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SOUTH-WEST CHAMPIONSHIPS

Blundell's School, Tiverton, 29/30th July 2006

There may have been an unusually low number of entrants for this year's South West Open, but the quality of fives certainly didn't suffer. The singles final was contested by the two most recent National champions, and all four players in the doubles final were current title holders.

In the singles, despite a couple of scares on the way – most notably Gareth Price pushing John Minta hard in the first round – the top four seeds made it safely through to the semi-finals. In the top half, Phil Bishop just had the edge over John Beswick, while in the bottom half, Matt Cavanagh (the only semi-finalist not from Manchester's Y Club) disposed of John Minta.

The final may have been a repeat of last season's National Singles final, but the result could not have been more different. Matt's pin-point accuracy coupled with his athletic retrieval won him the first game and took him into a commanding lead in the second. Only then did Phil really begin to find his length, and the back nick, but it was too late. Matt held on to clinch the game and, with it, the championship.

In the doubles, too, the Y Club was dominant. After Wayne Harrison and Brian Nithsdale had won the Plate, the final of the main competition was contested by two pairs from Manchester: Phil Bishop teamed up with John Minta to face Wayne Enstone and Kevin Henry, who had earned their place in the final after hard-fought wins in both the quarter- and semi-finals.

The final itself was played at a frenetic pace, John cracking the ball round the court with either hand, Wayne matching him volley for volley at the front of court, and all four players retrieving seemingly impossible shots.

To start with, the match was very even, but gradually the tide began to turn the way of John and Phil. And, once they found their length, the relentless pressure told. They eventually secured the first game and, with their confidence boosted, went on to win the second game comfortably and claim the silverware.

Last but not least, we must mention two other sterling efforts: first, Nick Hillier battled his way to the finals of both plate competitions, only to finish runner-up twice; and, secondly, every player recognised the dedication and faultless, consistent performance of Fred Beswick, who gallantly manned the kettle all day long – a real godsend on a grey and rainy day. .

Singles

1st round: N Geere bt W Harrison 11-1, 11-6; N Hillier bt B Nithsdale 11-7, 12-10

2nd round: P Bishop bt J Eadie 11-0, 11-0; E Hatton bt B Baral 11-3, 11-8; K Henry bt A Smith 11-6, 11-4; J Beswick bt J Thomson 11-0, 11-1; J Minta bt G Price 12-10, 11-2; A Pringle bt N Geere 11-7, 11-7; D Hebden bt Hillier 11-8, 11-2; M Cavanagh bt S Lewis 11-0, 11-1

Quarter-finals: Bishop bt Hatton 11-0, 12-10; Beswick bt Henry 11-2, 11-6; Minta bt Pringle 11-2, 11-2; Cavanagh bt Hebden 11-0, 11-0

Semi-finals: Bishop bt Beswick 11-5, 11-7; Cavanagh bt Minta 11-4, 11-2

Final: Cavanagh bt Bishop 11-3, 11-9 ; Plate: Geere

Doubles

1st round: Baral & Price bt Hillier & Thomson 8-11, 11-5, 11-6

Quarter-finals: Bishop & Minta bt Eadie & Geere 11-0, 11-1; Hatton & Smith bt Harrison & Nithsdale 11-0, 11-3; Enstone & Henry bt Baral & Price 11-9, 11-7; Hebden & Pringle bt Lewis & Lewis 11-3, 11-4

Semi-finals: Bishop & Minta bt Hatton & Smith 11-4, 11-0; Enstone & Henry bt Hebden & Pringle 11-9, 11-3

Final: Bishop & Minta bt Enstone & Henry 11-6, 11-2

Plate: Harrison & Nithsdale

LONDON OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Alleyn's School, Dulwich, 16/17th September 2006

It was a year of firsts at the 2006 London Open. Ed Fuller won his first ever singles title, and Matt Cavanagh won his first ever open doubles title.

In fact, more than one Fuller made headlines this year. Ed's dad, Ian Fuller, played superbly in his first singles tournament for some time to reach the semi-final at the expense of John Minta. Matt Cavanagh eventually knocked him out of the tournament, but Matt wasn't able to complete the Fuller double in the final, where he faced Ed, fresh from a semi-final win over James Toop, one of three former national champions in the semi-finals.

The match was a gruelling affair for the two players, with the opening two games very close, and shared. Come the deciding third game, though, it was Ed who had the greater strength in his legs, and he was able to defeat the tiring Matt - after well over two hours on court.

Elsewhere in tournament, other young players put in impressive performances. St Paul's schoolboy James Corbin took Ben Taberner to three games before going out in the first round, and UCL student Freddie Sjostrom played well to win the singles plate.

It was a very similar story in the doubles tournament, where national schoolboy colts champions Luke Rowland and Jamie Faber did extremely well to reach the quarter-finals. Dan Grant and Freddie Sjostrom also played well, beating Alex Smith and Jez Sinton in the first round before going out to the established pair of Ben Taberner and Paddy d'Ancona in the quarter-finals.

The competition really came to life in the semi-finals. On one court, Ben and Paddy won through against Chris Jones and Andy Pringle in two very close, hard-hitting games, while on the other court two relatively untried pairings battled it out. Eventually, however, Matt Cavanagh gained revenge for his singles final defeat, as he and partner Hamish Buchanan beat Ed Fuller and James Toop.

The final was a gripping match, with contrasting styles. Ben and Paddy, with years of experience as a pair, were working together like a well-oiled machine, whereas Hamish and Matt, who had never played together in a Rugby Fives tournament before, were more prone to getting in each other's way. The first game was a tense battle, with the score locked at nine-all for what seemed like ages, but Matt and Hamish held their nerve to clinch it 12-11. They then went on to claim the title with a more comfortable win in the second game, always more able than their opponents to pick off the winning shot when the chance came.

Singles

1st round: A Boyd bt A Bowden 15-5, 15-9; J Sinton bt G Matthews 15-2, 15-7; B Taberner bt J Corbin 16-14, 9-15, 15-5; B Hitchens bt P Cohen 15-9, 15-11; D Grant bt A Smith 15-9, 15-7; S Roberts bt C

Lamb 15-1, 15-2; T Maconie bt R Bridge 15-0, 15-0; E MMC bt S Stokes 15-1, 15-0; E Hatton bt F Sjostrom 15-12, 15-7
2nd round: M Cavanagh bt Boyd 15-2, 15-0; O Stone-Lee bt Sinton 15-4, 15-6; I Fuller bt Taberner 15-3, 15-0; J Minta bt Hitchens 15-2, 15-0; E Fuller bt Grant 15-8, 15-3; Roberts bt Maconie 15-13, 15-9; C Jones bt MMC 15-13, 15-8; J Toop bt Hatton 15-2, 15-2
Quarter-finals: Cavanagh bt Stone-Lee 15-2, 15-0; I Fuller bt Minta 15-9, 15-6; E Fuller bt Roberts 15-1, 15-2; Toop bt Jones 15-6, 15-2
Semi-finals: Cavanagh bt I Fuller 15-1, 15-1; E Fuller bt Toop 15-7, 15-4
Final: E Fuller bt Cavanagh 11-15, 15-13, 15-7

Plate: Sjostrom

Doubles

1st round: Grant & Sjostrom bt Smith & Sinton 11-9, 11-6; Matthews & Lamb bt Tristao & Corbin 11-1, 11-2; Rowland & Faber bt Bridge & Boyd 11-0, 11-3; Carr & Sulkin bt Gregory & Bowden 11-2, 11-3
Quarter-finals: d'Ancona & Taberner bt Grant & Sjostrom 11-6, 11-4; Jones & Pringle bt Matthews & Lamb 11-2, 11-0; Toop & E Fuller bt Rowland & Faber 11-2, 11-3; Buchanan & Cavanagh bt Carr & Sulkin 11-0, 11-6
Semi-finals: d'Ancona & Taberner bt Jones & Pringle 11-8, 11-9; Buchanan & Cavanagh bt Fuller & Toop 11-5, 11-6
Final: Buchanan & Cavanagh bt d'Ancona & Taberner 12-11, 11-4
Plate: Smith & Sinton

OLD BOYS' CHAMPIONSHIP (OWERS TROPHY)

St Paul's School, Barnes, 30th September 2006

After the closest final in the history of the tournament, the Owers Trophy returned to its first ever winners, the Alleyn Old Boys. Judging their tactics perfectly, their eventual margin of victory over the Old Paulines was just three points.

The final was a fitting end to a tough day's play, notable for the competition's first ever fraternal battle, when Old Oundelian Alex Smith faced his brother Nick (of the Alleyn Old Boys) in the first round. This year's tournament also saw the debuts of the Radley Manuals and the Old Blues (from Christ's Hospital), and both teams did very well. The Old Blues eventually went on to win the Plate and the Radley Manuals reached the semi-finals after a tight win over the Old Tonbridgians – thanks in no small part to the efforts of former schoolboy champions Tom Maconie and Chris Saltmarsh, who won their second round of doubles for the loss of just three points, allowing the Manuals to win by nine points overall.

However, they couldn't repeat their feat in the semi-final against the Alleyn Old Boys, where the experienced pair of Hamish Buchanan and Bruce Hanton dropped just three points in their four games. The second semi-final, Old Paulines against Old Eastbournians, was a repeat of a clash at the same stage last year, but the result was very different. The eight games were shared evenly between the two teams, but crucially the Paulines scored more heavily in the games they lost, giving them a 14-point victory overall.

The resulting final was a tense, tactical battle, with Hamish and Bruce desperate to win their games convincingly to relieve the pressure on the hard-working Dave Hebden and his less experienced partner, Nick Smith. For the whole match, there were never more than a few points in it, and the teams each won four of the eight games. However, the crucial difference was that Dave and Nick won 17 points in their four games, whereas Hamish and Bruce conceded just 14 in theirs.

Victory, then, to the Alleyn Old Boys, if not the Owers Trophy itself, which the unfortunate organiser had broken the previous evening!

1st round: Alleyn Old Boys bt Old Oundelians 83-28; Radley Manuals bt Old Tonbridgians 66-57; Old Paulines bt Old Blues 89-39

Semi-finals: Alleyn Old Boys bt Radley Manuals 73-46; Old Paulines bt Old Eastbournians 65-51

Final: Alleyn Old Boys bt Old Paulines 61-58

Plate: Old Blues bt Old Oundelians 88-39

YORKSHIRE OPEN DOUBLES TOURNAMENT

Giggleswick School, Settle, 14th October 2006

Warm sunshine blessed the endeavours of the thirteen pairs contending for the Yorkshire Open Doubles title at Giggleswick this year, writes organiser Ian Roberts. Hopefully this mitigated the discomfort of the lack of availability of showers, due to the commencement of work on a new sports hall being built adjacent to the Fives courts.

The entry was a strong one, and this showed in the length of time taken over the games. Despite an uncharacteristically early start, no three game matches clogging the timetable, and both courts being in constant use through the day, it proved necessary to curtail the Plate to enable play to end at a reasonable time.

By the late afternoon, contestants were drifting away, so Plate games were played with a view to identifying the winners on each side of the draw who should appear in the final. This led to the Leeds University pair of Korris & Marshall being pitted against Mancunians Nithsdale & Harrison in the Plate final, which was decisively settled in favour of Korris & Marshall.

The final of the main competition lasted longer. It was, as they say, a game of three halves. Hebden & Buchanan had had the tougher semi-final game against the new and successful pairing of Minta & Widdop. Nevertheless, they swiftly established a seven point lead which Roberts & Beswick did well to overturn to win the first game. However, by then, Beswick's shoulder was giving him trouble, allowing Hebden & Buchanan to win the next two games easily and, with them, the match.

The proceedings were then adjourned to the bar of the nearby Black Horse, where the restorative qualities of Taylors' Landlord bitter were demonstrated, before dinner chez Gillian & Neil Roberts in the fastnesses of Rathmell.

1st round: B Nithsdale & W Harrison bt R Grey & CE Butler 15-8, 15-8; B Kirk & P O'Brien bt CD Lamb & JR Hawke 15-2, 15-3; J Minta & TC Widdop bt S Korris & AJ Marshall 15-7, 15-5; W Ellison & H Mohammed bt JL Ellacott & CTJ Taylor 15-2, 15-3; PC Reynolds & JN Reynolds bt TI Roberts & DK McIntyre 15-4, 15-11

Quarter-finals: NH Roberts & JG Beswick bt Nithsdale & Harrison 15-10, 15-1; WG Enstone & K Henry bt Kirk & O'Brien 15-8, 15-3; Minta & Widdop bt Ellison & Mohammed 15-3, 15-3; DJ Hebden & H Buchanan bt Reynolds & Reynolds 15-3, 15-3

Semi-finals: Roberts & Beswick bt Enstone & Henry 15-1, 15-8; Hebden & Buchanan bt Minta & Widdop 15-13, 15-11

Final: Hebden & Buchanan bt Roberts & Beswick 13-15, 15-0, 15-1

Plate: Korris & Marshall

LATEST RFA RANKINGS

London, 23rd October 2006

Things are tighter than ever at the top of the latest official singles rankings, compiled by Dave Hebden and published by the RFA today. Just 1.4 points cover the top three players, with current national champion Phil Bishop taking over first place from Hamish Buchanan, who was unable to play in this season's first two singles tournaments. Meanwhile, South West Open champion Matt Cavanagh closes in on both of the players above him.

