

# Newsletter

Oxford University Tennis Club



May 2009



Back row left to right: Charles Ashbourne, Sam Halliday, Horatio Cary (Captain), Will Fortune  
Front row left to right: Sarah Hird, Charlotte Barker (Captain), Vicki Ormerod, Stephanie Walton

## VARSLITY MATCH

Played at Lords, February 19th 2009.

### Results

Men: Cambridge 4 Oxford 2

Women: Cambridge 5 Oxford 1

### Women's Match report

On February the 19th 2009, the Oxford University Women's real tennis team set off for the Marylebone Cricket Club in London. After a harsh defeat in 2008, we were determined to make some progress this year, and with two new team members it was looking promising.

We arrived in time for a short practice the day before the matches began. Women's singles were played on the Friday, and began with an encouraging win by one of our new players, Stephanie Walton. Having not been playing the game long she proved her natural eye for the ball and showed some great potential for the future. Unfortunately, despite all our efforts, the rest of us were overcome by the Cambridge girls, who remained exceptionally strong with Karen Hird (now the world number two) leading their team to victory.

After a lovely meal out with the Cambridge team that night, we had the doubles to focus on on Saturday. Sarah Hird and Charlotte Barker, had some excellent moments, but it was not enough to beat the

Cambridge second pair. The same was true for the first string match consisting of myself playing with Stephanie. With little doubles experience, Stephanie gave another great performance, defending the galleries with her intrepid volleys, but we were once again overcome by the strength of Cambridge.

Unfortunately this left the girls with a 5-1 loss to Cambridge - an improvement on last year's performance but still with some way to go before we can secure ourselves a varsity victory.

The Saturday evening was more eventful than originally planned. As the matches were drawing to a close, play was disrupted by a power cut. The girls proceeded to get ready for the much anticipated dinner in the Long Room whilst the boys waited patiently for the lights to return so that play could be resumed. Unfortunately this never happened, so they were forced to abandon play and head over to the champagne reception, kindly sponsored by Pol Roger. This was much enjoyed by all, but due to the power cut, the dinner could not be produced, and so after the presentation and speeches, we all disappointedly had to leave Lords. This was a great shame, but nevertheless we all had a fantastic weekend of tennis, and felt it was a privilege to be able to compete against some of the best girls in the world in such a wonderful location.

We can only hope for better luck with both the tennis and the electricity next year.

### **Men's Match Report**

With David Woodman gone, the boys were looking to cause an upset this year with a similar team bar the replacement of Tom Dance with Charles Ashbourne.

We started with the doubles matches and the first pair to go on was Sam Halliday and Horatio Cary against Ali Hakimi and Ed Pearson. The Oxford pair started stronger and managed to maintain the momentum through the first set to win it 6-4. They also started strongly in the second set managing to win it 6-0 however in the third set they faltered and, after some nervous tennis, succumbed to a 4-6 loss. The next set proved to be the decider though with Oxford pulling through to win the match 6-4, 6-0, 4-6, 6-4.

This left Will Fortune and Charles with the tough ask of beating an exceedingly strong Cambridge pair of Jamie Douglas and Rob Hird. The final score of 6-1, 1-6, 1-6 to Cambridge showed that though the

Oxford pair put up a strong stand in the first set with both players hitting the ball very well, the experience and strength of the Cambridge pair was too much to overcome.

So after the first day we were level with one string each - a good start for us and we finished off the day with a lovely meal in Carluccio's with the opposition.

Hostilities were commenced the next afternoon though as the singles started with the number 4s taking to the court first. Charles sadly started slowly and the hard-hitting Ed managed to win the first set 6-0 and though Charles managed to put up a defense of the second set, Ed was seeing the ball well and won it 6-0, 6-4.

This was not the best start for Oxford but there was still a chance however small and it all relied on winning the number 3s with Sam facing off against Ali to rescue Oxford's last small hopes however Ali hit hard from the off managing to win the first set 6-3. The second set started with the players trading games to 5-5 before Sam won the decider to make it 6-5 to Oxford. In the deciding set, Ali played very well to get a lead to 5-2 before Sam came back to level the scores at 5-5 again but sadly could not maintain his momentum and Ali won it 6-5 in the third.

Horatio was up next playing against Rob who in the first set was very clinical managing to win it 6-1. Horatio started playing better in the second set and at times the pair seemed matched but Rob moved up a gear and won it 6-4.

With just Will to play Jamie, most of those attending dinner had arrived ensuring a packed crowd. Even with his injury Jamie managed to win the first set 6-0 but the second set was a different affair with some very good rests before at 3-3 bad light stopped play in the form of a power cut throughout the area. This left the crowd and players wandering over to a candlelit champagne reception from the sponsors Pol Roger which was enjoyed by all.

Sadly dinner could not follow at Lords so instead an alternate venue was found on Baker Street which finished off the weekend well.

