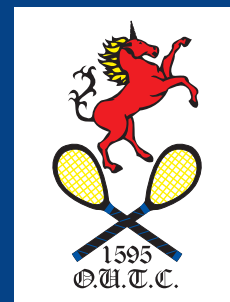


Newsletter

Oxford University Tennis Club



Winter 2015/6

Edited by Liz Leach

Welcome to the winter edition of the Club Newsletter. There's been plenty of action on and off our court, with some great matches and social events having taken place over the last six months or so. The Club rooms have seen some much needed improvements made.

As well as looking forward to the forthcoming Varsity matches, club tournaments, and inter-club matches, we are planning an attempt on a Guinness World Record here at Oxford (see page 10). You'll also read of plans to further improve the lighting and facilities.

As ever, on behalf of all at the Club, my thanks go to our committee who have worked hard behind the scenes to keep the wheels turning and help to plan the events and improvements we will be making.

Roger Boning, Jonathan Clark, Stuart Herbertson, Liz Leach, Roger Nathan, and Ed Wigzell, along with our student captains, Maggie Henderson-Tew and Ben Graves, and our accountant, Martin Mercer, are all deserving of our gratitude, as are Andrew and Craig who keep Oxford such a great place to play.

Derek Williams



NOT THE VARSITY MATCH!

By Liz Leach

Back in July Chris Lintott and I took a random tennis roadtrip to Cambridge. After we'd generously left some of our handicap points with the locals, Chris

shared an idea he'd had about an event he was calling Not the Varsity Match, a kind of antimatter twin to the actual Varsity Match: Oxford versus Cambridge but played by people no longer (or perhaps never) eligible to play Varsity tennis.



Cambridge pro, Kees, was keen to host, and thought he knew the perfect person to captain the Cambridge team and handle local arrangements, Christie Marrian. But Lintott wasn't captaining Oxford - Lintott is a Cambridge alumnus, so was playing for the opposition! From my perspective this was good news: with OUTC having dogs on both sides of this fight, while Oxford could lose, OUTC would always win.

I set about gathering my team and one Saturday in late September, we arrived in Cambridge ready for something . . . Not.

First up for the Oxford team on the Blue Court was Daniel Baltzer, who took the first set 6/0; at this point I had to head to the Green Court for my own singles match only later to learn that a first-set defeat of that magnitude had activated the wily mental analysis of John Trapp who took the next two sets 2/6; 4/6. I was luckier than Daniel in being on the receiving end of a generous handicap difference in the Captains' match against Christie, and took the match in straight sets 6/2; 6/1. Meanwhile, on an identical handicap difference, Lawlor had sealed Oxford's second victory in a game of two Peters against Singleton, 6/5; 6/4.



In the first doubles match I partnered CURTC's Guy Kirk, playing for Oxford because he is an Oxford alumnus against Chris Lintott (playing, as noted above, for Cambridge, for the mirror-image reason) and John Trapp. Format for the doubles was to play a single set to 10. The single set meant choice of

server/receiver pairing was critical; I ended up serving to Trapp, whose sheer experience meant that while he was complimentary about the variety of Leach serves, he had absolutely no trouble returning any of them. The power of canny experience once more triumphed, as Oxford were defeated 5/10, although an OUTC player was on the winning side, so I'm going to sort-of claim it. Lintott (OUTC for Cambridge) then went on to play Kirk (CURTC for Oxford) – you're getting this now, right?! – who, despite receiving a generous handicap advantage, lost 4/6; 6/1.

Cambridge proved themselves doubles specialists as the two Peters faced each other again, joined by Oxford's Mike Fleming and Cambridge's Kate Kirk, Oxford losing narrowly 8/10. This sealed the outcome of the day, with two singles and two doubles victories to Cambridge and only one singles match left to play. Mike narrowed the margin of loss, though, winning a strenuous three-setter 2/6; 6/2; 6/5 against Kate while the rest of us bit our nails, ate stew, and drank wine as we watched from the upstairs dining room.

Cambridge had managed to secure sponsorship from Pol Roger in the attractive shape of two magnums of fizz on the strict understanding that it was to be drunk



on site and not taken away. Tough ask, but we were up to it, not least because we had already exhausted the generous stocks of the still wines that came with lunch. After play finished, we stayed on for several hours drinking and plotting a return rubber at Oxford in 2016. Provisionally this will be Saturday 24 Sept, so if you're someone with a past or present link to Oxbridge (however tenuous!) who didn't get a chance to play Varsity back in the day, pencil Not the Varsity Match 2016 into your diary now.



