

Newsletter

Oxford University Tennis Club



Summer 2015

Edited by Maggie Henderson-Tew

The last six months at the club have produced some compelling events and we've been lucky enough to host some excellent matches. Unfortunately, this year at Lord's, our Varsity teams were on the receiving end of another Cambridge victory, in the Ladies' and Mens' Blues contests. Sadly, the Second teams shared the same experience, when playing away at Cambridge. Although not a vintage (Pol Roger) year for OUTC (that precious liquid is presented to the victors), all our teams acquitted themselves well and were a credit to our club. Our resolve is re-doubled for next year . . .

On the plus side, we had good runs in the Brodie Cup and Field Trophy, and won the Division One National League. We also hosted the 0-9 Tournament and the accompanying Pro-Am Tournament, which was won by the home team of Craig Greenhalgh and Anthony Clake.

We've also seen some improvements to the décor of the club and the introduction of a camera feed in the Clubroom – there are further technological developments planned; some of which are covered in this issue.

We were very sorry to lose our oldest playing member, David Morris, who was last on court at the age of 94. Lesley's words below sum up David's presence at the court beautifully, and the photo is exactly how many of us will remember him. It was a privilege to have had David as an enthusiastic and loyal club member for so many years.

Derek Williams



DAVID MORRIS

Oxford University Tennis Club was saddened to learn that its oldest active real tennis player, David Morris, had laid his last chace. David died on 29th April, only a month short of his 95th birthday.

He took up real tennis in 1977 and continued to play in a regular Saturday morning doubles until only a few weeks before his death. Rules had, it is true, to be rewritten to accommodate his age, but his serve remained tricky to the last game and his determination to win was undiminished. As much as he enjoyed the game, the post-match ritual of putting of the world to rights in conversation with old friends was a highlight, and the accompanying photo shows him in characteristic form!

Lesley Smith

NATIONAL LEAGUE DIVISION 1

Roman Krznicaric and Craig Greenhalgh had a great season for Oxford winning the league stage and with it, the right to host Middlesex in the final at home. On the night of the final, it was gratifying to see the dedans and the side galleries full of spectators.

More were in the clubroom and were able to see, for the first time at Oxford, live streaming of the match from a camera in the eye of the unicorn in the grille. The picture was crystal-clear and being able to watch the action made the clubroom feel part of the match. From the Oxford perspective, what a match it was! Roman was in imperious form and romped home 6-2, 6-1 against Leon Smart. Craig's match with Will Burns was a much tighter affair. The first set went Craig's way 6-5, but Will then fought back to take the second set by the same score and it looked as if some of the wind had been taken out of Craig's sails. The atmosphere was electric for the start of the final set and the vocal support of the partisan crowd seemed to

Full dedans and side galleries cheered the Oxford team on



ANDREW & CRAIG

Our Pros both had big birthdays recently.

Craig hit 30 and Andrew reached the big 50. Craig sensibly opted to go away for a couple of weeks and keep a low profile, but Andrew bravely elected to celebrate with family and friends and I was honoured to be among their number.

I have to report that when the cake (to the right) which was designed by Andrew's partner, Emma, was revealed, it became clear that the "White Wolf" moniker is destined to stick!

Derek Williams

*Oxford's Division 1 winning team;
Roman Krznicaric (left) and Craig Greenhalgh*



steady Craig's nerves. Despite his best efforts, Will was unable to cope with Craig playing his best tennis. The deciding set went to Oxford 6-2, sealing the match, and, most pleasingly, the Division 1 title.

Our sincere thanks go to Hugo Shuttleworth of Berwyn Catering and Mark Savage of The Curious Wine Company for their splendid sponsorship of our team this season. The combination of excellent wine and delicious nibbles added to the spectators' experience through the season, and the club and team are extremely grateful to Mark and Hugo for their support.



GRANT BATES DOUBLES

The Club's handicap doubles event always provides some good matches, and this year there were a wide range of handicaps and styles on display.

Defending champions Derek Williams and Chris Lintott made it to the semi-final, but were beaten by the Varsity Blues pairing of Izzy Hunt and Clare Bucknell.

