

**SEPTEMBER 2011**

## **THE NEW SEASON**

September brings to members the promise of a new season. Our spring.

While the first use of the court may be for the splendid Armonica Consort performance, the real deal is the first competition-the Ogilby Cup. 24th-25th September.

Will this year bring yet more silverware into the Pettiford households? Will Lyndon Haworth continue his run of form? Will our best player- Phil Shaw- Hamilton continue his great example?

Will our winning National League team hold its place? All will be revealed by our team of correspondents over the coming year.



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## **The GARLAND CUP**

January 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> 2011.

Report by Lloyd Pettiford.

A very successful tournament with 34 participants and some really tight matches in the boxes and early rounds.

Results seemed counter intuitive from the semi-final stage onwards. Having beaten last year's winner, one expected Tim Stokes to ease past Patrick Parry-Evans, but it was not to be as he went down 5-3. In the other half, Ed Loades was both in good form and had seen his handicap drift through time spent playing at Middlesex; surely he would have too much for Owen Pettiford. But somehow Pettiford the younger (yeah, I know he looks older) managed not only to get to 4-4, 40-40 after a slow start (and thanks in part to some admirable honesty from

Ed), but then pinched the game as he had done so memorably the previous year against Steve Watson. There was a prompt turnaround for the final after a long day's tennis. Pettiford the elder (really, can you believe it?) was this year reduced to the role of physio, spraying deep heat and applying bandages in an effort to keep his obviously flagging brother going. On the other hand Parry-Evans looked, if not exactly lean and mean then bouncy and confident; he had soundly thrashed Owen in a 2010 tournament and on-lookers (including he confessed afterwards, Tom) confidently expected that his greater experience would win the day.

Owen Pettiford almost seems to exist to irk the purists (although rumours that Norman Hyde's mystery disappearance in the morning were linked to Owen's presence are surely exaggerated?). His attire needs working on shall we say (Owen's not Norman's!) and his style and grace are only matched by Ann Widdecombe dancing. Nonetheless, as so often happens, an injured player finds concentration and one last effort. At 1-3 the crowd perhaps sensed a PPE comeback but it never materialised and Owen played some of the best tennis of his life, romping home 6-2. There will be those disgruntled by this victory, who claim he is some kind of bandit, but let me assure you that whilst he might occasionally play like a 63, he usually justifies all of his 65.4. The last 5 winners of the Garland have had handicaps in the teens or twenties, 2 in the 30s, 1 in the 50s and now Pettiford the younger (but doesn't he look older?!) in the 60s. Hurrah for handicap tennis say I and for his sporting conduct. Let's hope PPE can emulate Owen's feat of losing in the final one year and then winning it the next.



## The LEAMINGTON OPEN HANDICAP SINGLES

for the Silver Racket.

28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> January. Report by the Editor.

The entry was larger than it has been in recent years, but there is still some way to go if the quality is to be restored to what it was in the 1980s and 1990s. It being a changed tennis world today, that may never happen. The Moreton court was used for a full Saturday.

One of Leamington's youngest members, Freddie Dixon (40), won the open singles handicap sponsored by Aspect Financial Consultants.

Moreton Morrell member James Richardson (54) defeated Will Withers (60) and then Ben Burbidge (40) to reach the final.

In the final the determined Richardson retrieved effectively and, conceding a handicap of 14, Dixon was unable to shake him off. Richardson went 4/3 up and a crucial moment came in the next game when Richardson played a Dixon return of service that was clearly never going to win the chase he was defending. Had he not done so, he would have stood at match point. What the story might have been then will, of course, never be known. Sadly for James he was unable to recover from this error and Dixon went on to take the match 5/4.

## The PONSONBY CUP.

12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> February 2011.

Report by the editor.

In the first semifinal of the annual 1<sup>st</sup> tier (last gasp in the editor's case) doubles tournament David Bryant and Andrew Hamilton had a tough and long match (105 minutes) against Paul Wilson-Gunn and Sally Grant. W-G and Grant won 6/5 4/6 6/4



In the second semi the fancied pair – Alex Reynolds and Mike Henman- were giving owe 15 to Richard Seymour Mead and John Miller. Miller with his 'Undertaker' serve and RSM with a slow railroad reduced some of the fierce forcing of their younger opponents.

