

# Newsletter

## Oxford University Tennis Club



Summer 2011

Edited by Katrina Allen

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

#### LADIES' CLUB SESSION

The Pros are keen to organise a session for all lady members of the club, either on a Saturday morning or late one evening.

Any interested ladies should contact Andrew or Craig at the club.

#### INTRODUCTORY EVENING FOR PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS

As you may recall, last autumn, we ran a very successful introductory evening, where those who had not played tennis before and were interested in finding out more about the game were given a free session with the professionals.

We repeated this in May, and we had another really successful and enjoyable evening. If any members know of people who would be interested in taking part in future similar evenings, please encourage them to contact Andrew or Craig. Spaces will have to be limited and will be allocated on a first come/first served basis.

### RECENT EVENTS

*Match reports by Craig Greenhalgh*

#### ABERDARE CUP

That Cup was won by Jonathon Clark who defeated John Simms 9/8 in a tense encounter which which went to 40-all in the final game.

#### THE BEARD CUP

The Beard Cup was won by Richard Oliver, defeating Will Rowsell in a fantastic match, which ended in a 9/6 win for Richard.

*Beard Cup Winner William Rowsell on the left with runner-up Richard Oliver on the right*



#### JOHN D WOOD TROPHY

This popular team event was played in January and February, with the final in March. The Penthouse Playboys (captained by John Murphy) were winners, beating Dadd's Army (captained by Mark Partington) in a very close final. The score was three rubbers each, the deciding factor being that the Playboys won more games.

*John D Wood winners from the left: Wayne McLennan, John Murphy, Adam Jeffrey, Frank Close, Mark Bale and Julian Eeley.*



*Pamela Wallis Cup Winner Adam Jeffrey on the right with runner-up Andrew Mackintosh on the left*



## **PAMELA WALLIS CUP**

The Pamela Wallis cup was won by Adam Jeffrey, who beat Andrew Mackintosh 9/6 in a quickfire match in which only half a dozen chases were laid!

## **0-9 HANDICAP TOURNAMENT**

On paper, this year's tournament didn't seem quite as strong as previous ones, with players in low double figures being recruited to make up the numbers. However, the quality of the tennis was just as impressive, with spectators being treated to some high-class tennis from the first round right through to the final.

Andrew Davis rolled back the years with an outstanding performance against the U.S.-based professional, Tony Hollins. Andrew took it all the way to 3 sets before fitness started to tell, and the young Hollins edged out the winner.

Craig Greenhalgh, the new local Pro, had an easy passage to the quarter finals, only to meet the number two seed, Matt Ronaldson, who proved too good for him on the day.

The final saw both top seeds, Chris Chapman from RTC, and Matty Ronaldson from Middlesex, in a three set cliffhanger! Chapman, who seemed to drift off in the second set, managed to regain full focus to claim the title 6/0 3/6 6/4.

In the Pro-Am, Anthony Clake and Will Burns did very well to get to the final, only to be beaten by Horatio Cary and Tom Granville. Many thanks go to Anthony Clake for his continued support and sponsorship.

## **OUTC GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP**

*by Alan Oliver*

The championship was held on April 28th for the second time at the prestigious 'Oxfordshire' course, thanks to the organisation of Jon Conibear. It was a fine but windy afternoon, and the conditions meant that all 17 competitors struggled to play close to their handicaps. Alan Oliver was able to make judicious use of the rescue club, presented to him at the club dinner, and, keeping the ball in play, came in first with 33 points. In second place, was Moreton Morrell pro Tom Granville, with 32 points, and third was Sam Eeley (brother of Julian) with 31. Former champion Andrew Davis had a tough time getting out of the many bunkers and came 17th with 15 points (sorry Andrew, couldn't resist leaving that in – Katrina).

Date for the autumn meeting is Thurs Sept 15th at Frilford. We are also looking at the possibility of having occasional golf matches with other real tennis clubs.

## **NATIONAL LEAGUE DIVISION 1 MATCH VS RTC - 21ST APRIL**

*by Katrina Allen*

A great evening's Tennis. Why, oh why, were there so few people in the stands for such spectacular stuff? This match was a build-up to the semi final in which Oxford were soon to host RTC.

