



COURT CIRCULAR

HAPPY CHRISTMAS

DECEMBER 2007

*By the time this reaches the morning post the Christmas holiday season will be upon us.
There are many tournaments to play. And it is not too late to get some coaching.*

The lights will be bright, the dedans welcoming and the court true.

*Book some lessons or fix some friendly games. Check the fixture list to see if there are any matches to play.
The editor would like to thank all the contributors to this edition for their eloquence and the readers
for their patience in reading it all. (If they do!).*

*The edition includes the longest report of a match that was a first round loss for MMTCC and demonstrates the
enthusiasm of our team! (Field Trophy) Please compare it with the editors report on the match against the Ladies –
another loss- but what a team of Champions-past present and future!*

CATEGORY C TOURNAMENTS 20-24 and 25-29

Moreton Morrell 4th-7th October 2007

After a short break, the Category C tournaments returned to **Moreton Morrell** in 2007 and the Club was rewarded with an excellent standard of tennis in which over 50% of matches went to three sets.

25-29 handicap range: Highlight of the first round matches was the one between Hyde House's Mark Mathias and visiting American, Ryan Carey. Definitely a player for the future, Mathias squeezed home 5/6, 6/4, 6/5. Moreton Morrell's **Martin Rogers** defeated Newmarket youngster James McEwan in three sets, MMTCC's Vice Chairman **David Bryant** worked hard for his 6/5, 6/3 victory over MCC stalwart Ronald Paterson and MMTCC Chairman and Chairman of the T&RA Tennis Committee **Andrew Hamilton** overcame Chris Swan of Petworth in a close contest.

In the quarter finals, Hamilton was made to work hard for his 6/5, 6/2 victory by Robin Barlow (Manchester), Mathias cruised past Chris Herbert 6/4, 6/0, Rogers triumphed in another three setter and Bryant proved too strong for Leamington's Richard Yorke- Long.

In the semi-finals, Andrew Hamilton was severely tested by Mark Mathias and a 37 year age differential. Mathias had only played for nine months previously- however, forty years of play at MMTCC saved the day for Hamilton in a closely fought three sets. In the other semi, Rogers' steady play scuppered another chance for Bryant to win his first real tennis trophy. Unfortunately Rogers was suffering from a bruised foot and bad back as a result of his earlier endeavours and Hamilton's constant cut shots to the corners in the final proved too much for him.

20-24 handicap range: In the first round Freddie Adam triumphed in a three set match. MMTCC's Secretary **John Miller** struggled to come to terms with the questions posed by the youth and pace of Holyport's assistant professional Andy Chinneck. Plenty of practice and training delivered just two games...

In the quarters, Prested's Assistant professional Adrian Kemp was tested by Freddie Adam in a close three set match. Sixteen year old Claire Vigrass also of Prested displayed her huge potential in a fine first set performance against Chinneck but failed to convert two set points and thereafter failed to win another game.

MMTCC's **Paul Wilson-Gunn** and Oxford based **Mike Henman** (also an MMTCC member) entertained the dedans with a flamboyant and unorthodox match, Henman winning the third set 6/3. Adrian Kemp received a walkover from MMTCC's under the weather **Paul Holland**. John Miller had predicted great things for Chinneck from his first hand experience but Henman with dash, panache and determination proved too strong, winning 6/5, 6/3.

Mike Henman maintained his momentum in the final when his ferocious forcing unsettled Kemp in two sets.

Matt Fattorini was thanked for his catering over the three days and Tom Granville and Jo Iddles were commended for their organisation of a most enjoyable and successful weekend and for their marking and the production of an excellent set of tennis balls.

THE MORETON MORRELL GOLF SOCIETY

October 9th. Stratford -on-Avon Golf Club. Report by Hypocrotease.



Hypocrotease was there at the first to see if the Harry Vardon Trophy could be wrested from the grasp of the 4 times winner **Andrew Hamilton**. Was it a case of a hired gun or was this a bandit come down from the Lighthorne Hills to lay waste the honest members of Stratford-on-Avon Golf Club?

