

# NOTTINGHAM CROQUET CLUB

Winner of the 2021 Millennium Award for most improved croquet club



## Croquet for All

The 2021 Season



## 2021:

# WHAT AN EXTRAORDINARY YEAR!

Plans for the 2021 season were made, despite the on-going uncertainty of the covid-19 pandemic. The pent-up need for a safe, outdoor activity was recognised and as you can see in this brochure, it turned out to be an extraordinary year:

- Funds raised and development project completed.
- Local MP and councillors, representatives of funding bodies, user groups and club members attend Grand Opening.
- Hoops for Health launched— very positive feedback received.
- Schools' programme and Junior Club go from strength to strength.
- Better engagement with local community and diversity of users significantly increased.
- Joined-up recruitment and coaching programme, leading to 40% increase in membership.
- Successful corporate and groups bookings programme
- Croquet achievements at all levels, in both team and individual competitions.
- Much fun, laughter and enjoyment (and some hard work!)

Sport England launched its new 10 year plan 'Uniting the Movement' which fits well with our 'Croquet for All' campaign. With the help of our willing volunteers, the club is now well on its way to achieving its own five year plan.

Many, many people have been involved in these projects, bringing their skills, enthusiasm, and love of the game to help the club realise its vision to be ...

### **An inclusive, friendly and caring centre of croquet excellence in the heart of our community**

From coaches to cooks, greeters to groundsman, architect to archivist, and designators to dogs-bodies, everyone who has lent a hand, in whatever capacity, is hugely appreciated.

Beatrice McGlen  
Chairman



Nottingham Croquet Club is very grateful for the financial support it has received for its redevelopment programme from the organisations below and for the generosity of the public, the croquet community and its own club members.

Sport England: Active Together and Return to Play - Small Grants

FCC Communities Foundation

The Croquet Association

Wesleyan Foundation

East Midlands Airport Community Fund

Made by Sport

Nottingham City Council: Lenton and Wollaton East Ward Councillors

Federation of East Midlands Croquet Clubs

Magic Little Grants – Postcode Community Trust



Nottingham Croquet Club is proud to be a supporter of:





# PAVILION REFURBISHMENT

## The Big Decision

As 2021 dawned with another covid-19 lockdown and the tenders for the refurbishment of the pavilions came in at more than expected, the future of our project looked very uncertain. Should we press ahead or delay?

## Work already completed

The extension to the irrigation system had been completed and the newly laid croquet courts had made good progress in the autumn. Plans had been drawn up, following consultations with the members, and listed building consent obtained for the pavilion refurbishment.

## Funding

We had raised a substantial part of the funding, largely through the generosity of our own members and a successful Crowd-Funding campaign, but we were still short. Grant opportunities were starting to re-appear and some applications had been submitted.

## Bullet bitten—no going back!

Work commences on 18th January. The enforced closure of the club because of lockdown means demolition and building can progress unhindered.

## Let play commence

March 29th lockdown restrictions lifted, building work almost completed, club re-opens, sun shines (it was snowing a week later!)



Before



During



After



# GRAND OPENING

Guests representing our funding bodies, our users, the local community and our members celebrated the completion of the project and were given the first chance to use the new croquet courts.



A fascinating display showing the history of the club from its foundation in 1929, a video presentation of the development work and a display of our community programme could be viewed in the newly refurbished West Pavilion.

In keeping with tradition, a splendid tea followed!



Lilian Greenwood MP cuts the ribbon. She later tweeted:

***"Forget everything you think you know about croquet: it's accessible, fun & for everyone, from 8-80."***

Deputy Leader of Nottingham City Council Sally Longford tweeted:

***"Spent an enjoyable afternoon at Nottingham #Croquet Club, celebrating completion of development works supported by @MyLWE Councillors. "***





# INTRODUCING CROQUET

- Two Open Days.
- Taster sessions for small groups on demand.
- Learn to Play courses run on Sunday mornings, Thursday evenings and Tuesday evenings. Eight-week course with a mix of GC and AC.
- Croquet Experience weekends run in May and August teaching skills via a 'gymkhana' and a mix of GC and Ricochet.
- Follow-on courses for newer members.
- Full programme of coaching from refresher courses for last year's beginners all the way up to elite level. 14 lead coaches (all qualified volunteers)
- Alternate stroke Hi-Lo doubles every two weeks, so newer and established members get to know each other.
- 'Pay and Play' introduced for people who don't have much spare time.
- After-school club for juniors every Wednesday.
- Corporate and social bookings.



