



Running Hoops

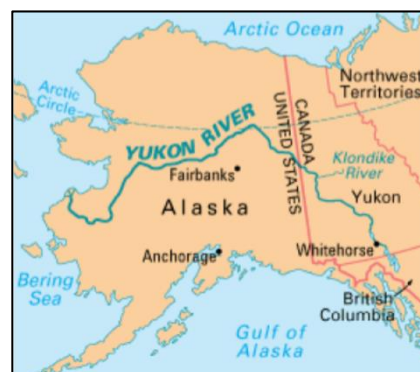
The Newsletter of Kenilworth Croquet

July 2024

Contents	
Editorial.....	1
Club News	
Doubles Fun Day.....	2
Irrigation System.....	3
Press Success.....	5
Feature	
Jon's Yukon Venture.....	6
Honours Board History	
Charlecote Cup.....	7
July Level Cup.....	8
Wells Cup.....	8
Competition Time	
GC	
Ken B v Eardisley.....	9
Charlecote Cup.....	9
All-England Tournament.....	10
Ken 6+ v Edgebaston.....	11
Ken A v Himley.....	12
Leagues.....	12
Stourbridge Friendly.....	13
Ken 6+ v Himley.....	14
AC	
Cheltenham Cliff Daniel.....	15
Ken v Church Stretton.....	16
Brian Shorney.....	18

It's hard to believe that we are now well over half-way through our croquet summer season and by the end of July there will only be two more months left to play our beloved sport. Depressing though it may sound, the thought occurred to me while I was actually feeling quite excited about how busy life had become, how many more matches still had to be played and competitions to be entered. The problem is how to fit them all in, in the 2-3 months we have left to play. The rain certainly plays a part, but while inter-club competitions are going ahead at full steam, looking at the score boards it appears that lots of competitions have been slow to get off the ground, with deadlines passing and games still not completed. It's going to leave quite a rush of bookings later on, especially as the weather improves, and if it doesn't, we may all end up having to play in the rain anyway!

We have probably all now heard of the challenge taken on by club member Jon Hodge in June, to paddle by canoe down 715km (444 miles!) of the Yukon River in Alaska, third longest river in N America, which flows from its source in British Columbia through the Yukon Territory of Canada to its mouth in the Bering Sea. Jon shares his amazing experience with us and the challenges he faced to raise money for his chosen charity, MANX Mencap, on page 6.



This edition of Running Hoops includes the final analysis of the club trophies, with the Charlecote Cup, the July Level Cup and the Wells Cup, the Club Championship trophy, all featuring. I would like to think that this series on the trophies might be expanded one day to produce a follow-on from Peter Dennis' work on the early years of the Club. The early copies of Running Hoops, which Nick has searched out and published on the Club's website are a great source of information, but if the series on the trophies has awakened any personal memories or anecdotes, interesting or humorous, to share with members, I would love to hear them.

Longer serving members of the club may remember Brian Shorney, who I believe was Chairman of the WMF before Adrian Morris took over. Knowing he was a local, he was pointed out to me as he competed in a tournament last year at Budleigh Salterton, so I was surprised to see in the current Croquet Gazette, an obituary of Brian. Apparently he died unexpectedly in February, but his obituary is worth reading for the very interesting life he led, from his youth in Wales to his final move to Hereford, a lifetime dedicated to his favourite sport of croquet. For this reason, I've printed a copy of it at the end of this Running Hoops, for those who would like to read it.



Elizabeth

DOUBLES FUN DAY Sunday 2 June 2024



With the promise of a gloriously warm and sunny day, the enthusiastic doubles competitors were early arrivals at the club, to set up lawns and prepare for their big day, the first Doubles Fun Day of the year. Sadly, one team had to withdraw at the last minute for personal reasons, leaving 7 teams to compete in this event:

- Pauline Dennis and Tony Breedon
- Elizabeth Thomson and Jeff Lindsay
- Jan and Bob Phelps
- Lynne Breedon and Alan Worrall
- Robert Zara and Nigel Pigdon
- Phil Blake and Tim Naylor
- Ian Robertson and Glen Duggins



After a briefing from Lynne, players dispersed to their respective lawns and the games followed smoothly for most of the day, with occasional hold-ups when players sharing lawns, had to wait their turn to contest the same hoop. Players had time to keep their energy up with drinks and snacks in between games and a short break for lunch in the middle of the day. Lynne's organisation meant that players would spend time on both lawns during the day, enjoying the warmth of the sun on Lawn 2, but revelling in the coolness of the shade provided by the tall trees surrounding Lawn 1.



Games were played to 6 hoops only, and scoring was done by totalling hoops scored in all games throughout the day. As the charts filled up, it became clear that the results were going to be incredibly close. The highest scores of the day were 32 and the lowest 26, out of a possible maximum of 36 and every pair won at least 2 of their 6 games.

The winning team was not decided until the result came in from the very last game of the afternoon, and it turned out to be a draw between Jan and Bob, last year's winners, and Elizabeth and Jeff, both with 32 points. However as the latter team had beaten the former in their individual match, it was Elizabeth and Jeff who were declared the winners and presented with the coveted bottles of red wine! In third place, only 1 point behind the leaders, were Ian and Glen.



