

RFA HANDBOOK 2004-2005



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Our thanks to Apple Macintosh for permission to use the image on the front cover.

Photos by Denise Hall-Wilton, except where noted.

Picture credits for the St. Dunstan's article are on page 47

'Stars of the Future': three Blundell's photos by Bertie Matthew.

'Veterans All': 'Dave Hebden's 100th trophy' photo by David Barnes.

THE RUGBY FIVES ASSOCIATION

The RFA was founded in 1927 as the governing body of Rugby Fives. It drew up the rules of the game and established the standard court dimensions. During the 1930s it became responsible for the administration of national open and schools' singles and doubles championships. Nowadays, it also runs a wide variety of other competitions, details of which may also be found in the members' pocket-book and fixture list, published separately from this handbook and containing the 'Good Fives Guide', a comprehensive listing of courts throughout the UK. The RFA became a Company Limited by Guarantee in 2003.

In 1996, the RFA Club, which has been playing matches against all opposition since 1947, joined forces with the RFA and became its playing club. A total of more than 60 clubs and schools are affiliated to the RFA, and there is a steadily increasing individual membership. The RFA has produced a coaching manual and video. Its Club holds an annual free-entry doubles tournament for the President's Cup in December, open to all members and with a draw for partners. In addition to individual and doubles events, the RFA runs the annual National Club Knockout Competition for the Wood Cup and the Old Boys' Championship for the Owers Trophy.

PAST PRESIDENTS OF RFA

1927-46	Rt. Rev. A.F.Winnington Ingram
1947-55	Dr E.F.Cyriax
1955-60	J.Armitage
1960-65	G.R.Rimmer
1965-70	B.R.Griffiths
1970-71	H.D.Beevers
1971-72	J.W.Nye
1972-74	W.H.Pett
1974-76	D.E.Gardner
1976	T.Wood
1977-79	R.A.Colville
1979-81	J.G.Burton
1981-83	D.M.Hebblethwaite
1983-85	A.I.F.Mackenzie
1985-87	J.F.Pretlove
1987-89	F.J.Beswick
1989-91	D.Barnes
1991-93	F.R.F.Wilson
1993-95	C.D.A.Martin-Jenkins
1995-97	I.P.Fuller
1997-99	J.I.Cooper
1999-2001	P.W.Duncombe
2002-2003	D.J.Hebden

PAST PRESIDENTS OF RFA CLUB

1954-65	G.R.Rimmer
1965-83	J.G.Burton
1983-89	A.I.F.Mackenzie
1989-96	D.Barnes

Vice-Presidents of RFA: J.A.Carey, B.D.Dance, E.C.Livesey, C.H.R.Niven, S.H.Reid, J.D.Turner and all past presidents.

Honorary Life Members of RFA: Michael Beaman, Joan Wood.

RFA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS FOR 2004/2005 SEASON

President:	Geoff Sherratt
Deputy President:	John East
General Secretary:	Ian Fuller
Directors:	David Barnes, Hamish Buchanan, Paddy d'Ancona, Bob Dolby, Dave Fox, David Gardner, Denise Hall-Wilton, Chris Jones, Johnny Nelmes, Ollie Stone-Lee, Alex Wilson
Club Manager:	Denise Hall-Wilton
Hon. Auditor:	Peter de Winton
Hon. Archivist:	David Barnes
Handbook Editor:	David Barnes

EDITORIAL

The RFA Handbook has changed a good deal since it was restarted in 1996 and redesigned in 2002. Further changes are in the pipeline, including one of editor, and I am delighted that Ian Roberts has agreed to take over as editor with immediate

effect. I have enjoyed editing the Handbook and want to thank all those who have contributed written and photographic material during that period. I wish Ian all the best as editor and will be helping him during his initial year in charge.

David Barnes

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Being President has been a great experience, and I have thoroughly enjoyed my two years in office. I am also delighted that I have been able to serve the Association and to give a little bit back to the sport from which I have received so much. On becoming President, my primary objectives were to ensure that the Association continued to develop the strategies determined by my predecessors, and to complete a strategic plan which I believed was necessary for the long-term development of the Association.

Whilst a strategic plan has not been fully developed, we have seen a major advance in the formation of the Fives Federation, which has responsibility for promoting the game of Fives in all its versions, both in the United Kingdom and overseas. A major vote of thanks must go to our General Secretary Ian Fuller, who had the initial idea, and to our new President John East for their contributions during the development of the Federation.

Over the last two years, our new Board of Directors, with its combination of youth and experience, has overseen a large number of positive developments: a significant change in our corporate image; the introduction of the mid-season Rugby Fives Review; the creation of a modern and dynamic website; a reversal of the trend of court closures with the renovation of the courts at Clifton, Denstone and Derby Moor – all aided by the financial support of the Charitable Trust; the inauguration of three tournaments (the Owers Trophy, the Whitgift Doubles and the Derby Moor Invitation Doubles); the birth of a new club serving the London Universities; the resurrection of the Edinburgh University and Leeds University clubs; the introduction of gold, silver and bronze certificates of attainment at Rugby Fives; the completion of documentation providing guidance for the construction of a standard Rugby Fives court; the production of an overall Equity Statement covering Child Protection, Risk Assessment, Equal Opportunities, and Disability and Racial Equality; a steady growth in the membership of the Association; a similar growth in the numbers of players entering tournaments (our singles events this season have attracted the highest number of entrants since records began in 1971); and a significant increase in the number of young people entering tournaments, as evidenced by the BUSA Championships, which this season attracted the highest ever entry since David Gardner introduced them 45 years ago.

The only low point during my time in office occurred in November 2003, when I unfortunately had to hang up my gloves. I was, however, delighted to be able to hand them over to my son Peter, who I hope will have as much enjoyment from the game as I have been so lucky to have had.

In concluding, I would like to express my thanks to all the Board members, including our retiring members Bob Dolby and Johnny Nelmes, who have served the Association during my Presidency, and whose support has been invaluable in ensuring that the Association has achieved so much during the last two years. I would also like to thank all the other members of the Association, whose very generous support in organising championships, tournaments and club matches has meant that players can continue to enjoy their participation in our wonderful sport.

I am delighted to hand over the Presidency to John East, and having witnessed his contribution as Deputy President during the last two years, I know he will serve and guide the Association with skill and energy during his term in office. I wish him and the Board every success and good luck for the future.

Geoff Sherratt

A Message from the new President, John East

With my various sojourns over the past 20 years or so in Asia, my involvement with Rugby Fives has always been enthusiastic, but necessarily sporadic. So if I was a little surprised to be asked to take on the mantle of presidency so soon after returning from the last stint abroad, I certainly had no hesitation in accepting, and I am both delighted and honoured to be taking on the role.

Over recent years, through the hard work of many people, our game has generally prospered and retained its popularity. Many thanks especially to Geoff Sherratt after his successful two years as President, to Ian Fuller and the rest of the RFA Board and to numerous other committed enthusiasts.

Nevertheless, there is a continuing battle for the voice of Fives to be heard against the clamour of competing attractions, particularly in schools, which are the life blood of the game, but also in universities and thereafter.

Three years ago in this organ Dave Hebden emphasised three important initiatives: coaching, publicity and finance. All these areas continue to be important, but we have made progress; there have been some successful coaching initiatives, the new website is a hugely improved communications and publicity tool, and our formation of the Fives Federation has given new impetus to a number of publicity-related ideas; but all these and the ever-increasing demands of regulation require more professionalism and money.

Geoff's presidency has seen some significant achievements in terms of new clubs being formed at universities and courts being brought back into use; sadly, some courts have also been lost, so we have to be ever-vigilant. The only way to ensure that this does not happen more is to ensure more use of all our courts, which, as Dave Hebden pointed out, requires coaching, publicity and money.

These are interesting times, and I am delighted to have such an experienced and supportive group of Board members to help me over the next two years as we steer our way through them.

I am immensely looking forward to meeting many more of you and listening to your ideas over the next two years.

John East

CHAMPIONSHIP AND TOURNAMENT RESULTS AND REPORTS

South-West Open Championships, 31st July/1st August 2004

(Blundell's School, Tiverton)

Singles. 1st Round: J Hayes bt A Smith 11-2 11-0; N Geere bt T Lewis 11-2 11-9; E Fuller bt A Hajiale Alexandrou 11-8 11-0; N Austin bt W Harrison 11-3 11-5; A Pringle bt P Breslin 11-9 11-9; E Hatton bt S Clapp 11-6 11-0; P Bishop bt J Wren 11-3 11-1; M Cavanagh bt P Atkinson 11-3 11-0; K Henry bt M Bliss 11-8 11-8; J Hughes bt S Lewis 11-0 10-12 11-1; M Hajiale Alexandrou bt R Nagy 11-4 11-1; S Watson bt D Hebden 11-1 11-1; A Rew bt B Baral 11-0 11-3; J Savery bt B Nithsdale 11-6 11-5. **2nd Round:** H Buchanan bt Hayes 11-1 11-6; Fuller bt Geere 11-2 11-4; Austin bt Pringle 11-5 11-4; Bishop bt Hatton 11-2 9-11 11-0; Cavanagh bt Henry 11-2 11-4; Hajiale Alexandrou bt Hughes 11-3 11-4; Rew bt Watson 6-11 11-8 11-8; P d'Ancona bt Savery 11-0 11-2. **Quarter-Finals:** Buchanan bt Fuller 11-2 11-7; Bishop bt Austin 11-2 11-5; Cavanagh bt Hajiale Alexandrou 11-3 11-3; d'Ancona bt Rew 11-1 11-0. **Semi-Finals:** Buchanan bt Bishop 11-3 11-4; Cavanagh bt d'Ancona 12-11 12-10.

Final: M Cavanagh bt H Buchanan 7-11 12-10 11-5.

Plate: Nagy.

Doubles. 1st Round: H Buchanan & D Hebden bt M Bliss & R Nagy 11-2 11-3; T Lewis & S Watson bt E Fuller & E Hatton 12-10 11-9; A & M Hajiale Alexandrou bt P Bishop & K Henry 12-11 11-4; P Atkinson & N Austin bt B Delsoldato & S Lewis 11-1 11-8; J Hughes & A Rew bt B Nithsdale & W Harrison 11-6 11-5; M Cavanagh & J Hayes bt B Baral & N Geere 11-1 11-4; P Breslin & J Savery bt A Pringle & A Smith 12-10 11-9; J Beswick & P d'Ancona bt S Clapp & J Wren 11-5 11-3. **Quarter-Finals:** Buchanan & Hebden bt Lewis & Watson 11-6 11-0; Atkinson & Austin bt Hajiale Alexandrou 8-11 11-6 12-10; Hughes & Rew bt Cavanagh & Hayes 11-8 11-6; Beswick & d'Ancona bt Breslin & Savery 11-8 11-2. **Semi-Finals:** Buchanan & Hebden bt Atkinson & Austin 11-2 11-1; Beswick & d'Ancona bt Hughes & Rew 11-2 11-3.

Final: Buchanan & Hebden bt Beswick & d'Ancona 11-9 11-7.

Plate: Bishop & Henry.

The standard of play was as hot as the weather on this 20th occasion, and the entry was high again, both in quantity and quality.

In the singles, whilst the top four seeds won through to the semis, they had to work extremely hard. Hamish Buchanan made it to the final by beating an in-form Phil Bishop, while Matt Cavanagh reversed his defeat of last year by beating Paddy d'Ancona in two nail-biting games. On the Sunday morning the excitement continued with Hamish looking all set to win the match, having won the first game and standing at 7-0 in the second. Despite this, Matt's resilience proved the deciding factor, as he came back and won in three.

The singles plate was contested by 16 competitors, and at 8.45 p.m. the Far East Champ, Robin Nagy, came off the court triumphant over a still lively Dave Hebden – just warming up for the doubles, as it turned out.

The doubles competition produced some terrific games, and the seeds again had to work hard to get to the semis. Hamish Buchanan had to find a replacement for an injured Robin Perry and did so, Dave Hebden filling the position admirably. They beat Phil Atkinson and Nick Austin in their semi, while John Beswick

and Paddy d'Ancona battled against the local pairing of James Hughes and Alex Rew, winning in two games.

In the final, the first game was hotly contested, and at 9-9 it could have gone either pair's way. Hamish and Dave took the honours and went ahead in the second, only to be held at 9-7. We were then treated to some vintage Hebden shots that clinched the last two points and the match.

In the doubles plate, Phil Bishop and Kevin Henry weathered the ferocious hitting of Robin Nagy and Mark Bliss to win an epic final.

It was another great weekend's play, and it was good to witness the number of players who continue to improve. Thanks must go again to Bertie Matthew at Blundell's School, and to Nigel Gordon for supplying the superb G6 balls – don't forget, if you want an enjoyable summer break, come down and join us here at sunny Blundell's!

Wayne Enstone

Whitgift Doubles Tournament, 21st August 2004

(Whitgift School, Croydon)

Group A: S Moger & J Sinton bt A Bowden & O Stone-Lee 15-7 15-3; bt N Geere & E Selvadurai 15-8 15-8. Geere & Selvadurai bt Bowden & Stone-Lee 15-11 14-16.

Group B: H Buchanan & Z Butlin bt C Jones & E Ronan 15-11 15-5; bt E Hatton & J Partridge 15-8 15-5. Jones & Ronan bt Hatton & Partridge 15-9 12-15.

Final: Buchanan & Butlin bt Moger & Sinton 15-7 15-13.

Despite half the entry for this tournament coming from the 'schoolboys' or 'recent leavers' ranks, most of whom were celebrating their 'A' level results with a holiday overseas, we still managed a decent turnout.

For those who are not aware of the Whitgift Doubles, it is an informal competition that pairs a younger with a more mature player to encourage more young players to get involved in the senior game. Which category one belongs to is often debated afterwards, mainly being results and performance based!

This year's tournament was won by Hamish Buchanan and Zachary Butlin, who defeated Jez Sinton and Sholto Moger in an engaging final. The finalists represented all three major codes of fives: Rugby (Hamish is the reigning National Doubles champion), Winchester (Jez attended Bradfield), and Eton (Sholto was at Charterhouse), whilst Zach was at a non-fives-playing school.

My thanks go to James Partridge and Eraj Selvadurai (Old Eastbournians), Allan Bowden (Old Dunstonian) and Ed Ronan (Old Bradfieldian) as the younger partners, as well as to Nick Geere, Ed Hatton and Ollie Stone-Lee. I note in recent months that Ed Ronan was runner-up in the BUSA Doubles Championship, Allan has continued to play at Alleyn's in his gap year, and Zach has started playing with the West of England Club whilst at Bristol University.

Chris Jones

London Open Championships, 18th/19th September 2004

(Alleyn's School, Dulwich)

Singles. Preliminary Round: T Curtin bt A Seigel 11-2 11-6; R Mathieu bt C Hay 12-11 1-11 12-11; J Yirrell bt A Jennings 11-7 11-1; P Simister bt A Bowden 11-4 7-11 12-11. **1st Round:**

N Geere bt C Saltmarsh 11-7 11-6; B Taberner bt Curtin 11-3 11-0; M Bate bt Mathieu 11-0 11-2; E Hatton bt Yirrell 11-2 11-1; E Fuller bt M Bliss 11-1 11-0; O Stone-Lee bt B Baral 11-6 11-4; D Hebden bt Simister 11-5 11-6; S Moger bt A Smith 11-5 10-12 11-9. 2nd Round: P d'Ancona bt Geere 11-1 11-2; Bate bt Taberner 11-2 11-3; M Hajialexandrou bt Hatton 11-6 11-3; M Cavanagh bt Fuller 11-5 11-5; H Buchanan bt D Grant 11-3 11-4; Stone-Lee bt D Clydesdale-Cotter 11-5 11-7; Hebden w/o; J Toop bt Moger 11-2 11-0. *Quarter-Finals:* d'Ancona bt Bate 11-2 12-10; Hajialexandrou bt Cavanagh 3-11 11-5 11-1; Buchanan bt Stone-Lee 11-3 11-4; Toop bt Hebden 12-10 11-5. *Semi-Finals:* d'Ancona bt Hajialexandrou 12-10 11-12 11-6; Buchanan bt Toop 3-11 11-2 11-2.

Final: Buchanan bt d'Ancona 11-4 11-2.

Plate: Grant.

Doubles. *Preliminary Round:* Andrews/Bliss w/o; Baral/Geere bt Hay/Seigel 11-2 11-5; James Duff/McKerrow bt Bowden/Yirrell 11-6 11-2. *1st Round:* Hatton/Moger bt E Fuller/Hitchens 7-11 11-1 11-8; Bate/Toop bt Andrews/Bliss 11-2 11-6; Cavanagh/Hayes bt Baral/Geere 11-1 11-3; James Duff/McKerrow bt Saltmarsh/Smith 11-6 12-10; Brooks/Mogford bt Clydesdale-Cotter/Curtin 11-5 11-8. *Quarter-Finals:* Buchanan/Perry bt Hatton/Moger 11-0 11-4; Cavanagh/Hayes bt Bate/Toop 11-5 11-6; I Fuller/Hebden bt James Duff/McKerrow 11-1 11-6; d'Ancona/Taberner bt Brooks/Mogford 11-5 11-0. *Semi-Finals:* Buchanan/Perry bt Cavanagh/Hayes 11-4 6-11 12-10; I Fuller/Hebden bt d'Ancona/Taberner 12-10 11-1.

Final: Buchanan/Perry bt I Fuller/Hebden 11-7 11-4.

Plate: E Fuller/Hitchens.

In the singles, the highlight of the early rounds was the match that brought together the 1979 national champion, Dave Hebden, and the 2003 holder, James Toop. The first game was a demonstration of why they have both held the Jesters Club Cup, with wonderful artistry displayed by both players, as they eschewed the hard hitting that was prevailing in other matches. James didn't seem to mind that he hadn't even been born when Dave famously triumphed over Wayne Enstone a quarter of a century ago to take the national title. Nor did it seem to hinder Dave, who moved with the speed and athleticism of a man half his age (i.e. still three years older than James). Some of the cross-court shots and retrieving by both men were of the highest standard, and the game was played with imagination and finesse, Dave moving ahead as his reverse angles found their mark. Ultimately, however, James's fitness took its toll on Dave, as the veteran's 10-6 lead was chipped away – James claiming a 12-10 win. The second game saw James take control to take the match 11-5.

James's doubles partner, Marcus Bate, had a comfortable win over Ben Taberner, and was at one point in a very favourable position against Paddy d'Ancona in their quarter-final match.

This tournament saw the super-fit and determined Mike Hajialexandrou definitely move into the top echelon of players with a win over Matt Cavanagh (the 2002 winner) in the quarter-finals – a match that featured numerous marathon rallies. In the semi-final, Mike was level with Paddy until close to the end – his main weapon being an impressive reverse angle winner. However, Mike made a series of uncharacteristic errors at both the start and end of the third game, and this proved to be decisive. The match finished at the slightly-later-than-advertised time of 8 p.m.

In the other semi-final, there was a frenetic first game between James Toop and Hamish Buchanan, which James won 11-3. In the second game, however, the tables were turned as James's shots – which had been winners in the first game – were often hitting the bar. In the third game, Hamish kept James at

the back of the court with his trademark low and hard shots, and built up an unassailable lead.

The final therefore featured the same contestants as on the previous occasion, but, in contrast to last year, Paddy wasn't really playing at his best, and Hamish won quite easily.

In the doubles, Hamish and Robin Perry survived an extremely close third game against Matt Cavanagh and John Hayes. In the other semi-final, Ian Fuller and Dave Hebden made sure that their close game against Paddy and Ben wasn't the final one, winning by the interesting score of 12-10, 11-1. The final was once again won by Hamish and Robin, by a reasonable margin.

In the plate tournaments, Dan Grant won the singles, and Ed Fuller and Ben Hitchens the doubles.

Paddy d'Ancona / Nick Geere

Old Boys' Championship (Owers Trophy), 2nd/3rd October 2004

(St. Paul's School, Barnes)

Pool A: Alleyn Old Boys bt Old Tonbridgians 110-35; Alleyn Old Boys bt Old Blundellians 67-64; Old Blundellians bt Old Tonbridgians 110-12.

Pool B: Old Dunstonians bt Old Oundelians 110-14; Old Dunstonians bt Old Bradfieldians 110-30; Old Bradfieldians bt Old Oundelians 107-24.

Pool C: Old Eastbournians bt Old Paulines 100-58; Old Eastbournians bt Old Merchant Taylors 79-47; Old Paulines bt Old Merchant Taylors 93-88.

Semi-Finals: Old Dunstonians bt Old Blundellians 81-49; Alleyn Old Boys bt Old Eastbournians 73-35.

Final: Old Dunstonians

(P d'Ancona, M Hajialexandrou, P Bishop, T Stock)

bt Alleyn Old Boys

(H Buchanan, D Hebden, B Hanton, N Geere) 83-61.

There are two challenges for the organiser of the Owers Trophy, played for a successful second year at St. Paul's: first, ensuring that the old boys' teams have four fit players, not only weeks before but on the day itself; second, devising a draw which produces enjoyable games for all the teams, from the regular playing sides like Alleyn Old Boys to the occasional players who come together for the day.

As to the first, some last-minute phone calls meant that nine sides were ready to compete in the group stages, although at one stage we could have had 12; Whitgift, Radley and Christ's Hospital all managed to get three players, not quite enough for a team! Nine was in fact a good number, allowing three groups of three with the winner of each group and the best runner-up going through to the semi-finals. Each match would consist of doubles, plus an element of singles to be played by two players from each team.

As to the second challenge, the group seedings were complicated by the fact that OMTs had a stronger team than had looked likely earlier in the week, making Group C a very tough one.

So the minor miracle of 36 fives players turning up on time to play a tight schedule of games on a Saturday morning was only prevented by train delays which hampered the Eastbourne team. Some tough group games followed, with the two least experienced sides, Tonbridge and Oundle, managing to keep the rallies going against the stronger sides – both came away with a respectable number of points and some good experience. The players had enough time to revitalise themselves with refreshments provided by three generations of the Smith family, for which many thanks were received.

The seeded teams, Alleen's and St. Dunstan's, went through from Groups A and B, while OMTs and Old Paulines were unlucky to lose out to an impressive Eastbourne side in Group C. The best runners-up were Blundell's, completing the semi-finals. Only the Old Dunstonians went through with the full 220 points – an indication of their fine form this year.

The semis followed the form book: Eastbourne and Blundell's, having had a tough morning of group games, produced their best to provide a hard battle for last year's two finalists, but in vain. Blundell's in particular, having given Alleen's a close run for their money in the group games, put up brave resistance to an eventual Dunstonian victory.

The final was therefore a repeat of last year, but this time the Dunstonians were out for revenge. Alleen's introduced their secret weapon, Bruce Hanton, to the Sunday squad. The first doubles games, d'Ancona and Haji versus Buchanan and Hebden, were fantastic to watch, in particular because of Haji's volleying. There were so many drop-shots and angles that at one point it seemed as if all four players were vying to get closest to the front wall! In the other court, Geere and Hanton made a slow start against Bishop and Stock, for which they were punished.

In the second set of doubles, Geere came out with several unreturnable winners whilst Buchanan and Hebden (despite an injury to the latter) produced some consistent hard hitting to quickly overcome Bishop and Stock and ensure the singles had to be played. Here, Old Dunstonians confirmed their superiority and ended deserving winners to take the trophy home.

I would like to thank everyone who took part in my inaugural year as organiser of the Owers Trophy, and also my wife and family for helping out. I look forward to another good contest next year and would encourage all teams to start getting their squad of four (or more) players together, as there is great fun to be had in the group stages.

Alex Smith

Yorkshire Open Doubles, 16th October 2004

(Giggleswick School, Settle)

Preliminary Round: C Jones/S Korris bt J Hawke/D McIntyre 15-4 15-3; J Reynolds/P Reynolds bt R Barrand/N Wharton 15-8 15-3; W Clark/R Pearson bt R Butterworth/K Henry 15-4 15-9. *Quarter-Finals:* N Roberts/R Sandie bt Jones/Korris 15-3 15-12; P Breslin/J Minta bt Reynolds/Reynolds 15-1 15-3; S Kirby/B Kirk bt J Ellacott/C Taylor 15-13 15-5; H Buchanan/D Hebden bt Clark/Pearson 15-6 15-8. *Semi-Finals:* Roberts/Sandie bt Breslin/Minta 15-11 15-4; Buchanan/Hebden bt Kirby/Kirk 15-11 15-2.

Final: Buchanan/Hebden bt Roberts/Sandie 15-5 15-6.

Plate: Kirby/Kirk.

The oddities of organising a small tournament can mean quirks of the draw that would inspire a professor of mathematics to wax lyrical. The organiser's dream is to have an entry of a number of pairs which is one of the sequence 2, 4, 8, 16, 32 etc., in which case the draw is easy. Faced with an entry of 11.5 pairs, some might despair, but we in Yorkshire can cope with any eventuality. The solution is for the organiser to stand aside (now 11 pairs) and then to play three preliminary games (thus losing three pairs) and get the pairs back to the magical sequence at the number eight. However, it does sound odd that there are six pairs in the preliminary round and eight in the quarter-finals.

Nevertheless, once the preliminaries had been played, the tournament ran smoothly and no matches ran inconsiderately to three games. Good grief: under the old licensing laws we might have finished the tournament before the pubs opened! There

was no need for the organiser to act the Anne Robinson and dictate to contestants that they must play in a certain order or to a certain time schedule. Discipline was capable of being lax. The whole atmosphere was relaxed.

Some results are worthy of comment. The School put out pairings which did not proceed far in the main Tournament. Nevertheless, the pairs comprised staff players rather than pupils, and this gives a welcome sign that the School may be able to revive the sport, if the staff transmit their evident enthusiasm to the students.

Some pairs played 'out of their skin'. How was it that Neil Roberts and Bob Sandie could beat Steve Korris and Chris Jones 15-3 in their first game and yet only win the second to 12? Easing off? And John Ellacott and Chris Taylor losing their first game in the quarter-finals by 13-15, with Brian Kirk and Stuart Kirby winning the second by 15-5 suggests initial over-confidence on the part of the Derby Moor pair.

Inevitably, the attention focussed on the final. Last year, Neil Roberts and Bob Sandie triumphed over Dave Hebden and Hamish Buchanan. This year, the defending champions couldn't defend their title successfully, and by dint of pounding the ball relentlessly onto Bob (still recovering from injury problems), Hebden and Buchanan won the day and thus the J.H.Whitley trophy.

In the plate tournament, the pairs played in two blocks to produce two pairs to play a final. Injury and train times meant that there was fall-out from the plate, but nevertheless the result was a plate final that produced an excellent contest, a three-gamer involving Dave Clark and Roger Pearson against Brian Kirk and Stuart Kirby. If we suspected over-confidence in the Derby Moor pair in the main tournament, it was shaken by being taken to 3 games by Yorkshire pair Dave and Roger.

The serious business of the tournament then got under way with the ritual sampling of the landlord's best Landlord (Timothy Taylors', of course) at the nearby sign of the Black Horse in the village. Once rehydrated to acceptable levels, those remaining dined in style. Those wishing to emulate the experience should note the date of Saturday 15th October in their diaries.

Ian Roberts

West of England Open Championships, 30th/31st October 2004

(Sherborne School)

Singles. 1st Round: M Bate bt S Werkshagen 11-7 11-2; J Hughes bt J Thomas 11-0 11-6; J Minta bt A Pringle 12-10 11-9; D Fox bt S Maskell 11-3 11-2; D Hebden bt D Kirk 11-4 11-4; P d'Ancona bt B Hitchens 11-0 11-0; N Roberts bt N Geere 11-2 11-0; B Taberner bt D Park 11-7 11-1; E Fuller bt C Thomas 11-0 11-0; M Hajialexandrou bt K Henry 11-5 11-3; J Bristow bt O Stone-Lee 11-7 6-11 11-7; T Lewis bt E Hatton 11-4 11-0; J Nelmes bt A Smith 11-1 11-0; H Buchanan bt J Savery 11-2 11-0. **2nd Round:** J Toop bt Bate 11-9 11-3; Minta bt Hughes 12-11 12-10; Fox bt Hebden 11-0 11-8; d'Ancona bt C Jones 11-0 11-3; Roberts bt Taberner 11-5 11-0; Hajialexandrou bt Fuller 11-7 11-9; Bristow bt Hatton 11-8 11-8; Buchanan bt Nelmes 7-11 11-4 11-6. **Quarter-Finals:** Toop bt Minta 11-2 11-0; d'Ancona bt Fox 11-2 11-4; Roberts bt Hajialexandrou 11-0 11-1; Buchanan bt Bristow 11-2 11-5. **Semi-Finals:** Toop bt d'Ancona 11-3 11-2; Roberts bt Buchanan 11-8 2-11 11-2.

Final: Roberts bt Toop 11-8 11-1.

Plate: Stone-Lee.

Doubles. 1st Round: N MacIver & O Stone-Lee bt J Hughes & J Savery 12-11 12-10; D Fox & D Moar bt K Henry & T Lewis 11-1 11-2; M Bate & J Toop bt E Fuller & B Hitchens 11-4 11-7;

H Buchanan & J Nelmes bt D Kirk & D Park 11-1 11-2; J Bristow & C Jones bt S Maskell & S Werkshagen 5-11 11-4 11-6; J Minta & J Thomas bt N Geere & C Thomas 12-11 11-5; P d'Ancona & B Taberner bt A Pringle & A Smith 11-3 11-6. *Quarter-Finals:* D Hebden & N Roberts bt Maclver & Stone-Lee 11-5 11-6; Bate & Toop bt Fox & Moar 11-5 11-4; Buchanan & Nelmes bt Bristow & Jones 11-0 11-4; d'Ancona & Taberner bt Minta & Thomas 11-1 11-3. *Semi-Finals:* Hebden & Roberts bt Bate & Toop 11-8 11-8; Buchanan & Nelmes bt d'Ancona & Taberner 4-11 11-3 11-8.

Final: Buchanan & Nelmes bt Hebden & Roberts 8-11 11-5 11-3.
Plate: Hughes & Savery.

With a good entry of 31 in the singles and 17 pairs in the doubles and many strong unseeded players, there were always going to be some tough early-round matches. It was good to have two Sherborne boys (Kirk and Park) participating this year. Although they both lost in the first round, they played extremely well in both competitions.

It was the current Oxford University captain Bristow who produced the first upset when he defeated the seventh seed Stone-Lee in three hard-fought games. In the next round, he beat last year's Oxford captain Hatton but finally succumbed to the second seed Buchanan, who had been pushed to the limit in an earlier round by the improving Nelmes.

As is often the case, it was the top four seeds who reached the semi-final stage, with Toop overcoming d'Ancona relatively easily. The other semi produced a long and tense match in which Roberts finally overcame Buchanan.

The final was an unexpected match, with Roberts jettisoning his normal hard-hitting game and playing much softer shots down the walls, but always to an excellent length. Toop trailed throughout the first game but pulled back strongly in the latter stages, so even though he lost the game, a Toop revival was expected in the second game. However, Roberts continued his successful tactics of the first game and ended up the clear winner.

In the doubles the seeds won their way through, although Jones and Bristow, the sixth seeds, needed three games to overcome Werkshagen and Maskell. The final was a fast and exciting battle that could have gone either way. In the end, Nelmes and Buchanan hit the ball harder for longer to win in three games.

Peter Dunscombe



30 years West of England organiser: Peter Dunscombe (left) with singles winner Neil Roberts and runner-up James Toop.

Schools Winchester Fives Doubles Tournament, 7th November 2004

(Winchester College)

1st Round: Winchester I bt Tonbridge II 11-2 11-1; Marlborough bt St. Paul's III 11-3 11-5; Winchester III bt Christ's Hospital I 11-3 11-7; St. Paul's I bt Winchester IV 7-11 12-10 11-5; Winchester II bt Christ's Hospital III 11-2 11-4; Tonbridge I bt St. Paul's II 11-7 9-11 11-1; Blundell's bt KCS 11-8 11-3; Sherborne bt Christ's Hospital II 11-2 11-0. *Quarter-Finals:* Winchester I bt Marlborough 11-2 11-6; St. Paul's I bt Winchester III 11-8 11-6; Winchester II bt Tonbridge I 11-9 11-7; Sherborne bt Blundell's 11-6 5-11 11-8. *Semi-Finals:* Winchester I bt St. Paul's I 11-1 11-8; Winchester II bt Sherborne 12-10 11-9.

Final: Winchester I bt Winchester II 11-7 11-0.
Plate: Marlborough.

The tournament was supported by eight schools, all mainly or exclusively Rugby Fives-playing except the hosts, Winchester. Once the visiting players had reconciled themselves to the realities of the butress, the standard of play was high, and there were at least two outstanding matches in the first round.