80 attend Open Days  
52 Learn to Play  
14 lead coaches  
22 assistants  
58 new members

*"As well as the actual sport and the beautiful setting, the friendliness, help, support and encouragement of coaches and other beginners was great"*

Feedback from Learn to Play course

*"We had a really fun time but also learnt a lot"*

Feedback from Croquet Experience Weekend

*"The different games and changing format of play challenged players to use different skills and strategy, whilst enabling everyone to interact and socialise. For most, this was the first time we have seen our colleagues 'in real life' in over 15 months!"*

Heather Suen, Experian Ltd.



# CROQUET FOR ALL

Approximately 14% of Nottingham's population is from a minority ethnic background but this has not been reflected in the past in either the membership or the users of the club.

Efforts to address this began in 2019 with the launch of our 'Croquet for All' initiative. This year targeted advertising, social media posts, a welcome sign in different languages, along with our Community Engagement and schools programmes seem to have been well received.

Building on this will be an important strategy going forward.



Whatever your age or stage of life, whether or not you have a sporting background, whatever ability, gender, race, colour or creed, we'd like to share this fascinating sport with you.





## THIS GIRL CAN

A national media campaign to get more women and girls active, known as 'This Girl Can', coincided with the GC Women's Open Championship at Nottingham.

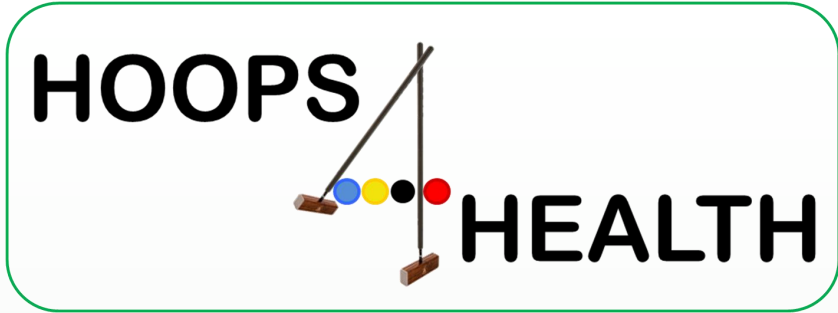
Some of the country's top female players had an enjoyable summer evening introducing over 50 women (and some men!) to the joy of croquet.

*"We had so much fun yesterday that we'd like to bring the boys!"*

*"We came along because we met some girls in the Park who told us about it. We have really enjoyed ourselves."*



121 participants  
8 groups  
13 sessions  
Ages 13 to 90+



**BEESTON MEMORY CAFE**

*“There was much laughter, encouragement and fun. There was tea and cakes afterwards and we all agreed it was a ‘clouting outing’!”*

**COMMUNITY TOGETHER**

*“We are a diverse group with different mobility issues. All got to have a go, no matter how limited their mobility was. It was amazing, done safely, and promoted a ‘can do’ attitude.”*

**PARKINSON’S UK (NOTTINGHAM)**

*“Thanks to Hoops for Health, people affected by Parkinson’s can now benefit from the many physical and mental health benefits that this gentle game offers.”*

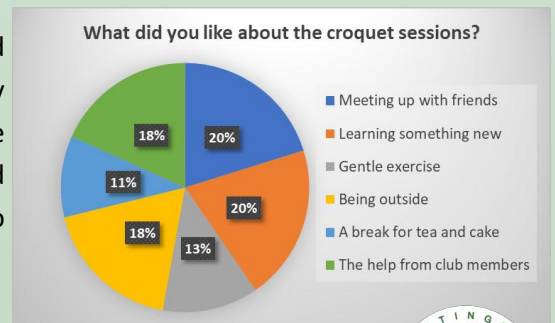
Croquet is an adaptable game that can suit many people. ‘Hoops for Health’ was offered this year to groups who had been particularly badly affected by the pandemic.

Activities were chosen to suit the needs of the various groups and all sessions included a chance to sit and chat over a cup of tea.



**Feedback survey**

Only five attendees had played croquet before but every respondent wanted to come again next year and 100% would recommend playing croquet to their friends.





