



COURT CIRCULAR

SEPTEMBER 2005

Our Tennis season starts again in September. The club looks marvellous, the pros are waiting for your calls to sharpen up your skills and trophies await.

The Lady Hamilton Trophy takes place on September 25th.

Enter the Moreton Shield on 8/9th October and have the opportunity to see the editor defend his only title.

Club members who play regularly at MMTCC will be asked next month to pay a £10 levy to the game's ruling body, the Tennis and Rackets Association. The levy on all UK players will enable the T and RA to provide for the continued well being of real tennis.

The Stars of 2005

Congratulations to Charlotte Cornwallis on her victories in the French Womens Open, The World Championship, the British Womens Open (played at Moreton Morrell) and the USA womens open.

Congratulations to Julian Snow on winning his first British Masters title- he beat 6 times holder Kevin Sheldon at Leamington. Julian also won his 18th Amateur Championship Singles title.

Congratulations to Phil Shaw-Hamilton and Andrew Hamilton on reaching the final of the Over 50s doubles. They were runners up to John Ward and John Prehn.

Congratulations to Phil Shaw-Hamilton, Andrew Blossie and Nick Jury on reaching the final of the M & G National League Division Three. They lost to Queen's Club who had home court advantage.(again)

Congratulations to new member Rob Allsop who with Jamie Bebb won the Manchester Christmas Doubles.

Congratulations to Tom Seymour Mead who won the Queen's Club Championship.



The ALLEN SEDDON TOURNAMENT

April 2005

In an exciting final between Paul Thompson (h'cap 54) and Paul Gillam (37) the first set went to Gillam playing a controlled and tight game. Thompson- relatively new to tennis - used his handicap, receive ½ 30 owe ½ 30, and excellent mobility and eye to great advantage. This continued through the last set. He won 3/6 6/5 6/3.

His handicap has been cut!

Paul will play in the National Final for the Chetwood Trophy in September at Hampton Court.

Our correspondent will be there!

CHAIRMAN VS VICE CHAIRMAN

May 2005

Prelunch matches determined the post lunch pecking order which ensured that the editor and Paul Holland playing for the Chairman's team went on immediately after eating.

Suitably fortified by the Vice Chairman's champagne and claret it was something of a surprise when they defeated Nick Jury and Paul Gillam 6/2.

Andrew's second strings Rob Allsop and Simon Hobson wobbled about until they were 3/0 down against Sally Grant and John Miller. They then woke up to take the match 6/4.

It was appropriate that the Chairman playing with Alex Reynolds in the No 1 slot took on Vice Chairman David Bryant and Paul Wilson-Gunn. Shot selection drifted from dire to terrible and the execution was not much better (was the editor drinking when he wrote this? Ed).

On several occasions the Chairman and his partner found the strings and victory 6/3.

MEMBERS' ADDRESSES

We are urgently trying to update our name and address lists in time for the next tennis year.
Too late for this one!

Please could you check your 2005/6 version of the booklet that you receive with this Court Circular containing fixtures and names and addresses and let the pros know of anything that is incorrect.

We are particularly interested in obtaining your correct phone number and e-mail address.

If you use e-mail then it may be easier for you to send an e-mail with the corrections to pro@mmtcc.co.uk rather than phoning the pros.

The information will be stored on the MMTCC computer only and will be printed in the 2006 club handbook and not on any web site.

THE CENTENARY

MORETON MORRELL CENTENARY WEEK

Richard Seymour Mead

Charles Garland opened his Bickley tennis court in 1905- four years before he completed his splendid neo William and Mary mansion Moreton Hall.

We celebrated the centenary with a feast of tennis and entertainment from 17th to 26th June 2005. Amateur events were sponsored by Loddors Solicitors and the World Tournament by VetCell, leaders in animal stem cell technologies.



Centenary Singles. *Sponsored by Loddors.*

48 players from points across the globe as far apart as Manchester and Melbourne contested this handicap event.

The club and court sparkled under the lovely sunshine. The grounds were pristine following the efforts of many magnificent members. Refreshments kept coming. Pimms, cakes and strawberries and cream were constantly available to help players avoid playing too strenuously.

