

Running Hoops

The Newsletter of Kenilworth Croquet



Club Mav

June 2026

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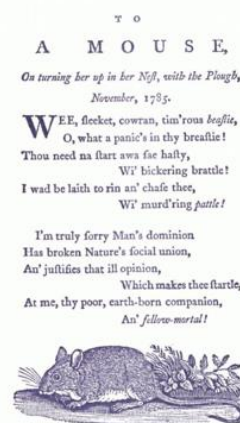
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“The best laid schemes o’ Mice and Men gang aft agley”, as Burns said, and how I agree with him this month. I started the year with my own scheme of producing a shorter more frequent Running Hoops even month or so, with a target maximum of ten pages. And it worked well this year for the months of March, April and May, until life and croquet got in the way and my scheme went well agley. So if you’re



settling to have a quick skim through June’s effort, I recommend that you first make yourself a large cup of coffee and find a very comfortable seat. It could be a long time before you stand up again!

The weather seems to have dominated croquet members’ conversation for a very long time. After a long period (it seemed) of wet weather, how we longed for a spell of dry

weather and more: calm sunny days, when the rain wear would be discarded and T-shirts would become the order of the day. And when it came in abundance, out came the cover-all shirts to save putting on greasy sun cream; sun hats became the order of the day, and attendance at social sessions dropped considerably as the energy levels sank to new depths!



Fortunately the weather didn’t stop our important club activities, and in May we held our very successful Open Day, and in June the first of our popular Doubles Fun Days. But now, hopefully, we will be treated to some lovely temperate days of warmth, and booking lawns for matches won’t be reliant on the BBC or Met Office websites.

Elizabeth

CROQUET CLUB OPEN DAY 24TH MAY



Once again we were blessed with a beautiful day of sunshine for our Open Day, as has happened so often in the past. With temperatures reaching 27°C and bringing out an enthusiastic number of visitors, despite the day falling on the Whitsun holiday weekend, we were kept busy serving drinks and a large choice of cakes, thanks to the generosity of our members, and of course introducing our visitors to our favourite game.

Not all were completely new to the game, as several

members from the U3A Croquet Group had accepted an invitation to come along to see how the Croquet Club operates and to enjoy a few extra games on half lawns, or to try their hand at playing on a full lawn. And for the first time in many years, there was an opportunity for some members to have an introduction to Association Croquet, or a simpler version called Ricochet, with guidance from Adrian.



But for those totally new to the game, there was the thrill of running their first hoop, and following it up with more success later on. The reward for us, is seeing the pride on their faces, and watching their confidence grow as they return for a second game.

Most of our visitors stayed on afterwards to enjoy the ambience of the club, chatting happily in groups, in shade or full sun, meeting new people, soaking up the incredible atmosphere of a perfect croquet day, with quiet chat and laughter, and the sound of mallets connecting with balls. Hopefully we may have inspired more people to play more croquet in more places, be it in our club, other clubs or simply their own back gardens.



COACHING DAY WITH LIONEL TIBBLE 22nd MAY

The morning session began with Lionel gathering information from all members regarding their ability and expectations from the coaching day. This ranged from jump shots, clearing balls and tactics.



He began with the basics of running a hoop from straight in front, followed by angled shots. Demonstrations were followed by practice time, with Lionel watching all members individually and commenting on their technique. This was followed by jump shots on the practice court, which we all managed to achieve, some more than others! Summing up on this part of the

morning, he emphasised the necessity to practice shots over and over again, gradually increasing the distance from the hoop, or the angle of the shot to the hoop, until you find your own personal limit for each type of stroke, by counting the number of successes until you reach a 5/10 comfortable rate of success, and memorise that limit for future use.

After this, we moved down to Lawn One for demonstrations of tactics at each hoop individually, reaching as far as Hoop 3, before time ran out for our group and the lower handicap group had gathered for the start of their own afternoon session.



THE AFTERNOON SESSION

The advanced coaching started with introductions and a request for items to be discussed during the session. In our session this ranged from improving long jump shots to improved tactical play.

Lionel then took us through some basic tactical play decisions depending on what hoop was being played and at what stage of the game you were.

The practical side of the session commenced with a doubles game. Once all approach shots had been made to Hoop 1, the game was then deconstructed into the decision making process for each subsequent shot. Each type of possible shot was discussed with the advantaged and disadvantaged outcomes. The player then attempted to play the shot, though this did not always go to plan!

Each shot choice was guided by a supplied printed decision tree by Stephen Mulliner.