Knight Cup winner Stewart Licudi (right) with runner up Alexander Anton



Beard Cup winner Matthew Alden (right) being presented his trophy by sponsor, Mark Beard



CLUB TOURNAMENTS

We've had some great tournaments again this year and some notable results too.

Andrew Johnson retained the Aberdare Cup (Club handicap singles championship) and Matthew Alden the Beard Cup (Club handicap 40 and below tournament), both of which are very rare occurrences.

Thanks again go to Mark Beard for his continued sponsorship of the Beard Cup. Winning the Aberdare

Cup gains you entry into the National Handicap Competition, the Chetwood Cup, and due to Andrew's success at Oxford, he represented our Club at Hyde and made it through to the quarter finals – a good result.

The Simms Summer league was again very popular, with 72 entrants. Both finals had to be re-arranged to different dates due to the court sweating, but all parties were good sports and the finals were organised a few days later in December. Liz Leach beat Pete Johnson

Winner of the Pamela Wallis Cup, Jean-Francois Bellec (right), with the runner up, Jeremy Irwin-Singer



AI RAM Doubles winners Lesley Smith (right) and Ed Sulston



Winner of the Aberdare Cup Andrew Johnson (left) with Runner up Charlie Lane-Fox



8/6 and Charlie Lane-Fox beat Matthew Alden 8/2. John Simms of Bower & Bailey must again be thanked for continued sponsorship of this great tournament.

The Knight Cup (Club open Singles championship) took place at the start of October. Stewart Licudi beat Alexander Anton 6/3 6/0 in the final after both players had come through tough 3 set semi-finals (versus Ed Wiggzell and Mike Henman respectively). Stewart has cleaned up locally as he is also the Radley champion.

Over 60's (age!) Handicap Doubles winners Andrew Johnson (right) & Ian Barry (left) with former Club Head Pro, Alan Oliver



Grant Bates Handicap Doubles Trophy winners Chris Hancock (left) and Ray Cook flanking James Bates



The over 60's Doubles for the 'JC Smith Salver' took place on December 5th. Ian Barry and Andrew Johnson beat Jonathan Clark and Adrian Fort 6/3. Andrew and Ian were the deserved winners having never lost a match throughout the entire tournament!

The Club Handicap Doubles tournament for the Grant Bates Trophy took place on on 9-10 January was again kindly sponsored by Nuffield Health and a delicious lunch was generously donated by Richard and Matthew

Christmas Fun Doubles winner Andrew Mackintosh (right)





Three of the four Simms finalists. From the left: Charlie Lane-Fox, Liz Leach and Matthew Alden. Not pictured: Peter Johnson

Alden of Haymans Fisheries and Meatmaster respectively. 16 pairs took part in this popular event, with Chris Hancock and Ray Cooke beating Neil Mortensen and Chris Conlon 6/3 in the final, winning champagne and dinner at the Cherwell Boathouse for their efforts. It was great to have Sue and James Bates with us for the finals and to have James present the prizes. It was a reminder that Grant is still very much missed by all at the Club.

In the A1 RAM Over 40 handicap Doubles on 28 November, Lesley Smith and Ed Sulston beat Daniel Talbot-Ponsonby and Chris Peri 6/4 in the final. All who took part thoroughly enjoyed a friendly social

CLUB MATCHES & NATIONAL LEAGUE

In the Brodie Cup, Oxford beat Seacourt 3/2 at home on 22 November which set up a tie with MCC, which we narrowly lost at Lord's in a rearranged fixture on 3 January. It was a hard fought match and there were heroic 3 set losses by Jonathan Clark and Roger Nathan.

Unfortunately, we were outclassed in the Pol Roger by Cambridge at home on 13 November with a 5-0 defeat, not helped by the absence of Roman. Thankfully, the Oxford team registered an emphatic win at home over Manchester on 31 January to avoid being relegated into the 2nd division.

event and some very enjoyable tennis. Thanks go to Ron Mutton for sponsoring the competition for the Club's most visually challenging piece of silverware!

