



Running Hoops

The Newsletter of Kenilworth Croquet

August 2023

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As promised, here is the new slimmed-down, monthly Running Hoops, as opposed to the previous bi-monthly edition, which proved to be too unwieldy. Unfortunately this 'half-size' version is proving to be almost as unwieldy as its predecessors, so I've taken the liberty of cutting down on-going internal competition reports to a table of results for each with little further commentary.

The highlight of the Club News was the highly successful Charity Day, organised by all sections of the KTSCC. The Croquet section had a large number of visitors interested in trying their hand at the game, and Lynne's report is on Page 2.



Pauline Harvey has been very busy this summer, arranging friendly matches with other clubs and these have been very popular, with so many players keen to take part, that some have had to share the day, with one playing in the morning and the other in the afternoon. This month, it was the turn of Moreton in Marsh, a fairly new club and particularly interesting because Peter Kristunas has been coaching them. He turned up to watch and must have been proud of his protégés, who played some excellent games, winning several of their matches. P12

The hospitality team have been busy again this year with several very successful sessions and have put together their own report of how these sessions are run on page 5. I enjoy these evenings very much, though my favourite hospitality event of all is the annual Squash Juniors' session, a raucous, exuberant reminder of the wild enthusiasm of your own youth! P4.



Frank Lee-speaking's letter to Marj last month about handicapping systems, and her reply, prompted Adrian Morris to enter the discussion with his own analysis of handicapping on page 7. This is followed by my own thoughts on the subject after reading Adrian's report and my first experience of handicap competition this year. In the June issue of the Croquet Gazette, my favourite

writer, Minty Cinch, mentions the same topic in her Hibiscus Column, on playing a GC match using the Advanced GC system, against no less a player than Reg "that's Bamford, of course. Like Boris, he doesn't need a surname." We are led to believe that Minty did actually beat Reg this time in a Golden Hoop after starting on a -2:1 ratio. She seemed very happy with her Advantage Croquet success!



Another astonishing article in the same Gazette aroused my indignation as well as my sense of humour as a female, in the Tunnel of Time section of reports from years ago. As late as July 1983, only 40 years ago, Reg A Pierce appealed to the Croquet Association to move out of the Victorian era into the Elizabeth II era, by using Christian names for women instead of their husband's initials!!! He mentions a tournament at Budleigh Salterton, where 'most of us were soon on first name terms', and the Sidmouth Club, where first names had been used for many years, resulting in a very friendly and popular club. Shocking!

Mrs N A Thomson

CLUB NEWS

Parkinson's UK Charity Day Sunday 9th July Lynne Breedon

Last Sunday afternoon we hosted 20 members from squash and tennis who wanted to try their hand at croquet. I had no idea of final numbers till the morning, but we decided to set up 4 half lawns and also lawn 3.

Initially the weather looked as though it wasn't going to play ball but after a short sharp shower the sun came out and play commenced.

As I'd been told there was a prize for the winner and runner up, the format for the afternoon changed from our original plan. Everyone played in pairs having a different partner in each round. Needless to say this was a little chaotic, but with the enthusiasm and competitiveness of the players, the games quickly passed and in 2 hours 4 rounds had been completed. The half lawns were looked after by Phil, Nick, Kath, Judith and Anne, who did a fantastic job keeping the games moving and the competitors "in order". Jeff and Glen also played as guests, so were able to help the groups they were in during the afternoon.



The winner was Louise Best and runner up Helen Slater, who collected their prizes later in the afternoon, which finished with a delicious cream tea. The event was very successful and all the participants thanked us for a very enjoyable afternoon.

To everyone who helped, a huge thank you for all your efforts, before, during and afterwards.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Ladies' Day Saturday 5th August 2023

Doubles Fun Day Sunday 20th August 2023

AC Kenilworth v Broadwas Home 29th August

Diamond Jubilee Event Sat 30th Sept Glen Duggins

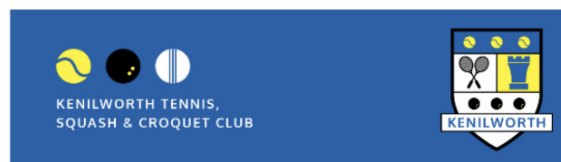
The KTSCC Diamond Party starts at 1:00pm on 30th September. Please write the date in your diaries now!

I shall be running a small tombola and need small prizes: no alcohol or ornaments, but sweets would be good, as long as they are in date!

If anyone has any suitable items to donate, please could they be left in the Croquet Pavilion with my name on them, for me to collect.

Thanks to anyone who can help.

Glen



Diamond Jubilee Volunteers needed!

