

Newsletter

Oxford University Tennis Club



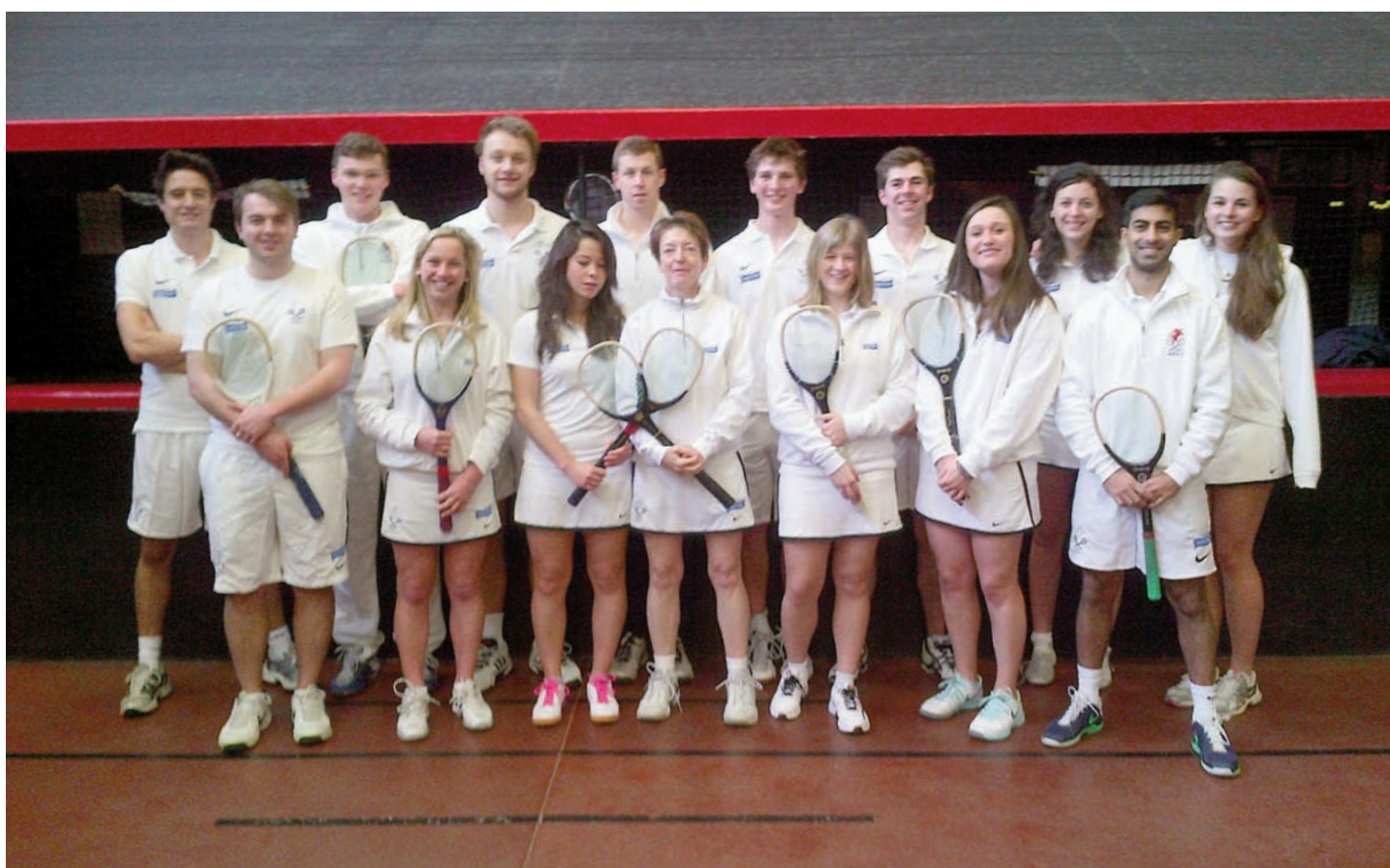
Summer 2014

Edited by Maggie Henderson-Tew

Welcome to a rather later-than-planned edition of our Club Newsletter and my first as President. It seems a long time since the Varsity matches took place. A number of club competitions have been completed since then, the results of which you'll find here, along

with some developments at the Club. I hope you enjoy this newsletter and I will welcome any contributions for the next issue, which should be out around Christmas.

