



Running Hoops

The Newsletter of Kenilworth Croquet



May 2026

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For those of us who took part in the Myton Hospice Annual Moonwalk this year, croquet seemed to take a step back into second place for some time, as our minds drifted far away from the croquet courts, and focussed mainly on 'shocking pink' T-shirts, (larger sizes preferred to allow for warm layers underneath!), pink hats or hairbands, pink leg warmers, pink gloves, pink rah-rah skirts for the more outrageous among us, and of course, the most important topic, fund raising for a very highly rated and local charity, which, for most of us, will have helped someone whom we have known.



For this, we were very grateful to Lynn O'Connor, for the initial suggestion, fantastic leadership and organising of every element of our efforts. The Moonwalk was more than an altruistic exercise for us all: it was an evening of being an integral part of a vast congregation, sharing a wonderful experience in the magical setting of Warwick Castle.



Coming back down to earth, it's lovely to see the new notice boards filling up with competition lists (many strangely blank at the moment!), information sheets (and competition fees yet to be paid!). The Ladder has yet to take off, but I received my first challenge a week ago and Richard and I spent a happy morning playing a very relaxing match together (and before you ask, he won 2-1, so I went down and he went up!) I had never played a match with Richard before and it was interesting to meet a new opponent, but we also had time to sit with coffee and chat between games. I really do recommend it to newer members: there is nothing at stake in the ladder – no trophy to be won or lost, no chance of being knocked out of the competition, nothing to lose at all. Look on it as a fun way to gain experience of playing a proper match with no pressure on either player. Or join with a friend, and challenge each other until you feel a bit braver!



And finally, with the Open Day approaching on Sunday 24th May, I hope lots of us will come along to help out and enable even more people to discover for themselves this fantastic game that we love.

Elizabeth

OKAY CROQUET 2026!

On the evening of Friday, 17th March, unsuspecting visitors to the town of Warwick, would have been astonished to see their town centre turn to a sea of pink, as 1800 walkers, in startling outfits and high spirits, swarmed through their streets from the Castle, along the High Street, down Stratford Road, Shakespeare Avenue and out through the normally peaceful roads of Chase Meadow, before returning to the Market Square via the race course. Then onward again past St Mary's Church, and finally, up to 10 kilometres later, returned via Priory Road and Smith Street to the Castle grounds. And all to waving, cheering crowds, adults and children, and a cacophony of car horns, at times deafening, from passing motorists, intent on adding their own support to this annual event in Warwick, The Myton Hospices Moonwalk, in support of their three local hospices, in Warwick, Coventry and Rugby.



And this year, for the first time, a gallant fun-loving team from our own Kenilworth Croquet Club, named **OKAY CROQUET**, took part in this great event: Vicky Deasley, Pauline Dennis, Linda Edwards, Liz and Nick Hegan, Sue Hulme, Val Moss, Lynn O'Connor, Elizabeth Thomson and Charlotte Wheeler, Vicky's niece.

Six of our members tackled the 10K walk, while three took on the 5K distance. Our tenth team member, Linda, who was unable to do the walk, played her part in sponsoring us and providing parking at her house, within a short walk of the Castle. And later on, she and John welcomed us all to their house, where we were plied with snacks and fizz(!), but most of all, a time to unwind, relax together and share experiences and laughter.





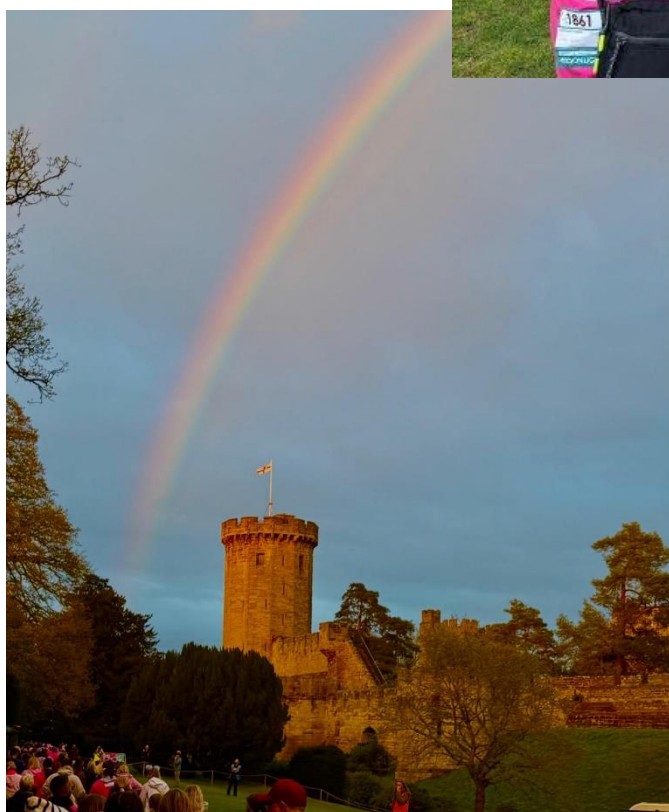
We all met up eventually in the Castle grounds, and after registering, we had time to enjoy the entertainment in the courtyard, and take memorable photographs for the family albums!