First match up: first singles rubber:

Alan Oliver marked from the marker's box (God help him) and he was wearing glasses... Alan, you must realise you are retired and shouldn't be doing such foolhardy stuff... He nearly got his head taken off by a Chris Chapman mishit, but he was lucky.

Chris Chapman, 'batting' for RTC, beat our Will Fortune 6-0, 6-3. To be honest, Chris was on fire – not much Will could do about that. I could almost see Chris's 'thought bubbles' as he played yet another subtle shot – he looked up to see where his opponent was and hit a deft touch shot to where his opponent wasn't ... time after time... but after all, Chris is a scratch handicap and Will a seven, so not an easy task for 'our lad'.

Talking of 'our lad', Craig, our new pro, was on next against Charlie Crossley and the home advantage was evident, but then Craig is on a seven (ish) and Charlie, a ten, handicap. Craig was also on fire and could do

little wrong after a tight first set. He ran away with the second, and the final score was 6-4, 6-0.

Craig has burst onto the scene and seems to be going from strength to strength, both in his game, and his racket stringing. He's also a seriously good pro and I notice he is very booked up on the lesson front. Better get in there fast before he gets too picky about whom he coaches.

The doubles pairing of RTC proved too strong for Oxford as the players stormed away with an 8/1 victory, giving RTC a 2/1 win overall.

Many thanks to Derek Williams for his continued support in sponsoring this event.

Despite so few supporters, it was a great evening with superb Tennis and decent wine after. Thank you, Oxford RTC.

## OUT AND ABOUT WITH OXFORD SENIOR LADIES

*by Janet Peach*

We had our first senior ladies' match at the end of January against Hatfield, and I am pleased to report we had an all-round victory.

The Oxford Ladies' team comprised (left to right) Marion Windsor, Katrina Allen, Liz Leach, Katie Leppard and Janet Peach.



Inspired by our success, and a thoroughly enjoyable day in wonderful surroundings, we soon planned our next match, as a result of which a visit to Hardwick House took place on March 26th. The ladies there made us feel very welcome with some great tennis,

good company and yet more marvelous food. This match was declared an overall draw.

Ladies who are keen to participate are welcome to join us for other matches coming up with LRTA and Queens Club. Contact: Janet Peach on: [janetpeach@heraldix.com](mailto:janetpeach@heraldix.com)

## STUDENT NEWS

### MEN'S AND WOMEN'S TEAMS' REPORT

*by Maggie Henderson-Tew.*

*Photographs by Frederika Adam*

With the majority of last year's Men's and Women's Varsity teams having graduated in 2010, the first half of the season was strongly focused on rebuilding squads determined to beat Cambridge in February. Some new talented additions have allowed Oxford to maintain its strength in depth.

*Mens Varsity fist Team from left to right: Alex Evans, Simon Roach (captain), Sam Halliday and Johnny Beale*



After hard preparation, the Men's Blues team made a defiant stand against a formidable Cambridge side. The highlight of the fixture was a fantastic win by Johnny Beale against a player a full ten handicap points better. However, the final score was Oxford 2-4 Cambridge; a result Oxford aim to reverse in 2012.

The Men's Second team, led by Rowan Jackson, also made a spirited effort against a strong Cambridge side. Sadly, they also came up short, with the same overall 2-4 score line. Despite these losses, the Men's squad is in good heart. The second team features some talented new players who look set to improve rapidly and challenge for Blues team spots next year.

*Women's Varsity First Team from left to right: Maggie Henderson-Tew (Captain), Alex Walvis, Victoria Ormerod and Christina Fast*



This should help ensure that both teams will be thoroughly competitive next year.

While the Men had some disappointing results in National League fixtures, they have had some successful inter-club matches, including a very encouraging 3-1 win against a strong Jesters side.

