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NEWSLETTER - OCTOBER 2014 Volume 15 Issue 4

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“2014 Season Round-up”

Welcome to the fourth newsletter of 2014. This final publication for 2014 covers the period starting 19th July.

Middlesbrough B-Level Tournament - 19th July

David and Jean Ball attended one of the more distant B-Level Tournaments when they travelled to Middlesbrough. The weather was rather damp and humid for much of the day.

The twelve players were put into a Swiss draw and after the first two rounds the leaderboard looked like it would produce an outright winner fairly easily, and by lunchtime David and Jean had edged ahead of Margaret Cowman from Ripon Spa.

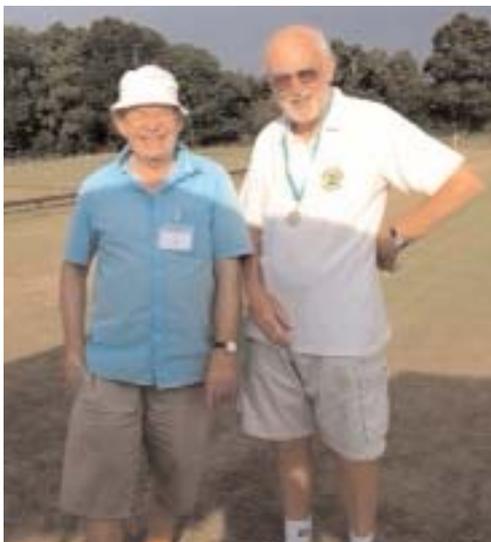
Unfortunately David and Jean's progress slipped a little and by the end of the day the results showed Margaret Cowman and Colin Green from Tyneside both with five wins out of six and 38 hoop points scored, so a playoff was required and won by Colin Green. David ended up third and Jean was fifth.

Well done to both for waving the LLCC flag in one of the most northern clubs we have yet visited – only Belsay Hall, north of Newcastle, is the most distant club we have played at – an Inter-Club Shield round back in 2010.

Hamptworth B-Level - 26th July

The next B-Level that some of our members attended was at Hamptworth near Southampton. Ross Bagni supplied the transport on a very hot day for John Cundell, John Thorp and Richard Keighley. Departing at 6.30am we arrived at Hamptworth Golf and Country Club at 9.00am – perfectly timed for the briefing.

There are five lawns in a pleasant setting in a vale below



John Cundell displays his 'gold' medal for second place at the Hamptworth B-Level Tournament - presented by organiser Richard Jenkins. Photo: Ross Bagni.

the golf clubhouse. The lawns were cut extremely short and were very fast which made positioning a bit of a lottery. There were 16 players drawn into four heats of four. These blocks were to be played before lunch. Our players were all in separate blocks. Some of the blocks were completed within a couple of hours – however others took until around 2.00pm! John Thorp won his block; Richard and John C were runners up in theirs.

After lunch, play restarted at 3.00pm! The weather was even hotter with hardly a breath of wind. The first and second players in each round played their opposite numbers from different blocks as quarter finalists. John C and Richard Keighley were successful and got through to the semi finals. They were then drawn to play one another. John C was more fortunate with lawn positioning than Richard and won 7-3 to get through to the final. Richard was to play Kath Wright for third and fourth places.

John C was playing Chris Heath from Guildford and Godalming club, The match see-sawed from one hoop to the next with both players really struggling to gain positions on the unpredictable lawn surface. Chris managed a fine hoop jawsing on the 12th and both John's balls were in no position to remove or jump him – Chris winning 7-5.

Richard Keighley scored a good win over Kath Wright.

By now it was approaching 6.30pm – a long, hot day – as organiser Richard Jenkins announced the results. First was Chris Heath from Guildford and Godalming – John C was second, Richard was third. In the play offs that had been continuing during the quarters, semis and final, John T finished 7th and Ross Bagni 11th.

At this stage of the season we had David Ball and John Cundell qualified for the October National Final.

Wingrave v Phyllis Court - 25th July

Wingrave CC play in the Southern Croquet Federation's Handicap League North against Blewbury, Dogmersfield, High Wycombe and two Phyllis Court teams. As they only have one lawn, Wingrave have to play all their home games 'away'. Obviously somewhat of a disadvantage. Therefore in 2013 they hired our lawns for their home match against High Wycombe, and decided to repeat the process against Phyllis Court this year.

The Southern Federation's competition is rather different from our EACF Handicap League as there are four doubles games and only eight singles. The other major change to our format is a 13.00 hours start. This was somewhat delayed as Phyllis Court players were delayed by traffic, and with untimed games, play didn't finish until the early evening! Wingrave's Richard Keighley sent in the following letter of thanks.

Dear John,

On behalf of the Wingrave team, many thanks to all concerned for allowing us to play our League match at Page's Park on 25th July.

We were naturally delighted to record our first win against a Phyllis Court team, who have been ruling the roost for some years.

Particular thanks to you and John Thorp for all the setting up and preparations for our visit, and also to Sheila Beal and Peter and Jackie Cole for kindly acting as scorers in what proved to be a very long afternoon/early evening.

Leighton-Linslade well deserves its excellent reputation for generous hospitality and Friday was yet another example of this.

Thanks and best wishes from us all.

Richard Keighley

Northampton Friendly Away - 29th July

As Northampton enjoyed themselves so much at their Friendly with us at Page's Park a few weeks previously, they suggested a quick return match which was arranged by Northampton's Marilyn Robinson and John Thorp.

Therefore on another lovely warm and sunny day the following pairs made their way to Northampton's fine lawns - John Thorp/Ross Bagni, John Cundell/Jackie Cole, Malcolm Kirby/Peter Cole and Roger Stroud/Una Pengelly.

We arrived to a warm welcome with everything set out and ready for action. The first round of handicapped doubles was a great one for us as we won all four games. Round two was also pretty successful for LL as we won three of the four matches, with just Northampton's Les Heard/Jayne Stevens winning.

A very pleasant lunch was taken in the beautiful grounds of St. Andrew's Hospital - following which, round three was a better one for Northampton as the games were shared. An even more successful improvement in round three for Northampton gave them three wins.

