

Running Hoops

The Newsletter of Kenilworth Croquet



October 2025

Contents

Editorial..... 1

Club News

2025 Year Summary... ..2

Leek Wootton Day.....9

Features

Story of Marj Part 2..... 10

Next Generation.....12

Press Success.....14

Competition Time

GC

Charlecote Cup..... 15

Pindi Cup..... 16

Kenilworth Cup..... 17

6+ v Himley.....18

All England.....19

6+ v Himley.....19

Ken B v Broadwas.....20

6+ v Edgbaston.....21

Kenilworth Festival.....22

Friendly v Moreton.....23

AC

Bill Browne.....24

Secunderabad.....24

St George Cup.....24

Castle Cup.....26

Budleigh.....28

Cartoons.....29

This time last year, I was looking for suggestions on how to pass the time during winter while the lawns were closed. At this moment (now into November as my timing with RH is well out this month), the lawns are still open and playable, and the weather so far has been really kind to us, so the social sessions are continuing and are still well supported.

However, if the rain, or frost, or croquet wrist/shoulder sets in and keeps you away from the lawns, you may spend several hours just reading this Running Hoops, which is turning out to be the longest on record. I realise an extended holiday in Australia prevented me from issuing the normal September newsletter, which would have covered the competitions which had ended by then. Consequently there are an astonishing 14 match reports and 1 national tournament included in this October publication. What a very competitive club we have, both internally and against other clubs. West Midlands Federation league matches, and friendlies, all good fun, help to publicise and raise the profile of Kenilworth Croquet.

However there is still lots to read in the rest of the magazine. We start with leaders' reports, on what turned out to be a memorable year for the club, some of which you may have been unaware, but it also highlights the great number of people who give up their time to run the lovely club we enjoy, and also helps to keep the cost of membership down. I'm a great believer in Hands On clubs, as I call them, and also firmly believe that the more you put in to a club, the more you are rewarded, with the extra interest and involvement with others. If you read these reports and feel you could help with any particular area, then do mention it to the group leader or to anyone else on the Committee.

On other pages, Adrian ran a croquet promotion at a Leek Wootton Activities afternoon in September, p8; Mervyn at last lifts the curtain on the story of Marj, p9, who reached the lofty pages of the Croquet Gazette, and we welcome another new member to our exclusive Writers' Club, Judith Brickwood, who has been playing croquet with her grandchildren, aged 5 and 9. Judith has written a lovely account of their games with some delightful photographs of the children, on page 10.

If the weather worsens and prevents play, some might consider meeting up in the clubhouse for coffee or lunch, to keep in touch with friends over the winter. There is now a professional cook, who provides some lovely light lunches and cakes. Unfortunately, when a few of us met up recently on my return from abroad, it turned out to be the cook's day off (Thursday!) so we had to settle for coffee and cake. So if you're feeling hungry, check in advance that the cook will be on duty!

Elizabeth

CHAIR Lynne Breedon

The lawns were rested over the winter months after the autumn maintenance but on Monday 10th March the 2025 season officially opened. Initially the lawns were being cut twice a week but at the beginning of May the mowing was upped to 3 times a week and it was decided also to double cut lawn 1. This has continued throughout the year. Our lawns have remained lush and green over this incredibly hot Spring and Summer due to the irrigation system which was installed in 2024. Thanks to Phil Blake for ensuring the lawns were watered appropriately during this time and visiting clubs have commented on how good they look.



The 2025 maintenance took place at the end of September and because it was not as drastic this year we had only a short time off the lawns. This year I'm pleased to say we will play through the winter. This is of course weather dependant but if it's not too wet or temperatures plummet I see no reason why we can't all carry on enjoying our croquet even if we have so many layers on it's difficult to move!!

The GC competitions have finished and congratulations to all our winners and it's great to see that 3 new names will be on the Honours Board. Alan Worrall won the July Level, Jon Hodge - Kenilworth Cup and Val Moss the Ladies Trophy. The trophies will be presented at the 2026 annual dinner.

This year, particularly the last few months has been busy for the Committee. Another Planning Application has been submitted to Warwick District Council by the General Committee for alterations and renovations to the main clubhouse and for 2 more padel courts to be built. I understand a decision is likely to be made in early November. I will keep you all informed.

The highlight of this year has to be the recent announcement by the President of Croquet England that Kenilworth is the first croquet club in England to be awarded the Silver Mark Accreditation. When the Committee first decided to go for the Silver Mark Ian Robertson "volunteered" to be the lead. The initial application form itself was quite daunting but we were determined to go ahead. Some elements were easy to answer but other areas needed more work. Many people contributed to us gaining this award but Frank Hurst who looks after the marketing and media for all of KTSCC was brilliant and should be mentioned for all the help he offered. Throughout all this time Ian was liaising with Beatrice McGlen from CqE and it was in mid-September that he arranged for a group of us to meet with Beatrice for our final interview. It was a very positive meeting but we knew from the outset getting the accreditation was not a "given". We were delighted when a week or so later Ian was told that CqE were going to award the first Silver Award to us. At the AGM which Ian joined online we also were amazed and thrilled to receive the inaugural Chris and Gail Barley Award of £500. Chris Barley had enjoyed playing croquet in England so much he and his wife wanted to give something back as a thank you and to support croquet in the UK. Ian has now exchanged several emails with the Barleys and we hope when they are next in the UK they will visit us.

As a result of these two prestigious awards on Thursday 23rd October I received an email from Will Oelrich from BBC CWR Sport who presents Wildcard, "a celebration of grassroots sports clubs from Coventry and Warwickshire". I will be having a chat with him tomorrow and arranging for him to visit the club as I understand he wants to have us on one of his shows.

What an end to the season!

Finally my thanks to all the Committee for their energy and commitment all year round and to all the members not on the Committee who give of their time in so many ways.

Thank you everyone for making Kenilworth Croquet such a friendly and vibrant club.

MAINTENANCE LEAD Nick Hegan



2025 has been a year relatively easy year regarding site maintenance. Plans for a new pavilion hut have been temporarily put on hold until we know exactly how our lawns will be impacted by the Main club's growth aspirations. (Note: at the time of writing it appears that any necessary changes should be manageable).

Last year an acquaintance of Glen kindly repaired one of our green benches; this year Mervyn Harvey kindly found the time to renovate another.

Our lighter weight green picnic chairs are gradually failing so this year we purchased 8 higher quality units. Next year we hope to replace all of the remaining older chairs.

Earlier in the year our composting bin needed some urgent repairs. Tony Breedon and I had a go at it and it is now fully functional. This bin is producing some good compost now. In 2026 it will need emptying again so if any members would like some free compost it will be made available.

Our irrigation system functioned well over the very hot summer and we certainly had the greenest and the least scorched lawns in the midlands. One sprinkler head failed; this was detected and a replacement arranged by Phil Blake.

In the club house we fitted new recycling bins and a new ball container was manufactured for Linda's hospitality secondary ball set that had previously been kept in a cardboard box. We also replaced our eclectic mix of drinking mugs and purchased a new teapot, thanks Vicky!

U3A CROQUET GROUP Mervyn and Pauline Harvey



Pauline and I run this Group on behalf of the U3A, but know that many members are nevertheless interested in what sort of year we have had. The short answer is – a very good one. We have been able to run every one of our 16 planned sessions, with an average attendance of 27 per session. This has brought in £1500 for the club – which equates to 10 members' membership fees.

You may be interested to know that 11 of the club's current members joined after first being in the U3A Croquet Group, and 3 others joined after a taster session I ran, because the U3A Group could not accommodate them at that time.

FRIENDLY MATCHES 2025 Pauline Harvey (Friendly Matches Co-ordinator)

We have managed only five friendly matches this season; three at home and two away. Home against Sapcote, Stourbridge and Moreton-in-Marsh, and away to Stourbridge and Worcester Norton. A match was also planned against Edgbaston, but after attempts at several dates, they found that they couldn't raise a team for any. It was also a bit tricky to arrange some of the other matches, so thank you for bearing with me when I ask for availability on multiple dates.