On the evening of 24 November, the Silver Racket Student Challenge Match was played. The Silver Racket is contested by the two up and coming blues players. Ben Graves defeated Charlie Defries 8/5. Thanks to Richard Alden and his company, Haymans Fisheries, for supporting the event.

The Christmas Fun Doubles was on 29 December and was won by Andrew Mackintosh in a fun, festive and ever so slightly bleary-eyed competition.

We have an excellent entry of seven teams entered in the National League. We have teams in Divisions 1, 2, 4, 7 and 9 and two teams in Division 8.

Our Division 1 team of Craig Greenhalgh and Roman Krznic is kindly sponsored by Mark Savage of Curious Wines and Sir Martin Smith. Oxford won this division last year and are currently sitting second at the halfway point.

Our next home game is Thursday 10 March versus Cambridge. We encourage as many members as possible to come and show your support for the team.



JUNIOR TENNIS

By Craig Greenhalgh & Ron Mutton

Great things are happening at Oxford! Back in the summer, our Club was approached by Josh Farrall of the Dedanist Foundation with a view to helping us develop a programme for our Juniors here at Oxford.

The approach was part of The Dedanists' national campaign to encourage more junior play and try to build some depth into our game. In addition to physical help in the form of Dan Jones's assistance with planning and training, they have also subsidised the initiative to the tune of £500.

Oxford welcomed the idea and Craig has taken the project under his wing. Dan Jones and Craig worked out the details and, following on from a successful Junior Open Day in October, we began a Junior programme, running every Wednesday evening 4:30-6:30pm in six-week blocks. So far we have around a dozen juniors aged 9-14 and all are showing great enthusiasm! The Skills Session held at the end of the last programme was particularly popular.

We completed our first six week course in late Autumn 2015 and we are currently in the midst of our second programme which started in January.

We would welcome more Juniors who are keen to have a go at real tennis to come along on Wednesday evenings for lots of fun and plenty of tennis.

Our thanks go to The Dedanists Foundation for their generosity in supporting Junior tennis at Oxford.



BRIGADIER HUGH BROWNE

By Martin Mercer

It is we regret that we report the death on 14 December of Hugh Browne at the age of 90.

Hugh's last 'posting' in a distinguished career was as bursar of Oriel College. He was a keen tennis player and as the major refurbishment of the club in 1997 coincided with his retirement from Oriel, Hugh volunteered to act as project manager, and today's

members have much to thank him for. The successful building of the new Pro shop and club rooms was in no small way due to Hugh's dedication and hard work and his name is properly recorded on the plaque in the entrance hall to the club.

He was a special person, excellent company, and a good friend to the club. Our thoughts are with his family.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

VARSIY MATCH

Oxford and Cambridge Men's and Women's First Teams will be playing at Lord's on Friday 26 and Saturday 27 February, and you are welcome to come along to lend your support. Further details on request to the Pros.

VARSIY 2NDS

The second team matches will take place at Oxford this year on Friday 4 and Saturday 5 March and all are welcome to come and watch.

NATIONAL LEAGUE DIVISION 1

18.30 Thursday 10 March

Oxford vs Cambridge

Kindly sponsored by Sir Martin Smith and Mark Savage.

Come along and watch Craig and Roman take on Ed Kay and Jamie Giddins
£5.00 entrance fee includes a glass of wine.

FROM THE COMMITTEE

COURT SWEATING

Dry January? Sadly not on our court. There has been severe disruption to tennis in January with the loss of at least 3 full days of play. This is due to 'sweating' which is when condensation forms, initially on the walls and then the floor. It happens when the weather rapidly turns from cold to mild and humid. The walls take a very long time to warm up, so comparatively warm, humid air comes into contact with cold, painted walls and the cold, smooth court surface. The net cord gets sopping wet, as do the balls if left on court. This results in the floor becoming dangerously slippery. If you find the conditions to be as described, or are phoned by the Pro and advised that the court is sweating, under no circumstances should you play.

