford & Godalming) (2)

Marilyn Robinson (Northampton) (7)
 June Pendergrast (Northampton) (8)
 Roger Stroud (Leighton-Linslade) (3)
 Patrick Knight (Camerton & Peasdown) (7)
 Tony Wells (Leighton-Linslade) (6)
 Malcolm Kirby (Leighton-Linslade) (7)



Thanks to our scorers: Eve Buckingham & Judith Cundell; Sally Clay & John Thorp; Judi Priestley & Una Pengelly. Below left; Roger Stroud watches Chris Heath in the final won by Roger. Middle: Roger receives the glass trophy from our Chairman Malcolm Kirby. Malcolm came 4th in his first B-Level. Right: Tony Wells, also in his first B-Level, came 5th.



The competitors at this year's B-Level were: Tony Wells (Leighton-Linslade); Richard Bilton (Nottingham); Mike Bilton (Richmond Park); June Pendergrast (Northampton); Chris Heath (Guildford & Godalming); David Boxell (Hunstanton); Roger Stroud (Leighton-Linslade); Marian Manning (Colchester); Michael Manning (Colchester); Marilyn Robinson (Northampton); and Patrick Knight (Camerton & Peasdown).



The twelve competitors were drawn into two blocks of six, keeping clubs separated and husband/wives similarly as far as was possible – and to maintain an equable level of handicaps. All competitors had arrived by 9.00am – some having stayed locally overnight. After a warm welcome on what was a rather chilly day weatherwise, Tournament Manager John Cundell briefed the players on the day's programme. After 15 minutes practise 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 that was staffed all day by a number of our club members – including Sally Clay, John Thorp, Una Pengelly, Judith Cundell, Judi Priestley and Eve Buckingham.

The 30 games proceeded throughout the day, with competitors taking a short lunch break after three rounds.

At the end of the block play, our Roger Stroud was a clear winner in his block – repeating his performance from last year, with Marian Manning from Colchester in second. In the other block there was another clear winner, Chris Heath from Guildford & Goldalming, with first timer to this competition, Malcolm Kirby, second.

As well as the two games required to find the first four places of the day, all competitors agreed they would like to play off for the minor places. The final between Roger and Chris, and the third/fourth play off between Malcolm and Marina took place simultaneously on lawn 3, with the other four games covering fifth to 12th on lawns 1 and 2.

Both the final and places games went to the 13th hoop, with Roger Stroud beating Chris Heath, and Marian Manning beating Malcolm Kirby. On the day as a whole, 18 of the 36 games played went to hoops 12 or 13!

The final positions were:

1st	Roger Stroud	7th	Michael Bilton
2nd	Chris Heath	8th	Michael Manning
3rd	Marian Manning	9th	Patrick Knight
4th	Malcolm Kirby	10th	Richard Bilton
5th	Tony Wells	11th	Marilyn Robinson
6th	David Boxell	12th	June Pendergrast

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 2016 from our Chairman, Malcolm Kirby.

Patrick Knight thanked us for an excellent competition, our well-received scoring system and our overall management of the day.

Tournament Manager John Cundell would like to thank the scorers mentioned above, Len Buckingham who was the Tournament Referee, John Thorp who was on site at 7.15am as we swished off the worm casts and set the hoops, plus Tony Wells, Roger Stroud and Malcolm Kirby to help erect gazebos, scoring tents, etc., and Una Pengelly and Judith Cundell on other early event duties.

N.B. Roger Stroud goes through to the B-Level Final at Budleigh Salterton on 8/9th October, together with Ross Bagni who won at Hunstanton and Nottingham, plus Richard Keighley who gets through on points from Wrest Park. John Cundell also qualified after a third at Nottingham and second at Edgbaston but cannot attend.

EACF Handicap League - Northampton Mallets - 22nd June - report by Jean Ball

Our first handicap league match of the season took us to Northampton. We were very lucky with the weather as there was only a couple of showers. Given the statistics for June that wasn't bad!

Our team consisted of Tony Wells, Val Jeffers, Sheila Guest and Jean Ball. Our team fought valiantly against Northampton Mallets with handicaps thrown at us from 8 to 14, yes 14!

It worked out that our team gave 60 extra shots away against four being allocated to us - Sheila two and Val two.

The result was a win for Northampton Mallets 10-8. An excellent score all things considered, so well done team.

EACF Level League - Watford - Away - 23rd June

Last year's match between us and Watford was played at Page's Park in dreadful rain and winds. This year at Watford we didn't have the wind, however overnight torrential thunderstorms had left Cassiobury Park in Watford almost awash. Fortunately the conditions improved to dull overcast as our team of John Thorp (1), David Ball (2), John Cundell (3) and Jean Ball (4) arrived to contest the Level play fixture against Ian Parkinson (1), Arther Reed (3), George Skinner (6) and Ron Drew (8).

The first round of doubles all went Watford's way with the pairings of John Cundell/David Ball and Jean Ball/John Thorp losing out.

The first singles round saw wins by John Thorp, David Ball and Jean Ball. In Round 2 John Cundell, John Thorp and David Ball won. Round three was also a good one for LL with wins by John T, David and Jean. However round four was a clean sweep by Watford. When all the games were added up the result was a draw with both teams scoring nine wins each.

The rain had started again during the last two rounds, so a quick tea and cakes soon resulted in us making tracks homeward, accompanied again by heavy rain until we got to LB – where it was dry!

Judith Pengelly wins EACF Golf Croquet Club Champions Day - 26th June - report by Terrey Sparks

Played at Hunstanton this year the tournament attracted a total of 14 entries, six in the handicap section and eight in the level play section.

In the Handicap Section which comprised six entries with handicaps ranging between five and seven it was run as an all play all block. As to be expected, play was very competitive with many games going to the 13th hoop, resulting in the following final position.

1st	Judith Pengelly	Leighton-Linslade	4 wins
2nd	Pat Dawson	Hunstanton	4 wins
3rd	Des Taylor	Enfield	3 wins
4th	Anne Dennis	Watford	2 wins
5th	Patricia Drinkwater	Colchester	1 win
6th	Mike May	Bury St Edmonds	1 win

As Judith had beaten Pat, Judith was declared the winner overall using the Who-beat-Whom formula.