We adjourned to tea and a superb selection of cakes

Winners of Group A at the U3A Fun Day were (l to r) Roy Kemp and Peggy Kenny. Group B winners were Wendy Smith and John Boon.



rounded off a very enjoyable friendly - even better for us when Marilyn Robinson announced that we had won by ten games to six.

Dunstable U3A Fun Day - 28th July - reported by Ronnie Richardson

The first thing John Cundell greeted me with for the Dunstable U3A Fun Day was 'at least you've got a sunny day this year' - famous last words!

The teams were as follows:

Group A

Ann Elmett and John Wright
Peggy Kenny and Roy Kemp
Alan Morris and Kay Hudgell
Ursula Brennan and Don Barrett
Pauline Morris and Barbara Steurs

Group B:

Ann Warren and Florrie Jeater
Ronnie Richardson and Ray Kirby
Gean Carmen and Eileen Southern
John Clancy and Peter Hudgell
John Boon and Wendy Smith.

We played three matches and then stopped for lunch, John Wright and Ann Elmett had made delicious cakes for us to enjoy. Two more matches after lunch and the group winners were announced. Winners of Group A were Peggy Kenny and Roy Kemp with 27 hoops and winners of Group B were John Boon and Wendy Smith with 33 points.

As the final started, just as John C had predicted, down came the rain but it did not dampen the players. The match went to the 13th hoop and the victors were Peggy and Roy. Last year's winner Ursula Brennan presented the winners with their cups. Peggy and Ursula won last year.

All matches were very close; one couple, Ursula and Don, managed 12 hoops in 30 minutes, which was a great achievement.

Our thanks again to LB for making us very welcome, putting up the gazebos and supplying us with tea and biscuits. My personal thanks to Peter Cole for an excellent

Last year's winner Ursula Brennan presented Roy Kemp and Peggy Kenny with the winners' cups. Photos: Ronnie Richardson.





EACF Handicap League against Stony Stratford - left, Ross Bagni watches as Val Jeffers clears away. Right, Sally Clay runs the hoop, watched by her partner Jean Ball.



job as timekeeper and keeping us in order. We look forward to coming again next year.

EACF Handicap League - Stony Stratford - Home - 4th August

Our final Handicap League match was against Stony Stratford on a warm, calm day. All was ready for play by 10.00am – preparation work by the two John's, David Ball and Ross Bagni. Stony's all male team arrived promptly and play soon got under way. This was to be a tense day as a win would just about keep LLCC in the hunt for the Western Division title. Our team consisted of our joint team captains, Jean Ball and Ross Bagni, with Val Jeffers and Sally Clay making up the four. Stony Stratford's team was Alfred Sawbridge, Steve Barber, Robert Chipperfield and John Burridge.

The first round went to Stony with three wins out of four. Our team got their act together and it was their turn to take three wins in round two. With the tension rising, a nervous round three was halved.

Lunch was taken and round four was well under way when a light rain shower arrived. By the time the players had donned their rain gear, the sun came out again! Play continued and ended up with the teams sharing this round also. Therefore going in to the final two doubles games the score was 8-8.

Jean Ball and Sally Clay took on Steve Barber and John Burridge, whilst the other game was between Ross Bagni and Val Jeffers playing Alfred Sawbridge and Robert Chipperfield. The latter game was fairly straightforward for Ross and Val who were well within the 60 minute time limit by 7-4. The other game ran out of time with Jean and Sally leading by six hoops to two. A close win for Leighton-Linslade.

This win puts LLCC at the top of the Western Division League with seven points – closely followed by Stony Stratford and Watford with six points each. Unfortunately they still have to play one another and a win by either will give them the title. However a draw means that the decision as to the overall winning team will depend on net hoops difference over the whole season between LLCC and Watford, as we beat Stony and we drew with Watford. Watch this space!

Once again thanks to the scorers, Ann Rowe, Sheila Beal, John Thorp, Roger Stroud and Florrie Jeater – and also thanks to the cake makers – Val Jeffers, Jean Ball and Eve Buckingham.



John Fogg Trophy - 9th August

This annual competition is for mens' doubles where the pairs are chosen by draw at the start of the day's play. As per the ladies' competition earlier this year the entry was very disappointing. Only ten members entered, way down on last year's 16 entries. They had made their way to a

Erica Fogg presents The John Fogg Trophy to John Thorp and Roy Kemp - runners up were Richard Keighley and Peter Cole.

sunny, breezy Page's Park for the 9.45am draw. The players were drawn from two groups - one of low, the other of high handicap players. The resulting pairs were John Cundell/George Lawson, David Ball/ Malcolm Kirby, Richard Keighley/Peter Cole, John Thorp/Roy Kemp, and Roger Stroud/Don Barrett. Just two lawns were used, allowing regular Saturday social players to enjoy Lawn 3.

Three rounds were completed before lunch and the remaining two rounds after lunch. The results of the block gave a clear win to the pairing of John Thorp and Roy Kemp with four wins. John Cundell and George Lawson had a pretty lean day with zero wins, whilst the remaining three teams all finished with two wins each. It was impossible to split them by the 'who beat whom' rule, therefore the net index points method was called into play. This gave fourth place to Roger Stroud and Don Barrett; third were David Ball and Malcolm Kirby; the runners up were Richard Keighley and Peter Cole.

Erica Fogg presented the John Fogg Trophy to John and Roy - well done.

Thanks to the two Johns, David Ball, Roger Stroud and Roy Kemp for setting up the lawns, etc. It was a very pleasant day's play and it is difficult to understand why this type of mix 'n match competition is not popular with the rest of the membership.

EACF Level League - Chelmsford - Away - 12th August

This match was initially scheduled on an earlier Friday in July but was postponed due to violent thunderstorms overnight and temperatures in the low 30s. The original team of John Cundell, John Thorp, Roger Stroud and Richard Keighley had an uneventful journey around the M25 and the A12 to the two fine lawns at Chelmsford and Bentley Croquet Club which is sited at Writtle in Essex.

After a lovely welcome from Anne and John Skuse including tea and coffee, we soon started on the first round of singles which resulted in an excellent four out of four wins for LLCC. In round two the four games were halved, however the third round was another clean sweep for LLCC. Lunch was taken and round four was shared, therefore at the end of the

DavidBall lines up his winning shot by the 11th hoop.



singles we were leading by 12 games to four.