The main purpose of the friendly matches is to give players, who wouldn't otherwise have the opportunity for competitive play against other clubs, the chance to do so, and in a relaxed atmosphere. It is one of the pathways to improvement which helped us to gain the CA Silver Mark this year. Twenty-one different players took part this season. It is also enjoyable to see other clubs' facilities, and to chat over tea. They can be very sociable occasions and can also enable you to see how Kenilworth fits into the croquet world in this part of the country. I hope that any newer club members reading this will be keen to give friendly matches a go next season. All games are doubles, and you will be paired with a more experienced player. For home games, we can even split a place between morning and afternoon, if you don't feel you have the stamina for four games in a day.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Ian Robertson



Croquet England's Silver Clubmark.

Sport England had decided it would require each sport's governing body to ask all clubs to be assessed for various governance capabilities (care of membership, committee responsibilities, safeguarding etc). In March 2025, CqE invited clubs, and our committee decided to go for it and aim for Silver Clubmark. I led the project, completed the template.

As you know we are the first club in the country to be awarded the Silver Clubmark plus the first award of the Chris and Gail Barley financial award (£500).

The assessment process began with CqE's assessment template and needed considerable additional documentary evidence given to the CqE assessor. However I had previously compiled various documents (members' handbook, emergency contact list, members' contact list, CqE Standard membership options, introductory information to prospective members) and these, along with our members' survey, Running Hoops newsletter, our accounts, the KTSCC constitution and articles of association, the poster of committee members (faces and roles) clinched the success.

So these papers and the help of several members, Adrian, Mervyn, Pauline Harvey, and particular mention has to be made of Allison Watmore's safeguarding role, helped convince the CqE assessor that we are a well managed club.

There was much to and froing with CqE's assessor by email, then a very amicable face to face meeting in our clubhouse in September. A few days later we heard that we'd been awarded the Silver Clubmark and we're the first club in the country to win this. On the back of this award I learned, when I sat in on the online CqE AGM, that we had also been awarded the Chris and Gail Barley award of £500 for our success, so literary a win win.

Frank Hurst, in KTSCC's publicity role, has been especially helpful in editing our webpage plus adeptly publicising in the local and wider media.

It's been a "full-on" assessment process but it's been rewarding for all of us.

Our membership numbers have risen in recent years.....

April 2024--54

April 2025--61

Nov 2025--69

So we're on the up, showing the popularity of croquet and also our club.

In case of emergency (ICE) contact details of 40 of us are shared via email.

Standard Members, we have 40 members subscribed with CqE.

Members Handbook, I wrote and distributed around members, the first edition of a club handbook, summarising the club's activities.

The hospitality events season has come to an end for 2025 and I'm delighted to tell you that we have raised £1920. KTSCC will also receive a VAT refund from the catering costs. It has been an interesting year with several WI Groups dominating the bookings and some guests not turning up at all, due to the hot weather and so causing a rearrangement of the playing schedule. We ran the last event on 10th September in the rain and played the final game courtesy of the floodlights on the adjacent tennis court plus the pavilion lights. The group enjoyed the event so much and are eager to return next year. Events will be offered between mid-May and the end of August in 2026. We need more lead lawn hosts to run the events on the day. If you think this is something you would like to consider, please get in touch or have a chat with me at the club.

**Tennis v Squash Annual Croquet Match**

Hi Lynne and all in the croquet section,

Thank you very much for organising the annual croquet challenge this afternoon. Everyone really enjoyed themselves and we certainly picked up a few tips on the art of this noble game. The time and effort you put into chaperoning us all, keeping scores, offering your wisdom and keeping the kettle on was much appreciated.

Best wishes, Mel Jennings (on the losing tennis team) 🏏

WMF WI Thursday 10 July

Good morning Linda,

Just a quick email to say a big thank you for hosting our event yesterday. Despite the heat everyone really enjoyed themselves.

Can I also extend the thanks to the other members of your team for their help, guidance and scoring. I have forwarded your bank details on to our Treasurer to make the payment today.

Once again thank you for yesterday and look forward to seeing you next year.

Kind Regards, Jackie

Kenilworth Lions team v Balsall Common

Good morning, Linda

Thank you so much for a lovely evening and for your excellent organisation and management skills. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves. I have advised our treasurer of the BACS payment and that should be through very shortly.

Best wishes, Graham.

Ian and Caroline Robertson
playing for the Kenilworth Lions

**Warwickshire Federation of Women's Institutes**

Hi Linda

Thank you to all of you for last night. I thoroughly enjoyed myself and will be looking to start playing, it's a great game. The feedback from the Ladies was lovely. They too enjoyed themselves. I think we could try next year for another. I found it great fun.

Thank you and best wishes. Glyn

The Hiplok Company

Hi Linda & Bede

Thank you so much for yesterday, we had a great day and I think everyone really enjoyed learning a new sport! I've

done the transfer for £195 to KTSCC today so it should be in your account shortly.

Thanks, Maria

**Kenilworth 41 Club – Wed 11th June**

Hi Linda

Thank you very much to you and your team for running our Croquet Night (especially help with the food etc). Thoroughly enjoyable night helped by the weather. Please find

attached photographs taken on the night as promised. Once again, many thanks – hopefully see you again next year. Martin



WMF LEAGUE - KENILWORTH A TEAM**Philip Wood (Team Captain)**

On May 30th we played our early 'away' match against Kenilworth B Team, scoring a comfortable but by no means easy win by 12-6, with Mervyn, Phil Mander and Phil Wood winning three singles games each.

On June 17th our second away match was at Himley. We started very well with 10 singles games won out of the first 12. As in the Kenilworth B match we ended up winning 12-6, with Mervyn, P Mander and P Wood winning three singles games each.



Next were our two home matches. Broadwas arrived on July 25th posing their usual threat. Despite their having to cope with our fairly level lawns after theirs which are very sloping (and in July very dry), they won the first round of singles 4-0. We battled hard but eventually lost by one point, 8-9 with one 'drawn' game. Two of our singles games we lost by 6-7, so if one had gone 7-6 we would have won the match. Mervyn starred with 3 wins. To be fair, they did not have their full strength team, and we admire their strength in depth.

On August 5th we played our final, fourth match at home to Eardisley. They had two steady but rather inexperienced players but we were at full strength, winning very comfortably 15-3. Mervyn won 4 singles games, while Phils Blake, Mander and Wood won 3 each. After all that we awaited the result of the match between our B Team and Broadwas. We had considerable respect for our B team and hoped that they might manage to beat Broadwas to put us top of the League, but they failed to help us!

Editor: Philip has two other roles in lawn marking and hoop setting, and organises the annual Kenilworth Festival (see P20). He would appreciate help in either of these roles

WMF LEAGUE - KENILWORTH B TEAM**Pauline Harvey (Team Captain)**

After a long and wet spring, preventing players in all clubs playing much until May, the season started with many not performing to their handicap levels. However, the three Kenilworth B team players playing in the first fixture of the season, The Robertshaw Cup, adjusted to the short grass and faster playing conditions at Edgbaston better than most, and beat Kenilworth A team in the final. As readers of Running Hoops may remember, The Robertshaw Cup is contested by the top four teams in the previous year's West Midlands League, but with three players instead of the usual four, namely, Nick Hegan, Ian Robertson and Pauline Harvey. As 2024 was Kenilworth B team's first year, it was also the first time they had played in The Robertshaw Cup.



The first league game of 2025 was at the end of May, when Kenilworth A took their revenge, winning 12-6. For this match, and most subsequent matches, the team of 4 was Nick, Ian, Pauline and Richard Pinder, starting the season with handicaps of 3,3,3 and 7 respectively. The A team's handicaps were -1,2,2 and 3, so we did well to win 6 games. Lynne Breedon came into the next game, which was against Eardisley, as Richard was unavailable, and helped us win 12-6. This was on 1st July, when the heatwave was just beginning, and their lawns were already dry and bumpy. We are so grateful for our watering system! With Richard back in the team, we continued to play well at home against Himley on 30th July, winning 14-4. However, after several attempts to agree a date against Broadwas, we finally played them on a very dull day on 17th September, and failed dismally on their challenging lawns, losing 17-1.

So, overall we did well, and all team members improved their handicaps by one, finishing the season 2,2,2,6. The good news is that we have again qualified to play in The Robertshaw Cup at the start of next season, and will do our best to retain the cup!

There has been some discussion about whether to change the team names to something like Abbey and Castle, which don't attempt to grade the teams, as the seven members of the teams with handicaps of 3 or lower are split pretty evenly between the two teams. No decision has yet been made.

WMF LEAGUE – KENILWORTH 6+ TEAM Tony Watmore (Team Captain)

Kenilworth had another successful year in winning the Eastern section of the WMF 6+ league although it was a tight close affair going down to the wire with the very last match.