Also making good progress up the rankings to fifth is London Open champion Ed Fuller. That win puts him within touching distance of James Toop in fourth – and the final automatic qualifying place for the national singles championship in December. With that in mind, next weekend's West of England championships will take on even more significance.

Nevertheless, perhaps the most impressive performance comes from Ed's dad, Ian, who jumps from nowhere to 11th in the singles rankings after reaching the semi-finals at last month's London Open.

In the doubles rankings, however, Hamish Buchanan makes up for losing the top singles position by cementing his first place after wins in the London and Yorkshire Open tournaments. His closest challengers – South West champions John Minta and Phil Bishop – are more than 20 points behind.

Dave Hebden and Matt Cavanagh, Hamish's partners in his two wins this season, make good moves up the rankings, but the biggest riser in the top 20 is a certain Wayne Enstone. Runner-up in the South West Open and losing semi-finalist in Yorkshire, he jumps 10 places to 15th.

WEST OF ENGLAND CHAMPIONSHIPS

Clifton College, Bristol, 28/29th October 2006

On a day that started with Matt Cavanagh's second singles title of the season, the gods of fives saved the best till last: a hard-fought three-game win for Dave Hebden and Hamish Buchanan to take the West of England doubles title by the narrowest of margins.

It was the perfect end to a weekend that had seen fives of the highest quality. Even in the first round of the singles, two of the matches went to three games. However, as the day wore on, experience won through, and seven of the eight quarter-finalists were seeds. The one exception was Harry Akerman, who had recorded notable wins over Chris Jones and Kevin Henry - in three games on both occasions.

However, his run came to end against James Toop, who went on to meet Matt Cavanagh (winner against Dave Fox) in one semi-final. James tried everything he knew, but it simply wasn't enough against an in-form Cavanagh. Their match included many long rallies, but almost invariably it was Matt who won them.

In the top half of the draw, meanwhile, things were much tighter: Phil Bishop and Ed Fuller only reached the semi-finals after three-game wins over Marcus Bate and John Minta respectively. In the first game, pretty much everything went Ed's way, but he only reached the final after surviving a major fightback from Phil.

It was much the same story in the final, but with the opposite result. In the first game, Ed simply had no answer for Matt's relentless accuracy and athletic retrieving, and the second game started off in the same vein, allowing Matt to build up a big lead. Ed did begin to fight back, but by then it was too little, too late.

Matt was always ahead, and held on to take the second game and, with it, the title.

The doubles tournament, too, was blessed with some excellent fives, and even the plate tournament - won by the promising young pair of Dan Grant and Freddy Sjoström - saw plenty of very close games. In the main draw, though, the form book held true: six of the eight seeds made the quarter-finals and three of the top four seeds played out the semi-finals, with the top two winning through to the final.

And, what a final it was, hard-fought, hard-hitting and hard to work out who was on top right until the very end. Dave Hebden and Hamish Buchanan took the first game, with their powerful cross-court shots finding the vital winning nicks. However, in the second game, the aggressive power of Phil Bishop and John Minta began to tell. They found their length and began to hit their trademark winners into the back nick. One game all...

The third game started as the second had ended and, with the score at 10-6 to Matt and Phil, it looked like curtains for Dave and Hamish. They had other ideas, though, and clawed their way back up to 10-all and even went on to game-ball at 11-10. However, again the tide turned: Phil and John won a point to get another game ball for themselves at 11-all, only for Dave and Hamish to dig deep and find the right shots at the right time. Several match points were saved by both pairs and, for the last quarter of an hour, it was impossible to predict the eventual winner. Only when the last shot of yet another tough, tense rally spun agonisingly away from the reach of a despairing John Minta was the result certain: Hamish and Dave could finally claim the trophy.

Singles

Preliminary round: Rew by Ahern 11-0, 11-0

1st round: Bishop bt Plemming 11-1, 11-2; Pringle bt Geere 11-2, 11-3; Rew bt Kiggell 11-9, 3-11, 11-8; Bate bt Lewis 11-1, 11-5; Minta bt Moger 11-4, 11-0; Wilson bt Matthews 11-3, 11-3; Hatton bt Sage 11-1, 11-7; Fuller bt Gregory 11-0, 11-0; Toop bt Gibbor 11-7, 11-7; Roberts bt Adcock 11-1, 11-0; Henry bt Smith 11-4, 11-5; Akerman bt Jones 10-12, 11-3, 11-7; Fox bt Eadie 11-1, 11-4; Sjoström bt Savery 11-7, 11-4; Grant bt Hughes 11-6, 12-11; Cavanagh bt Hodder 11-0, 11-2

2nd round: Bishop bt Pringle 11-8, 11-3; Bate bt Rew 12-10, 11-8; Minta bt Wilson 11-3, 11-3; Fuller bt Hatton 11-3, 11-0; Toop bt Roberts 11-3, 11-5; Akerman bt Henry 11-6, 4-11, 11-3; Fox bt Sjoström 11-4, 11-0; Cavanagh bt Grant 11-3, 11-0

Quarter-finals: Bishop bt Bate 11-4, 7-11, 11-5; Fuller bt Minta 11-9, 10-12, 11-5; Toop bt Akerman 11-4, 11-7; Cavanagh bt Fox 11-4, 11-9

Semi-finals: Fuller bt Bishop 11-3, 11-7; Cavanagh bt Toop 11-2, 11-1

Final: Cavanagh bt Fuller 11-3, 11-7

Plate: Kiggell

Doubles

Preliminary round: Plemming & Gibbor bt Lewis & Sage 11-8, 11-6; Moger & Colton bt Savery & Kiggell 11-4, 3-11, 12-11

1st round: Bishop & Minta bt Grant & Sjoström 11-1, 11-8; Akerman & Mohammed by Hatton & Clydesdale-Cotter 12-10, 11-6; Jones & Pringle bt Plemming & Gibbor 11-7, 11-7; Bate & Toop bt Adcock & Adcock 11-5, 11-1; Rew & Hughes bt Matthews & Gregory 11-5, 11-1; Henry & Fuller bt Geere & Eadie 11-5, 11-4; Moger & Colton bt Fox & Wilson 11-2, 11-7; Buchanan & Hebden bt Werkshagen & Larnach w/o

Quarter-finals: Bishop & Minta bt Akerman & Mohammed 11-0, 11-6; Bate & Toop bt Jones & Pringle 11-8, 11-4; Henry & Fuller bt Rew & Hughes 10-12, 11-8, 11-4; Hebden & Buchanan bt Moger & Colton 11-2, 11-3

Semi-finals: Bishop & Minta bt Bate & Toop 11-3, 11-6; Buchanan & Hebden bt Henry & Fuller 11-4, 11-4

Final: Hebden & Buchanan bt Bishop & Minta 11-7, 4-11, 12-11 ; Plate: Grant & Sjoström

RFA 80th ANNIVERSARY DINNER

Queen's Club, London, 29th September 2007

The RFA is to celebrate its 80th anniversary with a dinner at the famous Queen's Club in West London on September 29th 2007. Further details will be announced in the forthcoming mid-season newsletter but, in the meantime, members are advised to put the date in their diaries now.

SCHOOLS WINCHESTER FIVES DOUBLES TOURNAMENT

Winchester College, 5th November 2006

A lean year in terms of entry nonetheless produced an enjoyable day's competition, with some very close matches. As last year, two St Paul's pairs reached the final, the school's first pair beating Winchester II in the quarter-finals and then Winchester I in the semis. In the bottom half, St Paul's II had a real battle with Marlborough I and then defeated Sherborne I in two close games. In the final, Tristao and Corbin (SPS I) showed their class to take the first game easily, but Ladak and Ashok (SPS II) came back strongly in the second game, only to lose it by the narrowest of margins.

The plate final was a superb game between the rising stars of Winchester III (Kelly & Squire-Smith) and St Paul's III (Rowland & Faber), just won by the home side.

Many thanks to Winchester College for the use of its fine courts, and to Jamie McManus and Paul Carling for their help in organising and running the tournament.

1st round: Winchester II bt Christ's Hospital II 11-0, 11-0; St Paul's III bt Christ's Hospital I 11-3, 11-0; Winchester I bt Malvern 11-9, 11-5; Winchester III bt Marlborough II 11-0, 11-3; Marlborough I bt Sherborne II 11-1, 11-2

Quarter-finals: St Paul's I bt Winchester II 11-8, 11-3; Winchester I bt St Paul's III 5-11, 11-8, 12-10; Sherborne I bt Winchester III 11-7, 11-8; St Paul's II bt Marlborough 6-11, 11-7, 11-8

Semi-finals: St Paul's I bt Winchester I 11-5, 11-4; St Paul's II bt Sherborne I 12-10, 11-8

Final: St Paul's I (D Tristao & J Corbin) bt St Paul's II (A Ladak & A Ashok) 11-4, 12-11

Plate: Winchester III

BOB HOLLAND MEMORIAL TOURNAMENT

Y Club, Manchester, 11th November 2006

A really good day was had by all the players at the recent Bob Holland Memorial Tournament. Organiser Jeff Thomas would like to thank all the lads who took part: Bob would have been very proud.

After the hard fought group of initial games and tough semi finals, Phil Bishop and his very reliable partner Clive Butler won a very good final against Neil Roberts and the player of the day, young Ashley Hill from Derby, two games to one.

The plate final was won by Brian Nithsdale and Brian Kirk and, after the fives, a good few of the players and spectators went up to the bar for beers and hotpot. Bob would have approved...

NATIONAL STUDENT & BUSA CHAMPIONSHIPS

Oundle School, 24/26th November 2006

The BUSA Championships showed incredible strength in depth in university fives, but it was players from Cambridge who came away from Oundle with the major titles. Alan Beverly added the BUSA singles title to the Under 25 title he already holds, before teaming up with Charlie Brooks to regain the doubles title they won last year.

For Charlie, it was his fourth BUSA doubles title in succession, a truly impressive feat. And, true to form, he and Alan were the class of the field throughout the tournament, never conceding more than 8 points in any one game on their way to an eventual win over the Durham pair of Adrian Lee and Hal Mohammed. Hal's former schoolboy partner, Will Ellison, also did well, reaching the semi-final with Will Hardyment, while the Leeds pair of Korris and Marshall survived some tough games to also make the last four.

Charlie and Alan had already shown their form in the singles tournament, both winning tough quarter-finals before facing each other in one semi-final, where Alan always had the edge. The other semi, however, was arguably the match of the tournament: a two-hour, three-game epic in which UCL's Dan Grant eventually overcame Adrian Lee. It was a performance all the more remarkable given that Dan had already played one three-game marathon against Oxford's Jamie Pendergrass in the quarter-final.

Come the final, though, and Dan couldn't repeat his heroics. It was Alan who always had the upper hand, running out the winner in two games, and claiming his first BUSA singles title.

Cambridge's stranglehold on the silverware was only broken in the Plate competitions, where Southampton's Ed Hawke retained the singles plate he won last year, and the hard-hitting UCL pair of Will Pleming and Mark Gibbor won the doubles plate in three very tight games against the Durham pair of Hay and Midmer.