Dear Members,

As many of you know, the club is planning a celebration on Saturday, 30th September, to mark 60 years since the opening of the clubhouse in Crackley Lane. We would be grateful for volunteers to help organise this special event, which will include tennis, squash/racketball, croquet and padel activities plus some fun and games on the grass and refreshments.

The party (1pm onwards) will coincide with junior tennis finals day and the event will be advertised to the public.

Please scan the list and contact Mel Jennings on melanie@jenningsfamily.me.uk or 07968 236885 if you are able to lend a hand with:

- Any sporting activity (these will be run by the section coaches and committee members);
- Assisting Jared, our president, with the barbecue;
- Co-ordinating a supply of tea and cakes and organising a kettle rota;
- Researching and pricing a few outdoor games eg Splat and Rat, stocks and sponges;
- Organising and running a tombola;
- Running a stall or activity eg face-painting, guess how many balls are in the bucket or any other idea you may have;
- Music;
- Assisting with a stand for prospective new members;
- A magician...this was very popular when we had the 50th party.
- Anything else to make the day a great occasion!

Your help would be very much appreciated and we can co-ordinate further once we have a willing group!

Many thanks,

The General Committee

KTSCC Comedy Night 13 September 2023

We have managed to engage with the organisers of Kenilworth Comedy Club to bring their ever popular event to our club on WEDNESDAY 13th SEPTEMBER.

Not only will this be a night to remember but this event will actually be one of the heats for the official 'National Comedian of the Year', a very auspicious award.

Tickets are £12 and we have exclusive early bird access as club members for two weeks before the event is opened to the general public. Get them quick, this promises to be a fun and popular night!

Ticket Link:

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/booking/t-yagoxag>

Squash Juniors 24 July 2023 Elizabeth Thomson

For the second year running in my experience, we hosted the Squash Juniors for a session playing croquet. My memories from last year, were of a very noisy afternoon, and this year was no exception. The juniors this year arrived in an excitable bunch, definitely more confident than last year's group, who were much more reserved and arrived in a self-conscious silence. Which, thankfully, did not last long, once they had found their feet on the lawns.



This lot were in high spirits, ready for anything, and raring to go. They arrived in the care of Guy Pearson, who was appointed the new Padel coach this week. He produces the KTSCC newsletter, so it was interesting to meet him. Also with the youngsters was Steven Townsend, Squash Coach, who played with one group of youngsters to make up a foursome for doubles.

Most of the groups were double-banked on the two half lawns of Lawn 2, and my group were lucky to have the practice lawn to themselves and able to play the full course. The others followed the shorter course used by the hospitality groups. As children do, they adapted very quickly to the game. They are already keen sportsmen in their own right, and competitive by nature, and they played astonishingly well for beginners. Like normal



teenagers, there was much raucous cheering and celebrating on scoring a hoop, taunting their opponents, amid fun and laughter. It was lovely to see them mixing so well with each other, forming new friendships in a healthy environment, and clearly having the time of their lives in their holiday squash camp. They were a lovely crowd.



I think it is such a worthwhile idea to run this annual session for the youngsters, to give them, however brief, a taste of playing a minority sport. That they enjoyed the experience was

evident and it is hoped that some time in the future, they may remember their early games of croquet as youngsters, and opt to take up the sport at college or university, in garden croquet or in a club.



gathering of younger squash players drifted over to spectate alongside Lawn 1. What lovely youngsters they were and what a rewarding touch for those of us who helped on Monday.

Post script: We were very impressed later, when two of the older squash juniors turned up at our Thursday social GC evening, and politely asked if they could join us for a game of croquet, even offering to pay. We were delighted to welcome them and Kath Spare and Irene Rogers played through a game with them, while a sizeable

FEATURES

Hospitality Nights John Copping Linda Edwards Bede Hayes



Over a decade ago an AC player unremarkably registered that GC was easier to learn than AC adding that "anyone could play it" which led to the idea that Jo or Joe Public might like to visit and give it a go - so was the idea of hospitality events born. At first visitors were effectively mentored while playing a standard GC game, often on a full size lawn. The increasing size of visitor groups ultimately obliged double banking on half-lawns to accommodate the full capacity of 16 per lawn. For some time that posed the problem, when following the standard route, of interference between the two games. Someone won a beer by suggesting the adoption of the rather odd route we now use.