Moreton Morrell club champ, Phil Shaw-Hamilton, at 13 the lowest handicapped player was at his very best to reach the semifinal when he beat James Dubois (52) 5 games to love. However Matthew Fattorini (39. MM) blocked his path. Phil lost 6/4.

The final was closely contested between Fattorini and John Burnett (33. Newmarket) but at 4 all Burnett took control to win the match and the trophy 6/4

Centenary Doubles. *Sponsored by Loddors.*

64 players took 3 days at Leamington and Moreton Morrell to reach the final stages.

In the 1st semi, Sarah McGivern and Sheila Owens (53) took on Tim Parker and Aldona Greenwood (34). Even receiving 1/2 30 owe 30 the ladies succumbed to the experienced Manchester partnership 6/2.

The 2nd semi was between local players Howard Shipstone & John Lambdon (38) vs David Jenkins & John Burnett (21). Two unforced errors from Jenkins and this fancied pair were 2 games down. The star pair found the awkward and unusual serves from both players a problem. They also made more errors than in the earlier rounds which became their undoing. The result was 6/2.

The Final. No-one was in any doubt concerning the commitment of the MM pair but the athleticism and positive volleying from Greenwood was the difference in the last 2 games. Sadly the whirling dervish (John Lambdon) at 5/4 managed to net a ball instead of leaving it to fall Hazard the door when being a little greedy.

The result: Parker and Greenwood beat Shipstone and Lambdon 6/5.



VetCell World Doubles.

The semifinal between Steve Virgona & Danny Jones and Nick Wood & David Woodman demonstrated tennis of a style never before witnessed at Moreton Morrell. The crushing forces of Woodman, an amateur studying for a PhD at Cambridge, were snapped back by Virgona.

Speed of response was extraordinary. One point in particular had Virgona forcing hazard the second gallery to find Wood anticipating. He took a volley over and behind his head which went straight into the dedans.

The result was 6/3 2/6 6/2 to Wood and Woodman.

The VetCell World Doubles Final.

The final started with the Woodies- the underdogs- going 3/0 up against the favourites Rob Fahey & Kieran Booth. Not so frenetic as the semifinal reported above, there was cunning and craft with changes of pace, cut, side spin and every angle of the court being used by all four players. Some astonishing pickups, long rests and brilliance dazzled the packed dedans. The excellent Moreton Morrell dedans has 5 rows of seats and standing room.

World Champion Rob Fahey had to duck a few of Woodman's forces but when playing was not suicidal Rob blocked or forced back with remarkable accuracy. His reading of the opponents' positions and the changes of pace and direction that he demonstrates are extraordinary.

Very ably supported by Kieran Booth the favourites never looked as if 3 sets would be needed.

The result: Rob Fahey & Kieran Booth beat David Woodman and Nick Wood 6/4 6/5.

VetCell World Tournament.

1st semi. Nick Wood vs Steve Virgona.

Steve Virgona was certainly up for a battle. Forsaking fortifying beverages offered by his host, David Bryant, he accepted only water. However he was unable to find the openings in the first set losing 6/2 . The second was hard fought. Wood glided gracefully from side to side retrieving apparently impossible shots in the corners and mixing up the pace. Virgona attacked finding the winning gallery and the grille but lost his touch and the service end at 5 all. Wood took the set 6/5.

At 5/2 to Wood it looked all over but Virgona persisted and reached 5 all 40 love.

Wood made deuce and then match point but Virgona fought on and won the set 6/5.

At 5/2 up in the fourth Virgona saved another match point and in the next game at 3/5 and 40 love down he saved another 2 but not the third. This splendid match lasted 2 hours 35 minutes.