Singles

1st round: Hardyment (London-SB) bt Katte (Durham) 15-3, 15-0; Mogford (London SOAS) bt Kemeny (UCL) 15-0, 15-1; Reid (Cambridge) bt Fagan (Leeds) 15-4, 15-1; Furniss (Oxford) bt Porteous (Leeds) 15-1, 15-0; Hay (Durham) bt Hammond (London Brunel) 15-2, 15-4; Pleming (UCL) bt Kirk (Birmingham) 15-5, 15-13; Midmer (Durham) bt Simister (Cambridge) 15-2, 15-5; Marshall (Leeds) bt Heath (Oxford) 16-15, 15-9; Hawke (Southampton) bt Dunbar (Oxford) 15-9, 15-1; Burrows (Oundle) bt Richards (Durham) 15-3, 15-9; Sjostrom (UCL) bt Armistead (Durham) 15-2, 15-0; Ellison (London Imperial) bt Weisner (Leeds) 15-0, 15-1

2nd round: Beverly (Cambridge) bt Atashroo (UCL) 15-0, 15-0; Hardyment bt Colton (Bristol) 15-4, 16-14; Mogford bt Reid 15-3, 15-1; Mohammed (Durham) bt Emmett (Oxford) 15-6, 15-2; Brooks (Cambridge) bt Adcock (Southampton) w/o; Furniss bt Hay 13-15, 15-7, 15-10; Midmer bt Pleming 15-7, 15-7; Korris (Leeds) bt Joyner (UCL) 15-0, 15-1; Grant (UCL) bt Parker (Leeds) 15-0, 15-1; Marshall bt Newsome (Durham) 15-1, 15-1; Love (Durham) bt Hawke 15-10, 15-8; Pendergrass (Oxford) bt Smart (Southampton) 15-1, 15-1; Gibbor (UCL) bt Bowden (Durham) 15-0, 15-1; Ronan (Oxford) bt Burrows 15-9, 15-9; Ellison bt Sjostrom 13-15, 15-9, 15-4; Lee (Durham) bt Hodder (Southampton) 15-10, 15-12

3rd round: Beverly bt Colton 15-5, 15-1; Mogford bt Mohammed 15-10, 15-9; Brooks bt Furniss 15-3, 15-3; Korris bt Midmer 15-2, 15-10; Grant bt Marshall 15-4, 15-4; Pendergrass bt Love 15-11, 15-3; Gibbor bt Ronan 15-9, 15-9; Lee bt Ellison 15-10, 15-12

Quarter-finals: Beverly bt Mogford 15-12, 15-0; Brooks bt Korris 15-10, 5-15, 15-9; Grant bt Pendergrass 15-11, 12-15, 15-11; Lee bt Gibbor 15-2, 15-6

Semi-finals: Beverly bt Brooks 15-6, 15-8; Grant bt Lee 15-16, 15-8, 15-8

Final: Beverly bt Grant 15-4, 15-6
Plate: Hawke

Doubles

1st round: Furniss & Heath (Oxford) bt Parker & Weisner (Leeds) 15-0, 15-2; Hardymont & Ellison (London SB/Imperial) bt Fagan & Porteous (Leeds) 15-1, 15-0; Colton & Percy (Bristol) bt Katte & Armistead (Durham) 15-0, 15-0; Hay & Midmer (Durham) bt Kemeny & Joyner (UCL) 15-0, 15-1; Dickens & Beal (Cambridge) bt Richards & Newsome (Durham) 15-10, 15-4; Hawke & Hodder (Southampton) bt Burrows & Gait (Oundle) 15-11, 15-9; Mogford & Hammond (London SOAS/Brunel) bt Bhuva & Atashroo (UCL) 15-0, 15-5

2nd round: Brooks & Beverly (Cambridge) bt Love & Bowden (Durham) 15-0, 15-4; Furniss & Heath bt Gibbor & Fleming (UCL) 15-13, 15-16, 15-13; Hardymont & Ellison bt Colton & Percy 15-12, 13-15, 15-9; Pendergrass & Ronan (Oxford) bt Simister & Belassie (Cambridge) score not recorded; Grant & Sjostrom (UCL) bt Park & Emmett (Oxford) 15-4, 15-4; Korris & Marshall (Leeds) bt Hay & Midmer 15-13, 15-13; Dickens & Beal bt Hawke & Hodder 15-5, 15-8; Lee & Mohammed (Durham) bt Mogford & Hammond 15-9, 15-9

Quarter-finals: Brooks & Beverly bt Furniss & Heath 15-7, 15-3; Hardymont & Ellison bt Pendergrass & Ronan 15-8, 15-10; Korris & Marshall bt Grant & Sjostrom 15-11, 15-1; Lee & Mohammed bt Dickens & Beal w/o

Semi-finals: Brooks & Beverly bt Hardymont & Ellison 15-3, 15-8; Lee & Mohammed bt Korris & Marshall 15-12, 15-8

Final: Brooks & Beverly bt Lee & Mohammed 15-4, 15-2

Plate: Gibbor & Fleming

NATIONAL OPEN SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIP

St Paul's School, Barnes, 2nd/3rd December 2006

As if to celebrate his recent rise to the top of the singles rankings for the first time, Matt Cavanagh today secured his second National Open Singles title with a win over Hamish Buchanan. In doing so, he became the first top seed to win the title for many years.

In fact, a Cavanagh win was only what he deserved, as he had been the class of the field all weekend, never conceding more than five points in any one game on his way to the final. His speed around the court meant that not only could he retrieve shots which would have been winners against almost any other player, he also had more time to pick his shot when he reached the ball. Hamish played superbly, hitting the ball powerfully and retrieving manfully himself, but, faced with such athleticism and the relentless pressure from Matt's well placed shots, he simply had to admit defeat.

Mind you, a win for the top seed was perhaps quite easy to predict, given that almost the entire tournament went according to the seedings. The final was between the top two seeds, the third seed (and defending champion), Phil Bishop, went out in the semi-finals, and in every first-round match, the higher-seeded player won through.

There was one exception, though - and what an exception it was, as fifth seed James Toop overcame fourth seed Ed Fuller in a titanic three-game quarter-final that showed off fives of the very highest quality. With tremendous athleticism, amazing shot-making and total sportsmanship from both players, it was worthy of a final, and surely the match all the spectators will remember from what was a superb tournament.

1st round: M Cavanagh bt S Byron Evans 15-2, 15-0; M Bate bt M Hajialexandrou 15-9, 15-11; J Toop bt

M Skogia 15-5, 15-8; E Fuller bt O Stone-Lee 15-2, 15-7; P Bishop bt A Rew 15-4, 15-1; D Fox bt P d'Ancona 15-12, 15-4; J Minta bt S Roberts 15-9, 15-10; H Buchanan bt S Korris 15-11, 15-1
Quarter-finals: Cavanagh bt Bate 15-4, 15-2; Toop bt Fuller 7-15, 15-7, 15-13; Bishop bt Fox 15-9, 15-6; Buchanan bt Minta 15-7, 16-14
Semi-finals: Cavanagh bt Toop 15-5, 15-4; Buchanan bt Bishop 15-12, 15-11
Final: Cavanagh bt Buchanan 15-6, 15-8
Plate: Hajialexandrou

PRESIDENT'S CUP

Merchant Taylors' School, Northwood, 10th December 2006

“One of the best” was the verdict of no less an authority than David Barnes on the final of the 2006 President's Cup. And, after three enthralling games, it was Hamish Buchanan and Matt Hanney who claimed the day's big prize with a fine win over Ed Hawke and Clive Butler. For a delighted Hamish, it was his fourth win in the tournament; but for Matt, it was a landmark occasion, not just his first President's Cup, but his first ever win in a fives tournament.

It was a match that engrossed the capacity crowd, with Clive and Ed trying to pressure Matt into submission, only for him to answer with booming right-hand drives, as Hamish desperately searched for winners against resolute opponents. Ed literally threw himself around the court and Clive played improbable volleys from around his ankles, all in the name of defence.

The key to the match, however, was the second game. Ed and Clive had won the first and, with 13 points on the board and a healthy lead in the second, they looked to be on course for victory. But, then, Matt and Hamish hit back, clawing their way back into the game with a good run that took them to 14-13 up before holding their nerve and taking the game. With that, the momentum swung their way, and they always had the upper hand in the third and deciding game.

Such a final perfectly encapsulated a tournament where close games were very much the order of the day. Half of the first-round matches, and three of the quarter-finals all went to three games, as did two of the three plate finals. In the Love Mug final, the wily skills of Dave Hebden and the determination of Ian Roberts took them to a win over Chris Thomas and Phil Reynolds, while Brian Nithsdale made sure his journey from Manchester was worthwhile, teaming up with Ian Mogford to win the T-pot against last year's overall winner Gareth Price and Brian Kirk.

The day ran extremely smoothly, and the last match on court was a fitting end to a great day's competition. Jeremy Schroeter and Mark Kiteley took the first game by the narrowest of margins, before the left/right combination of Alex Smith and Justin Cawthorne got into its stride, taking the next two games and, with them, the Mate's Plate, the last piece of fives silverware for 2006.

1st round: G Price & B Kirk bt A Pringle & J Hawke 11-7, 11-0; E Hawke & C Butler bt D Hebden & I Roberts 11-1, 12-11; E Hatton & T Orton bt W Ellison & M Arnott 11-9, 6-11, 12-11; J Schroeter & M Kiteley bt J Harrison & G Matthews 11-7, 10-12, 11-2; D Grant & N Arnott bt C Thomas & P Reynolds 6-11, 11-4, 11-6; T Maconie & C Lamb bt N Hiller & A Passey 11-8, 10-12, 11-3; B Nithsdale & I Mogford bt A Smith & J Cawthorne 12-10, 11-7; H Buchanan & M Hanney bt B Hanton & R Grey 11-5, 11-5
Quarter-finals: Butler & E Hawke bt Price & Kirk 4-11, 11-5, 11-5; Schroeter & Kiteley bt Hatton & Orton 11-8, 10-12, 11-9; Grant & N Arnott bt Maconie & Lamb 3-11, 12-11, 11-9; Buchanan & Hanney

bt Nithsdale & Mogford 11-6, 11-3

Semi-finals: Butler & E Hawke bt Schroeter & Kiteley 11-6, 11-5; Buchanan & Hanney bt Grant & N
Arnott 11-9, 11-6

Final: Buchanan & Hanney bt Butler & Hawke 9-15, 16-14, 15-9

T-Pot: Nithsdale & Mogford

Love Mug: Hebden & Roberts

Mate's Plate: Smith & Cawthorne

OFFICIAL RFA RANKINGS

London, 30th December 2006

The latest official rankings from the RFA confirm that Matt Cavanagh has cemented his position as the country's top singles player after winning the Jesters Cup in December. However, the top five players – also including Hamish Buchanan, Phil Bishop, Ed Fuller and James Toop – remain well clear of the chasing pack.

That's not to say there isn't some notable movement lower down the order, though. After his win at the BUSA Championships, Alan Beverly moves into the top 20, while Sam Roberts is just one place behind after beating higher ranked players on his way to the last 16 of the National Singles Championship. However, the biggest rise comes from Marco Skogh, who jumped more than 30 places, also after an excellent performance in the National Singles Championship.

In the Doubles rankings, the biggest changes come from the successful players in November's BUSA Championships. The winners, Cambridge's Alan Beverly and Charlie Brooks move into the Top 20, while the runners-up – Adrian Lee and Hal Mohammed from Durham – climb to just outside the Top 30

WEST OF ENGLAND SCHOOLS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Sherborne School, 6/7th January 2007

The Championships attracted an entry of more than 80 boys, and were again again dominated by a very strong squad from St Paul's School. However, in the Colts Singles, Peter Hanton of Alleyn's ran out the winner to prevent a St Paul's cleansweep in the main competitions.

In both the seniors' championships, St Paul's supplied three of the four semi-finalists; Simpson of Christ's Hospital and Eastbourne completed the line-ups in the Singles and Doubles respectively, but only after tough three-game wins over players from St Paul's. In both cases, the resulting finals were all-St Paul's affairs: James Corbin was an assured winner of the Singles, but there was an upset in the Doubles, where the St Paul's second pair of Alex Griffiths and Anand Ashok came back to outgun the first pair (James Corbin and Alqahir Ladak) in the third game of a pulsating match.

In the Colts competitions, St Paul's again put in a good performance, but boys from plenty of other schools also played extremely well: Derby Moor reached the semi-finals of the Doubles, and no less than five schools – Alleyn's, Winchester, Derby Moor, St Paul's and Alleyn's – were represented in the quarter-finals of the singles.

In the end, though, both finals were played out between boys from Alleyn's and St Paul's. Dara Ahrabian and Joe Harris took the Doubles title for St Paul's after a win over Peter Hanton and Adam George, but Peter didn't leave Sherborne empty-handed, beating Mark Hine to take the Singles title back to Alleyn's.