Over the years the Heavenly Hosts have continually refined the procedures for setting up, welcoming and briefing the visitors, facilitating play, recording scores and declaring winners. Given the availability of good value meals from Ian Moorhouse's "A Bit of a Do", a score or so of different groups have availed themselves of the opportunity over the years. Astonishingly, though groups have withdrawn by the Monday night deadline because of a bad weather forecast, we have never yet had to bring out the books of quiz questions stored in the hospitality drawer in the pavilion, as fallback entertainment. Groups have included professional firms forming partnerships with other practices, or with clients. One sixth-form teacher brought members of his class to help form new relationships, having come from different fifth forms.

The Lead Host



There are now three lead hosts since Linda and Bede joined John's team last year, hosting events from May through to September on a Wednesday evening when daylight is at its longest.

Early in the year local clubs are invited to play croquet at KTSCC. We offer a fun evening, a chance to learn a new skill or improve skills, join in competition and enjoy supper and drinks afterwards in the clubhouse. Clubs return year after year, a testament to an enjoyable evening. Once the date is agreed we book the lawn(s). Group and booking details are entered on a spreadsheet and copies sent to the Committee, Andy in the clubhouse and Ian, the caterer. The club lead contacts Ian to book supper.

We're hosting five events this Summer including a private event for a member, Kenilworth 41 Club, The Catenians, The Leofric Lions and an afternoon competition for the West Midlands WI. Unfortunately, Andy Lee's MG Club cancelled due to a low response from members this year. Our scoring model accommodates groups consisting of 16, 24, 28 and 32 people playing in pairs, though we try to adapt play for most even numbers. One or two weeks before the event we ask the group lead to confirm numbers, players' names and pairs, and catering arrangements with Ian. We contact Andy so that he can arrange extra bar staff and ask for

lawn hosts to help on the evening from our core of croquet member volunteers. Before the event we check the weather forecast and if inclement, we may cancel, though this is rare. If rain starts during the event, we usually continue play as players like to continue the competition.

Players Briefing

On arrival, players choose their mallets. We welcome everyone to KTSCC, introduce the lawn hosts and the gist of golf croquet is 'explained'. Half of the pairs play as 'Home Teams' and play all games from the same flag. The remaining pairs play as 'Away Teams' and move to a different flag for each game. Because Home teams play on the same lawn, Away teams always start the game, to balance any advantage.



We explain the ball sequence and the game route on the lawn with the help of a 3D model. After a short demonstration of striking the ball, the teams are sent to their flags and play begins. The lawn hosts offer advice and encouragement and record scores. At the end of play, the scores are added up and a winning pair emerges. We move to the clubhouse for supper and chat, where winners are announced and prizes awarded.

From our experience, these are enjoyable events for the lawn hosts much as for the competitors. Anyone interested in joining the team of hosts should contact John, Bede or Linda. All our groups have been very friendly and enjoy a lot of laughter and sometimes display a serious amount of competitiveness.

Hospitality events are not held primarily for money. The aim is to spread knowledge of the game of croquet by facilitating an enjoyable evening. We try to offer value for money, the cost to a visitor this year being around £20 including a standard meal. It seems likely the thousand or so visitors over the years have contributed to the Club, as 'donations', a sum into five figures.



Catenians enjoying their games

A Reply from the WI Beverley Moynihan

(This article was published in the local paper, The Bugle)

On an afternoon of mixed sunshine and rain in July, members of Temple Balsall WI competed in the West Midlands WI Croquet Competition. To the delight of the Temple Balsall ladies, one of their members, Judith Adlington, and her partner, Lynette Billingham, from Heart of England WI, won this year's trophy. There was a tie for second place, with an exciting play off, but none of us had managed to beat Judith and Lynette.

The croquet match was held at the Kenilworth Tennis, Squash and Croquet Club. Women's Institutes from Birmingham and surrounding areas, including Balsall Common, joined together for an afternoon of fun, but the games soon became very competitive! Many of the ladies had never played before but we were given extremely useful assistance by members of the Kenilworth Club. They explained the rules of croquet to us and



showed us skills ranging from how to hold the mallet and the order in which to play the hoops, to the tactics of how to hit the opponent's ball away from the hoop! We were divided into teams and each lady played with a member from another WI so the whole afternoon became very sociable as new friendships were made.

Our congratulations go to this year's two winners and our thanks go to the WI organisers of the afternoon, and to the members of the Kenilworth Club, who gave their time to ensure that we would have such a brilliant afternoon. I personally can't wait for next year.

HANDICAPPING Adrian Morris

In the last issue Elizabeth expressed some concern about the new Advantage GC and whether it was better or worse than Extra Turns and asked for comments. In a further discussion she also expressed concerns about handicapping in general.

Allow me to express my opinion.

HANDICAPS – Good or Bad?