In the Level Play section this was split into two groups of

four, the first four games were played using the cross-block formula, which resulted in the following position:

Block A

Martin French	Ipswich	4 wins
David Frost	Enfield	3 wins
Jeff Race	Hunstanton	1 win
Terrey Sparks	Peterborough	1 win

Block B

David Ball	Leighton-Linslade	3 wins
Chris Sheen	Colchester	2 wins
Nick Archer	Watford	2 wins
Chris Howard	Bury St Edmunds	0 wins

In the next round block A winner Martin French played David Frost, winning a place in the final with a 7-5 result; whilst in block B the undisputed leader David Ball played Chris Sheen who had qualified over Nick Archer by having the better results in the earlier round. Chris earned his place in the final by beating David 7-6.

The final proved to be a very close game with Martin setting the pace by taking a very early lead. However, Chris dug in with some very good clearance play and eventually overhauled Martin to run out the winner 7-5.

Inter Club Murphy Shield - Leighton-Linslade v Hunstanton - Quarter Final - 27th June

Following our first round win against Nottingham in May, our quarter final opponents were to be Hunstanton. The match took place at Page's Park on a dry and reasonably warm day – Monday 27th June.

John Cundell and John Thorp arrived at PP at 7.30am and were met with damp lawns covered in wormcasts and also syscamore seed leaves over lawn 2. 90 minutes work removed the worm casts, blew away the leaves, placed the hoops, erected two gazebos and three scoring stations. Phew!

Our scorers – Sheila Beal, Eve Buckingham, Len Buckingham, Ann Rowe, Una Pengelly and Judith Cundell – and many thanks to them for their excellent help during the day - arrived at 9.00am followed shortly by our visitors from Hunstanton – Team Captain David Thirtle-Watts, Roy and Pauline Donner and Chris Ward. Our team was John Cundell, David and Jean Ball and Judith Pengelly.

Play started with John and David playing and winning the doubles round against David Thirtle-Watts and Pauline Donner. These rounds are the best of up to three games as required. Meanwhile Jean and Judith were playing their opposite numbers in singles – with wins by both of them also. So by noon we were three games ahead. Play continued with four more singles matches – with lunch taken as possible by the various combatants.

Leighton-Linslade enjoyed some more excellent results with wins by John Cundell, Jean Ball and Judith Pengelly. David Ball was playing a hard fought match against David Thirtle-Watts who won their first game on the 13th hoop. Our David fought back in the next game and he also won on the 13th hoop. At this point the results stood at six wins out of six for Leighton-Linslade, therefore it was decided to call a halt to the two David's match. We won by six games to one drawn by agreement.

Jubilation for our team.

We look forward to our next round that will be a semi-

Well done to Judith Pengelly, winning the East Anglian Croquet Federation's Champion of Champions Day in the Handicap category.

Also, well done David Ball, unfortunately losing out to Colchester's Chris Sheen in the Level semi-final.
Photo: Terrey Sparks.



final – against either Durham or Ripon Spa.

Results

Leighton-Linslade members named first:

1. David Ball (2) and John Cundell (3) beat Pauline Donner (3) and David Thirtle-Watts (2) 7-3, 7-6
2. Judith Pengelly (5) beat Chris Ward (5) 1-7, 7-6, 7-3
3. Jean Ball (4) beat Roy Donner (4) 7-4, 7-5
4. John Cundell (3) beat Pauline Donner (3) 7-5, 7-3
5. Judith Pengelly (5) beat Roy Donner (4) 7-2, 6-7, 7-3
6. Jean Ball (4) beat Chris Ward (5) 7-5, 7-3
7. David Ball (2) drew with David Thirtle-Watts (2) 6-7, 7-6 (Match not completed).

EACF Level League - Chelmsford - Away - 1st July

For our second Level League match we travelled to Chelmsford on yet another cool and often wet day, arriving just after 9.30am after a busy but untroubled trip around the M25. After the usual warm welcome from Chelmsford captain John Skuse and members, plus a warming cuppa, play started at 10.30am.

Our team was captain John Cundell, plus David Ball, Ross Bagni and John Thorp. We were eager to improve on our draw at Watford however this was not to be. The first round of doubles went to Chelmsford with two wins at 7-6 and 7-5. The singles rounds were shared with both teams scoring eight wins each, so giving an overall win to Chelmsford of 10 wins to 8.

Our wins as follows: John Cundell 1; David Ball 2; Ross Bagni 2; John Thorp 3.

In the 18 games played, nine went to the 13th hoop. We certainly need to tighten up 13th hoop play.

Congratulations to Chelmsford and we look forward to our next game against Northampton.

Ross Bagni wins Hunstanton B-Level Tournament - 2nd July - report by Terrey Sparks

The Club's Annual GC 'B' Series event qualifier 'The Storey Cup' attracted 16 entries from throughout the United Kingdom. Split into blocks of four, after four games by each competitor which were crossed blocked, the top two players of each group then played each other to determine a play-off place in the semi-finals. The four

Terrey Sparks presents Ross Bagni with the Storey Cup.



semi-finalists turned out to be Bryan Saddington (Hunstanton) v Michael Bilton (Richmond Park) and Ross Bagni (Leighton Linlade) v Chris Ward (Hunstanton) with Michael and Ross winning through to the final.

The final turned out to be an interesting game with Michael taking an early lead. However, Ross overcame a shaky start to overhaul Michael leading to an exciting 13th hoop win.

Little Gaddesden Friendly - Home - 8th July

This date was originally booked as a friendly with Buckingham, however unfortunately Buckingham could not get a team together. After a few telephone calls, John T invited the relatively new club at Little Gaddesden to take the spare slot. They eagerly agreed and their team of eight arrived before 10.00am on a rather windy July day which started a bit damp but continued to improve as the day wore on.

Our team was formed as follows: Tony Wells/Sally Clay;

A first visit to our lawns by Little Gaddesden Croquet Club



Roy Kemp/Sheila Guest; Diana Phelps/Peggy Kenny; Ann Rowe/Mary Kemp. The first round was a good one for Little Gaddesden with three wins - only Tony and Sally scoring for LL. Our team got their act together with round two by winning all four games. Therefore at lunch the score was 5-3 to LLCC.