The doubles pairings were the two Johns, and Roger Stroud with Richard Keighley. The latter duo enjoyed a straightforward win against Judith Hand and Anne Skuse by 7-3. The two Johns were 0-4 down but fought back to 5-5, only to lose the 11th hoop. A long tussle on the 12th hoop ended with John T running the hoop. So to the 13th - John Skuse was short - John T was very long (in the hedge), Tony Frewin was also short and John C almost on the boundary. John T cleared John Skuse and Tony Frewin went for a good positional shot. John C had to make a choice and decided to go for the hoop with a relatively slow approach shot which found its way into and through the hoop. Two doubles wins therefore for LLCC gave an overall score for the match of 14 games to LLCC and four to Chelmsford & Bentley.

A lovely tea of home-made cakes finished off an excellent day and even the journey home around the notorious M25 was uneventful!

Enfield Friendly Away - 15th August

Unfortunately we do not have a report for this match. Our players were John Thorp, Caroline Stroud, Roger Stroud, Peggy Kenny, Diana Phelps, Val Jeffers, Roy Kemp and Sally Clay. The result was a good win by Enfield by 13 games to 3.

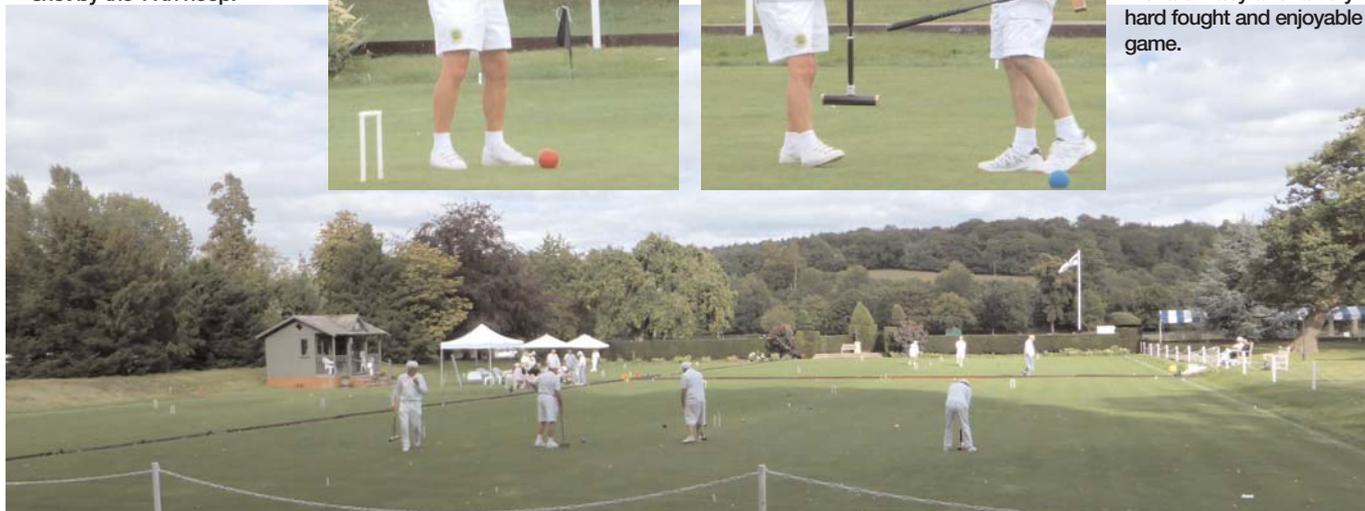
Phyllis Court B-Level - 15/16th August

This was the third B-Level tournament to be organised by Phyllis Court, a club in the Southern Federation based at The Phyllis Court Members' Club at Henley on Thames – a country club of distinction which enjoys a splendid location on the bank of the River Thames opposite the finishing line of the famous Royal Regatta Course.

This year we had four entrants from LLCC, David Ball, Jean Ball, John Cundell and Richard Keighley. This was Jean's first visit. We travelled to Henley along the narrow and beautiful Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire lanes, arriving in good time for the morning briefing.

The 16 entries from eight different clubs ranging in handicaps from three to eight were briefed by

David shakes hands with Richard Raby after a very hard fought and enjoyable game.





At Phyllis Court, Richard Keighley plays for the hoop. Right: Jean Ball takes aim watched by Richard Peperell from Phyllis Court, whilst in the background David Ball is playing Richard Raby from Worcester.



managers Chris Roberts and Frances Colman. We were to play all other players which meant eight games on Friday and seven on Saturday. These were untimed level play games and even with this very large number of games, with many going to the 12th or 13th hoops, the excellent organisation by Chris Roberts and Frances Colman resulted in two very pleasant days of competition with an equally pleasant and friendly group of players.

At the end of day one, just after 6.00pm, Richard Raby from Worcester had a commanding lead with all his eight games won – second at this stage was David Ball, closely followed by Jean, and with John and Richard on five wins.

So on to Sunday and an equally good day as far as weather was concerned – broken sunshine and not too hot. Play continued efficiently and by lunchtime it was obvious that Richard Raby could not be beaten as he had still not lost a game with 12 wins out of the 15 to be played. His nearest contenders were our David and Jean Ball. David lost a little ground and ended the day with nine wins. Richard Raby continued his march to winning Smokey's Cup, however he was not to enjoy a clean sweep, as the last game of the day between him and David resulted in a superb battle with some very impressive croquet, and David took the winning 12th hoop with a fantastic shot

A happy group of Dunstable CC players waiting for the rain to stop!
Right: winners Ronnie Richardson and Ann Elmett - in the sunshine!

from close to hoop 11!

However Jean Ball had been making steady progress as the day went on, and quietly moved up to amass 12 wins, earning her a very creditable second place. David Ball and Richard Keighley finished with nine wins, with David beating Richard hence finishing third. Richard was fourth and John Cundell finished sixth after losing to Durham's Andrew Carpenter in their last match of the day.

Hopefully, Jean's six points for second place will go towards her qualifying for the Golf Croquet B-Level National Final at Hamptworth in October – David and John having already qualified by their respective wins at Colchester and Hunstanton.

