



Running Hoops

The Newsletter of Kenilworth Croquet

Editorial.

December 2019

Take a walk down memory lane with the reports of some of the fascinating games and events of this year. As winter takes its cold – and currently very wet – hold on our croquet playing aspirations, relive balmy days of the games which – as the photo of Mervyn and Adrian shows – were played in warmer and much drier times. (Although there is a suspiciously wet-looking cloud looming over them!) Also relish the thought that, in the future with the advent of electricity, cups of hot tea, coffee, even nourishing soup will become easily available in the pavilion thanks to the benevolence of an anonymous donor and the trench-digging expertise and hard graft of Nick Hegan and others.

I may be seeming a little weather focused but, take a look at this photo, it's not an entrant for the best, wet, croquet suit competition 2019 but, instead, poor Joe Manifold of the Church Stretton Croquet Club, manfully continuing to play during a deluge during an AC tournament game (against yours truly) in May in Edgbaston. He continued to play until puddles braked the balls and the game had to be abandoned that saved me the effort of catching him up and beating him!!!



The white, vertical dashes are the rain – shows much better on a larger photo.

Philip Wood and I represented our club at that event; a 2 days' event that required navigating through Birmingham during the morning and evening rush hours before and after facing the challenges some intense AC play. I was sent some photos of the winners but they were in an email and I couldn't extract them. Philip acquitted himself well as usual but didn't win. I turned up – all I can say is; never let fear of failure hold you back!

Irene Rogers.

As a contrast, Anne Langley found two paintings that are images of Garden Croquet in much earlier times. I've included one; the other may appear in a later RH. Thank you Anne.



Now for some reports. Thank you to those who sent them. Particular thanks to Cliff who not only manages to play but also remembers his observations of the play enough to produce his detailed and interesting reports.

I shall now make my Oliver Twist reference: As there are many dedicated club members who host WI, hospitality and U3A events, run regular club sessions, leagues, inter-club friendly matches and intermittent coaching sessions, may I have some more please?

The Charlecote Cup 2019.

The early season Cup started with 11 entrants – which is a good number for any of our competitions. It's intended for those of handicaps 4 and above although the Cup is played on level handicaps so there are no extra turns. Cup competitions are usually played in whites but it turned out that warm, winter clothing of any colour was more appropriate. Jump shots were not allowed as the lawns hadn't begun to recover from last year's hot, dry weather and the potential for damage to them had to be minimised.

80% of the block games had been played – which, again, is a good, high proportion for any of our block competitions. The semi-finals ended up being played by the winner of one block and the second placed player of the other and vice versa. That pitched Peter Kristunas v Ian Robertson, and Philip Blake v Cliff Daniel. After good, close games, Peter and Cliff emerged as finalists. So far so good but, unfortunately, various circumstances meant that they couldn't play the final until June and that's well outside the usual rule of an April final. A dilemma; what to do? Cancel the Cup; postpone the final; toss a coin, or arrange an arm-wrestling match instead?

The solution was to look back at the block games that showed that Peter and Cliff had already played each other with Cliff being the winner on that occasion, so the Charlecote Cup was awarded to him. Congratulations to Cliff on his first foray into the competition.

Ian Robertson.

Early in the season; mixed Fortunes for Kenilworth in the West Midlands League.

The first two home league matches resulted in a victory over Himley but a narrow defeat by Eardisley.

In the Eardisley AC match, Kenilworth were trailing 2 games to 1 at the lunch break but fought back in the afternoon to win that session 2 - 1. Phil Mander won both his games with Cliff winning the other. League rules do not allow a draw so on a count back of net hoops, Eardisley narrowly took the victory with 95 hoops to Kenilworth's 90.

The Golf Croquet match with Himley was more straightforward but with a number of tight games. Kenilworth took an unassailable lead after the singles by 10 - 6. Philip Wood and Mervyn Harvey took 3 wins each, with 2 wins for Pauline Harvey and Adrian Morris. Kenilworth then took both doubles matches for a 12 - 6 victory.

Adrian Morris.

28 June 2019.

West Midlands AC League: Kenilworth v Church Stretton.

A win for Church Stretton 4 - 3

Individual Results:

In the doubles: Cliff Daniel (4.5) and Phil Mander (10) lost 7-20 to Will Priestley (10) and Joe Manifold (18)

In the singles: Philip Wood (6) lost 11 - 17 to John Wilkins (12)
Mervyn Harvey (9) won 20 - 13 v Brian Christmas (3.5)

Cliff Daniel (4.5) won 26 - 25 v Brian Christmas (3.5)
Philip Wood (6) lost 17-26 to Will Priestley (10)
Mervyn Harvey (9) lost 13-19 to John Wilkins (12)
Philip Mander (10) won 14-9 v Joe Manifold (18)

Report:

The format for a 4 man team match in the league comprises 7 games; 3 in the morning, with one doubles and 2 singles, followed by 4 singles games in the afternoon.