After lunch the third round was shared with wins by Tony/Sally and Roy/Sheila. Overall score was now 7-5 in LLCC's favour. The final round of the day was another good one for the home team with three wins. The result was a good win for LLCC by 10-6 games. During tea and cakes Little Gaddesden's Captain Bill Newberry thanked us for a very enjoyable day and invited us to their lawns for a return friendly at a date to be arranged. John Cundell said how much we had enjoyed their company and how well they had played, having never experienced our variable lawns, and them being used to playing on a bowling green.

Thanks to all who helped make this such an enjoyable day and particularly to those who helped in the early morning - the two Johns, Tony Wells, Roger Stroud and Roy Kemp.

EACF Handicap League - Northampton Hoops - Home - 11th July

Our third EACF Handicap League match this season was against the second Northampton team called Northampton Hoops. This was played at Page's Park on what must have been one of the windiest days we have experienced this year - courtesy of a low pressure system from America which we wish had stayed on their side of the Atlantic. For safety it was necessary to rope the gazebos against the pavilion wall and it was not possible to provide any cover for the scorers. David Ball, Ross Bagni, Tony Wells and John Cundell braved the elements to get everything ready for our visitors, David and Gill Higgins, Jeff Brockett and Richard Caine from Northampton. Our team was Ross Bagni, Mary Kemp and Judith and Una Pengelly.

Play started at 10.30am with the doubles that were halved with a win by Judith and Una. Into the first round of singles and this was also shared with two wins each - Judith and Una again coming up trumps. The second singles round was an excellent one for LLCC with three

wins by Mary, Una and Ross. Lunch was taken with everything tied down as the wind was still howling through the trees.

After lunch LLCC enjoyed another three-win situation by Ross, Judith and Mary, whilst the last round of the day was shared - this time success for Ross and Una. At the end of the day the result was a good win for LLCC by 11 games to seven.

Well done team, and thanks to the scorers - David Ball, Sheila Beal, Judith Cundell and Ann Rowe; to cakes provider Jean Ball; and the morning set-up crew.

Nottingham B-Level Tournament - 13th July

Three members entered this year's Nottingham B-Level - Ross Bagni, John Cundell and Roger Stroud. A 7.00am start and a trouble-free journey up the M1 resulted in an 8.30am arrival at Nottingham's excellent lawns and to meeting friends old and some new over a welcome cuppa.

A slightly reduced entry from previous years of 16 resulted in four blocks of four players per block. LLCC entrants were all in separate blocks. Before we started play at 9.30am, organiser Patricia Duke-Cox announced that as the entry was smaller than usual, the games would all be 19 hoops rather than the normal 13. The time limit was 60 minutes and with one or two exceptions, most of the games were completed within this time!

Three of the blocks produced clear winners, Ross Bagni and John Cundell being two of these with Pauline Donner from Hunstanton being the third - the fourth block placings were determined by points scored and Roger was the winner. For the group of finalists the 19 hoop format was kept with the result that Ross Bagni won, Roger Stroud came second and John Cundell third - a clean sweep for Leighton-Linslade. Another B-Level trophy for 2016.

An excellent result - well done to all.

Leighton-Linslade (C-Level) Singles Play Tournament for High Handicap Players - 15th July

This 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. Our first such competition held last year was successful and attracted 12 competitors - six from outside the club and six of our members.

For 2016 we received four entries from outside the club - one from Watford - Brenda Theobald, plus three from Northampton - David Higgins, Vivien Heard and June Pendergrast. Eight LLCC members made up the 12 players with handicaps ranging from 8 to 14 that were split into two blocks of six. Our members were Una Pengelly, Sally Clay, Valerie Jeffers, Helen Wilkinson, Sheila Beal, Ann Rowe, Roy Kemp and Len Buckingham. Some of these entrants had never played in a Singles Level tournament which was one of the main ideas for holding the event.

An early morning of 7.30am was necessary for John Cundell, David Ball, Ross Bagni, Tony Wells and Roger

Stroud to set up all the usual equipment, including two gazebos and scoring tents and equipment. The early morning weather looked promising and sunny, however this poor summer soon returned with a chilly and overcast morning followed by an annoying light rainy period during the middle of the afternoon.

All entrants arrived around 9.00am and after the usual welcoming coffee and tea, they were given 10 minutes practise. Promptly at 9.30am, the untimed games of round one commenced and early winners were Brenda Theobald, Len Buckingham, Ann Rowe, Roy Kemp, Sally Clay and Sheila Beal.

Two more rounds were played after lunch - in the lead were Brenda Theobald from Watford in block one with three wins, and in block two Sheila Beal with two wins.

The final two rounds resulted in the following:

Block 1

- 1st Brenda Theobald
- 2nd Helen Wilkinson
- 3rd Len Buckingham
- 4th Vivien Heard
- 5th Ann Rowe
- 6th David Higgins

Block 2

- 1st Val Jeffers
- 2nd Sheila Beal
- 3rd Roy Kemp
- 4th Una Pengelly
- 5th June Pendergrast
- 6th Sally Clay

In order to find a complete first to last listing of players, the first of block one would play the first of block two, the second of block one would play the second of block two, etc. Unfortunately the rain arrived just as the games started, however all our players braved the conditions, and as the games came to a conclusion - the rain stopped.

The results were:

- 1st Brenda Theobald
- 2nd Val Jeffers
- 3rd Sheila Beal
- 4th Helen Wilkinson
- 5th Roy Kemp
- 6th Len Buckingham
- 7th Una Pengelly
- 8th Vivien Heard
- 9th June Pendergrast
- 10th Ann Rowe
- 11th Sally Clay
- 12th David Higgins

A brief ceremony took place in front of the club room and Brenda was presented with a glass memorial trophy and a cash prize of £20. She expressed her great pleasure and surprise at what was her first win at such a competition. She and other competitors expressed their thanks for a superb competition, organisation and great hospitality.

Thanks to 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.

