

Running Hoops

The Newsletter of Kenilworth Croquet

Feb 2024

Contents

Editorial.....1

Club News

[Presentation Dinner](#).....2

Features

[Honours Board](#).....7

[News from Florida](#).....10

[Advantage Golf](#).....12

[Speed Croquet](#).....13

[Offer from Adrian](#).....13

[Rachel Gee](#).....14

Apologies if some of these links don't work properly!

Welcome back everyone! I hope you enjoyed the festive season and survived the dark days of rain and cold during closure of the lawns. "What did you do in the war, Grandad?" sprang to mind whenever I met someone from croquet. The question that soon arose was "What did you do in the winter without croquet?"

Well, this winter some of us decided to be more positive. So first up was pétanque, Judith's suggestion, as she produced a brand new shiny set of silver balls. So there we were in my back garden, on a dull damp day in November, four of us, well wrapped up, looking forward to our new sport. It wasn't easy. Not being a player, my 'gardener'



hadn't cut the grass quite as short as we would have liked, which made spotting the jack part of the skill in playing the game, but we managed. It was interesting that the lawn mower, not being very efficient at cutting wet grass (the gardener had missed the dry days), had left a thick layer of cuttings covering the grass. Soon it became more difficult to spot the silver balls as well, with their green camouflage. But we played on until the light was against us, and happily trooped into the house for the customary croquet coffee and biscuits, leaving grass-clad boots and coats in the utility room and washing and drying the balls in the sink, to return shiny silver balls to their shiny silver case. But sadly, the weather and soft ground put paid to our hopes of a winter of pétanque.

My own next bright idea was Bridge. Having collared a potential partner at U3A croquet, Pat and I enrolled for a supervised play session on Wednesday mornings at the Bridge Club and found we didn't do too badly at all, hastily swotting up on Transfers, Staymans, Doubles, Overcalls and happily enjoying the stress of playing out a hand! So we enrolled for a further 10 lessons in January.



And then I remembered a project Adrian had suggested a long time ago, to write an article on the Honours Board. It tied in with the fascination I had developed while working with Peter on his

History of the Club, about these early members of the club, and I was keen to learn more about them. The article filled in my evenings (afternoons and after midnights) very successfully, as it grew from an article to a thesis, and you can now read this analysis of the Honours Board in instalments in Running Hoops over the next few issues. My hope is that this effort will trigger memories of incidents, anecdotes, interesting or amusing, or of more photographs that could be included in a modern history of our club, following on from Peter's story of the early years to around 2005.

I would love to know what others did in the Lawns Lockdown this winter – no 'housework' allowed! Do pass on any ideas you had to fill in the days of No Croquet. There are also lots of videos of croquet matches online, which are a great way to fill in time in the dark days and learn new tactics from the world's top players. Nick and Liz held a 'mince pies and mulled wine' gathering for players in the regular GC Roll Up Sessions. The AC players got together in the main pavilion for coffee, chat and lively coaching sessions, organised by Adrian. If you did something interesting, let's hear about it. Or join the Bridge Club next winter!

Elizabeth

CLUB NEWS ANNUAL PRESENTATION DINNER

The highlight of the winter season has to be the annual Presentation Dinner. A chance finally to meet up again with the croquet community, relax with a lovely meal, chat, take photographs, and for one rugby fan, a chance to view the final moments of the first match of the Six Nations Cup, Ireland v France, on the television downstairs in the bar.

We gathered around 6:30pm in the bar at the Kenilworth Golf Club, except for one member who mistakenly arrived at the main KTSCC pavilion, but was quickly re-directed to the correct location, where they were soon reunited with friends and enjoyed the full evening.

With the Golf Club's new catering staff and Ian Robertson's precision-organised table settings with menu choices attached, the meal was served quickly and efficiently, leaving plenty of time to enjoy the food, drinks and coffee before Lynne Breedon (Chair) summed up the past year for us. She commented on the progress being made by the lawn maintenance company, the rising membership including Kenilworth Mayor, Alix Dearing, a prominent figure to draw attention to our club; increasing interest in Association Croquet; the new format of Running Hoops, and the vibrant atmosphere in the club at the present time.

After the presentation of the Golf Croquet trophies, Adrian Morris, (our previous Chair) took over with an interesting history of the cups on display on the presentation table. He summarised the final matches of the Wells GC Cup and the AC trophies, mentioning in particular, John Leader's remarkable return to competition croquet by winning the Taylor Cup for the fifth time and a mere 23 years after he had first won it. I wonder how many of our current members will match this amazing achievement.

