



LEIGHTON-LINSLADE CROQUET CLUB

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Founded 2000

NEWSLETTER - OCTOBER 2011
Volume 12 Issue 3

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“2011 Season Round-up”

Welcome to the third newsletter of 2011. For a number of reasons, mainly due to the very busy playing period we had over late June and July, I'm afraid that the interim summer newsletter published in previous years was not possible - however this issue will be a bumper epic as we round up the whole season! So without more ado let's get cracking in chronological order, beginning with the Annual Dinner.

Annual Club Dinner - 25th March

This year's Club Dinner was at the Leighton Buzzard Golf Club, Plantation Road. This was the first time at this venue, which was recommended to us by Malcolm Kirby. There were 36 attendees who gathered around 7.00pm in the bar for a welcome drink, and then we moved into a pleasant room graced with four tables seating nine people on each table.

The service and the quality of the food supplied was exceptionally good and from all reports, everybody was very impressed and much enjoyed the meal and the whole evening.

Thanks are due to David and Jean Ball for the general organisation, Len Buckingham for looking after the financial matters, John Cundell for the individual seating labels, and once again, Malcolm Kirby for the original suggestion.

Fence Damage

Shortly before our opening weekend, on a maintenance visit to Page's Park by your Editor, I found the fence rail in front of the Clubhouse chopped through into two pieces. There was evidence of drinking by 'visitors' using the steps in front of the Clubhouse as there was a sparkling wine cork and the usual empty food packets thrown around which we seem to get most days after a fine evening.

The fence had been attacked by a sharp substantial tool of some sort which we later had confirmed from a third party report that it was a 'machete'! It would have to be such an implement as the rail is 100mm Square Knee Rail security fencing. This damage could not be achieved by kicking. Fortunately the Town Council's Operations Manager was present in the pavilion and the damage was reported and a replacement rail was fixed by the Groundstaff within a few days. I also sent details to the Leighton Linslade East Safer Neighbourhood Team as we have been requested to do after some minor problems last year - followed by a photograph of the damage taken later in the day by David Ball. At that time I did not receive an acknowledgement of my report from the LLESNT. A similar report last year was also not acknowledged.

I fail to understand this moronic and unsocial behaviour, admittedly by a minority, which society seems to be plagued with nowadays.



Opening Day

It was a dry and not too chilly day on Sunday 3rd April for the Official Opening of the lawns by the Town Mayor Councillor Gordon Perham and the Mayoress Carole Perham. The photographs show what an enjoyable time was had by the Mayoral party and subsequently some appreciative and kind words came direct from the Mayor as follows:



Dear Members, I thank you for your kind invitation to the Croquet Club where Carole and I enjoyed every minute and both of us would have liked to stay longer. I am sure we will see you all again soon and maybe have a return match. It is not hard to be enthusiastic when you are met by smiling faces and warm and friendly people. I did enjoy the rock cakes and coffee but most of all I enjoyed the company and the great fun we had. I am sure the club will continue to be successful and maybe one day soon we may become members. Thank you again for making us feel so welcome. Kind Regards from Gordon and Carole.



Attempted Break-in

Sometime between the end of play on Sunday 1st May and 1300 hours on Bank Holiday Monday 2nd May there was an attempted break-in to the Croquet Room which was discovered by Peter Davis when he and Irene went to play. David Ball and I inspected the damage shortly after Peter's report - the lock mechanism barrel had been smashed through into the door but fortunately the inside locking bars held. There is also minor damage in the way of a 3in long hole halfway up towards the left side of the shutter and impact damage in the middle of the door. I informed the Town Council by email and also contacted the Leighton Linlade East Safer Neighbourhood Team. They did respond back on Tuesday morning and I was advised to report the break-in attempt to Bedfordshire Police which I did and details have been recorded in a Crime Report.

On Tuesday morning a conversation with Groundsman Doug Bolton and the email to the Operations Manager John Connew that I had sent on Monday resulted in splendidly quick action as the lock was replaced within a few hours on Tuesday morning and we received the new key to the door early in the afternoon. Arrangements were then made to have 20 new keys cut and these were distributed to members over the next few days. We would thank those members who responded to our request for a donation towards the replacement keys - and would also like to thank John Connew and Doug Bolton for their very prompt action.

General Precautions

This is perhaps the time once again to emphasise to all members that they perform a final check before leaving the Park that the shutter door is securely locked, and that the toilets entrance shutter is also locked.

An extra shutter has been installed between the toilet lobby and the main pavilion corridor. This often needs to be opened to gain access to the lockable main corridor door in order for the toilet lights to be switched on or off. The shutter does NOT have a key. It is imperative however that the lockable door (which displays a notice aimed at LLCC members) is always locked even whilst we are in attendance, and furthermore the Council recommend that the previously mentioned shutter is pulled down. This is designed to be a deterrent. We appreciate that this is all a bit cumbersome but we do not want to lose use of this facility, do we?!

EACF League 'B' - Stony Stratford

Our first League match this season was the 'B' team against Stony Stratford on Friday 6th May. The lawns



The first League match of the season - 'B' team against Stony Stratford. Malcolm Kirby and Pauline Lefrere's League debuts were very impressive. Pauline seen here taking the 13th hoop winning shot. Irene and Peter Stevens scored at most of the League matches this year - much appreciated by players and spectators alike.



were looking the best they have been for some time after a close mowing by the Groundstaff on the Thursday and some irrigation by us on Wednesday and Thursday. We were greeted with yet another find day to the superb early Summer - and as the day progressed it warmed up to a pleasantly warm but not unbearable day with a light wind.

The support team of John Cundell, John Thorp, Peter and Irene Davis, David and Jean Ball, and Len Buckingham had everything set up by 9.30am - and the scorers Sheila Beal and Peter and Irene Stevens were ready to go as 10.00am approached - the expected arrival time of the Stony Stratford team. Time passed by - 10.10, 10.20, 10.30 - and then striding across the Park with some urgency came Tony Stammer's wife Faith - with the message that she had received through Tony Well's wife that Stony Stratford were all set up and waiting for us at their lawns! A quick check by Tony Wells and John's paperwork showed that the game was scheduled for Page's Park and that Stony had unfortunately got their wires crossed. We said we were quite happy to hold off for an hour whilst they packed up all their equipment and leapt in their cars - arriving with us at 11.20am.

After welcoming words and commiseration from David Ball - play commenced with Round 1. Our team comprised Tony Wells and Jean Ball, together with newcomers to the League, Pauline Lefrere and Malcom Kirby. Malcolm Kirby's first competitive game for the Club in the League resulted in a very fine 7-0 win - well done Malcolm. Pauline's first game was against Stony's best player Roy Healey who plays off a 4. Pauline used her extra shots to keep Roy on his toes and she managed to hold her own although Roy's extra experience gave him the 6-4 win. Quite a challenge for one's first competitive League match - however Pauline kept her head and went on to win her next two rounds.

The more experienced Tony Wells and Jean Ball won their first rounds, so after round 1 LL were 3-1 in front. The remaining rounds were very closely fought - we had a short half hour break after the first two rounds - and at the end of the four rounds of singles the score was 8-8. All our team had halved their matches. So it all depended on

the two doubles. Malcolm and Pauline took John Burridge and Roy Healey to the 13th hoop and after a considerable tussle they won. Tony and Jean's game was also very tight – first one way, then the other – but unfortunately when they were 4-5 down the time expired as Jean was hopefully about to make it 5-5 – after which a deciding hoop would have been played. This meant that the result was a 9-9 draw – so for the first time for many years we were looking at a 13th hoop decider.

The teams have to agree whether a pair or a single player takes part – it was agreed that it should be a pair and as they had won their doubles match, Pauline and Malcolm were our couple – against Alfred Sawbridge and Marian Holland. The procedure is that the winning team is the first to run the 13th hoop and the start point is corner 1 – that by hoop 1. We won the toss and played first. All four players ended up short of the hoop and then began an exciting and tense few minutes with some very close shaves around the hoop. Finally it came to Pauline to play one of those tantalisingly close hoop runs which are all too easy to miss. However she ran it beautifully and a very excited Malcolm's cheers were echoed by our watching and enthralled members.

Well done to the team and thanks to all those who helped make the day a success.

B-Level at Watford - 9th May

This event at Watford was their third golf croquet One-Day B-Class Tournament. This is singles level play with those for handicaps of 3 to 7. There were 14 players divided into two blocks – from Leighton-Linslade, Watford, Letchworth, Nottingham, Hamptworth, Broadwas and Reigate Priory. We had four players entered; David Ball, Eve and Len Buckingham and John Cundell. Handicaps of the players consisted of five 3's; three 4's; two 5's; one 6; and three 7's. The standard of play was very good, particularly from the '3' handicappers. John and Len won one of their matches; Eve won two, and David won five. The final was between group winners John Bee from



Below: B-Level at Watford - Len Buckingham plays a shot against John Edwards from Broadwas. Watford's Janet Lewis waits for the CA Coaching Committee Chairman Lawrence Whittaker's shot. Left: David Ball in his play off for third place against John Edwards - won by John.



Watford and Ian Mantle from Letchworth – with Ian winning on the 13th hoop after a very hard fought match. David Ball played against John Edwards for the third place which went to John.

An excellent day, well organised by Watford's Ian Parkinson and Roger Nicholls, super weather and an excellent opportunity to match one's skills against other clubs – plus meet some very nice people. If you are interested in taking part in any of these B-Level matches next season then ask John, Len, Eve, David, Richard or Roger for further information.

Mix 'n Match Doubles Handicap - 14th May

The entry was an encouraging 22 members for this competition which was devised to attract players of all abilities to get involved in a light-hearted yet competitive event.

We were lucky in that apart from a slight shower which didn't even wet the ground, the weather was mostly sunny but tempered by a chilly breeze. At 9.00am the 22 members assembled for the draw of partners handled by David Ball and Judith Cundell. There were some interesting combinations and the pairs were placed into one block of six and one of five.

Play started just after 9.30am on all three lawns and continued until 4.30pm. This year timing was introduced – a generous 60 minutes. The results of the two Blocks were as follows:

Block 1

- 1st Martin Field and Vic Peddar
- 2nd David Ball and Eve Buckingham
- 3rd Jean Ball and Bryan Ferris
- 4th John Thorp and Malcolm Kirby
- 5th Sheila Beal and Val Jeffers

Block 2

- 1st John Cundell and Roger Stroud
- 2nd Tom Miller and Len Buckingham
- 3rd Roy Kemp and Caroline Stroud
- 4th Erica Fogg and Don Barrett

Mix 'n Match Doubles Handicap - finalists John Cundell and Roger Stroud playing Vic Peddar and Martin Field - winners below right John and Roger. We couldn't resist the shot of the visiting locomotive 'Paddy' to the Leighton Buzzard Light Railway's Coffee Pot Fest (that means steam locomotives with vertical boilers) that was at Page's Park the same weekend. Bottom: there are 16 of the 22 players in this shot!



