



# RUNNING HOOPS

The Newsletter of Kenilworth Croquet Club

DECEMBER 2013

## End of Season Event - Friday, October 25th. 2013

Once again, this took place at the Croquet Club. Over 30 people gathered together for a very enjoyable evening. Everyone was welcomed with a drink of their choice and were then invited to take part in a quiz on Warwickshire organised by Stella Gill, which involved looking at various pictures attached to the walls. There was also a general buzz of conversation.



At 8.15pm, we all sat down to enjoy a delicious buffet prepared by Ian and Jan. Jean took the opportunity to present each of them with a bottle of wine as a thank-you for all the other lovely food they had prepared for us over the year.

The result of the quiz was announced and prizes presented to the winners, Peter and Anne Langley.

Adrian then gave a general resume of the croquet year before presenting the cups to the winners of the various competitions.

The evening was rounded off by another display of incredible magic by Danny Razoo, alias Cliff Daniel.



## Leaf clearing

One of the drawbacks of having so many beautiful trees next to our croquet club is that they are prone to shed their leaves in Autumn, all over our beautifully kept lawns. Obviously they can't just be left to rot without having a detrimental effect on the grass. So this year, as indeed happens every year, a very hard working band of volunteers, ably led by Martin and David Green, cleared the leaves on several Wednesdays in November. They did manage to have a very well-earned mid-morning coffee break, as can be seen in the picture below...



Why don't you join them next year???

## John Handy receives Croquet Association Diploma

Congratulations to John who has received the CA Diploma which is presented for 'services to croquet'. He was unable to receive the award at the CA AGM so it was presented by Adrian Morris accompanied by Bill Sidebottom, Peter Dennis, Ray Clipson and John Leader.

John has been a member of both Nottingham and Kenilworth Croquet Clubs for many years. Whilst at Nottingham, he served as treasurer for 6 years. At Kenilworth, John has been a keen committee member, helping the club to grow from its early beginnings to the strength we have today. He was membership secretary, and represented Kenilworth on the WM Federation before moving on to represent the Federation at the CA. Nationally, he sat on both the CA's AC and GC Tournament Committees.



John is a referee in both AC and GC and an active coach. He managed tournaments at both clubs. He also donated the Pindi and Secunderabad Cups, which his mother won playing tennis in India!

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## Finals

Reports of various finals follow but in summary the results were as follows:

### Association:

The St. George's Cup was won by Cliff Daniel who beat Peter Dennis

The Secunderabad Cup was won by Cliff Daniel who beat Adrian Morris

The Bill Browne Trophy was won by Ray Clipson who beat Philip Wood

The Taylor Cup was won by Nigel Haslem

The Douglas Trophy was won by Mervyn Harvey



### Golf:

The Kenilworth Cup was won by Philip Wood who beat Adrian Morris

The Pindi Cup was won by Philip Wood who beat Nigel Haslem

The Ladies Trophy was won by Pauline Harvey

## Douglas Trophy

The Douglas Trophy is for those fairly new to AC and played on half-lawns. For the first time in a few years it was contested by four members who fell into that category – Chris Duppa-Miller, Mervyn Harvey, Robin Moore and William Pink. Chris and William have joined the club this year, and the various demands on their time have limited the amount of time they could spend on the lawns. In the end this proved to be a decisive factor, as Robin and Mervyn beat each of them comfortably in the first two rounds.

So the third round match between Robin and Mervyn turned out to be the battle for first and second place. Robin has enjoyed a very good season at GC, with some notable scalps in level play. On the other hand, Mervyn had a little more tactical knowledge of AC, albeit gained on a small lawn many years ago at a previous house. The decisive break came early on, when Mervyn suddenly discovered that the balls were well placed for a 4-ball break. He then ran 4 hoops, and added a fifth after taking a bisque, before leaving Robin needing to hit in from long range. This set the pattern for the rest of the game, and Mervyn eventually pegged out just as time was up. So, will they spend more time playing AC? Watch this space!

