



## Chairman's Christmas message 2015

**The Garland Cup Men's Handicap Singles 8-10th January 2016- put the date in your diary now! We will also complete the Prince's 2015 draws for the 100 Club after the prize giving.**

**Club Wine:** You will be interested to hear that due to global warming the Prince's wine lake is drying up fast- in fact we have run out of white and rose! There are, however, cases of red available @£8.50 per bottle. Order please from Philip Shaw-Hamilton at Accounts.

**Merchandise:** James Richardson has sourced some long and short sleeved lambs wool sweaters with the club logo @ £65 and £60. Order from Tom or Philip. In the New Year there will be samples to view of logoed polo shirts, shorts, track suit bottoms and hoodies...

**Christmas Play:** The court is often under utilised over the Christmas and New Year period- please put that right and run off some of the excesses of Christmas- please respond to Tom and Nick's pleadings for you to play! Or better still contact them off your own bat/ racquet.

I should like to thank the Committee for all their hard work over the course of a successful year for the club and of course as ever to Tom and Nick for all their efforts.

Seasons greetings and all the best for a thoroughly happy Christmas and New Year

**Andrew**

Andrew Hamilton  
Chairman MMTCC

The Club & Professionals would like to welcome all its new members. The Professionals will be pleased to introduce aspiring players to the game, and to help improve current players.

Tom and Nick wish all the members an improving season of tennis.

Tom Granville

**Brodie Cup:** For the first time for seven years the club had a home tie in the first round, against Queen's, and made use of it! The team of Andrew Hamilton, Martin Trees, Alan Moug, Howard Shipstone and Mark Maclure won handsomely 4/1 and now play MCC at Lord's on 22 November... bring it on! Hopefully the Pol Roger team will take inspiration from us! (MMTCC won the Field Trophy and now play in the league above in the Pol Roger Trophy).

**Junior Coaching:** Dan Jones formerly of Seacourt and now working for the Dedanists Real Tennis Charity will be coaching at the club after the successful autumn events. If you know of anyone whose children might be interested in what is an excellent initiative, please let Tom know.



#### Hattie Hamilton, winner of the Moreton Shield

It was excellent to see a range of ages and handicaps in the quarter-finals! Jonny Cook (75- age, not handicap) ran Martin Rogers (25-handicap) very close, Norman Hyde (over 70- age) gave young Harry Walsh a lesson in consistency, and the only ladies in the tournament just managed to make it to the semi-finals- Hattie Hamilton who plays at Queen's squeezed past John Murphy 6/4 and Felicity Sargent was pushed hard by young Greg Bowler.

Rogers displayed great control against the evergreen and canny Hyde in a hard fought set. Hattie and Felicity's ding dong battle went to 5/5 but Hattie's volleyed return of serves saw her through to the final.

Martin faced the daunting task of giving Hattie 30 owe 30 and banned tambour and one serve. The first game was probably the quickest in the history of real tennis when Martin served two faults! He went 3/0 down but managed to claw his way back to lead 4/3 with measured and controlled play. Hattie fought back to 4/4 but at 4/5 down the odds were against her. However, she continued to volley well and the competition enjoyed the fourth 5/5 in the closing stages. Hattie held her nerve and forced Martin into a weak return against a short chase to win her first title after showing greater confidence in playing off the back wall and visibly improving as the tournament progressed.

It was another typically well organised and enjoyable tournament so thanks to Tom and Nick as usual for producing perfect tennis balls and organising us all so efficiently.

#### Brodie Cup Round 2 vs MCC:

The MMTCC Brodie Cup team travelled to Lord's with high hopes of another barn storming win after a pre-match bonding session... but to no avail. The in-form Chairman came up against a former Somerset batsman (whose career was ended by a young lad called Trescothick) whose knowledge of the court and comparative youth proved too much succumbing 2/6, 2/6. Flo Holland and Nick Mills won the first set in dramatic style after being 3/5 down but stumbled thereafter to defeat. Kevin Higgins found the court difficult to cope with going down in two sets. MCC member Mark Maclure was the only jewel in the MMTCC crown winning comfortably and faced with a dead match Captain Martin Trees and Alan Moug performed creditably but didn't win a set.

All but two of all the Brodie Cup matches this season have been home wins - home advantage is so great that the T&RA need to look at the introduction of some form of handicapping to counteract the problem.

#### Amicus Cup

The major club knock-out tournament continues, and should produce a result in the next few weeks. Thanks to Steve Walsh for Amicus's continued sponsorship of the winner's new racket.