5th Tony Stammers and Pauline Lefrere

6th Peter Stevens and Diana Phelps.

In the semis, the Cundell/Stroud team beat Ball/Buckingham by 7-4 and Field/Peddar beat Miller/Buckingham by 6-5.

The Final started just after 5.15pm and resulted in a fine match with John Cundell and Roger Stroud coming from 1-5 down to a win on the 13th hoop.

We should thank John Thorp, David Ball and John Cundell who had set up the equipment at 7.45am, plus the ladies who provided cakes – and Judith Cundell for organising play and scoring.

EACF League 'B' - Watford - 23rd May

Pauline Lefrere reports that on a blustery day in Watford, the 'B' League team consisting of Tony Wells, Sheila and John Guest and Pauline Lefrere won seven of the first twelve singles games before lunch. The situation changed afterwards, however, with Watford taking the lead, and winning the overall match by a very close 10 games to 8, despite a valiant effort by the ladies in winning the doubles match against Nick and Robert Archer.

Ladies Doubles Mix 'n Match - 4th June

The second year of this competition for the trophy donated by Erica Fogg attracted a healthy 16 entries from the ladies of the club. Unfortunately Margaret Lawson had to withdraw at the last moment as George was in a poorly state after his hip operation a few days previously. The last person to enter the competition was Judith Cundell so she stood aside so that we were back to even numbers for the draw.

The lawns were prepared following an early start by John C and John T, David Ball, Malcolm Kirby and Tony Wells. All contestants had arrived by 9.00am, so after an introduction from David who welcomed Sally Clay back to playing after her recent illness, and good wishes passed on to George, the excitement of the draw commenced, throwing up some interesting pairings – Helen Wilkinson and Judi Priestley, Pauline Lefrere and Erica Fogg,

Caroline Stroud and Diana Phelps, Eve Buckingham and Irene Davis, Sheila Guest and Val Jeffers, Jean Ball and Sally Clay – and believe it or not – Una and Judith Pengelly!

Play consisted of one block with all pairs playing six games. There was a 45 minute time limit and only primary colours were used on all three lawns. After the first three rounds the Pengellys swept into a three win lead and there were comments that the match looked all but won before midday. The remaining six teams were fighting hard and suddenly there was a breakthrough when Judith and Una faltered against Sheila Guest and Val Jeffers. A short break for lunch left three rounds of the seven to be played in the afternoon and a number of teams were slipping in wins here and there.

The block play finished at 15.35 – just ten minutes after the scheduled timetable. All players heeded the timetable – were ready to play as required – all of which made the tournament progress very smoothly under the scoring management of John C, with refereeing from David and Len – and general assistance by John Thorp.

So came the reckoning by John and checked by Judith C. We had quite a complicated scenario planned to sort out the final and, if necessary, semi finals from the block – however both John and Judith were amazed when the block table showed that Una and Judith Pengelly had won five games with a hoop difference of +16 – whilst Sheila Guest and Val Jeffers had one five games with a hoop difference of +16! No, that is not a typing error – they were both exactly the same. So we had a ready made final which was played with no time limit on Lawn 1 in front of an enthusiastic audience.

The Pengellys started off well and got into a 5-1 lead – Judith's positional play was excellent which often placed Sheila and Val in a defending situation. The latter recovered towards the end of the game and we all wondered if there was to be an upset – however after a long fought tussle on hoop 11, Judith and Una won by 7-4.

Erica Fogg congratulated the winners and commiserated with the runners-up, then thanked all those who had



Ladies Doubles Mix 'n Match was blessed with good weather and there was a great day of



competitive play by the ladies - winners were Judith and Una Pengelly, seen in action at right.



helped to make the day such a success – including the all-important cake makers!

Improvers Coaching Day - 6th June

After six weeks praying for rain the deluge decided to come on 5th June. It threatened to continue on into Monday 6th June which was the day we were expecting 19 attendees to a Coaching Day aimed at improving the standard of play for those interested in moving on to Friendly, League and Tournaments, rather than social club play. Fortunately the rain stopped at 8.00am and although the day was a bit chilly, it was at least dry and the wind which had plagued us for many days had dropped.

The course was devised by Richard Keighley as Lead Coach, with assistance from David Ball, Eve Buckingham and John Cundell from Leighton-Linslade, plus Janet Lewis and Roger Nicholls from Watford.

At 9.30am 11 LL members, four from Winslow, and three from Watford arrived to a welcome cup of coffee from Judith Cundell and Judi Priestley – both of whom kept all players and coaches well looked after for the rest of the day – and the course got under way with an introduction from Richard Keighley.

The 18 players were divided into six groups – each with a Coach. The morning sessions looked at potential problem areas and general tactics. After lunch we continued with handicaps and using extra shots and rounded off the day with tactical discussive play plus a rounding-up session, rule clarifications and advice on other sources of information – the latter with tea and cakes. The day ended at 3.30pm with Richard extending his and the players thanks to the six coaches for their services and to Judith and Judi for keeping all well sustained.

Since the event appreciative comment has been received from Liz Kinsell from Winslow, Linda Spurr from Watford and Helen Wilkinson – all much appreciated.

EACF Golf Croquet Inter-Counties Tournament - 'Ken Wheeler Shield'

This tournament, at Hunstanton on 11th June, was the inaugural Golf Croquet team competition between the six counties comprising the East Anglian Croquet Federation. The teams from Bedfordshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Suffolk – plus a team of players nominated as EACF Select, as unfortunately Cambridge was not able to field a team – were competing for the 'Ken Wheeler Shield' donated by the President of Hunstanton CC who also acted as the Tournament Manager. There were four players per team and the total aggregate handicap for each team was not less than 8 at the time of team entry. Ken Wheeler organised the competition to take place over a single day and included singles and doubles games for all players. All games were level play.

The competition format was that each team played a match against each other over the first five rounds with a match comprising two singles games and one doubles. In the first round the team captains could elect to allocate players in any role (singles or doubles) irrespective of handicap. In the second round the singles/doubles roles were reversed, and in round three roles reverted to those of the first round. This continued until all five rounds had been played.

The three leading teams then qualified for a 'Gold Medal Round' and played two doubles games each – using different pairs to round one if desired. The GMR teams carried forward a point for each of their games won in the first block, and were awarded two points for a win in the GMR. The winners would be the team with the most points. This all looked somewhat complicated at first glance, but it soon became clear after Ken Wheeler's briefing, and all players quickly understood and took to the format well – remarking on its obvious success at the end of the day.

The Bedfordshire team was John Cundell as Captain, David Ball, Malcolm Kirby and John Thorp.

The Hunstanton lawns were in immaculate condition and the weather was sunny if a little chilly, but the promised rain kept away. The first three rounds took from 10.00am until lunch and it soon became apparent that the team on excellent form was Hertfordshire, closely matched by the EACF and Suffolk teams. In the afternoon session these three teams consolidated their positions and finished the block by winning four games for Hertfordshire, with EACF and Suffolk taking three. The other three teams certainly didn't give away points easily – a large percentage of the games went to the 13th hoop and could have gone either way. Essex were fourth, pipping Bedfordshire on game wins, and Norfolk were sixth. All members gave their utmost for their county.

So, after a short break the Gold Medal Round started with all three teams playing their two doubles pairings. Hertfordshire now moved up a gear and the pairings of Duncan Hector/Nick Mounfield and Ian Mantle/Nick Archer won convincing games against the EACF and Suffolk, whilst Suffolk beat the EACF – so the overall result was a win for Hertfordshire, with Suffolk second and the EACF third.

The force behind the idea of this tournament – Terrey Sparks (EACF Secretary) – expressed his thanks to all who made the day such a success – the Team Captains and players, the members of Hunstanton CC who worked hard all day, the catering ladies, and Hunstanton President Ken Wheeler for conceiving the format, managing the day – and finally presenting the fine shield plus commemorative plaques to the successful Hertfordshire team led by Letchworth's Nick Mounfield – supported by Duncan Hector and Ian Mantle from Letchworth, and Watford's Nick Archer.

All in all a very successful inaugural tournament – possibly the first such GC event organised by any Federation. The whole day was played with a fine and fair competitive spirit by all teams with very little work for the referee. Congratulations to all concerned. No doubt we will all be back for revenge next season so watch out Hertfordshire!

Golf Croquet Inter-Club Murphy Shield - First Round Kenilworth -17th June

After our long trip to Belsay Hall near Newcastle in last year's quarter final, where we lost by four games to three, we were pleased when this year's draw was announced as our first match was against Kenilworth CC in the West Midlands. This competition requires a team of four who play level in the following format: the two strongest



One of the Kenilworth lawns which lay in a dip surrounded by protective banks on two sides, and trees which provide a calmer environment.

players in handicap play a doubles and the other pair play their opposite numbers in singles; after lunch the morning singles pair swap opponents and the morning doubles pair play their opposite numbers in singles. All games are the best of three. We elected to play at Kenilworth as we felt their lawns were less variable in levels. The weather forecast was dire, however we were very fortunate as rain only arrived as we left the Kenilworth car park just before 5.00pm.

The team of John Cundell, David Ball, Eve Buckingham and John Thorp were warmly greeted by the four Kenilworth players. Their two lawns are very level and consistent and are protected from the elements on two sides by a high bank and trees. After a quick coffee and short practice session we started the matches as soon as possible in view of the dire weather forecast.

David and John C won their doubles with an easy first game, then lost the second, and it was a very hard struggle in the third to win 7-5 and take the match. Over on the second lawn John Thorp won and Eve lost so at lunch it was 2-2 to LL. The four singles matches commenced and after some very long hard fought battles, David, John T and Eve won their singles, and John C was the last game to finish after a titanic battle over three games and losing on the 13th hoop. Overall it was a very pleasing win by five games to two. As an aside and showing what a hard fought match, 163 hoops were contested by the four of us in the day.

Our thanks to Kenilworth for their fine hospitality and sportsmanship. Our next game in the quarter finals is local rivals Letchworth.

B-Level Wrest Park - 25th June

At the end of 2010 Richard Keighley suggested that a Croquet Association B-Level tournament be held in our area. It was felt that Wrest Park would be a better venue in view of their six lawns and therefore Richard went ahead and arranged a competition for Wednesday 22nd June. A number of entries were received from various clubs



John Thorp and John Cundell fought the final at Wrest Park with John C winning on the 13th hoop.

around the country plus a small contingent from LL. Then came the early Spring news that weekday events were not possible for much of the season at Wrest Park which meant that the date had to be changed to Saturday 25th June, and unfortunately some of the more distant competitors could not make that date. Another participant had to withdraw as his handicap had dropped below the 4-8 limit prescribed for this competition. And finally, competition manager Richard then had the news that his knee operation was to take place on the 22nd June! Richard finalised the pre-match details, a number of LL members came forward to take part, and Geoff Strutt of Wrest Park stepped up to manage the competition on the day.

