

Results and Reports from the RFA Website 2011-2012

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SOUTH WEST OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Blundell's School, Tiverton, 9/10th July 2011

After a weekend of fine action on the newly refurbished courts at Blundell's School, the 2011 South West Championships ended with the 2010 champions retaining their titles. Will Ellison beat Matt Cavanagh to claim the singles title before teaming up with Marcus Bate to secure the doubles title with a win over Hamish Buchanan and Chris Burrows.

The singles final was remarkable not just because it was the first time Will had beaten Matt in competition, but also because of the topsy-turvy nature of the first game - a game described as 'weird' by most spectators. After some tense opening rallies, Matt soon established a commanding 7-1 lead, only for Will to strike back, scoring 10 unanswered points to take the game 11-7. The second game was rather different in nature, but the end result was the same - an 11-7 win for Will - securing the title for him for the second year in a row.

Throughout the draw, there were some great clashes. Tom Dean's win over Jim Hughes in the second round, for instance, was a nail-biting encounter, and Tom went on to push Will hard in the quarter-final; also in the second round, fourth seed Marcus Bate needed three games to beat Gareth Price, while Tom Kiggell pushed Ed Hatton hard before Ed won through.

However, surely the best performance of the weekend came from Ed's former Christ's Hospital pupil, Luke Thomson. Proving that his plate win in the National Singles was no fluke, Luke beat Nick Austin and Marcus Bate on his way to the semi-finals, where it took a player of the calibre of Will to put him out.

It was Will who also put paid to Ed and Luke's campaign in the doubles - and again they reached the semi-finals. However, by that stage, the day's exertions were affecting Luke, who was struck down by cramp, and the Christ's Hospital pair were forced to withdraw. That put Will and Marcus into the final again, where they would face the previously untried partnership of Hamish Buchanan and (playing in his first ever Open Championship final) Chris Burrows. They had reached the final only after a three-game win over Tom Dean and Andy Pringle - who, in turn, had only reached the semi-finals after a three-game win over Tom Kiggell and Jim Hughes.

Come the final, though, it was the established pair that came out on top, winning both games 11-5 to retain their title. That was perhaps no great surprise, but what is remarkable is that this represented the first time that Marcus had ever successfully defended a title - at the eighth time of asking.

No less keenly contested were the plate competitions, which saw a huge cross-section of ages taking part. In the singles competition, young players dominated and Durham University's Jay Gravatt ended up as winner. However, the plate doubles final produced a wonderful contrast, with Derby Moor youngsters Mike Baxter and Jimmy Goodwin facing the experience of Wayne Enstone and Stuart Watson. Yes, in the end, experience told - although only just - but the performance of the youngsters here and in the main draw shows that the established stars must never rest on their laurels. If Will and Marcus want to retain their titles next year, they know they'll have to work very hard to do so.

Singles

1st round: D Schultz bt B Baral 11-3, 11-9; J Hughes bt N Geere 11-8, 11-1; T Dean bt A Smith 11-4, 11-2; L Thomson bt K Kennerley 11-0, 11-0; N Austin bt J Gravatt 11-4, 11-2; G Price bt H Aveston 11-1, 11-3; J Savery bt B Kirk 11-5, 11-3; A Pringle bt M Baxter 11-0, 11-2; C Burrows bt S Watson 11-4, 11-3; E Hatton bt J Goodwin 11-0, 11-3; T Kiggell bt R Christie 11-1, 11-1; M Frost bt S King 11-7, 11-2
2nd round: W Ellison bt D Schultz 11-1, 11-3; Dean bt Hughes 11-9, 11-8; Thomson bt Austin 12-11, 11-

4; M Bate bt Price 10-12, 11-1, 11-2; H Buchanan bt Savery 11-8, 11-5; Burrows bt Pringle 11-6, 11-8; Hatton bt Kiggell 11-7, 11-8; M Cavanagh bt Frost 11-4, 11-2
Quarter-finals: Ellison bt Dean 11-8, 11-5; Thomson bt Bate 11-4, 11-3; Buchanan bt Burrows 11-2, 11-4; Cavanagh bt Hatton 11-1, 11-4
Semi-finals: Ellison bt Thomson 11-4, 11-2; Cavanagh bt Buchanan 11-3, 11-5
Final: Ellison bt Cavanagh 11-7, 11-7
Plate: Gravatt

Doubles

1st round: Frost & Gravatt bt Baral & Price 11-0, 11-5; Austin & Savery bt Grant & Sanders 11-0, 11-2; Hatton & Thomson bt Kirk & Christie 11-3, 11-1; Dean & Pringle bt Geere & Smith 11-2, 11-2; Hughes & Kiggell bt Goodwin & Baxter score unknown; Aveston & King bt Kennerley & Schultz 11-4, 11-6; Buchanan & Burrows bt Enstone & Watson 11-4, 11-2
Quarter-finals: Bate & Ellison bt Frost & Gravatt 11-4, 11-1; Hatton & Thomson bt Austin & Savery 11-4, 11-12, 11-4; Dean & Pringle bt Hughes & Kiggell 5-11, 11-6, 11-2; Buchanan & Burrows bt Aveston & King 11-3, 11-6
Semi-finals: Bate & Ellison bt Hatton & Thomson 11-4, 9-5 retd; Buchanan & Burrows bt Dean & Pringle 11-12, 11-5, 11-0
Final: Bate & Ellison bt Buchanan & Burrows 11-5, 11-5
Plate: Enstone & Watson

LONDON OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

St Paul's School, Barnes, 10/11th September 2011

James Toop gained revenge for his loss at the hands of Will Ellison in the 2010 London Open by beating him to win the 2011 London Open Singles Championship – only the second time he has won this title. However, Will made up for any disappointment by teaming up with Hal Mohammed to retain the doubles title with a comprehensive win over the untried partnership of Hamish Buchanan and Ady Lee.

There was little doubt that these were the right winners, as James had been the class of the field all weekend in the singles, while Will and Hal's 11-2, 11-2 win in the doubles final tells you just how dominant they were in that tournament.

It was the earlier rounds that saw the closest matches, and three matches in the Round of 16 in the singles went to the full three games: Luke Thomson edged out fellow leftie Tom Dean, while Charlie Brooks beat Tom Maconie 11-8 in their final game, but the longest match was between Hamish Buchanan and Pete Cohen, where a tiring Cohen used every second of the allowed time between points – and perhaps a few more.

Come the quarter-finals, though, the seedings held true, and as if to prove the seedings right, the top four made it into the semis, where there were some of the day's best matches. In the first, James Toop survived a tough challenge from Matt Cavanagh to come through in two games, but the second was a real classic: Will Ellison just sneaked through against John Minta, winning the deciding third game 11-9.

Come the final, though, it was to be James's day. After he and Will were pretty much level-pegging to 7-6, gradually James came to the fore, hitting more winners and forcing more mistakes out of Will. He closed out the first game to 7, before carrying on where he'd left off in the second game, taking that 11-3.

The doubles competition was to be a very different story, although again it was the eight seeds who made it through to the quarter-finals – despite the fact that some of them were rather unfamiliar pairings. Will and Hal were the only established pair, and they duly won through to the final, beating the Derby

youngsters Frost and Goodwin, and then surviving a slight scare against Charlie Brooks and Gareth Price in the semi.

Here they were joined by Hamish Buchanan & Ady Lee (playing together for the first time), Gareth Price & Charlie Brooks (also partners for the first time) and James Toop & John Minta, playing together for the first time in some years.

The match of the day was undoubtedly the clash between John & James and Hamish & Ady, with the first two games shared, 10-12, 12-11 – and both games could have gone either way. However, Hamish and Ady had the momentum after just sneaking the second game against the odds and they carried that form into the deciding game, clinching it comfortably in the end.

In the final, though, it was they who had no answer to Hal and Will, who seemed capable of hitting a barrage of superlative winners from all over the court. Surely, so many nicks have never been hit by one pair in such a short period of time. Ady and Hamish looked shell-shocked when they came off court, whereas the smiles on Will and Hal's faces as they collected the trophy were a fitting end to a fine weekend's sport – and a suitable send-off to Hal, who left the following day to work for in the Carribean for several months.

Singles

1st round: N Edmonds bt F Thomas 11-0, 12-10; J Gravatt bt T Parker 11-8, 11-8; N Patel bt J Malde 12-10, 11-8

2nd round: J Toop bt N Edmonds 11-1, 11-2; E Hatton bt E Kay 11-7, 11-0; H Buchanan bt P Cohen 9-11, 11-7, 11-2; M Cavanagh bt J Gravatt 11-1, 11-0; J Minta bt A Pringle 11-3, 11-6; C Brooks bt T Maconie 11-9, 5-11, 11-8; L Thomson bt T Dean 11-7, 7-11, 11-5; W Ellison bt N Patel 11-0, 11-1

Quarter-finals: Toop bt Hatton 11-4, 11-3; Cavanagh bt Buchanan 11-0, 11-0; Minta bt Brooks 11-5, 11-8; Ellison bt Thomson 11-1, 11-6

Semi-finals: Toop bt Cavanagh 11-4, 12-10; Ellison bt Minta 11-4, 8-11, 11-9

Final: Toop bt Ellison 11-7, 11-3

Plate: Kay

Doubles

1st round: A Goodwin & M Frost bt R Holl & J Heath 11-2, 11-2; T Maconie & C Burrows bt T Parker & F Thomas 11-1, 11-4; C Brooks & G Price bt R Warner & J East 11-1, 11-5; J Minta & J Toop bt R Dyke & D Rivett 11-2, 11-3; E Hatton & L Thomson bt J Malde & N Edmonds 11-9, 11-7; R Christie & J Gravatt bt T Golding & M Connolly 11-3, 11-3

Quarter-finals: W Ellison & H Mohammed bt Goodwin & Frost 11-6, 11-8; Brooks & Price bt Maconie & Burrows 11-9, 11-5; Minta & Toop bt Hatton & Thomson 11-9, 11-8; H Buchanan & A Lee bt Christie & Gravatt 11-8, 11-0

Semi-finals: Ellison & Mohammed bt Brooks & Price 11-4, 12-10; Buchanan & Lee bt Toop & Minta 10-12, 12-11, 11-4

Final: Ellison & Mohammed bt Buchanan & Lee 11-2, 11-2

Plate: Goodwin & Frost

OWERS TROPHY

St Paul's School, Barnes, 1st October 2011

Truth be told, it was a rather disappointing entry for this year's Owers Trophy, with many of the 'usual suspects' unable to raise a full team for a variety of reasons.

However, in the end, four teams took the courts and a fine day's sport was had by all. The defending

champions, the Old Paulines, were joined by the Old Eastbournians and – playing for the first time in the competition – Old Derby Moor.

The fourth team was a makeshift affair, and comprised two Old Oundelians, an Old Rugbeian and an Old Wykehamist. They faced the daunting task of tackling the OPs in their first match and the defending champs were clearly in no mood to relinquish their hold on the title. They beat the ‘All Stars’ by almost 30 points, with only the Old Oundelian pairing of Alex Smith and Chris Burrows able to come to terms with the combined firepower of Dan Tristao, Ady Lee, Tom Dean and Francis Thomas.

In the other semi-final, however, things were much tighter between the OEs and Derby Moor. Against expectation, Derby won both opening games of doubles, as the strength and power of their two left/right-hand pairs were too much for their more experienced opponents.

However, in the second round of matches, things changed dramatically: the OEs’ Sam Adcock and Marcus Bate scored a 15-2 win over Jimmy Goodwin and Mike Baxter to effectively level the tie and leave the other match to decide the outcome.

It was a tight affair from the start, but Anthony Goodwin and Max Frost gradually pulled out a lead over Andy Pringle and Andrew Meek. However, once news of the other result reached the players, the OEs were revitalized and began to dominate the match. They even managed to creep ahead at 12-11, and it looked as if they might pull off an unlikely OE win. However, just in time, the Derby boys regained their composure and came back to win the game 15-13 – and the match by a single point 47-46.

Come the final, though, they couldn’t repeat their heroics. The OPs – now with Sam Roberts playing in place of Francis Thomas – were simply too strong, and went on to record a comfortable win by 65 points. With the Club Championship also in their possession, it served merely to reinforce their position as currently the country’s top club side.

Results:

Semi-finals: Old Derby Moor bt Old Eastbournians 47-46; Old Paulines bt Combined team 60-34

Final: Old Paulines bt Old Derby Moor 88-23

Plate: Old Eastbournians

YORKSHIRE OPEN DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP

Giggleswick School, Yorkshire, 15th October 2011

A high quality entry graced the tournament this year, with a dozen pairs enabling the first round to be held as a set of four round-robins. The first in each robin proceeded to the cup semi-finals, the second to the plate semis, and the third to the second plate. This format ensured that everyone, whatever their ability, had some close, competitive, matches.

As is becoming the norm, Derby Moor club provided almost a third of the players (in fact, it was one third if Jay Gravatt is counted as an honorary Derby Moor member). They proceeded to monopolise the plate competition. In the end, youth vanquished experience, with Jay and partner Max Frost defeating Richard Christie and Stuart Kirby in a thrilling, three game, final.

Jay and Max thus become the first holders of the T. Ian Roberts plate, a beautiful trophy found for us by John Walter and donated by him.

The second plate also produced some close competition, although the final was the only one of the day won in two games, by Mark Roberts and Damian Connolly, who both play at Manchester.

From the entries, three pairings were obvious seeds, but the fourth was not so easy to pick, as there were so many of similar ability. Paul Manning and Tim Widdop, of the White Rose club, rose to the occasion. Playing as well as they ever have, these two provided stiff opposition for John Minta and Marco Skogh, who eventually won in 2 games. On the other side of the draw, Hamish Buchanan and Will Ellison were made to work for their place in the final by John Beswick and Neil Roberts.

And so to the cup final, and what a final it was. After losing the first game 15-16, Hamish and Will slowly ground down their opponents to achieve a hard fought victory. The spectators did not notice the increasing chill of the evening, nor the discomfort of watching from the Giggleswick back wall, until the final point was scored. Then the shivering and stretching began in earnest.

Thanks must go to all who took part, but especially to Neil Roberts, who liaised with the school, swept out the courts, and organised the fine weather, and to Stuart Kirby who sorted out the catering. In addition, the spectators who made their way to the wilds of Yorkshire must be praised, especially those who brought cakes with which to strengthen both players and organiser.

Results:

Round Robin 1: Buchanan & Ellison bt M. Roberts & Connolly 15 – 1; Buchanan & Ellison bt Butler & Kirk 15 – 2; Butler & Kirk bt M. Roberts & Connolly 15 – 8

Round Robin 2: Minta & Skogh bt Goodwin & Baxter 15 – 2; Minta & Skogh bt P McIntyre & Tosh 15 – 1; Goodwin & Baxter bt P. McIntyre & Tosh 15 – 4

Round Robin 3: Beswick & N. Roberts bt Frost & Gravatt 15 – 6; Beswick & N. Roberts bt Rob Christie & G. McIntyre 15 – 1; Frost & Gravatt bt Rob Christie & G. McIntyre 15 – 1

Round Robin 4: Manning & Widdop bt Richard Christie & Kirby 15 – 11; Manning & Widdop bt Lamb & Reynolds 15 – 4; Richard Christie & Kirby bt Lamb & Reynolds 15 – 6

Cup: Buchanan & Ellison bt Beswick & N. Roberts 15 – 8, 15 – 7; Minta & Skogh bt Manning & Widdop 15 – 9, 15 – 11

Final: Buchanan & Ellison bt Minta & Skogh 15 – 16, 15 – 12, 15 – 7

First Plate: Richard Christie & Kirby bt Butler & Kirk 12 – 11, 11 – 1; Frost & Gravatt bt Goodwin & Baxter 12 – 10, 11 – 6

Final: Frost & Gravatt bt Richard Christie & Kirby 10 – 12, 11 – 1, 11 – 6

2nd Plate: M. Roberts & Connolly bt P McIntyre & Tosh 11 – 8, 11 – 2; Lamb & Reynolds bt G McIntyre & Rob Christie 11 – 6, 12 – 11

Final: M. Roberts & Connolly bt Lamb & Reynolds 11 – 3, 11 - 1

‘WINCHESTER FIVES ASSOCIATION’ vs. RFA

Winchester College, 30th October 2011

Harry Akerman has sent in a report from what he describes as a ‘cracking match’ at Winchester in which the (very newly formed!) Winchester Fives Association did themselves proud. As you can see from the results below, in the eight-a-side fixture, the match included a game to 15 against each pair finishing with two games to 15 against the opposite-numbered pair. No one went home feeling like they did not have enough Fives!

On the face of it, says Harry, the teams were poorly matched, with four of the eight in the RFA team being in the top seven singles rankings, while Winchester had only one player in the top 50. But how a six-inch buttress changes the whole dimension of the game! And so, despite being theoretically inferior, the Winchester Fives ‘Association’ players were able to use their significant home advantage and squeak out a very narrow victory.

The closeness of the match can be demonstrated by the fact that the overall victory was by an average of just a point and a half per 15-point game. Several scores were revenge for previous Barnes Bridge defeats by the Winchester players, and this victory sets things up very nicely for this season’s tournament in Sedbergh. Two exhausted teams recuperated in The Queen while trying to work out why the harder you try, the harder the buttress is to hit!