## Ladies Trophy

There is a law which says that if you postpone an event because of a bad weather forecast, it will turn out not to be so bad on the original date and will be worse on the rescheduled date. Fortunately there is an exception to every law, and all the ladies were very pleased that we put off their event for a week, as the weather on the second Sunday was warm and dry.

This year, the competition was played on a handicap basis, but the one thing that didn't change was the friendly spirit in which the games were played. The play was enthralling, and kept this observer glued to his seat. There was some very good play – with one going to the deciding hoop, and being won by a combination of two long-range clears followed by running the hoop from the boundary. There was an interesting "wrong ball" situation, which righted itself after three or four rounds of blue – yellow – black – red, with neither party seemingly being aware that anything had ever gone wrong (and observers, even referees, are not allowed to intervene unless called to do so by a player). And there was one hoop where, over 10 minutes or so, a player used three of her extra shots to clear her opponent's well-placed balls, and still didn't win the hoop!

At the end of the day, there were creditable performances from Jean Wilson and Glenys Tunstall, who each won three of their five games. But, the clear winner, and (as MC's of boxing championship bouts say) still the ladies champion, is Pauline Harvey, who won all of her games.

# Taylor Cup

The Taylor Cup is an AC tournament, played in three round-robin blocks in July and August, with the winners and best runner-up contesting the round-robin final. Here, Nigel Haslam describes the closing stages; it is relevant to note that in the event of a three-way tie, the winner is decided on net hoops.

“Going into the last series of games Ray Clipson, Nigel Haslam and Philip Wood were all in with a chance of taking the cup, so the last round of matches would produce a very tense finish. Nigel beat Frank Hibberd (last year’s winner) 14-6, with the game between Phil and Ray still having 20 or so minutes of time left. Ray took to the lawn 3 - 8 behind with only a couple of minutes left and needing to win the game to take the cup, having won his first 2 matches. He hit in from distance to take Yellow through hoop 3 (score 4-8) and managed to get out of position on approach to hoop 4. Another fantastic long roquet on Blue enabled hoop 4 to be run (5-8). Time was called (at which point the player on the lawn can complete his break, and his opponent is allowed one more visit to the lawn) with Ray still looking good to run further hoops. Good approach work to hoop 5 had the Yellow ready to run the hoop, but was missed. Ray had lost his chance but could Phil, with the last turn of the tournament, take up the opportunity to peg out both his balls (Black already on peg) and win the cup by the narrowest of margins. With the balls not in great position Phil made some good positional play to run his Blue through hoop 3, score 9-5. Good hit ins and rushes put the Blue within striking distance to run hoop 4. Although from the sidelines it looked very straight, a yard off the hoop, and very runable, Phil missed - the occasion and tension perhaps played a part, but we all know the feeling of missing a hoop when in a good position. So, Nigel had won by 4 hoops. It was a good day’s competitive croquet played in good spirits, keeping the 7 spectators and a Labrador well entertained.”



## Bill Browne Trophy

The final of the Bill Browne competition was held in a lovely Autumn sunshine between Phil Wood and Ray Clipson. But it has to be admitted that the quality of the croquet did not quite match the weather. Neither player was at their best with very few good breaks. Ray produced some good long distance hits but then missed the short roquets. Phil had a lot of near misses at distance but ran good hoops after coming up short on his approaches. The enjoyable contest was won by Ray Clipson by 14 – 7.



