

Running Hoops

The Newsletter of Kenilworth Croquet

August 2024

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At long last summer weather reached us and the new sprinkler system has been invaluable in keeping the grass green and healthy. The lawns have been very well booked up, both for competitive play and for friendly games, and most of the social roll-up sessions, both GC and AC are very well attended, including the new Thursday afternoon GC session (10- handicap). The remainder of the season is going to be very exciting with lots of cup finals and team matches taking place, creating a headache for team captains and tournament managers trying to find a spare date for their event!



For this edition of Running Hoops, I'm delighted to welcome another new member to our prestigious Writers' Club. Bob Phelps has revealed the existence of a competition of which no one else was aware. Find out about it now on p4!

Once again we had fun with the Squash Juniors, p3, and our own Doubles Fun Day with yet another new winning team this time, p2.



A casual comment from my son, Cameron, in the car one day, set me searching the Internet to find anything about croquet and the Olympics, and I was astonished to find out more than I'd expected. Perhaps others knew more than I did, p6.

Competition Time may seem to be somewhat unbalanced with lots going on in Golf Croquet, and somewhat fewer pages on Association Croquet, but rest assured that the AC section is thriving, with full lawns on Thursday mornings, and Club competitions well supported, with 8 members, novices and experienced alike, entering the most recent one, the Fellows Salver, on Saturday, p17. Try playing 3 matches in one day. Exciting, exhausting, exhilarating! Other contests are on-going and lots of reports will follow in the next Running Hoops.



Golf Croquet has also been very active this year with the full range of Club competitions along with inter-club leagues: two teams from Kenilworth (A and B) competing in the same WMF GC league and a third team, the "6+ handicap" team entering its own WMF league. Add to that a full program of friendly matches and now there is something for everyone who would like to try competing against other clubs. It's a great way to learn from watching others, and improve your own game. As Cliff Jones (High Wycombe) said: "If you always do what you always did, you'll always get what you always got." In a recent match with the '6+' group from Himley I found them just as friendly as in the 'Friendlies', with lots of laughter during matches, and I would thoroughly recommend that others give them a go!



Elizabeth

CLUB NEWS

DOUBLES FUN DAY 18th August

Competitors

Val Moss and Tony Breedon	Linda Edwards and Nigel Pigdon
Kath Spare and Ivan Moss	Elizabeth Thomson and Jeff Lindsay
Jan and Bob Phelps	Nick Hegan and Lynne Breedon

This second doubles competition of the season got off to an inauspicious start the day before the event was due to be held, when two players unavoidably had to pull out. So instead of a Magnificent Seven pairs event, we were reduced to six teams. So Linda and Nigel teamed up at late notice and enjoyed a very successful day together, with Linda happily gaining a few tips from Nigel. Well done Lynne Breedon for managing to juggle the pairs and reorganise the playing schedule at such short notice.



Congratulations also to Jeff Lindsay, for making it just on time, after a late night 3 hour drive home from Suffolk, where he'd been looking after a very elderly friend. Jeff needn't have worried, as his partner, Elizabeth, had managed to forget her mallet and had to race off to her car to retrieve it in time to start the first game.

Players settled into their first games in beautiful warm sunshine with some welcome dappled shade on Lawn 1, and without the deafening noise of the combine harvester in

the next field, which we have experienced in the past, drowning out the quiet conversations between partners. Games this year were played 'first to 6 hoops' with a time limit of 50 minutes, and all but two matches were completed within the allotted time.



Relief came after the third round of matches when a lunch break was called, the highlight being the lashings of chocolate covered strawberries made by Linda. Well done Linda, they were delicious!

The competition was judged on the total number of hoops run, rather than games won, and the result was in doubt until the very last match finished, with Nigel and Linda emerging as well deserved winners, having run 27 hoops. In second position, only one hoop behind, were Jan and Bob with 26 hoops, followed by Tony and Val with 25. Only 10 points separated all the competitors and everyone won at least one game.

Congratulations to Linda and Nigel, and to Lynne for organising yet another great day out for everyone, with perfect weather laid on! More next season please.

SQUASH JUNIORS 22nd JULY Elizabeth Thomson



A group of around 20 happy children arrived for their lunchtime session of croquet during their summer squash camp, accompanied by Guy Pearson and coaches. They seemed somewhat younger and quieter than the lively group who descended on us last year but no less excited. They were given a brief introduction to the basics of the game before being split into groups of four and directed to the various flags identifying the 3 half-lawns we were using. The hoop sequence for the two groups on each half lawn was the same as that used by the hospitality groups.

The children were impatient to get started and helpers found themselves being fought over by groups competing to attract their attention! They were soon organised, and play started. As expected, there were some who picked up the technique very quickly and a few others who needed a little more advice and reassurance, but after the first few games, most had a clear idea of what they intended to do with their shot, even if it didn't work out quite as they had hoped! They warmed to the idea of working as a team and discussing tactics with their partner, and as usual, they celebrated (loudly!) the triumph of taking out an opponent's ball with as much enthusiasm as running a hoop!

Guy changed the groups round after each game, so that the children played with a variety of partners, and I noticed with each group that it was the younger children who were taking the game more seriously than the older teenagers, who may have been feeling a bit more self-conscious. I decided that the decision taken last year by Croquet England, to introduce primary school children first to the sport, was probably a very good decision.

And as the session progressed some amazing talents began to surface and my older teenagers were left dumbfounded, as a very young girl ran a hoop from about 4-5m away and repeated the triumph a few hoops later! I wondered whether to ask her for some advice on how to achieve this in such a short time.

