

# Kypers Curling Club

The Kypers Curling Club (KCC) hails (ye old Scottish word meaning originates) from Strathaven in Central Scotland and consists of a group of approximately eight people (give or take ten), shepherded by *The Leaderine*, who get together every year to play about ten games of curling.

We play approximately once per week from January through March. We used to play at Hamilton Ice Rink but now play at East Kilbride Ice Rink. Only *The Leaderine* knows why, as she organises the games, however we suspect that we must have caused embarrassment at Hamilton one year, that being *The Leaderine*'s home curling rink.



## Playing the Game

*The Leaderine* nominates teams from amongst us each week and tells us who are playing lead, second, third and skip in each team that week. Some of us don't like playing skip as we are not really sure of the rules or, even after a decade or two, which way a stone curls. As for reading the ice, only a few have seen the writing on the wall and some of the others think they are hallucinating. The odd one or two of our once regular players like Kate might have played elsewhere for a real "team" in a real "club", but, for most of us, these ten games are our only expeditions onto the ice.

The first difficulty of each game (or is it "match"?) for some weeks at the beginning of each Season is "what foot does the slippy shoe go on?" Getting this wrong (as the curlers amongst you will know) can cause serious devastation as you are about to release a heavy rock. In fact this has caused so many problems over the years that most of us have now been driven to buy "proper" curling shoes instead of turning up in an old pair of sannies (Scottish word for sandshoes – like what they wore for tennis until marketing departments found trainers). The good thing about the proper shoes is that the slippy bit is already on the correct shoe and is coloured white so that you don't have to remember.

Some of us are relatively new to curling and some of us have been turning up at *The Leaderine* 's Command for twenty years (give or take ten) or so. We never appointed an archivist (though Geoff has aspirations) so we can't quite check when this all started, but a number of us were herded by *The Leaderine* to lessons some years ago. Sometimes a team will include a standby player or a guest because one of the regulars can't make it. The standby or guest players are, sadly, usually more skilful than the regulars. Sometimes, though less often these days, *The Leaderine* plays on one side or the other, or, puzzlingly, both at once (ours is not to reason why) either throughout the game (match?) or until Sandy and Malcolm turn up.



### **Distractions**

Some of our players tend to concentrate more or less on the game (match?). Others, when not delivering their stones (not as painful as it sounds unless you fall during delivery because your slippy shoe is on the wrong foot), see this as an opportunity to catch up on the gossip with other players. Half the team members forget when it's their turn to deliver their stones and have to be shouted from the other end of the rink where they have been discussing third world debt reconstruction or their dumbfoundment that the local council is planning yet another set of traffic lights on a roundabout. The seriousness of such debate of course, means that half the stones get swept by only one sweeper and often a stone is half way down the rink before a sweeper catches up with it. Some of our lot have even been caught sweeping behind the stone. (For the sake of members reading this: you sweep in front of the stone in order to maintain its speed and direction... allegedly!) *The Leaderine* used to keep us in check of course and we do try to keep our minds on the game, especially if there is a guest playing. However, as *The Leaderine* is not present often these days, things do tend to degenerate somewhat.



## **The Turn-About Scrum**

An “end” in curling is part of a game (match?) where the teams, normally four players in each team and two stones per player, are aimed turn-about at the “house” (circles at the far side). The end is scored, and then you turn about to aim the other way. If you watch a curling game almost anywhere, you can see that as an end finishes, the lead players of the teams are immediately ready and on the ball, so to speak, to play their first stones of the following end and the skips are in place at the house ready to direct play.

Our club however has established a tradition of the turn-about scrum. In the turn-about scrum almost everyone joins in, sorting out the stones and neatly lining them up in numerical order whilst heartily discussing the last end or what’s for supper. Spectators, if there are any, begin to wonder if the match (game?) is over. *The Leaderine* used to to forcibly remind the leads to get the finger out, at which point the leads would run about like headless chickens trying to find their slippy shoe or remembering to take off their kipper (don’t ask) and trying to remember who won the end that just finished (as the previously winning team leads off the next end). Eventually though all would get sorted out. Nowadays though, as *The Leaderine* does not usually attend the games (matches?), the turn-about scrum can last quite some time and the leads can finish their conversations without being harassed.



## **Scoring and the Club Champion**

*The Leaderine* used to keep a note of the scores. But sometimes she used to depart on an important curling mission (ICM) and left one of us to keep note of the scores. Of late, as the *The Leaderine* is invariably not present, one of the players keeps the score. This weighty responsibility can only be handled by a chosen few amongst us as most are not really sure how an end is scored in any case.