Derek Williams



*Oxford's Blues and Seconds Varsity teams. From left to right:
Back row: Charlie Archer, Euan Campbell, Archie Burgess, James Roberts, Jonny Whitaker, Arthur Wakeley, Madeline Grant, Audrey Davies. Front row: Alex Mullan, Rosie Alterman, Isobel Hunt, Maggie Henderson-Tew, Sophie Dannreuther, Clare Bucknall, Dipesh Mahtani. Not pictured: Ben Graves and Emma Stuart*

VARSITY MATCH - BLUES

By Maggie Henderson-Tew

Ladies' Match - Oxford won 5-1

Men's Match - Cambridge won 6-0

The 2014 Varsity Match took place over Friday 28 February and Saturday 1 March on the neutral MCC court, which provides such an impressive venue for

this match. First established in 1859, the fixture is now in its 155th year.

The Varsity Match was, as it always contrives to be, a thrilling event for all involved. The combination of exciting play, a packed dedans and tremendous hospitality from the MCC and Lord's, is both exhilarating and exhausting, in equal measure.

*Ladies' Blues from left to right:
Sophie Dannreuther, Madeline Grant, Maggie Henderson-Tew
and Audrey Davies (Captain)*



There were well over fifty people watching the first day's play on Friday and about eighty on Saturday. Support, while vocal and partisan, was sporting throughout the two day match.

The Oxford Ladies won their Blues' match by a margin of 5-1. Their Varsity trophy made a (happily for Oxford) pointless round trip to Lord's and is now back on the glory shelf in the Pro Shop on Merton St. Oxford was the strong pre-match favourite, and had the confidence of three successive years of victory by a 5-1 margin behind them, but the match did not proceed exactly as they had expected...

The surprise came in the shape of the number three player for Cambridge, their Secret Weapon, Sophie Morrill. It had been a surprise to see her name on the Order of Play. Sophie who? She had no results on RTO and it transpired that this was pretty well her second-ever match; her first being the play-off for the Blues team. She improved about 15 points during the course of her two set win and showed admirable court craft for one so new to the game. Her backhand cross courts shots and her volleys were of a very high standard and she is a fine prospect for the future. She could go a very long way indeed in the women's real tennis world, if Lacrosse England and her lawn tennis allow her sufficient time to develop her tennis.

Sophie Dannreuther's win at second string for Oxford was also a notable success. Her win meant that in her two appearances for the Blues in 2012 and 2014 she has conceded only one game in four sets of singles.

Huge credit must go to Kate Kirk, the Cambridge Captain, and to Kees Ludekens, the Cambridge Head Pro, for a vigorous recruitment campaign, which has brought lacrosse, squash, lawn tennis and other players into tennis. Although the early timing of the Varsity match in the year means there are not many university weeks in which to spot, encourage and develop talent, their efforts resulted in an unprecedented play-off involving 16 people for the four slots in their Blues side.

It is a great legacy for Kate to leave, as she hands over to the next Captain, and bodes well for Cambridge in the next few years. It is great for the game to have new talent, but slightly less good news for Oxford to have the prospect of much-strengthened Cambridge women's teams in the future! Thank you to all the Cambridge ladies this year. They played hard and fair and were great company.

The Cambridge Men played just as well as Oxford had feared they might. Despite heroic efforts from all the Oxford players, the significantly superior handicaps of each of the Cambridge players told in the end. They swept through the match, with surgical efficiency, winning 6-0, and not even allowing Oxford a set.

The Cambridge teams this year impressed, surprised and challenged Oxford, in equal measure, and the match was played in an appropriate spirit of rivalry and respect. The tone of the event was exemplified by the exhibition match between the third and fourth men's singles rubbers on Saturday, in which there were current and past Oxonians playing alongside Cambridge men on both sides of the court.

Once again, the MCC and Lord's organised the real tennis Varsity Match superbly well. At the concluding black tie dinner, held in the magnificence of The Long Room, tribute was paid by the speakers to the continued sponsorship of the event by Pol Roger, for which all involved in the Varsity Match are most grateful. Additionally, Audrey Davies, the Oxford Ladies' Captain, and Euan Campbell, the Oxford Men's Captain, thanked Neptune for its generous support of real tennis at Oxford.