All too soon the hour's session came to an end and the children moved on to their lunch break and further activities, but it would be lovely if they remember their early croquet experience in later years and opt to try it again at college, in a local club, or merely in their own back gardens, and bring in another generation of enthusiasts to keep the game alive and follow the ambition of Croquet England to get more people playing more croquet in more places.

THE COMPETITION WE DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT

The Worrall-Phelps Wine Challenge Bob Phelps



Alan Worrall was beaten in the semi-final of the Charlecote Cup in 2023, after hoping to meet Bob Phelps, the eventual cup winner, in the final. He was determined to see what would have happened if he had reached the final, and challenged Bob to a match under Charlecote Cup rules, with a bottle of wine for the winner. Unfortunately for Alan he was beaten by Bob and graciously presented Bob with a bottle of wine.

Thus was born the Worrall-Phelps Wine Challenge.

The 2024 edition of the challenge was played on the 30th July, and once again Alan was on the wrong end of a 7-4, 7-5 score line.

Again he was gracious in defeat and duly presented Bob with a bottle of Rioja and a small bottle to himself. Both Bob and Alan look forward to the 2025 challenge which has only ever been played in the best of spirits. How Alan wished he could be allowed jump shots!

Editor: I hate to disappoint Bob, but he may be surprised to learn that, according to practice in the higher levels of competition up and down the country, it is the duty of the **Winner** to buy the drinks for the **Loser**.

My authority on this is our regular contributor, Cliff Daniel, who has experience of playing in tournaments in some of the top clubs of our country. In his article in the July 2024 Running Hoops, entitled, **A FABULOUS WEEK-END TOURNAMENT.....DESPITE LOSING ALL OF MY GAMES!!**, he finishes with the happy reflection that, "Losing games does have its compensations! **My bar bill was ZERO!**"



Alan, stay positive: I strongly suspect that when Bob has absorbed this, your fortunes may well change dramatically in the Worrall-Phelps Wine Challenge 2025!

PRESS AND ONLINE SUCCESS

The procedure now, is to submit articles to the Warwickshire World website, after which they are normally printed in the following Friday's Leamington Courier, giving us double exposure for the same article. In Facebook, the same article may be adopted and repeated by other Facebook groups, again opening the article to a wider audience. Adrian is always keen to receive articles for submission, but expressly with an accompanying photograph!



Bob Phelps retains the Golf Croquet Charlecote Cup



Bob Phelps retains the Golf Croquet Charlecote Cup

Bob Phelps lines up to run his Red with Elizabeth Thomson looking on.

By ADRIAN MORRIS Contributor

The Charlecote cup is a Golf Croquet competition competed for over the winter months where competitors are not allowed to use jump shots. This year's semi and final had been delayed but the final took place this week. Bob Phelps, who had beaten the Club Chair, Lynne Breeden in his semi, took on Elizabeth Thomson, who had beaten Nigel Pigdon in their semi. In the first game Thomson went ahead, 4-2, before Phelps drew level at 5-5. At 6-6 the game went Golden Hoop and Phelps took the game 7-6. In the second game, Thomson again took an early lead, Phelps then took the next five hoops on the trot to go in front 6-4. Thompson then pulled one back to make it 6-5. At the 12th hoop Phelps put his red ball in the hoop and with jump shots not allowed, Thomson was obliged to concede the game and match. Phelps won the final and retained the Charlecote Cup 7-6, 7-5.

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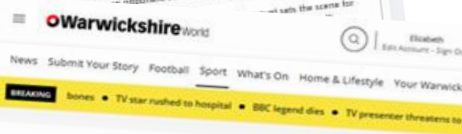
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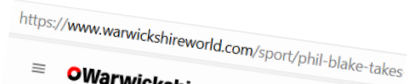
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The sun is shining, it is a perfect time to unleash Your Inner Croquet Champ! Looking for a delightful way to spend a sunny afternoon with friends? Look no further than the charming game of croquet! 🏏
"Why Croquet is a Blast"
1. "Social Shenanigans" Croquet is the perfect blend of competition and camaraderie. Imagine this: you, your friends, laughter echoing through the air, all while trying to outmaneuver each other on the lawn. It's the ultimate social sport!
2. "Easy to Learn, Hard to Master" Whether you're a newbie or a seasoned pro, croquet offers just the right balance. The rules are simple enough to pick up quickly, but the strategic depth keeps everyone engaged.
3. "Fresh Air Fun" Swap your screens for some green! Croquet gets you outside, soaking up Vitamin D, and enjoying the great outdoors. It's the perfect excuse to bask in nature's glory.
4. "No need for brute strength—croquet is all about precision and teamwork." No need for brute strength—croquet is all about precision and teamwork. 🏏



Broadwas takes Golf Croquet title from Kenilworth

By ADRIAN MORRIS Contributor



Phil Blake takes Croquet Club Championship

Phil Blake takes Croquet Club Championship

By ADRIAN MORRIS Contributor



Blake takes Croquet Club Championship at Kenilworth



Phil Blake (left) receives the trophy from last year's winner Mervyn Harvey.
By ADRIAN MORRIS Contributor
Alan Worrall won last out of the blocks and took a commanding lead but Harvey made a nervy start but played better as game progressed but, too late, so Worrall took the first game. The second and third games were tight and both were won by Harvey. The final was a golden hoop and Phelps took the game 7-6. In the second game, Thomson again took an early lead, Phelps then took the next five hoops on the trot to go in front 6-4. Thompson then pulled one back to make it 6-5. At the 12th hoop Phelps put his red ball in the hoop and with jump shots not allowed, Thomson was obliged to concede the game and match. Phelps won the final and retained the Charlecote Cup 7-6, 7-5.