Izzy and Clare faced Vinh Tu and Jax Jarvis, the latter receiving a big handicap, in the final. Despite accurate and steady play from Izzy and Clare, Vinh and Jax went for their shots and, apparently much against their own expectations, emerged as the worthy winners of the trophy, 6-4.

Tim Goodacre (left) and James Bates (2nd left) presented the trophy to Jax Jarvis (right) and Vinh Tu (2nd right)



THE NEPTUNE BOOK OF TENNIS & RACKETS

The book is a complete revision and update by James Bruce of the earlier books by his father, the late Lord Aberdare, which have long been internationally regarded as the most authoritative works on the games of Real Tennis and Rackets. It provides the reader with a comprehensive account of everything that has happened in the games from their inception hundreds of years ago to 2014.

This new edition is bursting with over 300 new colour photos, covering not just active courts and players but also every known court still standing in the UK, Ireland, USA and Australia.

The book contains comprehensive and completely rewritten chapters on the history and present situation of every active court in the world (over 200 new pages), covering all that is new in the games, in terms of people, places, clubs and achievements. The author has also scoured the records of the UK, Australia, Canada, France and the USA to bring the statistics of all major tournaments up to date.

This large format book has over 450 pages and costs £35.00 for the standard edition or £350 for the leather-bound limited edition (100 copies) plus postage and packing and can be ordered from:
alan@tennisbookshop.com.

James kindly came to the Oxford court earlier in the year and signed books for those of us who had pre-ordered and gave all present a short talk on the book and his research.



James' father and grandfather (both titled Lord Aberdare) were Oxford members, but despite this connection, it emerged that James had never played here. The honour therefore of introducing James to the Oxford Court fell to me. I regret to say that the third ball I struck caught James squarely in the chest off the tambour, so he had a bruise to take home as a memento of his visit!

The picture above shows James with the photo of his father and grandfather that is in our clubroom. This photo celebrates them having won the Rackets Doubles Championship; quite an achievement, considering the senior Aberdare was in his 50's at the time.

Derek Williams

0-9 TOURNAMENT, PRO-AM TOURNAMENT AND CLUB DINNER

0-9 Tournament

It was our privilege to once again host these two competitions. Organising the 0-9 was complicated this year by the late withdrawal, due to injury, of the top seed, but Andrew and Craig rapidly sorted out a revised draw and made an excellent job of making the tournament run as seamlessly as ever.

It was wonderful to have the Ladies' World Champion Claire Fahey playing at Oxford and supported by her husband, Rob Fahey, the Men's World Champion for the past twenty years. Claire won through to the semi-final, but came up against an in-form Peter Wright who beat her 6-5, 6-4 in a gripping match. Peter went on to win the final 6-4, 6-5 against Darren Long in a spectacular match, in which Darren's fierce forcing and Peter's control of line and length were particularly memorable and impressive.

0-9 Tournament winner, Peter Wright



Pro-am

In the pro-am, there was a succession of good matches, but the best was, rather fittingly, saved until last, with a nail-biting final in which Anthony Clake and Craig Greenhalgh managed to overcome Jonny Whitaker and Marc Seigneur in a very tight three setter. The final score was 4/6 6/5 6/5.

I would like to thank our sponsor (who prefers to remain anonymous) most sincerely on behalf of the club for his continued support. For me, it is one of the best weekends at the club, combining tennis of a very high standard with a packed and buzzing clubroom, as members and players mix and friendships are renewed. Without our sponsor, it would not be possible to stage

this event, and the club is very grateful to have received his support again this year.

Club Dinner

On the Friday evening of the 0-9 tournament, the Club held its annual formal dinner, which this year was at Pembroke College. Organising such an event always seems to call for flexibility and a steady nerve. This year there were changes even on the morning of the event. Three diners dropped out, but, serendipitously, three new guests pleaded for tickets!

We had a drinks reception in the Harold Lee room and there sparkling wine and conversation were in abundance. It was a delight to see so many members and their guests. 95 of us sat down for dinner, and were well served by the Pembroke staff, although the portions were felt by many to be a little bit too much like 'nouvelle cuisine' i.e. on the small side.