The first involved Winchester IV, late substitutes who played very soundly, and St. Paul's I, a young and promising pair who lost the first game but managed to take the second narrowly and the third more comfortably as they learnt to cope with the different court. The other three-game match in round 1 opposed Tonbridge I and St. Paul's II, who traded two very close games before the older Tonbridgians came home comfortably in the third.

The quarter-finals were all worth watching, with Winchester's top two pairs recording victories over the plucky Marlborough and Tonbridge I, and their third pair fighting a losing battle against the ever-improving St. Paul's I. Old rivals Sherborne and Blundell's had a superb three-game battle, the result in doubt until late on, when Sherborne just managed to edge home.

Winchester I (Mohammed and Pumphrey) won the first game of their semi-final against St. Paul's I (Hay and Seigel) by a distance and then, typically, were made to fight hard for the second, which they eventually won to eight. Winchester II (Ellison and Eccles) played their best fives in the other semi to defeat Sherborne (Kirk and Park) in two extremely close games.

The final between the two home pairs was slightly anticlimactic, as such finals can be. The second pair managed to glean seven points in a scrappy first game but were swamped in game two as their more experienced rivals piled on the pressure. Congratulations nonetheless to both pairs, the second for having reached the final and the winners, Hal Mohammed and Ollie Pumphrey, for being the outstanding pair in the tournament, not losing a game to any of their opponents.

The plate was a high-class event, with many pairs showing their abilities as they settled down on the courts and started to find the butress (or to ignore it successfully!). Any one of four or five pairs could have won the plate, but the eventual and worthy winners were Marlborough (Montagu-Pollock and Davies), who defeated Blundell's (Dyke and Beach) narrowly in a good final.

Many thanks to Winchester College for the use of their courts and facilities, and to Jamie McManus, the new master-in-charge, for his help throughout the day.

David Barnes

National Winchester Fives Doubles Championship, 14th November 2004

(Sedbergh School, Cumbria)

1st Round: H Clerey & D Exley bt G McIntyre & I Roberts 15-3 15-10. *Quarter-Finals:* H Buchanan & N Roberts bt N Geere &

K Henry 15-0 15-2; R Pearson & R Sandie bt M Raikes & J Reynard 15-5 15-7; S Fraser & I McKerrow bt Clerey & Exley 15-0 15-2; D Fox & D Hebden bt L Catlow & J Gribble 15-3 15-2. *Semi-Finals:* Buchanan & Roberts bt Pearson & Sandie 15-5 15-0; Fox & Hebden bt Fraser & McKerrow 15-3 15-6.

Final: Fox & Hebden bt Buchanan & Roberts 15-5 15-10.

Plate: Catlow & Gribble

The weather was kind to us, and the championship postponed from March was duly played on a coldish November day, albeit with a reduced field of doughty contenders. Top travel award goes to Nick Geere for coming (via Oxford on the Saturday) all the way from the far tip of Kent; what his journey home was like, I dread to think – let alone his first lesson on Monday morning!

Ian Fuller, joint holder of the trophy since 1996, was sadly unable to play this year, but his perennial partner Dave Hebden teamed up with Old Sedberghian Dave Fox, while Hamish Buchanan partnered Neil Roberts for the first time in this event, so the finalists were predictable even though Scotsmen Simon Fraser and Ian McKerrow provided a good challenge to Fox and Hebden in their semi-final.

Sedbergh always seems to produce a good final, and this one was a magnificent exhibition of Winchester Fives at its best, played in front of a gallery reduced to gasps of admiration at the accuracy and skill of both pairs. All four players produced telling shots throughout the two games, and the scores fail to do justice to the losers, but the deciding factor was the superior buttress play of Fox and Hebden, both in defence and attack. After winning the first game, they had to cope with a change of tactics which temporarily disturbed their pattern of play and produced the odd unforced error, but they rode the pressure and got their second wind to come home by a narrower margin in the second.

Congratulations to Dave Fox on his first tournament win – it was worth waiting for! – and of course to Dave Hebden who continues his fantastic record in the 'Bridge', which he first won with Simon Constantine back in 1985 and has won twelve further times since then. He still reads the Winchester game better than anyone else, and while his legs can still carry him, he will continue to be the best.

The plate competition was a round robin for five pairs, and the deserved winners were Laurence Catlow and Joe Gribble. Many thanks to Laurence for his help with the tournament, and to Sedbergh School for their hospitality, including a superb lunch.

David Barnes



Sedbergh plate winners: Laurence Catlow (left) and Joe Gribble.

National Student and British Universities Championships, 26th-28th November 2004

(Fettes College and Edinburgh Academy)

Singles. *1st Round:* N Patel (Cambridge) bt S Robson (Edinburgh) 15-3 15-0; H Manning (Edinburgh) bt A Smith (Birkbeck) 9-15 15-4 15-11; H Ishii (UCL) bt C Lamb (York) 15-0 15-3; J Furniss (Oxford) bt C Wright (Cambridge) 15-0 15-2; P Rider (Durham) bt T Brook (Edinburgh) 15-2 15-2; J Major (Edinburgh) bt T Papior (KCL) 15-0 15-0; H Clive (Edinburgh) bt P Nichols (Cambridge) 15-7 15-6; R Ross (Durham) bt N Sellar (Dublin) 15-0 15-4; S Ranasinghe (Oxford) w/o M Conrad (Edinburgh); W Hardymont (Oxford) w/o J Abecassis (Cambridge); S Byron Evans (Exeter) bt T Barlow (Edinburgh) 15-1 15-8; D Grant (UCL) bt H Richards (Durham) 15-3 15-2; G Makins (Edinburgh) w/o M Hanney (Cambridge); J Cooper (Open) bt J Stevens (Cambridge) 15-11 15-2; D Mason-Malik (Edinburgh) bt D Hewson (KCL) 15-0 15-4; S Korris (Leeds) bt G McGairl (KCL) 15-4 15-3; R Nichols (Durham) bt E Ronan (Oxford) 15-12 12-15 15-12. *2nd Round:* J Bristow w/o S MacLennan (Fettes); J Heath (Oxford) bt L Pedreschi (Edinburgh Academy) 15-1 15-1; A Bhuva (Cambridge) bt M Reid (Edinburgh Academy) 15-5 15-2; Patel bt Manning 15-4 15-5; W Powell (Edinburgh) bt Ishii 15-2 15-7; Rider bt Furniss 15-2 15-7; Major bt Clive 15-3 15-6; B Elfick (Cambridge) bt Ross 15-7 15-0; C Brooks (Cambridge) bt Ranasinghe 15-6 15-8; Byron Evans bt Hardymont 15-8 15-3; Grant bt Makins 15-7 15-5; J Pendergrass (Loretto) w/o Cooper; A Beverly (Cambridge) bt Mason-Malik 13-15 15-5 15-9; Korris bt A MacGregor (Edinburgh Academy) 15-0 15-0; Nichols bt A Fyffe (Fettes) 15-5 15-4; Lee bt G Sharp (Edinburgh Academy) 15-1 15-0. *3rd Round:* Bristow bt Heath 15-6 15-3; Patel bt Bhuva 16-14 15-13; Powell bt Rider 16-15 15-13; Elfick bt Major 15-5 15-12; Brooks bt Byron Evans 15-9 15-8; Pendergrass bt Grant 15-10 15-10; Beverly bt Korris 15-10 15-8; Lee bt Nichols 15-5 15-2. *Quarter-Finals:* Bristow bt Patel 15-8 15-1; Elfick bt Powell 15-1 15-3; Brooks bt Pendergrass 15-2 10-15 15-10; Lee bt Beverly 15-11 15-6. *Semi-Finals:* Bristow bt Elfick 12-15 15-10 15-9; Brooks bt Lee 16-15 15-8.

Final: Bristow bt Brooks 15-8 15-1.

Plate: Korris.

Doubles. *1st Round:* G Makins & H Manning (Edinburgh) bt D Newsome & R Ross (Durham) 16-14 15-16 15-9; M Conrad & D Mason-Malik (Edinburgh) bt P Nichols & J Stevens (Cambridge) 15-11 15-6; D Hewson & T Papior (KCL) w/o T Brook & J Major (Edinburgh); H Mohammed & O Pumphrey (Winchester) bt A Beverly & N Patel (Cambridge) 8-15 15-12 15-8; A Bhuva & C Wright (Cambridge) bt D Moger & S Robson (Edinburgh) 15-3 15-5. *2nd Round:* C Brooks & B Elfick (Cambridge) bt Makins & Manning 15-3 15-3; H Ishii & A Smith (UCL/Birkbeck) bt L Pedreschi & M Reid (Edinburgh Academy) 15-5 15-2; D Grant & G McGairl (UCL/KCL) bt Conrad & Mason-Malik 15-8 15-6; T Barlow & W Powell (Edinburgh) bt J Furniss & J Heath (Oxford) 15-10 15-6; J Bristow & E Ronan (Oxford) bt Hewson & Papior 15-0 15-0; Mohammed & Pumphrey w/o A Fyffe & S MacLennan (Fettes); W Hardymont & S Ranasinghe (Oxford) bt A MacGregor & G Sharp (Edinburgh Academy) 15-2 15-3; A Lee & R Nichols (Durham) bt Bhuva & Wright 15-4 15-4. *Quarter-Finals:* Brooks & Elfick bt Ishii & Smith 15-7 15-10; Grant & McGairl bt Barlow & Powell 15-6 15-11; Bristow & Ronan bt Mohammed & Pumphrey 15-8 15-8; Lee & Nichols bt Hardymont & Ranasinghe 15-8 15-5. *Semi-Finals:* Brooks & Elfick bt Grant & McGairl 15-4 15-5; Bristow & Ronan bt Lee & Nichols 16-14 5-15 15-6.

Final: Brooks & Elfick bt Bristow & Ronan 15-3 15-4.

Plate: Furniss & Heath.

Any lingering doubts as to whether Edinburgh would be a venue too distant or too expensive to get to were quickly dispelled as the entries rolled in during the month or so prior to the championships.

In the end we had a record entry of 51 for the singles and 22 pairs for the doubles, representing 16 institutions (including nine BUSA universities). Even allowing for a few last-minute withdrawals, we still had a record 45 in the singles and 20 pairs actually on court.

Our hosts were Fettes College and Edinburgh Academy, with a 'people carrier' service by the organisers transporting the competitors the one mile between venues. Our thanks to both schools and in particular to Mark Peel and Charles Brookman for assisting with pre-organisation and allowing us the use of their facilities.

Even with a total of six courts, little time was available for sightseeing in this magnificent city, certainly not by the organisers, who consisted of a distinguished team of five. It did not go unnoticed that all organisers (plus Denise Hall-Wilton as photographer) are members of the RFA Board, which shows the importance that the Governing Body of the sport places on Student University Fives. Apart from myself (long-term organiser Dave Gardner), the team included co-organiser Chris Jones (ex Durham University); RFA President Geoff Sherratt; champion of all champions Wayne Enstone; Handbook editor and archivist David Barnes. My thanks to everyone for staying at the courts for many long hours, including a twelve-hour session on Saturday!

A lot of excellent fives was played, with a very high standard being achieved. The National Schools champions from the previous four years were competing, plus one potential champion from Loretto in the National Student event.

The current doubles champions from Cambridge, Brian Elfick and Charlie Brooks, managed to retain their title in impressive style, whilst James Bristow from Oxford finally managed to win the singles title with a devastating display against Charlie Brooks, who unfortunately lost his second successive final.

In the Plate singles, Steve Korris triumphed over a 'home' competitor, Johnny Major from Edinburgh. Steve is a first-year student at Leeds, and we wish him well in his efforts to get the Leeds Club up and running again shortly. The doubles Plate went to Oxford (Jack Furniss and Johnny Heath), but notably Edinburgh crept into the honours again as runners-up.

Apart from the actual winners there were notable performances from Dan Grant (UCL) and Adrian Lee (Durham), so it will be a tough call selecting the BUSA team v RFA later in the season. Amongst the National Student entrants, Jamie Pendergrass, Hal Mohammed and Ollie Pumphrey all stood out as potential BUSA champions.

Competitors came from as far as London, Exeter, Winchester, Oxford, Cambridge, York and Leeds, not to mention the impressive support from Edinburgh.

Trophies were presented by RFA President Geoff Sherratt and BUSA representative Stuart Fowlie, whom we were delighted to see attending the event all day on the Sunday, and who was even persuaded to take to the court and try his hand at the game. Sadly, Stuart is leaving BUSA in 2005, but I would like to thank him for his tremendous support for fives during his time in office.

We were extremely pleased with all aspects of this, the 45th University championships. My thanks go to everyone, in particular the competitors and spectators, who ensured that there was a full gallery watching the event right up to the last shot being played. One has to say that, overall, this was the most successful event that we have ever had.

David Gardner

[Editor's note: Photos of this event are to be found in the centre pages of the Handbook.]

National Open Singles Championship (Jesters Club Cup) 2004

(Final rounds at St. Paul's School, Barnes)

Last 16: N Roberts bt S Fraser 15-4 15-1; M Bate bt O Stone-Lee 15-10 15-5; M Cavanagh bt E Fuller 15-7 15-3; P d'Ancona bt D Hebden 15-10 15-1; H Buchanan bt S Roberts 15-7 15-11; P Bishop bt J Nelmes 15-11 8-15 15-13; D Fox bt C Jones 15-10 15-6; J Toop by M Bowness 15-7 15-10. *Quarter-Finals:* Roberts bt Bate 15-8 15-5; Cavanagh bt d'Ancona 15-5 15-3; Bishop bt Buchanan 5-15 15-12 0-0 ret.; Toop bt Fox 15-8 15-5. *Semi-Finals:* Cavanagh bt Roberts 11-15 15-8 15-0; Toop bt Bishop 15-7 15-10.

Final: Cavanagh bt Toop 6-15 15-4 15-3.

Plate: Fraser.

'Whenever Cavanagh touched the ball, there was an end of the chase. His eye was certain, his hand fatal, his presence of mind complete.' Words to describe Matt Cavanagh as he strode to his first national singles title? Not quite. They are from William Hazlitt's Times obituary for 'famous hand-fives player' John Cavanagh in 1820.

But the modern-day Cavanagh was going the right way towards emulating his 19th Century namesake as he overcame James Toop 6-15, 15-4, 15-3. His victory was the culmination of a Jesters Club Cup tournament with the biggest entry since 1991.

The last 16 produced tight battles from the start. Past champion Neil Roberts settled a score with Simon Fraser, the man who put him out in the quarter-finals in 2001. Sam Roberts gave Hamish Buchanan much to think about, too; and Matt Bowness smattered his close encounter with Toop with a clutch of Fulleresque cross-shots.

Hamish and James survived the onslaughts, but the pick of the bunch was Phil Bishop's cliff-hanger against Johnny Nelmes, which

he finally won 15-13 in the last game. No wonder Johnny, who lost the plate final to Simon Fraser, was seen looking queasy at Reading Services on his way home.

The quarter-final clash between Buchanan and Bishop was dramatic enough when the scores levelled at game-all. Sadly, the denouement was a piecing yell from Hamish as he reached for a tasty high volley. The back strain forced his retirement at 0-0 in the third.

Cavanagh was conspicuous by his relatively comfortable dispatch of Paddy d'Ancona, while his semi-final opponent Roberts had to work harder against Marcus Bate, who is very much a chart-mover in the national rankings.

In the semis, Neil achieved his usual domination in a 15-4 first game, but Matt's positional play and winners took their toll in the second and he found the decider a 15-0 formality against a tired opponent. The other half of the draw produced a hard exchange of blows between Toop and Bishop, who ended 7-15, 10-15 on the wrong side of a very entertaining match.



*National Singles Champion
Matt Cavanagh.*

James's shot-making had looked impressive throughout, but in the final it touched the sublime and he looked well on the way to defending his title after a 15-4 win in the first game against Matt. Then misfortune struck, and he returned from the break suffering obvious pain in his left arm.

There had been a few cries of despair and frustration from Matt in the first, but he kept his nerve to make his shots really count in the second game. Shots which had missed early on were transformed into winners as Matt piled pressure on James on both wings, taking the final two games and the trophy 15-4, 15-3.

Could his next test be to copy the 19th Century Cavanagh's habit of playing matches for 'wagers and dinners'? Perhaps just leave the betting to the new Fantasy Fives League.

Ollie Stone-Lee

Ladies' National Open Championships 2004

(St. Paul's School, Barnes)

Singles. *1st Round:* S McDowell bt L Harvey 11-2 11-0; E Seton bt L Redmond 11-2 11-1; S Blessley bt A Shelley 11-0 11-3. *Quarter-Finals:* C Knowles bt McDowell 11-0 11-0; Seton bt M Whitehead 11-8 12-10; D Redmond bt D Hall-Wilton 11-4 11-1; P Smith bt Blessley 11-3 11-3. *Semi-Finals:* Knowles bt Seton 15-2 15-0; Smith bt Redmond 15-3 15-5.

Final: Knowles bt Smith 15-1 15-0.

Plate: Harvey.

Doubles. *1st Round:* S Blessley & S McDowell bt L Harvey & A Shelley 11-5 11-7. *Semi-Finals:* C Knowles & M Whitehead bt Blessley & McDowell 15-0 15-1; D Redmond & E Seton bt D Hall-Wilton & P Smith 15-6 10-15 15-9.

Final: Knowles & Whitehead bt Redmond & Seton 15-7 15-2.

We started the day with the singles competition. This year we had four entrants who mainly play Eton Fives, of whom three contested the plate competition, having lost in the first round. Most first and second round matches went according to the seeding, with the exception of the close match between Melanie Whitehead and Emma Seton. Emma, showing the benefit of regular play at Derby Moor, won through to the semi-finals. Dominique Redmond tried hard to repeat her success at the Winchester competition but was unable to beat Paula Smith on the Rugby court. Claire Knowles showed her usual expertise by proceeding to beat Paula in the final, with the loss of only one point. The plate competition was won by Laura Harvey from St. Olave's.



Ladies' Singles Champion Claire Knowles.

The doubles competition went as predicted in the top half of the draw, with Claire and Melanie easily progressing to the final. In the bottom half, Paula and Denise fought a long, hard three-game battle against Dominique and Emma, with Dom and Emma the eventual victors. Dom and Emma showed early promise in the final but were eventually beaten by Claire and Melanie in two games.

Melanie Whitehead

RFA Club President's Cup, 12th December 2004

(Merchant Taylors' School, Northwood)

1st Round: R Baty & D Grant bt N Geere & B Nithsdale 15-2 15-7; B Hanton & G McIntyre bt H Buchanan & J Clifford/C Lamb 16-15 15-13; P Atkinson & P Cohen bt J Hawke & C Jones 15-3 15-1; P Chopra & E Hatton bt L Graham-Taylor & J Schroeter 13-15 15-3 15-4; M Hanney & C Thomas bt B Baral & C Lamb 5-15 15-3 15-2; B Brookes & E M-M Crichton bt D Hebden & J Walter 16-15 15-2; M Arnott & A Smith bt A Pringle & I Roberts 15-7 15-9; N Arnott & O Stone-Lee bt J Bartle & B Kirk 15-8 15-12. *Quarter-Finals:* Baty & Grant bt Hanton & McIntyre 15-7 15-0; Chopra & Hatton bt Atkinson & Cohen 15-10 15-12; Brookes & M-M Crichton bt Hanney & Thomas 15-7 15-2; N Arnott & Stone-Lee bt M Arnott & Smith 15-9 15-7. *Semi-Finals:* Chopra & Hatton bt Baty & Grant 5-15 15-6 15-7; Brookes & M-M Crichton bt N Arnott & Stone-Lee 15-7 15-13.

Final: Chopra & Hatton bt Brookes & M-M Crichton 15-5 15-13.

Plate A (Love Mug): Hebden & Walter.

Plate B ('T' Pot): Atkinson & Cohen.

Plate C (Mate's Plate): Baty & Grant.

This year's event was oversubscribed, but withdrawals eventually brought in all those on the waiting list. Like policemen, the players (mostly) looked younger than ever, and the four finalists' average age was a mere 25 years – but of the final, more later. Unlike last year, the draw failed to produce any real cliff-hangers, and there were only three matches in the main competition which required a deciding game to be played, all of them clear-cut. Despite this lack of tension, much good fives was played, and four zippy G6 balls lasted the whole tournament – a tribute to ballmaker Nigel Gordon's efforts.

The quarter-finals were all decided in straight games, the closest match being the one in which Prashant Chopra and Ed Hatton beat Phil Atkinson and Pete Cohen. It was good to see Phil back on court after his frozen shoulder, but even he was unable to prolong this match to three games. Another keen quarter-final saw Neil and Matt Arnott in opposition to each other, with father plus Ollie Stone-Lee beating son and Alex Smith in two good games.

The first semi was a three-gamer, the first game going easily to Richard Baty and Dan Grant, but the next two almost as comfortably to their opponents Chopra and Hatton, who had now started to play rather well together. In the other half, Ben Brookes and Ed M-M Crichton hit the still lively ball a bit too hard for the tiring Arnott, despite Stone-Lee's continuing efforts to counter-attack and thus protect his partner.

There was plenty more lusty hitting in the final, causing a certain amount of muttering in the gallery about lack of variety, but Chopra and Hatton successfully contained most of Brookes's



(from right) Bhaswar Baral (organiser) and helpers Kalyan Baral, Susan and Alex Smith.

hard left-handed hitting and scored enough back-wall nicks to take the first game easily. The second was much closer, but Brookes and Crichton couldn't quite maintain the necessary fire-power to take the match to three games. Congratulations then to Prashant Chopra and Ed Hatton on their first President's Cup victory, and to all the plate winners detailed above.

Joan Wood came to support her favourite tournament again this year, presenting the Mate's Plate and congratulating the competitors on having almost as much energy as she did! Bhaswar Baral thanked all who had helped with the tournament, including his wife Kanika, his father Kalyan, Susan and Alex Smith, Denise Hall-Wilton, Chantel Sampson, James Clifford and Merchant Taylors' School. Geoff Sherratt presented the other trophies and thanked Bhaswar for organising another magnificent day's fives.

David Barnes

West of England Schools Championships, 8th/9th January 2005 (Marlborough College)

Key to schools: Ab = Abingdon. All = Alleyn's. B = Blundell's. CH = Christ's Hospital. E = Eastbourne. KCS = KCS Wimbledon. L = Loretto. Mal = Malvern. Mar = Marlborough. MT = Merchant Taylors'. Sh = Sherborne. SP = St. Paul's. T = Tonbridge. W = Winchester.

Open Singles. *Prelim. Round:* C Knight (T) bt P Stoop (Mar) 15-9; N Halliday bt J Howie (T). *1st Round:* P Simister (SP) bt P Eccles (W) 15-13; M Hale (CH) bt R Dyke (B) 15-4; Knight bt S Lewis (All) 15-5; A Lim (W) bt N Caplan (MT) 15-2; F Halliday (SP) bt O Beach (B) 15-10; M Knight-Robson (T) bt B Robinson (W) 15-11; C Teschmacher (KCS) bt C Hornsey (Ab) 15-1; O Khan (CH) bt E Pugh (All) 15-9; E Hansom (All) bt R Morgan (Ab) 15-8; A Jennings (SP) bt R Ruperal (MT) 15-1; R Walter (T) bt B Reed (SP) 15-10; J Walsh (CH) bt W Moir (T) 15-8; J Davies (Mar) bt C Birch (CH) 15-13. *2nd Round:* J Pendergrass (L) bt Simister 15-3; C Hay (SP) bt Hale 15-7; W Midmer (KCS) bt Knight 15-3; C Jones (T) bt A Horsewood (W) 15-8; A Montagu-Pollock (Mar) bt Lim 15-0; H Jefferies (KCS) bt F Halliday 15-10; M Gibbor (SP) bt Knight-Robson 15-3; W Ellison (W) bt Teschmacher 15-0; D Kirk (Sh) bt Khan 15-2; E Emmett (SP) bt Hansom 15-0; Jennings bt D Ackland (All) 16-15; A Seigel (SP) bt E Hammond (CH) 15-10; M Belassie (CH) bt Walter 15-1; E Carr (All) bt N Halliday 15-3; D Park (Sh) bt Walsh 15-0; H Mohammed (W) bt Davies 15-4. *3rd Round:* Pendergrass bt Hay 15-2; Jones bt Midmer 15-7; Montagu-Pollock bt Jefferies 15-2; Ellison bt Gibbor 15-9; Kirk bt Emmett 16-14; Seigel bt Jennings 15-9; Belassie bt Carr 15-6; Mohammed bt Park 15-12. *Quarter-Finals:* Pendergrass bt Jones 11-1 11-0; Montagu-Pollock bt Ellison 11-6 11-6; Kirk bt Seigel 11-4 11-1; Mohammed bt Belassie 11-5 11-4. *Semi-Finals:* Pendergrass bt Montagu-Pollock 11-6 11-6; Mohammed bt Kirk 11-1 11-6.

Final: Pendergrass bt Mohammed 11-4 11-4.

Plate: Eccles.

Open Doubles. *Prelim. Round:* Winchester III bt Tonbridge II 15-8; KCS I bt Merchant Taylors' 15-1; Alleyn's II bt Winchester IV 15-7; St. Paul's III bt KCS II 15-7. *1st Round:* Marlborough II bt Christ's Hospital II 15-11; Alleyn's I bt Blundell's II 15-6; Marlborough I bt Winchester III 15-4; KCS I bt St. Paul's IV 15-10; Blundell's I bt Christ's Hospital III 15-7; Alleyn's II bt Abingdon 15-4; St. Paul's III bt Alleyn's III 15-3. *2nd Round:* Winchester I bt Marlborough II 15-0; St. Paul's II bt Alleyn's I 15-4; Loretto bt Marlborough I 15-12; Tonbridge I bt KCS I 15-13; Winchester II bt Blundell's I 15-10; St. Paul's I bt Alleyn's II 15-5; Christ's Hospital I bt St. Paul's III 15-13; Sherborne I bt Tonbridge II 15-0.

Quarter-Finals: Winchester I bt St. Paul's II 11-0 11-1; Loretto bt Tonbridge I 11-1 12-10; St. Paul's I bt Winchester II 11-1 11-4; Sherborne bt Christ's Hospital I 11-5 11-2. *Semi-Finals:* Winchester I bt Loretto 11-5 11-3; Sherborne bt St. Paul's I 12-11 6-11 11-5.

Final: Winchester I (W Ellison & H Mohammed) bt Sherborne (D Kirk & D Park) 11-7 11-4.

Plate: Christ's Hospital II (C Birch & M Hale).

Under 16 Singles. *1st Round:* S Adcock (E) bt M Schofield (Mar) 15-4; E de Moraville (Mar) bt F Kelly (W) 15-5; R Garratt (E) bt J Lambert (B) 15-13; T Hoolahan (SP) bt A Meek (E) 15-8; P Winzeler (KCS) bt R Lowe (All) 15-10; W Gilbert (Mal) bt N Pickford (E) 15-4; W Kennedy (W) bt N Hemming-Brown (MT) 15-3; R Jesty (W) bt S Miller (MT) 15-10; D Pugh (W) bt T Crump (Mal) 15-8; B Hale (W) bt A George (All) 15-6; A Wilson (Mar) bt R Dadia (SP) 16-14. *2nd Round:* J Corbin (SP) bt Adcock 15-1; de Moraville bt B Litherland (W) 15-13; C Roberts (SP) bt C Cox (MT) 16-14; N Simpson (CH) bt Garratt 15-8; A Ladak (SP) bt Hoolahan 15-8; Winzeler bt J Hony (Mar) 15-12; R Patterson (L) bt Gilbert 15-3; D Tristão (SP) bt Kennedy 15-0; E Leakey (Sh) bt Jesty 15-1; J Dudding (W) w/o T Fabes (T); J Gibbor (SP) bt Pugh 15-2; A Ashok (SP) bt Hale 15-1; Wilson bt M King (Mal) 15-13; I Ackland (All) bt K Sloan (MT) 15-13; J Brubert (All) w/o A Botting (T); J Kelly (CH) bt T Davenport (W) 15-3. *3rd Round:* Corbin bt de Moraville 15-4; Simpson bt Roberts 15-3; Ladak bt Winzeler 15-6; Tristão bt Patterson 15-2; Leakey bt Dudding 15-6; Ashok bt Gibbor 15-13; Wilson bt Ackland 15-11; Kelly bt Brubert 15-1. *Quarter-Finals:* Corbin bt Simpson 11-6 11-4; Tristão bt Ladak 11-8 11-7; Leakey bt Ashok 11-3 11-6; Kelly bt Wilson 11-1 11-3. *Semi-Finals:* Tristão bt Corbin 11-8 11-8; Leakey bt Kelly 11-3 11-1.

Final: Tristão bt Leakey 11-6 11-2.

Plate: King.

Under 16 Doubles. *1st Round:* Marlborough II bt Winchester VII 15-2; St. Paul's IV bt Winchester V 15-0; Alleyn's II bt Winchester II 15-12; Eastbourne I bt St. Paul's III 15-9; Malvern II bt Winchester IV 16-15. *2nd Round:* Christ's Hospital I bt Marlborough II 15-11;



Jamie Pendergrass (Loretto) with the Kemp Cup.

St. Paul's IV bt Malvern I 15-9; Alleyn's II bt Merchant Taylors' 15-8; St. Paul's II bt Eastbourne II 15-1; Eastbourne I bt Alleyn's I 15-8; Marlborough I w/o Tonbridge; Malvern II bt Winchester I 15-6; St. Paul's I bt Winchester III 15-5. *Quarter-Finals:* St. Paul's IV bt Christ's Hospital I 11-5 8-11 11-6; St. Paul's II bt Alleyn's II 11-5 11-5; Marlborough I bt Eastbourne I 11-1 9-11 11-4; St. Paul's I bt Malvern II 11-2 11-1. *Semi-Finals:* St. Paul's II bt St. Paul's IV 11-6 12-10; St. Paul's I bt Marlborough I 11-5 11-5.

Final: St. Paul's II (J Corbin & D Tristão) bt St. Paul's I (A Ashok & A Ladak) 11-9 6-11 12-10.
Plate: Malvern I (W Gilbert & M King).

There was again a very healthy entry for these championships, with over 100 boys involved during a busy weekend at Marlborough College.

Before the Senior singles began, it seemed likely that the final would be a repeat of the Colts' final of two years ago between Jamie Pendergrass of Loretto and Hal Mohammed of Winchester, and this prediction was duly realized. There were, however, good performances from the enthusiastically supported local hero Archie Montagu-Pollock of Marlborough and David Kirk of Sherborne in the semi-finals.

The finalists were in a different class, however, and if they can both keep playing the game, they have the potential to achieve great things. On the day, it was the crisp, clean hitting of the very mobile Pendergrass which held sway in the final, although Mohammed might well have been the winner in other years.

The Colts competition had a more open look about it. There was a strong contingent from St. Paul's but also challengers such as Simpson and Kelly of Christ's Hospital and Leakey from Sherborne.

As always, the competition provided the seeding committee with a stern task. As it turned out, Daniel Tristão of St. Paul's (4th seed) battled through to the final, surviving a very close game with his team-mate (and 1st seed) James Corbin in a good semi-final. Edward Leakey had a more straightforward win in the other semi against Jeremy Kelly. Tristão continued his good form in the final and, after initial resistance from Leakey, swept to a convincing win.

The doubles saw some fine spirited play in both competitions. In the Seniors, Hal Mohammed and Will Ellison of

Winchester were clinically efficient throughout and in the final were always a step ahead of David Park and David Kirk of Sherborne, who had triumphed over St. Paul's I in a battle royal in the semi-final.

The Colts competition was dominated by St. Paul's, who were in a no-lose situation in an excellent ding-dong final, eventually won by their No. 2 pair (Daniel Tristão and James Corbin) narrowly overcoming the No. 1 pair (Anand Ashok and Alqahir Ladak) 12-10 in the third.

A very enjoyable and energy-sapping weekend thus drew to a close, and we were indebted as always to Marlborough College for their hospitality and warm and dry facilities.

Lionel Lawson

North-West Open Championships, 29th/30th January 2005.

(Manchester YMCA)

Singles. Prelim. Round: R Larnach bt J Thomas 11-8 11-1. *1st Round:* H Buchanan bt M Bliss 11-5 11-1; B Taberner bt K Brice 12-10 11-6; M Bowness bt K Henry 11-3 11-4; J Bristow bt S Maskell 11-9 11-0; D Fox bt B Nithsdale 11-1 11-2; E Fuller bt T Lewis 11-2 11-0; J Hughes bt T Curtin 11-6 11-0; J Beswick bt W Harrison 11-2 11-2; P Bishop bt T Walker 7-11 11-2 11-2; P Breslin bt R Perry 2-11 12-11 11-3; D Cotter bt S Werkshagen 11-9 5-11 11-2; N Austin bt R King 11-0 11-3; J Minta bt L Samuals 11-1 11-5; D Hebden bt S Korris 11-7 11-4; A Rew bt B Hitchens 11-2 11-9; P d'Ancona bt Larnach 11-2 11-1. *2nd Round:* Buchanan bt Taberner 11-4 11-0; Bowness bt Bristow 12-10 11-4; Fuller bt Fox 12-10 11-7; Beswick bt Hughes 11-3 11-0; Bishop bt Breslin 11-2 11-0; Austin bt Cotter 11-5 11-4; Minta bt Hebden 11-5 11-6; d'Ancona bt Rew 11-1 11-1. *Quarter-Finals:* Buchanan bt Bowness 9-11 11-4 11-6; Beswick bt Fuller 11-6 11-8; Bishop bt Austin 11-5 11-5; d'Ancona bt Minta 11-4 5-11 11-2. *Semi-Finals:* Buchanan bt Beswick 11-0 11-6; Bishop bt d'Ancona 11-7 11-5.

