



# Running Hoops

The Newsletter of Kenilworth Croquet

Sept 2023

<b>Contents</b>	
Editorial.....	1
<b>Club News</b>	
Doubles Fun Day.....	2
<b>Committee</b>	
Gordon Henderson.....	3
Frank Hibberd.....	3
<b>Features</b>	
Press Success.....	4
Visit to St Agnes.....	6
<b>Competitions</b>	
<b>Wider Community</b>	
GC Inter Counties.....	7
AC Kw v Broadwas.....	8
Double Success.....	10
GC Kw v Northampton...	11
<b>Club Level</b>	
<b>GC</b>	
Ladies' Day.....	12
<b>AC</b>	
Castle Cup.....	13
Referees.....	14

August has been yet another very busy month for the club with competitions continuing into new rounds, a Doubles Fun Day, Ladies' Day, a friendly match with Northampton, a very special AC League home match with Broadwas and the third League of the season. All these events are reported in this newsletter.



A highlight for the month was the GC Inter Counties Competition on the weekend of 19th-20th August, in which our own Phil Blake was competing. Read Phil's account on page 7.



Share the club's excitement about winning the AC WMF League for the first time in 16 years, and find out who needed to lie down during a match.



In Meet the Committee, Gordon Henderson gives us an insight to his own early introduction to croquet and the other sporting love of his life. With a glimpse of the past, he shares a page with founder member of the club, Frank Hibberd.



The Club has had a remarkable run of success this season, with a series of weekly match reports achieving a high profile in the Sports Section of The Courier, one of them appearing twice, in consecutive weeks, by mistake! These are celebrated in Features, Page 4. A highlight for the editor and Ian Robertson, was to find themselves sharing a double-page spread in the Sports Section of a newspaper, with fellow Scot, Andy Murray! Hats off to principal press reporter, Adrian Morris.



Since joining the Croquet Association, I have the luxury of the magazine being delivered to my door every other month for the first year. The magazine is a very interesting read, with a wide variety of articles, informative, humourous, historical, lots of news from individual clubs all over England - 'Pimms and Play' in Yorkshire! – as well as all the local, national and international match reports. Why not take the chance to read the copy of the CA Gazette which is delivered to the table in the croquet pavilion each

other month. What caught my attention this month was again from the past: advice, 65 years ago, reportedly from a Dr Wiggins on **how to improve your long shots** in croquet:

1. Contrary to general belief, tobacco does not steady the nerves, and its smoke does not improve vision.
2. Reading should be reduced during a competition week and only the larger headlines of the newspaper read. This rests the visual focusing apparatus.
3. Never think, "I must hit this one." You won't. Result – Nervous Tension.
4. Avoidance of heavy manual work for forty-eight hours before and during the competition.
5. Medicinally, a pre-prandial small quantity of alcohol is helpful. Larger quantities – fatal.

So now you know!

Elizabeth

# CLUB NEWS

## Doubles Fun Day 20<sup>th</sup> August Elizabeth Thomson

For the second Doubles Fun Day of the year, we were blessed with perfect weather, sunny but with a pleasant breeze and without the burning heat or humidity of earlier months. The line-up of eight pairs this time included a few new names, and once again a change of winners. The day was the usual rush of competitors from lawn to lawn, primary to secondary balls, opponent to



opponent, fitting in seven games to the 8 hours of the day, and very occasionally, a few minutes to sit down (or stand) while trying to eat packed lunches, an occasional hot drink and drink gallons of water. As usual the day was punctuated by laughter, often at misdirected shots, applause at the occasional brilliant stroke played by someone, and quiet celebrations and congratulations when games were won. Once again, we struggled time wise and occasionally some games had to be cut short in order to complete the full day's play.

When the final games ended and the points totalled, the winners were announced as Ian Robertson and Kath Spare. Runners up in second equal place were Peter Kristunas with Glen Duggins, and Robert Zara with Irene Rogers, followed by Jeff Lindsay with Elizabeth Thomson.

Thanks go to Lynne Breedon for the excellent organisation of the day and to Linda for the lovely cream scones we all enjoyed.



← Worthy winners, Ian Robertson and Kath Spare with Lynne Breedon, Chair.



