

Running Hoops

The Newsletter of Kenilworth Croquet

March 2024

Contents

Editorial.....	1
Behind the Scenes	
Philip Wood.....	2
Club News	
Opening the Lawns.....	3
New Member Alix.....	4
Moss Clearing.....	5
Footpath Improvement....	6
Hacking Problem.....	6
Caption Time.....	7
Facebook Croquet Hub.....	7
Membership Changes.....	8
Honours Board History	
Secunderabad Cup.....	9
Douglas Trophy.....	10
Pindi Cup.....	11
Rawalpindi Club.....	12
From the Past.....	13

When I breathed a sigh of relief and forwarded the February Running Hoops to Ian to circulate to members, I was confident that the next Running Hoops would be packed with news, with the club alive and vibrant. But the rain continued to fall, and the lawns continued to be water-logged, and the members continued to watch the skies for signs of relief. But at last the email from Lynne arrived, signalling the opening of the club from Monday, 11th March, and we all breathed again!

But what we tend to forget is how much work still needs to be done before any croquet can be played. And that work falls initially on one person, Philip Wood. I volunteered to help Philip in between showers, and learned just how much work is involved in measuring out the lawns, painting white lines, measuring out rows and lines of hoops with great precision, for both whole lawns and half lawns, and setting the hoops finally in place.



There are other 'behind the scenes' workers too, who are not members of the Committee but still do a lot of work. Last year, we met the Committee members and now it's time to recognise other hard workers in our club. So this issue starts with Philip, who gives us some insight to his own introduction to croquet and the varied work he does for the club, and continues with the celebrations on the first day of play on Thursday the 14th March. On p4, meet new member Alix, as she takes us by surprise on her first day of wielding a mallet!



While we all enjoy playing croquet and socialising, the work on maintaining all our facilities continues and volunteers were soon mustered for the first work party. Nick impressed us all with his agility and energy, being the only volunteer to climb on to the roof of our buildings to clear the moss growing there for the past 10 years.

Don't miss the fun on p7, with some brilliant captions inspired by the Harveys' photograph of an ibis taking to the lawns in Sarasota. And following that, information on Alison Maugham's new Facebook page, Croquet Hub, showing her own sense of humour. The page makes quite interesting reading, with people bringing up a wide range of topics for discussion, the latest being an on-going debate on handicapping systems in Golf Croquet, a subject much discussed in our own club last year.



The analysis of the Honours Board continues on p9 with an interesting snippet of history related to the Pindi Cup, p12. And for those of us who think we've had a dreadful start to the croquet season, take a look at p13, From the Past, to find out what Running Hoops editors were writing 14 years ago!



Elizabeth

I grew up with 2 brothers and a sister, all older than I am and close in age. There was a park behind our house and we played a lot of cricket and football, etc, there. My father was a notable figure in the



world of chess – he founded a chess magazine in 1935 which is still going strong. So we all played chess together, also various board games and card games.

At university I played chess, football and cricket for my College (Emmanuel, Cambridge) and in my first summer term found croquet going on in the college grounds. So I tried that as well and even played for a College team. In the next summer a student appeared in the College who knew how to play proper croquet (AC) on that pretty awful, small

lawn. I even played for my College in the inter-college (Cuppers) matches.

I played cricket for Kenilworth for a long time, and also social tennis and squash, plus badminton and a bit of golf etc, but a bad back stopped the cricket, then the tennis. I knew Peter Dennis through tennis and had noticed the development of the croquet lawns into which Peter put a huge amount of work. So when I was suitably decrepit I took up croquet again, about 20 years ago.

I have actually represented Kenilworth at cricket, tennis, chess and croquet.

Many years ago Peter Dennis persuaded me to take over from him in looking after the garden borders alongside the lawns, and I have also planted shrubs along the East bank. A few years ago I also took over laying out the lawns, painting the white lines and setting the hoops.



Peter also asked me to take over the running of the GC team, and Adrian Morris asked me to take over organising the Kenilworth Festival. I do have plenty of time for all this in my retirement.