Euan then stole the entire show by reciting, with great dramatic aplomb, a poem he had written for the event, which was rapturously received by the assembled diners:

*His alarm goes off and the day begins,
He knows he's hung over 'cause everything spins.
"What day is it?" he asks, as he stretches to bend,
His wrist holds the answer, a stamp from the nightclub, Park End.
A Thursday! A Thursday! Of that he is sure,
As he picks up his things and he moves to the door,
When "bing" in his pocket, he feels a small surge,
It's an email from Andrew - a free court has emerged.
"Sign me up!" He replies, he jumps at the chance,
'Cause he wasn't organised enough to book three weeks in advance.
Into college he arrives with his racquets on show,
When a Fresher appears and is keen to know,
"What racquet is that? Is it squash? It looks heavy!"
He's heard this all before and his responses are ready:
"It's Real Tennis, yes, as opposed to fake tennis, before you try to be funny,
You can play all-year round, be it winter or sunny."
"But what are the rules? Is it more precision or power?"
He says, "I'm going to have to stop you right there to save us both the next hour."
He leaves the poor Fresher and sweeps up his books,
And jogs to the court, his racquets receiving yet more quizzical looks.
Into the pro shop he comes, it's the usual throng,
There's Andrew, Ron Mutton and Craig, looking strong.
When a parcel arrives, delivered by a man with a goatee,
Craig puts down his olives, his muscles bulging with protein,
It's for Craig! It's new shoes! And Craig murmurs just audibly enough,
(And I quote): "That's the stuff, Craigy-boy, hoo-hoo-hoo, that's the stuff!"
Five minutes are left 'til it's time to get going,
Just enough to chat with the pros and watch some immaculate sewing.
Then it's onto the court for an hour of fun,
An escape from the library and the daily humdrum.
And he'll aim for the grille, he give his best, he'll try hard,
He'll say, "Good shot, mate", when it falls for a yard.
And when all's said and done, and he's left Oxford behind,
He'll look back, oh so fondly, as he reflects on his time.
So when his court time is up and the next players are due,
He'll collect up the balls and hand over a few,
And though he might not know them well, perhaps not even their name,
He'll mean it when it says, "Hey, I hope you have a good game".*

*Men's Blues from left to right:
Arthur Wakeley, Ben Graves, Jonny Whitaker and
Euan Campbell (Captain)*



We had the bonus this year of Mike Gatting, the President of the MCC in its 200th anniversary year at Lord's, as the final speaker of the evening. He has, he told us, played real tennis at Lord's, the Oratory, and in Melbourne with David Gower, but insisted that he is a 'dreadful' player. He entertained The Long Room with a succession of anecdotes (mostly scurrilous stories about Ian Botham), and was generous in signing very many menus after the dinner.

Andrew Davis getting to meet Mike Gatting



Great thanks are due, once again, to Brian Sharpe, who managed the match so ably on behalf of the MCC, to the Lord's Professionals, Adam, Chris and Mark for their marking stamina and excellence, to the Lord's catering team who so ably, and deliciously, looked after us, and, of course, to all those Oxford supporters who came to play, watch and enjoy the tennis.

RESULTS

Ladies' Match - Oxford won 5-1

Men's match - Cambridge won 6-0

Ladies' Match – Oxford players listed first

Singles:

4th string	Audrey Davies (Captain)	v	Venetia D'Arcy	6-1, 6-2	Oxford
3rd string	Madeline Grant	v	Sophie Morrill	3-6, 4-6	Cambridge
2nd string	Sophie Dannreuther	v	Emma Lord	6-0, 6-0	Oxford
1st string	Maggie Henderson-Tew	v	Emily Brady	6-5, 3-6, 6-4	Oxford

Doubles:

2nd string	Dannreuther & Grant	v	D'Arcy & Lord	1-6, 1-6	Oxford
1st string	Davies & Henderson-Tew	v	Brady & Morrill	6-2, 6-3	Oxford

Men's Match – Oxford players listed first

Singles:

