



# LEIGHTON-LINSLADE CROQUET CLUB

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Founded 2000

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## “10th Anniversary Season Well Under Way”



Welcome to the third newsletter of 2009, our 10th Anniversary year. Details of our special event below, followed by an update on the season so far, plus other forthcoming events, including an invitation to the annual Garden Party (see last page).

Our Opening Day, originally scheduled for 4th April, was moved to Sunday 5th as the Mayor was overseas. The day was much better weatherwise than previous years and a large contingent of members turned up to witness the first 'official' shots of the year played by Mayor Councillor George Rolfe, seen here with Chairman Tom Miller. Top, the Mayor is hoping he doesn't have to try a jump shot like Judith Cundell, whilst Roger Stroud and Tom Miller look on with anticipation.

### 10th Anniversary Celebrations

July 14th - the most important day for your diary since the club's formation back in 2000. This will be our 10th Anniversary Celebrations day.

Your Committee are very pleased to announce that Patricia Duke-Cox, Chairman of The Croquet Association, has agreed to join us on 14th July. On the same day,



Leighton Middle School, with whom Tony Wells and Margaret Brown have been working, will hold their "end of season" finals on our lawns.

The day's programme is:

Please arrive between 1.45 and 2.00pm

At 2.00 pm Patricia will give a brief talk after which there will be a group photo.

Around 2.30 Patricia will

be accompanied by a member of LLCC to play a partner she is bringing - we think that person has played at international level! - who will also be joined by one of our members, for a friendly (!) demonstration game.

Around 3.30 there will be refreshments and the cutting of a special celebration cake.

At 4.00 o'clock the Leighton Middle School tournament will start and last around an hour to one and a half hours. We anticipate that Patricia will make any final presentation.

The whole event is free and we hope there will be a good turn out. We will be inviting many of the Founder Members who are no longer with the Club.

If you wish your name to go in the hat for a chance to play with Patricia or her guest, please come prepared to play.

### Playing Sessions

As a number of members are still asking what are the playing sessions for this year, here is the



B-Level Tournament at Watford. Eve Buckingham and Croquet Association Chairman Patricia Duke-Cox wait for the start of their game. Right, Len Buckingham attempting to clear his opponent's ball, Roger Barnacle, who went on to win.

information as published in the previous two newsletters and which is also displayed on the wall in the clubroom.

The 'official' playing sessions for 2009 will be as follows:

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

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

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

### Sessions Follow-up

After a couple of months experience the committee feels that the present arrangements are working well. The flexibility of being able to arrive early and play later has almost eliminated the periods where a prolonged wait for play occurred. The publication of the 'official' session times means that you can, to all intents and purposes, guarantee there will be other members present - and the list of members' telephone numbers in the Clubroom allows for individual contact if required.

### Goundstaff Access

IF THE COUNCIL GROUNDSTAFF ARRIVE TO MOW OR CARRY OUT ANY OTHER WORK ON THE

**LAWNS WHILST YOU ARE PRESENT - PLEASE STOP PLAYING IMMEDIATELY AND GIVE THEM ACCESS - EVEN IF YOU HAVE JUST TURNED UP AND HAVE TO WAIT. THIS IS ONE OF THE CONDITIONS APPERTAINING TO OUR FLEXIBLE PLAY ARRANGEMENTS. ABUSE IT AND WE COULD LOSE IT. THANKYOU.**

### 2009 Dates for your Diary

We still await one EACF League date against Northampton which will follow in due course, so keep an eye on the noticeboards in the Clubroom.

#### June

- 19 League Team Coaching
- 22 Watford League (Home)

#### July

- 3 Wrest Park League (Home)
- 11/12 Club Handicap Singles
- 14 **10th Anniversary Event**
- 17 Stony Stratford League (Away)
- 19 Club Fun Day
- 25/26 Hunstanton Golf Croquet Tournament
- 29 Committee Meeting
- 31 Stony Stratford Friendly (Home)

#### August

- 10 Watford Friendly (Away)
- 14 or
- 21 Northampton League (Away) - Date to be confirmed
- 15 **Club Garden Party (See last page)**
- 22 Letchworth Friendly (Home)

#### September

- 16 Committee Meeting
- 26/27 Club Doubles

#### October

- 3/4 Club Singles

#### November

- 13 AGM & Party

Please note that the Charity Garden Party at Waterways on 4th July for Macmillan Cancer Support has unfortunately been cancelled owing to that being the same day as the Edlesborough annual fete, which meant that Irene and Peter Davis would have lost most of their helpers and also supporters. Hopefully a better date can be picked for 2010.