Somehow they managed to take the first set (from 4/5down)

Reynolds and Henman went 4/0 up then 5/3 but the 'oldies' plugged away with 'slow ball' serves and short mainwall returns to take the set and the match 6/5 6/5.

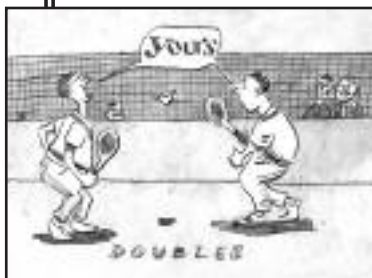
The Editor plays on a Sunday!

The play of the previous day was not to remain- RSM made more errors and inspite of several brilliant winning galleries from Miller, the surprise finalists found Wilson-Gunn at his best. He hardly missed a shot and with Grant taking all pace off the ball and accurately finding perfect length both serving and returning, they finished off RSM and Miller 6/4 6/3.

## The HOBSON CUP

12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> February 2011.

Report by Henry Piney.



The 2011 Hobson Cup was the scene of high excitement and some unusual tennis. A total of twelve pairs entered and the first Saturday was tight and tense; the next day's composition only decided well after 6pm. By the Sunday

morning, any lingering hangovers abruptly dissipated as James Richardson and Jake Wilson-Gunn unluckily lost a nail-biter: Henry Piney and Lyndon Haworth sneaking through 6/5, 40-all in the final game.

On the other side of the draw, Gerry Slora and Norman Hyde were looking dangerous but would have to face Moreton Morrell's new-found answer to the Ronaldsons, the husband and wife team of Steve and Fran Walsh. Giving owe 40/30 Gerry and Norman battled hard and the match swung one way and another to reach



40 all, 5/5. The watching crowd expected experience to prevail but counted against Fran's dead eye: a top spun forehand straight onto a crack, into the dedans and onto the final!

In the other semi, Martin Trees and Jon Lambdon looked to be coasting as they reached match point at 5-3. However, faced with defeat, Lyndon decided on an unusual set of tactics. Rather than volleying a fierce drive from Martin he proceeded to very coolly let it bounce all around the grille surround – but not the grille itself - before lobbing it back. Understandably Jon was a little surprised and netted the return. Buoyed by his partner's excellent judgement, Henry scuffed back a couple of returns and the scoreline once again reached 5/5, 40/40. At this stage Martin and Jon realised that fate was against them and the final was set for a battle of the next-door-neighbours.



Playing a tight percentage game, Henry and Lyndon raced into a 5-0 lead. And then they wobbled. The watching bar began to sense another turnaround as Steve and Fran came back to 5-3, before Henry and Lyndon began to guard the dedans with their lives. Finally they just managed to close proceedings out 6-3 to depart as happy (if slightly fortunate) winners.

## The CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

### **MEMBERSHIP OF THE TENNIS AND RACKETS ASSOCIATION (T and RA):**

The T&RA, the national governing body for real tennis, is currently engaged in a membership drive. Of the 90 active players at MMTCC there is a 50/50 split between those who are members of the T&RA and those who are not. What follows is aimed at the latter who I hope will do their bit to support the game we are all so privileged to play, by joining the Association.

Anyone who signs a direct debit for the annual subscription of £50 will receive a FREE lesson from Tom.

**So if you join the Association what exactly are you supporting? When you next go on court in a club tournament or a match, ponder on the following:**

Your handicap and the handicap system are funded by the T&RA

The professional marking your match has been trained to mark, coach, make balls and string rackets thanks to T&RA funding

Tom and Nick will be receiving Continuous Professional Development sessions as part of a new initiative funded by the T&RA

The ball cloth for the balls you are playing with is monitored, ordered and distributed to clubs by the T&RA

The T&RA paid for the excellent online booking system we use

The defibrillator by the marker's box was part funded by the T&RA

The bulk of the club's Health and Safety policy was based on a T&RA designed advisory document

MMTCC Juniors and the schools that use the court are increasingly funded by the T&RA- this weekend at Radley, Oxford, Hardwick and Oratory a schools' tournament for 17 schools (including Warwick and Rugby who play at the club) was part organised and funded by the T&RA. MMTCC's burgeoning numbers of juniors will, if T&RA funds increase sufficiently, benefit from T&RA funding

Grants are distributed by the T&RA for court repairs and advice is freely given and information is recorded re building materials, lights, netting etc.