Presentation of trophies



Lynne presents first time cup winner, Bob Phelps, with the Charlecote Cup...



...and Nick Hegan with the Kenilworth Cup. Nick has won both the Charlecote and Pindi Cups in the past.



←

Ian Robertson is presented with the Pindi Cup, after previously winning the Kenilworth Cup.

↓

Lynne presents first time cup winner Elizabeth Thomson with the Ladies' Trophy and the July Level Cup.



Phil Mander accepted the trophy for the Golf Croquet League Championship on behalf of the rest of the team who were unable to attend: Mervyn Harvey, Philip Wood (Captain) and Phil Blake.





Lynne presents Adrian Morris with the St George Cup (left), his 7th win of this cup, and the Castle Cup, his 9th win of this one!
He has also won the Taylor and Secunderabad AC Cups, along with the Kenilworth and Wells GC Cups, in the past.



And finally, Lynne presented the Taylor Cup to John Leader, a founder member of our club and retired AC referee. John has won this cup three times previously, the first time in the year 2001.

He has also won the St George, Secunderabad, Bill Browne and Castle AC Cups, and the Kenilworth and Pindi GC Cups in the intervening years.

You can read more about John and those early champions of our club in the following pages on the Honours Board.

Absent Cup Winners

Mervyn Harvey, winner of the Secunderabad and Bill Browne AC trophies and the GC Wells Cup.





Also missing from the Presentation Dinner this year, was new member Nigel Pigdon due to family illness. Nigel joined our club in September and within a few weeks had won his first competition, the Douglas AC Trophy.

And Adrian Morris accepted the AC League Champions' Cup on behalf of his absent team mates: Philip Wood, Cliff Daniel (Captain) and Mervyn Harvey.



Congratulations to all our trophy winners from 2023.

With the presentations over, the formality of the evening ceased and members and guests moved around to stretch legs and join friends at other tables, pose for photographs and finish drinks.



Ivan made up for last year with two bottles of wine this year... while Jon and Nic apparently indulged in lots of coffee.



What do two referees talk about when they get together? Between them, John and Adrian have over 50 years of membership of the Club so there must be lots of reminiscing.

It was lovely to see both John and Lee at the dinner this year.



For Edith and Anne, it was phones out to compare notes!



Irene and Elspeth kept the party going at Table 4.



And lots of laughter at Table 3. Linda even tore herself away from the Talisman for the evening!



What did Lynn say that sent them all into fits of laughter?

Caroline insisted on taking her own photograph of Ian with his Pindi Cup.



The Hegan team turned out in force, and Adrian managed to pop up at every table for the photograph – except his own, when he was nowhere to be seen!

Hope to see everyone again next year at the Presentation Dinner 2025!

KENILWORTH CROQUET CLUB HONOURS BOARD

To view the full Club Honours Board, click here: [Croquet-Honours-Board.pdf \(ktscc.co.uk\)](https://www.ktscc.co.uk/Croquet-Honours-Board.pdf)

St George Cup (Association Croquet) 1991

Player	No of Wins	Years of Success
Bill Sidebottom	4	1991-2000, 2011
John Kelley	2	1993-4
Roger Tribe	3	1995-2001
Neil Stevenson	1	1996
Doug Taylor	4	1997-2005
Charles Wade	1	2002
Peter Mallen	1	2004
John Leader	1	2006
Peter Dennis	1	2008
Adrian Morris	7	2009-2023
Cliff Daniel	5	2010-2021
Philip Wood	1	2012
Mervyn Harvey	1	2018



The very first cup for the Club, the St George Cup, was originally presented by Boston House Motors (Coventry) Ltd to the Royal Society of St George, Warwickshire Branch, for their annual Croquet Competition cup, and the winners' names from 1981 to 1986 are still engraved on the sleeve. **Doug Taylor** was offered the cup and gave it to the club which started using it in **1991**. The longest running competition in the club, the St George Cup has been fought over for 32 years! It's hard to imagine what it must have felt like for this largely self-taught band of enthusiasts, years after creating a new club, with a new sport for the town, new lawns and a new pavilion, to have their first formal competition in which to compete, with a historic cup as the prize, and to be the first man to have his name engraved on a Kenilworth Croquet Club Cup! And that first man was **Bill Sidebottom**, Chairman of the Club until 2008, when Adrian Morris took over.