The OUTC Women have had a great year. They built on their turnaround success in the Varsity Second's match in 2010, which they won 5-1, and in 2011 they won both the Blues Varsity and the Second's Varsity matches 5-1. The Blue's result was particularly pleasing, as a very strong Cambridge side had been victorious for the previous five years. The reasons for

*Oxford and Cambridge Varsity second teams*



this tremendous Oxford success have been enthusiasm, commitment, careful preparation and a lot of match practice. The Women have trained as a squad and team selections were made close to the matches. In the much-expanded inter-club fixture list, the OUTC Women's results stand, so far in the 2010/11 Season; played 13, of which they have won 11, drawn 1 and lost 1.

The 2010/11 Captain, Maggie Henderson-Tew, will continue as Captain for the 2011/12 season and hopes to at least equal this year's success in the 2012 Varsity matches and other fixtures. Team spirit and moral have been tremendously high and so it is with great regret, but with huge thanks and good wishes, that farewell is bid to Alex Walvis, Christina Fast, Emily Scaysbrook (though as a linguist, her absence will only be temporary) and Rosie Atkinson, who have been tremendous contributors to this year's success. The hunt will be on for new players from the 2011 Freshers or from other sports to replace these team members, so that both Women's teams can at least equal, or, it is hoped, improve their results in Varsity 2012.

The Men and Women's OUTC teams are tremendously grateful to their sponsors in this last season and Varsity campaign: to club members Anthony Clake and Adam Jeffery, who co-sponsored a set of match racquets and team match kit respectively; to Oxford alumnus John Ford, who contributed most generously to co-fund the match racquets; and to Neptune Asset Management, the major sponsor of real tennis, who so kindly assisted again with Varsity match costs and also gave items of kit. Maggie Henderson-Tew has presented a trophy for the Women's Second team Varsity match as well as a new trophy for the Women's Blues Varsity match, replacing the fixture's original cup.

Maggie is also delighted to announce that the Oxford Office of Coutts & Co have very generously offered sponsorship support for student tennis at Oxford. We are currently agreeing with them how this money can be best used for the greatest benefit of the Men and Women's teams. And, lastly, she would like to say a huge 'thank you' to the OUTC Pros and all who have supported the OUTC teams.

*Thanks must also go to Pol Roger for their overall sponsorship of the Varsity matches*



## ALAN OLIVER'S RETIREMENT DINNER

by Roman Krznaric

In early April, the Queen's College dining hall was packed for the tennis world's glamour event of the decade: the retirement dinner for Alan Oliver. A huge turnout of club members, former Blues and professionals from around the country came to celebrate Alan's 28 years in the seat of power in the pro shop. Coinciding with the 0-9 tournament, the evening began with drinks in the college gardens, followed by a sumptuous meal sponsored by Alden's Butchers. Alan spent most of the time running from table to table taking snapshots while quaffing glasses of fine college wine. Eventually he was ordered to sit down so that the speeches could begin.

Alan giving his valedictory - photo by Frederika Adam



Roman Krznaric began with a journey down memory lane, recalling Alan's early years as a top Oxfordshire lawn tennis player, and reminded the assembled guests of Alan's extraordinary ability to spend half his tennis matches on the floor as a result of heroic diving efforts. Reference was made to his masterful contribution to the game, the Oliver 'flopper', as well as his fantastic dedication to the club over the years, organising matches, encouraging players and giving lessons. Martin Mercer then stepped in with some wise and witty remarks about Alan's great contribution to the club. This was followed by Club President Simon Stubbings presenting Alan with three gifts: a tennis cartoon by William Rowsell, a mysteriously shaped package which turned out to be a golf club, and a golfing holiday for four at St Mellion in Cornwall.

The evening was topped off by a wonderful surprise speech by the man himself, who then lead us all down into the depths of the college bar, where, no doubt, a few members still remain, raising their glasses to Alan.

### 'EYES RIGHT' by Katrina Allen

We get beyond our 30s and start to 'collect' injuries - bad backs, tennis elbow, dodgy knees and then, the eyes start to go. That bit has only hit me in the last few years and it is depressing.

When I started noticing my progressively-blurred vision, I simply carried on playing in a haze of denial. I tried contact lens but suffered the nasty experience of somehow managing to peel off the top layer off my eyeball while removing one of them and lay in a dark room in agony for four days, so that solution was a no-go.