The T&RA part funds the Dedanists' Elite, Development and Junior squads for the most promising and talented young players. MMTCC's Tom Lewis has benefited greatly from his training as I found to my cost over the New Year!

The T&RA maintains an informative website for both games under its auspices- real tennis and rackets. If you want to find out about rackets visit [www.tennisandrackets.com](http://www.tennisandrackets.com)

The T&RA organises tournaments for all levels of player ability- from the British Open involving Rob Fahey the greatest ever player, to tournaments for the likes of you and me- the Field and Brodie Cups, Category Tournaments for all bands of ability and a competition for 40+ handicappers. T&RA members will be able to play in the 'Olympic' tournament next July for 48 teams with group matches to be staged here at MMTCC.

Grants are available for clubs for repairs- to penthouses, floors, walls etc. Information is stored on the website re.lighting, building materials etc.

MMTCC benefited from a T&RA sourced interest free £3000 loan in 2000 for major repair work at a time when we weren't as sound financially as we are now

Courts in difficulties are aided by the T&RA- the superb court at Middlesex University was saved from extinction thanks to a T&RA trouble shooting package

The T&RA is keen to encourage more participation in real tennis and is offering funding for clubs to receive 'Best Practice Management Checks' to achieve this aim- MMTCC took part in a pilot scheme which was very useful for both the committee and the professionals

The T&RA offers advice and support for those driving real tennis projects- currently those at Surrey University, Sutton Sports Centre and complexes at Harrogate and Edinburgh

Everything that the T&RA is involved with has to be overseen and organised which requires an office staff which of course is costly but I can assure you that having seen them at close quarters for many years now, the CEO and 2 secretaries work incredibly hard to organise an army of volunteers and committees that run the sport

I hope that the above are reasons enough to join the 'custodian' of our wonderful game- the T&RA has always depended on the income from membership- it has ambitious aims to 'grow' the sport and these can only be effected if more real tennis players commit themselves to safeguarding and driving the sport forwards by joining the T&RA

I will admit that my view is a subjective one! I have been on T&RA Committees for 20 years and have one more year to run as Chairman of the Tennis Committee. I feel, therefore, that I know the Association well, understand and appreciate what it achieves and I am fully aware of all the endeavours of volunteers and paid staff who work selflessly for the outstanding, idiosyncratic sport we play

It would be a great shame if ambitious projects falter due to insufficient funding.....I would hope therefore that if you are not a member, you will consider joining and thus playing your part in ensuring a bright future for real tennis.

And Tom is right- many of you need another lesson! Please contact him to book it before he calls you!

Many thanks,

Andrew Hamilton  
Chairman MMTCC and T&RA Tennis Committee

## FIELD TROPHY

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2011

Sponsored by Pol Roger

### **MCC v Seacourt**

(MCC names first)

Second doubles: Peter Jarvis and James Acheson-Gray beat Martin Higney and Spencer Davies 6/0, 6/2

First Singles: David Harms beat Luke Danby 6/5, 3/6, 6/4

Second Singles: William Maltby beat Ivan Snell 6/3, 6/5

Third Singles: Mark Howard beat Charlie Danby 6/3, 6/2

First Doubles: Mark Matthias and Neil Roxburgh beat Paul Weaver and Alan Fine 6/2, 6/1

MCC win 5/0

After a break of 16 years M.C.C. at last achieved their goal of winning the Field Trophy and deservedly so with a comprehensive whitewash of last year's winners Seacourt.

Seacourt's team was weakened by Conor Medlow's handicap dropping below the prescribed limit and Louis Gordon turning professional. Their presence would unquestionably have made a difference.

In the opening doubles, Peter Jarvis and James Acheson-Gray's play was crisp and incisive and they never looked like being troubled.

Highlight of the day was a spectacular and memorable match between David Harms and Luke Danby, undoubtedly the best in the years the Final has been held at Moreton Morrell. Danby played through the pain of an injured hand but Harms won the key points decisively particularly at 4/4 in the third set.