Dunstable CC Fun Day - 14th August - reported by Ronnie Richardson

I am sure everyone has heard of the film 'The Rain Man' starring Dustin Hoffman. I have decided to change my name from 'Ronnie Richardson' to 'Rain Woman' as every time I have booked Leighton Buzzard's lawns either for U3A or Dunstable Croquet Club Fun Days it always rains! This has happened every time this year – I will get someone else to choose the dates for next year so I do not get the blame!

Twenty-four members of Dunstable Croquet Club enjoyed the first three games in sunny weather, although we kept



looking in the distance to see a very large dark cloud heading our way, but luckily when the rain, thunder and lightning started we were having our lunch, although some people did get a bit wet under the awning.

The last two games did start off in damp conditions, but luckily the rain had gone over in time for the final.

The winners of Group A were John Wright and John Boon who played the winners of Group B, Ann Elmett and Ronnie Richardson. This meant a grudge match with the girls playing the boys!

The winners were Ann Elmett and Ronnie Richardson who won 7-3 in an exciting final.

Our thanks once again to members of LLCC for putting up the gazebos and many thanks to Dierdrea Ellins who made numerous cups of coffee, and supplied cakes to keep us refreshed during the day. Two of our members also made cakes, which we all enjoyed. LL members always make us most welcome and we look forward to coming next year – in brilliant sunshine this time!

Watford Friendly - 18th August

A rather cool and blustery day greeted the two Johns as they prepared the lawns and equipment for Watford's return friendly visit. Unfortunately, Watford had got through to an important championship event on the same day therefore they could only raise a team of six rather than the usual eight. We therefore agreed to loan two of our members to make up the Watford team - John Thorp playing with Maureen Croft and Una Pengelly playing with Anne Dennis.

Play started at 10.30 am - the LLCC pairs were John Cundell/Val Jeffers, Roger Stroud/Florrie Jeater, Roy Kemp/Diana Phelps, and Caroline Stroud/Peggy Kenny. Watford's teams were the two pairs as mentioned above plus Hazel Archer/Linda Williams, and Valerie Cambridge/Brenda Theobald.

The first round was shared with wins by John C/Val and by Roger and Florrie. Round two was a repeat for our first round winners plus a good result for Roger and Florrie. After lunch and dodging one of the fast moving showers, round three was shared - this time with wins for Roy/Diana and Roger and Florrie. Into round four - and the two Johns finished their games very quickly - John

Thorp/Maureen Croft for Watford - and John C/Val with a clean 7-0 win. Roger/Florrie enjoyed a good win, therefore the last round was shared. The final result was a close win for Leighton-Linslade by nine games to seven.

A fine spread of cakes from Val Jeffers, Jean Ball and Eve Buckingham was enjoyed by all - although John C's call for a group photograph was interrupted by a very heavy shower! Despite the weather, a very enjoyable day for all concerned. It was even more enjoyable as news filtered through that Watford had won against Bowden CC in the final of the Golf Croquet Inter-Club Championship. Great cheers all round from Watford and Leighton-Linslade players.

High Wycombe Friendly Away - 19th August

The third friendly in five days was to the new lawns at High Wycombe. They lost the use of their previous location in High Wycombe a couple of years ago and their new lawns are at Hazlemere Recreation Ground, Amersham Road, Hazlemere. They have received considerable help from their local Council and now have two excellent lawns surrounded by a high all metal security fence, and including automatic irrigation – plus the use of a nearby sports centre.

We were warmly welcomed on what was a cold morning for mid August which necessitated wearing jumpers, fleeces and wet gear for most of the morning. Our teams were John Cundell/Diana Phelps, Roger Stroud/Una Pengelly/ John Thorp/Ross Bagni and Malcolm Kirby/Jean



Below: the Watford and Leighton-Linslade teams had a great day despite the torrential downpours - witness the Niagara Falls overflow testing out one of our gazebos.



Ball. There were two rounds before lunch and two after. The first two rounds resulted in wins for three of our teams with only John C and Diana not finding their form. Lunch obviously invigorated us as both afternoon rounds resulted in clean sweeps for all our four teams. The overall result was a win for Leighton-Linslade by 14 games to two. Many of the games were close with a number of 7-6 results.

The weather had improved in the mid afternoon and after tea and cakes and pleasant social conversation, we departed for home – all of us agreeing how fortunate High Wycombe are in their superb new facility.

EACF Level Play League - Enfield - 22nd August

Our fourth match this season was against Enfield. Our team consisted of John Thorp (3), David Ball (2), Richard Keighley (4) and John Cundell (4). The Enfield team was led by David Frost (3) – the other three players were Brian Dawes (3), Tony Elliott (4) and John Street (5).

Enfield arrived just a few minutes after 10.00am and play commenced at 10.30am. The first round was almost a clean sweep for Enfield apart from John Thorp making a very good win against David Frost. Round two was a complete reversal with three wins for us with only David Frost beating David Ball. So all square at this stage with four games each. The third round reverted to another 3-1 win for Enfield – with once again John Thorp holding up the LLCC cause.

A pleasant lunch break was taken before the last round of singles and guess what – another 3-1 win – this time for LLCC. The scoreline was now eight games apiece – so all depended on the doubles. John C and John Thorp took on David Frost and John Street and after a see-saw match, both pairs arrived at the 13th hoop. After a tense struggle, John C ran the hoop. On the other lawn Richard Keighley and David Ball were playing Brian Dawes and Tony Elliott. After a long match with a number of hard fought hoops, Richard and David won 7-4. A good result for LLCC by 10 games to 8.

Thanks to David and the two Johns for setting up the equipment, to Roger Stroud for managing the paperwork and scoring, also to Sheila Beal and Jean Ball for scoring and looking after hospitality to our visitors – and to Val Jeffers, Jean Ball and Eve Buckingham for supplying the cakes.

A good result – next and last team to be played will be Northampton.

EACF Level League - Northampton - 29th August

Our last Level Play match of the season was against Northampton, one of the strongest teams in the League. They obviously meant business as their team consisted of Les Heard (2), Peter Stansfield (2), Mike Hills (1) and Lionel Tibble (-1)

Our team members - John Thorp, David Ball, John Cundell and Roger Stroud had set up the lawns, gazebos etc., and were ready for Northampton as they arrived shortly before 10.00am. Play commenced after the requisite practise and the first round was a clean sweep for Northampton, although there were two 13th hoop games. Round two went the same way - only this time there were three games which went to the 13th hoop.

