

## Results and Reports from the RFA Website 2009-2010

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## **SOUTH WEST OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Blundell's School, Tiverton, Devon, 11/12th July 2009

Hamish Buchanan celebrated the 10th anniversary of his first win in the South West Open by repeating his 1999 feat and winning both the doubles and singles titles. His display drew nothing but admiration from the spectators, with 'awesome' and 'man on a mission' among the praise dished out.

From the word go, he had made his intentions clear, with good wins over Ed Brooke, Jim Hughes and Tom Maconie on his way to the final. At the opposite end of the draw, meanwhile, second seed Will Ellison was also making imperious progress, brutally dispatching his opposition.

Elsewhere, the high-quality field led to some titanic battles: Stuart Watson beat Andy Pringle, top England handballer Pete Cohen beat Kevin Henry, and Tom Kiggell put out Ben Taberner. The toughest battle, however, saw Ed Hatton tackle Alex Rew, with Ed winning the third and final game 12-11. Ed also had the toughest quarter-final – another three-gamer, in which he scored a notable win over Marcus Bate. This secured his first Open singles competition semi-final place, where he was joined by Hamish, Will and Tom Maconie, the latter also making his first ever semi-final appearance.

As it turned out, the two semis were relatively one-sided. In both, the higher-seeded player took the first game to love, and while Tom pushed Hamish hard in the second, the top seeds won through to ensure a repeat of the 2008 final. Surprisingly, though, the final was also one-sided. Hamish came out of the blocks at some pace and a shell-shocked Will simply had no answer to his opponent's outstanding play. Hamish took the title in two quick-fire games, conceding just three points.

In the doubles, too, most early games went with the form book, and in the quarter-finals, the top seeds – Buchanan & Taberner and Ellison & Bate – had easy wins, while the two Johns, Beswick and Minta, disposed of Hughes and Rew. The closest match was between Tom Maconie & Andy Pringle and Wayne Enstone & Kevin Henry, in which the Londoners came back from a game down to win it in three.

The semi-finals produced two great matches. In a no-holds barred encounter between Minta & Beswick and Bate & Ellison, the younger pair came back strongly from losing the first game to take the match in three. The other match may have been over in two games, but they were both incredibly tight. In the end, though, Hamish & Ben just edged out Tom & Andy.

The best Fives of the weekend was saved for the final. And, if the singles had been unexpectedly one-sided, the doubles couldn't have been more different. This was a tremendous encounter, with superb play from all four men. Hamish and Ben saved game-ball to bounce back and nick the first game, only for Will and Marcus to take the second convincingly. The final game was suitably close, but in the end it was Hamish and Ben who clung on to take it 11-8.

Although there was no local interest in the finals, the plate competitions featured plenty of South West talent. John Savery took the singles plate, while Richard Bury and Tom Kiggell won the doubles. In a new addition to the tournament this year, an 'American doubles' competition featured four players rotating as partners through three games of doubles, with the winner being the one with most points at the end. The result was close, but Andy Pringle just edged out Brian Kirk.

### **Singles**

**1st round:** E Brooke bt R Bury 11-8, 11-3; J Hughes bt N Geere 12-10, 11-0; S Watson bt A Pringle 12-11, 3-11, 11-6; T Maconie bt T Bury 11-2, 11-4; G Price bt J Savery 11-3, 11-4; P Cohen bt R Price 11-3,

11-0; K Henry bt C Bury 11-1, 11-2; E Hatton bt H Aveston 11-2, 11-0; A Rew bt B Kirk 11-1, 11-2; T Kiggell bt S King 11-5, 11-0; A Smith bt K Kennerley 11-2, 11-0

**2nd round:** Buchanan bt Brooke 11-8, 11-5; Hughes bt Watson 11-4, 11-8; Maconie bt G Price 11-7, 11-0; Cohen bt Henry 12-10, 11-6; Hatton bt Rew 2-11, 11-8, 12-11; Kiggell bt B Taberner 9-11, 11-0, 11-3;

W Ellison bt Smith 11-0, 11-3

**Quarter-finals:** Buchanan bt Hughes 11-1, 11-8; Maconie bt Cohen 11-7, 11-2; Hatton bt Bate 11-8, 0-11, 11-4; Ellison bt Kiggell 11-2, 11-0

**Semi-finals:** Buchanan bt Maconie 11-0, 11-7; Ellison bt Hatton 11-0, 11-0

**Final:** Buchanan bt Ellison 11-1, 11-2

**Plate:** Savery

## **Doubles**

**Preliminary round:** C Bury & T Bury bt Clark & Hillman 11-8, 11-2

**1st round:** Buchanan & Taberner bt Geere & Warner 11-1, 11-5; Brooke & Hatton bt Cohen & Savery 11-9, 11-4; Maconie & Pringle bt R Bury & Kiggell 11-4, 11-2; Enstone & Henry bt Kennerley & Smith 11-1, 11-0; Beswick & Minta bt C Bury & T Bury 11-2, 11-0; Hughes & Rew bt Christie & Kirk 12-10, 11-7; Aveston & King bt Price & Price 11-8, 0-11, 11-5; Bate & Ellison bt Lewis & Watson 11-0, 11-0

**Quarter-finals:** Buchanan & Taberner bt Brooke & Hatton 11-1, 11-2; Maconie & Pringle bt Enstone & Henry 8-11, 11-7, 11-6; Beswick & Minta bt Hughes & Rew 11-6, 11-4; Bate & Ellison bt Aveston & King 11-1, 11-0

**Semi-finals:** Buchanan & Taberner bt Maconie & Pringle 11-9, 12-11; Bate & Ellison bt Beswick & Minta 10-12 11-9, 11-4

**Final:** Buchanan & Taberner bt Bate & Ellison 12-10, 5-11, 11-8

**Plate:** R Bury & Kiggell

**'American Doubles':** Pringle

## **FIVES/HANDBALL IN THE SUN ONLINE**

The internet, 10th August 2009

Fives/Handball has been featured in a campaign spearheaded by former England footballer Ian Wright and which appears on the website of The Sun newspaper. The tie-up happened after the RFA's General Secretary was asked by the campaign's organisers to contribute some writing to the campaign which would promote simple forms of the game. It was only after they received the words that they confessed that they had thought our game was something to do with Rugby Football, but they published what was written anyway. We hope that it will generate plenty of interest in both Fives and Handball.

## **FUND-RAISING APPEAL FOR COURTS AT RUGBY**

Rugby School, 19th August 2009

Given the depths of the economic crisis we find ourselves in, it's great news to be able to report that the appeal for funds to build two new Fives courts at Rugby School has already raised £160,000. However, word has just reached the RFA of a fantastic offer from Old Rugbeian John Harland in a bid to reach the ultimate target of £200,000.

He has promised to match any donation from a first-time donor to the appeal between now and the end of this year. This is a fantastic opportunity, and we would encourage anyone who has not yet donated to this most significant of appeals to make a donation. We would also encourage everyone to spread the word of this offer, as the School is ready to start building as soon as the funds are in place.

As a final incentive, both the school and John are happy to honour their sides of the bargain if, rather than make a substantial donation at once, any donor wishes to spread the donation over a period of 10 years. In other words, rather donate £1000 now, you could make an annual donation of £1000 for the next 10 years. Combined with Gift Aid and John's extreme generosity, this will hopefully allow the appeal to reach its target very soon.

If you would like to make a donation - and we sincerely hope many of you will - you can download a donation form from the link below.

## **RFA WEBSITE**

London, 31st August 2009

The more keen-eyed observers of the RFA website will notice a couple of new additions in the left-hand menu from today: Links and Videos. To make it easier to get around the site, we have moved the Links from the bottom of the page to the main navigation menu; and, at the same time, a more major addition is that of the Videos section.

This will exist side-by-side with the existing Gallery (for still photographs), and will include reports and films that we think will be of interest to RFA members. Already on the site are reports from RFA tournaments from the last year, as well as some films on 1-Wall Fives. All these have already been seen on Facebook and Youtube, but we are publishing them here so that all our members - and casual web browsers, for that matter - can find and see them more easily. More clips and reports will be added in due course, and (as is the case for photographs) the RFA welcomes any submissions from members.

## **OFFICIAL RFA RANKINGS**

London, 31st August 2009

The RFA today published the latest official singles and doubles rankings. And, while there is not much change at the very top of the lists, there are some interesting moves lower down.

The latest rankings take into account the most recent tournament - the South West Open Championships - and see the tournament's top performers gain ground on those ahead of them. Although singles winner Hamish Buchanan and runner-up Will Ellison remain in fifth and eighth positions respectively, they have considerably narrowed the gap on those in fourth and seventh. A little lower down, good results in Tiverton have seen Tom Maconie, Ed Hatton, Pete Cohen, Jim Hughes, Tom Kiggell, Stuart Watson, John Savery and Gareth Price make good progress up the rankings .

Likewise, in the doubles rankings, Hamish Buchanan (champion again in the South West Championship) retains his top spot, but below there are some significant changes. In particular, Marcus Bate overtakes John Minta to take second position in the rankings, while his partner Will Ellison closes in on fourth position. Significant moves up the rankings also come from John Beswick and Tom Maconie, both losing semi-finalists, partnering John Minta and Andy Pringle respectively, while Andy moves into the top ten for the first time. Gareth and Richard Price, Hew Aveston, Ed Brooke, Richard Bury, Tom Kiggell, and Seb King also make upward progress following the South West, but for the full details of the new rankings, simply

## **UK OPEN SINGLES HANDBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Westway Sports Centre, London, 5th September 2009

With players from as far afield as Wales, Ireland and Belgium joining the English handballers, there was a real international flavour to the 31 players in this year's UK Open Handball Championships. In the end, though, it was home-grown players who picked up the day's top trophies.

There were separate competitions for men and women, with the men's split into two categories - Open and Challenger - but every competition began with a group stage, and the top players from each group qualified for the knockout stage. With every match played to a strict 15-minute time limit, the action throughout the day was fast and frenetic, with some players literally throwing themselves around the court in a desperate bid to return the ball.

The final of the women's competition was an all-English affair, and saw Kerry White confirm her position as England's top player with an emphatic win over Ashley Lumbard.

The Men's Challenger category saw a real mix of players, and in the end, the final was played out between Irishman Fintan Creamer (runner-up in the same category in the Irish National Championships) and top-ten-ranked Rugby Fives player Will Ellison, who was trying handball for the first time.

Perhaps amazingly, Will took the first game in the best-of-three final, only to see Fintan take a tight second game to send the match into a decider. Here, after a tentative start from both players, eventually it was Fintan's greater experience that proved crucial, taking him through to a well-deserved win. Ireland was also the destination for the Men's Open Plate, after Tadgh Carroll beat Anthony Theodossi.

In the Men's Open, there was plenty of local success, with no less than five of the eight quarter-finalists coming from England: the country's top four of Ady Lee, Pete Cohen, Dan Grant and Pete White joined by RFA General Secretary Andy Pringle.

The draw meant that at least two had to fall at this hurdle, though, and while England captain Ady overwhelmed fellow RFA board member Andy, the EFA's Pete Cohen had to play his best to edge out Dan of the RFA. Also falling at this stage was EFA member Pete White, who lost out to Justin Evans from Wales. The last quarter-final, meanwhile, was an all-international affair, and saw Belgium's Bastien Van Nuffelen knock out Welshman Keith Wilde.

Sadly, hopes of an all-English final were dashed when Justin beat Ady in their semi-final; and, for a while, it looked as if there might be no Englishman at all in the final, as Pete Cohen was 9-11 down to Bastien with just a couple of minutes to play in their semi-final. However, showing true grit and determination, Pete rallied at the crucial time, and managed to close the game out 13-11. It was this form that he carried through to the final, where his hard hitting and fine athleticism carried him through to a comfortable win over Justin

### **Men's Open**

**Quarter-finals:** Ady Lee (Eng) bt Andy Pringle (Eng); Justin Evans (Wales) bt Peter White (Eng); Bastien Van Nuffelen (Belgium) bt Keith Wilde (Wales); Peter Cohen (Eng) bt Dan Grant (Eng)

**Semi-finals:** Evans bt Lee; Cohen bt Van Nuffelen

**Final:** Cohen bt Evans

### **Men's Open Plate**

Tadgh Carroll (Ire) beat Anthony Theodossi (Eng)

### **Men's Challenger**

Fintan Creamer (Ire) beat Will Ellison (Eng)

## **Ladies' Open**

Kerry White (Eng) beat Ashley Lumbard (Eng)

## **LONDON OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Whitgift School, Croydon, 12/13th September 2009

The return of the London Open to Whitgift was accompanied by some welcome late-summer sunshine - for the singles at least - and the broadest smiles at the end of two days' fierce competition were on the faces of the three title-winners, none of whom had ever won a title at these championships before.

In both competitions, the high quality of entrants ensured some tight matches from the off: in just the first round of the singles, Andy Pringle and Tom Dean had a full-blooded encounter that saw Tom prevail in two tight games, while it took eighth seed Ed Hatton three games to overcome the challenge of Gareth Price. It was little wonder, then, that the losers of these two games would go on to contest the Plate final, with Andy surviving a fightback from Gareth to emerge on top with a 15-11 win.

Generally, though, the tournament went with the seedings, and the top seven seeds all made it through to the quarter-finals. The only non-seeded player remaining was Alan Beverly, returning to tournament play after a while away. Sadly for him, he faced national champion James Toop, and the top seed was in good form, taking a win in two games. Also following the form book into the semi-finals were the second and third seeds, Ed Fuller and John Minta, with wins over Marcus Bate and Tom Maconie respectively.

However, the fourth quarter-final saw something of an upset, when Will Ellison put out the three-time winner of this event, Hamish Buchanan. With Hamish struggling to find his length, Will could dominate the match and finally secure a tournament win over Hamish. It was all the more impressive, given that the pair's last tournament match - in July's South West Open - had seen a crushing win for Hamish.

Come the semi-finals, the form book held sway again: Ed Fuller was simply too steady for John Minta, who by his own admission was a little below par, while Will struggled to lift his game again after his win in the previous round. That said, he retrieved manfully against James and played plenty of good shots in a match full of superb rallies. However, more often than not, James could find the crucial winner, and won through to face Ed in a repeat of the last two years' finals in this competition.

That, though, was where the similarity ended. This time, Ed struggled to find his length, allowing James to dominate the match, dictating the pace and forcing errors from the defending champion. James took the first game quickly, and followed it by taking a good lead in the second; and, although Ed fought back, James was able to close the match out, claiming one of the few titles that has so far eluded him.

In the doubles, too, the quality of the entry was impressively high - so high in fact that, when two seeded pairs fell at the first hurdle, neither result was exactly an upset. Still, for the pairings of James Bristow/Nick Wolstenholme and Chris Burrows/Mark Gibbor, their wins over Pringle/Maconie and Hatton/Korris were notable victories.

In the end, the semi-final line-up was completed by the four top seeds - but not without a fight. Will Ellison and Hal Mohammed only edged past Dan Grant and Ady Lee, while Bristow & Wolstenholme came close to taking a game off Marcus Bate & James Toop before losing in two. However, the highlight of the quarter-finals was a no-holds-barred, hard-hitting clash between defending champions Hamish Buchanan & Ben Taberner and Alan Beverly & Charlie Brooks. It went down to the wire, with both sides having match-ball in the third game, before Hamish Ben finally sealed it 12-11.

Ominously, though, it was the previously untested pairing of Ed Fuller and John Minta who had the easiest path through the draw. They conceded just two points in a quarter-final win over Burrows & Gibbor, and followed that with an comprehensive win over Bate & Toop to reach the final. Here they would face Ben & Hamish, who had beaten Will & Hal in a strange match - the younger pair came out with all guns blazing, hitting winners from all over the court to take an apparently unassailable 8-1 lead; yet, from then on, the momentum changed, mistakes crept in, and Hamish and Ben fought back, scoring 10 unanswered points to take the first game, then following that up with an 11-4 win in the second.

The final promised drama, and it delivered - before the players had even got on court. In a moment of madness, Hamish locked his gloves in his van and, despite frantic phone calls home for the spare keys, he had to take to court with a pair of gloves borrowed from his opponents! Perhaps unsurprisingly, Ed and John went into an early lead, and although Hamish and Ben pegged them back, they clung on to take a tight first game 11-9. The second game, on the other hand, was pretty much one-way traffic, and Ed and John took it 11-3, sealing their first title in their first competition together. Sadly, however, they weren't able to lift their first trophy together. That too was locked in Hamish's van...