So 12 participants arrived at an overcast Wrest Park and play commenced at 10.00am. The 12 were divided into two blocks and played five games each. The longest travelled competitor was John Edwards from Broadwas (near Worcester) closely followed by Richard Jenkins and Janet Trueman from Hamptworth in Hampshire. Geoff Strutt from Wrest Park took part to make up the twelve, and LL players were David and Jean Ball, Eve Buckingham, John Cundell, Tom Miller, Judith Pengelly, Judi Priestley and John Thorp. Judi, who is also a Wrest Park member looked after the refreshments as well – a sterling effort.

The first three rounds took up until lunchtime whereupon the sun emerged and the temperature climbed rapidly. Two more rounds finished off the block play and the results were as follows:

Block 1

| | | |
|------|-----------------|--------|
| 1st | John Thorp | 4 wins |
| 2nd | Judith Pengelly | 3 wins |
| 3rd | David Ball | 3 wins |
| 4th | Geoff Strutt | 3 wins |
| 5th= | Richard Jenkins | 1 win |
| 5th= | Eve Buckingham | 1 win |

Block 2

| | | |
|-----|----------------|--------|
| 1st | John Cundell | 5 wins |
| 2nd | John Edwards | 4 wins |
| 3rd | Janet Trueman | 2 wins |
| 4th | Jean Ball | 2 wins |
| 5th | Judi Priestley | 1 win |
| 6th | Tom Miller | 1 win |

The Final was a hard fought yo-yo match between John Cundell and John Thorp until hoop 12 where John T had a good chance of taking the win, but nerves set in and so the 13th hoop came into play. Both players enjoyed some fine clearances and some nervous hoop runs until after about 15 minutes John Cundell squeezed the win.

An enjoyable day for this first B-Level event at Wrest Park. Thanks to Richard Keighley for the idea and pre-management, Geoff Strutt and Judi Priestley of Wrest Park for their work on the day, and the players from near and far.

EACF League 'A' - Watford

The first League match this season for our 'A' team was against Watford on Monday 27th June which turned out to be the hottest June day for many years. The team of David Ball, Eve Buckingham, John Cundell and John Thorp arrived to the usual very welcoming Watford members at



9.30am when the temperature was already 24 degrees and rising rapidly.

Watford manager Roger Nicholls had everything ready to go for us and after a cool drink Round One commenced – a good round for LL as we enjoyed three wins with John Cundell beating Janet Lewis, David Ball beating Steve Dennis, John Thorp beating Anne Dennis and Eve Buckingham running out of time at 5-6 down to Ron Drew. Perhaps we were a little too confident as we entered Round Two as Watford then reversed the situation by winning three games to one – this time it was Eve who beat Janet 5-4. After frequent water top-ups as the heat increased to 29 degrees, Round Three was shared with two games each – the two Johns winning.

More liquid refreshment plus lunch was next on the agenda and the last round of the singles was played under extremely humid and wind free conditions which everyone took at a gentle pace. This was a fine round for LL as we all won – so with the doubles to come we knew that we could not be beaten. Honours were shared in the doubles round – Eve and David beat Steve Dennis and Ron Drew by 5-3, and the two Johns lost out at 5-6 as the time limit sounded as John T was about to run hoop 11 from a foot out which would have taken the game to a 13th hoop decider.

The overall result was a win for LL by 11 games to 7.

We enjoyed the usual tea and cakes before wending our way homewards – jubilant at the win and looking forward to a cool shower and yet more drinks – this time of the celebratory kind.

Ealing Friendly - 29th June

Earlier in the year Richard Keighley, David Ball and John Cundell ran a coaching course at Ealing Club, West London for a student group and for a small number of Ealing CC members. During the day we discussed the possibility of a friendly day and after due negotiation by Tony Wells, a match was arranged for Wednesday 29th June.

The eight LL players journeyed to Lammas Park, Ealing by two cars – some 50 miles and about 75 minutes travelling time, on a fine, warm morning, arriving at the required time of 11.00am. We were made very welcome by the club and a short discussion took place with Helen de Jimenez who was the Team Manager for Ealing, to agree on our normal 'Friendly' pairs format of four rounds. Our eight players were paired up as follows: David Ball and John Cundell, Eve and Len Buckingham, Tony Wells and Tony Stammers, and Una Pengelly and Diana Phelps.



The superb lawns and clubhouse at Ealing where we enjoyed our first friendly with the club. The lawns were originally bowling greens.

The three lawns are superbly level and in excellent condition – formerly being bowling greens. There is also a clubhouse and toilet facilities – the photo gives some idea of the layout. Two rounds were played before lunch and two after. LLCC as visitors stayed on their first lawn whilst the Ealing members moved accordingly as the rounds proceeded. At the end of the day the results were:

David and John – 4 wins; Eve and Len – 2 wins; the Tony's – 2 wins; and Diana and Una – 2 wins. An overall win therefore by Leighton-Linslade of 10 wins to 8.

Ealing then provided us a fine tea and cakes and after saying our farewells and the usual group photograph we took our leave after inviting Ealing to a return Friendly in due course.

EACF League 'A' - Northampton

The second League match this season for our 'A' team was only three days after the Watford match, and took place on Thursday 30th June at Northampton. The team of David Ball, John Cundell, Roger Stroud and John Thorp arrived at 9.30am and were warmly greeted by Northampton Manager Mike Hills and his team. Mike began by apologising to us for the state of the Northampton lawns. These usually pristine greens were on a par with the surface that we experienced earlier this season with the right hand side of our Lawn 2. The Northampton Groundstaff had deeply scarified the lawns in March and re-seeded – to be followed by a 17 week period with no rain – even drier than we experienced here. They were not allowed the luxury of any irrigation hence the surface was somewhat difficult to play on. We expressed our sympathy to Mike and his team.

In Round One the honours were shared with John Thorp and Roger Stroud winning for LL; in Round Two the two others, John Cundell and David Ball pulled their socks up and we won all four games. Round Three went back to sharing with John Cundell and David Ball winning this time. We started lunch but after 15 minutes or so had to make a dash for the clubroom as the heavens opened!

The shower soon ceased and in Round Four LL consolidated with wins by both Johns and Roger Stroud – so the score was 11-5 to LL.

The home team then played two excellent Doubles games, winning both, so the overall result was a win for Leighton-Linslade by 11 games to 7.

We enjoyed the usual tea and cakes and then made our way homewards - jubilant at the win but a little concerned as both John Thorp and John Cundell have lowered their handicaps – and David Ball is also very close to lowering his, which is going to cause possible problems with

reference to the selected teams for the remaining events as their combined handicap will be lower than allowed by the competition rules.

Stony Stratford Friendly - 8th July - reported by Pauline Lefrere

The eight players from Leighton-Linslade attending the Friendly at Stony Stratford included Eve Buckingham, Irene and Peter Davies, Erica Fogg, Sheila and John Guest, Malcolm Kirby, and Pauline Lefrere. Stony Stratford provided an interesting method of arranging the match. At the start of each set of games, all players were asked to choose a coloured stick. The colours (hidden from view) denoted who our partners would be, who we would play against, and which lawn we would play on. This method also ensured we would only partner a Stony Stratford player.

Six sets of games were played in sun, wind, and showers. Only one game was delayed due to the rain, but the four players concerned (no names mentioned) seemed quite happy to retreat to the clubhouse to scoff the tea and cakes provided!

At the end of the afternoon, the player from each side who had the highest total of hoops from all the games was Marianne from Stony, and Malcolm from Leighton-Linslade. These two then had a play-off where each had to hit the ball from the corner of the lawn to the centre post. Marianne's ball ended up 2ins nearer and she was declared the overall winner. Although the six games didn't result in a winning team as such, the majority of us felt it was an extremely pleasant and sociable day.

Club Handicap Singles - 9/10th July

Twenty players entered the competition and after the draw on the previous Wednesday, they were split into four blocks of five – with Val Jeffers offering to act as a reserve if required. Tom Miller had to withdraw with a back problem on Thursday so Val stepped in. Unfortunately, late on Friday evening, two players withdrew so there was some hectic reorganisation of the third and fourth blocks

as both withdrawals had been drawn in block three. Hence we were left with two blocks of five and two of four.

So on Saturday morning, 18 players arrived promptly at 8.45 and after a briefing by David Ball and John Cundell, play commenced promptly at 9.00am. All three lawns were in use, double banked, and players were responsible for timing their own games – with some assistance from David – to a 60 minute time limit. Not one of the 32 games went to the full time – so well done to all concerned. Block play continued until just after 13.00 hours, with player manager Judith Cundell keeping things running smoothly. The winners of the four blocks were Malcolm Kirby, Sheila Guest, Roger Stroud and Peter Cole.

After a short break for lunch the two semi-finals started, as did the rain showers, between Roger and Peter on Lawn 1 and Sheila and Malcolm on Lawn 2. Roger and Peter's game was the first to finish at 7-3 to Roger; the other match was a lengthy tussle with both Sheila and Malcolm fighting hard for every point.

During their game Tony Stammers was chatting away to Bryan Ferris when he realised that Bryan was not feeling at all well. Prompt reaction from many members, particularly Helen Wilkinson and John Thorp resulted in a 999 call. Whilst members did their best to keep Bryan comfortable, Peter Cole and John Cundell went over to the Billington Road car park and kept the car park entrance clear for the Paramedics and ambulance which arrived in due course and directed them to the lawns area. Bryan was treated on site and in the ambulance and after some time they decided he could be taken home by Don Barrett. Bryan recovered from his ordeal and is playing croquet again.

Both Sheila and Malcolm were initially not made aware of Bryan's problem and completed their game before the ambulance arrived – Malcolm winning by 7-4.

As soon as it was clear that Bryan could be taken home, the final started between Roger and Malcolm – and during the game the ambulance services departed and Don took Bryan home.

Malcolm put up a good fight in the final, but Roger's tactical experience came to the fore and he won by 7-3. Congratulations to Roger – and to all other players who had made this a successful if very eventful day.

The showers then became rather heavy and the clear up was a bit of a wet affair. Thanks are due to both Johns, Tony Wells, Malcolm and David and Jean Ball for early morning preparation – and to Judith and David for looking after the player organisation, timing, etc.



Handicap Singles semi-finalists Malcolm Kirby and Sheila Guest; Roger Stroud and Peter Cole. Roger won the final against Malcolm. Above; Paramedic and ambulance about to leave after treating Bryan Ferris.





EACF League A - Letchworth

Just eleven days after the Northampton match, we were entertaining our old adversaries from Letchworth at Page's Park on 11th July for the League 'A' team's third match of the season.

The weather was extremely kind – a lovely warm, almost calm day. The Letchworth team of Peter Ross, David Russell, Robert Staddon and Geoff Simpson arrived promptly at 10.00am and after welcoming them and introducing our team of Don Barrett, John Cundell, Roger Stroud and John Thorp – organiser and manager for the day David Ball soon got the first round under way after coffee and ten minutes warm-up for the visitors on our three lawns. We decided that as Lawn 3 is probably our best lawn at the moment in terms of level and consistency, the doubled up games would be played there with the other two singles on Lawns 1 and 2.

