



LEIGHTON-LINSLADE CROQUET CLUB

Secretary:
Roger Stroud
Corks Cottage
180 Common Road
Kensworth
Dunstable
LU6 2PJ
Tel: 01582 873793
Email: rogerstroud302@hotmail.com

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Membership Secretary:
Judith Cundell
18 Saxons Close
Leighton Buzzard
LU7 3LT
Tel: 01525 374620
Email:judith.cundell@btinternet.com

The newsletter Editor is John Cundell. Items for the newsletter can be sent to 18 Saxons Close, Leighton Buzzard, Beds LU7 3LT; or emailed to john.cundell@btinternet.com. Tel: 01525 400512 or 374620

“Mid-Summer!!”



Welcome to the third newsletter of 2013. I have managed to get around to producing an interim summer newsletter this year rather than the mammoth production at the end of last season. So without more ado let's get cracking in chronological order, beginning as usual with the Opening of the Season by the Town Mayor.

Opening Day - Hoops Away! - 6th April

A bit chilly, but also a bright and sunny afternoon, greeted some 26 members at the 2013 season's official opening ceremony. Town Mayor Councillor Alan Brandham was soon involved in playing his first ever game of croquet and it is pretty obvious from his first hoop, pictured at right, that he enjoyed the moment. Alan stayed for most of the afternoon, enjoying a couple of games, and showed a great interest in our club and our future development.

Wingrave and LLCC teams at the first event of 2013.

Wingrave Friendly 19th April - reported by Peter Cole

Our first event of the season was a friendly against Wingrave. The day started at 11am, cold and windy but dry when seven members of Wingrave arrived at Page's Park, led by Richard Keighley. Peter Stevens was asked to play for Wingrave and unfortunately played his first game, partnered with Richard Skidmore, against Roger Stroud and Peter Cole, beating the home team 7-4! Tony Stammers and Jackie Cole won 7-5 against Roy and Denny





Tony Stammers looks surprised at his excellent shot from the boundary.



High Wycombe and LLCC teams.

Bradbury; Len and Eve Buckingham won 7-4 against Jill Branham and Ken Francis; John Thorp and Roy Kemp won 7-5 against Richard Keighley and Daphne Vessey. All four pairs played each other during the day with LLCC winning the friendly by 11 games to 5.

The day was a very pleasant occasion with all enjoying the games. A special thank you to Eve Buckingham and Jean Ball for the excellent cakes provided, to David Ball, John Cundell and John Thorp who arrived early to prepare for our visitors - and John T for managing the day.

High Wycombe Friendly - 22nd April

Yet another cold day dawned for our home friendly against High Wycombe. Last year our match at Page's Park with them was 'blessed' with torrential rain, and our away return at the end of the year wasn't much better. Let's hope for better conditions when we visit HW this year.

However, despite the conditions a good day's play was enjoyed by all concerned - especially by our team which scored an impressive 14 games to 4 victory. The pairs of John Cundell and Ross Bagni; David and Jean Ball scored four wins per pair; Tony Stammers and Jackie Cole scored three wins and Una Pengelly and Erica Fogg one win.

Thanks again to all the usual helpers in preparation and cake making - and to the intrepid scorers led by Irene Davis who also braved the cold. *(See the special scorers'*

page later in this issue.)

Dunstable Friendly - 26th April

Our third Friendly within eight days once again managed to find the third cold, windy day of what was otherwise a warm spell! Dunstable arrived early and enjoyed 30 minutes learning our lawns whilst the preparations were completed by David, the two Tonys and the two Johns.

Play started at 10.00am and what followed was a very competitive four rounds where the first three were shared between the two teams. So it all came down to a nail biting last round. Wins by Pauline Lefrere/Don Barrett, Eve and Len Buckingham, and Jean Ball/Judith Pengelly sealed a close result for Leighton-Linslade with 9 wins to Dunstable's 7. Overall results by LL teams were one win apiece for the Buckinghams and Sally Clay/Tony Wells; three for Jean Ball/Judith Pengelly; and four by Pauline Lefrere/Don Barrett.

The day was rounded off with a mad dash by all concerned, including our visitors, to dismantle the gazebos before the squally winds destroyed them!