4th string	Ben Graves	v	Jamie Giddins	2-6, 2-6	Cambridge
3rd string	Euan Campbell (Captain)	v	Freddie Kalfayan	2-6, 0-6	Cambridge
2nd string	Arthur Wakeley	v	Jules Camp	2-6, 3-6	Cambridge
1st string	Jonny Whitaker	v	Edmund Kay	1-6, 2-6	Cambridge

Doubles:

2nd string	Campbell & Wakeley	v	Camp & Kalfayan	2-6, 3-6, 2-6	Cambridge
1st string	Whitaker & Graves	v	Kay & Giddins	1-6, 1-6, 0-6	Cambridge

SECOND TEAM VARSITY, AT OXFORD, 7 & 8 MARCH 2014

LADIES

By Isobel Hunt

On Friday morning, Emma Stuart played the opening match for Oxford Ladies' Second team. In a close match, two players similar in standard battled it out to win the first points for their university. Closer than it looks on paper, they were neck and neck all the way, but Cambridge just pipped Oxford to the post.

Next came doubles: Emma and Clare Bucknell took on the second pair from Cambridge. Again Oxford fought hard, but the Cambridge team managed to target our weaknesses, despite Emma's new serving technique and Clare's relentless retrieval and aim for the tambour. Cambridge stole the second victory of the day.

In the last match of the first day, the crowd sat tensely in the hope that Oxford could stop Cambridge in their tracks. Izzy Hunt had a slow start but took hold of the game at 2-2 with a hat trick of hits on the grille, and stormed through to victory, winning 6-2, 6-2.

Saturday morning allowed a completely fresh start for Oxford. Beginning with the second doubles, Izzy played with Rosie Alterman, a new recruit who had only picked up a Real Tennis racket a few weeks before. Rosie had quickly impressed many with her incredibly hard hitting and boldness in approaching the net. This lack of fear on the front line proved to be invaluable in the doubles. The Cambridge girls could rarely get the ball past her and Izzy simply played retriever at the back. The Cambridge team played very well and it was a nail-bitingly close finish, ending 8-7 in Oxford's favour. The match was now level with all to play for.

From the left: Sophie Dannreuther and Audrey Davies with winning Ladies' Seconds players Isobel Hunt and Clare Bucknell (Captain)



Next up was Clare Bucknell, who was taking no chances and no prisoners. Clare's kick-serve and accuracy on the tambour meant that Cambridge's number two did not stand a chance. Clare's victory propelled Oxford into the lead.

Finally, Rosie Alterman had her singles game to secure Oxford's victory. She was solid from the start, keeping the pace of play high, and causing her opponent problems. Winning the first set with relative ease, her opponent started to read Rosie's game in the second set, retrieving better and drawing level at 5-5. Rosie did not let nerves get to her, went on to win, and sealed Oxford victory over Cambridge.

Thanks must go to the Pros, Andrew and Craig, for putting up with us early in the mornings and coaching us through to victory; to Maggie Henderson-Tew, who provided fabulous lunches and was an organizational hero, and to Audrey Davies, the Blues Captain, who trained with us every week, sharing her tennis wisdom, and being unfailingly encouraging and supportive.

Ladies' Match – Oxford won 4-2. Oxford players listed first

Singles:

4th string	Rosie Alterman	v	Ameera Patel	6-3, 6-5	Oxford
3rd string	Emma Stuart	v	Imogen Whittam	0-6 3-6	Cambridge
2nd string	Clare Bucknell (Captain)	v	Kate Kirk	6-3, 6-3	Oxford
1st string	Isobel Hunt	v	Karen Pearce	6-2, 6-2	Oxford

Doubles:

2nd string	Stuart & Bucknell	v	Whittam & Patel	5-8	Cambridge
1st string	Hunt & Alterman	v	Pearce & Kirk	8-7	Oxford

MEN

By Alex Mullan

This year saw the Second Team Varsity Match being played at the court at home in Oxford. With a stronger team than last year, we were hoping to work things in our favour. Unfortunately, despite some great play from our team and a bit of home court advantage, we weren't quite able to do enough, with the scoreline ending up at 4-2 to Cambridge.

The matches were all played in good spirit and there was fierce competition in all the games.