Congratulations to all members who played so well today, in a spirit of friendship and generosity. It was a tired but very happy group who posed for photographs at the end of the day. Huge thanks again to Lynne for her organisation of another very successful Fun Day. The next Doubles Fun Day will be on Sunday, 18th August.

NEW IRRIGATION SYSTEM

From this:



to this:



In three days in June, the longed-for new irrigation system was installed on our lawns with incredible speed and with no alteration to the playing surface of the courts. Thanks to the work of **Phil Blake**,

Warwick District Council: £6666
Kenilworth Town Council: £250
KTSCC: £3500

The work in progress:



a small tractor is used to dig the narrow trenches round the perimeter of both lawns.



Piping is laid in the trenches and covered over.

The sprinklers are installed, one on each side of both lawns.



The electricity to control the sprinklers is led from the pavilion to a point close to the practice lawn and covered with this green disc.





Water tanks have been installed behind the pavilion and are fed from the mains water supply but also collect rainwater from the pavilion roof.



A test of the sprinklers caused great excitement among the younger tennis players, several of whom escaped from the courts hoping to play in the fountains but were hastily recalled by their coaches!



With thanks to Phil Blake and Nick Hegan for the demonstration, information and photographs.

PRESS SUCCESS

Adrian has been busy again with his contributions to the Leamington Courier which are also published on the Warwickshire World website. This is an excellent way to bring croquet to the fore as a growing national sport and provides valuable publicity for our own Club. Thanks also to the reporters who write the reports for inclusion in Running Hoops, which Adrian then translates into 'press speak' and submits for publication. Please note that a photograph to accompany the article is essential for the piece to be accepted for publication in the press.

Home win for Kenilworth in West Midlands League

By ADRIAN MORRIS Contributor

Having been narrowly beaten by Broadwas in their first Association Croquet match, Kenilworth returned to winning ways against Church Stretton.

This match was played with three players from each team so the morning doubles was played by Cliff Daniel and Nigel Pigdon for Kenilworth. An early break by Stretton put Kenilworth on the back foot. They fought back but eventually lost 15 - 18. Mervyn Harvey comfortably won the singles for Kenilworth as his less experienced opponent made too many careless decisions. The photograph shows Harvey pegging out to win 26 - 13.

In the afternoon singles, Harvey was ahead in the final stages of his game but his opponent managed a long range hit in to complete the game 26 - 23 to Stretton. Pigdon, in his first season, continues to improve and took his game 26 - 13. Captain Daniel took on Stretton's captain in the final game. As time was called, the Stretton player had a chance to level the game but failed to score the hoop. This allowed Daniel to score a further two hoops to claim the win 26 - 17.

This gave victory to Kenilworth by three games to two. Kenilworth will travel to Shrewsbury for their next match on 23 July.

If you want to find out more about Croquet, see www.ktscc.co.uk/croquet



Mervyn Harvey pegging out Red then Yellow to win his game

3rd July
AC Church Stretton

Another win for Kenilworth in West Midlands League



Kenilworth team enjoying a tea break

By Contributor Contributor

Kenilworth maintained their form to beat Himley in the West Midlands Golf Croquet League - 13 games to 5.

The current hot dry conditions provided a good test of Kenilworth's recently installed watering system. What a boon it has proven to be. The lawns were in excellent condition. Himley's number one, Paul Garrett won all his games but Himley were only able to win one more singles game. Kenilworth's team strength was too good and took the singles 11 games to 5 and also won both doubles. This was Kenilworth's



Kenilworth's new sprinklers

second win to maintain their 100% record in defence of last year's league win. Phil Blake, Mervyn Harvey and Philip Wood all won 3 games with Phil Mander taking 2.

The photographs show the Kenilworth team of 1 to 4 Phil Mander, Captain Philip Wood, Mervyn Harvey and Phil Blake enjoying a tea break in front of the pavilion.

If you want to find out more about Croquet, see www.ktscc.co.uk/croquet

28th June
GC A Himley

Kenilworth Croquet take the Robertshaw Cup



Kenilworth team 1-r Nigel Pigdon, Philip Wood, capt and Mervyn Harvey

By ADRIAN MORRIS Contributor

Kenilworth Croquet were the surprise winners of the Robertshaw Cup, a competition between the top four teams in last year's West Midlands Golf Croquet League.

Three of the four teams had an aggregate handicap of 8 but Broadwas, with home advantage, playing on their idiosyncratic, undulating lawns, had a total handicap only 1 and hence were hot favourites.

Kenilworth had an inauspicious start, losing to Himley 2 - 4, while Broadwas beat Eardisley 6 - 0.

The second round proved to be the turning point when Kenilworth beat Broadwas 4 - 2.

Kenilworth beat Eardisley 4 - 2 in the third round and Broadwas just managed a 3 - 3 draw with Himley but claimed the victory on Hoop count.

With two wins each for Kenilworth and Broadwas, Kenilworth claimed the Robertshaw cup based on "Who beat Whom".

Kenilworth captain, Philip Wood was pleased with the result as two of his 2023 league winning team were unavailable for this match. This demonstrated the strength in depth of Croquet in Kenilworth.

If you want to find out more about Croquet, see www.ktscc.co.uk/croquet

14th June
Robertshaw Cup

Bob Phelps retains the Golf Croquet Charlecote Cup



Bob Phelps lines up to run his Red with Elizabeth Thomson looking on.