Runner up Elizabeth Thomson with Winner, Pauline Harvey, holding the trophy

CROQUET AS AN OLYMPIC SPORT



Croquet was briefly included in the Olympic Games at the second edition of the Summer Olympics held in 1900 in Paris, France. Croquet was among the first but shortest-lived events to include female competitors in competition before being removed permanently from the Olympic program.

The Croquet debut as an Olympic sport consisted of a set of three events, played from May 14 to October 28, 1900. Three women competed in the croquet events, making Croquet one of the first Olympic sports for female competitors. Nevertheless, the women did not even achieve medal status.

Medal summary

Event	Gold	Silver	Bronze
Singles, one ball	Gaston Aumoitte (FRA)	Georges Johnin (FRA)	Chrétien Waydelich (FRA)
Singles, two balls	Chrétien Waydelich (FRA)	Maurice Vignerot (FRA)	Jacques Sautereau (FRA)
Doubles	Gaston Aumoitte Georges Johnin (FRA)	<i>Not known</i>	<i>Not known</i>

All-time medal table	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
FRA	3	2	2	7

Why was Croquet pulled from the Olympics?

- The year 1900 croquet events are deservedly infamous for the utter lack of interest they drew from spectators. The lack of public interest and engagement was likely a big factor in the IOC decision not to continue the sport.
- In addition was the small participation internationally: most of the year 1900 competitors were French, and a lack of competition from other nations led to weak results. These implications were negative for an Olympic sport with no international field competition. It is not even certain that there was any opposition in the Doubles Competition!
- A sport lacking rigor: compared with the more physical sports that had begun to increase in the early 20th century, Croquet was seen by some as somewhat sedate and undoubtedly not athletic.
- Shifting Priorities and Evolving Olympic Vision: as the Olympic movement advanced and became a more massive, complex event, so too could it have changed how the IOC viewed sports of quality athletic talent in international competition that was also appealing to a mass audience.

Exclusion of Croquet

After being removed from the Olympics, many obscure sports, like tug-of-war or solo synchronized swimming, have met with mixed fortunes in their bid to reclaim past Olympic glory. Similarly, Croquet may have suffered in its visibility and participation worldwide due to its absence from the Olympic program.

SPECTATOR SPORT? Elizabeth

Many years ago when I moved to Worcestershire, I would look forward to my parents coming down from the North to stay with us occasionally in the summer, planning lots of activities and outings to entertain them and enjoy their company. So it was always a bit of a puzzle to me when during every visit, my father would ask if he could just be dropped off at Worcester Cricket Club, where he would sit for a whole day, just watching, well... cricket. As an active and energetic younger being, I never quite understood why he would want to sit in one chair all day watching other people playing a game. Certainly he had played cricket as a younger man, not as common a sport in Scotland as in England, but just to sit and *watch*?

Roll forward many years and not quite so busy now, I took up croquet and loved every minute of playing the game. From time to time I would find myself in a small sociable group, sitting outside the pavilion with a cup of coffee in hand on a calm late summer afternoon, chatting quietly while keeping an eye on a match being played on one of the courts. It was peaceful, friendly and interesting. With nothing particular to rush off to, the reward of retirement, with no demands of young family, suddenly I *got* it! What my father had loved all these years ago, a peaceful day in the sun watching his favourite sport.

So I found another joy of croquet – not just playing it, but watching others enjoying playing it. I looked out for team matches being played at home, and went up just to sit quietly with my coffee and watch. Sometimes there might be others doing the same, from our club or the visiting club, with whom you could chat quietly or sit companionably in silence, and relax. And there was always the benefit of learning some new tactics from watching our top players too.

The topic came up recently in casual conversation, of spectators at our own events, matches, cup finals, and the low numbers who turn out to support our teams. I was interested, when playing a friendly match recently against Stourbridge, to find there was a gallery of spectators from their club, doing just that. Enjoying a warm peaceful afternoon watching their favourite sport. There was even applause for each of the good shots they saw, regardless of which team played them. It was a generous and friendly gesture to welcome a visiting team.

I'd like to think that we could reciprocate when teams come to visit us, not as a duty but as a pleasant way to pass an afternoon. When I asked recently about watching a singles cup match in our own club, I was told that spectators are always welcome. I'd love to encourage others to come along and support teams or singles matches, visiting teams, cup finals, so here is a list of upcoming events readers might enjoy watching, in the final few weeks of our croquet season.

Tuesday	27 th August	WMF GC 6+ Kenilworth v Himley
Saturday	31 st August	AC Fellows Salver
Friday	13 th September	GC Kenilworth v Stourbridge Friendly
Saturday	14 th September	GC Ladies' Day
Wednesday	18 th September	WMF AC Kenilworth v Eardisley
Friday	20 th September (provis)	GC Kenilworth v ? Friendly
Sunday	29 th September	GC Kenilworth and Pindi Cup finals
Sunday	6 th October (provisional)	GC Kenilworth Festival

COMPETITION TIME

KENILWORTH CROQUET GC CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP

The WELLS CUP with JULY LEVEL CUP 28th and 27th July

The history of the Wells Cup and the July Level Cup, and how these two trophies are linked together, has finally been clarified by Adrian and Mervyn. The July Cup was introduced first of all in 2015 and was won for the first two years by Ray Clipson. After that, it was decided to introduce a new trophy to be competed for as a Club Championship, and at that stage the impressive Wells Cup was added to the Club's collection of trophies, to be competed for by the top range of GC players, currently with handicaps of 4 or below. At the same time, it was decided to run a 2-tier system, with the July Level Cup being open to higher handicappers, set at 5 and above, to allow everyone who wished, to join in.