Winchester Fives ‘Association’ vs. RFA 30th October 2011 Winchester College

W. Ellison + J. Pearce-Smith	vs	D. Tristao + S. Roberts	15-10
E. Ronan + J. Marshall	vs	H. Buchanan + D. Grant	16-15
H. Akerman + M. Mohammed	vs	G. Price + T. Marshall	15-6
E. Hawke + G. Munn	vs	A. Lee + J. Minta	<u>5-15</u>

51-46

W. Ellison + J. Pearce-Smith	vs	G. Price + T. Marshall	15-2
E. Ronan + J. Marshall	vs	A. Lee + J. Minta	15-13
H. Akerman + M. Mohammed	vs	D. Tristao + S. Roberts	15-9
E. Hawke + G. Munn	vs	H. Buchanan + D. Grant	<u>8-15</u>

53-39

W. Ellison + J. Pearce-Smith	vs	A. Lee + J. Minta	15-9
E. Ronan + J. Marshall	vs	G. Price + T. Marshall	15-2
H. Akerman + M. Mohammed	vs	H. Buchanan + D. Grant	15-11
E. Hawke + G. Munn	vs	D. Tristao + S. Roberts	<u>6-15</u>

51-37

W. Ellison + J. Pearce-Smith	vs	H. Buchanan + D. Grant	15-8, 6-11
E. Ronan + J. Marshall	vs	D. Tristao + S. Roberts	7-15, 13-15
H. Akerman + M. Mohammed	vs	A. Lee + J. Minta	11-15, 15-11
E. Hawke + G. Munn	vs	G. Price + T. Marshall	<u>11-15, 15-5</u>

93-95

WEST OF ENGLAND OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Clifton College, Bristol, 22nd/23rd October 2011

My first year in charge did not pass without incident, writes Simon Werkshagen, when one entry ended up in our ISP's junkmail and it was not picked up until after the draw had taken place. Last minute manoeuvring in both the singles and doubles draw left some questioning if my judgement was right, but with the support of Peter Dunscombe and Dave Hebden the draw was confirmed and sent out.

There was a high quality singles draw consisting of 18 entrants which included the top 8 ranked players. As a consequence there were no easy matches.

As expected all eight seeds made their way through to the quarter finals and then the top four into the semi-finals. The highlight had to be a fantastic third game between Dan Tristao and Will Ellison who after a 10-4 lead in the third was chased hard by Dan who eventually won 12-10.

Sunday morning saw James and Dan deliver the expected high calibre match with some fantastic attacking fives which gave Dan the edge and his first West of England title.

The doubles took time to get going due to the Rugby World Cup taking priority over the first few rounds! The highlight of the first round saw the West of England pairing of Maskell and Marshall take on Hatton and Thomson and after a first game win of 11-2 a potential upset was on the cards however, Hatton and Thomson fought back hard to win in three.

All the seeds made it through to the quarter-finals and then the top 4 to the semi-finals but here both first and second seeds were beaten by their opponents, setting up a final between Tristao & Grant v Minta & Pringle. The Dans played an aggressive match and had victory in their sights but a gritty come back by Minta and Pringle in the second game had all the spectators thinking that a third game was on the cards but they held on and won 11-9.

I would like to thank all the competitors for their help throughout the weekend but special thanks must go to the old guard (Peter De Winton, Lionel Lawson and Dave Hebden) who supported me both on and off the court with good company and of course beer!

Singles

1st Round: A Rew bt G Price 7-11, 11-2, 11-5; C Davey w/o J Byron-Evans; D Butler w/o J Gravatt; T Dean bt S Watson 11-1, 11-2

2nd Round: J Toop bt A Boyd 11-0, 11-0; M Bate bt E Hatton 11-6, 11-3; M Cavanagh bt A Rew 11-3, 11-2; J Minta bt C Davey 11-0, 11-0; D Tristao bt D Butler 11-4, 12-10; H Buchanan bt T Dean 11-7, 3-11, 11-1; D Grant bt L Thomson 11-7, 11-5; W Ellison bt A Pringle 11-0, 11-9

Quarter-finals: J Toop bt M Bate 11-1, 11-6; J Minta bt M Cavanagh 4-11, 11-5, 11-8; D Tristao bt H Buchanan 11-5, 11-9; W Ellison bt D Grant 11-6, 11-9

Semi-finals: J Toop bt J Minta 11-3, 11-2; D Tristao bt W Ellison 11-9, 4-11, 12-10
Final: D Tristao bt J Toop 11-7, 11-7
Plate: Thomson

Doubles

1st Round: G Price & T Dean bt A Boyd & A Lawson 11-3, 11-7
2nd Round: W Ellison & H Buchanan bt S Coffey & R Lebon 11-3, 11-5; G Price & T Dean bt S Kirby & R Christie 11-3, 11-4; D Tristao & D Grant bt B Kirk & C Butler 11-3, 11-4; A Lee & C Burrows bt M Frost & J Gravatt 11-3, 11-4; J Minta & A Pringle bt J Goodwin & M Baxter 11-0, 11-1; E Hatton & L Thomson bt S Maskell & J Marshall 2-11, 11-3, 11-2; H Akerman & J Pearce-Smith bt S Watson & T Lewis 11-5, 11-3; M Bate & J Toop bt K Kennerly & A Mullan 10-0, 11-1
Quarter-finals: W Ellison & H Buchanan bt G Price & T Dean 11-0, 11-6; D Tristao & D Grant bt A Lee & C Burrows 7-11, 11-0, 11-4; J Minta & A Pringle bt E Hatton & L Thomson 11-7, 11-7; M Bate & J Toop bt H Akerman & J Pearce-Smith 11-4, 11-4
Semi-finals: D Tristao & D Grant bt W Ellison & H Buchanan 11-8, 11-9; J Minta & A Pringle bt M Bate & J Toop 11-5, 11-5
Final: D Tristao & D Grant bt J Minta & A Pringle 11-6, 11-9
Plate: Gravatt & Frost

SCHOOLS WINCHESTER FIVES TOURNAMENT

Winchester College, 6th November 2011

Eleven pairs contested the tenth anniversary edition of the RFA Schools' Winchester Doubles tournament, held at Winchester College.

The first round produced a lengthy battle between Bradfield and Winchester III, eventually won by the Bradfieldians. Their penchant for long matches then continued into the quarter-finals, where they lost a three-game cliff-hanger to Blundell's I. Meanwhile, the fancied St. Paul's I were taking their time settling down before beating Winchester II in two close games.

Things went more to plan in the bottom half of the draw, Winchester I defeating St. Paul's II convincingly, while Derby Moor dismissed St. Paul's III. It was Derby Moor's first appearance in this event, and they continued to play excellent fives to defeat Winchester's first pair at the semi-final stage. Blundell's top pair meanwhile gave a good account of themselves in their semi-final against St. Paul's I, but were handicapped by injury towards the end of the match and lost in two games.

The final was disappointingly one-sided, with Derby Moor failing to unsettle the Paulines with their hitting and being defeated in straight games by superior doubles play and court-craft. Both pairs can be proud of their achievement: Derby Moor for reaching the final at their first attempt, and St. Paul's for playing better and better as the tournament progressed and emerging as clear winners.

The subsidiary competition was eventually won by Bradfield's Plate specialists Butler and Cummings, who played more games than anyone else on the day and are now well on their way to completing a dinner service.

1st Round: Bradfield bt Winchester III 8-15, 15-12, 15-7; St. Paul's II bt Blundell's II 15-1, 15-1; St. Paul's III bt Marlborough 15-5, 15-10

Quarter-finals: St. Paul's I bt Winchester II 16-14, 15-13; Blundell's I bt Bradfield 12-15, 15-11, 16-14; Winchester I bt St. Paul's II 15-7, 15-3; Derby Moor bt St. Paul's III 15-2, 15-6

Semi-finals: St. Paul's I bt Blundell's I 15-6, 15-13; Derby Moor bt Winchester I 15-13, 15-7
Final: St. Paul's I (T Parker & F Thomas) bt Derby Moor (J Goodwin & M Baxter) 15-2, 15-5
Plate: Bradfield (D Butler & S Cummings)

NATIONAL British Universities (BUCS) STUDENTS CHAMPIONSHIPS Marlborough College, Wiltshire, 25/27th November 2011

For the first time the championships visited Marlborough, where the College courts, recently re-furnished with non-slip floors, provided an excellent base for the event, writes organiser David Gardner. Four courts, and a sizeable indoor viewing area, which made players and spectators warm and comfortable, were a particular feature.

Initially the entry looked good, with 41 for the singles & 21 pairs for the doubles, numerically slightly down on last year, but with a similar number of institutions participating - thirteen. However a steady trickle of withdrawals during the couple of weeks prior to the event reduced numbers considerably, particularly in the singles. Only ten places actually turned up - Edinburgh, Worcester & Kent withdrawing - and the No 1 Seed, Dan Grant was an early casualty with a recurrence of his ankle problems which have now put him out for some months to come.

There are always a few last-minute withdrawals, but it does seem, on this occasion, that quite a number of individuals committed themselves to the event without actually checking that they were really free on the Friday! It might be a good idea if team captains were to get their players to double check this in future years before sending in their entry forms! As it was sections of the singles draw had to be re-vamped on several occasions in order to give a balanced schedule.

Having said this, the revised top four seeds all reached the semi-finals and there were lots of closely contested matches. Ed Kay, (Cambridge) had a tough Saturday with some 13 games in 5 matches. It is to his credit that he survived them all, although it might just have taken its toll on the Sunday!!

In the Singles Final, the previous two seasons' National Schools Champions faced each other, with the 2011 victor, Luke Thomson, from Loughborough, running out the winner. The Doubles Final again saw the top two seeds in combat, with Durham, represented by Peter Hanton & Alex Griffiths, narrowly defeating the holders, Ed Kay & Tom Chase, from Cambridge, with a second game that see-sawed around at 15 all for a long time!

Plate victories went to James Tilston, also of Durham, in a three-game singles final, and to Adam George of St. Andrew's, keeping his Plate Doubles crown intact partnered by Kit Ward.

Special mention must also be made of the St. Paul's schoolboy pair, Theo Parker & Francis Thomas, who come in under the heading of National Students, who reached the semi-final of the Doubles, whilst Theo contested the final of the Plate. A good omen for the future.

Our thanks must go to Marlborough College for allowing us the use of their fine facilities, in particular to Tom Kiggell and facilities manager Julian Beckett. Also to all the organisers, who helped make this 52nd championship another success.

In the entirely unofficial team championship, using figures and statistics compiled by the RFA's Dave Hebden, Durham emerged on top, just ahead of Cambridge - a reversal of the positions at Durham last

year. For the full details, simply click on the link below.

Singles

1st round: Thomson (Loughborough) beat Chail (UCL) 15-1, 15-0; Brubert (Cambridge) beat Lalor (Durham) 15-1, Ret inj.; Coffey (Southampton) beat Gravatt (Durham) 15-8, 15-6; Parker (St. Paul's) beat Esin (Oxford) 15-5, 15-1; Hine (Oxford) beat Squire (Imperial) 15-1, 15-1; Aquilina (Durham) beat Bhattacharya (Imperial) 15-1, 15-0; Waller (Oxford) beat Tilston (Durham) 15-13, 15-12; Burrows (Imperial) beat Malde (Cambridge) 15-0, 15-6; Thomas (St. Paul's) w.o. Barnsley (UCL); Malone (Cambridge) beat Lung (UCL) 15-1, 15-0; Jefferies (Oxford) beat Harvey ((UCL) 15-0, 15-2; Hanton (Durham) w.o. Roberts (Oxford); Chase (Cambridge) beat Bowden (Durham) 12-15, 15-5, 15-8; George (St. Andrew's) w.o. McKelvie (Oxford); Ward (Durham) beat Lang (UCL) 15-0, 15-1; Kay (Cambridge) beat Spencer (Durham) 15-0, 15-1
2nd Round: Thomson beat Brubert 15-7, 15-2; Coffey beat Parker 15-10, 15-2; Aquilina beat Hine 15-13, 15-9; Burrows beat Waller 15-2, 15-4; Thomas beat Malone 16-14, 13-15, 15-12; Hanton beat Jefferies 15-0, 15-2; George bt Chase 15-11, 9-15, 15-9; Kay beat Ward 15-4, 15-1
Quarter-Finals: Thomson beat Coffey 15-0, 15-5; Burrows beat Aquilina 15-3, 15-1; Hanton beat Thomas 15-1, 15-3; Kay beat George 15-1, 14-16, 15-13
Semi-Finals: Thomson beat Burrows 15-5, 15-0; Kay beat Hanton 15-13, 9-15, 15-9
Final: Thomson bt Kay 15-9, 15-6
Plate: Tilston

Doubles

1st round: Rolls & Brierly (Bristol) w.o. Lung & Hervey (UCL); Parker & Thomas (St. Paul's) w.o. Connolly & Golding (Kent); Chai & Lang (UCL) w.o. Butt & A.N. Other (Edinburgh)
2nd Round: Kay & Chase (Cambridge) beat Spencer & Wakelam (Durham) 15-0, 15-1; Thomson & Satterfield (Loughborough) beat Burrows & Squire (Imperial) 15-0, 15-3; Parker & Thomas (St. Paul's) beat Tilston & Aquilina (Durham) 15-7, 15-5; Coffey & Lebon (Southampton) beat George (St. Andrew's) & Ward (Durham) 15-11, 15-5; Malone & Beverly (Cambridge) beat Jefferies & Waller (Oxford) 15-3, 15-12; Gravatt & Bowden (Durham) beat Brubert & Malde (Cambridge) 15-7, 15-9; Hine & Esin (Oxford) beat Chai & Lang (UCL) 15-6, 15-7; Hanton & Griffiths (Durham) beat Rolls & Brierly (Bristol) 15-4, 15-6
Quarter-Finals: Kay & Chase beat Thomson & Satterfield 15-3, 11-15, 15-5; Parker & Thomas beat Coffey & Lebon 8-15, 16-14, 15-10; Malone & Beverly beat Gravatt & Bowden 15-8, 15-4; Hanton & Griffiths beat Hine & Esin 15-8, 15-6
Semi-Finals: Kay & Chase beat Parker & Thomas 15-8, 15-7; Hanton & Griffiths beat Malone & Beverly 16-14, 15-5
Final: Durham (A Griffiths & P Hanton) bt Cambridge (E Kay & T Chase) 15-9, 16-15
Plate: George & Ward

NATIONAL SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIP

Manchester, 3rd/4th December 2011

James Toop today scored his fourth successive National Singles title, winning in two games over Will Ellison. For James, this title – his fifth in total – moves him into a clear second place behind Wayne Enstone in the list of all-time winners, overtaking Eric Marsh and John Pretlove, each with four titles. It will undoubtedly be a disappointment for Will to fall at the final hurdle for a second year, but he does have the consolation of having beaten Dan Tristao for the first time in competition. However, it could be that that win – only secured with a 16-15 win in the third of three games! – took too much out of him to mount a significant challenge to James, who by contrast had a more routine two-game win over former champion Matt Cavanagh in the semis.

The first round went more or less according to the seedings, apart from the two closest matched opponents, Tom Dean v Marco Skogh and Chris Burrows v Charlie Brooks, going to three games with the lower seed (Skogh and Brooks respectively) coming from behind to win in both cases. In fact, the top six seeds were all comfortable in their wins, despite a couple of the games looking enticing on paper.

Matt Cavanagh was at his consistent best in the quarter finals, overturning 4th seed John Minta in straight games. It was nip and tuck in the first game before Matt pulled away at the end, carrying the momentum through to cause the only upset of the round. Tom Maconie pushed Dan Tristao very hard in the other half of the draw, but couldn't produce the winners at the business end of the games. James and Will both wore down their opponents, and Marco Skogh's loss ended local interest in the main draw.

The first semi final saw James take a commanding lead against Matt, but a string of points put Matt within touching distance. That was the closest anyone came to putting James under pressure all tournament, and he responded to it by closing the game out quickly and taking the second to 4.

The second semi final between Dan and Will was easily the match of the tournament, with many a twist and turn along the way. Will started off phenomenally well, pulling winners out all over the place to take the first game to 3 and when he took a huge 11-1 lead in the second, a thrashing was on the cards. Dan slowly turned the game on its head though by changing his tactics, and when he fought back to win the second game with Will beginning to cramp up, it looked like he was favourite to win. They traded the lead in the third before Will's cramp returned and an injury time out was taken; when they came back, Will clearly still in a lot of pain, Dan stormed ahead. Will somehow found another gear to stay in the hunt, and after they had both seen a match point come and go, Will hit a fantastic winner on his second chance to take the game and the match.

Undoubtedly fatigued the next morning, Will never got to grips with James's relentless retrieval and his ability to keep his opponent on the move with a great length and changes in pace. There was a brief spell at the start of the second game when Will came out all guns blazing to take a few points, but James weathered the storm and asserted his dominance once more.

The plate was a closely fought contest, with Matt Bowness winning through despite a sore back to ensure some silverware for the Manchester Y Club, and Tom Dean finishing runner-up.