In AC I am a 6 handicap, and in GC I reached handicap 0 but poorer eyesight (and old age?) brought it back to 2. However, I wonder now whether, after eye operations which have made a huge improvement, I can get back to 0.



(PS: my back is not too bad even now.)
QED

Editor: After watching Philip at work, I realise what an enormous task the lawn marking is for one man (or woman!) to do, both in terms of effort and in particular, time. I'm sure Philip would be delighted to have some offers of help at the start of each croquet year in particular. The work for the assistant is not difficult: mainly holding ends of

string and measuring tape, first of all to mark out the boundaries then later to mark the position of the rows of hoops, then moving these along the edges of the lawns to line up each row. It takes three long afternoons with help, to mark out one lawn alone, and position and set the hoops for half and full lawn. Two people working together makes quite a difference to cutting down the time involved.

Thanks to Philip for managing to get our lawns set up in time for the long-awaited reopening on Thursday, the 14th March. Despite the poor weather forecast, both the morning and afternoon's play went ahead, with only a few short-lived showers, and the day was enjoyed by all those who defied the weather experts and turned out to play.



First off, at 10:00am, were the AC group, with new member, Edith Cheung, who gamely attempted to learn the new terminology, in a language with which she is not completely familiar. As most of us know, Edith is a very accurate GC player and was fascinated when shown the range of new shots available to her, and successfully pegged out under the watchful eye of Adrian. Edith is now on an extended visit abroad, but keen to rejoin the group in May.



After lunch it was the turn of the GC group, much reduced in number due to the forecast, but very happy to be meeting up again with each other and being back on the lawns to play.



Lawn 2 had been marked out in preparation for the day, in two half-lawns, to allow a greater number of members to play during the afternoon. It was wonderful to see the hive of activity again.



OUR FIRST NEW MEMBER OF THE YEAR ENJOYS HER FIRST GAME ON THE LAWNS

You may not immediately recognise our newest member from this photograph, but you will almost certainly recognise her in her next photograph, taken from the internet. Alix is better known as Kenilworth's new Mayor, but will soon become better known to members as Alix, the croquet player.



With one of the worst weather forecasts of the new season, the Thursday afternoon social session on the 28th of March initially attracted only two hardy players, Judith and Elizabeth, who had agreed to meet at the lawns and if play was deemed to be impossible, then coffee in the main pavilion would be a perfectly adequate substitute. However, the afternoon didn't pan out quite as expected, because a third car pulled into the car park on that bleak afternoon and we met Alix for the first time.

All well wrapped up, we headed gleefully for the lawns and set out the hoops. Alix was keen to make a start and with a well-chosen mallet, and a few practice strokes, astonished us by her natural instinct for the game. It turned out that Alix is a keen snooker player, which explained a lot, since croquet is often described as 'snooker on grass'.

So the three of us settled into our game and shortly afterwards were joined unexpectedly by Nick to make up a doubles and we played on, enjoying a sunny if chilly afternoon before the clouds began to gather. We were rewarded with a brief rainbow, which you can just make out in the centre of the first photograph, emerging from behind the hedge and soaring over the tennis courts.

At the first few drops of rain we retreated to the pavilion for coffee and biscuits and chatted for a while until the deafening noise of hailstones on the roof startled us and we watched in astonishment, the huge hailstones bouncing heavily off the grass and table outside. We even went outside to video the scene and very soon a white covering had concealed the grass and forestalled any further play, and when the barrage lessened, we gave up, cleared the lawn and headed for home.



It was lovely to meet Alix and I'm sure she will enjoy many more games with us all in the social sessions. Welcome to the Club, Alix!



On Saturday 29th March, the first work party of the year had the task of clearing the dense covering of moss from the roof of both the pavilion and the equipment hut. An able team of four turned out to help, led by Nick.

As the only one brave enough or able enough to climb up on to the roof by the precarious method of resting the ladder on the companion bench, the lion's share of the work fell to Nick himself.