### **Singles**

**1st round:** J Bristow bt P White 11-0, 11-1; A Beverly bt M Gibbor 11-1, 11-3; E Hatton bt G Price 8-11,

11-7, 11-8; C Brooks bt H Wiseman 11-0, 11-1; T Dean bt A Pringle 11-7, 12-11; C Burrows bt J Gravatt

11-0, 11-0; P Cohen bt T Hamilton 11-3, 11-3; S Korris bt D Warner 11-8, 11-0; B Taberner bt A Joyce score unknown

**2nd round:** J Toop bt Bristow 11-4, 11-8; Beverly bt Hatton 12-11, 11-1; W Ellison bt Brooks 11-4, 11-5;

H Buchanan bt Dean 11-4, 11-4; J Minta bt Burrows 11-2, 11-3; T Maconie bt Cohen 11-0, 11-9; M Bate bt Korris 11-4, 11-9; E Fuller bt Taberner 11-7, 11-7

**Quarter-finals:** Toop bt Beverly 11-6, 11-3; Ellison bt Buchanan 11-7, 11-1; Minta bt Maconie 11-0, 11-6; Fuller bt Bate 11-9, 11-3

**Semi-finals:** Toop bt Ellison 11-2, 11-3; Fuller bt Minta 11-4, 11-1

**Final:** Toop bt Fuller 11-4, 11-7

**Plate:** Pringle

### **Doubles**

**1st round:** Dean & Cohen bt Hamilton & East 12-10, 11-9; Ronan & Fabes bt Kay & Ward 11-2, 11-4; Hillier & Thomson bt Edmonds & Jefferies 11-5, 9-11, 11-7; Burrows & Gibbor bt Aquilina & Tilston 11-0, 11-0

**2nd round:** Buchanan & Taberner bt Dean & Cohen 11-7, 11-3; Brooks & Beverly bt Furniss & Tristao

11-4, 12-10; Grant & Lee bt Kirk & Christie 11-5, 11-2; Ellison & Mohammed bt Ronan & Fabes 12-11,

11-2; Bate & Toop bt Hillier & Thomson 11-1, 11-1; Bristow & Wolstenholme bt Pringle & Maconie 11-1, 11-9; Burrows & Gibbor bt Hatton & Korris 11-3, 5-11, 12-11; Minta & Fuller bt Goodwin & Gravatt 11-2, 11-4

**Quarter-finals:** Buchanan & Taberner bt Brooks & Beverly 11-12, 11-5, 12-11; Ellison & Mohammed bt Grant & Lee 12-11, 11-9; Bate & Toop bt Bristow & Wolstenholme 12-11, 11-3; Minta & Fuller bt Burrows & Gibbor 11-1, 11-1

**Semi-finals:** Buchanan & Taberner bt Ellison & Mohammed 11-8, 11-4; Minta & Fuller bt Bate & Toop

11-1, 11-2

**Final:** Minta & Fuller bt Buchanan & Taberner 11-9, 11-3

**Plate:** Ronan & Fabes

## **OWERS TROPHY**

St Paul's School, Barnes, 26th September 2009

Eight teams took part in this year's Owers Trophy, but the title went to a team making its debut in the competition, and one which was the first to represent the old boys of a prep school: the Old Pilgrims.

Right from the start of the round-robin group stages, the team had looked very impressive, chalking up a victory over the three-times winners, the Alleyn Old Boys. The only disappointment came when an injury to Harry Akerman forced him to withdraw. However, with Jules Pearce-Smith drafted into to replace him, the Old Pilgrims duly topped their group to claim a semi-final place alongside the Alleyn Old Boys, who had comfortable wins in their remaining games to take second place.

The second pool, by contrast, was a much tighter affair, with the Old Paulines, Old Olavians and Old Eastbournians fighting for the two semi-final places. All three took maximum points against the Old Oundelians, and in the end just 18 points separated first place from third in the group.

Filling that third place were the Old Eastbournians, but they had some consolation for their failure to reach the semi-final with a victory in the Plate competition. In the end, although the Olavians beat the Paulines (a remarkable feat, given that St Olave's has no Rugby Fives courts), it was the Paulines who topped the group, thanks to a higher points total.

That meant that the first semi-final was a repeat of the last three finals: the Old Paulines faced the Alleyn Old Boys. In the first round of matches, the Paulines effectively sealed the tie. Ady Lee and Charlie Brooks conceded just a point in beating the Ackland brothers, while Mark Gibbor and Alex Griffiths narrowly beat Hamish Buchanan and Peter Hanton, so the Paulines were 16 points up ahead of the return matches. Although they lost both, the games were tight, and the Paulines took the match by 10 points.

The second semi-final was not quite as close, with the Pilgrims first pair of Will Ellison and Hal Mohammed scoring two wins in their two matches, including a fine 15-8 win over the hitherto unbeaten Olavians, James Toop and Peter Cohen. Although James and Pete hit back to beat Nick Wolstenholme and Jules Pearce-Smith, the relative lack of Rugby Fives experience in the Olavian second pair (Peter White and Howard Wiseman) cost them, and the Old Pilgrims notched up a 20-point win overall.

In the final, Hal and Will picked up where they left off, winning their first game and conceding just six points. However, perhaps more crucially, Pilgrims' second pair (Nick and Jules) scored 12 in losing to Mark and Alex, meaning that Pilgrims went into the second round of matches six points to the good. As

a result, although Ady and Charlie beat Nick and Jules to four, it wasn't enough - on the neighbouring court, Will and Hal beat Mark and Alex by the same score, ensuring a six-point win for the Old Pilgrims

### **Pool stages**

**Group 1:** Alleyn Old Boys lost to Old Pilgrims 37-52, bt Old Blues 60-29, bt Radley Manuals 60-24; Old Pilgrims bt Old Blues 60-6, bt Radley Manuals 60-16; Old Blues bt Radley Manuals 53-46

**Final Positions:** 1st Old Pilgrims (172 points), 2nd Alleyn Old Boys (157), 3rd Old Blues (88), 4th Radley Manuals (86)

**Group 2:** Old Paulines bt Old Eastbournians 47-34, bt Old Oundelians 60-20, lost to Old Olavians 39-42; Old Eastbournians bt Old Oundelians 60-17, lost to Old Olavians 34-36; Old Oundelians lost to Old Olavians 4-60

**Final positions:** 1st Old Paulines (146), 2nd Old Olavians (138), 3rd Old Eastbournians (128), 4th Old Oundelians (41)

### **Knockout stages**

**Semi-finals:** Old Paulines bt Alleyn Old Boys 54-44; Old Pilgrims bt Old Olavians 51-31

**Final:** Old Pilgrims bt Old Paulines 46-40

**Plate:** Old Eastbournians

### **YORKSHIRE OPEN DOUBLES TOURNAMENT**

Giggleswick School, 10th October 2009

Pirate bandannas, knee braces and a psychedelically decorated Goth were all in evidence at the 2009 Yorkshire Open Double Tournament; and that was just amongst the players, writes Ian Roberts.

A small (but select) entry of seven pairs led the organiser to abandon the usual knock-out format for the Tournament, and instead all pairs were initially pitted against each other in a 21-game Round Robin, playing one game to 15. This split the pairs into the top four and the bottom three. The two top pairs would play the final of the Main Tournament, and the third and fourth pairs played in the Plate final.

The results of the Round Robin games were not wholly predictable, and an excellent 15-13 victory by trans-Pennine partners John Minta and Bob Sandie secured their place in the Main Final against top seeds Hamish Buchanan and Ben Taberner, relegating Neil Roberts and Richard Sutcliffe to the Plate Final against locals Tim Widdop and Paul Manning.

According to the Tournament rules, the two Finals were to be played as best of three games to 11, but in the Main Competition, the masochistic finalists agreed to play their games to 15 instead. The Final was notable for its hard hitting, with Ben piling the pressure onto Bob, and John Minta occasionally leaping into action with volleys to try to break up the action. One spectacular dive (after all, he does play for a Manchester-based club!) saw him get a fingertip to a ball achieving a cross court shot that had Ben diving for the front wall himself on the left, despite his surgical supporter, but without the same success. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the energy expended, John and Bob were not rewarded with success, with the final rally of the match being determined by a scorching shot from Ben which hit Bob on the full toss. An eminently satisfactory result for Ben on his first outing to the Giggleswick courts with regular attendee Hamish as they took the JH Whitley Trophy.

Over on the second court, Richard Sutcliffe took in some reefs on his own knee brace as he joined Neil Roberts to sally forth in the Plate Final against WRRFC stalwarts 'Tiger' Tim Widdop (so called from the branding of the yellow heavy-duty gardening gloves that he now wears as a cheaper alternative to more conventional manual protection) and Paul Manning. Paul and the Tiger had succumbed to Neil and Richard in their Round Robin preliminary; would this result be sustained or reversed? The result was indeed a reversal, and by a convincing 11-3, 11-5 scoreline, suggesting that the senior players were tiring and their younger opponents had sharpened their partnership.

The Round Robin format for the initial games meant that the Tournament flowed swiftly after its 11am start, with a minimum of players being left standing around waiting for a court. As a result, the Finals could start by 4-45 pm, even allowing for a half-hour rest after the last games in the Round Robin. Both finals even finished in daylight hours, provoking concern that the Black Horse might not yet be open for the obligatory post-Tournament Taylor's Landlord Bitter and food. Mercifully, the former worry proved to be unjustified, although the latter issue led to us eating a little later than hoped. Much hilarity was had by all asking Bob Sandie how high he could raise his arm before the onset of his shoulder strain, and getting a graphic demonstration, which a passing waitress somehow interpreted as a call for extra vegetables at the table, which were despatched with gusto, regardless of his muscular spasms

**Round Robin Preliminary Games:** NH Buchanan & B Taberner (*won 6, lost 0*) bt NH Roberts & RJ Sutcliffe 15-5; JF Minta & RG Sandie 15-5; TC Widdop & P Manning 15-9; JR Hawke & C Robinson 15-2; TI Roberts & O Woodhouse 15-0; DK McIntyre & P McIntyre 15-2. Minta & Sandie (*won 5, lost 1*) bt NH Roberts & Sutcliffe 15-13; Widdop & Manning 15-5; Hawke & Robinson 15-0; TI Roberts & Woodhouse 15-0; DK McIntyre & P McIntyre 15-0. NH Roberts & Sutcliffe (*won 4, lost 2*) bt Widdop & Manning 15-9; Hawke & Robinson 15-0; TI Roberts & Woodhouse 15-2; DK McIntyre & P McIntyre 15-1. Widdop & Manning (*won 3, lost 3*) bt Hawke & Robinson 15-3; TI Roberts & Woodhouse 15-0; DK McIntyre & P McIntyre 15-1. Hawke & Robinson (*won 2, lost 4*) bt TI Roberts & Woodhouse 15-7; DK McIntyre & P McIntyre 15-5. DK McIntyre & P McIntyre (*won 1, lost 5*) bt TI Roberts & Woodhouse 15-5.

**Final:** Buchanan & Taberner bt Minta & Sandie 15-7, 15-10.

**Plate Final:** Widdop & Manning bt NH Roberts & Sutcliffe 11-3, 11-5

## **WORLD HANDBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Portland, Oregon, USA, 4/11th October 2009

The largest number of English players ever to compete in the World Handball Championships have ensured that the 2009 event has been the most successful event ever for the country.

A total of 12 players competed – nine men and three women – and Team England had some truly impressive results: in the men’s C grade, for instance, Richard Price was a semi-finalist in both the One Wall Big Ball singles and (with partner Andy Pringle) doubles, while Luke Stradwick and Gareth Price reached the quarter-finals of the four-wall event. This latter effort was a particularly notable achievement, given that none of the English players had even set foot on a four-wall handball court, let alone played the game, before reaching Portland.

The most success, however, came in the Men’s B category: not only did Dan Grant reach the semi-final of the One Wall Big Ball singles, the doubles final was an all-English affair, with the Rugby Fives pairing of Ady Lee and Dan Grant defeating the Eton Fives pair of Pete White and (a sadly flu-ridden) Pete Cohen. This ensured England’s first ever piece of crystalware from a World Handball Championship.

However, this wasn’t the last win for England in Portland, as the Federation Cup (a Davis Cup-style event) ran alongside the World Championships. Although neither the men’s nor ladies’ teams qualified for the Federation Cup finals, they both reached the final of the ELA Cup (an event that performs a role like the Europa League does compared to the Champions League in football). The women (Kerry White, Anita Ganguly and Emmalina Thompsell) lost out to the Dutch, but the men (Ady, Dan and the two Petes) went one better, claiming their ELA Cup with a 2-0 win over Mexico. As a result, the men are now ranked fifth in the world, while the women are even higher, in fourth.

Last, but very definitely not least, the entire English team also played an Ashes series – singles and doubles – against their friends and rivals from Australia, and the good news is that, just as in cricket, so in handball, the Ashes are now back in England! Which, at the time of writing, is more than squad-member Gareth Price is, after he mistakenly booked his return flight for a day later than the rest of the team...

## **OFFICIAL RFA RANKINGS**

London, 16th October 2009

The latest RFA rankings - prepared on behalf of the Association by Dave Hebden - have just been published. They take into account last month's London Championships and, while there is little movement at the top of the singles rankings, there are interesting moves lower down.

In the singles, James Toop, Ed Fuller and John Minta retain first, second and third positions respectively, but Hamish Buchanan is only just behind Dan Tristao, who remains in fourth spot. A strong performance in the forthcoming West of England Championships could see those positions swap round, which will have important ramifications, as the top four in the singles rankings will qualify automatically for the last 16 of the National Singles Championship. Meanwhile, lower down, Will Ellison jumps up a place and closes in on Matt Cavanagh who clings on to sixth place, and Tom Maconie jumps up to 11th place.

In the doubles, John Minta's win in the London Open (with Ed Fuller) sees him overtake Marcus Bate and secure second place behind Hamish, whose London partner, Ben Taberner, climbs to fourth. Meanwhile, London semi-finalist Hal Mohammed makes the top 10, and there are good moves upwards for Alan Beverly, Mark Gibbor, Ed Ronan, James Bristow and Jez Fabes

## **WEST OF ENGLAND CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Clifton College, Bristol, 24/25th October 2009

A field that was big on quality and quantity assembled for the West of England Championships, which made a return to Clifton after a year away in Sherborne last year.

That quality meant that close games were guaranteed from the off: in the first round, for example, England Handball captain Ady Lee went out to James Bristow, while Gareth Price scored a notable win over Jim Hughes in three games. The tightest game of the round, though, pitted together the masters in charge of Fives at Radley and Marlborough, resulting in a win for Radley's Ed Brooke over Tom Kiggell – 12-10 in the third.

In the second round, too, there were plenty of close matches – including Dave Fox needing three games to beat Andy Pringle – but in the end, the top seeds made it through to the quarter-finals. Here, in the top half of the draw, first and fourth seeds James Toop and Will Ellison had comfortable wins, while second seed John Minta also safely secured his place in the semis. The highlight of the quarter-finals, though, was a meeting of the two Dans – Grant and Tristao – and although Dan T staged a remarkable comeback to nick a first game that Dan G really should have won, Dan G held his nerve to win the next two.

He then pushed John Minta hard in the first game of their semi-final, but John took that 11-8, before going on to win the second comfortably. The other semi-final was a very different affair, and in a topsy-turvy match, James and Will shared the first two games, before James took the third comfortably.

The final, though, was all very much one-way traffic. James quickly took the initiative, forcing John onto the back foot and into an uncharacteristically large number of errors. The defending champion was on top throughout, and although John could claim to have been the victim of poor luck a couple of times, James comfortably regained his title in two games – his third successive title at these championships.

The doubles, too, proved to be a remarkable competition, and it was great to see the College's courts graced not just by some Clifton schoolboys, but also by their headmaster and master-in-charge. In the

end, though, the seedings generally held good, and seven of the eight seeds reached the quarter-finals. The one non-seeded pair was the young Derby Moor pair Anthony Goodwin and Max Frost, who had benefited from Jim Hughes' withdrawal to win their first-round match.

In the quarter-finals, though, they had a rude awakening against Will Ellison and Hal Mohammed, who won in two swift games. Will and Hal were joined in the semis by the defending champions, Marcus Bate & James Toop, as well as many people's favourites for the title, John Minta and Hamish Buchanan. The closest match of the quarters saw Dan Grant & Ady Lee clash with the ex-Cambridge pairing of Alan Beverly and Charlie Brooks. Ady and Dan took the first, only for their opponents to hit back, taking a close second game and then sealing the match with an 11-5 win in the third.

Almost incredibly, both semi-finals went the distance, where the quality of Fives was just as incredible. In the first match, Will and Hal just held their nerve to take the first game against John and Hamish, but the more experienced pair hit back to take the second comfortably. The third game was nip and tuck to 6-all, but then Hall and – especially – Will stepped up a gear, hitting clean winners from all over the court and wrapping up the last five points in double-quick time.

In the other semi, meanwhile, Marcus and James were struggling with the power and persistent retrieval of their younger opponents, and Alan and Charlie took the first game. James and Marcus came back to take the second game, but the third seemed to be slipping away from them when they found themselves 9-7 down. However, a couple of vital unforced errors from the opposition allowed them back into the game, and they eventually sealed their place in the final.

This was a repeat of last year's final in this event, but the result was to be very different. The first game was very tight, and both pairs had game-ball before Will and Hal eventually took it 12-10. But, it was what happened in the next game that will live long in Fives folklore. Incredibly, both Will and Hal stepped up a gear, and both started to hit clean winners seemingly at will. Faced with such an onslaught, James and Marcus simply couldn't get into the rallies, and they lost the game to love, as Will and Hal won their first ever open Rugby Fives title together.