Fortunately this year I was able to call upon a wider pool of players wanting to play in the league this year so that there was a squad of players to select from according to availability.

The squad consisted of regular stalwarts – myself, Robert Zara and Jeff Lyndsey boosted with Alan Hulme, Jon Hodge and Richard Pinder.



Our opening match was at home against Edgbaston in July which we won fairly comprehensively by 14 games to 4 – an advantage of 10 games which was to prove important in the final reckoning. Man of the Match for Kenilworth was the captain Tony Watmore winning all 4 of his single matches and his pairs match.

The second match away at Himley was a very tight affair with both sides winning 9 games each so the decision was based on number of hoops won - and the result went to Kenilworth who won 98 hoops as opposed to Himleys 95. The stars of the show were Richard Pinder and Jeff Lyndsey who both won 3 of their singles matches. For Jeff this was retribution from last year's game against Himley when he failed to win a match. The result was no small achievement as the match took place during the height of the heatwave – the lawns had not been watered for 6 weeks and it was like playing on concrete. Once again Himley's nonagarian Terry Wood was Kenilworth's nemesis winning 4 of his matches.

The return match against Himley wasn't as close a contest, with a rather conclusive one sided affair - Kenilworth winning 16 games to Himleys 2, (both of those won by Terry Wood). Richard Pinder and Robert Zara were the stars, winning all 4 of their matches, with Tony Watmore and Jon Hodge being the fall guys losing their matches to Terry.

And so to the final match against Edgbaston where a win or draw would suffice for Kenilworth to retain the WMF 6+ championship for the East Region. Even a loss would suffice as long as Kenilworth did not lose by more than 10 games due to the superior hoop difference from the first match as in such a case the championship would be determined by overall hoops won over the 2 matches. However things didn't go well early on as Edgbaston raced into a 7 game lead after 8 matches and the captain was getting nervous.

However Kenilworth rallied after lunch winning 6 matches out of 10 and so losing by 11 matches to 7 and took the overall league on the basis of 21 games to 15 over the 2 legs.

So Kenilworth retained the Eastern division title and once again will meet Llanidloes in Spring 2026 at Himley's lawns to determine the overall WMF 6 + League title. Kenilworth will be seeking revenge and looking to wrest the title from Landiloes having lost to them last year.

The playing record of the Kenilworth team (excluding the pairs matches) was as follows:

Richard Pinder	Played 12	Won 10	Lost 2	83.3%
Alan Hume	Played 4	Won 3	Lost 1	75%
Jeff Lyndsey	Played 4	Won 3	Lost 1	75%
Tony Watmore	Played 16	Won 10	Lost 6	62.5%
Jon Hodge	Played 12	Won 7	Lost 5	58.3%
Robert Zara	Played 16	Won 8	Lost 8	50%

I think everybody in the team enjoyed themselves – it was good to play on different lawns, (and appreciate how good Kenilworth's lawns are) as well as the opportunity to play against players from other clubs and test ourselves against their handicaps.

So another successful year with just the final hurdle to try and wrest the overall WMF 6+ league title from Llanidloes in the spring of 2026.

THURSDAY MORNING AC SESSIONS Adrian Morris

These AC sessions have continued to be well attended with competitive play being enjoyed along with some group and 1 to 1 coaching.

It pleases me greatly to see the improvement in the knowledge of tactics and general play. I'm sure we have the basis of successful Association Croquet in the club for years to come.



We regularly have the hardy old timers who have been around for a few years but the newcomers to AC are showing much improvement and starting to give the old guard a run for their money.

It is always pleasing to see new names on Trophies and with Pauline Harvey winning the prestigious St George Cup this year; let's hope it's the first of many mentions on the Club AC Honours Board. I'm confident that runner up Jon Hodge will be featuring too, before long.

Elizabeth Thomson, two-time winner of the Douglas Cup is showing much improved form this season and Tony Lester and Mike Taylor won't be far behind.

I look forward to more success as we go forward and would welcome any GC player to come along any Thursday to see what AC is all about.

Elizabeth would like to express her thanks, on behalf of the others, to Adrian, for giving up his time week after week to coach and encourage all players, ably supported by Mervyn.

WMF LEAGUE AC TEAM Cliff Daniel (Team Captain)

Kenilworth managed to arrange all of its matches early in the season, but had mixed fortunes this year, starting with a strong win against Shrewsbury. This was followed by an even stronger win against Church Stretton 10 days later, although the teams for this match were reduced to 3 in each, after their team captain was unable to play and so Cliff had to withdraw as well to even the numbers. With two wins behind them, they approached their third match optimistically, against Eardisley, but sadly were unable to match their earlier performances, losing narrowly. In the final match of the season, against Broadwas, luck was out again and they suffered their biggest defeat of the season.



Date	Home Team		Away Team	Match pts	League pts
Tues 3 rd June	Kenilworth	v	Shrewsbury	5 - 2	4 - 0
Fri 13 th June	Church Stretton	v	Kenilworth	1 - 4	0 - 4
Wed 9 th July	Eardisley	v	Kenilworth	3 - 2	4 - 1
Tues 29 th July	Kenilworth	v	Broadwas	2 - 5	0 - 4

However, in the final calculations, they did not do too badly after all. In the League Table, Broadwas led the field with a clear 13 points, followed by 3 teams, all on 9 points: Kenilworth, Eardisley and Shrewsbury. All three teams won one and lost one, so after that, it had to be calculated on 'net match points'. This put Kenilworth in second place, with Eardisley and Shrewsbury third equal.

LEAGUE TABLE FOR 2025

		P	W	D	L	Match points	League points
1	Broadwas	4	3		1	17 - 7	13
2	Kenilworth	4	2		2	13 - 11	9
3=	Eardisley	4	2		2	9 - 11	9
3=	Shrewsbury	4	2		2	11 - 13	9
5	Church Stretton	4	1		3	8 - 16	5

I am a long-time resident of Leek Wootton and earlier in the year I was asked if I could demonstrate Croquet on the village green at an event in September. It seemed ages away so I readily agreed. As it got nearer the time, however, panic set in! How am I going to achieve this?

With the help of the village sports club, some fencing was erected to keep people from wandering onto the lawns, and to protect them from wayward croquet balls.

Lynne kindly agreed for me to borrow some equipment, and Mervyn offered his gazebo. So, with the use of the club wheelbarrow, six hoops, ten mallets, two sets of balls, a peg and the necessary equipment to set up the hoops and the gazebo, were loaded into the car and driven to the event.



Two hoops were installed for newcomers to get the feel of a mallet and practice running a hoop, and four hoops were set up to play a game.

We forgot to take any photos during the event but these show the area just before opening. Unfortunately, Darryl was busy setting up his fitness course next door and features well!

Philip Wood, Robert Zara and Elizabeth joined me to host the event and we had an enjoyable afternoon. It wasn't overly busy but a steady flow of families enjoyed the croquet experience, some more competitive than others! We had enough freedom to enjoy our own challenge of trying to run the four hoops in as few strokes as possible on the very sloping cricket outfield. I think Robert might have beaten me at that and Elizabeth beat me 6-3 in a game of GC.

There were lots of other activities on offer in the village hall including folk dancing, displays of every sort of interest available locally: U3A, painting, crocheting, walking groups, mosaic tile pictures, all sorts of crafts, and the Scouts served hot and cold drinks with a large selection of mouth-watering cakes, which we enjoyed sampling. A police car excited the children with sirens screaming and lights flashing, and alongside us was a more sedate demo of Pétanque.



As soon as Darryl had set up his fitness course, Elizabeth couldn't resist trying a timed circuit of the commando course to the incredulity of Adrian and Philip, providing the trainer with a base level for the day – and all in her "whites"!

An exhausting but enjoyable day, followed by dismantling and returning all the equipment.

No potential members were identified but one chap was very keen on AC and was invited to join us on a Thursday morning.

We did spread the word about our wonderful sport but probably too much effort to make it an annual event.



THE TRUE STORY OF MARJ – PART 2

(See August RH edition for part 1)

The difference between the three poems referred to in part 1 is that the first two give a bit of a clue as to why they were there – although it helps to know that the Corfu Croquet Club invites two groups from the UK each year – a GC group (which has included Pauline and Peter Dennis, and Pauline Harvey and husband) in May, and an AC group in October. So you'd think that at least one reader would have commented on the letter to Marj. Come to think of it, the most likely response would have been along the lines "what the ****", and so would have been rejected for including an obscenity.

