



LEIGHTON-LINSLADE CROQUET CLUB

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“A New Lawn and New Events”



Welcome to the fourth newsletter of 2010. Another interesting and busy season, and apart from the drenching at Littlehampton and damp days at Northampton and Edgbaston, the weather was generally kind as far as playing was concerned, but the mid season drought caused us some problems with the lawns - to the extent that it was necessary to give them a few days sprinkling which inevitably broke the drought within a few days and it was an amused group that watched a couple of us turn off the irrigation system (sprinklers!) when the lawns were covered by half an inch of hail. Croquet on ice skates was the order of the day!

The third lawn finally became available in May. Despite the best efforts of our hard working groundstaff, the dreadful winter certainly hindered the preparation and development of the surface, and the plague of dandelions didn't help either. The lawn is by far the flattest of our three so it is to be hoped that this winter's work will give us a better surface for next season. Those of us who have travelled to other clubs and been very impressed with their superb playing conditions have, after due discussion with their members, realised that the clubs with the best conditions are invariably those with a long history - some as long as 100 years! Patience is a virtue - and also playing regularly on the surface will help. A number of



Our two new Mix 'n Match competitions this year were both inaugurated by Erica Fogg - the winners of the ladies trophy were Eve Buckingham and Margaret Lawson. The John Fogg Trophy for men was won by David Ball and John Cundell.

clubs we have visited with three lawns regularly rest one lawn for short periods during the playing season. Always playing on Lawn 1 because it is convenient is not going to foster good surfaces on all three lawns.

Membership has remained steady at just under 60 and now we have three lawns there have been no days where members have had to sit around and wait for long periods before being able to play.

We enjoyed a much busier season due to the introduction of a second League team and two new events promoted by Erica Fogg; the Mix 'n Match doubles for ladies and the mens' event, The John Fogg Trophy. We spread our wings further south with a friendly against Littlehampton, one member attended regional events at Hunstanton and



A good win for the League 'A' team against Letchworth. Left to right; David Mathews, Richard Keighley, Andy Allen, David Ball, John Cundell, Eve Buckingham, Peter Ross and Colin Gregory.

Ipswich; the new Inter Club Murphy Shield event required a team to travel 250 miles to play Belsay Hall, north of Newcastle; and four members attended Croquet Association B-Level tournaments at Watford, Nottingham, Newport and Edgbaston.

Match Reports

Ladies Doubles Mix 'n Match – 14th June

This was the first event of two new doubles competitions inaugurated by Erica Fogg who has provided fine trophies. Both competitions are for doubles play and of the Mix 'n Match format, where the teams are drawn on the day. One event is for ladies only, and the other is for men and the trophy is named in honour of her late husband and our former Membership Secretary John – 'The John Fogg Mens Doubles' trophy.

The idea for these events was to create a light-hearted day with not too many rules and regulations, so the play was non-handicapped and the draw for partners would add a little excitement to the proceedings and hopefully encourage other members than the regular competitive names to take part. It was a little disappointing that only 16 of the club's 32 lady members entered – and unfortunately two had to withdraw a few days before the match.

The weather was dry albeit with a cool northerly wind. The ladies arrived around 9.00 am, apart from four who had mistaken the starting time as either 9.30 or 10.00am – however a few quick telephone calls from John Cundell roused them from their morning duties and they all made it to Page's Park within a very short and impressive time.

The four male organisers, John Cundell, David Ball, George Lawson and John Thorp had prepared the lawns etc., at an earlier hour, so all was ready for the draw. The names were pulled out of the hat and the teams given their identification badges – labelled 'A' to 'G' – seven teams. The draw paired off the following: Jean Ball and Judith Cundell; Judith Pengelly and Caroline Stroud; Margaret Lawson and Eve Buckingham; Sally Clay and Norma Morris; Val Jeffers and Yvonne Banks; Una Pengelly and Helen Wilkinson; and finally Diana Phelps and Sheila Beal. The teams were put into a block of seven,

meaning they all had to play six games. There was a 45 minute time limit and seven rounds with three games per round, all playing primary colours on all three lawns. With seven teams, obviously one team would sit out each round. Play started at 9.30am and proceeded throughout the day with a short 30 minute break for lunch in the early afternoon.

Judith Pengelly and Caroline Stroud stormed off to an impressive start, winning their first four games. Others were a bit hit and miss, but after a shaky start Eve Buckingham and Margaret Lawson fought back to win their next four games – and the last of those was against Judith Pengelly/Caroline Stroud, which they won 5-4, one of the few games in the day which went to the full 45 minutes. So as we went into the last round, it was four wins each. Judith and Caroline enjoyed a convincing win against Sally Clay and Norma Morris, whilst Eve and Margaret had a much tougher fight against Jean Ball and Judith Cundell.

So at the end of the block play, we had Pengelly/Stroud and Buckingham/Lawson on five wins each. The final was played with no time limit and after an initially hard fought couple of hoops, Eve and Margaret moved into a good lead and never looked back, winning by 7-2.

All other teams finished with two wins, so were all equal third! The day was rounded off with cakes, including strawberry scones and cream.

Thanks are due to Val Jeffers and Jean Ball for the cakes; plus the four men who enjoyed a day bossing the ladies about! We looked forward to 'The John Fogg Mens Doubles' in August when the ladies would be handling the organising and would no doubt get their own back!

EACF League 'A' – Letchworth

Friday 18th June saw our intrepid League 'A' team, this time comprising Richard Keighley, David Ball, John Cundell and Eve Buckingham wending their way on a dull but dry day to the superb lawns at Letchworth – flat, lush, just the right amount of grass, and no weeds or clumps. Add to this the wonderful adjacent sports complex together with bar, restaurant and all necessary facilities – and the generous and friendly welcome from David Russell and his colleagues pointed to a good day.

Now, in the past we have never been too successful at Letchworth – indeed we have been comprehensively beaten for the last two years – in 2009 by 12-6. After coffee and biscuits and a brief summary from David, the first round of singles commenced. On our return to match control after the statutory 40 minutes play, we were all very pleased to find out that we had a clean sweep – all four games. Would we keep this up against one of the strongest teams in our division? The second round was almost a repeat with wins by Richard, John and Eve – with David losing on the 13th hoop after his opponent's first ball finished up perfectly in front of the hoop. So after two rounds the score was 7-1.

Round three produced a similar result with us once again winning three matches – this time it was Eve who suffered a 3-5 defeat by Letchworth's David Mathews. But the fantastic news was that at the end of three rounds we had 10 wins to Letchworth's two, so the match was ours as the total number of games played is 18.



The EACF League 'A' v 'B' was an eagerly awaited confrontation which the 'A' team of Val Jeffers, Una Pengelly, Roger Stroud and David Ball won 13-5. Right, David Ball's opening shot in one of the Doubles; Sally Clay and David Ball after their Singles game; and John Thorp and Val Jeffers in their Singles game.

We adjourned for lunch and play recommenced with the last round of singles – and Letchworth enjoyed a good comeback with three wins – only Eve gaining a win for LL by 5-2 against Colin Gregory.

So on to the Doubles, where David and John managed another win so the overall result was Leighton-Linslade 'A' with 12 wins against Letchworth's 6 – an identical score to last year but this time in our favour.

We very much enjoyed the tea/coffee and cakes before saying farewell to the Letchworth lads – and as we got into Richard's car, it started raining – so good fortune had stayed with us to the end.

EACF League 'A' v 'B'

July was a very busy month with five League matches spread between the 'A' and 'B' teams. However, 2nd July was a special day – the eagerly anticipated match between our two teams. Would the 'A' team prove their selection? Would the 'B' team embarrass them? The day started off a bit dull which was somewhat of a surprise after the previous couple of weeks of hot sunny weather – and believe it or not – exactly on the dot of 10.00am as we were holding the briefing – it started raining! Fortunately this was pretty light and actually improved the lawn surfaces by slowing them a little, the almost bare lawns being otherwise very fast. The rain moved away by midday and a fine and very pleasant afternoon for playing croquet resulted.

The teams were as follows: for the 'A' team David Ball, Val Jeffers, Una Pengelly and Roger Stroud; for the 'B's' Sally Clay, Margaret Lawson, Diana Phelps and, playing in his first ever League match, John Thorp.