Traditionally the two competitions have been run on the same day, originally in September, but after some thought, were brought forward to July to raise the chance of better weather for spectators who wished to come along to enjoy the day; hence the name of the July Cup. This year, circumstances meant that the July Level took place on Saturday 27th, while the Wells players waited until the next day, which avoided the use of double-banking on the lawns.

THE WELLS CUP Mervyn Harvey

Results	Semi-finals:	Phil Blake	2-0	Nigel Pigdon
		Mervyn Harvey	2-0	Adrian Morris
	Final:	Phil Blake	2-0	Mervyn Harvey

The semi-finals were both closely fought but both were won by two games to nil. Phil Blake took the first semi against Adrian Morris and Mervyn Harvey the second against Nigel Pigdon.

The final saw last year's winner Mervyn Harvey taking a good lead in the first game, after winning the toss and using this advantage to take the first hoop. At the second hoop, he managed to get his ball in the hoop, but when Phil tried a difficult jump shot and knocked Mervyn's ball through, the point went to Mervyn and led to him taking the next two as well, taking the score to 4-0 and soon after, to 5-2. At that point, the game changed: Phil Blake rapidly recovered his form, taking control and running 5 consecutive hoops, including a long jump shot at hoop 8, to take the game 7-5.



Phil Blake (left) is presented with the trophy by Mervyn Harvey, runner-up

The two men have, of course, played each other many times, and know each other's strengths. Phil's is undoubtedly clearing shots, with an accuracy that allows him to clear to a distance while remaining close to the hoop. Mervyn's forte is jump shots, and when he is playing well, probably has more confidence in his hoop-running ability than Phil does.

The second game is a blur, and by that time Phil was playing so well that Mervyn was surprised to get to 5. I don't recall either of us getting a big lead, so we probably exchanged hoops in the way games quite often go. The better man won!

JULY LEVEL CUP GC 27 July Pauline and Elizabeth

Results	Semi-finals:	Elizabeth Thomson	2-1	Jeff Lindsay
		Pauline Harvey	2-1	Alan Worrall
	Final:	Pauline Harvey	2-1	Elizabeth Thomson

Four members gathered for the competition: Pauline Harvey, Elizabeth Thomson, Alan Worrall and Jeff Lindsay, disappointingly the only members to enter the competition this year. The day was warm, mostly sunny, but with a sprinkling of rain for a few minutes. It wasn't the only sprinkling though! Soon after Alan and Pauline started their third game, the sprinklers on lawn 1 sprang into life and caused a bit of a panic. How were we going to continue? They are certainly powerful beasts and not to be approached without full waterproofs or a wetsuit, neither of which we were wearing! Alan then had the bright idea of turning off the electrical switch, which quickly stemmed the flow. A couple of phone calls established that the problem was that the timer had been set for 12pm instead of 12am to boost the watering!

It wasn't the only problem of the day however, when Jeff and Elizabeth found a panic-stricken magpie trapped inside the pavilion, crashing into windows on both sides of the room and creating havoc. Unable to direct it out of the open door, Elizabeth fiddled with keys, trying to open the side door to allow it to escape without harm, but by then Jeff had finally managed to usher it outside from the front door to freedom.



Philip Wood presents the 2024 July Level Cup to Pauline Harvey

Despite the distractions the semi-finals went ahead and filled the morning, with Alan and Pauline competing on Lawn 1 and Jeff and Elizabeth on Lawn 2 after winning the coin toss.

Alan and Pauline

Alan was first out of the blocks, and raced to a commanding lead in the first game, hardly putting a foot wrong, whereas Pauline was always on the back foot, looking as though she could go down 7-1, but in the end, she managed to scrape four hoops.

The second game was very even, but Pauline pulled ahead around the half-way point, hitting a better length, and running hoops when she had the chance, thus winning this game 7-4.

The third game continued in the same vein, although Alan played some very good hoops, and made excellent defensive play, until Pauline again pulled ahead in the second half of the game, gradually taking command of the hoops after long battles, thus winning 7-4.

On Lawn 2, Jeff and Elizabeth were very evenly matched resulting in a very long match of over 3½ hours, only going out to start their third game as Alan and Pauline finished their match and settled to eat their lunch!

In the first game Jeff took an early lead but Elizabeth gradually caught up and levelled at Hoop 12, so the game went to a Golden Hoop, with Elizabeth emerging as the lucky winner.

In the second game Jeff played steadily with accurate clearing and hoop running and gradually built up a strong lead, taking the game with a clear 7-3 score.

The third game was another very long tussle with every hoop being strongly contested and neither side showing any sign of weakening! The lead alternated between the two, with Elizabeth eventually gaining a slight lead, but Jeff, this time, managing to level at the 12th hoop and another Golden Hoop ensued. With all to play for and tension causing errors on both sides, it was Elizabeth who once again was fortunate to take the hoop and thus the match. The result might easily have been reversed.

The Final



Pauline Harvey holding the trophy with Elizabeth, runner-up

With the clock running on, there was only time for a quick lunch before it was time to start again in the final, already after 2:00pm. Elizabeth won the toss but failed to capitalise on the advantage and Pauline took the first two hoops. Elizabeth managed to catch up slowly but the game ended in a 7-5 lead for Pauline.

In the second game, Elizabeth was the first to score, and gradually built up a strong lead. Pauline fought back, but some very accurate long shots towards hoops contributed to a clear 7-3 win for Elizabeth, and so the match went to another third game.

This time the tables were turned and it was Pauline who forged an early lead which didn't let up. Pauline is a master of jump shots apparently from any angle or distance, and is very accurate at clearing balls and running hoops. Elizabeth ran out of steam and trailed behind,

making some classic errors and failing to run even one hoop! So Pauline emerged as the very worthy winner of the July Level Cup in 2024.