Senior Singles

1st Round: Hemming-Brown (Merchant Taylors') bt Doherty (Rossall) 15-5; Eadie (Blundell's) bt Geraets (Christ's Hospital) 15-0; Longstreet (Blundell's) bt Coreth (Sherborne) 15-6; Hale (Winchester) bt Yarwood (Tonbridge) 15-6; Cochran (Tonbridge) bt Lock (Blundell's) w/o; Kennedy (Winchester) bt Hooker (Merchant Taylors') 15-8

2nd Round: Corbin (St Paul's) bt Hemming 15-0; Rowland (St Paul's) bt Litherland (Winchester) 15-0; Collyer (Tonbridge) bt Griffiths (Rossall) 15-6; Meek (Eastbourne) bt Dudding (Winchester) 15-1; Hoolahan (St Paul's) bt Eadie 15-8; Kelly (Winchester) bt Gauntlett (Christ's Hospital) 15-0; Burrows (Oundle) bt Constantine (Winchester) 15-3; Griffiths (St Paul's) bt Adcock (Eastbourne) 15-10; Ashok (St Paul's) bt Longstreet 15-4; Sloan (Merchant Taylors') bt Hale 15-7; De Candole (Sherborne) bt Lambert (Blundell's) w/o; Simpson (Christ's Hospital) bt Cochran 15-7; Faber (St Paul's) bt Neil (Merchant Taylors') 15-0; Vara (St Paul's) bt Somji (Winchester) w/o; Ackland (Alleyn's) bt Janes (Christ's Hospital) 15-0; Ladak (St Paul's) bt Kennedy 15-4

3rd Round: Corbin bt Rowland 15-8; Meek bt Collyer 15-0; Hoolahan bt Kelly 15-7; Griffiths bt Burrows 15-7; Ashok bt Sloan 15-13; Simpson bt De Candole 15-0; Faber bt Vara 15-2; Ackland bt Ladak 15-10

Quarter-finals: Corbin bt Meek 11-1, 11-6; Griffiths bt Hoolahan 11-7, 11-4; Simpson bt Ashok 11-4, 4-11, 11-5; Faber bt Ackland 11-8, 11-4

Semi-finals: Corbin bt Griffiths 11-8, 11-6; Faber bt Simpson 11-8, 11-3

Finals: Corbin bt Faber 11-4, 11-0

Plate: Adcock

Senior Doubles

Preliminary Round: Rossall bt Winchester IV w/o

1st Round: Tonbridge I bt Blundell's II w/o; Malvern bt Alleyn's 16-15; Sherborne bt Rossall 15-4; St Paul's IV bt Merchant Taylors' II 15-4; Tonbridge II bt Marlborough III 15-5; Winchester II bt Oundle w/o; Winchester III bt Blundell's I 15-13; Christ's Hospital II bt Marlborough II score not recorded

2nd Round: St Paul's I bt Tonbridge I 15-7; Marlborough I bt Malvern 15-6; Eastbourne bt Sherborne 15-1; St Paul's IV bt Winchester I 15-7; St Paul's III bt Tonbridge II 15-1; Winchester II bt Christ's Hospital 15-3; Winchester III bt Merchant Taylors' I 15-8; St Paul's II bt Christ's Hospital II 15-1

Quarter-finals: St Paul's I bt Marlborough I 11-4, 11-6; Eastbourne bt St Paul's IV 11-9, 8-11, 11-6; St Paul's III bt Winchester II 11-7, 11-5; St Paul's II bt Winchester III 11-3, 11-8

Semi-finals: St Paul's I bt Eastbourne 11-4, 11-2; St Paul's II bt St Paul's III 11-9, 11-6

Final: St Paul's II (Ashok & Griffiths) bt St Paul's I 10-12, 11-6, 11-4

Plate: Alleyn's (Ackland & Garratt)

Colts Singles

1st Round: Edwardson (Oundle) bt Hough (Rossall) 15-1; Choudry (Merchant Taylors') bt Durant (Blundell's) 15-3

2nd Round: Harris (St Paul's) bt Hennoch (Christ's Hospital) 15-1; Mighall (Christ's Hospital) bt Chase (St Paul's) 15-7; Gamble (Winchester) bt Tunnard (Oundle) 15-2; Hine (St Paul's) bt Clarke (Tonbridge) 15-7; George (Alleyn's) bt Stevenson-Hamilton (Bradfield) 15-0; Kay (St Paul's) bt Macdowell (Blundell's) 15-8; Edwardson bt Kerrison (Merchant Taylors') 15-4; Squire-Smith (Winchester) bt Garratt (Alleyn's) 15-7; Ahrabian (St Paul's) bt Rogers (Winchester) 15-5; Choudry bt Lewis (Rossall) 15-5; Buhagiar (Merchant Taylors') bt Longstreet (Blundell's) 15-5; Hill (Derby Moor) bt Suchak (Merchant Taylors') 15-0; Barnes (St Paul's) bt Hall (Blundell's) 15-1; Durnie (Derby Moor) bt Phelps (Bradfield) 15-2; Malone (St Paul's) bt Bowden (Alleyn's) 15-1; Hanton (Alleyn's) bt Marler (St Paul's) 15-0

3rd Round: Harris bt Mighal 15-4; Hine bt Gamble 15-0; George bt Kay 15-2; Squire-Smith bt Edwardson 15-2; Ahrabian bt Choudry 15-0; Hill bt Buhagiar 15-0; Barnes bt Durnie 15-3; Hanton bt Malone 15-3

Quarter-finals: Hine bt Harris 11-0, 11-6; Squire-Smith bt George 5-11, 11-1, 11-9; Ahrabian bt Hill 11-6, 11-9; Hanton bt Barnes 11-5, 11-7

Semi-finals: Hine bt Squire-Smith 3-11, 11-7, 11-8; Hanton bt Ahrabian 2-11, 11-1, 11-6

Final: Hanton bt Hine 11-7, 11-3

Plate: Chase

Colts Doubles

1st Round: Oundle bt Merchant Taylors' II 15-6; Merchant Taylors' I bt Marlborough I 15-8

2nd Round: St Paul's I bt Oundle 15-2; St Paul's IV bt Rossall 15-1; St Paul's III bt Marlborough II 15-3; Derby Moor bt Alleyn's II 15-5; St Paul's II bt Malvern 15-0; Winchester bt Blundell's I 15-4; Christ's Hospital bt Blundell's II 15-2; Alleyn's I bt Merchant Taylors' 15-2

Quarter-finals: St Paul's I bt St Paul's IV 11-1, 11-3; Derby Moor bt St Paul's III 11-6, 10-12, 11-6; St Paul's II bt Winchester 11-8, 11-3; Alleyn's I bt Christ's Hospital 11-0, 11-3

Semi-finals: St Paul's I bt Derby Moor 11-6, 11-6; Alleyn's I bt St Paul's II 11-4, 12-10

Final: St Paul's I (Ahrabian & Harris) bt Alleyn's I 11-8, 11-5

Plate: Blundell's (Hall & McDowell)

NORTH WEST OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Y Club, Manchester, 27/28th January 2007

Honours were even between Manchester and London at the end of the North West Open Championships. Ed Fuller beat John Minta to take the singles title, but John wasn't to make the short journey home empty-handed, teaming up with Phil Bishop to take the doubles title.

For Ed, it was his second title of the season, after his success at the London Open in September, and it was thoroughly deserved. His draw meant he had to face Manchester players in every round, so beating Ben Taberner, Dave Fox, Phil Bishop and then John Minta on their home courts made winning this title all the more remarkable an achievement.

Come the doubles, though, and John got his revenge. With partner Phil Bishop, they were the class of field throughout the tournament, never conceding more than three points in any one game. Their closest challenge came in the final against the scratch pairing of Hamish Buchanan and Ben Taberner, but they lost just five points over the two games to take the doubles title comfortably, and for the second year running.

Singles

1st Round: T Walker bt T Curtain 11-3, 11-7; M Hajialexandrou bt J Thomas 11-0, 11-2; J Minta bt E Hammond 11-3, 11-1; E Fuller bt B Taberner 11-2, 11-1; D Fox bt E Hatton 11-5, 11-7; M Skogh bt D Clydesdale-Cotter 11-4, 11-4; P Bishop bt L Samuels 11-1, 11-9

Quarter-finals: H Buchanan bt Walker 11-2, 11-6; Minta bt Hajialexandrou 11-4, 11-8; Fuller bt Fox 11-2, 3-11, 11-1; Bishop bt Skogh 12-10, 11-8

Semi-finals: Minta bt Buchanan 12-10, 7-11, 11-6; Fuller bt Bishop 11-2, 11-7

Final: Fuller bt Minta 11-7, 11-5

Plate: Taberner

Doubles

1st Round: Fuller & Henry bt Hill & Orr 11-2, 11-2; Kirby & Kirk bt Roche & Samuels 11-3, 12-10

Quarter-finals: Bishop & Minta bt Cotter & Curtain 11-1, 11-0; Fuller & Henry bt Butler & Grey 11-1, 11-0; Buchanan & Taberner bt Hammond & Hatton 11-2, 11-9; Beswick & Roberts bt Kirby & Kirk 11-1, 11-1

Semi-finals: Bishop & Minta bt Fuller & Henry 11-1, 11-2; Buchanan & Taberner bt Beswick & Roberts 11-2, 11-7

Final: Bishop & Minta bt Buchanan & Taberner 11-2, 11-3

Plate: Cotter & Curtain

RFA v BUSA REPRESENTATIVE MATCH

Christ's Hospital, Horsham, 4th February 2007

The RFA emerged victorious from its annual clash with the best students in the country, who were representing BUSA, the British Universities Sports Association. The teams of six took the courts of Christ's Hospital and the RFA immediately seized the advantage, winning all six singles matches to take a 53-point advantage into the doubles.

Here, however, the games were much closer, and eventually shared equally between the two teams. Indeed, so close was the competition that no one pair from either side won all its four games. For BUSA, the London pairing of Dan Grant and Will Ellison was the most successful, winning three of their games, while the RFA's Dave Hebden again teamed up with a Fuller – Ed, on this occasion – to great effect, also winning three of their four games.

Although the students secured a ten-point advantage over the 12 games of doubles, the damage had been done in the singles, and the RFA team's experience ensured they held on for a deserved overall victory.

Singles (RFA names first)

H Buchanan bt A Beverly (Cambridge) 15-4; E Fuller bt D Grant (UCL) 15-8; S Roberts bt C Brooks (Cambridge) 15-6; C Jones bt A Lee (Durham) 15-6; D Hebden bt I Mogford (London SOAS) 15-5; E Hatton bt W Ellison (London Imperial) 15-8

Doubles

Hebden & Fuller bt Beverly & Brooks 15-6, 13-15; bt Lee & Mogford 15-11; bt Grant & Ellison 15-12. Buchanan & Hatton lost to Grant & Ellison 14-16, 11-15; bt Beverly & Brooks 15-11; lost to Lee & Mogford 7-15. Roberts & Jones bt Lee & Mogford 15-10, 15-9; lost to Grant & Ellison 2-15; lost to Brooks & Beverly 3-15

Result: RFA (230 points) bt BUSA (187 points) by 43 points

NATIONAL UNDER 25 CHAMPIONSHIPS

London, 10/11th February 2007

It was a case of déjà vu at the Under 25 Championships, as Cambridge's Alan Beverly and Charlie Brooks won both the singles and doubles titles, just as they had done at the BUSA Championships at Oundle last November. What's more, they even faced the same opposition in the finals: Alan beat UCL's Dan Grant in the singles, while Durham's Hal Mohammed and Adrian Lee finished as runners-up in the doubles.

For Alan, not only was this a repeat of his BUSA singles win, this was his second Under 25 singles title in a row. However, he didn't have things all his own way on his run to the final, with Will Ellison pushing him close in the quarter-finals. As at BUSA, though, it was Dan Grant who had the tougher run to the final, needing three games to beat both Jamie Pendergrass and Charlie Brooks.

Come the final, though, and Dan put up more of a fight than he had done at BUSA. Although Alan won the first game comfortably, Dan came back to pinch the second 15-12. However, Alan wasn't to be denied, and he rediscovered his touch to take the third game, and with it the title, convincingly.

In the doubles, it was a Cambridge win again. However, but for some unfortunate injuries, the result

could have been very different. Alan and Charlie had had to fight back from a game down in their quarter-final and were all-but level in the third, for instance, before their opponents were forced to retire. However, they showed their class to beat the scratch pairing of Will Ellison and Tom Dean in the semi-final, and then duly dispatched Hal and Adrian for the second time this season with a convincing win in two games.

Singles

1st Round: Holl bt Gregory 11-1, 11-1; Ellison bt Ronan 11-4, 11-8; Mohammed bt Gibbor 11-6, 11-9; MMC bt Midmer 11-6, 11-0; Colton bt Marshall 12-11, 11-7; Lee bt Hodder 11-1, 11-2; Sjostrom bt Newsome 11-2, 11-0; Brooks bt Furniss 11-3, 11-7; Hay bt Hudson 11-0, 11-1; Hatton bt Matthews 11-2, 11-2; Hawke bt Ross 11-7, 11-0; Pendergrass bt Bowden 11-6, 11-1; Jones bt Mogford 11-6, 11-9
2nd Round: Beverly bt Holl 11-1, 11-5; Ellison bt Mohammed 11-2, 11-8; Colton bt MMC w/o; Lee bt Sjostrom 11-4, 11-2; Brooks bt Hay 11-3, 11-7; Hawke bt Hatton 11-2, 11-6; Grant bt Jennings 11-0, 11-6; Pendergrass bt Jones 11-1, 11-4
Quarter-Finals: Beverly bt Ellison 11-7, 11-8; Lee bt Colton 11-6, 11-4; Brooks bt Hawke 11-6, 11-5; Grant bt Pendergrass 9-11, 11-8, 11-5
Semi-Finals: Beverly bt Lee 15-2, 15-2; Grant bt Brooks 12-15, 15-7, 15-5
Final: Beverly bt Grant 15-5, 12-15, 15-5

Plate: Marshall

Doubles

1st Round: Beverly & Brooks bt Hawke & Hodder 15-4, 15-3; Gibbor & Colton bt Ronan & Furniss 15-4, 15-10; Hatton & Clydesdale-Cotter bt Jones & Lebon 15-9, 15-7; Lee & Mohammed bt Ahern & Palmer 15-0, 15-0; Jennings & Windham bt Marshall & Ross 15-10, 15-13; Pendergrass & Holl bt Gregory & Hudson 15-1, 15-1; Grant & Sjostrom bt Midmer & Hay 15-12, 14-16, 15-12
Quarter-Finals: Beverly & Brooks bt Gibbor & Colton 10-15, 15-9, 6-7 retired hurt; Dean & Ellison bt Hatton & Clydesdale-Cotter 15-9, 15-5; Lee & Mohammed bt Jennings & Windham 15-9, 15-4; Pendergrass & Holl bt Grant & Sjostrom 15-5, retired hurt
Semi-Finals: Beverly & Brooks bt Dean & Ellison 15-8, 15-11; Lee & Mohammed bt Pendergrass & Holl 15-12, 15-8
Final: Beverly & Brooks bt Lee & Mohammed 15-3, 15-3
Plate: Ronan & Furniss

VARSIITY MATCH

St Paul's School, London, 24th February 2007

Despite a sizeable singles deficit, Oxford produced an excellent team performance in the doubles to defeat Cambridge by 54 points in this season's Varsity Match.