John Hobbs Visit - 27th April

John Hobbs, mallet maker, paid a visit to Page's Park following an invitation arranged by Peter Cole and Roger Stroud. Roger had invited other local clubs to attend and



Left to right: Pauline Lefrere and Don Barrett; Len and Eve Buckingham in action against Dunstable. Below: was it really that cold?!





John Hobbs, mallet maker at right, discussing his mallets with Roy Kemp, Ross Bagni, Val Jeffers, John Thorp and Florrie Jeater. also invited the visitors to play if they desired. Unfortunately the weather did not play ball – it was cold, windy and very wet for the first hour or so – however a number of hardy souls turned up from our club and from Dunstable, and at least half a dozen mallets were purchased. It was good to be able to try different lengths and types of mallet. The weather improved a little and a number of folk ventured onto the lawns. We thank John Hobbs for making the long journey from Tunbridge Wells, and for his generous contribution to club funds of £100. Also thanks to Peter and Roger, and to David Ball and both Johns for setting out the gazebos and lawns.

EACF Handicap League - LL Green v LL Yellow - 3rd May

Under the new rules for this season's EACF Handicap League matches, any club that enters two teams is requested to play the match between their teams first in the season. Accordingly Teams Yellow and Green



Green and Yellow EACF Handicap League team members after their inaugural match which ended up as a draw. Below, Roger Stroud and Margaret Lawson watch Jean Ball, partnered by Eve Buckingham in the Doubles. At right; George Lawson, Tony Wells and Malcolm Kirby study Len preparing to clear the yellow.



assembled at Page's Park on 3rd May and were greeted by the lawns at their best so far this season and also some dry, sunny weather.

The usual group of preparatory members, David, Tony W and the two Johns were ready for the teams who comprised – Yellow – Captain Malcolm Kirby with Roger Stroud, George and Margaret Lawson; and the Green team captained by Jean Ball with Tony Wells, and Len and Eve Buckingham.

Play commenced on three lawns at 10.30am and the first round resulted in wins for Jean Ball, Tony Wells and Eve Buckingham of the Green team, with one win for Yellow by George Lawson. The remaining three singles matches were halved, so with the doubles pending, the score was 9-7 to the Greens.

A pep talk from Yellow team Captain Malcolm raised the spirits and the pairings of Roger and Margaret, and Malcolm and George rallied to win both doubles, giving an overall result of nine games to each team – hence a draw. Under the new rulings we no longer have to play the dreaded 13th hoop shoot-out as previous years. For 2013 if there is a draw the two teams share the points – gaining one apiece. There are two points for a win and none for a loss. So in a way a good result for the LLCC teams who are obviously well balanced.

Mix 'n Match Doubles Handicap - 11th May

Initially there was an entry of 28 members for this competition. Two withdrew early on, one for another commitment and two for ill health that left us with an odd number of 23 on the day. This total required one withdrawal on the day. John C withdrew and was ably assisted by Peter Cole in running the competition.

Most competitors managed to turn up at the requested time of 8.45am to witness the draw for partners and only two mobile calls were required to make sure everyone was on their way. The players had been split into two groups for the draw, based on their handicaps, with a high handicapper playing with a low handicapper. There were some interesting combinations and the pairs were placed into one block of six and one of five.

The weather started grey and was forecast to be very blustery and with heavy showers by early afternoon. John C had arranged the format of 55 minutes per round and explained that if members got on with it and didn't drop out for extended breaks and lunch, but took these as and when they were forced to sit out until another pair was available, it would be possible to reach the final by early afternoon and perhaps miss the worse of the weather conditions. Most members were amenable to this situation,





A variety of wet weather gear in use at the Mix 'n Match Doubles Handicap,



Mix 'n Max Doubles Handicap finalists: Roy Kemp and Don Barrett beat Tom Miller and Ronnie Richardson.

however there were a small number who were not prepared to follow this procedure which necessitated in one or two pairs having to wait for upwards of 30 minutes. This then had a knock-on effect and extended the block play somewhat. Unfortunately the rain arrived on schedule so a number of games had to be played in very wet conditions.