Ivan Snell needed to pull out the stops against William Maltby but the Chairman of the T&RA's preparation 2 days earlier on the court, paid dividends and he just won the second set despite Snell's relentless comeback from 2/4 and with great relief after last year's bombardment from Louis Gordon!

In the dead rubbers, Mark Howard was too clinical for Charlie Danby and Mark Matthias and Neil Roxburgh cruised past Paul Weaver and Alan Fine.

Once again it was a thoroughly enjoyable day made possible by the generosity of Pol Roger. Tom Granville and Nick Jury were thanked for their contributions to the day's success.

## JUNIOR SCENE

*Our junior section continues to thrive.*

There is a separate Newsletter available on the website. In August the Moreton Junior Championships and the National Juniors Championships (Queens Club) take place. Results will be after printing but will be reported in our New Year edition.

See [www.mmtcc.co.uk](http://www.mmtcc.co.uk)

## The OWEN-GEORGE CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP

4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> March 2011.

Report by David Bryant.

This year, in the somewhat skewed draw, Andrew Hamilton and John Miller played in a preliminary round. Andrew played exceptionally well and was 4-2 up in both sets but somehow (and I watched both sets and still can't work out what happened) John stuck in, won a number of 40-40 games and eventually came out the winner 6/5 6/5.

Phil Shaw-Hamilton played Paul Holland. Paul played well in the first set. In many rests it looked as though Paul had won them, only to see Phil time after time produce some tremendous rescue shots and eventually win the rally. Phil played like a man obsessed (he has a personal hatred of losing any games) and won 6/2 6/0. Paul didn't play badly and the score line did not do justice to his efforts.

In the next round David Bryant gamely tried to keep up with the mobility of Lloyd Pettiford but despite there being several 40-40 games and some long rests Lloyd came out with some great winning shots and David lost 4/6 2/6.



On the Saturday in the first semi-final Phil then convincingly beat Lloyd Pettiford 6/0 6/1. Phil had watched most of the Lloyd versus David match and, whatever he noticed, it definitely paid off. Throughout the tournament Phil was possibly playing 2 or 3 handicap better than currently registered, so Lloyd should not feel disappointed with the result.

John Miller then continued his great play of the previous round and brought off the surprise of the tournament in beating Mike Henman in 3 sets. A number of us commented that this was the best that John had played in several years. He returned serve well with that severe cut/chop of his and his NASA style serve was very precise. Mike took the second set and the assumption was that he would win the third but then pulled a muscle. It can only be supposed that Mike thought that he could still beat John with just one leg - but his lack of mobility dictated the result.

Tom Lewis and John Miller played the second semi-final, with Tom winning. This was Tom's first match in the competition whereas John had had to play two close matches on the Thursday night and the Friday night the night before. So perhaps that and the age difference ultimately had an influence. Tom won - the first set was an extremely close 6/5, the second 6/0

In the final PSH continued the devastation of the other players by beating Tom Lewis 6/1 6/0. Phil looked as if he was a man on a mission, relentlessly attacking Tom and making very few unforced errors. It was an impressive performance by Phil who is now playing as well as he did around 2004/5. Should we institute drugs testing?

# NATIONAL LEAGUE DIVISION 5

Final. 20<sup>th</sup> May 2011.

Report by Lloyd Pettiford.

## **Saints Fan's Win Against Pompey Team Gives National League 5 to MMTCC!**

National League Division 5 this season consisted of a 5-team league; the winners went straight through to a home final where they would play the winners of a play-off between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. Accordingly, MMTCC's table-topping tally of 31 points to MURTC's 30 and Seacourt's 29 was crucial. Over the course of the season 6 players made vital contributions in securing those extra 1 or 2 points: Paul Holland, Andrew Hamilton, John Miller, Lloyd Pettiford, Alex Reynolds and Tom Lewis.

In finishing above Seacourt, 3-0 victories home and away were crucial. The home game was cancelled by Seacourt at late notice; later in the season, when claiming the walk-over was the only option, John Miller's email filing proved invaluable in fending off any potential complaint! For the away leg, Alex, Lloyd and Tom (risking marriages where applicable) travelled many hours on a Sunday (Mother's Day!!!), with Lloyd and Alex both winning deciding sets in long matches.