EACF Level League - Northampton - Away - 25th July

Our third Level League match was at home against old

adversaries Northampton, led by their captain Mike Hills, a long time member of Northampton. His three companions were Lionel Tibble - one of the most experienced players on the circuit, plus newer but no less skilled members, Jayne Stevens and Les Heard. Their combined handicap was -2! Our team was captain John Cundell, John Thorp, David Ball and Ross Bagni. Our combined handicap is 9 - so we knew we had a toughie on our hands!

The doubles round went to Northampton with two wins at 7-5 and 7-3. The first singles round was shared, with wins by Ross and John C; the second round was a strong one for Northampton with just David Ball beating their best player, Lionel Tibble.

Unfortunately lunch didn't improve things for us and in rounds three and four Northampton scored six wins with just David Ball and John Thorp gaining a win each for LLCC.

Northampton won 15 of the 18 games played. Well done to one of the strongest teams in the Level Play League. Despite our defeat it was a very enjoyable day with good humoured and sporting play on both sides.

Thanks to our four players who put out the equipment in the morning - with assistance from Una Pengelly - and thanks to our scorers, Una, Sheila Beal, Jean Ball and Judith Cundell - and to Val Jeffers and Jean Ball for the lovely cakes.

We look forward to next Friday and our Level Play match against Letchworth.

Inter Club Murphy Shield - Leighton-Linslade v Ripon Spa Hotel - Semi Final - 27th June

Following our quarter final round win against Hunstanton in June, our semi-final opponents were to be Ripon Spa from North Yorkshire. We won the toss as to where the match was to be played - initially at Page's Park - however due to a number of reasons we agreed to the request from Ripon Spa to play the match at a venue approximately half way distance between the 200 miles that separated our clubs, and Ripon Spa agreed to pay the cost of hiring a venue. Both clubs agreed on Nottingham that is almost exactly 100 miles from each of our clubs.

After a smooth journey we arrived at Nottingham at 9.30am, shortly followed by the Ripon Spa team. We were warmly welcomed at Nottingham and after tea and coffee made our way to the two lawns that had been beautifully prepared, to start the match. Our team was John Cundell, David and Jean Ball and Roger Stroud. The visitors were

Three of our players in the EACF Handicapp League match against Watford: below: Val Jeffers. Right: Sally Clay and John Thorp.



Jane Pringle, Freda Vitty, Roger I'Anson and Daphne Pepler.

Play started with John and David playing and winning the doubles round over two games. These rounds are the best of up to three games as required. Meanwhile Jean and Roger were playing their opposite numbers in singles - with a win by Roger over two games - so a good start.

Lunch was taken and we started the afternoon round of four singles. Two of the matches went to three games. John Cundell and Roger Stroud won and lost their first two games, which meant a decider was required. Roger won his decider and John lost his. David lost in two games. Fortunately, Jean triumphed over her opponent and won her first two games. The overall result was therefore a close win for Leighton-Linslade by four matches to three.

Jubilation for our team. We have reached the FINAL - the first time in this competition that we have been taking part in for many years. Our opponents will be the winners of the second semi-final that we await with eager interest. It will be either Merton CC or Guildford and Godalming CC.

Teams

Leighton-Linslade

David Ball (1), John Cundell (3), Roger Stroud (3), Jean Ball (4)

Ripon Spa Hotel

Jane Pringle (2), Freda Vitty (3), Roger I'Anson (5), Daphne Pepler (6)

Results

(Leighton-Linslade names first)

1. David Ball and John Cundell beat Jane Pringle and Freda Vitty 7-3, 7-4
2. Roger Stroud beat Daphne Pepler 7-4, 7-1
3. Jean Ball lost to Roger I'Anson 5-7, 4-7
4. David Ball lost to Jane Pringle 4-7, 6-7
5. John Cundell lost to Freda Vitty 7-3, 3-7., 5-7
6. Roger Stroud beat Roger I'Anson 7-4, 4-7, 7-4
7. Jean Ball beat Daphne Pepler 7-2, 7-4

EACF Handicap League - Watford - Home - 5th August

John T, John C and David Ball had set up the lawns and equipment on a lovely, calm sunny morning ready for the two teams assembling at Page's Park for the EACF Handicap League match against Watford. Our team had



suffered a few changes during the week before as Sheila Guest had a bad fall on the previous Sunday whilst leaving Page's Park and has broken her left shoulder and badly sprained her left wrist. We all wish Sheila a speedy recovery. Val Jeffers had stepped in to cover for Sheila and John Thorp was asked to cover for another previously selected player who had withdrawn. The other two team members were Una Pengelly and Sally Clay. Watford, who are normally early at our meetings, arrived just before 10.30am, which wasn't bad when we learnt that they had problems with their transport en-route and had to change cars. Their team was old friend Ron Drew, plus three newer members - John Smallbones, Alan Clark and George Skinner. Our team's handicaps were 1, 9, 10 and 10 - Watford's were 2, 3, 5 and 7.

Play started with the doubles - John T and Sally lost - Una and Val won. The first round of singles saw three wins for Watford and a win for LLCC by Val. An early lunch was taken and the three afternoon singles rounds commenced. All three went the same way with single wins for LLCC by Sally, John and Val - the remaining nine games all going to Watford. The overall result was a strong win for Watford by 13 games to five. Well done to our visitors.

All the games were played in a very friendly, sporting and humorous atmosphere making for a very pleasant day in excellent weather conditions.

Thanks to our scorers Peggy Kenny, Diana Phelps, Ann Rowe and Judith Cundell, and to cake suppliers Val Jeffers and Jean Ball. Also it was nice to see the following club members who came along to cheer on our team - Irene and Peter Davis, Roy Kemp and Derrick Haines accompanied by his wife Maureen.

Friendly Letchworth - Away - 9th August

Our team of John Cundell/Mary Kemp, Sheila Beal/Una Pengelly, Tony Wells/Sally Clay and John Thorp/Diana Phelps arrived at Letchworth a few minutes later than 10.00am after being trapped in a long roadworks halt just a few miles south of the lawns. After the usual warm welcome we had ten minutes practise and found the lawns very fast as they had been cut very short on the previous weekend to satisfy an Association Croquet tournament. This also made the lawns very difficult to find accurate positions - even the locals were struggling.