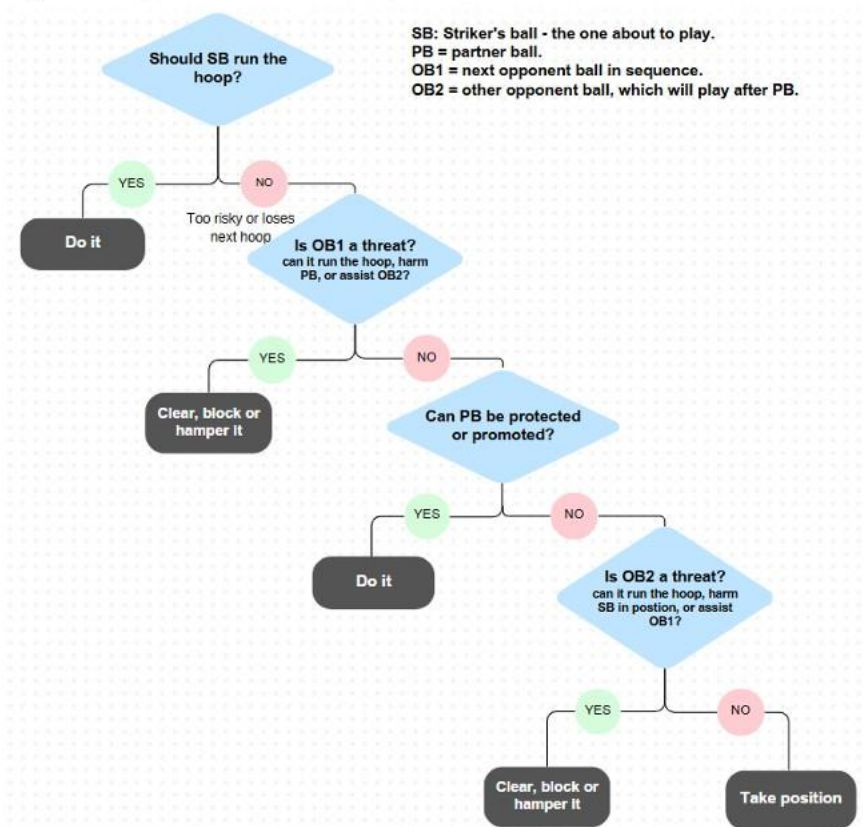
Figure 6.1. Stephen Mulliner's Golf Croquet Tactical Decision Tree

This offered guidance as to the best shot depending on the position and threat level of the other balls. Discussing each shot to such a degree took quite a time so the exercise stopped at hoop 3.

Lionel confessed to not having a particular good long range jump shot but demonstrated some shorter range ones with considerable accuracy.

The session ended with a discussion about how to practice well and a demonstration of determining range accuracy using a plastic practice hockey ball.

All in all a very worthwhile session, thanks should be extended to Phil Blake for arranging and also Chris and Gail Barley for gifting the club some funds which paid for the coaching sessions.



DOUBLES FUN DAY, 21st JUNE Lynne Breedon (Photographs: Nick Hegan)

Eight pairs took part as usual:

Ted Frith and Mike Taylor
Jan Phelps and Bob Phelps
Tony Breedon and Robert Zara
Lynne Breedon and Pauline Dennis

Val Moss and Ivan Moss
Blake and Jaspal Jheeta
Nick Hegan and Sue Hulme
Jeff Lindsay and Philip Wood

Sunday morning dawned with light cloud, a gentle breeze and the sun peeping out from time to time from behind the clouds. As good a start to the day as I'd hoped.

The Doubles Day has proved to be very popular and it was lovely to welcome Ted, Mike and Sue for the first time.

Everyone arrived in good time, the lawns were set out, rules explained and we were ready for a prompt 10.00 am start. The first two matches got underway with the secondary games starting when the first pairs had run hoop 2. The first 4 games went well with only a short delay before the second round commenced.



Of course there is always plenty of time during the course of the day to snatch a drink and biscuit(s) between games and to have a chat too. By 1.00pm we had completed 3 rounds, so only 4 more to go! The weather was still playing ball to everyone's relief as full sun would have been a bit too much for most of us.

After lunch the afternoon session started with no clear leader but as the day progressed 3 pairs began to draw ahead: Phil and Jaspal, Nick and Sue, Tony and Robert, and it was all down to the last couple of rounds to decide the winner.



After more drinks and biscuits and sustained by their lunches, the final rounds were played. Lynne and Pauline managed to beat Phil and Jaspal in a very well contested and tight match which made the scores even closer. Eventually all the matches were completed and 16 tired but happy people gathered to find out who were the eventual winners.



In third place with 30 points were Tony and Robert - winning 5 games.
 In second place were Nick and Sue with 32 points - winning 5 games.
 In first place and the winners with 34 points were Phil and Jaspal - winning 6 games.

Congratulations to Phil and Jaspal who each took home a bottle of wine to enjoy at their leisure. Well done everyone. It was a long, hot day but I hope you all enjoyed yourselves and thank you for taking part.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the next Doubles Fun Day on Sunday 26th July.

GOLF CROQUET POSER Adrian Morris



Yellow to play...