In the third round John T managed a win against Peter

High Wycombe and Leighton-Linslade players. Below, panoramic view of the superb new facility at High Wycombe - two fine lawns and securely fenced all round.



Stansfield, and after lunch both John C and David Ball gained wins against Mike Hills and Peter Stansfield. If only we had all managed to win those 13th hoop games!

The two doubles were wins for Northampton, therefore the overall result was a good result for Northampton by 15 games to three.

Thanks are due to Jean Ball, Peggy Kenny and Diana Phelps for scoring on what was a very blustery day - and to Val Jeffers, Eve Buckingham and Jean Ball for the cakes which were much enjoyed by us and our visitors.

Garden Party and Fun Day

A number of members had expressed disappointment at the loss of the Garden Party and Fun Day and it was suggested that we combine these into an event at Page's Park in late Summer, and on a day when there was no cricket in order that we can make use of the pavilion kitchen.

The agreed date was 6th September and it is pleasing to report that this turned out to be one of the best social events we have had for many years. Even the weather played its part with a late Summer warm, dry and calm day.

Over 50 members and friends came along and enjoyed

Just some of the fun at the Garden Party/Fun Day. Below: Ross Bagni and Sheila (not in pic), and Sally Clay with Rose Gillett won the jumping hoops competition. Below right: Richard Keighley shows some impressive 'French' style throwing in petanque. Middle left: after lunch it was time for the raffle draw. Middle right: Julie and Nigel Clark (Nigel made all our scoring stands for us several years ago), enjoy an introductory game of croquet with Len Buckingham and Len's grand daughter Verity. Bottom: some of the members and friends.

six hours of convivial fun, croquet and food. The latter was a sit down cold meal with meats, coronation chicken, pork pie, salad, followed by some excellent deserts and a superb cheese board - all beautifully and expertly prepared by Val Jeffers, Jean Ball and Eve Buckingham.

There was fun and games on Lawn One run by David Ball before lunch, croquet on the other two lawns, plus petanque, shove h'penny, jenga. etc., and Tony Stammers operated a raffle from within Peter Cole's marquee.

A considerable interest was shown by many of the friends in having a go at croquet and we are more than hopeful that this will result in some welcome new members for next season.

An excellent day that appeared to be enjoyed by all. Thanks are due to many members for helping make this day a great success. The following members have expressed their thanks in writing and email - Ross and Sheila Bagni, Sally Clay, Jackie and Peter Cole, Irene and Peter Davis, Deidrea Ellins, Richard Keighley and Roger and Caroline Stroud.

Letchworth Friendly - 8th September

Our last Friendly this year was a return match against Letchworth. A glorious warm and sunny day with no wind





A glorious Autumn day was much enjoyed by our visitors from Letchworth CC at the last Friendly of 2014.

on an early September day was a great bonus as we welcomed the Letchworth team led by Tracy Martin. Our team was John Thorp/Jackie Cole, David Ball/Don Barrett, Judith Pengelly/Sheila Guest, and Val Jeffers/Roger Stroud. The match was the usual four rounds of doubles but with handicaps employed.

The first round was shared with wins by John/Jackie and Roger/Val. Round two was a clean sweep for LLCC, therefore at lunch we were leading by six games to two. Round three was another shared round, this time our winners were David/Don and Roger/Val. We were wondering if the 'LLCC after lunch collapse' was going to rear its head - however the fourth round was a good one for us with three wins - only Roger/Val spoiling their previous excellent record of three wins.

The overall result was a win for LLCC by 11 games to five. Both teams enjoyed tea and cakes - all agreed how lucky we had been with such a superb day and what a wonderful way to end off the friendlies' season.

Thanks to John T, John C, David and Roger for the morning's preparatory work and to Val Jeffers and Jean Ball for the cakes.

Friendlies are Fun - and Thanks to John Thorp

This season we have enjoyed thirteen friendlies with Watford, Wingrave, Dunstable, Letchworth, Stony Stratford, Northampton, Enfield and High Wycombe.

At the beginning of the year we did wonder if we had made a mistake in asking John Thorp to arrange more fixtures than last year, as the initial response from members was quite disappointing. However, interest picked up as the season progressed and by the end of the season, some 24 of our members, over half the membership, have taken part in these events over the six months.

I'm sure you will all join me in thanking John Thorp for arranging the friendlies. This isn't the easiest of tasks and takes an awful lot of time and commitment - especially

taking into account that John also arranges all our League matches. The latter has been somewhat frustrating this year as one or two clubs wanted last minute changes - something we are working on to try and eliminate in 2015.

A big thank you to John Thorp. Well done and much appreciated.

B-Level Edgbaston - 9th September

This year we had three entries from LLCC at this event, the last B-Level tournament in the calendar - and they were John Cundell, accompanied by David and Jean Ball. Edgbaston demands an early start due to meeting the rush hour traffic in and around Birmingham - hence 6.30am - and we arrived at the lawns at 8.45am in time for a welcome cuppa and a few minutes practise on the three lawns before the 9.15am briefing and draw for players by organiser Richard Thompson. The weather was glorious, calm, warm and sunny all day.

The lawns at Edgbaston are always good - green overall, consistent length and very level - a joy to play on. The atmosphere is also always very relaxed under Richard's firm, fair, friendly and efficient organising abilities.

For the first time the handicap level for this match had been lowered from its original 5-8 to 3-8 to bring it into line as one of the qualifying events for the B-Level final at Hamptworth in October. The entry of 12 players brought together no less than five players who have already qualified - including our David Ball and John Cundell. The players were from nine different clubs, some travelling long distances to attend.

The four semi-finalists were David Ball against Derek Buxton, David winning 7-3, and Richard Raby against Maggie Cowman, Richard also winning 7-3.