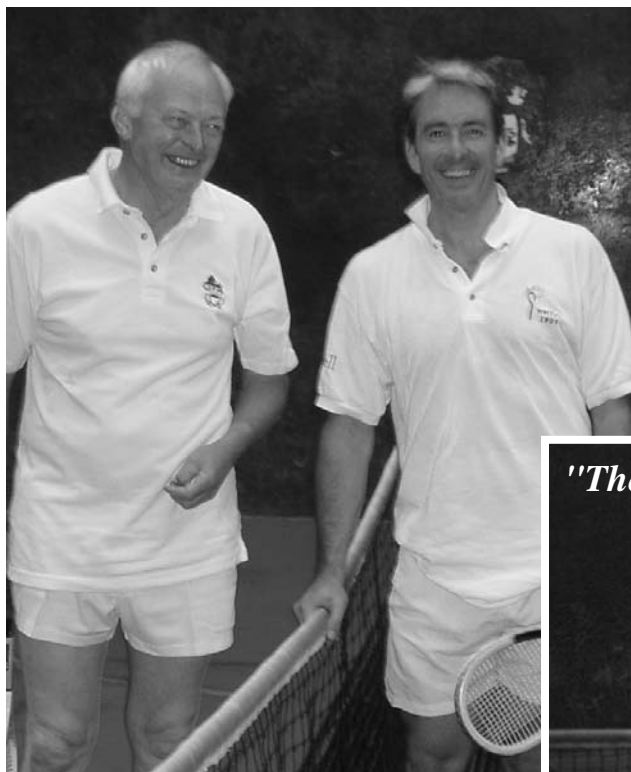
Wood beat Virgona 6/2 6/5 5/6 6/3.

2nd semi. Chris Bray vs Rob Fahey.

At this level any loose shot is punished with a force to the dedans or the grille.

The World no 1 Rob Fahey just hits more of these openings than his opponents and defends them with fewer errors.

Fahey beat Bray 6/2 6/4 6/3.



Demi/semi final.

Anthony Parsons, during the Centenary Dinner, challenged the World Champion to 1 set with a handicap of 40 owe 30.

Parsons reached 6/5 and as he usually only plays and trains for sets of this length he considers this a Win for Parsons.

At 7 all 40 owe 30, Tony was starting to worry the world's best player. Fahey might have folded under the intense pressure from his fit and fast opponent (steady on : ed), but Australian determination carried the day.

Fahey beat Parsons 8/7.



The VetCell World Tournament Final.

The Fahey railroad serve is so good that it establishes dominance in a rest which then almost invariably ends with Fahey winning the point.

When Wood managed to get good strings to the ball and force the dedans, Fahey made astonishing volley returns.

Fahey took the first set 6/2 and the second 6/1. At his imperious best Fahey left Wood bereft of ideas but he relaxed at 4/1 and allowed Wood back to take 5 games and the third set.

Resuming normal play Fahey took the 4th set and the VetCell Trophy 6/0.

The result: Rob Fahey beat Nick Wood : 6/1 6/2 4/6 6/0

THE CENTENARY DAY.

HRH the Earl of Wessex was the guest of honour on the big day of our celebrations.



With Moreton Morrell Chairman Sir Andrew Hamilton he took on the might of Vice Chairman David Bryant and senior professional Tom Granville. The favourites, clearly enjoying the court and the attention to protocol of our professional, managed a narrow victory at the end of a hard fought match.

Our guest having taken lunch was presented to the members of the committee before staying for the afternoon to enjoy the World Tournament singles matches.

Moreton Hall, Charles Garland's mansion, is a wonderful venue for the big occasion. The great lawn took the 415 guests at the Centenary Dinner with ease. The view down the Avon valley and the Hall itself in the evening sun was stunning.

We had a parade of 9 former and current world champions and then a very good dinner.

Sir Andrew made an excellent speech. He amused us with the history of the court, the club and the players. There was a musical ditty by Andrew Page and John Miller and then an 'entertainment' by RSC actors Ali and David Troughton.

A raffle and an auction of promises concluded the evening and added to the funds raised for the Centenary Fund.

For the historical record the speeches are reproduced below:

The Parade of Champions.

Introduced by Tim Parry:

It was Oscar Wilde who remarked - "Man's reach must of necessity be higher than his grasp - else why the heavens."

There are among us tonight some extraordinary people who have reached the very pinnacle of this wonderful sport of Real Tennis.