Blue is in front of the hoop.

What would you do?

What did Edmund do?

See video in link below:

[Edmund Fordyce: Golf Croquet World Championships 2024](#)

PRESS SUCCESS: FROM THE CROQUET GAZETTE 15 YEARS AGO John Copping

THE CROQUET GAZETTE ~

ISSUE 334 OCTOBER 2011

Coping with high hospitality numbers the Kenilworth way

Hospitality events are great revenue earners but how do you accommodate large numbers all at the same time? Kenilworth CC has come up with a novel idea, as Ray Clipson explains.

Recently a new pavilion at Kenilworth was financed in part by a CA grant, with balance met by the tennis and squash club of which our club is part. This decision was helped by recognition of the income generated by us hosting hospitality events for local organisations.

Kenilworth has only two lawns, so for these hospitality events one is laid out as two half-lawns, leaving the other free for use by members. Guests used to just turn up and play doubles, sometimes double banked, supervised by club members, but even with starts from each baulk and best-of-seven hoops and peg, there was often congestion making it a challenge to complete three games within three hours.

Five years and about fifty visits later, structured arrangements have been developed that now work slickly. Guest organisations are sent a one-page briefing describing golf croquet, how it is to be played and how the visit will be organised, plus a plan of the playing route.

We use a route (pictured right) allowing two doubles matches to be played on each half lawn without crossing and virtually eliminating delays, with up to 16 people playing at the same time.

The four corner flags are re-positioned to identify the corners to which players are sent to start their game. A display board offers a reminder of the route and signs are put on to each hoop.

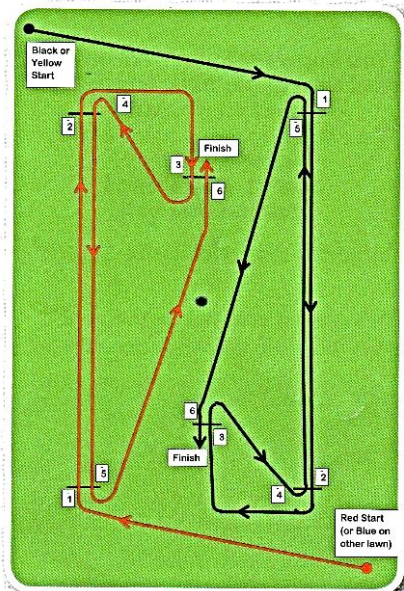
Games are all started at the same time, producing a win by the couple first to four hoops or a draw at three all. This reduces the duration of tight games. The three points (or two for a draw) are awarded to both players of the winning teams who are paired for a sequence of four games played as a mini-league.

As guests arrive they are allocated to form



the teams and are given a self-adhesive label with their team letter, the sequence of start points and the colour of the ball they will be playing with in each of their four games. Some have a rôle as either route-master or score-keeper.

Evening sessions are the norm, with a usual start time of 18.30. The system allows four games within two and a quarter hours – 45 minutes for the first game and 30 minute games thereafter. Even in



mid-September there is time to complete the programme in advance of a meal at half past eight.

Further help and advice can be had from John Copping on copping.jl@gmail.com.



AND FROM THE CROQUET GAZETTE, P5, JUNE 2026 The Myton Walk Team

MYTON HOSPICE MOONWALK

Members of Kenilworth Croquet Club swapped mallets for walking shoes on Friday 17 April as they took part in the annual Moonlight Walk in support of Myton Hospice.

The group, cheerfully calling themselves Okay Croquet Kenilworth, lit up the evening in bright pink T-shirts as they completed either the 5km or 10km routes.

Spirits were high throughout the event, with participants embracing both the challenge and the festive atmosphere of the night walk.

Together, the team raised an impressive £3,248 for the hospice, which provides vital care and support for patients and families across the region.

Members expressed their gratitude to everyone who sponsored them, helping to make their fundraising efforts such a success.

"It was a fantastic evening and great fun for everyone involved," one participant said.

"We're proud to support such an important cause—and I'm sure we'll be back again next year."

By Elizabeth Thomson



Charlotte Wheeler, Vicky Deasley, Lynn O'Connor, Sue Hulme, Val Moss, Liz Hegan, Nick Hegan, Pauline Dennis, Elizabeth Thomson

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FROM KENILWORTH NUB NEWS AND WARWICKSHIRE WORLD Adrian Morris




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Kenilworth defeat Church Stretton 4-1 at Crackley Lane

By James Smith 22nd Jun 2026 Croquet



A resounding victory for Kenilworth at Crackley Lane (image via KTSCC)

Fresh from a narrow defeat against a strong Shrewsbury side last week, **Kenilworth** returned to winning ways with an impressive 4-1 victory over Church Stretton on the Crackley Lane lawns.