Spoiler alert – only a few members know that Marj was not a real person. She came about because, back in the early 10's, Mike Cheeseman and I were concerned how few members knew the rules of the game they were playing. We did a little skit about faults at one of the winter get-togethers (or was it the AGM? It doesn't really matter which), and while Mike pursued a more serious approach, I decided to inject a little humour – by inventing Marj as an agony aunt. The small number of club croquet publications mentioned in my letter to the Croquet Gazette (CG) was one - our own Running Hoops, then edited by Gordon Henderson. Did our members read letters to Marj? My guess is – not many – but who knows.



The rules were a lot more complicated back then, and most letters were based on things that actually did happen. The poem from Carol Lewis actually happened in a game Mike was playing in. And, of course, if the peg is missing, it is not likely to be missed (literally) until you play hoop 5.

The late Dame Edna Everage, who inspired Marj

And another letter was based on a bizarre situation whereby if Ruth, playing Red, accidentally kicked a ball while it was Black's turn, Yvonne, playing Yellow, would lose her next turn! NB Accidentally kicking a ball is no longer a fault.

Someone suggested that the CG might be interested in this approach to getting the rules better understood. However, Chris Roberts – then editor of the CG, and someone I've since got to know quite well – said that they weren't appropriate for a serious publication like the CG.

So – fast forward to where Part 1 starts, and, given the above, imagine my surprise to see that the President of CE (Patricia Duke-Cox. again, a very friendly lady whom I have met on the lawns many times) is clearly in favour of frivolous poems. So I re-sent the poem to the current editor – Alison Maugham – who was thrilled to get something different, and would include it, subject to getting Patricia's approval, which was readily granted. My email to Alison gave some background to how Marj came about, and asked her to "publish as much or as little of the background as you have room for."

I mentioned a letter from John Silver, and his parrot, and went on to say that “the following letter in the form of a poem was sent in by ‘Carol Lewis’”. I had said that it was a spoof letters column, and thought that “spoof”, the mention of John Silver and his parrot, and putting Carol Lewis in quotation marks, would make it clear that these weren’t real people.

However – there must have been some breakdown in communication between Alison and a sub-editor, which resulted in none of the background information being included. Worse still – there is a Carol Lewis who is a member at a club in the north. It may have been too cryptic, but my Carol Lewis was a nod to Lewis Carol, the author of Jabberwocky. It was, as it turned out, an unfortunate diversion from my usual practice of creating a name that is obviously made up – although I am not denying the possibility that there is a real person called “Wilma Housebereadyontime”!

So, we agreed that the letter that appeared in the June edition would act as some sort of explanation, albeit being too ridiculous to be true.

People often ask (or did I just make that up?) which was my favourite. Away from croquet, it has to be the letter from R(ené) Descartes – he of “I think, therefore I am”, because of its mind jumbling. But in pure croquet terms, it is the unusual wrong ball situation, which has remained largely unchanged over the last 12 years, despite more radical changes in situations which happen more often. This is reproduced below.

Running Hoops July 2014

Dear Marj

I was playing in my regular doubles “friendly” session with Gillian against Phyllis and William (we call ourselves “the Sickies”, as we all sound “ill”). Anyway, I’ll pick up the game with Phyll having hit White to about 2 feet in front of the hoop, and Gill’s and Will’s balls being a long way away. It was my turn to play with Brown. I couldn’t run the hoop, but could get in the jaws or clear White. Knowing that poor old Phyll couldn’t jump (not since her recent hip op), I chose the former and got my Brown into the jaws - exactly where I wanted it. Will then wandered over and said that he had just realised that he and Phyll must have swapped balls some time back, because everyone knows that when playing with secondaries, Phyll plays with Pink and Will plays White. He said that now that he had realised this, we should put it right and so he should now be the one to play White. Now Will never misses a jump shot from this range, and so I wasn’t amused.

Surely there is a rule against this sort of thing? The error happened some time back, and has been condoned many times since.

Bill Tinaday

Dear Bill

Will’s interpretation is Fair dinkum! Rule 10.1.2 makes it clear that Will owns White, and remains the owner of White throughout the entire match, and no amount of “condoning” can change that. The last potential wrong ball was when Will played Pink, which was condoned when you played Brown. Now that the error has been spotted, the game simply proceeds with the owner of White playing White. That, of course, is Will.

Marj

BRING ON THE NEXT GENERATION OF CROQUET PLAYERS! Judith Brickwood



Both Archie (9) and Jessica (5) pestered me to take them to play croquet.

It was Jessica's first attempt at the game, having seen croquet being played on the green sward below Bamburgh Castle while on holiday there in August, (clearly not influenced by my involvement with the game).

Jessica and Archie start with some introductory coaching

"Bamburgh Croquet Club was formed in 2008 and is still one of the youngest clubs in Croquet England. There has been a keen interest in the game in the north of Northumberland and we are continuing to expand our membership.

The majority of our members were new to the game when we started and we put a strong emphasis on coaching to enable members to learn and appreciate this intriguing game.

We now have three full-size quality lawns on the castle green at Bamburgh. We cater for both codes of the game, golf croquet and association croquet, and we compete in the Croquet North golf croquet league."



Archie coped well with one of the Club's shorter mallets but Jessica struggled a bit with hers. Despite that, she ran the first hoop within two minutes of us starting to play.

Jessica says she enjoyed "winning points" when her ball went through a hoop.

Archie enjoys croquet because of the tactical side to the sport. He is a big chess fan and there are elements that resonate in both games.

Both children are keen to play again.

Archie had played before - the first time with Rugby U3A's croquet group on a back lawn in Lilbourne last year, where not only had he to face a rather bumpy pitch but also half a dozen hens pecking at his laces or standing in front of the hoop.



Later that year I took him to Crackley Lane where I had booked the practice lawn (much to his disgust), but feelings and honour were saved when Glen and Kath invited us to join them on Lawn 2. Being kind individuals they insisted that Archie be allowed extra strokes at each hoop, a gesture they soon regretted as he ran hoop after hoop.

Archie demonstrates a balanced stance to line up his shot...

Earlier this year we had a family morning meeting with my son and girlfriend, again playing on a full lawn.

It is clear that children don't just have to play with each other but can play (very successfully!) with the grownups.



...while Jessica shows how to follow through.

Another (unrelated) thought for you to ponder - why croquet is important to KTSCC and should not be side-lined:

At the other end of scale some of our members are ex-tennis and squash players; it is an excellent sport for those who wish to remain active but who no longer wish, or who are able, to play physically demanding sports.

So from 5 to 95, croquet has something to offer.

Where else could one go for a game of croquet? There are lots of opportunities for playing tennis, squash and padel, but no other croquet lawns nearby.

After a dearth of press coverage earlier this year, there has been more success in the past months, both online in the Warwickshire World and in the Leamington Courier where our recent achievements filled nearly half a page in the Sports section, quite a coup. I also read the Facebook site, Croquet Hub, run by Croquet England's Alison Maughan, and wonder if we could send in some of our news to that site. Clubs from all over the world send in photos, news and chat and there can be some very interesting topics discussed or questions asked, even by recent beginners, who benefit from advice from willing coaches or players from many other clubs.

Kenilworth Croquet Club celebrates awards honours

KTSCC Kenilworth
Contributor

Kenilworth Croquet Club, part of Kenilworth Tennis, Squash & Croquet Club (KTSCC), is celebrating a remarkable double achievement — becoming the first club in England to receive Croquet England's Silver Club Mark accreditation, and now being named the inaugural winner of the Chris and Gail Barley Award for club development.

The Chris and Gail Barley Award, established by American croquet enthusiasts Chris and Gail Barley, recognises clubs that demonstrate exceptional progress and commitment to developing the sport. The accompanying grant will support Kenilworth's continued community outreach, including youth sessions, open days, and partnerships with local organisations.

This latest recognition follows the club's success in gaining the Silver Club Mark — Croquet England's new quality standard for good governance, safeguarding, inclusivity and community engagement. Together, these awards highlight the enthusiasm, teamwork and dedication of Kenilworth's volunteers and

members, who keep the club thriving both on and off the lawns.