Final: Bishop bt Buchanan 3-11 11-6 11-2.

Plate: Henry.

Doubles. Prelim. Round: Larnach & Maskell bt Darlington & Samuals 11-2 10-12 12-11; Brice & King bt Harrison & Nithsdale 11-6 11-0; Darlington & Thomas bt Kirby & Kirk 10-12 12-10 12-10. *1st Round:* Buchanan & Perry bt Larnach & Maskell 11-5 11-1; Bristow & Lee bt Bowness & Henry 11-4 11-1; Hebden & Werkshagen bt Cotter & Curtin 11-7 11-2; Bishop & Minta bt Fuller & Hitchens 11-1 11-3; d'Ancona & Taberner bt Brice & King 11-5 11-0; Hughes & Rew bt Fox & Moar 7-11 12-10 11-9; Austin & Bliss bt Butterworth & Lewis 11-7 11-8; Beswick & Roberts bt Darlington & Thomas 11-0 11-1. *Quarter-Finals:* Buchanan & Perry bt Bristow & Lee 11-5 11-5; Bishop & Minta bt Hebden & Werkshagen 11-9 11-9; d'Ancona & Taberner bt Hughes & Rew 11-7 11-8; Beswick & Roberts bt Austin & Bliss 11-7 11-4. *Semi-Finals:* Buchanan & Perry bt Bishop & Minta 12-10 11-7; d'Ancona & Taberner bt Beswick & Roberts 11-8 11-2.

Final: Buchanan & Perry bt d'Ancona & Taberner 11-8 5-11 11-5.

Plate: Bowness & Henry.

First, I would like to thank all the players who travelled from London, the Midlands and the South-West (especially Bristol) for their continued support of the tournament.

On the Saturday there were twelve hours of continuous fives, resulting in a new champion. Hamish Buchanan had an excellent last-eight game against Matthew Bowness and then saw off John Beswick to get to the final. Edward Fuller had recorded a great win over Dave Fox before being beaten by



Daniel Tristão (left) and James Corbin (St. Paul's) with the Gardner Cup and the RFA Bowl.

Beswick. Phil Bishop beat Paddy d'Ancona in three to get to the final. Hamish won the first, but Phil was not going to be stopped and won the next two games to take his first title.

On the Sunday, nineteen pairs did battle in the doubles. Bishop and Minta played Buchanan and Perry in one semi-final and went down 12-10, 11-7 in an excellent battle. In the other semi, d'Ancona and Taberner had a great win over Beswick and Roberts 11-8, 11-2. The final was a brilliant three-game match which Buchanan and Perry won, but Paddy and Ben gave it their all.

The singles plate was won by Kevin Henry who beat Wayne Harrison 15-12 in a close encounter. The doubles was also won by Kevin, who played with Matthew Bowness; they won 15-6 in the final against Dan Cotter and Tom Curtin.

John Beswick

RFA v BUSA Representative Match, 6th February 2005.

(Christ's Hospital, Horsham)

Singles: (RFA names first) S Roberts lost to J Bristow (Oxford) 5-15; D Hebden bt C Brooks (Cambridge) 15-10; J Schroeter lost to A Lee (Durham) 7-15; B Lovett lost to B Elfick (Cambridge) 11-15; N Geere lost to A Beverly (Cambridge) 4-15; R Walters lost to S Byron-Evans (Exeter) 1-15.

Doubles: Roberts & Lovett lost to Elfick & Brooks 2-15 9-15; lost to Lee & Beverly 15-16; lost to Bristow & Byron-Evans 8-15. Hebden & Geere lost to Bristow & Byron-Evans 9-15 9-15; lost to Elfick & Brooks 5-15; lost to Lee & Beverly 7-15. Schroeter & Walters lost to Lee & Beverly 5-15 10-15; lost to Bristow & Byron-Evans 2-15; lost to Elfick & Brooks 2-15.

Result: BUSA (266 pts) bt RFA (126 pts).

A Universities team that was very strong in depth for a change, was expected to do well, perhaps even record a victory against the usually very strong and experienced RFA team.

In the end the BUSA players recorded a very comprehensive win by 140 clear points over a Governing Body team seriously weakened by last-minute withdrawals, which meant that none of their players were in the top 20 in the National rankings – most unusual!

All the BUSA students played extremely well, taking full advantage of the lack of pressure by the opposition, which allowed them to play their natural aggressive game and show their full potential. They never gave the RFA the opportunity to take command.

Of particular note were Sam Byron-Evans from Exeter and Alan Beverly from Cambridge, who were impressive at numbers 5 and 6 in the singles and also in the doubles, paired with higher-ranked players.

In all, 18 games were played – BUSA winning 17 of them. The only narrow defeat was in the singles, when the very experienced David Hebden beat Charlie Brooks from Cambridge.

In the doubles, the University champions for the past two years, Brian Elfick and Charlie Brooks (Cambridge), were dominant throughout, whilst Byron-Evans combined with James Bristow, the BUSA singles champion, and Beverly partnered Adrian Lee (Durham) to provide very effective second and third pairings, both of which again dominated all the opposition pairs.

This is only the second win by BUSA in the thirty-nine year history of the match, the other one being by just ten points in 1978. There was also a tied match in 1986. BUSA may well be able to field a similar team next year – but I doubt if the RFA will allow the same situation to occur again!

David Gardner

Oxford v Cambridge, 19th February 2005

(St. Paul's School, Barnes)

Singles (Oxford names first): JAO Bristow (Winchester & Worcester) bt A Beverly (St. Paul's & Girton) 15-6; WR Hardymont (Radley & St. Hugh's) lost to BR Elfick (Bradfield & Selwyn) 5-15; EO Ronan (Bradfield & St. Hugh's) bt N Patel (St. Paul's & Trinity) 15-6; NP Warrillow (St. Paul's & Pembroke) bt AN Bhuva (St. Paul's & St. John's) 15-13.

Doubles: Bristow & Ronan lost to Elfick & CG Brooks (St. Paul's & Caius) 3-15 15-16; lost to Beverly & JM Dickens (Bedford & Emmanuel) 15-12 7-15. Warrillow & JC Furniss (St. Paul's & St. Edmund Hall) lost to Beverly & Dickens 9-15 2-15; lost to Elfick & Brooks 4-15 2-15. Hardymont & J Heath (Radley & Exeter) bt Patel & JCD Paul (St. Paul's & St. John's) 15-9 15-10; bt Bhuva & J Abecassis (Clifton & St. John's) 15-8 15-0. LI Jamieson (St. Paul's & Christ Church) & STP Ranasinghe (St. Olave's & St. John's) bt Bhuva & Abecassis 11-15 15-10; lost to Patel & Paul 4-15 15-6.

Result: Cambridge bt Oxford 231-212.

Oxford Beavers v Cambridge Sparrows

Singles: NJD Hillier (Whitgift & Mansfield) bt MT Hanney (St. Paul's & Jesus) 15-1; SM Lewis (Winchester & St. Catherine's) bt LG Graham-Taylor (Merchant Taylors' & Downing) 15-3; ES Wilman (Giggleswick & Hertford) bt JWW Stevens (Tonbridge & Christ's) 15-2; CM Powrie (Whitgift & Hertford) bt CJ Wright (Oundle & Homerton) 15-0.

Doubles: Hillier & Lewis bt Hanney & Wright 15-4 15-0; bt Graham-Taylor & Stevens 15-4 15-1. Wilman & Powrie bt Graham-Taylor & Stevens 15-12 15-8; bt Hanney & Wright 15-6 15-4.

Result: Oxford Beavers bt Cambridge Sparrows 180-45.

In the closest Varsity Match since 2000, Cambridge beat Oxford for only the second time in thirteen years. The Cambridge singles line-up was weaker than anticipated because Charlie Brooks, last year's number one, was unwell, and Oxford won three of the singles matches through James Bristow, Ed Ronan and Nick Warrillow, with Brian Elfick the only winner for the Light Blues. The Oxford lead was only 10 points, but it was a blow to Cambridge's hopes.

Looking pale but determined, Brooks bravely emerged to play in the doubles, and he and Elfick won all their games, three of them by a wide margin. Their second pair, Alan Beverly and Jeremy Dickens, took a little while to settle down but scored heavily in the second game against Oxford 2 (Warrillow and Jack Furniss) and combined superbly to take a game off Bristow and Ronan, giving their side a good cushion in case of defeat in the bottom four.

It was at three that Oxford excelled themselves, the Old Radleian pair of Will Hardymont and Johnny Heath scoring maximum points and winning their last game to love to give Oxford a chance of something dramatic. Hardymont's performance was especially plucky, as he played throughout with a nasty shoulder injury sustained the week before.

Cambridge 3 (Niraj Patel and James Paul) had looked a little short of pace and penetration in their first two games, but they took the first game against Oxford 4 (Lawrence Jamieson and Sanjaya Ranasinghe) easily, only to lose the last almost as heavily. Cambridge 4 (Anish Bhuva and John Abecassis) held their own in the match with their opposite numbers, and managed eight valuable points against the rampant Oxford 3.

Although until quite a late stage the match had looked to be a real cliff-hanger, the eventual margin of victory for Cambridge

was 19 points. Last year it was Oxford's depth that saw them through, but the bottom fours were rather better matched this year and Cambridge's top two pairs played impressively to guarantee a winning score. Men of the Match were Brooks and Hardymont for their courage and skill, while Brian Elflick and James Bristow led their sides in exemplary fashion. St. Paul's provided no fewer than eight of the sixteen players – a great tribute to the School which is our welcoming host for the Varsity match.

Congratulations also go to another good Oxford Beavers team, who again defeated the Cambridge Sparrows easily this year, although not by quite such a large margin as last.

Sadly, the only news on the West Cambridge Sports Centre is that the cost of the whole project has now risen to £50 million, so the generous sponsorship of the Cambridge team this year by BRIT Insurance was extremely welcome!

David Barnes



The Cambridge team with the Jock Burnet Trophy from left: Jon Abecassis, Anish Bhuva, Alan Beverly, Brian Elflick (capt.), James Paul, Charlie Brooks, Jeremy Dickens, Niraj Patel.

North of England Open Championships, 26th/27th February 2005

(Durham University)

Singles. *1st Round:* R Nichols bt E Hatton 5-11 11-8 11-1; D Hebden bt H Richards 11-3 11-3; O Stone-Lee bt H Armistead 11-5 11-4; E Fuller bt R Ross 11-5 11-3; A Lee bt C Lamb 11-0 11-0; K Henry bt D Newsome 11-2 11-4. *Quarter-Finals:* H Buchanan bt Nichols 11-0 12-11; Hebden bt Stone-Lee 8-11 11-7 11-2; Fuller bt Lee 11-3 11-0; N Austin bt Henry 11-4 11-5. *Semi-Finals:* Buchanan bt Hebden 11-0 11-3; Fuller bt Austin 11-1 11-12 11-9.

Final: Buchanan bt Fuller 11-5 11-8.

Plate: Hatton.

Doubles. *1st Round:* Austin & Buchanan bt Armistead & Ross 11-0 11-0; Lee & Nichols bt W Enstone & Henry 12-11 11-9; S Korris & T Widdop bt Fuller & Hatton 11-7 11-9; Hebden & Stone-Lee bt Newsome & Richards 11-4 11-2. *Semi-Finals:* Austin & Buchanan bt Lee & Nichols 11-5 11-7; Hebden & Stone-Lee bt Korris & Widdop 11-4 11-3.

Final: Austin & Buchanan bt Hebden & Stone-Lee
4-11 12-11 11-9.

Plate: Fuller & Hatton.

It was three hundred miles north, but this year's Durham final was an all-Alley'n's affair. Hamish Buchanan notched up his fifth

victory in six years (and three in a row) as he beat Ed Fuller 11-5, 11-8 in the final.

Fuller the Father already has his name engraved several times on the trophy, and the Son looked determined to emulate his feat as he brushed aside the local knowledge of Adrian Lee in the quarter-finals.

He started his semi-final against Nick Austin in similar vein, taking the first game easily. Austin soon started to find the back wall nicks to level the match in a tight and tense 12-11 second game. And at 9-3 in the third, he looked on course to thwart the Fuller ambitions before Ed ground his way back into the match and into the final – 11-9.

The other half of the draw had tight tussles of its own from the start. Having survived a three-game encounter with Ed Hatton, Rico Nichols slumped to 0-11 in his first game against Buchanan. But the Durham student suddenly got the measure of the national number three with some sharp Eton fives-style volley winners and was only nudged out 11-12.

Elsewhere, Dave Hebden made uncharacteristic errors as he lost his first game against Ollie Stone-Lee. Those mistakes were reduced in the second, and by the third they had been transformed into winners, with the legendary Hebden right hand seemingly omnipresent in an easy win.

Dave could not put quite the same pressure on Hamish in the semi-final, and this set up a final where Hamish's sustained pressure was enough to keep Fuller under the cosh. The rising star's late rally in the second could not prevent defeat.

The plate final was won by the ever-energetic Ed Hatton, beating another Durham student, Rob Ross, 11-3, 11-0.

The doubles saw a student dream come true as Nichols and Lee defeated all-time master Wayne Enstone and the fast-improved Kevin Henry in a gripping battle. The wake-up call for the young pair came in the semis, where Buchanan and Austin proved just too powerful and accurate, despite the impressive shot play and retrieval of Nichols and Lee.

The other semi saw Stone-Lee and Hebden make their first final together (although Hebden, with his 98 titles, has seen rather a lot in other company), beating Tim Widdop and the hard-hitting Steve Korris in two games.

Stone-Lee and Hebden felt it was all rather too good to be true as they opened the final with an 11-4 first game. Sure enough, the pressure started to build in the second. Thwarted on their only match point by an outright Austin winner, they trailed 3-10 in the third, and a recovery of sorts only slowed Buchanan and Austin's 11-9 final game defence of their title.

The plate competition saw Hatton and Fuller stop Enstone winning what must be the first plate title of his illustrious career. Hatton's two pints before the match may not have been the best preparation but he still won his second plate of the weekend.

Ollie Stone-Lee

National Under 25s Championships, 5th/6th March 2005

(Denstone College, Uttoxeter)

Singles. *Pool 1:* E Hatton bt H Armistead 15-2; bt S Korris 15-4; bt G McGairl 15-2. Korris bt Armistead 15-0; bt McGairl 15-9. McGairl bt Armistead 15-5. *Pool 2:* D Grant bt E Maitland-Makgill-Crichton 15-11; bt R Ross 15-4; M-M-Crichton bt Ross 15-7. *Pool 3:* M Bate bt A Hodder 15-1; bt H Richards 15-1. Hodder bt Richards 15-5. *Pool 4:* J Bristow bt H Ishii 15-0; bt R Nichols 15-1. Nichols bt Ishii 15-10. *Quarter-Finals:* Bristow bt Nichols 15-4 15-13; Grant bt Korris 15-5 15-13; M-M-Crichton bt Hatton 15-9 15-13; Bate bt Hodder 15-2 15-1. *Semi-Finals:* Bristow bt Grant 15-6 15-9; Bate bt M-M-Crichton 15-3 retd. hurt.

Final: Bristow bt Bate 15-9 15-11.

Plate: *Armistead.*

Doubles. Round robin: Hatton & Korris bt Armistead & Richards 15-5; bt Grant & McGairl 15-10; bt Nichols & Ross 15-6. Bate & Bristow bt Armistead & Richards 15-2; bt Grant & McGairl 15-5; bt Nichols & Ross 15-4. Nichols & Ross bt Armistead & Richards 15-2; bt Grant & McGairl 15-0. Grant & McGairl bt Armistead & Richards 15-5.

Final: Bate & Bristow bt Hatton & Korris 15-6 15-8.

Plate: *Nichols & Ross.*

This year's tournament moved to Denstone College, close to Uttoxeter and Alton Towers.

In the initial round robins, where seeding for the quarters was on points' difference, Bristow and Bate cruised through. The organiser surprised himself with a solid display earning a third seeding, but despite a dodgy shoulder on his opponent's part, he was out-huffed in the quarters by Ed M-M-C for the second time in three years.

Bristow was made to work against Rich Nichols's crisp volleying, and Grant outlasted his nemesis of schoolboy days, Korris, before challenging but failing to overcome the Bristow juggernaut in the semis. Bate had meanwhile cruised through his quarter and then his semi against a cramped and hurt M-M-C, much to the organiser's chagrin.

A tired Bristow went on to prove his mettle in the final against the fresh and eager Bate. The latter seemed a little nervous and unfocused, probably unhelpt by the deterioration of the balls, but Bristow held his nerve and won in a gritty, consistent fashion. Armistead impressively snatched the plate from his Durham compatriots.

The doubles involved five pairs only, so again a round robin was employed. Bate and Bristow were generally on top in the final, but their dominance and control were challenged more than once by some determined baseline rallying from Hatton and Korris. Nichols and Ross took a deserved plate.

It was a pleasure to have Geoff Sherratt and Wayne Enstone spectate and present the prizes, and we certainly hope to have stimulated interest at the school.

I cannot end without expressing the competitors' and my own disappointment at the lack of a sizeable entry from Oxford, Cambridge and Edinburgh. I am very happy to listen to students' suggestions about venue and timings, particularly to do with the Varsity match. Durham, next year's venue, is an attractive town, has excellent courts and, as we all know, a great bunch of guys in the fives club. I hope that Edinburgh in particular, but also Oxford and Cambridge, will make an effort next year to support a competition that competitors and organiser put a great deal into.

Ed Hatton

National Under 13 Championships, 6th March 2005

(St. Paul's School, Barnes)

Key to schools: A = Alleyn's. CH = Christ's Hospital. L = Loretto. P = Pilgrims'. SO = St. Olave's.

Singles Pools: A. 1st: T McWhirter (P). 2nd: G Stansil (A). 3rd: C Allan (L). B. 1st: P Hanton (A). 2nd: A Kailey (SO). 3rd: W Hancock (P). C. 1st: R Dunk (SO). 2nd: W Clarke (P). 3rd: M Probert (CH). D. 1st: A Num (CH). 2nd: O Scott (P). 3rd: J Wilson-Goldsmith (A). E. 1st: J Elansey (SO). 2nd: P O'Boyle (CH). 3rd: K Co (A). F. 1st: J Connell (SO). 2nd: H Legge (P). 3rd: B Stephens Hemingway (A). 4th: A Mackay (L). G. 1st: D Hewlett (SO). 2nd: N Jones (A). 3rd: J Periam (L). 4th: A Elliott (CH). H. 1st: A Satterfield (CH). 2nd: J Clarke (SO). 3rd: T Parsons (P). I. 1st: S Crinall (SO). 2nd: C Bowden (P). 3rd: D Neale-Draysey

(CH). J. 1st: W Whiteaway (P). 2nd: D Bowden (A). 3rd: D Abbitt (CH). K. 1st: B Michaels (SO). 2nd: A Burns (P). 3rd: J Ward (CH). L. 1st: H Worthington (P). 2nd: T Seifert (L). 3rd: J Lodge (A).

Knockout stage: Round 1: Hanton bt McWhirter 15-0; Dunk bt C Bowden 15-4; Clarke bt Num 15-5; Elansey bt Connell 15-3; Satterfield bt Hewlett 15-5; Crinall bt D Bowden 15-4; Jones bt Whiteaway 15-9; Michaels bt Worthington 15-5. **Quarter-Finals:** Hanton bt Dunk 15-1; Elansey bt Clarke 15-8; Satterfield bt Crinall 15-1; Michaels bt Jones 15-1. **Semi-Finals:** Hanton bt Elansey 15-0; Satterfield bt Michaels 15-3.

Final: P Hanton (Alleyn's) bt A Satterfield (Christ's Hospital) 11-0 11-0.

Plate 1: *D Hewlett (St. Olave's).*

Plate 2: *A Kailey (St. Olave's).*

Plate 3: *M Probert (Christ's Hospital).*

Doubles Pools: A. 1st: A I. 2nd: SO II. 3rd: CH III. B. 1st: SO IV. 2nd: P III. 3rd: CH II. C. 1st: SO III. 2nd: L I. 3rd: P II. 4th: A IV. D. 1st: P I. 2nd: A II. 3rd: CH IV. E. 1st: SO I. 2nd: P V. 3rd: L II. F. 1st: CH I. 2nd: P IV. 3rd: A III.

Knockout stage: Quarter-Finals: Alleyn's I bt St. Olave's IV 15-8; St. Olave's III bt Pilgrims' III 15-2; St. Olave's II bt Pilgrims' I 15-5; St. Olave's I bt Christ's Hospital I 15-6. **Semi-Finals:** Alleyn's I bt St. Olave's III 15-7; St. Olave's II bt St. Olave's I 15-6.

Final: Alleyn's I (PA Hanton & BH Stephens Hemingway) bt St. Olave's II (S Crinall & R Dunk) 11-2 11-2

Plate 1: *Christ's Hospital I (A Satterfield & P O'Boyle).*

Plate 2: *Alleyn's II (N Jones & G Stansil).*

The fact that there were fewer competitors this year than in recent years was a little disappointing, but it did mean that the schedule was not quite as hectic as it sometimes is. There were no entries this year from St. Dunstan's, Stoke Newington or Whitgift – three schools who were represented last year – but there was a most welcome first-time entry from another school: a contingent from Loretto rose in the early hours of the morning to fly down from Edinburgh. I hope we shall see more of them in the years to come and I hope, too, that next year Clifton Prep School will be back now that they have started playing again in the refurbished College courts.

Of the five schools competing this year Alleyn's were the most successful, but it is nice to be able to report that, during the course of the day, each of the other four schools was represented in at least one final.

This year's singles champion was Peter Hanton from Alleyn's, whose father, Angus, and uncle, Bruce, will be known to many senior fives players. Peter is a very accomplished young player, as



U13 Doubles finalists: (from left) Rob Dunk, Simon Crinall (St. Olave's), Ben Stephens Hemingway, Peter Hanton (Alleyn's).

is borne out by the fact that he conceded just one point in seven games of singles. He also ended the day as doubles champion, winning that competition with fellow Alleynian Ben Stephens Hemingway, defeating St. Olave's II in the final.

With very little knowledge of the range of ability of the players entered from any one school or of how one school's players compare with those from another school, I am well aware that the allocation of players to pools is rather a lottery, and this year it produced two quite extraordinary results: in pools C and D of the singles, each of the three players won one of his games and lost one. In such cases the points scored are taken into consideration and, if it is still impossible to separate two players (as was the case in pool D), the one who won the match between the two of them is ranked the higher. The really extraordinary feature in this particular instance was that in both pools the player who was ranked first had been beaten by the player ranked third!

In previous years, those who finished top of their pool qualified for the knockout stage of the main competition, those finishing second qualified for the main plate competition, and those finishing third and fourth qualified for the second plate competition. This year, because there were only twelve pools, I decided to include the four most successful second-placed players in the main competition, thus making the total up to sixteen and eliminating the need for preliminary or bye rounds, and to make the main plate competition a competition for those who lost their first round matches. Not only was it a convenient way of doing things, but I have felt for some time that those who win their pool deserve a second chance of winning a trophy if they lose their first round match in the knockout competition, and this was a good opportunity to see how it worked. Any feedback on this matter would be welcome.

Michael Beaman

Winchester Fives National Ladies' Championships, 12th March 2005

(Malvern College)

Singles. *1st Round:* D Redmond bt K Palmer 11-0 11-3; C Makepeace bt R Hunter 11-1 11-2; C Bowen bt H Campbell 11-1 11-2; E Seton bt M Griffith 11-0 11-4; D Hall-Wilton bt V Brazier 11-3 11-4; K Atherton bt V Grohman 11-6 11-2; K Yeo bt L Redmond 11-9 10-12 12-10; M Whitehead bt L Perry 11-0 11-3. *Quarter-Finals:* Redmond bt Makepeace 11-0 11-3; Seton bt Bowen 11-2 11-4; Atherton bt Hall-Wilton 11-3 11-2; Whitehead bt Yeo 11-2 11-1. *Semi-Finals:* Redmond bt Seton 11-8 11-6; Whitehead bt Atherton 8-11 11-5 11-1.

Final: D Redmond bt Whitehead 15-13 15-7.

Plate A: L Redmond. **Plate B:** Yeo.

Doubles. *Quarter-Finals:* D & L Redmond bt V Grohman & K Yeo 15-0 15-1; C Bowen & M Whitehead bt H Campbell & L Perry 15-1 15-3; K Atherton & C Makepeace bt T Brazier & R Hunter 15-3 15-1; D Hall-Wilton & E Seton bt M Griffith & K Palmer 15-4 15-1. *Semi-Finals:* Redmond & Redmond bt Bowen & Whitehead 15-5 15-7; Hall-Wilton & Seton bt Atherton & Makepeace 15-7 15-9.

Final: Redmond & Redmond bt Hall-Wilton & Seton 15-8 15-12.

Plate: Grohman & Yeo.

With nearly fifty years' age difference between the youngest and oldest competitors and the absence through injury of two normally seeded players, the day was always going to be interesting.

The doubles, played first as usual, was fairly straightforward, with all the matches being decided in two games. In the semi-finals, experienced Eton fives player Dominique Redmond commanded the middle of the court, with her 13-year-old sister

supporting courageously. They were very comfortable with the Malvern buttress and used it to good effect against Rugby fives players Melanie Whitehead and Claire Bowen. The Redmond sisters then took on and beat Emma Seton and Denise Hall-Wilton in a fairly gritty final. Emma was strong on the longer shots, while Denise preferred the shorter ones around the buttress, but it was Dominique's convincing buttress shots that sealed the win for the Redmonds.

The singles competition saw two three-game matches. In the first round, Katie Yeo from Blundell's and young Lea Redmond did their utmost, with Katie squeezing home 12-10 in the final game. It was too much for Katie then to have to play an in-form Melanie Whitehead. However, in her turn Melanie had a similar experience, as she needed three games to defeat Kathryn Atherton in the semi-final. The other half of the draw went to form. Dominique Redmond and Emma Seton were both hitting some good long shots in their semi-final, but it was Dominique's powerful volleys that got her into the final against the hard-working Melanie. The final was no walkover, but Dominique deserved to win, to add the singles trophy to the doubles won earlier.

The four very young beginners from Malvern were not overawed by the occasion and gained valuable experience in the plates.

Blundell's girls have contributed hugely to ladies' fives and have been a credit to Bertie Matthew, the master-in-charge, and to Blundell's School. Had we been able to hold a girls' tournament, they would surely have carried off many trophies. A number of them are leaving to go to fives-playing universities, where we hope they will radiate their enthusiasm to inspire more women players.

Paula Smith, although injured and unable to defend her remaining long-running doubles title with her veteran partner, came along with typical sportsmanship and did a great job with the complexities of five different score-sheets. Many thanks also to Peter Gray and Michelle Maskell for their help, and to Malvern College for its hospitality.

Denise Hall-Wilton



Fives at Malvern: (from left) Melanie Whitehead, Lea Redmond, Dominique Redmond, Denise Hall-Wilton, Emma Seton.

Winchester Fives National Doubles Championships, 13th March 2005

(Malvern College)

1st Round: J Sinton & C Thomas bt R Cothay & A Scholz 15-9 15-2; I de Weymar & J Fabes bt M Cowie & E Ronan 15-6 15-2; J Hughes & A Rew bt M Arnott & N Arnott 15-2 15-2; G McGairl & H Mohammed bt C Butler & B Kirk 15-2 15-3; T Lewis & S Maskell bt T Kiggell & A Landon 15-10 15-5; H Buchanan &

S Roberts bt P Gray & M King 15-4 15-7. *Quarter-Finals:* D Fox & D Hebden bt T Squires & S Stagg 15-2 15-4; de Weymarn & Fabes bt Sinton & Thomas 15-11 15-9; Hughes & Rew bt McGairl & Mohammed 16-14 15-13; Buchanan & Roberts bt Lewis & Maskell 15-5 15-5. *Semi-Finals:* Fox & Hebden bt de Weymarn & Fabes 15-4 15-6; Buchanan & Roberts bt Hughes & Rew 15-9 15-9.

Final: Fox & Hebden bt Buchanan & Roberts 12-15 16-14 15-9.
Plate: McGairl & Mohammed.

A smaller field than usual contested the 24th 'Barnes Bridge' – the sixth time the competition has been held at Malvern College. The weather was cold but dry, and once the players had settled down to the unique demands of the Malvern courts, plenty of good fives was on view.

The first round matches were all two-gamers, the most enjoyable to watch being the one in which Tim Lewis and Old Malvernian Simon Maskell defeated Tom Kiggell and Andy Landon.

While the first and second seeds sailed through the quarter-finals with relative ease, the other two matches produced four cracking games. Iain de Weymarn and Jez Fabes had to play near their best to beat Jez Sinton and Chris Thomas, while Jim Hughes and Alex Rew found the Wykehamist pair of George McGairl and Hal Mohammed a real handful, only scraping home by the odd couple of points in each game.

Hughes and Rew went on to test second seeds Hamish Buchanan and Sam Roberts in their semi-final but just lacked the accuracy onto the buttress to take a game off the London pair. In the other semi, holders Dave Fox and Dave Hebden defeated de Weymarn and Fabes fairly comfortably.

The final – the only three-game match of the whole tournament – was extremely close. The fives may not have been of quite the same breathtaking standard as the final at Sedbergh in November 2004 involving three of the same players (plus a different Roberts), but it was just as exciting. Buchanan and Roberts won the first game narrowly and took a commanding lead in the second, finally standing at 14-7 up. Fox had been struggling with a damaged muscle and had to receive medical



Double winners of the Winchester Doubles: Dave Fox (left) and Dave Hebden.

attention, and this broke the pattern of the game, with Fox and Hebden saving a match point and then playing unbeatable fives in a series of superb rallies to take it 16-14.

With Fox's injury and Hebden's energies beginning to waver, there was always the possibility that they might not have been able to sustain their form into the third game. But somehow they managed to do so despite continuous pressure from their opponents, eventually winning the game to 9. Congratulations to all of them for a fine show of fives on the aptly-named 'Masters' court – surely the only four-walled fives court in Britain without a door. And here's another one for the statistically minded: the two Daves are the first pair to win the 'Barnes Bridge' twice in one season!

The plate – a lengthy affair involving ten pairs – was deservedly won by McGairl and Mohammed, who beat Sinton and Thomas comfortably in the final. Many thanks to Peter Gray for his help with the tournament and to Malvern College for their hospitality. The four-year cycle starts again next year at Bradfield.

David Barnes

National Open Doubles (Cyriax Cup), 19th/20th March 2005

(Alley's School, Dulwich)

1st Round: A Pringle & O Stone-Lee bt C Brooks & B Elfick 15-12 15-11; J Nelmes & G Rees bt D Hebden & C Jones 15-8 15-12; M Cavanagh & J Hayes bt B Brookes & A Smith 15-5 15-2; P d'Ancona & B Taberner bt P Chopra & E Hatton 15-8 15-6; P Atkinson & N Austin bt J Sinton & C Thomas 15-12 7-15 15-10; J Hughes & A Rew bt T Maconie & C Saltmarsh 15-12 13-15 16-14. J Beswick & N Roberts bt N Geere & D Grant 15-2 15-4. *Quarter-Finals:* H Buchanan & R Perry bt Pringle & Stone-Lee 15-8 15-8; Nelmes & Rees bt Cavanagh & Hayes 16-15 15-0; d'Ancona & Taberner bt Atkinson & Austin 15-1 15-4; Beswick & Roberts bt Hughes & Rew 15-13 11-15 15-10. *Semi-Finals:* Buchanan & Perry bt Nelmes & Rees 15-2 15-10; d'Ancona & Taberner bt Beswick & Roberts 15-8 15-8.

Final: Buchanan & Perry bt d'Ancona & Taberner 15-12 15-12.
Plate: Hebden & Jones.

Spectators flinched and the faint-hearted looked away as Hamish Buchanan and Robin Perry retained their National Doubles title in a frenetic victory over Paddy d'Ancona and Ben Taberner. An air-raid siren rather than calls of 'Yours' and 'Mine' would have been more suited to this hard-hitting contest. It was not a case of blind power – more a case of targeted smart bombs often defused by spectacular retrieval from both sides – to the delight of the crowd.