## Season so far

### Coaches Training Course - March 28/29th

As part of our 10th Anniversary celebrations the Club invited The Croquet Association to run a training course for golf croquet coaches on Saturday and Sunday, 28/29th March – the object being to train people to become Golf Croquet coaches.

The course was led by Jennet Blake along with two other coaches. Attendees totalled 12, coming from four outside clubs including Stony Stratford and Watford, with five of our members – David Ball, Eve Buckingham, John Cundell, George Lawson and Tom Miller.

The weather was a bit cold, however it was dry. The first part of the course was in the pavilion and after a few welcoming words from Chairman Tom, Jennet Blake introduced herself and her fellow instructors and moved on to cover the aims of the course. Subjects covered included – why do we need coaches, benefits for the coach, who can be a coach, and benefits of the course. We were led through how to prepare a course, principles and techniques of good instruction, teaching tactics, etc. There was considerable interaction with all course members during this morning session. After lunch we moved outside for instruction and clarification of the rules, followed by playing a number of hoops together with a coach in each group who encouraged us to explain how and why we intended to play each ball. At the end of what was a busy and thoughtful day – did we get the chance to go home and relax? Oh no, it was like being back at school as we were given our homework! Each of us was given two subjects which we had to ‘gen’ up on ready for teaching to a group of invited volunteers on Sunday morning. Subjects ranged through playing the wrong ball; halfway law; stop shots; split shots; non-striking faults; the use of other balls; and striking faults – pushing, pulling, crush shots, double taps. The homework exercise was very useful as none of us had probably thought very much about the particular subject we had to teach, and having to sit down in the evening and work out how to coach them on Sunday was very beneficial.

In general, the course proved useful and it is hoped that we get the opportunity to impart some of the knowledge gained to club members. We realised that many of us had drifted in to some grey areas where we could find ourselves being challenged, particularly by outside opponents as to the validity of our play. Naturally, we would like to think that most of our Club members would like to abide by the rules of our game, and improve the standard of play at all levels. With that in mind, we intend to give the opportunity later in the season to any members who wish to take advantage of the knowledge we gained. We would like to pass this on. Arising from this, and for a start, is the League Team short course on 19th June.

Thanks are due to Len Buckingham who did an exceptional amount of work in relation to the organisation just prior to the course – arranging hotel details for the coaches and liaising with other visiting clubs – and keeping things running smoothly over the weekend. Also thanks to Margaret Brown for the initial idea and getting the ball rolling.



A cold and windy couple of days greeted the attendees at the Coaches Course held in late March. Here, Tom Miller welcomes Head Coach Jennet Blake (standing right).

### Coaching Day at Wrest Park - 7th April

Hard on the heels of our Coaches Course, Richard Keighley organised a coaching day at Wrest Park aimed at Beginners or near Beginners. There were 16 attendees from around the region – none from Leighton-Linslade – and the group was due to be split up into fours with a coach for each. A few days before the course one of Richard’s fellow coaches had to withdraw due to a funeral commitment, and Richard invited David Ball and John Cundell to help out. Both enjoyed the experience, under Richard’s expert supervision, and it was very satisfying to help people and note their enthusiastic response to advice and assistance. Thanks also to Margaret Brown who single-handed looked after the catering arrangements.

### B-Level at Watford - 11th May

This event at Watford Croquet Club was their first golf croquet One-Day B Class Tournament. This is Singles Level play for those with handicaps of 3 – 7. There were 14 players divided into two blocks – from Leighton-Linslade, Dogmersfield (Hook, Hants.), Sussex County (Brighton), Colchester, Woodhall Spa (Lincolnshire), Broadwas (Worcester), Norwich, Ealing and High Wycombe. We had four players entered; Eve and Len Buckingham, John Cundell and Richard Keighley. Handicaps of the players present were six 7’s; two 6’s; one 5; one 4; and four 3’s. The standard of play was very good – and those of us who have not played in one of these competitions before (Richard Keighley being an old hand) found the experience very rewarding and we learnt a lot. Len and John won one of their matches, Eve won two and old hand Richard won five. Unfortunately the match which Richard lost was against Roger Barnacle from Dogmersfield Club, so Roger went through to the Final and ultimately won against Richard Brooks from Sussex County. In the third place play off Richard was successful against Watford’s Ian Parkinson.

An excellent day, well organised by Watford, fine weather and an excellent opportunity to match one’s skills against other clubs – plus meet some very nice people!