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## MEET THE COMMITTEE

### Gordon Henderson

Born at an early age in Northumberland then lived in Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire before settling in Kenilworth in 2009.

I first came to croquet when a member I knew invited me to an open day. Tried it and enjoyed it, joined the club soon after.

Previously I had played squash and badminton socially for a number of years. When I worked and lived away from home, playing was a good way to meet and socialise with other Engineers also working away. The plants we worked in sold electricity, steam, hot and cold water in various parts of the country. (Steam by the tonne!)

My greatest passion was, however, competitive dinghy sailing. I've been a member of three sailing clubs for many years. I have an instructor's certificate and taught club members and the local Scouts. It has become a family sport with my Son and Grandson now sailing competitively.

All this sport stopped, after two operations for a touch of cancer left me unable to carry on. (If I got into trouble out on the water others would maybe have to put themselves in danger to rescue).



However, I can still play Croquet without any issues which is fortunate as I enjoy it so much.

Until recently I held a couple of prominent posts in the Kenilworth Lions Club which took up a fair amount of my time. Now that I am now on the 'back benches,' I hope to play more and commit more to the Club.

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### The Fashion Setter - Frank Hibberd



Frank with Peter Dennis

**Pauline Harvey:** Older players would remember Frank Hibberd, one of the founder members of the club, who organised an annual joint GC/AC match, and always wore a striped blazer and boater hat for matches. He tried to play AC at Kenilworth, taking into account any undulations in lawn 1, and so carried around a topographical map of the lawn as he played!

**Editor:** I feel honoured to be playing with Frank's original mallet, whose initials were still on the mallet until recently and will soon be added again along

with my own. Curious to know more about the original owner of the mallet, I searched past issues of Running



Hoops, where I found many references to Frank, from the first Running Hoops in 2014 onwards. He was a member both of Northampton Croquet Club and of Kenilworth, competing in competitions at Kenilworth and in matches against other clubs.



Clearly a fashion setter of his era, has he set a trend for future generations, already followed by this cheerful couple, Ivan and Laura, from his old Northampton Club?

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# FEATURES

## Celebrating Press Success

### Opener goes with form book

5<sup>th</sup> May  
GC v Himley

Kenilworth travelled to Himley to play their first West Midlands Golf Croquet League match of 2023.

Himley's lawns were slow and soft. The weather was cold and the wind, at times, was a little awkward, but all players were happy to be back on the lawns.

On handicap, Kenilworth were favourites and form proved to be true as Kenilworth won each of four singles rounds three games to one. Himley's top player, Paul Garrett, was deadily accurate and won three of his four singles only losing to Phil Blake 4-7.

With the match already decided, Kenilworth won the two doubles.

Phil Blake starred, winning four singles out of four. Mervyn Harvey and Philip Wood took three games each.

19<sup>th</sup> May

Croquet Club Open Day!



### Pop down to club and have a try at croquet

Kenilworth Tennis, Squash and Croquet Club are holding a Celebration of Croquet at...

This is a great opportunity to showcase the sport to the general public...

comprise a mix of inter county club competitions and public open days all of which are run by individual Croquet clubs. No experience is necessary and everyone is welcome to go down to the club and have a try. Email philbax4@gmail.com for more information.



### Kenilworth beat Broadwas in tight game

Kenilworth took a step nearer to the title with a win. The lawns were dry and fast for Kenilworth's Golf Croquet match v Broadwas on the Crawley Lane lawns. Around 4 of the singles was a tight game. Kenilworth won the next 3-1 and when the board went to the home side 4-0, Kenilworth were in the driving seat. The final round of singles was a tight game. Kenilworth had an unassailable lead. The doubles games were tied one each giving Kenilworth the victory by 12 games to 6. Mervyn Harvey, playing well after his 9th hole practice in Florida, won all his matches with three wins for Phil Blake and Phil Mander. The Broadwas players showed a lack of form, with only two weeks practice, as their lawns had been unplayable since then. Four of their losses were by just the single the match had been. Kenilworth's final match will be on 19th July when a win will give them the title.

9<sup>th</sup> June

GC v Broadwas

30<sup>th</sup> June

AC at Church Stretton



Kenilworth Captain Philip Wood enjoys the win.