Please welcome:

Howard Angus - Member of the most excellent Order of the British Empire, World Singles Champion 1976-1981 and Sally Jones - one of Moreton's own and World Ladies Champion 1993

Chris Ronaldson - World Singles Champion 1981 - 1985

Penny Lumley - Member of the most excellent Order of the British Empire, World Ladies Champion six times and World Doubles Champion six times; and Lesley Ronaldson - World Doubles Champion 1987

Robert Fahey - The supreme talent of this sport, uninterrupted World Singles Champion since 1994 and Charlotte Cornwallis - World Ladies Champion 2001 & 2005

Philip Shaw-Hamilton, World Over 50's Champion 2004 and Alex Garside - World Ladies Doubles Champion 1989, 1991.

The Speech. (the uncut version!)

Sir Andrew Hamilton. Chairman of the Moreton Morrell Tennis Court Club.

Your Royal Highness, My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It has been an honour and a privilege tonight to have had the opportunity to rub shoulders with so many of the great names in Real Tennis.....Terry Drane, Ian Sloan, John Lambdon, Rob Woolston

Sadly there are some who are unable to be with us tonight and I have received a number of apologies-

Ricky Ponting, the Australian cricket captain, initially accepted the club's invitation but had a change of heart when he noticed that last carriages were at 12.30- 12.30 was he felt far too early for such an event to finish on the morning of a major international. He asked me to pass on his apologies to Rob Fahey, Steve Virgona, Kieran Booth and Mike Garnett for his team's pathetic and spineless performances this summer- in reply I expressed the fervent hope that they would continue for the rest of the summer.

Our leading and much loved political leaders have sent their apologies for tonight- I received a somewhat confused message from Charles Kennedy who is currently on a speaking tour of the United States- he clearly thought that Moreton Morrell is somewhere in the United States as he wrote: I'm afraid I will be unable to join you for your special evening as I'm not sure what state I'll be in.

You may have been saddened to hear from news bulletins throughout the day that Michael Howard has been admitted to Charing Cross Hospital with multiple stab wounds - in his back. Police say there are no suspicious circumstances. He is sorry to have disappointed the peepal of Moreton Moreell.

And Tony Blair sends his sincerest of apologies- for absolutely everything.

One absent friend who will be unable to join us tonight is the late Brian Church, real tennis professional for years at Cambridge University. Had he seen the wine list tonight he wouldn't have needed an invitation to join us- Brian was a larger than life character, raconteur and bon viveur but a fine coach and there are several here tonight including his Royal Highness, Howard Angus and Andrew Page who benefited from his coaching and they will all have a story to tell about Brian- he recounted with suitable self deprecation that when he visited Moreton Morrell for a World tournament in 1980 he was the guest of the Lord Willoughby de Broke. The following year for another similar tournament he stayed with Sir Richard Hamilton. Ten years later when he returned his card had been marked as he was billeted with MISTER Clive Barnes.

I am mindful that there are many here this evening who are none too au fait with the history, the traditions, the idiosyncrasies of the marvellous game that we are so fortunate to play. I shall avoid explaining to you the rules of real tennis- until later. But for those of you who don't know the difference between a lawn tennis racket and a real tennis racket, I can point you in the right direction- a lawn tennis racket is spherically shaped and a real tennis racket is like the millennium dome- completely pear shaped.

Your Royal Highness, my Lords, ladies and gentlemen, we are gathered here tonight in these magnificent surroundings because of one man- an American Charles Tuller Garland who in 1900 visited England on holiday from being on holiday and was so captivated by the social scene on offer, the hunting and the other prey worth chasing, that he returned to New York and told his father that he fancied a bit more of it. His father was a director of iron, cotton, steel and railway companies and to add to his modest means, he was Director of the New York City Bank. What a wonderful father he was- encouraging his second son to "Go east young man", so it was then that the young Charles Tuller shipped his shed loads to central Warwickshire where he built this magnificent house with its superb panoramic view of the Avon valley, he built a polo pavilion and polo ground, laid a cricket pitch as a role model John Paul Getty later, employed his own cricket professional to play for Moreton Morrell cricket club, he built a school in the village, became a church warden, bought a stud farm in Newmarket, bought a house in Mayfair. Your Royal Highness ladies and gentlemen his major lasting legacy was perhaps the finest real tennis court in the world.