Halfway through the first round of singles the 'B' team were ahead in three of the four games, but after some very hard fought moments at the 12th and 13th hoops, the 'A' team managed a clean sweep, which continued into the second round. In round three Sally Clay secured a 13th hoop win over Una Pengelly, and in the last singles round there were 'B' team wins for John Thorp over Roger Stroud, and Sally Clay over David Ball, with Val Jeffers and Una Pengelly halving the round by beating Diana Phelps and Margaret Lawson respectively. The 'B' team comeback continued in the Doubles with a win for John Thorp and Sally Clay over David Ball and Roger Stroud by 7-4; and another win for Diana Phelps and Margaret



Lawson over Una Pengelly and Val Jeffers by 5-3. The overall result was an 'A' team win by 13-5 games.

Our thanks to the set-up crew, David, John T, John C, and Tony S – and to George for scoring and Val, Jean and Eve for the cakes.

EACF League 'B' v Letchworth – reported by George Lawson

Just a few days later, Monday 2nd July, the 'B' team of John Thorp, Sheila Guest, Margaret and George Lawson were at Letchworth hoping to emulate the 'A' team's visit on 18th June. The Letchworth team was John Skingsley, Andy Kennedy, Alan Ross and David Mathews. The weather was perfect and the team received the usual pleasant welcome upon arrival at 9.40am.

The match started just after 10.00am and the first round finished even with two wins each – ours scored by John and Margaret. In round two only John managed a win on the 13th hoop; then the third round was again halved, this time Sheila and George scoring for LL. At the lunch break the score was Letchworth leading by 7-5. The fourth round went to Letchworth by 3-1 with George winning, and John just missed out after taking David Mathews to the 13th hoop and missing a 'sitter'. We have all done it – so frustrating.

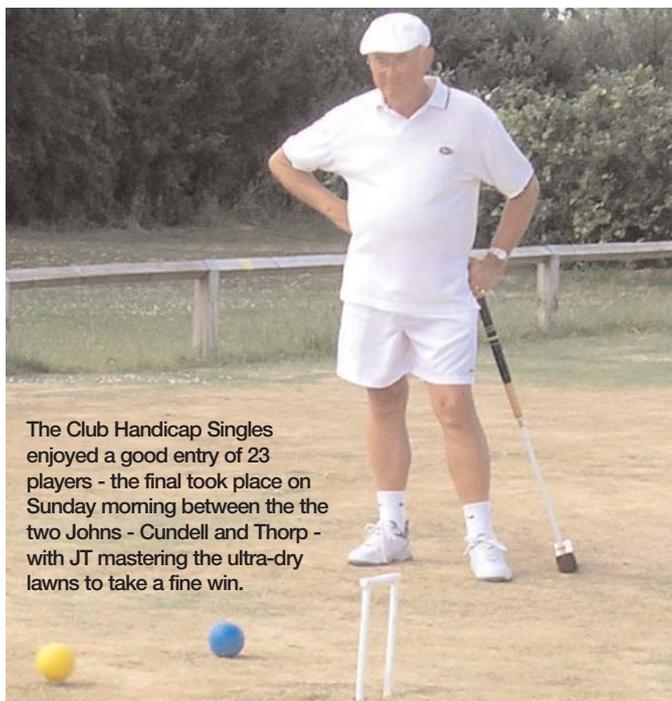
The doubles were both won by LL, so the final score was a win for Letchworth by 10-8.

After tea and cakes the 'B' team made their way home, after a very pleasant though slightly disappointing day.

EACF League 'A' v Wrest Park – 8th July

Our much delayed and changed visit to Wrest Park finally happened and the team of John Cundell, Roger Stroud, Val Jeffers and Una Pengelly made their way to a warm and parched Wrest Park. After the security check to get into the park and the 10 minute walk to the toilets, we were asked if we were prepared to shorten the games to 30 minutes rather than 40 as decreed by the rules, as one of the WP players needed to leave early. We refused this and agreed to a shorter lunch break in order that the match could finish early. The time limit for games in this competition is already somewhat tight, especially when there is a large difference in player handicaps.

Play commenced on four lawns with no double banking. Results were wins for Wrest Park in the four singles



The Club Handicap Singles enjoyed a good entry of 23 players - the final took place on Sunday morning between the two Johns - Cundell and Thorp - with JT mastering the ultra-dry lawns to take a fine win.

rounds of 3, 2, 2, and 4 respectively. We won both doubles so the final result was a win for Wrest Park by 11-7.

Our players left somewhat disappointed.

Club Handicap Singles – 10/11th July

This competition grows in strength every year – from 20 in 2009 to 23 this season. The players were drawn into four blocks by a number of members on the previous Tuesday, three blocks of six and one of five. Play started shortly after 9.00am on Saturday and continued on all three lawns with double-banking. This year, games were full 13 point games, much better than the seven hoop games we have used previously in the blocks. This means that 55 games were played – a time limit for 50 minutes was allowed per game and the players were asked to manage their own timekeeping. This all worked very well and by 4.30pm all the necessary blocks were completed with the following four winners: Don Barrett, John Cundell, Malcolm Kirby and John Thorp.

After a good night's rest the four protagonists plus an enthusiastic supporting crowd of at least a dozen members arrived at 10.00am on Sunday morning to witness the semi finals. John Cundell beat Don Barrett 7-5 and John Thorp beat Malcolm Kirby (in his first ever club competition) by 7-2. The final between the two John's saw JT managing the dry conditions much better than JC with John Thorp winning by 7 hoops to 1. Congratulations to John and to all who took part and helped organise the

competition – with special thanks to Judith Cundell who once again took on the task of managing the competition.

Hunstanton Friendly – 17/18th July

The 2009 inaugural Friendly with Hunstanton was a great success, and not just because we won! Last year's Hunstanton Chairman and organiser Terrey Sparks suffered a major road accident at the end of 2009 and has decided to take a slightly lower profile this year. Terrey popped in to see us on the Sunday morning and it was good to see and hear that his recovery is progressing. His place was taken by David Thirtle-Watts as Chairman and organiser of this event – ably assisted by his wife Christine, Club Secretary Myfanwy Dunford, and a number of other enthusiastic, helpful and friendly Hunstanton club members. Your Editor had provided David with our team members and their handicaps, and when Judith Cundell and John arrived at a pre-arranged meeting at Hunstanton on Friday afternoon to meet David and Christine, we found a superbly presented running order and score sheet already prepared for the following day's competition.

We followed the same format as last year – Handicap Singles and Level Doubles – and with 10 players per team that meant 45 matches in total – no problem to fit in when you have five superb courts – level, smooth and green due to the club's on-site irrigation system. Play was interspersed with morning coffee/tea, a lunch break and afternoon tea.

Our team consisted of David and Jean Ball, Una and Judith Pengelly, Sally Clay and Diana Phelps, John Cundell and Eve Buckingham, Florrie Jeater and Roy Kemp. Supporters were Len Buckingham and Judith Cundell who stepped in for Florrie in two of the Doubles to give her a break.

Sunny Hunny almost lived up to its reputation – there was some sun between the showers which meant a number of rapid breaks to don wet weather gear (Len and Judith acting as 'runners') – and also a strong wind. The games were mostly close and were all played in good humour and sportsmanship. The matches were restricted to 45 minutes, except for the last round of the day and play finished around 5.00pm.

After a welcome drink from the licensed bar and a chat, we assembled in the clubhouse for a chicken and salad meal, followed by a light-hearted quiz and then the announcement of the day's results. Last year we won by 24 games to 21 – this time Hunstanton got their revenge by winning 25 to 20. John Cundell presented the trophy to David Thirtle-Watts, congratulated Hunstanton for their win and thanked David and Hunstanton members for all



The Hunstanton Friendly was again very enjoyable under the organisation of David Thirtle-Watts (extreme left in the group photograph). Left, a brief relaxation break. Right, Florrie Jeater and Roy Kemp playing Christine Watts and Susan Boxell.



Photos: David Thirtle-Watts

their work and making us feel at home.

On Sunday morning, eight of our players enjoyed a pleasant couple of hours playing progressive doubles with partners selected from both clubs.