Membership Secretary Ian Robertson expressed the club's thanks at the National AGM, to Croquet England, Beatrice McGlen, Chris and Gail Barley for their support and generosity, as well as to everyone within the

club who contributes their time and energy to make it such a welcoming and successful community.

With two national honours in quick succession, Kenilworth Croquet Club continues to lead the way in promoting croquet as a modern, inclusive and sociable sport for all.

Submitted



Lynne Breeden club chair Ian Robertson membership secretary

Kenilworth Croquet Club wins National Silver Mark Accreditation
WarwickshireWorld > community > kenilworth-croquet-club...
30 Sept 2025 ... Kenilworth Croquet Club wins National Silver Mark Accreditation — A first for England ... Kenilworth Tennis, Squash & Croquet Club (KTSCC) is ...



Kenilworth Croquet Club celebrate awards honours
WarwickshireWorld > sport > kenilworth-croquet-club-celebr...
14 Oct 2025 ... The Chris and Gail Barley Award, established by American croquet enthusiasts Chris and Gail Barley, recognises clubs that demonstrate ...



Kenilworth Croquet Club celebrates a year of triumphs and a ...
WarwickshireWorld > sport > kenilworth-croquet-club-celebr...
3 Nov 2025 ... Kenilworth Croquet Club has rounded off an exceptional season marked by competitive spirit, community engagement, and a historic



warwickshireworld.com

Friday November 7, 2025 warwickshireworld.com

SPORT

Kenilworth Croquet Club celebrates a year of triumphs and a national first

KTSCC Kenilworth
Contributor

Kenilworth Croquet Club has rounded off an exceptional season marked by competitive spirit, community engagement, and a historic national first.

The annual Kenilworth Festival, held on Sunday 12th October organised by Philip Wood, once again proved to be one of the highlights of the year. Eight pairs from seven different clubs took part, each pair playing the others in a demanding full-day schedule.

Many matches were fiercely contested, several going to the final hoop, but in the end Kenilworth emerged unbeaten, winning all seven of their matches — an outstanding achievement that

secured them the title. The festival remains a much enjoyed fixture, and the club is already looking forward to defending the trophy next year.

The season's finale saw the GC Pindi Cup come to an exciting conclusion, with Ian Robertson and Pauline Harvey contesting a close and skilful final. After a hard-fought match, Ian claimed victory 7-6, 7-5, bringing the competition to a thrilling close.

Although a planned friendly against Edgbaston had to be cancelled at the last minute, Kenilworth went ahead with their fixture against Moreton-in-Marsh on 14th October. Despite Moreton's defeat, the match was played in great spirit, and both clubs are



Lynne Phil with the Kenilworth Festival trophy

looking forward to a return encounter next year in the Cotswolds — particularly as Moreton's club, still in its early years, continues to grow and thrive.

The proud moment of the year came with the announcement that Kenilworth Croquet Club is the first in England to receive the Silver Mark Accreditation from Croquet England. This new national award recognises clubs demonstrating excellence in governance, safeguarding, financial management, and community engagement.

At Croquet England's Annual General Meeting in early October, Kenilworth received further recognition with the inaugural Chris and Gail Barley Award, including a grant of £500 in support of club development. The club has since been in touch with the Barleys and hopes to welcome them to Kenilworth during a future visit to the UK.

Thanks to lighter end-of-season maintenance this autumn, members will continue to enjoy play through the winter months, weather permitting — a welcome change from recent years when the lawns needed longer rest periods.

As the season concludes, Kenilworth Croquet Club extends warm wishes to all local sports clubs for a successful and enjoyable winter — and extends a warm invitation to anyone interested in trying croquet.

New players of all ages and abilities are always welcome, with coaching and equipment provided.

To find out more or arrange a taster session, please contact Kenilworth Croquet Club by email: croquet@ktacc.co.uk.

COMPETITION TIME**CHARLECOTE CUP****Group A**

Tony Watmore
 Pauline Dennis
 Jeff Lindsay
 Gordon Henderson

Group B

Val Moss
 Jon Hodge
 Elizabeth Thomson
 Alan Worrall

Group C

Jaspal Jheeta
 Pauline Harvey
 Bob Phelps
 Robert Zara

Quarter Finals

Pauline Harvey	2-0	Val Moss
Elizabeth Thomson	2-1	Jaspal Jheeta
Bob Phelps	2-0	Tony Watmore
Pauline Dennis	beat	Alan Worrall

Semi Finals

Pauline Harvey	2-0	Elizabeth Thomson
Pauline Dennis	2-0	Bob Phelps

FINAL

Pauline Harvey	2-0	Pauline Dennis
-----------------------	------------	-----------------------

Congratulations to 2025 Winner Pauline Harvey and to Runner Up Pauline Dennis

The Charlecote Cup, also known as The Winter Cup, is the first competition of the new season to launch. It is played level (without handicaps) and limited to higher handicap members (less experienced), and differs from all other competitions in that jump shots are not allowed, to avoid damage to the lawns before they have recovered from the winter weather. It is therefore an ideal



first competition for newer members to the club to try entering.



PINDI CUP

Group 1

Gordon Henderson (0)
 Tony Watmore (7)
 Jon Hodge (9)
 Pauline Harvey (3)

Group 2

Ian Robertson (3)
 Mervyn Harvey (1)
 Philip Wood (3)

Group 3

Jeff Lindsay (8)
 Nick Hegan (2)
 Robert Zara (9)

Semi Finals

Pauline Harvey (3)	2-1	Robert Zara (9)
Ian Robertson (3)	2-0	Nick Hegan (2)

FINAL

Ian Robertson (2) 2-0 Pauline Harvey (2)

Congratulations to 2025 Winner, Ian Robertson, and to Runner Up, Pauline Harvey

The Pindi Cup is played using the original handicap system of Extra Turns. Players are divided into groups and play the other members in their group, after which the top scorers move on to the Semi Finals and Final.

Match Report by Pauline Harvey

Ian and I played the Pindi Cup final today on a rather dull damp morning on a level basis as we both have a handicap of 2. The wet grass made the balls fly across the lawn at great speed, such that we both overshot the first hoop by several feet, but Ian, with his early morning golf experience, quickly got the measure of the speed and pulled away to a 4-1 lead. I did rally to 4-3 with a rather spectacular (Ian wanted me to say this) jump shot from an angle, over a blocking ball, knocking back Ian's ball which was not quite fully in the hoop, and then sailing through to score the hoop. Sadly, that was the high spot in my game which couldn't quite match Ian's accurate ball positioning and long clearances. Ian took the first game 7-4.

The second game followed a similar pattern, with Ian going ahead 4-1. This time I rallied to 4-4 and battled hard over hoop 9. This time my jump shot spun, for what seemed an age, on top of Ian's ball, but fell back on the non-scoring side. A long battle ensued over hoop 10, and so we moved on to hoop 11 with the score 5-5. However, Ian's firm accurate clearing ensured that he was the first to have a successful shot on the next hoop. Ian then made short work of hoop 12, with a very accurate approach, and the rest, as they say is history. He won that game 7-5, and so wins the Pindi Cup for 2025. Congratulations Ian!



KENILWORTH CUP

First Round

Richard Pinder (7) 2-0 Robert Zara (9)

Second Round

Ivan Moss (8)	0-1	Alan Worrall (Ret)	(6)
Philip Wood (3)	2-0	Tony Watmore	(7)
Jeff Lindsay (8)	2-0	Val Moss	(11)
Jon Hodge (9)	2-0	Elizabeth Thomson	(7)
Mervyn Harvey (1)	2-0	Richard Pinder	(7)
Ian Robertson (3)	2-1	Adrian Morris	(2)
Nick Hegan (2)	Bye		
Pauline Harvey (3)	Bye		



Quarter Finals

Philip Wood (3)	2-1	Ivan Moss	(8)
Jon Hodge (9)	Bye		
Ian Robertson (3)	2-1	Mervyn Harvey	(1)
Pauline Harvey (3)	2-0	Nick Hegan	(2)

Semi Final

Jon Hodge (9)	2-1	Philip Wood	(3)
Ian Robertson (3)	2-1	Pauline Harvey	(2)

FINAL

Jon Hodge (9)	2-1	Ian Robertson	(3)
---------------	-----	---------------	-----

Congratulations to 2025 winner, Jon Hodge and to Runner Up, Ian Robertson.