The morning session opened with the doubles, where captain Mervyn Harvey partnered Philip Wood in a tightly contested match. Both pairs exchanged hoops throughout a tense and finely balanced game, but the Church Stretton duo edged it narrowly, 19-18.

In the morning singles, Adrian Morris delivered a confident performance, securing a comfortable 26-15 win to restore momentum for Kenilworth.

The afternoon session saw Morris continue his strong form, producing a commanding 26-3 victory to put Kenilworth within touching distance of overall success.

Harvey's afternoon singles match began evenly, but as play progressed he steadily took control, closing out a well-earned 26-12 win to secure the match for Kenilworth.

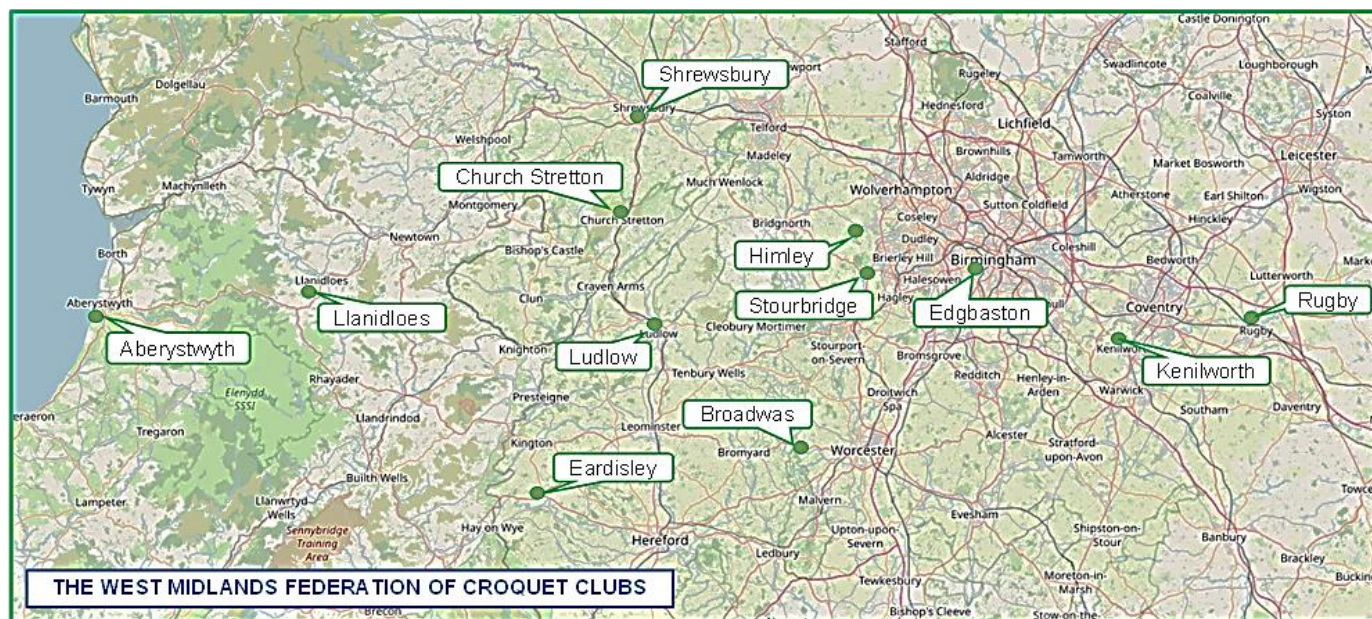
The final game proved the most dramatic of the day. With both players trading errors and strong breaks under pressure, Philip Wood held a slender one-hoop lead going into the final stages.

Church Stretton needed a single hoop to level the match but, despite achieving a promising position in front of the hoop, the decisive shot was missed. Kenilworth therefore sealed the final game and an overall 4-1 victory.

THE WEST MIDLANDS FEDERATION **Adrian Morris**

Kenilworth is part of the West Midlands Federation of Croquet Clubs — but what exactly is the WMF, and why does it matter?

The Federation brings together all twelve croquet clubs across the West Midlands Region, stretching from the coastline at Aberystwyth in the west, to Rugby in the east. It's a broad and varied patch of the country, but every club shares the same goal: to support and grow the sport we love.



Twice a year, representatives from every club meet online. These meetings are friendly, lively affairs where the main business is organising the regional leagues, though the conversation often ranges across every corner of croquet life. If it affects players, lawns, competitions, or clubs, it's on the table.

The Federation is run by a committee, each member taking responsibility for a specific area — leagues, handicapping, coaching, safeguarding, the website, and more. Whatever a club needs, there's always someone who can help, or someone who knows exactly where to find the right expertise within Croquet England.

Kenilworth plays a particularly active role. I currently serve as Chair, with Elizabeth providing her trademark efficiency and good humour as Secretary, and Mervyn keeping us financially sound as Treasurer. Mervyn also manages the GC Leagues, while Phil Blake brings his experience to the role of GC Handicapper.