There isn't space to list all the results, which have been posted on the club noticeboard, however a synopsis follows:

Singles

Players	Wins	Losses
David Ball	1	2
John Cundell	3	0
Judith Pengelly	3	0
Eve Buckingham	2	1
Una Pengelly	1	2
Sally Clay	1	2
Jean Ball	1	2
Diana Phelps	0	3
Roy Kemp	1	2
Florrie Jeater	1	2
Total	14	16

Doubles

David Ball/Jean Ball	1	2
Una Pengelly/Judith Pengelly	2	1
Sally Clay/Diana Phelps	0	3
John Cundell/Eve Buckingham	3	0
Roy Kemp/Florrie Jeater/ Judith Cundell	0	3
Total	6	9

Hunstanton won by 25 - 20

EACF League 'B' v Watford

After weeks of drought with the lawns getting progressively more difficult to play we wondered what surface would be available for the 'B' Team League match against Watford on 23rd July. Three days of irrigation by the groundstaff and a fifteen minute deluge of hail and rain which flooded the lawns to a depth of half an inch on

EACF 'B' and Watford teams - Ron Drew, Linda Spurr, Nick Archer, Helen Walker, John Guest, Diana Phelps, Caroline Stroud and Tony Stammers. Right, Caroline starting her game against Nick Archer. Below Right, Ron Drew watches John Guest. Irene and Peter Stevens scored all our matches this year - well done to you both and hearty thanks.





The quarter final of the Golf Croquet Inter Club Shield was on the two lawns at Belsay Hall, near Newcastle, with the Summer House in the background used as the club's headquarters. Left, a lovely lunch was supplied. Above, Richard Keighley with Belsay Hall organiser Derek Old.

Thursday 22nd July solved the problem. Miraculously the lawns turned green almost overnight! A coolish day greeted David Ball and John Cundell to prepare the lawns and equipment – the Watford team arrived at 9.30am and play commenced at 10.15. Watford played a strong team of Nick Archer whose handicap is 3, Ron Drew and Linda Spurr on 8 and Helen Walker on 10. They were opposed by our 'B' team consisting of Caroline Stroud and Tony Stammers on 9 and Diana Phelps and John Guest on 10.

The first two rounds proved very successful for Watford with clean sweeps on the eight games. In the third round Diana Phelps and John Guest won their matches to share the games, and John also gained a fine win against Nick Archer in Round 4. So before the doubles it was all over bar the shouting – and Watford consolidated their win by taking both doubles. The overall result was a Watford win by 15 games to 3.

After the competition tea and cakes were enjoyed by both teams, the scorers – Sally Clay, Sheila Beal, Irene and Peter Stevens - who once again did a fine job, and the organising crew of George Lawson, David Ball, Irene Davis and John Cundell.

Golf Croquet Inter-Club Shield – Murphy Shield

Members will recall that we entered this Croquet Association National club event where players must not have a handicap below 2, and also that only one player at this level can take part and the other three team members must have handicaps where the total team handicap is at least 12. The initial draw placed us in the Midlands/Northern area and we were drawn against Nottingham. The venue is selected by random draw using the Lottery Bonus Ball and we were lucky to win the draw for a home match at PP. Unfortunately, a few days before the scheduled event on 21st June, Nottingham withdrew as they could not raise a team, so we received a bye to the next round which was the quarter finals. Our opponents were Belsay Hall in Northumberland.

This time we were not fortunate in the Lottery draw and as Belsay did not wish to play at a neutral half way venue, which is the winning club's right, we arranged for the match to be played on 28th July. The team consisted of Richard Keighley and John Cundell playing off 5, David Ball off 6 and Eve Buckingham off 7. We were to play Jack Shotton, Derek Johnson and Eric Nixon – all 4 handicap – plus Jacqui Old on 6. These matches consist of one Doubles between each team's strongest players and two Singles in the first session, followed by four Singles in the afternoon. Each match is the best of three level play games.

Our team made the 250 mile journey to Newcastle on the 27th packed into John's Honda Jazz, and enjoyed a pleasant evening where David, John and Richard met with Richard's cousin at a pub in Heddon-on-the Wall, whilst Eve was looked after by the Belsay Hall club's organisers Derek and Jacqui Old at Rothbury (which was of course much in the news in the Summer). After a good night's sleep the team made their short journeys to Belsay Hall, an English Heritage grand medieval castle, later extended to include a magnificent Jacobean mansion, huge grounds, packed with an impressive array of shrubs and flowers, a unique Quarry Garden of ravines, pinnacles and exotic plants – and of course two fine and level croquet lawns.

We were made very welcome and given 15 minutes or so to check out the lawns. The grass is cut quite long and it was a damp morning with some drizzle so a fairly hefty shot was required to move the balls. However the surface was extremely consistent and very level. In the Doubles, Richard and John beat Jack and Derek in two games, whilst Eve lost against an in-form Eric Nixon on the 13th hoop, and David was beaten by Jacqui Old - again with one of the matches going to the 13th. We were treated to a fine lunch by the club, and moved on to the afternoon Singles. John beat Jack Shotton and Richard beat Derek Johnson, again in two games. David and Eve played their opposite numbers. David's match went to the best of three with two 13th hoop games, David winning one of these, before Eric Nixon shot some superb positional balls to win. Eve found Jacqui Old, a very experienced player who has taken part in many tournaments, even in Egypt, a tough competitor, and lost in two games. On reflection it was felt



EACF 'B' team of Bryan Ferris, Sally Clay, Sheila Guest and John Thorp played Wrest Park's Jackie Cole, Elaine Newman, Judi Priestley and Margaret Marshall. Above right, Judi and Sally are not only being watched by scorers Jean Ball and Irene Davis, with David Ball taking photographs - but there was a working party of railway volunteers in the coach enjoying their lunch and the croquet!



that Eric was certainly the better player amongst the Belsay 4's, so their team was cleverly selected in as much as their two Singles only players were probably the most experienced match players. We live and learn! So the overall result was a win for Belsay Hall by four games to three – very disappointing as we were so close to getting through to the semi-final against Broadwas.

After tea and thanks to our hosts we departed BH at just after 3.00pm and arrived back in Leighton Buzzard just before 9.00pm after an uneventful but long journey. We all enjoyed the experience, once again learnt a lot and were not too dismayed at the result. It would have been great to have got to the semi-finals, but we realise that the standard of the competition is growing all the time and we were so close this time against a very strong and experienced match-play team. Roll on next year. Results below are as posted on the Croquet Association website:

Belsay beat Leighton Linlslade at Belsay in a closely fought contest 4 - 3. Many thanks to Leighton Linlslade team for making the long journey from Bedfordshire to play at Belsay in Northumberland.

Results as follows with Belsay names first.

Match 1 (Doubles) Jack Shotton & Derek Johnson lost to John Cundell & Richard Keighley 5-7, 2-7.

Match 2 Eric Nixon beat Eve Buckingham 7-4, 7-6.

Match 3 Jacqui Old beat David Ball 7-6, 7-5.

Match 4 Jack Shotton lost to John Cundell 3-7, 6-7.

Match 5 Derek Johnson lost to Richard Keighley 3-7, 4-7.

Match 6 Eric Nixon beat David Ball 7-6, 6-7, 7-3.

Match 7 Jacqui Old beat Eve Buckingham 7-3, 7-4.

Since our match, Belsay Hall were beaten by Broadwas in one semi final and in the other Dulwich beat Sussex.

The final on 29th September between Broadwas and Dulwich was played at Blewbury on a wet and grey day. It was a very close match with both teams all square with one singles best of three games to play between John Edwards from Broadwas and Sue Lightbody from Dulwich. The first game went to John at 7-4 - the second to Sue at 7-2 - so the whole competition final depended on one remaining game. The captain of Broadwas, Stuart Smith, reports that tension was running high. Sue won the first hoop but John came back strongly with some long distance hoop runs including one the whole length of the lawn and took a lead 4-1. Sue kept her head very well to keep the game going to 6-4 down with an excellent hoop but John eventually was left with a tap-through on hoop 11 to complete a victory for Broadwas in the inaugural Golf Croquet Inter-Club Shield (Murphy Shield). John Handy, Tournament Director, refereed throughout the day and presented the magnificent shield together with individual smaller shields to all players.

We look forward to next year's tournament.