Congratulations to Archie Burgess, who played an excellent singles game despite only taking up Real Tennis at the start of the year. To Charlie Archer, for hitting his left-hand railroads with perfect accuracy; and to James Roberts and Dipesh Mahtani, whose doubles match was one of the closest and hardest fought of the day. Well Done!

Unfortunately, we will lose three of this year's players before next year's match, but thanks to all of them for the effort and commitment they put in to Real Tennis during their time here. Here's to even greater things next year.

Men's Match – Cambridge won 4-2. Oxford players listed first

Singles:

4th string	Dipesh Mahtani	v	James Thomas	1-6, 4-6	Cambridge
3rd string	James Roberts	v	Roly Grant	1-6 2-6	Cambridge
2nd string	Charlie Archer	v	Jimmy Campbell	3-6, 1-6	Cambridge
1st string	Archie Burgess	v	Alex Evans	4-6, 6-4, 6-5	Oxford

Doubles:

2nd string	Roberts & Mahtani	v	Campbell & Thomas	8-5	Oxford
1st string	Burgess & Archer	v	Evans & Grant	6-8	Cambridge

NEPTUNE INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT MVP AWARD 2014

By Derek Williams

This year, Neptune Investment Management were kind enough to donate a trophy for the Most Valuable Player during the 2013/2014 season.

There were some great performances from Oxford's players and Maggie's victory over Emily Brady for the Ladies' Blues was one of them. But, in addition to playing for Oxford, Maggie has been instrumental in managing sponsorship for student tennis at Oxford and has worked tirelessly behind the scenes to help Oxford in many different ways over the last five years.

Maggie deserves a vote of thanks from all at Oxford for the hard work she has put in, much of which is unseen. It was wonderful that Neptune gave us a visible means of expressing our thanks to Maggie this year.

Maggie will (once again!) be eligible to play for Oxford next year and I look forward to her assistance in awarding the trophy next year.

Maggie Henderson-Tew receiving the trophy from Andrew Davis



0-9 TOURNAMENT AND PRO-AM DOUBLES

By Andrew Davis

0-9 TOURNAMENT

This year, the tournament attracted 15 competitors, which was a good entry considering the relatively small number of players in the category. Notable first round matches included a good win by Craig Greenhalgh over past winner Marc Seigneur, a win by Miles Jackson over Paris professional Adrian Kemp and a fine encounter between Roman Krznic and number two seed Peter Wright, with Peter eventually prevailing.

Andrew Davis played two good sets against Will Burns, the Middlesex University Professional, until Will injured himself. Will then changed his game and still managed to beat (the now rather tired!) Andrew in three sets.

In the quarter-finals Craig, played possibly the best match of his life, almost beating the holder Jonny Dawes. In the end though, Jonny triumphed 6-4 in the third set. Miles marched on, brushing aside Prested Hall Professional Lewis Williams.

In the semi-finals, Andrew Fowler convincingly beat Peter Wright, whilst Miles again performed well, taking the first set from Jonny Dawes with some impressive tennis, before losing in three sets.

Jonny Dawes receiving the trophy from Derek Williams



A close final was predicted, but Jonny came out firing on all cylinders. Jonny blew Andrew away in what he described as the best set he had ever played. Although the second set was closer, the result was a remarkable fourth tournament win for Jonny.

PRO-AM DOUBLES

The pro-am tournament was, again, a great success. A round-robin format on the Saturday produced finalists Matt Ronaldson and Alexander Anton versus Roman Krznic and Ben Graves. It's hard to imagine better pro-am tennis!

A new rule this year meant that both players had to take their turn at the back of the court at the service end. This worked well and resulted in many long rallies of a high standard.

Krznic and Graves eventually triumphed in a tremendously-close three-set match, with some great play from both sets of players.

As ever, our thanks go to our generous sponsor of these two events.

Pro-Am winners Roman Krznic (left) and Ben Graves



*Rebecca and James Bates flanked by winners
Chris Lintott (left) and Derek Williams*



GRANT BATES SALVER (CLUB HANDICAP DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP)

By Derek Williams

Once again, we had a good entry to this competition with 20 pairs entering and there was some great play through Friday, Saturday and Sunday. It was lovely to have the club room full and a good standard of banter maintained in the dedans.