With the photographs over, fortunately, a light rain shower descended just as we were warming up with a Zumba routine, led by Matthew, a former school pupil of Vicky's!

Zumba in the rain!



Fortunately, the rain did not last long, and we had the lovely sight of a perfect rainbow over the castle, promising us a dry spell for the walk, we hoped, and so it transpired.

We set off enthusiastically, initially with an unexpected circuit of the castle grounds, before emerging on to the streets and the start of our walk through the town.

The event was superbly marshalled, with clear directions on where to go, and safety maintained throughout. The walk was mainly on pavements, with stewards at every road crossing to halt the traffic and allow the crowds to swarm over safely, and it was lovely to see the goodwill of the drivers whose journeys were paused, with waving or horn

blowing. We must have made an incredible sight, as the column of shocking pink walkers extended as far forward as we could see and just as far back behind us.

The organisers helped the participants by offering cups of water enroute, toilet facilities at the racecourse, entertainment both at the racecourse and the market place in Warwick, with choirs singing, children's face painting, the famous 'snow tunnel', from which we emerged covered in white foam! We were also delighted to be offered unlimited packets of Haribo sweets to boost our energy for the final two miles!



And as the walk progressed, the skies gradually darkened, the street lights and window lights turned on, and the sparkly headbands and other decorations worn by many of the walkers, lit up in the dark and added an extra magic to the atmosphere.

All too soon, and in a surprisingly short time, considering the hold-ups and entertainments laid on, we were back at the Castle in the dark, with time to congratulate ourselves and others, take more photographs still, with a reluctance to move away from the wonderful atmosphere at the Castle.





Lynn had arranged with a small company in Leamington, to have all the T-shirts printed with our names and team name on the back. To her surprise and delight, the owner offered to print them for us at half the normal price, helping to keep costs down.

We are grateful to Eddie, at Cool Fox Tees in Bath Place, Leamington Spa, for his generous gesture.

And soon it was time to gather together all our belongings and head back to Linda's house on the High Street, a mere 5 minute walk from the Castle gates, for a perfect ending to our day.



And the all-important figures, with sincere thanks to all those who donated to our efforts:

No of Sponsors: 105 individuals or groups

Amount Raised: £3248 excluding Gift Aid

Support from companies: Charlotte's tech company, Workday, and Cool Fox Tees

PETER'S BENCH

Peter Dennis was a member of KTSCC from the year 1965 onwards, a founder member of the Croquet Club, and was made an Honorary Member of KTSCC in 2010.



His history of the early years of the club can be read by clicking on this link:

[Croquet-Peter_Dennis_History.pdf](#)

Peter was a man of vision and it was he who raised the idea of creating a full sized second lawn (Lawn 1), by digging out the large embankment on the West side of the club, adjacent to Crackley Lane. It was a massive undertaking, executed mainly by sheer determination and perseverance, heavy manual work, physical exhaustion, and the whole process took over a year to complete.

Peter was a very enthusiastic player of both Golf and Association Croquet which he continued to play until his later years.

His father was a carpenter by trade and Peter loved handmade wooden furniture himself. After his death in July 2023, Pauline had the idea of having a new and longer garden bench seat made, to donate to the Croquet Club in his memory. Peter had enjoyed playing many different sports in his lifetime, but he loved Croquet and spent a lot of his time at the club there. She was careful to choose a carpenter, Peter Tooth, who had completed lots of other projects for them in the house and whose workmanship she greatly admired.

Peter (Tooth) suggested a hardwood called Iroko from the tree *Milicia Moraceae*, which grows across tropical Central Africa. It is often used for outdoor furniture and has an attractive finish. Together they decided on a bench 8 feet long, to seat 4 people. Peter then opted for a sturdy design which would wear well and last a long time. The final touch was a brass plate attached, with the inscription,



"In Loving Memory of Peter Dennis 1930 – 2023 Peter's Perfect Resting Place"

The bench was finally delivered to the Croquet Club on Thursday 30th April, but Pauline will arrange to have an official presentation later on, with cake (!), when Lynne returns to the Club.

On the following Saturday, a small group of us turned up to play at the afternoon social session and showed great interest in the bench. There was some debate about the length of this beautiful addition to our club.



First of all, we had tried it with four people for which it was designed.

But we decided the length was underestimated, so we tested it for five people....

....and again.