### EACF League - Letchworth Home 15th May

Our first League match of 2009 was home to last year’s champions Letchworth. We knew this was going to be a



From l to r: Letchworth and LL league team members - David Gough, John Skingsley, David Russell, John Cundell, Eve Buckingham, Richard Keighley, David Ball and John Barrance. Above, Richard and Eve in their Doubles match.

tough battle and we were not wrong. The respective teams assembled at 9.30am on a fairly damp Page's Park after the first heavy rain for many weeks. It was touch and go whether or not the match would even take place until Events Organiser Tony Wells contacted David Russell of Letchworth at 7.30am on the match morning and they both decided to go for it despite a fairly doubtful forecast. Fortunately they made the correct decision and apart from a very heavy downpour whilst the hardy set-up crew of Tony Wells, David Ball, Len Buckingham and John Cundell were trying to put up the gazebo, the day passed without any of the players getting soaked. The team consisted of David Ball, Eve Buckingham, John Cundell

and Richard Keighley.

Letchworth showed that they meant business by charging off into a very impressive 4-0 lead from the first round. Despite valiant efforts to recover the situation, the match ended with a win for Letchworth by 11 games to 7. David Ball and John Cundell halved their matches; Eve Buckingham and Richard Keighley won one match each – but the latter won their doubles with David and John missing out on the dreaded 13th hoop. Well done Letchworth.

Thanks are due to all those who helped on the day, especially Irene Davis for organising the scorers and Len Buckingham for acting as sole Officer of the Day.



Finalists in the Mix 'n Match were Tony Wells and Len Buckingham against Irene Davis and John Cundell. Right: the draw was quite exciting! Left: yes it was a cold day and the clubroom provided a warm viewing platform for the final. Tony and Len won 7-4.



## **Mix 'n Match Doubles Handicap - 16th May**

This event was suggested by a number of members at the end of last season as a way to encourage members of all ability levels to get involved in a light-hearted yet competitive event - and also to introduce the concept of Handicap Doubles. As an added incentive, a fine cup has been donated by George Lawson which will be presented to the winners at the AGM.

The entry of 18 people was a bit disappointing, however there were at least eight usually keen members away on holiday. As the previous week progressed with ever worsening weather forecasts, for some time we wondered if the event would even take place. As it was the day was plagued with a cold wind, however we managed to avoid the heavy showers and play continued almost uninterrupted for most of the day.

At 9.00am all 18 entrants waited with baited breath as the draw took place along Football Association lines using numbered balls and a draw table devised by Peter Davis. There were a number of oohs and aahs as the names were pulled out which resulted in some interesting combinations. David Ball and Eve Buckingham ended up together and with their handicaps of 5 and 4 respectively, it was obvious they were going to find life a bit difficult against pairs with 9's and 10's. The nine pairs were placed into one block of four and one of five, which means three games for the first block and four for the second. This meant that only 16 games were required initially however many of these took a lot longer than the usual 45 minutes or so, due of course to the handicap play. Finally, by around 4.00pm - we had Tom Miller and Tony Stammers winning Block 1 with John Cundell and Irene Davis second; whilst Sheila Beal and Roy Kemp won Block 2 with Tony Wells and Len Buckingham second. The second block was very close in results terms with three teams winning two of their three games, and the second place

was gained by just one hoop difference! In the semis, the Wells/Buckingham team beat Miller/Stammers 7-2, and Cundell/Davis beat Beal/Kemp 7-3.

The Final started at 5.00pm and resulted in a fine win for Tony Wells and Len Buckingham by 7-4. Unfortunately not many of the entrants stayed to watch, but those hardy souls that did, warmly applauded the winners.

As a first try the event was a success and was obviously enjoyed by all present. There are a few changes that we will have to look at for next year - perhaps a time limit for each match, and if we receive a larger entry than 20 almost certainly the event will need to go to both days.

## **Watford Friendly Home - David Ball reports**

Friday 29th May, and at 8.30am it was like a midsummer day as we erected the gazebo and set up the lawns. At 10.00am our guests/opponents from Watford were made welcome, however we were sad to hear that two of their team had to withdraw at the very last minute due to health problems overnight. We therefore agreed to loan Watford two of our members, Irene Davis and Diana Phelps - who played amazingly well. Peter Davis and John Thorp started the day very well for LL by winning their first game 7-1. (They also managed a 7-1 victory in their last afternoon game.) At mid-morning the first round of four games was halved, but alas come lunchtime we were four behind. The afternoon was again halved, so the day's result went to Watford by 10-6.