There were four rounds of doubles played with handicaps. Our handicaps ranged from 1 to 12, Letchworth's from 4 to 11. LLCC enjoyed wins as follows: John T/Diana Phelps - 0, John Cundell/Mary Kemp - 1, Sheila Beal/Una Pengelly - 2, Tony Wells/Sally Clay - 3. The result was a win for Letchworth by 10 games to 6.

An enjoyable day in good weather, however the ultra fast lawns and some very slow play from one of the Letchworth players made some of the games somewhat frustrating.

Little Gaddesden Bowls and Croquet Club Friendly - Away - 10th August

The next day after Letchworth friendly was a first visit to Little Gaddesden for a return friendly for our team of John Thorp/Roy Kemp, Diana Phelps/Val Jeffers and Peggy Kenny/Ann Rowe. Each pair played the other club's three

teams giving a total of nine games. There were three wins for John and Roy, two wins for Diana and Val, and two wins for Peggy and Ann - giving a total result of seven wins for LLCC and two for LGBCC.

The team reported they were made very welcome and much enjoyed their day.

Watford Friendly - Home - 10th August

Just two days later in a very busy week, we welcomed our old friends from Watford for a return friendly. A fine day welcomed John T, John C, Tony Wells and David Ball to Page's Park at 8.30am as our hard-working groundsman Doug and his young assistant Lewis were coming to the end of mowing our three lawns.

Watford arrived early and it was nice to greet some old friends and three players new to our lawns. As we started round 1, the sun appeared and was to stay with us all day - plus an ever increasingly strong wind which at one stage was assisting the balls across the newly mowed lawns!

Our team was chosen by draw before play commenced and was Tony Wells/Diana Phelps, John Thorp/Sally Clay, Jean Ball/Mary Kemp and Val Jeffers/Una Pengelly. There were the usual four games for each pair, two in the morning and two after lunch. By mid afternoon, at the end of the fourth round, Una and Val had won all four of their games, Jean and Mary won three, John T and Sally won three, and Tony and Diana won one. This gave an overall win result of 11-5 for LLCC.

So ended a very full week of Friendlies - thanks to Letchworth, Little Gaddesden and Watford for their good sportsmanship, humour and genuine friendliness.

EACF Handicap League - Stony Stratford - Home - 19th August

John T, John C, David Ball, Tony Wells, Ross Bagni, Roger Stroud, Una Pengelly and Sally Clay had set up the lawns and equipment on a damp, overcast morning ready for the two teams assembling at Page's Park for the EACF Handicap League match against Stony Stratford. Our team was Roger Stroud (3 handicap), Tony Wells (6), Sally Clay (9) and Mary Kemp (12). The Stony Stratford team arrived early at 9.30am and were accompanied from the car park by ever increasing rain. We made them welcome and were introduced to three players who had not visited Page's Park before - Alexander Kidd (10), Robert Chipperfield (10), Lesley Inchley (11), plus long standing member John Burrige (11).

Play started with the doubles - wins by Roger/Mary and Tony/Sally got LLCC off to a good start. On to the first round of Singles saw one win for LLCC by Tony Wells. The second round saw wins by Sally and Tony - therefore at lunch the score was five wins for each club.

Lunch was taken and the two afternoon singles rounds commenced. Round four was a clean sweep for Stony Stratford. Therefore LLCC needed to win all four games in the last round to force a draw. Roger, Tony and Sally all won, however Mary lost against Stony's top player. The overall result was a win for Stony Stratford by ten games to eight. Well done to our visitors who have now won the Western Division of the EACF Handicap League.

All the games were played in a very friendly and sporting atmosphere despite the almost continual rain

which finally cleared up as we were enjoying tea and cakes.

Thanks to our scorers Judith Cundell, Ross Bagni, Derrick Haines, Una Pengelly and John Thorp, and to cake suppliers Val Jeffers and Jean Ball.

EACF Level League - Enfield - Home - 22nd August

Our fifth Level League match was at home against Enfield, led by their captain David Frost (0). His three companions were John Street (3), Brian Dawes (3) and Anthony Elliott (3). Our team was captain John Cundell (3), John Thorp (1), David Ball (2) and Roger Stroud (3).

The visitors arrived early, accompanied by a fine day but an annoyingly strong wind which lasted all day and caused us some problems with the scorers' tents. After the usual preliminaries, play started at just after 10.00am with the two doubles games and we were pleased to record two wins - one by David Ball/John Cundell, the other by Roger Stroud/John Thorp.

The first singles round saw three wins by Enfield with only David Ball beating John Street. Round two of the singles saw wins by David Ball, John Cundell and John Thorp. Therefore at lunch the score was Leighton-Linslade six to Enfield's four. The third singles after lunch was another good one for us with three wins again by the same trio. John C's game against Anthony Elliott was a real battle that lasted over an hour and ended up on the 13th hoop when John went for a long shot which was successful. John and Anthony and scorer Ann Rowe finished just as all the other players had completed their games and their lunch! Overall score was now LLCC with nine wins and Enfield with five. This meant that Enfield needed to win all four games of the last round to force a draw. Fortunately the two Johns won which gave LLCC a win by eleven wins to seven.

Thanks to our four players and Tony Wells who put out the equipment in the morning. Thanks also to our scorers, Una Pengelly, Ann Rowe, Jean Ball and Judith Cundell - and to Jean Ball for the cakes.

Letchworth Friendly - Home - 29th August

Another friendly in a busy August - this time against Letchworth - and the set-up crew of David Ball, John Cundell, Roy Kemp, Roger Stroud, John Thorp and Tony Wells arrived at Page's Park at 8.30am on what was to become a very pleasant warm and dry Bank Holiday Monday.

Our team was chosen by draw a couple of days before play commenced and was Jean Ball/Judith Pengelly, David Ball/Eve Buckingham (two games), David Ball/Una Pengelly (two games), Mary Kemp/Roy Kemp, and Roger Stroud/Len Buckingham. The games were to be handicapped - a system preferred by Letchworth. This is not normal for all our other friendly tournaments, but it did lead to an excellent day's play and also provided useful practise as to how to use extra shots.