## SCHOOLS AND JUNIORS

*"I would like to thank your wonderful team. The skills they brought to the two days have really opened up the pupils' eyes to another sport."*

Andy Heaps, KS2 Phase Leader  
Round Hill Primary School

*"We had a lovely time and can't thank you enough for your patience with the children and your time."*

Anisah Hussain  
'Akela' West Bridgford Scouts

*"We, as a family, have really enjoyed this summer at the club. We look forward to seeing you again in the spring."*

Donna Edwards  
Junior club

Building on the success of the 2019 schools out-reach initiative and the replacement summer school held in 2020, this year we ran both!



### After-school follow-up:

- 3 sessions
- 60 children

Aged 8-14? Try something new...  
**Mallet Sport Summer School**

When: Mon-Fri 20th-30th July 2021, 4pm-6pm  
Where: Nottingham Croquet Club, Highfields Park, University Boulevard, NG7 2PB  
Cost: £20 for the week  
Description: Learn a different game each day!  
COVID-19 friendly | DBS-checked instructors | Tester for parent/guardian included  
Booking essential: Ian Draper 07962 448848 ian\_draper@hotmail.com  
www.nottinghamcroquet.org.uk

### Youth groups:

- Scouts, Guides and Brownies
- 68 children



### Junior club:

- Every Wednesday
- 18 children



### Summer school:

- 5 sessions
- 11 children



# SUCCESS ON THE LAWNS

Developing our players is important and coaching is organised for all abilities. Our club members have had success at all levels—some highlights below:

- Ian Burr ridge represented Wales in both the AC and the GC Home Internationals. In the latter his son Euan played for England (Dad won the head to head).
- The victorious Nottinghamshire team in the GC inter-counties comprised club members Will and Rachel Gee, Ian Burr ridge and James Death.
- James Death claimed the AC Men’s Championship, the East Midlands Championship and the Open Doubles (with Samir Patel).
- Rachel Gee took the Women’s Open GC and the Cheltenham Championship titles without losing a game!
- The Peel Memorials handicap mixed doubles was won by the rapidly improving duo Debbie and Roger Watson, and Cathy Turski and Roger Watson walked away with the magnificent 19th century Women’s and Men’s Trophies.
- Mark Innes was unbeaten in our Beginners’ Tournament.

Clockwise below:

James, Ian, Mark, Rachel, Cathy, Roger & Debbie



Nottingham won the covid-delayed 2020 Mary Rose AC inter-club trophy on a bitterly cold day at Wrest Park in April.

They reached the final again in October 2021 but the match was abandoned—this time due to flooding!

Nottingham were runners-up in the National Short Croquet competition..

The team included 13 year old Elizabeth, Mick Owens, Kate Packham and Ben Shelton.





## RELAXATION AND FUN



People play croquet because they enjoy it. They may play in serious tournaments all over the country (or even internationally) or they may just enjoy a potter in the sunshine.

At all levels, meeting friends, having a natter and simply having fun are very important parts of the game's attraction.

The 'Cheshire Cat' day required big smiles (of course) and teams dressed up to play silly games.

A New Members' Evening was a chance for everyone in the club to get to know each other.

A barbeque during the GC Eights was an opportunity to watch top class play and socialise afterwards.

The catering team at Nottingham knows how to put on a good spread!



## FIVE YEAR STRATEGY: 2019-2023

Goals	In progress	On target	Achieved
Establish better links within the community			
Expand the diversity of users of the facilities			
Develop relationships with local organisations			
Secure a long term lease			
Consult on re-development of facilities			
Upgrade the former bowling greens			
Re-furbish and renovate pavilions			
Ensure financial sustainability			
Increase membership to 200			
Maximise potential as a centre of croquet excellence			
Comprehensive coaching and development programme			
Trial different recruitment methods			
Improve retention of second year members			
Maximise volunteering in all aspects of the club			
Improve the social activities of the club			
Update and review our communication channels			
Raise the profile of the club to attract sponsorship			

## NOTTINGHAM CROQUET CLUB

Highfields Park  
University Boulevard  
Nottingham  
NG7 2PS

Email: [secretary@nottinghamcroquet.org.uk](mailto:secretary@nottinghamcroquet.org.uk)  
[www.nottinghamcroquet.org.uk](http://www.nottinghamcroquet.org.uk)  
[www.facebook.com/NottinghamCroquetClub/](https://www.facebook.com/NottinghamCroquetClub/)