## **Singles**

**1st round:** N Wolstenholme bt S Moger 11-1, 11-2; T Dean bt R Guthrie 11-9, 11-5; A Beverly bt J Furniss 11-6, 11-0; D Fox bt T Lewis 11-1, 11-2; A Pringle bt J Wren 11-2, 12-10; G Price bt J Hughes 9-11, 11-6, 11-7; W Ellison bt S Watson 11-2, 11-1; E Brooke bt T Kiggell 10-12, 11-9, 12-10; D Grant bt E Hatton

11-4, 11-5; M Bate bt C Brooks 11-3, 11-5; A Rew bt S Maskell 11-4, 12-10; J Bristow bt A Lee 11-3, 11-5

**2nd round:** J Toop bt Wolstenholme 11-1, 11-2; Beverly bt Dean 11-8, 11-6; Fox bt Pringle 11-4, 8-11,

11-1; Ellison bt Price 11-3, 11-2; D Tristao bt S Byron-Evans 11-6, 11-0; Grant bt Brooke 11-5, 11-3; Bate bt Rew 12-10, 11-5; Minta bt Bristow 11-6, 11-4

**Quarter-finals:** Toop bt Beverly 11-4, 11-2; Ellison bt Fox 11-1, 11-0; Grant bt Tristao 10-12, 11-5, 11-6; Minta bt Bate 11-3, 11-3

**Semi-finals:** Toop bt Ellison 11-3, 6-11, 11-3; Minta bt Grant 11-8, 11-2

**Final:** Toop bt Minta 11-5, 11-3

**Plate:** Kiggell

## **Doubles**

**Preliminary round:** Christie & Kirk bt Mullen & Streatfield-James 11-0, 11-0; Ronan & Marshall bt Lewis & Watson 11-2, 11-5; Goodwin & Frost bt Waller & Lidgitt 11-3, 11-0; Moger & Wren bt Williams & Moore 11-7, 11-3

**1st round:** Bate & Toop bt Maskell & Byron-Evans 11-4, 11-6; Furniss & Tristao bt Christie & Kirk 11-4, 11-8; Brooks & Beverly bt Ronan & Marshall 11-8, 11-5; Grant & Lee bt Bristow & Price 12-10, 11-4; Ellison & Mohammed bt Dean & Burrows 11-9, 11-6; Goodwin & Frost bt Rew &

Dunscombe 12-10, 11-0; Hatton & Pringle bt Moger & Wren 11-3, 11-1; Buchanan & Minta bt King & Werkshagen 11-2, 11-6

**Quarter-finals:** Bate & Toop bt Furniss & Tristao 11-3, 11-7; Brooks & Beverly bt Grant & Lee 5-11, 11-8, 11-5; Ellison & Mohammed bt Goodwin & Frost 11-1, 11-2; Buchanan & Minta bt Hatton & Pringle 11-3, 11-0

**Semi-finals:** Bate & Toop bt Brooks & Beverly 6-11, 11-5, 11-9; Ellison & Mohammed bt Buchanan & Minta 12-11, 5-11, 11-6

**Final:** Ellison & Mohammed bt Bate & Toop 12-10, 11-0

**Plate:** Ronan & Marshall

## **SCHOOLS' WINCHESTER FIVES DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP**

Winchester College, 8th November 2009

Twelve pairs entered from five schools, including a first entry from Blundell's whose young players gained some valuable experience in the art of Winchester Fives. It was good to have entries from Radley, where a Fives renaissance is starting under Ed Brooke, and from the ever-reliable Marlborough, whose first pair gave Winchester I a real battle in the quarter-finals and took away the plate as a deserved reward for their efforts.

But it was St. Paul's and Winchester who dominated the later stages of the main competition, their top two pairs contesting both semi-finals, with the respective first pairs reaching the final. The final was a good three-game match, the hard-hitting Winchester pair taking the first game but failing to match the increasing accuracy and court-craft of the Paulines, who won the next two games with comparative ease. This was the fourth win for St. Paul's in the eight years of this event.

Many thanks to Winchester College for its facilities and to Giles Munn, the new master-in-charge, for his assistance

**1st Round:** Winchester III bt Marlborough II 13-15, 15-5, 15-11; Winchester II bt Radley I 15-2, 15-3; Marlborough I bt St. Paul's III 15-0, 15-5; Winchester I bt Radley II 15-4, 15-0

**Quarter-Finals:** St. Paul's I bt Winchester III 15-0, 15-1; Winchester II bt Blundell's I 15-3, 15-5; St. Paul's II bt Blundell's II 15-0, 15-1; Winchester I bt Marlborough I 11-15, 15-11, 15-9

**Semi-Finals:** St. Paul's I bt Winchester II 15-11, 15-2; Winchester I bt St. Paul's II 15-5, 15-6

**Final:** St. Paul's I (E Kay & A Edmonds) bt Winchester I (J Lane & J Kennedy) 9-15, 15-6, 15-2

**Plate:** Marlborough I

## **RUGBY SCHOOL'S NEW COURTS**

Rugby, December 2009

The superb news that Rugby School is definitely going ahead with the building of its proposed new Fives courts has just reached the RFA. Work will start next month, and it is hoped that, following the long drying-out process for the structure, the first ball will be hit in anger on the courts in September 2010.

The news marks the culmination of a successful appeal to raise £200,000, which has been contributed to by many Fives players, as well as the RFA itself and the RFA Charitable Trust. The school paid particular tribute to Old Rugbeian - and now RFA Deputy President - Dick Warner, whose efforts in the 2008 Crick Run at the school raised more than £10,000 alone.

The plan is for work to start in November, with a party to christen the courts next September. As the Rugbeians' website says, "This has been a triumph of generosity, cooperation and camaraderie over the demons of doubt and pessimism. Thank you so much and here's to next September!"

## **BOOK ABOUT JESTERS' CO-FOUNDER JOCK BURNET**

8th November 2009

Jock Burnet was Bursar of Magdalene College, Cambridge, from 1949 to 1977. But he was much more than that, for he was a man who touched many lives. He was a don who had much influence behind the scenes, not least in Cambridge, the Church of England, independent education and court games. He co-founded the Jesters Cricket Club while still a schoolboy at St Paul's, and out of that grew the premier court games club in the world – the Jesters.

To mark the 80th anniversary of the Jesters in 2008 and, in 2009, the 60th anniversary of the match and fixture known as the Past versus Present, Richard Morgan has put together this portrait of the man who for forty years was President of Cambridge University Rugby Fives Club. A fine player of the game at St. Paul's and Cambridge, Jock Burnet left a legacy that enriched the game at all levels. The list of contributors to this very readable book includes three former captains of Cambridge Fives, Dennis Silk, Richard Morgan and Bob Dolby, the latter relating Jock's particular contribution to Fives.

Profits from this privately published book will go to Mencap. A copy can be obtained at a cost of £27.50 (inc. p&p) from Richard Morgan at: Warmans, Bodenham, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP5 4EU (cheques to be made out to Richard Morgan – Book Account).

## **UCS RUGBY FIVES CLUB**

London, 8th November 2009

UCS Old Boys Rugby Fives Club has been in touch with the RFA to say that it is looking to grow its membership. The club plays at UCS school, in Hampstead, North London, on Monday and Wednesday evenings from 6.30pm and on other days by arrangement. Organiser Huw Aveston says that the club members are 'a friendly bunch in our late twenties with occasional players right through the age range.'

He invites anyone who might be interested in playing the game - whether local players who normally go to other clubs, or lapsed players of the game - to get in touch with him, either by email using the link below or by mobile phone on 07780 975 315.

## **OFFICIAL RFA RANKINGS**

London, 8th November 2009

The latest official rankings, prepared on behalf of the RFA by Dave Hebden, have just been released, and they make very interesting reading - especially given the upcoming qualifying tournaments for the National Singles Championship.

The top four in the rankings automatically qualify for the finals of the National Singles, which made Dan Tristao's loss to Dan Grant in the West of England Championship crucial. As a result, while Dan G jumped up four places to 11th, Dan T dropped down to fifth, allowing Hamish Buchanan to claim the vital fourth spot in the rankings. Also climbing up one spot in the top 10 was Will Ellison, while the top three of James Toop, Ed Fuller and John Minta was unchanged. The only other major move in the top 20 was Alan Beverly's rise to 16th, and the biggest moves happened much lower down, with Gareth Price climbing into the top 50, James Bristow rising 10 places to 54th and Ed Brooke a new entrant at 55th.

In the doubles rankings, too, the top three were unaltered, with Hamish Buchanan clearly in first place, followed by John Minta and Marcus Bate. However, following his win in Clifton, Will Ellison

climbs to fourth, and while his partner Hal Mohammed only climbed one place to ninth, he has put clear daylight between him and those immediately behind him.

Again, the biggest moves were lower down: Charlie Brooks and Alan Beverly both had big leaps up the chart after reaching the semi-finals in Clifton, while Bob Sandie jumped 13 places after reaching the final in the Yorkshire Open. The biggest jump came from Paul Manning, plate winner at Giggleswick, while Derby Moor schoolboy Anthony Goodwin climbed 19 places to 47th after reaching the quarter-finals at Clifton. For the full rankings, simply click on the link below.

## **WINCHESTER FIVES NORTHERN DOUBLES TOURNAMENT**

Sedbergh School, Sedbergh, Cumbria, 8th November 2009

Ten pairs entered the tournament, including three pairs from Rossall, led by their master i/c fives Tom Root, a couple of pairs from the White Rose Club and players from the Manchester YMCA, as well as a good showing from the Sedbergh boys and staff. Two groups of five pairs played a round robin from which the top two in each group went into the main semi finals and the third and fourth placed pairs went into the plate.

The groups went largely as predicted, setting up a mouth watering main final between Richard Guthrie/David Fox and John Minta/Bob Sandie. It was a classic match-up between the hard-hitting Minta/Sandie combination and the guile and accuracy of a pair much more accustomed to the Winchester courts. The high quality match was close at all stages and fittingly went deep into the third game of a best of three to 15, with Guthrie and Fox coming out on top winning 15-13 in the decider. Rarely can a buttress have been hit so often and so hard!

The plate final was between the 'Sedbergh Classics masters' pairing of Jon Lidiard and Lawrence Catlow and the Rossall pair of Tom Root and one of his senior players. The best of three to 11 match looked set to go the distance when the lead in the first game changed hands several times before the Rossall pair edged it 11-9. This was not to be the case, however, as the Sedbergh pairing faded in the second game, giving the big hitting Rossall pair a deserved 2-0 win.

It is to be hoped that more pairs will be able to enter this tournament in the future and raise the overall standard of the event to give the top couple of pairs, who produced a final of high pace and real quality, a bit more competition!

**Final:** Fox & Guthrie bt Minta & Sandie

**Plate:** Root & TBC bt Lidiard & Catlow

## **NATIONAL STUDENT/BUCS CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Sherborne, 20th/22nd November 2009

The venue may have moved from Edinburgh to Sherborne, but it was the same winners as in 2008 who walked away with the main prizes at the 2009 BUCS Championships. That meant that Oxford's Dan Tristao won the singles championship - making this his third consecutive title in the event - while Durham's Inigo Ackland and Alex Griffiths took the doubles title.

In both cases, players from Oxford were the runners-up, and Jez Fabes had the unenviable claim to fame of being a double runner-up, in both the singles and (with partner Ed Ronan) in the doubles. However, there was a wide spread of universities represented in the latter stages of both the main and plate competitions, with an Imperial pair winning the plate doubles over a pair from Glasgow and Middlesex.

That said, according to Dave Hebden's calculations for the unofficial Team Championship, the BUCS event saw a dominant performance from Oxford University - and, indeed, three of the four doubles semi-finals were from there, as were the two singles finalists. Durham were clear in second place, while Glasgow (through Richie Murby's efforts) took third place.

The event was the 50th running, and it - like every previous one - was overseen by David Gardner. So, on the Saturday evening, a reception was hosted by Sherborne School, where a gathering of past and present players and champions gathered to show their appreciation of his efforts over so many years. After speeches from RFA President Frank Akerman and BUCS Chief Executive Karen Rothery, David was presented with a small memento to mark his 50 years' organisation and duly received the prolonged round of applause he so richly deserved.

### **Singles**

**1st Round:** Crighton (Exe) bt Spencer (Dur) 15-9, 15-5; D Ackland (UCL) bt Wall (Leeds) 15-10, 15-1; Hine (Ox) bt Acton (UCL) 15-0, 15-1; Murray (Middx) bt Hansom (UCL) 15-4, 15-1; Tong (Imp) bt Malhotra (UCL) 15-2, 15-3; Constantine (Exe) bt Lang (UCL) 15-2, 15-3

**2nd Round:** Tristao (Ox) bt Crighton 15-5, 15-2; Wiesner (Leeds) w/o Compton (Cam); Baker (Ox) bt

D Ackland 14-16, 15-7, 15-13; Griffiths (Dur) bt Ward (St. Paul's) 15-9, 15-2; Murby (Glasgow) bt Miller (Leeds) 15-3, 15-0; Adcock (Ox) bt Roberts (Bristol) 15-7, 15-4; George (St Andrews) bt Jefferies (St. Paul's) 16-14, 15-10; Hay (New) bt Hine 15-13, 15-3; I Ackland (Dur) bt Mason-Malik (Leeds) 15-0, 15-3; Buckhalter (Dur) bt Murray 15-12, 15-2; Hoolahan (Ox) bt Tilston (St. Paul's) 15-13, 15-2; Burrows (Imp) bt Lung (UCL) 15-0, 15-0; Ronan (Ox) bt Tong 15-3, 15-2; Kay (St. Paul's) w/o Gwynne (Cam); Legget (Dur) w/o Kelly (Cam); Fabes (Ox) bt Constantine 15-1, 15-0

**3rd Round:** Tristao bt Wiesner 15-3, 15-1; Griffiths bt Baker 15-2, 15-5; Murby bt Adcock 15-10, 16-14; Hay bt George 15-8, 2-15, 16-15; Ackland bt Buckhalter 15-3, 15-1; Burrows bt Hoolahan 15-5, 7-15,

15-11; Kay bt Ronan 15-16, 16-14, 15-9; Fabes bt Legget 7-15, 15-9, 15-7

**Quarter-finals:** Tristao bt Griffiths 15-6, 15-12; Murby bt Hay 15-8, 15-7; Ackland bt Burrows 15-10, 16-14; Fabes bt Kay 15-12, 15-4

**Semi-finals:** Tristao bt Murby 15-3, 15-9; Fabes bt Ackland 16-14, 15-11

**Final:** Tristao bt Fabes 15-11, 15-9

**Plate:** Leggett

### **Doubles**

**1st Round:** Buckhalter & Legget (Dur) bt Lang & Lung (UCL) 15-0, 15-0; Burrows & Tong (Imp) bt Coffey & Ward (Soton) 15-7, 15-9.

**2nd Round:** I Ackland & Griffiths (Dur) bt Jefferies & Tilston (St. Paul's) 15-9, 15-11; Baker & Hoolahan (Ox) bt Wall & Wiesner (Leeds) 15-0, 15-1; D Ackland & Hansom (UCL) bt Mason-Malik & Miller (Leeds) 15-5, 15-7; Adcock & Park (Ox) bt Acton & Weil (UCL) 15-0, 15-5; Hine & Tristao (Ox) w/o Gwynne & Patel (Cam); Buckhalter & Legget bt Burrows & Tong 15-9, 2-15, 15-3; Kay & Ward (St. Paul's) bt Constantine & Crighton (Exe) 15-2, 15-2; Fabes & Ronan (Ox) bt Lang & Malhotra (UCL) 15-0, 15-0.

**Quarter-finals:** Ackland & Griffiths bt Baker & Hoolahan 15-11, 14-16, 15-6; Adcock & Park bt D Ackland & Hansom 15-3, 15-8; Hine & Tristao bt Buckhalter & Legget 14-16, 16-15, 15-8; Fabes & Ronan bt Kay & Ward 15-2, 15-2.

**Semi-finals:** Ackland & Griffiths bt Adcock & Park 16-14, 15-8;

Fabes & Ronan bt Hine & Tristao 15-11, 15-11

**Final:** Ackland & Griffiths (Durham) bt Fabes & Ronan (Oxford)

**Plate:** Burrows & Tong (Imperial)

### **(Unofficial) Team Championship**

1st Oxford 61 points; 2nd Durham 38; 3rd Glasgow 15; 4th= Imperial, St Paul's School 12; 6= Newcastle, UCL 11; 8= Bristol, Exeter, Leeds, Middlesex, Southampton, St Andrew's 10

## **NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS**

St Paul's School, London, 5/6th December 2009

It was a year of emphatic victories in the Men's and Ladies national championships, with James Toop becoming the first man since Ian Fuller in 1998 to retain the national singles title, and Claire Knowles taking the ladies singles and doubles titles for the ninth consecutive time.

Indeed, through the course of the championship, it was clear that James was the class of the field. He conceded just a single point in his first round match, and no more than seven in any one game on his way to the final. By contrast, the rest of the field was having much closer matches: former champion Hamish Buchanan needed three games to beat Alex Rew in the first round, while there were frighteningly tight matches in the quarter-finals between Dan Tristao & Will Ellison and John Minta & Dan Grant.

In the end, it was Dan and John who reached the semis - but with very different outcomes. John had a relatively routine win over former champion Matt Cavanagh, but Dan had to face James Toop, a man clearly on a mission. Indeed, James's form at the start of the first game of their semi was nothing short of breathtaking, and Dan simply had no answer. Sadly for John, James picked up in the final where he left off in the semi, blitzing his opponent with his array of clean winners, accurate hitting, amazing retrieval and sheer speed around the court. Like Dan before him, John had no answer, and although he started the second game well, James soon reeled him in and went on to take the title comfortably.

It was a similar story in the Ladies' championships, where Claire Knowles was again a class apart, winning the singles title without dropping a single point. In the doubles, too, it looked to be heading for a similar conclusion as Claire and partner Melanie Whitehead reached the final after dropping just two points in their semi-final.

However, in the final, they were to face Anita Ganguly and Charlotta Cooley, a pair who had conceded just one point in their first two matches. Although they were playing in their first Rugby Fives tournament, both used their considerable Eton- and 1-Wall Fives experience to push the reigning champions hard. Both girls improved visibly during the day's play, and it's testament to how far they came in just that time that they forced Claire to visibly raise her game in response. In the end, Claire and Melanie emerged as the winners - and rightly so - but Anita and Charlotta can take great credit from their performance. Likewise, in the plate, the spoils went to another pairing more used to the three-walled game, with Cambridge's Emmalina Thompsell and Charlie Farquharson-Roberts beating Megan Griffith and Caroline Makepeace in two keenly contested games.