The 50-minute first game was tightly fought throughout, but Hamish and Robin just had the edge to find the winners at the crucial times and came out 15-12 victors.

Paddy and Ben took the initiative in the second from the start, dominating with a mixture of hard-struck angles and dogged consistency. At 10-4, they appeared to have reduced Hamish and Robin to trying just to tire out their opponents for the decider. But the champions rediscovered their form, with Hamish's cross-courts and Robin's artillery bombardment combining to level the scores at 10-10 and edging on to take the trophy.

Other highlights from the tournament included the return of the old Clifton partnership of Johnny Nelmes and Gareth Rees, who reached the semi-finals after an impressive win over Matt Cavanagh and John Hayes. And also from the West, Jim Hughes and Alex Rew almost sent John Beswick and Neil Roberts home

early: they were 10-0 up in the third before the former champions found the discipline and pressure needed to squeeze into the semi-finals.

Ollie Stone-Lee

National Schools' Championships, 29th March – 1st April 2005

(St. Paul's School, Barnes)

Key to schools: A = Alleyn's. B = Blundell's. CH = Christ's Hospital. E = Eastbourne. KCS = KCS Wimbledon. L = Loretto. M = Malvern. MC = Merchiston Castle. MT = Merchant Taylors'. O = Oundle. R = Radley. Se = Sedbergh. Sh = Sherborne. SD = St. Dunstan's. SP = St. Paul's. T = Tonbridge. Wh = Whitgift. Win = Winchester.

Open Singles. Pools: A. 1st: J Pendergrass (L). 2nd: S Kirby (SP). 3rd: D Yuen (Wh). B. 1st: J Walsh (CH). 2nd: W Peck (A). 3rd: T Badminton (SD). C. 1st: C Hay (SP). 2nd: C Compton (E). 3rd: H Clerey (Se). D. 1st: O Pumphrey (Win). 2nd: M Knight-Robson (T). E. 1st: D Park (Sh). 2nd: M Hale (CH). 3rd: S Lewis (A). F. 1st: A Rothnie (T). 2nd: M Sands (E). 3rd: B Reed (SP). G. 1st: M Gibbor (SP). 2nd: R Sulkin (A). H. 1st: W Ellison (Win). 2nd: J Reynard (Se). 3rd: F Hopewell-Smith (O). I. 1st: D Kirk (Sh). 2nd: B Robinson (Win). 3rd: R Kanesan (Wh). J. 1st: E Carr (A). 2nd: A Jennings (SP). 3rd: D Roberts (O). K. 1st: C Jones (T). 2nd: A Taylor (SD). L. 1st: A Seigel (SP). 2nd: A Tong (Win). 3rd: M Raikes (Se). M. 1st: M Belassie (CH). 2nd: A Horsewood (Win). 3rd: J Spencer (SD). N. 1st: E Emmett (SP). 2nd: R Dyke (B). 3rd: K Sewell (Se). O. 1st: P Simister (SP). 2nd: D Ackland (A). 3rd: W Moir (T). P. 1st: H Mohammed (Win). 2nd: M Oates-Wormer (Sh). 3rd: C Leggett (MC). **Last 16:** Pendergrass bt Walsh 11-2 11-1; Hay bt Pumphrey 11-2 11-0; Rothnie bt Park 11-1 11-5; Ellison bt Gibbor 11-3 11-5; Kirk bt Carr 11-3 9-11 12-10; Seigel bt Jones 12-10 12-10; Belassie bt Emmett 9-11 11-8 12-10; Mohammed bt Simister 11-2 11-0. **Quarter-Finals:** Pendergrass bt Hay 11-3 11-3; Ellison bt Rothnie 11-4 12-10; Seigel bt Kirk 5-11 11-5 11-6; Mohammed bt Belassie 11-4 11-2. **Semi-Finals:** Pendergrass bt Ellison 11-3 11-4; Mohammed bt Seigel 11-2 11-5.

Final: Pendergrass bt Mohammed 9-11 11-3 11-2.

Plate 1: Sands. **Plate 2:** Leggett.

Open Doubles. 1st Round: Alleyn's III bt Whitgift 11-2 11-4; Eastbourne bt St. Dunstan's 11-0 11-0; Alleyn's II bt Tonbridge II 12-10 11-3; Winchester III bt St. Paul's IV 11-3 11-7; St. Paul's III bt Sedbergh II 11-5 11-9; Oundle w/o Christ's Hospital II. **2nd Round:** St. Paul's I bt Alleyn's III 11-1 11-0; Eastbourne w/o Christ's Hospital I; Sedbergh I bt Alleyn's II 11-7 11-0; Sherborne I bt Winchester III 11-2 11-4; Winchester I bt St. Paul's III 11-1 11-1; Sherborne II bt Alleyn's I 11-8 11-3; St. Paul's II bt Oundle 11-1 11-4; Tonbridge bt Winchester II 11-9 11-2. **Quarter-Finals:** St. Paul's I bt Eastbourne 12-10 11-5; Sherborne I bt Sedbergh I 11-2 11-5; Winchester I bt Sherborne II 11-0 11-2; Tonbridge bt St. Paul's II 11-4 11-7. **Semi-Finals:** St. Paul's I bt Sherborne I 11-5 12-11; Winchester I bt Tonbridge 11-2 11-7.

Final: Winchester I (W Ellison & H Mohammed) bt St Paul's I (E Emmett & M Gibbor) 11-1 11-2.

Plate: Alleyn's I (E Carr & R Sulkin).

Under 16 Singles. Pools: A. 1st: D Tristão (SP). 2nd: I Ackland (A). 3rd: D Pugh (Win). 4th: D Yates (CH). B. 1st: J Walsh (KCS). 2nd: B Litherland (Win). 3rd: U Khan (A). 4th: M Laichena (CH). C(i). 1st: J Kelly (CH). 2nd: T Fabes (T). 3rd: J Somji (Win). C(ii). 1st: K Sloan (MT). 2nd: A Griffiths (SP). 3rd: J Harding (SD). D. 1st: A Ladak (SP). 2nd: C Burrows (O). 3rd: J Brierly (M). 4th:

A George (A). E. 1st: E Leakey (Sh). 2nd: W Gilbert (M). 3rd: T Davenport (Win). 4th: N Hemming-Brown (MT). F. 1st: A Ashok (SP). 2nd: J Thompson (T). 3rd: J Brubert (A). G. 1st: J Corbin (SP). 2nd: J Dudding (Win). 3rd: S Leung (A). 4th: G Janes (CH). H. 1st: R Dadia (SP). 2nd: F Hodgson (O). 3rd: A Branchini (A). I. 1st: P Winzeler (KCS). 2nd: N Simpson (CH). 3rd: B Hale (Win). **Last 10:** Sloan bt Kelly 15-10; Winzeler bt Dadia 15-11. **Quarter-Finals:** Tristão bt Walsh 11-4 11-8; Ladak bt Sloan 11-1 11-1; Leakey bt Ashok 11-3 11-7; Corbin bt Winzeler 11-0 11-1. **Semi-Finals:** Tristão bt Ladak 11-5 12-10; Leakey bt Corbin 12-10 11-7.

Final: Tristão bt Leakey 11-1 11-6.

Plate 1: Simpson. **Plate 2:** Somji.

Under 16 Doubles. 1st Round: Christ's Hospital I bt Alleyn's III 11-1 11-2; Tonbridge bt KCS Wimbledon 11-8 11-7; St. Paul's II bt Winchester III 11-2 11-1; Alleyn's I bt Malvern 11-9 6-11 11-8; Winchester II bt Oundle 11-3 11-8; St. Paul's I bt Christ's Hospital II 11-0 11-3; Winchester I bt Alleyn's II 11-6 11-3; St. Paul's III bt Merchant Taylors' 11-6 11-4. **Quarter-Finals:** Christ's Hospital I bt Tonbridge 11-4 11-9; St. Paul's II bt Alleyn's I 11-3 11-1; St. Paul's I bt Winchester II 11-3 11-1; St. Paul's III bt Winchester I 3-11 11-6 11-4. **Semi-Finals:** St. Paul's II bt Christ's Hospital I 11-9 11-8; St. Paul's I bt St. Paul's III 11-6 11-7.

Final: St. Paul's I (J Corbin & D Tristão) bt St. Paul's II (A Ashok & A Ladak) 11-6 6-11 11-2.

Plate: KCS Wimbledon (J Walsh & P Winzeler).

Under 14 Singles. Pools: A. 1st: J Grant-Dalton (R). 2nd: S Tsouloupas (Wh). 3rd: F Rafter-Phillips (SD). B. 1st: P Hanton (A). 2nd: A Rippingale (SP). 3rd: T Simpson (T). C. 1st: J Loo (SD). 2nd: A McDade (M). 3rd: R Sakkali (Win). D. 1st: G Barnes (SP). 2nd: S Mighall (CH). 3rd: N Keppe (SD). E. 1st: M Hine (SP). 2nd: M Frankis (SD). 3rd: H Rogers (Win). 4th: A Thillanathan (Wh). G. 1st: J Mabbutt (Wh). 2nd: S Oberai (SP). 3rd: W Knapp (A). I. 1st: S Coffey (M). 2nd: A George (A). 3rd: C Brouard (Wh). J. 1st: G Kamenou (SD). 2nd: J Bomford (SP). 3rd: R Monroe (O). K. 1st: D Butt (SD). 2nd: F Beardmore (SP). 3rd: Gamble (Win). L. 1st: E Cloke (T). 2nd: C Castelino (Wh). 3rd: M Deighton (SP). M. 1st: L Squire-Smith (Win). 2nd: D Ahrabian (SP). 3rd: F Dinwiddie (T). 4th: G Holloway (SD). O. 1st: T Hennock (CH). 2nd: F Rossi (Wh). 3rd: S Winayak (SP). P. 1st: O Ratnatunga (SP). 2nd: C Murray (SD). 3rd: H Hunter (A). **Knockout stage:** Hanton bt Grant-Dalton 15-12; Barnes bt Loo 15-12; Kamenou bt Coffey 16-15; Butt bt Cloke 15-4; Ratnatunga bt Hennock 15-10. **Quarter-Finals:** Barnes bt Hanton 15-6; Hine bt Mabbutt 15-4; Butt bt Kamenou 15-6; Squire-Smith bt Ratnatunga 16-15. **Semi-Finals:** Barnes bt Hine 15-13; Squire-Smith bt Butt 15-11.

Final: Squire-Smith bt Barnes 11-6 11-9.

Plate 1: Frankis. **Plate 2:** Rogers.

Under 14 Doubles. 1st Round: St. Dunstan's II bt Whitgift III 15-2; Whitgift II bt St. Paul's IV 15-4; St. Dunstan's IV w/o Oundle; St. Dunstan's III w/o Tonbridge II; Alleyn's I bt St. Paul's III 15-9. **2nd Round:** Malvern I bt Alleyn's II 15-5; St. Paul's II bt St. Dunstan's II 15-11; Winchester I bt Whitgift II 15-13; Tonbridge I bt St. Dunstan's IV 15-7; St. Paul's I bt St. Dunstan's III 15-6; Winchester II bt Christ's Hospital 15-13; Whitgift I bt St. Paul's V 15-1; Alleyn's I bt St. Dunstan's I 16-15. **Quarter-Finals:** St. Paul's II bt Malvern I 15-7; Winchester I bt Tonbridge I 15-3; St. Paul's I bt Winchester II 15-3; Alleyn's I bt Whitgift I 15-5. **Semi-Finals:** St. Paul's II bt Winchester I 15-12; Alleyn's I bt St. Paul's I 16-14.

Final: Alleyn's I (A George & P Hanton) bt St. Paul's II (J Bomford & A Ratnatunga) 11-6 11-5.

Plate: St. Paul's III (D Ahrabian & M Deighton).

Eighteen schools were represented in the National Schools' Championships this year – a good entry considering the difficulties posed by the early date of Easter – although it is always sad when members of a school IV cannot enter the Nationals.

The last sixteen of the Open Singles competition saw three close matches, with Kirk (Sherborne) just defeating Carr (Alleyn's); Seigel (St. Paul's) doing well to beat Jones (Tonbridge); and Bellasie (Christ's Hospital) having just the better of a terrific struggle with Emmett (St. Paul's). The quarter-finals went with the seedings except for Seigel's three-game match with Kirk, which the young Pauline excelled himself to win. Ellison (Winchester) beat Rothnie (Tonbridge) in a match that nearly went to three games, while the top two seeds, Pendergrass (Loretto) and Mohammed (Winchester) showed their class by winning their matches relatively easily. The semi-finals were also predictably won by these two players, although Ellison and Seigel did not give in easily, leaving an eagerly anticipated final. Here, both players can be proud of their performance, for Mohammed started well and won the first game, albeit narrowly; but then Pendergrass went up a gear and played quite beautifully to take the next two games and the title. A worthy final from two very fine players, who both got themselves to a peak of fitness for this competition.

The Open Doubles, despite some close individual games, was altogether more of a formality, with one outstanding pair and too many walk-overs and easy wins. No match in the entire event went to three games, which meant a certain lack of tension. St. Paul's I (Emmett and Gibbor), a young pair who will be tough to beat next year, did well to reach the final, having beaten Eastbourne (Compton and Sands) and then the fancied Sherborne pair of Kirk and Park. In the other half, Winchester I (Ellison and Mohammed) looked impressive but eventually met with a degree of opposition in the semi-final from Rothnie and Jones (Tonbridge). Having come through this match unimpaired, the Wykehamists demolished the Paulines in a one-sided final, thus becoming the first Winchester pair to win the Mappin Cup since 1931.

The Under 16 Championships were dominated by St. Paul's, although as at Marlborough, Sherborne had a very good player in the Singles final. The entry was on the low side at 36; five of the ten preliminary groups in the Singles were won by Paulines, and it was remarkable that KCS Wimbledon (a school without



Wykehamists Hal Mohammed (left) and Will Ellison with the Mappin Cup.

courts of its own, but with an enterprising master-in-charge) provided two of the others. The West of England winner, Tristão (St. Paul's) was given a hard match by Walsh (KCS) in the quarter-finals but emerged victorious, as he did from an even tougher encounter with Ladak (St. Paul's) in the semis. In the other half, Leakey (Sherborne) also came through two testing matches, first against Ashok (St. Paul's) and then against another Pauline, Corbin. The final was thus a repeat of the West of England final, with the same result, the inventive and nimble Tristão winning in straight games against an opponent who struck the ball with authority despite a shoulder injury.

The question in the Under 16 Doubles was not so much who was going to win as how many pairs St. Paul's could get through to the later stages. In the event, they managed three pairs in the semi-finals, the fourth being occupied by the promising Christ's Hospital I, who gave St. Paul's II a very hard match in the semi-finals. St. Paul's I put their own third pair in their place, although not by all that much, and so the final was again a repeat of the West of England, with Corbin and Tristão (now St. Paul's I) defeating their second pair, Ashok and Ladak, in three games.

The Under 14 event was characterized by a large entry, plenty of close matches and a distinctly higher quality of play than previously. Coaching at some of the schools involved has clearly had a considerable effect and has enabled their players to challenge for honours. The result this time was a singles victory for Squire-Smith of Winchester and a doubles win for George and Hanton of Alleyn's, with St. Paul's providing the finalists in both cases. Let us hope that all the young players who entered this event are allowed by the sports structure of their schools to continue playing fives – then the future will be bright indeed.

Our thanks go to St. Paul's School for its hospitality and to the organisers of this four-day competition – David Goodwin, Peter King and Michael Beaman – for their hard work and efficient administration.

David Barnes

National Veterans' (over 45) Championships, 2nd/3rd April 2005

(Christ's Hospital, Horsham)

Singles. *Quarter-Finals:* J Schroeter bt I Torkington 11-0 11-1; B Nithsdale bt R Kemp 11-8 8-11 11-8; J East bt N Arnott 11-5 11-3; D Hebden bt G McIntyre 11-3 11-1. *Semi-Finals:* Schroeter bt Nithsdale 11-3 11-2; Hebden bt East 11-3 11-4.

Final: Hebden bt Schroeter 11-3 11-4.

Spoon: East. **Plate:** Kemp.

Doubles. *1st Round:* D Hebden & K Puckle bt W Avenell & I Torkington 15-1 15-2. *Quarter-Finals:* Hebden & Puckle bt J Hawke & G McIntyre 15-2 15-5; P Atkinson & I Puckle bt S Kirby & B Kirk 15-13 15-10; B Atkinson & J East bt B Nithsdale & I Roberts 15-5 15-13; C Horrocks & J Schroeter bt N Arnott & M Wilkinson 13-15 15-8 15-5. *Semi-Finals:* Hebden & K Puckle bt P Atkinson & I Puckle 15-4 15-5; B Atkinson & East bt Horrocks & Schroeter 14-16 15-2 16-14.

Final: Hebden & K Puckle bt B Atkinson & East 15-6 15-2.

Spoon: P Atkinson & I Puckle. **Plate:** Kirby & Kirk.

This year's Championships were again blessed with glorious weather, and nine participants assembled keenly on the Saturday to do battle for the Singles. One notable absentee was Ian Fuller who has dominated the event over the last six years, and we all hope Ian will be back next year.

The outstanding match of the day was a first-round contest between new entrant Richard Kemp and 'Didsbury Ranger' Brian Nithsdale, with Brian showing great determination and stamina

to win eventually 11-8 in the third after well over an hour's play. Richard went on to win the Plate comfortably, only losing a couple of points to Neil Arnott in the round robin.

Jeremy Schroeter polished off a tired Brian in the top semi, while Dave Hebden won through against John East in the other half. The final was closely fought early in each game, but Dave, benefiting perhaps from having had more recent fives than his opponent, pulled away in each game to win 11-3, 11-4. John East won a close third-place play-off against Brian Nithsdale, thus acquiring a very desirable wooden spoon and a bottle of 'Tom Wood' ale.

Nine pairs contested the Doubles, and in this event there were several epic struggles. It was good to see Ian Puckle back on court after a lengthy absence from competitive fives, and with Phil Atkinson they won an excellent encounter against Stuart Kirby and Brian Kirk. Stuart and Brian also had some close games in the Plate – in particular against Neil Arnott and Martin Wilkinson – before retaining their trophy.



Veterans' Plate winners: Brian Kirk (left) and Stuart Kirby.

In other first-round games, John East and Bernard Atkinson were pressed hard by Brian Nithsdale and Ian Roberts, while Jeremy Schroeter and Chris Horrocks won a three-gamer against Arnott and Wilkinson. But the outstanding match was the semi in which East and Atkinson triumphed against Schroeter and Horrocks 14-16, 15-2, 16-14 to reach the final. The losers still had something left to press Atkinson and Ian Puckle hard in the third-place play-off, but Phil and Ian took away the spoils.

Top seeds Dave Hebden and Keith Puckle had a more comfortable passage to the final, and this was perhaps significant as they proved too strong for their battle-weary opponents. There were however some excellent rallies, and it was remarkable that all four players in the final were of 'Vintage' age, with Keith putting on a typically steady and crafty exhibition of fives to become the oldest ever winner of the Veterans' Doubles.

All the competitors enjoyed the excellent facilities that Christ's Hospital has to offer and made a valiant attempt to consume the plentiful provisions, a task made a little more difficult this year by the regrettable absence of Bob Sandie!

Dave Hebden

National Club Championship (Wood Cup), 16th/17th April 2005

(Final Rounds at St. Paul's School, Barnes and
Bank of England Club, Roehampton)

Quarter-Finals: Manchester YMCA bt Old Paulines 111-32; RFA Club bt Wessex 112-107; West of England bt Executioners 109-104; Alleyn Old Boys bt White Rose Club 123-61. *Semi-Finals:* Manchester YMCA bt RFA Club 93-52; Alleyn Old Boys bt West of England 122-58.

Final: Alleyn Old Boys (H Buchanan, R Perry, D Hebden, B Hanton) bt Manchester YMCA (J Beswick, B Taberner, P Bishop, K Henry) 97-80.

As thousands of athletes fought their way round the east of the city in the London Marathon, across town St. Paul's hosted a struggle every bit as tough, in which Alleyn Old Boys reclaimed the Wood Cup with a win against Manchester YMCA.

The final was a tense battle between the two sides that have dominated this competition in recent years, and a fitting end to a hard-fought tournament: so hard-fought, in fact, that two of the quarter-finals were won by just five points.

Eventually, though, the best two teams won through to the final. And it was the superb form of the National Doubles champions, Hamish Buchanan and Robin Perry, that saw the Londoners through to a win.

It was only at the last, though, that victory was certain, and the singles showed how close the match would be. With the four games shared between the sides, the YMCA went into the doubles just four points ahead.

Almost immediately, though, the tide began to turn. In an epic encounter that combined delicate touch, devastating power and amazing retrieval from both sides, Hamish and Robin always had the edge over John Beswick and Ben Taberner, winning two games for the loss of twelve points. So, with honours all but even in the other court, Alleyn Old Boys went into the second round of doubles four points up.

It was in the next game that the match was effectively won, when Hamish and Robin blitzed Phil Bishop and Kevin Henry. Conceding just one point in that first game set them on the road to an overall victory that was sealed by an 11-6 win in the second. Ben and John restored some pride with an 11-9 win over Dave Hebden and Bruce Hanton, but by that stage Alleyn Old Boys had an unassailable lead and won by 17 points.

At least there was some consolation for the YMCA as, on their long journey home, they could listen to that other great Manchester club – the Red Devils of United – smash four goals past Newcastle to clinch a spot in the final of the FA Cup.

Andy Pringle

National Vintage (over 55) Championships, 24th April 2005

(Christ's Hospital, Horsham)

Singles. *Pool A:* D Hebden bt A Maltby 11-1; bt R Stuart 11-1. Stuart bt Maltby 11-6. *Pool B:* W Avenell bt C Arnold 11-4; bt R Brewer 11-1. Brewer bt Arnold 11-5.

Final: Hebden bt Avenell 11-0.

Plate: Brewer.

Doubles. *Semi-Finals:* D Hebden & K Puckle bt R Brewer & A Maltby 15-6 15-2; B Atkinson & R Dolby bt W Avenell & R Stuart 15-11 15-8.

Final: Hebden & Puckle bt Atkinson & Dolby 15-8 15-8.

Plate: Avenell & Stuart.

In the doubles, Bernard Atkinson and Bob Dolby enjoyed success in a keenly fought contest with the Christ's Hospital masters Bill Avenell and Ross Stuart. Bernard's quickness of pace to the front of the court was a deciding factor, taking his partner into the final for a record number of years. In the second semi, the Old Tonbridgian pair of Alan Maltby and Richard Brewer gave the favourites something to think about, and with Alan encouraging his partner with his usual gusto, the rallies were interesting, but unforced errors directed the Tonbridgian pair into the plate final.

The early stages of the main final were well fought and quite close, with Bob finding his touch down the right and Bernard patrolling most of the front of the court. Unforced errors proved to be their eventual downfall, but the spectators, who outnumbered the participants, were treated to a good contest of vintage fives played in a good spirit.



Picture: David Barnes

*Vintage and Masters' Champions
from left: Keith Puckle, Dave Hebden, David Bawtree, Bernard Atkinson.*

The plate final was closely fought in the first game, with Brewer and Maltby drawing initial blood. Avenell and Stuart regrouped to take the second and forged ahead in the third to run out deserved winners, entertaining the crowd with some enterprising play – local knowledge won the day.

Following a short break for lunch, the singles contestants were split into two groups of three, with matches on a round robin basis. It was somewhat one-sided in as much as some players were tired from the doubles, but David Hebden took the trophy for the first time, not because he was the youngest entrant, but because his wealth of talent and his fitness were too much for the other contestants. Bill Avenell was the unlucky man who had to play Dave in the final: he deserved a better reward for his effort at the end of a busy day. Richard Brewer took third prize.

I would like to thank John East (sidelined by injury) for presenting the prizes, and my wife for the fine spread, which was appreciated by all. Then it was time to adjourn to the local hostelry, where those in attendance were treated to a 'Vintage Evening with David Hebblethwaite'. Our one regret – it wasn't taped.

Keith Puckle

National Masters' (over 65) Doubles Championship 2005

(Christ's Hospital, Horsham)

Final: B Atkinson & D Bawtree bt
C Arnold & D Hebblethwaite 11-4 11-4.

The Masters' Championship was played following the Vintage and, as last year at Manchester, there were only four entries. Sadly, John Robertson had to pull out at the last moment – as with many of us, the spirit was willing but the flesh was getting weaker! So the oldest entry in the Vintage volunteered to take

part, and at 63 Christian Arnold joined David Bawtree, David Hebblethwaite and Bernard Atkinson on court. For Bernard, it was his third 'senior' doubles final in the same season (Veterans', Vintage and Masters') – a record to treasure.

The best of three games up to 11 was the ambition, and this was achieved by David Bawtree and Bernard Atkinson with scores of 11-4 and 11-4. Fortunately, there were no stops for David Hebblethwaite's heart monitor to calm down, and the five knee supports on court held out!

We hope that next year there will be a few more players in the Masters' category and, if the numbers continue to increase, we will have to introduce a Grand Masters' at some suitable age!

All in all it was a very pleasant afternoon, and the two games were played with humour and style.

David Bawtree

Scottish Open Championships, 30th April/1st May 2005

(Loretto School, Musselburgh)

Singles. 1st Round: A Smith bt G McIntyre 11-2 11-2; I Purvis bt R Butterworth 11-0 11-1; D Hebden bt J Thomas 11-2 11-1; J Beswick bt P Reynolds 11-4 11-2; A Pringle bt J Cooper 11-1 11-4; K Henry bt J Hawke 11-1 11-6. **Quarter-Finals:** H Buchanan bt Smith 11-4 11-4; Purvis bt Hebden 11-8 9-11 11-7; Beswick bt Pringle 11-3 11-3; N Roberts bt Henry 11-4 11-1. **Semi-Finals:** Buchanan bt Purvis 11-7 11-5; Beswick bt Roberts 11-0 11-7.

Final: Buchanan bt Beswick 11-4 11-2.

Plate: Thomas.

Doubles. Pool A: Henry/Thomas bt Buchanan/Hawke 15-2 5-15 15-5; bt Pringle/I Roberts 15-10 15-3. Buchanan/Hawke bt Pringle/I Roberts 16-14 15-10. **Pool B:** Butterworth/Hebden bt Beswick/McIntyre 15-13 15-12; bt Reynolds/Smith 15-10 15-10. Reynolds/Smith bt Beswick/McIntyre 15-16 15-2 15-3.

Final: Henry/Thomas bt Butterworth/Hebden 14-16 15-7 15-4.

Plate: Buchanan/Hawke.

Having produced the National Schools' champion a few weeks previously, Loretto School once again hosted the Scottish Open, where the cream of local Scottish talent were able to do battle with the elite of the English game on their home courts.

John Cooper of the Caledonian Club performed creditably against Andy Pringle, and Ian Purvis took part in the match of the tournament, narrowly defeating Dave Hebden over three games in the quarter-finals. The relatively youthful John Beswick overcame the relatively experienced Neil Roberts in the semi-finals to set up an eagerly awaited final against defending champion Hamish Buchanan. Despite some fine attacking play by John, Hamish's all-round consistency and court craft saw him home in two high quality games. Jeff Thomas defeated Phil Reynolds in the plate final.

The doubles tournament produced six evenly matched pairs competing not just for the main trophy but also for the inaugural award of the Alex Smith Platter, carefully sculpted from local Scottish elm and to be presented annually to the winners of the plate competition.

Messrs Thomas and Henry came through the group stages to overcome Hebden and Butterworth over three games in the final of the main competition. In the plate final, John Hawke, with a little assistance from his partner Hamish, defeated Alex Smith and Phil Reynolds.

Neil Roberts

National Winchester Fives Mixed Doubles, 8th May 2005

(Bradfield College)

1st Round: K Palmer & J Lambert bt D Hall-Wilton & M Cowie 15-13 11-15 15-7. *Quarter-Finals:* E Seton & R Dolby bt C Makepeace & R Matthew 16-15 15-3; M & M Whitehead bt C Bowen & D Rivett 15-4 15-8; V Lawrence & E Hatton bt Palmer & Lambert 15-1 15-3; D Redmond & H Wiseman bt K Yeo & R Dyke 16-15 15-11. *Semi-Finals:* Seton & Dolby bt Whitehead & Whitehead 15-4 15-3; Redmond & Wiseman bt Lawrence & Hatton 15-3 15-13.

Final: Seton & Dolby bt Redmond & Wiseman 15-6 15-12.

Plate: Yeo & Dyke.

The eighth Mixed Doubles tournament attracted an entry of nine pairs, so one preliminary round was played before the quarter-finals and, as Murphy's law dictates, it turned out to be the only three-gamer of the tournament. Blundellians Katie Palmer and Joe Lambert so exhausted themselves in beating local pair Denise Hall-Wilton and Matt Cowie that they were easy meat for Vicky Lawrence and Ed Hatton in the next round, despite Vicky injuring her arm in an unfortunate collision with her partner.

The Derby Moor pair of Emma Seton and Bob Dolby had a desperately close first game with Caroline Makepeace and Bertie Matthew before winning the second by a distance. Melanie and Martyn Whitehead defeated Claire Bowen and Damien Rivett

relatively comfortably, but the remaining Blundell's pair, Katie Yeo and Richard Dyke, gave Dominique Redmond and Howard Wiseman a real battle before succumbing.

In the semis, Dominique and Howard used the buttress well and had the better of Vicky and Ed, although the second game was close, with Ed playing some good cross-court kills. Emma and Bob, looking suspiciously as if they had been practising, cruised home against the Whiteheads.

The final could have gone to three games, but Emma and Bob, having won the first game quite easily, just had enough in reserve to keep Dominique and Howard at bay in the second. Well done, Bob, for two titles in a row, with different partners: speculation is rife that you might arrive with a third, even younger lady next year in a bid to achieve the hat-trick! In the meantime, congratulations to Emma, too, on her first win and to Dominique and Howard on their performance throughout the day.

A lengthy plate competition was deservedly won by Katie Yeo and Richard Dyke, the best of the four Blundell's pairs on the day. Blundell's were planning to bring more pairs, but a couple of unlikely accidents prevented this. One girl broke her finger on stage (dangerous stuff, drama: stick to fives!), and another actually managed to have a fridge fall on her in real life, which could have been serious but mercifully wasn't.

Many thanks to Paula Smith, unfortunately unable to play this year, for organising another successful competition, and to Bradfield for the use of their courts and facilities.

David Barnes

THE RUGBY FIVES ASSOCIATION CHARITABLE TRUST

Trustees: Peter Dunscombe, John East, Ian Fuller,
Bruce Hanton, David Hebden, Neil Roberts

Charity No: 1087264

The Trust continues to flourish. During the last year the Trust has contributed to the refurbishment of the two 'old' fives courts at Clifton College that have been out of commission for the last 25 years, and it is fantastic that Clifton now have four indoor courts in first-class condition. In addition the Trust has just agreed to support the refurbishment of the roofs of the courts at Loretto School.

Donations have continued to come in, but at a very reduced rate. After allowing for current commitments the Trust has just over £15,000, which is sufficient for the time being, but if a major project were to come forward then a special appeal would need to be launched.

In the meantime, if you are rewriting your will, please consider making a bequest to the Trust. As a charity it will not suffer inheritance tax.

If you would like to make a donation, please forward it to Peter Dunscombe, 15 Archfield Road, Cotham, Bristol BS6 6BD.

THE RUGBY & ETON FIVES COACHING AGENCY

Est. 1994

7 Genoa Road, London SE20 8ES, England.

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- *Providing a professional Fives Coaching service to over 20 Schools in England, Switzerland and Australia.*
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All inquiries from Schools, or potential Undergraduate and Postgraduate Coaches, should be directed to Howard Wiseman as detailed above.

UNIVERSITY FIVES

Cambridge University Rugby Fives Club

2004/5 has been a good season for us: the unofficial BUSA team prize, the Varsity Match and the inaugural Trapnell Tankard (for Past vs Present).

In our courtless existence, we rely heavily on outside support: Bob Dolby has been extremely generous with his time and will shortly become our President; Tony Burrows at Oundle has not only made those courts freely available to us but invariably turned out with his gloves as well; without Brit Insurance we would be deep in the red; and the RFA itself helped us to get to Edinburgh. BUSA was great from our point of view, as it is always likely to be in a large university town.

The key factor this season, however, has been an unusually willing and dedicated squad of players, regular in making the hour's journey (let alone matches) and keen to see each other improve. For once we were with each other enough to get the pairings right, and we are starting to generate some depth, with Messrs Hanney, Stevens and Graham-Taylor all pressing for places. Of this trio, the first has been an excellent Treasurer, the second a willing driver, and the third an effective fund-raiser.