The results of the blocks were as follows:

Block 1

- 1st Don Barrett and Roy Kemp
- 2nd Tony Wells and Pauline Lefrere
- 3rd Sheila Guest and Sally Clay
- 4th Sheila Beal and Eve Buckingham
- 5th Peter Stevens and Tony Stammers

Block 2

- 1st Tom Miller and Ronnie Richardson
- 2nd Jean Ball and Irene Davis
- 3rd Malcolm Kirby and Len Buckingham
- 4th Roger Stroud and Peter Davis
- 5th John Thorp and Deirdrea Ellins
- 6th David Ball and Jackie Cole

The final started between Don and Roy against Tom and Ronnie and suffered some very heavy downpours. The hardy four stuck with it, watched by 17 remaining competitors, to the end. Don and Roy enjoyed a good start, moving to a 6-2 lead – whereupon a fight back from Tom and Ronnie on hoops 9 and 10 cut that back to 6-4. There was a good last hoop fight on 11, which was won by an excited Don Barrett to give him and his team-mate Roy

Kemp the title by 7-4.

We should thank David, John T, Tony W and John C for setting up the lawns at 7.30am!! And also to John C and Peter Cole for running what is quite a complicated day – and to those members who stayed on and helped clear up.

Watford Friendly Away - 23rd May - reported by Malcolm Kirby

For our first away friendly match this season we visited our old friends at Watford.

The teams and results were: John Thorp and Ross Bagni (won 3 lost 1); Tony Wells and Sally Clay (won 1 lost 3); Una Pengelly and Diana Phelps (won 1 lost 3); and Peter Cole and Malcolm Kirby (won 0 lost 4). We therefore lost 11 games to 5. For most of the day the weather held , apart from a short shower at lunch time where two games had to be delayed, and lunch was taken under two very welcome gazeboes.

After lunch the sun came out and the remainder of the games were finished in sunshine. The rain held off until we were on our way to the bottom car park when the heavens opened and we arrived back at the cars cold and very wet!

The Watford team made us feel very welcome and a good day was had by all. I think someone should give Peter and Malcolm a pep talk as they were the only team not to win a single game! (*I'm sure you were being considerate to the other teams and didn't want to outshine them. JC!*)

Ladies Doubles Mix 'n Match - 1st June

The fourth year of this competition attracted a larger and keen entry of 14 ladies. We were blessed with a dry day – a little cool in the early morning, but it warmed up to a very pleasant sunny afternoon. The two Johns and David Ball were in attendance at 8.00am to set out the lawns and equipment, and promptly at 8.45am our ladies arrived for the draw which created the following pairs: Ronnie Richardson and Una Pengelly; Jean Ball and Helen Wilkinson; Irene Davis and Eve Buckingham; Peggy Kenny and Margaret Lawson; Judith Pengelly and Deirdrea Ellins; Diana Phelps and Sally Clay; and Sheila Beal and Rose Gillett. This gave a block of seven which meant each pair played six games.

All three lawns were used and as only three games could be played per round, there was no need for doubling up. A time limit of 45 minutes was imposed. John C and David Ball organised the day's play and George Lawson carried out the scoring mathematics.

By mid afternoon we had reached the last round and it was obvious from the results to date that the match between Jean Ball/Helen Wilkinson and Margaret Lawson/



Ladies Doubles Mix 'n Match entrants. Above, jump shot by Peggy Kenny.



Far left: the Ladies Doubles Mix 'n Match finalists - Margaret Lawson, winners Helen Wilkinson and Jean Ball, and Peggy Kenny. Middle: Ronnie Richardson and Una Pengelly. Above: Helen stretches for a shot.

Peggy Kenny was going to decide the winner. If Margaret and Peggy won, then they would have to play again as they would both have five wins. If Jean and Helen were winners then they would have six wins – a clean sweep. It was a hard fought game with Margaret and Peggy going straight into a good lead of 3 - 1 – however a steady fight back from Jean and Helen brought them to a 6 - 5 win.