Peter Stephenson (golf handicap 19) rode into town. His 19 shots were the equivalent of 3 six-shooters and an extra bullet. Most of the local club members are only carrying 8-15 bullets and hope that their knowledge of the course and their supposed superior accuracy would deal with any newcomer into town. This was not to be—Pistol Pete, unphased by the rain soaked greens and unfamiliar territory, gunned down the opposition. His 36 points in 16 holes (2 abandoned due to water) were far superior to the rest. He is now the proud owner of a pink shirt, a mauve boot bag and the Trophy.

His team - the **Stephenson Sombreros** - Tres Amigos - **Peter Stephenson** , **David Sutton** and **Tom Granville** also took the team prize.

Jane Sloan and **Jane Terry** shared the ladies prize. Thanks to **Simon Allen** for sorting out the event and for organising the rain to stop as the golf started.

THE BRITISH REAL TENNIS UNDER 18 HANDICAP SINGLES

2006-7

There were two events, one at Prested Hall, and one at Seacourt, which were played in December 2006 **Tom Lewis** played several matches to reach the final where he faced Huw Rolands. He got off to a good start, but Huw came back, and he had match point at one time, but in the end Tom won 8-7. Since then, Tom was meant to have played the winner of the other event, Christian Whitacker. Christian called the final off numerous times, until it was agreed to play at Lords on the last Sunday of September 2007. However, two weeks before the final was due to be played, Christian broke his right thumb playing rugby, and was therefore unable to play, so Tom was awarded the win.

THE MORETON SHIELD

October 20th 21st 2007. Report by our correspondent.

Despite all having outstanding earlier matches, neither **Wills**, **Miller** nor **Cook** could overcome **Marmoy** who used every bit of his racket to good effect most of the afternoon. In the final an injured Cook was just unable to respond fully to the repeated retrieval shots of Marmoy.

Results :

QUARTER FINALS

J.Cook bt M.Rogers 5/2
S.Hodges bt S.Wratten 5/2
R.Marmoy bt R.Wills 5/2
J.Miller bt S.Holland 5/3

SEMI FINALS

J. Cook bt S. Hodges 5/2
R.Marmoy bt J. Miller 5/3

FINAL

R.Marmoy bt J.Cook 6/2



The H.L.BARNES INTERCLUB TOURNAMENT

10th -11th November.

Report by Richard Seymour Mead.

Real Tennis clubs from all over England were represented at the clubs at **Leamington** and **Moreton Morrell** in this annual real tennis event sponsored by **H. L. Barnes & Sons Chartered Accountants** this weekend.

The Doubles final was between the host clubs and was a Midlands Real Tennis derby.

Moreton Morrell Vice-chairman **David Bryant** with star volleyer **Martin Rogers** were against the veteran Leamington President **Charles Wade** supported by the experienced **Professor Sir Howard Dalton**.



A fiercely fought match with enthusiastic supporters in the dedans saw MMTCC take victory by 6 games to 2 confirming Moreton Morrell's position as the Midlands premier Real Tennis club. This victory was David's first ever tournament victory at Moreton and is well deserved.

The singles final was between **Robin Mace** of Hatfield and **John Stevens** of Oxford.

Both players had played their best earlier in the tournament but in a very close match which went to 5 all, it was Mace who held his nerve to win 6/5.

The Team trophy for the best overall team performance went to **Hatfield** represented by **Steve Brewerton, Robin Mace and Nick Brodie**.



FIELD TROPHY VS MCC

18th November 2007. Report by Phil Shaw-Hamilton

The new boy on the block is a star! There were murmurings in the dedans, there were excited exclamations of incredulity. Even the MCC Professional inquired about this player's background and handicap! Without exception everyone who saw the match was uplifted at witnessing a magnificent display of volleying and racket control.

His name is Martin Rogers (ex Canford) who partnered David Bryant in the 2nd Doubles opening match against Jonathon English & Tom Symonds. Look out for this formidable force as the winner of many doubles tournaments! Indeed David and Martin have already won the Interclub doubles.

The first game saw a 50 shot rally which our boys won....only to lose a game point by a fluffed shot by Martin who quickly redeemed himself by winning the next opportunity. Ten minutes into the match and a hugely important 1-0 up. Then there were exchanges of punishing volleys by both David and Martin against the opposition who were fighting for their lives even at this stage. But even so MMTCC saw their lead go to 1-2 down.