We can only hope that next year with the loss to Cambridge of Jamie that the match might be a more even affair all the way down the order and perhaps if we win it you might spot one of our Pros enjoying himself in one of London's many nightclubs.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### Simms "Champagne" Summer Handicap League

70-80 Players will be taking part in this year's leagues which runs from June to August. The winner of each league of 8 receives a bottle of champagne.

If you have not already entered it may not be too late if you contact the pros straight away.

### Past and Present Mixed Doubles

#### Social Tournament. Saturday June 6th

This is the third year of this social mixed doubles. Competition and the previous tournaments have been great fun. This year, our new ladies captain, Vicki Ormerod (Merton) has taken over from Alice Unwin as organiser.

Due to our current shortage of lady players some of them will need to play twice!

If you would like to play, please contact the pros.

## CHANGES TO THE BOOKING SYSTEM

We will very shortly be launching a revised booking system, courtesy of committee member Tom Povey. Along with this newsletter is a further attachment detailing the improvements made and what you should expect to see when making a booking. The intention is to go live with these changes on Monday 25th May. Should you experience any problems, please contact the pros.

## ANNUAL RESTRICTIONS ON PARKING IN MERTON SREET

The exam season is with us again and will last for about 6 weeks commencing Friday 22nd May. In recent years it has been a complete ban in Merton St. This year it looks as if they are just closing it for large chunks of each day. Please read the parking bay notices carefully as the parking wardens will be eager to give you a ticket at the first opportunity. Do consider parking in the St.Clement's car park if you are not sure whether the parking bays will be open.

## RECENT TOURNAMENTS AT THE CLUB

### Wroth Cup (Club Doubles championship)

The title was won by defending champions, students Will Fortune and Horatio Cary.

Their opponents in the final were Ashley Prior and Branden Thornhill-Miller.

### Aberdare Cup (Club Open handicap)

The Aberdare Cup was won by Jonathan Nash who will now represent Oxford in the national championship at Hampton Court.

A thrilling final ended with Rob Dance just going down 9-7.



*Jonathan Nash receives the Aberdare Cup prize from Ron Mutton. An engraved trophy will follow.*

### Beard Cup (Club 40 or less handicap cup)

Simon Horobin (currently 34 handicap) continues to improve and beat Ed Wigzell (also 34 handicap) 9/6 in the final.

### Pamela Wallis Cup (Club Greater than 40 handicap cup)

The final is due to take place on 28 May between Jonathan Nash (50) and Tim Robinson (54).

### 0-9 (Category A) National Singles

#### Championships, Club Pro-Am and Club Dinner 24th-26th April 2009

Once again Oxford was very pleased to host what has become a very important event in the T&RA calendar.

This year, Will Fortune was the only amateur in the draw (Roman Krznaric has become a father of twins in the last year and has taken a tournament sabbatical!). Although just outside the handicap band Will did very well to beat Will Burns in the first round.

The same can also be said of Andrew Davis who, despite being heard after just the first three games proclaiming that "fitness might be an issue!" beat Stefan King in the first round. However, after some

excellent tennis, the four top seeds all made it through to the semi-finals with relative ease.

In the first semi-final, number one seed, Ben Matthews faced Matt Ronaldson. Ben won the first set comfortably but Matthew upped his game to produce his best tennis and take the second before Ben again took control to win the final set comfortably.

In the second semi-final, Jonathan Dawes took on Marc Seigneur (who was the winner 2 years previously). Jonathan won 6/3 in the third set to win a keenly contested match.

Ben Matthews looks to have the necessary attributes to close the gap in standard between himself and some of the top players in the game. He won the final in similar fashion to his semi-final.

Whilst Jonathan had staged a spirited comeback in the second set, Ben was in total control in the first set and the final set. It was good to see Jonathan playing so well. Although he didn't quite have the stamina in the final set, he played some wonderful tennis before that.



*Anthony Clake (right) presenting the Cat A cup to the worthy winner, Ben Matthews*

The quality of tennis in the pro-am was, this year, exceptional! Several matches of a very high standard were played before Anthony Clake and Paul Knox overcame Alastair Mackeown and Andy Chinneck in the final.



*A well-organised event in a superb setting*

For the first time, a Club dinner was held on the Friday night to co-incide with the tournament and our gratitude is due to Simon Hilton who arranged this wonderful evening. The dinner was a sell-out and 100 people enjoyed a very pleasant evening, in the company of the players, dining in beautiful surroundings of nearby Corpus Christi College, followed by a few small libations in the college bar. There are also rumours that several of Oxford's licensed premises experienced an increase in takings later too!

Our thanks must go out again to Anthony Clake who so generously supported the tournament and the dinner. It cannot be over emphasised how important his contribution is to this tournament which is now the highlight of the Club calendar.

## **O.U.T.C. GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP**

This was played at North Oxford Golf Club on April 28th with a record turn out of 15 players. The trophy was won by Adam Jeffrey [8] with 36 points with our esteemed Past President Martin Mercer as the runner-up. The 2010 championship is likely to be held in conjunction with a real tennis trip to Fontainebleau in mid-April. Anyone interested in a triathlon of real tennis, golf and boules please sign up with the pros.

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