The results were:

- 1st Jean Ball and Helen Wilkinson
- 2nd Margaret Lawson and Peggy Kenny

LL Green v Watford: left to right, Len Buckingham, Tony Wells, Jason Carley, Jean Ball, Ross Bagni, Linda Williams, George Skinner and Ron Drew.



- 3rd Ronnie Richardson and Una Pengelly
- 4th Irene Davis and Eve Buckingham
- 5th Judith Pengelly and Deidrea Ellins
- 6th Sheila Beal and Rose Gillett
- 7th Sally Clay and Diana Phelps.

It would be nice if we could raise some more interest for this competition next year as it was a very enjoyable day.

EACF Handicap League - LL Green v Watford - 7th June

The second EACF Handicap League match was the Green team playing Watford at home. A chilly start led to a bright, fairly warm day, and everything was ready for Watford's team when they arrived at 10.00am. Their team was Ron Drew, George Skinner and Linda Williams, led by team captain Jason Carley, who is the new EACF Leagues Organiser.

Our team consisted of captain Jean Ball, Tony Wells, Len Buckingham – and Ross Bagni playing his first Handicap League match. After the usual briefings and a cup of coffee all round, play got under way with the first of the four singles rounds. Early on it was obvious that this was going to be a close match. At lunch, with three rounds completed, the score was six wins for each team. A pleasant lunch break was followed by the remaining singles round – again shared. Therefore it was in to the doubles - pairings were Jean and Len playing Jason and Linda; Tony and Ross playing Ron and George. Whether it was the lunch break which was LL's undoing, we will never know, as after two very intense games that both ran out of time, Watford managed to take both doubles –



giving them a win by ten games to eight.

It was noticeable that most players were now very adept at using their extra shots which meant that 12 of the 18 games ran out of time. Players in these League matches need to think a little more about how to speed up their play – for instance move to your ball earlier and try to spend less time analysing and lining up a shot. Standing over a ball for 20 to 30 seconds each shot is not a good idea when you only have 45 minutes for the whole game.

Thanks to all the excellent members who prepared the lawns, managed the day, scored, made cakes, cleared up, etc. This was much appreciated by our visitors who remarked how lucky we are to have such an enthusiastic membership in this regard.

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

This tournament at Hunstanton on 8th June was the third GC team competition between the six counties comprising the East Anglian Croquet Federation. The teams from Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk 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



Action shots from Len Buckingham watched by Jason Carley; Ross Bagni; and Tony Wells.

first block, and were awarded two points for a win in the GMR. The winners would be the team with the most points.

The Bedfordshire team was John Cundell as Captain, David Ball, John Thorp and Roger Stroud. The lawns were in immaculate condition and the weather was somewhat chilly and quite breezy, so winter woollies were required despite it being early June! The first three rounds took from 10.00am until lunch and most teams were equally matched with wins and losses shared. The remaining two rounds were completed in the afternoon and there were many games which went to 7-5 or 7-6.

The three teams to make the Gold Medal round were Norfolk, Essex and Suffolk. We were very disappointed when we found that we missed out on the Gold Medal round by one 13th hoop loss to Suffolk!

The winners of the Gold medal round was Suffolk – a new winning county this year. Congratulations to them.

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 Suffolk team.

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. We enjoyed ourselves immensely and rounded off the day with dinner at Heacham, arriving back in LB just after 9.00pm. Next year we **will** make that Gold block!



The team from Suffolk who won this year's Inter-Counties Tournament - Martin Hart, Paul Strover, Jill Waters and Team Captain David Crawford.



League Yellow v Northampton. Above: Peter Cole and George Lawson in action. Far left: Roger Stroud watches Owen Bryce. Middle: we couldn't resist Roger in 'pointing mode'. Left: Was it really that tiring for John Cundell, Malcolm Kirby and John Thorp?

EACF Handicap League - LL Yellow v Northampton - 10th June

The second EACF Handicap League match for the Yellow team was against Northampton at home on Monday 10th June. Northampton team was Owen Bryce, David Snowden, Daphne Reed and Les Heard. Our team was Roger Stroud, George Lawson, Tony Stammers and Peter Cole.