## **NATIONAL OPEN SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIP**

St Paul's School, London, 5/6th December 2009

**1st round:** J Toop bt T Dean 15-1, 15-0; M Bate bt D Fox 15-9, 15-8; W Ellison bt E Hatton 15-6, 15-4;

D Tristao bt P Cohen 15-9, 15-3; H Buchanan bt A Rew 12-15, 15-10, 15-3; M Cavanagh bt H Mohammed 15-6, 15-3; D Grant bt G Price 15-6, 15-13; J Minta bt C Burrows 15-6, 15-2

**Quarter-finals:** Toop bt Bate 15-5, 15-7; Tristao bt Ellison 15-10, 15-13; Cavanagh bt Buchanan 15-10,

15-13; Minta bt Grant 15-12, 15-13

**Semi-finals:** Toop bt Tristao 15-6, 15-4; Minta bt Cavanagh 15-12, 15-8

**Final:** Toop bt Minta 15-0, 15-6

**Plate:** Dean

## **NATIONAL LADIES' CHAMPIONSHIPS**

St Paul's School, London, 6th December 2009

### **Singles**

1st round: Charlotta Cooley bt Kathleen Briedenham 15-2; Megan Griffith bt Emmalina Thompsell 15-2; Claire Rymarz bt Helen Higgins 15-5; Charlie Farquharson-Roberts bt Caroline Makepeace 15-2; Anita Ganguly bt Gemma Reece 15-1

Quarter-finals: Claire Knowles bt Cooley 15-0; Rymarz bt Griffith 15-10; Melanie Whitehead bt Farquharson-Roberts 15-2; Emma Howie bt Ganguly 15-10

Semi-finals: Knowles bt Rymarz 15-0, 15-0; Howie bt Whitehead 15-10, 15-11

Final: Knowles bt Howie 15-0, 15-0

Plate: Cooley

### **Doubles**

1st round: Higgins & Briedenham bt Thompsell & Farquharson-Roberts 15-11; Ganguly & Cooley bt Griffith & Makepeace 15-0

Semi-finals: Knowles & Whitehead bt Higgins & Briedenham 15-1, 15-1; Ganguly & Cooley bt Howie & Rymarz 15-1, retd

Final: Knowles & Whitehead bt Ganguly & Cooley 15-8, 15-6

Plate: Thompsell & Farquharson-Roberts

## **PRESIDENT'S CUP**

Merchant Taylors School, Northwood, 13th December 2009

As in 2008, so in 2009, the topic of conversation at the end of the President's Cup was of ages and potential records. However, whereas last year saw the youngest ever winner, keen observers of the game thought this year's tournament saw perhaps the widest ever spread of ages in a final, with 16-year old Max Frost facing his fellow Derby Moor player Rob Grey, who is more than 40 years his senior. They were partnered by Ady Lee and John Minta respectively, but in the end it was the experience of John and Rob that won the day, beating their younger opponents comfortably in two games - the first time either of the two has won this trophy.

In truth, these two pairs were arguably the strongest pairs right from the off, and they both came comfortably through their matches on the way to the final without dropping a game. Ady and Max did well to defeat the fancied pair of Bruce Hanton and Bhaswar Baral in the semi-finals, while John and Rob beat the left/right-hand combination of Tom Dean and Alan Bowden at the same stage. Naturally, one pair had to lose their first game in the final, and it was Ady and Max who had to give second best to the power and aggression of John, ably backed by his ever-steady partner.

As is expected on President's Cup day, competition for the three Plate competitions was every bit as fierce, with the closest final being Richard Price and John Keyes' three-game win over Dan Grant and Ian Roberts to claim the T-Pot - John and Richard's second three-game match in that Plate in succession. Keen to emulate his brother, Gareth Price got in on the act, too, combining with Nick Hillier (a last-minute sub for Mark Kiteley, who had to withdraw after the first round) to win the Love Mug, while Bruce Hanton and Bhaswar Baral gained some comfort for their defeat in the main competition's semi-final by taking the Mate's Plate with a dominant display in the final.

**1st round:** A Lee & M Frost bt R Christie & A Passey 15-5, 15-3; C Thomas & G Matthews bt D Murray & A Pringle 12-15, 15-9, 15-10; C Burrows & C Lamb bt J Sinton & B Kirk 15-13, 4-15, 15-9; B

Hanton &  
B Baral bt G Price & M Kiteley 15-5, 15-11; J Minta & R Grey bt J Cawthorne & T Burrows 15-5, 15-10;  
A Smith & A Goodwin bt H Buchanan & R Bridge 15-7, 14-16, 15-12; T Dean & A Bowden bt D Grant &  
I Roberts 15-10, 15-5; R Price & J Keyes bt E Hatton & J Hawke 15-10, 15-8  
**2nd round:** Lee & Frost bt Thomas & Matthews 15-11, 15-7; Hanton & Baral bt Burrows & Lamb 15-0, 15-13; Minta & Grey bt Goodwin & Smith 15-4, 15-6; Dean & Bowden br RPrice & Keyes 15-8, 15-12  
**Semi-finals:** Lee & Frost bt Hanton & Baral 15-11, 15-9; Minta & Grey bt Dean & Bowden 15-9, 15-7  
**Final:** Minta & Grey bt Lee & Frost 15-8, 15-5  
**Mate's Plate:** Hanton & Baral  
**T-Pot:** R Price & Keyes  
**Love Mug:** G Price & N Hillier

### **SPANISH CIJB DELEGATION VISITS ENGLAND**

London, 16th December 2009

England Handball, the Eton Fives Association and the Rugby Fives Association welcomed a Spanish delegation from world pelota organisation the Confederation Internationale du Jeu de Balle (CIJB), who were visiting to accept England into their federation in time for the Europilota 2010 championships to be held in Valencia.

The CIJB President José Luís López, along with two other officials, watched high quality demonstration matches of both Eton and Rugby fives, before remarking that the skills required for both codes ranked extremely highly in a world context. The day ended with an excellent dinner hosted by Mr López, with Michael Constantinidi and Ron Pattison representing the EFA, Andy Pringle the RFA, and Peter Cohen from England Handball.

### **OFFICIAL RFA RANKINGS**

London, 30th December 2009

James Toop and Hamish Buchanan have, respectively, secured top spots in the latest singles and doubles rankings. Prepared for the RFA by Dave Hebden, the latest tables reflect the results of the National Singles and Student Championships.

As a result, James Toop, who retained the national singles title (and who has not lost a singles match in a tournament since the final of the London Open in September 2008), now has clear daylight between himself and the chasing pack, while runner-up John Minta has closed the gap on second-placed Ed Fuller, who missed the National Singles Championship. Also making good progress in the top 10 is Dan Grant – up three places to eighth – while good results for Ed Hatton and Plate-winner Tom Dean and have seen them into the top 20 and top 30 for the first time, respectively.

With the doubles rankings only taking into account the BUCS championships, there's little movement in the top 20. However, after retaining their title in Sherborne, the Durham pair of Inigo Ackland and Alex Griffiths have jumped 14 places to 21st. Runners-up Ed Ronan and Jez Fabes also jump up the rankings, as do Oxford's Sam Adcock, Mark Hine and David Park, who all lost in the semi-finals.

## NATIONAL OPEN DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP

St Paul's School, Barnes, 9th January 2010

Despite the treacherous weather conditions, several pairs – including two from Derby – took part in the London qualifying tournament for the National Doubles Championship, with three places in the finals up for grabs. In fact, the only concession to the weather was to transfer the event from Alleyn's to St Paul's, where the courts are warmer – and indoors!

The beauty of this year's tournament was that, although there were plenty of familiar names in the draw, they were playing in unfamiliar pairs. That said, it was two established pairs who made it through the preliminary rounds: Derby's Kirk and Christie beat the ex-Malvern pair of Bishop and Murray, while St Paul's current top pair of Kay and Ward scored a good win over old Paulines Furniss and Barlow.

In the end, though, it was the more fancied pairs who won through to the semi-finals. In the top half, Steve Korris and Hal Mohammed (who had never played as a pair before, but had both partnered Will Ellison to doubles titles in 2009) scored a fine win over Mark Gibbor and Chris Burrows. Meanwhile, the bottom half produced the closest match of the day. Andy Pringle & Tom Dean shared the first two games with Charlie Brooks and James Bristow, and staged a huge fightback in the third game, coming back from 2-12 down to lead 13-12; however, at the crucial moment, their concentration lapsed and James and Charlie closed the game out 15-13, to seal a place in the final.

Here, they were soundly beaten by Hal and Steve, but both pairs safely sealed their place in the last eight, alongside the top four seeded pairs (reigning champions Hamish Buchanan & Robin Perry, 2009 runners-up Will Ellison & Marcus Bate, plus Manchester's John Minta & Ben Taberner, and the England handballers Ady Lee and Dan Grant). That left one Finals place up for grabs, with a match between the two losing semi-finalists to decide it. In the end, despite some major bruising to his left hand, Tom Dean and his partner Andy Pringle hung on to beat Mark and Chris in two close games.

The eighth Finals place will be decided at a South-West qualifying tournament later in the year.

**1st round:** Christie & Kirk bt Bishop & Murray 15-11, 15-10; Kay & Ward bt Furniss & Barlow 13-15,

15-13, 15-6

**2nd round:** Korris & Mohammed bt Christie & Kirk 15-3, 15-4; Burrows & Gibbor bt Baral & Bowden 15-6, 15-5; Pringle & Dean bt Goodwin & Frost 15-3, 15-4; Bristow & Brooks bt Kay & Ward 15-2, 15-3

**Semi-finals:** Korris & Mohammed bt Burrows & Gibbor 15-7, 15-3; Bristow & Brooks bt Pringle & Dean

9-15, 15-9, 15-13

**Final:** Korris & Mohammed bt Bristow & Brooks 15-6, 15-3

**3rd/4th place play-off:** Pringle & Dean bt Burrows & Gibbor 15-9, 15-13

## NORTH WEST OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Y Club, Manchester, 23rd/24th January 2010

STOP PRESS: Players from Manchester dominated their home championships, with John Minta taking the singles title before teaming up with Phil Bishop to win the doubles as well – and securing Phil's fifth consecutive North West doubles title in the process. Even the doubles plate went to a Manchester pair – John Beswick and Matt Bowness – and the only main prize not to stay in Manchester was the singles plate, won by Londoner Charlie Brooks. However, Charlie may take more pride in his first ever appearance in an Open championships final, as he and James Bristow finished as runners-up in the doubles tournament. Also taking a runner-up's tankard back down south was

James's fellow Old Wykehamist Will Ellison, who was runner-up to John Minta in the three-game singles final.

### **Singles**

**1st round:** C Burrows bt H Mohammed 11-7, 11-2; M Bowness bt C Brooks 11-4, 11-6; D Fox bt G Price 12-11, 11-5; W Ellison bt T Widdop 11-3, 11-3; J Beswick bt T Lewis 11-2, 11-2; J Bristow bt T Dean 11-3, 11-4; H Buchanan bt B Taberner 11-3, 9-11, 11-6

**Quarter-finals:** J Minta bt Burrows 11-9, 11-5; Bowness bt Fox 9-11, 11-6, 11-3; Ellison bt Beswick 11-0, 11-0; Buchanan bt Bristow 11-7, 11-3

**Semi-finals:** Minta bt Bowness 9-11, 11-6, 11-3; Ellison bt Buchanan 10-12, 11-5, 11-2

**Final:** Minta bt Ellison 8-11, 11-7, 11-4

**Plate:** Brooks

### **Doubles**

**Quarter-finals:** Buchanan & Taberner bt Price & Price 12-10, 11-0; Bristow & Brooks bt Beswick & Bowness 11-2, 11-4; Ellison & Mohammed bt Enstone & Henry 9-11, 11-9, 11-9; Bishop & Minta bt Burrows & Dean

11-3, 11-0

**Semi-finals:** Bristow & Brooks bt Buchanan & Taberner 4-11, 11-7, 11-2; Bishop & Minta bt Ellison & Mohammed 11-8, 11-0

**Final:** Bishop & Minta bt Bristow & Brooks

**Plate:** Beswick & Bowness

## **EASTBOURNE COLLEGE LADIES' FIVES**

Oundle School, 24th January 2010

Tessa Mills and Charlotte Dodds made history by becoming the first ever girls to represent Eastbourne College at Fives – in a match against Oundle School. Playing singles and doubles on unfamiliar courts against an Oundle pair of Bryony Choy and Suzi Burrows, the Eastbourne girls won by 66 points to 13, a score which did not do justice to how well the Oundle girls had played.

After the match, Eastbourne coach Alex Smith (himself an Old Oundelian and RFA board member) said, "It has been fantastic to see the girls play so well in their first competitive Fives fixture." The girls won't be resting on their laurels, though. They already have their next match lined up against Christ's Hospital, and hope to take part in the Ladies' Winchester Fives tournament at Bradfield on March 13th, where they will be joined by another of their schoolteachers, Kathleen Briedenhann.

## **UNDER 25s CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Merchant Taylors School, Northwood, 30th/31st January 2010

And so it was that time of year again when some of the best athletes in the world all came under one roof to compete for some of the most prestigious awards in sport. Yes, the Australian Open was in full swing in Melbourne. But at Merchant Taylors' School, the Under 25s Nationals was also rocking the world.

The first match on Singles Saturday was a lonely preliminary match between veteran Abecassis and top MTS school boy Judge. The youngster pulled out some impressive resilience which saw the senior player collapse on the floor with exhaustion after nearly every point. However, in the end it was wisdom over teenage beauty as Abecassis nicked the second game 16-15 to ensure his place in the first round. However, it was to be fashion sense over wisdom from there on in as Steve Korris went on to annihilate Abecassis in record time. The rest of the 1st round matches also went on seeding, with

relatively easy matches for all, except for 8th seed Inigo Ackland, who was closely beaten in a tasty match by stalwart good-guy Charlie Brooks 15-3, 16-15.

The quarter finals was also a mainly seeded-led affair, though Dan Tristao was pushed to two 16-14 sets by Brooks, who once again played his best fives. However, the second upset of the day came as Dean, who had worked hard over the past months to gain a 4th seeding, worked equally hard to lose it on that day as he was creamed by Burrows 15-1, 15-0. The semi-finals were almost a repeat of last year, except this time Dan Tristao was playing Burrows instead of Korris (who had been easily beaten by Ellison in the quarters). Again Tristao infuriated his opponent by purposefully allowing him to smell the glory, before whipping it away from under his nose, as he won 16-14, 16-14 for a second time. In the other semi, Ellison faced up against Grant. The first set was close with a few silly mistakes creeping in at the end, allowing Ellison to win 15-10. However, if Dan G had banked on Ellison to have another mammoth sugar crash (see National prelims), he would be disappointed, as Will came out strongly to take the second set 15-5.

This left us with a repeat of last year's final. Tristao vs. Ellison. Last year it was a marathon match, and so it was this year. The fives was, as always special (though unfortunately there was a special tennis match on at the same time which drew many of the spectators and, shamefully, this organiser to a nearby TV set). However, in good fortune Federer won in three, so at least we could all watch the end of the match! Ellison, who was in his 158,000th singles final, and still yet to win, walked on court with fire in his eyes. He dominated the first game and took it decisively 15-6. Dan fought back in the second though, and steady pace shined through as he took the game to a third set with a 15-10 scoreline. Now, no-one really knows what happened next. Some say Ellison blacked-out and his limbs acted on their own accord. Others say Tristao whispered to the ball and it magically began to follow his every command. Perhaps it is no coincidence that Dean who watched Murray, also watched Ellison. Whatever happened, Will Ellison shot to a 14-3 lead in the third. What followed, was a comeback so unbelievable that you may dismiss it as embellished storytelling. Don't! It actually happened. Tristao faced 11 match points and Ellison had 5 chances to win. But Dan clawed back, like the resilient mongrel he is, overcoming tiring fitness and mental anguish along the way to attain an incredible victory, winning 16-14. A quite spectacular finish to reclaim the singles trophy. Which is useful, because he hadn't engraved it from last year yet.

An arduous Plate match also saw Dan Ackland win over Bowden, with a respectable 25-17 scoreline.

Now to doubles! Unfortunately there were several withdrawals, which made the draw a lot smaller than we'd have hoped, but the valiant twenty fivesers soldiered on to make the most of it. In the bottom of the draw, the virgin pairing of Dan Grant and Dan Tristao (Dan Squared) easily reached the final with a comfortable win over Burrows and Dean. The top half, however, was not so clean cut. Last year Ellison and Korris, the no.1 seeds, had decimated all opposition, but this year they were taken to three sets by some quite remarkable fives from Hay and Brooks. The latter excelling himself, producing some of the best fives the world has ever seen. Midway through the third game, with Brooks and Hay up 7-3, tragedy occurred as Ellison's scream echoed through the rafters. He had fallen badly on his thumb. Dr Frank Ackerman rushed to the rescue and it turns out the thumb didn't need amputating. So Will bravely soldiered on, playing predominantly on the left (even serving there too). This may have actually been a blessing in disguise as this tactic was too difficult for Brooks and Hay to counter. With Steve far stronger on the right, smashing everything into the nicks with gusto, and poor little Hay being picked on worse than that ginger fat kid at school, it was not long before the no.1 seeds took their place in the final once more. It was no surprise that Brooks and Hay then went on to win the plate with a 25-4 scoreline over a decent pairing of George and Hunter, who had taken out Burrows and Dean in the semis.

And so that left the final. Defending champions Korris and Ellison, whose thumb was now feeling hittable again, vs Tristao and Grant, in their first and third U25s doubles final respectively. In front of a few sturdy spectators, the four played some superb fives in a brilliant final, if I say so myself. The Dan's raced to the lead in the first set, only to have the experienced duo power back with several

quick points on the trot. In a nail biting finish, the Dan's clinched the first set 16-14. The second set was also impressive, but this time the Dan's began to harmonise at partners. Tristao's retrieval was exceptional and even under constant bombardment, rarely hit a shot down. When the ball eventually made its way to Grant, the ball was returned with more aggression which unbalanced the no.1 seeds. Combined with quick volleys and rolling nick shots, Dan Squared raced to a 14-5 lead. Ellison and Korris fought back valiantly, but could only get to 9 before the inevitable hammer thundered down. Grant, who you should never play against with a loved one watching (you have been warned), winning his first Rugby Fives national title since the schoolboy singles seven years ago and Tristao attaining the double.