Hard work in practice has enabled huge progress over the season, with most improved player Jon Abecassis. His partner, Anish Bhuvra, wins the prize for team encourager; and team spirit has been stronger than in any team I have played in. Mentioned in dispatches for the Varsity Match were James Paul (who had glandular fever) and Charlie Brooks and Jeremy Dickens (who were running temperatures).

We say goodbye to Paul, Niraj Patel and myself this year, losing a combined experience of 13 Varsity Matches. So the Club will be looking in the transfer market for one big signing in the mould of Alan Beverly, this year's star fresher, and perhaps a couple more from the Pauline youth academy. All best wishes to Charlie as he takes the Club on.

Brian Elfick

Durham University Fives Club

The Club has had another very successful year. The number of regularly playing members has been growing all year, and we can now boast a large club which includes a number of female players. Adrian Lee and Paul Rider should be thanked for the time they have spent teaching and recruiting these newcomers. In our fixtures the club has remained unbeaten with victories over the RFA, the White Rose Club and Sedbergh School, both in a hard-fought Winchester Fives fixture and at Rugby Fives.

We have also had considerable success in the BUSA and the U25s Championships. In the first, Adrian Lee reached the semi-finals both in the singles and, with his partner Richard Nichols, in the doubles; while in the second, Hugo Armistead won the plate singles, and Richard Nichols and Robert Ross the plate doubles. We look forward to holding the U25s in Durham next year, if Ed Hatton can be persuaded!

A particular highlight for the club has been the selection of Adrian Lee for the BUSA side for the second year running, and the awarding of his half-palatinate, which recognises his commitment to the club and his representation. He also remains the best-dressed man on the circuit!

As captain of the side in my final year, I have thoroughly enjoyed watching fives flourishing at Durham. The improvement in so many players has been remarkable, and I put this down to their hard work and commitment as well as to their desire to play in the tournaments. I leave Durham happy in the knowledge

that fives is flourishing and that the side should be strong next year – even if we are losing Adrian who is going on his year abroad to spread the fives gospel!

Well done and thank you to all who have been involved this year.

Robert Ross

Edinburgh University Fives Club

The year began well. Most of the guys involved during the previous season returned for more of the same, and a useful bunch of freshers were gleaned from the sports fair to bolster the ranks. Our weekly training sessions are still held at Fettes College thanks to the generosity of Mark Peel, and attendance was regular, full and included the newly formed girls' squad; although preoccupied with trying to acquire pink uniforms, they approached the sport with admirable enthusiasm and commitment.

The prospect of hosting BUSA this year was very exciting, and we positively swamped the field with twelve entrants all told. Our number one, Billy Powell, matched his previous achievement in the singles by reaching the quarter-finals, and he also reached the quarter-finals of the doubles with new boy Tim Barlow. In the Plates, Johnny Major was runner-up in the singles, as were Henry Manning and Giles 'Big Man' Makins in the doubles. Although we still have some way to go if we are to pressure the Oxbridge monopoly, the tournament was very enjoyable and the turnout encouraging.



Picture: Stephen Robson

Edinburgh at BUSA: (back row, from left) Toby Brook, Dominic Moger, Stephen Robson, Giles Makins, Matt Conrad, Dash Mason-Malik; (front row) Tim Barlow, Billy Powell, Henry Manning, Johnny Major.

During the Lent Term we played the surrounding schools, and it was good to see some talented players developing. We also challenged the touring Jesters and the resident Caledonian Club. We lost both matches (though not embarrassingly) and so look forward to future contests with the two sides.

Finally, others and myself move on from Edinburgh and so leave the club in the hands of Johnny Major, Tim Barlow, Robin Malacreda and Toby Brook. We wish them the best of luck for the future and hope that Edinburgh fives continues to grow in the years to come.

Stephen Robson



▲ *Christ's Hospital*

Under 13s (with M.F.B.) ►



Loretto



Malvern

STARS OF THE FUTURE



Floored!



Master-class with Wayne



Pilgrims



Blundell's

London University Fives Club

London University has certainly had its ups and downs this year. The club was only official at King's College and, as such, publicity could only reach members of that institution. The Tuesday night sessions at St. Paul's were regularly attended by several individuals, but unfortunately this was not enough and, despite our best efforts, the King's College Club has now been disaffiliated due to lack of members.

However, the University College Club, led by Daniel Grant and Hiro Ishii, has just been freshly affiliated and we have high hopes indeed. It will not be an easy start – for a new club it never is – but we hope to attract our mandatory 20 members and possibly a lot more. If anyone has any bright ideas about how to raise interest and awareness in the game at UCL, please do not hesitate to contact me!

This year we enjoyed success in the cold Edinburgh BUSA Championships, with Daniel Grant and George McGairl winning a bronze medal for doubles. It was a great weekend, and our team of six enjoyed themselves, with the pairing of Hiro Ishii and the wealth of knowledge that is Alex Smith also performing well. The latter was also awarded the prize for oldest player there!

Finally, if any reader is at one of the colleges of the University of London next year and wants to play Fives, please contact me (d.grant@ucl.ac.uk). The club will only be official at UCL, so there'll only be publicity for it there, but there's no reason why the club can't run unofficially at the other colleges.

Daniel Grant

Oxford University Rugby Fives Club

Oxford enjoyed another successful season this year.

Despite a rather passive approach to the running of the Freshers' Fair stand, we were pleasantly surprised by the large number of keen new members. The courts have seen more than thirty different players over the course of the year, varying from the usual undergrads to postgrads, gap-year students and local businessmen!

We enjoyed one of our busiest fixture lists, with continued support from various clubs around the country as well as with new matches against the likes of Old Blundellians, Wessex and Winchester College. Many thanks to all those who travelled to play against us – your support is appreciated.

Various University players also got involved in tournaments around the country – North-West, South-West, London – as well as the student-orientated BUSA and U25s. An excellent team effort in Edinburgh saw Oxford win the BUSA singles and lose in the doubles final, as well as picking up the doubles plate thanks to Jack Furniss and Johnnie Heath. Oxford were involved in both victories at the U25s competition in Denstone – James Bristow winning the singles and teaming up with former captain Marcus Bate to take the doubles title.

The season finished with another superb Varsity match. Excellent fives throughout the depth of both teams ensured the numerous supporters enjoyed an exciting encounter. After twenty games, Cambridge came out on top 231-212. Congratulations must also go to Oxford's Beavers, who completed another comprehensive victory, beating the Sparrows 180-45.

Many thanks to club secretary Lawrence Jamieson for the excellent fixture list and to the club treasurer, Sanjaya Ranasinghe, for keeping the club solvent.

James Bristow

SCHOOL FIVES

Alleyn's School

Last season we had far greater strength and depth than in previous years, which enabled us not only to have more success on court but also to have a greater number of matches. New fixtures were held against Oundle, KCS Wimbledon, Winchester and Pilgrims' School. All were very enjoyable events, and hopefully they will become regular fixtures.

The 1st IV was ably led by Rocco Sulkin, winning eight and losing five of their matches. Great enthusiasm was shown by all the senior boys, and they assisted me by taking a special weekly session for the Juniors. Rocco, Ed Carr and Stephen Lewis all leave this year and will be very useful additions to the Alleyn Old Boys.

The U16s had a successful year, winning more matches than they lost, and the U15s lost just the one match against St. Paul's by 9 points in a very exciting encounter. The U14s had a relatively mixed season but the U13s showed great promise, with a significant number at a strong standard.

In the National Schools' Championships, Carr and Sulkin played to their full potential by beating Winchester II to win the Senior Doubles Plate Competition, and this was deserved reward for their efforts over the season. Adam George went one better this year to win the U14 Doubles competition with Peter Hanton, having survived some desperately close matches against St. Dunstan's and St. Paul's to reach the final.

Peter Hanton dominated the U13 National Singles, losing just one point on his way to the title, and he combined well with Ben Stephens-Hemingway to win the Doubles. Peter has

excellent potential and showed maturity beyond his years in the way that he combined with Adam George to play such a significant role in winning the U14 Doubles.

There is no doubt that success breeds success, as was evidenced by the increased numbers of boys turning up to the Fives Courts after Peter Hanton's successes! With the successes at National level, the profile is now well established within the School, and we will seek to build on this next year and beyond.

Ian Fuller

Bedford School

The School season began with our annual Fives lesson from the Jesters who did, they admitted, have to play much harder to beat us this year. The 1st IV have now been together since year 10 and have one more season to go after this. Unfortunately our annual two games against University College School had to be cancelled this year, as UCS couldn't raise a IV. Fortunately, however, we were able to revive two fixtures that have not been played for a number of years, against Oundle and Bedford Modern School.

The match against Oundle proved to be an encouraging start, as the 1st IV beat their opponents by 47 points in a very well fought match at home. The icing on the cake was provided by the Colts IV, who beat an admittedly younger Oundle IV by 78 points, losing no games on the way. The match against BMS played on their courts was the first for about 20 years! Let's hope it will be a regular event from now on. The 1st IV overwhelmed

an older but less experienced BMS IV by 114 points in a clean sweep of games. The U14 IV were not so lucky. They played hard, but lack of experience, strange courts and stronger opposition saw them defeated by 53 points.

The final match of the term was the traditional Old Bedfordians' fixture. Unfortunately for the School, the result was also a traditional one (at least over the last dozen years or so), with the OB team beating the School by 72 points in a hard-fought match. The School did manage to win two games on the way, though – some consolation at least.

John Osman

Blundell's School

A busy and enjoyable season on the Fives courts has seen an excellent coaching workshop by Wayne Enstone, a 1st IV tour to Edinburgh and several well-contested matches. Richard Dyke won the senior Rice Cup in an exciting final against Oliver Beach, and Will Denford threw himself around the court to great effect to take the Junior Cup. Claire Bowen, paired with the Head Master, Ian Davenport, outplayed all opposition to win the school's first mixed doubles competition from an impressive field of twelve pairs.



Rice Cup finalists: (from left) Richard Dyke, Oliver Beach.

The Ladies' team of Claire Bowen, Alex Steel, Katie Yeo, Kate Palmer, Kathryn Atherton, Caroline Makepeace and Viki Grohman travelled to Malvern for the National Winchester Championships and met with considerable success. Kathryn Atherton reached the semi-finals, while Katie Yeo won both the singles plate and, paired with Grohman, the doubles plate. They have been a loyal and enthusiastic squad who have made excellent progress and, as they are now leaving the school, it is a fitting opportunity to thank them for their efforts. They will hopefully find a way of continuing the sport in the future. A lady fives player is a rare thing indeed.

The 1st IV suffered from injury and the loss early on of Oliver Beach through a dislocated shoulder, and they struggled to be a competitive force. The junior and U13 squads are looking extremely promising with Jack Eadie, Richard Longstreet, Matt Kvesic, Ned Menheneott and Freddie Gabbitass all being players of note. Congratulations to Joe Lambert, Rob Currell, Alex Steel, Claire Bowen, Katie Yeo, Richard Longstreet, Kate Palmer, Caroline Makepeace and Kathryn Atherton, who were all awarded their colours.

Bertie Matthew

Bradfield College

A small group of dedicated players met regularly throughout the season and, although they were starting from a low base, the improvement of the quality of their play was very noticeable over the period. One hopes that they do not forget all the lessons learnt by the time we meet again in September.

One of the reasons for this steady improvement has been the willingness of other fives-playing schools to match up abilities for the games that we have played. This has resulted in a chance for the Bradfield players to learn in competition without being hopelessly outplayed. I must applaud the masters-in-charge from the schools involved and convey my greatest thanks to them for their cooperation.

Even with this assistance the results went mainly against the Bradfield teams, but the players remained cheery throughout and obviously enjoyed the games. The old lags, Andy Inskip and Julian Butler, can still compete at a good standard and should have a good season next year. At U-16, Olayemi Smith is turning into a good player, Michael Trollope is getting fitter and better, and the two less experienced players, Rupert Yorke and Mannie Ababe, improved enormously over the season to become steadier match players by the end.

My colleague Jeremy Ball kindly looked after the U-14 age range, and I thank him for all the time and support he has given over the season. Jamie Stevenson-Hamilton, Alex Lillington-Martin, Jack Worsley and Adam Phelps were the mainstays of the U-14 side, but other members of the 'Year 9 activity' group also made appearances: Ben Beardmore-Gray and Ed Mearns, amongst others. One hopes that these young men will continue to play and improve, and become the core of the club in the future.

Terry Ronan

Christ's Hospital

The most remarkable feature of this season has been the numbers playing regularly as their official activity. In the Lent Term this was one hundred and twenty. Nearly eighty of these played in at least one of the eighty school matches. There were plenty of others who made occasional appearances, and an informal form of handball, played against outside walls, in which the ball has to bounce before it strikes the wall, could be seen in various places throughout the school. There has also been quite a bit of interest shown amongst the girls. Who knows whether this will be sustained?

The consequence of these huge numbers, however, has been that the available time for the senior team players to practise has been too limited, and there can be little doubt that the performance in school matches and tournaments suffered. Nevertheless, we still won more than half of our senior matches, had the runner-up in the National U13 Championships and won four plate competitions.

The other consequence, however, has been that the Head Master and the Almoners (governors) have been convinced of the value of the sport within the school and of the need for more courts. They have staked £20,000, at a time of severe financial restraint, to cover the necessary provisional costs of a survey and architect's fees before launching an appeal to convert the four adjacent squash courts.

The 1st IV had a good season. The captain, Mark Belassie, was unbeaten in inter-school matches, and the other leaving Grecians, Chris Birch, Michael Hale and Oneeb Khan, all performed at a creditable level. The 2nd IV, all of whom will still be available next year, lost only one match, right at the end of the season, to a remarkably strong St. Paul's Colts IV.

Ian Torkington



▲ James Bristow (Oxford)



▲ Geoff Sherratt (RFA President), David Gardner (C)



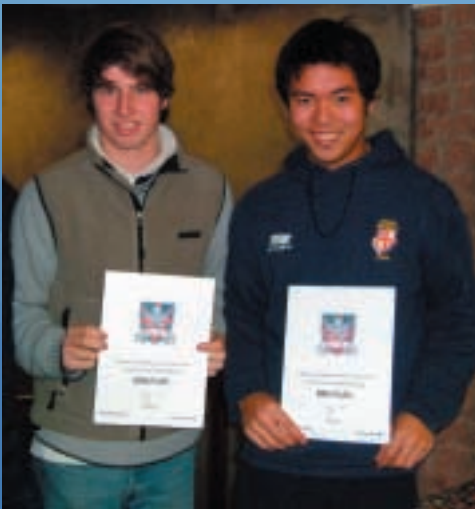
▲ The first morning

B.U.S.A.



▲ 'Switched On'

▼ Richard Nichols & Adrian Lee (Durham)



▲ Giles Makins, Henry Mann



rganiser), Steve Korris (Leeds), Stuart Fowlie (BUSA)



▲ Charlie Brooks & Brian Elfick (Cambridge)



▲ George McGairl & Daniel Grant (London)



2004



▲ 'Switched Off'



ng, Johnny Major (Edinburgh)

(Picture: Stephen Robson)



▼ The last evening



The CH IV: (from left) Michael Hale, Chris Birch, Mark Bellassie, Oneeb Khan.

Denstone College

Denstone's four Rugby Fives courts were renovated last year with kind help from the RFA and, although Denstone has not restarted fives in earnest, the game is being played. We recently hosted the National Under 25 Championships.

Steve Phennah

Derby Moor Community Sports College

The second year of Fives at the College; progress is being made. Last year we targeted every single pupil, boy and girl, in Year 9 so that I could give them at least a two- or three-week taster of the game. With the game thus made more familiar, this year we decided to use P.E. Curriculum time to enable interested pupils in Year 8 and the new Year 9 to play for at least a term. As a result some 20-25 boys have played all year and raised the standard of their game considerably. The keenest ones have joined the Saturday Morning Club, where Stuart Kirby, Brian Kirk and I coach them a little more intensively.



The Saturday Morning Club with Brian Kirk (right)

We had our first competitive match in February when Anthony Burrows at Oundle kindly fielded a IV to play us. Not surprisingly our boys struggled in Singles on the unfamiliar courts, but we managed to get on top in the Doubles and actually record a win. Three more boys went back in March for a friendly game involving a mixture of adults and pupils. The experience of playing under different conditions and against different opponents was invaluable.

In June 2004 we involved four 14-year-olds in the Plate Competition of the first Derby Moor Invitation Doubles Tournament. They were good enough to cope and enjoyed having their pictures taken with Hamish Buchanan for the local press.

This year a different group of seven boys will play. In a year's time we may be good enough to take part in the Schools' Colts competition; meanwhile we would much appreciate the offer of fixtures. Perhaps we could meet halfway and play on someone else's courts if Derby seems a bit remote.

Bob Dolby

Fettes College

Aside from the pleasure of hosting the BUSA Championships at Fettes last November, this was another enjoyable and productive season, especially at lower level.

The 1st IV, under Scott MacLennan, didn't have one of their better years, largely because they were badly afflicted by illness and injury. The vacancies did, however, provide opportunities for several promising youngsters such as James Gilbert, Laurence Bax and Neil Brotherston, and with everyone back for this coming year, we hope to be competitive at this level.

The Colts, under Christopher Kinloch, were unbeaten against other schools, as were the Junior Colts under Sunnie Frayn, the first time this has occurred for many years and a tribute to the boys' dedication to practice. The Fettes first pair of Sunnie Frayn and Kit Gammell also won the inaugural Scottish Schools' Junior Colts Championship, beating the second pair of Chris Graves and Hector Cottam in the final.

Mark Peel

Kings College School, Wimbledon

Fives has been running at the School for four years now. Although we do not have our own courts, we are able to hire the courts at the Bank of England Club. Currently there are 13 boys who play every Friday afternoon, and a few others who play on Wednesdays in the summer term. The sport is not run as an official school game as I'm committed to Rugby and Hockey in the winter, and the best Fives players are involved in other areas. It is run as an extra-curricular activity, which has the advantage of the boys committing to it for the whole year.

The School has in the last year had fixtures against St. Paul's, Alleyn's, Christ's Hospital and Winchester, as well as entering boys for the West of England and National Championships. Although not a force in the world of school Fives yet, we are beginning to see the effect of boys playing for a number of years. This year the Senior team had a good first pair in Harry Jefferies and Will Midmer, both getting to the last 16 of the West of England. Sadly, these two could not compete in the Nationals due to timings, but two Colts, James Walsh and Peter Winzeler, did so. James and Peter reached the quarter-finals of the main competition, and together won the doubles plate. Peter has only been playing for one afternoon a week for this year and, with another year to go as a Colt, is an exciting prospect.

There is now a healthy interest in Fives within the School, and this year it is featuring on Commemoration Day in the squash-court version. With limited facilities, KCS will struggle to do much better than we do at the moment, but talks of our own courts are continuing – watch this space!

Chris Thomas

Loretto School

The 2004/5 season was one to remember at Loretto. In Jamie Pendergrass, the School had a player of exceptional quality in terms of technique, analytical ability and determination. The expertise he displayed on court did not come about by accident or by chance – every shot was examined in practice, and game situations were discussed at considerable length throughout the year.

The lack of depth in the senior part of the School meant that much of Jamie's practice was completed on his own. Few players



*'Situations were discussed at considerable length':
Jamie Pendergrass and coach Roger Whait.*

would have been able to match this dedication. When success came, it was completely deserved.

In winning both the West of England Schools' and National Schools', Jamie justified his status as Number One seed for both championships. Along the way, he and his partner Rob Patterson collected the Scottish Schools' title, which secured the cup for the second year running.

I hope Jamie enjoys his fives at Oxford next year – he has made many good friends playing this game, and I know he has very much appreciated the sportsmanship and support of his fellow competitors.

Roger Whait

Malvern College

Overall this was a successful season, with the Fives squads playing 19 matches against school opposition. Of these, 10 were won, 8 lost and one tied.

Uniquely for Malvern, at times the 1st IV consisted entirely of boys from abroad, and fairly regularly it contained three boys who had begun playing on joining the school in the lower sixth. That they managed to be so competitive against far more experienced opposition is a testament to the time they spent on the courts.

At U16 level, Mike King and Will Gilbert succeeded in winning the plate competition at the West of England Schools' Championships. Supported very well by John Brierly and Charlie Mercer, the U16s were a strong side who were competitive against all but the very best schools.

The U15s did not have many games and suffered from the extended injury to Tom Crump. The remaining players rose to meet the challenge of this loss and did very well to win and tie their last two games.

The U14s were a strong Malvern team. Led by Stephen Coffey, they did well to achieve four wins against two defeats. Our U14 girls' team had an inaugural match against Marlborough, and I would very much like to arrange more fixtures for the girls next season – any school with a junior girls' team should get in touch.

Sadly this will be the last season where we have the benefit of six courts. The block of two will be demolished next year to make way for a new Mathematics block. Fortunately the four remaining ones are in good condition and should continue to serve us well.

Peter Gray



Picture: Stephen Stegg

*A match at Malvern during the National Winchester Doubles 2005:
(from left) Tom Kiggell, Simon Maskell, Tim Lewis, Andy Landon.*

Marlborough College

There were several excitements over the season, but the highlight was unquestionably the victory for Archie Montagu-Pollock and Jamie Davies in the Schools' Winchester Fives Plate Competition – the first bit of Fives silverware in living memory to bear the name of Marlborough College.

Archie powered his way through to the semi-finals at the West of England Schools', only to come up against the invincible Pendergrass. Defeat in the semis of the Colts' Doubles was naturally a disappointment, but it was very pleasing nonetheless to reach this stage for the second successive year.

The other high point was our first girls' fixture, a well-contested U14 match at Malvern. We hope very much that this match and perhaps others will become a regular part of our season (just as we hope equally that the result will not).

Most notable elsewhere was the development of U15 number one Andrew Wilson, who went through the season of school fixtures unbeaten, including several matches in the Colts, and who will aim to improve in 2006 on his quarter-final performance at this year's West of England Schools'.

Overall, these highlights compensated for a Lent Term fixture list that was ultimately rather thin, particularly for the seniors, and for the continuing difficulties with the flooring. The girls' match, the success of the top senior pair and an enjoyable inter-house competition all helped keep up the profile of the sport at the College.

Tom Kiggell

Merchiston Castle School

The senior side was undefeated in the 6 school games that they played this season. This included a good 46 point victory over the touring Sedbergh School. We had some depth in our pairings and whereas last year a young side made too many mistakes, they proved to be more consistent this season.

Robin Holroyd, the captain, and Gordon Mackie made up a strong first pair who didn't lose a match against a school side. Robin was a very good retriever and was consistent. Gordon hit the ball with his right hand harder than any other Merchiston schoolboy that I have seen! It was a real pity that these two couldn't compete in the Nationals – Robin because he was involved in national rugby, and Gordon because he badly pulled a hamstring.

The second pair was made up of Charles Legget, a nicely cultured player with a good range of shots, and Patrick Clarke, a player of flair but annoying inconsistency! These two are back next season and ought to be a good pair.

There was no joy in the Edinburgh Fives Championships, and sadly we couldn't be at full strength because of injury. However, it is very evident that there continues to be greater strength on the circuit up here than for many years.

A further five games were played against the Caledonian Club, the Jesters and the Merchistonians. We won none of them, but valuable experience was gained. Again we are



▲ *Ilan Roberts and Brian Kirk*



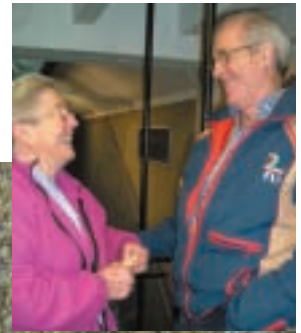
▲ *Ilan Puckle and Phil Atkinson*



▲ *An audience with Bernard Atkinson*



◀ *Michael Beaman*



Joan Wood and Geoff Sherratt ▶

VETERANS ALL



▼ *Brian Nithsdale*



▼ *John East*



▼ *Dave Hebden's 100th trophy (and Keith Puckle)*



indebted to Frank Akerman for his wonderful enthusiasm in travelling to these northern parts to play many games. As always, what a pleasant bunch of people he brings, and it was great to see them all again!

Fives continues to flourish in the school, with Colts, Juniors and U13 sides all playing. Once again, to all Fives playing schools in England, Edinburgh is a great place to tour, with easy accessibility to fives courts and opposition. Edinburgh Airport is only 15 minutes away from Merchiston. You would be most welcome!

Charles Swan

Oundle School

With so many of last year's team now left, this year's side were always going to be on the steepest part of their learning curve. However, they have managed to put together some good victories and some narrow defeats.

Against the men's teams, we have relied on staff to help match the strength of the RFA, Jesters, UCS Old Boys and Cambridge University – losing three and winning two matches, all of which were good contests. In the school matches the seniors lost all their encounters, but often by thirty points or fewer – the positive aspect being that all the first four will be playing again next season.

For the first time in recent history we had matches for Colts and Under 14s and, for the first time, for our girls' team as well. The girls were victorious, and we hope to play more matches next season. Our new venture of Sunday fixtures was very successful, and again we hope to continue with these. Another landmark was entries in all age groups at the National Schools' Championships despite many boys being away on family holidays, and we hope to have more playing again next year.

I am grateful to all the masters i/c for their help in arranging such good contests in a year when we have been rebuilding with younger players, and I look forward to another busy Easter Term 2006.

Anthony Burrows

St. Dunstan's College

As the College and its contribution to the game are being showcased in this edition, I shall be brief. The season was always going to be difficult for the 1st and 2nd IVs, as in the previous year the team had been dominated by upper sixth students and so the new players were thrown into the lions' den. The players battled hard but failed to register a win – a total turnaround to last year. The effort put in was commendable, and certainly Alex Taylor as captain tried very hard and was ably supported by Tom Barnes, Tom Stillwell, Daniel Wiseman and Tom Badminton. Indeed, Tom Badminton improved enormously throughout the season, winning many games.

The highlights are always the matches against UCS Old Boys, the RFA and the Old Dunstonians, as the students learn so much about the game and its ethics.

The U15 team is small, but Jamie Harding and Krishna Coopamah certainly gave their opponents a run for their money. The U14 team had an excellent season, losing only one match. The highlight for me was when the College put out three teams against St. Paul's, with the A and B teams being victorious. However, it was not necessarily the winning that mattered, but the enthusiasm the pupils showed. James Loo, George Kamenou, Matt Frankis, Doug Butt and Chris Murray had a good National Championship and will certainly form the core of the team in coming years. Even more pleasing is that we had 30 pupils aged 11 playing the game regularly at an after-school club, which augurs well for the future.

Rick Bodenham

St. Paul's School

1st IV: Played 12, won 5, lost 7.

2nd IV: Played 8, won 5, lost 3.

3rd IV: Played 4, won 3, lost 1.

Colts IV: Played 7, won 7.

Junior Colts IV: Played 6, won 6.

U-14 IV: Played 7, won 6, lost 1.

Other: Played 27, won 21, lost 6.

This year's results again reflected our strength in depth: 81 boys represented the school – or in one or two cases the opposition – in this season's matches and tournaments, and last year's record was re-broken when the number of Paulines playing in the Oxford v Cambridge match rose to eight of the sixteen, with Alan Beverly providing crucial input for the winners and Jack Furniss joining the Oxford contingent; Charlie Brooks was again a BUSA doubles champion and runner-up in the BUSA singles.

The 1st IV, composed entirely of last year's colts, took on a demanding fixture list with enthusiasm, and although they lost narrowly on their first visit to Sherborne, they scored significant wins against Winchester (home) and Tonbridge (away), both strong school sides this year, as well as UCS Old Boys. The 2nd IV narrowly beat Christ's Hospital 1st IV to end their school careers on a high point.

The top Colts were formidably strong, while the Junior Colts also made excellent progress despite the loss of a number of the previous year's stars. The Under 14s took to the game in huge numbers and looked capable of matching the best once levels of experience are closer.

In tournament fives this year, the Colts swept the board at both Marlborough and the Nationals: Dan Tristão beat Ed Leakey of Sherborne in both singles finals, and with James Corbin beat Alqahir Ladak and Anand Ashok in the doubles finals. Ed Emmett and Mark Gibbor did well to beat Sherborne in the national doubles to reach the final, and Alex Seigel also provided an upset in reaching the singles semi. We provided runners-up and beaten semi-finalists in the Under 14 tournaments, but consoled ourselves with the thought that the winners had been playing the game for substantially longer. In the Schools' Winchester Fives doubles tournament in the autumn term, SPS I (Alex Seigel and Chris Hay) were beaten in the semi-final.

Internally, the 'Captain's Cup', awarded to the senior who shows the greatest improvement in a season, went to Will Pleming. Three invitation doubles events were again held, with a draw for partnerships, and the winners of singles cups were Ed Emmett (Conway) and Dan Tristão (Thomas).

Another very busy and enjoyable season, then, and with the addition of Sam Roberts to the staff a good chance that the boys will continue to be thoroughly tested on court, despite increasing decrepitude of the master-in-charge!

Peter King

Sedbergh School

1st IV: Hugo Clerey (capt.), Jack Reynard, Michael Raikes, Kenny Sewell.

In defiance of geriatric management, Sedbergh Fives seems to be flourishing. A talented but inexperienced 1st IV improved considerably in the course of the season and played some very exciting, though not always consistent Winchester Fives. They were too strong for the White Rose Club; they lost two close encounters with Durham University, beat the RFA comfortably and came unstuck against UCS Old Boys. Our only fixture against schoolboy opposition was at Merchiston, where the IV's inexperience – especially in Rugby Fives on unfamiliar courts – was all too obvious.

In the Nationals, Sedbergh were not very impressive, but their master-in-charge found an Italian restaurant that offered superb Chianti Classico at a very reasonable price. Three of last year's four will be on the team next year, when I expect the standard of our senior fives to be higher than it has been for seven or eight years. Further down the school there is a group of able and enthusiastic players and we are eager for colts fixtures next spring term.

Laurence Catlow

Sherborne School

I am delighted to be able to write that the School has had one of its most successful seasons ever. I think it is fair to say that Sherborne was more than a match for any school side in the country, with five very good players. Injuries to two of them meant that all five were integral parts of the team and fully deserve all plaudits.

The West of England Schools' Championships were again held at Marlborough – on the very slippery courts! – on the first weekend of term. David Kirk and David Park reached the final of the Senior Doubles losing to Winchester, and Edward Leakey reached the final of the Colts' Singles losing to a very competitive St. Paul's player. Very little practice had been possible in the Michaelmas term because of Rugby commitments, so this was a very pleasing start.

The season proved to be a highly successful, with the 1st IV only losing one match – the first one of term – to a very strong Old Tonbridgian side which included a dominant past National Champion, Ian Fuller. Victories were gained over the RFA, Marlborough, Blundell's, St. Paul's, King's Bruton (twice), Wessex, The Pilgrims, Winchester and Tonbridge. My thanks to St. Paul's and Tonbridge for coming down to Sherborne to play the 1st IV – a credit to the School team.

The Nationals were once again held at St. Paul's, starting on the Tuesday after Easter. There was an air of expectancy and quiet confidence among the team. Was David Kirk's ankle going to stand up to the pressure of four days' Fives? Was Edward Leakey's shoulder going to stay in place? There was no doubting David Kirk's desire to win, but easy first-game successes do not win matches. He knows that he should have reached the semi-finals, and hopefully he will learn from this as he enters the student and senior ranks. David Park surprisingly lost in the last sixteen. In the Doubles, they never played at their best and failed to reach the final, losing to a St. Paul's pair that they had previously beaten. Congratulations to Michael Oates-Wormer and Edward Leakey for reaching the quarter-finals with an excellent win against the Allyn's first pair – definitely the best doubles that they have ever played. Pride of place must go to Edward Leakey for reaching the final of the Colts' Singles, losing to the same Pauline who defeated him at Marlborough. If only the shoulder had stayed in place! On his way to the final, he defeated players from Malvern, Winchester, Allyn's and St. Paul's. Michael Oates-Wormer reached the final of the Senior Plate competition, narrowly losing to a very talented player from Eastbourne.

Numbers playing Fives are still high, especially in the Fifth Form, but there are concerns that with the introduction of Soccer some players in the Lower School are moving away into that sport. The revival of the First Year Minor Games programme in September will certainly help in recruiting the better players.

Michael Cleaver

Tonbridge School

2005 was one of the strongest years for Tonbridge Fives since the days of Ian Fuller over 30 years ago. The 1st IV's season started well when the RFA team were beaten for the first time for at least 16 years. This was followed by a surprising win against Winchester (when both sides were struck by injuries and

had to field their number 6). Sadly, St. Paul's put an end to hopes of an unbeaten season.

At the end of term, Martin Wilkinson (our new coach, following his retirement from Unilever) and I accompanied the 1st IV on a West Country weekend. Sherborne were just too strong, but Blundell's were easily beaten. The hospitality shown to our team by Sherborne was exceptional and made the weekend a fantastic success. The team are already looking forward to future trips when at University and beyond. The Nationals were also successful, with Alex Rothnie reaching the quarter-finals of the singles and Alex and Chris Jones reaching the semi-finals of the doubles.