Kenilworth's Phil Mander, left, Mervyn and Pauline Harvey in the middle and captain Cliff Daniel on the right.

### Pauline enters history books in Kenilworth win

Pauline Harvey wrote her name in Kenilworth croquet history after becoming the first woman to play Association Croquet for the club.

Having started the season well in the West Midlands Golf Croquet League, focus turned to Association Croquet and the first match, away to Church Stretton. Kenilworth continued their form with a 7-0 win.

The day started with a bit of a panic when club stalwart Philip Wood was ruled out by illness and team member Mervyn Harvey persuaded his wife Pauline to make up

the four. Pauline was a little reluctant as she had little experience of competitive Association Croquet but had been performing well at the club recently. Pauline became the first woman to play AC for the club.

She was partnered by club captain Cliff Daniel in the doubles match and soon showed her improving skills. The pair won the game 15-11.

The two morning singles were also won by Kenilworth with Mervyn Harvey winning by 28-12. Phil Mander won by 18-13.

During the lunch break, there was a torrential downpour, flooding the lawns. After a brief delay, the afternoon matches were curtailed to a reduced time limit of 2.5 hours.

Pauline declared the afternoon singles game a challenge, playing her first competitive match on strange lawns. However, she again demonstrated she was up for the challenge and won her match 15-5.

The other singles were also won by Kenilworth. Daniel 18-8; Mervyn Harvey 18-12 and Mander 18-8.

7<sup>th</sup> July

All England Handicap



### New handicap system leads to tight games

The local base of the All-England Handicap Croquet League took place on the 7th July at Kenilworth. The four Kenilworth players, Phil Mander, Mervyn Harvey, Elizabeth Thomson and Ian Robertson, took part in the event. The new handicap system introduced this year and it proved a success with the 10 games played with a single hoop and the other 4 games with a 2 hoop difference. The lowest handicapped player, Mander won all his games and saw progress in the Midlands regional final. Watnave had two wins and Robert and Elizabeth Thomson lost all three games, but by the close of matches, they were all in the top 10. Mander was all his games and saw progress in the Midlands regional final. Watnave had two wins and Robert and Elizabeth Thomson lost all three games, but by the close of matches, they were all in the top 10. Mander was all his games and saw progress in the Midlands regional final. Watnave had two wins and Robert and Elizabeth Thomson lost all three games, but by the close of matches, they were all in the top 10.



7<sup>th</sup> July

Sharing the limelight with Andy Murray!

# Victory makes it 3 in a row

Kenilworth have been the West Midlands Golf Croquet Champions for two years in a row – and they went into Saturday's match knowing a win would give them three straight titles.

The final match of this season was a home match versus Herefordshire team, Eardisley.

The Kenilworth team of Philip Wood, Phil Blake, Mervyn Harvey and Phil Mander all scored 3 of their 4 singles with Eardisley's captain Tony Johnston in excellent form to win all his singles.

Kenilworth also won both doubles to give the 14-4 victory needed, and the West Midlands league title for the third consecutive year.

Visit the club's website at [www.ktscc.co.uk/croquet](http://www.ktscc.co.uk/croquet) for more info on the club and the sport.



Victory gave Kenilworth a third straight title.

14 July  
GC v Eardisley  
GC League Champions!



## Kenilworth's Mander qualifies for finals

The local heat of the All England Golf Croquet Handicap competition took place on the Cracker Lane lawns recently. The four Kenilworth finalists, Phil Mander, Ian Robertson, Tony Watmore, 3, Tony Watmore, 8 and Elizabeth

Thomson, 8 played an 'all play all' final. Kenilworth were trialling the new national handicap system introduced this year and it proved a success with 8 of the 12 games going to the single hoop and the other 4 games with a 2 hoop difference. The lowest handicapped

player, Mander won all his games and now progresses to the Midlands regional final. Watmore had two wins and Robertson 1. Elizabeth Thomson lost closest of margins, 6-7. The demonstration how tight the competition had been. [MoreSportOnline](http://MoreSportOnline).