EACF League 'B' v Wrest Park

Friday 30th July at Page's Park was the date and venue for our 'B' team's match against Wrest Park. The usual crew of David, John T and John C prepared the equipment, and three of the 'B' team arrived early to get some practise on our fast, bare and difficult lawns. The fourth member withdrew on the morning and was replaced by first reserve Sally Clay who after a rapid telephone call from John C, had a quick hunt round for her mallet,



Letchworth Home Friendly was a great day all round - good weather, good company and good sportsmanship in a friendly atmosphere - and we won!

hastened to Page's Park, handed over her proposed scoring duty to Scoring Manager Irene Davis, and managed a few minutes practise as well! The Wrest Park team of Judi Priestley, Elaine Newman, Margaret Marshall and Jackie Collins arrived around 10.00am and were invited to practise also. Judi and Elaine are also members of LL so at times it was difficult to decide who to support for the onlookers.

The first round resulted in wins for John Thorp, Sally Clay and Bryan Ferris, and there was a similar three point win in round two, this time for Sheila Guest, Sally Clay and John Thorp – and then another three point win in round three for John, Sheila and Bryan. Therefore as we went to lunch LL had scored nine wins and needed one more to take the match.

Round four found Wrest Park coming out fighting and winning three of the games. Bryan Ferris though beat Jackie Cole and so LL were in front by ten games to six. The Doubles gave a good win for John and Sheila over Margaret and Judi, and a harder fought win for Sally Clay and Bryan Ferris who came back from a good early lead by Elaine and Jackie.

So the overall result was the first win of the season for the 'B' team. After tea and cakes, thanks were given to the organising team of David Ball, George Lawson and John Cundell, the scorers Irene and Peter Davis, Jean Ball, Irene and Peter Stevens, and the caterers Jean Ball and Margaret Lawson.

Letchworth Home Friendly

With all the League matches this year it had been almost two months since our previous friendly day, so it was very pleasant to welcome Letchworth to Page's Park on August 2nd. Despite the threat of rain from the weather bureau, the day was dry if a little cool for high summer. Just after 10.00am players arrived led by team captain David Russell. There were a couple of newcomers to our 'unique'

lawns, but most of the team were well acquainted with our venue and expressed pleasure at seeing our third lawn.

After the necessary coffee and briefing, and a little practise, play commenced with the usual format of four doubles pairs playing each other – two rounds in the morning and a further two after lunch – all level play with no time limit. It was pretty obvious as the day moved along that skill levels of both sides are continually improving and many of the games went to the 12th and 13th hoops.

After a very pleasant and enjoyable day's play, the last match finished just before 5.00pm and the overall result was a win for us. Our teams were Roger Stroud and John Guest with three wins; Tony Stammers (David Ball for the last round as Tony had a surgery appointment) who won two games; Eve Buckingham and Jean Ball with two wins; and Una Pengelly and Pauline Lefrere with three wins.

After tea and cakes, David Russell and John Cundell thanked the teams for a good match and the organisers, scorers and helpers for their fine work.

The John Fogg Trophy – 14th August

After over half a season of superb weather on event days – except for the waterlogged members who returned from Littlehampton – we got what we had been wishing for with regards to making the grass grow – water! There was plenty of it in the week leading up to the second doubles mix 'n match competition promoted by Erica Fogg. This was the competition for The John Fogg Trophy, a superb glass engraved trophy in memory of John Fogg who was our much liked membership secretary and general member for many years. John's sense of humour would no doubt have been well to the fore as the heavy showers kept the players on their toes. We only have 21 male members and of those there are three that only play very infrequently – there were four on holiday and one on other duties, which leaves 13 – and of those 10 hardy souls had put their name



The John Fogg Trophy - finalists were Richard Keighley and Roy Kemp playing David Ball and John Cundell. Winners were David and John after a see-saw and close match.



forward for the draw to see who would play with whom. The teams were George Lawson and Peter Davis; John Guest and Peter Stevens; Tom Miller and Don Barrett; David Ball and John Cundell; and Roy Kemp and Richard Keighley.

Play started at 9.15am following a briefing from organiser Judith Cundell, standing in for Erica initially who had a last minute family occasion that delayed her arrival, and assisted by Margaret Lawson. Each team played four games against all of the other teams and there were some very hard fought matches with a couple going to the 13th hoop. The lady organisers were kept busy dashing in and out of the gazebo to collect or deliver the rain gear as the heavy showers came and went.

By 14.00 hours we had the results – there was one pair, Richard Keighley and Roy Kemp who had won three of their games – the remaining four pairs all won two and lost two. The final was to be between the top two in the block and if there was a tie on wins, then the hoop difference was to be taken into account. This could not have been closer with David Ball and John Cundell having zero hoop difference; George Lawson and Peter Davis with -1; John Guest and Peter Stevens with -2 and Tom Miller and Don Barrett with -5. So the final was between Roy and Richard and David and John.

This was a see-saw game with Richard and Roy leading initially, then David and John fought back to win by 7-5 on the 12th hoop.

The rain had kept away for the final, but it managed to appear again just as Erica was presenting the trophy to David and John! As per tradition the trophy will be included in the AGM presentation. All in all a successful first running of this event – we will try and arrange the date next year to get more of our limited number of men taking part.

Thanks to the ladies for their organisation and to the usual crew for preparation, cake making, etc.

EACF League 'A' v Northampton

Once again with our League matches we were favoured with a fine day amongst the August showers – however the wind was pretty strong from the north-west which meant putting the gazebos up was somewhat difficult! Nevertheless we were ready for our visitors from Northampton, Mike Hills, Les Carrick, David Snowden and Daphne Reed, who arrived promptly at 10.00am. After the welcomes and a cup of coffee, a short practise session, and following the short briefing, play started at 10.30am.

A pattern emerged in round one with Leighton-Linslade's David Ball, Una Pengelly and Don Barrett winning three of the four singles games, which was repeated in the next two rounds – the same trio in round two, and by Eve, David and Don in round three – so at lunch LL were leading by a healthy 9-3. The weather was sunny but still windy so we elected to move the lunch tables to the lee of the pavilion – then it was too hot!

After lunch we suffered a mini-collapse with Northampton winning three of the four remaining singles, but a win by David Ball sealed the match. In the doubles which followed there was a win by David and Don, so the overall result was a win for Leighton-Linslade 'A' by 11-7.

During tea and cakes, Mike Hills and other members of the Northampton team expressed thanks for our hospitality and remarked on how we manage to get so many members to come along and look after the organisation, scoring, cakes, etc.

Watford Home Friendly

Our last friendly of the season was with old friends Watford, and it was a pleasure to greet their team of eight on a warm and windy 20th August at Page's Park. Their team comprised Anne Dennis and Nick Archer, David Wender and Keith Woolgar, Maureen Croft and Hilary Isham, and Bob Croft and team captain Roger Nicholls.



EACF League 'A' against Northampton was a windy but dry day - and we did experience problems keeping the gazebos in the park! Nevertheless George Lawson looked after the scoring and timekeeping without being blown away. The players in the group picture are Eve Buckingham, Mike Hills, Daphne Reed, David Snowden, Don Barrett, Una Pengelly, David Ball and Les Carrick.

Our team was George and Margaret Lawson, Una Pengelly and John Cundell, Pauline Lefrere and Sally Clay, and David Ball and John Guest.

After warm welcomes and a coffee, play started with the usual format of four rounds of doubles. In the first round we shared the spoils with wins by Una and John C, and David and John G – successful for Watford were Nick and Anne and Maureen and Hilary. Round two was a good one for Watford, winning three, with only David and John G upholding LL by beating Maureen and Hilary. At this stage, Watford were winning by 5-3 as we went to a very enjoyable lunch break – although we did have to anchor down food and cups in the very strong winds.

After lunch round three was another sharing session with wins for the Lawsons and again David and John G. For Watford, Bob and Roger and Anne and Nick were winners. So as we entered the last round the scores were 7-5 in favour of our visitors. First winners were Anne and Nick who beat David and John G who had won all their games up to this point (too much lunch?). Fortunately the Lawsons and Pauline and Sally had good wins which left one match in the balance. This tussle between Una and John C against Maureen and Hilary ended up at the twelfth hoop and it looked curtains when the Watford ball was positioned almost in the hoop. Una performed a superb shot to dislodge the Watford ball and squeezed her ball into the hoop and it simply remained for John C to clear the Watford ball away, and the hoop was run. So the overall result was a draw of eight games each which was considered by all concerned to be a very fair conclusion to a lovely day's golf croquet where nobody went away disappointed. Watford stayed on for tea and cakes and a general chinwag during which time both John C and Roger Nicholls thanked all those who had taken part and of course the helpers and scorers who had contributed to such a good day.