As the first idea of using a pressure hose to remove the moss failed to work, Nick was left with the heavy work of scraping off the moss with a shovel and then sweeping it off on to a large plastic sheet below.

The other helpers dragged this to the compost heap and struggled to lift the heavy weight up to the top of the full composter.



In between moving the sheets of moss, the workers made some progress in clearing some of the rubbish which has collected over the years behind the equipment hut and in tidying up the interior of the pavilion, clearing and cleaning surfaces and emptying bins.

During this last task we came across this delightful little croquet set! I would love to know the origin – did someone leave it in the pavilion by mistake or was it donated to the club or bought by the club? I'd love to think of some event where it might be put to good use, perhaps entertaining younger children on an Open Day? Or bored adults when the rain refuses to go off?



And finally, some photos taken by Nick from the rooftop, showing the work in progress and views of the club as you've never seen it before!



Lynne and Nick inspected the sloping footpath to the lawns after long bouts of rain had left it deep in mud, very slippery and extremely dangerous. Immediate attention was needed to avoid an accident and Nick agreed to take on the task. He and long-suffering Liz spread 2 heavy bags of bark down the length of the sloping path and round the corner of the tennis court to Lawn 1. This has made a big difference to the safety of players, giving grip on the slope and a less muddy approach to the lawns. Sincere thanks to Liz and Nick for taking on this task.



From this....

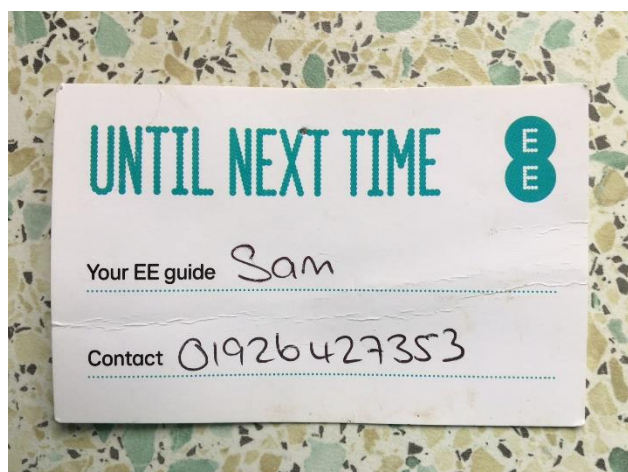


.....to this!

A NOTE FROM ELIZABETH

As Ian has informed everyone, my email was compromised last week and I do apologize to anyone who was taken in by the initial innocent-looking query, and wasted time answering. I hope no one suffered any damage to their own email systems as a result.

Since then, many people have asked who sorted out my problem and I have passed on the name of the brilliant Sam, a very warm and extremely talented girl working for EE in the EE Hub on the Parade in Leamington, close to Tesco Express.



Sam gave me her card for future use, hopefully never to be needed. I've spoken to her since and she just smiled and assured me she has no objection to me passing on her name, or to publishing her contact details in our newsletter, with a copy of her card. She did ask me to mention that the service is only open to customers of EE and BT.

Sam's email address is:
samantha.ayres@ee.co.uk

This photograph was sent to us by Pauline and Mervyn Harvey from their croquet club in Sarasota, Florida, and was published in February's Running Hoops. Readers came up with some brilliant captions for such a comical photograph.

Adrian took the novel step of doctoring the photograph itself with a very topical caption!



Others suggested:

"I wanted to play golf croquet, but they told me there are no birdies in this game."

"Hmmm... Must be Easter – they've painted the eggs again!"

"They said it was All Whites, so I dressed for the occasion."

"Must have been a colourful ostrich! Or a very large parrot?"

