



LEIGHTON-LINSLADE CROQUET CLUB

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Founded 2000

NEWSLETTER - MARCH 2016 Volume 17 Issue 2

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"Spring and Croquet At Last!"

Welcome to the second newsletter of 2016. Our opening paragraphs of last year's Issue 2 newsletter were that the lawns had once again been damaged by footballers and that remedial work was necessary before the season commenced. We also had to endure problems with the five-a-side football area adjacent to Lawn 1 for much of the season.

You will recall the following paragraph published in Issue 1 back in January.

'After a meeting with the Town Clerk and the Head of Grounds and Environmental Services in August 2015, we have reached the following stage. It is proposed to erect a new 1.8 metre high green mesh fence around all three croquet lawns. Quotations for this work are in hand by the Town Council, following which there will be a proposal put forward to the Leisure and Community Committee (L&CC) meeting.'

Our Secretary, Roger Stroud, put the following information on the club website a month ago.

Yesterday evening, 8th February, there was a meeting of the Town Council's Leisure and Community Committee at the White House, Leighton Buzzard.

Item 14 on the agenda was a proposal for the Council to erect 1.8 metre high fencing around all our croquet lawns.

Malcolm Kirby, Len Buckingham and myself were at the meeting to answer any questions the Councillors might have prior to making a decision.

We have been discussing this for a considerable time and with terrific support from the Councillors on the committee, plus support from Ian Haynes (Town Council - Head of Grounds & Environmental Services) and Mark Saccoccio (Town Clerk) the proposal was passed by the committee.

Therefore, the fencing will be erected, which should enable us to improve the quality of the lawns without the constant worry of vandalism.

It was my first visit to a meeting of this committee and it was obvious that there was much goodwill towards our club from the Councillors.

This goodwill has almost certainly been earned by the culture of friendliness within our club, not only to all our members, but also all Council Officers and Councillors, as well as all the croquet clubs with whom we have contact.

Start of play for the 2016 season is only a few weeks away and I'm sure that we are all looking forward to the weather being a little warmer.

*Our club web site, which I maintain, is in the process of being 'dusted down' for 2016 and is always worth a visit to see what's going on at www.leightonlinsladedcroquet.org.uk.
Roger Stroud.*

Further to the above, I can now report that we have drawn up scale plans of the fencing and this has been discussed in detail by your committee and has been submitted to the Council. On 2nd March a meeting was

held with the Council's Team Leader Grounds and Environmental Services person, John Connew, and the contractors who will be erecting the fencing. The work is expected to start shortly. The fencing siting will come up to the walls of the pavilion giving access straight from the clubroom, and will also allow us to site the gazebos, etc., between the fencing and Lawn 2. There may be some minor disruption to play during the installation period, which is expected to take up to two weeks.

This will be an excellent addition to our area, providing better security and enabling us to further improve the lawns and surrounding area. The cost of the fencing is around £10,000 and the club will be contributing £3,000.

Season Opens

The lawns should be ready for play on Saturday 26th March - weather permitting.

The hoops have been shot blasted and re-enamelled during the winter months, organised by Len, and these will be positioned on the morning of the 22nd March and at the same time the clubroom will be cleaned and tidied. If you can help, particularly with the latter, please contact John Cundell.

Enjoy the season and let's hope for another warm, sunny summer.

Playing Sessions

Below are the 'official' playing sessions for 2016 - note the changes from 2015 regarding Wednesday and Thursday where the morning sessions are now extended until 4.00pm:

| | |
|---------|----------------------------|
| 10-12 | Tuesday (Singles Handicap) |
| 2-4 | Tuesday (Singles Handicap) |
| 10-4.00 | Wednesday |
| 10-4.00 | Thursday |
| 10-12 | Saturday |
| 2-5 | Saturday |
| 10-12 | Sunday (Singles Handicap) |
| 2-5 | Sunday |

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

The only provisos are that a) if the Council Groundstaff or our own members are working on the lawns, then they will have priority and players will have to wait until they are finished; and b) certain Mondays and Fridays when League and Friendly matches are scheduled when no club play will be possible. On rare occasions there may be events on regular session play days which will be highlighted on the club noticeboards - for instance

our B-Level tournament on 18th June that is a Saturday.

2016 Dates for your Diary

Our Fixtures Secretary John Thorp and your Editor have already been busy working on this year's calendar and it looks like we will have another busy season. All fixture dates so far arranged are included below.

Remaining EACF League dates, etc., will be posted in the Clubroom as and when these become available.

