

## **Jim Kirby Croquet Cup – The History**

A Cup given in memory of Jim Kirby to the Federation of East Midlands Croquet Clubs and first contested in 1991.

Jim Kirby was a member of the Loughborough and Ashby croquet clubs back in the 1970s and 1980s and was a keen player of Association Croquet (AC). He also served the Federation in its early days.

He was always concerned by the lack of new blood joining and made it his business to encourage beginners. He tried using National Trust properties to arrange coaching sessions and succeeded at the Museum of Childhood at Sudbury Hall.

After Jim's death in 1990, one of his team mates contacted his wife, Betty Kirby, and asked if a trophy could be named in his honour. She agreed and a cup inscribed "Jim Kirby Croquet Cup" was presented to the Federation of East Midlands Croquet Clubs.

The Cup was originally given for the winner of a Federation Short Croquet competition originally held at Loughborough, and when that closed, moved to Ashby, Jim's other club. There was no restriction on handicap. Representatives of clubs within the federation were able to send one or more players to compete.

While the established clubs at Nottingham and Bretby played predominantly Association Croquet, the newer clubs (founded from 1985 onwards) played mostly the new Short Croquet game, which suited their smaller lawns. The 7 clubs forming the original Federation of East Midlands Croquet Clubs were Ashby, Bretby, Leicester, Loughborough, Northampton, Nottingham and Southwell. They were later joined for varying periods of time by clubs in locations ranging from Stony Stratford to Woodhall Spa. As time passed, fewer clubs competed for the "Jim Kirby", even after (following handicapping arrangements in which the CA recognised shortened games on small lawns) its conversion to the Full Bisque 14-point AC game.

With the expansion of clubs within the Federation in the 2000s, Golf Croquet became the ascendant form of the game with little appetite for Association Croquet of any variant being introduced to club members. It was a time when the Federation had "caretaker" Development officers who did not have the time to attend CA committee meetings and get out to new clubs on a regular basis.

With fewer clubs participating, the Jim Kirby cup was offered as a prize for competitions for beginners at the Nottingham club in 2012. Restrictions were imposed that entrants must be players in their first or second year of Association Croquet and have club handicaps between 18-24. Half size courts were used and games were timed to 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> hours.

In 2018 Ben Hargreaves, the grandson of Jim Kirby, approached the Nottingham club to ask about competing and he offered to sponsor the event as well as play in it. He had his grandfather's mallet with JAK on it.

As the requirement to be a "beginner" no longer applies from 2020, he may yet compete and win it!

## **JIM KIRBY CUP TOURNAMENT**

### **ROLL OF HONOUR**

1991	LAWRENCE WHITTAKER	[LEICESTER] handicap 2.5
1992	LAWRENCE WHITTAKER	[LEICESTER]
1993	DAVID CARPENTER	[BRETBY]
1994	JOHN RIDDINGTON	[LEICESTER]
1995	ADRIAN PAGE	[ASHBY]
1996	TERRY O'GRADY	[MARKET BOSWORTH]
1997	GARY NORMAN	[ASHBY]
1998	D. ROY TAYLOR	[WOODHALL SPA]
1999	PATRICIA DUKE-COX	[WOODHALL SPA]
2000	BRIAN S. MENDHAM	[SOUTHWELL]
2001	R. MICK SEAGRAVE	[SOUTHWELL]
2002	MIKE BOWSER	[WOODHALL SPA]
2003	MIKE BOWSER	[WOODHALL SPA]
2004	TIM M. KING	[ASHBY]
2005	MICK HAYTACK	[ASHBY]
2006	GEOFF A. C. ELLOTT	[ASHBY]
2007	NIGEL J. HARDING	[WOODHALL SPA]
2008	BOB THOMPSON	[WOODHALL SPA]
2009	ARTHUR ROWE	[ASHBY]
2010	MICK HAYTACK	[ASHBY]
2011	MICK HAYTACK	[ASHBY]
2012	IAN DRAPER	[NOTTINGHAM]
2013	ADRIAN BYRNE	[NOTTINGHAM]
2014	VIV STALEY	[NOTTINGHAM]
2015	ALEX MCINTYRE	[NOTTINGHAM]
2016	MARY ASHWORTH	[NOTTINGHAM]
2017	PAUL MAGUIRE	[NOTTINGHAM]
2018	MIKE HEDGE	[NOTTINGHAM]
2019	DEBBIE WATSON	[NOTTINGHAM]
2020	NOT COMPETED DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC	
2021	NOT COMPETED DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC	
2022		

## Photographs associated with the Jim Kirby Cup



Jim Kirby presenting Lawrence Whittaker, on behalf of Leicester, with the Matchplay Cup for winning the East Midlands League. Won for several years beginning in 1989 and in view of his death in 1990, this is almost certainly the 1989 occasion. It's at Shelagh Rastall's house, 7 Fairmount Drive, Loughborough.



On the bowling green behind Loughborough Technical College, where the Loughborough Club played. It was in August 1992 after Lawrence Whittaker retained the Jim Kirby Cup with local player Marjorie Boyd as runner up. Marjorie was a friend of Jeane Ackermann.