Beverly, the BUSA and Under 25 singles champion, spearheaded the Cambridge singles effort with a fine win against Pendergrass, while his number two, Brooks, defeated Oxford's Ronan by a similarly wide margin. At three, Furniss fought tigerishly to claim back a few valuable points for Oxford from Lebon, but Jones played well in his first singles appearance for Cambridge to come out a narrow winner against Warrilow, giving Cambridge a healthy lead of 25 points at lunch.

In the doubles, Oxford set about their task of recovering this deficit with a will, and all their pairs looked purposeful and well practised. Even Cambridge's flagship pair, Beverly and Brooks, who duly won all four of their games, found solid resistance from their opponents and were not able to destroy Oxford's

morale. Oxford 1 (Pendergrass and Heath) managed 15 points against them and then proceeded to defeat Cambridge 2 (Lebon and Dickens) comprehensively. Oxford 2 (Ronan and Furniss), having won useful points against their opposite numbers, also played well to limit the damage against the Cambridge champions.

But it was in the bottom four that the match was won and lost. Oxford 3 (Warrilow and Holl) and 4 (Jennings and Windham) achieved a clean sweep by winning all their games and scoring 120 points – almost half the Oxford total – in the process. Both Cambridge 3 (Beal and Belassie) and 4 (Jones and Simister) looked rusty and unprepared for the battle – no doubt partly a result of lack of practice – while Oxford, by contrast, showed a tremendous will to win and played aggressive and effective doubles.

To confirm the depth of talent at Oxford, the Beavers side was exceptionally strong this year and would have made a very competent bottom four in the top match, so it was not surprising that they defeated Cambridge Sparrows heavily in the reserves contest.

Although some of the tension of last year's encounter was lacking, a good crowd of supporters came to watch again this year, and on a showery winter's day all were grateful for St Paul's School's superb indoor facilities. Sadly, there has been no apparent progress towards the provision of any such facilities for Rugby Fives at Cambridge.

Singles (Oxford names first)

JR Pendergrass (Loretto & Balliol) lost to A Beverly (St Paul's & Girton) 1-15; EO Ronan (Bradfield & St Hugh's) lost to CG Brooks (St Paul's & Caius) 2-15; JC Furniss (St Paul's & St Edmund Hall) bt RS Lebon (Christ's Hospital & Trinity) 15-11; NP Warrilow (St Paul's & Pembroke) lost to CP Jones (Tonbridge & Emmanuel) 13-15

Doubles (Oxford names first)

Pendergrass & J Heath (Radley & Exeter) lost to Beverly & Brooks 10-15, 5-15; bt Lebon & JM Dickens (Bedford & Emmanuel) 15-1, 15-4. Ronan & Furniss bt Lebon & Dickens 15-10, 15-8; lost to Beverly & Brooks 8-15, 7-15. Warrilow & RJ Holl (Winchester & Worcester) bt S Beal (Eastbourne, Durham & Homerton) & MO Belassie (Christ's Hospital & Caius) 15-2, 15-11; bt Jones & PR Simister (St Paul's & Trinity) 15-5, 15-5. AE Jennings (St Paul's & Corpus Christi) & TR Windham (Radley & BNC) bt Jones & Simister 15-10, 15-4; bt Beal & Belassie 15-5, 15-6

Result: Oxford bt Cambridge 241 pts to 187

Oxford Beavers v Cambridge Sparrows

Singles: CM Powrie (Whitgift & Hertford) lost to MC Reid (Edinburgh Academy & St John's) 11-15; D Park (Sherborne & St Catherine's) bt R Walter (Tonbridge & St John's) 15-1; EJ Emmett (St Paul's & Christ Church) bt T Eccles (St Paul's & Trinity) 15-0; ES Wilman (Giggleswick & Hertford) bt CJ Wright (Oundle & Homerton) 15-0

Doubles: Powrie & Park bt Reid & Walter 15-0, 15-8; bt Eccles & Wright 15-1, 15-0. Emmett & Wilman bt Eccles & Wright 15-0, 15-0; bt Reid & Walter 15-8, 15-9

Result: Oxford Beavers bt Cambridge Sparrows 176pts to 42

NORTH OF ENGLAND OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Durham, 24/25th February 2007

John Minta won the North of England Championship to take his second ever regional open singles title. In the final, he was victorious in a three-game battle against six-times winner and defending champion Hamish Buchanan. Hamish looked comfortable in winning the first game, but John stuck to his game plan and with some powerful hitting gradually gained the upper hand. Hamish was unable to find his length under the pressure of John's attacking game, and John completed a very well deserved 3-11, 11-3, 11-3 victory.

A remarkable Plate final saw Adrian Love get to 14-10 up against Hal Mohammed before Hal tenaciously fought back to 15-all. Adrian eventually won the match 16-15 – on his 10th match point!

In the following day's doubles semi-finals, Adrian Lee and Hal Mohammed played superbly to take the 2nd game from John Minta and Neil Roberts, but John and Neil proved too experienced in the decider. In the final, Hamish Buchanan and Dave Hebden took healthy leads in each game before successfully fighting off resilient comebacks to win 15-8, 15-10 in a tense affair. Dave Newsome and Hugo Armistead were victorious in the Plate.

Singles

1st round: D Newsome bt H Richards 11-6, 11-5; D Hebden bt H Armistead 11-4, 11-4

2nd round: A Wilson bt D Katte 11-4, 11-0; Hebden bt Newsome 11-4, 11-3; A Love bt C Hay 11-3, 11-1

Quarter-finals: H Buchanan bt Wilson 11-2, 11-1; A Lee bt A Bowden 11-2, 11-3; Hebden bt H Mohammed 11-8, 3-11, 11-0; J Minta bt Love 11-3, 11-1

Semi-finals: Buchanan bt Lee 11-4, 11-2; Minta bt Hebden 11-4, 11-3

Final: Minta bt Buchanan 3-11, 11-3, 11-3

Plate: Love

Doubles

1st round: H Buchanan & D Hebden bt B Chandler & W Tidy 15-3, 15-2; A Lee & H Mohammed bt M Atkinson & J Mace 15-1, 15-1

Semi-finals: Buchanan & Hebden bt H Armistead & D Newsome 15-8, 15-10; J Minta & N Roberts bt Lee & Mohammed 15-11, 8-15, 15-3

Final: Buchanan & Hebden bt Minta & Roberts 15-8, 15-10

Plate: Armistead & Newsome

WINCHESTER FIVES DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP

Winchester, 11th March 2007

A glorious spring day welcomed 50 fives players to the Winchester courts to compete for the Barnes Bridge trophy, writes David Barnes. Local participation was strong, with the Wessex Club and Winchester College providing no fewer than 12 of the pairs.

Round 1, so often a formality, saw extremely close three-game victories for two of the College pairs (Hale/Somiji and Kelly/Squire-Smith) against adult opposition. The entry of the major seeds in the second round brought order to the competition, although Hodgins & McManus had to fight hard to win

a tight three-gamer against Lord & Smith, and most of the other encounters were no walkover for the seeded players.

From the quarter-finals onwards, all but one of the matches went to three games. Strangely, each one followed the same pattern, with the more fancied pair winning the first game, losing the second and then reasserting its dominance in the third. The holders, Akerman and Mohammed, were given stern challenges by Marshall & Ronan in the quarter-finals and by Hughes & Kiggell in the semis, but in each case they weathered the storm and came through comfortably in the third game. In the bottom half, Fox & Hebden were similarly tested by Maconie & Pringle and then by Buchanan & Roberts, but in each match they too found that extra gear in game three.

After all these close encounters, it was nearly six o'clock by the time the final started. Play was a bit scrappy to start with, but the top-seeded local pair won the first game reasonably comfortably. The second was of much higher quality and could have gone either way, but Fox & Hebden took it by a couple of points, setting up a superb decider in which all four players showed their quality. Mohammed hit a rich vein of form, and he and Akerman, who played magnificently throughout, came home to retain the trophy.

The plate was won by Maskell & Werkshagen from the West of England Club, who squeezed past Wessex's Hawke & Passey to win the final after the local men had been 14-12 up.

Many thanks to Winchester College for the use of its excellent courts, and to Jamie McManus and Harry Akerman for recruiting so many local players – a crucial part of any tournament.

1st round: Hale & Somji bt Butterfield & Grant 11-3, 7-11, 12-10; Furniss & Pendergrass bt Ball & G Kennedy 11-1, 11-1; Marshall & Ronan bt Dudding & W Kennedy 11-3, 11-0; Kelly & Squire-Smith bt Arnott & Arnott 11-1, 9-11, 12-11; Adcock & Atherton bt Rogers & Rogers 11-5, 11-0; Butler & Kirk bt Metcalfe-Gibson & Spiegel 11-1, 11-6; Lord & Smith bt Graham-Evans & Patterson 11-1, 11-0; Maskell & Werkshagen bt Hawke & Passey 11-4, 11-5; Oscroft & Wilkinson bt Hodder (sub. Wolstenholme) & Mettam 11-2, 11-2

2nd round: Akerman & M Mohammed bt Hale & Somji 11-0, 11-3; Marshall & Ronan bt Furniss & Pendergrass 11-1, 11-5; Hughes & Kiggell bt Kelly & Squire-Smith 11-1, 11-9; Ellison & H Mohammed bt Adcock & Atherton 11-1, 11-7; Buchanan & Roberts bt Butler & Kirk 11-1, 11-7; Hodgins & McManus bt Lord & Smith 11-4, 5-11, 11-8; Maconie & Pringle bt Maskell & Werkshagen 11-5, 11-4; Fox & Hebden bt Oscroft & Wilkinson 11-3, 11-5

Quarter-finals: Akerman & M Mohammed bt Marshall & Ronan 11-3, 8-11, 11-4; Hughes & Kiggell bt Ellison & H Mohammed 11-5, 11-3; Buchanan & Roberts bt Hodgins & McManus 11-3, 4-11, 11-3; Fox & Hebden bt Maconie & Pringle 11-6, 8-11, 11-3

Semi-finals: Akerman & Mohammed bt Hughes & Kiggell 11-5, 8-11, 11-2; Fox & Hebden bt Buchanan & Roberts 11-8, 4-11, 11-3

Final: Akerman & Mohammed bt Hebden & Fox 11-5, 10-12, 11-4

Plate: Maskell & Werkshagen

NATIONAL UNDER 13 CHAMPIONSHIPS

St Paul's School, Barnes, 11th March 2007

There was an impressive entry from 7 schools, who brought a total of 51 players and 22 pairs, which boded well for a busy and eventful day. It was particularly good to welcome entries from Rossall (6 players), Dulwich College (8) and Derby Moor (2) to widen the number of schools taking part.

We started early on the Pool section of the singles competition and realised this would show the cross section of the boys' ability. Pilgrims and Alleyn's boys soon showed their prowess, with many of them recording maximum points in the singles and going on to be pre-eminent in the knockout section, where they filled seven of the last eight positions. The lone St Dunstan's player showed strength, but not enough staying power to get to the final, which was won by Leuchars of Pilgrims, 11-4.

In the plate, Wheatley of Derby Moor did his best to spoil the South London party of Alleyn's, St Dunstan's and Christ's Hospital boys, but Brenman of Alleyn's proved too steady, taking an 11-5 win.