(continued overleaf)

However our boys held on and although 0-40 down at 2-2 they came back to win another crucial confidence booster 3-2 up! From there they didn't look back – with David's excellent serving and well positioned high wall boasts dropping into the corners, and Martin's exceptional volleying and screaming shot under the winning gallery we took the first set 6-3.

It is extremely difficult to keep the momentum going on an away court but both Martin and David played first class tennis – very tight serving from David again and amazing volleying from Martin including an overhead smash that Federer, let alone Fahey, would be proud of. They stormed through to a 5-2 lead, 40-0 up and chase better than 3. The nerves then got the better of MMTCC – suddenly previously well hit shots became pushes. A total of five match points were squandered. However 5-3 up is a reasonably secure margin particularly when David laid a chase of ? yard. Changing ends at 40-30 up Martin served a fault.....stomachs churning all round.... Second serve is OK the opponents put up a lob.....you could feel the anxiety as our players calculate the trajectory and make a decision ... to leave it and WIN the match!! 6-3, 6-3. Well deserved and worrying to the opposition.

Paul Holland (22.8) was next on against Mark Howard (7 – ranked as the 6th best amateur). Paul played really well at times. He won a 20-shot rally, he fired his signature forces at the opposition, he had many deuces and even game points, he rallied, he fought, he said sorry too many times for fluffing shots, he fired a blistering winning shot under the winning gallery but flunked the next, and through all this Mark Howard kept his composure making only one unforced error winning 6-0,6-2. Paul acquitted himself well and Mark was seen to come off court sweating profusely. So, poised at 1-1 the match was set to turn one way or the other.

John Miller (24.6) was next on against Rob Nicholson (12). With the lower ceiling at Lords (the rest find it high enough) John had to change his serve from his normal very high Giraffe to a previously unseen boomerang. There were comments from the Chairman as to why John should select that particular serve but during the course of the match most were accurate and two were inch perfect. John fought tenaciously to take a 2-0 lead. A tussle ensued but Rob was the stronger player and came back to lead 5-3. This is where John served his perfect boomerangs to stay in the match at 5-4. For some reason, at 40-0 up Rob then lost his head and seven points on the trot to give John a chance at 5-5, 40-15 up and chase worse than 2. After some fine retrieving from both players (with Rob's head back on saving all five set points) John lost his lead and the set 6-5. The next followed (6-1) but not without a plucky fight by John who had an unlucky shot to the edge of the winning gallery to come out to hazard the door.

The match was now 2-1 down and Paul Wilson-Gunn (23.4) was due to take on Marcus Ward (8) whose wife has recently had a baby and who was delayed getting to the court for his match. Paul, a highly tuned athlete, was timing his match start to perfection which was now ruined by this delay – at least that is the excuse I shall allow him!

Whilst the rest of us enjoyed a fine lunch and a glass or two of claret Paul kept himself at the ready until Marcus's arrival. But it was obvious from the start that the wait had not improved Paul's 'off the back foot' or 'both feet off the ground' or 'skip just before playing a top-spin half-volley' style! Furthermore Marcus has obviously studied his father's approach to the service game and managed to string out the walk up to serve into minutes rather than seconds. However Paul did manage some excellent floor shots, a nick serve and a blow to back of the opponents head off the tambour to upset Marcus's composure and went to a 3-1 lead. Then three unforced errors and, curiously, whilst standing over the ball to watch it fall to a 'stroke' at the hazard end, Paul let Marcus back into the game. At one point Paul drilled the ball at the tambour and Marcus, only 5 feet away from having his head knocked off, put his racket up in self defence and played an incredible seemingly un-returnable shot.

The confidence of the opposition was on the rise and Paul's style did not penetrate the improving form of Marcus. Having lost the first set 6-4 this didn't stop our man from playing the most flamboyant and yet frustrating tennis we have seen (professionals – this is a request from us all – please, please can you work your magic and tame the beast that is inside P.W-G!). He is a most gifted player whose abilities can astound – he leapt into the air to play a back-hand volley 12 ft off the ground in front of the tambour..... and then despair – as he put the next easy shot into the bottom of the net. He then played a superb low shot under the winning gallery, performed balletic pirouettes, managed to roll the ball around the roof and into the dedans and still snatched defeat from the jaws of victory. He lost 4-6, 2-6.