Letchworth's team arrived by 10.00am and after the usual pleasantries and a welcome drink, John Cundell briefed both teams and the players went off for practise and the first round of doubles. This round was shared,

with Jean Ball/Judith Pengelly and Roger Stroud/Len Buckingham winning their games for LLCC. Round two gave three good wins to Letchworth with just David Ball/Una Pengelly beating the Letchworth top pairing of Peter Ross/Peter Aspinall.

After lunch the round was once again shared, this time with wins by David Ball/Eve Buckingham and Jean Ball/Judith Pengelly. Therefore at the end of Round Three the score was five games to LLCC and seven to Letchworth. All to play for in the last round.

With three games won by our first three pairs on lawns one, two and three - we all watched the final game between David Ball/Una Pengelly and Letchworth's Colin Gregory/Jan Scroggins. A win by the Letchworth pair would end up as an overall draw whilst a win for us would give LL an overall victory. David Ball and Una Pengelly won convincingly at 7-4, giving Leighton-Linslade an overall win by nine games to seven.

An excellent and enjoyable day's play plus plenty of social chat and it was nice to see half a dozen members come along to support our successful team.

Friendly High Wycombe - Home - 2nd September

Our last but one friendly this season was a home match against High Wycombe. After a couple of weeks of warm, even hot weather, the forecast was initially for this Friday to be wet and windy. However the day dawned overcast and that was it - apart from a little light drizzle whilst the two Johns, David Ball, Tony Wells and Ross Bagni did most of the preparation work - assisted as they arrived by Una Pengelly, Roy Kemp and Florrie Jeater. The first three arrivals from High Wycombe arrived just before 10.00am, shortly followed by four more. Their last player had not appeared by 10.15am when a mobile call to one of the HW players told us he was lost and was presently at Leighton Buzzard Rugby Club! John T gave him instructions over the mobile and then met him near to the Richmond Road car park.

Our team had been previously drawn, however as one of our players failed to arrive, some last minute changes resulted in the following pairings: David Ball/Ross Bagni; Florrie Jeater/Len Buckingham, Jean Ball/Eve Buckingham (two games) John Thorp (two); and Roy Kemp/Una Pengelly.

After 10 minutes practise for High Wycombe, the first round started at 10.40am and resulted in three wins for LLCC - DB/RB, FJ/LB and RK/UP. The second round was shared with wins by RK/UP and JB/JT. The score was 5-2 to LLCC. After lunch we enjoyed three wins out of the four by FJ/LB, DB/RB and RK/UP. This brought the overall score to 8-4 in favour of LLCC. High Wycombe therefore needed to win all four of the last round to draw the match. It was not to be as LLCC enjoyed a clean sweep. The overall result was a good win for LLCC by twelve games to four.

Our visitors said that despite our win they had enjoyed an excellent day with fine hospitality and good sportsmanship and sociable company.

Thanks were expressed to those who helped organise the day and to Jean Ball for providing an excellent selection of cakes.

‘New’ Friendly Northampton - Home - 6th September - reported by Ross Bagni

On a warm but cloudy September day we welcomed 11 players from Northampton for a new format of friendly - well it was to me as I didn't attend the home Northampton Friendly earlier in the season.

The format was simple, sticks representing each colour ball were sorted so that one of each pair was drawn by a LLCC member and the other colour by a Northampton player, the sticks were also colour coded as to which lawn you would be playing on. Much confusion seemed to ensue, as a lot of folk forgot which colour ball and which lawn they were on! But the end result was that you played with a Northampton player against another LLCC and Northampton player. Trust you are all paying attention!

Scoring was simple as you got the number of hoops that your team won. After four rounds Sally Clay and Peggy Kenny had the highest scores from LLCC - Sally had a perfect 28 hoops and Peggy only missed out by one. Les Heard and June Pendergrast from Northampton finished with 26 and 25 hoops respectively.

A final was played with Sally playing with June, whilst Peggy played with Les. Peggy and Les won 7-5.

It was fun day with 12 members from each club (plus a few substitutions) enjoying themselves. It was nice to see our relatively new members David and Gill Gwillim playing their first competitive match, after only a few months playing the game.

Hopefully we can repeat this format in future years.

Garden Party and Fun Day - 10th September

The first available Saturday we could book the pavilion for this year's Garden Party/Fun Day was 10th September. We must have upset the weather gods for some reason as the forecast was for rain from 7.00am until 2.00pm. On the day they were spot on with the start time for the wet stuff, and unfortunately it carried on until early evening. Len Buckingham, Roy Kemp and John Cundell arrived at PP at 9.00am and set out the lawns and a couple of gazebos in the rain. At the official start time of 10.00am we were pleased to see upwards of a dozen hardy souls arriving and playing croquet on lawns one and two. The remainder of those who had tickets - there were 39 sold - of which some 17 were to friends and family of members, arrived by noon.

The buffet was ready for serving just before 1.00pm. It was superbly prepared by Jean and David Ball, who were assisted in the kitchen by Judith Cundell and Sally Clay. The lunch was excellent and enjoyed by all. It was nice to see Sheila Guest following her recent bad fall where she broke her shoulder that needed extensive surgery, and to learn that her recovery is progressing well. It was also good to see Tony Stammers who has rejoined the club recently after his hip surgery earlier in the year, and also Margaret Brown - one of our founder members who did sterling work for many years in official club posts.

Unfortunately the weather did not relent and at the end of lunch it was decided that there was little point in trying to carry on with any outside play. What was the weather like on the next day? - superb!! Let's hope for better conditions in 2017.

Club Doubles Championships - 17th September



After the previous weekend's non-stop rain at the Garden Party, followed by a week of very high temperatures and torrential storms, the day for this tournament 'enjoyed' a drop in temperature of 10 degrees C, plus a cold northerly breeze and drizzle for the first hour or so of play. An early start by John C, Ross Bagni, Richard Keighley and Roy Kemp allowed them to carry out the necessary preparation work - and once again the worms had been extra busy creating their casts. We didn't have time to remove the forest of leaves, however they didn't seem to have much effect on the play.