As Development Officer, I also work with clubs across the region to help them improve their facilities and secure financial support from Croquet England. This work has real impact: Kenilworth once received £3,000 towards our pavilion; Aberystwyth and Rugby have recently benefited from Starter Kits of equipment; and Ludlow are currently exploring funding to level their lawns.

The Federation also supports individuals. Anyone training to become a Coach or Referee is recognised as contributing to the wider croquet community. Croquet England currently offers a £25 subsidy for these qualifications — and the WMF matches it, doubling the support.

Another important part of the Chair's role is meeting regularly with the Chairs of the other eight Federations across the country. These discussions are invaluable: a chance to share best practice, raise the views of our clubs with Croquet England, and help shape national initiatives.

In short, the West Midlands Federation is much more than an administrative body. It's a network, a support system, and a community — one that helps every club, and every player, to enjoy croquet to the fullest.

COMPETITION TIME**GOLF CROQUET****WMF GC LEAGUE KENILWORTH ABBEY v BROADWAS 13TH MAY Philip Wood**

Philip Wood (Team Captain), Mervyn Harvey, Alan Hulme, Tony Watmore



Last year they beat us with a markedly weaker team than this year, and we travelled to Broadwas hoping at least that we could give a good account of ourselves even on their difficult, sloping lawns. The weather was windy and very showery, with a shower more or less between every game and the next.

This time they were almost at full strength, with handicaps of 0, 0, 2, 3, while our handicaps were 1, 3, 5 and 6: Mervyn, Philip, Alan and Tony.



To cut a long story short, we received a thorough pasting. Mervyn managed a win in the first round of singles. In the next two rounds of singles they won all 4 games. This meant that they had won the match already. In the last round we won two of the singles, and then they won both doubles games.



Mervyn, Philip and Alan each won a game of singles, but most noteworthy was Alan's performance. He scored 6, 5, 6 and 7 hoops in his 4 singles matches, by far the best performance of our team members, and was unlucky not to win a further two games. He is a very promising prospect for the future of the team, especially as he is a relative youngster!



We finished with a good chat over tea and home-made cakes.

This photograph shows the beautiful setting of Broadwas Croquet Club, against a backdrop of hills.

Broadwas Croquet Club, The Ground, Stoney Ley, Broadwas, Worcs. WR6 5NG



WMF 6+ (EAST) KENILWORTH v HIMLEY 19TH MAY Tony Watmore



Richard Pinder, Tony Watmore (Captain), Robert Zara, Alan Peters

Kenilworth began their 2026 WMF 6+ campaign with a home match against rivals, Himley.

The Kenilworth team comprised of Tony Watmore, Robert Zara, Richard Pinder and a new Alan, Alan Peters, making his WMF 6+ team debut. Unfortunately Kenilworth have lost their regular team player from last season, Alan Hulme, because he's become too good for the team!!! However based on his performance - see below - Alan Peters was a more than adequate replacement.

The weather ended up being quite favourable considering the forecast was downpours all afternoon. Apart from a brief shower of 10 minutes when play was suspended the majority of the day was spent in sunshine and wasn't too hot.

Kenilworth ran out comfortable winners by 11 matches to 7, (104 hoops to 81) with no golden hoops which is unusual. Tony and Alan won 3 singles matches and their pairs match, whilst Robert and Richard won 2 matches but lost their pairs match.

From a Kenilworth perspective a special shout out for Alan making his debut and he played like a veteran only losing one match to Craig Marsh, (as did everyone else!) If he continues to play like this we may be losing another Alan by the end of the season and we'll need another Alan. Mr Worral be prepared for a call up next year!

Special mention should be made of Himley's Craig Marsh, who won all his singles matches and his pairs match, all on lawn 1, and so was unbeaten for the day. He played the lawns like he had been born to them and was Kenilworth's nemesis taking over the role of Terry Wood, Himley's nonagenarian, who again represented Himley on the day, winning 2 of his matches and his pairs.

All in all a lovely match of croquet played in good spirits with a chance for some socialising and Richard's home-made sausage rolls and other assorted nibbles.

The matches come thick and fast and Kenilworth turn their attention to their next match the following week against newcomers, Stourbridge.

WMF 6+ (EAST) KENILWORTH v STOURBRIDGE 27TH MAY Tony Watmore (captain)



Richard Pinder, Tony Watmore, Robert Zara, Jon Hodge

Only a week after playing Himley, Kenilworth travelled to play their second match in the campaign against newcomers to the league, Stourbridge. Amazingly this was the first competitive match that Stourbridge had played in over 25 years so I believe.

The Kenilworth team comprised of Tony Watmore, Robert Zara, Richard Pinder and Jon Hodge, fresh from his travels to the Far East.