The Kenilworth Cup is played using the more recent Advantage handicap system, whereby players are given a different target number of hoops to score, depending on their ability, in order to win a game. So weaker players will normally have fewer hoops to aim for, while stronger players will need to run more hoops to win the game. This allows weaker players to enjoy playing games with a wider range of stronger players.

Ian

Jon deservedly won the Kenilworth Cup last Tuesday. He remarked that this was his first win but I suspect it certainly won't be the last. He cleared well, ran hoops well, played for position well..... you get the drift, all in all he played well. Me, not so much.

The first game went to Jon then I came back to win the second, but he clinched it with the third game. So a new name on the Cup.

Jon had to reach 5 hoops to my 8 hoops, a challenge too far for me.

Jon

I'd just add that we had three well contested games with the results 5:2; 3:8; and 5:5. In our last game I managed to peel Ian's red ball through hoop 1 and he returned the favour on the penultimate hoop, peeling my black through it. I think I saved probably my best shot of the match until the end, managing from a reasonable distance to block Ian's sight of my black ball which was happily within running distance of the hoop, which I then made to clinch the match.

WMF 6+ MATCH KENILWORTH V HIMLEY 12TH SEPTEMBER

Tony Watmore

Result was Kenilworth 16 (119 hoops) v Himley 2 (67 hoops)

Kenilworth Team: Tony Watmore, Robert Zara, Jon Hodge and Richard Pinder

This was a comprehensive but rather surprising win against Himley considering the past matches played against them.

Last year we each won our respective home matches against each other and this year the fixture at Himley was a close affair each winning 9 games and Kenilworth only winning on hoop countback by 3 hoops.



I say this a little tongue in cheek but I wonder whether it was because we were playing on our impressively manicured and green lawns compared with Himley's lawns that we played the previous week, which had not been watered for some 6 weeks and were like concrete.

We should be very thankful for the irrigation system we had installed last year as it has made such a difference during this hot summer and Himley were certainly envious of our lawns.

For Kenilworth – as the score suggests all players were on top form. For Himley, Terry Wood (their nonagenarian) won Himley's only 2 matches, having been a thorn in Kenilworth's side in previous matches, only losing 1 of the previous 10 matches he had played, but today, was finally beaten twice.

A good time was had by all with plenty of cake, fruit and biscuits. The weather was kind – deciding to have only 1 lashing of rain for 20 minutes whilst we had broken for lunch.

And so Kenilworth march on with 3 wins and a final match against Edgbaston on 30th September where winner takes all in winning the WMF 6+ title for the Eastern region. If Kenilworth win this match they will be outright winners – if Edgbaston win, it will be determined on hoops won over the 2 matches played.

So all to play for.

THE GC ALL-ENGLAND HANDICAP FINAL (ADVANTAGE GC) 2025 Robert Zara



I arrived at the final stage of this competition by virtue of winning the club round at Kenilworth, and then the area final at Ashby. The national final was held at Camerton and Peasedown Croquet Club, in a village a few miles south of the city of Bath. There were 14 finalists, although one withdrew shortly before the event, leaving 13 of us to compete in an all-play-all format, meaning 12 matches to be played over 2 days. The handicaps of the finalists ranged from 2 to 11.

The event itself was superbly organised by the host club. The order of play was clearly displayed on a whiteboard, with our handicaps taken into account to determine how many hoops each player would need to run in order to win. The competition used the original version of the Advantage system, meaning that in some matches, the lower handicapped player would start with a minus score. To assist us in keeping score,

plentiful supplies of clips were provided, to be placed on hoops as they were run. We were double-banking in most matches, so those playing primaries put their clips on the top, and those playing secondaries on the side. We also used timers, each match being allowed one hour.

There were four lawns, two of which were of excellent quality, and two which were good but had some defects (a small sinkhole on one lawn was marked with a white circle, and we were told to call the referee if a ball landed there). We had the services of a full-time referee, who was kept busy adjudicating on whether balls had run a hoop (there were a couple of rat-runs) or how to deal with what happened after a wrong ball had been played. The grass on all the lawns was cut quite short, certainly shorter than at Kenilworth, and this enabled some accurate play. On two separate occasions, I hit my ball from the side of



hoop 1 and successfully ran hoop 2, to applause from spectators in the pavilion behind me. Unfortunately, on the first occasion it transpired that I had hit the wrong ball! It is of no comfort to me that the referee got the ruling wrong, having failed to appreciate that I had in fact run the hoop and allowing my opponent to opt for ball swap. The referee subsequently apologised for his error but it would have made no difference.

It became apparent to me that most, if not all, of the other competitors were experienced tournament players. All seemed very familiar with the rules and etiquette of the game. My first match was against a player with a handicap of 4, who rebuked me for taking a shot without first calling the referee when there was a possibility of a double tap. Fortunately, she agreed that in fact the shot was clean. I became accustomed to calling the referee whenever there was a risk of a crush shot or a double tap. Incidentally, I was not (at 78) the oldest player in the competition; that title went to a gentleman of 85 (with a handicap of 8) who successfully executed a dambuster jump shot to win a hoop!

In theory, we were supposed to play seven matches on the first day, and six on the second. One of the matches would be a sit-out, because of the late withdrawal of one player. In practice, and with everyone's agreement, we played eight rounds on the first day because the weather forecast for the Sunday was for heavy rain starting around lunchtime. We also agreed to start Sunday's play at 9.00 a.m. and in the event, only one match was significantly affected by the rain.

One striking feature of the competition was that the vast majority of those competing came from clubs in London or the southwest. There were two contestants from Maldon, in Essex, and one from a club in Bedfordshire, leaving Kenilworth to represent not just the Midlands but the whole of the rest of England! Where were the representatives from clubs in the north-west? Why were there apparently no entrants from clubs like Edgbaston or Cheltenham? It may be to do with the location of the final being in Somerset (in a previous year the final was held in the even more inaccessible Isle of Wight) but whatever the reasons, All-England it certainly was not.

Space does not permit me to give you a detailed analysis of my score, but four of my matches ended 7-6 (I lost all four!) so it was perhaps closer than the final result might suggest. In the event I narrowly avoided the wooden spoon, registering only 2 wins out of 12 but scoring more hoops than the other competitor in that position. Undeterred, I shall definitely be prepared to enter again next year.



The day started with a pitch inspection at 7.30 am, as heavy rain had been forecast for overnight, and for showers during the day. However, the rain overnight was light, and we were pleased to receive the message that the match could go ahead. As it turned out, we were able to play in almost dry weather, with just a little rain in the air from time to time. Unfortunately, that is the only good news to report.

To say that the lawns at Broadwas are unusual in their topography is perhaps an understatement. The challenging slopes meant frequently aiming two yards or more, to right or left when approaching a hoop, and getting the right soft touch for a downward slope is a skill I certainly rarely achieved. An amusing story - Nick was playing from hoop 6 to 7, aiming well left to account for the slope. His ball curved right through the hoop the wrong way and ended up just in front of the hoop on the correct side! He won that one! We acknowledge that the challenges of the lawns are the same for all the teams who play there, and some players have success. Sadly, on Wednesday that wasn't the case for us, and we only narrowly avoided a complete whitewash. Four games did go to the golden hoop, but, despite valiant battles, only one result went in our favour. The respective handicaps of each team were: Broadwas 0,0,1,3 and us 2,2,2,6, so, even without Broadwas's considerable home advantage, we would have expected to win only a handful of games (last year we lost 6-12 at home). We look forward to improving on that next year when we will again play Broadwas at home.

Other clubs are quite envious of our lawns – Himley, who are prevented by the local council from treating any weeds, and who cannot use a hose on the lawns, and Eardisley who, although having generally flat terrain, have lawns that are very bumpy, and they again have no watering system. Both of these clubs had serious problems this summer in the very dry weather with parched, hard surfaces. Our watering system has paid enormous dividends this year, as has the aeration and weed-killing, so our lawns are now in the best condition for a long time.

This was our last game of the season, which by and large was very successful. We finished third, below our A team and Broadwas, which means that we will, once again, be eligible to play, and defend, the Robertshaw Cup at the start of next season, which is held between the top four teams.