We look forward to renewing the challenge with Watford next season.

EACF – Leighton-Linslade 'B' v Northampton – reported by George Lawson

Just one week after the 'A' Team had beaten Northampton at home, the 'B' Team of John Thorp, John Guest,



Margaret and George Lawson made their way to Northampton. It was a rather dull and cloudy day so play started slightly earlier than planned just in case the weather turned.

After the first round it was 4-0 to the 'B' Team, but in the second round Northampton pulled back with three wins. The third round was 2-2 and so at lunchtime it was 7-5 to us, but after lunch the fourth round of singles went to Northampton 3-1 – therefore at the end of the singles the score was 8-8 and it was all down to the doubles. After about fifteen minutes the heavens opened and everybody made a dash for the hut. As it did not look like the rain would stop the ladies supplied tea and cakes which had been arranged for the end of the match. Fortunately after about 45 minutes the rain eased to a light shower and it was decided that the doubles would be finished, which at the postponed stage were 3-1 for Margaret and George and 1-1 for the two Johns. Margaret and George maintained their lead and won 7-3, and the two John's won at 7-4.

So the very last match of the EACF Western Division was a fine win by the Leighton-Linslade 'B' Team of ten games to eight.

EACF League - 2010

Members will recall the comments at last year's AGM concerning our recent poor performance in the League in 2008 and 2009 and the subsequent decision to form a selection committee and to enter an 'A' and a 'B' team in this year's competition. Eight players were selected for the 'A' team which left ten players to take part in the 'B'. As you can see from the table of Western Division results, our new strategy was quite successful. The 'A' team won four of their six matches – only losing to Stony Stratford on the frustrating 13th hoop draw following a 9-9 result – and to Wrest Park where our team came across a handicap differential of 32 extra shots in the course of the day's play which proved too great a disadvantage to overcome. The 'A' team also scored the highest number of game wins in the division – so it was even more frustrating to lose out. Stony Stratford also beat Letchworth on the 13th hoop syndrome – although they lost to Wrest Park! Obviously if this method of resolving a draw is to be continued for next year, then we need to get in some serious practise at



The Watford Friendly was indeed a very friendly day in windy conditions - as can be seen by the new windbreaks for the scorers made by Peter Davis in the inset above and right - also pictured is our Scoring Manager Irene Davis who once again this year did a fine job, as of course did all the scorers. Some of the team members are seen in action - except for Una Pengelly and John Cundell!



positioning for that 13th hoop – and also winning the all-important toss! If any member has an alternative to the 13th hoop resolution please let us know.

The ‘B’ team didn’t start off wonderfully well, losing heavily to Stony Stratford and our ‘A’ team. They enjoyed a fight back against Letchworth, just losing 8-10, but again lost heavily to Watford. Then came good end of season matches against Wrest Park (12-6) and Northampton (10-8). These two results and taking into account the ‘who beat who’ rule, lifted them in the table to fifth place – a creditable result.

During the winter our selection committee will be studying all members’ performances this year and will take this into account for next season’s selection.

The winners of the other divisions in the League were as

follows:

Northern – Hunstanton ‘Blue’ – beat Hunstanton ‘Red’, Norwich and Downham Market.

Eastern – Enfield ‘E’ – beat Enfield ‘W’, Chelmsford & Bentley ‘2’, Purley ‘E’, Purley ‘W’, Chelmsford & Bentley ‘1’ and Southchurch.

Central – Newport Oaks beat Bury St. Edmunds ‘E’, Bury St. Edmunds ‘W’, Colchester, Sudbury and Newport Elms.

Over to EACF Organiser Chris Howell for a report on the Semis and Final:

The four successful area winners met at the Bury St Edmunds Club on 3rd September to challenge for a place in the finals. Matches were continuous, Newport Oaks and Stony Stratford having an early morning start, Enfield East and Hunstanton Blue following on in the afternoon. Stony Stratford made a promising start against Newport ending 5 to 3 games ahead at the short break. They maintained their lead when play continued and as a result of accurate hoop running, good ball positioning and skilful use of extra turns they won the singles by 12 games to 4. However they were unable to maintain their domination in

EACF League - Western Area Results										
	Stony Stratford	Leighton Linslade 'A'	Letchworth	Watford	Leighton Linslade 'B'	Northants	Wrest Park	MATCH WINS	GAME WINS	
Stony Stratford	-	10-9	10-9	6-12	15-3	11-7	9-10	4	61	1st
Leighton Linslade 'A'	9-10	-	12-6	11-7	13-5	11-7	7-11	4	63	2nd
Letchworth	9-10	6-12	-	10-8	10-8	11-7	10-9	4	56	3rd
Watford	12-6	7-11	8-10	-	15-3	7-11	13-5	3	62	4th
Leighton Linslade 'B'	3-15	5-13	8-10	3-15	-	10-8	12-6	2	41	5th
Northampton	7-11	7-11	7-11	11-7	8-10	-	12-6	2	52	6th
Wrest Park	10-9	11-7	9-10	5-13	6-12	6-12	-	2	47	7th

the doubles, both games being taken by Newport. Result was 12-6 to Stony Stratford.

In the afternoon semi-final Hunstanton, unaccustomed to undulating lawns took a while to establish any consistency to their play and were well beaten by Enfield in the singles, the doubles being halved. The result was 12-6 to Enfield. Tony Elliott, an Enfield rookie with potential, was unbeaten in both his singles and doubles games.

The finals, a repeat of the 2009 event, were a week later allowing teams to hone their skills and prepare their strategies! Stony Stratford made a determined start being 8 to 1 in front after 9 games. Post lunch Enfield's play took on greater concentration and focus rewarding them with 5 out of 6 games, but still needing to win the doubles to draw and play the golden hoop. However Stony Stratford maintained a steely hold on their lead, taking the two doubles games and the trophy 11-7. Despite the intense competition a friendly atmosphere prevailed throughout, all teams demonstrating quality play. Highlights, in particular, were Ken Pickett's hitting in and Rex Hale's jump shots. Thank you Christine.

The competition improves every year in quality and excitement – and Chris Howell is to be congratulated on organising it. The change to 40 minutes this season was a definite improvement. If only we could stop the one or two clubs who abuse the handicap situation by letting long experienced and skilful players utilise high handicaps.

Other Competitions attended

B-Level at Nottingham – 8th July

Eve Buckingham and John Cundell attended their second B-Level tournament this season at Nottingham on Wednesday 8th July. After an early start at 6.30am and a trouble-free journey we arrived at their fine croquet complex of five immaculate lawns and clubhouse in the grounds of Nottingham University. We were made very welcome and took a few minutes to inspect the five level lawns, all still green as they are regularly watered, and with a small adjacent shelter for scorers, etc.

There were 12 entrants with handicaps ranging from 4 to 8 from seven clubs – Ashby, Broadwas, Ramsgate, Phyllis

Court, Kenilworth, Leighton-Linslade and Nottingham. There were some familiar faces – including Jennet Blake who has helped our club with coaching over the years, and John Edwards from Broadwas.

The players were split into three blocks of four and level play commenced with a self-timed limit of 50 minutes which was more than adequate, on four lawns which meant some double-banking. John Cundell's first match was against Jennet Blake – their first ever competitive match, and John was successful by 7-3. After the first three rounds the winners of the blocks plus the best overall second were put into block A and it was from this block of four that the tournament winners would come. John had enjoyed a fine set of games in his block and came out top with three wins from three. Eve had managed one win in her block.

After lunch John had wins against his first two opponents, Valerie Harding and Eileen Buxton, so the final game of the day was against Chris Roberts of Phyllis Court who had also won his block without loss. This game would therefore determine the tournament winners. It was a hard fought game which went to the 12th hoop which John required to take the game to a decider. After running some excellent hoops during the day John missed a sitter and Chris didn't! So the result was a win for Chris Roberts with John Cundell second.