The early years are filled with nostalgia as we read of these early pioneers of our croquet club, in Peter Dennis' History of the Club, [Croquet-Peter Dennis History.pdf \(ktscc.co.uk\)](https://www.ktscc.co.uk/Croquet-Peter-Dennis-History.pdf)



Many names stand out as repeat winners of the cup, **Doug Taylor** and **Bill Sidebottom**'s names each appearing 4 times on the trophy, a young **Roger Tribe** 3 times, and **John Kelley** twice.

Early Members of the Club

Bill Sidebottom, Doug Taylor, John Robinson, Roger Tribe, John Leader, David Taylor, Bill Browne, Jim Ward



Later Members of the Club

Adrian Morris, Philip Wood, Cliff Daniel, Mervyn Harvey

But by 2009 a new generation of players was starting to emerge, first with **Adrian Morris** in 2009, **Cliff Daniel** in the following year, **Philip Wood** in 2012, and later in 2018, **Mervyn Harvey**. And soon two main contestants had emerged, **Adrian Morris** and **Cliff Daniel**, who continue to dominate the Honours list in this historic cup, with 7 and 5 wins respectively.

Taylor Cup (Association Croquet) 1994

Player	No of Wins	Years of Success
Neil Stevenson	2	1994-6
Peter Dennis	2	1995-2000
John Kelley	1	1997
Roger Tribe	2	1998-9
John Leader	4	2001-16, 2023
Bill Sidebottom	2	2002-4
Doug Taylor	1	2003
Adrian Morris	3	2007-10
Charles Wade	1	2008
Nigel Haslem	4	2011-15
Frank Hibberd	1	2012
Philip Wood	2	2017-22
Mervyn Harvey	3	2018-21



In 1994, a second cup was donated to the club by **Doug Taylor**, the Taylor Cup. The Taylor Cup was to be played on half lawns, and still is today, because in those days, the single lawn was divided into two halves to allow more games to take place.



John Leader, Bill Sidebottom, Frank Hibberd, Peter Dennis

Over the 30 years of competition, the honours have been shared remarkably evenly, a wide range of names appearing in this time. Early winners repeated the names of the St George Cup, **Neil Stevenson, Roger Tribe, Peter Dennis and Bill Sidebottom** each taking the cup home twice. By 2007, the new generation was again taking over the Honours list, with **Adrian Morris, Nigel Haslam, Mervyn Harvey and Philip Wood** winning multiple times.

But this time, they did not have a monopoly, because in 2012, **Frank Hibberd** stole the honours, no doubt in his famous striped blazer,



Nigel Haslam, winner 2014, Frank Hibberd, Philip Wood



Mervyn Harvey presents the cup to John Leader 2023

and in **2023**, the applecart was overturned, when **John Leader** turned the years back to steal a march on them all, and carry off the trophy in triumphant style, his fifth win of the trophy and a mere **23 years** since he had won it for the very first time.

What a triumph for any man!

Kenilworth Cup (Golf Croquet) 2001

Player	No of wins	Years of Success
Edgar McCarthy	1	2001
Patrick Wright	1	2002
Peter Dennis	1	2003
Ray Clipson	1	2004
Charles Wade	2	2005-11
John Leader	3	2006-9
Adrian Morris	2	2008-10
Robin Moore	1	2012
Philip Wood	2	2013-19
David Green	2	2014-16
Mervyn Harvey	1	2015
Pauline Dennis	1	2017
Philip Mander	1	2018
Ian Robertson	1	2021
Phil Blake	1	2022
Nick Hegan	1	2023



After the World Golf Croquet Championships in 1998, the Croquet Association produced the first book of Golf Croquet rules in 2001, at which point Golf Croquet was finally accepted as a version of the game and grew in popularity. The first cup to be introduced for Golf Croquet in Kenilworth, the Kenilworth Cup, was donated by **James Ward** in 2001, and was first won by a new name, **Edgar McCarthy** in that year. The longest running of the golf croquet competitions, it remains one of the most popular, attracting 18 competitors in 2023, and surviving without interruption, apart from one Covid year, for 23 years. The honours in this competition are shared fairly evenly, particularly in the later years.



Top winner here is former referee, **John Leader**, well-known to most of us, who scooped the trophy 3 times in 4 consecutive years, interrupted by comparative newcomer, **Adrian Morris** in 2008, who also won 2 years later. Other double winners included **Charles Wade** and

David Green, honouring us occasionally with his presence at GC roll-up sessions, where he can be tempted to join us on the lawns, and can still frustrate us by running hoops around us (nice pun!); and more recently, **Philip Wood**, who plays both GC and AC.