PLEASE NOTE THERE ARE SOME DATE CHANGES FROM THOSE PUBLISHED IN OUR FIRST NEWSLETTER IN JANUARY SO PLEASE CHECK AND CHANGE YOUR DIARY ENTRIES NOW!

March

26 SA LAWNS OPEN - weather permitting

May

9 M Dunstable Friendly - Home

13 F Coaching Course – Improvers

14/15 SA/SU Club 'Mix 'n' Match' Handicap Doubles

24 TU High Wycombe Friendly - Away

28/29 SA/SU Club Ladies Doubles 'Mix 'n' Match'

June

4 SA EACF Wheeler Shield Counties Tournament

5 SU National Croquet Day

11/12 SA/SU Club Handicap Singles

15 W Committee Meeting

18 SA CA B-Level Tournament (3-8) – Leighton-Linslade

21 TU Trinity Church Fellowship Group – 6.30pm

26 SU EACF Club Champions Tournament - Hunstanton

July

1 F EACF Level League – Chelmsford - Away

15 F C-Level Tournament (8-12) - Leighton-Linslade

22 F Wingrave v Phyllis Court Southern League

August

6/7 SA/SU Club Mens Doubles 'Mix 'n' Match' John Fogg Trophy

8 M U3A Dunstable Visit Fun Day

10 W Committee Meeting

September

2 F High Wycombe Friendly - Home

3 SA Club Garden Party and Fun Day (10.00am – 4.00pm)

7 WE Committee Meeting

10 SA LJB 70+ Trophy

17/18 SA/SU Club Doubles

24/25 SA/SU Club Singles

November

11 F AGM & Party

Official Opening Postponed!

We will NOT be holding an official opening day at the start of the season as it is quite likely that the erection of the fence will be under way at that time. Instead we will be hosting a grand opening of the lawns once the fence is completed.

Social Club finishes 30th March

The Social Club attendance at Page's Park on Wednesday

mornings has been a little depleted this winter, mainly due to the very wet weather and poor health from a number of our regulars - however those that did come along have enjoyed a convivial chat over card games, dominoes, Rummikub, etc. The pavilion will be available up to and including 30th March, therefore if we are unlucky with the weather, there will be somewhere warm to meet.

Annual Club Dinner

The dinner held on Friday 11th March at the Leighton Buzzard Golf Club was attended by 34 people - members, wives and guests. A very pleasant evening was enjoyed by all with some excellent food and convivial conversation in pleasant surroundings. Thanks are due to Malcolm Kirby, Len Buckingham, John Cundell and David Ball for organising an excellent evening.

EACF Club Champions Tournament

Three years ago David Ball won the Handicap trophy at this event. This year the venue has changed from Wrest Park to Hunstanton, where each club in the region is invited to send both their level play and handicap club champions from the previous year, or suitable substitutes. Our representatives will be David Ball in Level and Judith Pengelly in the Handicap category.

Leighton-Linslade High Handicap (C-Level) Tournament

Last year's inaugural C-Level tournament, aimed specifically at those players whose handicap falls between 8-14, and designed to give the less experienced player a chance to play in open competition, was very well received.

This year's event will be organised similarly to the B-Level Tournament (see below) with an entry of 12 players. There will be a small entry fee of £5.00 to cover costs and a trophy. The only entry proviso is that your handicap lies between 8 and 14. The date is 15th July. Entry forms will appear in the clubroom in due course. You do NOT have to be a Croquet Association Tournament member to take part in this competition.

Leighton-Linslade GC B-Level Tournament - 20th June

The B-Level series was initiated in 2014 by Chris Roberts, the Editor of The Croquet Gazette, to try and bring a climax to the series of B-Level Tournaments held throughout the country. Chris's idea was to enlarge the competition by getting more clubs to take part and rationalising the events to allow play from the same handicap range which was finalised from 3-8. Winners of each round automatically qualified for a two-day final at the end of the year. The whole series was very well supported.

The success of the B-Level series has encouraged even more clubs to take part this year. There will be tournaments throughout the season as follows: Sussex, Watford, Wrest Park, Ealing, Budleigh, Northampton, Leighton-Linslade, Colchester, Hunstanton, Bath, Bury, Nottingham, Middlesbrough, Hamptworth, Guildford, Phyllis Court, Ashby, Hurlingham and Edgbaston. The final will be at Budleigh.

I am pleased to say that our event has almost reached it's quota of 12 competitors. To play in any of these events you need to be a Croquet Association Tournament Member.