It was a glorious day and everyone enjoyed themselves playing - and eating the lovely spread of cakes. Watford were duly congratulated and we wished them well and told them we looked forward to the return friendly in August. Thanks were made to the organisers and scorers.

Competitors in the Inter-Club match against Dulwich - Richard Keighley, David Ball, Eve Buckingham, Pierre Beaudry, Gloria Watson, Ken Watson, Roger Stroud and Simon Carter.





A lovely day at Stony Stratford Friendly in early June. Above left, Roger and Caroline Stroud wait for their next shot. Above, Una Pengelly plays her first shot. Left, Sally Clay in determined mood - and it did go through the hoop.

support and help), and they were rewarded by seeing two of the top players in the country playing awe-inspiring croquet. Well done Dulwich and we hope they progress through to the finals.

### Letchworth Friendly Away - David Ball reports

10.00am Saturday 6th June and our team of eight were all present at Letchworth - David Ball, Irene and Peter Davis, John Thorp, Erica Fogg, Una and Judith Pengelly and Roger Stroud. (Peter Davis stood in for Tony Stammers who unfortunately had been taken to hospital a few days previously). We were welcomed by David Russell, and members of the home team. Tea and biscuits were available before we started play.

The method of playing was to have a different partner each game, and matches were doubled up by playing from opposite corners over 7 hoops timed to 45 minutes. LL won three of the first four games - what a good start! By lunchtime we were two down. After lunch and a chat play resumed and we lost three out of the next four which meant we needed to win the final four to be all square. Alas this was not to be as we only managed three, so Letchworth ended up winning by 9-7. It would have been nice to have come home with a win.

It was a very enjoyable day with just a light sprinkling of rain am, but drier pm. We congratulated Letchworth and look forward to the return friendly at Page's Park on 22nd August.

### Stony Stratford Friendly

Phew, what a busy month. Hardly a week passed by and another eight members were on their way to Stony Stratford on Friday 12th June for this year's away friendly. The weather was superb, as was the usual welcome from Stony Stratford members - and the day started with the also usual coffee and biscuits.

The eight LL members were paired up: John Cundell/Bryan Ferris, Sally Clay/Una Pengelly, John and Sheila Guest, Roger and Caroline Stroud. The usual format was played - two doubles rounds prior to lunch and two after - amounting to 16 games in all. The first round was almost a walkover for SS with only the Guests winning 7-5. Second round was shared with wins by Roger and Caroline Stroud 7-5 and the Guests again with 7-5, so at lunch the score was SS 5, LL 3.

Lunch had a beneficial effect on the LL players as the

### Inter-Club - Dulwich

Wow! What an exciting, educational and interesting day. Wednesday 3rd June was the date and Page's Park was the venue for this year's first knockout round of the National Inter-Club Championship.

This tournament is open to clubs from the whole of England, and attracts many of the top golf croquet clubs. Two of the players from Dulwich, Simon Carter and Pierre Beaudry, handicap 0, are currently 10th and 13th in the National Golf Croquet Rankings! - and they were paired together for the one Doubles game of the match against Richard Keighley and Len Buckingham. Our duo put up a brave show but were beaten by 7-3 and 7-2 in their best of three legs.

The remainder of the games were all singles, and Richard Keighley twice took Simon Carter to the 13th hoop before losing 7-6. Eve Buckingham found Pierre Beaudry an extremely strong player - and his jump shots over balls to advance position and excellent tactical play led to 7-0 and 7-2 results. Roger Stroud played against Ken Watson and then Gloria Watson, taking Gloria to a third game before succumbing 4-7, 7-5, 6-7, but beaten by Ken 7-5, 7-4.

The hero of the day was David Ball, who won both his games against the Watsons in straight sets. Well done David - a superb performance. Leighton Linslade's combined total handicap was 28 against Dulwich's 11. The final result was a win for Dulwich by 5 games to 2.

It was excellent inasmuch that 18 club members turned up to assist in running the event (thank you all for your

third round was halved with wins by Una and Sally 7-3, and John and Bryan 7-2. Even better in the last round as LL won three of the four matches - only the Guests not so fortunate. So the day ended up all square 8 games apiece - a fitting end to a very pleasant day. And we must not forget to mention the afternoon tea with scones, strawberry jam and cream!

### Coming Up

#### Weekend away with Hunstanton

As reported in the previous newsletter Tony Wells had been making enquiries about a friendly over a couple of days with Hunstanton. As this is some distance, Tony had asked for some feedback from members who might be interested in a 'play and stay' event. Each team member would take wife, husband or partner and could enjoy a short break, taking a day to drive there, stay overnight, play the friendly game, return home then or perhaps stay over and return on a later date. There was interest in this from a number of members who initially put their names down for three provisional dates. The most popular date was 25/26th July with 14 members interested. Tony Wells, who unfortunately cannot make that weekend, performed a draw and the successful 10 members will be representing the club in due course.