The first round saw wins for Don, Roger and John T – whilst John C lost against Peter Ross when he removed John's ball sitting right in front of the 12th hoop from the 10th hoop boundary and won 7-5.

In the second round LL again managed three wins to Letchworth's one, this time by both John's and Roger. In the third round LL slipped slightly, sharing the four games with Don and John C winning. So we went to lunch with the score at 8-4.

The last round of singles was another 3-1 win for LL – Roger, John C and Don winning, with Peter Ross of Letchworth maintaining an unbeaten run in the singles – he won all four of his games with a very impressive display. So at the end of the singles rounds LL had won the match by 11-5.

League 'A' match against Letchworth. Above left: both teams plus our four much appreciated scorers, Irene and Peter Stevens, Diana Phelps and Scoring Organiser Irene Davis. Above right: our victorious 'A' team; Roger Stroud, Don Barrett, John Cundell and John Thorp. Right is Letchworth's Peter Ross who convincingly won his four singles playing off a handicap of 3 and having to give away many extra shots. Peter has just played one of his smooth shots and the brown ball will not miss!



The doubles proved to be very hard fought battles with both games running out of time. LL managed two wins, 4-3 to the two Johns against Peter Ross and Geoff Simpson, with Roger and Don winning against David Russell and Robert Staddon by 6-5. The overall result was a good win by Leighton-Linslade by 13 games to 5.

Letchworth stayed on for tea and cakes – there were thanks to all the helpers from David Ball and Letchworth – who said they always love coming to play at Page's Park – even when they lose – as they always feel very welcome and enjoy the sport and the company.

Watford Friendly Home - 15th July

Our first 'Friendly' against Watford this season was greeted by a lovely warm summer's day. The two John's

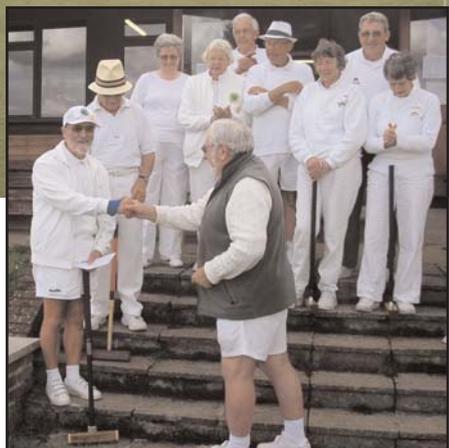


Watford Friendly - Sheila Guest, Roger Nicholls, Ron Drew and Tony Stammers with a complicated grouping. Below: compilation shot of our three lawns.





The rain clouds gather at Newport as the B-Class event gets under way. Right: David Ball receives the winner's award from organiser Ernie Turkington.



were on site at 8.30am setting out the hoops, putting up two gazebos, etc., and we were ready to greet our old friends from Watford who appeared smartly on time at 10.00am. After the usual welcoming drinks and chat, play started under our usual format – four pairs per club playing each other – to continue the friendly rivalry which has existed between our two clubs for many years now.

The Watford team consisted of three husbands and wives – John and Helen Walker playing together, whilst Steve and Anne Dennis and Bob and Maureen Croft preferred to do a wife swap! The remaining duo were Roger Nicholls and Ron Drew. The Leighton-Linslade pairs were David and Jean Ball, Pauline Lefrere and John Thorp, Tony Stammers and Sheila Guest, and John Guest and Don Barrett.

At the end of the first round LL led by 3-1 with only Sheila and Tony not finding winning form. Round two was shared with Sheila and Tony winning, as did David and Jean. A leisurely lunch was followed by the third round which was another 3-1 win for LL – this time only John Guest and Don Barrett missing out. So Watford needed a clean sweep in round four to produce a draw. The first two matches on Lawns 1 and 2, which were not doubled up, resulted in wins for Watford's husband/wife swaps pairs. Then came a good win by Pauline Lefrere and John Thorp to win the day for LL by 9 games to 7. There were quite a number of very close matches during the day with four games going to the 13th hoop and six games to the 12th hoop.

Tea and cakes, plus thanks to all concerned for a very pleasant day, rounded off the occasion.

B-Class Newport - 16th July

This is an annual event organised by the Newport Croquet Club which can be entered by anyone who is a member of an EACF club. This event normally clashes with our Friendly with Hunstanton, but not this year, so five of our members entered; David Ball, Eve Buckingham, John Cundell, Judith Pengelly and John Thorp.

It was a fairly early start for us, 7.00am, as the tournament was due to commence at 9.00am. The weather forecast was dire – persistent heavy rain – and whilst we had an encouraging dry drive to Newport, the first rain

drops started at the precise moment we drew into the Newport club's car park. We were warmly welcomed with a cuppa and the fine facilities that Newport have at their disposal.

As all players had arrived by 9.00am, it was decided to start the games straight away rather than wait for the listed 9.15am start time. For the first round the rain was light, however it then arrived with a vengeance. Play continued throughout as there was a tight timetable to adhere to. There were two blocks of eight players, hence seven games per person. The club has three lawns, level and green with a consistent surface. Games were double-banked with primary and secondaries starting from opposite corners; they were just 35 minutes and if you were baulked you chose another hoop with your partner. Not an ideal situation and not loved by most players, but at least the system keeps play going and was probably the best choice in view of the weather conditions. By the end of the third round everybody was thoroughly soaked and the clubroom looked more like a laundry!

Three of us, David Ball, John Cundell and Judith Pengelly were in Block A, whilst Eve Buckingham and John Thorp were in Block B. The games were all level play – handicap levels ranged from 4 to 10.

Games continued well on time with a welcome lunch break at 12.30pm. By 4.30pm all blocks were completed and the scores computed. John Thorp and Judith Pengelly won three of their games, Eve Buckingham and John Cundell four each, whilst David Ball had an excellent day, winning all seven of his games. So the final was between Block A winner David and Block B winner, Dennis Saville from the home club.

By now the rain had at least stopped and we even had some warm sunshine as all the players sat out on the Newport Verandah to watch the final. This was a fine tussle with Dennis rocketing off to a 2-0 lead within a couple of minutes of the start – however David didn't panic and came back to all square at 4-0 and then there was a yo-yo sequence until the inevitable 13th hoop. David kept his nerve and took the hoop amongst much acclaim from us all.

Organiser Ernie Turkington presented David with his award, and after thanks all round for a fine day we journeyed home on a warm, sunny evening!

EACF League A - Stony Stratford

Two days later and Monday 18th July saw the 'A' team off to Stony Stratford for their fourth match of the year. The team was John Cundell, Val Jeffers, Roger Stroud and John Thorp. The opponents fielded Rex Hale, Rex Gower, John Burridge and Alfred Sawbridge. Stony Stratford were last year's champions so we expected a tough match. The weather was dry and we played on Stony's original ¾ size lawn in front of their clubhouse, plus their new lawn on the outfield of the cricket field. This lawn is coming along fine, is very similar in terms of pace to our Lawn 3, and is full size.

The first round was halved with wins by John Thorp and John Cundell, as was round two with wins by John Thorp and Val Jeffers. Round three proved a good result for Leighton-Linslade, with wins by John Thorp, Roger Stroud and Val Jeffers – John Cundell having a nightmare game

against an inspired Rex Hale. So at lunch we were leading 7-5.

The last round of the singles proved a good one for SS, as only our John Thorp managed a win – a clean sweep for John in the singles – bringing the result to 8-8.

The doubles between John Cundell/Roger Stroud and John Burrridge/Rex Gower was a win for LL on the 12th hoop. We had been playing on the new lawn, so we popped through the gate to see John Thorp and Val Jeffers getting ready to play the 13th hoop. All four players obtained a reasonable position with John Thorp having first shot at the hoop. Unfortunately the ball was just about jawssed but was removable. Val and Alfred Sawbridge played for position then Rex Hale attempted to move John Thorp's ball, which he did, but left John with a 6ft shot. John kept us all on tenterhooks whilst lining up and then struck a superb winning shot.

A great result for Leighton-Linslade, winning by 10-8 which gave the 'A' team four out of four wins with one match to play - against our 'B' team!

Golf Croquet Inter-Club Murphy Shield - Quarter Finals - Letchworth

We knew that this was going to be a tough day against our old rivals at Letchworth. Our slightly changed team of David Ball, John Cundell, Roger Stroud (playing as Eve Buckingham was ill), and John Thorp arrived at Letchworth's superbly flat lawns on Tuesday 19th July at 10.00am.

We were met by Ian Mantle, Team Captain of Letchworth, who introduced his other three players David Mathews, Peter Ross and John Skingsley. The format of this competition was reported earlier in our match against Kenilworth. Our handicaps were 4, 4, 5 and 7 – playing Letchworth's 2, 3, 3, and 4. The play is level.

The overall result was a resounding win for Letchworth by 7-0 – however the games were much closer than the overall result implies with a number of 7-6 and 7-5 results. It was a pleasure to play on Letchworth's level and consistent lawns and as usual in this tournament, although disappointed with the overall result, we were not downhearted, had enjoyed a superb day's play – and we learnt a lot for the future.

Thanks to Ian Mantle and his team for making us very welcome. We now look forward to next year. Letchworth beat Phyllis Court 4-3 on 25th August and will play Broadwas in the final on 9th October.



B-Class Nottingham - 20th July

John and Eve Buckingham attended this level play singles tournament for players with handicaps between 4 and 7 last year and had a very

Yes, it's that man again! What a great year David had up to the end of July - until his winning streak was interrupted by his heart bypass operation. Your rivals didn't wish it on you David!! Here he receives the winner's dish from organiser John Handy.

enjoyable day on the club's superb five lawns. For 2011 we had planned a larger visit with Len Buckingham and David Ball joining the group. Unfortunately just a few days before the event Eve suffered an attack of very painful cellulitis and had to withdraw along with Len.

So the next day after the Letchworth Inter-Club match, David and John made the journey to Nottingham, arriving at 9.00am to be warmly greeted by organiser John Handy and the other members and players.

We were soon out on the fine lawns under a cloudy but dry sky. We were split into four blocks and played our first three games before lunch. Winners of the blocks were then redrawn into new blocks and play continued until around 4.00pm. When all the calculations had been performed the winner was David Ball with five wins from six games, second was Eileen Buxton from Ashby and third place was taken by John Cundell.

An enjoyable day's play on fine lawns with companionable players, we would recommend this event to all. The event is open to Croquet Association Tournament members, but remember if you are not a CA member as yet and would like to try one of these B-Level events then you are allowed to enter one of these competitions as a lifetime first. As we stated earlier contact John Cundell, David Ball, Richard Keighley, Eve Buckingham or Roger Stroud for more information.

World Golf Croquet Championships - Hurlingham - 18-24th July

This event is held every two to three years and returned to England this year, played at Hurlingham and Surbiton clubs. 64 players aged from under 18 to over 60 from more than 20 countries competed over the week. The first part of the competition is block play which whittles the contestants down to 32 players. These then enter knockout rounds.