Though things were not over. The prestigious flair award –or the Jack “Furniss” Off Booby Prize as it is otherwise known – was still to be presented. Each flair shot was assessed over several criteria, marked out of 10. Poise, intentionality, grace, limb flails, finish and gloating were all taken into account. Schoolboy Smith made a fine attempt at flair with what has been described as a “Matrix followed by a reach-around”. This organiser doesn't want to know what the ‘reach-around’ involved. Veteran Brooks showed that fives is an instinct, and not a learned skill, as a reverse-angle-back-handed-nick-flipper scored him 30 points. Grant topped it with a Mortal Kombat “FINISH HIM” Spin Dice Drop, which astounded all on court, including himself, with a remarkable drop shot, slowly spinning midway off the sidewall on match point (finishing marks were high!). But not to be outdone, and with a clean-sweep possibility, Tristao won the award, achieving 31 points for intentionally allowing a game to go to 16 on not one, not two, but SIX occasions! A remarkable feat; the gloating to Ellison sealing the deal!

We look forward to next year's tournament, but know there's work to be done to increase numbers and keep the tournament a healthy success.

### **Singles**

**Preliminary round:** J Abecassis bt Judge 15-9, 16-15

**1st Round:** C Brooks bt I Ackland 15-13, 16-15; D Tristao bt D Ackland 15-6, 15-6; C Burrows bt Smith 15-3, 15-2; T Dean bt A Bowden 15-3, 15-7; D Grant bt Percival 15-1, 15-4; C Hay bt M Gibbor 15-3, 15-3; S Korris bt Abecassis 15-5, 15-2; W Ellison bt A George 15-1, 15-1

**Quarter-finals:** Tristao bt Brooks 16-14, 16-14; Burrows bt Dean 15-1, 15-0; Grant bt Hay 15-4, 15-6; Ellison bt Korris 15-4, 15-3

**Semi-finals:** Tristao bt Burrows 16-14, 16-14; Ellison bt Grant 15-10, 15-5

**Final:** Tristao bt Ellison 6-15, 15-10, 16-14

**Plate:** D.Ackland

### **Doubles**

**Quarter-finals:** Ellison & Korris w/o Ackland & Ackland; Brooks & Hay bt George & Hunter 15-2, 15-1; Burrows & Dean w/o Smith & Percival; Grant & Tristao w/o Bowden & Abecassis

**Semi-finals:** Ellison & Korris bt Brooks & Hay 15-3, 12-15, 15-12; Grant & Tristao bt Burrows & Dean 15-11, 15-7

**Final:** Grant & Tristao bt Ellison & Korris 16-14, 15-9

**Plate:** Brooks & Hay

**Flair Award:** Tristao (for intentional 16s)

## **WEST OF ENGLAND SCHOOLS CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Sherborne, Dorset, 13/14th February 2010

Boys from Derby Moor and St Paul's dominated the West of England Schools' Championships, which were held in February after the event was postponed from January because of the weather. Sadly, the originally planned entry dropped from 70 to 50 because of the new dates, but the event still

played host to boys from nine schools.

In both the Open and Colts tournaments, however, the winners' silverware was shared between Derby Moor and St Paul's. In the Open singles, reigning National Schools Champion Ed Kay of St Paul's won a thrilling final against last year's National Colts champion Luke Thomson of Christ's Hospital, coming back to win the third game having been 10-5 down. The doubles, meanwhile, went to the Derby Moor pair of Anthony Goodwin and Max Frost, who beat Luke Thomson and Seb Stracey of Christ's Hospital in another tight encounter over three games - and that after beating the top-seeded St Paul's in the semis.

It was Max's second win of the weekend, as he had already picked up the Colts singles championship, overcoming stern resistance from David Butler of Bradfield and powering his way to a win in three games. The Colts doubles final, meanwhile, was an all-St Paul's affair, with Francis Thomas and Sam Russell overcoming their team mates Theo Parker and Richard Law.

### **Open Singles**

**1st round:** Ainsworth (Tonbridge) bt Reid (Blundell's) 15-0; Turner (Blundell's) bt Brennan (Tonbridge) 15-5; Tilston (St Paul's) bt Baines (Winchester) 15-2; Kennedy (Winchester) bt Daykin (Blundell's) 15-1; Bowyer-Knight (Marlborough) bt Webb (Tonbridge) 15-0; Aitken (Tonbridge) bt Lewis (Rossall) w/o; Goodwin (Derby Moor) bt Lalor (Marlborough) 15-2; Stracey (Christ's Hospital) bt Carlton (Blundell's) 15-0; Aqualina (St Paul's) bt Michell (Tonbridge) 15-0; Jefferies (St Paul's) bt Lomax (Tonbridge) 15-0; N Edmonds (St Paul's) bt Mitchell (Sherborne) 15-0; Rolls (Marlborough) bt Ader (St Paul's) 15-0; Malde (St Paul's) bt Lester (Rossall) w/o

**2nd round:** Kay (St Paul's) bt Ainsworth 15-0; Tilston bt Turner 15-0; Kennedy bt Bowyer-Knight 15-5; Goodwin bt Aitken 15-2; A Edmonds (St Paul's) bt Stracey 15-5; Jefferies bt Aqualina 15-1; Rolls bt

N Edmonds 15-4; Thomson (Christ's Hospital) bt Malde 15-3

**Quarter-finals:** Kay bt Tilston 11-4, 11-2; Kennedy bt Goodwin 11-6, 7-11, 11-3; Jefferies bt A Edmonds 11-1, 11-5; Thomson bt Rolls 11-4, 11-1

**Semi-finals:** Kay bt Kennedy 11-2, 11-4; Thomson bt Jefferies 11-1, 6-11, 11-2

**Final:** Kay bt Thomson 11-4, 3-11, 12-10

**Plate:** Malde

### **Open Doubles**

**1st round:** Tonbridge 1 bt Rossall w/o; Winchester bt Blundell's 15-3; Derby Moor bt St Paul's 4 15-7;

St Paul's 2 bt Tonbridge 3 15-2; Marlborough bt Tonbridge 2 15-2; St Paul's 3 bt Sherborne 15-1

**Quarter-finals:** St Paul's 1 bt Tonbridge 1 11-1, 11-4; Derby Moor bt Winchester 11-7, 11-2; St Paul's 2 bt Marlborough 8-11, 11-1, 11-6; Christ's Hospital bt St Paul's 3 11-7, 11-1

**Semi-finals:** Derby Moor bt St Paul's 1 11-9, 12-11; Christ's Hospital bt St Paul's 2 11-8, 11-6

**Final:** Derby Moor bt Christ's Hospital 11-7, 8-11, 11-4

Plate: St Paul's 4

### **Colts Singles**

**1st round:** Smart (Sherborne) bt Akulinin (Eastbourne) w/o; Goodwin (Derby Moor) bt Hale (Winchester) 15-7; Baxter (Derby Moor) bt Grand (Blundell's) 15-9; Woollard (Winchester) bt Ashman (St Paul's) 15-12; Scott (Bradfield) bt Bar (Winchester) w/o

**2nd round:** Frost (Derby Moor) bt Law (St Paul's) 15-3; Smart bt Whait (Loretto) w/o; Goodwin bt Parker (St Paul's) 16-14; Russell (St Paul's) bt Baxter 15-5; Butler (Bradfield) bt Prince (St Paul's) 15-1; Wyatt-Haines (Blundell's) bt Woollard 15-4; Wylde (Winchester) bt Crofts (Eastbourne) 15-4; Thomas (St Paul's) bt Scott 15-6

**Quarter-finals:** Frost bt Smart 11-0, 11-0; Russell bt Goodwin 11-8, 11-2; Butler bt Wyatt-Haines 11-2, 11-3; Thomas bt Wylde 11-4, 11-3  
**Semi-finals:** Frost bt Russell 11-9, 11-3; Butler bt Thomas 11-3, 11-5  
**Final:** Frost bt Butler 11-6, 1-11, 11-3  
**Plate:** Parker

### **Colts Doubles**

**Preliminary round:** Derby Moor bt Winchester 2 11-2, 11-6  
**Quarter-finals:** St Paul's 1 bt Derby Moor 11-9, 8-11, 11-1; Blundell's bt Winchester 1 12-10, 11-8; Bradfield bt St Paul's 3 11-8, 11-4; St Paul's 2 bt Eastbourne w/o  
**Semi-finals:** St Paul's 1 bt Blundell's 11-4, 11-1; St Paul's 2 bt Bradfield 11-4, 12-10  
**Final:** St Paul's 1 bt St Paul's 2 11-9, 10-12, 11-8  
**Plate:** Winchester

### **VARSITY MATCH**

St Paul's School, Barnes, 20th February 2010

Sport can sometimes kick you when you're down, and this year's Varsity Match at St. Paul's was a cruel example of this for the losing team, writes David Barnes.

Oxford were almost unchanged from last year's victorious eight – only adding freshman Hine to give them extra fire-power in the doubles – while Cambridge, still without home courts, were forced to field a side weakened by a combination of illness and unavoidable absence. This inevitably led to something of a mismatch, at least as far as the scores were concerned.

Oxford, led by British Universities and National Under 25 champion Tristao, boasted a formidable singles line-up, including some seasoned veterans. Fabes at two, a winning captain for Cambridge back in 2002, and Ronan at three had each played in four previous Varsity Matches. In the event, Oxford's top three overwhelmed their less experienced – though talented – opponents, Malone, Ladak and Rowland; while at four, last year's captain, Park, beat the Cambridge secretary Compton with something to spare. 60 points to eight was the score at lunch.

The doubles brought Cambridge no relief, as none of their pairs was able to make any real impression on the well-balanced Oxford line-up. The third and fourth Oxford pairs played as well as any of recent years and gave Cambridge little chance. The first eight games of doubles were so conclusive that the result of the match was already determined by that stage, with none of the Cambridge pairs reaching double figures in any game.

The question now was this: could Oxford keep pressing to create a remarkable record by scoring 300 points and limiting their opponents to fewer than 50? Despite whole-hearted resistance from Cambridge, they managed to achieve this aim, conceding only 38 points overall while amassing a maximum – the first time since the very first Varsity Match in 1925 that the winning margin has been over 250 points.

No progress has yet been announced on the West Cambridge site, where a Sports Centre with Rugby and Eton Fives courts has been planned for a number of years, without attracting enough funding so far. Please sign the petition on the website [www.800yearswithnosportscentre.org](http://www.800yearswithnosportscentre.org) if you are interested in supporting the campaign to get this facility built. It is vital for the future of Cambridge Fives – and of the Varsity Match itself.

Meanwhile, this fine Oxford side should surely enter a team or two for the Wood Cup in April!

### **Singles (Oxford names first)**

D.C.Tristao (St. Paul's & Lincoln) bt E.R.Malone (St. Paul's & Churchill) 15-0; J.Fabes (Clifton & Green) bt A.Ladak (St. Paul's & Christ's) 15-0; E.O.Ronan (Bradfield & Linacre) bt L.O.Rowland (St. Paul's & Fitzwilliam) 15-2; D.M.Park (Sherborne & St. Catherine's) bt C.K.Compton (Eastbourne & St. John's) 15-6

### **Doubles**

Fabes & Ronan bt Malone & Rowland 15-3, 15-1; bt Ladak & Compton 15-0, 15-1. Tristao & M.L.Hine (St. Paul's & St. John's) bt Ladak & Compton 15-2, 15-2; bt Malone & Rowland 15-2, 15-0. T.J.Hoolahan (St. Paul's & Christ Church) & J.C.Baker (St. Paul's & Pembroke) bt P.N.Gwynn (Radley & Trinity) & F.S.W.Beardmore (St. Paul's & Clare) 15-2, 15-2; bt A.Ashok (St. Paul's & Queens') & T.P.R.Hennock (Christ's Hospital & Trinity) 15-5, 15-1. Park & S.J.Adcock (Eastbourne & St. Edmund Hall) bt Ashok & Hennock 15-3, 15-4; bt Gwynn & Beardmore 15-2, 15-0

**Result: Oxford bt Cambridge by 300pts to 38**

## **NORTH OF ENGLAND OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Durham, 27/28th February 2010

There was a double triumph for youth over experience in Durham this year, as younger players took the singles and doubles titles against far more experienced opposition. Just a week after Dan Tristao led his Oxford University side to a record win over Cambridge, he picked up his first open singles title, beating 2008 champion John Minta in three games. John (with partner Hamish Buchanan) was also on the losing side in the doubles final, losing out to Will Ellison and Marcus Bate - again in three games.

### **Singles**

**1st round:** J Minta by Wakelam w/o; A Griffiths bt G Price 11-7, 12-11; J Major bt I Ackland 11-3, 11-6;

H Buchanan bt Cochran 11-1, 11-1; D Grant bt J Buckhalter 11-4, 11-8; C Burrows bt A Lee 11-9, 11-1;

C Legget bt M Bate 11-5, 11-3; D Tristao bt C Hay 11-9, 11-7

**Quarter-finals:** Minta bt Griffiths 11-6, 11-3; Buchanan bt Major 11-5, 11-6; Grant bt Burrows 11-5, 8-11, 11-6; Tristao bt Legget 11-1, 8-11, 11-7

**Semi-finals:** Minta bt Buchanan 12-10, 11-5; Tristao bt Grant 11-9, 12-11

**Final:** Tristao bt Minta 9-11, 11-3, 11-1

**Plate:** Bate

### **Doubles**

**Quarter-finals:** Buchanan & Minta bt Buckhalter & Cochran 11-2, 11-1; Grant & Lee bt Ackland & Griffiths 11-9, 11-9; Legget & Mohammed bt Hay & Tristao 11-6, 11-2; Bate & Ellison bt Burrows & Price 10-12, 11-2, 11-3

**Semi-finals:** Buchanan & Minta bt Grant & Lee 11-9, 11-5; Bate & Ellison bt Legget & Mohammed 11-2, 11-9

**Final:** Ellison & Bate bt Buchanan & Minta 11-6, 4-11, 11-8

**Plate:** Price & Burrows

## **RFA v BUCS REPRESENTATIVE MATCH**

St. Paul's School, Barnes, 7th March 2010

In their representative match against the RFA, the British Universities, having unusually established a lead in the singles, were given a severe lesson in doubles play by the experienced RFA top pair, Hamish Buchanan and Bruce Hanton.

Late arrivals because of traffic problems meant that the singles match between Dan Grant and Inigo Ackland was postponed to the end and eventually remained unplayed; but in the other singles the students, especially Dan Tristao at one and Ed Ronan at six, scored heavily enough to ensure a lead of 12 points before the start of the doubles.

Although the BUCS pairs held their own initially in the doubles, the turning point in the match came at the halfway stage, when the BUCS top pair, twice Universities' champions Ackland and Alex Griffiths, were heavily defeated in both games by Buchanan and Hanton. This produced a swing of 22 points to the RFA, which the other BUCS pairs, despite stout resistance on their part, were unable to reduce.

Superior tactical play and pressure saw the RFA take a further 15 points profit from the final doubles exchanges to ensure victory without the deciding single having to be played. All in all, the match was full of irony: two players who lost their singles games by quite a wide margin played the decisive winning role as a doubles pair. Who said fives wasn't a team game?

Many thanks to St. Paul's School for the use of their facilities, and to BUCS for the very smart team kit.

#### **Singles (BUCS names first)**

D.Tristao bt H.Buchanan 15-8; I.Ackland v D.Grant match not played; R.Murby lost to M.Bate 13-15; C.Burrows lost to J.Bristow 12-15; A.Griffiths lost to A.Pringle 13-15; E.Ronan bt B.Hanton 15-3

**Singles total: BUCS 68 RFA 56**

#### **Doubles (BUCS names first)**

Ackland & Griffiths bt Grant & Pringle 16-15; bt Bate & Bristow 16-15; lost to Buchanan & Hanton 2-15, 6-15. Tristao & Ronan lost to Buchanan & Hanton 2-15; bt Grant & Pringle 15-7; bt Bate & Bristow 16-15, 15-8. Burrows & Murby lost to Bate & Bristow 12-15; lost to Buchanan & Hanton 5-15; lost to Grant & Pringle 13-15, 11-15

**Doubles total: BUCS 129 RFA 165**

**Overall RFA bt BUCS by 221pts to 197**

### **LADIES' WINCHESTER FIVES CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Bradfield College, Berkshire, 13th March 2010

There was a clear demonstration of how effectively players can cross the various codes of Fives at the Ladies Winchester Fives Championships, as Eton Fives and Handball champion Kerry White won both the singles and (with Dominique Redmond) the doubles titles.

In fact, Kerry put in a dominant performance throughout the day, showing her ability to master the unique demands of Winchester Fives. She was a comfortable winner in the singles final against fellow Eton Fives/Handball-player Charlotta Colley, regularly serving into the buttress and moving her opponent all over the court with good length and precise width. Kerry's closest challenge came in her semi-final against Eastbourne College teacher Kathleen Briedenhann, who took 10 points off the eventual champion in one game. However, Eastbourne didn't go home empty-handed, as the singles plate was won by the College's very promising pupil, Tessa Mills, and she also teamed up with fellow Eastbournian Charlie Dodds to win the doubles plate as well.