And then we couldn't resist calling in the full complement to test it for six!

I like to think Peter would have laughed along with us.

Pauline, thank you from all of us for such a lovely tribute to Peter.

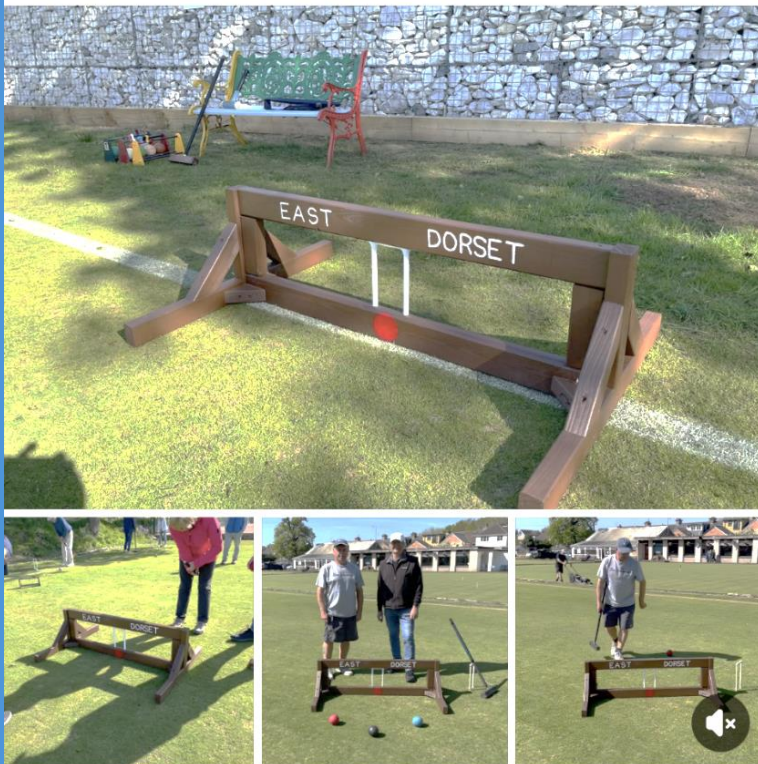
SNIPPETS FROM OTHER SOURCES

There are several websites and other areas of interest to croquet members. One of the most popular is the Croquet Hub, on Facebook, where all sort of topics of interest to croquet players, are discussed and answers to problems offered by other readers. Items which caught my attention recently are shown below.

The first is a clever idea for helping players to learn or improve their jump shots. The contraption has a bar across the foot, exactly the height of a croquet ball and the top bar is at exactly the height of a hoop. To begin with, players concentrate only on getting the ball to jump over the bar to the side of the hoop, and when they have achieved this, they move on to trying to jump through the normal sized hoop. An advantage of the gadget is that two people can practice together, one on either side of the hoop. A further advantage is that the device can be moved around, for example on to a practice court, then cleared off if the court is needed for play.

Another item which caught my attention was this lovely poem:

The advantage of it is you can get the newbies to concentrate on just learning to get the ball to jump consistently, without worrying about getting through the hoop, once they have the confidence to jump then comes as the next stage, jumping and the accuracy of getting through the centre hoop. Big thank you to Andy for constructing the jump trainer and for helping me in the coaching sessions.



Croquet Hub

Lyn Keillor
 ★ Rising contributor · 14h · 🌐

Swan Hill Croquet Club · Join
 ♦ Admin ♦ Noreen Dunster-Jones · 3d · 🌐

How lucky we are to play this game.

The quiet focus.
 The friendships.
 The moments that stay with you long after the last ball is struck.

Not everyone knows this world exists.

But they could.

If you've ever smiled on a croquet court...
 👍 Pass it on.

— Croquet Talk

GOLF CROQUET

WMF 6+ LEAGUE v LLANIDLOES 24th MAY 2026 (Final for 2025 season)

Tony Watmore



Llanidloes Croquet Team



Richard Pinder, Tony Watmore, Robert Zara, Alan Hulme

Andy, Wendy, Jill, David, Jane

The delayed 2025 season final of the WMF 6+ took place on Friday 24th May between arch rivals Kenilworth and Llanidloes, (last year's finalists) kindly hosted by Himley. Kenilworth were seeking revenge after having been comprehensively beaten 12- 6 in last year's final and aiming to get their hands on the Dave Piggot trophy.

The Kenilworth team of Tony Watmore, Robert Zara, Richard Pinder and Alan Hulme arrived in good spirits to find the Himley lawns in a much improved state than our previous visit – although the grass on the lawns was far longer than Kenilworth were used to and it took some hefty shots to propel the balls the length of the lawns.