In the final, Chris Lintott and Derek Williams somehow managed to turn around a 5-0 deficit to Mark Bale and Adam Jeffrey into a 6-5 victory, as much to the surprise of those assembled to watch as to all four players themselves!

WROTH CUP (LEVEL DOUBLES CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP)

By Andrew Davis

An excellent weekend's doubles was capped by a very tight final in which Miles Jackson and Tim Dadd eventually beat Jonny Whitaker and Ben Graves 6-5 4-6 6-3.

Tim Dadd deserves a special mention in this for his exceptional play in this company. His handicap is in the forties but he was able to play a full part in the game, with some great serving and effective volleying from the galleries. This, when combined with Miles's accurate play and court coverage, made them a great team.

*Winners Miles Jackson (left) and Tim Dadd being presented
with the trophy by Jonathan Clark*



Winner Ed Wigzell (left) with runner up Chris Milford



BEARD CUP (UNDER 40 HANDICAP SINGLES KNOCK-OUT TOURNAMENT)

By Andrew Davis

Congratulations to Ed Wigzell on winning the tournament overcoming Chris Milford in the final.

This was a lively and very competitive match, with many long rallies. The eventual score-line doesn't tell the whole story of the match, as there were some wonderful and accurate shots and memorable pick-ups from both players.

The long rallies in the end played into Ed's hands, as his fitness and agility told, and he ran out the winner, 9-3.

PAMELLA WALLIS CUP (OVER 40 HANDICAP SINGLES KNOCK-OUT TOURNAMENT)

By Craig Greenhalgh

The Pamela Wallis Cup was won by Jean-Francois Bellec. He defeated Hugo Shuttleworth 9/8 in a very close match that was tightly fought to the final point.

Hugo started off the brighter, going 3-0 in front before Jean threw off his pre-match nerves to take a commanding 7-3 lead. Remarkably, the match saw-sawed back in Hugo's favour as he took the next five games, to go 8-7 up. Hugo couldn't quite find that final game. Jean quickly made it 8-8 and went on to take the match 9-8. Well done to Jean-Francois for his first Oxford trophy and to both players for a terrific final.

Winner Jean-Francois Bellec (right) with runner up Hugo Shuttleworth



Winner Andrew Johnson (right) and runner-up Daniel Talbot-Ponsonby



ABERDARE CUP (OPEN HANDICAP SINGLES KNOCK-OUT TOURNAMENT)

By Andrew Davis

Congratulations to Andrew Johnson, who capped an excellent season by winning this event.

Daniel Talbot-Ponsonby played really well and stormed into an 8-3 lead. However, Andrew showed his competitive nature and clawed his way back, saved a match point, and eventually took the match 9-8! Commiserations go to Daniel.

All present thought Daniel had done enough to win the match, only for Andrew to pull the game back from the brink. This final was a great advertisement for handicap tennis.

JOHN D WOOD TOURNAMENT

By Andrew Davis

In the final Half-Cut (Mike Fleming, Jonathan Clark, Dipesh Mahtani, Miles Jackson) narrowly lost to the Penthouse Playboys (Andrew Johnson, Derek Williams, Adam Jeffrey and Mark Bale). With the score at three rubbers to two in the Playboys favour, Half-Cut needed to win the final doubles to force a count-back. In the event, Bale (Captain) and Jeffrey scored an emphatic 7-3 win over Mahtani and Jackson. So the Penthouse Playboys, who have won the trophy on a regular basis over the last few years, win again.

Thanks again to Nick Hextall and his company, John D Wood & Co. for their sponsorship of this wonderfully social competition.

Winning Captain, Mark Bale of Penthouse Playboys receiving the trophy from Nick Hextall of John D Wood & Co.





THANK YOU!

Derek Williams

On behalf of the Committee and the club, I would like to say thank you to Simon Stubbings for five outstanding years of service as President of our club.

We have been privileged to have Simon at the helm. He was responsible for many changes to the way the things are run, all of which have helped to improve the club and its facilities. Simon was also instrumental in driving the progression of the Club's IT systems



Gold Racquet (after Diderot's Encyclopedia) by Frederika Adam for The Real Tennis Society (www.realtennissociety.org).

which are much better-managed and more transparent as a result. He was responsible for revising the membership structure and introducing better communications between the club and its members.