The main doubles competition, meanwhile, saw some very close matches, with both semi-finals going to three games, and both eventual finalists having to come back from a game-down to claim their place in the final. Eventually, it was the seasoned Rugby Fives pairing of Melanie Whitehead and Emma Howie who faced Dom Redmond and Kerry White, current Ladies Eton Fives champions; and, it was the latter who triumphed, meaning the statisticians will be scurrying to their record books yet

again. With Kerry's win today, on top of her Eton- and 1-Wall Fives titles, this could be the first time any Fives player has held titles in three different codes at the same time.

### **Singles**

**1st round:** Anita Ganguly bt Lauren Mackinnon 15-1; Charlotta Cooley bt Bella Eckert 15-1; Charlie Dodds bt Emmalina Thompsell 15-4

**Quarter-finals:** Kathleen Briedenhann bt Tessa Mills 16-14; Kerry White bt Ganguly 15-1, 15-3; Cooley bt Melanie Whitehead 15-5, 15-1; Dominique Redmond bt Dodds 15-1, 15-3

**Semi-finals:** White bt Briedenhann 15-5, 15-10; Cooley bt Redmond 15-8, 16-14

**Final:** White bt Cooley 15-5, 15-2

**Plate:** Mills

### **Doubles**

**Semi-finals:** Whitehead & Howie bt Briedenhann & Thompsell 6-15, 15-3, 15-7; White & Redmond bt Ganguly & Cooley 7-15, 15-5, 15-0

**Final:** White & Redmond bt Whitehead & Howie 15-2, 15-4

**Plate:** Mills & Dodds

## **WINCHESTER FIVES NATIONAL DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP**

Bradfield College, Berkshire, 14th March 2010

After another dominant display in the annual Winchester Fives doubles championship, Old Wykehamists Will Ellison and Hal Mohammed again demonstrated that they are the pair to beat in the Winchester version of the game. A year after winning the Barnes Bridge trophy for the first time at Malvern, they mounted a successful defence at Bradfield, winning the title without dropping a game.

The field was a mixture of youth and experience, with plenty of schoolboys among the more seasoned campaigners, but it was experience that held sway in the early rounds, and the eight seeded pairs won through to the quarter-finals. The top three seeds also made it through to the semi-finals, but the battle for the fourth place produced arguably the day's biggest upset: the Old Pauline pairing of Dan Tristao and Sam Roberts just edged out former champions Harry Akerman and Mario Mohammed in three tight games.

Sam and Dan's reward was a semi-final clash with Will and Hal, and although they lost the first game by a distance, they pushed the defending champions all the way in the second, only losing it 14-16. The other semi-final was another close match, with Manchester's Dave Fox & John Minta facing Hamish Buchanan & James Bristow. It went to the full three games, and although Hamish and James took the first, John and Dave fought back to take the next two, and clinch a place in the final.

Here, though, Hal and Will soon showed their class, regularly cracking the ball into the butress themselves and retrieving the ball whenever their opponents did so. They raced into a lead in the first game, and although Dave and John pegged a few points back, that merely made the scoreline respectable - they never threatened to get on top in the match. After that, the second game followed the same pattern; Hal and Will could dominate the play and they went on to retain their title in emphatic fashion.

**1st round:** A Edmonds & Jefferies bt Kennedy & Munn 15-10, 15-2; Gravatt & Sinton bt Esin & Tilston

15-8, 15-1; Maskell & Moger bt N Edmonds & Malde 15-3, 15-8

**2nd round:** Ellison & H Mohammed bt Grey & Kirby 15-2, 15-6; Dean & Pringle bt Edmonds & Jefferies

16-14, 15-2; Roberts & Tristao bt Arnott & Wilkinson 15-4, 15-3; Akerman & H Mohammed bt Christie & Kirk 15-2, 15-1; Bristow & Buchanan bt Kiggell & Wilson 15-2, 15-3; Marshall & Ronan

bt Gravatt & Simpson 15-6, 15-2; Pearce-Smith & McManus bt Maskell & Moger 15-10, 13-15, 15-11; Fox & Minta bt Kay & Ward 15-9, 15-5

**Quarter-finals:** Ellison & Mohammed bt Dean & Pringle 15-3, 15-2; Roberts & Tristao bt Akerman & Mohammed 13-15, 15-12, 15-11; Bristow & Buchanan bt Marshall & Ronan 15-8, 15-7; Fox & Minta bt Pearce-Smith & McManus 15-9, 15-9

**Semi-finals:** Ellison & Mohammed bt Roberts & Tristao 15-6, 16-14; Fox & Minta bt Bristow & Buchanan 5-15, 15-7, 15-5

**Final:** Ellison & Mohammed bt Fox & Minta 15-8, 15-5

**Plate:** Kay & Ward

## **NATIONAL UNDER 13 CHAMPIONSHIPS**

St Paul's School, Barnes, 14th March 2010

This tournament is an indicator that the game thrives in many of the schools that play at Under 13, writes tournament organiser Peter de Winton. Entries were received from 10 schools, from which the winners were different from those in last year's competition. It was good to welcome back Dulwich and Christ's Hospital, and some strong "Northern Raiders", who indeed accounted for most of the silverware, including a formidable Singles champion who made short work of his opposition. The day was also enhanced by the attendance of a considerable number of parents and other family members, which added to the atmosphere and no doubt encouraged their sons.

The Singles Pools yielded a number of hard fought matches, producing a group of the best eight, including two boys each from Alleyn's, Rossall, Pilgrims, and one each from Loretto and Derby Moor. Simon Whait from Loretto had only lost 4 points in his 7 pool matches, and relentlessly swept to victory in the final, overcoming a brave challenge from Ralph Thicknesse of Alleyn's, who had worked hard to overcome the two Rossall contestants in succession in previous rounds. Robert Whitehorn of Derby Moor took the Singles Plate as the best losing Semi Finalist. Simon is an outstanding and very complete player who has a great future in the game.

There was a different format in the Doubles this year; the Pool stage was dispensed with in order to get quickly into the knockout stage, with an optional Plate for those eliminated that were still standing! This proved popular and featured many a hard fought contest though the boys were obviously tiring. In the knockout, Derby Moor I showed great steadiness throughout and came through as deserving winners, not conceding more than an average of 3 points in their games, and grinding away Rossall I's challenge in the final. In the Plate Rossall II beat two Pilgrims pairs in succession to demonstrate their fitness and claim the tankards.

Thanks to all the coaches for their flexible approach to a day that was at times hectic, but always enjoyable. As always, one walks the tightrope of allowing the maximum participation from a keen group of boys, whilst striving for a format that produces quality fives and finishes within a reasonable hour. My thanks particularly to Frank Akerman for his support at all times during the day, and his ideas of how to improve the competition still further.

### **Singles**

#### **Round-robin stages:**

**Pool 1:** 1st Thicknesse (Alleyn's); 2nd Petrie (Pilgrims); 3rd Scott (Blundell's); 4th Hockings (Rossall);

5th Wright (Sutton Valence); 6th Anjum-James (Dulwich); 7th Patel (Merchant Taylors)

**Pool 2:** 1st Kinnear (Pilgrims); 2nd Hanton (Alleyn's); 3rd Hurd (Pilgrims); 4th Trapnell (Rossall); 5th Stephenson (Merchant Taylors); 6th Cookson (Blundell's); 7th Traherne-Pollock (Dulwich)

**Pool 3:** 1st Thompson (Alleyn's); 2nd Ardrone (Rossall); 3rd Brown (Blundell's); 4th Boissier (Pilgrims);

5th Goodhew (Dulwich); 6th Timney (Derby Moor); 7th Hamilton (Merchant Taylors)

**Pool 4:** 1st Andrews (Rossall); 2nd Edmonstone (Pilgrims); 3rd Pilkington (Blundell's); 4th Twyman (Alleyn's); 5th Baxter (Derby Moor); 6th Bryant (Pilgrims); 7th Schlossmann (Dulwich); 8th Murphy (Merchant Taylors)

**Pool 5:** 1st Whitehorn (Derby Moor); 2nd Aucamp (Sutton Valence); 3rd Morrison (Rossall); 4th Tinkler-Davies (Alleyn's); 5th Wardle (Blundell's); 6th Afolayan (Merchant Taylors); 7th Morgan-Giles (Pilgrims);

8th Dinwoodie (Christ's Hospital)

**Pool 6:** 1st Whait (Loretto); 2nd Blunden (Derby Moor); 3rd Mitchell (Pilgrims); 4th Dawber (Alleyn's);

5th Duncan (Blundell's); 6th Lee (Rossall); 7th Cowan (Merchant Taylors); 8th Trickey (Christ's Hospital)

#### **Knockout stages**

**Quarter-finals:** Whait bt Edmonstone 15-3; Whitehorn bt Thompson 15-5; Thicknesse bt Andrews 15-4; Ardron bt Kinnear 15-3

**Semi-finals:** Whait bt Whitehorn 11-0, 11-1; Thicknesse bt Ardron 11-5, 11-7

**Final:** Whait bt Thicknesse 11-2, 11-0

**Plate:** Whitehorn

#### **Doubles**

**Preliminary round:** Blundell's 3 bt Merchant Taylors 2 11-0; Pilgrims 4 bt Rossall 3 11-7; Alleyn's 3 bt

Blundell's 2 11-5; Pilgrims 3 bt Merchant Taylors 3 11-2; Alleyn's 2 bt Dulwich 2 11-6;

Rossall 2 bt Derby Moor 2 11-0

**1st round:** Alleyn's 1 bt Blundell's 3 11-2; Sutton Valence bt Pilgrims 2 11-7; Pilgrims 4 bt Dulwich 1 11-10; Derby Moor 1 bt Alleyn's 3 11-3; Blundell's 1 bt Pilgrims 3 11-7; Rossall 1 bt Christ's Hospital 11-0;

Alleyn's 2 bt Merchant Taylors 1 11-4; Pilgrims 1 bt Rossall 2 11-9

**Quarter-finals:** Alleyn's 1 bt Sutton Valence 11-7; Derby Moor 1 bt Pilgrims 4 11-1;

Rossall 1 bt Blundell's 1 11-5; Pilgrims 1 bt Alleyn's 2 11-0

**Semi-finals:** Derby Moor 1 bt Alleyn's 1 11-4; Rossall 1 bt Pilgrims 1 11-6

**Final:** Derby Moor 1 bt Rossall 1 11-4, 11-2

**Plate:** Rossall II

## **COLQUHOUN TROPHY**

Sherborne, Dorset, 21st March 2010

21 boys from six schools took part in the first ever running of the Colquhoun Trophy at Sherborne – a new event designed to commemorate the life of Charlie Colquhoun (former master in charge at Clifton College) and to promote Fives in the South West.

Sadly, no boys from Clifton were able to take part this year, but the competition did see players from Sherborne, Kelly, Blundell's, Marlborough, Malvern and Bruton take to the courts at Sherborne. There were Seniors and Colts sections, with 11 in the former and 10 in the latter, and the competition began with each section split into two round-robin groups. Each player's results within those groups would dictate whether they went into the main semi-finals, into the Plate, or straight home!

From the off, it was clear that the senior boys from Marlborough would take some beating, and both Sam Rolls and Kasper Bowyer-Knight had 100% records in their pools as they qualified for the semi-finals. Here they were joined by Ed Collins of King's School, Bruton, and George Daykin of Blundell's, but it was the Marlborough pair who maintained their 100% record and won through to the final.

This was a fine match, and nothing like as one-sided as the scoreline suggests. There was some fine play on show from both players, with a good variety of shots and plenty of long, keenly fought rallies. However, it was almost always Sam who found the winner or forced a mistake from his opponent, and he went on to score a fine victory. The plate, meanwhile, went to Malvern's Jamie Killick, who beat Jack Turner of Blundell's.

Blundell's also did well in the Colts plate, where the school provided both finalists, and Harvey Scott ran out a 15-9 winner over Sam Combe. However, it was four different schools who provided the semi-finalists in the main competition: Charlie Bury from Kelly College defeated Malvern's Adam Flattery in one match, while Alex Frossell of Marlborough beat Sherborne's Jamie Smart in the other.

Again, that meant that two boys with 100% records met in the final – but it was only Charlie who emerged with his perfect record intact. Both boys played fine Fives that belied their age, but Charlie had enough class to run out a 15-7 winner.

### **Open**

**Pool 1:** 1st Sam Rolls (Marlborough); 2nd Ed Collins (Bruton); 3rd Jack Turner (Blundell's); 4th Jamie Killick (Malvern); 5th Richard Lalor (Marlborough); 6th Alex Mitchell (Sherborne)

**Pool 2:** 1st Kasper Bowyer-Knight (Marlborough); 2nd George Daykin (Blundell's); 3rd Max Bayliss (Malvern); 4th Will Ward (Malvern); 5th Florian Singhoff (Bruton)

**Semi-finals:** Rolls bt Daykin 15-1; Bowyer-Knight bt Collins 15-6

**Final:** Rolls bt Bowyer-Knight 15-0

**Plate:** Killick

### **Colts**

**Pool 1:** 1st Charlie Bury (Kelly); 2nd Jamie Smart (Sherborne); 3rd Harvey Scott (Blundell's); 4th Jack Nicholson (Blundell's); 5th Harry Charteris (Blundell's)

**Pool 2:** 1st Alex Frossell (Marlborough); 2nd Adam Flattery (Malvern); 3rd Sam Combe (Blundell's); 4th Cameron Squibbs (Blundell's); 5th Sam Mills (Blundell's)

**Semi-finals:** Bury bt Flattery 15-0; Frossell bt Smart 15-2

**Final:** Bury bt Frossell 15-7

**Plate:** Scott

## **NATIONAL DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP**

Alleyn's School, Dulwich, 27/28th March 2010

Hamish Buchanan and Robin Perry marked their tenth successive appearance in the final of the National Doubles Championship by taking the title for the seventh successive time. As in 2009, they faced Will Ellison and Marcus Bate in the final, but this year's match was an altogether closer affair than last season's.

However, it was a mark of these two pairs' quality that they had both reached the final relatively easily. Hamish and Robin had resounding wins over, first, the two St Paul's schoolboys Ed Kay & Kit Ward, and secondly the England Handballers Dan Grant and Ady Lee; meanwhile Will and Marcus dispatched Chris Burrows & Mark Gibbor in the quarters before disposing of the sole Manchester pair, John Minta & Ben Taberner, in the semi-finals.

The final itself was keenly contested, and in neither of the two games was there ever more than a handful of points between the pairs. Indeed, at the end, the appreciative crowd were hard pressed to pin-point any major difference between the two pairs. Of course, Robin Perry's power was crucial at times, particularly when he was able to serve his opponents straight out, thereby denying them the chance to score points; and, naturally, Hamish's superb reading of the game allowed him to anticipate his opponents' shots almost before they had been played. But, Will and Marcus were every bit as able around the court, working well as a pair, retrieving and combining power and precision to frequently devastating effect.

The difference between the pairs was slight, and in the end probably came down to the defending champions' ability to win the crucial points and keep their noses ahead. Will and Marcus played very well, but towards the end of each game, they were the pair with the catching up to do, and they were never able to take the lead at the vital time. Instead, Hamish and Robin held their nerve to claim the title again.

The Plate, meanwhile, was won by Tom Dean and Andy Pringle, who beat all three other losing quarter-finalists in a round-robin competition. That means that Tom is the unusual – if not unique – position of holding both the National Singles and National Doubles plates at the same time.

**Quarter-finals:** Buchanan & Perry bt Kay & Ward 15-7, 15-9; Grant & Lee bt Korris & Mohammed 15-12, 15-4; Minta & Taberner bt Dean & Pringle 15-16, 15-7, 15-7; Bate & Ellison bt Burrows & Gibbor 15-3, 15-10

**Semi-finals:** Buchanan & Perry bt Grant & Lee 15-4, 15-6; Bate & Ellison bt Minta & Taberner 16-14, 15-2

**Final:** Buchanan & Perry bt Bate & Ellison 15-11, 15-13

**Plate:** Dean & Pringle

## **NATIONAL SCHOOLS CHAMPIONSHIPS**

St Paul's School, Barnes, March 29th/April 1st 2010

This year's tournament was well supported, with 21 schools represented in the three age groups, and it was good to have substantial groups from Edinburgh Academy, Sedbergh, Merchiston Castle, Loretto and Blundell's as well as the usual suspects from the Home Counties circuit.

After the postponed West of England tournament a mere six weeks earlier, form may have seemed more predictable than usual, but in fact a number of results, especially in the doubles, were reversed. St Paul's were the dominant force, with four quarter-finalists in Open and Colts singles, and five in

the last 16 of the Under 14, but another dozen schools had competitors still surviving at these stages. The standard of play in the two senior plate competitions was extremely high.

In the Open final, Ed Kay retained his title, but not without alarms, to which he has become accustomed! He came from 5-10 down to win the first game against Luke Thomson (Christ's Hospital) and had to work extremely hard for the second as well. After their epic final at Sherborne this was no surprise, and of course Luke has a further year at school. Thomson had defeated Peter Hanton in the semi-final, sad for Peter in that his season had been truncated by injury, and the lack of regular play meant he was unable to make the final a repeat of 2009. Both plate winners emerged from the "group of death" (with Luke Thomson), perhaps unfortunate victims of what was otherwise very accurate seeding(!): Ali Edmonds of St Paul's, surprisingly at his first National event, beat fellow Pauline Julian Aquilina (finalist in the 2009 second plate), and Marlburian Sam Rolls defeated David Bowden of Alleyn's.