NEW CROQUET HUB and ALISON MAUGHAM

If you watch live or videoed croquet matches on-line, you will probably have heard Alison Maugham's voice commenting on a game. Alison holds the post of Communications Support Officer in Croquet England and is also Editor of the Croquet Gazette and the Croquet England newsletter which drops regularly into my email Inbox. Recently she has been encouraging croquet fans of any level to sign up to Croquet Hub, a newly set up Facebook group. Out of curiosity, I signed up, and almost immediately got drawn in to reading the comments of the 83 early members of the new group. They sounded, like me, very ordinary mortals, mostly fairly new to the game and looking for an opportunity just to chat to other croquet fans. Within minutes I found myself 'liking' posts and very soon replying to a comment by another fairly new AC player. When one member told how quickly he had become hooked on croquet, even preferring it now to his golf, he was rewarded by a reply from Alison herself, showing she has a fine sense of humour,



"Just wait until you start shifting the salt and pepper shakers around the dining table whilst trying to explain tactics to someone who really would rather not hear. 🤪🤪"

And my family think I've flipped, moving the children's Frustration pieces round an A4 paper croquet lawn, playing out my dream 4-ball break in AC. If only the dream could metamorphose into reality.

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

After writing the page about new member, Alix, I heard we have another two new members this year, so a warm welcome also to Sheila Skinner and Alison Smith!

We met Sheila when she ventured along to the first Thursday GC social session in April. Sheila has been a member of the KTSCC for some time, as a tennis player, and has now decided to switch to croquet. Sheila played a number of games on that first afternoon, and, as Alix also did, impressed us with her skills and accuracy on her first attempts at play. There was no doubt that the co-ordination and ball skills practised for years on the tennis courts, will give Sheila a head's start when transferring these skills to a new game.

We look forward to playing again with Sheila and Alix many times in the future and also to welcoming Alison, when we meet up at the Club.

IRENE ROGERS

While enjoying meeting our new members, sadly this week we have heard from Irene Rogers that she will be leaving the Kenilworth Club shortly when she moves to live in Wales, and will continue to play at Cheltenham Croquet Club, which will be closer to her new home.



Irene on Ladies' Day, 2014, above,
on Ladies' Day 2015, right,
on Ladies' Day 2023 below...

Irene has been a very active member of Kenilworth Croquet Club for a long time. Browsing through previous editions of Running Hoops on the Club website, I found photographs of Irene from the year 2014, so she has been a member for around 10 years.



...and runner-up in the Douglas AC Trophy, 2023.

Irene plays both codes of the game, AC and GC and is proficient in both. She is known to be very generous with her time and experience when coaching beginners in Golf Croquet, and on any occasions when neither Mervyn nor Adrian could attend the Thursday morning AC sessions, Irene willingly took over the organisation of the session and the coaching of beginners in that version of the game also.



Irene's departure will be a big loss to our club, and we will miss her down-to-earth outlook on life, but I'm sure we will be united in wishing her happiness in her new home and every success in her continued croquet life at Cheltenham.

CONTINUING THE HISTORY OF THE HONOURS BOARD

Secunderabad Cup (AC, 2002)

Player	No of Wins	Year(s) Of Success
John Lovett	1	2002
Brian Kerr	1	2003
John Handy	2	2004-5
Peter Moody	1	2006
John Leader	1	2007
Cliff Daniel	5	2008-14, 2021
Adrian Morris	4	2009-19
Peter Dennis	1	2010
Alan Richardson	1	2015
Philip Wood	1	2016
Mervyn Harvey	2	2017, 2023
Phil Mander	1	2022



The fourth cup to be introduced to the Club, in 2002, the Secunderabad Cup, along with the Pindi Cup, was brought back from India by **John Handy**, whose mother had won them there for tennis. He donated them for AC and GC respectively, and won the Secunderabad himself in 2004 and 2005. In the early years of the cup, a number of players achieved their first cup win, with new names like **John Lovett**, **Brian Kerr**, **Peter Moody** and **Alan Richardson** appearing for the first time. Interestingly, two of these gentlemen, Peter and Alan, were still seen putting in an occasional appearance on the lawns in 2023!