We enjoyed a fine tea and prizegiving, after which we hit the M1 and enjoyed a fine run home until literally two thirds of a mile from Junction 14 turnoff at Milton Keynes where an accident had blocked the M1 and all traffic was diverted off through MK! However it didn't spoil a fine day's sport.

B-Level at Edgbaston – 14th September

Eve Buckingham and John Cundell attended their third B-Level tournament this season at Edgbaston on Tuesday 14th September. After an early start at 6.30am and a dreadful journey along the M6 and through Birmingham, we arrived at 10.10am – 40 minutes after the scheduled start time. We were not the only late arrivals as we learnt that their had been traffic problems all round the city – however play had already started on the first round. The organiser, Richard Thompson, quickly made us welcome and introduced us to our two opponents who had been waiting patiently. We were started off on hoop five at 2-2 which was a fair and friendly and much appreciated compromise to our late arrival. Obviously our opponents could have been given a bye which would have ruled Eve and me out of contention from the start. Of course we had missed any chance of learning the speed of the lawns which were in beautiful condition, and they were wet due to the drizzle which had been falling on and off as we arrived and which continued throughout the day.

Parking is relatively easy and the three lawns are surrounded by a high fence and a number of trees with a clubhouse at one end containing changing rooms, a general area and toilets. There are also seats around all lawns plus a couple of shelters to leave your rain gear, etc., during play.

There were 12 entrants with handicaps ranging from 4 to 8 from six clubs – Ashby, Broadwas, Ramsgate, Phyllis Court, Leighton-Linslade and Edgbaston. There were some



The club has purchased six timers specifically for use in the EACF League competition. These are mounted on a magnetic board and are labelled for lawns and primary and secondary. We used four of them at the last League match of the season and they made the timekeeping control much easier.



Members might like to see the facilities at Nottingham and Edgbaston, enjoyed by Eve Buckingham and John Cundell this season. Nottingham sports five immaculate lawns and an imposing clubhouse seen above. Many members will recognise Jennet Blake who has helped us with coaching over the years - seen here playing John Edwards from Broadwas.

Below is Edgbaston's rain swept three lawns with the clubhouse in the background, plus a waterproofed Eve Buckingham.

familiar faces that Eve and I had met at Nottingham and elsewhere. The players were split into two blocks of six with level play and no time limit. No games went over 50 minutes. As soon as a game was completed you looked for your next opponent and a free lawn. At precisely 12.45am Richard rang a bell; we noted where our balls were in that particular game and who was next to play, and made our way to the clubhouse for lunch which was included in the £20 entry fee. This turned out to be very welcome and consisted of soup and bread, lasagne with baked potatoes and salad, plus apple or rhubarb pie and ice cream. Pretty impressive and most enjoyable. During lunch the drizzle turned into a deluge so the timing could not have been better.

Before play recommenced the club's lawn guru asked that there be no more jump shots as he did not want the immaculate lawns damaged. Play continued until all the blocks had been completed and we moved on to playing the semi finals and the lower position results. Unusually both the block winners were beaten in the semi finals by the second place winners.

Before and during the final, tea was supplied with a fine array of sandwiches and cakes.

The final was won by Margaret Lewis from Broadwas, beating local man and lawn guru Paddy Heath by 7-5. For our part Eve had three good wins making her fifth overall and John had two wins and three 6-7s, finishing seventh.

Margaret Lewis was presented with a huge challenge cup, after which we let the satnav take us past Edgbaston Cricket ground and down to the M42, returning home to LB via the M40 and a lovely sunny evening. Despite the rain and travel problems we enjoyed the day immensely and we would both recommend other members to join the Croquet Association as Tournament Members and take part in these competitions. They are becoming more popular and are a fine introduction to tournament competitions, and give you an opportunity to meet players from





Roger Stroud attended the Hunstanton Golf Croquet Tournament for the first time and won the trophy and an engraved cut-glass whisky glass - seen here receiving his awards from Hunstanton's Myfanwy Dunford.

other parts of the country and learn new skills. For further details ask John, Eve or Richard Keighley for details.

One Day Golf Croquet Level Tournament – Ipswich – reported by Roger Stroud

On 25th July I made my way in the early hours of Sunday morning to this event at Ipswich. It was open to all members of EACF clubs with an entry limited to 14 on a first come first served basis. Unfortunately only eight applied which was a shame. Even more annoying was that only six turned up as two players backed out on the event morning. Peter Allnut, the organiser said he could have probably got others to stand in if he had known in advance. Each of us played five games, timed to 40 minutes.

They were very good players - I won one and lost four but felt I held my own very well. Mike Percival (the maker of Mike Percival mallets) won the event by winning all five games. I was actually 3-0 up playing Mike then he seemed to go into overdrive and won 7-3.

I had an interesting game against David Scrybe. He plays off 2 and is a hard hitter. I played extremely well against him, always getting a ball back in from his incredible clearances. I was 4-2 up and was in the jaws, much to his consternation as he was running out of time. When I hit the ball from the jaws he immediately said it was a crush shot, picked up my ball and put it back and was then able to knock me back out from behind the hoop! I don't think it was a crush shot but I chose discretion and kept quiet rather than argue. He went on to win 7-5. An interesting experience.

Hunstanton Golf Croquet Tournament – 7th August – reported by Roger Stroud

Entrants were split into two groups, section A - handicap level 4 and below, and section B - level 5 and above. Section A was level play and section B handicap. I played in B against 13 players from Hunstanton, Bury St Edmunds, Colchester, Watford, Letchworth and of course

Leighton Linlade.

Ken Wheeler organised the day by splitting the 13 players (section B) into two groups and each had to play all others in their group - games were not timed. My group of six had to play five games in the group rounds. I won the first four rounds, losing the fifth game to Terrey Sparks, winning the group and progressing to the semi-final. I then played David Boxell (Hunstanton - who came second in the other group) in a timed game of 30 minutes, winning 5-4 after a real tussle. The game could have gone either way.

Mary Coombs (Hunstanton) beat Ann Brooks (Colchester) in the other semi-final. Therefore I played Mary Coombs in the final (timed game of 35 minutes), winning 7-3, and I presented with a trophy and a cut glass whisky tumbler engraved with Hunstanton Croquet Club. Section A was won by Jeff Race.

Refreshments were freely available all day and there was also an option of having a cooked lunch of bangers and mash plus apple pie and custard.

A memorable highlight of the day was watching Jeff and Timothy Race play in section A. They are father and son and a week earlier had won as partners in the English Golf Croquet Championships. Hunstanton Croquet Club is a very welcoming club and it was a pleasure to play there. I could not stay to play in the pro/am doubles tournament on the next day which was won by David Watts (Hunstanton) and Ann Dennis (Watford).

Rotary Club visit – 12th July

During the Mix n' Match Doubles, Tom Miller was approached by Ian Stephens from Leighton Linlade Rotary Club about us hosting an introductory evening of Golf Croquet for some of their members.

So on a rather cool Monday evening, 11 members met at Page's Park at 6.30pm and at 7.00 we welcomed ten Rotary members – all men. After a brief introduction to the game and some basic instruction on swinging a mallet we divided the visitors into a number of groups together with our players and enjoyed some doubles play. There was much interest from the group and some light-hearted banter which resulted in a pleasant evening rounded off with coffees at about 8.45pm. It is to be hoped that we may obtain one or two new members from the group and we are sure they will spread good publicity to others about our activities. Subsequently a contribution to club funds was received from the Rotary Club which was much appreciated.

Thanks to the following members who turned up to help – David and Jean Ball, John and Judith Cundell, Malcolm Kirby, George and Margaret Lawson, Pauline Lefrere, Tom Miller, Tony Stammers and John Thorp.

Club Doubles and Singles Championships

Our club tournaments regularly bring our playing year at Page's Park to an end. The first event, the Doubles, played over 25/26th September, attracted an entry of 26 members, playing as 13 pairs who were drawn into two blocks a few days previously, one block of seven and another of six.