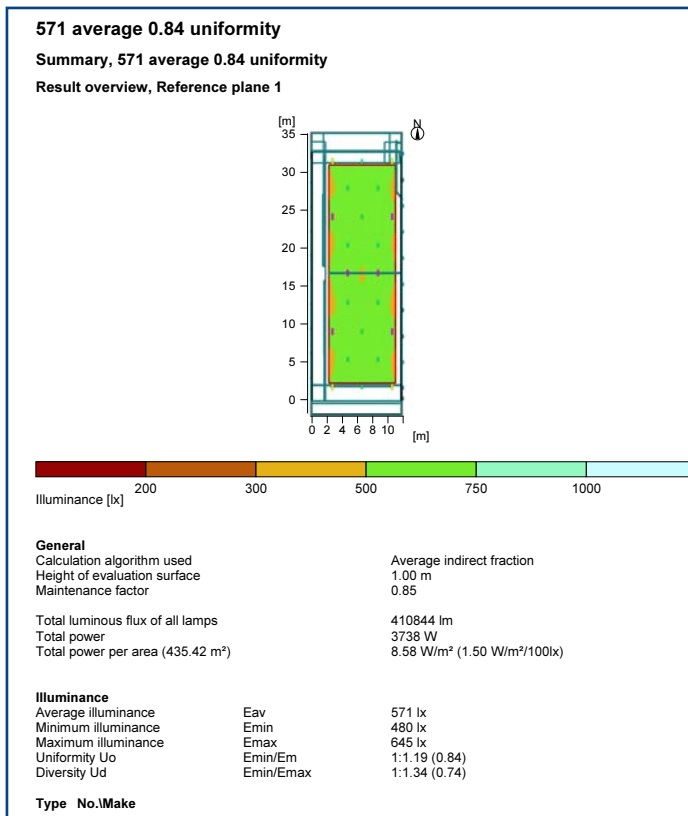
A few years ago, a specialist company were engaged to quote on preventing this issue, and they came up with a solution involving heating, drying, and moving the air around inside the court. Unfortunately, the likely capital costs were in excess of £35,000 and energy costs would be increased too.

Are there any members who specialise in the heating and ventilating of big, old buildings, or perhaps members who know someone who has knowledge of these issues? It generally happens at the busiest time of year and ends up being very inconvenient for our members, as well as being expensive for the Club and professionals alike. It's a problem the Club would dearly like to be able to solve, and it would be interesting to see if technology has moved on and maybe costs have dropped.

COURT LIGHTING

Finalising the quotes and specifications on our new LED court lighting has proved to be much slower than anticipated, but has moved on.

One of the companies tendering has now gained access to the roof space and is in the process of finalising the equipment and installation costs. Whilst two other companies have quoted and been eliminated from the process, one further quote is being sought from a local company to ensure that we have the correct specifications and that costs are kept to a reasonable commercial rate.



The current lighting on the court is an average of around 350 lux and is quite uneven. Whilst it's difficult to entirely eliminate slightly darker patches, we should achieve a much better average across the court. Energy costs should also reduce.

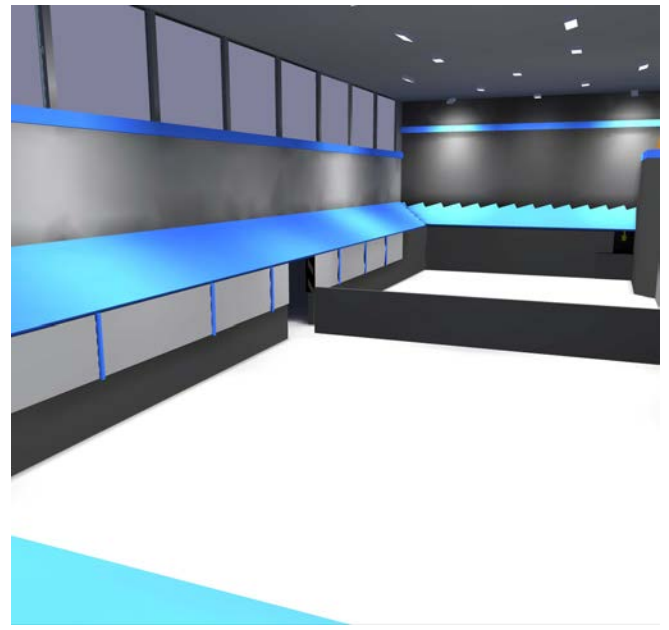
It is hoped that the installation will take place in the quieter summer months and, as soon as the dates are programmed in, we will e-mail all to advise of the dates the court will be shut. Current information is that the court is likely to be shut for two or three days.