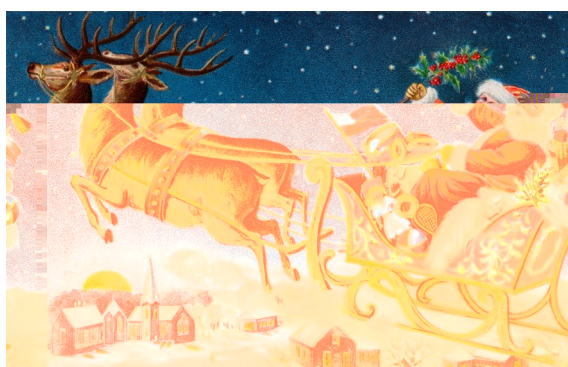
## WMF GC League

On Tuesday, August 20th, Shrewsbury arrived with a strong team comprised of players who play mostly Association Croquet; as chessplayers playing draughts, they would say. Tim Leggett arrived late having had to deal with a boiler breakdown earlier in the morning and one was reminded of the Chinese proverb 'man late for work is running all day'. But he settled down well and his doubles game then would have gone better had Philip Wood not made a poor start to lose the game 7-2. Our other doubles pair of Robin Moore and Peter Kristunas were well in the lead at the half way stage but eventually lost narrowly. Thus we started the singles 3-0 down. and although we fought back well, scoring 8 from 16 games it was not enough. Philip Wood won all 4 singles games, Peter Kristunas won 3 and Tim Leggett 1.

If we win our last match away against Broadwas on Thursday August 29th we should win the League but they will be tough opponents.

### BUT...

In our final match, against Broadwas away, we lost 15 games to 4. We were heavily out-handicapped (playing level) and found their sloping lawns difficult. However they gave us an excellent tea afterwards which alleviated the suffering. Philip Wood scraped 2 singles games and Peter Kristunas and Bob Maskell one each, with Amanda Haslam making our fourth player.



# Kenilworth become WM League AC champions in style!

On Saturday 14 September three of our AC players travelled to Stourbridge for the last match of the WML season.....needing to win by a score-line of 5-2 or better to become champions.....and triumphed 7-0!

With our opponents having reduced the match to 3 players for each team we used the format of 3 singles matches in the morning followed by 'a singles and a doubles'.....each worth 2 points..... in the afternoon.

Cliff led the way (as any captain should!) by winning his singles inside 90 minutes with two particularly good breaks.....and Peter was equally impressive once his opponent had used all of his bisques. Nigel's game was a more dogged affair but a timely good break secured a win of +4 on time.

So we needed to win either of the afternoon games to become champions. Nigel played particularly well in the singles game, mastering the tricky west boundary, and won +25 fairly quickly. With the pressure off, Peter relaxed a little.....finally getting his ball through hope one(!) and with Cliff's ball patiently waiting 'on peg' the result of the doubles was never in doubt and the winning margin being +12.

So ended a marvellous season, with 8 players all making useful contributions.....in both the WML (where we lost just one game) and the LONGMANS COMPETITION (where we had two fine wins before losing to Bowdon).



## Tennis v. Squash

The 5-day weather forecast for the day of the annual Tennis v Squash croquet match was quite gloomy, but it gradually improved, and the afternoon turned out to be very pleasant. There was a lot of natural talent on display, and many of those who play once a year could be very good at croquet if they played more often. But there was a problem, and not one that our section has encountered too much this season – too many had expressed a desire to play. So there had to be some rotation, and it would be interesting to see how that worked out in practice.

The first two rounds were shared, with 3 wins each, and 2 draws. During the second round, Tennis secured the biggest win, scoring 5 hoops to the opponents 0 in the allotted 20 minutes. Might that be the decider if the rounds continued to be close? In the third round, Tennis took a 1 point lead, but were then trounced 4 – 0 in the penultimate round, clearly flagging and in desperate need for a cup of tea. Only a big win in the last round would see them win the trophy for the first time.

The tea may have revived them, but Squash (as in racket and small ball, rather than the cold drink) seemed better able to cope with the copious amount of cake we all consumed (kindly provided by the Tennis ladies) and convincingly won the last round, and so retain the trophy.

So – congratulations to Squash, who now have the honour of making the cakes next year!



## Victorian Croquet

In the Victorian times, traders and shopkeepers in Warwick nurtured their own gardens, just outside the town centre. These have now been renovated by volunteers, based on plans from those days. Each garden is still separate and features old fruit trees, chicken coops and a pig sty or two. For details, see [www.hillclosegardens.com](http://www.hillclosegardens.com)

In August, Hill Close Gardens held a Victorian Weekend and features volunteers dressed in Victorian clothing. They also featured the most popular game of the times- Croquet!

Bob, Glynis and Adrian agreed to support the event and took along some of our equipment to ensure the guests were able to enjoy their visit and to experience croquet in a friendly and relaxed environment.