John Handy



Adrian Morris, Cliff Daniel



Philip Wood, Peter Moody 2014

In later years, the same newcomers' names appear again - **Cliff**, **Adrian**, **Philip** and **Mervyn** – with Cliff taking the upper hand this time with 5 wins. But one new name appears for the first time – **Philip Mander**, winning his first AC trophy in 2022.



Philip Mander

Player	No of Wins	Year(s) of Success
Peter Mills	1	2002
Ray Clipson	1	2003
Gina Munden	1	2004
John Copping	1	2005
Amanda Haslem	2	2006-7
Alan Richardson	1	2008
Tim Leggatt	1	2009
John Clark	1	2010
Frank Hibberd	1	2012
Mervyn Harvey	1	2013
Mike Cox	1	2015
Nigel Pigdon	1	2023



The fifth trophy, the Douglas Trophy, presented by **Doug Taylor** in 2002, was used as the trophy for a high handicappers' competition. As this cup was intended for relative beginners, names would normally only appear once, after which you would presumably be re-labeled as competent and expected to compete against the giants of AC in the other competitions! However it is fascinating to see the names of some of these same giants appearing here, and to realise that behind the glory they now share in taking trophies home each year, there was once a beginner who competed in this very cup, and thereafter graduated to the elite level of play in AC.

Early winners included many well-known names:



Ray Clipson



Tim Leggatt



Alan Richardson



Frank Hibberd



Mervyn Harvey

along with Peter Mills, Gina Munden, John Copping, Amanda Haslem, John Clark and Mike Cox, of whom I have struggled to find photographs.

For a while after 2015, new recruits to AC remained low, and so, with no one eligible to enter as a beginner, the competition remained unplayed until the year 2023. With a sudden upsurge in interest in Association Croquet over the previous two years, and a very successful year at the roll-up sessions on Thursday mornings, it was decided to reintroduce the Douglas Cup. A surprise awaited the club however, with the arrival of new member **Nigel Pigdon**, only a few weeks before the event was about to take place, and the upshot was that this new member suddenly found himself being presented with a cup within a month of joining the club!



Nigel Pigdon, Adrian Morris 2023

Player	No of wins	Year(s) of Success
John Handy	1	2004
John Leader	2	2005-6
Adrian Morris	2	2007-8
Peter Dennis	1	2009
Nigel Haslam	2	2010-11
Amanda Haslam	3	2012-15
Philip Wood	3	2013-19
Lynne Breedon	2	2017-21
Nick Hegan	2	2018-22
Peter Kristunas	1	2022
Ian Robertson	1	2023



The other very popular GC competition and sixth trophy of the club, is the Pindi Cup, appropriately won in its first year, 2004, by John Handy, whose mother had won the cup in Rawalpindi, India, for Ladies' Doubles Tennis in 1933, and after it was brought back from India, John donated it as a trophy to the Croquet Club for Golf Croquet.



As with the Kenilworth Cup, the honours in the Pindi Cup are shared very evenly, with 2 members each winning 3 times – Amanda Haslam and Philip Wood, and others managing 2 wins apiece: (L to R) John Leader, Adrian Morris, Nigel Haslam, Lynne Breedon and Nick Hegan.



For three others, Peter Dennis, Peter Kristunas and Ian Robertson, it was their first win in this competition, and their second success in Golf Croquet.



Peter Dennis, Peter Kristunas and Ian Robertson

DID YOU KNOW...

The Pindi Cup, above, bears the inscription on the reverse side of the cup, just about visible in the photograph above of the cup:

RAWALPINDI CLUB TOURNAMENT MIXED DOUBLES 1933

At Ian's suggestion (the current holder of this cup), I did some research into the club named on the cup, in Rawalpindi, a large city in the far north of Pakistan. Unfortunately there is little information on tennis at the time, 1933, but **Rawalpindi Sports Club**, also known as the **Army Sports Club** was likely a hub of athletic and social activity.