Finishing above MURTC equally relied on small margins. In the home leg, John Miller's serve drove Freddy Adam absolutely crazy, and his 2-1 win in a 2-1 match score was his finest hour. The away tie was organised for Friday 8<sup>th</sup> April (Lloyd's email system has the correspondence to prove it!) but a week before the fixture MURTC enquired about a match on Saturday the 8<sup>th</sup>. Two of MMTCC's original squad became unavailable for a match on Saturday the 9<sup>th</sup>, and Miller and Hamilton kindly stepped in; despite a 3-0 defeat for the team, by fulfilling the fixture and Hamilton earning a point from an extremely arduous set, MMTCC were able to top the table.

Seacourt then won at MURTC to earn the right to play a final in Moreton and came to us full of confidence having strengthened the team which played MMTCC in regular season. Meanwhile in Moreton Morrell a crisis developed over team selection; Miller had a crisis of form and Pettiford one of fitness. Who would play third behind Lewis and Reynolds was in doubt until a late conversation/fitness test gave Pettiford the nod (and in the end Miller was also injured). And so to the final:

Andrew Jameson had been in tremendous form and was favourite against Tom Lewis. Indeed, despite steady play by Tom, Jameson won the first set 6-3. Lewis upped his game to win the second 6-1. At the start of the 3<sup>rd</sup>, and for the first time, both players played well at the same time. However, perhaps due to the pressure, the set got scrappier as Tom ground out a 4-3 lead. But, the rubber's defining moment arrived just as Tom looked to be heading for 5-3. Scrambling desperately at the service end, Jameson appeared to have failed to return the ball as it clipped the referee, losing the point according to rules of the sport. It appeared to be Tom's point, but amidst confusion over a rarely invoked rule (and about whether the ball would otherwise have cleared the net) a let was played. It all seemed contrary to natural justice even if Tom Granville (referee) was rightly not wanting to be seen as biased towards the home team. In any case, it changed the course of the rubber. Lewis got stuck down the hazard end, making a series of errors and losing 6-4. Although he will undoubtedly learn from the experience, his willingness to accept the ultimate decision with grace shows he has the team's old head, even if the shoulders are more than half the age of everyone else's!

In any case, it was a splendid effort by Tom, but time for Alex and Lloyd to step up. Alex, surely the league's MVP for the season whatever the official MVP methodology comes up with, proved his worth yet again. Sneaking the first set 6/5 was crucial; although the second was lost he had taken enough out of his opponent Nick Jones to take the third comfortably. He also showed that when it comes to calling himself a 'big girl' he's in a league of his own, although he failed to prove the accusation by eating any of the pumpkin falafel that Lloyd had controversially added to the evening's food selection. (Alex ed: He ended up taking these home to the wife still untouched...(the pumpkin that is!))

And so...6 sets and nearly 4 hours of tennis later and with the match score tied at 1-1, Lloyd Pettiford and Spencer Davies took to the court at 9.45. The lateness makes this a good time in the report to thank MMTCC head professional Tom Granville; he offered to mark at very short notice and did so superbly accurately. The pressure this took off the players certainly played *its* part in (oops I'm giving the game away now!) MMTCC's victory.

Anyway, the crowd (including the slightly snoozing Chairman, irked by the boycott of cut shots) had wanted that to be a quick victory full of good tennis, but Pettiford seemed in no mood to oblige. He tentatively chipped as if Tom had never taught him a thing. Davies meanwhile looked intent on hitting the ball back to Portsmouth. Both victory and good tennis looked a long way off as Pettiford trailed 2-4 in the first set. Was the pressure getting to him? Perhaps...but only a little...

Lloyd's chipping soon became considerably more assertive (at least) and his scurrying mostly effective, even if the Chairman was at any given time just moments from snoring. Davies got more and more frustrated. He almost appeared to throw the towel in after he hit the tambour so hard it wobbled, only for the ball to spin off the wall below the winning gallery and pop out for a hazard chase. Perhaps due to Davies' mounting frustration, the crowd finally got quick victory, if not good tennis, with MMTCC's 2-1 final victory confirmed at just before 10.30.