Ray Clipson, runner-up, presents the cup to David Green in 2014



Philip Wood



Pauline Dennis

Interestingly, the only female player so far to win this trophy was **Pauline Dennis** in 2017.

Photo News from Members Pauline and Mervyn Harvey in Florida, USA

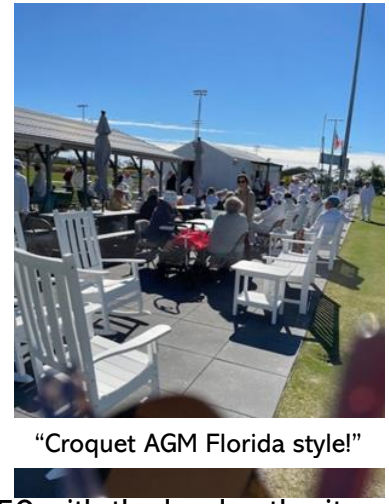
Mervyn and Pauline are spending their second winter in Florida, where they are members of Sarasota County Croquet Club. Mervyn takes up the story:



"It's cold here too!"

First, let me explode the myth that Florida winters are always warm and sunny, as it has rained on at least half the days we have been here. Floridians keep reminding us, apologetically, that this is unusual, and, indeed, we hardly saw any rain in the corresponding period last year.

Sarasota County Croquet Club (SCCC) has more members than any other club in the USA – around 300. It is virtually unique in being affordable and accessible to all, as costs are shared 50/50 with the local authority.



"Croquet AGM Florida style!"

However, in most other parts of the US, the sport is seen as elitist – which comes from the vast majority of clubs being private, and carry a five figure annual subscription and an even larger joining fee. BUT – we do still have to wear whites to be on the courts (lawns), which makes us highly visible to passing traffic. Oh how we laugh when drivers honk their horns in the hope of making us miss a shot!



Over the last six months, SCCC and the Venice authorities have spent around \$800k to extend from 5 to 7 courts, improve the shading and make other improvements. This was finished just in time to host the Solomon Trophy, an AC match played between the USA and Great Britain every year or so. Our top 6 players weren't playing, and so it was no surprise that we lost.

If you divide 300 by 7, you might think that the courts are always crowded – but that is not the case. Well over half just play GC, and some not very often. There are four GC roll-up doubles sessions each week – including "Snake in the Grass" (Google if you want to know more), and occasionally we have more than the 56 that can play at one time. I guess that around 50 of us actively play "Six-wicket" croquet, which is as

similar to AC as Bridge is to Whist. You take the game of AC, which some GC players find too complicated or physically demanding, and then introduce complexities which change the game out of all recognition. Pauline and I have really taken to it, and will continue to play it here until the grey cells can no longer cope with the complexities.

I had to read the rules so many times to know what is allowed in various situations that the club's senior referee suggested that I should get certificated – at least that's what I think he said! So I took the written and on-court tests to become a referee. The written test is "open book", but even so "no-one ever gets them all right". I got two wrong, and was allowed five.



12th February 2024 Mervyn (R) with his doubles partner Rusty Rose, wins the SCCC Doubles Championship, 2nd Flight.

The on-court test is more to identify areas of uncertainty, and when I pointed out an ambiguity in the rules, the examining Referee acknowledged it, told me what it was intended to say, and thought it very unlikely that anyone would put it right – which goes with the laid-back attitude out here. So I am now a referee.



14th February Spot the Harveys!
Valentine's Day croquet after a Snake in the Grass session!



There are three sessions where courts are reserved for Six-wicket singles play for those with handicaps of 1-5, 5-9, and 10+ respectively. (Lucky 5s get to play in both!). There are also two coaching sessions each week – one on shot-making and the other on Six-wicket strategy, and we have recently started two AC sessions – one for experienced players (for which I qualify) and one intended to be hi-low doubles. But in many ways the most enjoyable afternoon is Sundays, where we play roll-up Six-wicket doubles and then 12 – 20 of us go to dinner at one of the many restaurants who can cope with that number.