The Singles had taken till 2.30 pm, so this left less time than planned for the Pool section of the doubles competition, where the games were cut to 7 points. Nevertheless, this still provided some exciting clashes, and it was pleasing to see Rossall get a pair into 'last four' groupings of both the Main and Plate competitions to challenge the Alleyn's/Pilgrims domination. However, Alleyn's and Pilgrims went on to hold sway in both, running out winners by 11-8 and 11-5 in the Main and Plate competitions respectively.

It was a big programme overall for the boys, many of whom were under 12 on 1 September 2006, but it is a tribute to their enthusiasm and staying power that they played flat out all day with little rest time. It promises well for the 2008 event if they return. But, if such a big entry is repeated, the structure of the day may need rethinking to ensure that there is a balanced focus on both Singles and Doubles. The organisers have taken soundings from those in charge of the teams and will consider their thoughts for the 2008 Championships.

Singles (Pools)

Pool 1: 1st Leuchars (Pilgrims); 2nd Browett (Alleyn's); 3rd Andrews (Rossall); 4th Oddie (Pilgrims); 5th Searle (Christ's Hospital); 6th Obileye (Merchant Taylors'); 7th Amory (St Dunstans); 8th Brewer (Christ's Hospital); 9th Abou-Chahine (Dulwich College)

Pool 2: 1st Over (Pilgrims); 2nd= Brenman (Alleyn's) & Kaiser-Burrows (St Dunstans); 4th Heard (Pilgrims); 5th Southern (Rossall); 6th Lanes (St Dunstans); 7th Callaghan (Christ's Hospital); 8th Clark (Christ's Hospital); 9th Scott-Malden (Dulwich College)

Pool 3: 1st Merison (Pilgrims); 2nd Judge (Merchant Taylors'); 3rd Lambert-Powell (St Dunstans); 4th Wheatley (Derby Moor); 5th Keddie (Christ's Hospital); 6th Landman (Rossall); 7th Roberts (Dulwich College); 8th Taylor (Christ's Hospital); 9th Horton-Stephens (Dulwich College)

Pool 4: 1st Smart (Pilgrims); 2nd Howlett (St Dunstans); 3rd Brubert (Alleyn's); 4th Goodwin (Derby Moor); 5th Chong (Dulwich College); 6th Hayton (Rossall); 7th Amrat (Christ's Hospital); 8th Fryars (Dulwich College)

Pool 5: 1st Redmayne (Alleyn's); 2nd Pearey (Christ's Hospital); 3rd Morrison (Rossall); 4th Strutt-Clare (St Dunstans); 5th Barlow (Pilgrims); 6th Ashola (Merchant Taylors'); 7th Johnson (Dulwich College); 8th Williams (Christ's Hospital)

Pool 6: 1st Akinotan (St Dunstans); 2nd Geberbauer (Alleyn's); 3rd Duxfield (Pilgrims); 4th McCulloch (Christ's Hospital); 5th= Williams (Rossall) & Rajan (Merchant Taylors'); 7th Oscar Davies (Christ's Hospital); 8th Waugh (Dulwich College)

Singles (Knockout stage)

Quarter-finals: Leuchars (Pilgrims) bt Browett (Alleyn's) 11-3; Akinotan (St Dunstans) bt Over (Pilgrims) 11-2; Merison (Pilgrims) bt Redmayne (Alleyn's) 11-9; Geberbauer (Alleyn's) bt Smart (Pilgrims) 11-8

Semi-finals: Leuchars bt Akinotan 11-6; Geberbauer bt Merison 11-5

Final: Leuchars bt Geberbauer 11-4

Plate: Brenman (Alleyn's)

Doubles (Pools)

Pool 1: 1st Pilgrims 1; 2nd Pilgrims 4; 3rd Rossall 2; 4th Alleyn's 3; 5th Christ's Hospital 2; 6th Christ's

Hospital 5; 7th Dulwich College 3

Pool 2: 1st Alleyn's 1; 2nd Pilgrims 2; 3rd Derby Moor; 4th Christ's Hospital 3; 5th Merchant Taylors' 1; 6th Dulwich College 1; 7th Rossall 3

Pool 3: 1st= Pilgrims 3 & Rossall 1; 3rd Christ's Hospital 1; 4th= Dulwich College 2 & Merchant Taylors' 2; 6th Christ's Hospital 4; 7th Dulwich College 4

Doubles (Knockout stage)

Semi-finals: Alleyn's 1 bt Pilgrims 3 11-6; Pilgrims 1 bt Rossall 1 11-3

Final: Alleyn's 1 bt Rossall 1 11-8

Plate: Pilgrims 4

OUNDLE SCHOOL'S NEW COURTS

Oundle School, 24th March 2007

The first match has been played on the new courts at Oundle School. An RFA team, including board member and Old Oundelian Alex Smith as well as Bob Dolby, Robert Grey, Brian Kirk and Kevin Cobb, christened the courts with a game against a team of current schoolboys. A full report will appear here in due course, but a couple of pictures are already in the Gallery. Click on the link below to see them

NATIONAL OPEN DOUBLES (THE CYRIAX CUP)

Alleyn's School, London, 24/5th March 2007

Defending champions Hamish Buchanan and Robin Perry won the National Doubles title for the fourth successive year, with victory – for the second year running – over Manchester's Phil Bishop and John Minta.

However, although the 2007 final featured the same four players as last year, this year's match was a much closer one, and a fine end to a keenly contested tournament. Hamish and Robin took an early lead in the first game and held on to it in a long finish to the game, eventually taking it 15-7. The second game was much closer as far as 9-8, with John Minta finding plenty of winners. However, at that point, Robin Perry hit the gas and reeled off five or six clean winners, taking the Londoners to a 15-9 win in the second game – and the title.

Throughout the two games, Hamish was the outstanding player on court, playing almost faultless fives. His speed around the court, retrieving, and ability to maintain pressure at all times was the key to setting up opportunities for Robin to unleash those trademark Perry thunderbolts. It was this form that had made the defending champions the class of the field through the competition, and the only pair not drop a game, dispatching first the Hatton/Clydesdale-Cotter pairing and then Will Ellison and Marcus Bate, who had earned a semi-final place after a tough three-game win over Jim Hughes and Alex Rew.

Minta and Bishop, meanwhile, had been pushed hard all the way to the Final. Andy Pringle and Chris Hughes were within a point of taking them to three games in the quarter-final, while Ben Taberner and Paddy d'Ancona took the first game against the Manchester pair before losing the second and third.

The battle for the Plate was every bit as tough as the main competition, with both semi-finals going to three games. However, the eventual – and deserved – winners were Jim Hughes and Alex Rew, who beat Ed Hatton and Dan Clydesdale-Cotter before securing a comfortable win in the Final against Chris Jones

and Andy Pringle, who by that stage were feeling the effects of their mammoth victory over Dan Grant and Freddy Sjostrom in the Plate semi-final.

Quarter-finals: Buchanan & Perry bt Hatton & Clydesdale-Cotter 15-3, 15-2; Bate & Ellison bt Hughes & Rew 8-15, 15-6, 15-9; d'Ancona & Taberner bt Grant & Sjostrom 15-10, 15-13; Bishop & Minta bt Pringle & Jones 15-5, 16-15

Semi-finals: Buchanan & Perry bt Bate & Ellison 15-1, 15-12; Bishop & Minta bt d'Ancona & Taberner 8-15, 15-10, 15-7

Final: Buchanan & Perry bt Bishop & Minta 15-7, 15-9

Plate: Hughes & Rew

NATIONAL VETERANS' (OVER 45) CHAMPIONSHIPS

Christ's Hospital, 31st March/1st April 2007

This year's Veterans' Championships was one of the strongest on record, with Neil Roberts and Ian Fuller, both recent Open National Champions, appearing head to head in the draw for the first time. In total, ten participants gathered in glorious sunshine on the Saturday to do battle for the Singles.

It was good to see Richard Sutcliffe back after an absence of 3 years, and he showed himself to be in very good form, despatching Jeremy Schroeter on his way to the semi-finals. Neil Roberts, Ian Fuller, and Dave Hebden had comfortable early wins to occupy the other 3 places. In the semis Neil and Ian proved too strong for their opponents to set up a mouth-watering final. This was a high quality match with some exciting rallies, but Neil showed great skill, consistency, and relentless power to win 11-1, 11-1, a score which did not do justice to Ian's effort, but underlined the superb form of the defending champion.

Jeremy Schroeter duly won the Plate, but only after some spirited resistance in the final from Brian Nithsdale who took the first game before Jeremy took command to win in three.

A good entry of 12 pairs contested the Doubles and again the quality was high. Two of the quarter-finals were epic struggles, with Bob Sandie and Richard Sutcliffe narrowly overcoming Phil Atkinson and Brian Nithsdale, and Dave Hebden and Keith Puckle needing three games to defeat Stuart Kirby and Brian Kirk. But the two outstanding pairs were defending champions Wayne Enstone and Neil Roberts, along with six-times past winners Ian Fuller and Jeremy Schroeter, and these pairs both achieved comfortable semi-final wins to set up a repeat of last year's final. This was a treat for the 20 spectators who witnessed a match worthy of an Open National final. Fuller & Schroeter retrieved an early deficit to snatch the first game, but Enstone and Roberts turned up the pressure to win in three pulsating games full of power, guile and skill. Wayne showed that he had lost none of his old touch and speed of reaction, while on the left of court Neil is a doubles master second to none.

Some very good games in the Plate led to a final between Kirby and Kirk and Atkinson and Nithsdale, with the Atkinson/Nithsdale combination winning a close first game 11-8, before getting the better of tiring opponents more comfortably in the second. It was remarkable for Phil Atkinson to play in a tournament without grinding out at least one three-gamer!

All the competitors enjoyed the excellent facilities at Christ's Hospital and made a valiant attempt to consume the plentiful provisions, a task made a little easier by the welcome return of Bob Sandie!

Singles

1st Round: N Roberts bt V Aldous w/o; D Hebden bt P King 11-1, 11-3; I Fuller bt J Hawke 11-2, 11-3

Quarter-finals: Roberts bt N Arnott 11-0, 11-1; R Sutcliffe bt J Schroeter 11-3, 11-6; Hebden bt B Sandie 11-1, 11-4; Fuller bt B Nithsdale 11-0, 11-1
Semi-finals: Roberts bt Sutcliffe 11-0, 11-1; Fuller bt Hebden 11-3, 11-0
Final: Roberts bt Fuller 11-1, 11-1
Plate: Schroeter

Doubles

1st Round: Enstone & Roberts bt Hawke & McIntyre 15-1, 15-2; P Atkinson & Nithsdale bt Horrocks & Avenell 15-3, 15-7; Hebden & Puckle bt King & Wade 15-9, 15-1; Fuller & Schroeter bt Arnott & Wilkinson 15-3, 15-0
Quarter-finals: Enstone & Roberts bt B Atkinson & Stuart 15-5, 15-4; Sandie & Sutcliffe bt Atkinson & Nithsdale 15-10, 15-11; Hebden & Puckle bt Kirby & Kirk 15-10, 5-15, 15-10; Fuller & Schroeter by Gunyon & Summerfield 15-1, 15-1
Semi-finals: Enstone & Roberts bt Sandie & Sutcliffe 15-3, 15-1; Fuller & Schroeter bt Hebden & Puckle 15-4, 15-1
Final: Enstone & Roberts bt Fuller & Schroeter 13-15, 15-1, 15-6
Plate: Atkinson & Nithsdale

NATIONAL SCHOOLS' CHAMPIONSHIPS

St Paul's School, Barnes, 2nd/5th April 2007

Although eight schools had representatives in the last 16 of the Open Singles, St Paul's had things very much their own way in both senior events in the end, with seven of the last eight singles players and a 'full house' of four pairs in the semi-finals of the doubles.

Faber, who had been at his best in defeating Leakey (Sherborne) in the previous round, pushed Griffiths hard in the quarters but lost in two good games. The surviving non-Pauline, Simpson (Christ's Hospital) was well beaten by Corbin, while in the top half Ladak and Tristao met younger opposition in the form of Hoolahan and Rowland and were too experienced for them.

In the semi-finals, Ladak lost the first game to Tristao, last year's champion, but had game ball in the second before going down by the odd point. Corbin lost the first to his lively left-handed opponent Griffiths but increasingly established his authority to win the next two. The final was a fine match between two old rivals. Corbin deservedly won the first game but was then pinned back and eventually forced into errors in games 2 and 3 by Tristao's ability to place the ball and find a perfect length. The champion was unable to play his adventurous game full of boasts and cross-court shots, but in the end his sheer accuracy, allied to great retrieving, was enough to wear Corbin down.

13 schools entered the Open Doubles, but only Alleyn's first pair looked capable of arresting the inexorable progress of the four St Paul's pairs into the semi-finals. The semis were duly won by the two older pairs, but their youthful opponents already play doubles with a maturity beyond their years, and the matches were well contested. The final was a cracker, with the left and right partnership of Griffiths and Ladak losing the first but playing high-class fives to take the next two, each by a narrow margin. The fact that Corbin and Tristao had played a hard match that morning may have made the difference in some of the later rallies, but the second pair played extremely well throughout and deserved their win.