It has been alleged over the years that Charles Garland was black balled from the Leamington club- a myth that has been debunked by Charles Wade their Club president in his History of the Leamington Tennis Court Club, copies of which now fill an entire shelf at home for having won various trophies there. However, truth should never be allowed to get in the way of a good story so just for tonight I can categorically confirm that the story is true. Leamington's loss was our gain and thus started the hundred year old friendly local rivalry.

Charles Garland played hard and stories abound of his countrywide peccadilloes. He was to die at the early age of 46 when visiting the two young Miss Eno of Enos Liver Salts fame at their house in Sonning Berkshire. One thing we can sure of is that he wasn't there with a doctor's note for treatment for his well used liver- his death certificate shows that he died of a heart attack and the reasons for it I leave for you to speculate upon.

I'm sure that if he has been looking down on us and Moreton Morrell this week, he will have been delighted with what he has seen- the Court and its surroundings can never have been in better shape in their hundred years of existence. The Committee and many others have worked like Trojans in recent months- the imposing wrought iron gates were restored, only for a student of this college to test their new found strength with her motor car- they came off second best. The drive way has been re-surfaced, the garden rescued from nature, the steps to the court re-modelled, the Dining room re-decorated, the corridor carpeted, and holes and cracks filled in on the tennis court. I would like to mention the shower, not the main committee but the men's shower-.Charles Garland was responsible for installing one of the finest showers in the history of plumbing -Garland's shower was a masterpiece with a rose the size of Roger Federer's racket but in the all pervasive spirit of late 1960s architectural vandalism our committee in their wisdom joined in the frolic ripped it out and replaced it with a small plastic contraption that produced a cold dribble. So poor was it,that it was memorably described by the Chairman at the time and our current President David the Lord Willoughby de Broke as like being peed on by a young boy. For those of you who have suffered from such an indignity, or who knows, have enjoyed such an experience, I can assure David that if he ever does come out of retirement to play again, he will find the newly installed shower like being peed on all at once by Terry Drane, Ian Sloan, John Lambdon and Robert Woolston.

Over the years Moreton Morrell has been blessed with the very finest of professionals. For an incredible 55 years Edward or Ted Johnson was Charles Garland's first resident professional. A true gentleman, loved by all he taught, the vestiges of his own graceful style can still be seen in the play of our President, the Lord Lieutenant of Warwickshire and to a far lesser extent in the Chairman's play. Ted and his wife raised a family of 4 sons and a daughter in the small flat at the court including Jack Johnson a future world champion. There is another Jack, scarcely a year old, resident in the flat, young Jack Granville, just one child but his influence on the Court and Club is like the 19th century European Imperial scramble for Africa- daily the club's territory is being annexed to provide space for prams, play pens and baby walkers- will Jack Granville be Moreton Morrell's next world champion?- his parents Tom and Laurel are rather hopeful that he will become a lawyer or an accountant to help them in their advancing years.

Martin Dunne tells the marvellous story about Ted Johnson and his cat. On arriving to play, Martin saw Ted clearing up a mess that his cat had made on the court floor. He was most apologetic but nonetheless complimented his cat on laying it on chase better than half a yard.

So highly respected was Ted that he was visited on many occasions by so far- the greatest world champion of all time Pierre Etchebaster and helped train him for his first world title in 1928.

I can hear the two of them in conversation now-

Oh Edouard, all zee top players do nowadays is blast and smash zee ball at zee dedans (by the way Pierre was a Frenchman)

- *o whatever happened to the floor game and the cut stroke*

- And Edouard you tell me zat Robert Fahey, zee current world champion turned up at Moreton Morrell for a world tournamenta wizout out hees tennis shoes- how can a world champion forget hees tennis shoes

- *oh Pierre what is the world coming to the professionals have given up making tennis balls themselves. Clubs are importing them from Haiti.*

- Haiti? zis cannot be so

- *Oh Pierre it is, they are called Divine Balls*

- What ees divine about them-

- *oh they are completely the opposite of divine just look at this one*

- Sacre bleu Edouard and ow do they bounce?