By ADRIAN MORRIS Contributor

The Charlecote cup is a Golf Croquet competition competed for over the winter months where competitors are not allowed to use jump shots.

This year's semi and final had been delayed but the final took place this week.

Bob Phelps, who had beaten the Club Chair, Lynne Bredon in his semi, took on Elizabeth Thomson, who had beaten Nigel Pigdon in their semi.

In the first game Thomson went ahead, 4-2, before Phelps drew level at 5-5. At 6-6 the game went Golden Hoop and Phelps took the game 7-6.

In the second game, Thomson again took an early 4-1 lead. Phelps then took the next five hoops on the trot to go in front 6-4. Thomson then pulled one back to make it 6-5.

At the 12th hoop Phelps put his red ball in the hoop and with jump shots not allowed, Thomson was obliged to concede the hoop and therefore, the game and match.

Phelps won the final and retained the Charlecote Cup 7-6, 7-5.

Kenilworth B take first win in West Midlands League



Pauline Harvey "jumping" her ball over her opponent's red to score the hoop.

By ADRIAN MORRIS Contributor

Kenilworth Croquet's B team took on Herefordshire team, Eardisley in the West Midlands GC League. Both teams were closely matched but Kenilworth pipped it 10 games to 8.

On experience, Eardisley were favourites as this was Kenilworth's first year in this league. The Eardisley captain, Tony Johnston was on top form to win all his matches. However, the rest of his team fared less well, but with some very close games. Ten of the games ended 7-6 or 7-5, close games indeed.

Player of the match was Kenilworth's number 4, Pauline Harvey. In her first game, with the score 6-6 in front of the hoop, she cleared the ball from 20 yards away and went on the win 7-6.

In another game, Pauline managed a superb jump shot over her opponent's ball to score a hoop. As a result of her three wins, her handicap was reduced from 5 to 4.

Ian Robertson also took three singles wins for Kenilworth, Nick Hegan two and Nigel Pigdon 1. Robertson and Hegan also took a doubles win.

Kenilworth B team's next match is v Himley in July. If you want to find out more about Croquet, see www.ktscc.co.uk/croquet

31st May
GC Eardisley

16th July
Charlecote Cup

WE DID IT! CANOEING 715KM OF THE YUKON RIVER FOR MANX MENCAP Jon Hodge

There are moments in my life when I've been proud and honoured to have had the opportunity and gone on to achieve something. This is one of those moments. I'm delighted to say that I am proud of myself and so proud of our amazing Expedition Limitless 2024 team to have successfully paddled the 715km of the Yukon river from Whitehorse to Dawson City, where the Klondike River joins the Yukon River.



During the 12 days of paddling and wild camping - carrying all our food, equipment and clothing with us in our canoes - we had no break from the elements, with near freezing conditions, temperatures up to 28C, wind, rain, thunder and lightning and very cold water to contend with. It's hard to explain how vast the Yukon is. We saw many bald eagles, osprey, beavers, moose, but sadly no bear. We had some hairy moments crossing Lake Laberge, even with sitting it out for 3 or 4 hours until we could hit a break in the weather.

Even then we had to raft canoes, paddle whilst constantly bailing out for 75 minutes, and contend with head winds on the first day of the crossing and growing breaking waves on the second day, caused by tail winds. The weather also dictated our paddling days too. Our longest day started on the water at 4am (thanks to it not getting dark due to the high latitude) and ended that evening after paddling 89km (over 55 miles). We had highs and lows, but the team spirit remained high and we all helped each other - which is exactly what great teams do.



The BBC news article link is here <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ce4qn5zdOdxo> with a short video of the expedition, and a few of my favourite pictures highlights the contrasts in the weather.



It's been an amazing achievement for a fantastic charity. If you'd like to donate, no matter how small or how much, then every penny goes to Manx Mencap; and for those of you that have already supported me in my fund raising then a really big heart felt 'thank you'. Thank you too, to my sponsors Snow Problem Limited and Hodge Properties (UK) Limited.

Best wishes,
Jon Hodge

[Jons Expedition Limitless fundraiser for Manx Mencap](#)

HISTORY OF THE HONOURS BOARD

Charlecote Cup

Player	No of Wins	Year(s)
Nick Hegan	1	2010
Pauline Harvey	3	2014-22
Peter Kristunas	1	2017
Phil Mander	1	2018
Cliff Daniel	1	2019
Bob Phelps	1	2023



Ray Clipson

The Charlecote Cup (or Winter Cup) was donated by **Ray Clipson** in 2010. While our lawns were closed over the winter season in 2010, we were invited to play croquet at Charlecote Park.



Nick Hegan

It was won by **Nick Hegan** in that year, and after a break of 3 years, was then played on the Kenilworth courts.



Pauline Harvey

After the break, it was **Pauline Harvey** who lifted the trophy in the year 2014 and again in 2016, after yet another year's break from play.

The cup changed hands for the next 3 years, going to **Peter Kristunas**, **Philip Mander** and **Cliff Daniel**. A 2-year break followed due to Covid, before **Pauline Harvey** returned to claim the cup in 2022 for a third time.