Most seasonal players (like us) choose to live within a 20 minute drive of the club, but there are also some permanent residents with houses in Sarasota, which has far more culture, but can involve a 45 minute drive. We can get to the club in about 7 minutes. Our condo is one of 50 in a 5-acre area of grass and palm trees. The COA (condo owners association) is quite active, and we have a weekly get together around the pool, and a fortnightly evening meal. We have also just had our first “safari lunch” – starters at one condo, main course at another, and dessert at a third. We were fortunate in sitting near people who were as interested in us as they were in telling us about themselves. At dessert we sat near a lady whose surname is Campbell, and I asked if she knew about the Campbell Clan. Not only did she, but she had been to Inveraray Castle and shaken hands with the Duke. We could have stayed sharing stories of ancestry well past the allotted finish time. So, an event which we went to more or less out of duty turned out to be very enjoyable.



Inveraray Castle



CAPTION TIME AGAIN!

After last year's Outside Agency at Sarasota, a snake in the grass, this year it's an ibis! And we think an occasional tennis ball is a nuisance on our lawns!

Email captions to
eythomson@live.co.uk

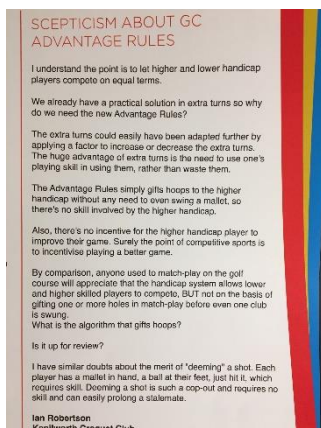
in time for the next Running Hoops.



From The Croquet Gazette Dec 2023

ADVANTAGE GOLF CROQUET Elizabeth

Once again, a member of our Club has had a letter published in the Gazette.



Ian's letter was then published in the December issue of the Gazette together with this reply from Ian Cobbold, Chair of the Golf Croquet Rules Committee.

In the last issue of Running Hoops (October 2023), we published a copy of a letter which Ian Robertson (Membership Secretary), had submitted to the Croquet Gazette, expressing his personal view of the new Advantage handicap play for Golf Croquet, which our club had trialled in the All-England Competition and in the Kenilworth Cup in 2023.

Ian Robertson
Kenilworth Croquet Club

Response:

Ian, you are not alone in disliking Advantage - see David Haddrell's letter in the April Gazette and Martin French's in the June issue; other people are delighted to get rid of the complication of extra turns.

Advantage is still new and I will be proposing to the GC Rules Committee that we should review it, now we are at the end of the season. In advance of that I don't think I can add to my letter in the April issue in response to David's.

Of course, Advantage is in the GC Rules, which are the property of the WCF rather than the CA, and it will remain up to Tournament Managers and League Organisers to decide whether they wish to play under the Advantage Rule or the Handicap Rule with extra turns.

Ian Cobbold
Chair of GC Rules

GC ADVANTAGE RULES

Just a brief note to say how much I completely agree with Ian Robertson of Kenilworth re GC advantage rules. He has said exactly what I have said many times, and so have many other players have expressed similar views. While I am in complaining mood, PLEASE will those with too little to do, STOP changing laws/rules each season. I just sort one thing out then it changes. Penalties for playing the wrong ball should stand, after all the player should keep their mind on what they are doing, not call for YET another change.

Ros Pimlott Bowdon Croquet Club

A further comment was made in agreement with Ian's views by Ros Pimlott in the February 2024 issue of the Gazette.

In conversation with Adrian Morris, I asked for his opinion as Chair of the West Midlands Croquet Federation. From a personal viewpoint, Adrian is very much in favour of Advantage GC but stressed that both variations are allowed within the rules of GC and it is up to individual clubs which they use.

Adrian confirmed that there are strong views either way among the Federations but most clubs seem to be accepting of Advantage as players get used to it. He also pointed out that Handicap Golf Croquet competitions run by Croquet England this year will be run under Advantage rules.

Editor: I'm afraid I shall be sitting on the fence as usual (!) although I did do some analysis of the match results of the All-England, Kenilworth and Pindi competitions myself, and found that the results were very similar regardless of which handicap system was used. I believe there is very little to choose between the two systems.

More from the Croquet Gazette

Speed Croquet! Elizabeth

After being told to speed up my game in AC croquet, I was amazed to read this extract from a match report in the Croquet Gazette December 2023 from the AC Handicap Finals at Chester:

“All games were time limited to a challenging 2.5 hours to ensure that failing light would not be an issue and a timely close to the first day’s play would be achieved. To that end the matter of time passing was a consistent discussion topic between opponents, and led also to some dramatic examples of speed croquet. For example, with under 10 minutes on the clock, Simon Tuke, who had at that point managed to run but one hoop, took his front ball to Penult, and in his extension turn, his second ball round to peg for a thrilling win over Clive Moncrieff (Glamorgan).”