At this stage, Philip Wood arrived on the scene to do some work on the lawns in preparation for the Wells Cup the following day and was invited to present the cup to Pauline. Thank you to Alan for returning to watch the final, and to Mervyn, our other spectator.



Two weekend winners, Pauline on the left (July Level Cup) and Phil (Wells Cup) GC Club Champion, 2024

WMF GC LEAGUE KENILWORTH A-TEAM v EARDISLEY 22 July Philip Wood

11

Kenilworth A-team: Philip Wood
Phil Blake
Phil Mander
Mervyn Harvey

Result: Kenilworth 11 -7 Eardisley

Our usual team set off early for the long journey and started the first round of singles at about 10.20. Early rising and the long trip were perhaps reasons why we struggled to cope with the conditions and win only one of the first round of singles. It was windy, making the ball deviate slightly, but also it pushed the mallet sideways at times.



Although their two lawns are flat and level, there were minor irregularities that we had to get used to, and hardened worm casts which could slow down the ball or make it deviate, or jump so that a clearance shot was less effective.

After this shock we managed to win all four games in the second round of singles. Their handicaps (2, 2, 4, 6) were rather higher than ours (0, 1, 2, 2) but it was all very close; the third round of singles we lost 1 – 3, giving an overall score of 6 - 6 after 3 rounds. The last round of singles went 3 - 1 to us, meaning that we needed to win only one of the final two doubles games. We managed to win both of these rather comfortably, giving a final score of 11 - 7 to us.

Their 6-handicap player won two of his singles, and Phil Wood was the victim of a 3ft jump shot which won him the game 7 - 6, and he reached 5 in another game.

For us, Phil Blake won 3 games, whilst Mervyn Harvey, Phil Mander and Phil Wood each won 2 games.

To finish, we were entertained to a nice tea with cake before we set off,

Eardisley is a thriving Club with rapid improvements to their croquet facilities in the last few years.

WMCF GC LEAGUE KENILWORTH A-TEAM v BROADWAS 22 August Philip Wood

Team: As above **Result:** Kenilworth 4-12 Broadwas

The weather was fine and windy, and the lawns were quite dry and fast. Once again we found some difficulty in coping with the speed and slope. Having risen early and travelled far we might have started weakly, but in fact we scored 2-2 in the first round of singles, and one game we lost by only 6-7. That was the extent of our success. The next two rounds of singles were lost 0-4 meaning that the match was lost. However, we scored 2-2 in the last round of singles, and it was unfortunate that the three games that went to 7-6 were all lost by us.

So Broadwas won back the Cup for the Competition which we had taken there with us.

Phil Blake won 2 games, Mervyn Harvey and Phil Mander each won 1 game, while Phil Wood featured but did not star in any way. We look forward to not having to play on their lawns for two years. But we were well beaten by a good, keen side who were as welcoming as ever.

WMF GC LEAGUE KENILWORTH B-TEAM v HIMLEY 24 July Pauline Harvey

Kenilworth B-team: Pauline Harvey
Nick Hegan
Lynne Breedon

Result: Kenilworth 5 - 13 Himley

A slightly depleted Kenilworth B team, due to holidays and recovery from surgery, travelled to Himley, where the 6+ team had played the previous week. If you haven't ever been to Himley Hall, it would be well worth a trip, particularly if you have primary-aged grandchildren. The park is vast, with the structure of the landscape, including the lake and trees, designed by Capability Brown. Other features and gardens have been added over the years, including a new adventure playground, which seemed to be very popular.



The croquet lawns are to the front of the Hall, with views across the whole of the park. The situation, whilst idyllic, does have some drawbacks, such as having to clear molehills off the lawns before starting play. Moreover, the club is not allowed to flatten the lawns or use any weedkiller or fertiliser in case it finds its way into the lake. This means that there is at least the same area of weed as grass, and many bumps causing the balls to veer off.

Anyway, what about the croquet, I hear you say! As their players' handicaps totalled 8, and ours 15, we did not expect to do very well, but we tried hard, and had a lot of close games. In fact 8 of the games we lost scored 7-5 or 7-6, so, if they had gone the other way, the overall result could have been quite different. As it was, the score was 13 – 5 to Himley, who played well, and were also able to take advantage of knowing the run of the lawns.

Pauline was pleased to take a game off their 2 handicap player, but there is nothing else to say apart from the weather! Whilst you had a dry sunny day in Kenilworth, we donned sunhats and rainhats, fleeces and anoraks, sometimes all within one game! Luckily, the heaviest rain came at the end of the day and, as we saw families hurrying back across the park to their cars, we battled on in the rain. That is why, in the photo, you will see the last two to play in anoraks and rainhats, and the others, who were able to shelter, dressed in more conventional summer garb.

WMF GC LEAGUE KENILWORTH B-TEAM v BROADWAS 13 August Pauline Harvey

Kenilworth B-team: Pauline Harvey
Nick Hegan
Nigel Pigdon
Mike Cheeseman

Result: Kenilworth 6-12 Broadwas

Kenilworth B-Team had its last match of the season today, at home, in perfect summer weather, against the formidable team of Broadwas. Their handicaps were 0,0,1,1, compared to our 2,4,5,6. On paper, our team, Nick Hegan, Pauline Harvey, Nigel Pigdon and Mike Cheeseman, might have expected to win three games (based on the theory behind the distribution of index points), but we won five singles games and one doubles, a very creditable performance. Six games went to the Golden Hoop, with Kenilworth winning three and Broadwas three. If all had gone Kenilworth's way, the score would have been 9 all, but as it was, the final score was 12-6.

Although the 2nd team won only one match in the season, we performed better in every match than our handicaps indicated, and gained a lot of experience playing against others with a lower handicap. We look forward to doing even better next year!