Results:

1st round: J Toop bt N Roberts 15-2, 15-0; M Skogh bt T Dean 8-15, 15-11, 15-5; M Cavanagh bt E Hatton 15-5, 15-3; J Minta bt S Fraser 15-2, 15-8; D Tristao bt N Patel 15-9, 15-2; T Maconie bt M Bowness 15-5, 15-7; C Brooks bt C Burrows 11-15, 15-2, 15-7; W Ellison bt R Murby 15-4, 15-2
Quarter-finals: Toop bt Skogh 15-1, 15-2; Cavanagh bt Minta 15-10, 15-4; Tristao bt Maconie 15-13, 16-14; Ellison bt Brooks 15-9, 15-5
Semi-finals: Toop bt Cavanagh 15-11, 15-4; Ellison bt Tristao 15-3, 13-15, 16-15
Final: Toop bt Ellison 15-0, 15-6
Plate: Bowness

NATIONAL LADIES' CHAMPIONSHIPS St Paul's School, Barnes, 4th December 2011

With an entry of five pairs in the doubles competition, the day started with a round robin for all players, writes organiser Melanie Whitehead. The top two pairs from this went on to play a traditional final whilst the others played a round robin plate.

The final was played between Claire Knowles and Melanie Whitehead and the Eastbourne pairing of

Kathleen Briedenhann and Tessa Mills. This was Claire and Melanie's tenth final together and the first in which they were pushed to three games, losing the first game 11-15. However, experience prevailed and they won the next two games to win their 10th title. In the plate competition Chessie Ruffell and Hannah Hawkesley from Rugby School were the eventual winners.

The singles competition had an entry of nine and followed a more traditional knockout format with a round robin plate. Both Claire Knowles and Kathleen Briedenhann only dropped 1 point each on their respective routes to the final. The final was a closely fought match despite the eventual score of 15-2, 15-0, giving Claire her 11th singles title, equalling Paula Smith's record. The plate ended up as an all Rugby School affair with Kerry Smith proving to be the victor.

Many thanks to St Paul's for the use of their facilities.

Singles

Preliminary round: Melanie Whitehead bt Hannah Hawkesley 15-6

1st round: Claire Knowles bt Kerry Smith 15-0; Tessa Mills bt Chessie Ruffell 15-10; Whitehead bt Helen Toop 15-4; Kathleen Briedenhann bt Liz Tilley 15-0

Semi-finals: Knowles bt Mills 15-1, 15-0; Briedenhann bt Whitehead 15-0, 15-1

Final: Claire Knowles bt Kathleen Briedenhann 15-2, 15-0

Plate: Kerry Smith

Doubles

Round-robin: Knowles & Whitehead bt Briedenhann & Mills 15-7, bt Thompsell & Toop 15-0, bt Ruffell & Hawkesley 15-0, bt Smith & Tilley 15-2; Briedenhann & Mills bt Thompsell & Toop 15-2, bt Ruffell & Hawkesley 15-2, bt Smith & Tilley 15-2; Thompsell & Toop lost to Ruffell & Hawkesley 3-15, lost to Smith & Tilley 2-15;

Ruffell & Hawkesley lost to Smith & Tilley 8-15

Final: Knowles & Whitehead bt Briedenhann & Mills 11-15, 15-7, 15-4

Plate: Ruffell & Hawkesley

RFA CLUB PRESIDENT'S CUP

Merchant Taylors' School, Northwood, 11th December 2011

Yet again the President's Cup lived up to its reputation as the most gruelling competition in the Fives calendar. Despite the fact that the competition started on time at 9.45am – no mean feat in itself – the last shot of the final match was only struck some time after 8.30pm!

Right from the start, it was clear that this would be a particularly long day. No less than five of the eight first-round matches went the distance to three games, and by 1pm only four matches had been completed; even by 5pm, with barely a pause in the action on any one of the four courts, no finalist had been confirmed in any of the four competitions!

Nevertheless, as the day went on, the tournament began to take shape. In the main competition, it was perhaps only to be expected that the only pair not to be involved in a three-game match – the ex-Christ's Hospital pair of Luke Thomson and Guy Matthews – won their way through to the final, beating Max Frost and Richard Dyke in the second round, before disposing of Ed Hawke and Henry Jefferies in the semi-final.

In the final, they would face John Minta – going for an unprecedented third consecutive win – and Mark Kiteley, who was playing in his first President's Cup final. They had had a tough opening match against Richard Price and 'Harry Potter' star Freddie Sjoström (taking the chance to re-acquaint himself with the game on a trip back to the UK from his home in Los Angeles), but then secured more comfortable wins over, first, Bruce Hanton & Bhaswar Baral, and then Gareth Price and Andea Gemade.

Almost inevitably, the final went to three games, and it was a hard-fought battle, not without its contentious moments. For large parts, it was effectively a singles battle between Luke and John, with their partners taking cover in the back corners and desperately trying to avoid a mistake when the ball found its way to them. The first game went to John and Mark, but Luke and Guy never lost confidence: they stuck to their game and hit back to take the next two games, securing the President's Cup. It crowned a fine year for Luke, in which he also won the Schools' and Universities' championships, as well as representing the largest achievement in Guy's Fives-playing career.

Play in the three plate competitions was no less intense, and eventually saw wins for Hamish Buchanan & Alex Satterfield (a newcomer to the game) in the Love Mug, Max Frost & Richard Dyke in the T-Pot, and Ed Hawke and Henry Jefferies in the Mate's Plate.

Results:

1st round: G.Price & Andea bt Walter & Compton 7-15, 15-7, 16-14; Hale & Gravatt bt Pringle & Lamb 15-13, 10-15, 15-11; Hanton & Baral bt Burrows & Arnott 15-10, 15-6; Minta & Kiteley bt Sjoström & R.Price 15-7, 13-15, 15-7; E.Hawke & Jefferies bt Buchanan & Satterfield 15-10, 6-15, 15-11; Parker & Warner bt Lee & Bridge 15-5, 15-10; Frost & Dyke bt Tristao & Butler 13-15, 15-3, 16-15; Thomson & Matthews bt Kirby & Kirk 15-8, 15-6

2nd round: G.Price & Gemade bt Hale & Gravatt 15-7, 13-15, 15-13; Minta & Kiteley bt Hanton & Baral 15-4, 16-14; Hawke & Jefferies bt Parker & Warner 15-7, 15-13; Thomson & Matthews bt Frost & Dyke 15-8, 15-13

Semi-finals: Minta & Kiteley bt G.Price & Andea 15-13, 15-1; Thomson & Matthews bt Hawke & Jefferies 15-11, 15-11

Final: Thomson & Matthews bt Minta & Kiteley 11-15, 15-11, 15-11

Love Mug: 1st round - Burrows & Arnott bt Lee & Bridge 15-7, 15-6; Buchanan & Satterfield bt Kirby & Kirk 15-5, 15-2; R.Price & Sjoström bt Walter & Compton 15-8, 15-6; Tristao & Butler bt Pringle & Lamb 15-13, 16-14

Semi-finals: Buchanan & Satterfield bt Burrows & Arnott 15-5, 15-9; Tristao & Butler
bt R.Price & Sjoström 16-14, 6-15, 15-10

Final: Buchanan & Satterfield bt Tristao & Butler 15-8, 15-9

T-Pot: 1st round: Pringle & Lamb bt Hale & J.Hawke 15-6, 15-7; Hanton & Baral bt Walter & Compton
15-12, 15-4; Parker & Warner bt Kirby & Kirk 15-10, 3-15, 15-11; Frost & Dyke bt
Lee & Bridge 15-6, 15-8

Semi-finals: Pringle & Lamb bt Hanton & Baral 15-4, 15-6; Frost & Dyke bt Parker & Warner 15-9, 11-
15, 15-9

Final: Frost & Dyke bt Pringle & Lamb 15-9, 15-9

Mates' Plate: Semi-finals - G.Price & Andea bt Burrows & Arnott 15-9, 15-5; Hawke & Jefferies bt
R.Price & Sjoström 15-6, 15-2

Final: Hawke & Jefferies bt G.Price & Andea 8-15, 15-12, 15-12

WEST OF ENGLAND SCHOOLS' CHAMPIONSHIPS

Sherborne, Dorset, 7/8th January 2012

Boys from St Paul's School dominated the action at this weekend's West of England Schools' Championships, picking up three of the four main prizes on offer. In the Colts, Yul Kahn-Pascual won the singles title before teaming up with Oliver Arnold to take the doubles as well – in both cases with wins over boys from Blundell's. In the Senior section, too, the doubles title went to St Paul's – courtesy of Francis Thomas and Theo Parker in an all-Pauline final. However, Bradfield's David Butler prevented a clean sweep for the boys from Barnes, beating Theo Parker in the singles final.

St Paul's also claimed the Senior Doubles plate, but no one school dominated the other three plates, with boys from Winchester, Eastbourne and Blundell's winning the silverware.

Senior Singles

1st round: Law (St Paul's) bt Cumberlege (Blundell's) 15-0; Frosell (Marlborough) bt Hale (Winchester) 15-2; Wylde (Winchester) bt Uddin (Alleyn's) 15-0; Pinder (Winchester) bt Prince (St Paul's) 15-13; Oddy (Blundell's) bt Lamb (Marlborough)

15-3; Ganendra (Winchester) bt McPherson (Blundell's) 15-12; Edmonds (St Paul's) bt Tunstall (Alleyn's) 15-8; Brubert (Alleyn's) bt Smart (Sherborne) 15-3; Johnston (St Paul's) bt Rees (Bradfield) 15-1; Woolard (Winchester) bt Davies (Marlborough) 15-2

2nd round: Butler (Bradfield) bt Law 15-3; Browett (Alleyn's) bt Frosell 15-5; Wylde bt Pinder 15-4; Russell (St Paul's) bt Oddy 15-1; Parker (St Paul's) bt Ganendra 15-3;

Shaw (St Paul's) bt Edmonds 15-2; Brubert bt Johnston 15-8; Thomas (St Paul's) bt Woolard 15-2

Quarter-finals: Butler bt Browett 11-2, 11-2; Russell bt Wylde 11-7, 11-5; Parker bt Shaw 11-7, 11-5; Thomas bt Brubert 11-5, 11-1

Semi-finals: Butler bt Russell 11-3, 11-9; Parker bt Thomas 12-11, 11-6

Final: Butler bt Parker 11-3, 12-11

Plate: Hale (Winchester)

Senior Doubles

1st round: Winchester II bt Alleyn's II 11-2, 11-2; St Paul's III bt Bradfield 11-4, 11-5; Winchester III bt St Paul's IV 12-11, 3-11, 11-8

Quarter-finals: St Paul's I bt Winchester II 11-5, 11-4; Alleyn's I bt Blundell's 11-8, 12-10; Winchester I bt St Paul's III 11-4, 11-7; St Paul's II bt Winchester III 11-0, 11-3;

Semi-finals: St Paul's I bt Alleyn's I 11-4, 11-1; St Paul's II bt Winchester I 11-4, 4-11, 11-6
Final: St Paul's I (Francis Thomas and Theo Parker) bt St Paul's II (Sam Russell and Matt Shaw) 11-5, 10-12, 11-7
Plate: St Paul's IV (Timothy Edmonds and Sri Ram Prince)

Colts Singles

1st round: Blunden (Derby Moor) bt Watkinson (Winchester) 15-7; Combe (Blundell's) bt J Singh (Derby Moor) 15-4; Wordley (Winchester) bt B Singh (Derby Moor) 15-3; Richrads (Eastbourne) bt Summerfield (Bedford Modern) 15-0; Dawber (Alleyn's) bt Mossahee 15-11; Grandfield (Blundell's) bt Timney (Derby Moor) 15-3
2nd round: Wyatt-Haines (Blundell's) bt Tetferin (Eastbourne) 15-3; Blunden bt Haig (Bedford Modern) 15-2; Arnold (St Paul's) bt Charteris (Blundell's) 15-3; Combe bt Hemmings (Bradfield) w/o; Ashraf (St Paul's) bt Mills (Blundell's) 15-1; Chilcot (Blundell's) bt Tomlinson (Bradfield) w/o; Smith (Winchester) bt Shields (Bedford Modern) 15-3; Christie (Derby Moor) bt Terrafranca (Winchester) 15-4; Chua (Winchester) bt Halligan (Derby Moor) 15-3; Baxter (Derby Moor) bt Norman (Bradfield) w/o; Wordley bt Richards 15-12; Whitehorn (Derby Moor) bt Scott (Blundell's) 16-14; Whait (Loretto) bt Dawber 15-0; Webber (Blundell's) bt Prabhu (St Paul's) 15-2; Grandfield bt Hanton (Alleyn's) 15-1; Kahn-Pascual (St Paul's) bt Hodgkinson (Bradfield) w/o
3rd round: Wyatt-Haines bt Blunden 15-3; Arnold bt Combe 15-2; Ashraf bt Chilcot 15-4; Christie bt Smith 15-3; Chua bt Baxter 15-3; Whitehorn bt Wordley 15-1; Whait bt Webber 15-13; Kahn-Pascual bt Grandfield 15-1
Quarter-finals: Wyatt-Haines bt Arnold 11-0, 11-1; Christie bt Ashraf 11-6, 8-11, 11-3; Whitehorn bt Chua 8-11, 8-4 w/o; Kahn-Pascual bt Whait 11-1, 11-1
Semi-finals: Wyatt-Haines bt Christie 11-3, 11-4; Kahn-Pascual bt Whitehorn 11-2, 11-1
Final: Kahn-Pascual bt Wyatt-Haines 2-11, 11-5, 11-0
Plate: Philip Teterin (Eastbourne)

Colts Doubles

1st round: Winchester II bt Alleyn's 15-8
2nd round: Blundell's I bt Derby Moor IV 15-2; Winchester II bt Blundell's III 15-8; Derby Moor III bt Bradfield I w/o; Winchester I bt Blundell's IV w/o; St Paul's I bt Eastbourne 15-5; Derby Moor II bt Bradfield II w/o; St Paul's II bt Blundell's II 16-14; Derby Moor I bt Bedford Modern 15-0
Quarter-finals: Blundell's I bt Winchester II 11-6, 11-2; Winchester I bt Derby Moor III 11-4, 11-3; St Paul's I bt Derby Moor 11-3, 11-4; St Paul's II bt Derby Moor I 7-11; 12-11, 12-11
Semi-finals: Blundell's I bt Winchester I 11-1, 11-0; St Paul's I bt St Paul's II 11-3, 7-11, 11-0
Final: St Paul's I (Yul Kahn-Pascual and Oliver Arnold) bt Blundell's (Sam Wyatt-Haines and Jack Grandfield) 11-7, 7-11, 11-2
Plate: Blundell's (Harvey Scott and Jack Weller)

NORTH WEST OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Manchester, 21st/22nd January 2012

It was a clean sweep for Old Boys of St Paul's School in the North West Open this weekend. Dan Tristao won the singles title – his second title of the season – beating Will Ellison in three games, before Tom Dean and Charlie Brooks went on claim the doubles title.

Singles

1st round: M Roberts bt B Baral 11-5, 11-7

2nd round: W Ellison bt D Warner 11-0, 11-0; M Skogh bt A Lee 11-3, 11-2; T Dean bt J Gravatt 11-1, 11-0;

L Thomson bt M Roberts 11-3, 11-2; J Minta bt G Price 11-1, 11-2; C Brooks bt D Fox 11-1, 11-3; M Bowness bt N Roberts 11-9, 11-3; D Tristao bt J Beswick 11-6, 11-7

Quarter-finals: Ellison bt Skogh 11-2, 11-4; Thomson bt Dean 11-8, 11-2; Minta bt Brooks 11-8, 11-2; Tristao bt Bowness 12-10, 11-5

Semi-finals: Ellison bt Thomson 11-1, 11-0; Tristao bt Minta 11-2, 11-8

Final: Tristao bt Ellison 8-11, 11-5, 11-5

Plate: Fox

Doubles

1st round: Ingham & Roberts bt Christie & Christie 11-5, 7-11, 12-11; Kirby & Lee bt Warner & Baral 11-4, 7-11, 11-5

Quarter-finals: Ellison & Thomson bt Ingham & Roberts 11-5, 11-4; Brooks & Dean bt Beswick & Roberts 9-11, 11-4, 11-1; Minta & Skogh bt Frost & Gravatt 11-1, 11-3; Tristao & Price bt Kirby & Lee 11-7, 12-11

Semi-finals: Brooks & Dean bt Ellison & Thomson 11-2, 9-11, 11-6; Minta & Skogh bt Tristao & Price 12-10, 1-11, 11-6

Final: Brooks & Dean bt Minta & Skogh 8-11, 12-11, 11-6

Plate: Beswick & Roberts

FRED BESWICK

Salford, 27th January 2012

The funeral of Fred Beswick was held yesterday at Agecroft Crematorium, followed by a reception at the Castlefield. Many Fives players past and present were on hand mark his passing and pay tribute to a great man, who was such a loyal and devoted friend and supporter of our beloved game. Here we have great pleasure in publishing a tribute to Fred, written by fellow Manchester YMCA club member Wayne Enstone.

FRED BESWICK (1930-2012)

Fred Beswick proudly became President of the RFA from 1987 to 1989, becoming the first Manchester YMCA club member to be awarded this position.

Fred Beswick was a member of Manchester YMCA for over 65 years, having joined as a junior member at the age of 14, playing many sports to a high level and a member of many YMCA club teams; a very competent all round sportsperson. Fred fortunately lived in the Castlefield area of Manchester and worked in his early life less than a mile from the old YMCA site on Peter Street. He was on the Board at the Y in the 80s when the decision was made to move the Y to the new site in Castlefield, less than 150 meters from where he had lived - he had to quote him, "come home". Fred in his youth had been a volunteer who had given many weeks and weekends to help build the National YMCA Lakeside facility on Lake Windermere. His contributions to both Manchester YMCA and the National YMCA movement were

recognised recently with the highest honour being awarded, an Honorary Membership of Manchester YMCA and the National YMCA's Order of the Red Triangle, one of only a few people to have gained this honour.