Handicapping is a common feature in many sports and allows players of differing standards to enjoy a competitive game. The weaker player will need to make good use of the advantage given and the better players may need to adjust their tactics.

Let's make it clear from the start, THERE IS NO PERFECT HANDICAP SYSTEM! Authorities strive to seek the best system possible. It is difficult, nigh on impossible, to handicap fairly, players with a large discrepancy in playing ability.

Handicaps are also based on full games and so timed games can distort the handicap advantage – usually in favour of the weaker player. That said, I believe the handicap systems for Croquet are fit for purpose.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of Handicaps?

Advantages

1. Firstly, as mentioned above, it allows enjoyable competitive games between players of differing standards.
2. The index associated with the handicapping system allows players to measure their improvement.

Disadvantages

1. If a player has been given the wrong handicap it can distort the system.
2. If a player improves more quickly than the index changes, it can take a while for the handicap to increase. This is often referred, impolitely, some may say, as the “Bandit Stage”! Club handicappers should keep an eye on these players and adjust accordingly.
3. In a handicap game, if the handicaps are accurate, you should expect to win 50% of your games.
4. Therefore, if you enter a Handicap competition, you should enjoy competitive games but will need an element of luck to get your name on the trophy!

ADVANTAGE GC v EXTRA TURNS

For many years, there was a perceived concern about the fairness of the Extra Turn handicap system. The main concern was the use of the Extra Turns. A beginner not only had to learn the playing skill and the tactical skill of GC, but also then, the tactics of using the extra turns.

It was also clear that there was dichotomy between those who knew how to use the Extra Turns effectively and those who didn't. If you knew how to use them, you had an “unfair” advantage over the stronger player whereas if you didn't, then the advantage switched to the stronger player.

Advantage GC has been trialled over the last few seasons and thousands of games have been analysed. This system eliminates the need to learn how to use Extra Turns and I believe strongly is a better and fairer system.

However, there were concerns about keeping score and this has been overcome by the ingeniously simple counting device available for all to use, in the pavilion. There still remains the problem of timed games but again, this has been overcome by charts provided by the CA.

CONCLUSION

I am very much in favour of handicapping but have to admit that strong players rarely play Handicap games. Personally, the only games I play to handicap rules are those in our club. I enjoy the games, win or lose, but do prefer the former!

As you will see above, I am also very much in favour of Advantage GC over Extra Turns. It is always a pleasure to agree with Marj's comments from last issue!

Elizabeth's Reply

Adrian's article explained a lot, and prompted me to rethink my attitude to handicapping. My initial preference on learning to play croquet was to play level, no handicaps in sight. At the time, this seemed fairer – why should weaker players be enabled artificially to play against, and even beat, experienced players who have spent many years practising and improving their game? The Leagues were a perfect choice for me, being level play. However, entering cup competitions for the first time this year, necessitated accepting and learning to use handicaps; in fact, two different handicap systems. I read Marj's timely analysis of the merits of Advantage GC over the Extra Turns handicapping system in the last issue of Running Hoops with interest: at the time I had no idea which system might be better. Fortunately I soon had the opportunity to experience both of these systems in matches.

First was the Pindi Cup with its Extra Turns. In my first match, I forgot to take them. In my second, I did remember, but was frustrated when some didn't work and gave me no advantage after all.

Soon after that came the All-England Handicap Competition, which trialled the Advantage system. I had a wonderful day, playing against top players and taking them all to Golden Hoops even though I then lost the games. I now understand the main advantage of handicapping is allowing us to enjoy games with a much wider range of opponents than would be possible if playing only level games.

However, playing next in the Kenilworth and Pindi Cups, the former using Advantage GC, the latter Extra Turns, I went a step further and beat several stronger players, which left me feeling uncomfortable for some time; that I had achieved a hollow victory. I have had to recognise that playing handicap games is very different from playing level. Playing level is a match of skills in which the better player will most often win. The outcome is almost inevitable. Playing in handicap competitions gives each player a 50% chance of winning each game, leading, as Adrian points out, to more closely fought and exciting games, with the possibility, eventually, of improving one's handicap! Unfortunately I think I am currently basking in the 'Bandit Stage' of handicapped games that he describes, and already my handicap is going down to counteract this!

Regarding Advantage GC v Extra turns, Adrian explained that thousands of games have been analysed over the last few years and Advantage is seen as the fairest handicap system for GC. However, when the difference in handicaps is great, no handicap system would work effectively.

From my own experience now of both systems, I must admit that I prefer the simplicity of the Advantage system, in setting a clear target for the game and removing the distraction of the Extra Turns: wondering when to take them, the possibility of losing them, or even forgetting to take them at all. And the little counters in the pavilion do simplify keeping the score in the Advantage system!