WMF 6+ LEAGUE MATCH v HIMLEY Tuesday 27th August 2024 Tony Watmore

Kenilworth 12 – 6 Himley

Team: Tony Watmore (Captain) Jeff Lindsay Robert Zara Elizabeth Thomson



In complete contrast to the match played at Himley – when it was the hottest day of the year – Himley arrived to somewhat overcast and blustery conditions and lawns covered in leaves.

Before the match could start Robert Zara heroically carried out a leaf removal exercise. It was unfortunate that the lawns weren't in the best of conditions to show off to our visitors as the recent mowing had been severe and the lines had not been marked.

The Kenilworth team of Tony Watmore, Robert Zara, Jeff Lyndsey and Elizabeth Thomson – making her debut in this league competition – were determined to gain revenge for their defeat at Himley with Jeff

determined to get a win after 4 losses at Himley and for someone finally to defeat Himley's super nonagenarian, Terry Wood, who won all his games at Himley.

Things weren't looking too good before the lunch interval – Himley were leading 5-3, Jeff still hadn't registered a win and Terry Wood remained unbeaten.

I don't know what happened at the lunch interval. There was no hairdryer treatment from the captain, the tea/coffee weren't spiked but there must have been something in Himley's sandwiches because there was a mini collapse in the afternoon with Himley only winning 1 of the remaining 10 matches.

This included some notable achievements – Jeff finally ridding himself of the Himley curse and winning his 2 singles and doubles match and Tony (followed by Jeff) defeating Terry Wood in the afternoon singles. Credit also to Elizabeth winning 3 singles and her doubles matches on her debut and Robert also fighting back from the morning session (no doubt suffering from the exertions of his leaf removal) and winning his 2 singles and doubles match.



There were only 3 golden hoop matches during the game.

So with a comfortable win the team will travel to Edgbaston in September with all to play for as it will determine who will be the champions of this inaugural WMF 6+ league.

Hopefully this will continue next year with more teams from WMF entering.

KENILWORTH v SAPCOTE GC FRIENDLY MATCH 26 July Pauline Harvey

Kenilworth team: Pauline Harvey Jeff Lindsay Jan Phelps
 Anne Langley Bob Phelps Mike Cheeseman
 Alan Worrall Tony Watmore

Result: Kenilworth 7 – 9 Sapcote



Anne Langley is missing from the photo as she had to leave before tea to attend a prior engagement. Jan appears to be hidden behind another member!

Our match against Sapcote was long anticipated, as we hadn't visited the club for many years, and was a big deal for them, being the only fixture they were arranging this season. It was particularly significant as their club secretary, Pat Wright, known to many of us, sadly died early in the year, whilst on a cruise. What I didn't know is that Pat was once a member at Kenilworth, then went on to found the croquet club at Offchurch, before moving to Sapcote and developing the club there.

He was a qualified coach and GC referee, and had done a great deal for the sport. In his younger days, he had been a keen footballer, once playing against Bobby Charlton, and was also a football referee. He enjoyed playing cricket too, and always got involved with the organisation in his clubs. He sang bass in his church choir and volunteered in their charitable organisation, playing a full part in his local communities. He lived life to the full and, in doing so, enhanced the lives of many. Oh, and he was a second cousin to Sting! RIP Pat!

Sapcote's lawns, with a wide selection of weeds, and overhanging trees, and with slopes and hollows, made for interesting play! Local knowledge was very useful! If you could hit a ball from hoop 2 towards hoop 3, about a yard from the hoop, it would then turn through 90 degrees and run through the hoop! Sadly, I only managed to achieve this whilst practising beforehand! Most games were very close and, with the last two games on the lawns, the score was evenly balanced at 7-all. It would have been lovely had the teams shared the honours, but sadly, from our point of view, we lost both, giving victory to Sapcote 9-7. Then came the tea, for which the club is famous. They laid out a delicious spread of sandwiches, sausage rolls, quiches, and more, plus four different cakes. I won't embarrass one of our number who had to try them all!! And to cap it all, we were offered glasses of wine, both red and white! I don't think we have ever been offered wine at a match before! We were honoured to have been treated so royally. It was a really enjoyable afternoon amongst friends, with croquet bringing us together.

KENILWORTH v WORCESTER NORTON GC FRIENDLY 7 August Pauline Harvey

Kenilworth team: Lynne Breedon Tony Breedon Jeff Lindsay
 Robert Zara Jaspal Jheeta Linda Edwards
 David Hands Ian Robertson Tony Watmore

Result: Kenilworth 10-5 Worcester Norton

The day started with rain in the air and temperature lower than of late, so Robert decided to warm up by nobly clearing the leaves and worm casts on lawn one using the leaf clearer. I'm sure he won't mind me saying that he now strongly advises anyone considering the same not to do so if they are wearing whites or light-coloured clothing. This machine, although very effective, does flick mud backwards! Enough said.



Worcester Norton came ready to enjoy a good day out. They are a friendly bunch who soon made themselves at home and enjoyed a chat, as well as a drink, between games. They were very impressed with our flat lawns, whereas theirs apparently are bumpy. They also had lots of questions about our pavilion, watering system, member numbers – in fact anything and everything! Lynne even discovered that she had been at school with the sister of one of their players!

Many of the games were close, which could have affected the result, had they gone the other way, but the match finished with Kenilworth winning 10 – 5, with one game drawn (game times were limited to 50 minutes). Tony Breedon and David Hands played in their first match, and Jaspal Jheeta in only his second, all performing extremely well. I'm sure that this will be the first match of many, and will encourage them to take part in club

competitions and leagues in the future to improve their play and handicaps.