Peter Kristunas, Cliff Daniel, Philip Mander



Bob Phelps

But in the year 2023, it was a new name that appeared on the Honours Board, with **Bob Phelps** winning his first trophy since joining the club.

July Level Cup

Player	No of Wins	Year(s)
Ray Clipson	2	2015-16
Peter Kristunas	2	2017-18
Elizabeth Thomson	1	2023

This GC cup was introduced in 2015, when it was won for the first two years by **Ray Clipson** and for the next two years by **Peter Kristunas**. After a break due to Covid, it somehow got overlooked until 2023, when Peter rediscovered it and handed it back to Lynne Breedon (Chair), who was entirely unaware of its existence.



Ray Clipson, Peter Kristunas, Elizabeth Thomson

And so the competition was reestablished in 2023, for higher handicapped players, and **Elizabeth Thomson** emerged as the unexpected winner of the revived trophy.

Wells Cup

Player	No of Wins	Year(s)
Adrian Morris	3	1917-20
Mervyn Harvey	2	2019-23
Phil Blake	1	2022

The Wells Cup is a fairly recent competition, introduced in the year 2017, to be the GC Club Championship trophy, for which the top GC players would participate annually.



The first and most frequent winner was **Adrian Morris**, with 3 wins during the first 4 years of the competition, eventually interrupted by **Mervyn Harvey** in 2019, who later won the cup a second time in 2023, defeating his old adversary, **Adrian**, in the final. Both of these men are talented players of both the croquet codes, AC and GC.

The only other winner of this cup so far is **Phil Blake**, in 2022, currently the lowest handicapped GC player in the club, a member of the successful 2023 GC Inter-Counties Midlands team, Second Division, and winner of several national tournaments.



WMF KENILWORTH GC B-TEAM v EARDISLEY 31 May 2024 Pauline Harvey

Result: Kenilworth 10 – 8 Eardisley

Kenilworth Team: Nick Hegan, Ian Robertson, Nigel Pigdon and Pauline Harvey.

Our "B" team in the WMF League played their second match on Friday 31st May, in somewhat dull, cool weather, with an unexpected shower or two. However, our enthusiasm wasn't dampened, and we made a good start, challenging our opponents from Eardisley in Herefordshire, not far from the Welsh border, to some close games. On paper, with handicaps totalling 14 to our 16, we were in for a close match, but with Eardisley the favourites to win.

The first round included two close losses, a convincing win, and a very pleasing win by our number 4 player (Pauline) over one of their 2-handicap players. He was in command on the Golden Hoop, with a ball about a yard away from the hoop, straight in front, when a lucky/skilful (?!) clear from almost 20 yards, made him nervous about his following shots, and eventually giving Kenilworth a successful shot at the hoop. This meant that we were 2-all after the first round.

The next round was also even, but it was in the third round that Kenilworth pulled ahead, winning it 3-1. That 2-point lead was retained through the 4th round of singles, and the final round of doubles, both even-stevens, giving a final score of 10-8 to Kenilworth.

Both sides worked steadily and diligently to take command of their games, and it is interesting to note that 10 of the 18 games were scored 7-5 or 7-6; very close battles, with a lot of defensive play taking place, before being able to take the prize of shooting for the hoop. However, there was also great generosity, as in one of my games my opponent scored two of my hoops by knocking my ball through, and then I returned the favour with one of hers. Nigel also had an unfortunate outcome when he hit, what became the final ball of the match, at high speed, trying to clear a ball immediately in front of the hoop, but instead peeling it through like an arrow!

Despite the unseasonably cool weather, there was a lot of warmth and good conversation between the teams, making it a very enjoyable and sociable day. We were very glad to have a well-appointed pavilion to shelter in between games, and to make hot drinks. We now look forward to our next match at Himley, near Dudley, on July 24th.

CHARLECOTE CUP FINAL 12 July 2024 Bob Phelps

**Semi-Finals Elizabeth Thomson 2-1 Nigel Pigdon
Bob Phelps 2-0 Lynne Breedon**

Final Bob Phelps 2-0 Elizabeth Thomson

This year's final was contested between Bob Phelps, the current holder of the trophy, and Elizabeth Thomson.

In the first game Elizabeth went into a 4-2 lead, then 5-3, before Bob pulled level at 5-5. They both then scored a hoop each to take the game to a Golden Hoop which Bob managed to win.



Elizabeth quickly went into a 4-1 lead in the second game before Bob reeled off 5 hoops on the trot to go in front 6-4. Elizabeth then pulled one back to make it 6-5. At the 12th hoop Bob's red ball was sitting in the hoop, and with jump shots not allowed, Elizabeth sportingly conceded the hoop and therefore the game and match. Therefore Bob won the match 7-6, 7-5 and retained the cup he won last year.



This was the local Kenilworth preliminary round of the All England GC Handicap tournament.

Taking part were Jeff Lindsay, Robert Zara, Tony Watmore and Ian Robertson under Advantage rules.



I'd heard it said that croquet is a summer sport. Well, think again!



The weather was as competitive as the play on the lawns. We experienced light rain, then the very heavy rain, then the thunder, then the lightning and as a final flourish we had the lawn covered in hail. All in the course of three hours. You can see the hail in the photos!

It was so bad that the tough and hardy tennis players took shelter in our pavilion but sadly I couldn't get any to sign up for croquet membership though.