His interest in Rugby Fives began in his early thirties, in the 1960s, and as he admits he regretted not having taken up the game earlier. He became club champion not long after starting to play and reached the North of England singles semi-final in 1973. With his regular doubles partner, Danny McGregor, he won the Club Doubles championship five times. Fred gave a very good account of himself in many open championships, his drop shot and follow up volley were feared by the best players and his short serve, we all struggled to return, which prompted his leg pulling saying during doubles "and the next". One of his favourite titles was, Master Of The White Ball (M.O.T.W.B). Bringing fun into the game was one of Fred's great assets and as a coach his ability to motivate all players to enjoy playing the game he loved. His positive energy infected all he coached. As everyone who came into contact with Fred soon found out there was a game called 'fives', that included conversations in pubs, cafes and shops covering the whole of the UK. His enthusiasm was infectious, as he would say, "no one is safe", gloves and a ball would be produced from somewhere and before the person knew it they were on court. One would always know which court Fred was on because of the laughter, and another favourite expression of his booming from the court, "great shot". Fred's wife Shirley recounts that in his later years on court, Fred was credited with inventing a variation on fives, witnessed by onlookers to his games of doubles known as 'yours!'.

From a YMCA fives development point of view Fred, at the suggestion of David Gardner (St Dunstan's O.B.) helped to organise with Ernie Livesey (ex Club President) the first Lancashire Open Championship (now the North West) in 1968, which really put the YMCA as a fives club on the map. In addition, and as an incentive to play in the tournament, competitors were treated to Shirley's 'girls' famous hotpots. Whilst the club had fixtures against other clubs this was the start of a new group of Fred's 'boys' going to tournaments around the country. This was also a new era from a family point of view as Shirley with daughter Jane, who also wore the gloves as a youngster and son John (5 times National Doubles Champion) found themselves either travelling the country or waving Fred off for another weekend match or tournament, or having strange men in the house for the home fixtures. A big thanks must go to Shirley for sharing Fred with us. Other family members who were also introduced to fives were brothers Frank, who in turn introduced his work colleagues and brother Bill, who played in several open tournaments and instigated the coaching of students by Fred at Manchester University. Tony Wynn, (4 times British Universities Singles Champion) being one of the many students that benefited. Shirley's nephews, Gary, Robert, David and Brian became fives players, all entering our schools tournament which Fred helped to organise.

In the 70's Fred helped establish that fives existed in Manchester with the North West Sports Council. This contact led to Greater Manchester Council in the late 70's funding our Open Schools Tournament with over 70 competitors coming from schools all over the country. David Barnes from Bradfield School will remember it well, especial the sleepless nights in the YMCA hostel - happy days!. Fred at that time also became a Junior YMCA Leader helping with the Saturday morning club and developed the junior fives club throughout the 70's, 80's and into the 90's. Another role he undertook was his Father Christmas appearances at the Junior YMCA Christmas party.

In Fred's early days he worked close to the Manchester Opera House Theatre and was introduced and attended many operas. This interest he also passed on to many fives players. It led to many good 'singing' sessions nationwide, often finishing with the toreador song from Carmen, 'Stand up and fight until you hear the bell'. Fred was a fine 'theatrical' performer too, as I am sure all would agree who attended the YMCA annual Fives Club dinner dances, which Fred initiated and organised for many years. Together with his fives partner Danny McGregor they produced an array of hilarious performances that left not a dry eye in the room. Fred's social talent was spotted and used on the Sports Council's National Coaching Course at Exeter University. Whilst coaching fives he became the course Social Director for over 20

years. Fred was a great observer of life and had many wonderful stories and a thousand and one jokes. Any visiting team would have the warmest of greetings from Fred when they arrived at the YMCA and then be treated to a beer or two and refreshments in Cox's bar round the corner from the YMCA, whilst Fred held 'court'.

Fred has touched innumerable lives and his contribution to fives at the YMCA will remain unrivalled. We who try to emulate him are "all his boys" and are so proud to be so. He will never be replaced or forgotten by all who knew him. Fred's enthusiasm will live on for ever in us all as he is a true legend of all that is best of our wonderful game of fives.

UNDER 25s CHAMPIONSHIPS

Oundle School, 4/5th February 2012

Singles

1st round: J Gravatt bt G Woodfield 15-3, 15-0; M Frost bt J Pascoe 15-2, 15-3; A Goodwin bt E Thornton 15-1, 15-3; R Edwardson bt E Ward 15-9, 15-3; F Burgess bt J Spencer 12-15, 15-13, 15-12
2nd round: D Tristao bt Gravatt 15-7, 15-10; J Aquilina bt S Coffey 14-16, 15-12, 15-13; E Kay bt Frost 15-0, 15-0; C Burrows bt Goodwin 15-6, 15-5; L Thomson bt Edwardson 15-5, 15-6; P Hanton bt D Butler 15-2, 15-12; A George bt J Tilston 15-8, 15-9; W Ellison bt Burgess 15-0, 15-0

Quarter-finals: Tristao bt Aquilina 15-10, 15-4; Kay bt Burrows 15-6, 15-4; Thomson bt Hanton 15-8, 15-9; Ellison bt George 15-0, 15-7

Semi-finals: Tristao bt Kay 10-15, 15-8, 15-3; Ellison bt Thomson 15-4, 15-5

Final: Tristao bt Ellison 15-12, 15-13

Plate: Butler

Doubles

1st round: Tilston & Aquilina bt Woodfield & Thornton 15-5, 15-1

Quarter-finals: Ellison & Mohammed bt Edwardson & Spencer 15-2, 15-2; Hanton & George bt Frost & Goodwin 14-16, 16-15, 15-7; Thomson & Gravatt bt Butler & Russell 15-12, 15-7; Tristao & Kay bt Tilston & Aquilina 15-1, 15-11

Semi-finals: Ellison & Mohammed bt Hanton & George 15-7, 15-4; Tristao & Kay bt Thomson & Gravatt 15-10, 15-4

Final: Tristao & Kay bt Ellison & Mohammed 15-10, 15-4

Plate: Frost & Goodwin

SOUTH-EAST SCHOOLS' CHAMPIONSHIPS

Tonbridge, Kent, 5th February 2012

The inaugural South-East Schools' Championships took place at Tonbridge School. On a very cold day, 29 players from Christ's Hospital, Eastbourne, Tonbridge and Whitgift played both a singles and doubles tournament on a variety of Rugby and Winchester courts. A friendly but competitive spirit marked the day and there were some great games. In the singles pools in the morning none was closer than the Colts pool B where no fewer than four out of the six games went to 11-10.

The senior singles final was between Andea Gemade of CH and Chayton Kent of Eastbourne. Chayton took the first game 12-11 but gradually Andea's shots dominated and he won 11-12, 11-4, 11-8 to become

the first winner of the Hamilton trophy. In the Colts singles no one could challenge Tom Walters of Whitgift and he convincingly beat Edward Richards of Eastbourne 11-6, 11-4 to become the first winner of the Wheeler trophy.

The doubles started mid-afternoon and there were again some excellent matches. In the senior doubles Tonbridge 1 just edged out Eastbourne 1 in a close semi-final before being outhit by CH 1 in the final. Andea Gemade and Rory Keddie won the Neil Arnott trophy beating Nick Whitney and Ben Jones 11-8, 11-1. The Colts ended up an all Eastbourne affair and Philipp Teterin and Edward Richards beat Ollie Thompson and Marcus Coffey 11-3, 11-3 to win the Torkington trophy.

It was excellent to welcome two of the donators of the trophies, Tony Hamilton and Neil Arnott, to present them at the end of a long, cold day. Greetings were sent by the other two, Ian Torkington and Nigel Wheeler. This had been a very successful day and all eligible were looking forward to the following year.

Senior Singles

Pool A: Gemade (Christ's Hospital) v Jones (Tonbridge) 15-8; Crofts (Eastbourne) v Jones 15-9, Gemade v Crofts 15 -5

Pool B: Eastwood (CH) v Dohyan (Whitgift) 11-8, Eastwood v Whitney (T) 4-11, Zaidi (E) v Dohyan 11-0, Eastwood v Zaidi 5-11, Whitney v Dohyan 11-2, Zaidi v Whitney 9-11

Pool C: Callaghan (CH) v Rider (T) 11-7, Rider v Shui (W) 6-11, Callaghan v Batson (E) 6-11, Callaghan v Shui 11-4, Batson v Rider 11-1, Batson v Shui 11-10

Pool D: Keddie (CH) v Davison (T) 15-4, Kent (E) v Davison 15-2, Keddie v Kent 12-15

Knockout section:

Semi-finals: Gemade v Whitney 15-13, Kent v Batson 15-6

Final: Gemade v Kent 11-12, 11-4, 11-8

First Plate: Semi-finals: Crofts v Zaidi 15-11, Keddie v Callaghan 15-5. Final: Crofts v Keddie 15-13

Second Plate: Semi-finals: Jones v Eastwood 15-8, Shui v Davison 15-8. Final: Jones v Shui 15-9

Senior Doubles

First Round: Tonbridge 1 v Christ's Hospital 2 15-10, Eastbourne 1 v Tonbridge 2 15-7

Semi-finals: Christ's Hospital 1 v Eastbourne 2 11-3, 11-0, Tonbridge 1 v Eastbourne 1 11-1, 11-5

Final: Christ's Hospital 1 v Tonbridge 1 11-8, 11-1

Plate: Semi-final: Christ's Hospital 2 v Tonbridge 2 15-9. Final: Eastbourne 2 v Christ's Hospital 2 15-9

Colts Singles

Pool A: Morgan (CH) v Martyn (T) 8-11, Martyn v Walters (W) 2-11, Morgan v Thompson (E) 3-11, Thompson v Walters 0-11, Morgan v Walters 1-11, Thompson v Martyn 8-11

Pool B: George (T) v Worne (W) 10-11, Sessions (CH) v Worne 10-11, Coffey (E) v George 11-3, Sessions v George 11-10, Coffey v Worne 11-2, Sessions v Coffey 11-10

Pool C: Norris (CH) v Richards (E) 3-15, Norris v Hutt (T) 1-15, Richards v Hutt 15-14

Pool D: Higginson (CH) v Henderson (T) 11-9, Higginson v Brandon (W) 4-11, Teterin (E) v Henderson 11-2, Henderson v Brandon 1-11, Higginson v Teterin 2-11, Teterin v Brandon 11-3

Knockout section:

Semi-finals: Walters v Sessions 15-2, Richards v Teterin 15-13

Final: Walters v Richards 11-6, 11-4

First Plate: Semi-finals: Coffey v Martyn 15-6, Brandon v Hutt 16-15. Final: Coffey v Brandon 15-5

Second Plate: Semi-finals: Morgan v Worne 15-6, Higginson v Norris 15-6. Final: Morgan v Higginson 15-12

Colts Doubles

First Round: Tonbridge 2 v Christ's Hospital 1 15-12, Eastbourne 2 v Whitgift 15-2, Christ's Hospital 2 v Tonbridge 1 15-7

Semi-Finals: Eastbourne 1 v Tonbridge 2 11-6, 11-2, Eastbourne 2 v Christ's Hospital 2 11-8, 11-4

Final: Eastbourne 1 v Eastbourne 2 11-3, 11-3

Plate: Semi-Final: Tonbridge 1 v Whitgift 1 15-3. Final: Christ's Hospital 1 v Tonbridge 1 15-12

OFFICIAL RFA RANKINGS

London, 16th February 2012

Ahead of the forthcoming North of England Championships, the RFA today published the latest singles and doubles rankings, prepared on its behalf by Dave Hebden.

In the singles list, there are some major moves in the higher reaches: Dan Tristao takes over from Will Ellison at no. 2 spot following his wins in Manchester and in the U25s; NW semi-finalist Luke Thomson moves up to no. 7, while NW quarter-finalists Charlie Brooks (10), Tom Dean (11), Marco Skogh (12), and Matt Bowness (13) all make moves up the table. Lower down, U25 quarter-finalists George (20) and Aquilina (36), and U25 Plate finalists Butler (20) and Goodwin (51) also improve their positions.

Meanwhile, there's less change in the doubles rankings, with no change in the top 8. However, Charlie Brooks (9) and Tom Dean (10) move into the top 10 following their win in Manchester, and Ed Kay (18) moves into the top 20 following his win with Dan Tristao in the U25 Doubles.

NATIONAL SINGLES RANKINGS

Current positions – after North West and U25s Championships, February 2012

Previous positions – after National Singles Championship, December 2011

Current	Previous	Name	Points
1	1	J Toop	90.1
2	3	D Tristao	86.7
3	2	W Ellison	83.6
4	4	J Minta	62.6
5	5	M Cavanagh	61.7
6	6	H Buchanan	44.5
7	8	L Thomson	40.9
8	7	D Grant	35.7

9	9	M Bate	32.7
10	11	C Brooks	26.1
11	12	T Dean	26.0
12	16	M Skogh	25.1
13	14	M Bowness	25.0
14	12	C Burrows	24.7
	15	E Kay	24.7
16	10	T Maconie	24.5
17	18	E Hatton	18.9
	16	J Major	18.9
19	20	H Mohammed	17.2
20	33	D Butler	14.3
	23	A George	14.3

Current positions – after North West and U25s Championships, February 2012
Previous positions – after BUCS Championships, November 2011

Current	Previous	Name	Points
1	1	W Ellison	100.0
2	2	H Buchanan	94.0
3	3	M Bate	80.6
4	4	H Mohammed	76.1
5	5	J Minta	67.9
6	6	D Tristao	67.6
7	7	D Grant	57.8
8	8	A Pringle	57.2
9	13	C Brooks	56.8
10	15	T Dean	54.7
11	9	A Lee	52.8
12	10	R Perry	50.2
13	11	J Toop	48.7
14	12	C Burrows	48.5
15	14	G Price	46.2
16	18	M Skogh	42.4
17	16	E Hatton	37.9
18	26	E Kay	36.8
19	17	J Beswick	35.9
20	19	N Roberts	34.7
21	20	J Gravatt	31.1
	23	L Thomson	31.1
23	21	W Enstone	30.3
24	24	P Hanton	30.0
25	25	A Griffiths	27.7

26	27	P Manning	26.8
	27	T Widdop	26.8
28	22	B Taberner	26.7
29	29	T Chase	26.5
30	30	A Beverly	24.9
31	31	M Frost	24.8
32	32	S Hodgson	23.1
33	33	P Bishop	21.7
34	36	A Goodwin	21.6
35	34	R Christie	21.2
36	35	T Maconie	20.1
37	37	C Legget	19.4
38	39	H Akerman	19.2
	39	J Pearce-Smith	19.2
40	41	S Kirby	18.7
41	42	J Major	18.3
42	38	E Fuller	17.5
43	43	G McIntyre	16.4
44	51	A George	15.9
45	45	J Hughes	15.8
46	44	I Ackland	15.3
47	47	J Marshall	14.8
	46	E Ronan	14.8
49	49	H Aveston	13.6
	48	J Bristow	13.6
	49	S King	13.6
51	53	J Savery	12.9
53	54	A Rew	12.3
	54	N Wolstenholme	12.3
55	57	M Baxter	12.2
56	51	J Hawke	11.6
	56	K Ward	11.6
	58	S Watson	11.6
59	61	T Kiggel	10.8
60	59	S Korris	10.1
	59	R Sandie	10.1
62	63	N Austin	10.0
	63	C Butler	10.0
	63	S Coffey	10.0
	63	B Kirk	10.0
	63	R Lebon	10.0
	63	E Malone	10.0
	63	T Parker	10.0
	63	F Thomas	10.0

70	62	J Furniss	9.6
71	71	K Henry	9.2
	71	M Hine	9.2
73	76	P Cohen	8.2
	73	E Cumberlege	8.2
	73	J Fabes	8.2
	73	M Gibbor	8.2
77	77	N Edmonds	7.1
	77	J Goodwin	7.1
	77	J Malde	7.1
80	81	T Lewis	5.8
	81	S Maskell	5.8
	81	M Moger	5.8
	81	D Murray	5.8
	80	R Sutcliffe	5.8
85	85	S Adcock	4.1
	85	M Bowness	4.1
	85	E Brooke	4.1
	85	R Bury	4.1
	85	D Park	4.1
90	90	J Buckhalter	2.9
	90	C Hay	2.9
	90	R Price	2.9
	90	A Tong	2.9

VARSIITY MATCH

St Paul's School, 18th February 2012

The strongest Cambridge side for some years defeated Oxford convincingly in the 2012 Varsity Match at St. Paul's, sponsored by Champagne Pol Roger. Both teams featured a majority of Old Paulines, demonstrating the excellence of the school's fives in recent years, and at times it was almost like a home match for both sides. This, if anything, only served to increase the rivalry, although the match was played, as ever, in the best traditions of sportsmanship.

Oxford's Hine led his team by example in the singles, playing superbly to defeat Beverly, the 2007 Cambridge captain. Cambridge came back strongly, however, by taking the remaining three singles matches to lead at lunch by 13 points.