## Skills' Evening 1st October 2015



An excellent time was had by 18 of us, divided into groups of 3 with a mix of handicaps. We were given tasks to carry out in 3 minute slots- hitting the ball into the grille, into the dedans via the side wall, into the winning gallery and straight into the dedans. Two other skills included laying chases better than three and serving the ball into a paddling pool (which was empty!). As things transpired it would be better to describe the event as a 'lack of skills' evening! Teams were able to play a joker for one of the skills to score double points- the wise heads chose the chase laying option, one team amassing well over 30 points... The winners were Captain of Tennis Martin Rogers, Peter Mason and John Murphy. There was plenty of hilarity and the skills were followed by a culinary delight by Georg K. Alastair Robson and Tom were thanked for masterminding the evening and Tom and Nick for organising and scoring. It was agreed that another evening should be held, and something on the same lines with Leamington

### Nature Notes

The Triples evening was notable for the revival of an ancient tradition, as well as the usual season fun of interactive handicapping, and fierce application of team orders. Thanks to Tom for his excellent organisation and to George K for a sumptuous curry.

Martin Rogers presented the prizes to the Tournament winners. He was careful to wear the ceremonial Eiderdown Coat of the Tournament Chair (see picture below). The Eiderdown Coat tradition can be traced back to the time before autumn of 2015, and can be observed in the many photographic records going back over the years.

*Cont'd next column*

### *Nature Notes cont'd*

It is believed that there was once a great beast which roamed the south of the county. The Eiderdown Coat is made from its natural moultings, gathered from around its favourite haunt, golf courses.

The tournament chair came to wear the Eiderdown Coat as part of the traditional greeting to the victors, on their return to the bar for recognition and adulation. Some research has indicated that there may be a related dance sequence, in the style of a haka. We look forward to understanding the role (and actions) of such a dance .



The 2015 Christmas Triples winners.

John Murphy, Terence Drane and Grant Arthur,  
with Tournament Chair Martin Rogers



Mat Fattorini receives the winning team trophy for MMTCC 1



Kevin Higgins, singles champion



Chris Sampson and John Devis  
Doubles champions

Hattie Hamilton  
Singles runner-up



Vaughan Hamilton and Mat Fattorini  
Doubles runners-up

For the second year running an MMTCC team of three won the National Inter Club Tournament at the Club on 31 October and November 1st. It was an excellent weekend with 14 teams competing so there was play at MMTCC and Leamington from 8.30 till 9.00 pm on the Saturday. There were some superb matches and a great dedans atmosphere at both clubs!

Sadly for John Murphy his Saturday form of 4 victories deserted him against Rory Sutton who had scraped through as a 'lucky loser'. Hattie Hamilton, who plays most of her tennis at Queen's volleyed well against Bob Compton, Kevin Higgins proved too strong for Martin Kellaway and Martin Trees for the second time beat the other 'lucky loser' Simon Constantine. Hattie staged a comeback against Rory whom she had beaten in the box match but left herself too much to do. Martin Trees was below par in his game with Kevin who never let him settle. The final was a grand affair, nip and tuck all the way, Kevin the winner at 5/5 40 all!

The Chairman of MMTCC and the former club champion were bombed out by Queens I's Chris Kroeger and Freddie Dixon in about 5 minutes flat! 'Bomber' Griffith-Jones and James Blackburn lasted a little longer but succumbed to the same score line. John Lillie and Simon Gill squeezed through against the plucky Jesmond pairing of Tony Harrison (fully recovered after a traffic jam at the dreaded Toll Bar island in Coventry!) and Simon Johnston and the Moreton Morell/Leamington clash went Leamington's way with John Devis and Chris Sampson inching past Flo Holland and Nick Mills. The first semi-final was a splendid match with 15 year old Vaughan Hamilton taking the game by the scruff of the neck to place too much pressure on the Queen's pair. In the all Leamington affair, Lillie and Gill staged a comeback until at 4/5 40 all Lillie sent an unguided missile which had it gone through one of the open windows might have landed in Scarborough! In the final, young Vaughan found the challenge of giving away so many points against doughty, hard hitting opponents a test too far but a comeback at 40/40 to go to 3/5 was halted when his experienced partner Mat Fattorini double faulted!

### **MMTCC Golf Day.**

Many golfers in the club were most perturbed, particularly 6 handicapper Martin Trees and Tom Granville with a 12 going on 9 handicap, that the Chairman won the coveted trophy for the fifth time. Asked how he keeps stealing the trophy from under the noses of, allegedly, the more deserving, he commented avoiding platitudinous cliches and destruction of the time honoured English adverb, that 'it's simple really, I just play to my handicap or slightly worse and still win. It's all about stepping up to the plate, putting the ball in the right areas, hitting the short green stuff, putting good and kicking on to the next hole. I didn't play brilliant but the rest of the field played in their skins. I'd like to thank my family and support team and the Stratford-on-Avon G.C. bunkers for all their help and encouragement during them dark days, you know, when my handicap, kept going up.'

My thanks to all those who helped with this edition, photos, and ideas.

The Court Circular is published twice a year and is complimentary to the full results of tournament sand competitions reported on the club website. Thanks to David Bryant for his work in caring for the website.

The Court Circular welcomes articles of general real tennis interest, humorous and other perspectives, photos and commentary.

Bruce Paxton      editor      December 2015