The overall winner was the weather but the GC winner was most definitely Tony Watmore.

Tony played a blinder and won all three matches each with a good hoop margin.

Robert came second with two wins, Jeff third with one win and Ian was tail-end Charlie with zero wins.

Tony will now go forward to the regional final at Ashby lawns.

There were several close games (see the table below).

There were moments of joy, moments of skill, moments of despair (I'll let you guess who was in the most despair).

Several jump shots were attempted.....few successes.

<u>GC</u>	<u>HANDICAP</u>	<u>PLAYER</u>	<u>TO PLAY</u>	<u>WIN or</u> <u>LOSS</u>	<u>SCORE</u>	<u>SCORE</u>	<u>HOOP</u> <u>DIFF</u>	<u>Advantage</u> <u>handicaps</u>
3	IAN	ROBERT	L	5	7	-2	-2 v 2	
		JEFF	L	6	7	-1	-1 v 2	
		TONY	L	0	7	-7	-2 v 2	
						-10		
9	ROBERT	IAN	W	7	5	2	2 v -2	
		TONY	L	3	7	-4	0 v 0	
		JEFF	W	7	6	1	0 v -1	
						-1		
7	JEFF	TONY	L	4	7	-3	-1 v 0	
		IAN	W	7	6	1	2 v -1	
		ROBERT	L	6	7	-1	-1 v 0	
						-3		
9	TONY	JEFF	W	7	4	3	0 v -1	
		ROBERT	W	7	3	4	0 v 0	
		IAN	W	7	0	7	2 v -2	
						14		

WMF KENILWORTH GC 6+ LEAGUE v EDGEBASTON at HOME

Tuesday 18th June 2024 Tony Watmore

Result: Kenilworth 10 - 8 Edgbaston

Kenilworth came out as eventual winners in a closely fought match in the club's debut in this new **WMF GC 6+ handicap league** - winning the final match to secure victory.

Kenilworth's team consisted of Tony Watmore, Jeff Lyndsey and morning players Robert Zara and Val Moss. Due to holidays, sickness and unavailability Robert and Val were replaced by Anne Langley and Colin Abrahams in the afternoon. It was very gracious of Edgbaston captain Julie to allow this to ensure the match went ahead.

The weather was fair and the lawns looked in great condition. The format was 4 singles matches against each opponent and 2 doubles matches at the end. Despite Kenilworth's combined handicaps being 35 against Edgbaston's 25 the home club leapt into an early lead, of 7-5 after 3 rounds no doubt helped by familiarity with the lawns.

However as Edgbaston became familiar with the lawns the fightback was on - so much so that with one pairs' match still playing, the score was 9-8 to the hosts. A win for Kenilworth would secure the match - a win for Edgbaston would see a drawn result.

In this match Jeff and Colin were playing Merryn and Chris - and Merryn had been Edgbaston's star player - and they raced into a 2-0 lead. However Jeff and Colin persisted and recovered so the match went to the Golden Hoop. Merryn rather surprisingly missed two relatively straight forward hoops and Colin secured the match win and Kenilworth overall victory.

Star of the show was Jeff Lyndsey who won 4 of his 5 matches. Special mention to Colin who having cycled in the heat to attend the match was - by his own admission - slow off the blocks losing his singles match and tossed in at the deep end against Edgbaston's better pairing of Merryn and Chris. Despite going 2-0 down he and Jeff fought back valiantly to win the match and game. Not bad for a nonagenarian!

However this was a team effort and thanks must go to all the players- especially Val, Anne and Colin who stood in at short notice.

Onwards and upwards as we play Himley at their place in July. This will be intriguing as Edgbaston's comments on Himley's lawns ranged from "interesting" to "agricultural". In addition we have a return match against Edgbaston - who will be seeking revenge in either late September or early October.

Result: Kenilworth 13 – 5 Himley

Team Members: Philip Wood, Phil Blake, Mervyn Harvey, Phil Mander



Ready for battle!

We had good weather, sunny in the afternoon, and the lawns were in good condition thanks to the new watering system. (This normally comes on around 10 p.m. but Phil Blake was able to give an impressive demonstration after the match.)

Our handicaps, at -1, 1, 2, 2 were lower than theirs at 2, 2, 5, 5 but they had a steady start, winning two of their four opening singles games.

Kenilworth then pulled ahead, winning three out of the four singles games in each of rounds two and three. This put us 8 - 4 ahead with the last singles game for each to play, plus the final two doubles games. Their No 1 player won his fourth singles game, but we won the others and both of the doubles games.

In their singles games Phil Blake, Mervyn Harvey and Philip Wood each won 3 games, and Phil Mander won 2.



And relaxing after a successful day.

LEAGUES For more information on the leagues, contact Mike Cheeseman by email.

See Members' List of Contacts

League to end on	RED BLOCK
Sun 25 Aug	Breedon, Lynne
BLUE BLOCK	Dennis, Pauline
Harvey, Pauline	Moss, Val
Mander, Phil	Watmore, Tony
Pinder, Richard	Worrall, Alan
Robertson, Ian	YELLOW BLOCK
Wood, Philip	Abrahams, Colin
	Cheeseman, Mike
	Henderson, Gordon
	Lindsay, Jeff
	Zara, Robert

The third league of the year has now started and will end on the 25th August, allowing 6 weeks for games to be played.