Glasses then. I bought a pair of long-distance ones with plastic lens but it played havoc with peripheral vision (I had no idea how much I'd relied on it until then). They also steamed up when I got hot.

So I played a few more matches and experimented; glasses on, glasses off and became obsessed with how to deal with this and began to wonder whether I would ever enjoy the game again. I started talking to a few players in the 50 plus age bracket and almost every one of them had the same dilemma. The majority chose just to play in a blur but, as we all know, the ball is hard and potentially very dangerous and, of course, also played indoors, often under bad light, so the blurring is even worse.

I mentioned what had now become my pet subject to a couple of opponents after a match - one said 'don't talk to me about eyes - the subject drives me crazy', but the other told me that she'd had laser treatment which had totally changed her life. '20/20 vision for life', she told me, and recommended where to go for the treatment. Well, I was knocking on their door the following day. 'From £395.00 per eye' the ad went.

Predictably, this appeared to be a price to get custom through the door and ended up being around the £2,500.00 mark (I actually bargained the price down from £2,900.00 - see, you can even negotiate with surgery quotes in a recession!). There were a number of different types of treatment but, I have to admit, I didn't

take them all in; I'm very squeamish and, as soon as someone talks about making flaps in my eyeballs, I tend to switch off in sheer terror. Anyway, after a few tests, I found myself saying 'yes' to the surgery. The thought of being able to volley again without ducking was a major factor in my decision-making.

I took the earliest surgery date - the following week - not too much time to think and maybe back out.

The day of the op. came round after a few sleepless nights. The scariest thing was that both eyes were to be done at once. I tried to persuade myself that this was a good thing since there surely couldn't be that much risk if they 'did' them both at one sitting. Either that, or I'd be totally blind if it all went wrong.

Lots of tests from a horribly authoritarian 'laser assistant' with harsh Germanic accent - 'blink, don't blink, look at the red lights, look up/down/left/right', she barked - no bedside manner here.

I was then led to an upstairs waiting room to find a semicircle of nervous-looking seated people, many with fixed smiles and all indulging in 'eye talk'. Within five minutes we were all best friends - it felt like bunker mentality or, as one jovial Irishman put it, 'Big Brother'. That same Irishman would have driven everyone crazy after a day in 'the House' with his incessant jokes and gallows humour, which were clearly a cover for his nerves.

We started to clap each patient in turn into the surgery room; a few minutes later, each one emerged in turn, looking a bit dazed - 'how was it?' 'did it hurt?' 'what happened?'. 'Can't you see the blood spurting from her eyes', said the Irishman... lots of nervous laughter - at which point the surgeon came out to ask us to quieten down because it was putting her off and making patients nervous. We all laughed hysterically and then went very quiet like naughty school kids. It was probably like this in the trenches: a small group of total strangers with nothing in common other than a sense of mutual terror.

Well, it turned out during my consultation with the surgeon, that there was a risk; peeling off my eyeball had weakened it, and another four days in darkroom agony was a real probability after the surgery, along with a gritty feeling in that eyeball for up to six months. 'I'll leave you to think about it for ten minutes', she said. 'Would you do it in my position?', I replied. The

answer was 'No, I don't like pain'. The thought of ducking volleys for the rest of my tennis-playing life was alleviated by the fact that I would be some £2,500.00 better off.

The gang were getting ready to clap me into surgery and were somewhat thrown when I said I wasn't going through with it. I felt like a traitor to the cause.

However, it seems there is another option. Did I mention that laser treatment is for correcting long sight only. It can't correct reading problems. Driving in glasses doesn't worry me; I had a couple of years before my long-distance vision started going, endlessly hunting for reading glasses. It was almost a relief to have to wear glasses all the time - at least I wasn't always looking for them since they were now permanently on my face. It was just trying to play Tennis in them that was the problem. It seems there is a procedure that corrects both reading and long distance, which sounds almost too good to be true. This involves removing and replacing one's existing natural lens (I won't elaborate; as I said, I'm squeamish) and it costs about the same. Why hadn't they offered this during the initial consultation? It appears to be because this procedure is only available at their Bristol and London, Harley St. clinics, so they would have lost a customer in their Oxford branch where I was booked in. That kind of commercial behaviour irritates me.