Thankfully the weather had cooled down from the previous day – when it had been 33 degrees and would have made playing extremely uncomfortable – to a more modest 26 degrees with a breeze. Indeed, Stourbridge had had a thunderstorm with torrential rain during the previous night which had helped the lawns, although they did get faster as the day wore on due to the sun.

As per the previous week Kenilworth had a comfortable win by 13 matches to 5, (118 hoops to 79), with 5 golden hoop results – 4 going in the favour of Stourbridge. Richard was the star player for Kenilworth winning all 4 of his matches with Tony, Robert and Jon each winning 3. Kenilworth lost both pairs matches but the damage had been done.

Special mention should be made to Stourbridge, playing their first competitive match, and getting used to the format of match play in a competitive environment.

The Stourbridge club members came out in force, with probably at least 10 members supporting their team but appreciating good croquet shots with ripples of applause for good shots and jump shots, and collective “oohs and ahhs” for near misses. Also these supporters providing an endless supply of teas and coffees during the match – much needed refreshment as the day wore on – and grapes, strawberries and cake at the end of the match.

Although Stourbridge will be disappointed with the result, I am sure they will take heart from having played in a competitive match for the first time, will learn from the experience and be better for it.

From Kenilworth’s perspective that is 2 wins with what will now probably be a crucial crunch match against Edgbaston for the East Division title although that is far from certain at this stage as Edgbaston still have to play both Himley and Stourbridge.

ROBERTSHAW CUP 2025 26TH MAY Mervyn Harvey (Tournament Manager)

Both of our West Midlands Federation (WMF) GC League teams – referred to as Kenilworth Abbey and Kenilworth Castle – took part in the Robertshaw Cup on 26 May, in temperatures approaching 33 degrees!

The event is for the teams that finished in the top four places in the most recent league, which were Broadwas, Abbey, Castle and Himley, and has an unusual format whereby teams of three play three games of singles and three games of doubles against each other team. So, everyone is on the lawns at the same time, and, in the interest of time, the singles and doubles games start from opposite corners .

On paper, Broadwas were marginally the strongest team, with handicaps totalling 4. Followed by: the Abbey team of Phil Blake (0), Mervyn Harvey (1) and Alan Hulme (5); the Castle team of Ian Robertson (2), Nick Hegan (2) and Pauline Harvey (2); and the Himley team, with handicaps totalling 9.

Our two teams faced each other in the first round, and they each won 3 games. However, Abbey scored 3 more hoops than Castle, and so, in accordance with the rules, were awarded a 3-point win, with Castle getting 1 point for losing a close match. In the other match, Broadwas beat Himley 4-2.



In the second round of matches, Abbey beat Broadwas 4-2, and Castle had another 3-3 “draw” against Himley, but again lost out on hoop-count, so just got another 1 point for a close defeat.

This meant that if Abbey could avoid defeat to Himley, they would win the tournament – which they duly did, with another 4-2 win. Castle did well to win 3 games (for the third time!) against Broadwas, and this time the hoop-count was 23 to each side – so this was a genuine draw, with 2 points going to each side.

There were two stand-out performances worthy of mention: for Abbey, Alan (5) beat a 2-handicap Broadwas player by 5 hoops to 1, and for Castle, Ian (2) beat Stuart Smith (0), and many of our longer-serving members will know that Stuart has been a top player in the Midlands/South West for many years,

The overall result therefore was that Abbey regained the Cup that Castle took from them last year. The picture shows Pauline (last year’s winning captain) presenting the trophy to Philip Wood – Captain of Abbey, who graciously stood down to give Alan some valuable experience in this singles/doubles format.

WMF 6+ LEAGUE (EAST) KENILWORTH v EDGBASTON TUESDAY 9TH JUNE

Tony Watmore (Captain)

Kenilworth travelled to Edgbaston for their final game of the WMF 6 + East Division match and emerged victors by 11 matches to 7 (113 hoops to 96) which, as they had won all 3 matches in the division, ensured that they retained the title for the third year running and now await the winners of the West section for the overall title.

The Kenilworth team comprised of Tony Watmore, Robert Zara , Richard Pinder and Jon Hodge.

The weather was fine (with 2 sporadic showers) and the lawns were in excellent condition and fast.

Kenilworth roared into an early lead – winning 5 of the first 8 matches and Edgbaston were never able to recover.

Robert was the star player for Kenilworth winning all 4 of his matches with Richard and Jon winning 3 of their single matches. Unfortunately Team Captain Tony who is currently, (since attending the Lionel Tibble coaching lessons), undergoing a wretched period, had 3 matches going to the Golden Hoop – losing 2 of them. All very tight matches – maybe Tony is overthinking things.

Honourable mention should be made for Edgbaston's Jenny Buchanan who won 3 of her 4 matches and her pairs match.