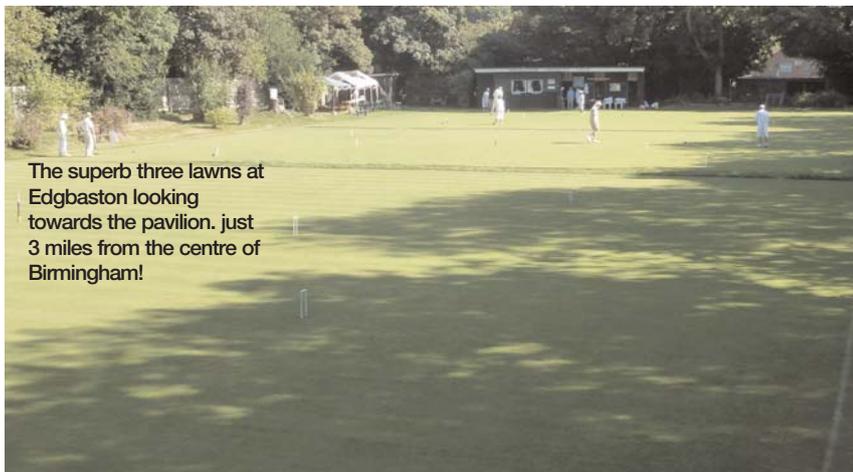
All the remaining players enjoyed tea, sandwiches and cakes, whilst watching David and Richard Raby play out a very hard fought final. David created an early lead of five hoops to two, however Richard then managed a return to the impressive form that he had enjoyed for the rest of the tournament and fought back to a long 13th hoop duel. In



David Ball making one of his excellent long, fast hoop runs during the Edgbaston B-Level final.



Left: Jean Ball lining up at Edgbaston. Right: countrywide entries at Edgbaston. Valerie Harding - Nottingham, David Ball, Margaret Cowman - Ripon Spa, John Cundell, Kath Wright - Long Eaton, Gill Brent - Ripon Spa, Eileen Buxton - Ashby, John Edwards - Cheltenham, Jean Ball, Derek Buxton - Ashby, Les Heard - Nottingham; seated is winner Richard Raby - Worcester. Below right: John Cundell lining up - (Photo: Richard Thompson).



The superb three lawns at Edgbaston looking towards the pavilion. just 3 miles from the centre of Birmingham!



the end Richard took the hoop amongst acclamation from all the other players for a wonderful game between the two players. David had won the cup last year, following John Cundell's win in 2012 – however it was not to return to LLCC this time. Congratulations to David on getting to the final and only just missing out.

The LBJ 70 Plus Trophy - 12th September

The title of this event says it all – entrants may be male or female, 70 years old or over, and competing for a Main Trophy, and a Plate Trophy. It was devised by Len

Buckingham as a rather different and fun event. The competition is the best of 19 hoops for sixteen competitors and is run on a knockout basis. After the first 16 have played, the eight players knocked out are moved into the Plate competition. Rather disappointingly, only 12 players entered this year! This obviously makes running a knockout competition based on 16 players somewhat difficult. The solution adopted was to play all 12 initially, then to take the two best losers to play in the next round of eight players - with the remaining four players moving into the Plate competition.

John Thorp, David Ball, Roger Stroud and John Cundell



The LJB 70 Plus Trophy players - minus John C who was taking the photo! Right are the winners of the Main Trophy - John Thorp, and the Plate Trophy - Sally Clay. Below: John Thorp and Len Buckingham; centre: new member this season - Phil Rowe playing in his first competition with Roy Kemp; and (right) - Roy and Sally Clay in the Plate final.



had prepared the lawns and equipment, so all was ready for John's opening remarks explaining the changes in format necessary due to the reduced entry.

The players were drawn for the first round and were Don Barrett v John Cundell, Sally Clay v David Ball, Peggy Kenny v Len Buckingham, Jackie Cole v Diana Phelps, Phil Rowe v John Thorp, and Roger Stroud v Roy Kemp.

In the LJB Trophy the following moved on to the quarter finals: John Cundell, David Ball, Peggy Kenny, Jackie Cole, John Thorp, Roger Stroud, Diana Phelps and Len Buckingham. Those going through to the Plate were Don Barrett, Sally Clay, Phil Rowe and Roy Kemp.

After the quarter finals those going through to the semi finals were John Cundell v Peggy Kenny and John Thorp v Len Buckingham in the LJB; and Sally Clay v Roy Kemp to the Plate final.

John Cundell and John Thorp won through to the LJB final.

Both finals were held at the same time on lawns one and two in front of an enthusiastic audience, and after two excellent games the winners of the LJB Trophy were John Thorp over John Cundell by 10-4, with Sally Clay beating Roy Kemp by 10-4 in the Plate.

An enjoyable and different day. Let's hope next year we can manage a full 16 to take part.

Club Doubles and Singles Championships

The first event of the club tournaments, the Doubles, was played on 20th September and attracted 18 players. John C, John T and David Ball had carried out the usual preparation from 7.45am, that included 'swishing' of all

three lawns due to the damp conditions to remove dew, worm casts and leaves.

The draw had been carried out earlier in the week and featured one block of five pairs, each playing four games - and a second block of four pairs, playing three games - to find two finalists. There was a slight breeze and the day was overcast with a little drizzle. The games soon warmed up the players and there was some exciting play from players old and new to this event. By early afternoon our block winners were as follows:

Block 1		Wins
1st	John Cundell and Judith Pengelly	3
2nd	John Thorp and Sheila Guest	3
3rd	Peter Cole and Jackie Cole	2
4th	Sally Clay and Peggy Kenny	2
5th	Mary Kemp and Derrick Haines	0

Block 2		Wins
1st	David Ball and Jean Ball	3
2nd	Roger Stroud and Caroline Stroud	2
3rd	Una Pengelly and Diana Phelps	1
4th	Roy Kemp and Florrie Jeater	0

The final was set up on Lawn One in front of an enthusiastic audience. It was a relatively short game as David and Jean Ball were both playing very well with good positional shots and clean hoop running. They kept John Cundell and Judith Pengelly in defensive mode as David and Jean went into the lead at hoop one and never looked back, winning the 2014 Doubles Championship by 7-2.

One week later and we were back for the Singles. As we had 16 entries it was decided to go for a two block event over Saturday and Sunday. The alternatives of four blocks



This year's Doubles Championships attracted nine pairs. The winners were David and Jean Ball - left - flanked by runners-up John Cundell and Judith Pengelly.

of four or one block of 16 are not feasible.