The obvious popularity for this event has led Tony and others to look at similar outings for 2010.

The opportunity was taken at the Opening Day earlier this year to obtain a group photograph of the Chairmen since inauguration for Margaret Brown's book covering the first ten years of the club - pictured here with Town Mayor Councillor George Rolfe. From left to right: Irene Davis 2000, Joan Slow 2000-2001, George Lawson 2002-2004, Margaret Brown 2005-2007 and Tom Miller -2008.



### Hoop Placing/Removal

On a number of occasions recently incorrect hoop positioning has occurred. The 'Townsend's' (the name is on the top bar of the hoop) must go on Lawn 1 - nearest the clubroom; and the 'Davidson's' on Lawn 2. Also, if you look closely at the hoops you will note a small number between 1 and 6 in black felt-pen marked at the top of the hoop. They should be placed in the normal order of play for the first six hoops. The reason for this is that the hoop sets have different shapes and spacing on their pegs, and using them incorrectly leaves large holes and incorrect spacing, which leads to loose hoops and extra maintainance.

Also, when removing hoops, please don't waggle them sideways to loosen them as again this makes the holes large. Use the hoop lifter provided for this purpose. It takes a few seconds a saves Len and John hours! It also makes it easier on your back!

### Odds & Ends

#### Cups and Mugs

Can we remind established members and inform new members that you are expected to provide your own cup for tea and coffee. You are also expected to wash up your cup and either leave it in the cupboard or take it home with you. The store of cups with LLCC marked on them are actually there for visitors to the club when we have matches, etc., not for general use.

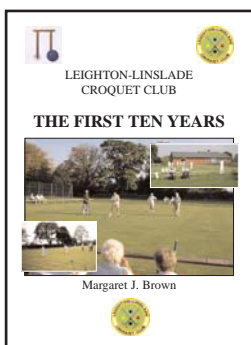
At the moment, for a number of members it seems to be the policy to leave dirty cups lying around for others to wash up and dry. You may well have enjoyed a pleasant session, and are in a happy relaxed mood, so please take a few minutes to wash up your cup/mug and any others that may be lying around, rather than leave it for someone else to do. It will make you and them feel better!

Also, please open your eyes with reference to the milk/squash in the 'fridge. On a couple of occasions recently new bottles have been started before those in use have been finished. It's your money you are throwing away!

### Register

Our Membership Secretary requests that when you complete the attendance register on behalf of visitors, please include their name, whether or not they are having a trial game, and if they are family or friends, please indicate to which member they belong!

Also, please bring visitors at less busy times - busiest session tends to be Saturday.



### The First Ten Years

By now most members should have received a free copy of Margaret Brown's history of the club - 'The First Ten Years'. This full colour 48 page publication should be of interest to members old and new. We would point out that the production and publication of the booklet were performed at no charge to the club, Margaret having used the award she received as female winner of the 2008 Leighton-Linslade Sport Award to fund the production, with practical help from Julian Brown and John Cundell. Further copies of the publication are available from Margaret who would welcome donations to the Marie Curie Nursing Service, which offers relief to those caring for terminally ill relatives. Contact Margaret at 40 Miles Avenue, Leighton Buzzard LU7 3LG. Tel: 01525 373860. The committee has purchased a copy for the club's archives and a £10 donation made to the charity.

# GARDEN PARTY

We will be holding a Garden Party for Members plus guest(s) at 135 Hockliffe Road on Saturday 15th August from 3.00pm - only £3.00 per person

**AFTERNOON TEA -  
PLUS TEA, COFFEE, SOFT DRINKS PROVIDED  
but please bring your own alcoholic drink and glass!**

Please send the Booking Form together with your cheque made out to 'Leighton-Linslade Croquet Club' to:

Len Buckingham,  
2 St. Mary's Glebe,  
Edlesborough,  
Nr Dunstable, Beds.  
LU6 2RB



by 9th August at the latest!

.....

Please book ..... places for the Garden Party on Saturday 15th August for which I enclose £3.00 per person.

Name(s):

.....

Address:

.....

.....

.....

..... Tel: .....

Send with your cheque made out to 'Leighton-Linslade Croquet Club' to:  
Len Buckingham, 2 St. Mary's Glebe, Edlesborough, Nr Dunstable, Beds.  
LU6 2RB