Match over. 1-3 down. But the Chairman has yet to go on.

Sir Andrew, when the chips are down, can produce either the most awful tennis because he has given up, or the most sublime – because it is a matter of principal and he happens to very good at it. Fortunately it is the former that is only witnessed late on a Tuesday evening. In a Field Trophy match representing his beloved club he played magnificently. However, your correspondent (Philip Shaw-Hamilton), is known to leave his brain in his sports bag along with other detritus, and whilst Sir A did his utmost, PS-H pulled the rug from underneath him. They (we) lost the first set 4-6 to Steve Ducat and Jolyan Symonds.

Sir A and PS-H (I am unashamed to remind you won the British 0'50s Amateur Doubles in 2004), so there was pride at stake. Slowly PS-H recovered his form and whilst admiring Sir A's tennis (the best I have seen him play) was able to support him in the end and we came through 4-6,6-2,6-4.

So although the match was lost 2-3, everyone gave of their best and a good day was had by all.

MMTCC AWARDS DINNER

Friday 12th October 2007

George K with Judy, Jane Sloan and Savoy trained waiter and bottle washer David Bryant laid on a very special and enjoyable dinner.

It gave enormous pleasure to the twenty five or so members who have never won anything to cheer on those multiple winners who graced our company .
(*who writes this rubbish? ed*).



These culprits were Hamilton, Shaw-Hamilton, Lewis, Wells and Parmiter. Modest to a fault the lot of them.

The dining room and the trophies sparkled, the wine flowed and the winners beamed.

BRODIE CUP VS NEWMARKET

November 18th

The Moreton Brodie Cup team won 3-2 in a close match.

Their next round is on 8th December versus Queens at Queens.

Gerry Slora beat John Burnett 6/3, 6/5
Tom Lewis lost to Ken Smith 2/6, 2/6
Tim Messer beat Ian Lindsey 6/2, 6/2
Howard Shipstone & John Lambdon lost to
Graham Smith & Eric Nutter 3-6 4-6
Anthony Parmiter & Stewart Hodges beat Keith Banks &
Oliver Johnson 6-2 6-3

T & RA CENTENARY DINNER

Lords Cricket Ground. November 13th 2007.

Report by the Editor

Many old friends mingled in the Long Room and Library and much Pol Roger lubricated the splendid occasion to celebrate the Tennis and Rackets Association's centenary.

There was some wonderful tennis to watch as the world's top 4 professionals gave a demonstration to an extremely packed gallery. But the main event was the meeting of so many- about 600- players of tennis and rackets.

Moreton Morrell was well represented by two tables of ten each, with many other MMTCC country members scattered about the Nursery Pavilion where the dinner was held. The age spectrum was covered- from Tom Greaves and Patrick Sutton at the more youthful end to Richard Greenwood and John Evans representing the more mature element.

Food, wines and speeches were excellent and the occasion was entirely fitting for a Centenary even if it did not quite reach up to the heights of our own MMTCC celebrations 2 years ago.



BRITISH OPEN FINAL

Queen's Club 19th November. Report by Sir Andrew Hamilton.

Rob Fahey (Aus) vs Steve Virgona (Aus)

The old sages have been nodding of late and predicting that Rob Fahey's crown was beginning to lie a little uneasy. This would be the year when 29 year old Steve Virgona would come of age and wrest the British Open title from the 39 year old World Champion. The sages had a point- the portents were plain to see- Fahey had struggled against Camden Riviere in their bruising five set semi-final 6/4, 6/3, 5/6, 5/6, 6/1. Virgona had on the other hand cruised through 3 matches dropping only 16 games in 9 sets.

Slimmer and sporting a more conventional hairstyle, Virgona buckled immediately under a Fahey hurricane in the first game. Announcing his intent, the World Champion beat chase worse than a yard with a rasping volley off Virgona's serve. The barrage continued unabated as Fahey played immaculate tennis to win the first set to love and allowing his opponent only two games in the second set.

Virgona had struggled to find a serve that put Fahey under pressure and once he had eschewed serves from the main wall, his shorter serves from nearer the penthouse begun to reap some rewards. After a long injury break Virgona came out fighting in the third set, helped by a lack of focus from the World Champion.