In the Open doubles, there was some excellent fives from the outset: Marlborough upset the seeded Winchester pair, and particularly tough matches saw KCS beat Merchiston Castle, while Christ's Hospital were given a good run by the third Pauline pair. St Paul's IV pushed Derby Moor hard, but in the end the semi-final line up was the same as at Sherborne – but with some significant changes of personnel. Two outstanding matches followed, with SPS I winning a nail-biting first game against Christ's Hospital and SPS II winning in three close games with Derby Moor. The all-Pauline final was no anticlimax this time, with but the all-round court skills of Kay and Tom Chase eventually prevailed despite excellent retrieving by Ward and Edmonds.

Bradfield's David Butler was the Colts champion, reversing the result of the Sherborne final against Max Frost (Derby Moor). Both Butler and Sam Russell (SPS) in a three-game semi found Max's serve more manageable on the St Paul's courts, but he remains very hard to beat. Butler was pushed very hard in a three-game quarter final by Theo Parker (St Paul's). The two plate competitions also saw some very close games, with a large number of Under 15 players gaining experience for next year.

The Colts' doubles final was also an all-Pauline affair, with the newly formed partnership of Russell and Parker prevailing over Francis Thomas and Guy Johnston in three competitive games. Bradfield were unable to cope with the winning pair's consistency in the semi-final, while in the other SPS III (a scratch pairing of Richard Law with under-15 Matt Shaw) were not able to spring a third shock in a row, after remarkable wins in three games against Winchester I and in two tight ones against Alleyn's I.

The Under 14 competition had a record entry, and the standard of play was very high indeed. 2009 Under 13 champion Sam Wyatt-Haines (Blundell's) was always going to be the man to beat, and nobody could! Yul Kahn-Pascual (St Paul's) was the runner-up, but the gulf in experience needs rather more time to bridge. Yul had survived a very protracted semi-final against this year's U13 champion, Simon Whait (Loretto), and the plate winners were Ben Lawry (Sedbergh) and Archie Foster (St Paul's). In a busy day of doubles, Blundell's again proved to be the class act, but they were pushed all the way by Derby Moor. The enthusiasm of all the pairs in action showed that the game is in excellent health, and all power to those making it happen in the schools.

Many thanks to all involved in organisation and support, especially to those school staff who were giving up holiday time (and those who were supposed still to be teaching!). The whole championship was played in an excellent spirit, with the highest standards of sportsmanship and manners on court and camaraderie off it. (Writer's note: this paragraph is identical to last year, deservedly so!)

### **Open Singles**

**Pool A:** 1st E.Kay (St Paul's); 2nd R.Lalor (Marlborough); 3rd G.Waugh (Sedbergh); 4th P.Berman (KCS Wimbledon)

**Pool Bi:** 1st A.Mathias (Christ's Hospital); 2nd J.Ader (St Paul's); 3rd M.Hynes (Merchant Taylors)  
**Pool Bii:** 1st A.Goodwin (Derby Moor); 2nd P.Baker (Merchiston Castle); 3rd C.Yuen (Winchester)  
**Pool B play-offs:** Goodwin bt Mathias 15-3; Baker bt Ader 15-7; Yuen bt Hynes 15-1  
**Pool C:** 1st T.Chase (St Paul's); 2nd J.Gravatt (KCS Wimbledon); 3rd M.Chipping (Tonbridge);  
 4th J.Yamazaki (Oundle)  
**Pool Di:** 1st K.Bowyer-Knight (Marlborough); 2nd R.Mathias (Christ's Hospital); 3rd D.Bowden  
 (Alleyn's)  
**Pool Dii:** 1st J.Kennedy (Winchester); 2nd J.Aquilina (St Paul's); 3rd P.Judge (Merchant Taylors)  
**Pool D play-offs:** Kennedy bt Bowyer-Knight 15-5; Aquilina bt Mathias 15-8; Bowden bt Judge 15-6  
**Pool Ei:** 1st K.Ward (St Paul's); 2nd Z.Smith (Merchant Taylors); 3rd H.Spencer (Oundle)  
**Pool Eii:** 1st A.Ainsworth (Tonbridge); 2nd B.Stephens-Hemingway (Alleyn's); 3rd J.Atkins  
 (Winchester)  
**Pool E play-offs:** Ward bt Ainsworth 15-6; Stephens-Hemingway bt Smith 15-12; Spencer bt Atkins  
 15-8  
**Pool F:** 1st L.Thomson (Christ's Hospital); 2nd A.Edmonds (St Paul's); 3rd S.Rolls (Marlborough);  
 4th A.Goodwin (KCS Wimbledon)  
**Pool Gi:** 1st P.Hanton (Alleyn's); 2nd C.Percival (Merchant Taylors); 3rd B.King (Sedbergh)  
**Pool Gii:** 1st J.Tilston (St Paul's); 2nd Forrest (Christ's Hospital); 3rd F.Heathcote (Oundle)  
**Pool G play-offs:** Hanton bt Tilston 15-0; Percival bt Forrest 15-1; King bt Heathcote 15-1  
**Pool H:** 1st N.Edmonds (St Paul's); 2nd P.Leggett (Merchiston Castle); 3rd O.Evans (Tonbridge); 4th  
 Lorstrom (Christ's Hospital)  
**Quarter-finals:** Kay bt Goodwin 11-4, 11-0; Chase bt Kennedy 11-4, 11-3; Thomson bt Ward 11-8,  
 11-2; Hanton bt N.Edmonds 11-5, 11-6  
**Semi-finals:** Kay bt Chase 11-4, 11-4; Thomson bt Hanton 11-9, 11-1  
**Final:** Kay bt Thomson 12-11, 11-6  
**First plate:** A.Edmonds  
**Second plate:** Rolls

### Open Doubles

**Preliminary round:** Sedbergh bt Oundle II 11-1, 11-2; St Paul's IV bt Merchant Taylors II 11-4, 11-  
 2; Marlborough bt Merchant Taylors I 11-2, 11-2  
**1st round:** KCS Wimbledon I bt Merchiston Castle 12-10, 11-5; St Paul's II bt Sedbergh 11-0, 11-2;  
 Derby Moor bt St Paul's IV 11-1, 12-10; Tonbridge bt Christ's Hospital II 11-4, 11-7; Marlborough bt  
 Winchester 11-7, 11-2; Christ's Hospital I bt St Paul's III 11-3, 11-4; St Paul's I bt Oundle I 11-0, 11-  
 0; Alleyn's bt KCS Wimbledon II 11-1, 11-1  
**Quarter-finals:** St Paul's II bt KCS Wimbledon I 11-4, 11-8; Derby Moor bt Tonbridge 11-0, 11-0;  
 Christ's Hospital I bt Marlborough 7-11, 11-8, 11-0; St Paul's I bt Alleyn's 11-0, 11-2  
**Semi-finals:** St Paul's II bt Derby Moor 11-2, 5-11, 11-6; St Paul's I bt Christ's Hospital 12-10, 11-4  
**Final:** St Paul's I bt St Paul's II  
**Plate:** St Paul's III

### Colts Singles

**Pool Ai:** 1st G.Johnston (St Paul's); 2nd R.Shah (Merchant Taylors); 3rd F.Greig (Edinburgh  
 Acadaemy)  
**Pool Aii:** 1st E.Mack (Whitgift); 2nd C.Williams (Alleyn's), 3rd M.Kimberlin (KCS Wimbledon)  
**Pool A play-offs:** Johnston bt Mack 16-14; Williams bt Shah 15-2; Kimberlin bt Greig 15-2  
**Pool B:** 1st M.Frost (Derby Moor); 2nd M.Shaw (St Paul's); 3rd E.Wylde (Winchester); 4th B.Heath  
 (Marlborough)  
**Pool C:** 1st S.Russell (St Paul's); 2nd W.Geberbauer (Alleyn's); 3rd G.Ramsey (Edinburgh  
 Academy)  
**Pool D:** 1st Z.Brubert (Alleyn's); 2nd S.Prince (St Paul's); 3rd F.Crofts (Eastbourne); 4th X.Le  
 Joncour (Winchester)  
**Pool Ei:** 1st R.Law (St Paul's); 2nd R.Patel (Merchant Taylors); 3rd P.Wheeler (Eastbourne)  
**Pool Eii:** 1st D.Butler (Bradfield); 2nd P.Watson (Oundle); 3rd Y.Uddin (Alleyn's)

**Pool F:** 1st T.Parker (St Paul's); 2nd S.Redmayne (Alleyn's); 3rd M.Hale (Winchester); 4th R.Smith (Edinburgh Academy)  
**Pool G:** 1st S.Browett (Alleyn's); 2nd J.Whittaker (KCS Wimbledon); 3rd S.Woolard (Winchester)  
**Pool H:** 1st F.Thomas (St Paul's); 2nd J.Balfour (Edinburgh Academy); 3rd D.Shui (Whitgift)  
**Quarter-finals:** Frost bt Johnston 11-0, 11-1; Russell bt Brubert 11-4, 11-6; Butler bt Parker 10-12, 11-8, 11-1; Thomas bt Browett 11-5, 11-6  
**Semi-finals:** Frost bt Russell 8-11, 11-1, 11-6; Butler bt Thomas 11-6, 11-5  
**Final:** Butler bt Frost 115-11-6  
**First plate:** Whittaker  
**Second plate:** Wylde

### Colts Doubles

**1st round:** Alleyn's II Bt Edinburgh Academy 11-1, 11-2; Bradfield bt St Paul's IV 11-4, 11-7; St Paul's I bt Eastbourne 11-1, 11-0; Alleyn's III bt Winchester II 11-9, 11-8; St Paul's II bt KCS Wimbledon 11-6, 11-2; Whitgift bt Merchant Taylors I 9-11, 11-8, 12-10; Alleyn's I bt Edinburgh Academy II 11-2, 11-1; St Paul's III bt Winchester I 10-12, 11-8, 11-1  
**Quarter-finals:** Bradfield bt Alleyn's II 11-8, 12-10; St Paul's I bt Alleyn's III 11-4, 11-8; St Paul's II bt Whitgift 11-2, 11-2; St Paul's III bt Alleyn's I 11-9, 11-7  
**Semi-finals:** St Paul's I bt Bradfield 11-5, 11-4; St Paul's II bt St Paul's III 11-2, 11-6  
**Final:** St Paul's I bt St Paul's II 11-9, 4-11, 11-6  
**Plate:** KCS Wimbledon

### Under 14 Singles

**Pool A:** 1st S.Shindler-Glass; 2nd C.Constable (Whitgift); 3rd R.Goodson (Tonbridge)  
**Pool B:** 1st O.Bar (Winchester); 2nd J.Grandfield (Blundell's); 3rd L.Stone (Sedbergh)  
**Pool C:** 1st Savage (Alleyn's); 2nd V.Patel (Merchant Taylors); 3rd T.Adde (Radley); 4th C.Brechin (Loretto)  
**Pool D:** 1st O.Thompson (Sedbergh); 2nd A.Rogers (St Dunstan's); 3rd J.Mander (St Paul's); 4th L.Mullally (Whitgift)  
**Pool E:** 1st B.Chua (Winchester); 2nd R.Christie (Derby Moor); 3rd S.Okenabirhie (Merchant Taylors); 4th R.Turner (Loretto)  
**Pool F:** 1st A.Russell (Marlborough); 2nd J.Worne (Whitgift); 3rd A.Foster (St Paul's); 4th A.Hill (Tonbridge)  
**Pool G:** 1st C.Good (Loretto); 2nd D.Blakey (Sedbergh); 3rd R.Patel (Merchant Taylors)  
**Pool H:** S.Wyatt-Haines (Blundell's); 2nd Y.Rana (St Paul's); 3rd H.Fox-Edwards (Radley)  
**Pool I:** 1st Blunden (Derby Moor); 2nd B.Wycherley (Loretto); 3rd G.Rolls (Marlborough); 4th T.Gibbs (Radley)  
**Pool J:** 1st O.Arnold (St Paul's); 2nd B.Lawry (Sedbergh); 3rd J.Webber (Blundell's); 4th H.Coles (Wincheseter)  
**Pool K:** 1st S.Whait (Loretto); 2nd F.Sida-Murray (St Dunstan's); 3rd W.Kitching (Malvern); 4th H.Bowden (Tonbridge)  
**Pool L:** 1st T.Walters (Whitgift); 2nd S.Bell (St Paul's); 3rd A.Hubbard (Alleyn's); 4th A.Ogunde (Merchant Taylors)  
**Pool M:** 1st H.Stirling (Radley); 2nd T.Hoggard (Sedbergh); 3rd W.Baker (Malvern); 4th L.Brandon (Whitgift)  
**Pool N:** 1st Y.Kahn-Pascual (St Paul's); 2nd A.Oatts (Loretto); 3rd D.Buntine (Tonbridge); 4th E.Richards (Eastbourne)  
**Pool O:** 1st J.Neuhaus (St Paul's); 2nd C.Farmer (Sedbergh); 3rd Brady (Merchant Taylors)  
**Pool P:** 1st G.Herring (Winchester); 2nd M.Adewunmi (Whitgift); 3rd Coombe (Blundell's)  
**1st round:** Bar bt Shindler-Glass 11-3; Thompspon bt Savage 11-9; Chua bt Russell 11-6; Wyatt-Haines bt Good 11-1; Arnold bt Blunden 11-0; Whait bt Walters 11-6; Kahn-Pascal bt Stirling 11-0; Herring bt Neuhaus 11-6

**Quarter-finals:** Thompson bt Bar 11-9; Wyatt-Haines bt Chua 11-1; Whait bt Arnold 11-1; Kahn-Pascal bt Herring 11-3

**Semi-finals:** Wyatt-Haines bt Thompson 11-0, 11-3; Kahn-Pascal bt Whait 11-5, 11-7

**Final:** Wyatt-Haines bt Kahn-Pascal 11-0, 11-4

**First plate:** Lawry

**Second plate:** Foster

#### **Under 14 Doubles**

**1st round:** Loretto II Bt Winchester II 15-13; Blundell's I bt Radley II; Sedbergh II bt Merchant Taylors III w/o; St Paul's II bt Tonbridge II; St Dunstan's bt Whitgift III 15-1; St Paul's IV bt Merchant Taylors II 15-7; Whitgift I bt St Paul's III 15-12; Winchester I bt Blundell's II 15-4; Alleyn's bt Malvern 15-6; Loretto III bt Radley I 15-3; Sedbergh III bt Whitgift II 15-8

**2nd round:** Blundell's I bt Loretto II 15-1; St Paul's II bt Sedbergh II 15-8; Sedbergh I bt St Dunstan's 15-7; Loretto I bt St Paul's IV 15-7; Derby Moor bt Whigift I 15-4; Winchester I bt Alleyn's 15-13; Merchant Taylors I bt Loretto III 15-11; St Paul's I bt Sedbergh III 15-6

**Quarter-finals:** Blundell's I bt St Paul's II 15-1; Sedbergh I bt Loretto I 15-12; Derby Moor bt Winchester 15-11; St Paul's I bt Merchant Taylors I 15-7

**Semi-finals:** Blundell's I bt Sedbergh I 15-4; Derby Moor bt St Paul's I 15-13

**Final:** Blundell's I bt Derby Moor 15-7, 15-4

**First plate:** Alleyn's

**Second plate:** Winchester II

#### **NATIONAL VETERANS' CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Christ's Hospital, Horsham, 10/11th April 2010

Christ's Hospital arranged the traditional hot weekend for the Veterans' Tournament, and Stuart Kirby and Brian Kirk arrived with food and drink to feed an army. Needless to say, there was very little food remaining by Sunday evening, writes organiser John Hawke.

During the weekend, only a single match went to three games, even though every round was hard fought. Once the organiser was knocked out of the singles (he did not participate in the doubles), the standard of play was excellent [NB this is rather harsh, as John himself played very well - RFA Ed], with the finals of both events producing games that would have been outstanding in any age group.

Neil Roberts pressed Hamish Buchanan hard in the first game of the singles final, building an early lead, but eventually youth and fitness swung the match in favour of Hamish.

On Sunday, we had our only three-game match, when Henry and Nithsdale, Kirby and Kirk threatened to make proceedings finish as late as they had on Saturday. Luckily, other players had different ideas, so proceedings for the day ended in the Sussex Oak with a group of well-groomed gentlemen.

In the doubles final, Neil Roberts – with a small amount of assistance from Wayne Enstone – had his revenge over Hamish for his Singles defeat. Again, a fiercely contested match finished in just two games, although Roberts and Enstone achieved the narrowest possible win in the first game. This close defeat appeared to dampen the spirits of Hamish and Bruce Hanton, as the second game, although still hard fought, was a much easier victory for the eventual champions.

The courts were shared, on the Saturday, with the Masters Doubles Championship (for over 65s), in which three pairs took part. This event was perhaps most notable for the RFA's President and Deputy President (Frank Akerman and Dick Warner, the latter playing by special dispensation despite not being of the required age) facing each other on court, but the title was eventually won by Bev Boag and Douglas Rice.

## **Singles**

**1st round:** H.Buchanan bt I.Roberts 11-0, 11-0; S.Kirby bt R.Warner 11-2, 11-9; A.Hanton bt R.Christie

11-7, 11-5; A.Hamilton bt B.Nithsdale 11-9, 11-7; J.Walter bt R.Sandie 11-2, 11-2; K.Henry bt B.Kirk 11-2, 11-6; N.Roberts bt J.Hawke 11-3, 11-3

**Quarter-finals:** Buchanan bt J.Stubbs 11-2, 11-0; Kirby bt Hanton 11-0, 12-11; Walter bt Hamilton 11-6, 11-2; N.Roberts bt Henry 11-3, 11-0

**Semi-finals:** Buchanan bt Kirby 11-2, 11-3; N.Roberts bt Walter 11-1, 11-0

**Third place play-off:** Kirby bt Walter 15-11

**Final:** Buchanan bt Roberts 11-8, 11-6

**Plate:** Henry

## **Doubles**

**Quarter-finals:** Enstone & N Roberts bt East & Hamilton 11-3, 11-6; Henry & Nithsdale bt Kirby & Kirk

11-6, 6-11, 11-9; Sutcliffe & Walter bt Christie & Stubbs 11-1, 11-0; Buchanan & B Hanton bt Sandie & Kiteley 11-3, 11-5

**Semi-finals:** Enstone & Roberts bt Henry & Nithsdale 11-1, 11-8; Buchanan & Hanton bt Sutcliffe & Walter 11-2, 11-1

**Final:** Enstone & Roberts bt Buchanan & Hanton 12-11, 11-5

**Plate:** Sutcliffe & Walter

## **NATIONAL CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP (WOOD CUP)**

St Paul's School, Barnes, 17/18th April 2010

For the fifth consecutive year, the Wood Cup left the Manchester Y Club, only to return there after another successful defence by the club in the National Club Championship. In doing so, the Y Club has equalled its own record of five consecutive wins in the championship, which they also managed between 1983 and 1987.