David Ball, John Cundell, Richard Keighley and Tom Miller visited Hurlingham on Friday 22nd July, the first knockout day. We made the journey to Hurlingham which is situated near Putney Bridge, London, by train and bus – arriving at just after 11.00am with the first round well under way. We saw the current world



Below: David Ball and Tom Miller enjoying watching the play at Hurlingham, and taking a short stroll around the club perimeter which borders the Thames - together with Richard Keighley. Left: one of the many different styles of grip - this by one of the Egyptian players.



champion Ahmed Nasr from Egypt playing, plus most of the other final 32 contenders from Egypt, Ireland, England, Sweden, Scotland, Australia, USA, New Zealand, Wales, South Africa and Belgium.

Their were so many different styles of holding the mallet and action which were fascinating to watch, from delicate tactical shots to hoop running, particularly the Egyptians, at incredible speed and power.

It was a fascinating day – we much enjoyed sitting in the sun and watching the world’s best gold croquet players in action in the wonderful surrounding of Hurlingham’s ten courts, and also enjoyed meeting many English players and friends who were involved in the organisation, scoring, refereeing, or just, like us, spectating.

The time simply flew along and we finally had to leave to catch our transport just before 8.00pm, as the last few matches of the day were coming to exciting finishes.

The winner from Sunday’s final was not one of the expected Egyptians, but an Irishman named Mark McInerney.

Fun Day - reported by Sheila Beal

It was a select band of 11 members who joined Tony for the Annual Fun Day on Sunday 24th July, on a gorgeous sunny afternoon. It was decided we would form into two teams, the Reds and the Blues and we proceeded with much hilarity to play a series of games set out by Tony, ably assisted by Sheila and Helen and other participants along the way.

These included ‘Burst the Balloons’ around the centre post from the four corners!; ‘Hitting the Centre Post’ from the sideline; ‘Knock the Golf Balls’ off the tees race; ‘Best of Six Ping Pong Balls’ - through hoops guarded by filled Balloons!; ‘Best of Three’ hoops with a partner tied together at the wrist using one hand each on the mallet!; and ‘The Limes and Lemons Match’!

The victorious Red Team were presented with prizes, and

The players in the class of 2011 at Hunstanton, from left to right: Standing: Malcolm Kirby, Barrie Joyce, Mary Coombs, Pauline Lefrere, David Boxell, Judith Cundell, John Cundell, Christine Thirtle-Watts, David Thirtle-Watts, Alf Wells, Val Jeffers, Tony Wells, Terry Kendal, and Derek Cole. Seated: Tony Stammers, Roger Stroud, Irene Davis, Peter Davis and Thelma Betts.



Lyn Peddar with a prize for the most centre post hits. We all had a great time improving our croquet skills!!! Thanks Tony.

EACF League B - Letchworth

The ‘B’ team’s third EACF League match was home to Letchworth on 25th July. A fine warm day greeted the LL team of Tony Wells, Malcolm Kirby, Jean Ball and Sheila Guest. The Letchworth team was David Russell, Ian Mantle, Andy Kennedy and John Barrance.

Play started promptly at 10.00am using all three lawns as previously described. Round one was a good start for the home team, winning three out of the four games by Tony, Sheila (with an impressive 7-0), and Jean. Malcolm fought hard against Letchworth’s top player, Ian Mantle, who plays off a 3 handicap. Ian was to continue his fine form for the rest of the three singles rounds. He is very difficult to beat, even when one has six extra shots against him. His excellent day resulted in his handicap moving from 3 to 2!

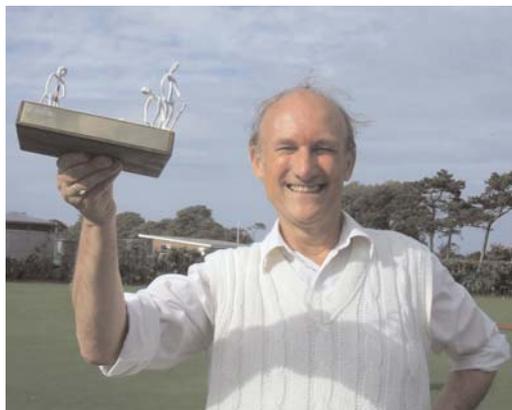
The second round was halved with wins by Sheila and Tony, whilst in the third round, three home wins were scored by all except Sheila whose turn it was to play Ian.

A relaxing lunch was taken with the score at 8-4 in LL’s favour. This lead was maintained in round four with wins by Jean (another 7-0), and Malcolm. So with the doubles to come, LL had an unassailable result. This was then consolidated by the LL ‘B’ team winning both doubles – an overall win for the day by 12 games to six.

The usual tea and cakes followed and after thanks to all concerned, Letchworth took their leave for another year.

Hunstanton/Leighton-Linslade Friendly - 30/31st July

We have reported on this event and the wonderful facilities and lawns at Hunstanton in the previous two



Roger holds the Singles Handicap Shield aloft after successfully defending his 2010 win at Hunstanton.

years of this competition – won in 2009 by LL and by Hunstanton last year. So our team, see picture, was determined to try our hardest to win back the trophy this year. Rather than give a blow by blow account, I have taken the liberty of reproducing below the report that appeared in Hunstanton’s newsletter – penned by the hard-working Chairman of Hunstanton, David Thirtle-Watts and his wife Christine. So over to David and Christine:

This annual event was blessed with good weather. Ten players from each club had alternate games of singles and doubles, everyone playing six games. The trophy was won by Leighton Linslade 24-21. A fish and chip supper was enjoyed by all. This was followed by a Beetle Drive which had everyone on the edge of their seats - a contrast from the pace of play on the lawns earlier in the day; and the very relaxed pace enjoyed by a number of players on the Sunday morning before our friends made their journeys home. Plans are afoot for next year.

Thanks D&C. I would add that this was an exciting and see-saw day in terms of the results which were kept secret by David until the grand announcement at the end of the evening. We actually shared the 30 singles matches with 15 each, but fortunately we came up trumps with the doubles.

Hunstanton Invitation Weekend - 6/7th August

This event at Hunstanton Croquet Club is an annual two-day open tournament aimed at providing competition for all levels of golf croquet players from within the local club and from other clubs. This is achieved by arranging what is in effect three separate competitions, although two are run at the same time. John Cundell and Judith stayed on for a refreshing week on the North Norfolk coast after the Friendly, and John played in both events over the weekend – with Roger Stroud coming back up to Hunstanton to defend his Doubles title from 2010.

On the Saturday the Singles Competition is held. This year there were 24 players who were split into two groups of 12 – each group containing two blocks of six players each. Named Alpha 1 and 2, and Beta 1 and 2 by Organising Manager and Club President, Ken Wheeler, the Alpha blocks were Level play for those with handicaps of 6 and under – whilst the Beta blocks were handicap games for players of 7 to 12. These two groups were run separately and a winner would be found by a final of the two block winners in each case. John C was in the Alpha block which contained players at handicaps of two to six;



Above and right: the Hunstanton Clubhouse as John Cundell receives the Leighton-Linslade/Hunstanton trophy from David Thirtle-Watts.

Roger was in the Beta group with handicaps of seven to 12.

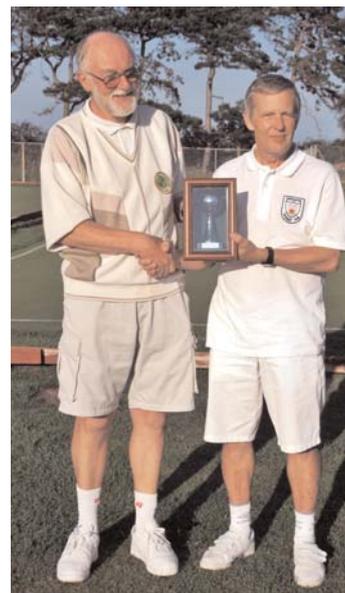
The non-club competitors had travelled from Norwich, Ipswich, Bury St. Edmunds, Leighton-Linslade and Watford.

Hunstanton is fortunate in having five excellent lawns in a fine park – and is completely self-contained with a superbly equipped pavilion/clubhouse with all the facilities and amenities that any club could wish for. So on the five lawns it was of course possible to play 10 matches simultaneously with primaries and secondaries starting from opposite corners - and with no time limits. Manager Ken Wheeler, ably assisted by Christine Thirtle-Watts, juggled the players as they completed each match and kept everyone moving along very efficiently but still leaving the odd minutes to take refreshment and watch some of the other games in progress. At the end of the block play, Jeff Race from Hunstanton and Mike Percival from Ipswich topped their blocks as Alpha finalists – whilst in the Beta blocks it was Roger Stroud from Leighton-Linslade and Robert Archer from Watford – almost a local derby for these two as we hold League and Friendlies regularly of course. Mike Percival was in fine form and despite Jeff Race striking some impressive shots – the Alpha trophy went to Mike.

In the Beta final Roger Stroud maintained his form from 2010 and was in command almost from the start, beating Robert Archer by 7 games to 3 to bring the trophy back to LL once again. Well done Roger..

Despite a weather forecast of heavy showers, the day was blessed by fine, dry and reasonably warm conditions – as one would expect from Sunny Hunny – and the sun was still shining as Ken Wheeler presented the trophies to Mike and Roger, amongst much acclaim by all present.

Sunday morning also dawned dry, if a trifle chilly in the strong wind that prevailed most of the day. What more can you expect when at the sea-side! This tournament, compared to Saturday, was ‘completely different’. 14 of the



previous day's players also took part in the Doubles tournament. Again, Ken Wheeler had come up with a system that really gives most players the chance of success. There were two blocks of five, chosen by pairing a Hunstanton player with one of the visitors – and they are also chosen from opposite ends of the handicap spectrum. A player of 12 would be paired with one of the lower handicappers – say a 3 – and so on up and down the scale. This obviously evens out the pairs' playing abilities and often results in success for the higher handicapped competitor. Play was a little more relaxed than for the Singles as each pair only had to play four games in their particular block. As this is a relatively small number of games for a day's play then each pair also played against their opposite number in the other block – another innovation by Ken that improved the day's enjoyment and something we will consider when we end up with small blocks. John C and Thelma Betts from Hunstanton played well all day, only to be beaten in the last block game by Watford's Janet Lewis and Hunstanton's Ruth Cole. Roger and his partner Christine Thirtle-Watts managed two wins.

So after the lunch, tea and refreshment breaks we got to around 5.00pm and had two pairs ready for the final – Janet Lewis and Ruth Cole against Stephen Dennis from Watford and Joyce from Hunstanton. Janet and Ruth didn't manage to find the good form they had displayed in their block play, and Stephen and Joyce came out winners by 7 games to 4.

Once again Ken Wheeler appeared from behind his paperwork and made the presentation to the winners and thanked all the Hunstanton members who had put in a tremendous effort over the weekend to provide us all with two exceptionally fine croquet days on excellent lawns and with good humour and hospitality throughout. It's a shame that for many of us that live in the South and West of the Anglia region that we have to travel 100 plus miles – but it's worth all the pain of the Hunstanton to Kings Lynn road on a Sunday evening!