In the doubles, Cambridge's well-balanced first and second pairs looked impressive and won all their matches with something to spare, although Oxford's top pair offered stout resistance throughout the afternoon. Cambridge 3, with both players new to the Varsity Match, also played well to record wins in all their games, while Oxford 3 prevented a clean sweep in the doubles by narrowly defeating Cambridge 4 in two hard-fought games.

In the reserves match, Cambridge Sparrows, fielding four more Old Paulines, just had the better of a wider-ranging ensemble of Oxford Beavers, with the ever-faithful Wilman brothers in attendance. This was a close encounter, the final outcome determined by the fine play of Rowland and Sloper, the Sparrows' first pair.

For those who may not have heard about the Cambridge courts' situation, the news at last is promising. Subject to a large amount of money being raised – the appeal is to be launched shortly – six courts (three Rugby and three Eton) are to be built at the new Cambridge Sports Centre, due to open in October 2013. All Fives players are urged to support this appeal, which if successful will bring to an end almost 20 years of struggle for Rugby and Eton Fives at Cambridge University and ensure the future of Varsity Matches.

Oxford v Cambridge

Singles (Oxford names first)

ML Hine (St. Paul's & St. John's) (Capt.) bt A Beverly (St. Paul's & Girton) 15-8; GWJ Barnes (St. Paul's & LMH) (Hon. Sec.) lost to EI Kay (St. Paul's & Emmanuel) 7-15; HKE Jefferies (St. Paul's & Oriol) lost to TJG Chase (St. Paul's & Churchill) (Hon. Sec.) 13-15; CLY Waller (Clifton & New) lost to JB Brubert (Alleyn's & Queens') 5-15

Doubles

Hine & Waller lost to Kay & Chase 9-15, 8-15; lost to Beverly & Brubert 7-15, 7-15. Barnes & Jefferies lost to Beverly & Brubert 5-15, 4-15; lost to Kay & Chase 4-15, 3-15. JC Baker (St. Paul's & Pembroke) & AD Esin (St. Paul's & Pembroke) lost to JN Lane (Winchester & St. Catharine's) & JK Malde (St. Paul's & Clare) 8-15, 11-15; beat ER Malone (St. Paul's & Churchill) (Capt.) & PRH Judge (Merchant Taylors' & Robinson) 15-13, 16-14.

CDH McKelvie (St. Paul's & Trinity) & JW Roberts (Tonbridge & St. Edmund Hall) lost to Malone & Judge 4-15, 5-15; lost to Lane & Malde 4-15, 8-15

Result: Cambridge University bt Oxford University 290pts-158

Oxford Beavers v Cambridge Sparrows

Singles (Oxford names first)

TM Hoskins (Oundle & LMH) lost to LO Rowland (St. Paul's & Fitzwilliam) 7-15; ES Wilman (Giggleswick & Hertford) bt JS Ader (St. Paul's & Pembroke) 15-2; HR Wilman (Giggleswick & Hertford) lost to WJ Sloper (St. Paul's & Girton) 5-15; DT Webb (Tonbridge & Magdalen) bt BSI Quarry (St. Paul's & Selwyn) 15-7

Doubles

Wilman & Wilman lost to Rowland & Sloper 4-15, 10-15; bt Ader & Quarry 15-10, 15-4. Hoskins & Webb bt Ader & Quarry 11-15, 15-10; lost to Rowland & Sloper 4-15, 3-15

Result: Cambridge Sparrows bt Oxford Beavers by 138 points to 119

NORTH OF ENGLAND CHAMPIONSHIPS

Durham, 25/26th February 2012

Will Ellison gained revenge for his two defeats at the hands of Dan Tristao in the Under 25s Championships by beating his rival to claim both the singles and doubles titles in Durham. After beating Dan 15-6, 15-11 to win the singles title, Will teamed up with North West doubles champion Tom Dean to also claim the doubles title, winning 15-5, 15-8 against Dan and Hamish Buchanan, the defending champions.

Singles

1st round: D Tristao bt Spencer 15-1, 15-5; L Thomson bt J Gravatt 15-4, 15-10;
J Minta bt Murphy 15-1, 15-0; H Buchanan bt A Bowden 15-1, 15-7; P Hanton bt
T Dean 13-15, 15-13, ret; A Lee bt A Hanton 15-0, 15-2

Quarter-finals: Tristao bt Aquilina 15-9, 15-3; Minta bt Thomson 15-5, 15-10; Buchanan bt Hanton 15-12, 15-10; Ellison bt Lee 15-7, 15-5

Semi-finals: Tristao bt Minta 15-13, 15-6; Ellison bt Buchanan 15-1, 15-5

Final: Ellison bt Tristao 15-6, 15-11

Plate: Gravatt

Doubles

Final: Ellison & Dean bt Tristao & Buchanan 15-5, 15-8

INTRODUCTION TO FIVES – Shrewsbury House School

Shrewsbury House School, Surbiton, 1st March 2012

Over 100 schoolchildren have been introduced to Fives at a introductory session run by the Fives Federation at Shrewsbury House School, Surbiton, in South West London.

A chance conversation led to the discovery of two dormant courts at the school, and the RFA and EFA joined forces to run an introductory session on the unique courts. Believed to be old Bat Fives courts, they most resemble three-walled Rugby Fives courts, but with a higher bar. They are in good condition, having been refurbished some 18 months ago, and also act as the school's War Memorial.

During the session – which started with a demonstration match between RFA President Dick Warner and fellow RFA board member Andy Pringle – a constant stream of pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6 played on the courts under the tutelage of Dick and the EFA's Howard Wiseman, and with Andy and former EFA Chairman Richard Barber looking on.

Also among those taking a keen interest were the school's Director of Sport, Billy Davison, who had organised the day, while the school's headmaster and the head of governors also came to watch. All agreed that it was great to see the courts being put to their intended use again, and the Federation is now in conversation as to how to build on the undoubted success of this session, hopefully leading to the incorporation of Fives into the games curriculum at the school.

RFA v BUCS

St Paul's School, Barnes, 4th March 2012

A strong RFA team came through its annual match against a BUCS representative squad to claim a resounding victory. In the six-a-side fixture, the RFA team earned a 10-point lead in the singles, thanks to wins for Hamish Buchanan, Charlie Brooks, Tom Dean and James Marshall, whereas just Luke Thomson and Alex Griffiths scored wins for the students.

Come the doubles matches, though, the RFA team established a clear lead, winning this section of the match by 171 points to 117. Leading the way were North West doubles champions Tom Dean and Charlie Brooks, who won all their games, while John and James lost just one of theirs. Remarkably, though, two student pairs – Alan Beverly & Ed Kay, and Adam George & Luke Thomson – scored wins over reigning national doubles champions Hamish Buchanan and Robin Perry.

In the end, though, the more experienced players won through by 249 points to 185.

Singles

(BUCS names first): L Thomson (Loughborough) bt J Minta 15-11; E Kay (Cambridge) lost to H Buchanan 13-15; A Beverly (Cambridge) lost to C Brooks 9-15; P Hanton (Durham) lost to T Dean 4-15; A George (St. Andrew's) lost to J Marshall 12-15; A Griffiths (Durham) bt R Perry 15-7.

Singles totals: BUCS 68 pts RFA 78 pts

Doubles

Griffiths & Hanton lost to Brooks & Dean 7-15; lost to Marshall & Minta 14-16; lost to Buchanan & Perry 8-15, 9-15.

Beverly & Kay lost to Marshall & Minta 11-15; bt Buchanan & Perry 16-14; lost to Brooks & Dean 8-15, 2-15.

George & Thomson bt Buchanan & Perry 16-14; lost to Brooks & Dean 4-15; drew with Marshall & Minta 15-7, 7-15.

Doubles totals: BUCS 117 pts RFA 171 pts

Result: RFA bt BUCS 249-185 pts

OFFICIAL RFA RANKINGS

London, 1st March 2012

Ahead of the forthcoming National Doubles Championships, the RFA today published the latest singles and doubles rankings, prepared on its behalf by Dave Hebden.

With the changes in the rankings only reflecting the North of England Championships, there are few substantial moves. However, in the singles, James Toop, Dan Tristao and Will Ellison remain in the top three spots, but close up slightly after Will's win over Dan in the final. Meanwhile, Peter Hanton moves up into the top 20 after his win against Tom Dean.

In Doubles, there's no change in the top four places, but Dan Tristao moves up to no. 5 after reaching the

Final at Durham with Hamish Buchanan, while Tom Dean (who won with Will Ellison in Durham) moves up to no. 7, and Angus Hanton is a new entry after winning the Durham Plate with Jay Gravatt. These changes could be critical, as the new rankings will be used to determine the seedings for the National Doubles

NATIONAL SINGLES RANKINGS

Current positions – after North of England Championships, March 2012

Previous positions – after North West and U25s Championships, February 2012

Current	Previous	Name	Points
1	1	J Toop	89.1
2	2	D Tristao	86.1
3	3	W Ellison	83.3
4	5	M Cavanagh	61.1
5	4	J Minta	60.0
6	6	H Buchanan	44.5
7	7	L Thomson	40.7
8	8	D Grant	34.5
9	9	M Bate	32.0
10	10	C Brooks	26.0
11	12	M Skogh	25.0
12	13	M Bowness	24.8
13	14	E Kay	24.6
14	14	C Burrows	24.4
15	16	T Maconie	24.2
16	1	T Dean	23.9
17	23	P Hanton	19.5
18	17	E Hatton	18.6
19	17	J Major	18.5
20	19	H Mohammed	16.5
21	20	D Butler	14.3
22	20	A George	14.2
23	28	A Lee	13.5
24	22	N Roberts	13.2
25	24	C Legget	12.8
26	25	R Murby	12.7
27	26	S Fraser	11.7
28	29	A Rew	10.9
29	27	D Fox	10.8
30	30	K Henry	10.2
	30	G Price	10.2
32	33	E Brooke	8.8
33	36	J Aquilina	8.3
	34	A Pringle	8.3
35	35	I Ackland	7.5
36	41	J Gravatt	7.1
37	38	S Coffey	6.5

38	42	F Thomas	5.7
39	40	S Moger	5.6
40	39	A Griffiths	5.5
41	32	E Fuller	5.3
42	37	T Kiggell	5.2
43	44	S King	4.7
	44	J Tilston	4.7
45	48	N Austin	4.0
	47	J Savery	4.0
47	51	A Goodwin	3.5
48	43	A Beverly	3.1
49	52	T Parker	3.0
50	44	P Cohen	2.7
51	56	C Waller	2.4
52	57	S Wyatt-Haines	2.3
53	49	J Fabes	2.2
	49	J Hughes	2.2
55	58	M Frost	2.0
56	53	J Beswick	1.5
	53	J Bristow	1.5
	53	C Hay	1.5
59	62	S Adcock	1.4
	62	T Chase	1.4
61	59	D Ackland	1.1
	59	S Korris	1.1
62	61	H Aveston	0.9

NATIONAL DOUBLES RANKINGS

Current positions – after North of England Championships, February 2012

Previous positions – after North West and U25s Championships, March 2012

Current	Previous	Name	Points
1	1	W Ellison	98.3
2	2	H Buchanan	92.0
3	3	M Bate	78.7
4	4	H Mohammed	74.5
5	6	D Tristao	69.8
6	5	J Minta	66.6
7	10	T Dean	63.5
8	7	D Grant	56.8
9	8	A Pringle	56.4
10	9	C Brooks	55.9

11	11	A Lee	53.8
12	12	R Perry	48.2
13	14	C Burrows	47.9
14	13	J Toop	47.7
15	15	G Price	46.6
16	16	M Skogh	42.4
17	17	E Hatton	37.4
18	18	E Kay	36.4
19	19	J Beswick	35.2
20	20	N Roberts	34.3
21	21	L Thomson	32.6
22	21	J Gravatt	30.7
23	24	P Hanton	29.9
24	23	W Enstone	29.6
25	25	A Griffiths	27.3
26	26	P Manning	26.5
	26	T Widdop	26.5
28	29	T Chase	26.1
29	31	M Frost	24.7
30	30	A Beverly	24.1
31	28	B Taberner	24.0
32	32	S Hodgson	22.6
33	34	A Goodwin	21.4
34	35	R Christie	21.0
35	33	P Bishop	20.5
36	36	T Maconie	19.3
37	38	H Akerman	18.8
	37	C Legget	18.8
	38	J Pearce-Smith	18.8
40	40	S Kirby	18.5
41	41	J Major	17.9
42	43	G McIntyre	16.0
43	42	E Fuller	15.7
44	45	J Hughes	15.5
45	44	A George	15.4
46	46	I Ackland	14.5
47	47	J Marshall	14.3
48	47	E Ronan	14.0
49	49	H Aveston	13.3
	49	S King	13.3
51	52	J Savery	12.8
52	49	J Bristow	12.6
53	55	M Baxter	12.2
54	53	A Rew	11.9

	53	N Wolstenholme	11.9
56	56	S Watson	11.5
57	56	K Ward	11.1
58	59	T Kiggel	10.7
59	56	J Hawke	10.5
60	62	N Austin	10.0
	62	C Butler	10.0
	62	S Coffey	10.0
	~	A Hanton	10.0
	62	B Kirk	10.0
	62	R Lebon	10.0
	62	E Malone	10.0
	63	T Parker	10.0
	62	F Thomas	10.0
69	70	J Furniss	9.2
70	60	S Korris	9.1
	60	R Sandie	9.1
72	71	K Henry	8.8
	71	M Hine	8.8
74	73	P Cohen	8.0
75	73	E Cumberlege	7.4
	73	J Fabes	7.4
	73	M Gibbor	7.4
78	77	N Edmonds	7.1
	77	J Goodwin	7.1
	77	J Malde	7.1
81	80	T Lewis	5.6
	80	S Maskell	5.6
	80	M Moger	5.6
	80	D Murray	5.6
85	80	R Sutcliffe	5.2
86	85	S Adcock	3.7
	85	M Bowness	3.7
	85	E Brooke	3.7
	85	R Bury	3.7
	85	D Park	3.7
91	90	J Buckhalter	2.6
	90	C Hay	2.6
	90	R Price	2.6
	90	A Tong	2.6

WINCHESTER FIVES NATIONAL DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP

Sedbergh, Cumbria, 11th March 2012

There had been rumours that the floors of the now enclosed courts at Sedbergh were liable to sweat after a few games, and this sadly turned out to be the case. Nonetheless, thanks to a great deal of sawdust-sweeping between (and even during) games, the tournament was played out and the conditions bravely overcome. It was heartening to see the efforts of players and spectators alike, not least those of the Sedbergh School competitors led by master-in-charge Jon Lidiard, to ensure that play remained possible.

The best of the early round matches involved Kelly & Passey from the Wessex Club and Lidiard & Lawry from Sedbergh, eventually won by the Wessex pair. The losers were always going to be favourites to win the plate, and several hours later they achieved this in a really entertaining final against Christie (Richard) and Kirk from Derby Moor. Another fascinating first-round spectacle was the sight of two left-handers, RFA President Warner and his game young partner Goodwin, in partnership against former champions Akerman and Mario Mohammed. Fortunately no-one got injured in the battle for left court domination.

The quarter-finals were interrupted by sweating floors, and the lack of continuity was beginning to affect some players. The top four seeds came through without losing a game in the end, but not without some stout resistance, particularly from Coffey and Pearce-Smith in their second game against Roberts and Tristão.

They say there's no such thing as a free lunch, but Sedbergh swept this cliché aside by giving us a very nice one. Brows were furrowed at this stage because of the uncertainty of the court conditions, but Queen's Hall provided an oasis in which to take counsel and refreshment, and it was decided to soldier on with the tournament, provided sawdust could be found to dry the floors.

It was duly found and deployed before the semi-finals and the start of the plate pools. In the top half semi, holders Ellison and Hal Mohammed comfortably defeated Akerman and 'Dad' Mohammed; while the encounter in the bottom half was a tighter match, won in two hard games by Roberts and Tristão against Fox and Minta. With the balls darkening rapidly and the floors uncertain, the standard of fives was incredibly high at this stage, with magnificent volleying and great accuracy of placement.

The final maintained this extremely high standard. Roberts and Tristão, both Rugby Fives trained but with games ideally suited to the Winchester variety, went down quite heavily in the first game but rallied magnificently in the second, giving themselves every chance of drawing level. But it was not to be: Ellison and Mohammed took a final grip on the game and ran out the winners 15-11, thus clinching their first win at Sedbergh and the 'Grand Slam' of Winchester Fives, winning successively at all four venues.

An unusual feature of the tournament this year was that no matches went to three games, which, since we did not finish until hard on 7 in the evening, was perhaps just as well! It remains for me to thank Jon Lidiard and Sedbergh School on behalf of all the competitors and spectators for their hospitality, and for their hard work in keeping the courts playable. Next year we go to Malvern, where the buttress looms large!

Scores

1st round: W Lyons & J Sinton bt A Smith & B Wood 15-2, 15-8.

2nd round: W Ellison & H Mohammed bt J Duffield & O Thompson 15-0, 15-1; F Kelly & A Passey bt J Lidiard & B Lawry 15-13, 15-10; H Buchanan & J Marshall bt Ric Christie & B Kirk 15-2, 15-5; H Akerman & M Mohammed bt A Goodwin & R Warner 15-9, 15-5; S Roberts & D Tristão bt C Farmer & L Stone 15-4, 15-2; S Coffey & J Pearce-Smith bt Rob Christie & A Wilson 15-4, 15-1; Lyons & Sinton

bt R Sandie & A Erskine 15-6, 15-3; D Fox & J Minta bt D Neale & A Metcalfe-Gibson 15-5, 15-0.