After the match (game?), *The Leaderine* secretly awards points to each member of the teams. None of us are really sure upon what basis points are awarded, but we do know that “*points mean prizes*”. We have discussed breaking in to *The Leaderine*’s house to steal her notes and calculations, but as the door is never locked anyway we gave up the idea as not being exciting

enough, and we suspect her notes are bound to be held in Caledonian Curling Cipher (CCC) anyway. We used to get points just for turning up, but just turning up now seems to attract no points at all, which can be a bit disappointing for some of us who depend on a leg up. Anyway, at the end of The Season, *The Leaderine* announces who the overall winner is, who came second, etc. and who came last, and then we all get prizes which don't seem to depend on whether you won or not. However, the overall winner, The KCC Champion, get's their name engraved on a medal and the medal is hung on The Cup along with the medals bearing the names of all the previous winners. Yes we have a cup. We also have a Ritual of The Cup (more later).



### **Refreshments**

Following each game, the players repair to the house of one of our number for Supper. That player provides gin and tonics, dinner, vegetarian for Anne Marie of course (pest!), wine and spirits. The term "player" here is used loosely. For example, each year an evening's Supper is held at Sarah's though Sarah might not actually have played for two or three years. And Liz provides Supper one evening though she hasn't played for many years, though, of course, Geoff (The Keeper of the Kyper's Purse) does play (Geoff being Liz's partner, for those of you don't follow the plot here). Similarly Caroline used to provide Supper in the far off city of Glasgow though she hadn't played for ages either though David (Fast Rock Spinner) still did of course when he wasn't off building some new hotel somewhere.

Supper is a great affair, much looked forward too. In fact most of the club start looking forward to it as the first hour on the rink passes and can be seen checking their watches from that point on. If caught checking your watch by *The Leaderine*, the standard excuse was that you are timing the keenness of the ice (phew! +5 brownie points (not sure if brownie points count towards prizes)). Keenness of the ice is a technical term for how slippery it is: the slipperier it is the further the rock will slide given one standard curling heave from the hack (Sorry, the hack is the wooden thing stuck into the ice that your foot pushes off from when you're about to deliver your stone. Oh, and I made up the bit about one standard curling heave, but I'm sure you get the gist). Anyway, dinner is much anticipated during the game (match?).

Conversational advice about “keenness of the ice”. This is usually what is being referred to (I think!) during gin & tonics when a senior expert associate like Jim Motion asks “how was the ice?”. Kypers are advised not to quake in their boots and to refrain from looking nonplussed. The answer is not “tasty” or “cold” or even “slippy”. Instead just wax lyrical about how keen the ice was, or wasn’t. It doesn’t matter which, as no-one is going to check anyway. No other Kyper is going to argue with your assessment, as, like you, they haven’t a clue as to whether the ice was keen or apathetic either. After about 30 years, we still have no idea if keenness is a “good thing” or a “bad thing”. At East Kilbride there is more to worry about anyway, like slipping on the frozen puddle of water dripping from the roof, and trying to avoid the 1 in 10 slope on the left hand side of sheet 6.



### **Ritual of The Cup**

At the Last Supper, The Cup with engraved medal is awarded to this year’s Champion and there is also a toast to *The Leaderine*. The Champion gets to keep The Cup at their house until the beginning of the New Season. In the New Season, the Champion brings along The Cup to The Supper. During The Supper, there is a toast to The Cup and sometimes someone, usually Geoff, makes an extremely short speech. In theory, the Supper Provider then keeps The Cup and hopefully remembers to bring it along to pass on to the Provider at the Next Supper. We are not sure why we are supposed to do this, but a club must have traditions, I suppose, and anyway *The Leaderine* says so. In practice, we usually forget to bring The Cup along and are never sure in whose house it was last left behind the settee.



## Kypers Away

The Kypers have a tradition of going away together on a trip, usually once per year or so. Past Kypers Away trips have included:

year?	<b>Edinburgh</b>	– anybody have any details?
year?	<b>Falkirk Wheel</b>	<a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Falkirk_Wheel">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Falkirk_Wheel</a>
2006	<b>Easdale</b>	Seil Island, Seafari. Lochgair Hotel. <a href="https://seafari.co.uk">https://seafari.co.uk</a>
2007	<b>Bute</b>	Mount Stuart. Ardbeg Hotel, Rothesay (Sandy & Malc took their yacht). <a href="https://www.mountstuart.com/">https://www.mountstuart.com/</a>
2008	<b>Trossachs</b>	Loch Katrine boat trip and bike ride. Abbotsford Lodge Callander.
2009	<b>Solway Coast</b>	Colvend. Rockcliffe. Threave Castle.
2010	<b>Fort William</b>	Jacobite Steam Train to Mallaig. Gondola up Aonach Mor. <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Jacobite_(steam_train)">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Jacobite_(steam_train)</a>
2011	<b>Kingussie</b>	Lochinch. Canoeing. Gordon Arms Hotel Kingussie. <a href="https://lochinch.com/product/kingussie-river-trip/">https://lochinch.com/product/kingussie-river-trip/</a>
2012	<b>Beamish</b>	Cragside South Causey Inn, <a href="https://www.beamish.org.uk/">https://www.beamish.org.uk/</a> <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cragside">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cragside</a>
2013	<b>Hunterian</b>	Art Gallery, Glasgow. Curlers for lunch.
2013	<b>Cairndow</b>	Inverary Jail. Cruachan Power Station Ardkinglas House. Cairndow Inn. <a href="https://www.visitcruachan.co.uk/">https://www.visitcruachan.co.uk/</a> <a href="https://www.ardkinglas.com/">https://www.ardkinglas.com/</a>
2014	<b>Stranraer</b>	Golf match. Mull of Galloway. Logan Fish Pond. North West Castle Hotel <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_West_Castle">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_West_Castle</a>
2015	<b>Belfast</b>	Titanic. Giant's Causeway and Antrim Coast tour. Holiday Inn. <a href="https://www.titanicbelfast.com/">https://www.titanicbelfast.com/</a>
2016	<b>Selkirk</b>	Bowhill House, Abbotsford House. County Hotel.
2017	<b>Zermatt</b>	Scottish Week
2017	<b>Anstruther</b>	Falkland Palace. Secret Bunker. Bank Hotel.
2018	<b>Gatehouse of Fleet</b>	Cally Palace Hotel. <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cally_Palace">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cally_Palace</a>
2019	<b>Dundee</b>	Queen's Hotel. V&A. Verdant Works. <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/V&amp;A_Dundee">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/V&amp;A_Dundee</a> <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verdant_Works">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verdant_Works</a>
2022	<b>Boat trip on Forth</b>	Forth Belle under the three bridges, Inchcolm Island, Blackness Castle

## The Line Up: KCC Players (past and present)

This is a list of Kypers regular players, standby players, guests and occasional players over the aeons. The list is not necessarily exhaustive. Please forward note of any missing links.

1. Fiona Motion (*Our Leaderine*)
2. Alan Motion
3. Alastair Brown
4. Alistair Motion
5. Andrew (surname?)
6. Anne Marie Mullin
7. Avril (surname?)
8. Billy Jackson
9. Caroline Thompson
10. Dave Mateer
11. David Thompson
12. Douglas McLean
13. Edna Taylor
14. Geoff Hancock
15. Ian (surname?)
16. Jacqui Colville
17. Janice Brown
18. Jim Motion
19. Jim Mullin
20. Joan Wilson
21. Joanne Motion
22. Johnny Muir
23. Karen Barbour
24. Kate Muir
25. Liz Hancock
26. Malcolm Walmsley
27. Marjory Jackson
28. Robert McLean
29. Sandy Walmsley
30. Sarah Mateer
31. Shona McLean
32. Tania Phayre
33. Tom Barbour
34. Tom Wilson



## Frequently Asked Questions



Q: Can I apply to join KCC?

A: No, you have to be asked by *The Leaderine*.

Q: Can't I ask you?

A: You can ask, but I dare not answer. *The Leaderine* would be livid: I would be pointless next year.

Q: Can I come to The Suppers then?

A: Only if you are a player, a past player, a guest, spouse of a player or past player or guest, Caroline's Mum & Dad, an employee of Anne Marie & Jim, or otherwise be favoured by *The Leaderine*.

Q: What are the team colours of KCC?

A: We have held out against team colours so far. It is our single point of independence against *The Direction of The Leaderine*. When *The Leaderine* has brought up the topic, we would start an argument amongst ourselves about which colour would look best or match Johnnie's eyes or something, and it would degenerate from there.

Q: Who is the best player in KCC?

A: That's a difficult one. It depends what you mean by best. Best at leading? Best at sweeping? Best at skipping? Best at gossiping? Best at mixing a G&T? What's your criterion?

Q: OK, OK, who is the most skilful player in the KCC?

A: I take it you mean apart from *The Leaderine*, of course? I suppose it would be one of the irregulars like Jim Motion or Billy Jackson. However they might be classifiable as guests and therefore not count. We've never really had a policy of when a guest graduates (or perhaps degenerates) to player status. Pass.

Q: Who has been Champion of KCC the most?

A: Don't know. We'd have to count the medals on the cup, and some may have been lost in the mists of time. Can't remember who has the cup (last year's Champion whoever that was). Anyway, that wouldn't necessarily make them the best player, as your points, we think, depend on winning games, and that depends on your team mates and whether you're in the Leaderine's favour or have been considered guilty of insurrection recently. So The Champion is champion mostly because of their team's performance over The Season. As the teams change at *The Direction of The Leaderine*, then basically The Champion is champion because, in the best traditions of KCC, *The Leaderine* decided it that way.