However Kenilworth's optimism was soon dented as Llanidloes raced into a 4 match lead (8-4) after 3 rounds, with Kenilworth's nemeses, Adam Britton and David Mullan, continuing where they left off from the previous final, remaining unbeaten. The only highlights at this stage for Kenilworth was Alan Hulme winning 2 matches, with Tony Watmore winning one match but losing his other 2 on the Golden Hoop.

Kenilworth now needed to win all the remaining matches and the fightback began. Finally Adam and David lost their unbeaten record in this and last season's final, to Alan and Tony respectively, and with a win by Robert Zara, meant that Kenilworth - with the pairs matches to come - were only trailing by 2 matches and had a superior Hoop count. If Kenilworth could win these 2 pairs matches the title was theirs. It couldn't be much closer.

Robert and Richard won their pairs match 7-6 – on the Golden hoop and so it was all down to Alan and Tony who slowly clawed into a 5-4 lead and the title was in sight. David Mullan then produced the shot of the tournament. Having been dispatched to the sidelines behind the hoop with Tony's yellow right in front of the hoop, he somehow contrived a shot which bounced off another ball – shot into the air and went through the back of the hoop – knocking the yellow out and replacing it with his ball. As David graciously admitted it was a fluke shot that he had miss-hit but they all count. This drew the teams level and Llanidloes used this as the impetus to seal a 7-6 win – and the title was determined on the Golden Hoop in the last match. It really could not have been any closer and was a fitting end to what had been an extremely competitive match played in excellent spirits.

WMF LEAGUE KENILWORTH ABBEY v KENILWORTH CASTLE 1st MAY

Philip Wood

Abbey: Philip Wood, Phil Mander, Mervyn Harvey, Alan Hulme
 Castle: Pauline Harvey, Ian Robertson, Nick Hegan, Richard Pinder



This, the first match of the season for both teams, was played in beautiful sunny weather on lawns in good condition and faster than at any time this season. There was very little to choose between the teams on total handicaps.

In the singles games, both teams scored 2 games in each of the first two rounds. In the third round of singles Abbey won all the games so the pressure was very much on Castle.

In the last round of singles Castle recovered, scoring 3 games, so giving themselves a chance of winning the match if they won both of the doubles at the end. But Mervyn Harvey and Alan Hulme managed to beat Pauline Harvey and Richard Pinder 7-3, so Abbey won the match even though their doubles team of Philip Mander and Philip Wood lost to Nick Hegan and Ian Robertson.

For Abbey, Phil Mander starred with 4 singles wins, Mervyn had 3, and Philip Wood and Alan Hulme scored 1 each. For Castle, Ian Robertson scored 3 wins, Pauline Harvey scored 2 wins and Nick Hegan and Richard Pinder scored 1 win each.



To conclude, photos were taken and the customary cake was consumed. One hopes that this was a valuable practice for our next games in the similar conditions which we are likely to experience in subsequent matches.

SECUNDERABAD FINAL 4 May 2026 (for 2025 competition) Adrian Morris

To recap on the situation of this competition from last year, the competition had been run as two blocks, from which 4 semi-finalists emerged:

SEMI-FINAL

Adrian Morris	(3)	26-3	Nigel Pigdon	(8)
Mervyn Harvey	(8)	26-14	Jon Hodge	(16)

Due to ill-health, it was decided that the competition would be finished in the New Year.

FINAL

Adrian Morris	(3)	26-24	Mervyn Harvey	(8)
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ADRIAN TAKES DELAYED SECUNDERABAD CUP

The 2025 Secunderabad Final was set for Monday, 4th May with Adrian and Mervyn competing for the trophy. Adrian described the game as the most closely fought battle he had been involved in for a very long time. It was tension packed with some pressure strokes, some excellent play by both players, matched with missed roquets and blobbered hoops (failure to run the hoops) by both.

Adrian made the first break but had to stop after 7 hoops when he was wired by the peg (ie. the peg was blocking him from hitting any of the other 3 balls). Mervyn then took the ascendancy and caught up by steady play, without resorting to using any of his bisques (extra turns).



When Adrian blobbered a hampered Hoop 1, this allowed Mervyn to create an excellent break for his second ball. The game progressed with Mervyn maintaining a good lead and with his last bisque used, was on Peg and Rover (the 12th and last hoop to be run), with Adrian on hoops 5 and 8.

Adrian made a break and tried to peg-out Mervyn's peg ball twice but on each occasion blobbered the final hoop. Mervyn then ran Rover but was unable to peg out.

Mervyn looked like a certain winner but in AC the game is not over until it is finished. Adrian hit in again and made a break to peg and set up a rush to Rover with his second ball.

Mervyn had to hit in to save the game. His shot was very close but when it grazed a hoop it deviated off line and gave Adrian an easy finish to this excellent game with the final score 26 – 24.



Adrian lines up the balls to peg out.