Weather again was chilly and overcast, but at long last the wind had gone away! The first three singles rounds were very well played by our team with ten wins against Northampton's two. This meant that with a total of 18 games to be played overall, the Yellow team could not be beaten. However after lunch, Northampton staged a spirited fight back and scored three from four in the last singles round, and halved the doubles.

Individual results for our players were George Lawson (4 wins), Tony Stammers (3), Roger Stroud (2), and Peter Cole (2). So an excellent win for the Yellow team by 12 games to six. Team Captain Malcolm Kirby, who was on hospital driving duty earlier in the day, arrived during the doubles matches and remarked at the close of play that perhaps he should stay away in future!

Thanks to all the excellent members who prepared the lawns, managed the day, scored, made cakes, cleared up, etc. This was again much appreciated by our visitors.

EACF Level Play League - LLCC v Chelmsford - 14th June

This was the first of our EACF Level play matches for 2013 and was against Chelmsford & Bentley at home. The visitors made it for 10.00am after their long journey around the M25, and after a welcome drink and the briefing, play commenced with the first round of singles on a chilly but dry day.

Our team was John Cundell, Roger Stroud, John Thorp and David Ball – playing against John Skuse, Judith Hand, Anne Skuse and Bob Jones from Chelmsford. After

a somewhat shaky start at 4-1 down John Cundell managed a fight back against Judith Hand, who makes some very impressive jump shots, to win on the 13th hoop. There were also wins for John Thorp and David Ball – however Roger lost to John Skuse on the 13th hoop after a hard fought game.

The second round followed the same pattern, but in round three the Leighton-Linslade team managed a clean sweep, so at lunch we were leading by 10 games to 2. We then enjoyed a similar 4-0 win in round 4, and shared the two doubles games. So the overall result was a very pleasing win by 15 games to 3.

We would thank the cake makers and particularly the scorers. The graceful losers remarked how much they enjoyed our hospitality and especially our scoring system which was much appreciated.

Club Singles Handicap - 15th June

All three lawns were green and in excellent condition as the two Johns and David Ball arrived shortly after 7.30am to set out the three gazeboes and hoops for this year's competition. As per last issue this event was plagued with an extremely windy and in the afternoon, a very wet



Level play against Chelmsford. Bob Jones, Judith Hand, John Cundell, David Ball, John Thorp, John Skuse, Roger Stroud, Anne Skuse.



John Cundell plays an air shot, watched by John Skuse in the Chelmsford Level Play match. David Ball plays his shot, watched by Bob Jones. Right: George watching the timekeeping and John working out the handicaps. Thanks to George for looking after the scoring at many of this season's matches.

session which made the day somewhat challenging.

All 23 competitors arrived on time, and play was under way by 9.15am on all three lawns. The 23 players were drawn into four blocks, three of six and one of five. This was our largest entry for this competition and resulted in over 50 games to be played. This challenging task of organisation was taken on by Judith Cundell, and as it was necessary to time the games to a 40 minute limit, the latter was made possible by the sterling services of Martin Field and Peter Cole in some quite nasty conditions at times.

Play continued at a good speed into the early afternoon until the heavens opened, and after a few minutes we had three flooded lawns! Lawn 3 was the worse so play continued on the other two lawns to complete the blocks. The semi-finalists from the blocks were determined firstly by the number of wins, then by who beat whom – John Thorp to play Judith Pengelly and Tom Miller against Len Buckingham. John won 7-3, and Tom beat Len by 7-4.

The hardy dozen or so players who had not departed due to the conditions watched an excellent final with some fine play from both John and Tom, with John Thorp eventually



winning by 7 games to 5.

Due to the ever-increasing entry numbers for this competition, we need to consider a different set-up for the future. It is impossible to cater for such a large entry in one day without compromising the concept of handicap



Club Singles Handicap winner John Thorp and runner-up Tom Miller. Above: semi finalists Len Buckingham and Tom Miller dressed for the conditions. Other semi-finalists were John Thorp and Judith Pengelly.



Right: Deirdrea Ellins plays her shot whilst Diana Phelps looks on; Peter Ross and Don Barrett deep in conversation.