EACF League 'B' - Northampton - 1st August - reported by Pauline Lefrere

The Leighton-Linslade 'B' team of John and Sheila Guest, Malcolm Kirby and Pauline Lefrere played well to win nine out of the first 12 singles games before lunch - Malcolm taking nearly 20 minutes to beat Richard Cain from Northants on hoop nine in a hard fought battle after time was called on an even score. John Guest excelled himself by winning all his four singles games – and then his doubles match after lunch.

The afternoon matches were played in sweltering heat, and the final result was a good win for LL 'B' by 12 games to Northants 6. This result means that either our 'A' or 'B' team must win the Western Division of the EACF League - it all depends on the home match between our two teams on 22nd August. Watch this space!

Stony Stratford Friendly - Home - 5th August - reported by Peter Davis

The evening before the match, John Thorp, who was organising the day, received a call from Stony Stratford Club to say that they were two players short. After a

number of telephone calls John managed to recruit Peter Stevens and Vic Peddar to make up their numbers.

On arrival the players found that due to the efforts of John Thorp, Tony Wells and Peter Stevens, all lawns were ready for play and tables and chairs ready for occupation. The weather was a little chilly for the first few games but by late morning it had warmed up, as had the players.

Play started on time at 10.00a.m. It was good to see all three lawns in use at the same time. John Cundell had pre-arranged the scoring sheets so that the games on Lawns 1 and 2 enjoyed the primary colours, whilst their was doubling-up on Lawn 3 - and this was arranged so that players enjoyed each game on a different lawn.

Leighton-Linslade players were John Thorp and Una Pengelly, John Guest and Sally Clay, Peter Davis and Diana Phelps and Irene Davis and Erica Fogg. Playing for Stony Stratford were Pam and Marian, Rex G and Denise, John with Peter Stevens and Rex H with Vic Peddar.

At the end of the day's play there was a draw so it was agreed that two players from each team would have a single hoop play off starting from the corner next to hoop 1 and playing for the 13th hoop. LL chose John Guest and John Thorp; Stony Stratford selected Rex Gower and Peter Stevens. Unfortunately for our team, although they placed a ball in the hoop, Peter Stevens, playing for Stony Stratford, did a perfect jump shot and won the match for the visitors.

Then it was time for tea and cake and general good humoured chit chat, some of it aimed at poor Peter Stevens and Vic Peddar for playing so well for the opposition. Everyone agreed that it was an excellent day; thanks go to John Thorp for organising it and also for playing - no mean feat. Thanks also to all the other helpers, Val for the cakes and the ladies making the tea and dealing with the washing-up afterwards.

It was a pity that we had no spectators - I am sure that encouragement from other club members would have helped us to win the day.

The John Fogg Trophy - 13th August

This was the third mix 'n match doubles competition for the fine trophy in memory of John Fogg. This year saw an increase in attendance from 10 to 14 – almost everyone of our male members who was in a position to play – others being absent due to health problems and family commitments.

The players assembled at 9.00am in a fine drizzle, to find everything waiting for them following an early and wet preparation hour by John Thorp, Tony Wells and John Cundell. Our Manager for the day, Judith Cundell, presided over the draw for teams which resulted in the following pairs; Peter Davis and Roy Kemp, John Cundell and Malcolm Kirby, Don Barrett and Vic Peddar, Tony Stammers and Peter Stevens, Roger Stroud and Tom Miller, Len Buckingham and John Thorp, and finally Tony Wells and Richard Keighley. Richard was playing his first competitive match since his recent knee replacement.

Play commenced at 9.15am as the drizzle ceased and even the sun appeared for a few moments. The games were of 50 minutes on each of the three lawns with no doubling up. After the first three rounds it was clear that the pairs of Cundell/Kirby, Stroud/Miller and



Keighley/Wells were going to be strong contenders. A short break for lunch at around 1.00pm was followed by the afternoon's remaining three games – each team played six games during the day. At the end of the block play, it was seen that there was a clear overall winner with John Cundell and Malcolm Kirby as they had enjoyed an excellent day's play and won all six of their games. In joint position for runners-up were the pairs of Tony Wells and Richard Keighley, and Tom Miller and Roger Stroud – both teams having won four games.

The play-off was a see-saw match, ending up on the 13th hoop where Richard cleared away Roger's ball and put himself through the hoop – to win the runners-up trophy.

Erica Fogg presented the trophy and runners-up shield to the winners. As per tradition the awards will be included in the AGM presentation.

Thanks to Judith for her organisation and the other ladies who came along to add support and encouragement – plus a special thanks to David Ball who came along to witness the end of the competition just a very short time after his heart bypass operation.

EACF League 'A' v 'B'

After eight League matches played by the 'A' and 'B' Teams, we reached the exciting situation whereby Team 'A'

The EACF League Western Division winning Leighton-Linslade 'B' Team after their win against our 'A' Team - Malcolm Kirby, Jean Ball, Pauline Lefere and Tony Wells.



The John Fogg Trophy competitors and eventual winners John Cundell and Malcolm Kirby, and runners-up Tony Wells and Richard Keighley with Erica Fogg.



had scored 4 wins with no losses against Watford, Northants, Letchworth and Stony Stratford – whilst Team 'B' had scored wins against Letchworth, Northants and Stony Stratford, losing against

Watford. On 22nd August the two teams assembled at a warm and sunny Page's Park for decision day. The teams were Eve Buckingham, John Cundell, Val Jeffers and John Thorp for the 'A' Team – Jean Ball, Malcolm Kirby, Pauline Lefere and Tony Wells for the 'B' Team.

After a welcome return to George Lawson, back as our Organiser for the day following his long absence following his hip operation, play got under way at 10.00am prompt.

The first round was a good one for Team 'B'; with wins by Tony, Malcolm and Jean – Val being the only 'A' team winner. Round Two followed the same sequence, this time with wins by Pauline, Jean and Tony – John C being the 'A' Team's winner. Rounds Three and Four were walkovers by the 'B' team – resulting in an overwhelming score of 14 wins to 2 prior to the doubles. The latter were both tight matches, both running out of time, and were both won on the deciding hoop play-offs by Team 'B' by 5-4.

This means that the Western Division result for the League shows 4 wins for Team 'A' with 47 games wins total during the season; and also 4 wins for Team 'B' with 58 games wins. The Division winners are determined by first, who beat whom, then the game wins are taken into account, therefore Team 'B' are top of the Division on both counts. Well done to the team who now go forward to the semi-finals at Bury St Edmunds.

'Friendly' with Wingrave CC

Wingrave CC expressed a wish for a small number of their players to play a 'Friendly' at Page's Park. Their were to be no specific teams or club versus club competition, just the desire for some mix 'n match games. Nine of our members joined with six visitors from Wingrave at 1.30pm on Wednesday 24th August at a sunny and warm Page's Park. Organiser John Thorp asked David Ball, still convalescing from his recent heart bypass operation, to sort out the



30 members enjoyed the annual Garden Party at Diana Phelps' house which enjoyed good weather after a brief light shower first thing. The raffle raised over £60 which will help towards the lawn maintenance costs this coming winter. Thanks to all who helped make it a fine event.





John Thorp ready for customers at our Table-Top Sale over the Come & Try weekend.

pegs in order that our members and the visitors were matched against each other.

After a couple of hours some of the players had to leave which left four on each side so two doubles games were played in competitive format which was enjoyed by all concerned.

A good afternoon was had by all and Wingrave expressed the wish that they would very much like to repeat the 'Friendly' in due course. Thanks to John Thorp and David Ball for their organisation.

Come & Try Weekend

We have held Come & Try days in the past, but never a weekend and over a Bank Holiday. Also, earlier C&T's were at the beginning of the season and the thought was that by holding them nearer to the end of the season and in the Summer!! - we hoped to attract more visitors, and by offering them the opportunity to play for the remaining five weeks of the season for a reduced fee, that they would experience the benefits of our club and carry on to full membership in 2012. Committee and members had placed at least two dozen posters around the town and local villages and we were hopeful of a good response.

At the same time it was decided to hold a Table-Top Sale over the three days to raise funds for lawn maintenance. The TTS was organised by John Thorp with assistance from many other members and a good supply of items was generously supplied by members. It was therefore very annoying that the first two days were marred by cold, showery weather which obviously kept the punters away from the park. On one occasion on Saturday, ice skates would have been useful as the lawns were covered by hail. However, sales picked up on Sunday and particularly on Bank Holiday Monday, and the overall result was considered a success as over £100 was raised. Now that the club is responsible for all out of season lawn maintenance and development of the lawns, we are going to need every penny we can raise over the coming years. We would thank all those who generously supported this venture in supplying items for sale, purchases, and time.

The response to all our C&T notices was initially disappointing to say the least. We had five enquiries on the first day, four of which had come from members' contacts - and one from a passing lady taking gentle exercise on her bicycle! Two decided to join for the rest of the year, and we are more than hopeful for the other three. There was no response at all on Saturday, and we hoped for better things on Monday. We were not disappointed. At

least 17 folk turned up to Come & Try and two of those joined for the rest of the season, with at least five others stating their intention to join next season.

We had a super turnout of club members to take the visitors around the lawns - and a very enjoyable time was had by all concerned. So despite the poor weather, all in all this was a successful and enjoyable three days in terms of promoting the club, attracting new members and raising funds towards our lawn maintenance. A big thank you to all those who came along and helped show off our game and our club in its best light.

Watford Friendly Away - 5th September

A very blustery Cassiobury Park greeted the team of Tony Wells and John Guest, John Thorp and Sheila Guest, Sally Clay and Una Pengelly, and Malcolm Kirby and John Cundell at the last 'Friendly' of 2011. It's always a pleasure to visit Watford and once again we were warmly welcomed by Roger Nicholls and his team comprising of Geoff Johnson and Steve Dennis, Maureen Croft and Angela Drew, Anne Dennis and Janet Lewis, and Ron Drew and Bob Croft.

The weather threatened heavy showers so Roger got things under way fairly sharply and the first round was a good one for the home team with only John C and Malcolm managing a win. The same state of affairs occurred in round two with this time just Tony and John Guest winning. We decided to play the third round before lunch as rain was threatening, and again the home team scored three wins with once again Tony and John Guest doing the honours for LL.

We broke for lunch, the rain held off and the sun appeared, and this time we managed to reverse the situation with wins for Sally and Una, John C and Malcolm and John G and Tony. So Watford got a welcome revenge over our 9-7 win at our home friendly earlier in the year by winning 10-6. Well done Watford.

As we had pushed through the earlier rounds because of the threat of rain, we had completed our planned games by 2.30pm - so after a brief discussion it was agreed that we play a mix 'n match round of doubles, each pair being formed by a Watford player and a LL player.

Tea and cakes finished off a super day, much enjoyed by all concerned. We look forward to 2012.