Hill Close Gardens thanked us helping to make their event such a success and for "making our croquet far more compelling, with real players and proper kit". Bob and Glynis certainly looked the part, Adrian avoided the camera!

We enjoyed the day and perhaps we can help again in two years time as next year they will be celebrating the centenary of WW1 when these gardens were put to very good use growing vegetable for the war effort.



# Friendlies

Friendly matches are FRIENDLY, & they are for EVERYONE – this means you!

Many thanks to Frank Hibberd who has arranged these successfully for many years. He has now decided to relinquish the job, so I (Stella Gill) have taken it on for Golf friendlies & Peter Dennis for Association – the exception is for matches of either code against Northampton, as Frank is also a member there. (Don't worry about that; just reply to whoever sends you the email!)

Unfortunately, this last year, Frank has found it difficult to make up a full team on occasion. This is a great pity as they really are enjoyable - & they are for EVERYONE. Don't feel you haven't enough experience, or aren't good enough: the main point of these is to bring on those less experienced in competitive play, in a FRIENDLY, relaxed & enjoyable way. This doesn't mean that we don't play to win, but it does mean that the main aim is for everyone to enjoy playing croquet; who wins is secondary. The aim is also to make sure that, in doubles, less experienced players are partnered with those who can help them develop their understanding of tactics, by joint discussion of how to play the next shot.

So, if you thought these weren't for you, remember that they are. At the beginning of last season, there were plenty of members who expressed an interest, but when it came to it, it was often a core few who put their names forward. With the new season's renewal, we intend to send out a questionnaire to try to find out the best days/times for people. Some matches are on weekdays – usually Wednesday & Thursday; others on Saturdays, so there should be some which suit you. Most are all-day matches (10am start to 5.30-ish), although against Offchurch we always play on Saturday afternoons from 2pm. For an away match we usually meet at the club & share cars – the driver does get a mileage allowance from the club if he/she takes other people. Obviously, the start time will be earlier, or you can choose to go directly there if that suits you better. Those that have them, wear whites & bring their own mallet; if you don't, wear as near to white as you can & take a club mallet. We'll try to give preference to those who have played least in the season, or who need certain days – but when asked if you would like to play, put your name forward even if you have played a lot.

So, *please* respond when you get the questionnaire - & during the season, the requests for players, & help us to help you.

## GC Friendly v. Sapcote

Sapcote had cancelled the home match against us because of ailments within their ranks. For the match at Kenilworth, Pat Wright persuaded some of the recovering invalids to rise from their sickbeds; who gamely turned out to bring their number to five. Pat secured Frank Hibberd on loan to make a full team. Sapcote are always very competitive, but on this occasion could



not display their usual strength.

For Kenilworth, Stella Gill and John Fitch were undefeated, scoring two wins and a draw. Mervyn Harvey and Glenys Tunstall would also have been undefeated, had they not generously allowed an 'after time' hoop by their opponents. Pauline Harvey and Diane Fitch had a win, a loss and a draw.

Regardless of the result, the sunny afternoon was enjoyed by all; thank you Pat, Joyce, Christine, John and David for turning out. It was nice to see ex-Kenilworth member Joyce Critchley looking well and cheerful after a period of illness.

Final score: Kenilworth 6, Sapcote 3

## GC Friendly v. Upper Sapey

The Upper Sapey team, all eight of them, descended upon us like the Mongol hordes, determined to show no mercy.

The first round was shared, giving us some faint hope, with wins by Tim Leggatt and Robin Moore, and William Pink and Frank Hibberd. After that, however, it was slaughter, apart from wins by Tim and Robin (again) and, in the last round, by Stella Gill and Robin.

Peter Langley and Stella eked out a draw, as did Tim and Robin, and William and Frank managed two draws; the rest was all Upper Sapey. Peter Hancock and Anne Langley had no luck at all.

After the final round the Upper Sapeyans eyed us hungrily, but finally accepted the tea we had provided, and peace descended. Their captain, Dave Parsons, thanked us for a very enjoyable sunny day; and, to be honest, we had enjoyed their company.

Kenilworth 6, Upper Sapey 14