EACF Leagues

As in previous years, the long running Handicap League and the newer Level Play League will again be a part of the East Anglian Croquet Federation 2016 season, running under similar rules. There is a slight change to the Handicap League rules because of the new Handicap system that was tried out by the Croquet Association in our area last year and which is to continue for the future in not only our region but nationally.

The changes are in the following paragraph.

5. Handicaps:

a. Each player shall have a handicap within the range -6 to 14 and shall play off their current handicap on the day of the match.

b. The team shall have a minimum aggregate ACTUAL handicap of 12.

d. No more than one team member may have a handicap less than 2 on the day of the match.

There may possibly be some changes in the format of the team and play as far as the Handicap League is concerned due to the following proposal from the EACF organiser.

The EACF Committee have discussed how best to include one-lawn clubs in our competitions and has agreed to trial a system in this year's Handicap League. In essence, where a one-lawn club has been drawn to host a match it will be played by only three players on each side over ten games (one double, nine single games). Where a multi-lawn club hosts a one-lawn club, then the match will be the normal four player format.

The one-lawn format will give results ranging from 5-5 to 10-0, broadly comparable to the 9-9 to 18-0 results from the usual four-player matches. The ten games will be made up of nine singles games – that is, each player playing each opponent (H1 v A1, H1 v A2, H1 v A3, H2 v A1, H2 v A2, H2 v A3, H3 v A1, H3 v A2, H3 v A3) – and one doubles game H1H2 v A1A2. This will mean five rounds of games: everyone plays in the first round, H1/H2/A1/A2 will each sit out one round, while H3/A3 sits out two rounds (rounds 2 and 4). It is much clearer when you see the scoresheet!

As per last year, we will be running one Level Team and one Handicap Team. Entry forms will appear on the clubroom notice board as soon as the season commences.

Scorers

Sheila Beal will again be acting as Scoring Manager for 2016. Our scoring system has been much admired by visiting clubs and once again we will be using it for League, Murphy Shield, and our B-Level and C-Level events.

As soon as we have some dates available a list will appear in the clubroom for volunteer scorers to enter their names.

Setting Up Help

As discussed at the AGM last year, and again at a recent committee meeting, members taking part in a particular competition should be prepared to turn up at least 45 minutes earlier than the advertised start time to assist in setting up the necessary equipment - rather than just leave it to the same few. Many hands make light work!

National Croquet Day - Sunday 5th June

This is a national drive by the Croquet Association to help all clubs to attract more members, reach the public and promote competitive play. The CA are producing press releases, etc., to promote croquet as a game and sport of skill that anyone can play. There are posters from the CA which we will be distributing to noticeboards around the town, the Council, supermarkets and shops, clubs and associations and the local press. The only disappointing point about the poster is the top image which is hardly likely to inspire potential players to take up our sport!

The day will most likely follow the format of our previously held 'Come Along and Try' days - however more details to follow nearer the date.



National Croquet Day
Sunday 5 June

Come and try 'The Croquet Experience'

Croquet: a game of skill that anyone can play

Croquet: a sport with that competitive edge

Croquet: try something new!

For your 'Croquet Experience' contact your local club

Bring a sense of fun and a pair of flat shoes (e.g. trainers)

The Croquet Association
01242 242318
ncd@croquet.org.uk
www.croquet.org.uk/ncd

ELIZABETH MARY HAWKES

As we go to press we have just learned of the passing of Elizabeth Mary Hawkes on 10th March after a short illness. Mary only joined us last year, but in that short time she made many friends in the club with her enthusiasm to learn our game and at Social Club mornings. Our condolences to her two sons.

Subscription Reminder - Club Membership

In case you haven't yet paid this year's subscription and have mislaid the form sent out in January, you will find another membership application form overleaf. If you have an email address please include this as we would like to send as many newsletters and other communications as possible by this method. Postage costs are very expensive. Also please include a mobile number if you have one. Those on email will receive acknowledgement that your subscription has been received. The small number of members who are not on email will be telephoned. The membership cards will be distributed as the season commences.



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION - 2016 SEASON



I/we wish to join / rejoin the club.

Name(s):

Address:

..... Postcode:

Tel No: Mobile No:

Date: Email:

I am happy to receive all communication by email, including 'return forms': YES NO
A subscription for the full season is £75 per person. Potential new members may also pay a £5 fee for two trial sessions. This fee will be deducted if full membership is subsequently taken out.

I / we enclose a cheque for £..... payable to Leighton Linslade Croquet Club.

Please return this form and cheque to: Judith Cundell (Membership Secretary), 18 Saxons Close, Leighton Buzzard, Beds. LU7 3LT. Tel: 01525 374620.
Email: judith.cundell@btinternet.com