However, it was business as usual in the fourth, as Fahey continued his master class to win his 33rd Open Final and eighth British Open Championship.

Fahey is still a peerless performer and will be chasing down Pierre Etchebaster's record of World Championships. His play emphatically proved to the sages that their reports of his impending demise were greatly exaggerated. He cannot be written off for some time yet and claimed afterwards that his standard of play in the first two sets was the best he had ever achieved at the Queen's Club during his long career.

It was fitting that the period of Sir John Ritblat and British Land's sponsorship of the British Open should end with another scintillating performance by the greatest player ever to have played real tennis.

R. Fahey beat S. Virgona 6/0, 6/2, 0/6, 6/2

MORETON MORRELL WEBSITE

Did you know that you can keep up with MMTCC events- and indeed many other events
- on our excellent website which is currently being updated very regularly by David Bryant.

www.mmtcc.co.uk

MMTCC vs the LRTA.

2nd December 2007. Report by the editor.

The Ladies Real Tennis Association came with a strong team and left without losing a set. We hope they enjoyed themselves. There was some fine and exciting tennis played at both ends.

Their MMTCC opposition were out played in every match but will learn from the experience (possibly-ed).

R Hurion & D Bryant lost to S Grant & J Iddles 6/1 6/2

R Seymour Mead & J Cook lost to S Grant & J Newby 6/2 6/3

A Hamilton & J Miller lost to C Cornwallis & A Garside 6/4 6/3

R Seymour Mead & Paul Wilson-Gunn lost to C Vigrass & K Hird 6/3 6/3

JOHNATHAN HOWELL

Tony Parsons.

Johnathan Howell has recently left the Oratory Club to go to Australia and his contribution to Real Tennis was celebrated with a surprise party at Henley on Thames on 9 November. He was the second full time professional at Moreton Morrell, following Ted Johnson, and he is not as old as that would sound.

Phil I'Anson and his wife acted as caretakers of the Club after Ted Johnson died in 1972. Phil's claim to fame was that his father was head stable boy to Mr Garland at Moreton Hall. Phil was the publican at the Cricketers Arms at Kineton

He was better able to deal with drinks than play tennis and so it was with relief that Roland Owen-George, a Leamington Solicitor and very active member of the Moreton Morrell Committee, had a client who had a son who was interested in sport. Jonathan came in 1978 not knowing anything about real tennis but quite a lot about cricket. He hoped to play with Warwickshire in the summer and tennis with us in the winter. He stayed with Mike Smith at Wootton Court and, fortunately, ended up playing real tennis all the year round having taken lessons with Peter Dawes at Hayling Island. He breathed new life into the club. Our membership started to increase, and we had many new lady members.

The I'Ansons left in September 1978 and were replaced by the May family and this 'partnership' lasted until Jonathan left us in 1982, when he went to work as the professional at the Bordeaux club, which had recently been reformed at M rignac. He then moved to the new court at the Oratory where he remained until his recent retirement.

We were very sorry to see him go, he put Moreton Morrell on the map, but after he left it was hard to find a satisfactory replacement, until we managed to persuade Andrew Davis, whose parents lived in Moreton Morrell, to join us.



CAMEL

Members will see that the new electricity substation has been erected and that our lights are now more reliable and brighter.

Let us hope that this improvement is sustained and the **Campaign for Effective Lighting** led courageously by the editor will now cease and the **CAMEL** be laid to rest.

HYPOCROTEASE

It will come as no surprise to regular readers to hear that Hypocrotease has been asked for advice recently by our beleaguered leader and his party.

Cash for Honours was easy- Hypocrotease enlisted our Chairman Sir Andrew and our President, the Lord W de B.

These two worthies are above suspicion as their titles are so old.

Cash for Campaigns is the latest farce.

Hypocrotease has suggested that any politicians and public servants embarrassed by funding appearing from unusual, or even usual but dodgy, sources should pass these monies on to the Funds in Limbo committee (FILCH) which he will chair.

FILCH will distribute these funds entirely anonymously in a fully open and accountable manner.

Cash donations can be deposited beside the Child Benefit Discs in the basket already placed for convenience at the end of the net.

FILCH will work in the same way as the **Cash for Handicaps** system has worked throughout the tennis world for the last five centuries.