A win that never looked certain against tenacious opposition was thus secured on the night. And a tremendous team effort over the whole season was then celebrated with beer, wine, pork pies and strong cheddar (but not pumpkin falafel).

Tom Lewis lost to Andrew Jameson 3/6, 6/1, 4/6

Alex Reynolds beat Nick Jones 6/5, 3/6, 6/1

Lloyd Pettiford beat Spencer Davies 6/4, 6/2

MMTCC won National League 5 by 2 matches to 1.

## The BRYANT CUP & SUMMER BARBEQUE

Report by the Chairman.

June 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>.

Many thanks to all those who helped out, played in the Bryant Cup and attended the barbecue. Despite being the very worst day of a dry spring and summer, it was an enjoyable and happy occasion.

The Bryant Cup was competed for by 16 pairs and won by the chairman and Owen Pettiford who played a vital role at the net avoiding any contact whatsoever with the ball, serving to a good length and receiving successfully at times- he proved an excellent substitute for Keyvan Farmanfarmai who turned up to play, the worse for an altercation with the entrance steps the night before!

Hamilton and Pettiford (dubbed at various times 'The Invisible Man' and 'The Crouching Tiger') defeated Gerry Slora and Martin Ryan in a closely fought final 6/4 in which 'Rhino' played some incredible volleys from in front of the tambour, one of which whistled into the dedans much to the amusement of the spectators- mirth distinctly not shared by the chairman! To reach the final Slora and Ryan had disposed of Norman Hyde and

Julian Rawstorne 6/2 in the quarter- final and in the semi, club champion Philip Shaw-Hamilton and trophy sponsor David Bryant 6/5, when at 40 all the champ (chump?) had an attack of the elbow! Hamilton and Pettiford overcame Tracey and Mollie Thomas 5/1 in the quarters and Mat Fattorini and Alastair Robson 5/2 in the semi-final.

Grateful thanks to George K for masterminding arrangements and arranging the food, Mat Fat and Steve Walsh for their heroic cooking efforts, Tom for rounding people up and organising the tournament, Nick for the excellent tennis balls and marking, Paul Wilson-Gunn and David Bryant for among other things putting up the marquee, Mike and Diana Harwood for stalwart work at the bar, Tim Messer and David Aldwinckle for keeping us entertained with racing and 'rough and smooth' games while gently fleecing us (as it were), the Thomas's for arranging the excellent Jazz Band from Shottery Girls (and Mollie for playing), Fran Walsh, Lyn Lewis and Jane Terry for desserts etc.

### MORETON MORRELL TENNIS COURT CLUB GOLF

Our annual event will be held at Stratford-on-Avon Golf Club on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> October.

All members are welcome if they have a handicap and guests are welcome.

Members are eligible to win the prestigious Harry Vardon prize.

Please contact the editor [richardsm@doctors.org.uk](mailto:richardsm@doctors.org.uk)  
or Tom Granville [pro@mmtcc.co.uk](mailto:pro@mmtcc.co.uk)



## The PARSONS CUP

4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> March 2011.

Report by Grant Arthur

Tim Messer emerged from his box the victor having not conceded a game.

Mollie Thomas met Tim in the next round and took one game before succumbing 5-1

Tim was now looking like the tournament favourite beating Stuart Hodges 5-2 in the next round, only to fall foul of James Richardson 5-3 in the semi final.

James Richardson arrived at the semi final having accounted for Ed Loades 5-2 who despite his resistance and elegant cut shots was no match for James's enthusiastic strokes.

Young Jon Lambdon was unable to contend the handicap difference despite covering the court with his usual style. Jon succumbed to Alan Moug 5-2 Alan then met Grant Arthur and after a close fought game Grant came through 5-2

The Final was now set - James Richardson (53) and Grant Arthur (57); this was going to be a close match. James served his left handed railroad exceptionally

well and went into a 4-1 lead. Grant started to read the serve and fought back to 5 games all.

At 40all Grant served a slider off the penthouse roof close to the service wall.

James was in two minds and to everyone's surprise made no contact with his return attempt.

The Result: Grant Arthur beat James Richardson 6/5.