The leagues continue to be popular with 15 members entering this time, divided into 3 blocks of 5 players.

With only 4 matches to arrange, and 6 weeks in which to do so, there should be plenty of time for most members to complete their challenges before the deadline.

Kenilworth	Lynne Breedon Alan Worrall	Stourbridge	Maggie and Margaret
	Nick Hegan Jaspal Jheeta		Paula and Carole
	Tony and Allison Watmore		Phil and Marie
	Elizabeth Thomson Robert Zara		John and Shirley

A straightforward 45min journey took the team to Stourbridge for a long-awaited return friendly match. The croquet courts are in a fenced off section of the magnificent Mary Stevens public park in the Norton area of the town and well worth a visit for any family, with 33 acres of play areas, open spaces



and woodland, bandstand, café, stunning flower beds and a sizeable lake with wildlife. Tennis courts, croquet courts and bowling greens all have their own space. The gates were designed and made by the same company which created the gates of Buckingham Palace on which they were modelled.

We were greeted warmly and supplied with coffee and home-made baking before venturing on to the immaculate lawns in their own fenced-off area, against a beautiful background of trees and rockeries. Slightly smaller than our own in size, the lawns were cut extremely short, and the balls ran very much faster than our own, which took us a little while to get used to, as our shots flew over the lawns well beyond the intended targets.



The tournament ran very smoothly, with the two lawns double-banked, so there was no sitting out. A row of spectators sat on a raised bank and applauded the many good shots, which was probably a new experience for most of us! After the first two matches, with Kenilworth leading by 6 games to 2, there was a long lunch break, with the two sides mixing, sharing experiences and chatting, much about Wimbledon!

The afternoon continued with the final two matches, keenly contested but interspersed with friendly comments and laughter at some of the stranger shots, like John's back-to-the-hoop jump shot or Elizabeth's double-in-off! They had some very strong players, but overall we were probably a slightly more experienced side. The final score of 13-3 was qualified by 3 of the 16 games going to Golden Hoops and a further 4 reaching 7-5,



with Stourbridge scoring 75% of the hoops!



But the score really wasn't the main issue of the day: the Stourbridge members were genuinely delighted at being able to return the hospitality they had received at Kenilworth many years previously. We were treated to an astonishing array of home baking, cakes and tray bakes and more coffee before we left for home. It was a very happy and sociable occasion, enjoyed by everyone, and the club are keen to arrange a return match at Kenilworth towards the end of the season.

WMF KENILWORTH GC 6+ TEAM v HIMLEY 19th July 2024 Tony Watmore

Kenilworth: Lynne Breedon, Robert Zara, Jeff Lindsey, Tony Watmore

Result: Kenilworth 6 – 12 Himley



The team set off for Himley Croquet Club hoping to build upon the success of our victory over Edgbaston with another win. Alas it was not to be and Kenilworth were well beaten by Himley - 12 games to 6.

It would be nice to put forward some excuses:

- it was the hottest day of the year, (30 degrees) but it was the same for both sides
- we were seduced by the surroundings with Himley Hall as a backdrop to one end of the lawns and a lake with Canadian geese in attendance at the other end.
- the lawns

But quite simply we were beaten by a better side on the day. Although it should be noted that 5 of the 16 individual games went to a golden hoop decider.

Himley made us most welcome and had laid on biscuits, cakes, hot tea and coffee but much more needed was the cold water in the cooler box. We were even treated to ice creams in the afternoon by Himley's captain - Dawn Piggot - probably out of sympathy for the way the results were going.

Special mention must be made to Himley's Terry Wood who won all his individual games, (albeit 2 by the golden hoop) and his pairs match - not bad for a gentleman of 92 years of age in that heat!

As to the lawns I don't think we could use them as an excuse. They had a few bumps and ridges in them but I didn't feel they were any worse than our lawns were, 2 years ago before we started our renovation programme at Kenilworth. I felt that the hoops seemed to be a little more forgiving than our hoops - the side bars seemed a little thinner than ours and angled shots seemed to have a greater success of going through - but that may have been an illusion on my part and certainly no sour grapes as it was the same for both sides.



For the record the six games we won were as follows:

Tony Watmore 3 Lynne Breedon 1 Robert Zara 1 Robert Zara/Jeff Lyndsey 1

I believe that leaves all 3 teams in the League with 1 win each (Edgbaston beating Himley at Himley 15 -3) with Edgbaston having a narrow lead - gaining a losing bonus point against us.

So all to play for with Himley visiting Kenilworth in August and Kenilworth visiting Edgbaston in September.

A FABULOUS WEEK-END TOURNAMENT.....DESPITE LOSING ALL OF MY GAMES!!

8 June 2024 Cliff Daniel



On 8 June I set off early to drive to **Cheltenham** to play in the Bernard Neale Challenge that always attracts a strong entry of players and this year there were 17 players with handicaps ranging from -2.5 to +6. My handicap is 4.5, and the chasm between my handicap and -2, the handicap of my first opponent Sarah Hayes, is so great that I would need to win approximately 145 consecutive matches in order to reach her

handicap! The tournament was played Level Advanced so there were no bisques available to help me! I was allowed a couple of opportunities only and managed to run a mere 2 hoops before losing this game 2-26 inside 90 minutes. However Sarah offered me a little encouragement regarding my play, which helped me to approach my next game not too disheartened.