PARKING

We had another issue a month or so back where a Club member parked thoughtlessly and blocked in a Merton College Fellow. The Club is officially only

571 average 0.84 uniformity

Calculation results, 571 average 0.84 uniformity
 3D luminance, View 1



allowed to park in the two spaces farthest from the street (where Andrew and Craig's cars are normally to be seen).

Outside of working hours (which include Saturdays), often no-one is using the other two spaces, but please do not take this as a signal that you can park there in front of another car, effectively blocking them in, which is what happened. The miscreant also was not present on court when the owner of the blocked car tried to raise someone on court to have it moved.

We've also had the issue of someone parking directly outside the Pro Shop (despite, the sign that tells all not to do so), denying the Merton porters access to their doors. As you would imagine, this does not make for a convivial relationship with Merton College, who are our landlords. It also means that any chances of ever improving our ability to park at the court become vanishingly small.

DOUBLES HANDICAPS

In an attempt to get doubles handicaps more accurate, please record all results in the book, just as you would singles results.

VIDEO STREAMING

Work to get this up and running stalled until recently, but Jonathan Clark and Roger Nathan have now picked up the ball and we plan to have this up and running for the 0-9 tournament.



RACKET RACK

With thanks to Roger Nathan, our exquisitely engineered racket rack is now available for those who would like to leave a racket at the court. The costs for so doing are £5.00 per year for the hire and £5.00 for the padlock. Eight of the twenty spaces have already been taken, so it would be advisable to put your name down as soon as possible.

PRO SHOP AT OUTC

The Pro Shop specialises in the sale of Real Tennis rackets, complemented by a good range of OUTC clothing and souvenirs along with a fast restringing service for rackets of all types.



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WORLD RECORD ATTEMPT AT OXFORD!

Matthew Alden is well known for liking a challenge, and a conversation between him and Derek Williams regarding his Channel swim, Iron Man events, and 300km cycle races got them both thinking that maybe Matthew needed a challenge this year and, if so, why not a Real Tennis-based one?

It turns out that there are just two Real Tennis world records recognised by Guinness: the most consecutive opponents for Doubles and the same for Singles. Matthew has opted to challenge the Singles record, which stands at 26 and was set by Will Stephens at Prested Hall in March 2010.

A challenge was registered with Guinness and has been accepted. The matches must all be best-of-three-sets handicap matches and it is reckoned that it will take well over 24 hours for a successful challenge to be completed. The challenge will take place from 0800 on Saturday 21 May.

“That sounds fantastic, daunting, and very slightly mad – how can I help?” I hear you say.

Well, Matthew is going to need at least 27 opponents, we’ll need help with witnessing and administering the attempt, and some sponsorship would be gratefully received too.

Over the next few weeks, more details will emerge via e-mail and the noticeboard in the Clubroom, but if you’re up for helping Matthew’s challenge, please let the Pros know or contact Derek Williams on 07774 987731 or e-mail del636@yahoo.co.uk

OUR SPONSORS

By Derek Williams

I would just like to take a few moments to thank our sponsors, without whom we could not possibly maintain the level of enjoyment of our Club tournaments or support our student tennis players nearly so well.

We are very lucky here at Oxford to be blessed with sponsors on many levels.

Our students enjoy the benefits of sponsorship of our corporate sponsors, Neptune Investment Management, with whom Maggie Henderson-Tew has secured a three-year deal starting this year.

Pol Roger support our Student 2nds teams and sponsor the Varsity match itself (as well as the "Not the Varsity Match!").

An anonymous individual sponsor supports the Category A (0-9) tournament – a great event which has the clubroom buzzing and is much enjoyed and thoroughly appreciated by us all.

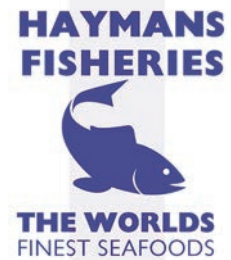
Then there are the various individual event sponsors, many of whom are listed on previous pages.

Each deserves our thanks, and we can also show our appreciation with our consideration of them and their companies when we're looking to purchase goods and services in their fields.

Please also support your Club Professionals by purchasing your rackets and attire from the Pro Shop and getting your rackets re-strung there too.



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