I have to confess that I am now a convert both to handicap games and to the Advantage system and join Marj, Adrian and Mervyn as an advocate for Advantage GC, while recognising that players who have already developed the skill to use their extra turns probably still prefer that option.

COMPETITION TIME

The Wider Croquet Community

GC WMCF Kenilworth v Eardisley at Home 5th July Philip Wood



← The home team (L to R) comprised Phil Mander, Phil Wood, Phil Blake and Mervyn Harvey.

The visitors (L to R) → were Mike Chapman, Jen and Tony Johnston and Roger Searle.



They arrived very early from far away Eardisley (near Hereford) and were helpful in setting up for the match. The weather was fine and the lawns fairly fast. Having won our two previous matches, we only needed to win this match to win the League.



Our handicaps (-1,2,2,2) compared with theirs (2,4,8,8) suggested that we should not have much difficulty, and a very slow first round of singles resulted in a 3-1 win for us. The possible need for timing the games loomed, but things speeded up. We won each of the three remaining rounds of singles 3-1, with each Kenilworth player winning 3 out of 4 games.

Eardisley team captain, Tony Johnston, scored their only four wins. Their 3rd and 4th players were relative novices but played with huge determination. They did learn a few things from us and were

appreciative of the advice we (tactfully) gave, including an excellent demonstration of a jump shot from Mervyn Harvey.



After this, the doubles were a formality; we won both of those also, giving a final score of 14 - 4 to Kenilworth. The club now holds the WMCF League Cup for the third consecutive year.

It is to be hoped that next season more Clubs will compete in this League, but the Clubs in the League are far apart with travel times of around 2 hours. (Most regrettable is the absence of Edgbaston, a Club with three excellent lawns, and centrally placed in the region.)



Mervyn scores a perfect jump shot

AC WMCF Kenilworth v Eardisley Away 12th July Cliff Daniel

Kenilworth: Adrian Morris, Cliff Daniel, Philip Wood, Mervyn Harvey

Eardisley: Tony Johnston, Jen Johnston, John Bothamley, David White

The journey to Eardisley, a delightful village near Hereford on the border with Wales, is the longest that we need to take when playing matches in the West Midlands League. So it was wonderful that Adrian had offered to drive the team there....in his new Jaguar F Pace!

We arrived around 9.35am, despite a road closure which entailed a detour along some narrow country lanes, in ample time to share pleasantries with our opponents over a hot drink and to have a chance to practise some croquet shots on their relatively new lawns.

During the morning there were 2 singles games and one doubles game to be played.



Two of the home team players were playing their very first competitive game and had been assessed as having a handicap of 14. One of these players, John Bothamley, was paired against Adrian, our top player, who has a handicap of 3.5 and so was conceding 10 and a half bisques. (For those unaware of half bisques, please note that a player taking a half bisque is permitted to use this extra turn to re-arrange the balls on the lawn but is NOT allowed to score any points whilst doing so!)

Adrian merely had to wait patiently for John to use up his bisques, incidentally, scoring just 10 hoops in the process, and then soon afterwards, carefully to build breaks to win the game 26-10.

In the other singles game, Mervyn played against Jen, the only lady playing in the match. Sadly this game was marred by Jen, a diabetic, getting rather confused about two-thirds of the game due to her needing more sugar. Even though this resulted in her wasting several bisques and losing 15-26, she generously said afterwards that she felt Mervyn would have won anyway.

The doubles game featured Cliff and Philip Wood against Tony Johnston (the home team captain) and David White, the other Eardisley player relatively new to the game. The home team pair squandered 4 of their 4.5 bisques failing to score any points at all whilst using them. So Phil and Cliff were able to take a few risks and in due course, were able to build up a reasonable lead. However Phil, much to his annoyance, missed running a straightforward hoop 5, (perhaps he was slightly hampered by the infamous 'lab coat' that he chose to wear when a short sharp shower of rain interrupted play!!) and this provided



the home pair with the initiative. With time running out they took their precious half bisque and applied a little pressure. Nevertheless when time was called they still trailed by a few hoops and, despite Tony running hoop 3 from a huge distance, the visitors triumphed narrowly 11-10.

So at lunch Kenilworth were leading 3-0 and so only needed to win one of the afternoon games to secure victory.

With approximately one hour's play left, all 4 singles games were very much in the balance.