Committee meetings were always a pleasure with Simon in charge and had an excellent balance of good humour and a determination to get the job done. We all owe Simon an immense debt of gratitude for his service to the club over so many years and for his unfailing good humour, modesty, problem-solving ability, patience and tenacity. The club is much stronger in so many ways as a result of his tenure.

At the AGM in January, on behalf of the club, Simon was presented with a limited edition print by Frederika Adam and some highly personal beer!

CLUB DINNER

Derek Williams

Timed to coincide with the 0-9 and Pro-Am tournaments, the Club Dinner at Harris Manchester College was a wonderful occasion with exactly one hundred guests sitting for dinner.

We were very well looked after by the college staff and Harris Manchester's organisation of the event was much appreciated. It was the start of term time and they bent backwards to accommodate our event. The food, the wine, our surroundings and the company were all excellent and it was lovely to see everyone enjoying the evening. In particular, the a capella group, The Gargoyles, provided us with twenty minutes of enthralling entertainment - far better than another speech from me!

I'd like to record my thanks to Stuart Herbertson and Janet Peach for the organisation of the event for the club, and to Liz Leach for finding us "The Gargoyles". I would also like very much to thank our sponsor, without whom the whole event would be much diminished.

FROM THE TREASURER

Stuart Herbertson

Members will be pleased to know that annual subs (due July 1st) and playing charges are unchanged for the coming year. Would all members please check that bankers orders are adjusted to the correct amount for your category of membership. There is a list of

categories and charges in the pro-shop, or please feel free to contact the Pros for clarification.

Please note that your playing account must be kept in credit. If you are sent a notification that your account is in debit, it is essential that you respond immediately with sufficient funds to put your account back into healthy credit. Thank you!

COURT FLOOR

Ed Wigzell

The Committee continues to investigate various options for improving the playing surface of the irregular court floor. Options recently explored have included:

- 1) Complete removal of the existing floor followed by the installation of a new epoxy resin surface. This has been rejected on the basis that it requires the destruction of the historically-important Bickley floor and therefore a large loss of the court's heritage.
- 2) Refurbishment of the existing Bickley floor by removing the top 3mm-5mm, applying a hardening treatment of the underlying aggregate, followed by a polishing of the aggregate to return it to a surface finish with comparable playing characteristics to the existing floor.

This is the option the Club is recommended to take at some point in the future.

3) Monitoring the heave of the court floor to enable the Club to better understand and predict the reasons and rate of movement of the floor. The Committee has recently instructed a specialist survey company to measure the movement of the floor over the next year.

The Committee will report to Club members the results of the floor monitoring as they become available.

PARKING BICYCLES

Derek Williams

Recently, on two occasions, bicycles have been locked to the railings outside the pro-shop in such a manner that Fellows of Merton have been unable to retrieve their bicycles from inside. This has resulted in a formal complaint to the club from Merton College, who are our landlords, and upon whose goodwill we greatly rely. Please ensure that this is not repeated.

We are looking at a way to convert the storage room opposite the pro-shop into a secure area for members' bicycles, but in the meantime, I would ask that you are very careful not to obstruct access to Merton's bicycle lock-up.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

CLUB TRY-OUTS

We're opening the court up from 5.30pm to 7.30pm on Thursday 3rd July to anyone who would like to come and try Real Tennis. If you know of someone who would appreciate an introduction to our game, please contact Andrew Davis who will be glad to welcome them. You will be very welcome to come and join in.

SIMMS CHAMPAGNE LEAGUE

John Simms has kindly agreed to sponsor this tournament again this year and the leagues are now in play. Please make every effort to get all your games in!

OPEN DOORS

We're opening the club on Saturday 13th September for the English Heritage Open Doors event. The event will be similar to last year in that we plan to play demonstration doubles matches at 11.00, 12.00, 13.00 and 14.00 for an hour at a time with talks to the spectators by club members. Lunch and wine will be provided and if you'd like to take part, please add your name to the sheet on the noticeboard in the Clubroom.

NEPTUNE INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT

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