14 July  
Oops! Spot the mistake!!!



4<sup>th</sup> August  
Wells Cup & AC v Shrewsbury



## On-form Harvey takes the title at Kenilworth

The four finalists of the Kenilworth Golf Croquet Club Championship fought for the Wells Cup last weekend. Mervyn Harvey won the first Semi-final quite comfortably against Philip Wood

(5-4, 7-3). The other Semi-final was a much closer battle with Adrian Morris losing the first game against last year's winner Phil Blake, but fought back in a very tight final two

games to win (3-7, 7-6, 7-5). In the final, Morris lost some form from the morning semi, which in turn Harvey ran some excellent hoops and three jump shots to take the Wells Cup and the 2023

Club Championship. Good weather prevailed for Kenilworth's Association League match vs Shrewsbury. Captain Cliff Daniel partnered Phil Mander in the morning Doubles and won

13-8. Mervyn Harvey won his match 24-8 but Adrian Morris met a fast improver and lost 10-26. However, all Kenilworth's way to give a 6-1 victory.

1 September  
Ladies' Trophy



## Thomson takes title at Kenilworth club

Elizabeth Thomson took the title at last weekend's Kenilworth Ladies Golf Croquet championship. The initial rounds took the form of two blocks of five with the top two in each block to progress to the semi-finals. The first semi saw seven times winner Pauline

Harvey beat 2021 winner Lynne Broadon 5-2. The other Semi saw 2021 champion Kath Spore beaten 5-4 by Thomson. The experienced Harvey took on Thomson in the final and it proved to be a see-saw battle with the scores level at 3-3. The seventh hoop was

a struggle with some excellent clearances from both players. Harvey then attempted a jump shot but only managed to knock Thomson's ball through the hoop. However, Harvey then levelled the score at 4-4. Both had chances at the 4-4 hoop but Thomson took the match 5-4.



## Kenilworth win Association Croquet League

Earlier this season, Kenilworth became West Midlands Golf Croquet Champions and this week, also won the Association Croquet League. The final match of the season, played at Kenilworth, was critical as both Broadwas and Kenilworth were unbeaten. Kenilworth won both the morning singles, Adrian Morris (26-11) and Mervyn

Harvey (26-6). The doubles game went Broadwas' way (20-8). Kenilworth needed two wins from the four afternoon singles, but Philip Wood lost (7-20) before Harvey took his

game (26-19). Morris lost (20-21) meaning the match then depended on Captain Cliff Daniel. He had maintained a lead throughout the game but a good break by his opponent

gave him the lead. Daniel then hit a good 25 yard shot to start a break of three hoops to retain the lead. This he defended well to win (18-6) to take the match and the league title.

8 September  
AC v Broadwas  
AC League Champions!

## Visit to St Agnes Croquet Club in Cornwall Elizabeth Thomson



St Agnes is a small village on the N coast of Cornwall, 12 miles SW of Newquay. Despite the small size of the village, population around 3500, it boasts a 3-lawn croquet club with a membership of over 80. The day after I arrived was the club's Open Day, so I went along to find out a little about the club, carrying my mallet in hope, which got me a singles game with a fellow Scot, Donald, who happened to be a near neighbour of my niece, and a handicap 4, so I didn't win! It transpired that Donald knew Kenilworth well, as his uncle, Bob Greene, lived in the bungalow in Farm Road, just off Rounds Hill, until he died in the early '70s. Small world.



All members of St Agnes Club play Golf Croquet. Various attempts have been made to encourage players to try Association Croquet, but so far none has succeeded. Another member donated a full set of Gateball equipment to the club and held an introductory session for players, but little enthusiasm has been shown for that either. Clearly members are very content with their club the way it is and happily join in the many club competitions: ladders, summer and winter, singles, doubles, men's, ladies', fun events like the Hedgehog Competition, as well as taking part in the SW Federation Leagues. Summer visitors are welcome and can contact the club via their website to book a session, as I did.

The club is very friendly and prides itself on its inclusivity. There are 3 drop-in sessions a week which are well-attended. From the CA Gazette, April 2023, I'd learned that the club also runs regular sessions for disabled and amputees. These are attended by around 8 players who enjoy their games, even when wheelchair bound. A number of willing volunteers help the visitors at these sessions.