WMF 6+ MATCH EDGBASTON v KENILWORTH 30th SEPT Tony Watmore

Result was Edgbaston 11 (103 hoops) v Kenilworth 7 (87 hoops)

Kenilworth Team: Tony Watmore (6) Robert Xara (9) Jon Hodge (8) Richard Pinder (7)

Edgbaston Team: Julie Antrobus (6) Merryn Lloyd (6) Chris Butt (6) Jenny Buchanan (7)



Kenilworth travelled to Edgbaston, for the final match of the WMF6+ match for the Eastern section with high hopes of retaining the title from last season. The situation was quite straight forward – based on previous results if Kenilworth either won or drew the match the title was theirs. If however Edgbaston won there would be a tie (on matches won) and the title would be determined by the aggregate number of matches won over the 2 matches between Edgbaston and Kenilworth.

Even in that scenario Kenilworth approached the match with confidence having a surplus of 10 matches from the first leg – having won by 14 games to 4. (a bit like the European Ryder Cup team).

The weather was perfect and the lawns looked to be in excellent condition – perhaps a little faster than the Kenilworth team were used to.

Whether it was adjusting to the faster pace of the lawns or a little complacency but Kenilworth were soon in trouble as Edgbaston, (just like the USA Ryder cup team) came out of the starting blocks fast reducing the deficit to only 4 games 7 of the first 8 matches with only Richard Pinder recording a solitary win.

Captain Tony Watmore had 2 titanic matches that seemed to go on forever but losing them 7-5 and 7-6 (the golden hoop) - the latter against Chris Butt who was Kenilworth's nemesis – going onto win all 4 of his single matches. A repeat of this over the second set of matches would have Kenilworth relinquishing the title.

However over the second set of matches, Kenilworth rallied winning 5 of the next 8 and sharing the spoils in the pairs matches – both sides winning 1 each with Richard and Tony finally vanquishing Chris Butt for his only defeat.

So the result of the match was Edgbaston winning by 11 matches to 7 on the day but losing out overall by 21 matches to 15. The star performer was Richard Pinder winning 3 of his singles and his pairs match along with Tony who won 2 of his singles.

And so Kenilworth win the WMF6+ Eastern section and now meet Llanidloes – the winners of the Western Section to determine the overall winner. This will be a chance to gain revenge and wrest the trophy from Llanidloes who beat Kenilworth in the final last year. As of yet a date, venue and format have yet to be decided.

A great day was had by all and some great croquet was played on lovely lawns. Edgbaston treated us royally to biscuits and cakes with a special mention for Merryn's lemon cake. We look forward to meeting up again next year and renewing our friendly rivalry.

THE KENILWORTH FESTIVAL SUNDAY 12 OCTOBER

Phil Blake



The Kenilworth Festival is run annually by our club, usually towards the end of the croquet season, and organised by Philip Wood, with invitations going out to members of other clubs.

The 8 teams this year came from Ashby, Edgbaston, Eardisley, Himley, Northampton, Morton in Marsh, Stourbridge and Kenilworth.

It was a cold morning with fog and a good dew on the grass. Play started about 10.15am and went on until 6.00pm.

Each team played 7 games up to a winning score of 6 hoops, and we managed to squeeze in lunch sometime between the start and finish times. [Ed: Good gracious – a hectic day, then!!!]

The competition was won by our own team Phil Blake and Lynne Breedon, who won all their 7 games, although 3 were won by a very close score of 6-5. A prize of two bottles of wine and the glass trophy was presented to the winners by Philip Wood, after another very successful annual event.

Congratulations, Lynne and Phil!



of
of



FRIENDLY MATCH AT HOME 14TH OCTOBER v MORETON-IN-MARSH Pauline Harvey

The lead up to this match was rather fraught, as communication began in June, aiming for a match on 2nd September. Unfortunately, Moreton were unable to find enough players for that date, and so we settled on 14th October, keeping our fingers crossed that the lawns and the weather would enable us to do so.

As Edgbaston had cancelled our match scheduled for the previous Saturday, being unable to raise a team, so we had several disappointed players. I therefore encouraged them to play in the match against Moreton, even though it meant that we then had eleven players and a reserve (aren't we lucky to have such a pool of able and willing players!).



The proposed pairings worked very well, with a little jiggling and almost everyone sitting out for one game. However, a last minute family crisis, someone taken ill the day before, and confusion on my part about am or pm availability, meant that by the morning, we had 7 full-day players and 2 part-day, and so it worked out perfectly. Phew!

The result was Kenilworth 12, Moreton 3 and a draw (it was a slightly damp day and a little chilly, so we agreed on timed games to keep everything moving). As always in a friendly match, the result isn't important, but well done to Tony Breedon and Jon Hodge for going through the day unbeaten. The hoops were keenly contested, but we were just a little better at running them on the day. Moreton were a very friendly group, and there was a lot of socialising during the day. They were very jealous of our irrigation system, as they had struggled with parched lawns in the long hot summer spell. They also took photos of our mallet storage system and our hoop-removing contraption – an engineering feat.



We finished the day with a splendid tea provided by all the players, which also impressed Moreton. We look forward to a return fixture next year playing on their relatively new lawns. The club has only been operating for four years, although history tells us that croquet in England started in Moreton.



ASSOCIATION CROQUET

BILL BROWNE TROPHY

The Bill Browne trophy is played on full lawn, to 14 points with handicap to Base 3 and no time limit. The winner of each group plays the runner-up in the other group.

Group 1

Pauline Harvey	(18)
Philip Wood	(9)
Alan Richardson	(10)
Nigel Pigdon	(8)
Elizabeth Thomson	(18)
Jon Hodge	(18)

Group 2

Philip Mander	(6)
Mervyn Harvey	(8)
Robert Zara	(24)
John Copping	(18)
Tony Lester	(18)

Semi Final

Pauline Harvey	(16)	beat	Mervyn Harvey	(8)
Nigel Pigdon	(8)	beat	Tony Lester	(18)

FINAL

Pauline Harvey	(16)	Nigel Pigdon	(8)
----------------	------	--------------	-----

This competition is still to be finished.

SECUNDERABAD CUP

The Secunderabad Cup is played Handicap to Base 6, on full lawn, to 26 points, with a time limit of 3.5 hours. The winner of each group plays the runner-up in the other group.

Group 1

H/cap

Cliff Daniel	(6)
Jon Hodge	(18)
Phil Mander	(6)
Adrian Morris	(3)
John Copping	(18)

Group 2

H/cap

Robert Zara	(24)
Nigel Pigdon	(8)
Elizabeth Thomson	(18)
Mervyn Harvey	(8)
Philip Wood	(9)

Semi Final

Adrian Morris	(3)	26-3	Nigel Pigdon	(8)
Mervyn Harvey	(8)	v	Jon Hodge	(16)

FINAL

Adrian Morris	(3)	v	Mervyn or Jon
---------------	-----	---	---------------

Due to ill-health, this competition will be finished in the New Year.

St George Cup is a knock-out competition played on full lawn, to 26 points, with handicap to Base 6, time limit of 3.5 hours, but no time limit in the Final.

Quarter Final

Adrian Morris	(3)	26-25	Phil Mander	(6)
Pauline Harvey	(16)	23-11	Cliff Daniel	(6)
Mervyn Harvey	(8)	26-19	Nigel Pigdon	(8)
Jon Hodge	(16)	23-8	John Copping	(18)

Semi Final

Jon Hodge	(16)	23-14	Mervyn Harvey	(8)
Pauline Harvey	(16)	23-18	Adrian Morris	(3)

FINAL

Pauline Harvey	(16)	26-10	Jon Hodge	(16)
----------------	------	-------	-----------	------

Congratulations to 2025 winner Pauline Harvey and Runner Up Jon Hodge

Match Report by Jon Hodge



After a long 5hr battle in the St George's Cup, Pauline Harvey emerged as the very worthy winner, beating Jon Hodge 26:10.



The match was played over two days. Day 1 took 3.5hrs, but dampness and dull light led to a decision to peg down the game and measure the position of each ball. The first part of the match saw some cagey and defensive play from both players with some burning down of the 10 bises they each had. By the end of the day Pauline had a fairly comfortable lead going into Day 2.

Play was resumed two weeks later and was a more flowing and attacking game, with Pauline extending her lead to win comfortably and take the cup.

CASTLE CUP 17TH SEPTEMBER Adrian Morris

ADRIAN RETAINS CROQUET CLUB AC CHAMPIONSHIP

The final round of their 2025 Association Croquet Club Championships featured four finalists playing level in an all-play-all block to determine this year's champion and winner of the prestigious Castle Cup.