Tonbridge players (from left) Alex Rothnie and Chris Jones with master-in-charge Ian Jackson.

With seventy boys playing, we were able to field twelve teams against St. Paul's and thirteen against Christ's Hospital. The future looks quite promising with new roofs on the courts, two good Colts this year and the potential for a very good team from the Under 14s.

I am most grateful to Ian Pinkstone for running things while I was away last year, to Martin Wilkinson for his help this year and to the OT Fives Club who encourage the Senior boys to join their practices and who have been instrumental in producing the strong team this year.

At the end of the Nationals, I totalled up that Chris Jones and I had shared 687 miles in the school minibus over the previous fortnight. We would both have done every one again!

Ian Jackson

Whitgift School

Fives at Whitgift saw a slight downturn in our fortunes this year. A relatively inexperienced 1st IV were cannon fodder to the more prepared Premier League fives schools, and we did lose two matches by over 100 points. Naturally, such results were cunningly disguised as 'friendlies' to avoid any publication in the school magazine, and the matches we won over 3rd IVs were naturally published as if they were the top teams! So, on that basis we did manage to win 3/10 fixtures.

The most encouraging aspect of fives at Whitgift is the progression of the U14 team, with James Mabbutt the captain and outstanding player of his year. Whispers before the Nationals that he was likely to be in the final (not by myself, I hasten to add!) were the kiss of death, and in the end he struggled in the quarter-finals. But we have the basis of an excellent team, which will surely develop in the years to come. A force to be reckoned with, but unfortunately we do now have two years of virtually nothing in-between, so things might be very low key at senior level next year.

Nick Morgan

Winchester College

Fives at Winchester continues to flourish. Indeed, this was a truly exceptional year. The top year have been a strong group of players throughout their time at the school, but this year all their hard work over the last five years really paid off. The first challenge was to retain the National Schools Winchester Fives Doubles title won by Ishii and Pumphrey in 2003. This was done in some style, with Winchester providing both pairs in the final; Mohammed and Pumphrey eventually beating Ellison and Eccles. A couple of weeks later Mohammed and Pumphrey were at it again, this time competing in the National Student Championships. They reached the semi-finals of the Doubles Tournament, beating Cambridge II on the way, before losing out to a strong Oxford I pair. Unfortunately, owing to knee surgery, Pumphrey would not be available again until three weeks before the Nationals.

Next on the agenda was the West of England Schools' Championships. The enthusiasm of the boys for the game was made plain by the record entry of a total of 22 Wykehamists. However, this was not the only record to be broken. The Senior Doubles title was won by Ellison and Mohammed, who beat Sherborne relatively comfortably in the final. This was the first time that a Winchester pair had won this particular title in the entire 46-year history of the tournament. Nor was this the only success: in the Senior Singles, Eccles beat Robinson in the plate final, Ellison made it to the quarter-finals of the main competition, and Mohammed was runner-up to Pendergrass of Loretto.

At last on to the Fives term proper. The overall record in School matches across all age groups was played 33, won 21, lost 11, tied 1. Of the 11 losses, 7 were inflicted by St. Paul's, who beat us at all levels – clearly something that needs to be improved upon!

The season then closed in spectacular style at the Nationals, with Mohammed and Ellison repeating their West of England Doubles triumph, as they proved far too strong for St. Paul's I in the final. In the Senior Singles Ellison made it to the semi-final only to meet Pendergrass, the number one seed, and despite putting up a brave fight, he eventually succumbed to the Scot. In the final it was Mohammed's turn to have a crack at Pendergrass, and he certainly gave it his very best shot. He eventually went down in three games, but the quality of Fives



U14 Singles winner Luke Squire-Smith.

was extremely high throughout and a tribute to the abilities of both players. Meanwhile, there were other Wykehamist successes. Somji picked up the U16 Singles second plate, beating Hale in the final, and Rogers won the U14 Singles second plate. Most encouragingly for the future of Winchester Fives, however, Squire-Smith won the U14 Singles title, and in partnership with Rogers made it through to the semi-finals of the U14s Doubles before losing narrowly to St. Paul's II.

The enhanced profile of the game within the School and the successes achieved on court owe a great deal to the considerable hard work put in by all the boys over the last five or so years, but I must also thank the Wessex Club who continue to welcome boys along to their highly enjoyable practice sessions and who provided opposition for both our 1st IV and U16 IV at the end of the season. Special thanks go to James Hodgins for his boundless enthusiasm, coaching and time spent on court, and to Deneal Smith for being so willing to drive minibuses loaded with boys, and without whom it would have been impossible to arrange so many away fixtures.

Jamie McManus

CLUB FIVES

Alleyn Old Boys Fives Club

The AOBs have had a good season. Tuesday night practices are usually well attended by at least eight players, including several recent school leavers from Alleyn's and the old enemy, St. Dunstan's. More players are always welcome, though.

The AOB Club managed to regain the Wood Cup this season, but unfortunately the Old Boys (not many of us left now) lost the Owers Trophy final to the Old Dunstonians.

Next season we hope to enlarge our fixture list, and there is even talk of resurrecting our springtime tour of the West, as we have recently lost Nick Geere to the Deep West Club.

Hamish Buchanan

Bank of England Rugby Fives Club

The bank's fives section continues to rely on a small band of enthusiastic players. Nevertheless, the section is still vibrant, playing matches or practising almost every Tuesday evening since the season began in September, and on the occasional weekend.

This season, success in club fixtures has been relatively good. Of a total number of 14 matches we have so far won nine and lost only three (with a remarkable two ties). For the first time in many years, we also progressed beyond the first round this year in the National Club Knockout, albeit courtesy of a scratched game v Oxford Past! Nevertheless, it meant that we had the pleasure of taking on the eventual runners-up, Manchester YMCA. And again this season, club representatives have enjoyed some success in national tournaments: Jonathon Bartle's attempted defence of his President's Cup title from last year fell just short, and Iain de Weymarn made it to the semi-final of the National Winchester Fives tournament. The section also continues to run an internal and highly competitive singles ladder, on which places have been chopping and changing all season.

The busy schedule continues to demonstrate the success of the reglazed roof to our courts. A couple of years ago such a schedule would have been impossible, with many matches cancelled owing to wet and therefore unsafe courts. Once again we would like to express our gratitude to both the Bank and the Sports Club for the continued maintenance of such a wonderful facility in which to play rugby fives.

The section currently comprises seven regular players: Jonathon Bartle, Iain de Weymarn, Anthony Calf, Mark Chester, Bruce Mackenzie, Michael Addison and Guy Sagar. We are all particularly indebted to Jonathon, who without fail is on the email on Monday, rounding up participants for the subsequent evening's entertainment – and his website (www.thebartles.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/), which is normally up-to-date within hours of each session, is a sight to behold!

Iain de Weymarn

Caledonian Club

2004/05 was another very enjoyable season for the Caledonian Club in Edinburgh. We continued to play at Fettes College on Tuesday nights, and my ongoing thanks must go to Fettes for allowing us to use their facilities.

We played a number of matches against Merchiston Castle School both before and after Christmas, and it was encouraging to see how much some of their players came on over the course of the year. I think that a few of our players, at times, were hoping that some of the boys wouldn't be coming back next year!

We also had a couple of matches against Edinburgh University, and it is good to see that the University Club seems to be thriving, with a very healthy number of players playing on a regular basis.

The Jesters had their usual trip north in February and, as always, the fixtures were played in excellent spirit with some pretty decent fives played over the course of the two matches. Hats off to all the Jesters' players for their stamina both on and off court!

Finally, Blundell's School organised a tour to Edinburgh and played against Fettes, Loretto, Merchiston and ourselves. It is always good to welcome touring teams to these parts, and if anyone is considering a tour, then they should bear us in mind.

Simon Fraser

Christ's Hospital Common Room and Club

Our results have not been great this season, but we put that down to the increasing stresses of the schoolmaster's life, or possibly old age! That said, we have welcomed a number of young members of staff who are learning the game; and activity, both in the courts and the Common Room afterwards, has been enthusiastic!

We have played our regular home and away fixtures against the Bank, Tonbridgians and Whitgiftians this season, and a very enjoyable new fixture against Wessex. We held our traditional gathering on Christmas Eve morning and again on New Year's Eve. We also held a 'Club evening' with Whitgiftians when, instead of playing against each other, we played with each other – and this proved to be a great event, certainly to be repeated.

The Keeley-Denison Cup, our own version of the President's Cup, in which we pair with the top eight school players, was keenly contested again and won by the father and son pairing of Steve and Jim Walsh. The 'Trafalgar Project' to convert the four squash courts in the block to fives courts, master-minded by David Bawtree, is moving forward, and preliminary surveys of how we might accomplish the conversion have been undertaken.

We have lost a couple of regular old friends to injury this year, but numbers are still good and we usually muster a dozen players. We play regularly on Wednesdays throughout the year. Anyone in the vicinity is very welcome to come and join us – just turn up with your gloves.

Bill Avenell

Derby Moor Fives

This year we have been working on two fronts: trying to enlarge the Club while encouraging more children to play at the school. Two adult novices (Paul Brown and Stan Nikov) have started playing regularly and have reached a good level. Paul took part in our home fixture against UCS Old Boys after playing for only three months and performed well.

Emma Seton has been playing with us since last year's invitation competition in June, and her game has improved to such an extent that she reached the finals of the ladies' doubles and the Winchester doubles and, with Bob Dolby, she won the Winchester mixed doubles competition.

An Irish Handball player, Patrick O'Brien, has been playing with us since November and took part in our match against an adult team from Oundle. He is working on contract in Derby until December and may then appear at another Club, depending on where his work takes him.

Another adult member arrived in the spring, thanks to the new RFA website. Robert Grey was searching the internet for fives clubs only two days after the website went live. He was directed to our Club, which is only 20 miles from his home near Loughborough, and began playing with us the following week. Robert has not played since he left Oundle School 36 years ago but has not lost his skills – clearly playing fives is like riding a bicycle.

Finally, two of the school pupils, aged 14 or 15, will soon begin playing with us on Tuesday evenings, having progressed to a good standard via the Saturday Morning Club.

Other matches have included two fixtures against Cambridge University at Oundle and Bedford. Brian Kirk and I won the Yorkshire Open plate and retained the Veterans' plate (which I had won the previous year with Bob Dolby), and we are currently looking forward to our second invitation doubles competition at the end of June. This event allows us to involve the children – with first-round losers from the main competition being drawn with children for a round-robin plate competition.

Bob celebrated his 60th birthday on court with champagne (after playing!) and we were able to express our gratitude for his continued coaching during school hours and for recruiting children into the Saturday Morning Club. This work has been rewarded by a grant of £1,800 from Derby City Council to support the development of fives for both adults and children over the coming year. Bob got to the final of the Vintage doubles yet again, but there was this chap called Hebden playing....

Twenty players competed in the Invitation Tournament and a further dozen entered the Plate, including six boys from the school. Hamish Buchanan and Stuart Kirby defeated Dave Hebden and Brian Kirk in the semi, and in the final they were too strong for John Beswick and Grem McIntyre, who had had a mighty tussle in their semi with Phil Bishop and Clive Butler. Rob Cleave and Tim Widdop won the Plate, beating Bob Dolby and Ian Roberts.



Picture: Lynn Kirby

The large field for the 2nd Derby Moor Invitation Tournament.

The challenge for the next year is to set up an additional adult club evening, but it is not entirely clear how this will come to pass. We often have eight or ten players on Tuesday evenings, and the pressure from any new members will make another evening session essential.

Stuart Kirby

Executioners Rugby Fives Club

The Executioners' 2005 report should perhaps be subtitled, 'Saddam – our part in his downfall'.

Never mind the fives, this year has seen the club play its part in world events, when the committee kindly allowed Paddy Lord to forego his duties as fixtures secretary to serve in Iraq.

However, Paddy's a man dedicated to the cause and he returned safe and sound from Basra, just in time to enter the club's now traditional end-of-season doubles tournament which, as is now also traditional, was won by Chris Saltmarsh – this time partnered by Richard Baty.

The fives pairs who played in that competition provided a fitting end to a season that has seen the club go from strength to strength. On more than one occasion, we have had all six of St. Paul's courts in use at once on our Wednesday evening sessions, and more than 20 players signed up for the singles ladder.

We welcomed several new members, and it was one of them – Gareth Rees – who deservedly finished in first position. Indeed, he has had a very successful year on his return to fives, qualifying for the last 16 in the National Singles and reaching the semi-finals of the National Doubles.

He was one of eight Executioners in that competition, and just one of the growing number of club members making their mark in tournaments around the country. In Alex Smith and Andy Pringle, for example, we had two of the quarter-finalists in the Scottish Open, while Ben Brookes was a beaten finalist in the President's Cup.

We're fast becoming plate specialists, too, with Richard Baty, Richard Kemp and new boy George McGairl all picking up silverware this year.

We'll be looking for continued success next season. And, of course, if you know of any oil-rich despots in the Middle East who need, er, 'taking care of', you know there's only one fives club to call.

Andy Pringle

Exeter Club

The notorious plate winners have stepped up a gear in the last year with one particularly resounding and unexpected victory, some notable individual performances and, as always, some 'nearlies'!

First, the victory! Mighty Manchester travelled to Devon on an inaugural tour, which we hope will become an annual fixture. With a team sheet comprising John Beswick, John Minta, Brian Nithsdale and Wayne Harrison, Manchester's arrival was awaited with trepidation by the West Country club. However, due to some clever organising involving travelling on a Bank Holiday, the boys arrived at the courts on time, but after about six hours in the car.

After some debate over whether it was necessary to play singles or not, Alex Rew led the charge, beating John Beswick 12-10, Stuart Watson demolished John Minta 12-11 and Tim Lewis saw off Brian Nithsdale. Young recruit Richard Dyke bowed to the experience of Wayne Harrison.

At the end of some hard-fought doubles, Exeter pulled through by the tightest margin of 8 points overall and fully recommend that other clubs now invite the mighty conquerors from the North-West to their courts – they do not travel well!

As to the plate wins, James Hughes came away victorious in the singles plate from the North-West Championships and, pairing up with John Savery, won the doubles plate at the West of England Championships at Sherborne, beating off West Country opposition from Bristol in the form of Simon Werkshagen and partner.

Lastly, the 'nearlies'. James Hughes and Alex Rew beat Matt Cavanagh and John Hayes in the South-West quarter-finals, only to lose to Paddy d'Ancona and Ben Taberner in the semis. And in the quarter-finals of the National Doubles at Alleen's, the same pair were 10-4 up in the third game against John Beswick and Neil Roberts, only to lose 15-11. Ah well, there's always a next year!

Alex Rew

Jesters Club

This year's Jesters tournament was played at Alleen's, and the winner was Ed Fuller. There was a sort of qualifying round, in as much as competitors had to be sufficiently nimble to be able to scale the School railings in order to gain access to the courts.

Alex Smith reports below on Frank Akerman's Edinburgh tour. Alex was responsible for organising this year's double fixture against Oxford University 1st IV and 'Beavers', which was times to coincide with the Squash Jesters fixture and a dinner at Wadham, to which we were kindly invited. Although James Bristow, the Oxford captain, ensured an impressive turnout for the dinner, Fives players were vastly outnumbered by Squash players (plus friends and relations). The other distinguishing feature was that our match lasted much longer, and so we got to the bar a lot later than the Squash players.

Not knowing quite what to expect at the dinner, the above factors led us to suspect that some embarrassing initiation ceremony might be on the agenda, and we were not reassured when Robert Dolman, the Jesters chairman, started the proceedings with a cabaret act. In the end, we only had to make a few speeches. Fortunately the dinner didn't end too late, as one Jester had arranged to play in the Sedbergh tournament the next day, and now regrets not having studied 'O' Level Geography.

Nick Geere

Alex Smith writes:

The highlight of the Jesters calendar was, as usual, the February Tour to Edinburgh, organised with vigorous determination by Frank Akerman. Frank's enduring patience and tenacity are legendary as he deals with the inherent irritations of ensuring that fifteen fives players make it to Edinburgh and are sufficiently organised to get to their various matches at the right time, or at all.

The tour is a gruelling itinerary of fives playing, ranging from relatively relaxed fixtures against the younger school teams through the tough games against the top school teams and the university, to the punishing two matches against the Caledonian Club VI first thing on Saturday and Sunday morning. The Jesters scored a very rare double victory against the Caledonian Club, although cynical observers may put that down to Frank's canny offer of a Jester to replace the absent Ian Purvis for the Scots.

As usual, much fives talk was had at La Petite Folie on Saturday evening. Talking to the fives coaches of Loretto and Merchiston Castle, it is obvious how much Frank's tours over the years have helped to maintain the high standard of fives playing in Scotland, for which we all owe him much thanks. We look forward to another great weekend in 2006.

Manchester Y Club Fives Club

Another year over and another year of progress at the Y Club Fives Club. One national tournament, four internal tournaments and four fixtures held. At the beginning of the season we had five players in the top 20 and at the end of the season we had six.

Congratulations go to Phil Bishop on his first seniors win at the North-West and the increasingly waif-like Kevin Henry and the famous chef Jeff Thomas's performance in winning the Scottish Doubles. David Fox carried the young Mr Hebden to another Winchester Tournament victory. Youngsters making a name in the club include Marco the wrestler, the most tenacious player to come out of the Y club stable in years. Leon Samuals is also improving fast, but with a new arrival in his family, we can take some comfort that his game will fall away as sleep deprivation kicks in.

Most of these achievements at the club have been, in large part, due to my tenure as Vice-Captain, ably assisted by the other Y club committee members. Brian Nithsdale had a rocky start to the year, complaining about almost everything (including his committee colleagues). Brian eventually managed to arrange a few fixtures, the most impressive of which was the tour of the South-West, Exeter and Bristol. This is the beginning of hopefully a growing list of fixtures, which may encourage some Y club players to venture beyond the bosom of the Y Club Fives Club. Brian also managed to arrange the first Y Club end-of-season dinner in years, which, to everyone's surprise ended up being a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

John Beswick was as ever a stalwart, organising the North-West, helping out on the occasional internal tournament and after a couple of years' absence, supporting the Club KO team, who came a close second to the arch enemy, Alleyn's. Other committee members also provided valuable input. Despite this, in true Y Club Fives club tradition, the end of season saw another culling of the committee to reflect the members' thirst for change and desire to see the functions of the club streamlined. The introduction of Peter Woods as Chairman may bring in yet more changes. All will be revealed in the year ahead.

David Fox

Old Blundellian Fives Club

There are still a good number of Old Blundellians playing Fives, albeit slightly sporadically and at varying locations across the country. The two main OB days have been well supported, with about sixteen players combining with boys and masters on a tiring day in March at the school, where much fun was had. The standard of Fives was surprisingly good, considering that most OBs only don the gloves once or twice a year. In June on OB Day we contested the Reichwald Cup, and the pairing of John Savery and Martyn Whitehead were victorious.

On the competition side, Alex Rew, James Hughes, John Savery and Harry Akerman entered as an OB side in the Owers Trophy and reached the semi-finals, only just being beaten by the eventual winners. These four players are regularly seen on the Fives circuit, and outings have also been had this year by Richard Summerfield and Jeremy Wren. It would be good to see all players playing more regularly, and all OBs and recent school leavers are asked to contact the secretary, Alex Rew, with their email address and telephone number in particular, so that they can be kept informed of OB fixtures. Contact details: alex.rew@virgin.net or Tel: 07970 958408.

(from left) John Savery, Alex Rew, Martyn Whitehead.



Picture supplied by Alex Rew

We are also looking for match managers who (with help) can arrange games in their area. A fantastic new fixture this year was organised by John Beckley at Oxford, which comprised some excellent Fives events at the university, followed by a nice walk along the river whilst the inter-college rowing races were taking place, with some food and a few beers waiting at the end!

Alex Rew

Old Bradfieldian Fives Club

The OBs have had the occasional fixture in the guise of people who all play at St. Paul's and could all be Executioners. Regular players are myself, the brothers Lord, James Birch, Jez Sinton and Edward Ronan. If any OB reads this and is interested in playing some Fives, please get in touch with Chris Thomas on cjt@kcs.org.uk or 07974 316396.

In September we entered the Owers Trophy and beat a weak Oundle side before losing respectably to a strong St. Dunstan's side who ran out winners at the end of the day. Due to members playing for other sides, we failed to produce a side for the Wood Cup, but we will hopefully have a get-together at an Old Bradfieldians' Day in the future.

Chris Thomas

Old Dunstonians Rugby Fives Club

The club made further progress in 2004/5 by improving on its runners-up position in the previous season's inaugural Owers Trophy competition, with a win over Alleyn Old Boys (last year's winners) in this year's final. A strong squad including Paddy d'Ancona, Phil Bishop, Mike and Andy Hajialexandrou and Tim Stock delivered victory.

The club's individual players had successes too, with Phil Bishop winning the North-West Open in Manchester. Paddy d'Ancona was a runner-up at the London singles tournament and in the National Doubles (with Ben Taberner), whilst Mike Hajialexandrou made several semi- and quarter-finals at Open level, reaching the top ten rankings. This season the ODs had three players in the top ten, a first for the club. Steve Korris also had a good season, winning the singles plate at a strong BUSA Championships and reaching the final of the Under 25 Doubles (with Ed Hatton). Steve has helped rejuvenate Leeds University's Fives Club – all fives-playing students at or within reach of Leeds, please note!

Paddy d'Ancona

Old Merchant Taylors' Rugby Fives Club

June 2005: one of the four courts at Sandy Lodge is currently out of action since it is being used as a store for ongoing school design and technology projects. So, as we catch our breath between games, we regard in awe the creations in court number one: the humble cheese cutter has given way to electric guitars; the wooden pencil-case has made room for a skateboard on steroids.

Happily this season, on courts numbers two, three and four the same has applied: we have become new and improved, double action, max-strength, 25% extra free, faster acting and of course baked – not fried.

Perhaps our improvement, along with greater interest and participation, has something to do with our members following their individual fitness disciplines: Prashant Chopra hits his yoga mat weekly, Gareth Price runs everywhere, John Walter visits his gym regularly, Spencer Edwards chases the best windsurfing locations during his weekends, Rich Fetherston wields a bewildering array of bats, rackets, clubs and sticks outside of fives,

Lyn Graham-Taylor plays the beautiful game for his local team and I, not that results are ever conspicuous, cycle everywhere.

Therefore congratulations to all (fives players or not) for a good season's worth of fives this year. The regular Wednesday club night was well supported by returning players (Gareth, Lyn) and newcomers (Spencer) alike. We played several matches, raised squads for the Wood Cup and Owers Trophy and exhibited squash court fives courtesy of Daniel Grant. I am told we even turned up en masse one evening at the Executioners club night.

We had a successful President's Cup also, both in playing and preparation – thank you to all involved. OMT names were scribed onto three of the four trophies: with partners, Daniel took the 'T' Pot, John the Love Mug and Prashant, partnered with Ed 'Sepp Meier' Hatton, fiercely beat away all competition to win the President's Cup.

Next season we hope to embark on our first tour in years (even if it's just a weekend away), having missed out on one this season due to work and other commitments. We continue to play fives throughout the summer months – everyone welcome.

Bhaswar Baral

Old Oundelian Fives Club

There are Old Oundelians playing fives in London, Yorkshire, Devon, Oxford and Cambridge, and this was reflected in a more active 2004/5 which saw OOs playing in tournaments around the country – including at BUSA in Edinburgh – and back at Oundle. As OO Fives Secretary, I make it back to Oundle several times a year, to play for the RFA, the Jesters and the Old Oundelians. It is particularly enjoyable to return to play on the courts, which are still in great condition.

Fives playing at the School continues to progress, thanks to the dedication of Tony Burrows and the other Oundle staff players. I hope fives will continue to return to its former popularity, and we have been assured by Oundle's Governing Body that the proposed rebuilding of the fives courts next to the sports hall will not interrupt the fives season.

The OO team entered the Owers Trophy in October 2004 and was composed of old doubles partners Alex Smith and Rupert Cheswright alongside the university pair of Chris Clark (Oxford) and Charles Lamb (Leeds). The tournament, beginning with the group games, was a tough prospect for any old boys' team which does not play regularly. We faced tough matches, first with the Old Bradfieldians and then with the Old Dunstonians, who went on to win the competition; so we finished without a victory but with pride intact!

In March, the fives players were back in numbers at Oundle's Sports Weekend, which features OO matches in a variety of sports. A range of players, from fresh-faced recent leavers to stalwart veterans, appeared on court. We divided up to play a round robin series of games, in order to give the school players some useful and varied practice for the girls' and boys' matches against Allyn's School the next day.

Highlight of the day was the seasoned father and son partnership of Roger and Mark Freebairn, who played some fine and competitive games against a variety of Oundle's players. It was great to see Roger, who has taught a huge number of people to play fives to a high standard, on court again.

The big doubles match of the afternoon involved Rupert Cheswright and Tony Burrows against Mark Freebairn and Alex Smith. After a series of long rallies, with some spectacular shots on both sides, Freebairn and Smith emerged narrow victors.

Thanks to the School for its continued support of fives, and also to Roger Freebairn for his hard work in researching and writing a very enjoyable article on the history of Oundle fives for last year's Handbook.

Alex Smith

Old Pauline Rugby Fives Club

The Club was formed early in 2003, mainly on the initiative of the 2002 leavers, and made an enthusiastic start, with club evenings held each Thursday at the school. A large proportion of the membership are currently students, so that numbers in term-time may be low; handicap singles tournaments for the Cunis Cup have taken place, but in 2005 this event will be moved to September. Our own 'President's Cup' doubles, played just after Christmas, is a popular event, won this year by Jack Furniss and Niraj Patel. We have competed in the quarter-final of the Wood Cup in each of the last three years, Manchester YMCA proving rather strong this time for a Pauline team reduced to fielding the Chairman at number 4.

Peter King

Old Tonbridgians Fives Club

This year we have had our usual round of fixtures, starting with an unsatisfactory appearance in the Owers Trophy, despite the personal best efforts of the team organiser, Ian Fuller. We will endeavour to do better this autumn. For the remainder of our events we had mixed fortunes, winning more than losing; one or two matches were postponed, but we had both home and away fixtures against The Bank of England, Masters of Christ's Hospital, Old Whitgiftians, Old Eastbournians, Tonbridge School, and a notable success against the RFA.

We continue to be most grateful to Tonbridge School for allowing us to use the newly revitalised courts. For those who may not be aware, the proposed move of the fives courts had to be rethought, as the building, which also incorporates the rifle range, has been declared a building of special architectural interest. As a result of this, a significant amount of money was spent last year in replacing the slates on the roof, which has dramatically improved the performance of the courts as we no longer get an ingress of water. With repaired windows and better ventilation, and also new lights which were installed approximately two years ago, we now have a substantially improved playing environment.

We continue to play regularly on Tuesday evenings, and often in the Michaelmas and Lent Terms we are joined by boys who I think enjoy the mixture of games that they are able to join in with. New players are always welcome, and it is pleasing that we have had some new players this year, including the father of one of the boys at the School, who is coming on in leaps and bounds and will soon be a regular contributor to our teams.

Neil Arnott

Old Whitgiftian Rugby Fives Club

We had another enjoyable season during 2004-05, with 16 matches played against a wide range of opposition teams. Although numbers were down a little on previous years, our annual club singles and doubles competitions saw a good variety of energetic and enthusiastic players and matches on the Whitgift School courts – although the collected masses still have some way to go to catch up with Chris Jones in the singles arena! We also enjoyed our travels down to the South-West for our annual tour.

We rounded off the season with our AGM – business as usual, rounded off swiftly to free up time for curries and beers – followed soon after by a post-season 'mix and match' evening of Fives with friends at Christ's Hospital, which we hope will become an annual gathering.

As a club, we are lucky to have a number of players willing to help out with managing matches, arranging competitions and other day-to-day business, and this all helps keep things running (generally!) smoothly.

If you'd like to get involved in the club in any way (you don't have to have gone to Whitgift to play with us) or want any more

information, please contact the Club Secretary Nick Woolfenden on 01403 256 328 or nickw5s@hotmail.com . We meet regularly for informal social Fives at 7 pm on Thursday evenings at the school courts in Croydon.

Nick Woolfenden

Radley Manuals

There are good and bad things to report this season. I'll start with the more gloomy news and hopefully end on a more cheerful note. The 2003/04 season saw the Manuals recording a 100% win rate in their fixtures (a narrow win against the Bank of England in January 2004). Sadly this has slipped to a 0% win rate for the 2004/05 season (a loss to the Executioners and revenge for the Bank). I suspect that even those with a strong aversion to mathematics can spot that these are not good statistics for us and would make for a sorry-looking graph!

However, on the more rosy side of affairs I am happy to report that the number of ORs playing for the Manuals has swelled this year to a point that at full strength we could put forward two fours. This is fantastic news as it means that we can start to think about arranging some more fixtures. New additions have arrived in the form of the Oxford pair of Will Hardymont and Johnny Heath, as well as a resurgent Harry Carr being added to the ranks. We actually had four fixtures arranged for this season, but only managed to play two – hopefully we can play the full complement and more next season.

My thanks go to all who have played for and against the Manuals this season but especially to Peter de Winton, Edward M-M-Crichton, Jock Mullard and Nicholas Hamshaw at Radley, Jonathon Bartle at the Bank of England and Andy Pringle of the Executioners.

Tom Maconie

Tiverton Fives Club

The club has switched to a Wednesday evening so that Tiverton and Exeter can combine playing resources. This has meant an increase in numbers where on occasion all six courts have been utilised. The university has introduced new players, and the school has taken the opportunity to practise against adult opposition. One unexpected surprise has been the emergence of ladies' doubles matches.

We rely on Exeter to take the game seriously, which allows us to play social fives. Visiting teams are welcome to include us in a tour of the south-west of England.

Andrew Wyeth

UCS Old Boys Rugby Fives Club

UCS OBs' 2004-05 has been mixed results-wise, the wins-losses ratio about even. Certainly none of the momentousness that readers may recall from last year's report. We ended up having a mid-summer fixture against a Tim Bury Select IV at Marlborough, which saw a trip that evening to the Shalbourne beer festival. Perhaps one of the more remarkable beer festivals, in that the bitter ran out quite early and we knew it was in real trouble just before 9 pm when we heard the immortal words from behind the bar: 'Oh ****, now the lager's gone!' The organisers would have had some trouble explaining to the Trogs quite why the place emptied when they came on stage at 9 pm as the headline act.... The pub we ended up in was good, though.

On to the Fives. Some very tight games were had – particularly a loss to Oxford early in the season, by a mere point. Whilst it's never good to lose, it was a first outing for two younger members, so in itself a moral victory perhaps and a good sign for the future. One of the new bloods, Seb King, went on to become one of the regulars this season, improving with every outing.

A re-jigged set of weekend tours led us to a White Rose and Derby Moor weekend in November. Apart from the beauty of Giggleswick – where of course White Rose now play at weekends – making the trip worthwhile, the Taylor's wasn't too shabby either. The shock of the day occurred upon arrival when the opposition's player-of-last-resort (as he was described to us) unexpectedly walked off court to greet us. Some readers may know him as the local vet. Our valiant IV were alas unable to make up for this augmentation in the power of the opposition, and White Rose carried the day.

Not content with a one-point loss against Oxford, UCS obviously got a taste for tight results as we lost by only five to West of England. But tightest of all was an 88-all draw against the Bank in our first match of the season. The author played utterly appallingly, and UCS were saved only by the heroics of his partner Patrick Burford, who kept his side from the edge of the abyss so that an honourable draw was attained.

Stuart Andrews's season was heavily limited by a broken finger which required a cast and three months out, but Burford, Huw Aveston, Simon Martin, Courtenay Barklem (who finally married Kelly in the US during the season), Tom Passmore, Dan Hawkins, Justin Marshall and Will Lander all stepped up and competed well on the Club's behalf.

The highlight of the playing season came once again from Nick Austin, who successfully defended his doubles title with Hamish Buchanan at Durham. The non-Fives (and real) highlight though came at the start of the season, when approximately fifteen Fives players and their beloveds attended Nick's nuptials to the lovely Alex. Held at the banqueting suite at London Zoo, some wag pointed out that – given the broad shoulders, long arms and skinny waist of the groom – it was quite appropriate for the function to be held next to the orang-utan enclosure!

Mark Bliss

Wessex Fives Club

Over 50 players have used the Winchester courts this year, including two complete newcomers. Tim Kennedy, previously familiar with Handball in the USA, and Charles Munro, who had survived 5 years at Sherborne without ever having visited the courts! After a single season both are now competent players, while a third regular this season, Deepak Mannaria, who played a little at school some 14 years ago, now holds his own in any company. The message here for any Club is that, with just a little encouragement, there is a surprisingly large pool of potential players who, within a relatively short period of time, will reach a good Club standard.