- *o merde, it is like a brick Edouard*

My apologies for feydeau meets allo allo

To return to the Moreton Morrell professionals, Jonathan Howell was the first working professional after Ted Johnson died in 1970. Jonners did a huge amount to breathe life into the Club and I'm delighted that he has taken on the Chairmanship of the International Real Tennis Professionals Association. Moreton Morrell was in the late 1970s an exciting place to be particularly if you were female. Jonners left to go to Bordeaux and Andrew Davis was to continue the good work with humour and diligence. Steve Brockenshaw with his dulcet Bury tones was another professional to leave a huge thumbprint on the Club's history and now we are fortunate to have two of the most popular of professionals Tom and Nick who have performed wonders in preparing for and marking for hours of tournaments this week for which many thanks and congratulations.

We ran a caption competition for the best collective nouns to describe a group of former and present Moreton Morrell professionals and the winners were despite what I may have just said-

A "We are sorry that we are unavailable to answer your call right now but will get back to you as soon as we possibly can" group of

And a "manana" of.....Sorry chaps for the verbal abuse in French.

And so to our 9 world champions here tonight-possibly a record number under one roof. Moreton Morrell is no stranger to World Champions- Ted Johnson was himself declared a world Champion in 1909 when George Covey refused to take up his challenge but typical of the man he refused to accept it without playing for it. His son Jack, when based in Chicago, took the title in 1957.

We can boast a ladies world champion, Sally Jones in 1993. It is no surprise that Sally became a World Champion- she is the most determined competitor I have ever played against so it was tremendous for myself and Frederika Adams to destroy her and Mike Garnett in this week's tournament. This week's victory has narrowed the gap -I have now won 15 of our many contests over the years and Sally has won on 300 occasions. Never once on those 315 occasions was Sally anything less than 10 minutes late for the game.

Alex Garside who learned the game with Jonners partnered Sally to two world doubles finals in 1989 and 1993 and even now many years later having partnered Sally so often, she is often caught like a rabbit in the headlights when she hears a call of "Yours". And Charlotte Cornwallis spent much time at Moreton Morrell practising since 2001 for her two titles and has raised the pace and power of the ladies game to new heights so we are happy to take a small piece of credit for her successes.

It has been an honour to welcome the greats of the game- Howard Angus MBE left handed and lightening quick about the court, Chris Ronaldson tall stylish, unflappable and cerebral whose brilliance in the World tournaments in the early 80s is still remembered fondly. And we nearly forgot Lesley Ronaldson in our parade of champions- World Ladies doubles Champion in 1987, both she and Chris have achieved so much for real tennis.

Penny Lumley MBE is as stylish a World Champion you could wish to see and her career took an upward turn after very nearly reaching its nadir when 4/6, 3/5 down to the chairman of Moreton Morrell in the 15-19 tournament. Like a true champion she extricated herself from the mire and won the third set 6-0.

Robert Fahey- World Champion since 1994 and the best real tennis player ever- it has been a huge privilege to see you Robert in action this week and I look forward to further demonstrations of your skills and talents over the next three days. I speak for all real tennis players when I express the hope that you will before retirement overturn Pierre Etchebaster's record of 8 championship wins.

Sadly some of the Grand Old men of Moreton Morrell are no longer with us or able to enjoy our centenary- Roland Owen-George, Tony Hobson and Sir Richard Hamilton who all worked tirelessly to keep the court going in difficult times although Tony Parsons is still fit as a fiddle and here tonight.

I would like to take time out tell a story about my father. After a T and RA meeting and a glass or two of claret he was returning along the A40 and was stopped by a policeman who asked him a question that, at any time of his life he wouldn't have had a cat's chance of answering " What sir is your car's registration number". Quick as a flash he replied "Officer, you couldn't possibly pop round the back and find out for me?"

I should like to take this opportunity to thank the Leamington Tennis Court for so generously allowing us use of their court this week. -a wonderful gesture and I would like to welcome all members of the Club present here tonight- chairman Olaf Dixon, Vice chairman Guy Stanton, President Charles Wade, Norman Hyde Captain of tennis, Treasurer Clive Barnes and eminence grise Peter Bromwich OBE. Many thanks to Kevin Sheldon and Marc Seigneur for their sterling efforts .