Finalists (Handicap): Cliff Daniel (6) Mervyn Harvey (8) Phil Mander (6) Adrian Morris (3)

With Nigel and Philip Wood eliminated in the Semis, this left Adrian, Cliff, Mervyn and Phil Mander to compete in the finals.



Nigel presents Adrian with the Castle Cup

Despite forecasts, the expected rain held off, allowing for an enjoyable day with some excellent croquet.

In the first round, Adrian took the lead but with Cliff rapidly catching up towards the end of the game, a blobbed hoop let Adrian in to win 24-14.

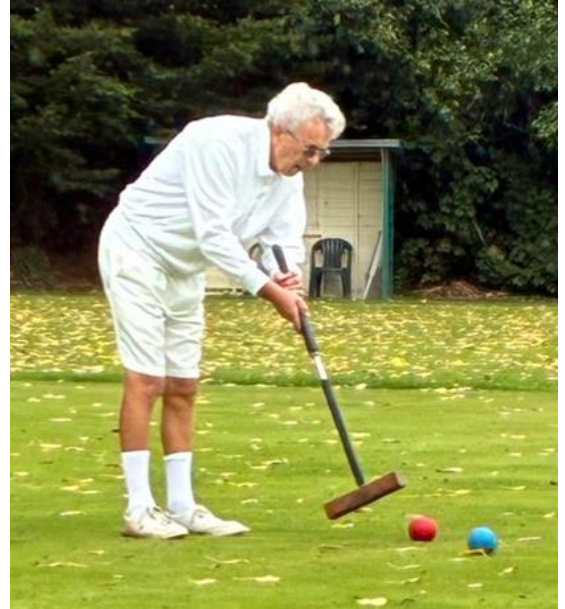


Adrian demonstrates playing a cannon during the match...



...while Cliff executes a perfect full roll.

In the other first round game, Mervyn and Phil had a tight game but Phil's unerring accuracy won through in the end to take the game 18-11.



The second round saw Mervyn beat Cliff 19-10 and Adrian taking on Phil. This game was played quite defensively and after 1hr 15mins the score was only 6-6. Adrian then hit in and found his rhythm to win 15-9.



In the final round, Phil overcame Cliff by 24-14 and when Adrian beat Mervyn 26-13 this gave Adrian three wins and the Castle Cup. Adrian reported that he was currently on his best form for a

long while and was delighted to win the Castle Cup for the fourth time in succession and for the eleventh time since first winning it in 2012. However, he is hopeful that his coaching of AC will help improve the standard of play of his prodigies so that it won't be too long before other names feature on this trophy!



Adrian lines up to peg out and take the Championship one more time.



A larger crowd than usual had gathered to watch the match! But those who missed it, also missed a great day's entertainment.

A SUCCESSFUL AND ENJOYABLE VISIT TO DEVON

Adrian Morris

As many of you will know, I travel the country playing in AC Croquet Tournaments. Some more successful than others, but always enjoyable and a chance to meet up with friends and colleagues on "the circuit".

This is a tale about my visit to Budleigh Salterton Croquet Club in September for their end of season Tournament. Budleigh is a beautiful club in Devon with eleven well-manicured lawns.

Cliff Daniel and I travelled down through much traffic on the Friday evening and booked into our pleasant hotel. We were refreshed for the morning's croquet.



There were twenty competitors, including some international players, but we were split into three groups. Our block of six players ranged from Robert Upton and I, on handicap 3, to Cliff, being the outsider at handicap 6. Cliff went on to claim two victories and gave me the closest of games.

My first game was a pleasantly easy victory by 26-1 against Chris Weedon (4.5); I was playing well.

My next was versus Robert Upton, a fellow Welshman and someone I had played against many times. The game was tight and towards time, I was three hoops ahead. I checked my watch and decided to peg out my ball to be four ahead with only two minutes to go. There was no way he could catch up. BUT....I had got my timing wrong; there was seven minutes to go, not two! He caught me up to win by one hoop. A very careless, costly mistake.

I played Cliff next and he gave me the hardest battle but I eventually won 23-18.

Refreshed from our pleasant evening, and hearty breakfast, in Exmouth, we returned for our final two games on the Sunday.

I again performed well and comfortably beat my two opponents, and wandered across to see how Robert was doing. I was on four wins. Robert had lost one game so needed to win his last game to win the tournament, because he had beaten me earlier.



He was well ahead against Chris, who I had earlier beaten 26 – 1. Robert just had to run the last hoop and peg out to win. BUT.....Chris was desperate to win. He took a reckless shot that paid off and made a break of eleven hoops to overtake Robert and win by one hoop! An AC game is never over until it is over!

That left me on four wins as the winner of the Stransham Bowl. A very enjoyable weekend.

Tournaments can seem very daunting but everyone I speak to says they wish they had started earlier. Yes, they can be challenging but they provide wonderful learning opportunities. There are many handicap tournaments for AC players to make a start.

For GC there are tournaments for set bands of handicaps so you can find one where you will be playing people of a similar standard. I can't recommend them highly enough.

If you want to know more about tournament play, speak to me or Mervyn Harvey: we'd be pleased to offer advice and encouragement.

Between his matches at Budleigh, Cliff was amused to see these cartoons on display on the walls of the Budleigh Clubhouse and decided to share them with us.



Keeping your head down

Best advice for playing all croquet strokes. Focus on the back of the ball, precisely on the spot where you plan to strike it, and don't look up until your mallet has finished its full swing. You will see soon enough where your ball has landed.

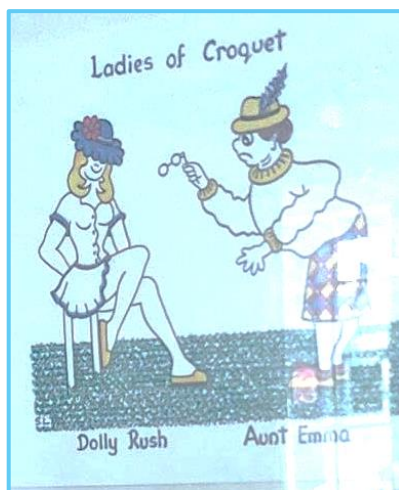
Playing the wrong ball

Playing either your partner's ball by mistake, or one of your opponents' balls, or playing out of turn. Read the leaflets inside the Croquet Pavilion by the door, for action to be taken after these faults are spotted.



Text supplied by Adrian

These are AC terms:



Dolly rush

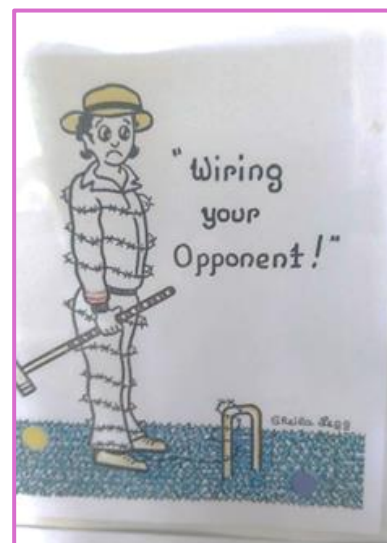
This is where your balls are close together so you can knock/rush the other ball where you want, with comparative ease.

Aunt Emma

Playing overly defensively. Aunt Emma won't make breaks, she will score one hoop at a time and leave her balls together but her oppo's balls far apart.

Wiring your opponent

This when you place your opponent's balls so they can't hit each other, and leave your own balls close together, a long way from opponent's balls, but allowing the opponent to see one of them so that they don't get a Wiring Lift.



Editor: This will be the last edition of Running Hoops for the year and what a marathon it turned out to be. A fantastic effort by so many people. Out of curiosity I counted the number of members who have contributed articles to this October edition, which added up to fifteen people, many of whom had supplied multiple reports. Others offered photographs and suggestions for topics, encouragement and advice, and as usual, Ian emails the newsletter to all members. To all those people, I extend my gratitude for their support and good humour. What a team!

At this point we say goodbye again to prolific contributors, Pauline and Mervyn Harvey, as they head off once more to their second home in Florida, where they will play during the winter in their local Sarasota Croquet Club. This is a large club and quite a contrast to our own one in Kenilworth, so we look forward to hearing from them again, as they don their T-shirts and sunglasses, while we wrap up in our scarves and hats, fleeces and waterproofs.

I wish all members a happy and sociable winter season, with very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year. We hope to see many of you at the annual Presentation Club Dinner, still to be arranged, but usually held in February, and always a lovely sociable evening. Elizabeth