However Mervyn, making good tactical use of his bisques, secured victory 26-15 to ease the pressure on the other three members of the Kenilworth team. He was playing against David and managed to preserve his bisques whilst keeping in touch score-wise with his opponent. This proved critical since Mervyn was able to use his last bisque to make a 'rover-peel'. However this did leave him with a long 'peg-peel', which he duly achieved, declaring this feat was a tribute to the trueness of the lawn that had very few bumps or areas of uneven cut.



Cliff was playing against Jen and, aided by some excellent hoop-running, started well and was hopeful of victory, However Jen did have 9.5 bisques at her disposal and, by her own admission found some useful good form especially with medium length roquets. She eventually triumphed deservedly 22-17 on time.

Philip was playing against John and both players struggled to make progress for quite some time, being let down by their hoop running. However John, who had rather more bisques of course, did improve

his play and with some excellent hoop approaches coupled with a few long roquets clinched the game 18-13 on time.

Adrian was playing Tony, who was an experienced player. Tony used his bisques to get his first ball to 'three-back' and then played well to make it difficult for Adrian to set up a break. However, having narrowly missed a number of long roquets, Adrian did eventually manage a long turn and took his first ball to 'four-back'. As time neared, Tony was 2 hoops ahead and there were chances for both players, but Adrian came out the winner by a single hoop, the final score being 20-19.

So the overall result was a win for Kenilworth 5-2 and, with two wins now out of two outings. The thought of winning the league becomes a distinct possibility.

The weather had been good and we were able to enjoy celebratory tea outdoors...with extremely yummy cake home-made by Jen!



GC Friendly Kenilworth v Moreton in Marsh Home 18 July Pauline Harvey

Although the present Moreton-in-Marsh Croquet Club has only been in existence for less than three years, having commenced play in May 2021, Moreton has been very significant in the history of croquet. It has been difficult to pinpoint the origins of croquet, although a game called “crooky” was played in Ireland from the 1830s, but a watershed moment occurred in 1866 when Walter Jones Whitmore, who lived at Chastleton House, near Moreton, now owned by the National Trust, codified the rules for croquet. The first croquet tournament was held on the Moreton cricket grounds in 1868. Walter Whitmore went on to form the All England Croquet Club at Wimbledon, and is known as the Father of Croquet. So, with the formation of Moreton-in-Marsh Croquet Club, croquet has come home, although, of course, the original game was AC and not GC!



Moreton have fundraised for a pavilion and other facilities, but unfortunately, with costs rising steeply post-Covid lockdowns and Brexit, they haven't yet been able to start. The plans are complete, and so they hope to be able to host games from next season, but, in the meantime, they were delighted to visit us for a friendly match on July 18th. As an aside, Peter Kristunas has been instrumental in helping them develop the club, both in terms of laying the lawns, and in coaching. He didn't feel comfortable playing for either side, but called in for a while on Tuesday to give support.

So far as the result is concerned, Kenilworth won convincingly, winning 26 games, drawing 4 and losing 6, but really, as I always say, the result is not the most important aspect of a friendly game. I will, however, give special mention to Linda Edwards, who, playing with Nick Hegan in her first ever match, didn't lose a game. They won five and drew one, but all the other pairs were kind enough to allow Moreton a win or two. The observant of you will realise that we had six pairs, whereas most matches involve three or four. This meant that we played on half-lawns to accommodate six games at a time, a first for us, but it seemed to go well.



As usual, members of the team brought a great selection of savoury and sweet items for tea, which greatly impressed our visitors. Luckily the rain stopped while we ate, drank and socialised, without having to squash into the pavilion. The kettles and urn were busy all day, so that we were able to keep offering tea and coffee. We are so grateful for those who enabled electricity to be run to the pavilion – the noisy generator is now a distant memory!

Moreton had a wonderful time, both in the play and in the tea; we look forward to developing friendships and competitive play in the coming years.

AC League Match Kenilworth v Shrewsbury Home 25th July Cliff Daniel

Fine weather greeted us as we arrived at the club on Tuesday 25 July to set up everything for the third AC league match of the season.

I acknowledged the man who was just completing the timely cutting of the grass on the two lawns. I was mildly concerned to note that the marking of the lines had not been done but my mind was soon put at ease when our lawn manager, Philip Wood, arrived soon afterwards...ON BICYCLE, which really impressed me, for Philip is currently not allowed to drive his car for health reasons. Furthermore, Philip was not selected to play in this particular match.



The morning session, as usual, comprised one doubles game and two singles games. In the singles games a large number of bisques were involved.

Adrian (h/c 3.5) conceded 10.5 bisques to David Hart (14), a newcomer to Association Croquet but with mallet skills learned from Golf Croquet, seems to be improving rapidly as he learns more about the game. David played very well and used his bisques carelessly...but effectively, and still had a bisque left with both balls on Rover! Adrian was facing a monumental task to catch up but was eventually beaten 26-10.