The Open Day was busy, colourful, loud and well-attended. Four such taster days are held each year for people to try the game free of charge. Today, there were 4 half lawns, double banked with visitors and their guides. For younger children there were other games, hoopla, table tennis, ice cream stall, tea and cakes for sale. There was also a children's croquet court, with mini-mallets, colour matched to the 4 primary mini-balls! (Seen in foreground in top picture)



Later in the week, we went up for our booked session, three of us, and on our last day, for another impromptu session. Donald kindly volunteered again, to make up a doubles four, and we had excellent close games, one going to a Golden Hoop. We chatted with several club members, who took photographs for us, asked all about our club in Kenilworth and were astonished to hear that our AC numbers are on the rise, due mainly I explained, to having a drop-in session every week, with enthusiastic coaches. They were curious to know our Club's opinion of Advantage Croquet and were impressed that we were already trialling it in one competition. (I was equally

impressed with the little carts they had made, one for each lawn, which stored and carried every piece of equipment needed to play – 6 hoops, 2 sets of balls, peg, mallet, clips for AC, flags, markers, hoop remover!) And now, after such a lovely introduction, I can look forward to more games on their lawns in future holidays in the area, confident of another warm welcome from their members.



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## COMPETITION TIME

### Wider Croquet Community

**Inter-County GC Championship 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> August Phil Blake**

### DIVISION 2 Champions!

Team	Berk's	Buck's	C.A. 3rd	Glouc's	Leic's	Oxfs	Position
Berk's		W	L	L	L	W	1st
Buck's	L		W	W	W	L	2nd
C.A. 3rd	W	L		L	L	W	5th
Glouc's	W	L	W		L	W	3rd
Leic's	W	L	W	W		L	1st
Oxfs	L	W	L	L	W		6th

The tournament was played at The Sussex County Croquet Club also known as Southwick. They have 11 very good flat lawns and were a pleasure to play on.

Our team consisted of 5 players combining three counties (Warwickshire, Leicestershire & Derbyshire) as Leicestershire were unable to field a team from their own county.

Saturday finished with a 1-2 loss, but we made up for that on Sunday by winning against the other 2 counties which gave us a total of 3 wins and 2 losses. This was the same as two other

counties, but we were declared the champions because of winning more games than the others. My claim to fame over the weekend was beating Jenny Clarke, a minus 5 handicap, who has been a women's multiple world champion at GC & AC.

### Inter-County GC Championship 2023 Ivor Brand at Sussex County Croquet Club

'Hope to see you all next year at a more relaxed event' was how I signed off last year. Well, it certainly was all I hoped for including promotion, which means I believe it's 'time off' for me. So, in the words of Woody Allen from the film Bananas, 'so long suckers'. The six teams had a wonderful time on Southwick's lawns, bathed in sunshine all weekend and even managed to see the 2nd half of the 'lioness's' world cup final live, thanks to a catering alteration by the Southwick team.



David Bell, Philip Blake & Noel Gill

This year's winners were the 3 counties (a combined team of Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Warwickshire). The picture above shows the proud captain David Bell holding the shield (for the regulation 5 secs) with Philip Blake and Noel Gill (missing were Paul Williams and Mark Buckley). In fact, 3 counties finished equal 1st on number of wins and had to be separated on net games. Buckinghamshire, led by Ian Shore, gained 2nd, while Gloucestershire gained 3<sup>rd</sup>, led by Richard Brand. This means that these two counties have gained promotion to Division 1 next year. Congratulations to both counties on serving their time in Div 2!!!

Unfortunately, with only 6 teams this year there was less time on court, but it did allow us to use a 'stop clock' time limit of one hour. This meant that the clock could be stopped if the double bank game was contesting the same hoop, without affecting your game. This worked well with only 1 game going to time and interestingly creating a lot of tight games going to the 13th hoop, which is always good entertainment for the crowd!!! Overall, it was so tight that by the last round, strangely, only the pre-tournament favourites, Oxfordshire, were out of the running. Indeed, looking at the match results, over half were won in the deciding game of which nearly half were by a single hoop! This supports the theory that every hoop really does matter, especially if it's the 13th. So, well done to the heroes that made the difference and thank you to their opponents for making it a 'tight' game.

Finally, as it seems appropriate I will sign off with the words of a legendary South West weatherman when I was growing up, who used to end his weather report with 'good night and tight lines'.