Friendly against Letchworth. Above, left to right; George and Margaret Lawson watch David Russell taking his shot; David Ball and Judith consider what to do next; Roy Kemp and Don Barrett in action. Below: fifteen of the sixteen friendly players - unfortunately Judith Pengelly had to dash off before the rains stopped and gave us the opportunity for this photograph.



play by having to impose a time limit that is too short and does not allow for slow play. Accordingly this competition will have to take place over two days – then we can play with timed games of at least 60 minutes and cut down the number of games per person on each day to a less hectic arrangement. We know that croquet is an all-weather game but there are times when the deluge needs to be avoided and that is not possible with a tight schedule.

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

This competition requires a team of four who play level in the following format: the two strongest players in handicap play a doubles and the other pair play their opposite numbers in singles; after lunch the morning singles pair swop opponents and the morning doubles pair play their opposite numbers in singles. All games are best of three.

We had been drawn against Kenilworth in the first round. We had played them in the 2011 tournament and were fortunate to win on their lawns. This year it was their turn to come to Page's Park. They arrived promptly at 10.00am to find our three lawns in good condition and on an unusually fine and slightly warmer day for a change this June.

Our team was John Cundell (4), David Ball (4), John Thorp (4) and Roger Stroud (4), therefore as we were all playing off 4, we had the luxury of choosing which pair should play the morning doubles. John C and David took on Adrian Morris (2) and Philip Wood (3) and could not find their winning form from the previous Friday's level play match against Chelmsford. They lost their first two games 7-3 and 7-2. Fortunately John Thorp won against Clifford Daniel (5) and Roger Stroud beat Peter Dennis (4), so at lunch Leighton-Linslade were winning 2-1.

After lunch the four singles were played – again John C was in poor form and lost against Adrian Morris, however David, John T and Roger all won their singles in impressive form, therefore the overall result was an encouraging win by 5 games to 2.

There was an hour or so left before the Kenilworth team made their journey homewards, so an impromptu couple of friendlies were played by Kenilworth with our players and also with our scorers – a nice gesture which was enjoyed by all.

Our quarter final match will be against Nottingham who have beaten Woodhall Spa.

Thanks to George Lawson for looking after the paperwork and to our scorers, Peter Stevens, Ann Rowe, Judith Cundell, Jean Ball – and to cakes provided by Jean Ball and Margaret Lawson which were much appreciated by the visitors.

Thanks from Kenilworth

Dear John

Thank you, on behalf of all my team, for your excellent hospitality and organisation for the match. You made us very welcome, and it was nice to mix up and have some



friendly games at the end. We were most impressed by your cricket style scoreboards - and the loyalty of your scorers to spend all that time helping.

Good luck in the rest of the competition!

Philip Wood

Letchworth Friendly Home - 21st June

For our home friendly with Letchworth we were promised a changeable day with a little drizzle in the morning and perhaps a shower in the afternoon. We must have upset the weather gods as the 'drizzle' was heavy and continuous for an hour or so shortly after the Letchworth team arrived – and after a clear spell during midday, it returned with a vengeance during the last round. However this did not put a damper on what was an enjoyable and closely fought day as we renewed old rivalries.

For a change it had been agreed by John Thorp and Letchworth's Tracy Martin that we would play the normal doubles setup with four rounds, however these would be played as handicap matches. This worked very well as the results testify.

Our team was David Ball/Judith Pengelly, Don Barrett/Roy Kemp, George and Margaret Lawson, and Diana Phelps/Deidrea Ellins. Letchworth's pairs were David Russell/Sue Bathmaker, Ann Baker/Colin Gregory, Ray Scroggins/ Tracy Martin and Susan Brooks/Peter Ross.

The first round produced three wins for Leighton-Linslade – then it was about turn as round two resulted in three wins for Letchworth. After lunch, both rounds were halved, therefore the result was a draw.

A pleasant tea and cakes followed, to round off an enjoyable day.

The usual thanks to all concerned.