EACF League Semi-Finals - 6th September

The day dawned very windy and very wet as the 'B' Team of Tony Wells, Jean Ball, Malcolm Kirby and Pauline Lefrere gathered at Newport's croquet lawns near Saffron

Our winning 'B' team with supporters.





Top, Newport Croquet Club's superb clubhouse and equipment storage area. Insets: Jean Ball lining up using the one-eye technique; Pauline Lefrere well protected in the rain; Malcolm Kirby makes a clearance; Tony Wells attempting a jump shot. Left; very essential rainwear at the start of one of the rounds - Malcolm's opponent was Pat Dawson and Jean was playing Thelma Betts.



6-2. The third round saw Enfield take three more wins, and with only one more required they surpassed themselves with another 4-0. With the score at 13-3 and a place in the final already achieved it was decided to forego the doubles matches so everyone could dry out!

So many congratulations to Tony, Jean, Malcolm and Pauline who go forward to the final on 11th September.

Walden at the early hour of 8.30am - supported by David Ball, John Cundell, Martin Field and John Thorp. The original venue was due to be Bury St. Edmunds, however as a team from Bury had also made the semi-finals, the latter were moved to Newport as a neutral ground. We had been drawn against Hunstanton 'Blue' team and were to play in the morning session - Bury St Edmunds 'E' team and Enfield 'E' team were the other protagonists.

Hunstanton's team arrived after experiencing heavy traffic during their long journey and we were pleased to welcome and say hello to four of our friends we have met before at our LL/H friendlies.

The first round of singles proved very successful for LL with wins for all four players. Not daunted at all by the rain and blustery win, their impressive performance continued in the next two rounds with three wins and four wins respectively. So after just three rounds the score was 11 wins to 2, therefore our team could not be beaten with just four single and two doubles games to come. The final singles round was another 3-1 win, however the doubles were shared with Hunstanton with a win apiece.

In the second semi-final the first round between Enfield (E) was also a 4-0 lead against Bury St. Edmunds (E), despite closely contested games. Round Two was played in monsoon conditions and at the short break Enfield were at

EACF League Final

Leighton-Linslade 'B' and Enfield (E) re-assembled, this time at Bury St. Edmunds, for the final on Sunday 11th September. Despite a pretty poor forecast the day was very pleasant with blue skies and a few clouds for much of the day - the wind was a bit blustery - and there was none of the wet stuff until the players were leaving for home!

After a warm welcome from League Organiser Chris Howell, ably supported by Katie Fairbairn, plus David Ball updating the handicap cards, the first two rounds got under way.

These were a very good start for our team as they stormed off to a 3-1 lead from round one, followed by an even more impressive 4-0 round two result, so with less than half the 18 games played, the score was 7-1. We just needed three more wins from the remaining ten matches for victory. It looked like it was all over with less than half the matches played!

However the Enfield team of Ken Pickett, Tony Elliott, David Frost and Brian Havill are made of stern stuff, and they fought their way back into the game with a clean sweep of four wins in round three, and followed this up with a 3-1 victory in the last singles round - so with just the two doubles to play, the score was 8-8, a superb



Top, two of Bury's three lawns in action for doubles. Left, the victorious Enfield (E) team with our 'B' team. Left to right; Brian Havill, Malcolm Kirby, Tony Elliott, David Frost, Ken Pickett, Pauline Lefrere, Jean Ball and Tony Wells. Above and right, our doubles pairs in action. Below; League organiser Chris Howell and our supporters, John Thorp, David Ball and Martin Field - (John Cundell behind the camera).



comeback.

With this surge in their favour, would there be any holding them? There was no time limit for the doubles games that were both hard fought - however Enfield (E) held their nerve and took both, so the dreaded golden hoop was avoided, and they gained a fine 10-8 victory.

After such a wonderful start our team of four were obviously very disappointed, however they should hold their heads up high at getting so close to LL taking this trophy for the second time. And we must not forget that both our teams were at the top of our area - between our 'A' and 'B' teams, only Watford managed one win against the 'B' team, and that was pretty close at 10-8. So congratulations to all those who took part in both our teams for a good year at which all should be very proud. We have some ideas to make us even stronger for 2012. We will be back!

Croquet Association Chairman visit

On Saturday morning, 10th September, the Chairman of



Len Buckingham and David Ball receive their examination papers for their Referee' Course from The Croquet Association Chairman Barry Keen.



The Croquet Association, Barry Keen, visited Page's Park to invigilate the completion of Len Buckingham's and David Ball's examination to become Golf Croquet Referees.

From 10.00am Len and David took the written test, whilst half a dozen members entertained Barry with a game of Golf croquet - he plays Association regularly and Golf on rare occasions. He then marked the exam papers and we are pleased to report that Len Buckingham reached the required standard, and he will no doubt soon receive his badge of office. Before he left, Barry demonstrated faulty shots when wired in the hoop and with near-touching balls. to the nine members present. Congratulations to Len - better luck next time to David.

B- Level Edgbaston - 13th September

Eve and Len Buckingham and John Cundell attended the B-Level tournament at Edgbaston - the second time for



The 70 Plus LJB Trophy finalists were Roy Kemp and David Ball, seen at top right with Len Buckingham refereeing. Above left are the Plate finalists in action; Margaret Marsall attempts to remove Irene Davis' ball from the hoop. Right; the winners. Far right; Len overseeing the action.



Eve and John, but Len's first visit. After an early start at 6.45am, this year we enjoyed a relatively easy journey via the M40 with only a short hold up just a few miles from the lawns due to a diversion - however we managed to arrive a few minutes before the briefing. Parking is relatively easy and the three lawns were in a good condition and fast. The weather was sunshine and a few light showers - a marked improvement over last year that was wet all day.

There were 12 entrants with handicaps ranging from 4 to 10 from five clubs - Broadwas, Dyffryn & Cheltenham, Kenilworth, Leighton-Linslade and Nottingham - with some familiar faces to Eve and John. The players were split into two blocks with level play and no time limit. As lunchtime approached players took the supplied lunch in two groups. This, together with the later afternoon tea, is included within the £20 entry fee and was much appreciated. Play continued until all blocks had been completed and it was time for the semi-finals - however there was a tie of three wins each in John's block and this could not be determined by the who-beat-who rule, therefore John played a one-hoop shoot-out with Kenilworth's Charles Wade. The method used by organiser Richard Thompson was designed to remove the advantage gained by the winner of the toss in this situation. After the first four balls are played, the next shot with the 5th (blue) ball **cannot** run the hoop or cause any other ball to be scored in any way. John won this and so played Peter Balchin in his semi. This was a fast moving game with John at 5-2 at one stage - however a fine fight back from Peter took the game to the 13th hoop which Peter won after a tough fight. The other semi was won by John Handy who went on to the final with Peter. This was an excellent game, won by Peter by 7-4.

Eve and Len both enjoyed their games and were so near yet so far in many of their games with a number going to the 13th or 12th hoops.

We all enjoyed the day immensely and would recommend other members to join the CA and to participate in these competitions. They are becoming more popular and are a fine introduction to tournament conditions, and give you an opportunity to meet players from other parts of the country, experience different playing conditions, and learn new skills.

The 70 PLUS LJB Trophy - 16th September

The title of this event says it all - entrants may be male or female, 70 years old or over, and competing for a trophy made by Martin Field and given to Len for his 70th birthday, plus a Plate trophy provided by John Thorp and a consolation award from Judith Cundell. Len visualises that this will be a fun competition and hopefully will continue in the future.

The competition is the best of 19 hoops, i.e., the first to ten, and level play. It was designed for 16 competitors and that was the number who entered - nine ladies and seven men. After the first 16 have played, the eight players knocked out are moved into the plate competition.

John Thorp, Len Buckingham, Pauline Lefrere and John Cundell had prepared the lawns and equipment after an early start at 7.45am, so all was ready for Len's opening remarks which were followed by the draw for eight teams. The first round of play started with six games for the LJB Trophy and there were considerable calls on Pauline to keep players on the correct route for a 19 hoop game. Len acted as referee and scorer/organiser whilst John C looked after the time-keeping and also helped score. The first round threw up a few problems with some games delayed due to doubling up - we will look at ways of improving this for the future.

Round two featured the last two matches from the original eight, plus the first matches for the Plate event. This method of play continued until the semi final stage of both competitions was reached.

In the LJB Trophy the following moved on to the quarter finals: John Thorp, Florrie Jeater, David Ball, Tony Stammers, Don Barrett, Una Pengelly, Roy Kemp and Peter Stevens. Those going through to the Plate were Yvonne Banks, Judith Cundell, Margaret Marshall, Eve Buckingham, Sheila Guest, John Guest, Irene Davis and Diana Phelps.

After the quarter finals those going through to the semi finals were John Thorp v David Ball and Don Barrett v Roy Kemp in the LJB; and Yvonne Banks v Margaret Marshall and John Guest v Irene Davis in the Plate.

After lunch, David Ball and Roy Kemp won through to the LJB final; Margaret Marshall and Irene Davis to the Plate final. The finals were held on lawns one and two and after two excellent games the winners were David Ball over Roy Kemp by 10-7, with a similar score line by Irene Davis over Margaret Marshall. The consolation prize will go to Yvonne Banks.

There was general agreement that this event was a welcome addition to our club events - there will be a few tweaks for next time - perhaps slightly longer on the time allowance for the first rounds, plus ideas to reduce doubling-up delays, and using pegs on the hoops so everyone can see scores as the games progress.

Congratulations to Len on coming up with 'something completely different' and we look forward to next year.

Club Doubles and Singles Championships

The club tournaments regularly bring our playing year to a close. The first event, the Doubles, played on 24th September, attracted 20 players. John C, John T and Tony Wells had carried out the usual event preparation from 7.45am until 9.00am on a dry Autumn morning, and the lawns looked fine following our scarification earlier in the week, and mowing by Groundsman Doug Bolton.