Cliff and Phil M played the doubles game for Kenilworth and faced an uphill task for their opponents received 7 bisques and used them sparingly to set up a sizeable lead. The home pair squandered the few opportunities offered and lost 7-20.

On the other lawn Philip W was also conceding bisques and his opponent used them wisely, running hoops and minimising time on the lawn for Philip by generally leaving him with very long roquets! Although Philip rallied well towards the end of the game he lost 11-17.

Mervyn however was receiving bisques which he used shrewdly and aided by some good fortune - by his own admission - with his attempts at lengthy roquets he was always in command and won convincingly 20-13.

So at lunch the visitors led 2-1 and needed to win just 2 of the afternoon singles games.

Philip W was again conceding bisques to a very capable opponent and again was let down by missing too many roquets and lost 17-26.

Phil M knew his game would be tough, conceding 8 bisques to his opponent, Joe, who had played so well during the morning doubles game. However, once the bisques had been used up, Phil was able to put pressure on Joe and won 14-9, thereby maintaining his 100% record in singles matches in this league.

Mervyn's game was close throughout and, frustratingly, his opponent retained his very last bisque until the latter stages of the game. Mervyn battled gamely but eventually lost 13-19.

Cliff's game with the opposing captain, Brian Christmas, proved to be extremely dramatic indeed! After approximately 1hr 15mins of the allotted 3 hours and Brian leading 22-6, with the innings and with no bisques left, the game looked like being the first to finish. However Cliff managed a few small breaks that made the score rather more respectable until he managed to secure a sizeable break taking his 'back' ball to peg which allowed him to 'peg out' his opponent's 'front' ball and an unlikely victory suddenly appeared possible! With Cliff poised to win, Brian ran 'rover' and then had a difficult shot to hit the peg and so win the game himself. However he missed this attempt and Cliff, full of self-confidence, kept his nerve to complete the win with less than 1 minute left on the clock!

Cliff Daniel



This photo, very conveniently, is applicable to both of Cliff's reports.

L. to R: Phil Mander, Phil Wood, Cliff Daniel and Mervyn Harvey

4 July 2019

In a Golf Croquet friendly, Kenilworth won against Stony Stratford for the first time by a margin of 8.5 to 7.5.

8 July 2019

West Midlands AC League: Shrewsbury v Kenilworth at Shrewsbury.

A win for Kenilworth 5-2

Individual Results:

Morning: Sean Sheridan (-0.5) lost 11-26 to Mervyn Harvey (9)
Barbara Edwards (7) lost 14-26 to Phil Mander (10)
Alan Ridley (4.5) won 15-10 v Cliff Daniel (4.5)

Isobel Ellersley (18) (result not stated) v Philip Wood (6)

Afternoon: Sean Sheridan (-0.5) lost 11-26 to Cliff Daniel (4.5)

Alan Ridley (4.5) won 18-17 v Philip Wood (6)

Barbara Edwards (7) lost 19-20 to Mervyn Harvey (9)

Isobel Ellersley (18) lost 12-20 to Phil Mander (10)

Report:

The morning matches comprised 2 singles and 1 doubles games

Mervyn played his singles game against Sean, the top player from Shrewsbury. As Mervyn received such a large number of bisesques - 9.5 in fact - Sean opened very cautiously indeed. This allowed Mervyn to delay taking any bisesques at all by simply running hoops in short bursts using the tactic of '2 balling'. Eventually Sean needed to take risks but by then it was too late and Mervyn completed a resounding victory 26-11 in fairly rapid time whilst still having 3.5 bisesques available!

Phil Mander was also receiving bisesques and was so much in control that he was, unsurprisingly, unable to resist the challenge - 3 times! - of attempting to peel his partner ball when the possibility arose. Even though he forfeited the break each time he won comfortably 26-14.

In the doubles game Philip W and Cliff needed to be patient as they were conceding 6 bisesques. The score was relatively close when their opponents had only one bisque left and over an hour of play was left. However they squandered the excellent opportunities offered to them and the home pair controlled the endgame with Alan, the stronger player, taking all the turns! In fact Alan managed a 5 hoop break towards the end, resulting in a 15-10 win for the home pair.

So the afternoon singles games commenced with Kenilworth leading 2-1.