Mervyn, on the other hand, was playing Shrewsbury's top player Sean Sheridan, and in receipt of 8.5 bisques. Being quite experienced in handicap play he used his bisques shrewdly to make it difficult for his opponent to establish a decent break and comfortably won 26-8.



In the doubles game Cliff was paired with Phil Mander and their opponents, Alan Smith & Barbara Edwards had handicaps such that NO bisques whatsoever were involved! This fact explains why it took so long for anyone to run hoop 1!!

However, eventually, Phil had a good opportunity to start a break and indeed he managed to peel his partner ball through hoop 1 too. This feat surprised nobody at all for Phil is always looking for the chance to accomplish a peel or two! Thereafter the home pair established a sizeable lead courtesy of several small breaks by

Phil...enabled by a number of lengthy roquets which rightly earned him the title of 'ROQUET KING'! In fact, Phil was so confident of hitting unlikely roquets that, as time was running out, Cliff had to be firm on a couple of occasions to insist on Phil resisting taking on risky long roquets. The home pair duly won 13-8 on time so Kenilworth were leading 2-1 at the halfway stage of the match.



The afternoon session comprised 4 singles games.

Adrian our top player, was facing Sean, the top player from Shrewsbury and had the luxury of receiving 3 bisques. In the event, Adrian played well and only needed to use one of his 3 bisques to complete a comfortable victory 26-13.

Mervyn had the challenge of playing David, the fast improver, who again had plenty of bisques to help him. Mervyn felt he did not play to his usual high standard and once his own bisques had been used, David became a firm favourite, but started to make a few mistakes. A tactical mistake in pegging out one of his balls with the other on Peg, left Mervyn a chance which he took with both hands to win 26-25.

This win by Mervyn guaranteed overall victory for Kenilworth, thereby relieving the pressure for Cliff and Phil who were involved in two close games. In fact, Phil's game was extremely close...despite Phil starting well and with Barbara squandering both of her two precious bisques early in the game. Both players wasted opportunities and the final result was victory for Phil 13-12 on time.



Cliff had been protecting a 5-hoop lead in his game, knowing that his opponent Alan was quite capable of establishing a game-winning break. But, following Mervyn's victory, he felt he could take a few risks. Consequently, even though he felt a little restricted by his hands that were showing signs of arthritis, he managed to complete victory 26-14.

The final result was a rather flattering score-line of 6-1 victory to Kenilworth. The final match, versus Broadwas late in August, will decide the West Midlands AC League.

Club Level Competitions

Leagues

Golf Croquet Leagues		2023
League to end on		
Sun 03 Sep		
BLUE BLOCK	Contact	Mobile
Blake, Phil	01926 484272	07771 771663
Mander, Phil	07850 696699	07850 696699
Robertson, Ian	01926 733113	07984 014473
Wood, Philip	01926 854784	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
RED BLOCK	Contact	Mobile
Breedon, Lynne	02476 419355	07751 402924
Harvey, Pauline	01926 718080	07576 289054
Henderson, Gordon	01926 855376	07856 093499
Lindsay, Jeff	01926 843408	07713 884798
Pinder, Richard	07974 804895	07974 804895
Thomson, Elizabeth	07817 674434	07817 674434
YELLOW BLOCK	Contact	Mobile
Abrahams, Colin	01926 856641	07964 827213
Cheeseman, Mike	01926 852976	07814 625330
Moss, Ivan	07828 802868	07828 802868
Moss, Val	07525 203077	07525 203077
Watmore, Tony	07903 709751	07903 709751
Zara, Robert	01926 887097	07976 579529

The second league of the year finished with an observation from Mike Cheeseman:

"By way of background, not much could be deduced from the results of the second league. For the first time since I started running the leagues each of the three blocks had a single player who played all his/her games and none of the others played anyone else. Slightly spooky!"

The Leagues however, continue to be popular, with 15 competitors entering the third league of the year, divided into 3 blocks of 4, 5 and 6 competitors and will end on 3rd September.

Perhaps players should try to make an early start to arranging league matches in this 3rd league, to avoid a last minute rush to complete on time, especially in the larger groups where up to 5 matches need to be fitted in.

From my own experience, most players breathe a sigh of relief that the Leagues are played Level – "We don't need to worry about handicaps!" is the frequent introduction to a new match!

Kenilworth Cup

16 players entered the Kenilworth Cup, a knock-out competition, which uses the new Advantage Croquet handicap system. Check out handicaps and results for yourselves!