Thank you to all the team members for helping in every aspect of the day, and for bringing generous contributions towards the tea. It was an impressive spread, which provided wonderful hospitality for our guests. They greatly appreciated our generosity, particularly the homemade cakes and delicious chocolate-covered strawberries! The photo was taken before the final plates were loaded!

Our next GC friendly match is against old foes, Stony Stratford, on their lawns this time, on August 21st. Our next home game will be on Friday September 13th; a return match against Stourbridge. We would welcome spectators, so come along to cheer us on. Your reward will be to share in the tea at the end!

KENILWORTH v STONY STRATFORD GC FRIENDLY 21 August Pauline Harvey

Team

Lynne Breedon & Elizabeth Thomson

Nick Hegan & Jaspal Jheeta

Jeff Lindsay & Richard Pinder

Pauline Harvey & SS member

(Final) Result

Kenilworth 11-9 Stony Stratford



Jaspal, Nick, Lynne, Elizabeth, Jeff
(Pauline and Richard had vanished at the photo-call)

There are many ways of reaching Stony Stratford, near Milton Keynes. Our team, travelling to our friendly match tried a variety of them in the journeys there and back! I for one discovered roads and towns new to me. Have you ever visited Towcester? It's very attractive, with a lot of characterful buildings. The weather was good, but there were signs that autumn is not far away, and so fleeces were needed until the warmth of the sun came through.



The lawns at Stony Stratford are interesting. The grass on the full-sized lawn was cut short, and made it lightning fast, thus requiring very little effort to hit the ball a long way. The other lawn was under-sized, but more than a half lawn. It was in partial shade, which made for variable speed, so it took a bit of getting used to. We all played half our games on each lawn, whereas the home side stuck to the same lawn. Unusual, but they wanted us all to spend some time on a full lawn.

Richard Pinder, playing with Jeff in his first match for Kenilworth, did very well, with the pair losing only one match, and that was 6-7. As one of the team had to pull out because of illness, and a substitute couldn't be found, Pauline played solo in some games, and borrowed a player from Stony Stratford in others, who helped her win all but one of her games. Very generous of them! One of Lynne and Elizabeth's games was so strongly contested, it had to be given a time limit after more than an hour so that the next round could be played, and ended in a 4-4 draw!



What was the result I hear you say? Well, it depends on when you asked the question! After the usual four rounds, when each pair had played all the others, Stony Stratford led Kenilworth 8-7, plus a draw. However, at this stage, still only 2.45 pm, our hosts decided that we should play another round, and this time, Kenilworth, having become more familiar with the lawns, won all their games, and so the final result was 11-8 to us. After eating our fill of cake, and drinking yet another cup of tea or coffee, we set out for Kenilworth taking an interesting scenic route home circling round the north side of Rugby and back down to the A45! Fortunately Richard and Nick had left earlier as they couldn't even go home and put their feet up having agreed to help with a hospitality event at the club. What devotion to duty! Thank you to all members who help in many ways to run the club, and raise funds to keep our fees at a reasonable level.

ASSOCIATION CROQUET

FELLOWS SALVER 31st AUGUST 2024 Adrian Morris

Players	John Copping	Phil Mander
	Mervyn Harvey	Nigel Pigdon
	Pauline Harvey	Elizabeth Thomson
	Jon Hodge	Robert Zara

On a sunny day but with a rather chilly easterly wind, eight of Kenilworth's Association players gathered to compete for the Fellows Salver. It promised to be a rather interesting day with 4 more experienced players and 4 relative novices, with handicaps ranging from 9 to 20.



Games were played to handicap AC rules, 18 points per game. Each player played three games timed to 2hrs 30mins, so a long day of croquet.

The first round, the quarter finals, went to form, with some natural nervousness showing among the less experienced competitors, which was to be expected.

Mervyn Harvey	12-8	Jon Hodge	Nigel Pigdon	18-5	Elizabeth Thomson
Pauline Harvey	15-5	Robert Zara	Phil Mander	13-11	John Copping



In the first semi-final, the current holder, Phil Mander, beat Pauline Harvey, 18 - 10.

In the other semi, Mervyn Harvey took on fast improver, Nigel Pigdon. Nigel had the upper hand on the day, winning 18 - 6.

The final between Nigel and Phil proved to be a very close game with the lead switching throughout, but as time was called, Nigel took the Salver, 16 - 13. Congratulations to Nigel on a great performance.

Elizabeth: In the meantime, the 4 losers from the first round were having their own fun playing off against each other. With the more experienced players out of the way, early nervousness had dissipated and we were able to relax and just enjoy the fun of playing. First of all we played against each other and thereafter against the losers from the semi-finals. Three players ended the day with two wins – Phil, Pauline and Elizabeth. Well done to them.

It was a lovely day; I think we've all learned a lot about how these AC tournaments are played out (even if rather bemused by Adrian's complex score sheet) and I'm sure we have all learned just how much more there still is to learn about Association Croquet!

2024 REPORT OF WMF AC MATCH v SHREWSBURY 25 JULY Cliff Daniel

Kenilworth

Cliff Daniel (4.5)
Mervyn Harvey (8)
Phil Mander (7)

Results:

Shrewsbury

Robbie Dodds & Mike Long won 17-14 on time v
Alan Ridley (2) won 26-11 v
Robbie Dodds (-1) won 26-1 v
David Hart (9) lost 19 – 23 on time v
Mike Long (12) lost 6-26 v

SO SHREWSBURY WON 3-2

Shrewsbury

Robbie Dodds (-1)
Alan Ridley (2)
Mike Long (12)

Kenilworth

Cliff Daniel & Phil Mander
Mervyn Harvey (8)
Cliff Daniel (4.5)
Phil Mander (7)
Mervyn (8)



For a variety of reasons this match was played with only 3 players on each side. Hence there were 5 points available rather than the usual 7.