Quarter-finals: Ellison & H Mohammed bt Kelly & Passey 15-4, 15-2; Akerman & M Mohammed bt Buchanan & Marshall 15-8, 15-7; Roberts & Tristão bt Coffey & Pearce-Smith 15-1, 15-13; Fox & Minta bt Lyons & Sinton 15-3, 15-9.

Semi-finals: Ellison & H Mohammed bt Akerman & M Mohammed 15-5, 15-3; Roberts & Tristão bt Fox & Minta 15-11, 15-10.

Final: Ellison & H Mohammed bt Roberts & Tristão 15-2, 15-11.

Plate: Lidiard & Lawry.

NATIONAL UNDER 13s CHAMPIONSHIPS

St. Paul's School, Barnes, 11th March 2012

With only 25 competitors, it was the smallest field for some years, but the competitive spirit and enthusiasm on show was as always second to none, writes organiser Peter de Winton. Although we missed having the boys from Loretto, Derby Moor and Rossall, and failed to add any new schools to the roster this year in spite of issuing invitations widely, there was a solid entry from the regular attendants, and we were pleased to welcome a couple of boys from Richmond Park Academy for their second year, so there was plenty of variety in the experience, style and physical size of those competing.

In the pool stage of the Singles, Taberham of Merchant Taylors emerged as the top player, losing only three points in three games, and impressing with his strength and timing. Hanton of Alleyn's ran him close, losing four points, all of those ironically to Francis of Blundell's, who went on to win the Plate. The other pool winners all achieved maximum points, and the top second-placed boys only dropped one apiece, so the knockout stage was set for some good tussles, and five schools were represented. Taberham and Hanton both made short work of their quarter- and semi-final opponents, so the final looked intriguing, with Hanton's all-round game pitched against Taberham's physicality.

In the end, Hanton's consistency, composure and variety of shots deprived Taberham of the opportunity to hit winners, and he won decisively 11-3, 11-2. In the Plate, for the next best eight players from the pools, the same five schools were again represented: the matches were close and hard fought, particularly the final where Kirwan of Alleyn's kept his resolve throughout a very long and tense game but ended up falling short, with Francis of Blundell's, who showed great steadiness and fitness, the winner at 15-9.

With fewer competitors and therefore a slightly shorter Singles session, it meant that the boys had enough puff left for the some determined Doubles action. Twelve pairs entered, and most first-round matches went according to the schools' own rankings, such that by the semi-final there were the first ranked pairs from Alleyn's, Merchant Taylors, Blundell's and Pilgrims, who had all won their previous matches only conceding six points between them! So inevitably the semi finals were tight matches with some quite long rallies.

Blundell's, who had won 11-7, and Alleyn's, who had won 11-8, both earned their place in the final, and so a finely balanced match was in prospect. We were not disappointed; Alleyn's started quicker, and managed to stay on top for the first game, winning it 11-7, but Blundell's came back strongly in the second and it then looked anyone's match. It took a big effort and focus by Alleyn's to then go up a gear in the third game and finish the match impressively, Hanton dominating the Blundell's serve and Alleyn's winning 11-0. In the Plate competition, five teams took part, with Blundell's 2 showing superior staying power to vanquish Merchant Taylors 2, 15-3.

My thanks to St. Paul's for allowing us the use of the courts, to the coaches for their enthusiasm and flexibility, and to Frank Akerman for his tireless support in helping to run the show. It is gratifying that, although schools have so many competing sports, they succeed in assembling teams of a good standard,

who invariably enjoy the day. I hope the various coaching and other initiatives in certain schools that have as yet not competed, combined with giving an earlier notice about the tournament, will attract other schools. I look forward to next year with confidence that this seed bed of Fives will be welcoming new schools, whilst retaining the traditional competitors.

Singles

Group stages

Pool 1: 1st Hanton (Alleyn's), 2nd Francis (Blundell's), 3rd Cole (Richmond Park Academy), 4th Calder (Pilgrims), 5th Savage (Merchant Taylors)

Pool 2: 1st Clarke (Blundell's), 2nd Rentoul (Alleyn's), 3rd Chapman (Christ's Hospital), 4th Ragudasan (Merchant Taylors)

Pool 3: 1st Mellor (Christ's Hospital), 2nd Walker (Merchant Taylors), 3rd McLaurin (Blundell's), 4th Fakorede (Richmond Park Academy)

Pool 4: 1st Griffiths (Pilgrims), 2nd Gibson (Blundell's), 3rd Burgess (Christ's Hospital), 4th Shah (Merchant Taylors)

Pool 5: 1st Lockwood (Blundell's), 2nd Kirwan (Alleyn's), 3rd Shaw (Christ's Hospital), 4th Andraous (Merchant Taylors)

Pool 6: 1st Taberham (Merchant Taylors), 2nd Kilnkenberg (Blundell's), 3rd Choi (Pilgrims), 4th Yang (Alleyn's)

Knockout section:

Quarter-finals: Taberham bt Lockwood 11-0; Walker bt Griffiths 15-10; Clarke bt Gibson 15-2; Hanton bt Mellor 15-1

Semi-finals: Taberham bt Walker 11-3, 11-1; Hanton bt Clarke 11-2, 11-3

Final: Hanton bt Taberham 11-3, 11-2

Plate: Francis

Doubles

1st round: Merchant Taylors 1 bt Blundell's 2 11-10; Christ's Hospital 1 bt Blundell's 3 11-9; Blundell's 1 bt Alleyn's 2 11-5; Christ's Hospital 2 bt Richmond Park Academy 11-4

Quarter-finals: Alleyn's 1 bt Merchant Taylors 3 11-1; Merchant Taylors 1 bt Christ's Hospital 1 11-3; Blundell's 1 bt Christ's Hospital 2 11-1; Pilgrims bt Merchant Taylors 2 11-1

Semi-finals: Alleyn's 1 bt Merchant Taylors 1 11-8; Blundell's 1 bt Pilgrims 11-7

Final: Alleyn's 1 bt Blundell's 1 11-7, 7-11, 11-0

Plate: Blundell's 2

COLQUHOUN TROPHY

Sherborne School, Dorset, 18th March 2012

Boys from Blundell's dominated the events at the third running of the Colquhoun Trophy, winning both the Seniors and Colts titles, as well as one of the plates.

Sam Wyatt-Haines dominated the seniors event, beating Matt Oddy (also of Blundell's) in the final, while Harvey Scott took the honours in the Colts section, beating Hugo Fry of Marlborough in a very closely fought final. Blundell's also won the Colts plate – through Sam Combe – but there was some joy for the home squad as Sherborne's Jamie Smart won the Senior plate.

In the Seniors event, it was a clean sweep for Blundell's, with the Devon school providing all four semi-finalists in the knockout stages after they finished in the top two positions in each of the round-robin

pools. In the first semi-final, Wyatt-Haines was a clear winner over Cumberlege, but the second semi was much closer: Oddy edged past his colleague McPherson 15-13. However, come the final, it was Wyatt-Haines all the way, and he deservedly took the title.

In the Colts event, Marlborough's Fry prevented a clean sweep for Blundell's in the semi-finals, although the one Blundell's boy not to make the semis – Combe – did go on to win the Plate. The matches were both closely fought, but led to a final between Fry and Scott, which was equally hard fought. In the end, Scott just sneaked the first game 12-10 before taking the second game more convincingly, and with it the title.

Seniors

Group stages

Pool 1: 1st S Wyatt-Haines (Blundell's), 2nd T McPherson (Blundell's), 3rd D George-Carey (Marlborough), 4th E Dance (Sherborne), 5th A Aliev (King's Bruton)

Pool 2: 1st M Oddy (Blundell's), 2nd N Cumberlege (Blundell's), 3rd A Flattery (Malvern), 4th J Smart (Sherborne), 5th Y Kawamoto (King's Bruton)

Knockout:

Semi-finals: Wyatt-Haines bt Cumberlege 15-2, Oddy bt McPherson 15-13

Final: Wyatt-Haines bt Oddy 11-2, 11-1

Plate: Smart (Sherborne)

Colts

Group stages

Pool 1: 1st H Scott (Blundell's), 2nd B Charles (Blundell's), 3rd N Lawrence (Marlborough), 4th G Tims (Sherborne), 5th M Guy (Malvern)

Pool 2: 1st H Fry (Marlborough), 2nd B Brown (Blundell's), 3rd S Combe (Blundell's), 4th E Best (Malvern), 5th W Pisani (Sherborne)

Knockout phase:

Semi-finals: Scott bt Brown 15-10, Fry bt Charles 15-11

Final: Scott bt Fry 12-10, 11-5

Plate: Combe

NATIONAL VINTAGE CHAMPIONSHIPS

Oundle School, 18th March 2012

In the 2012 Vintage Championships – organised for the first time by Brian Kirk – the singles title was won by Wayne Enstone, while Ian Fuller and Jeremy Schroeter won the doubles.

Singles

Pool 1: 1st W Enstone, 2nd P Atkinson, 3rd B Sandie

Pool 2: 1st T Hamilton, 2nd D Warner, 3rd B Nithsdale

Final: Enstone bt Hamilton 11-3, 11-7

Plate: Sandie

Doubles

1st round: Fuller & Schroeter bt Hawke & McIntyre 15-2, 15-2; Kiteley & Atkinson bt Kirk & Atkinson 15-13, 11-15, 15-11; Hebden & Hamilton bt Nithsdale & Sandie 15-8, 15-7; Enstone & Warner bt Arnott & Wilkinson 15-11, 15-5

Semi-finals: Fuller & Schroeter bt Kiteley & Atkinson 15-5, 15-0; Enstone & Warner bt Hebden & Hamilton 15-7, 15-11

Final: Fuller & Schroeter bt Enstone & Warner 15-2, 15-1

Plate: Nithsdale & Sandie

NATIONAL DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP

Alleyn's School, Dulwich, 31st March/1st April 2012

The 2012 National Doubles Championship was a remarkable event, and one which will send the game's statisticians scurrying to their record books. In a final between the third and fourth seeds, the championship ended up in the hands of Dan Grant and Dan Tristao, the youngest winners for many years.

In a small field of entrants, the emphasis was on quality, not quantity, and no less than 13 of the top 15 in the national doubles rankings took the courts to compete for the title; and, right from the off, the games were tight. In the one preliminary game, Tom Maconie and Chris Burrows just edged past Ady Lee and Ed Kay.

Come the quarter-finals, the theme continued and, although none of the matches went to three games, all were tight. In the end, though, the top three seeds won through and were joined by the fifth seeds, Tom Dean and Charlie Brooks, who had beaten John Minta and Andy Pringle.

That meant that every pair in the semi-finals was a current title-holder, and so it was that the defending national champions (Hamish Buchanan & Robin Perry) played the North West champions (Tom & Charlie), while the West of England champions (Dan Grant & Dan Tristao) played the South West champions (Will Ellison & Marcus Bate).

In the top half of the draw, the players witnessed the end of an era, as Tom & Charlie beat Hamish & Robin. This put an end to the eight-year run of championships for the older pair, and meant that 2012 would be the first final since 2000 not to feature them.

Amazingly, this would also be the first year since 2008 not to feature Will Ellison and Marcus Bate in the final. The runners-up for the last three years were beaten in three games by the two Dans, who overcame Will's determined efforts to make up for his partner, who was clearly suffering from a lack of sleep since the birth of his first child a month ago.

The match the players in the final produced belied their lack of experience, though. In the first game, Tom and Charlie's powerful hitting proved too much for the Dans, but following a change of tactics, the Dans became more aggressive in the second game. Venturing further up the court, they took many of their opponents' hardest shots on the volley, hurrying them into more frequent errors. At the same time, they improved their retrieving and, with their fast hands and sheer speed around the court, started to grind down their older opponents.

The second game went to the Dans, and as Tom and Charlie were pressured into their shots, they couldn't find the nicks that had won them so many points in the first game; and, with the Dans now playing with real flair, speed and understanding, it was they who deservedly took the third game and, with it, the title.

Preliminary round: Burrows & Maconie bt Lee & Kay 16-15, 15-10

Quarter-finals: Buchanan & Perry bt Burrows & Maconie 15-7, 15-10; Brooks & Dean bt Minta & Pringle 15-5, 15-11; Grant & Tristao bt Hatton & Thomson 15-10, 15-13; Bate & Ellison bt Cavanagh & Price 15-3, 15-13

Semi-finals: Brooks & Dean bt Buchanan & Perry 15-10, 15-4; Grant & Tristao bt Bate & Ellison 12-15, 15-9, 15-8

Final: Grant & Tristao bt Brooks & Dean 10-15, 15-5, 15-5

Plate: Minta & Pringle

NATIONAL SCHOOLS' CHAMPIONSHIPS

St Paul's School, Barnes, 30th March/2nd April 2012

This year's tournament enjoyed another large entry, not quite in line with 2011, as twenty schools initially submitted entries in at least one of the three age groups; and it was especially good to welcome a small contingent from Merchiston Castle. Eleven of these schools had representation in one or other of the singles finals, and a new name will have been inscribed on the Under 14 doubles trophy.

In the Open tournament, David Butler (Bradfield) was seen as the player to beat, and as in the West of England, despite the best efforts of several Paulines, nobody quite managed it. His consistency, retrieving and athleticism make him a tough opponent. There were few upsets in the earlier rounds, and in the all-Pauline semi-final Francis Thomas reversed the West of England result against Theo Parker. It was no great surprise that they went on as St Paul's I to win the doubles, in a hard-hitting final against Derby Moor – revenge for the semi-final defeat in straight games of SPS II, and the quarter-final (in three) against SPS III, fresh (?) themselves from a three-game win over the Merchant Taylors' first pair, who understandably went on to win the plate.

The Colts' tournament was remarkable for a very high standard of play achieved by those especially who qualified as group winners on Day 1: four of the six play-off matches went to a deciding game, the biggest upset coming when the inexperienced Obieta-Chichizola (SPS) defeated Winchester's highly-ranked ben Chua. Sam Wyatt-Haines (Blundell's) retained his position as champion, and as in 2011 his greatest challenge came from Yul Kahn-Pascual (St Paul's), this time in a final of extraordinary quality and athleticism.

The Colts' doubles was always likely to be an all St Paul's affair, won by Ben Beltrami and Oliver Arnold, neither of whom had been troubled by morning singles finals (Yul was paired with plate winner Ben Ashraf). Honourable mention to both semi-finalists, Derby Moor, and particularly Sedbergh, whose squad was unfortunate to leave empty-handed after another spirited and enjoyable campaign.

The Under 14 competition had a similar (vast) entry to last year, and the standard of play was probably even higher. The final was an epic, won in three games by Abdul Ahmed (Christ's Hospital) against Sam Mossaheb (Winchester), in his first year of playing the game. Sam fought back after losing the first game, but was in the end unable to defend against a very powerful right hand. Both plate competitions were won by players from Alleyn's, but there were distinguished performances from a large number of promising players in all three competitions. Tiredness from the singles final may have contributed to some of the afternoon results, but after losing their first game Christ's Hospital went on to win the plate. Winchester reached the semi-final but were edged out by Whitgift, who then took the final in a 70-minute monster of a match, 11-9 in the third game against a plucky and skilful pair of Merchistonians.

Many thanks to all involved in organisation and support, especially to a large number of parents who clearly enjoyed the experience and learnt a bit about the game as well! The whole championship was

played in an excellent spirit, with the highest standards of sportsmanship and manners on court and camaraderie off it.

Open Singles

Pool A: 1st D.Butler (Bradfield); 2nd S.Woollard (Winchester); 3rd M.Baxter (Derby Moor); 4th A.Shah (Merchant Taylors')

Pool B: 1st S.Browett (Alleyn's); 2nd A.Gemade (Christ's Hospital); 3rd A.Sinclair (Merchiston Castle)

Pool C: 1st E.Wylde (Winchester); 2nd G.Johnston (St Paul's); 3rd A.Jones (Bedford)

Pool D: 1st S.Russell (St Paul's), 2nd E.Thornton (Oundle); 3rd A.Roden (Rugby)

Pool E: 1st M.Frost (Derby Moor); 2nd R.Lamb (Merchant Taylors'); 3rd A.Barron (St Paul's); 4th C.Davey (Bedford)

Pool F: 1st T.Parker (St Paul's); 2nd D.Barnes (Eastbourne); 3rd J.Rice (Bedford); 4th J.Papadopoulos (Merchant Taylors')

Pool G: 1st R.Law (St Paul's); 2nd R.Patel (Merchant Taylors'); 3rd G.Woodfield (Oundle)

Pool H: 1st M.Shaw (St Paul's); 2nd A.Tunstall (Alleyn's); 3rd N.Finney (Merchant Taylors')

Pool I: 1st Z.Brubert (Alleyn's); 2nd V.Patel (Merchant Taylors'); 3rd H.Sloan (Oundle)

Pool J: 1st O.Quarry (St Paul's); 2nd C.Kent (Eastbourne); 3rd J.Pascoe (Oundle)

Pool K: 1st F.Thomas (St Paul's); 2nd G.Terry (Rugby); 3rd A.Rees (Bradfield); 4th (rtd) Callaghan (Christ's Hospital)

Round 1: Wylde beat Browett 11-2, 11-1; Shaw beat Law 11-12, 11-0, 11-4; Brubert beat Quarry 11-3, 11-1.