The Under 16 event saw a strong challenge by Alleyn's to St Paul's, with Winchester and Derby Moor playing supportive roles. In the singles, Hanton (Alleyn's) and Harris (St Paul's) came through their quarter-finals easily and then had a great battle in the semi-final, won by Hanton after a desperately close first game. In the bottom half, Hine (St Paul's) defeated the promising Hill (Derby Moor) and then in the

semis met George (Alleyn's), who had won a titanic struggle against Squire-Smith (Winchester). This semi-final was a classic encounter between two opposing styles, won by a whisker on the day by the hard-hitting left-hander Hine against his never-say-die opponent. The final was more clear-cut, as Hine continued to play at the top of his game against a slightly uneasy-looking Hanton, taking the first game narrowly and the second with something to spare.

The Under 16 Doubles, competed for by 10 schools, featured only a couple of three-game matches, one of them the final. Derby Moor had a roller-coaster victory over St Dunstan's II and then lost to St Paul's II in the quarters. Winchester had difficulty in beating St Dunstan's I but then upped their game to beat Christ's Hospital, qualifying to play St Paul's I in the semis. Alleyn's I made steady progress through the top half, defeating two St Paul's pairs in the process - neither being easy matches. St Paul's I made heavy weather of the other semi-final in beating Winchester, so the final looked nicely poised. So it proved, with Alleyn's losing the first game heavily but then managing to squeeze home in the second, and taking the third well to win the match.

The Under 14 event provided a much greater variety of schools in the later stages of each competition. Players from St Dunstan's, Alleyn's, Winchester, Christ's Hospital, St Paul's, Bedford Modern, Oundle, Malvern and welcome newcomers Rossall all reached a final of some sort, including plate competitions, and there is no shortage of talent and enthusiasm at this level.

The singles was won in a fine three-game final by Connolly (St Dunstan's) who was simply too strong in the end for Stephens-Hemingway (Alleyn's). The doubles final was between Winchester and Christ's Hospital, who had beaten Alleyn's and St Paul's respectively in their semi-finals. The Wykehamist pair, playing with increasing confidence, ran out the winners in two games.

Open Singles

Last 16: D Tristao (St Paul's) bt Y Smith (Bradfield) 11-0, 11-0; L Rowland (St Paul's) bt S Adcock (Eastbourne) 11-2, 11-3; T Hoolahan (St Paul's) bt I Ackland (Alleyn's) 11-7, 11-3; A Ladak (St Paul's) bt C Burrows (Oundle) 11-2, 11-2; J Faber (St Paul's) bt E Leakey (Sherborne) 11-9, 7-11, 11-6; A Griffiths (St Paul's) bt K Sloan (Merchant Taylors'') 11-4, 11-0; N Simpson (Christ's Hospital) bt J Brubert (Alleyn's) 11-5, 11-7; J Corbin (St Paul's) bt P Winzeler (KCS Wimbledon) 11-6, 11-5

Quarter-finals: Tristao bt Rowland 11-3, 11-6; Ladak bt Hoolahan 11-5, 11-8; Griffiths bt Faber 11-8, 11-7; Corbin bt Simpson 11-1, 11-5

Semi-finals: Tristao bt Ladak 11-6, 12-11; Corbin bt Griffiths 8-11, 11-6, 11-3

Final: Tristao bt Corbin 8-11, 11-4, 11-4

Plate 1: Kailey (St Olave's)

Plate 2: Rees (St Olave's)

Open Doubles

2nd round: St Paul's I bt Winchester II 11-4, 11-6; Merchant Taylors'' I bt Rossall I 11-1, 11-0; Alleyn's I bt Oundle 11-1, 11-8; St Paul's IV bt KCS Wimbledon II 11-0, 11-1; St Paul's III bt Eastbourne 11-7, 11-1; KCS Wimbledon I bt Sherborne I 11-5, 7-11, 11-9; Christ's Hospital I bt Rossall II 11-7, 11-1; St Paul's II bt Winchester I 11-0, 11-2

Quarter-finals: St Paul's I bt Merchant Taylors'' 11-5, 11-7; St Paul's IV bt Alleyn's I 5-11, 11-6, 12-11;

St Paul's III bt KCS Wimbledon I 11-7, 11-0; St Paul's II bt Christ's Hospital I 11-2, 11-3

Semi-finals: St Paul's I bt St Paul's IV 11-2, 11-9; St Paul's II bt St Paul's III 11-5, 11-8

Final: St Paul's II (A Griffiths & A Ladak) bt St Paul's I (D Tristao & J Corbin) 8-11, 12-10, 11-8

Plate: St Olave's I

Colts Singles

Last 12: P Hanton (Alleyn's) bt M Bassott (St Olave's); J Mabbutt (Whitgift) bt A Goodwin (Derby Moor)

8-11, 11-2, 11-1; L Squire-Smith (Winchester) E Kay (St Paul's) 11-6, 11-1; A George (Alleyn's) bt D Ahrabian (St Paul's) 11-5, 11-1

Quarter-finals: Hanton bt Mabbutt 11-3, 11-0; J Harris (St Paul's) bt B Booker (KCS Wimbledon) 11-1, 11-1; M Hine (St Paul's) bt A Hill (Derby Moor) 11-6, 11-5; George bt Squire-Smith 9-11, 11-9, 11-8

Semi-finals: Hanton bt Harris 12-11, 11-5; Hine bt George 7-11, 11-7, 11-9

Final: Hine bt Hanton 11-9, 11-5

Plate 1: Barnes (St Paul's)

Plate 2: Choudhry (Merchant Taylors'')

Colts Doubles

Last 16: Alleyn's I bt KCS Wimbledon I 11-4, 11-3; St Paul's III bt Merchant Taylors'' IV 11-0, 11-0; Derby Moor bt St Dunstan's II 11-7, 10-12, 11-7; St Paul's II bt Tonbridge 11-2, 11-5; Winchester bt St Dunstan's I 12-11, 11-9; Christ's Hospital bt Merchant Taylors' III 11-6, 11-4; Merchant Taylors'' I bt KCS Wimbledon II 11-1, 11-4; St Paul's I bt Alleyn's II 11-3, 11-1

Quarter-finals: Alleyn's I bt St Paul's III 11-9, 11-2; St Paul's II bt Derby Moor 11-5, 11-7; Winchester bt Christ's Hospital 11-2, 11-7; St Paul's I bt Merchant Taylors'' I 11-2, 11-0

Semi-finals: Alleyn's I bt St Paul's II 11-5, 11-7; St Paul's I bt Winchester 11-4, 11-8

Final: Alleyn's I (A George & P Hanton) bt St Paul's I (D Ahrabian & J Harris) 3-11, 12-10, 11-5

Plate: St Dunstan's II

Under 14 Singles

Last 11: H Owen (Winchester) bt Brubert (Alleyn's) 11-1; M Connolly (St Dunstan's) bt S Williams-Joy (Christ's Hospital) 11-7; J Kennedy (Winchester) by C Conder (St Paul's) 11-6

Quarter-finals: C Allan (Loretto) bt Owen 12-10; B Stephens-Hemingway (Alleyn's) bt H Lovstrom (Christ's Hospital) 11-7; Connolly bt Kennedy 12-11; F Ferrao (St Paul's) bt Baines (Winchester) 11-0

Semi-finals: Stephens-Hemingway bt Allan 11-9; Connolly bt Ferrao 11-0

Final: Connolly bt Stephens-Hemingway 10-12, 11-8, 11-5

Plate 1: Draper (St Paul's)

Plate 2: Killick (Malvern)

Under 14 Doubles

1st round: Winchester I bt Rossall I 15-1; St Paul's II bt Alleyn's III 15-12; Malvern I bt Christ's Hospital II 15-8; St Paul's I bt Bedford Modern 15-3; Winchester II bt Alleyn's II 15-5; Christ's Hospital I bt Malvern II 15-9; Rossall II bt Merchant Taylors'' 15-3

Quarter-finals: Winchester I bt St Paul's II 15-3; Alleyn's I bt Malvern I 15-4; St Paul's I bt Winchester II

15-8; Christ's Hospital I bt Rossall II 15-1

Semi-finals: Winchester I bt Alleyn's I 15-9; Christ's Hospital I bt St Paul's I 15-8

Final: Winchester I (J Kennedy & H Owen) bt Christ's Hospital I (Lovstrom & Williams-Joy) 11-8, 11-2

Plate: Rossall I

NATIONAL CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP (THE WOOD CUP)

St Paul's School, Barnes, 14/15th April 2007

In a repeat of the 2006 final, the Manchester Y Club have retained the Wood Cup. Although the eventual outcome was very close, the team of Phil Bishop, John Minta, Kevin Henry and Ben Taberner always had

the upper hand against the Alleyn Old Boys team, which was made up of Hamish Buchanan, Dave Hebden, Bruce Hanton and Ollie Stone-Lee.

Quarter-finals: Manchester Y Club bt Wessex 123-45; White Rose Club bt Old Paulines 98-71; Alleyn Old Boys bt Executioners 110-80

Semi-finals: Manchester Y Club by RFA Club 121-66; Alleyn Old Boys bt White Rose Club 110-52

Final: Manchester Y Club bt Alleyn Old Boys 93-89

NATIONAL VINTAGE AND MASTERS' CHAMPIONSHIPS

Derby Moor, 21st/22nd April 2007

In a repeat of the 1979 National Singles Final, newcomer Wayne Enstone took on defending champion David Hebden in the Final of the Vintage Singles at Derby Moor. No previous final can have been of such quality, with David manoeuvring Wayne around the court in rallies of a length and intensity that defied their ages. At 9-9 in the first game Wayne stepped up a gear, attacking David with relentless two-handed power to edge out as the winner. In the second game, Wayne's legendary consistency and fitness came into play, forcing uncharacteristic errors from David who, eventually, simply ran out of ideas. Wayne thus won the Mackenzie Trophy for the first time.

In their semi-finals, Wayne and David had beaten Robert Grey and John Hawke respectively, who then played for the magnificent Plate presented by John as a way of "getting himself on the list of winners with all the good players". Having won it last year, John this time had to cede victory to Robert, last year's losing Finalist in the main competition. These four should look out, though: rumour has it that Bob Sandie and Jeremy Schroeter are eligible next year!

In the Vintage Doubles, Graham Hobbs & Roger Butterworth and Grem McIntyre & John Hawke went out in the quarter-finals, thereby qualifying themselves to fight it out for the Plate, which took the form of deux boules newly presented by organizer Bob Dolby. Graham and Roger duly returned up the M6 to Manchester laden with the spoils. The semi-finals went according to expectations, with David and Keith defeating the pair from Kent, Martin Wilkinson & Neil Arnott, while new pairing of Bernard Atkinson & Wayne Enstone had too much firepower for Douglas Rice & Tony Wolstenholme, who had come to make a serious challenge for the Masters Doubles.

In the eagerly awaited Final, David and Keith took the first game with some ease, but in the second game found themselves facing resurgent opponents, especially Wayne, who can still get from the back wall to the opposite front corner at lightning pace. After a distinct wobble at 10-10, David got back into his destructive rhythm of fierce hitting down the left, though the match ended with an exchange of delicate drop shots in the front corner from which Keith emerged with the biggest smile of the day.

After an invigorating cuppa, Bernard returned to the fray with David Bawtree to repel the invaders, Douglas and Tony, in probably the most demanding (and legitimate) challenge to their Masters' Doubles title. After their successful defence, 5-times winner David floated the idea of a Grand Masters (70 and over). Who would begrudge him the title? Perhaps Jerry Cooper!

The day ended with Martin Wilkinson and Neil Arnott winning the jelly babies in the 3rd Place play-off

Vintage Singles

Semi-finals: D Hebden beat J Hawke 11-0,11-2; W Enstone beat R Grey 11-1, 11-1

Final: Enstone beat Hebden 11-9, 11-2 ; **Plate:** Grey

Vintage Doubles

Quarter-finals: M Wilkinson & N Arnott beat G McIntyre & J Hawke 11-7, 11-4; D Rice & A Wolstenholme beat G Hobbs & R Butterworth 11-2, 12-11

Semi-finals: D Hebden & K Puckle beat Wilkinson & Arnott 11-5, 11-7; B Atkinson & W Enstone beat Rice & Wolstenholme 11-0, 11-3

Final: Hebden & Puckle beat Atkinson & Enstone 11-3, 12-10

Plate: Hobbs & Butterworth

Masters Doubles

D Bawtree & B Atkinson beat D Rice and A Wolstenholme 11-5, 11-7

SCOTTISH OPEN

Loretto School, Musselburgh, 5/6th May 2007

The 2007 Scottish Open was a story of opportunities not taken; several of the finals, and one semi-final, contained a long moment where the losing player was in a dominant, winning position. And for Roger Butterworth, it represented the third time he has been the doubles runner-up!