The entry was nine doubles pairs which were drawn into two blocks a few days previously - one block with four pairs, the other with five. Play started at 9.45am and continued through to 12.00 noon when players took their lunch as convenient. Shortly before 14.00 hours the block results were as follows:

Block 1		
1st	David and Jean Ball	4 wins
2nd	Ross Bagni and Mary Kemp	3 wins
3rd	Ronnie Richardson and Una Pengelly	1 win
4th	John Thorp and Sheila Bagni	1 win
5th	Roy Kemp and Florrie Jeater	1 win
Block 2		
1st	John Cundell and Judith Pengelly	3 wins
2nd	Tony Wells and Sally Clay	2 wins
3rd	Rose Gillett and Peggy Kenny	1 win
4th	Richard Keighley and Len Buckingham	0 wins

The final was played between David and Jean Ball against John Cundell and Judith Pengelly on Lawn One in front of all the players and a couple of visiting members. John and Judith got off to a great start and were 5-1 up at hoop 6. David and Jean rallied and after a number of hard fought hoops, at hoop 10 the score was 5-5. John and Judith won hoop 11, however after another tussle at hoop 12, John attempted a clearance on David's ball and neatly



The Murphy Shield Final players. Left to right: Ross Bagni, John Cundell, Andrea Huxley, Mark Godfrey-James, David Ball, Alan Miles, Jean Ball and Mike Huxley. All Murphy Shield photos by Tom Miller.

promoted him through the hoop - but not enough for a clean shot to the 13th. Judith and John's balls were in reasonably good positions and after a few more shots John was able to run the hoop and win the trophy.

Inter Club Murphy Shield - Leighton-Linslade v Guildford & Godalming - National Final - 20th September

Below is the report published on The Croquet Association website about an excellent win by our club in The Croquet Association's Inter-Club Shield Final yesterday. This is the

In action: Jean Ball, David Ball and Mike Huxley, and John Cundell.

first National Team event won by the club. Well done to all our team who took part in this competition during 2016. There were 19 teams entered in this tournament ranging from Belsay, Newcastle and Durham in the north to Sussex and Hamptworth in the south, and during the course of the season we have beaten last year's winners Nottingham, also Hunstanton, Ripon Spa Hotel and Guildford & Godalming.

Over the season the team was comprised from the following, including the number of matches played: John Cundell - 4; Jean Ball - 4; David Ball - 3; Roger Stroud - 2; Ross Bagni - 2; and Judith Pengelly - 1.

The team members would also like to thank the six club





Left: LLCC supporters - Sally Clay, Malcolm Kirby, Mary Kemp and John Thorp. Above: interested parties from both teams avidly watching John Cundell's thrid tournament deciding game. Below: the winning team.

members - Malcolm Kirby, John Thorp, Sally Clay, Mary Kemp, Roger Stroud and Tom Miller - who also made the journey to Surbiton to support our team which made all the difference to the result.

Here is the report published on The Croquet Association website:

Golf Croquet Inter-Club Shield (The Murphy Shield) - Final. Leighton-Linslade beat Guildford and Godalming 4-3 - 20th September 2016 - played at Surbiton CC - report by John Cundell

The final between Leighton-Linslade and Guildford and Godalming was played at Surbiton Croquet Club on a fine,



Inter-Club Shield Tournament Manager John Bowcott presents the magnificent Shield to John Cundell and team members Ross Bagni, David Ball and Jean Ball. All Murphy Shield photos by Tom Miller.

dry, calm autumn day. The two teams were closely matched in handicaps and the day's play was similarly close. The doubles match was the best of three games with G&G taking the first game with some excellent positioning. LL's David Ball and John Cundell fought back in game two and then dominated game three - therefore winning the doubles. In the two morning singles these were shared with a win by G&G's Mark Godfrey James and LL's Ross Bagni, therefore at lunch LL were leading by two wins to one.

The afternoon session of four singles started with wins for G&G by Mark Godfrey James and Andrea Huxley - both winning within two games. The fight continued with LL's David Ball against Mike Huxley and LL's John Cundell against Alan Miles. David and Mike's games were initially well balanced, however after some excellent battles David managed two wins, both 7-4.

Alan Miles had come back from 4-6 down to win the first game against John Cundell on the 13th hoop. Game two had gone to John at 7-5. The third and tournament decider between John and Alan was watched by remaining competitors and a group of six LL supporters who had made the journey to Surbiton. John moved into a 6-4 lead, however as in their first game, Alan Miles fought back to take hoops 11 and 12. John managed to run a very long ball to gain an advantageous position at the 13th hoop and Alan was unfortunate in that John was also in a position to despatch Alan's clearance ball to the far side of the lawn. Alan's return just missed clearing John, who then ran the hoop to seal a win for Leighton-Linslade by four games to three.

A good day's croquet that was played in a very sociable and sportsmanlike atmosphere. This was a jubilant win for Leighton-Linslade CC, being our first team win in a CA National Tournament.

The presentation of the trophy was made by Tournament Director John Bowcott to Leighton-Linslade CC.

Both teams thanked Surbiton for providing two excellent lawns and fine hospitality.

Teams

Leighton-Linslade

David Ball (2), John Cundell (3), Ross Bagni (3), Jean Ball (4)

Guidlford & Godalming

Mike Huxley (3), Alan Miles (3), Mark Godfrey James (3), Andrea Huxley (3)

Results

(Leighton-Linslade names first)

1. David Ball and John Cundell beat Mike Huxley and Alan Miles 5-7, 7-5, 7-1
2. Ross Bagni beat Andrea Huxley 7-5, 7-6
3. Jean Ball lost to Mark Godfrey James 5-7, 4-7
4. David Ball beat Mike Huxley 7-4, 7-4
5. John Cundell beat Alan Miles 6-7, 7-5, 7-6
6. Ross Bagni lost to Mark Godfrey James 5-7, 5-7
7. Jean Ball lost to Andrea Huxley 5-7, 6-7

The six members who took part in this year's Inter-Club Murphy Shield tournament - including the number of matches played were Ross Bagni - 2; Judith Pengelly - 1; John Cundell - 4; Jean Ball - 4; Roger Stroud - 2; and David Ball - 3.