Quarter-finals: Butler beat Wylde 11-0, 11-4; Russell beat Frost 12-10, 11-3; Parker beat Shaw 11-2, 11-5; Thomas beat Brubert 11-2, 11-5

Semi-finals: Butler beat Russell 11-6, 11-4; Thomas beat Parker 11-3, 11-7

Final: Butler beat Thomas 11-6, 11-5

First plate: Johnston

Second plate: Sinclair

Open Doubles

Preliminary round: Oundle I beat Merchant Taylors' II 12-11, 11-9; St Dunstan's beat Bedford I 11-6, 11-3; Alleyn's II beat merchant Taylors' III 11-2, 11-1; Oundle II beat Bedford II 12-11, 11-7.

1st round: St Paul's I beat Oundle I 11-1, 11-0; Bradfield beat Christ's Hospital 11-3, 11-5; Winchester beat Rugby 11-4, 11-1; Alleyn's I beat St Dunstan's 11-3, 11-5; Derby Moor beat Alleyn's II 11-2, 11-4; St Paul's III beat Merchant Taylors' I 11-6, 7-11, 11-6; St Paul's IV beat Eastbourne 11-8, 11-3; St Paul's II beat Oundle II 11-0, 11-0

Quarter-finals: St Paul's I beat Bradfield 11-3, 11-4; Alleyn's I beat Winchester II 11-9, 11-6; Derby Moor beat St Paul's III 11-2, 8-11, 11-9; St Paul's II beat St Paul's IV 11-2, 11-7

Semi-finals: St Paul's I beat Alleyn's I 11-8, 11-0; Derby Moor beat St Paul's II 11-8, 11-7

Final: St Paul's I (Thomas/Parker) beat Derby Moor (Frost/Baxter) 11-4, 11-7

Plate: Merchant Taylors' I (R Patel/ V Patel)

Colts Singles

Pool A: 1st S.Wyatt-Haines (Blundell's); 2nd A.Hubbard (Alleyn's); 3rd D.Hutt (Tonbridge); 4th C.Baxter (Derby Moor)

Pool B: 1st O.Arnold (St Paul's); 2nd E.Tebboth (Merchant Taylors'); 3rd L.Brandon (Whitgift);

Pool C: 1st R.Whitehorn (Derby Moor); 2nd J.Duffield (Sedbergh); 3rd J.Smith (Winchester)

Pool D: 1st M.Hunter (Rugby); 2nd H.Searle (Merchant Taylors'); 3rd Norris (Christ's Hospital)

Pool E: 1st O.Thompson (Sedbergh); 2nd V.Patel (Merchant Taylors'); 3rd F.Dalby-Bowler (Alleyn's)

Pool F: 1st M.Blunden (Derby Moor); 2nd P.Prabhu (St Paul's); 3rd T.Robinson (Sedbergh)

Pool G: 1st B.Lawry (Sedbergh); 2nd L.Beddow (Alleyn's); 3rd Sessions (Christ's Hospital)

Pool Hi: 1st Y.Kahn-Pascual (St Paul's); 2nd Morgan (Christ's Hospital); 3rd D.Abbas (Whitgift)

Pool Hii: 1st T.Owen (St Dunstan's); 2nd F de Courcy Ireland (Alleyn's); 3rd B.Taberham (Merchant Taylors')

Pool I: 1st S.Obieta-Chichizola (St Paul's); 2nd L.Brady (Merchant Taylors'); 3rd R.Thickness (Alleyn's)

Pool J: 1st B.Chua (Winchester); 2nd B.Ashraf (St Paul's); 3rd O.Martyn (Tonbridge)

Pool K: 1st R.Christie (Derby Moor); 2nd L.Stone (Sedbergh); 3rd H.George (Tonbridge)

Pool L: 1st T.Walters (Whitgift); 2nd A.Atwal (Bedford); 3rd A.Shah (Merchant Taylors')

Pool M: 1st B.Beltrami (St Paul's); 2nd C.Farmer (Sedbergh); 3rd O.Horner (Whitgift); 4th Higginson (Christ's Hospital)

Round 1: Arnold beat Whitehorn 11-7, 9-11, 11-5; Thompson beat Hunter 10-12, 11-6, 11-2; Lawry beat Blunden 12-11, 11-3; Kahn-Pascual beat Owen 11-0, 11-4; Obieta-Chichizola beat Chua 4-11, 11-9, 11-5; Walters beat Christie 3-11, 11-7, 11-3.

Quarter-finals: Wyatt-haines beat Arnold 11-1, 11-0; Lawry beat Thompson 11-7, 7-11, 11-4; Kahn-Pascual beat Obieta-Chichizola 11-0, 11-1; Beltrami beat Walters 11-3, 11-4

Semi-finals: Wyatt-Haines beat Lawry 11-2, 11-3; Kahn-Pascual beat Beltrami 11-7, 11-8

Final: Wyatt-Haines beat Kahn-Pascual 11-2, 9-11, 11-1

First plate: Ashraf

Second plate: Horner (Whitgift)

Colts Doubles

1st round: Merchant Taylors' II beat Tonbridge II 11-2, 11-6; St Paul's III beat Christ's Hospital II 11-1, 11-3; Sedbergh III beat Whitgift II 6-11, 11-2, 11-3.

2nd Round: St Paul's I beat Alleyn's II 11-0, 11-1; Sedbergh II beat Whitgift I 11-2, 11-6; Winchester beat Derby Moor II 11-6, 9-11, 11-8; Sedbergh I beat Merchant Taylors' II 11-1, 11-0; Derby Moor I beat St Paul's III 11-2, 11-4; Tonbridge I beat Alleyn's I 2-11, 11-2, 11-5; Merchant Taylors' I beat Christ's Hospital I 11-5, 12-10; St Paul's II beat Sedbergh III 11-0, 11-0.

Quarter-finals: St Paul's I beat Sedbergh II 11-1, 11-3; Sedbergh I beat Winchester I 11-1, 11-3; Derby Moor I beat Tonbridge I 11-1, 11-4; St Paul's II beat Merchant Taylors' I 11-2, 11-0

Semi-finals: St Paul's I beat Sedbergh I 11-3, 11-8; St Paul's II beat Derby Moor I 11-1, 11-4.

Final: St Paul's I (Beltrami/Arnold) beat St Paul's II (Kahn-Pascual/Ashraf) 11-4, 11-9

Plate: Whitgift I (Walters/Brandon)

Under 14 Singles

Pool A: 1st S.Mossaheb (Winchester); 2nd K.Thomas (Tonbridge); 3rd A.Hamilton (Merchant Taylors')

Pool B: 1st H.Tyler (Tonbridge); 2nd T.Watson (St Paul's); 3rd A.Howard (Winchester) 4th F.Carr (Oundle)

Pool C: 1st A.Taylor (St Paul's); 2nd R.Thomson (Sedbergh); 3rd S.Johnson (Derby Moor); 4th T.Dawber (Alleyn's)

Pool D: 1st B.Morris (Merchiston Castle); 2nd Kennedy (Christ's Hospital); 3rd M.Guy (Malvern)

Pool E: 1st L.Heidrich (St Paul's); 2nd Martin (Marlborough); 3rd H.Orlebar (Oundle)

Pool F: 1st B.Ford (Whitgift); 2nd C.McKinney (Sedbergh); 3rd I.Jagger (Alleyn's); 4th N.Stephenson (Merchant Taylors')

Pool G: 1st Ganejran (Whitgift); 2nd J.Wall (Merchant Taylors'); 3rd Shingleton (Marlborough); 4th Roberts (Christ's Hospital)

Pool H: H.Thompson-Green (Sedbergh); 2nd H.Daniels (Oundle); 3rd L.Keates (Derby Moor)

Pool I: 1st K.Leadbetter (Winchester); 2nd B.Singh (Derby Moor); 3rd D.Raza (Whitgift);

Pool J: 1st J.Hanton (Alleyn's); 2nd Connolly (Sedbergh); 3rd C.Salvest (St Paul's); 4th M.Arkell (Oundle)

Pool K: 1st J.Grut (Whitgift); 2nd C.Boswall (Winchester); 3rd J.Murphy (Merchant Taylors'); 4th J.Halligan (Derby Moor)

Pool L: 1st C.Mabbutt (Whitgift); 2nd K.Jessel (Alleyn's); 3rd J.Ellis (Oundle)

Pool M: 1st L.Baird (Merchiston Castle); 2nd T.Dawber (Alleyn's); 3rd J.Byford (Tonbridge)

Pool N: 1st Ahmed (Christ's Hospital); 2nd C.Zehner (Winchester); 3rd Wheeler (Marlborough);
Pool O: 1st R.Quinault (Winchester); 2nd Burdett (Marlborough); 3rd J.Smith (Oundle)
Pool P: 1st M.Allsopp (Malvern); 2nd R.Patel (St Paul's); 3rd K.Francis (Whitgift)
1st round: Mossaheb beat Tyler 11-0; Morris beat Taylor 11-6; Heidrich beat Ford 11-5; Thompson-Green beat Ganejran 11-0; Hanton beat Leadbetter 11-5; Mabbutt beat Grut 11-6; Ahmed beat Baird 11-9; Allsopp beat Quinault 11-5
Quarter-finals: Mossaheb beat Morris 11-7; Thompson-Green beat Heidrich 12-11; Mabbutt beat Hanton 11-6; Ahmed beat Allsopp 11-6
Semi-finals: Mossaheb beat Thompson-Green 15-9; Ahmed beat Mabbutt 15-9
Final: Ahmed beat Mossaheb 11-8, 3-11, 11-6
First plate: Dawber (Alleyn's)
Second plate: Jagger (Alleyn's)

Under 14 Doubles

1st round: Whitgift III beat Derby Moor II 15-4; Tonbridge beat Marlborough II 15-12; St Paul's II beat Christ's Hospital 15-12; Alleyn's II beat Merchant Taylors' I 15-8; St Paul's III beat Oundle III 15-1; Winchester II beat Marlborough I 15-4; Merchiston Castle beat Sedbergh II 15-3; Alleyn's I beat Winchester III 15-3; Merchant Taylors' II beat Oundle I 15-1; Whitgift II beat Oundle III 15-1
2nd round: Winchester I beat Whitgift III 15-0; St Paul's II beat Tonbridge 15-1; Sedbergh I I beat Alleyn's II 15-5; Whitgift I beat St Paul's III 15-2; Winchester II beat Derby Moor I 15-8; Merchiston Castle beat Malvern I 15-4; Alleyn's I beat Merchant Taylors' II 15-1; St Paul's I beat Whitgift II 15-12
Quarter-finals: Winchester I beat St Paul's II 15-9; Whitgift I beat Sedbergh I 15-8; Merchiston Castle beat Winchester II 15-9; St Paul's I beat Alleyn's I 15-11
Semi-finals: Whitgift I beat Winchester I 15-13; Merchiston Castle beat St Paul's I 15-10
Final: Whitgift I (Mabbutt/Ford) beat Merchiston Castle (Baird/Morris) 10-12, 11-6, 11-9
Plate: Christ's Hospital (Ahmed/Kennedy)

NATIONAL CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP (WOOD CUP)

St Paul's School, Barnes, 14/15th April 2012

The Old Paulines confirmed their position as currently the strongest club side in Fives with a dominant display to retain the National Club Championship they won for the first time last year.

As in 2011, their win came at the expense of the Manchester Y Club in the final – and it was an emphatic win. Having won all four singles matches, the Old Paulines (Dan Tristao, Charlie Brooks, Tom Dean and Ady Lee), they then went on to win all four first-round doubles matches, putting the match beyond Manchester's reach before the second round of doubles games was played.

Perhaps such a result was only to be expected, given that the Pauline squad (completed by Ed Kay, who played in the semi-final) included three of the four finalists in the recent National Doubles Championship. It also meant that the Executioners – who were emphatically beaten in the semis – had to face doubles pairs who had won the National Under 25s Championship and the North West Open. Again, the Paulines won without having to face a second round of doubles in the match.

Still, at least the Executioners could content themselves with a good win over the Alleyn Old Boys in their quarter-final. However, the closest match of the whole tournament was the other quarter-final between Derby Moor and Wessex, eventually won by Derby by a margin of just two points.

They bowed out to Manchester in the semis, but for the second year running, no one could match the Paulines' strength. Can they go on to match Manchester's record five successive wins between 2006 and

2010? On this showing, few would bet against it.

Preliminary round: Old Merchant Taylors bt Old Tonbridgians; Derby Moor bt White Rose Club

Quarter-finals: Old Paulines bt Old Merchant Taylors w/o; Executioners bt Alleyn Old Boys 111-68;
Derby Moor bt Wessex 93-91

Semi-finals: Old Paulines bt Executioners 88-26; Manchester bt Derby Moor 125-73

Final: Old Paulines bt Manchester Y Club 88-22

NATIONAL VETERANS' CHAMPIONSHIPS

Christ's Hospital, Horsham, 21st/22nd April 2012

This year saw the largest entry in both the singles and doubles for some years, with 10 entrants for the singles and, after some very late entries, a field of 14 pairs for the doubles.

The intention of the organiser is to ensure that, on both days, everybody has a surfeit of Fives, regardless of their ability. To this end, the competitions were organised in President's Cup style, with those defeated in the first two rounds of the Cup then competing for the Plate, and those removed from the early rounds of the Plate contesting the final competition for a bottle of beer (the BOB). The only players to suffer from this format are the defeated semi-finalists, who might only have played four games. It is always the organisers hope that those deprived in this fashion are quiet, retiring, persons, so at the end of the day the only voices heard are those complaining of too much exercise. This year the wish was, spectacularly, not fulfilled, as our President was knocked out in the semis both days!

Singles

The Singles Cup competition produced only one real upset, when Dick Warner defeated an injured Tony Hamilton in two close games.

The final, as usual, was a demonstration of hard play between two skilled opponents. In the first game it appeared that another upset may be on the way, when Neil Roberts easily overcame an out of sorts Hamish Buchanan, to win 15-4. But between games Hamish recharged himself, eventually grinding down Neil to win 4-15, 15-4, 15-4.

Stuart Kirby eased his way through the plate competition to come away with the spoils. On his way he defeated the aforementioned Tony Hamilton, debutant Keith Kennerley, and experienced campaigner Angus Hanton.

An unbalanced draw for the final competition was threatened by the overdue withdrawal of Tony Hamilton due to that skiing injury. Unto the breach stepped a youthful John East, having stiffened the sinews with a warm-up in the Masters (over 65s) tournament earlier in the day. He showed that he was worth his breeding by winning the prized bottle of beer, although this remarkable trophy was claimed by Tony, in John's absence, during the presentations on Sunday evening.

Doubles

On Sunday there appeared to be an enormous number of people milling around, most of whom were competing. The Cup competition proceeded surprisingly quickly, with no matches going to three games. Up to the final there was only one really tight game, with the Clarke and de Belder pairing being eventually defeated 10-12 in their second game by East and Hamilton.

As is usual in this event, the final showed that hard hitting and competitiveness is not limited by age. Hamish Buchanan and Bruce Hanton eventually overcame Neil Roberts and Wayne Enstone 15-10, 15-9 to retain the trophy.

As on Saturday, the losers in the first two rounds of the Cup proceeded to compete for the Plate. Again Tony Hamilton pulled out to prevent further damage to what appeared to be a nasty injury, leaving only nine pairs in the competition. Sutcliffe and Walter finally got into their stride after their unexpectedly easy defeat in the Cup, vanquishing all. In the final they overcame the pairing of Kirk and Kennerley , a pair put together by the organisers dating service; they had never met before the start of the day.

The BOB was fought out by five pairs, with Clarke and de Belder coming out on top in the only three game match of the day. A trophy to put in the recycling bin on their first outing in the competition!

As usual, thanks must go to Stuart Kirby for providing the bulk of the food, the others who bought those wonderful cakes, to President Dick Warner for making the presentations, and to Ed Hatton and Christ's Hospital for providing a fitting venue. In addition, Ross Stuart, a master at Christ's must be lauded for stepping in at the last minute to make up an extra pair, and then having the energy to take an unofficial party to see the treasures of the CH dining hall.