B-Level at Wrest Park - 22nd June

This, the third B-Level Play Singles tournament to be held at Wrest Park – organised by Richard Keighley and managed on the day by Geoff Strutt, was the very first tournament to be played on Wrest Park's new lawns. There are currently two lawns with a further two under preparation. The present two are relatively level and cut very similar to our lawns, but are inevitably a little bumpy in places and have suffered some damage from local wildlife – presumably rabbits. However for new lawns and considering the dreadful winter, one can only admire the dedication and work effort by members of the Wrest Park club to get them even to this stage. They are situated

The new Wrest Park lawns. Pavilion and car parking at the right. This is lawn 1. There is another lawn to the right and two more are in preparation. Left: winner Ian Norris from Phyllis Court watches Leicester's David Bell take a shot.

immediately after the bridge across the A6 as you enter Wrest Park. One turns left and parks adjacent to the old pavilion and the lawns are just beyond the pavilion. Previous visitors to Wrest Park will appreciate the close parking and the fact that there are toilet facilities in the pavilion!

Ten players arrived at WP at 9.15am and after the necessary coffee and briefing, play commenced just before 10.00am. The players were split into two blocks. There were four participants from Leighton-Linslade – David Ball (4), Jean Ball (5), John Cundell (4) and John Thorp (3); John Edwards (3) from Cheltenham, David Bell (3) from Leicester, Colin Green (3) and Alison Heywood-Hill (6) from Tyneside, Mike Hills (3) from Northampton, and Ian Norris (4) from Phyllis Court. The two blocks of five played each other until just after lunch, then manager Geoff Strutt analysed the results to produce a series of play-off games to find the winners. The final results were a win on the 13th hoop for Ian Norris over David Bell whilst David Ball took third after beating John Cundell. John Thorp was fourth, Mike Hills from Northampton fifth and Jean Ball sixth.

So a new era starts at Wrest Park after over 50 years on the old lawns, and it was nice to be a part of this.



CONGRATULATIONS

We are sure all members will join us in extending our warmest congratulations to Martin and Pauline Field (formerly Lefrere) who were married in Sienna, Italy at the end of May.



A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SCORERS

Thanks to you all who sat out in all weathers. Many teams remark on our scoring system which is envied and appreciated. A big thank you to Irene Davis for her organisation.



JOHN GUEST 1936 - 2013

Our friend John Guest died on 15th May, after a long battle against ill health.

John joined the club in 2008, however it wasn't long before he was a very enthusiastic member, initially enjoying social play. He started competitive play in friendlies in 2009, and entered the club singles and doubles championships at the end of the year. John's technique was to hit the ball hard and long, scoring many long hoops to his considerable enjoyment.

In 2010 he joined the Handicap League team and played a number of the rounds – with a particularly good result at Watford where he beat one of their top players – and he was in the team that enjoyed a win against Northampton. 2011 continued in a similar vein, with John taking part in Friendlies and League matches, enjoying a fine win over Northampton by 12 games to 6.



John and Sheila enjoying a moment at a Fun Day event.



John Guest and John Thorp after their epic battle at Newport B-Level Singles. Below: enjoying a game of Petanque at a club Garden Party.

In 2012, John's game improved considerably following some friendly advice from one or two members that he should resist the JG Long Shot and play a little more tactically. This immediately bore fruit and John and David Ball won their block in the Mix 'n Match Doubles Handicap. John started entering open competitions and enjoyed the experience of the Wrest Park singles – following which he and Sheila entered the first EACF High Handicap Singles tournament at Bury St. Edmunds, and after a fine day's play, he emerged as the Champion. Then in the B-Level Singles event at Newport, John played some excellent croquet to reach the final, losing to a very in-form John Thorp. John played at Hunstanton, Watford and Stony Stratford, the 70+ Trophy, High Wycombe – and both the Club Singles and Doubles to round off a busy year.

He was so looking forward to 2013 – defending his EACF Singles win and playing in all sorts of events. We will so miss his humour, his friendly disposition and he was always willing to help in many ways.

John's funeral at Crownhill Creamatorium was attended by friends from his Masonic Lodge, and a strong contingent from our club. Our condolences go to Sheila and family.

Thank You from John's Daughters

To everyone at the croquet club.

Thank you so much for all your cards and donations following John's death. It was lovely to see so many at John's funeral – a send off he would have appreciated. Together we have raised nearly £650. Thank you for supporting Sheila during this difficult time.

Beverley and Debbie