I might do it or maybe I'll go back to attempting contact lens. Meantime, it's gentle tennis in a blur.

## **THE FIRST AND THE FOREMOST:**

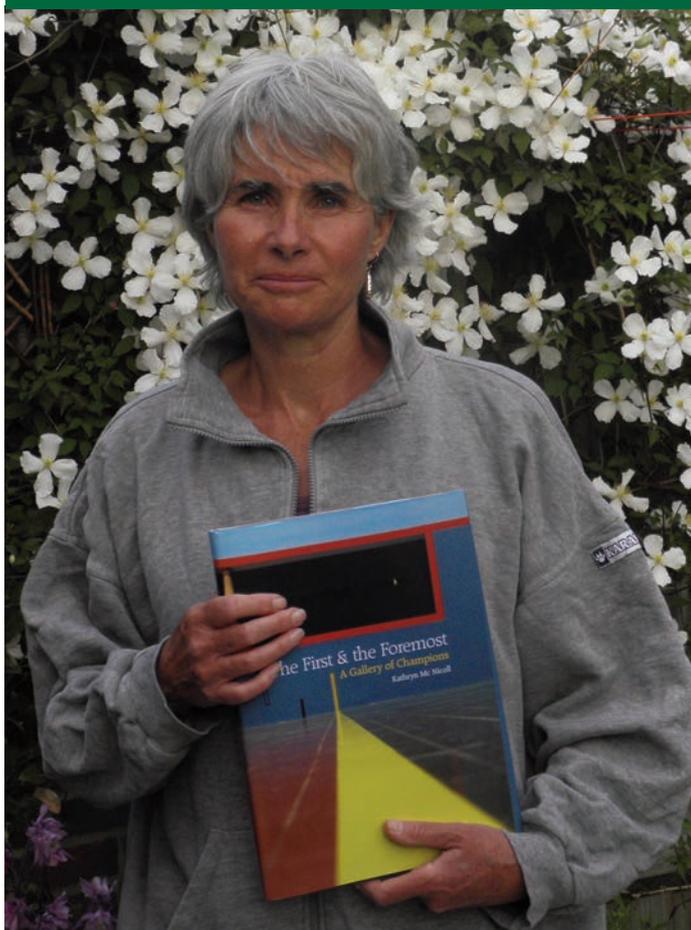
*by Kathryn McNicoll*

Tennis claims to have the oldest Championship of all sports, dating as it does from the eighteenth century. Over the centuries, many fascinating personalities have risen to the forefront of this wonderful, addictive sport. Originally these were all from France and Britain; then America and Australia joined in the fray. In 1985, the first Ladies' World Championship was held. This book chronicles the lives and fortunes of all the champions and challengers (champions and runners-up in the case of the women), as well as the major changes in the history of the championships.

The 'First and the Foremost', by Kathryn McNicoll, was published just before Christmas 2010 and Kathryn and brother Chris talked about the book

and about the game to a small but fascinated audience at the Oxford club during this year's Oxford Literary Festival.

*Author Kathryn McNicholl*



Kathryn McNicholl comes from a sporting family. Her father played cricket in Africa, captaining the East African and Tanganyikan teams. He founded Ronaldson Publications, which Kathryn now runs with her brother Chris. In Tennis, both her brothers, three of her nephews and a sister-in-law are all Tennis professionals: her older brother, Chris, was World Champion from 1981 to 1987 and Les was runner-up for the first Ladies' World Championship tournament in 1985 and also doubles world champion in 1987, partnered by current Oxford member, Katrina Allen. Les was instrumental in founding the Ladies' Real Tennis Association. Kathryn is married to Australian, James, whom she met in Melbourne on a Tennis court, and has three grown-up children. This is her second book on Tennis. To date, Ronaldson Publications has produced approximately twenty books on Tennis.