Singles

First Round: Buchanan bt Kennerley 15-2, 15-1; Roberts bt A Hanton 15-1, 15-1
Second Round: Buchanan bt Stubbs 15-2, 15-0; Walter bt Kirby 15-12, 15-5; Warner bt Hamilton 15-13, 16-14; Roberts bt Christie 15-1, 15-1
Semi-finals: Buchanan bt Walter 15-5, 15-5; Roberts bt Warner 15-3, 15-1
Final: Buchanan bt Roberts 4-15; 15-4; 15-4

Singles Plate

Prelim Round: Kirby bt Hamilton 15-7; Christie bt Stubbs 15-3
Semi-finals: Kirby bt Kennerley 15-3; A Hanton bt Christie 15-13
Final: Kirby bt A Hanton 15-2

Singles BOB (Bottle of Beer)

Semi Finals: Kennerley by Stubbs 15-3, East bt Christie 15-6
Final: East bt Kennerley 15-6

Doubles

First Round: B Hanton & Buchanan bt P Atkinson & Ryan 11-8, 11-6; East & Hamilton bt Clarke & de Belder 11-9, 12-10; Warner & Schroeter bt Hawke & Kiteley 11-3, 11-2; Kirby & Christie bt Walter & Sutcliffe 11-3, 11-8; Enstone & Roberts bt Kennerley & Kirk 11-0, 11-1; B Atkinson & Sandie bt McIntyre & Stuart 11-0, 11-2
Second Round: B Hanton & Buchanan bt Arnott & Wilkinson 11-0, 11-0; Warner & Schroeter bt East & Hamilton 11-1, 11-5; Kirby & Christie bt Stubbs & A Hanton 11-8, 11-8; Enstone & Roberts bt Atkinson & Sandie 11-1, 11-4
Semi Finals: B Hanton & Buchanan bt Warner & Schroeter 15-6, 15-1; Enstone & Roberts bt Kirby & Christie 15-8, 15-12
Final: B Hanton & Buchanan bt Roberts & Enstone 15-10, 15-9

Doubles Plate:

First Round: P Atkinson & Ryan bt Stubbs & A Hanton 15-12, Walter & Sutcliffe bt Clarke & de Belder 15-1, Kennerley & Kirk bt McIntyre & Stuart 15-5, Atkinson & Sandie bt Hawke & Kiteley 15-8

Semi Finals: Sutcliffe & Walter bt P Atkinson & Ryan 15-6, Kennerley & Kirk bt B Atkinson & Sandie 15-12

Final: Sutcliffe & Walter bt Kennerley & Kirk 15-1, 15-3

Doubles BoB:

Prelim Round: Stubbs & A Hanton bt McIntyre & Stuart 15-4

Semi Finals: Arnott & Wilkinson bt Stubbs & A Hanton 15-8, Clarke & de Belder bt Hawke & Kiteley 15-9

Final: Clarke & de Belder bt Arnott & Wilkinson 9-11, 11-4, 11-7

NATIONAL SCHOOL GIRLS' CHAMPIONSHIPS (Senior category)

Oundle School, 22nd April 2012

Oundle School hosted the first stage of the third National School Girls' Tournament, the senior (U18) category. The standard of girls' fives continues to improve, and the day saw some excellent singles and doubles played in front of schoolfriends, parents and sports coaches, who all remarked on the ability and determination displayed by the girls during a long and tough day. Thanks go to Oundle for providing excellent facilities and refreshments and also to Rugby School staff and parents for bringing a large group of very enthusiastic girls, some of whom were younger and quite new to the game, and all of whom helped the day go very well.

In the singles, Tessa Mills (Eastbourne College), the defending champion, won her group and then held off a challenge from Bryony Choy (Oundle) in the semi-final. In the other half of the draw, Francesca Ruffell (Rugby) came through and faced another local girl, Susie Burrows (Oundle) but also came through to the final. The singles final was a remarkably high-quality game and, before a packed gallery, the score remained very close for some time, both girls winning long fought rallies and displaying great tenacity, shot-making and fitness. But gradually the power of Tessa's serve and her accurate shots into the left-hand nick got the better of Francesca, and Tessa won the game to become national singles champion for the third time.

In the doubles, Tessa Mills and Isabella Why from Eastbourne reached the final where they met the Rugby first pair, Francesca Ruffell and Hannah Hawksley, who last year won the U16 doubles. Perhaps spurred on by Francesca's close match in the singles final, the Rugby girls put on a very impressive display of hard-hitting and intelligent doubles, dominating the rallies and resisting the attempts by the Eastbourne pair to take control. The Rugby pair proved too good, and deservedly took the doubles title and the gold medals.

Oundle School did not go away empty-handed, as Susie Burrows and Bryony Choy won the plate (bronze medals) against Rugby's second pair, and Bryony Choy also won the singles plate.

On Sunday 29 April, the second stage of the tournament takes place at Marlborough College, with U16, U14 and U13 doubles and singles

Singles

Group A: Tessa Mills (Eastbourne College) 44, Susie Burrows (Oundle School) 39, Hannah Hawkesley (Rugby School) 29, Milly Richards (Rugby School) 17, Milly Browne (Rugby School) 10.

Group B: Francesca Ruffell (Rugby School) 44, Bryony Choy (Oundle School) 40, Isabella Why (Eastbourne College) 30, Eliza Talbot-Williams (Rugby School) 30, Kate Broad (Rugby School) 11.

Semi-finals: T. Mills bt B. Choy 11-0, F. Ruffell bt S. Burrows 11-1

Final: T. Mills bt F. Ruffell 11-6

Plate: B. Choy

Doubles

Oundle bt Rugby III 11-3, Rugby I bt Oundle 11-7, Eastbourne bt Rugby II 11-4, Rugby II bt Rugby III 11-5

Final: Rugby I bt Eastbourne 15-2

Plate Final: Oundle bt Rugby II 15-4

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY SPORTS CENTRE

Cambridge, 1st May 2012

The ground-breaking ceremony for the new Cambridge University Sports Centre - which will include six Fives courts - took place today.

In front of 80 guests, Francis Shiner (MD of SDC Builders Ltd, the main contractor for the project) said, "We are delighted to be a part of the delivery of such a refreshing building, which will no doubt among other things produce champions for the benefit of the country."

The Sports Centre, which has been designed by Arup Associates, has at its core a vast sports hall, housing two full-size courts for badminton, boxing, volleyball, netball and five-a-side football. In addition, there will be a 'strength and conditioning' wing, as well as a multi-purpose room for martial arts, yoga, spinning and floor-based exercises.

There will also be space for future provision, subject to further funding, of a sports medicine and rehabilitation space and a separate wing that will include the six Fives courts - three Rugby and three Eton.

The centre is expected to open in October 2013, and further details are available through the link below.

NATIONAL MASTERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

Christ's Hospital, 21st April 2012

In an event contested by a record-breaking five pairs, the Masters' Championship was won by John East and Martin Wilkinson, who emerged as champions after a gruelling round-robin series. They were the clear winners, never conceding more than three points in any individual game; and, while the following places were more closely contested, the five-times champions Bernard Atkinson and David Bawtree were runners-up.

Akerman & Gardner lost to Atkinson & Bawtree 15-16, lost to Boag & Rice 14-16, lost to East & Wilkinson 2-15, lost to McIntyre & Stuart 11-5; Atkinson & Bawtree bt Boag & Rice 15-10, lost to East & Wilkinson 1-15, bt McIntyre & Stuart 16-15; Boag & Rice lost to East & Wilkinson 3-15, bt McIntyre & Stuart 15-5; East & Wilkinson bt McIntyre & Stuart 15-2
Result: 1st East & Wilkinson (60 pts), 2nd Atkinson & Bawtree (48), 3rd Boag & Rice (44), 4th Akerman & Gardner (42), 5th McIntyre & Stuart (37)

NATIONAL SCHOOL GIRLS' CHAMPIONSHIPS (U13/14/U16)

Marlborough College, Wiltshire, 29th April 2012

The School Girls U16, U14 and U13 was played on a very wet day at Marlborough College. Despite the weather, the intrepid teams and their coaches made it through rain, wind and fallen trees to reach Wiltshire from all around the country. Girls from Blundell's, Malvern, Sutton Valence, Christ's Hospital and Eastbourne joining the local girls at Marlborough College. Including the seniors, this means a total of eight schools have played in the National School Girls finals this year, the highest number so far.

As with the seniors, the girls played excellent fives and showed how the standard of fives amongst girls has continued to improve. Seasoned fives players among the spectators remarked on how well the girls are playing, producing excellent quality rallies and a real variety of shots, with perhaps more use of drop-shots and subtlety than is evident among schoolboys of their age. Girls from all six schools reached the various finals, which also shows the increasing range of talent.

In the U16 category, the singles in particular showcased the future in both breadth and skill, with a final of exceptional quality, in which Shinan Zhang (Malvern) beat Emily Royer (Sutton Valence) in a close game watched by a tense audience. Louise Mathias (Christ's Hospital) won the Plate and bronze medal overcoming her doubles partner Coralie Strong.

Malvern College were also triumphant in the doubles, managing to have three players in the final! The scratch pairing of Emily Royer (Sutton Valence) and Susy Marini (Malvern) surprised the seedings committee by beating the seasoned Christ's Hospital pair 12-11, and so they went on to win the doubles silver in the final against the Malvern first pair. The Christ's Hospital pair of Mathias and Strong defeated the local Marlborough girls (Sophie Spinks and Allie Davies) in the plate to win the bronze.

At U14 level, medals were less evenly distributed, with the girls from Blundell's School dominating. In the singles, three of the four groups were won by the Blundell's players, and they went on to dominate the knock-out stages. Apart from Blundell's only Eastbourne College were represented in the semi-finals, with Augusta King playing a series of tough games and eventually losing her third-place play-off, which meant that all three singles medals were won by Blundell's; Emily Combe with the gold, Amy Cross with silver and Lizzie Fearnley with bronze. The final between Emily and Amy was an exhausting and close affair, nevertheless with some high quality shots. Predictably perhaps, the doubles final was between the two Blundell's pairs, the first pair of Combe and Cross coming out as winners, although they were pushed hard to win.

U14/U13 Singles Group stage

Group A: 1. Lizzie Fearnley (Blundell's), 2. Augusta King (Eastbourne), 3. Phoebe Thornhill (Christ's Hospital)

Group B: 1. Molly Todd (Christ's Hospital), 2. Zanna Cooper (Eastbourne), 3. Abi Bundy (Blundell's), 4. Tamsin Denny (Christ's Hospital)

Group C: 1. Emily Combe (Blundell's), 2. Olivia Crossman (Christ's Hospital), 3. Tilly Campbell

(Marlborough), 4. Beatrix Crinnion (Christ's Hospital)

Group D: 1. Amy Cross (Blundell's), 2. Mary Ward (Christ's Hospital), 3. Jemima Jones (Marlborough)

U14 Singles knockout stage

Quarter Finals: Cross bt Jones 11-2, King bt Ward 11-3, Fearnley bt Bundy 11-5, Combe bt Cooper 11-2;

Semi Finals: Cross bt King, Combe bt Fearnley

Final: Combe bt Amy 15-11

U13 Singles

Final: Todd bt Crinnion 11-4

Plate: Denny bt Thornhill 11-8

U13 Doubles

Christ's Hospital II (Denny & Thornhill) bt Christ's Hospital I (Todd & Crinnion)

U16 Singles

Group A: 1. Shinan Zhang (Malvern), 2. Louise Mathias (Christ's Hospital), 3. Susy Marini (Malvern), 4. Sophie Spink (Marlborough)

Group B: 1. Emily Royer (Sutton Valence), 2. Allie Davies (Marlborough), 3. Anna Llewellyn (Malvern), 4. Coralie Strong (Christ's Hospital)

Semi Finals: Zhang bt Davies 11-2, Royer bt Mathias 11-5

Final: Zhang bt Royer 15-7

U16 Doubles

Semi-Finals: Malvern (Zhang & Llewellyn) bt Marlborough (Davies & Spink) 11-3, Malvern/Sutton Valence (Royer & Marini) bt Christ's Hospital (Strong & Mathias) 12-11

Final: Malvern bt Malvern/Sutton Valence 11-7

Plate: Christ's Hospital bt Marlborough 11-4

SCOTTISH OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Loretto School, Musselburgh, 5/6th May 2012

Will Ellison enjoyed a productive trip north of border, doing the double at the Scottish Championships. After beating John Minta to win the singles championship, he partnered John Hawke to the doubles title, beating Neil Roberts and Loretto schoolboy Callum Brechin in the final.

Singles

Final: Ellison bt Minta

Doubles

Final: Ellison & Hawke bt Roberts & Brechin

Plate: T Widdop and V Patel

OFFICIAL RFA RANKINGS

London, 15th May 2012

The RFA today published the latest singles and doubles rankings, prepared on its behalf by Dave Hebden. A full report will appear in the Annual Review, which will be published later this year, but for the record, James Toop finished the season on top of the Singles rankings, while Will Ellison was the number one doubles player. To see the full list, click on the link below.

NATIONAL SINGLES RANKINGS

Current positions – after Scottish Open Championships, May 2012

Previous positions – at start of 2011/2012 season

Current	Previous	Name	Points
1	1	J Toop	88.6
2	3	D Tristao	85.8
3	2	W Ellison	83.0
4	5	M Cavanagh	60.7
5	4	J Minta	60.6
6	6	H Buchanan	44.2
7	12	L Thomson	40.6
8	7	D Grant	33.9
9	9	M Bate	31.7
10	24	C Brooks	26.0
11	22	M Skogh	25.0
12	13	M Bowness	24.7
13	17	E Kay	24.5
14	15	C Burrows	24.2
15	11	T Maconie	24.0
16	18	T Dean	23.8
17	23	N Roberts	22.8
18	10	J Major	22.6
19	34	P Hanton	18.4
20	14	E Hatton	18.4
21	16	H Mohammed	16.2
22	~	D Butler	14.3
23	29	A George	14.1
	~	N Hillier	14.1
25	35	A Lee	13.5
26	33	R Murby	12.7
27	19	C Legget	12.5
28	~	T Widdop	12.2
29	~	S Fraser	11.7
30	40	A Rew	10.8

31	20	D Fox	10.5
32	28	K Henry	10.0
	~	R Patel	10.0
	27	G Price	10.0
35	31	E Brooke	8.7
36	~	J Aulina	8.3
37	35	A Pringle	8.0
38	26	I Ackland	7.1
	45	J Gravatt	7.1
40	~	R Lamb	6.7
41	47	S Coffey	6.5
42	~	F Thomas	5.7
43	41	S Moger	5.6
44	32	A Griffiths	5.0
45	~	S King	4.7
	~	J Tilston	4.7
47	~	N Austin	4.0
48	42	J Savery	3.9
49	54	A Goodwin	3.5
50	30	T Kiggel	3.0
	~	T Parker	3.0
52	~	C Waller	2.4
53	~	S Wyatt-Haines	2.3
54	~	M Frost	2.0
55	52	S Adcock	1.4
	52	T Chase	1.4

NATIONAL DOUBLES RANKINGS

Current positions – after Scottish Open Championships, May 2012

Previous positions – at start of 2011/2012 season

Current	Previous	Name	Points
1	2	W Ellison	90.6
2	1	H Buchanan	83.1
3	7	D Tristao	82.5
4	3	M Bate	76.8
5	8	D Grant	75.8
6	15	T Dean	71.8
7	11	C Brooks	68.6
8	4	H Mohammed	67.1
9	6	J Minta	61.6
10	10	A Pringle	58.7

11	5	R Perry	50.0
12	9	A Lee	49.5
13	16	C Burrows	46.4
14	14	G Price	45.8
15	12	J Toop	43.0
16	~	M Skogh	42.4
17	25	N Roberts	40.6
18	26	E Kay	36.1
19	19	E Hatton	35.4
20	34	J Hawke	34.6
21	18	J Beswick	32.4
	62	L Thomson	32.4
23	40	P Hanton	29.2
	45	T Widdop	29.2
25	23	J Gravatt	28.7
26	17	W Enstone	26.5
27	34	A Griffiths	25.5
	45	P Manning	25.5
29	~	C Brechin	24.5
	28	T Chase	24.5
31	51	M Frost	24.0
32	28	T Maconie	21.2
33	51	A Goodwin	20.6
34	21	A Beverly	20.0
	~	M Cavanagh	20.0
	40	R Christie	20.0
	25	S Hodgson	20.0
38	34	H Akerman	17.3
	40	S Kirby	17.3
	34	J Pearce-Smith	17.3
41	27	C Legget	15.8
	30	J Major	15.8
43	19	P Bishop	14.1
	45	J Hughes	14.1
	34	G McIntyre	14.1
	~	V Patel	14.1
47	45	A George	13.2
48	58	H Aveston	12.2
	~	M Baxter	12.2
	58	S King	12.2
	39	J Marshall	12.2
	62	J Savery	12.2
53	66	S Watson	11.2
54	30	I Ackland	10.0
	~	N Austin	10.0

	~	C Butler	10.0
	~	S Coffey	10.0
	~	N Finney	10.0
	~	A Hanton	10.0
	~	N Hillier	10.0
	66	T Kiggel	10.0
	~	B Kirk	10.0
	~	R Lebon	10.0
	~	E Malone	10.0
	~	T Parker	10.0
	45	A Rew	10.0
	32	E Ronan	10.0
	~	F Thomas	10.0
	45	N Wolstenholme	10.0
70	51	K Ward	8.7
71	32	J Bristow	7.1
	62	P Cohen	7.1
	~	N Edmonds	7.1
	57	J Furniss	7.1
	~	J Goodwin	7.1
	68	K Henry	7.1
	58	M Hine	7.1
	~	J Malde	7.1
79	66	T Lewis	5.0
	66	S Maskell	5.0
	66	M Moger	5.0
	66	D Murray	5.6

DERBY MOOR INVITATION DOUBLES

Derby Moor Community College, Derby, 24th June 2012

This year's tournament, featuring 20 players from Derby, Manchester, Halifax, Uppingham and Durham, ended in victory for the youngest pair yet, Mike Baxter and Jay Gravatt. For each it was his second victory in this competition, Mike having won it last year with Tim Widdop, and Jay having carried off the trophy in 2010 with Wayne Enstone.

Runners-up were Richard Christie and Bob Sandie, and the Third Place play-off was won by hard-hitting Jimmy Goodwin and Jonathan Lee, who beat Stuart Kirby and John Hawke. Paul McIntyre won the Plate for the second year in a row, playing with Anthony Goodwin. Next year will be the 10th anniversary of this premier event: commemorative T-shirts all round!