And that’s my new target for 2024!

MOVING FROM GC TO AC

For GC players, the move to AC is straightforward. Players’ GC skills give them a head start in the new code. A special role of the coach is to make the transition as smooth as possible.

The core rules of AC are simple. James Hawkins sums them up in a few easy steps:

1. You have two balls, and can pick either one or the other for each turn.
2. Both balls have to score all the hoops. The clips show you where you’re going.
3. You can keep your turn going by earning extra shots:
4. Run your hoop and you get another go.
5. Hit another ball and you get another two goes. The first of those is played from anywhere in contact with the ball you’ve just hit.
6. Both balls finish at the peg. That’s it!

Association Croquet? Nothing to it at all!

It has been noted that the number of members who have joined the ranks of Association Croquet players turning up to play at the roll-up sessions on Thursday mornings has risen over the past year and I believe others have also expressed an interest in coming along in the new season.

The usual hesitancy among friends is the belief that AC is much more complicated than GC, so I was therefore impressed with this snippet from the December Gazette. So there you have it – nothing to it at all. And let’s face it, if the Running Hoops Editor can get her head around roquets and croquets, then any other member will do so, just as well and probably a lot faster too!

An Offer from Adrian Morris

Adrian has offered to run a session entitled "Association for Spectators" early in the new season.

If any of you GC players out there are curious about Association Croquet and would like to know a little about the game, please come along.

The session will only last an hour or so and is aimed purely at allowing you to understand what is going on when you see an AC match being played.

Look out for details later or email Adrian to show an interest: amorris164@btinternet.com

And Yet More Exciting News from the Gazette February 2024: Rachel Gee

After joining the Croquet Association a year ago (now Croquet England), I was delighted to receive a paper copy of the Gazette, free of charge and delivered to my house, for the first year of membership. It proved to be a fascinating read and greatly increased my understanding of the sport, the country's top players, and their involvement in the organisation of the Association. When I wrote a formal letter to the organisation to ask why my first free copy had not arrived, my 'Dear Sir' email was answered by a very informal assurance that it was landing any day now, was headed simply, "Elizabeth" and signed, "Best Wishes, James". Imagine my astonishment when I realised that 'James' was no less than James Death, "one of the most talented players in the world" (Croquet England). I still treasure his email and watch his videos, along with other well-known names at world level. I do recommend joining Croquet England to everyone, to understand and enjoy the amazing wider world of croquet.

However, my year of free copies ended with the Dec 2023 magazine and the February 2024 arrived as an on-line version. Trying to read a very full magazine on a very small mobile phone proved somewhat less relaxing than flicking over pages of a magazine. After scrolling rapidly through from beginning to end and picking out nothing of interest, I was forced to start again at a slower pace and this time spotted a few articles mentioned earlier in this newsletter. Then I switched to reading backwards from the end page (I'd got bored reading forwards), and stumbled on an article about coaching and coaches (and No, I'm not planning to train as a croquet coach).



What caught my eye was a familiar name, **Rachel Gee, (née Rowe)**, who has just been named **2023 Coach of the Year**

becoming the youngest ever recipient of the award. The little-known connection is that **Rachel Rowe was a member of the Kenilworth Croquet Club** while she studied at Warwick University, sadly a fact omitted in the published article.

And from the depths of Adrian's library of photographs, he managed to retrieve this photograph of John Handy presenting the trophy and glass tankards of the **Kenilworth Festival** to himself and Rachel Rowe, as she was then, in the year 2008. I feel enormously proud to know that Rachel was once a member of our club as I'm sure we all must be. **Rachel is currently the World's number one female player**, having won the English National Championship twice, the European Championship twice and the Women's World Championship. Congratulations to Rachel for being

selected for this prestigious coaching award and we wish her every success in the coming season.

Editor: When I set out in December to produce the first newsletter of this year, I wondered what on earth I was going to write about. The longer the opening of the lawns was delayed, the more anxious I became. But as ever, aid arrives from many directions, with suggestions, letters, photos, and gradually things fall into place and the newsletter comes together. I never really understand how it happens with every publication, but I thank my loyal supporters for coming to the rescue once again, and to lan for distributing the newsletter despite Mailchimp problems, and hopefully, by the time the next issue is due, the club will once more be active, and we will have lots to write about!