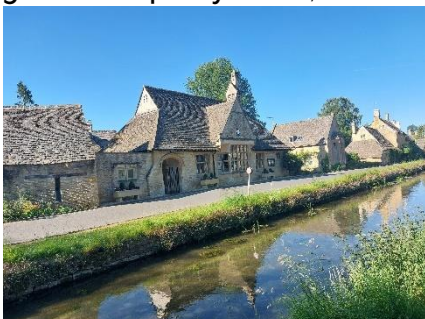
My second game was against Jim Blenkinsop whose handicap was 2.5, and happened to be the lawn manager at this club so was aware of most of the variations in the surface of the lawns. Our match was played without a time limit a feature that I much prefer as it stops opponents with a slender lead playing negatively hoping to win narrowly when time runs out. So our game stretched from late morning to tea-time, allowing us to have a break for lunch, a home-made 2 course affair with coffee that traditionally is excellent. Our game was well contested for about 3 hours and either of us could have won it but Jim finally put together a fine break of 6 hoops to win 26-13.

My third game of the day was against Martin Murray, a formidable opponent with a handicap of -0.5. Both of us managed to get one ball round to 4-back but struggled to get the second ball beyond hoop 3, and so we agreed to 'peg down' our game, planning to resume the following morning. Interestingly the next day when we returned to the lawn we found that somebody had removed all of the markers for the balls so we had to estimate the location of the 4 balls!! The game followed the pattern of my second game of the weekend...with both of us having real chances of victory but it was Martin who eventually put together a crucial break, winning 26-13 after over 4 hours play!

And so my 4th game started late morning against Tim Saxton, a player from Bristol who had a handicap of -1. Both of us were surprised at the impressive way I started the game, running some angled hoops as well as making a couple of medium length roquets as I scored an '8-hoop' break. When we stopped for lunch I was leading 9-0 and feeling very confident indeed. After lunch we both made reasonable progress but Tim eventually found some good form to have one ball for 'peg' and the other for 'penult', whilst my balls were for hoop 5 and for rover.

However following a good medium length roquet with my front ball I successfully ran 'rover' and 'pegged out' Tim's front ball to set up a '3-ball ending'. Once back on the lawn I managed to take my 'back' ball through hoops 5, 6 and one-back, and having all three balls well placed was on course to win the game! Sadly my would-be pioneer to 3-back hit the peg and I then missed a short roquet allowing Tim to win the game 26-20.

However losing games does have its compensations! My bar bill was ZERO....and on both days I was treated to the tea & home-made cake! The weekend had been brilliant...playing 'single-banked' untimed games on quality lawns, often bathed in sunshine, was truly pleasurable. Also losing whilst playing 'level'



to such outstanding players cost me very few points on my handicap card. Furthermore I was able to spectate part of the final, a long tussle between Ed Duckworth and David Goacher, eventually won by David.

The lovely village of Lower Slaughter nearby.



Kenilworth

Cliff Daniel (4)
 Mervyn Harvey (8)
 Nigel Pigdon (11)

Church Stretton

Brian Christmas (4)
 George James (6)
 Stuart Ray (14)

Summary

Cliff & Nigel lost 15-18 on time to
 Brian & George
 Mervyn won 26-13 v Stuart
 Cliff won 20-17 on time v Brian
 Mervyn lost 23-26 v George
 Nigel won 26-13 v Stuart



It had been agreed that this league match would be played with three players per team rather than the usual four. So the morning session comprised one singles game and one doubles game.



The doubles paired Cliff with Nigel against Brian Christmas & George James from Church Stretton. The home pair received 2.5 bisques but these could only be used by Nigel since Cliff's handicap was below 6 and it was decided to wait a while to use them. Both Cliff and Nigel were guilty of squandering opportunities to build a lengthy break by missing VERY SHORT ROQUETS as well as RELATIVELY STRAIGHTFORWARD HOOPS. George, however, seemed to adjust quickly to the pace of the lawn, and, full of confidence, put together an excellent break early in the game that proved decisive. Brian himself found some good form towards the end of the 3¼ hour game giving the visitors victory 18-15 when time was called.

In the singles game Mervyn played against Stuart Ray who, having a handicap of 14 received 8 bisques as opposed to Mervyn's 2 bisques. Stuart started well running 6 hoops using 5 of his bisques. Mervyn sensibly realised that he should bide his time and eventually made up the deficit and overtook his opponent. Stuart then made some poor decisions regarding the use of his remaining bisques and Mervyn, although a little disappointed with his own play, triumphed 26-13 with over an hour left on the timer.

So the match was poised at 1-1 when the three singles matches started after lunch.





Nigel's game against Stuart was the first to finish. As always Nigel seemed very relaxed and was clearly enjoying his game. However one of his attempted roquets is worth a special mention. Nigel had hit his own ball quite hard and after travelling about 3 metres and seeming set to hit the target ball it, quite inexplicably, cleared [Ed: jumped over!] this ball and then continued to the boundary. This clearly confounded and amused those watching, which included the 'lawn manager' Philip Wood!! Both players had a number of bisques at their

disposal but it was Nigel who made the best use of them, comfortably triumphing 26-13.



