

## Tony Hamilton hangs up his gloves

Spencer Beal, with whom Tony Hamilton has won 5 Masters titles, writes in June 2024: Unfortunately Tony Hamilton has had to make the decision to hang up his gloves. Although Tony moved away from Eastbourne some years ago, he is still regarded as some sort of legend here on the south coast, particularly of course for his supreme talent on the Fives court, but also because he played such a large part in reviving and regenerating the Club by raising the standard, recruiting fresh blood and spreading the gospel to all and sundry. That the Club continues to move forward is all thanks to his initial input, and during this last year we have worked hard to build the profile of the game through the College, especially with the provision of a glass back wall on the one St. Andrew's court (with generous support from the RFA and OAs) which we hope to see in action by September of this year. Tony's contribution is warmly celebrated in this poem sent in by Adam de Belder, one of our leading poets and Club members.

In Eastbourne, the game of fives lives on,  
Not least in part through Hamilton,  
His presence in our lives writ large  
Through weekly wit and badinage

To see him play is quite a thing,  
The ball, it seems, attached to string  
He takes each ball hard down the line,  
Each shot like grand cru claret wine

His opponent, often in a tangle,  
To cope with Tony's crafty angle.  
And now the cream to top the lot,  
A Gorgeous well disguised drop shot.

There is an inch above the bar  
Where Tony's shots infallibly are.  
No easy points are up for takes,  
As Tony rarely makes mistakes.

A privilege to take your part,  
To play with Tone - renaissance art.  
No sign of pomp, he wins with grace  
And shakes your hand with smiling face.

He could be ninety I don't know,  
No signs of age does Tony show.  
Nigh on 50 years since he began,  
I salute this ageless man.

As I age, and the years rescind  
And every squat releases wind,  
My memory of the man we love  
The steel hand in the velvet glove

Fives should happen with laughs and chortles  
Of playing games with other mortals  
We're blessed to think within our lives  
We played with Tony, a God of Fives.

Adam de Belder



The immaculate stylist playing in the Vintage Championships at Cambridge in 2015 with Stuart Kirby versus Ian Fuller & Dave Hebden



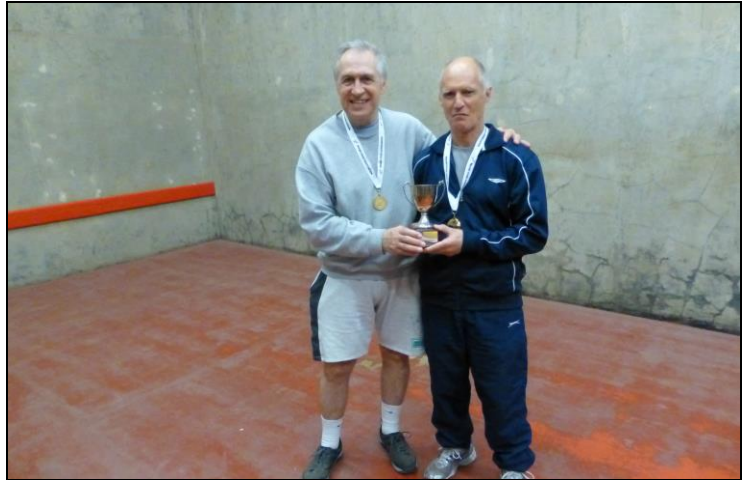
On tour at Tiverton with the Old Whitgiftians 2016



The first Masters title with Spencer Beal 2017



2018 Title number 2



The Hat-trick in 2019



After a break for covid -- the 4<sup>th</sup> title in 2022



5 in a row in 2023



Number 6 with Peter Ross in 2024



The stalwart Old Whitgiftian