The Council Groundstaff has spent Wednesday and Thursday mornings scarifying and mowing the lawns to



Once again Diana Phelp's home was the venue for the annual Garden Party. Attendance was a little reduced this year with 30 members and guests attending – however the weather was kind with the heavy showers keeping their distance, and a very pleasant and fun-filled time was obviously enjoyed by all – as you can see from the pictures. The highlight this year was the cricket game supplied by Peter and Irene Davis. We had moved it into the main garden rather than the patio of recent years and it enjoyed a new lease of life with play carrying on by almost everyone present through until well after 6.00pm. The scorers, Irene Davis and David Ball, kept the proceedings moving along and Diana's neighbours must have thought they were at the Oval or Lords! Not a sign of croquet! An enjoyable tea was supplied by organiser Val Jeffers and her ladies – thanks are due to them – and also to David and John C for setting up the gazebos etc., plus the extra tables and chairs brought along by a number of members. A fine day all round.





their best condition this year, particularly Lawn Three, and John C had resited the hoops on Thursday afternoon to eliminate rabbit runs and other worn areas. John, David Ball, John Thorp and Tony Wells turned up just after 7.30am on a chilly, windy but dry morning to set up the hoops, gazebos, tables, and to remove the considerable layer of worm casts from all three lawns. Players all arrived at 9.00am and after an introduction from Len Buckingham including thanks to all who had enquired as to his health condition, and a briefing from JC, play soon got under way. Games were given a generous time limit of one hour which was more than adequate in all but a few matches. Len and Martin Field looked after the scoring and as the day progressed a first and second pair emerged from the two blocks as follows:

Block 1		Wins	Diff.
1st	David and Jean Ball	6	+22
2nd	Tony Wells/Sheila Beal	5	+9
3rd	Eve Buckingham/Sally Clay	3	0
4th	Roger and Caroline Stroud	3	-2
5th	Peter Stevens/Val Jeffers	3	-6
6th	Margaret and George Lawson	1	-14
7th	Judith and Una Pengelley	0	-9

Block 2		Wins	Diff.
1st	John Cundell/Tom Miller	4	+14
2nd	Don Barrett/Bryan Ferris	4	+11
3rd	Roy Kemp/Florrie Jeater	2	-3
4th	John Thorp/Judith Cundell	2	-4
5th	Diana Phelps/Yvonne Banks	2	-9
6th	Peter Davis/Malcolm Kirby	1	-9

Club Doubles semi-finalists at top left - Don Barrett, Bryan Ferris, Jean Ball, Tony Wells, Sheila Beal, David Ball, Tom Miller and John Cundell. Top right, Sheila Beal plays a shot in her semi-final with Tony. Below, Judith Cundell attempts to remove Malcolm Kirby's brown whilst her partner John Thorp looks on. Above, Tom tries to force his blue past David's red in the final won by David and Jean. Left, start of a block game between Sally and Eve against Caroline and Roger. Right, Don's jokes and Bryan's humour led them to be affectionately referred to as 'The Old Codgers'!



It was now around 4.30pm so as arranged the semi-finals and final were to take place the following morning at 10.00am. JC, DB, JT and TW had set up the lawns and George Lawson arrived to look after the order of play and scoring. The weather was not quite as windy as Saturday but it was very cold after the high temperatures we had enjoyed earlier in the week. A draw was made by George to select lawns for the semi-finals, with John Cundell/Tom Miller playing Tony Wells/Sheila Beal on Lawn 2, and David and Jean Ball playing Don Barrett/Bryan Ferris on



Singles Day - most of the players before battle commenced. Left, finalists David and Sally. Above, David's jump shot on hoop 4 - see report. Right, some of the ladies in action.



Lawn 1. The semi on lawn one took around 40 minutes with David and Jean winning 7-4. That on lawn two saw Tony Wells and Sheila Beal move very quickly to a 4-0 lead, followed by a hard fought comeback by Tom Miller and John Cundell up to hoop 10 where the score was 5-5. A long and hard fought battle then took place over hoops 11 and 12 and the result, which could easily have gone either way, finally proved victorious for Tom and John by 7-5. A short break ensued before the start of the final between David and Jean and Tom and John, watched by an enthusiastic audience of a dozen or so members. David and Jean got off to a great start with some fine positioning by Jean and some excellent hoop running by David. After less than fifteen minutes play they were 4-0 up. This time, however, the Cundell/Miller pairing could not find the form to claw back the deficit and David and Jean stormed off to a fine 7-2 win - so they will be polishing the Doubles Cup for another twelve months!

The one thing that kept us all going in the windy cold conditions were the fine array of cakes and biscuits from Val Jeffers, Jean Ball, Margaret Lawson, Eve Buckingham, Sally Clay and Diana Phelps.

So to the Singles - On Friday 1st October we wondered if we might have to postpone the Singles after some very wet days leading up to Friday's deluge. The preparation party of John Thorp, David and Jean Ball, Tony Wells and John Cundell arrived at a very waterlogged Page's Park just after 7.30am and it took them up until 9.00am to get the lawns to a reasonable playing state. Apart from the soft ground the worms had been extremely busy and all lawns,

especially lawn three, were covered in wet worm casts and sycamore seeds. At least it had stopped raining overnight and the day was relatively calm with some watery sunshine until cloud cover later in the afternoon, but fortunately it stayed dry.

All but two of the 20 players, whom had previously been drawn into four blocks of five, had arrived by 9.00am, so after a short briefing all were assembled for a group picture just in case the day deteriorated. A one hour time limit was decreed and it was suggested to all players that if they didn't hang around between games and actively searched for their next opponent, it should be possible to get the whole event over in one day and avoid coming back on Sunday which was forecast to be wet once again. With Judith Cundell acting as scorer and motivator, the day progressed well and shortly after 2.00pm four winners emerged from the blocks as follows.

Block 1	Wins	Diff.
1st John Thorp	4	+7
2nd Jean Ball	3	+11
3rd John Cundell	2	0
4th Sheila Beal	1	-1
5th Caroline Stroud	0	-17

Block 2

1st	David Ball	4	+9
2nd	Roger Stroud	2	+8
3rd	Tony Wells	2	+3
4th=	Eve Buckingham	1	-10
4th=	Roy Kemp	1	-10

Block 3

1st	Sally Clay	3	+4
2nd	Malcolm Kirby	3	+2
3rd	Val Jeffers	2	0
4th	John Guest	1	-2
5th	George Lawson	1	-4

Block 4

1st	Sheila Guest	4	+15
2nd	Florrie Jeater	3	+1
3rd	Margaret Lawson	2	-2
4th	Pauline Lefrere	1	-4
5th	Yvonne Banks	0	-10

David Ball and Sheila Guest were the only players to win all four of their games. Well done David and Sheila.

A draw was made for lawn selection for the two semi finals - on lawn 1 John Thorp was to play David Ball and on lawn 2 it would be Sally Clay and Sheila Guest, so a male-female final was inevitable. The 20 plus players and

spectators made themselves comfortable in front of the two lawns, many of them enjoying the array of cakes and biscuits supplied by the aforementioned ladies, and play commenced.

John Thorp and David Ball's semi was closely fought from the start and it was only after a couple of errors by John, as he freely admitted afterwards, that David moved ahead - and a missed clearance by John on the 12th hoop allowed David to take the 7-5 win. The semi between Sheila and Sally was still going on and after one or two hard fought hoops, Sally moved ahead and never looked back, winning by 7-3.

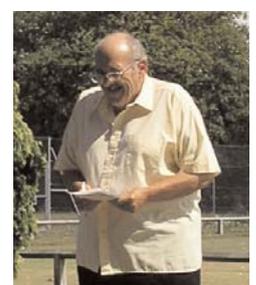
So, after a short break it was on to the final. There is a marked difference in style between the two players and initially neither was predominant. Then on hoop 4 Sally played a fine black well into the hoop. No option for David but to attempt a jump shot - not very easy on the day due to the soft ground. As you can see in the photograph, David's ball is already flying on its way to a clean jump through the hoop. From that hoop David moved ahead and the result was a win on hoop ten by 7-3.

Congratulations all round for David who has enjoyed a good result in the Club Championships this season.

Most members had stayed on and helped clear up and with a little sadness at the onset of the 'no-croquet' break until next March, we wended our way home.



Fun Day was NOT WET! You must be somewhere amongst this lot! Tony Stammers (with notepad) organised golf ball removal; blind croquet, lemons and limes and a croquet version of fairground hoopla.