The Club's end-of-season handicap tournament for the Letchworth Bowl (the draw attempts to make each pairing as equal as possible) was won for the second year in a row by a pair with the joint age of 110! This time the combined wiles of Tony Wolstenholme and Albie Healey (another complete newcomer to the game just a few years ago) defeated the youthful enthusiasm of Andy Passey and Deepak Mannaria. Tony indeed seems to remain indestructible and, having perfected the Winchester court serve into the buttress, often leaves his younger opposition not only exhausted but pointless!

Four players from Southampton University have played this year (Ed Hawke, Andy Hodder, Matt Adcock and Ben Barber) and have organised an occasional second evening for other university players, so there is some hope that the University Club may start playing again next season. It is nearly 20 years since Duncan Neale and Tony Metcalfe Gibson, among others, ran a successful Club with at least 12 regular players and even a section for women!

Winchester College boys regularly join us for part of a Tuesday evening, and undoubtedly the highlight of the year was the success of Hal Mohammed and Will Ellison in the National Schools' Doubles Championship – the first Winchester names to

appear on the trophy since 1931. Both played at Pilgrims before going to the College and competed in the Under 13 Schools Championships so successfully organised by Michael Beaman; while at an even earlier age Hal had accompanied his father Mario to Club nights for a short time. The progress of Hal and Will this season has been striking, and the enthusiasm engendered by James Hodgins and Jamie McManus has ensured that there are a number of talented younger Wykehamists ready to take their place. Commiserations go to Ollie Pumphrey, a regular on Tuesday evenings for many years and Hal's original partner, who was unable to play in the last term after knee surgery.

Success in other Club matches was mixed, and unfortunately we never managed to put out our strongest IV, even in the Wood Cup against the RFA Club, when the final margin of defeat was just five points. Harry and Will Akerman, Bev Boag, Bill Gunyon, Ed Hawke, Andy Hodder, Hal and Mario Mohammed, Ian Mettam, Will May, Deepak Mannaria, Andy Passey, Richard Summerfield and Simon Swales played in matches against the RFA (twice), Sherborne, Winchester, Jesters and Exeter.

Frank Akerman

West of England Club

The 2004/05 season had been anticipated with a fair degree of optimism following the restructuring of the club halfway through the previous season and with the prospect of two further courts coming into action.

We were not to be disappointed. It had been hoped that the two back courts, which had been lying dormant since the mid-1970s (save for the indignity of being used for storage) would be ready for the start of the new season. The timetable slipped slightly but by November the new back walls were in place and newly plastered, the lights were awoken from their thirty-year slumber and we were in business with a four-court Fives centre.

The arrangements were made possible as a result of positive support from Ian Fuller and the Board of the Rugby Fives Association, the co-operation of Clifton College, our own involvement as a club and especially the generous financial backing of the Rugby Fives Association Charitable Trust. There is now a genuine prospect that Bristol can put itself back on the national Fives map, having enjoyed a period of prominence and popularity as a regional centre throughout the '70s, '80s and '90s.

Under the enthusiastic leadership of our dedicated club captain, Simon Werkshagen, weekly club night sessions were well supported (now held on Wednesdays rather than Mondays), and it was, of course, such an advantage to have four courts at our disposal.

The Christmas Doubles and Club Singles competitions were well supported, with Sam Byron-Evans retaining the Singles Cup with a good win over Kevin Brice.

Six enjoyable matches were played against other clubs (and mostly won) but the highlight of the playing season was our win over the Executioners Club in the quarter-finals of the Wood Cup

Singles finalists: (from left) Kevin Brice, Sam Byron-Evans.



Picture: Simon Werkshagen

at St. Paul's. Our victorious team was made up of Johnny Nelmes, Simon Werkshagen, Simon Maskell and Andrew Lawson. They were not disgraced in going out to the strong Alleyn Old Boys side in the semi-finals.

Our reborn club looks forward to another season of progress in 2005/06 and to further enjoyable sessions at the Port of Call, our real ale après-Fives venue, which has already won the respected approval of a certain UCS Old Boy – you guessed it, Chris Heron.

Lionel Lawson

White Rose Rugby Fives Club

If any fives player is given a choice between 'Waiting for Godot' and 'Waiting for a reply to a letter to Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council', the smart money would now favour putting one's WRRFC-monogrammed fives shirt on the Godot option. Despite the worthy Mr Beckett's somewhat dispiriting experience half a century ago, Bob Sandie will no longer offer odds on our receiving a substantive response before the first anniversary of our original missive. In short, our attempts to bestow charitable benefactions on the Local Authority to persuade it to renovate our courts at the Heath Centre have not resulted in the expected enthusiastic acceptance of the proffered largesse. We will persist! After all, the Apostle Paul had to write a Second Epistle to the Corinthians, and religious history does not record whether he ever received a reply.

The White Rose Club is in rude good health and numbers playing have never been stronger. Our Tuesday (and now Thursday) club nights regularly attract players from Sheffield, York, Leeds and even Halifax. Even novices are catered for. We have played a healthy number of fixtures with varying degrees of success and, with more players, have been able to field teams without being forced to rely solely upon our sometimes injury-prone stalwarts, whose combined ages have on occasions been compared unfavourably with the more venerable Old Testament prophets. Of especial note was our National Club Knockout 1st Round fixture against Derby Moor (I resist the temptation to call it a local derby) when the combined efforts of the 4 apostles took us through to the finals weekend, though sadly not to further beatification.

We continue to visit our missionary outpost at Giggleswick School where we religiously play on the major Christian festivals of Easter, Christmas and New Year, together with other occasional Tuesdays when the Halifax courts are either closed or in that state of veneration when their very plaster is observed to sweat. We strive to convert the Giggleswick natives to that state of grace where they may achieve true ecstasy.

In conclusion, can anyone assist the Club to re-establish contact with a former member and erstwhile fives champion, Neil Roberts, with whom we are currently out of communion? Formerly resident in Giggleswick, this vulnerable individual sadly abandoned his home in mid 2004 without notifying family and fives-playing friends of his whereabouts and is believed to have gone to earth with wife and young children in rural Halton West, miles from the nearest purveyor of Timothy Taylor's Landlord Bitter. Directory Enquiries disclaim any knowledge of him owning a telephone, and e-mails seem to disappear into the bracing North Yorkshire ether. We are concerned for our brother's safety and sanity. Letters addressed to various 'Halls' in the area are believed to reach him occasionally, but we fear this may indicate distressing delusions of grandeur, and even instability. If this lost sheep can be found and brought back to the fold, there will be much rejoicing at the WRRFC annual dinner in August at the Tum Nuk Thai Restaurant in Halifax.

Ian Roberts

RFA CLUB RESULTS AND REPORT

	Manager		
Alley Old Boys	I Fuller*	E Fuller, B Hitchens, O Stone-Lee, E Hatton	Lost
Alley's School	A Smith	N Smith, R Matieu, I Arnott	Lost
Bank of England	K Puckle	I Fuller, E Fuller, D Hebden	Won
Bedford School	J Denham*	C Ryan, D Bartlett, I Corby, H French	Won
Bloxham School	I de Weymarn	C Brooks, A George, A Sutcliffe	Won
Blundell's Girls/Mixed	D Hall-Wilton	M Whitehead, D Rice, R Matthew, P Rivett	Lost/Won
Blundell's School	A Wyeth	D Rice, P Rivett, P Sheare	Won
Cambridge University	A Pringle	N Geere, O Stone-Lee, R Kemp, C Ryan, A Julius	Lost
Cambridge University	R Dolby	S Kirby, R Cleave, O Steed	Won
Christ's Hospital	K Puckle	W Avenell, K Love, R Lebon	Won
Christ's Hospital	K Puckle	N Geere, N Woolfenden, K Love	Won
Durham University	O Stone-Lee*	R Pearson, S Moger, M W-Williams, H Armistead	Won
Durham University	R Sandie*	T Widdop, R Pearson, A Lee, T Orton	Won
Eastbourne College	K Love	N Arnott, S Beal, M Wilkinson	Won
Executioners	A Smith	H Ishii, G McGairl, D Grant	Lost
Guthrie Dalesmen	I Roberts	G McIntyre, R Pearson, T Widdop	Lost
Jesters	T Maconie	O Stone-Lee, E Horder	Won
King's School, Bruton	R Brewer	P de Winton, G Matthews, D Park	Won
Malvern College	S Maskell	J Birch, S Stagg, T Squires	Won
Old Bedford Modernians	P Atkinson*	J Schroeter, I Puckle, B Baral, A Burrows	Won
Old Blundellians	W Gunyon	M Mohammed, J Bristow, C Horrocks	Lost
Old Blundellians	C Hattersley	M Steed, J Ogle, D Parlby	Lost
Old Tonbridgians	J Mon	E Andrews, A Smith, S Beal	Won
Old Whitgiftians	H Buchanan	E Fuller, A Smith, B Hitchens	Won
Oundle Staff	A Smith	A Pringle, N Geere, M Bliss	Won
Oxford University	D Hebden	H Buchanan, E Hatton, B Hitchens	Won
Radley College	C Horrocks	R Dolby, W Gunyon	Won
Sedbergh School	J Guthrie	R Guthrie, P Guthrie, L Catlow, A Williams	Lost
Sedbergh Staff	J Guthrie	R Guthrie, P Guthrie, D Urquhart, A Williams	Won
Sherborne School	N Maclver*	O Stone-Lee, E Horder, C Waaler, D Stokes	Lost
St. Dunstan's College	A Hamilton	H Gurling, J Thomson, A Smith	Won
St. Paul's School	A Wilson*	S Roberts, D Colton, P King, M Chester	Won
Tonbridge School	A Hamilton	H Gurling, R Dalman, A Smith	Won
Wessex	D Barnes*	J Hodgins, E Fuller, R Walters, A Seigel	Won
West of England	P de Winton	T Maconie, R Brewer, T Lewis	Lost
Winchester College	J Bristow	J Williams, W Hardyment, E Ronan	Lost

* *non playing*

April is an anxious time for the Club Manager. The match result cards have stopped dropping through the letter box and there are lots of matches unaccounted for. Emails seem to have done little to help – perhaps they have even contributed to the problem! But at last, after much communicating, an acceptable number of matches have been completed and reported on.

While in no way approaching the late Tom Wood's persuasive skills, as in the 1988/9 season when 75 matches were played, the current manager squeezes a respectable average of about 35 matches per season. This time the Club has played 37 fixtures (25 wins, 12 losses); five matches are known to have been cancelled, one of them because the match manager had been called up to serve in Iraq; and there are a further seven unknown results.

There were more frivolous incidents reported this year than previously. Bob Dolby experienced modern technology when after his match v Cambridge a mobile phone was used to add up the score; later, at a highly non-recommended pub round the corner from the Bedford Modern courts, Stuart Kirby asked for 'a large red wine' and was given a half-pint glassful! Andy Pringle reported on the other Cambridge match as being so close that the result was in doubt until the end. Alas, the Club team lost, and then, to add insult to injury, there wasn't even time for a beer.

Match manager Fuller (Ian) was away in Spain while his son was valiantly, but unsuccessfully, defending the Club's honour

against the Alley Old Boys – we lost by a mere two points. Phil Atkinson contributed to the Club's victory over the Old Bedford Modernians by playing for the opposition. Tom Maconie and Jesters' match manager Nick Geere decided to trim their teams down to three players and play short games so as to attend the Strawson Dinner in good order (Result: RFAC 45, Jesters 39).

On a more serious note, Tonbridge – a strong side this year – inflicted the first defeat on the Club for 16 years, despite Tony Hamilton's effort to provide an appropriately balanced four. Iain de Weymarn enjoyed managing the match against his old school, Bloxham, where 'a great time was had by all', and Keith Love's side earned their 'lavish lunch' at Eastbourne by playing good fives, as usual. Jim Mon has run Club matches for many years but is now stepping down, and I would like to thank him for his efforts. All other match managers have already unwittingly agreed to do it all again next year.

The President's Cup, immaculately run as ever by Bhaswar Baral with help from his family and friends, was won by Prashant Chopra and Ed Hatton, beating Ben Brookes and Ed M-M-Crichton in a hard-hitting final. The RFA Club side, run by Ed Fuller (taking over from his long-serving Dad) reached the semi-finals of the National Club Championship (Wood Cup).

Denise Hall-Wilton

OBITUARIES

JOHN BLACKSHAW (1936-2004)



Picture supplied by Mary Blackshaw

John Blackshaw arrived to teach Modern Languages at Malvern College in 1967 and soon found himself in charge of Fives, a game he never played as a boy at Sherborne, where he had been three years in the Hockey XI. He was a natural striker of the ball at cricket, too, and as someone was needed to run the Fives at Malvern, he took the game on and ran it for the next twenty years, despite being a busy housemaster for much of that time.

John's enthusiasm ensured that the game survived at Malvern, and although they did not have any schoolboy champions, they were always highly competitive – especially on their own courts – and produced some fine players, the best of whom was Simon Constantine. John made himself into a pretty good player, too, and Simon vividly remembers him getting annoyed on court when things weren't going quite right, throwing his gloves into a corner and playing on bare-handed!

A cutting from the *'Malvern Gazette'* sent to me by Tony Spicer has an article about the 4th Winchester Fives Doubles Championship played at Malvern in 1985, plus a photo (of too poor quality, alas, to reproduce here) of John serving during a match in which he partnered Jonathan Potter against Dick Warner and Terry Cobb. John and Jonathan lost that match but progressed to the later stages of the plate, where they lost to those eternal plate specialists, Tim Lewis and Cedric Clapp. As to whether John threw his gloves into the corner at any stage, history doesn't relate...

John was a man of principle who ran his house and his teams with firmness, fairness and a sense of humour which was never far below the surface. It was always a pleasure to travel to Malvern to play Fives and enjoy the company and hospitality of John and Mary in No 5. When Bradfield opened its two new courts in 1976, John came all the way from Malvern to join the party and play some rousing games with and against other aficionados of Winchester Fives. It was typical of him, although he must have had a hundred and one other things to do back at school.

After coming out of No 5, John became Malvern's Deputy Head (he would have preferred the title 'Second Master') and later, for six years, Secretary of the Malvernian Society, so his contribution to the life of the College was incalculable. His sudden death last September deprives that community, as well as his family and hundreds of friends, of a very special man.

David Barnes

JOHN WATKINSON (1941-2004)

John Watkinson learnt his Fives at Bristol Grammar School and was National Schools' Champion in 1959, the only BGS boy ever to win the title. He went from there to Worcester College, Oxford, where he won three half-blues for Rugby Fives and was on the winning side for two out of his three years. Possessed of a ferocious right hand and a magnificent service, he was very hard to score points against and was a player who liked to dominate.

From 1964 to 1971 John was a schoolmaster at Rugby, and during this period he won the Amateur Singles Championship, as it was then called, three times (in 1965, 1967 and 1970). The 1967 final, against Eric Marsh, was the last match played at the Hampstead Squash and Fives Club and was a magnificent exhibition of Fives at its best. In partnership with Mike Elliott, John had already won the Cyriax Cup three times running (from 1962 to 1964) by the time of his first singles triumph, and he won the trophy again with David Gardner in 1966. He reached the final partnering Ian Clarke (another Old Bristolian) in 1968, but they lost to Stan Holt and John Howe.

John left teaching and went briefly into law before entering politics, which effectively marked the end of his Fives career. He was the Labour MP for Gloucestershire West from 1974-79, when he lost his seat and joined the SDP, but he was unsuccessful in two further elections. Thereafter he worked for the BBC and then set up his own business as a solicitor. He played cricket, rackets and real tennis to a high standard but sadly never came back into serious contention as a fives player.

David Barnes

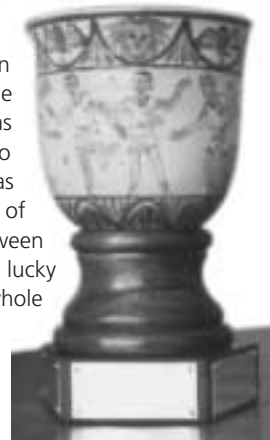
EVE CAREY

We send our condolences, on behalf of the RFA and the fives-playing community in Britain, to John Carey on the death of his wife, Eve. As all those who have been on a fives tour to the USA will know, John and Eve were the kind and generous hosts who welcomed us to St. Mark's School, Southborough, often under a foot of snow and once at two o'clock in the morning; and many who have not been to the USA will remember meeting the Careys and their American touring parties who came over to the UK in the 1980s and '90s at the invitation of Tom and Joan Wood.

Eve was a potter who worked in majolica, and it was she who made the Carey-Wood Cup which was competed for whenever the two nations met at fives. It now stands as a memorial to her and a reminder of much hospitality and goodwill between the USA and the UK to those lucky people who were involved in the whole adventure.

David Barnes

The Carey-Wood International Trophy made by Eve Carey in 1982.



Picture: Joan Wood

BOB HOLLAND (1954-2005)

As we went to press, we received the sad news of the death of Bob Holland. A full tribute will appear in our next issue.

FIVES IN SCHOOLS

The seventh article in this series is about St. Dunstan's College and is written by David Gardner, National Singles Champion in 1964 and seven times National Doubles Champion between 1960 and 1974. David was Honorary Secretary of the RFA from 1963 to 1968 and President from 1974 to 1976. He has been a member of the RFA Committee (now Board) since 1957 and is looking forward to celebrating his Golden Jubilee in two years' time! He has also run the British Universities' Rugby Fives Championships since their inception in 1960.

7. St. Dunstan's

It seems a good moment in time to commence this review of St. Dunstan's and Old Dunstonian Fives in 2005, exactly fifty years on from the time that it can reasonably be said that we came into prominence as a fives-playing school.

Whilst no titles were won in 1955, two young self-taught players, Gardner and Holt, reached the final of the National Schools' Championships held at Whitgift School. They lost narrowly to the pair playing on their home courts, Anderson and Ewart, 12-10, 4-11, 12-10. The match took over 100 minutes to complete, and the losers had four championship points before finally conceding. In a way it was a half-victory, as the St. Dunstan's pair scored more points than the opposition! It could also be argued that only a severe accidental blow to the nose between the left-handers, which caused an extended break in the final game due to a long-lasting nosebleed, prevented us from winning St. Dunstan's first ever title – but at that time no-one could foresee what was to come in the not too distant future.

Jim Williams was Master i/c at that time and for many years after. Whilst he only played the game a little, he gave enormous support and encouragement to teams and individuals, and his enthusiasm was boundless. Combine this with the efforts of the senior players in giving some coaching to the juniors, plus the general euphoria that came with the results in the National Schools' events (Stan Holt also reached the singles quarter-finals in both 1954 and 1955), and you have the catalyst which paved the way for the development of fives at St. Dunstan's.

Numerous prominent and highly skilled players were to come in future years and dominate in School, National and Regional Championships for many years. Details of this appear elsewhere, but for the present it is sufficient to know that St. Dunstan's rank in the top three schools in the country for National Schools' titles won: Oundle – 21; St. Dunstan's – 20; St. Paul's – 20.

Historically, the school is not an ancient foundation. It takes its name from the parish of St. Dunstan-in-the-East in the heart of the City of London. Over the centuries the parish had acquired a large number of bequests from wealthy residents, to be used chiefly for the relief of the poor and for education. The parish had a long, but intermittent record of involvement in education, but the early schools had no direct link with the present College. With more businesses arriving in Central London, more of the population moved outside the City boundary. The need for the parish charities became less, and therefore in the mid 1800s permission was sought to use parish funds for education outside the City. Plans were put forward to build St. Dunstan's College in Catford. The School finally opened its doors on 1st October 1888, some 900 years after the death of St. Dunstan in 988!

Fives courts were included in the plans right from the start: 'Outside were lavatories; a boot room; a covered playground; fives courts; football and cricket fields. Five doubles fives courts and a gymnasium were also suggested.' In January 1885 the costs of these plans were revealed to the Governors. The cost of the grounds, including the fives courts and the gymnasium, was



The College buildings in 1888.

£4,000! The three-walled roofless courts can clearly be seen in the centre top section of the picture of the College in 1888.

In the early years, fives flourished and the courts were in regular use. Many competitions were held but they were all internal events. Indeed, I was interested to read that in 1890 'Ill B started an open competition which was won by Gardner. The winner played very well for his size and age, but must learn to use his left hand.'! Inter-school matches did not appear until the early 1900s. The first Headmaster, Charles Stuart (1888-1922), was a keen player, albeit of the Eton variety. His enthusiasm for the game and encouragement given to pupils did much to help the game develop. It was fitting that, when the time came to replace the original three-walled courts with the modern four-walled variety, they were built as a memorial to him.

There was not always enthusiasm, however, as one correspondent wrote to the school Chronicle in 1895: 'The present state of affairs athletic is not creditable. The chief pastime seems to be roller-skating! This is followed with such ardour that football, fives, lacrosse etc. are almost neglected by the majority.'

It became clear that around the turn of the century general sporting interest was still on the wane. Records are sparse and not over-accurate. Nevertheless, considerable progress was made, which included the first-ever school match versus St. Olave's and further games versus Eltham College and City of London. A masters plus pupils doubles competition and new internal tournaments with prizes were introduced to encourage more players, and these attracted a very large entry – I wonder why! Fives team colours were also introduced in this period 'provided there were enough people playing'.

Scanty records are explained in this extract from the school magazine: 'Last term we played a couple of fives matches – a new feature – as no official record was kept of them there is, naturally, no official record to give, but the Editors, having personally taken part in one of them, know, only too well, their result.' In the immediate pre-war years (1909-13), fives interest turned upwards again with 'more interest than in the annals of the school', and regular matches were now held with Allyn's

and the Masters, who were able to field a team of six players, including the Headmaster. By 1915, the introduction of the House system also gave new impetus to internal events.

Various scoring systems have been noted. Some were a full three games up to 15; on occasions the first game was to 15 and the second to 12; the most interesting was a school internal competition where, at 14-14, five sets of 5 points each were played in order to determine the winner!

During the 1st World War years and after, fives continued to flourish and many new fixtures were arranged, very largely with Eton-playing schools or clubs. At varying times Old Citizens, St. John's Battersea, Whitgift, Emanuel, University College London and St. Mark and St. John's all appeared on the list, and later Haberdashers' at Cricklewood and Borough Road.

In 1923, the school played University College School in the final of the Cyriax Cup. 'It is a pity that this was decided on points as St. Dunstan's lost by 161-167, but won 8-6 on games!' There are no records of earlier rounds and it could be that the 'final' was also the first round. There had been various attempts to run a schools' tournament in earlier years. The first was at Merchant Taylors' in 1881, when five schools entered. The next was in 1922, with the Cyriax Cup 'open to the schools of England'. Finally, in 1930, the present National Schools' Championships were started by the newly formed governing body of the game, the Rugby Fives Association. Apart from the war years, these events have been competed for every year, and it is here that St. Dunstan's have been most successful.

None of the early tournaments really flourished, and there is no further record of the original 'Cyriax Cup'; one wonders if it eventually became the Cyriax Cup for Club Doubles which came into being in 1926, finally becoming the National Doubles trophy in 1934 – an event where Old Dunstonians were to be so successful, with nine winners and ten runners-up in a twenty-year period to 1977.

There were, of course, a few problems along the way between the two world wars. The fives courts, after over thirty years of use, were getting rather weather-beaten and were giving some cause for concern with the School Inspectors. In 1921, one inspecting body declared the courts 'unfit and unsafe'. However, play continued and it was to be another thirteen years before they were replaced.

Another problem was one that we seem to have to the present day. In 1919 it was reported: 'This term, with the exception of the Old Boys, which we won easily, there have been no matches at all. As a matter of fact, the ruinous price of a ball reduced the most affluent of us, after one afternoon's hard play, to a state of utter destitution for the rest of the month.'

Finally there was the problem, as many fives master know to this day, that 'minor' sports frequently have to give way to 'major' sports when teams are being selected or fixtures clash. There are constant reports of Athletics and 'Crosse' (lacrosse) interfering with the organisation of the fives programme. Indeed, a good year for fives was a bad one for lacrosse, when weather made the pitches unplayable – although playing in a wet, open court was not too good for fives either!

With the foundation of the RFA in 1927, it was not long before they produced a format for a standard fives court. The decision to put up new courts as a memorial to the first Headmaster came just at the right time. Thus an appeal went out to pupils, parents and Old Dunstonians to raise the necessary finances for the project. Such was the response, with close on a thousand contributions, that a sum approaching £800 was quickly raised. This, plus a generous donation of £200 from the Governors, enabled the courts to be completed on time. The three Rugby courts, plus one Eton, were duly opened on 17th November 1934.

A team from the RFA, captained by the President, Edgar Cyriax, took on an OD team in a demonstration match and were



The Stuart Memorial fives courts, 1934.

victorious by 149-117. Two 'Presidents-in-waiting', Harry Beevers and Geoffrey Rimmer, also played. The Dunstonians were represented by MacMillan, Waller, Prout and Lardner – the latter being arguably the best of the pre-war players. It was noted that the teams pronounced the courts as 'perfect'. The Lewisham Chronicle reported: 'Flood lighting enables matches to be played at all times on the courts, of which the walls are lined with special non-sweating compound. A changing room adjoins the courts.' More of the changing room later!

The new courts brought great enthusiasm for the game both amongst pupils and Old Boys. An immediate letter was sent to the OD Association asking them to form a fives club, and more than fifty names were enrolled – far more than we would get today – and many fixtures began to be arranged. Such was the enthusiasm that by the late 1930s some forty-one matches had been made for the season.

John Mockford reports that one of the players in these games was Eric Scading, who won the club singles and doubles competitions in 1936 and is believed to be the only player surviving from that pre-war era. Eric now lives near John in Limsfield, Surrey. He managed to find a few school magazines for us to go through, but cannot remember any specific details of fives in the 1930s.



*The '1st IV' in 1935
from left, standing: W Sewell, REH Sheridan
seated: EG Cowley, DS Snelgar, PA Coggin
The earliest known photograph of a St. Dunstan's fives team*

The onset of World War II brought an abrupt end to fives and the euphoria which followed the opening of the new courts. Fives courts have been used for many things: weight-lifting, table tennis, judo, general storerooms etc., but I feel that St. Dunstan's is unique. The school was evacuated to Reigate and then Wales, the buildings were commandeered by the Army, and the fives courts, having possibly the thickest walls, were used among other things for ammunition and as a dump for coke!

Despite this, the courts survived the war, as did the adjacent changing room, being more of a strong lean-to shed (on the left of the new courts photo). Spartan would be a complimentary description, as many opponents would agree! Showers and baths were also included, although my memory from the mid-fifties is of one bath and one shower. There was an Ascot-type

water heater that took 1d (one old penny) in a slot and dispensed an indifferent amount of hot water. A fives ball cost 6d in those days, and an expensive addition to the facilities was made by purchasing a ball-dispensing machine.

In 1964 the demise of the Ascot was reported after a long period of service, and in 1969 permission was given to redecorate 'The Shed', with a donation made from the school towards the DIY costs. However, this improvement was short-lived as the club received notice of the impending demolition of our changing room in the early 1970s to make way for the new Prep School building. Thus the Eton court, the memorial plaque and 'The Shed' made way for progress. The three Rugby courts survived, and players were most disappointed to be moved to the comparative luxury of the Gymnasium changing rooms!

John Mockford recalls joining the OD Club in 1953: 'Almost immediately, I fell over an opponent during a game and broke my arm. I then continued being either captain or secretary of the Club for the next thirty years.' John was a National Doubles semi-finalist in 1965, when the ODs fielded three out of the last four pairs in the event.

There was a long 'golden period' for the ODs in the 1960s and '70s, when the Club travelled far around the UK with tours, and when many trophies were brought back home. It continues today with Paddy d'Ancona, Phil Bishop and Mike Hajjalexandrou, all currently in the top ten of the National singles rankings. If my addition is correct, a total of some 145 adult National and Regional titles have come back to Catford since the war. The winners, in alphabetical order, read as follows: Phil Bishop 1, Paddy d'Ancona 17, Dave Gardner 62, Peter Grender 3, Stan Holt 18, John Howe 28, Eric Marsh 16. I doubt very much if any other club will match this for a while!

Jubilee Dinners were held by the Club to celebrate the Silver Anniversary in 1959 and the Golden Anniversary in 1984. The 1959 event was also notable for founder member Teddy Goddard, who completed 25 years as Treasurer. Together with Geoff Wise, he gave great help to the school in the recovery period after the war, providing coaching and equipment. Maybe we should look to a 75th celebration in 2009?



Silver Jubilee Dinner of the OD Fives Club, 16th April 1959 from left: Stan Holt, David Gardner, Eric Marsh, David Clift

In the 1980s there was a lull in OD fives activities, although in recent years there has been a bit of a revival. In the Owers Trophy for Old Boys' teams, we were runners-up last year and winners in this current season. There has been a steady flow of Oxbridge 'Blues', with Dave Sharman, Nick Roberson, Alastair Higgins, David Trew, Chris Denny, Paddy and Michael d'Ancona and Tim Stock. In 1960 a rare Bristol 'Red' was awarded to Eric Marsh, when he won the National Singles whilst still a student.

The OD Club, like the School, was the top team in the country for many years, even though more members were always required

to give greater depth. In the late 1950s, it is recorded that even the Army helped this appeal by allowing certain National Servicemen to get plenty of leave to play. 'We are very grateful to the War Office, as, no doubt, are the persons concerned, for posting both Gardner and Grender to Whitehall, thus giving us the nucleus of a very strong team next season. Is it too much to hope that other fives players will receive similar postings?'

ODs were not just players, either. They were prepared to put something back into the game as well. By 1965, three key posts on the RFA were held by Club members. Apart from myself as Secretary, Eric Marsh was Championship Organiser and Peter Setchell-Smith was Treasurer. This situation has continued, with Paddy d'Ancona playing an important role on the Board in recent years.

Behind any successful school sport there is invariably a good Master-in-charge, and St. Dunstan's is no exception. In recent years a considerable number have given of their time and expertise in order to maintain the high standards to which the school was becoming accustomed. Such names as Messrs Johnston, Morgan, Kitchingham, Reuben and O'Shaughnessy come to mind, although there were many other helpers, particularly with the junior teams.

An enthusiastic Headmaster was also a definite help, and Brian Dance spent much time supporting and encouraging the players – indeed, his son David (Bedford School) was a very fine player, so Brian had a considerable first-hand knowledge of the game. For many years he kindly hosted the annual representative match between the RFA and the British Universities, which often had many of his former pupils participating. The School also hosted the British University Championships in 1977.

One interesting feature of the post-war years was the preponderance of former pupils who returned from University to teach at the School, took over the running of fives and thus paved the way for the future. Jack Harris got the game re-started in 1946 and in particular had to cope with things like a shortage of gloves and balls, and courts damaged by the Army during the 'occupation'. Stan Holt came straight back to school from Loughborough and obviously had a good impact on the game over many years. Then came Colin Matten, Tim Brand and Ken Knight, all of whom set high standards and developed a very thriving fives club. The 1956 photo of the School Fives Club is remarkable in that it shows all three standing together, as pupils, in the back row. Who at that time would have forecast that they would all return to teach and take over the fives?

Currently in pole position is Director of Sport Rick Bodenham. He acknowledges that fives at senior level is not at quite the standard that he would like but says that there are very promising juniors, particularly at U14 level. Chris Murray and Doug Butt went out early in the U14 National Doubles, but only by 16-15 to the eventual winners from Alleen's. With greater experience and more coaching, they are capable of doing well in the next few years, and they are not the only ones – watch this space!

Back in 1947, play had come to a standstill due to a fuel crisis which meant no lights. One court was also often out of action due to water seeping through the roof, and the final

Future masters-in-charge in 1956: Colin Matten, Tim Brand, Ken Knight.



problem was an acute shortage of balls. The following year it was noted that: 'We have been fortunate with the weather this term, with no icy floors or pools to contend with. Repairs were carried out in the building so all courts have good roofs and lights, although the centre court is still suffering from the effects of coke dumped there in the war.'

There were only a dozen pairs of gloves in the whole school, and the supply of balls was so limited that each House was allocated a supply of just three, to last the whole term! Fortunately, as well as the ODs, the RFA came to the rescue.

By 1950, play had improved dramatically and nine out of ten matches were won, and standards continued to improve. However, some Captains are never satisfied, as a couple of critiques enlighten us from the school Chronicle: 'He spoils the effect of his neat shot and strong left hand by carelessness, putting the easiest shot down and often missing the ball entirely!' Or: 'He often lapsed into mere acrobatics with shots that were ostentatious but ineffective.' The players concerned shall remain nameless, but from memory the comments were fairly accurate!

In 1956, all four entrants reached the 3rd round of the Schools' Championships, with Marsh attaining the 4th, and then at last came the red-letter day, when, in the following year, Marsh reached the semi-final and went on to win the Doubles partnered by Dave Clift. In 1958 they managed to retain their title, and Marsh won the Singles. At last, St. Dunstan's had arrived!