'First and Foremost' retails at £30.00 and is available from the pros at both Oxford and Radley clubs.

## CONTACT DETAILS ON THE OUTC WEBSITE

Over the years, there have understandably been many requests for access to the contact details of other members and, from time to time, this has led to lists on the club noticeboard - which is fine as long as you happen to be at the club when you need them! Since the on-line booking system was introduced, it has made more sense to publish this information within the website where it can be accessed to enable discussions about bookings.

The good news is that, following the launch earlier this year of the new Admin Database, we now have the facility to publish a Contact Details spreadsheet in what will become known as the Private Members Area (currently just called the Booking System). This area will benefit from the existing password protection, but it is still felt that we should not publish such material without renewing the explicit consents of our members to have such details shared through our website. To this end we will shortly email all of our members for whom we have an email address, listing all the contact details we hold for them (postal address, email address, home, work and mobile phone numbers) together with the associated release consent flags for each item.

Some of our members will not have email addresses listed at all and others may not receive the email because the email address on record is incorrect - if either of these applies to you then this is your cue to please contact the pros, update your contact details, and confirm which of these, if any, you are prepared to have shown on the private part of the club website.

For those who receive the email, there are 3 options and we will be urging you toward one of the first two:

- confirm to the pros by email or any other means, that the details are correct, including your consent flags, for their release in the private part of our website.
- correct the details via the pros, again by email or any other means, so that the contact details are accurate and the flags reflect your wishes in terms of their release.
- fail to respond at all, in which case we will have no choice but to leave your contact details on the pros' database as they stand, but to set all flags to deny permission for release.

This should be a straightforward initiative for the greater good but, recognising the privacy sensitivities of some of our members, it is appropriate that we take care to protect such data in keeping with individual wishes. Please support the pros by responding accordingly.

## NEXT NEWSLETTER

We would be really grateful for any photos, articles or 'snippets' on events at the club, for the next issue.

Please forward these to me at:

[katrinaallen2003@yahoo.com](mailto:katrinaallen2003@yahoo.com)

## SUBSCRIPTIONS AND COURT FEES

Whilst changes in arrangements with the Tennis & Rackets Association led us to look at our subscriptions last year (and indeed to reduce them for many members), court fees have not been changed for some

time. Rising costs have obliged us to review them and the Committee has decided that, with effect from 1 August 2011, court fees will be increased as follows. As you will see, subscriptions will remain the same:

### CHARGES FOR SENIOR PLAYERS

	Existing Charges 2010-11	New Charges 2011-12
<b>Subscriptions</b>		
Full membership	£200.00	£200.00
Full membership (not primary club)	£190.00	£190.00
Full membership (under 28 yrs)	£70.00	£70.00
Country membership	£70.00	£70.00
A joining fee of £50 applies to new full members.		
<b>Court Fees (per person)</b>		
Singles (45 minutes)	£5.20	£6.00
Singles (1 hour)	£7.00	£8.00
Singles (1 hour peak)	£8.00	£9.00
Doubles (45 minutes)	£3.80	£4.50
Doubles (1 hour)	£5.00	£6.00
<b>Other Charges</b>		
Lesson fee (per hour) plus one court fee		£20.00
Racquet Hire		£2.00
Home match fee		£20.00

### CHARGES FOR STUDENTS AND JUNIORS

	Existing Charges 2010-11	New Charges 2011-12
<b>Subscriptions</b>		
Full membership	£40.00	£40.00
School Children	£20.00	£20.00
<b>Court Fees (per person)</b>		
Singles (45 minutes)	£3.50	£3.75
Singles (1 hour)	£4.50	£5.00
Singles (1 hour peak)	£8.00	£9.00
Doubles (45 minutes)	£2.50	£3.00
Doubles (1 hour)	£3.50	£4.00
<b>Other Charges</b>		
Lesson fee (per hour) plus one court fee		£10.00
Racquet Hire		£2.00
Home match fee		£10.00

**Note:** Peak hours are: Monday to Thursday: 5.30-9.30pm, and on Fridays 5.30-7.30pm.

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