I wish to thank the 8 players for entertaining us so much in the Vetcell World tournaments- it has been a long 15 years since we had top class tennis at Moreton Morrell and we have not been disappointed. Quietly efficient and effective, the IRTPA and Susie Falkner and Jonathan Howell have laid on a superb tournament- many thanks.

The Tennis and Rackets Association is our games's governing body and our club and members have benefited in all sorts of ways from the T and RA. It is a pleasure to welcome tonight the Chief executive James Wyatt, former Chairmen of the Tennis committee Alan Lovell and Colin Dean and committee member Sam Leigh

It is vital for the game's future that the T and RA is supported by those that play the game and I exort all players to ensure that they are full £50 members of the organisation

Sponsorship is vital to our game and to real tennis clubs and we have been hugely fortunate in attracting most generous sponsorship- from Mitsubishi Motors and thanks to Hayden Davis for arranging it, to Ladders Solicitors for their sponsorship of the Handicap Tournaments- many thanks to Paul Thompson for his input.

To attract the best players in the world a sizeable sponsorship is required and we owe a huge debt of gratitude to Jonny Cook and Vetcell. I wish you all the very best ladies and gentlemen with your venture.

There are large numbers of you here tonight from other Clubs, I thank you for your support and marvellous presents for the Club- in particular I would like to thank the Australian contingent for travelling such a long distance to our Centenary celebrations and I hope the long trip has been worthwhile.

I'm so pleased that the Ladies Real Tennis Association with whom we have struck up an excellent relationship over recent years are here in such force and Henry Macintosh -even Julian Snow might extend you his sympathy for being outnumbered 9-1 by such a determined set of Ladies.

Your Royal Highness, Ladies and Gentlemen, what has been achieved in the last two years has been prodigious and a team effort and those responsible I will mention later.

This Dinner I can assure you has been a grand feat of organisation and I can't commend highly enough the amount of work that Jane Sloan and George Krszynskyj have achieved in producing I hope a stunning success. Much of it will also be down to Warwickshire College and Malcolm Bumford and his staff who have performed heroics to lay on a dinner for such huge numbers- if any of you are thinking of re marrying- this ladies and gentlemen is the ideal venue for a reception.

What I would say is that we could not be as buoyant about the Club's future had it not been for superhuman efforts ten years ago masterminded by Richard Greaves to raise £100000 to save the building from slow decay and the work in achieving that by David Sutton and Julian Rawstorne- they are the true heroes in cementing, literally, the Court and Club's future-

Real Tennis has always been a Royal game and it is marvellous for the game that the Earl of Wessex should be such an excellent high profile supporter of our game and I should like on everyone's behalf to thank him for joining us today and lending us his support.

There are a number I wish to thank- to save time I should be grateful if you would leave applause for them until prompted.

There is nothing to beat a good vice and vice chairman David Bryant has been amazing- tireless, efficient, perceptive and deliverer of thousands of emails- among many things he has covered, his main achievement has been the running, ticketing and seating for the World Tournaments.

Organisation for a singles tournament for 48 players and 64 for doubles has been another huge challenge but John and Jo Miller were once again equal to the phenomenal questions asked of them and calmly and coolly, at least on the exterior, were responsible for two memorable tournaments.

Phil James has performed wonders on the wine front all week and www.mmtcc.co.uk is one of the best real tennis websites.

John Archard-Jones is to be congratulated on masterminding an excellent and popular range of merchandise.

This week Warwick Hospital has been inundated with real tennis players suffering from severely twisted arms and clutching a compilation of Richard Seymour Mead's real tennis cartoons. Richard has worked wonders with his new and exciting addition to the pantheon of real tennis literature and I recommend that to save yourself injury you order a copy on your way out tonight.

The catering at the Club has been superb- members and guests have been regally catered for and on everyone's behalf I would like to thank Mike Harwood for his incredible efforts on the bar- uncomplainingly opening it first thing and shutting up when everyone else has sloped off., The catering has also been overseen by Jane and George with heroic efforts from Jane Terry, Diana Harwood, Barbara Nicol, Sarah Holland and Nick Mills.

Any problems with the building and Paul Wilson-Gunn and Alex Reynolds have been on hand to put right. Paul's unseen efforts should never be overlooked.