It is interesting to note that Marsh went on to win both Singles and Doubles at the inaugural Universities Championships in 1960 and then won four consecutive National Singles titles between 1960-63. He was only narrowly prevented from winning a fifth title by Gardner, who beat him in the semi-final and went on to beat Holt in the final. Quite an OD take-over that year! Marsh then won a National Doubles title in 1965 (partnered by Gardner). This gave Marsh the distinction of being the first, and still the only person to achieve the 'Grand Slam' – Singles and Doubles for National Schools, British Universities and National Championships – the three major fives events. A fine achievement by any standards!

Following this outstanding period, when school teams had actually gone four successive years without defeat, there was a lull in the success rate. However, the school was certainly not short of high-quality players with John Howe around. Semi-finalists in 1961, 1963 and again in 1970 meant that the boys from Catford were ever present.

The numbers of quality players arriving from the juniors in the early 1970s meant that another golden period was almost inevitable, and so it proved to be. In 1976, the school team went unbeaten again, and the Schools' Doubles title went to Handy and Trew; then in 1979 came another Doubles victory, by Carpenter and Lawrence. The excitement had hardly died down when the onslaught really began. A record run of five successive Singles wins from 1982 to 1986 was only briefly halted by Mellor from Sedbergh in 1987; then there were three further titles until

*The 1st IV in 1983/4
from left: Phil Bishop, Andy Hajjalexandrou, Mike Hajjalexandrou,
Neil Mehmet*



*National Schools' Open and U16 winners with their trophies in 1988
from left: Paddy d'Ancona, Peter Newman, Jon Bentley, Irwin Ford*

1990! Eight victories in nine years! In this incredible period, titles were won, in order, by Denny, M. Hajjalexandrou (twice), A. Hajjalexandrou, Riat, Newman, and Ford (twice). The Hajjis are the only pair of brothers to have won the Schools' Singles and, to make their record harder still to emulate, they did it in successive years.

Not to be outdone, the Doubles pairs fought for glory as well, gaining a mere six victories in nine years! The winning pairs were: Denny & M. Haji, Jack & Moar, Riat & Slade, Slade & Tunbridge, Bentley & Newman, and P. d'Ancona & Ford. 1988 was a record 'Grand Slam' year, with Dunstonians winning all four National Schools' titles.

Stock's victory in the Singles in 1995 was the last major Schools' title to be won by a Dunstonian, so perhaps it is time that we made another appearance on the honours board. Watch out for unbeaten school teams: that seems to be where it all starts!

In such a wide-ranging report, space is limited, and so one can only record the main events. However, it should not be forgotten that, even in the lean years, success has never been far below the surface. St. Dunstan's has frequently had an excellent record at both Senior and Junior levels in regional events like the West of England and Manchester, as well as the National Colts. Indeed, in 1977 Callaghan and Keess even ventured as far north as Durham to win the North of England Schools. Achievements such as these have often been lost in the excitement of higher success. Semi-finals, quarter-finals and last sixteen places are still a regular achievement.

Ultimately, success at fives is a matter of attitude and enjoyment as well as skill. Ken Knight summed it up in one of his pithy fives reports of the late 1970s: 'Defeat is not a word common in our reports,' he wrote, 'but this is not the most important aspect of our season. The spirit that exists within the club ensures that there is a regular exchange of experience between levels. We look forward to receiving the new players from the third forms, but we must point out that a sense of humour and an ability to accept teasing without sulking are necessary attributes for any club member.'

St. Dunstan's fives is the story of a dream in the mid-fifties which soon became a reality, but which by the eighties had become a tradition. No-one knows what the future holds, but I see no reason why both School and Old Dunstonians should not return to their traditional role – only time will tell!

David Gardner

Acknowledgments: *Mrs Fiona Cordeaux (Head of College); Paul Fletcher (Librarian and School Archivist); John Newton; Stan Holt; Rick Bodenham; John Mockford; Clive Orpen; and Paddy d'Ancona.*

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MEMORIES OF THE MARCHANT CUP



Picture: RFA Archives

The original Deed Poll for the Marchant Cup.

The Marchant Fives Cup was originally donated by William Francis Marchant, O.B.E. (together with the sum of sixty-five pounds twelve shillings for its maintenance), to be competed for by the London Grammar Schools. It was contested every year between 1929 and 1966, with the exception of the period 1939-48. Eventually, as the number of London schools playing fives decreased in the 1960s, the competition was abandoned and the magnificent silver trophy was transferred to the National Schools' Colts Doubles in 1975.

Today there are, to the best of my knowledge, four original Marchant Cup players still enjoying the tussle on the court: namely John Robertson (Sir Walter St. John's, Battersea), Keith Love (Wandsworth) and Keith and Ian Puckle (Hackney Downs).

The competition comprised home and away fixtures involving two pairs from each school playing a maximum of eight doubles games up to 15, following the rules set down by the RFA. Schools participating were Strand, Sir Walter St. John's, Henry Thornton, St. Marylebone, Wandsworth, Sloane and Hackney Downs. The only standard courts were at Wandsworth and, in later years, Henry Thornton, and each individual non-standard court had its own peculiarities: buttresses in odd places, sub-standard doors, unusual dimensions of height, width and length. It was the norm to play the match on just one court, so total playing time could exceed the normal idea of a fives match. Nevertheless, it was a competition which over the years gave plenty of enjoyment to many boys who were introduced to a new sport out of pure choice and curiosity.

John Robertson recalls that football was his main sport, and when he passed his entrance examination to Sir Walter St. John's (Sinjuns, as it was known) in 1949, he was looking forward to playing his beloved game on good grass pitches with the luxury of proper changing rooms and showers. He was playing football with a tennis ball during the break when he heard strange noises coming from a building adjacent to the toilets. Having strolled over, he stepped up onto a raised viewing platform and peered in through a metal mesh at boys hitting a ball against walls with a great deal of energy and enthusiasm. The game struck him as a



One of the 2005 holders of the Marchant Cup, Daniel Tristão (St. Paul's School).

good way of keeping fit for football, so he approached the fives master, borrowed some gloves and was soon completely hooked on this new sport. The rules were relatively simple – no offsides, bad tackles, pitch invasions – just pure enjoyment from day one.

The Sinjuns court had a low ceiling of mesh, about 15 to 16 feet high, with a small buttress on the left-hand wall near the entry door, and this was John's fives domain for three to four years. The master-in-charge of fives left, and John found himself in charge! However, another master eventually arrived and brought encouragement to compete in the Marchant Cup.

This was a real eye-opener. The boys were used to their own court, with its odd dimensions and peculiarities. John had found the rules easy to understand, but such rules applied to courts of all shapes and sizes: narrow courts, high courts, courts with a 'dodgy' door; low back walls, no back walls, super-slow walls; slippery floors and varying heights of the front-wall bar. In their first year of competition, more matches were lost than won, but it was a tremendous challenge to adapt to the court you were playing on; visiting sides to Sinjuns would look aghast at the low ceiling. John recalls that the mode of transport to away fixtures was by way of the Ford Popular car belonging to the master-in-charge.

Over on the north side of the Thames, I was beginning my schooling in 1954 at Hackney Downs. I had gained a little



Picture: John Darby

'Adjacent to the railway line': The Hackney Downs open courts

knowledge of the game from my father, who was an Old Boy and an avid player. The school had one closed court of similar dimensions to the renovated 'small' courts at Allyn's. It stood well away from the main buildings, in complete isolation from the normal activities of the school. Some fifty yards away, adjacent to the railway line to Cambridge, stood two open back-to-back courts.

My initial introduction to the game, or a version thereof, was hitting a ball onto the roof of the boiler-room, which had a front wall and a lateral buttress where the ball could become lodged as out of play, and worth a point or two. Graduation to the open courts was in Year 2. The game had an odd scoring system similar to that of table tennis – the target being twenty-one points, with a change of serve every five points. Only tennis balls were used, and strictly no gloves. Being open, it was common for balls to find their way onto the railway line. Boys used to arrive early at the courts to retrieve 'lost' balls returned by the line workers, who were probably bemused by this form of sport.

Through the Old Boys' Club, I was fortunate to gain early access to the closed court. Club afternoons on Saturday would see around sixteen people turn up for just a couple of games. There were no showers – just the use of a small room where the tea was constantly brewed.

Thus I progressed to represent the school in the Marchant Cup in my third year, often missing lessons on odd afternoons to appear in matches. Our master-in-charge never had the least idea of the game – he merely ordered the equipment – and it was the responsibility of the captain to arrange fixtures, order teas for visiting opponents and organize travel across London by public transport. Our Marchant Cup IV certainly became streetwise. I can recall trips to the heart of the capital, tracing the whereabouts of Sloane and St. Marylebone Schools by the kind assistance of the cockney conductors on the buses. My colleagues were amazed at the various courts, but at least the scoring system was now standard, although the toss for service/receiving had alarming differences from venue to venue. The most standard method seemed to be rolling the ball to the front wall – the winner for choice being the ball stopping nearest to the back wall on the return journey.

In my last year, 1960, Hackney Downs had a strong IV, and at times it was embarrassing to record scores of 120-3 over eight games. Some opponents had little basic knowledge of the game but were no doubt thankful for an afternoon off lessons, a decent tea and a few pence on the expenses.

Our solitary court closed court had a non-slip floor but was prone to sweating. Being of small dimensions, perhaps designed more for singles than doubles, the game was especially fast. With a low back wall, the ball would often disappear across the playground and could not be retrieved on a dark winter's evening.

They were pleasurable times and certainly, for me, the grass roots of our game. Both John Robertson and I can recall many memories from those early days, with the Marchant Cup introducing the excitement and comradeship of playing this beloved game.

Keith Puckle

Editor's Note: Of the 28 times the Marchant Cup was contested, Hackney Downs won six times; Sir Walter St. John's, Henry Thornton and St. Marylebone five times each; Wandsworth four times; Sloane twice; and Strand once only, in the inaugural year of the competition.



Picture: Joan Wood

Their finest hour: The Clove Club (Hackney Downs Old Boys) IV, winners of the inaugural Wood Cup in 1974. (from left) Norman Elson, Ian Puckle, John Darby, Keith Puckle.

The RFA Website

The Association has taken a major step forward this year by updating and enhancing the RFA website (www.rfa.org.uk) so it can become the primary digital information resource for players, coaches, teachers and newcomers to the game alike.

It is worth emphasising that the main aim of the website is to support the Association in its work promoting the game, and to showcase all the news and information relevant to the whole fives community, not just the tournament circuit.

Over the coming seasons we hope to keep visitors to the site up-to-date on RFA developments, details of forthcoming competitions (for all age-groups!), tournament results, court information, the RFA Charitable Trust and all fives events of general interest. We are also looking to add to the site's pictorial element.

Since March's relaunch, we have been able to keep the site right up-to-date and hope to ensure that this pattern is repeated, not least after every tournament with results, pictures and reports.

Please help us make the site a success by providing as much information as possible on fives-related activities right across the country. You can send info to Andy Pringle, Ollie Stone-Lee or Paddy d'Ancona, or via General Secretary Ian Fuller. Andy has recently joined the board of the RFA with special responsibility for the website (email: andy.pringle@mac.com ; mobile: 07760 172904).

Many thanks to all those who contributed their time so generously to redeveloping the site and have already provided information since its relaunch – your contributions will be the key to its future success! Feedback is always welcome.

A TALE OF TWO PLAYERS: DENISE HALL-WILTON & PAULA SMITH

There is evidence of Ladies' Fives being played as long ago as 1885, but what we might call the modern era (for Rugby and Winchester Fives, at least) began in 1978 when Denise Hall-Wilton, the Bradfield Bursar's Secretary, asked Eddie Vinelott, Bradfield's secretary of Fives at the time, to demonstrate the game. The master-in-charge, despite some chauvinistic thoughts, was persuaded to lend some gloves and a ball, and Denise recruited Angela Marshall to play regularly with her, but Angela, after a promising but all too brief career, became pregnant and had to stop playing.

Denise, never one to be put off by a little local difficulty, looked around in the School Dining Hall for anyone who might be interested and spotted Paula Smith, then employed as a lab assistant in the Biology Department. Paula, a gifted netball player, took to Fives immediately, and soon she and Denise were involved in a lengthy series of Sunday games, keeping a running total from week to week just like a couple of fourteen-year-olds.

A few other players, including Paula's sister Trish, were recruited, and Sunday evenings became the regular time for the Bradfield Club to meet and play social fives. Husbands, boy-friends and people met in pubs were encouraged to come along as well, and soon the fives courts were a hive of activity most Sundays until late in the evening, with Reading University students joining in whenever they could get transport. The standard of play improved, and Paula, the outstanding player, even won herself a course of driving lessons as a result of a bet with a driving instructor who thought he could 'beat any woman at any game'!

The Bradfield courts are of the Winchester type, but before long Denise and Paula were also involved in playing both the Eton and the Rugby varieties. The chance to play Eton Fives came through Tom and Joan Wood, who told Denise there were ladies playing at Eton with the Thorn-EMI Club, organised by Richard Black. Denise and Paula were made most welcome there, and almost immediately they were playing in competitions as well as in club nights. They managed to win the plate on many occasions, and one year they even reached the semi-finals of the ladies' main competition. This adventure lasted for five or six years, until Paula's knee injury, sustained some years earlier, began to make the bending and leaping intolerable.

In 1985, the macho world of Rugby Fives was agog. Alastair Mackenzie, President of the RFA, had offered to run a Ladies' Singles Championship at St. Paul's School! Five or six players entered, and Paula duly became the first champion, beating Denise in the final. Although there was no competition the next season, the event was subsequently held without interruption until 1997, with Paula winning every year she entered. She was injured in 1993, and that year's title was won by Tom and Joan Wood's daughter Cherry, who beat Mary Love (one of the original participants in Ladies' Fives) in the final. In 1999, Paula was finally defeated by the brilliant Claire Knowles from Manchester, who has held the title since then.

One of the first Reading students who came to play at Bradfield was Melanie Haslam, whose father Michael ran the Men's Winchester Fives Doubles for its first dozen years. In 1988, Michael gave a cup for a Ladies' Singles Championship for Winchester Fives, and the first year was at Sedbergh, his old school, where the men's competition was also being played. Five doughty contenders made the trek from Berkshire to play each other, and Paula Smith became the champion in this branch of the sport as well! She was to win the competition every year it was held between 1988 and 2003, finally losing in 2004 to

Dominique Redmond, a talented young Eton Fives player who took a decided liking to the Malvern buttress.

Paula, whose competitiveness has seen her continue to play Winchester and Rugby Fives despite a dysfunctional knee and increasingly arthritic hands, has therefore won 26 National Singles titles (11 Rugby, 15 Winchester) since she started the game back around 1979. But that's only part of the story, for with her faithful sidekick Denise, a further 18 Doubles Championships have been won (5 Rugby, 13 Winchester). The same pattern applies as in the Singles: the victories in the Rugby came to an end when Claire Knowles, first with Jo Chenhall and now with Melanie Whitehead (née Haslam) as partner, came on the scene; and in the Winchester, Paula was sadly unable to enter in 2005, when the Redmond sisters were victorious.

So Ladies' Rugby and Winchester Fives tournaments have been running now for twenty years or so. If the outstanding player during that period has been Paula Smith, the organiser par excellence has been Denise Hall-Wilton. She has always seen to it that, however many (or few) entered, all were tested to near-exhaustion, with competitions rarely lasting less than five hours in all; singles and doubles events were played on the same day and, whatever the preliminary format, finals were invariably best of three games to fifteen points. The spirit of Tom Wood lives on!

Fives is about more than winning, especially for these two, who have put so much into the game. Paula has done it by her example as a player; by her encouragement of countless beginners (including the recruitment of Vodafone employees in the days when she worked for that company); and by her enthusiastic running of the Mixed Doubles competition, which she started in 1997 – and also won a couple of times with her son, Sean. Denise has done it by showing typical determination both on and off court; by taking on the RFA Club newsletter and pocket-book in 1989 and making the pocket-book the Fives player's companion; by running ladies' competitions and encouraging schools to start girls playing (something she herself pioneered at Bradfield); by becoming Hon. Sec. of the RFA Club in 1995 and then Club Manager on the amalgamation with the RFA; by keeping the RFA database going; by travelling hundreds of miles to take photos for the Handbook and website; and by being a long-serving member of the RFA Committee and Board.

Girls' Fives is now up and running in five schools on the Rugby/Winchester circuit – Alveley's, Blundell's, Marlborough, Malvern and Oundle – and with more and more such schools going fully co-ed, this must be the future of Ladies' Fives. But it might not have got going at all without the pioneering spirit of Denise Hall-Wilton and Paula Smith.

David Barnes

Early Days: (from left) Henrietta Chapman, Denise Hall-Wilton, Melanie Haslam, Paula Smith, Erica Patten, Mary Love.



Rugby Fives Association Rankings at End of Season 2004-2005

SINGLES

Position		Ranking points
1	(2) J Toop	78.9
2	(3) H Buchanan	75.8
3	(5) M Cavanagh	74.9
4	(4) P d'Ancona	71.8
5	(1) N Roberts	71.3
6	(8) P Bishop	68.8
7	(6) J Beswick	59.3
8	(7) D Fox	40.7
9	(11) M Hajialexandrou	39.2
10	(10) N Austin	36.5
11	(32) E Fuller	31.4
12	(18) M Bate	27.3
13	(19) J Bristow	25.5
14	(14) J Minta	24.6
15	(-) I Purvis	22.8
16	(-) S Fraser	22.7
	(17) D Hebden	22.7
18	(15) O Stone-Lee	22.5
19	(9) I Fuller	20.8
20	(29) M Bowness	20.6
21	(-) G Rees	20.2
22	(28) A Rew	19.3
23	(22) J Nelmes	18.5
24	(12) J Fabes	17.7
25	(24) A Lee	17.3
26	(20) C Jones	16.4
27	(22) S Roberts	15.2
28	(36) A Pringle	14.2
29	(35) C Brooks	13.5
30	(16) R Nagy	12.7
31	(27) B Lovett	12.6
32	(34) B Elfick	12.4
33	(25) J Hayes	12.3
34	(43) D Grant	12.1
35	(21) B Taberner	11.9
36	(12) A Wilson	11.7
37	(31) D Clydesdale-Cotter	11.0
38	(-) R Nichols	10.9
39	(44) E M-M-Crichton	10.8
40	(37) A Beverly	10.0
41	(-) K Henry	8.7
	(-) J Pendergrass	8.7
	(45) W Powell	8.7
44	(47) E Hatton	8.4
45	(33) J Hughes	8.0
46	(37) J Down	7.2
47	(-) N Patel	7.1
48	(40) P Rider	6.9
49	(40) S Korris	6.8
	(61) J Thomas	6.8
51	(42) J Paul	6.3
52	(-) S Watson	6.0
53	(49) N Geere	5.6
54	(-) W Harrison	5.1
55	(45) R Evans	5.0
56	(-) M Bliss	4.7
	(39) B Nithsdale	4.7
58	(48) T Lewis	4.5
59	(50) A Smith	3.3
60	(-) K Brice	2.6
	(-) D Park	2.6
62	(58) J Savery	2.5
63	(59) P Breslin	2.2
64	(-) S Maskell	2.1
65	(56) J East	2.0
66	(-) M Skogia	1.9
67	(53) T Curtin	1.6
68	(56) B Baral	1.4
69	(-) H Manning	1.3
70	(-) S Moger	1.2
71	(62) R Larnach	1.1
72	(64) T Walker	0.5

DOUBLES

Position		Ranking points	Position		Ranking points
1	(1) H Buchanan	99.5	48	(35) E Brooke	15.0
	(2) R Perry	99.5		(41) S Moger	15.0
3	(6) P d'Ancona	78.1	50	(41) D C-Cotter	14.1
	(5) D Hebden	78.1		(41) T Curtin	14.1
5	(7) B Taberner	72.1	(-)	P Reynolds	14.1
6	(4) N Roberts	70.0	(64)	J Savery	14.1
7	(3) J Beswick	69.3	54	(39) R Evans	12.2
8	(21) J Nelmes	57.4	(64)	D Fox	12.2
9	(9) N Austin	55.7	(35)	B Hanton	12.2
10	(8) I Fuller	47.4	(55)	T Lewis	12.2
11	(28) K Henry	41.2	(55)	S Watson	12.2
12	(17) J Minta	40.0	(-)	S Werkshagen	12.2
13	(10) M Cavanagh	39.4	60	(46) B Nithsdale	11.2
	(10) J Hayes	39.4	61	(46) A Beverly	10.0
	(18) O Stone-Lee	39.4	(-)	D Grant	10.0
	(24) J Thomas	39.4	(-)	A Hajialexandrou	10.0
17	(15) M Bate	38.1	(-)	M Hajialexandrou	10.0
18	(12) P Bishop	36.1	(-)	B Hitchens	10.0
19	(22) J Bristow	35.4	(-)	R James Duff	10.0
20	(31) J Hughes	34.6	(-)	N MacIver	10.0
	(31) A Rew	34.6	(50)	T Maconie	10.0
	(12) R Sandie	34.6	(-)	G McGairl	10.0
23	(28) C Brooks	33.2	(-)	I McKerrow	10.0
24	(27) B Elfick	31.6	(-)	D Moar	10.0
	(-) G Rees	31.6	(-)	I Mogford	10.0
26	(41) P Atkinson	30.0	(49)	C Saltmarsh	10.0
	(19) J Toop	30.0	(31)	R Sutcliffe	10.0
28	(14) P Breslin	28.3	75	(55) R Holland	8.7
29	(50) R Butterworth	26.5	(55)	P Rider	8.7
30	(19) G McIntyre	24.5	77	(76) S Andrews	7.1
31	(31) A Lee	22.4	(76)	W Clark	7.1
32	(15) A Wilson	21.2	(50)	R Cleave	7.1
33	(28) M Bowness	20.0	(64)	M Conrad	7.1
	(-) E Hatton	20.0	(50)	R Dolby	7.1
	(-) S Korris	20.0	(64)	W Enstone	7.1
	(-) R Nichols	20.0	(-)	J Furniss	7.1
37	(23) J Fabes	19.4	(64)	W Harrison	7.1
38	(38) C Jones	18.7	(-)	J Heath	7.1
39	(50) M Bliss	17.3	(64)	L Jamieson	7.1
	(-) J Hawke	17.3	(55)	S Maskell	7.1
	(-) S Kirby	17.3	(64)	R Murby	7.1
	(-) B Kirk	17.3	(25)	R Nagy	7.1
	(76) A Pringle	17.3	(63)	J Paul	7.1
	(-) E Ronan	17.3	(76)	R Pearson	7.1
	(46) T Widdop	17.3	(64)	W Powell	7.1
46	(64) E Fuller	15.8	(-)	R Ross	7.1
	(39) A Smith	15.8	94	(76) L Samuels	5.0

() position at start of season

AGM SUMMARY

The 79th Annual General Meeting of the Rugby Fives Association was held on Wednesday 15th June 2005. Full copies of the minutes are available from the General Secretary.

In addition to the President, Deputy President and General Secretary, fifteen members of the Association were present at the meeting. Apologies for absence had been received from a further eight members.

The General Secretary had already circulated his report, together with the RFA Club Manager's report, to all members. Both reports appear in full in this Handbook. There were no questions or comments from the meeting. Audited accounts had already been circulated and were accepted by the meeting after one

question about the reduced profit on competitions had been answered by the General Secretary.

The meeting then approved the appointment of John East to succeed the retiring President, Geoff Sherratt, and the appointment of Chris Horrocks to succeed John East as Deputy President. The following existing Board members, each retiring by rotation, were re-appointed as Directors in accordance with the Company's articles of association: D Barnes, H Buchanan, P d'Ancona, D Gardner, D Hall-Wilton, C Jones, O Stone-Lee and A Wilson. A Pringle and A Smith were appointed Directors on the retirement of J Nelmes and R Dolby.

P de Winton was re-appointed as Hon. Auditor, as was D Barnes as Hon. Archivist.



*At the AGM: (from left)
Chris Horrocks (Deputy President 2005/07),
John East (President 2005/07),
Geoff Sherratt (President 2003/05).*

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT 2004-05

Whilst the emphasis last year was on administrative matters following our incorporation, the Board this year was able to devote more of its time to marketing and development issues. Many of you will have read in the mid-season review that, after extensive discussions with the Eton Fives Association, we formed a joint Federation with them with principal objective of promoting and developing the game of Fives in all its versions, both in the UK and overseas. The respective Boards will retain full control of such issues as strategy, rules, championships/matches, quality of courts etc., but we considered that the combined membership of both sports would be more attractive to potential sponsors, advertisers and National bodies. One of the main issues currently under discussion at the Federation is the creation of a cohesive PR strategy which is fundamental to heightening the profile of the game of Fives. As also mentioned in the review, we are still in discussion with our potential publishers for a book on the history of Fives with the intended publication date of 2007 to coincide with our 80th Anniversary. Much work will need to be done in the early stages to create a viable and extensive database to which we can market the proposed book before we commit significant funds to the project.

Following much work by Paddy d'Ancona and his sub-committee, together with professional support from an external design company, our 'new' website was launched in March with much positive feedback from our users. The Board considered that the cost of this exercise was money well spent and that the previous site was not sustainable, particularly as we seek to heighten the profile of our game.

Following on from the assistance provided by the Charitable Trust to both Denstone School and Derby Moor last season, the

Board was delighted that the Trust was able to assist Clifton College with the renovation of two of their courts at the Music School site, thereby creating an excellent centre of four courts. Not only has this provided improved facilities for the College, it has also facilitated the regeneration of the West of England Club which is now a thriving entity. Some smaller projects are currently in the early stages of consideration, and we watch with interest the potential developments at both Oundle and Christ's Hospital, whilst continuing to monitor the situation at Sutton Valence.

In terms of publications, the Handbook and mid-season review continue to be well received by members, and this year we produced an updated version of the Record book.

Competitions continue to be very well attended and this season we had record entries for the British Universities Championships and the highest number of participants in the National Singles since 1991. The latter produced a new champion in Matt Cavanagh and overall it is extremely encouraging to see a good number of younger players coming through at such a high standard. This was equally true of the Schools Championships this year, with the Singles being won by Jamie Pendergrass from Loretto, who looks a very exciting prospect for the future.

On the administrative side, approximately 75% of the letters of guarantee have now been returned and the Board was pleased with the response to the revised standing order mandate exercise with approximately 80% being returned so far by members who pay in this way.

Finally, we say farewell to three Board members this year – Geoff Sherratt, Bob Dolby and Johnny Nelmes – and the Board wishes to record its thanks to all three individuals for their contributions over the last few years.

Ian Fuller, May 2005

FINANCIAL REPORT 2004-05

Members should again note that direct comparisons with 2004 are complicated by the fact that we had nearly a 14 month accounting period last year, so it will not be until next year that like-for-like comparisons can be made.

Overall a loss of just over £4,750 was made, mainly due to the Board's decision to redesign the website which resulted in additional costs of £3,750.

On the Income side, subscriptions were slightly up on last year even allowing for some duplicated payments received as a result of the new standing order exercise. Total income was, however, down as we did not have the benefit of the one-off sale of

equipment seen last year nor did we receive the level of donations which we enjoyed last year. Nevertheless, it again pleasing to see a good profit from competitions, even if the figure is lower than 2004 due to the longer accounting period for that year.

On the Expenditure side, costs were pretty much in line with last year other than the website expenses mentioned earlier and the one-off costs of nearly £400 for the vouchers which the Board decided to give to all the Championship organisers last year.

In the light of the above, the Board remains satisfied with the overall financial situation.

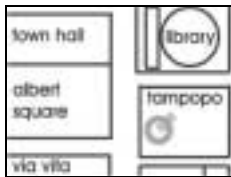
Ian Fuller, May 2005

RESULTS FOR SEASON 2004-2005

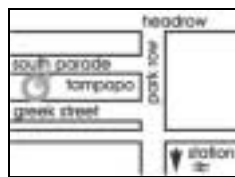
National Singles 2004	<i>Winner:</i> M.Cavanagh <i>Runner-up:</i> J.P.Toop
National Doubles 2005	<i>Winners:</i> H.Buchanan & R.A.Perry <i>Runners-up:</i> P.D.d'Ancona & B.R.Taberner
National Ladies' Singles 2004	<i>Winner:</i> C.Knowles <i>Runner-up:</i> P.B.Smith
National Ladies' Doubles 2004	<i>Winners:</i> C.Knowles & M.Whitehead <i>Runners-up:</i> D.Redmond & E.Seton
National Veterans' 2005	<i>Singles:</i> D.J.Hebden <i>Doubles:</i> D.J.Hebden & K.B.Puckle
National Vintage 2005	<i>Singles:</i> D.J.Hebden <i>Doubles:</i> D.J.Hebden & K.B.Puckle
National Masters' Doubles 2005	<i>Winners:</i> B.J.Atkinson & D.K.Bawtree
National Under 25 2005	<i>Singles:</i> J.A.O.Bristow <i>Doubles:</i> M.S.Bate & J.A.O.Bristow
National Student and British Universities 2004	<i>Singles:</i> J.A.O.Bristow (Oxford) <i>Doubles:</i> C.G.Brooks & B.R.Ellick (Cambridge)
West of England 2004	<i>Singles:</i> N.H.Roberts <i>Doubles:</i> H.Buchanan & J.R.Nelmes
South-West 2004	<i>Singles:</i> M.Cavanagh <i>Doubles:</i> H.Buchanan & D.J.Hebden
North of England 2005	<i>Singles:</i> H.Buchanan <i>Doubles:</i> D.N.Austin & H.Buchanan
North-West 2005	<i>Singles:</i> P.W.Bishop <i>Doubles:</i> H.Buchanan & R.A.Perry
Scottish 2005	<i>Singles:</i> H.Buchanan <i>Doubles:</i> K.Henry & J.Thomas
London 2004	<i>Singles:</i> H.Buchanan <i>Doubles:</i> H.Buchanan & R.A.Perry
Yorkshire Doubles 2004	<i>Winners:</i> H.Buchanan & D.J.Hebden
Whitgift Doubles 2004	<i>Winners:</i> H.Buchanan & Z.Butlin
National Schools 2005	
Open	<i>Singles:</i> J.Pendergrass (Loretto School) <i>Doubles:</i> Winchester College (W.Ellison & H.K.Mohammed)
Under 16	<i>Singles:</i> D.Tristão (St. Paul's School) <i>Doubles:</i> St. Paul's School (J.Corbin & D.Tristão)
Under 14	<i>Singles:</i> L.Squire-Smith (Winchester College) <i>Doubles:</i> Alleyn's School (A.George & P.A.Hanton)
Under 13	<i>Singles:</i> P.A.Hanton (Alleyn's School) <i>Doubles:</i> Alleyn's School (P.A.Hanton & B.H.Stephens-Hemingway)
West of England Schools 2005	
Open	<i>Singles:</i> J.Pendergrass (Loretto School) <i>Doubles:</i> Winchester College (W.Ellison & H.K.Mohammed)
Under 16	<i>Singles:</i> D.Tristão (St. Paul's School) <i>Doubles:</i> St. Paul's School (J.Corbin & D.Tristão)
Schools Winchester Doubles 2004	<i>Winners:</i> Winchester College (H.K.Mohammed & O.J.Pumphrey)
National Club Championship 2005	<i>Winners:</i> Alleyn Old Boys <i>Runners-up:</i> Manchester YMCA
Old Boys' Club Championship 2004	<i>Winners:</i> Old Dunstonians <i>Runners-up:</i> Alleyn Old Boys
Oxford v Cambridge 2005	<i>Winners:</i> Cambridge
RFA Club President's Cup 2004	<i>Winners:</i> P.Chopra & E.W.G.Hatton
Winchester Fives Doubles 2004	<i>Winners:</i> D.A.Fox & D.J.Hebden
Winchester Fives Doubles 2005	<i>Winners:</i> D.A.Fox & D.J.Hebden
Ladies' Winchester Fives 2005	<i>Singles:</i> D.E.A. Redmond <i>Doubles:</i> D.E.A.Redmond & L.C.I.Redmond
Winchester Fives Northern 2004	Combined with W.F.Doubles 2004 (see above)
Winchester Fives Mixed 2005	<i>Winners:</i> E.E.Seton & R.L.Dolby



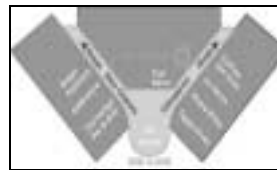
The food of Champions*



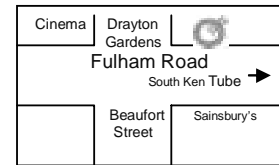
Manchester
0161 8191966



Leeds
0113 2451816



Trafford Centre
0161 7478878



London
0207 3705355

*7 out of ten ranked players eat at Tampopo on a regular basis
(Regular as defined in Collins Concise Dictionary "occurring at fixed or prearranged intervals")



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