Mervyn was paired to play George and, over the years, they have enjoyed some very close games. This game proved to be extremely close too, despite George setting up a substantial lead early on. Mervyn kept pegging away and was genuinely surprised to realise that the hoop score was level at 12-12 despite George having his forward ball on 'penult'. George managed to pull away again but he then started to make some mistakes and Mervyn again caught up at 19-19. Both players then had opportunities to win but then, with Mervyn poised to clinch the game when leading 23-22, George made a 15 yard roquet from which he completed victory 26-23. It had been a fabulous game that had clearly entertained the small group of

spectators.

So the match score was 2-2 with Cliff and Brian, the two captains, contesting the fifth game. Cliff had managed to set up what seemed to be a commanding lead of 18-10 with only 30 minutes of time left to play. However Brian, aided by a couple of missed hoops by Cliff, took a few risks and gradually clawed back to trail 15-18.. When he started his final turn his forward ball was able to run 'four-back' from which he engineered a good 'rush' to 'penult' which he confidently ran. He then managed to use the two opponent's balls to give himself a chance to run 'rover' which would have given him a huge advantage forcing the need for a 'golden hoop'. Sadly for him he missed this hoop, and Cliff, much relieved, proceeded to run 2 hoops himself to restore his own self-confidence and the final score was 20-17, giving the home team victory overall 3-2.



Editor: Once again, thanks to the many co-editors for your never-ending run of reports, photographs, articles, suggestions and comments. I sometimes struggle to keep up with the volume which is brilliant, and am grateful for your continuing support and enthusiasm. Apologies if your reports have just missed this issue: with grandchildren arriving on Wednesday for the start of the holidays, I needed to send this to Ian before chaos descends, but assure you that your reports will still be included in the next copy! Thanks to Ian again for distributing RH while he recovers at home from his recent operation, and wish him a speedy return to the croquet courts. Elizabeth

BRIAN SHORNEY CBE



Brian Shorney died suddenly and unexpectedly on the 7th of February. Brian had a distinguished career in the public service with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) and with the diplomatic service.

He was on the CA Council from 2010 to 2019. For the first 6 years he was the South West Federation Representative on Council. He was Chairman of Council from 2016 to 2018 and Chairman of the Handicap Committee from 2011 to 2014.

He was born into a farming family near Abergavenny and studied agriculture at the University of Aberystwyth. He joined the MAFF farm advisory service where the policy was to send new entrants as far as possible from home. Brian therefore began his career in March (Cambridgeshire) and then Norfolk.

He married his childhood sweetheart, Christine, in 1961 and they had three children. In the 1970s the advisory service added Farm Business Management advice and Brian was promoted to the new unit at Aberystwyth. I was in the same unit and we both lived with our families in the village of Llanrhystud. To understand how Brian and I acquired our addiction to croquet, we need a brief diversion into the little known history of Trawsgoed Croquet Club.

The regional (this was well before the idea of devolution) HQ of the advisory service in Wales was Trawsgoed Hall – a large country house some 8 miles to the east of Aberystwyth. It had been “acquired” by the government in 1947 to house specialists in agricultural science and husbandry and it was attached to an experimental husbandry farm. There was a large and hilly lawn divided by paths and a fountain into four. We found some croquet equipment and more hoops and mallets were made by the machinery advisers.

We could happily have settled into social croquet with our own rules but someone had the brilliant idea of contacting the Croquet Association, based in distant Hurlingham. This happily coincided with the CA’s development policy of increasing the number of clubs and Liz Neal was sent from Wimbledon to West Wales to help us. She arranged for us to attend a coaching course at Bisham Abbey led by Bernard Neal. This was also remarkable because Bernard was a busy academic, chairman of the CA council and a top player and yet willing to give up two days to coach beginners.

Liz also sent the Prichard family en masse from Gobion Manor to play an encouraging friendly. We remained keen. We played friendlies with West Midlands clubs and, in 1973, we dared to enter the Longman Cup. We got to the semi-final, losing to Stourbridge. After those heights, Brian and I moved away; the club lost its ambition and faded away. I believe that the only remaining relic of the club is some very large hoop clips which can still be seen at Surbiton CC.

Brian’s next move was a plum posting to be the agricultural attaché at the British High Commission in Canberra where he did two tours. He took his mallet but croquet in Canberra was in the hands of some formidable ladies and he found it difficult to fit in. He found consolation in his alternative passion of rugby refereeing until his return to Blighty and croquet. He was appointed regional head of MAFF in the South West where he became a member of Kington Langley Croquet Club, and later a member of both Budleigh Salterton and Cheltenham. He took early retirement and was awarded his CBE. He then went on to found Drew Associates, an agricultural policy consultancy with a special interest in helping EU candidate countries in eastern Europe.

Brian and Christine later moved to Hereford where he became a member at Eardisley and also held various positions in the West Midlands Croquet Federation. It was typical of Brian’s generosity and commitment that he was still willing to serve and assist croquet clubs right up until the end of his life. Brian was buried in the churchyard of Llanwenarth where he and Christine had once been members of the choir. He leaves Christine, his children Mark, Jane, and Clare, and six grandchildren.

George Noble