As soon as all the players assembled and the briefings were over, Judith Cundell, who was event manager, aided by Len Buckingham, made the draw

The Club Doubles Championships enjoyed a fine late Autumn day. Below, the start of the final as John Cundell runs hoop 1 watched by an enthusiastic and supportive audience. The score was 6-4 to Richard and John - soon to be 6-5 as Eve Buckingham (right) ran hoop 11. There was then a ding dong battle for hoop 12 which was finally run (far right) by Richard Keighley to give John and Richard their first win in this competition since 2006. Where does the time go? Bottom right: the happy finalists. (Photos by David Ball).

into two blocks of five. Games soon got under way with no time limit, and a relatively relaxed day resulted in some fine quality and exciting play. By mid afternoon we had our block winners as follows - using the 'who beat who' criteria where teams had scored an equal number of wins in their block.

| Block 1 | | Wins |
|---------|----------------------------|------|
| 1st | Sheila Beal/Eve Buckingham | 3 |
| 2nd | Jean Ball/Judith Pengelly | 3 |
| 3rd | Sally Clay/Peter Stevens | 2 |
| 4th | Malcolm Kirby/Tony Wells | 1 |
| 5th | Sheila Guest/Una Pengelly | 1 |

| Block 2 | | Wins |
|---------|-------------------------------|------|
| 1st | John Cundell/Richard Keighley | 4 |
| 2nd | Tom Miller/Roger Stroud | 3 |
| 3rd | Peter Davis/Diana Phelps | 2 |
| 4th | Pauline Lefrere/John Thorp | 1 |
| 5th | David Ball/Irene Davis | 0 |

The final was set up on Lawn 2 in front of an enthusiastic if slightly biased but very good humoured audience! The predominance of ladies were supporting Eve and Sheila, except for sole support from Judith Cundell for husband John and his partner Richard! All good fun which added to the final. It was a fine game with hoops yo-yoing between the pairs until hoop 10 was reached with John and Richard going into a 6-4 lead. They then hit a bit of a rough patch at hoop 11 where Eve ran the hoop, pulling



her and Sheila back to 6-5. Some fine positional play and some remarkable clearances followed during a battle royal on hoop 12, until finally Richard Keighley's experience found the hoop - so John and Richard were Club Doubles Champions for the first time since their win in 2006. Congratulations to all concerned for a fine sporting, competitive day's croquet.

One week later and we were back at Page's Park for the last event of the playing season - the Club Singles - on what turned out to be the hottest October day on record! The usual crew had set up the lawns and all 23 players arrived at 9.00am for the draw into four blocks - one of five and three of six. As we were scheduled to play 55 games in the block play, competitors were sent off to the start corner as soon as they were drawn. Soon all three lawns were in action as the timed 50 minute games proceeded.

Judith Cundell again acted as Organising Manager, scurrying around to keep players on their toes between games, and making sure that all blocks progressed evenly in order that we did not end up with some players left with a number of games to be played when others had finished. Not easy when there were the inevitable comments "I've only played one game!" Well done Judith for your commitment and patience.

Inevitably the pace slackened a little in the baking heat, and as we were using the 'who beat who' method of determining block winners, it was possible as the end of

block play approached to only play the required games necessary to find the semi-finalists. The results were as follows:

- Block 1 Judith Pengelly
- Block 2 Jean Ball
- Block 3 Roger Stroud
- Block 4 John Thorp

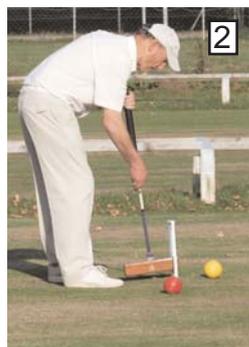
In the semi finals Jean Ball beat Judith Pengelly by 7-3, and there was a similar margin as Roger Stroud beat John Thorp.

So a small but enthusiastic audience relaxed in the shade of the gazebos as Roger and Jean played the final. You can see the progress of the game in the photographs which show the hoop by hoop action as Roger Stroud progressed to a fine 7-3 victory, despite a fighting performance from Jean Ball. What a good year for Roger as he also won the Handicap Singles earlier in the season, and the Mix 'n Match Handicap Doubles with John Cundell.

A number of members 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.



The Club Singles Championships were played on the hottest October day since records began! The semi-finalists are seen left - Judith Pengelly v Jean Ball, and John Thorp v Roger Stroud. Finalists at right, Roger and Jean. Below is the hoop progress of the final which finished 7-3 to Roger.



Winter Golf Croquet in the New Forest

Hamptworth Croquet Club, near Salisbury, is running GC winter tournaments from October to March on Saturdays and Sundays as follows; Oct 15/16; Nov 12/13; Dec 10/11; Jan 14/15; Feb 11/12; and Mar 10/11. 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.

Winter Friendly at Ealing

We have been invited to a Winter Friendly at Ealing - see report earlier for information about the club. The date will probably be early December. They can only accommodate four visitors so if you are interested, in the first instance please contact Tony Wells on 01525 379107.

Soham Indoor Croquet

Soham Indoor organiser Chris Howell has reluctantly decided to hold just one Golf Croquet weekend at Soham this winter, which will be in the New Year - date not yet available. The reason is that support was small for the pre-Christmas event last year and the cost of hiring and laying the carpet was difficult to cover by the small number interested.

Tables and Chairs

Members are asked not to site the two small tables on the concrete area immediately in front of the steps, not to place chairs in this area and to refrain from sitting on the steps. This makes access to the clubroom difficult and is dangerous to those members who need access to the handrails at the side of the entrance. Members are also asked to refrain from sitting on stacked chairs. This makes separation of the chairs difficult and also damages them.

Winter Social Club at Page's Park

The Wednesday morning social club will meet for the first time this winter on Wednesday 12th 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.

Annual Club Dinner

Preparations are in hand for this which is scheduled for March 23rd 2010 at The Golf Club, Leighton Buzzard. Full details will be announced at the Annual General Meeting.

Club Clothing

Judith Cundell has been following up a lead from John Thorp concerning a potential supply of club branded

clothing such as polo shirts, fleeces, sweatshirts and caps from a local manufacturer. Details were given to members at the Doubles and Singles weekends and a number of orders were placed. There will be an opportunity at the AGM for you to see what is available and to order (cash with order).

Sports Council Secretary required

The Leighton-Linslade Sports Council is looking for a volunteer to take over the post of Secretary at the Sports Council meetings at The White House. This would involve taking the minutes at four meetings per year. Anyone interested is asked to contact Tony Wells on 01525 379107 for further information.

Thanks from David Ball

David Ball would like to thank all those kind friends who supported Jean whilst he was in hospital. They would both like to thank everyone for their kind thoughts, cards and good wishes.

The Dedicated Few

These paragraphs are a thankyou and acknowledgement to the dedicated few who make it possible for the membership to enjoy the competitions and general play at Page's Park.

When you turn up at the published start time for events, do you ever wonder how everything was set up and ready for your enjoyment? This is due to the hard work of a dedicated few who are seldom named in dispatches. Before any competition most of the following are required: clear the lawns of worms or leaves (25 minutes), set hoops (20m), erect gazebos (20m), get out tables, chairs, open the toilets, empty the rubbish bin, put up the scoring system (15m), etc. In general terms an hour at least is required, so next time you feel the need to utter a moan about getting to the lawns at 9.00am, remember that the few have already been there for an hour or so - and they also would like to be fresh and ready for the start of their games.

It's dangerous to start mentioning names as I'm sure that I will have forgotten someone - if so I'm sorry. The dedicated few are: John Thorp, Tony Wells, David and Jean Ball, Len Buckingham, Peter and Irene Davis, Peter Stevens, Malcolm Kirby, Pauline Lefrere, Roy Kemp - and yours truly JC!

Lawn Maintenance, Costs and the Future - PLEASE READ THIS!!!

A number of the above are also becoming more involved in some of the routine work to keep the lawns in a reasonable playing condition - removing rabbit runs, re-setting hoops, scarifying and irrigating the lawns, etc.

Also, of course, we are now responsible for all maintenance work on the lawns that is required during the closed season. The following should give you some idea as to what this entails: Scarification (this means removing the matted and fibrous growth to reduce the thickness of the thatch); Aeration (puncturing the surface to allow air to penetrate and create better drainage and growth); Fertilisation; Re-Seeding and Top Dressing (improve levels and playing surface).

We can do some of this work ourselves - at the end of

September five members spent eight hours over two days to scarify the three lawns, saving some £600 if we had used an outside contractor. Some of the work will have to be done by a contractor and to give you some idea of the costs involved - in round figures aeration will cost us £450, Fertilisation £180, and Top Dressing £1980! Even if we are able to carry out some of this latter work ourselves we are talking similar sums of money as buying materials in small retail quantities is expensive. On top of all this our priority for this winter is to replace the rough, poor area of lawn at the right hand side of lawn 2. This is under way and is costing us £350.

So you can very quickly realise that this annual work is expensive and requires considerable commitment from a number of members.

We have heard comment that the club is well off and why are we trying to raise money. If we were to carry out all the recommended treatments during the closed season which were previously handled by the Council, we would be looking at £3,450 per year. Our income is around £3,500 per year. 'No Problem', I hear you say! Don't forget that we have to pay the Council £1654 for 2012 (increasing by 5% annually), plus insurance via The Croquet Association at around £400.

So we have approximately £1440 per year to run the club (milk, biscuits, cakes, pavilion hire charges, membership of EACF, repairs to equipment, etc., etc.) - and what is left

can go to lawn maintenance costs - obviously not £3450!

It is only through Len Buckingham's careful financial management over the last decade that we do have a capital sum to help offset the lawn maintenance costs, and we will need to dip into this, certainly in the first few years, as we learn what is required to keep the lawns in a reasonable condition. We will probably need to purchase and maintain equipment to enable us to carry out some of the work ourselves, and obviously we need some sort of storage facility as we are rapidly running out of space in the clubroom.

A challenging time to come, but an exciting one!

Annual General Meeting

You will find an announcement concerning the AGM below. Guests are welcome to accompany members but please make them aware that they may not participate in the business part of the AGM, and also to keep information they hear during the AGM as confidential.

Members are reminded that it has been tradition for the after-meeting party to take along some buffet finger food of your choice. If you need any guidance then a call to Val Jeffers on 01296 688543 might help.

Also, we will be holding a raffle to raise funds for the club and would be pleased to receive any **good quality** items you may wish to donate. If you can help please contact Tony Stammers on 01525 757940.



Attendance Breakdown - 2011 - by Membership Secretary

Our Membership Secretary Judith Cundell has extracted the following information from the attendance sheets for 2011. There were 27 weeks of play. Figures include all matches - players, helpers and spectators.

| Sessions | Saturday | Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|---|---------------|--|-------------------------------|---------|-----------|----------------|--------------|
| Average attendance | 20 | 12 | 5 | 8 | 14 | 13 | 3 |
| Highest attendance at one session | 33 | 21* | 24* | 17 | 20 | 22 | 21* |
| | Come&Try days | | | | | | (LJB Trophy) |
| Best week was week ending 2nd September with 105 attendances (includes three Come & Try Days) | | | | | | | |
| Most attendances by members: | | | Most attendances in one week: | | | | |
| John Thorp | 118* | } Some of these were lawn maintenance | John Thorp | | | 7 | |
| John Cundell | 90* | | John Thorp | | | 6 (Four times) | |
| David Ball | 79 | | Sheila Guest | | | 6 | |
| Irene Davis | 78 | | | | | | |

All figures very approximate as we know that not everyone marks the register - please try to remember to do it. If you bring a visitor, please come at a quiet time. Although we try to be welcoming to all, it is not fair to paying members to be sitting out while beginners are being taken over the court. Also, please mark all visitors on the register as 'friend of', and log them into the Visitors Book - this is mandatory to cover us for Health & Safety. We currently are 59 members.

Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held at Northall Village Hall at 7.15 for 7.30pm on Friday 11th November 2011, 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, AGM Details, reports, 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.

And Definitely Finally...

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