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## WMF AC League Kenilworth v Broadwas Home 29 August Cliff Daniel

### League Champions!



← The Kenilworth team:  
Adrian Morris, Philip  
Wood, Cliff Daniel and  
Mervyn Harvey

The Broadwas team: →  
Ian Lambert, Ian Dampney,  
Stuart Smith and John Guy



The final league match of the season was against Broadwas and with both teams unbeaten in 2023, would determine who would win the title. The Kenilworth team were quietly confident since the match was to be played on their lawns rather than the tricky sloping lawns at Broadwas!

In the morning matches, Cliff and Philip Wood struggled against the pairing of John Guy & Ian Lambert and, due to one significant break by Ian in the middle of the game, the visitors won comfortably 20-8.

The morning singles games were won decisively, by Kenilworth, giving the home team a slight advantage at the half-way stage.

Adrian played Ian Dampney, conceding 4 bisques. Once those bisques had been used Adrian was able to consolidate his lead and eventually won 26-11.



Mervyn was playing Stuart Smith, the strongest player from Broadwas, and as usual used his bisques sparingly to build a significant lead. With Stuart struggling to hit in, and with Mervyn running a few challenging hoops, Mervyn did not need his final precious bisque and won 26-6.



So, to win this crucial match, Kenilworth needed to win just 2 of the afternoon singles games.

Philip was paired against Ian Dampney, who had now it seems, become more comfortable with the lawns. Philip never really found his form and squandered his bisques leaving his opponent able to complete a victory 26-7.

However the other three singles games were nail-bitingly close.

Mervyn's game was the next to finish. His opponent Ian Lambert had continued playing well following his morning success. His 'rushes' and 'rolls' allowed him to pull ahead whilst retaining 3 of his 5 bisques. Mervyn, on the other hand, was making some mistakes and had needed to use his 3 bisques



much earlier than he wished. However Ian then faltered, took some unnecessary risks and squandered his remaining bisques.

Mervyn suddenly realised that he might, after all, win this game and proceeded to put more pressure on his opponent. He peeled his partner ball through 'penult' so both of his balls were set for rover and he was looking to be the likely winner. However he faltered at rover attempting a second peel(!) giving his opponent a half chance. Fortunately Ian missed lengthy roquets allowing Mervyn to complete victory 26-19.



Significantly this meant that Mervyn had won all 8 of his games in the league in 2023, a fine achievement which contributed to Kenilworth being on the brink of winning the League this year.

Adrian was playing against Stuart, who was now enjoying some decent sized breaks, The hoop score was always quite even and when time was called each player had run 20 hoops! However Adrian had the innings and had two clear chances to clinch the game. Perhaps it was simply pressure knowing the importance of the game but he, surprisingly, faltered. In contrast Stuart, aided by a lengthy roquet, was indeed able to score the 'golden hoop' making the overall match score 3-3.

The final game to finish was, fittingly, the one between the two captains. For much of the game Cliff had been in the lead, at one time 11-5, and looking the likely winner once John had used his 'half-bisque', the only bisque in the game. However John had doggedly clawed back well, and with time running out was in the lead himself 15-11. Soon afterwards Cliff managed a 25 yard roquet, put together a 3 hoop break and suddenly realised that the game was in the balance. Despite the distraction of the exciting play in the other two games, Cliff managed to hold his nerve and clinched the game 18-16.



John Guy (Captain, Broadwas) presents the cup to Kenilworth Captain, Cliff Daniel.

**So Kenilworth won the match 4-3 and therefore became Winners of the West Midlands AC League ....16 years after last doing so!**

**Editor:** This was a nail-biting match to watch, but fascinating to see the skill of our players in all their games and in clinching victory in the dying moments of the match. Also lovely to see was the genuine friendship and camaraderie between the two teams, and the respect they had for each other's ability as players. It was also very special to be joined for part of the day by Alan Richardson and John Leader, who came along to add their support to the home team.



**Puzzle:**

Why was Adrian lying on the grass?  
Disappointment? Frustration?



No! Just lining up blue and black for his next stroke...



... to peg out both balls in turn and win the match.



With thanks to Cliff for capturing the moment. AC is a fascinating game. If you want to know more, come along on Thursday mornings and learn more about it. (And before you ask, no, we don't all lie down on the grass before playing our shots or pegging out!)