Club Singles Championships - 24th September

A dry, bright morning welcomed John C, Ross Bagni and David and Jean Ball as they prepared the lawns, etc. - ready for the 16 players in this year's last competition - the Club Singles Championship. The entry for this year was 16 members and included an encouraging number of three newer members trying their skills and luck in competition. We hope they enjoyed their day and will be keen to participate in future club tournaments.

The sixteen competitors were drawn into four blocks earlier in the week. Play commenced at 10.00am and continued until shortly after 1.00pm. The conditions were very warm for the time of year, despite an ever increasing strong breeze which made those players who rely on swinging the mallet somewhat difficult. The results of the block play was:

Block 1		Block 2	
1st	Judith Pengelly	1st	David Ball
2nd	Sally Clay	2nd	Sheila Beal
3rd	Peggy Kenny	3rd	Len Buckingham
4th	Ann Rowe	4th	Malcolm Kirby
Block 3		Block 4	
1st	Roger Stroud	1st	Ross Bagni
2nd	John Cundell	2nd	Jean Ball
3rd	Roy Kemp	3rd	Una Pengelly
4th	Rose Gillett	4th	Mary Kemp

Lunch was taken before the semi-finals - including a photograph of the six members who had played throughout the season in the National Inter-Club (Murphy Shield) tournament reported above.



Club Singles. Above, watching the final. Right: Roger Stroud in action in his semi-final against Ross. Below: Judith Pengelly in her semi-final against David Ball. Right: Ross and David following David's win on the 13th hoop.. Bottom: the 16 players in this year's Singles Tournament.



Semi-final one was played on lawn one between David Ball and Judith Pengelly - won by David on hoop 12 after a closely fought match by 7-5. The second semi-final on lawn two between Ross Bagni and Roger Stroud was another closely fought match which ended up on the 13th hoop, eventually won by Ross.

As we approached 2.30pm the final started on lawn one in front of 20 or so watchers - David Ball was leading 5-3 at hoop 8. A determined fight back from Ross on hoops 11 and 12 took the final to the 13th hoop. After some good croquet from both players David Ball ran the 13th hoop to become 2016 Club Singles Champion. Congratulations to David on winning for two years running.

EACF Leagues - Handicap and Level The Handicap League

There are four areas. The North & Mid Area has six clubs and the winner was Ipswich. The Eastern Area had five clubs - Southchurch Park won as per the 2015 season. Central Area winner from the six clubs was Letchworth Red. Our region, the Western, had six entries. The winner was Stony Stratford with eight points. Second was Watford with six points. Northampton Mallets was third with six points; Wrest Park fourth with four points and in fifth and sixth place were Leighton-Linslade and Northampton Hoops with two points each - we had beaten Northampton Hoops.

Stony Stratford won the first semi-final, beating Ipswich. The second semi-final was won by Letchworth Red. The final is scheduled to be played at Hunstanton on 2nd October

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

The Level Play League

This has only two areas - the winner was Hunstanton in the North & Central Area whilst Northampton won our East & West Area. Our Level team won against Enfield and drew with Watford, lost by one game against Chelmsford, and also lost against Northampton and Letchworth. The final is not until 16th 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.

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.

This winter we hope to improve the general standard of the lawns - particularly lawn one - as well as the usual maintenance work. Tining, top dressing, reseeding and fertilising will be carried out in October. As far as tining is concerned this is considered to be one of the most

important tasks in keeping the lawns healthy and reducing the formation of moss. Previously we have been loaned the Council's machine to carry out this work, however the machine is quite awkward and very heavy to handle which is rather beyond the physical capabilities of most of our members. Accordingly we are investigating having this task carried out by a contractor.

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 weed control - plus moss treatment and scarifying if required. We have a keen group of ten members in our lawn maintenance team, however if any other member is prepared to help, please contact John Cundell who will gladly add your name to the list.

Club Website

With the club website now well into its second year, most members with computers will be aware of the site address: www.leightonlinsladedcroquet.org.uk. Roger Stroud is to be thanked for setting up and maintaining the website. If you have forgotten the member's password it can be obtained by emailing Roger at rogerstroud302@hotmail.com.

Winter Social Club at Page's Park

The Wednesday morning social club will meet for the first time this winter on Wednesday 19th 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?

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 will shortly be sending out the Information Pack for the meeting on Friday 11th 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.





Roll of Honour 2016



Leighton-Linslade Croquet Club Tournament Winners

Mix 'n Match Doubles Handicap	Val Jeffers and Judith Pengelly
Ladies Doubles Mix 'n Match	Jean Ball and Una Pengelly
EACF Counties Wheeler Shield	Bedfordshire: John Cundell, Judith Pengelly, Roger Stroud, John Thorp
Club Singles Handicap	Jean Ball
B-Level Leighton-Linslade	Roger Stroud
EACF Champion of Champions Handicap	Judith Pengelly
B-Level Hunstanton	Ross Bagni
B-Level Nottingham	Ross Bagni
Club Championship Doubles	John Cundell and Judith Pengelly
National Inter-Club Murphy Shield	John Cundell, Jean Ball, David Ball, Ross Bagni, Roger Stroud, Judith Pengelly
Club Championship Singles	David Ball

Attendance Breakdown - 2016 - by Membership Secretary

Our Membership Secretary Judith Cundell has extracted the following information from the attendance sheets for 2016. There were 27 weeks of play. Figures include all matches - players, helpers and spectators.

Sessions	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Average attendance	15	14	4	7	11	8	4
Highest attendance at one session	37*	25	19	16	20	15	16

*includes Garden Party

There was one week with 96 attendees, included Bank Holiday Monday

Most attendances by members:

John Cundell	103	These include work days.
John Thorp	102	These include work days.
Irene Davis	86	.

Most attendances in one week:

John Cundell	6 x 3
John Thorp	6 x 1
Diana Phelps	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 45 members.

Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held at Northall Village Hall at 7.15 for 7.30pm on Friday 11th November 2016, 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, Ross Bagni, Roger Stroud - unless stated otherwise)