Cliff faced Sean and used all of his 5 bisesques to set up a good lead with his forward ball on 'rover' and the other ball on 'penult' whilst Sean had yet to run a hoop. This lead began to look insufficient as Sean calmly took his first ball through 11 hoops in a single break! However he faltered with the second ball when he missed a short roquet thereby allowing Cliff back into the game. With careful play Cliff managed to seal victory 26-11.

Philip W, still struggling with his roquets, soon fell behind in his game and looked to have little chance of catching up. However, thanks to one particularly long break, he managed to draw level and so set up a tense finish. Sadly for Philip, his opponent, Alan, rallied well and held on to win 18-17 on time.

Mervyn only had 2 bisesques for his afternoon game but with shrewd play he set up a commanding lead. But his dogged opponent, Barbara, clawed herself back into the game and the closing stages proved to be very tense indeed with both players making uncharacteristic errors. However Mervyn held on to win 20-19 on time, thereby guaranteeing Kenilworth their first win of the season! In fact the final margin was 5-2 for Phil Mander completed yet another singles win. His game v Isobel was played in a very relaxed mode. Phil risked his eccentric opening - to good effect - and he cheerfully waited for his opponent to squander her 8 bisesques and he then won comfortably.

Cliff Daniel

22 July 2019

West Midlands Golf Croquet League: Kenilworth v Eardisley at Eardisley.

Kenilworth travelled to Eardisley in Herefordshire for their 2nd Golf Croquet match in the West Midlands league. The Eardisley lawn was playing very fast and it took Kenilworth a time to adjust and they lost the first 2 games but by lunchtime they had recovered to lead 4 to 2.

The afternoon's games also went well, 4 to 2 in Kenilworth's favour, to give an overall victory of 8 games to 4. Philip Blake played very accurately in his debut joining regulars Philip Wood, Mervyn Harvey and Pauline Harvey. Mervyn was "man of the match" with 5 wins out of 6.

Adrian Morris.

Also in July:

Harvey takes Club Championships.



Mervyn receiving the trophy from defending champion Adrian Morris

6 players competed for this year' GC Championships at the Crackley Lane lawns. Each player played a "round robin" of 2 shortened games of best of 9 hoops. This produced some very tight games and quite a few surprise results.

In the final game of the tournament, Mervyn Harvey executed an angled jump shot to avoid a play-off and take the championships outright with 7 wins out of 10. Philip Wood was second with 6/10, and Nick Hegan and Peter Kristunas tied for third with 5/10 each.

Adrian Morris.

22 August 2019.

West Midlands Federation GC Match: Broadwas v Kenilworth at Broadwas.

Broadwas had players with handicaps of 1, 1, 1 and 2. (They also happen to have 2 other players around the 1 mark.) Our handicaps were 0, 2, 3 and 4. We also faced the prospect of playing on their sloping lawns that are all different with variable direction and steepness of slope. A challenge but fun, rather like putting in golf on an uneven slope.

We were represented by the 3 Philips; Blake, Mander and Wood, and Mervyn Harvey.

In the first round of singles, we went down 3 – 1 with Philip Blake playing a very long game to finish very dramatically with an in-off shot at the last hoop. The next round went 2 – 2 but, in the afternoon, the third round of singles was won by Broadwas 4 – 0. We then needed to win the fourth round of singles 4 – 0 but only managed 2 – 2. Finally, the 2 doubles matches went 1 – 1 with the final result being, Broadwas 12 – 6 Kenilworth.

Once again, our hosts were very welcoming and looked after us very well.

Philip Wood.

Last but definitely not least:

Who keeps a club going? All volunteers - a committee of Chairman, treasurer, membership secretary and others to do the nitty-gritty, mainly administrative stuff of keeping it going; events/matches organisers to provide the facilities and the challenges for members and visitors; members to play,

pay their subscriptions, participate in events, and occasionally sweep out the pavilion and keep work surfaces clean – all essential stuff.

A small club needs volunteers. I have played croquet on some very bumpy, sloping and generally weird lawns; I have also played croquet on billiard-table smooth lawns but, whatever the quality of the flat, generally green surface, it takes maintenance. We have to thank Philip Wood (volunteer) and Idris Elms (professional) and unnamed others for their hard work. The last 2 years have certainly challenged both of them with the weather seemingly able to range from desertification-dry to monsoon-inundation wet. We also have to thank the other volunteers who do their bit when the call comes. Here is a photo taken of some of the volunteers hard at work on the practise lawn during the last lawns working party.



Alan Worrall, Robert Zara, Philip Wood, (Nick Hegan?) and Lynne Breedon hard at work volunteering.

Anyway, that's all folks. I apologise in advance if I've got any details wrong – it'll probably be a transcription when tired error! Keep volunteering – and send me some articles!

Irene Rogers