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**Double Success!**

**Golf Croquet League Champions 2023**



Only one month previously, as reported in Running Hoops, August 2023, our Golf Croquet Team of Philip Mander, Mervyn Harvey, Philip Wood (Captain) and Phil Blake also won their League and became **Golf Croquet League Champions** for the third year running!

**AC League Champions 2023**

Cliff Daniel, Adrian Morris, Mervyn Harvey, Pauline Harvey, Philip Wood and Phil Mander.



Congratulations to both teams for their outstanding success, helping to raise the profile of our club and make us one of the best croquet clubs in the Midlands area.

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### GC Friendly v Northampton 22<sup>nd</sup> August Elizabeth Thomson

Northampton have recently moved to their new premises at Roade in Northamptonshire and were very happy to renew our friendship and join us for a friendly match in Kenilworth. They arrived early and were sunning themselves around our pavilion when many of us were just arriving. What a lovely relaxed group they were, with a great sense of humour, and we enjoyed happy games with some excellent croquet.



The weather on the day was perfect, sunny with light cloudy spells and a gently breeze. We started with refreshments for the visitors before the first games started, following an order of play set up by Pauline Harvey who arranged the day. With only 4 games to be played by each couple, there was no rush and time for a short rest and drink between games.



The games were closely fought, with a time limit of 50 minutes, resulting in 6 of the 16 games running out of time and failing to complete the game. The day ended with a clear win for Kenilworth, winning 11 games, drawing 4 and losing only one, but this really did not reflect the degree of skill shown by the visitors, or the closeness of most of the hoops contested.



A cheerful couple with superb dress sense

Kenilworth members all played well, with special mention of Nick Hegan and Robert Zara (left), the only pair to win all their games.

There followed the traditional tea, a lovely spread welcomed by the visitors, who sat on for a long time, enjoying the sunshine and company before setting off for home. I'm sure we will enjoy many more friendlies with them in the future and look forward to playing at their new lawns in Roade. Special thanks to Pauline for the very happy day we all enjoyed.



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## Club Level

### GC Ladies' Day 25<sup>th</sup> August Elizabeth Thomson

Ten of us arrived early, or not so early, for the start of Ladies' Day, rescheduled from the planned date in early August, due to heavy rain, to set up the lawns and listen to Lynne's instructions and explanations of the excellent charts she had produced, perfectly clear to all but the Editor, who seemed to need more input than the others!

L to R in the photograph were competitors Pauline Harvey, Judith Brickwood, Allison Watmore, Val Moss, Lynne Breedon, Linda Edwards, Pauline Dennis, Kath Spare, Irene Rogers with Elizabeth Thomson as photographer. Special thanks to Irene and Pauline Dennis, who stepped in as last minute replacements.

We were divided into two random blocks of 5, decided by picking an unseen card number from the table. Lynne had thought of everything! Handicaps ranged from 5 to 14 but were reduced proportionately to a range of 3 to 10 as we were only playing 9 hoops, rather than 13, because of the time factor. All competitors played on both lawns during the day, and with primary and secondary balls.



The games proceeded with very few problems, though Pauline Harvey was called in as referee at one point when 4 balls ended up in a complicated straight line of touching and near-touching balls. Games were very closely contested as was apparent in the high scores, and with several lasting an hour or more.



It was well past lunch time before the final games in the blocks were completed, and points added up to find the winners. In Block 1, Kath Spare came top, with Pauline Harvey in second place and in block 2, Lynne Breedon led the way, with Elizabeth Thomson in second place. The semi-finals started next, with Kath playing Elizabeth while Lynne took on Pauline. After very close games, Elizabeth won the first semi by 5-4 and Pauline the second one, 5-2.

The final was a bit of a see-saw, with mistakes on both sides, Elizabeth not making the best use of her two extra turns and both players scoring a hoop for the opposition. Elizabeth won the toss but the first hoop went to Pauline, with Elizabeth equalising at hoop 2. Pauline forged ahead to a 3-1 lead but Elizabeth ran the next two hoops to level the score at 3-3. Hoop 7 proved to be a long struggle, with both parties repeatedly clearing the other. When Elizabeth accidentally touched another ball during a stroke, a fault, her turn ended and the balls were replaced. Pauline then attempted a jump shot which missed the hoop but knocked Elizabeth's ball through, to make the score 4-3. However, Pauline managed to level again at hoop 8 when Elizabeth missed an angled shot at the hoop. With the score at 4-4 the game could have gone either way, but Elizabeth eventually managed to take the final hoop, to win the match by 5-4.