Fun Day - 25th July

For the first time in a number of years it didn't rain for this event! Almost half the club, 27 members plus three guests, turned up to participate in Tony Stammers' fun-filled afternoon. This year the challenges involved croquet with water-filled balloons; trying to hit golf balls on tees distributed at random on the lawns; blind mans' croquet where a blindfolded partner is instructed how to play without the helper touching the mallet in any way; the fairground traditional game of hoopla with the centre post and mallets creating the scoring area – and finally eight players were chosen by pegs to play two doubles and a final with limes and lemons instead of croquet balls. There were some very bemused looks from passing train passengers and the general public at the antics, which provided a pleasant and enjoyable afternoon's fun.

In the 'competitive' games winners were Sheila Beal for the Hoopla, runner up Peter Davis; David Ball for golf ball removal; Judith Pengelly and Yvonne Banks for the limes/lemons doubles, with David Ball and prospective new member Rose Gillett.

Well done Tony – more fun next year.

Leighton-Linslade Social Club

The Wednesday morning social club will meet for the first time this winter on 6th October in Page's Park pavilion at 10.00am. The fee is £2 per session, and for that you get refreshments and the opportunity to play many board games, darts, snooker, table tennis, dominoes and crib. The activities generally finish about noon, so please support this venture if you possibly can. Friends of members are very welcome for the same attendance fee, refreshments included.

Any Expense Claims?

The Treasurer, Len Buckingham, asks if any member has an expense claim yet to be submitted to get this to him no later than 20th October in order that the 2010 financial breakdown can be ready for presentation at the AGM.

Local Community Policing Group

Many of you will be aware of the problems we experienced during the summer school holiday period of youngsters hanging around the pavilion and particularly our steps, drinking alcohol and leaving rubbish and litter almost every evening. The Council Groundstaff regularly collected the rubbish but they were not always present due to other commitments and on many occasions we needed to clear up the mess and put up with minor harrassment on a few occasions. Judith and John Cundell met with the Local Community Policing Group and discussed the problem with them and regular visits to Page's Park were promised.

Our Chairman Tom Miller met with two of the officers at

Praise the spirits of the land
And water, each one -
The bath by the beach, or the yacht on the sea -
But of all the sweet pleasures
Known under the sun:
A good game of Croquet's the sweetest to me.

Thomas Mayne Reid (1818-83), Anglo-Irish novelist, 1863.

Page's Park during one of their visits. They explained that a key issue for them is the consumption of alcohol. Initially, if they found under-age drinkers, they confiscated the alcohol and tipped it away. After investigation they are now aware that they can invoke an existing bye-law and confiscate alcohol from **anyone** in PP. They remarked that they did not have any record of complaints from us even though John Cundell had sent an email to the Leighton Linslade East Safer Neighbourhood Team back in April which had been acknowledged. If you do have low-level problems at the Park then please report same to Bedfordshire Police on their non-emergency number of 01582 401212 (leave a recorded message) so that at least there is a record of the complaint. The number for the LLESNT is 01582 473461. The situation did improve towards the end of the holiday period and on a number of occasions a polite and humorous request to some of the girls present to please refrain from leaving litter proved positive.

When Tom was discussing the general status of 'bored' youths, the issue of the old tennis court and a lack of signage etc. reference its use for football was raised. The Community Police lady PCSO Fay Barrett saw the point and appeared to indicate she would take this up with LLTC. Subsequently notices to this effect have appeared stating that football could be played on the grassed tennis courts.

Soham Indoor Croquet

Tony Wells confirms that there will be spaces at Soham for Leighton-Linslade teams this year, both in November (the 13th and 14th) and next year, usually in mid March. Tony already has four players for the November event, however if you are interested in the March weekend and wish to be considered then please contact Tony on 01525 379107.

In Planning for Next Season

Fixtures Secretary Tony Wells reports that plans are under way for the following competitions and events over and above our normal Club fixtures.

We will again be entering two teams in the EACF League.

Friendlies are to be arranged with Letchworth, Stony Stratford and Watford, plus hopefully an inaugural match against Wingrave.

The annual visit to Hunstanton is on where we intend to bring back the trophy in 2010!

Investigations are in hand for another friendly on the South Coast over a number of days - this time to the Isle of Wight.

Further details on all these at the AGM, in future newsletters and on next year's noticeboards.

Winter Golf Croquet in the New Forest

Hamptworth Croquet Club, near Salisbury, is running GC winter tournaments from November to March on Saturdays and Sundays as follows; Nov 13/14; Dec 11/12; Jan 15/16; Feb 12/13; and Mar 12/13. These are a mixture of informal level/handicap singles to suit all standards of player. Each day is one tournament. The facilities are reported as excellent with four lawns and a clubhouse which can provide hot food at reasonable prices all day. Further information can be obtained by email from

richard.jenkins21@btinternet.com or telephone 01722 325410 or by visiting www.hamptworthgolf.co.uk. Entry fee is £10 per day - £15 for two-day weekend - pay on the day. You need to book in advance - it is no good just turning up.

Annual Dinner

Preparations are in hand for this which is scheduled for March 2010. The intention is to try and keep the venue close to Leighton Buzzard. A small sub-committee is working hard at this moment and it is hoped that full details can be announced at the Annual General Meeting.

CA Diploma: Nomination of John Cundell - from Roger Stroud

During the summer myself and Tom Miller felt it appropriate to nominate John for a Croquet Association Diploma for his services to both our club and also the Croquet Association. Our nomination read as follows:

“John is the Vice Chairman of our club and is a driving force behind everything that we do. This includes clubhouse and courts maintenance and internal and external competitions organiser. He is a CA and Club coach and our club handicapper. John also assists with coaching at other clubs. Prior to matches or tournaments, he can always be seen checking the condition of the courts

and the precise measurement of the hoops. On match morning he is invariably first there, putting up gazebos and making any other last minute preparations.

During the past four years, he has been actively involved in the development of the courts from two overlapping courts to our current position of three full size, fenced courts. Our courts are part of a public park and John has developed a good working relationship with the Town Council groundstaff, to ensure on-going court maintenance, achieving a good standard for EACF league and CA Inter Club matches.

John has also produced the club’s respected quarterly newsletter since January 2004.

Earlier this year John - jointly with another of our members, Richard Keighley, updated the CA “Guide to Golf Croquet”.

John’s commitment and enthusiasm for the game of croquet, plus his service to the Leighton-Linslade Croquet Club and the wider croquet community, is an inspiration to all.”

We recently heard from the CA that John has been awarded a diploma and will be presented with it at the CA AGM at The Hurlingham Club on October 16th, accompanied by Judith.

Well done John.



Attendance Breakdown - 2010 - by Membership Secretary

Our Membership Secretary Judith Cundell has extracted the following information from Len Buckingham’s attendance sheets for 2010. There were 28 weeks of play. Figures include all matches - players, helpers and spectators.

Sessions	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Average attendance	19	14	9	8	15	14	14
Highest attendance at one session	28	30	22	15	25	26	20
Best week was week ending 3rd September with 113 attendances.							
Most attendances by players:			Most attendances in one week at 7:				
John Thorp	114					Once	Sad!
David Ball	109					Most attendances in one week at 6:	
John Cundell	99					Twice	Quite sad!
						Once	Quite sad too!

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. On two occasions this year members were waiting and one was the Opening Day! Also, please mark all visitors on the register as ‘friend of’ There were 29 guests of members plus 38 Rotary/Woodlands members. We currently are 57 members.

Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held at Northall Village Hall at 7.15 for 7.30pm on Friday 12th November 2010, followed by the traditional jolly party. Every member is entitled to bring a guest to join in the fun, but the meeting itself is an opportunity to raise any matter of interest or concern. It is also an opportunity for a member to volunteer his or her services to the Club. All members will receive Agenda, etc., shortly. Please come along to the meeting and party. You are all very welcome!

YOU MAY FIND IT HELPFUL AND INTERESTING TO READ THE OFFICER’S REPORTS BEFORE THE MEETING - IN PARTICULAR THE CHAIRMAN’S REPORT WHICH WILL CONTAIN IMPORTANT INFORMATION CONCERNING FUTURE OPERATION OF THE CLUB.

And Definitely Finally...

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

(All photos this issue by David Ball, John Cundell, Judith Cundell and Peter Davis unless stated otherwise)