It should be noted that 8 of the 16 matches were settled on the Golden Hoop – 4 won by Kenilworth and 4 won by Edgbaston and just showed how close and competitive the match was. If Edgbaston had won 2 more of those Golden Hoops then the match would have been drawn on matches played – and the result would have rested on hoops won – which would have been Kenilworth. However is just shows how small margins can affect the result.

WMF LEAGUE KW CASTLE v HIMLEY AT HIMLEY HALL, DUDLEY 9TH JUNE

Pauline Harvey (Captain)

In the West Midlands main League, we play each club at home one year and away the next. Some clubs have what one might call “distinctive” lawns, which give a home advantage. One of those is Himley. You may recall from a previous report that I mentioned that the park at Himley Hall in Dudley is a Capability Brown designed landscape, with a lake in the centre, and is a beautiful sight to behold. The disadvantage from the croquet club’s point of view is that they are not allowed to treat the lawns in any way, eg fertiliser or weed/moss killer, or to add top dressing to level out humps and bumps, and so the lawns are weedy, not cut very short, and peppered with rabbit holes and molehills (levelled as best they can). You can move your ball if it lands in a rabbit hole! Moreover, the contours of the lawns do not allow a shot in a straight line to the next hoop. Suffice to say that we struggled with length and direction, and I think all felt quite despondent about our performances.

An added difficulty on this occasion, which affected both sides equally, was the gusty gale-force wind which blew up from time to time, making it almost impossible to hold the mallet steady. Luckily the forecast rain showers were light and short-lived, which was just as well, as there is only a tree at the side of the court for shelter. The club is not allowed to erect any sort of shed as the grounds are Grade 1 listed. We talked on the way home in the car about how appreciative we are of our own club’s lawns and facilities.

Having got our excuses out of the way, I will belatedly mention the croquet! First of all, I must offer congratulations to Alan Worrall on his debut match. He appeared not to be fazed by the opposition, who all had better handicaps than him. Two of his games went to 7-6, and he scored a very creditable 5 hoops against their best player, Paul, with a handicap of 0, and maybe -1 after yesterday’s match. Alan was delighted to win his doubles game, paired with Ian Robertson.



In the singles, Pauline and Nick managed to win two games each, significantly in the last two rounds, when they were getting used to the run of the lawns, and Ian too managed two wins, one singles and one doubles, again later in the day. So, the final score was 12-6 to Himley. It is worth noting that 11 of the 18 games had a score of 7-6 or 7-5, so they were valiantly fought, but the end result did not reflect the effort we put in. We look forward to next year’s match on our own lawns.

A team photo shows a wonderful sky above the park, and for those who don’t know us: left to right: Alan Worrall, Nick Hegan, Pauline Harvey and Ian Robertson.

WMF LEAGUE SHREWSBURY V KENILWORTH 3 June 2026 Mervyn Harvey

Shrewsbury

Robbie Dodds (-1)
 Alan Ridley (1.5)
 James Handley (5)
 Julian Remfry (8) (morning)
 Tim Bunn (11) (afternoon)

Kenilworth

Cliff Daniel (6)
 Mervyn Harvey (8)
 Phillip Wood (9)
 Pauline Harvey (16)

The forecast for heavy rain, especially in the morning, was significant enough for both sides to agree to start at 11:00. As it happens, we did not have to don rainwear at all during play, but there was a very heavy downpour the second the players in the last game were in the dry! Shrewsbury only play AC, and are by far the strongest team we play against (with five players better than Adrian). But we did get extra turns (bisques) in every game.

In the morning doubles, Cliff and Pauline had 7.5 bisques to use against Robbie and Julian. Normally that may have resulted in a close game, but instead of having one ball each, the opponents had elected to make use of a recent rule change, by playing alternate strokes, which worked against us. Whenever Julian's shot was not exactly as intended, Robbie was able to rescue it. It was as if we were playing against two Robbie's! This is not sour grapes for the fact that we lost 26-16, but is something the rule setters probably haven't given much thought to.

On the other lawn, Philip started well against James, and used his bisques sparingly, to keep ahead. Despite making what he considered to be six or seven bad mistakes, he won 18 – 13. Alan was disappointed with how he started against me, but when he got in, he ran 11 hoops in one break. By the time I had used bisques to nudge slightly ahead, I was down to my last 1½, and was expecting to lose. However, Alan gave me two easy starts, which I made good use of, and I won 18-14.

In the afternoon singles, Cliff adopted a text-book start when playing a strong opponent, and spent 2 bisques to set up a break, but when a few balls did not go exactly where intended, he used another 3 in making 5 hoops. The pressure was then off Robbie, and after making a 9-hoop break he was able to make life difficult for Cliff, and ended up winning 26 -8, with plenty of time to spare.

Tim had 5 bisques to Pauline's 10, which she used well. With half an hour left, they both had 1 bisque left, with Pauline just 1 hoop ahead – a position from which the better player would expect to win. She used hers to set up what was likely to be her last break, and proceeded to pull 5 hoops ahead and leave Tim a difficult start. He was now under pressure, and had to use his last bisque to get anything going, but failed to add to his score, and so Pauline won 14-9.