A bright sunny day dawned on Saturday in Edinburgh. Young Connor Minta reported for duty to egg on his Dad, to help organiser Neil Roberts and to sell oranges to players and crowd for 25p.

The gathered players included, as well as the players from London, Yorkshire and Manchester, three Scottish representatives in the form of Fraser and Kemp, together with honorary Scot Johnny Major, doing a 6-year degree at Edinburgh University.

The highlight of the singles was the semi-final between Fraser and Minta. An enthralling contest between Minta's aggressive and powerful hitting combined with clever angles, and Fraser's exquisite artistry and knowledge of the courts. Fraser had several match points at 14-12 in the second game, but could not maintain the pressure, and went on to lose that game narrowly 16-14. After that, Minta smelt victory; he held on through the third game, eventually wearing his opponent down to take the semi in three games.

After that epic semi-final, Minta went through to face Buchanan who had had a difficult but shorter passage past Neil Roberts. Once Hamish got used to the pace of John's hitting, he cunningly moved John all around the court, employing every drop-shot and angle in his repertoire, and won the championship in perfect style with an unplayable reverse-angle drop-shot.

The plate also featured a reversal of fortunes; Smith went 10-1 up, but after Major dug in with some admirable hitting to bring the scores level, there followed an exhausting tussle at 11-11 which eventually left Smith thoroughly exhausted, and Major clinched the last few points.

In the doubles, a round-robin saw the favoured seedings of Buchanan & Butterworth go through to face Minta & I Roberts. Several three-game rounds had been predicted, but in fact it was only the final that produced. Having won the first game, Hamish & Roger found the second game harder going. Despite a collision with his partner, Ian Roberts hit a purple patch of superb touch shots, and Minta & Roberts went 6-0 up. Buchanan & Butterworth clawed back to 8-8, and eventually reached Championship point - they had three rallies on game ball, but lost. Again, after such a struggle the tide had changed, and Minta & Roberts went on to take the third game. At times it seemed as if the singles final was being played again, as Minta attempted to end the rallies; John's determination to come away with a winners' trophy was clear, and he and Ian finished deserved winners.

Things were less tight in the doubles plate; Major and Smith had exhausted each other the day before, and Hebden's brilliant reverse angles combined with Kemp's steady hitting had no answer. Once again, the legendary Smith plate was in Scottish hands.

Post Script: The players were pleased to discover a new pub in Musselburgh, the Levenhall Arms, which serves real ale. Over a pint after the games on Sunday, the organiser carefully explained to the young Scottish Plate winner Kemp the legends surrounding the Smith Plate, in particular how the Scotch Elm had once sat on top of the brandy barrel that housed Nelson's body.

This great tournament was also notable for the display of rear-ends; Smith's shorts ripped half-way through a singles game to display more than he may have wished to the embarrassed crowd. Butterworth was rather less shy at revealing to players and crowd the bruise caused to his posterior after being hit by one of Minta's shots!

Singles

1st Round: Smith bt Hawke 15-4, retired hurt

Quarter-finals: Minta bt I Roberts 15-3,15-2; Fraser bt Smith 15-1, 15-0; N Roberts bt Major 15-6,15-5; Buchanan bt Kemp 15-2,15-2

Semi-finals: Minta bt Fraser 8-15,16-14, 15-8; Buchanan bt N Roberts 15-5,15-10

Final: Buchanan bt Minta 15-11,15-9

Plate: Major

Doubles

Preliminary round-robin: Buchanan & Butterworth bt Hebden & Kemp 11-8, 11-6; bt Major & Smith 11-3,

11-1. Minta & I Roberts beat Hebden & Kemp 11-3, 12-11; bt Major & Smith 11-6,

11-2. Hebden & Kemp lost to Minta & I Roberts 3-11, 11-12; lost to Buchanan & Butterworth 8-11, 6-11. Major & Smith lost to Minta & I Roberts 6-11, 2-11; lost to Buchanan & Butterworth 3-11, 1-11

Final: Minta & I Roberts beat Buchanan & Butterworth 3-11,12-11,11-4

Plate: Hebden & Kemp

RFA AGM

London, 13th June 2007

At the RFA's recent AGM, Chris Horrocks and Frank Akerman were elected as President and Deputy President respectively. Chris succeeds John East, who has now finished his two-year term of office and, following his election, Chris thanked John for the direction and professionalism he had brought to the RFA board's activities, as well as for the rapport he had developed with the Eton Fives Association.

At the same meeting, the existing board members were re-appointed as directors, David Barnes was re-elected as Hon. Archivist and Peter de Winton was re-elected as Hon. Auditor.

OFFICIAL RFA RANKINGS

London, 2nd June 2007

Matt Cavanagh has finished the season on top of the official RFA singles rankings, calculated by Dave Hebden and published today. He secured his position with a win in the National Singles Championship, as well as picking up the South West and West of England titles. Ed Fuller jumps to second in the rankings after picking up two titles in the season, while his father Ian also returns to the Top 10 after his excellent run to the semi-final in the London Open.

Hamish Buchanan, who finished last season in top spot, drops to third this year after missing several early events because of injury, while John Minta continues to rise up the rankings to sixth after winning the North of England Championship. Just outside the top 10, and also climbing a good few places, is Alan Beverly, who won both the BUSA and Under 25 titles.

In the doubles rankings, Hamish Buchanan retains his top spot, although his National Doubles-winning partner Robin Perry drops to fifth after a year largely away from tournament fives. Moving into joint second place are John Minta and Phil Bishop, runners-up in the National Doubles as well as double title winners this season.

Elsewhere, Wayne Enstone returns to the top 20 after a few years' absence, while both James Toop and Ed Fuller break into the top 20 for the first time. Meanwhile, significant moves have been made by a number of promising young players, including Will Ellison, Adrian Lee, Hal Mohammed and Dan Clydesdale-Cotter. However, the highest new entrant in the double ranking is Ian Roberts, winner of the recent Scottish Open Doubles title.

DERBY MOOR INVITATION TOURNAMENT

Derby Moor, 24th June 2007

After a day of hard games played in tremendous spirit, it was home-grown talent that won the day at the fourth Derby Moor Invitation Tournament. Schoolboy Anthony Goodwin – partnered by John Minta – won the final in two close games against Stuart Kirby and Grem McIntyre.

Mind you, it was no surprise that the final proved such a close affair. Right from the start, the day was

packed with tough matches: both first-round encounters went to three games, and there were no easy wins in the quarter-finals.

In the end, though, local knowledge had a part to play, and three of four semi-final pairs included a 'home' player. On one court, Stuart Kirby and Grem McIntyre edged through to the final, while on the other, two Derby Moor schoolboys clashed, with the Minta/Goodwin partnership just prevailing over the pairing of Ashley Hill and Jon Lee.

The final was a desperately close affair, and saw John's trademark aggression – combining sheer power with intelligent use of the angles – ably backed up by his left-handed partner, who was playing the game of his life. Stuart and Grem were never out of the match, though, and at one stage looked as if they might take it to three games. However, John and Anthony just had the edge and held their nerve to take the title by the narrowest of margins.

It was fitting, then, that, while the main final was going on, the plate final on the next door court should end the day with a repeat of one of the first-round clashes. But, although the players were the same, the result was reversed, with Richard Christie and Tim Widdop avenging their earlier defeat with a win over Clive Butler and Bob Sandie.

1st Round: Kirk & Roberts bt Grey & Harrison 10-12, 11-5, 11-7; Sandie & Butler bt Christie & Widdop 11-9, 9-11, 11-8

Quarter-finals: Bishop & Heptenstall bt Kirk & Roberts 11-5, 11-7; Kirby & McIntyre bt Pringle & Robinson 11-5, 11-7; Minta & Goodwin bt Sandie & Butler 11-1, 11-9; Hill & Lee bt Beswick & Hawke 8-11, 11-7, 11-3

Semi-finals: Kirby & McIntyre bt Bishop & Heptenstall 11-8, 11-8; Minta & Goodwin bt Hill & Lee 11-9, 12-10

Final: Minta & Goodwin bt Kirby & McIntyre 11-9, 11-9

Plate: Christie & Widdop

CFA BRITISH OPEN DOUBLES TOURNAMENT

St Paul's School, Barnes, 7th July 2007

Preview: The City Fives Association is to stage a 1-wall fives doubles tournament at St Paul's School on July 7th, and entries are now being accepted from both Rugby and Eton Fives players.

The day will start with an explanation of the rules and a demonstration game, followed by a straight knockout tournament, with plate competitions for losing pairs. The organisers are limiting the entrants to 64 pairs, and hope to see an even split between Eton & Rugby fives players, as this is a great opportunity for each to pit their wits against "the other code" on a completely level playing field.

To allow as many players as possible, the tournament will be doubles only, but players may enter on their own, and the organisers will find a partner. Entry fees are £20 per player, including a British Open T-shirt, match balls, lunch, trophies and venue hire (£15 without T-shirt). To enter, please use the links below to email Helen Toop or James Toop as soon as possible to guarantee a place, with the following details: your name; partner's name (if applicable); Eton/Rugby Fives; phone number; email address; T-shirt Size (S, M, L, XL).

The City Fives Association (CFA) is a charitable body that is successfully introducing 1-Wall Fives, or International Handball, to schools throughout London, copying the New York City model. 1-Wall Fives is fast and furious, can be played instantly to a high level by Eton & Rugby Fives players, and is exciting to watch. What's more, it is an international game played professionally in the USA, Canada, Ireland and

Spain, and by amateurs in Mexico, Italy, France, Belgium, Holland, Australia and Japan. The CFA will be organising a team from existing Eton & Rugby players for a triangular tournament against Ireland and Spain later in the year, based on British Open performances, so watch this space...

Report: Ignoring the Tour de France and Wimbledon, 60 men and 10 women descended on St Paul's for the first City Fives Association British 1-wall Doubles competition.

Eton and Rugby Fives players competed on equal terms, and the field was impressive, with five of the top 20 RFA singles players and six of this year's Kinnaird quarter-finalists, as well as BUSA, U25 and Ladies champions from both codes.

Men's Competition: There were some superb games even in the first round, with the match between Derby Moor schoolboys Matt Orr & Ashley Hill and Oxford University Eton Fives players Will Betts & Akshay Agrawal, and the clash between Old Paulines Adrian Lee and Ian Mogford and UCL's Dan Grant and Freddie Sjostrom going down to the wire.

In the second round, Chris Borrows (Oundle/RFA) and Stewart Fautly (Old Olavian/EFA) pushed second seeds Hamish Buchanan and Howard Wiseman to the limit, before the more fancied pair won through.

Overall, though, experience was priceless. In the top half, Ian and Adrian continued their run to the semi-finals, where they met James Toop and Matt Wiseman, All four had been to Ireland with the England Schools Team in 1999 to play 1-wall.

Adrian and Ian took a tight first set after being well up, but James and Matt built on their momentum to win the next two sets. In the other semi, Dave Mew and Pete Cohen (Old Olavians/EFA) beat Hamish and Howard in straight games, drawing praise from the watching Tom O'Connor from Irish Handball Council.

In the final's first set, Matt and James held serve and worked their strategy more effectively to win 21-9, despite some excellent volleying and retrieving from Dave. They took a 16-7 lead in the second, before Pete's right arm began to fire, bringing the game to 20-20. However, a ball narrowly dropped out handing service to Matt and James, and they took the vital two points to seal the first British 1-wall Doubles title.

The plate final featured the two losing pairs from the epic first round clashes. Orr & Hill had battled their way through a number of matches to reach the final, but they lost to Grant & Sjostrom in two sets.

Women's Competition: The five pairs included two who were completely new to the sport, and they played a round-robin, with the top two pairs meeting in the final. In the end, the three experienced pairs fought it out for places in the final. Dom and Leah Redmond finished top and were joined by Sian Evans and Helen Toop, who edged out Emma Wells and Anita Ganguly 21-15 in the deciding game.

The final saw some long and exciting rallies. Both pairs had adapted well to 1-wall over the course of the day, but the power of Dom and Leah made all the difference as they won 21-9, 21-11.

Quarter-finals: M Wiseman & J Toop bt E Hatton & M Bate 21-1, 21-6; A Lee & I Mogford bt E Fuller & B Hitchens 21-16, 21-2; D Mew & P Cohen bt P White & S Ransinghe 21-11, 23-21; H Buchanan & H Wiseman bt O Stone-Lee & S Korris 21-12, 21-8

Semi-finals: Wiseman & Toop bt Lee & Mogford 20-22, 21-11, 11-5; Mew & Cohen bt Wiseman & Buchanan 21-13, 21-15

Final: Wiseman & Toop bt Mew & Cohen 21-9, 22-20

Plate: Grant & Sjostrom

Women's final: D & L Redmond bt H Toop & S Evans 21-9, 21-11