Seven rounds were played on Saturday with an early start of 9.00am - and huge thanks to John Thorp, John Cundell and Malcolm Kirby (Malcolm wasn't even playing), who turned up at 7.30am to prepare the lawns and other equipment.

Five games per person were played on Saturday, with the remaining two games per block played over three rounds on Sunday, with a slightly later start of 10.00am. Both days enjoyed dry, sunny and very warm weather, and in addition, a motor-bike rally and some very noisy pop music on Sunday!

By Saturday the block leaders were John Thorp in Block One and four people in Block Two - Ross Bagni, Roger Stroud, John Cundell and Sheila Beal.

Sunday morning quickly brought a clear Block One winner in John Thorp, whilst Block Two went to the very last match with John Cundell beating Sheila Beal - and John had already beaten Roger Stroud on Saturday, so he went through on 'who beat whom'. The results were as follows:

Block 1

		Wins
1st	John Thorp	7
2nd	David Ball	5
3rd	Jean Ball	6
4th	Ronnie Richardson	4
5th	Peggy Kenny	4
6th	Peter Cole	2
7th	Una Pengelly	1
8th	Roy Kemp	0

Block 2

		Wins
1st	John Cundell	6
2nd	Roger Stroud	6
3rd	Sheila Beal	5
4th	Ross Bagni	4
5th	Judith Pengelly	4
6th	Len Buckingham	2
7th	Sally Clay	1
8th	Jackie Cole	1

The final was set up in front of an enthusiastic and appreciative audience and was a good battle until hoop eight with a score of four hoops each, after which John Cundell drew ahead and enjoyed a 7-5 win. An excellent nine days for John Cundell, having won the runners-up trophy in the Club Doubles the previous weekend. Congratulations to John Cundell - and to all players who took part in this season's competitions. Roll on March 2015 and next season.

(Singles images are on the next page.)

EACF Leagues - Handicap and Level

This was the first year of the much amended EACF Leagues. The new organiser for this year was Jason Carley of Watford CC. Jason has worked extremely hard and his enthusiastic support and promotion of the 2014 Leagues has done much to encourage clubs new and old to take part in these two championships. His prompt response to queries and his excellent organising ability has brought the two leagues to a successful first year under the updated rules. There have been one or two minor problems that will no doubt be discussed and amended for 2015, but nothing serious.



Singles competitors: clockwise - Peter Cole and Roy Kemp, Peggy Kenny, Jean Ball, David Ball running the hoop, Jackie Cole, Sally Clay, Judith Pengelly and Sheila Beal, and Len Buckingham with his unique sideways style.



Left to right: Roger Stroud displays his individual 'stabbing' technique to run the black ball. Ronnie Richardson strikes for a long hoop. Ross Bagni runs the pink. Somehow or other - Una Pengelly managed to avoid the camera lens. Sorry, Una.



The final between the two Johns. Above left: John T's smooth swing sends a blurred black into John C's red. Middle: John C attempts a jump shot. Above right: John T appeals to the heavens. Left: an enthusiastic audience. Right: Ross Bagni scored the final.





Above: Singles final - John Cundell's winning shot on hoop 12 after John Thorp's attempted clearance from the boundary failed.



The Handicap League

There are four areas. The North & Mid Area has six clubs and the winner was Hunstanton. The Eastern Area had five clubs - Malden Pavilion won.

Central Area winner from the six clubs was

Letchworth Blue - whilst

our region, the Western, had six entries. Winner was Watford with eight points. Second was Northampton Mallets with seven points. We also had seven points but had unfortunately lost to Northampton Mallets early in the season.

A very close result and congratulations to our joint captains Jean Ball and Ross Bagni who effectively managed a small team which really needs more support from members.

In the semi finals Maldon Pavilion beat Letchworth Blue 10-9 and Hunstanton beat Watford - also by 10-9. The final was played at Letchworth on 13th September and the winner was Hunstanton. Congratulations to them.

The Level Play League

This has only two areas - Ipswich won the North & Central Area whilst Northampton won the East & West Area. We did not have a very successful year with losses at Northampton, Watford and Letchworth - and wins at Chelmsford and against Enfield - ending up fourth out of six clubs. The final was played at Chelmsford and was won by Ipswich.

There are now some very good handicap players taking part in this League and the standard of play has certainly moved on considerably from previous years. Nevertheless we will continue to support the League and strive to improve our abilities. The only way is to take part and learn from the experience.

B-Level Championship - Hamptworth - 11/12th October

David Ball, Jean Ball, Ross Bagni and John Cundell will be playing in the final at Hamptworth, Salisbury, to determine the best B-Level player in the country. We congratulate them on getting through to the final and wish them luck and look forward to one of them bringing the

trophy back to LLCC. **We are the only club to have four players taking part - Guildford has three and Hunstanton has two.**

Croquet Association Golf World Rankings

For those members who are Tournament Members of the Croquet Association, below are the current UK Rankings as at 29th September:

Position	Name	Index	Games	Wins	%Wins
104	John Thorp	1951	31	18	58
126	David Ball	1893	49	28	57
169	Richard Keighley	1737	14	8	57
174	Roger Stroud	1717	20	8	40
175	John Cundell	1761	52	24	46
184	Jean Ball	1721	39	15	38
268	Ross Bagni	1418	11	4	36

Winter Social Club at Page's Park

The Wednesday morning social club will meet for the first time this winter on Wednesday 8th 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, dominoes and card games. The activities generally finish about noon, so please support this venture if you possibly can. Friends of members are very welcome for the same attendance fee, refreshments included. This group raised the magnificent sum of over £300 per year towards club funds over the last couple of years, so why not give it a try?

Annual Club Dinner

Preparations are in hand for this which is scheduled for March 13th at The Golf Club, Leighton Buzzard. Full details will be announced at the Annual General Meeting.

Club Badges

David Ball has a batch of cloth club badges. These are available direct from David at £4.14 each. Contact David on 01525 211988 or email him at davidjean.ball@btinternet.com.

Lawn Maintenance, Equipment, Storage

As most members know, the club is now responsible for all maintenance work on the lawns that is required during the closed season - plus the normal work that we undertake during the playing season. The Council groundsmen mow for us once a week during the playing season and mark the white lines. Any other treatment is down to us, either doing it ourselves or paying others to carry out the work.