The **Pindi Club Ground** was a multi-use stadium, used mostly for cricket matches. The stadium could accommodate 15,000 people and hosted its first and only international Test match in 1965. It also hosted one match as part of the 1987 Cricket World Cup. It was the only cricket ground in Rawalpindi capable of hosting international matches before the establishment of Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium in 1992.



The Rawalpindi Sports Club c1890s

During the early 1930s, sports played an essential role in regimental life and community bonding in the area. Notable sporting achievements and events mentioned in Army Championships from that era include Point to Point Meetings, Hockey, Tug-of-War 1930, Boxing 1930, with champions named as members of military regiments stationed in the area: 1st Battalion, 6th Battalion, Territorial Army. These glimpses into the sporting achievements of the time highlight the camaraderie, dedication, and competitive spirit of military personnel and sports enthusiasts in Rawalpindi during the 1930s.

There are many tennis clubs today in Rawalpindi but so far none specifically linked to the relevant period, but it would be very interesting to know if John Handy's mother was a member of the military fraternity, stationed in the area at the time.

If you think the weather has been unkind to us this year, have a look at the problems they faced in previous years!

Running Hoops March 2010

NEARLY ANOTHER SEASON — if it stops snowing



When is the good weather going to arrive? We seem to get a day of Spring and then go back to overnight frost and cold wins during the day. All of which is stopping the grass growing and delaying the start of our croquet season. It didn't stop the rabbits as you can see from the photo. They still came out and tried to eat our grass!




We have put on fertiliser and mosskiller and we will be scarifying in the next week or so, but it looks very unlikely that we will be able to open the lawns at Easter as we hoped. We are keeping fingers crossed for a week or two later, but perhaps if you're itching to get started, why not come on Sunday 21st March and play at Charlecote (see details below). Ray Clipson

Running Hoops August 2009

IT'S BEEN WET, WET, WET.....




With the July rainfall in the Midlands officially at 195% of the average for the month, it has been a challenging month on the lawns. Several times the lawns have been flooded. The ground was so soft jump shots had to be banned. The hoops had fairly bad 'rabbit runs' (even without the help of the rabbits, which have also been a problem) & the few fine days have been very busy with people trying to catch up with their games. Thanks to everyone for their patience & help. Water has been only an inch or so from the surface as several members have found out when putting in hoops, muddy water tends to come out!! On a brighter note we now have a clock bought with a kind donation from Eileen & Derek Buxton of Ashby. Some roses have bloomed, most club competitions are on schedule, we have played matches against other clubs (some of which we have won) and we now have two international players in the club. Rachel Rowe has been to Egypt (see report over) & Adrian Morris has been selected for Wales vs Switzerland. Congratulations to both of them. And Geof Eames is looking forward to being asked to play for Azerbaijan!!

However, the news from August 2009 wasn't all bad as it turned out later on in the same article, when I spotted two familiar names: Rachel and Adrian. What a coup that must have been for a relatively small club, and in the same year!

and we now have two international players in the club. Rachel Rowe has been to Egypt (see report over) & Adrian Morris has been selected for Wales vs Switzerland. Congratulations to both of them. And Geof Eames is looking forward to being asked to play for Azerbaijan!!

Thanks to John Copping for the building of a shelter on the south boundary of Lawn 2 (with a little help from David Green & Bill Sidebottom to hold the sides !!)



Running Hoops May 2010

And finally, the answer to much discussion recently on who built the shelter on Lawn 2! It seemed no one could even remember if they were involved! Thanks to John Copping and to all others who contributed to the construction.

Editor: Thanks again to all volunteers for contributions to this March issue of Running Hoops. Your suggestions, articles, photographs and captions all help to make up another interesting read of the club newsletter. With the later start to the playing season, there is a shortage of any sports news, in fact, there's no sports news at all! Happily the main competitions and leagues will soon open, and the Charlecote Winter Cup is already in progress, although there is little sign of competitive activity yet, as members wait until the weather is more settled and the lawns have had time to dry out. Wishing everyone a very successful and sociable year in croquet 2024. Elizabeth