The other two singles were a reverse of the morning singles. I started well against James, using 2 of my 3 bisques to make 11 hoops, while he had only scored 1 hoop. James then started to play well, and made several 4 or 5 hoop breaks, leaving me having to hit in from distance each time. With only 1 bisque left I only managed to scramble a few more hoops, and he won 26-18.

The game of the day was Philip v Alan. Over the course of 2 hours 40 minutes, Philip used 5 of his 7.5 bisques to keep a few hoops ahead most of the time. Whenever Alan seemed well set, he let Phillip back in. With about 20 minutes left, Philip had extended his lead to 5 hoops, and with his opponent in a difficult position, decided against using 1 of his remaining 2.5 bisques to make it even more difficult. That proved decisive, as Alan proceeded to play better than he had all day, by hitting in and making a 6-hoop break. More importantly, he used up nearly all of the remaining time and finished by scattering the four balls into the four corners. Once time was up, the rules did not allow Philip to use any of his remaining bisques, and so he was unlucky to lose 20-19. Oh for another five minutes on the clock!

So, the overall score was 4-3 to Shrewsbury.

WMF LEAGUE KENILWORTH v CHURCH STRETTON 17TH June Mervyn Harvey



Despite the CqE website showing 34 members with a AC handicap, 7 of them better than our number 4, Church Stretton were only able to bring a team of three, and so Pauline was relegated to the position of chief cake-maker (appreciated by all)!

Kenilworth:

Adrian Morris (3)
Mervyn Harvey (8)
Philip Wood (9)

Church Stretton:

George James (4.5)
Robin Trew (7)
Brian Christmas (7)

In the morning doubles, Philip and I received 2.5 bisques (extra turns) against George and Brian (G/B) - who opted to play alternate strokes, but we decided to play conventional one ball each. Philip and I both scored hoops at our first opportunity, but after a shaky start, G/B combined well, and soon established a slender lead, which they maintained for most of the game. With little time left, they scored a hoop to go two ahead, and probably thought that was game



won, but Philip had other ideas. He hit in from distance, and proceeded to run three hoops, just using two balls – to put us one ahead. G/B's balls were on the east boundary, with Blue being in position to rush Black to its hoop. Philip therefore glanced off Yellow towards them, with what seemed to be the perfect strength – but neither of us had noticed a little hill and bare patch there, and Red disappeared over that hill – and off the lawn. With three balls in close proximity, G/B managed to draw level with

the last turn of normal time, scatter our balls, set up, and make the golden hoop on their next turn. So, it was 19 – 18 to Church Stretton.

On the other lawn, Adrian played Robin in an uneventful game. The result was never in doubt after Robin used his four bisques early, to no good effect; and although he then started to play much better, Adrian won 26-15, with an hour to spare.



We were fairly confident that Adrian would win his afternoon match, and so Philip or I needed to win one of our games to win the match.



Adrian duly despatched George in under 1½ hours. He made an early 10 hoop break with Brown to the penultimate hoop ("Penult"). Now having to concentrate on Green, his break broke down twice, but eventually he got going, and peeled Brown through Penult and Rover (the final hoop) but then blobbered (failed to run) Rover with Green. This delayed the finish, but Adrian soon pegged out at 26 – 3.

My game against Robin was the next to finish. He used his only bisque within 10 minutes, but did not make the big break he was hoping for. Early play was patchy, but when I had my first opportunity, with all the balls accessible, I made six hoops, and felt well-set for more, when I lost concentration and gifted him an easy start by missing a shortish roquet near the hoop one of his balls was for. However, it really felt like Christmas when he returned the favour by setting up to run the hoop the wrong way. He only hit in once or twice in the whole game, and I reverted to playing well, and won 26-12 with nearly an hour to spare.



Philip played Brian – double-banking with Adrian v George. In Philip's words, the game was a struggle for both of them, with too many mistakes, but some good long roquets by both. They both fell victim to the slope away on the east boundary, which had robbed us at the end of the doubles match. The only break Philip remembers is one of about five, made by Brian. Philip needed some good long roquets and his two extra bisesques to pull ahead. Later in the game he attempted a roquet from about 15 yards, which was on track to hit Brian's blue when a ball from the other game collided with Philip's ball. He had to replay it, and this time he missed. Had it hit, he would have been in a good position to make a break. In

the doubles game, we had observed that Brian felt most comfortable when setting up (for George) to run a hoop and when making short positional roquets. So perhaps it was no great surprise that when he was in a position to win when time was called, he did a poor rush, then blobbered the hoop. Had he made it, he would have been in control to get the golden hoop. As it was, he didn't, and Philip won 18 – 17, and so ...

... we won the match 4 – 1.