2012 was a big learning curve for us and the awful wet 2012 summer and the cold winter which followed made work quite difficult. Our small group managed to carry out scarification, aeration, an attempt to control the large moss problem due to the wet conditions, plus winter mowing where necessary.

We contracted the Council to carry out worm and weed control as we did not have the necessary equipment for these tasks.

John Thorp and John Cundell took advice from some of the clubs that we visit that have superb lawns, and

following further discussion with the Council Groundsman Doug Bolton, we carried out the following programme in 2013/2014 winter.

In early October John C and John T were instructed on how to use the Council's tining machine which punches holes and aerates the lawns, and they proceeded to hollow tine all three lawns. Following them were Ross Bagni, David Ball, Len Buckingham, Malcolm Kirby, Peggy Kenny and Roger Stroud to collect up all the removed cores.

The 'mossy' areas of lawns one and two were 'verticut' and then scarified. In the afternoon, the two Johns applied slow release fertiliser to all three lawns, borrowing the Council's spreader. After this lawn one was re-seeded as were the mossy areas of lawn two. As the dry weather held overnight, the following morning the two Johns re-seeded lawns two and three and applied 24 bags of top dressing to the poor left hand side of lawn one, to the 'bumpy' area between hoops three and four on lawn two and to other selected areas.

We also utilised some of the cores to fill in the two dips at the top of hoop two on lawn two. These areas were destined to be rolled over the winter months.

In all some 40 hours work from these eight members. John Thorp and John Cundell would like to thank the six others for their valuable help that is much appreciated. We would also like to thank the Council's Groundsman, Doug Bolton, for his assistance in helping us to get the use of the Council's equipment.

Up to the end of the year, the two John's carried out moss treatment, rolling and top dressing of the filled areas on lawn two which have responded very well, aeration of mossy areas, swishing to remove worm casts, and leaf clearance. All lawns were mowed twice. This work amounted to another 36 hours!

The Christmas and New Year period was very wet and there was little chance to get on the lawns. As soon as this was possible we mowed again, and as the new season approached, applied a slow release fertiliser, carried out a light scarification and added some moss control.

As the season started we were reasonably pleased with the extra work we had carried out on the left hand third of lawn one to remove some of the bumps and encourage more grass growth. It was very frustrating and annoying

when a group of inconsiderate teenage boys and girls decided to play football in wet conditions and undid all our good work in a short time. This caused emergency repairs with us purchasing and adding top dressing to fill the holes, and the necessity of asking Doug Bolton to run the cricket roller over the bumpy surface. Heavy rolling is NOT recommended for croquet lawns, however we had no option and managed to prepare a reasonable surface for the season.

The weather has been very kind this year and the warmth and lack of rain has helped the moss situation.

We will be starting a similar programme for the coming months, where the main work will be on aeration, scarifying, fertiliser and weed control, moss control, top dressing and re-seeding with a finer dwarf rye variety.

We were pleased that the allocation of the Referees Room/Dressing Room as a storage arrangement for our maintenance equipment and some playing equipment again worked reasonably well this year. Now that some of the football has been moved to Astral Park, we have approached the Council for permanent use of the Referees Room for storage and as a small committee/meeting room.

Keeping Fit!

Roger Stroud informs us that Caroline Stroud carried a pedometer around the lawns at a recent friendly, and recorded five miles - including the walk to and from the little car park.

Expenses

If any member has any claims for expenses please note these must be with Len Buckingham by 10th October.

Annual General Meeting

You will find an announcement concerning the AGM overleaf. 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.



From the Archives

A look back at the early days of croquet in the Leighton-Linslade area - this first example from Irene Davis' scrapbook goes back to a report in the Leighton Buzzard Observer, Tuesday September 28th 1999.

Members will recognise Irene Davis (centre) and Helen Wilkinson (right).

Croquet final beats the rain

A CROQUET tournament raised £200 for Macmillan Cancer Relief last Saturday.

The annual doubles match took place at Waterways, near Hockliffe, during a lucky break in the clouds.

The winners were Linda Potton and Helen Wilkinson, after a knock-out competition involving 16 ladies from local WI and U3A groups.

Mrs Irene Davis, the organiser and referee, said the ladies were "over the

moon" at their win after reaching the semi-finals for five years in a row.

The prizes were presented by Mr Doug Russell, Bedfordshire Fund-raising Manager for Macmillan Cancer Relief.

Forty people attended the matches and play was followed by tea on the lawn.

Mrs Davis described the event as a "wonderful day!"

Mrs Davis, Mr Russell and the winners are pictured with runners up E Easton and C Brewin.





Roll of Honour 2014



Leighton-Linslade Croquet Club Tournament Winners

Mix 'n Match Doubles Handicap	Judith Pengelly and Roy Kemp
Ladies Doubles Mix 'n Match	Judith Pengelly and Jean Ball
Club Singles Handicap	Judith Pengelly
B-Level Colchester	David Ball
B-Level Hunstanton	John Cundell
The John Fogg Trophy	John Thorp and Roy Kemp
LJB 70 Plus Trophy (Main)	John Thorp
LJB 70 Plus Trophy (Plate)	Sally Clay
Club Championship Doubles	David and Jean Ball
Club Championship Singles	John Cundell

Attendance Breakdown - 2014 - by Membership Secretary

Our Membership Secretary Judith Cundell has extracted the following information from the attendance sheets for 2014. There were 27 weeks of play. Figures include all matches - players, helpers and spectators.

Sessions	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Average attendance	15	14	3	8	14	9	4
Highest attendance at one session	32	25	11	15	22	16	19

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There were three weeks with 88 attendees per week.

Most attendances by members:

John Thorp	108	These include work days.
John Cundell	93	These include work days.
Peggy Kenny	90	These include work days.
David Ball	89	These include work days

Most attendances in one week:

John Thorp	6 x 2
Sally Clay	6

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 46 members.

Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held at Northall Village Hall at 7.15 for 7.30pm on Friday 14th November 2014, 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 WHICH WILL BE SENT TO YOU PRIOR TO THE MEETING.

And Definitely Finally...

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

(All photos this issue by David Ball, John Cundell, John Thorp, Ronnie Richardson, Ross Bagni, unless stated otherwise)