During the morning Mervyn played the singles game v Alan Ridley who had a handicap of 2 and

so conceded 6 bisques to Mervyn. For a while Mervyn gained the lead without using any bisques at all. However Alan started producing some fine shots and within a short time he had his front ball on rover, and with the balls well placed was threatening to clinch the game whilst Mervyn still had some bisques available! He faltered slightly allowing Mervyn opportunities to use his bisques but, inevitably Alan won the game 26-11 well before the 3 hour time limit was reached.

In the doubles game Cliff and Phil Mander were playing against Robbie Dodds, an experienced player with a handicap of -1, and Mike Long, playing in his very first year but already with a handicap of 12. Thanks to an early break by Phil, playing his first AC game for quite some time, the visitors developed a slight lead. However the home pair, thanks chiefly to Robbie, soon overhauled this lead and with less than 45 mins to go looked set to win comfortably. But Cliff, having squandered a couple of chances earlier, put together a good break which brought the scores level. Then, when set to retain the innings and separate the opponents' balls he unluckily roqueted his partner's ball into the jaws of a hoop! Thereafter Robbie took control, played all the turns for his pair, and secured victory 17-14 for the home team.

During the afternoon Kenilworth needed to win all 3 singles. Cliff, who loves to play the 'advanced' version of AC with the 'leave and lift' dimension, foolishly offered to play his game v Robbie this way. Robbie accepted this offer and proceeded to continue playing in the impressive way that he had controlled the morning doubles game. The final result was never in doubt as he won 26-1.

Mervyn faced the inexperienced Mike in his next singles game and employed his usual tactic of patiently waiting for his opponent to use up his bisques. Mike did squander his bisques averaging only one hoop per bisque and Mervyn then controlled the game eventually winning 26-6, not needing all of his own bisques!

Phil Mander, who was clearly enjoying his first AC league match for some time, began his singles game in flamboyant style by running hoop 1 with his first shot and then nestling this ball by hoop 2 ready for a subsequent peel! Undeterred, his opponent David Hart, with a handicap of 9 and a substitute for the afternoon, kept himself in the game until the closing stages. The final outcome was in doubt until Phil put together an impressive turn, running 'penult' from distance! When time was called David ran a few more hoops, finally losing 19-23. So the overall final score was victory 3-2 to Shrewsbury, the home team.

One can speculate as to what may have happened in Cliff's game had it been played under the prescribed 'handicap' rules, but with Robbie playing so exceptionally well I expect the final result would have been the same. Fortunately the result was never going to affect the eventual winners of the league: Broadwas had been declared Champions before today's match at Shrewsbury.

NAILSEA AC LEVEL A CLASS TOURNAMENT 9th July Cliff Daniel



On 9 July I set off down the M5 to play in this tournament, conscious of the fact I would be facing very strong opposition, but nonetheless was keen to visit a croquet club near the coast that would be new to me. I had underestimated the intensity of the traffic around Bristol, but the weekend was to prove really enjoyable for me.

I stayed the Friday night in a very comfortable caravan at Warrens Village on the recommendation of Adrian, at Clevedon, approximately 15 mins drive from Nailsea Croquet Club. Arriving at the venue on the Saturday morning I was pleased to discover that all games were to be untimed and as there were only 9 players involved there would be no double-banking.

My first game was to be against David Goacher who had a handicap of -2 and a world ranking of 48! Playing level I clearly had a challenge in front of me! And so it proved to be for although we both made a few mistakes as we adjusted to the lawns, David's obvious class soon became evident as he proceeded to beat me 26-0 producing a 'triple peel' as he did so! It was truly interesting to watch him manage this feat showing incredibly good control with the pace of his shots. It was indeed the very first time I had been beaten in this way.

However it was not long before I had suffered a SECOND EVER defeat with a 'triple peel', for my next opponent was Marcus Evans who had an even higher world ranking, no. 32! This, my second game of the day was contested for a while, and I did manage to run a hoop too, but lost decisively 26-1 tp.

For my third game of the day I faced Klim Seabright whose handicap of 4.5 was the same as mine. Our game ebbed and flowed for over four and a half hours, a game which I eventually won +9.

It had been a long day for me in intense heat and, after enjoying a brief walk by the sea as I returned to my caravan, I slept very well indeed!

On the Sunday morning I played against the only lady in the tournament, Erica Malaiperurman, with a handicap of 2. This game was well contested and really could have been won by either player. After approximately two and a half hours play we agreed to set a time limit of three and a half hours, and Erica put together one decent break, eventually clinching the game +6 as time was called. This allowed 4 games to be started immediately after lunch, permitting me to set off home mid-afternoon to prepare for an overseas holiday the following day.

I had thoroughly enjoyed the weekend and intend to return to Somerset in 2025. The event had been run calmly and efficiently by Marcus Evans and there was a wonderful ambience over the weekend, no doubt helped by the delicious two course lunch served each day, where wine and entertaining conversation flowed!

I ought to add that Marcus Evans, with 5 wins out of 5 was a very deserving winner.

Editor: And finally on the 4th September I manage to get the August Running Hoops off to Ian to circulate, not because I've been too busy or away on holiday, but because of the energy flowing through these peak months of activity in the club and the willingness of so many people to write reports and send photographs for inclusion. So thanks again to all those who contribute in many different ways and enable our Newsletter to continue so successfully through the playing season in spite of holidays and family responsibilities during the school holidays.

Best wishes to all for a successful, enjoyable and very busy final month of the croquet season. Elizabeth