By this stage, we were all pretty tired. It had been a very long day, after 6:00pm before the final game finished. Lynne presented the Ladies' Trophy to Elizabeth, while Val took over as photographer. And after that, all that remained was to finish Linda's giant box of shortbread, clear up and head for home for a much needed rest.

Huge thanks to Lynne for her superb organisation and preparation for the day, planning the technicalities of handicaps and lawn sharing, and drawing out all the charts. And of course, managing to compete at the same time, even winning her block, no easy feat when your mind is on milk, lemon drizzle cake and the clock. Well done, Lynne, and all the competitors, for making the day so successful.

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## AC Castle Cup Adrian Morris



4 players took part in this competition, played level. As Pete Trimmer was unavailable, the top four handicapped players contested the Cup – Adrian Morris, Cliff Daniel, Philip Wood and Phil Mander with Mervyn Harvey on standby.

The Castle Cup is the club's annual challenge to find the Association Croquet Champion. Sometimes there needs to be a qualifying round so that the final is played with an all-play-all four-player final. The day involves three games of AC, an arduous task in itself, but this year, it fell on the hottest day of the year. A sweltering experience!

In the first round, Cliff comfortably beat Philip Wood (15 – 2) but Adrian had a very tough game against Phil Mander.

Phil was comfortably ahead throughout the game with Adrian squandering his chances. Near the end, however, Adrian put together a break to take a three-hoop lead. Phil then managed a further two hoops enabling Adrian, only just, to scrape a victory by 15 – 14.

The second round saw Adrian beat Philip W (16 – 5) and Cliff beat Phil M (15 – 7).

In the final round Philip W came to life to beat Phil M (16 – 7). Philip W played his best of the day and Phil M admitted to feeling the effects of the heat and mental exhaustion from his tough encounter in the first game with Adrian.

The other game between Cliff and Adrian would be the decider. Adrian was now on top form and took a comfortable lead. All previous matches had been decided on time, but this time, Adrian was determined to finish. He had chances towards the end but hoop running let him down, and he had to settle for a 23 – 12 victory to take the Castle Cup, for the ninth time.

PS Pete Trimmer was unable to play, otherwise there may have been a different story altogether!



The beautiful Castle Cup is ornately engraved and features three croquet mallets on the base, with balls. The handles each display a hoop and ball.

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## The Dedicated Referee?



What does it take to make a dedicated referee? Look no further than our own Adrian Morris. This time, Adrian was trying to make a decision on whether a ball was through the hoop or not. In last year's Castle Cup, I witnessed an even more astonishing spectacle, of Adrian and John Leader, another qualified AC referee, lying on the ground on either side of a hoop, head to head, trying to come to a similar decision! Aren't we a fortunate club to have two qualified (and super-fit!) referees, and others who are experienced enough to help those of us who can't always get our heads round the printed Rules or Laws of the games?

**Editor:** I did find myself wondering how our referees would perform similar duties on another day... in the rain! Would the whites still remain as white?

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**The Golf Croquet, and most of the Association Croquet, competitions are still in progress as this edition of Running Hoops is published. I've therefore held back the results of the early rounds until next month's newsletter, when the full results are known and winners announced (and the all-important photographs taken!)**

**I am going to be away from home for the next few weeks, but will resume the next edition of Running Hoops as soon as I return (Yes, it's already started, in the embryonic phase!). In the meantime, please keep emailing match reports or any other articles to me, while I'm away. Don't leave them till I return or they may get forgotten altogether. I'll store these in a folder, to incorporate later in the October issue.**

So once again, thanks to all contributors and helpers in producing this September Running Hoops. Enjoy the last month of the Croquet 'season', and do try to go along to watch some of the cup finals both in GC and AC and support the competitors while enjoying a relaxing (or nail-biting) day!

Elizabeth

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