First Round

Philip Wood (2)	2-1	Tony Watson (8)
Val Moss (11)	2-0	Adrian Morris (3)
Nick Hegan (3)	0-0	Gordon Henderson (withdrew)
Phil Blake (-1)	2-1	Jeff Lindsey (7)
Elizabeth Thomson (8)	2-0	Ian Robertson (3)
Ivan Moss (10)	2-0	Phil Mander (2)
Lynne Breedon (8)	2-0	Pauline Harvey (5)
Mervyn Harvey (2)	2-0	Peter Kristunas (3)

Congratulations to the winners of the first round and good luck to all in the second round.

Pindi Cup

13 people entered the Pindi Cup, which uses the traditional 'Extra turns' handicap system, though one player was forced to retire through ill-health. The remaining 12 were divided into 3 blocks of 4, to be completed by Sunday, 30 July.

Quarter-Finals

The successful competitors who now progress to the quarter-finals have been drawn and confirmed by Mervyn and are as follows:

Peter Kristunas	v	Lynne Breedon	These matches should be played by Sunday 10th September.
Elizabeth Thomson	v	Jeff Lindsay	
Philip Wood	v	Phil Blake	
Nick Hegan	v	Ian Robertson	

Congratulations and good luck to all competitors.

July Level Cup

This cup was reintroduced after a number of years, by Lynne Breedon, when it was brought to her attention by Peter Kristunas, who last held the cup in 2018. This year, 8 players, generally those with higher handicaps, entered the knock-out competition, which is played level as the name indicates.

First round

Elizabeth Thomson	2-1	Jan Phelps
Bob Phelps	2-1	Jeff Lindsay
Tony Watmore	2-0	Irene Rogers
Lynne Breedon	2-1	Robert Zara

Semi-Finals

Lynne Breedon	2-0	Tony Watmore
Elizabeth Thomson	2-0	Bob Phelps

Final

Elizabeth Thomson	2-0	Lynne Breedon
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July Level finalists L to R: Lynne Breedon, Bob Phelps, Elizabeth Thomson (Absent: Tony Watmore)



Runner up Lynne Breedon presents the July Level Cup to Elizabeth Thomson

The finals were played on Lawn 1 on the same day as the Wells Cup finals were being played on Lawn 2, which caused much excitement, watching the matches being played out on both lawns, and particularly, being able to watch the club's top players going head to head in the Wells Cup.

Meanwhile, in the first semi-final of the July Level Cup, Lynne beat Tony 7-6, 7-6, while Elizabeth followed by beating Bob 7-4, 7-5.

In the final, Elizabeth and Lynne fought two very close games. In both of these, Lynne made a very strong start to the game, winning the first 3 hoops, before Elizabeth found her form and slowly fought back to win both games (7-4, 7-5) and the match. The second game was played in a steady downpour of rain, resulting in two very bedraggled victors in the cup presentation photograph.

Wells Cup

Seven of the top Golf Croquet players entered the Club Championships with the winner taking the Wells Cup. All matches were played level as best of three games.

First Round

Phil Blake Bye
Adrian Morris 2-0 Ian Robertson

Mervyn Harvey 2-1 Nick Hegan
Philip Wood 2-1 Peter Kristunas

Semi-final

Adrian Morris 2-1 Phil Blake
Mervyn Harvey 2-0 Philip Wood

Final
Mervyn Harvey 2-0 Adrian Morris



Wells Cup finalists L to R: Philip Wood, Mervyn Harvey, Adrian Morris, Phil Blake



Runner up Adrian Morris presents the Wells Cup to Mervyn Harvey

In the first Semi-final, Mervyn beat Philip in two games (7-4, 7-1)

The other Semi was a much more closely fought battle. In the first game Phil took a 3-hoop lead. Adrian fought back but lost the first game (3-7). The final two games were as close as they could be with Adrian winning both (7-6, 7-5). Phil ran hoops and achieved jump shots but Adrian's clearances from long distance made the difference.

The final between Mervyn and Adrian was much more clear-cut with Mervyn taking the first game (7-1). Adrian showed better form in the second game, but Mervyn showed his excellent form to win (7-5) and take the Club Championship and the Wells Cup.

Editor: This has been an incredibly busy month for competitions but it has been very interesting watching the results coming in, and recording them. If I have overlooked some competitions, possibly in AC, I'll make sure they are included in the next issue, hopefully to be distributed in early September. For this issue, time ran out for me, with child-minding, Ladies Day and a holiday week looming. All I can say now, is a sincere thank you to the many who have helped me this month, with articles, match reports and photographs, advice and editing, and distribution. A great team effort. Thank you all.