Thankfully, on my table anyway, there was no shortage of wine, so all was fine.

After the meal, we were entertained by an operatic performance by Gemma-Louise. Before the dinner, I had the pleasure of hearing her beautiful voice drifting across the quad whilst I sat watching students playing croquet - very Oxford! Perhaps unwisely, Gemma used a microphone in the dining hall and the PA system wasn't able to cope with her vocal range terribly well, which was a pity. Notwithstanding that minor blip, everyone seemed to enjoy the evening thoroughly. Feedback was encouraging and we are planning to hold another dinner next year, possibly at Exeter College.

Derek Williams

VARSITY 2015 LADIES' REPORT

Singles

4th String match – *Evelyn Fleming vs Emily Brady (4-6, 1-6 to Cambridge)*

We kicked off with Evie and Emily, who had handicaps of 60 and 53, respectively. Evie was new to real tennis this year, but she plays beautifully, has great potential and her handicap has dropped quickly. They were neck and neck up to 4-4 in the first set, playing a great standard of tennis for their paper handicaps, with low balls, corner-to-corner shots and long rallies. Emily was too good a server and retriever however - it was a real challenge to get the ball past her, and she took the first set 6-4. In terms of technique and style, the girls were pretty even, but, in the end, Emily's experience showed through. She took control of the game in the second set with her winning serves, and won 6-1.

3rd String match – *Clare Bucknell vs Karen Pearce (3-6, 6-4, 1-6 to Cambridge)*

Clare looked a little nervous to start, and went down in the first set 6-3, with Karen simply getting everything back, and hitting some winning shots in

the nick at the back for good measure. Clare was 4-2 down in the second set, but, with huge encouragement from the dedans, she finally got into her stride, finding some tight serves and repeatedly hitting the tambour. With a phenomenal comeback, she won that set 6-5. In the third, despite Clare returning a high proportion of her tambour shots, Karen drove ahead, hitting all the right spots, with the most effective use of pace. She has improved significantly since last year's Varsity, and took the third set 6-1.

2nd String match

Isabel Hunt vs Venetia D'Arcy (6-3, 6-1 to Oxford)

Venetia and Izzy looked pretty even to start at 2-2, and their handicaps were the most level of the matches. Then Izzy managed to slip ahead with some tight serving and carefully placed tambour balls, going up 4-3. Getting a good run at the service end, and mixing up some strategic serves, led to Izzy taking the first set 6-3. She also looked rock-solid in the second set and hit the tambour and grille with high efficiency. Venetia hit some tactical gallery chases, but she could not do enough at the service end to prevent Izzy getting some short chases, which led to her serving to victory in the second set 6-1.



Oxford Ladies' Firsts from left to right: Izzy Hunt (captain), Maggie Hendereson-Tew, Clare Bucknell and Evie Fleming

1st String match –

Maggie Henderson-Tew vs Sophie Morrill

(4-6, 2-6 to Cambridge)

Maggie and Sophie got off to a flying start, with superb rallies and excellent ball placing on both sides. Sophie was the ringer of last year's Varsity match, and has improved further since that startling display, but we knew Maggie was up to the challenge. At 3-3, there was everything to play for, but Sophie struck some first-rate serves and took the first set 6-4. In the second set, Sophie got quickly into her stride, hitting the ball strongly and with great precision. Maggie fought incredibly well and never gave up, getting some unbelievable returns, however Sophie was just too strong and too accurate, particularly on the volley, and won the second set 6-2.



Doubles

Second string match - Clare Bucknell & Isabel Hunt vs Venetia D'Arcy & Karen Pearce
(6-2, 6-1 to Oxford)

Izzy and Clare played their hearts out in this match, with Clare volleying strongly into the back right corner, and Izzy running left and right at the back picking up the well-placed Cambridge balls. They dominated the game throughout and were a very solid pair and the Cambridge duo was not given a chance to get started. The final score was 6-2, 6-1, set up the possibility of leveling the match 3-3, and taking it to a rarely-played deciding doubles. Every Oxford finger was crossed for the critical next rubber.