This year's win came at the expense of the Old Paulines, who were also runners-up in the Owers Trophy last September. And, credit to the Y Club, this year's result never looked in doubt, as they brushed aside first the West of England Club and then the Alleyn Old Boys to seal their place in the final of this competition for the eighth time in 10 years.

The Old Paulines, by contrast, had a much tougher time of it. Their quarter-final against the Wessex Club was won by little more than a dozen points, while their semi-final match against the Executioners was even closer. In fact, the games were evenly shared between the two teams, and the Paulines were down as the final two games of doubles started. Yet, both Pauline pairs came back to reverse the previous games and record a win, thereby taking the match - be just seven points.

The final, however, was to prove a match too far, and the writing was on the wall after just the first singles. John Minta conceded just one point as he beat Dan Tristao and, although the other singles matches saw the points shared evenly, the Y Club took a 10-point lead into the doubles; and that was soon extended as John and Phil Bishop scored an emphatic win over Sam Roberts and Charlie Brooks.

On the next court, Kevin Henry and Ben Taberner took on Dan and schoolboy Ed Kay in a full-blooded encounter that belied Ed's youth and Kevin's lack of sleep. Almost inevitably, though, the games finished 11-9, 9-11, meaning the four had toiled for well over an hour in amazing heat for no net gain!

Nevertheless, as the second round of doubles began, the Y Club's lead had extended to the best of 30 points, and the match was put beyond doubt as John and Phil won their first game against Dan and Ed

to love, while Kevin and Ben also won their first game. In the remaining games, the Paulines regained some pride – Dan and Ed only lost 10-12 to John and Phil, while Sam and Charlie won their second game – but it was all too late by that stage. Yet again, the Wood Cup was facing a journey up the M6 and set to call the Y Club home for another 12 months - and deservedly so. With such a strong squad to call on, who's to bet against the Y Club making it six years on the trot in 2011?

**Preliminary round:** West of England bt Exeter; Executioners bt Old Tonbridgians; Wessex bt Old Merchant Taylors

**Quarter-finals:** Manchester YMCA bt West of England; Alleyn Old Boys bt White Rose Club; Executioners bt Derby Moor w/o; Old Paulines bt Wessex

**Semi-finals:** Manchester YMCA bt Alleyn Old Boys; Old Paulines bt Executioners

**Final:** Manchester YMCA bt Old Paulines 121-83

## **WINCHESTER FIVES MIXED DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP**

Bradfield College, Berkshire, 25th April 2010

While thousands of athletes toiled around the capital's streets in the London Marathon, there was every bit as much effort expended on the courts at Bradfield. The Winchester Fives Mixed Doubles Championship had attracted its usual eclectic mix of players – from Rugby Fives, Eton Fives and even Pilota, many of whom had never played Winchester Fives before – and a fascinating day's Fives ensued.

In the early rounds, experience generally held sway, with the fancied pairings of Dan Grant & Claire Knowles, Andy Pringle & Emma Howie and Anthony Theodossi & Kerry White safely taking their place in the semi-finals. However, the closest quarter-final saw the Eton Fives pairing of Seb and Charlotta Cooley score a tough win in three games over James Bristow (the one genuine Winchester Fives player in the field) and Catherine Gainey, who was playing her first ever competitive Fives.

Mind you, if that was a tough match, it was nothing compared to the Cooleys' next game - against Dan (the defending champion) and Claire. The first two games were epics, both going the distance and being shared between the pairs, as Dan and Claire's more regular Rugby Fives-style play struggled to contain the Eton Fives-inspired tactics of Seb and Charlotta, who were playing front-and-back rather than the more conventional left-and-right. Come the third game, though, Dan and Claire subtly changed their tactics, playing more to a length, and that did the trick, as they came through to win the decider 15-8.

In the final they came up against Andy & Emma, who had managed a relatively routine win over Anthony and Kerry in their semi. However, any hopes they had of Dan and Claire suffering the after-effects of their semi-final exertions were soon dashed. Although the first game of the final was close, gradually Dan's serving came into its own, making it hard for his opponents to score, while he started to find the buttress (and clean winners) more regularly in rallies. With this skill more than ably backed up by Claire's fine play, there was no weakness to exploit, and Andy and Emma had to admit defeat.

The plate competition, meanwhile, was every bit as keenly contested, with many of the round-robin games going the full distance. However, it seemed appropriate that the eventual winners were James and Catherine, who had earlier come so close to clinching a place in the semi-finals.

**Preliminary round:** Charles Lamb & Victoire Binchet bt Ian Mitchell & Mandy Clemmett 11-5, 7-11, 11-6

**Quarter-finals:** Dan Grant & Claire Knowles bt Lamb & Binchet 15-1, 15-0; Seb & Charlotta Colley bt James Bristow & Catherine Gainey 15-6, 9-15, 15-12; Andy Pringle & Emma Howie bt Peter & Vanda Scholey 15-1,

15-6; Anthony Theodossi & Kerry White bt Martin & Melanie Whitehead 15-1, 15-2

**Semi-finals:** Grant & Knowles bt Cooley & Cooley 16-15, 14-16, 15-8; Pringle & Howie bt Theodossi & White 15-5, 15-6  
**Final:** Grant & Knowles bt Pringle & Howie 15-11, 15-8  
**Plate:** Bristow & Gainey

## **NATIONAL VINTAGE CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Oundle School, 25th April 2010

A select few gathered at Oundle School Fives courts for the Vintage (over 55) singles competition at the early hour of 9:30, although one competitor had to phone in from the M11, where he was stuck in traffic.

To provide the limited entry with plenty of Fives, the first rounds of the competition were played as two round robin groups of three players each. The first and second players in each group then proceeded to the semi-finals, where the program changed from one game to 15 to the best of three games to 11. Those who failed to reach the semi-finals and the losing semi-finalists then played a further round-robin to decide the Plate.

This format ensured that everyone played at least five games, with those reaching the semi-finals destined to play even more.

A similar number of pairs arrived at 2:00 for the doubles competition, which was arranged in the same way as the singles.

As usual, the standard of play belied the age of the competitors, with many games being hard fought, and a few additionally enlivened by the on-court comments of our Deputy President. Most players coped with the strange angles that the Oundle courts can produce, and none had any trouble consuming the plentiful vittles the school provided.

The day was capped by a doubles final, the quality of which improved as time went on. Although the spectators may have been disappointed that it finished in two games, the Sports Centre staff were allowed to lock up and go home almost on time.

Many thanks to Tony Burrows for arranging the use of the courts, and for organising the food.

### **Singles**

**Round Robin 1:** Enstone bt Warner 15-5; Enstone bt Grey 15-4; Warner bt Grey 15-8  
**Round Robin 2:** Hamilton bt Nithsdale 15-9; Hamilton bt Hawke 15-3; Nithsdale bt Hawke 15-0  
**Semi-finals:** Enstone bt Nithsdale 11-1, 11-0, Hamilton bt Warner 11-1, 11-6  
**Final:** Enstone bt Hamilton 11-1, 11-1  
**Plate:** Nithsdale

### **Doubles**

**Round Robin 1:** Enstone & Lewis bt Hamilton & Clarke 15-10; Enstone & Lewis bt Warner & Grey 15-4; Warner & Grey bt Hamilton & Clarke 15-10  
**Round Robin 2:** Nithsdale & Sandie bt Atkinson & Kiteley 15-2; Nithsdale & Sandie bt Arnott & Wilkinson 15-9; Arnott & Wilkinson bt Atkinson & Kiteley 15-13  
**Semi-finals:** Enstone & Lewis bt Arnott & Wilkinson 11-9, 11-4; Nithsdale & Sandie bt Warner & Grey 11-10, 11-7  
**Final:** Enstone & Lewis bt Nithsdale & Sandie 11-5, 11-6  
**Plate:** Hamilton & Clarke

## SCOTTISH OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Loretto School, Musselburgh, 1st/2nd May 2010

With a disappointingly small entry of players, it was a case of quality rather than quantity at this year's Scottish Open; and, as in the last few years, it was John Minta's quality that came to the fore.

Saturday's singles tournament saw just six entries, yet organiser Neil Roberts came up with a cunning plan to ensure plenty of Fives for everyone: a round-robin 'league' where each player played one game to 15 against every other player, with the top two players going on to contest the final, while the third and fourth would play in the Plate final.

John Minta started his campaign against Johnny Major, and this proved to be his toughest challenge, as the Edinburgh University student initially adapted better to the Loretto courts while John struggled with his footwork on the slippery floor. In the end, though, John proved too much for Johnny to handle and the defending champion came through 15-12, before going on to seal his place in the final with wins in all his remaining matches.

However, it took the final game of the round-robin to decide who he would face. Both Andy Pringle and Neil Roberts had come through the round-robin with only one loss (to John), so their encounter would decide both finals: the winner would face John in the main final, while the loser would face Johnny Major in the Plate Final, after he beat both John Hawke and Ed Cumberledge.

Neil and Andy's game was a fine encounter, with plenty of long rallies; and, while Neil graciously admitted that it was closer than the 15-3 scoreline suggested, there was no doubt that he was the deserved winner, always able to find the crucial winner and force Andy into mistakes. He then went on to push John hard in the first game of the final, but eventually John's power saw him win through 11-7 in the best-of-three encounter. Sadly for Neil, John then upped his game and blitzed through the second game without losing a point, securing his fourth Scottish Open singles title in five years.

Come the doubles – again just contested by six players, with the pairs selected by the organiser – it was John's class that shone through. He partnered John Hawke in the competition, which (like the singles) was a round-robin format, but with the winners decided simply on a league basis, with no separate final. And, no matter what the opposing pairs threw at John H, John M was able to defend his partner and strike the crucial winners when he had the chance.

That's not to say he had it all his own way, though. On the contrary, the Johns' matches both went the distance and they had to come back from losing the first game in each instance, first to Adam George and Ed Cumberledge, and then to Andy Pringle and Ian Roberts. Nevertheless, come through they did, and John Minta secured his fourth successive win in the event.

The final match of the tournament would decide who would finish as runners-up and who take the Plate. Sadly, this wasn't as close a match as the two previous encounters and the students (Ed from Edinburgh and Adam from St Andrews) won in two easy games, playing with a maturity that belied their ages and picking the right shots to pressure their more experienced opponents into mistakes

### Singles

**Round Robin:** J Minta bt N Roberts 15-6, bt A Pringle 15-9, bt J Major 15-12, bt E Cumberledge 15-1, bt J Hawke 15-1; N Roberts bt A Pringle 15-3, bt J Major 15-5, bt E Cumberledge 15-4, bt J Hawke 15-7; A Pringle bt J Major 15-8, bt E Cumberledge 15-1, bt J Hawke 15-0; J Major bt E Cumberledge 15-10, bt J Hawke 15-6; E Cumberledge bt J Hawke 15-2

**Final:** Minta bt Roberts 11-7, 11-0

**Plate:** Pringle

## **Doubles**

**Round Robin:** Hawke & Minta bt George & Cumberledge 13-15, 16-14, 15-13, bt Pringle & Roberts 19-15, 15-10, 15-10; George & Cumberledge bt Pringle & Roberts 15-3, 15-6

**Champions:** Hawke & Minta

**Runners-up:** George & Cumberledge

**Plate:** Pringle & Roberts

## **NATIONAL SCHOOL GIRLS' CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Christ's Hospital, 16th May 2010

Girls from four schools contested the first ever National School Girls' Championships at Christ's Hospital, and the event was an unqualified success. All the girls thoroughly enjoyed the day's play, and every school won some silverware.

The event was run by Eastbourne College teacher (and RFA board member) Alex Smith, who remarked on the fact that, in the top three singles tournaments, the eventual winners had a very powerful march to the Final, all no more than three points before their Finals. At U14 level, Royer conceded just 3 points overall, as did Dodds at U16, while in the Seniors Mills dropped just 6 points overall.

Also notable was the strength in depth at U14 level, and the fact that, with a couple of schools forced to withdraw at the last minute, the U16 category was quite open, so some of the U14 girls played in the U16 category.

Throughout the day, it was clear that the girls were playing with every bit as much enthusiasm, skill and athleticism as their male counterparts. The on-court behaviour was exemplary - although we're unsure if you can describe girls as gentlemen! - and the RFA Gen Sec was moved to remark that he had never seen so many players congratulate their opponents on good shots as he had in this championship.

Overall, the day was an undoubted success, and we look forward to this championship establishing itself in the Fives calendar

### **Senior Singles** (for the Paula Smith Cup)

Quarter-final: Harries (Christ's Hospital) bt Spain (Christ's Hospital) 12-11, 11-9

Semi-finals: Mills (Eastbourne) bt Harries 11-0, 11-0, Hayes (Christ's Hospital) bt Heslop (Christ's Hospital)

2-11, 11-3, 11-4

Final: Mills bt Hayes 11-1, 11-5

Plate: Harries

### **Senior Doubles** (for the Simon Eckert Memorial Trophy)

Round-robin: 1st Eastbourne I (Dodds & Mills) 30-5; 2nd Christ's Hospital I (Hayes & Harries) 19-24;

3rd Christ's Hospital II (Heslop & Spain) 10-30

Final: Eastbourne I bt Christ's Hospital I

Plate: Christ's Hospital II

**Under 16 Singles** (for the Melanie Whitehead Cup)

Round-robin: 1st Dodds (Eastbourne) 45-1; 2nd East (Eastbourne) 30-26; 3rd Haywood (Christ's Hospital)

23-31; 4th Cheverton (Christ's Hospital) 5-45

Final: Dodds bt East 11-1, 11-1

Plate: Haywood

**Under 16 Doubles** (for the Denise Hall-Wilton Trophy)

Round-robin: 1st Christ's Hospital I (Strong & Blair); 2nd Eastbourne I (Williams & Scott); 3rd Eastbourne II (East & Corfield); 4th Christ's Hospital II (names not recorded)

Final: Christ's Hospital I bt Eastbourne I 11-7, 11-4

Plate: Eastbourne College II

**Under 14 Singles**

Quarter-finals: Williams (Eastbourne) bt Blair (Christ's Hospital) 11-1; Zhang (Malvern) bt Page (Eastbourne) 11-0; Hollingsworth (Sutton Valence) bt Strong (Christ's Hospital) 11-8; Royer (Sutton Valence) bt Glenny (Christ's Hospital) 11-0

Semi-finals: Zhang bt Hollingsworth 11-2, 11-2; Royer bt Williams 11-0, 11-0

Final: Royer (Sutton Valence) bt Zhang (Malvern) 11-3, 11-0

Plate: Strong

**Under 14 Doubles**

Round-robin: 1st Sutton Valence (Royer & Hollingsworth); 2nd Malvern (Zhang & Darling); 3rd Eastbourne I (Cutler & Page); 4th Eastbourne II (names not recorded)

Final: Sutton Valence bt Malvern 11-2, 11-8

Plate: Eastbourne College

**Under 13 Singles**

Winner: Louise Mathias (Christ's Hospital)

Runner-up: Olivia Walsh (Christ's Hospital)

**Under 13 Doubles**

Winners: Olivia Walsh and Louise Mathias (Christ's Hospital)

Runners-up: Sophie Glenny & Mairi Watt-Cooper (Christ's Hospital)

**DERBY MOOR INVITATION DOUBLES**

Derby Moor, 20th June 2010

On his debut in the 7th Derby Moor Invitation Doubles on the 20th of June Wayne Enstone picked up the trophy for the first time. He and Jay Gravatt defeated local juniors Anthony Goodwin and Max Frost 15-9, 15-3 in a final which was an education for the two youngsters. Jay, who has previously won the President's Cup with Hamish Buchanan (he sure knows how to pick his partners!) came up from London, Wayne down from Manchester, in a pincer movement designed to wrest the trophy away from the home club, who have had a winner in each previous year.

In the semi-final Wayne & Jay beat father and son partnership Richard and Rob Christie, who had earlier eased through against organiser Brian Kirk and the evergreen John Hawke, while Anthony & Max gained a very creditable victory over Stuart Kirby & Tim Widdop. Earlier Grem McIntyre and his son Paul had had to fight hard in the first round to defeat the National U13 Doubles champions,

Matt Blunden & Robert Whitehorn.

In the Plate competition Derby Moor colts Jimmy Goodwin and Michael Baxter had a superb win over Clive Butler & Bob Sandie, but somehow contrived to lose in the final to the scratch pairing of wily Richard Christie and younger brother (13!), Craig Baxter.

**Semi-finals:** Enstone & Gravatt bt Christie & Christie 15-3, 15-6; Goodwin A & Frost bt Kirby & Widdop

15-10, 15-12

**Final:** Enstone & Gravatt bt Goodwin & Frost 19-9, 15-3

**Plate:** Christie & Baxter C bt Goodwin J & Baxter M 15-5