The publicity the Club and the game has received in recent days has been second to none for which Sally Grant must take all the credit.

We have a superb collection of auction promises and raffle prizes- thank you all so much for them and thanks to Simon Allen for all the organisation required.

I should be grateful if you would show now your appreciation for all those I have mentioned.

We are greatly outnumbered but I should be grateful if Moreton Morrell members and those associated with them and the Club are upstanding to raise their glasses in a toast to our guests.

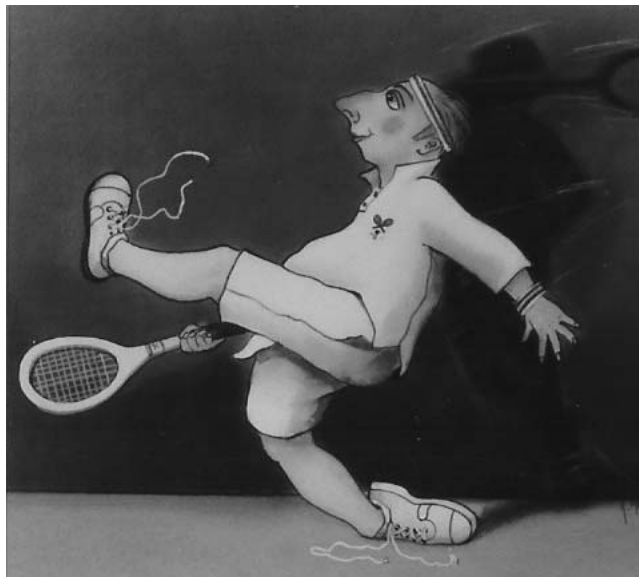
The MORETON MORRELL SONG

A prettier forum for sporting decorum has never been seen before.
When Leamington jilted him, Garland then built an amazing Bickley floor.
Despite their quarrel with Moreton Morrell, the Leamington players lost out.
A hundred years later, which court is the greater? It's Moreton's court, without doubt.

CHORUS

The Moreton Morrell court,
The greatest court in sport,
Is made for cutting your chases short,
 For cutting your chases short.
The floor's the place to play,
For forcing doesn't pay,
On a court a century old today,
 A century old today.

This Club is a haven (near Stratford-on-Avon)
 For players with hearts of oak.
It's steeped in tradition for local patrician
 Lord Willoughby de Broke.
This elegant President, locally resident,
 Always dresses the part,
He's there in the annals in perfect white flannels,
 Like Sir Andrew Hamilton Bart.
They've filled the Committee with spivs from the City,
 And ladies called Terry and Sloan,
And Doc Seymour Mead - though his game's gone to seed,
 His cartoons are quite close to the bone
The Club is reliant on Harwood and Bryant
 And Cookie and Wilson-Gunn,
And old soaks like Sutton, who cannot put cut on,
 But cut a fine figure of fun.



CHORUS

Some coaches are chosen for assets as pros and
 The rest for their curly hair.
Davies, Granville and Jury all played a mercurial
 Game with loads of flair
With coaching from Brockenshaw you can be fockin' sure
 There's no finer school.
Such patience inspires old hot-heads like Myers
 And stops them from losing their cool.
The critical factor was how to attract a
 Few women to play the game.
They found just the ticket through Warwickshire cricket,
 And Jonathan Howell was his name.
As female recruiter, this ideal suitor
 Soon shone as he did the honours:
With his eye for the ladies, we're rather afraid he's
 Made dozens of baby Jonners.

CHORUS

There's Miller whose poker face manner's a joke
 Not a flicker does he betray
His courtin' was sportin' and brought him to Moreton
 For Jo's proposal day
Their neighbour is Rawstorne whose service is forced on
 Whoever will dare oppose.
His Piquet with Shuffle is certain to ruffle his
 Unsuspecting foes.
The Club's local hack has a terrible knack
 Of arriving exceedingly late.
Her articles can't avoid reference to Grant
 But apart from that are first rate.
Poor Brian went weak seeing Edward's technique
 But he taught him with all his Blues.
He knew what he said would be no use to Edward
 So plied the Prince with booze.

By Andrew Page (with apologies to WS Gilbert)