First string match - Evelyn Fleming & Maggie Henderson-Tew vs Emily Brady & Sophie Morrill
(3-6, 0-6 to Cambridge)

Maggie and Evie gave everything in this match, hoping to win this last rubber to equalize with

Cambridge. They started well, with tight serves from Evie and short, low returns struck with perfect technique from Maggie. The Cambridge players were strong retrievers, and Sophie Morrill in particular hit the ball very hard and cleanly, putting Oxford under continuous pressure. Despite Oxford's best efforts, Cambridge took the first set 6-3. In the second set, Cambridge forged ahead and took the game out of Oxford's hands. It was a real nail-biter, with every point fought for until the end. But the winning score of 3-6, 0-6 secured the Varsity Match for Cambridge, to their great delight, after an Oxford run of victories over the previous four years.

Congratulations to Cambridge on winning a highly-competitive match, played with great intensity in the best Varsity spirit of friendly rivalry.

Isabel Hunt,
Oxford Ladies' Captain

VARSITY 2015 MEN'S REPORT

Doubles

First string match – Jonathan Whitaker & Alex Mullan vs. Ed Kay & Matt Shaw
(6-2, 3-6, 2-6, 0-6 to Cambridge)

We started off with the first string doubles, where Alex and I played the Cambridge no. 1 and no. 4. We started off well with Alex serving strongly tying up Ed in his service games, with me returning strongly off Matt's serves meaning we somehow found ourselves a set ahead. It looked like we could pull off a miraculous win however after a tight start to the second set at 3-3, Cambridge accelerated away with Ed finding his rhythm and Matt volleying well, leading to Cambridge taking that set and the next two comfortably.

Second string match – Archie Burgess & Ben Graves vs. Jamie Giddins & Alex Evans
(3-6, 1-6, 2-6 to Cambridge)

Archie and Ben played in the second string against considerably higher-rated players. Despite this, we felt that, as both Archie and Ben were strong at doubles, we might have a chance. Unfortunately, they were slow to get going, which meant after a close opening exchange, the Cambridge boys dictated, with the former Oxford captain, Alex Evans, volleying well at the net and Jamie keeping it very tight and finishing well. They proceeded to win in straight sets.



Oxford men's Firs from left to right: Jonny Whitaker (captain), Archie Burgess, Ben Graves and Alex Mullan

Singles

4th String match – Alex Mullan vs. Matt Shaw (0-6, 3-6 to Cambridge)

On Saturday we kicked off with the first of the “must win” games. This one, on paper, looked like it would be close. However at the start of the match the Cambridge no. 4 looked like a bandit off 29, playing extremely consistently and romping away 6-0 in the opening set. After seeing this, I decided to go to the galleries to give Alex a few words of encouragement. By the time I got down there, Alex had gone 2-0 up in the set, after which having me sitting in the galleries did not have the effect I wanted. It only seemed to spur on Matt, who won that set, and the rubber, 6-3.

3rd String match – Ben Graves vs. Alex Evan (5-6, 3-6 to Cambridge)

Ben needed to get this match if we were to have a chance. He started incredibly well and played the most consistently I've ever seen him, volleying as strongly as ever and putting balls away well. He racked up a 5-2 lead in no time. Alex then showed why he had a handicap 9 points superior to Ben by carving balls into the corners and dragging the score back to 5-5. After

one of the longest games ever, with set points left, right and centre, Cambridge prevailed. After a close opening to the second set, we all thought something similar was on the cards but the handicaps ended up telling the story, as Alex won the set and the match.

2nd String match – Archie Burgess vs. Jamie Giddins (6-4, 2-6, 2-6 to Cambridge)

Archie started off the match exceptionally well, volleying the return very strongly and playing better than I'd ever seen him before. The Cambridge number 2 looked perplexed, as on paper this should have been a walkover. With his crunching volleys and huge reach, Archie took the first set. Jamie looked worried. After a close opening to the second, I thought an Oxford win might be possible, but Archie tired, letting Jamie dictate play and take that set, and the third, in a convincing manner.

1st String match – Jonathan Whitaker vs. Ed Kay (2-6, 2-6 Cambridge)

Finally, I took on the Cambridge number 1, a fine single-figure handicap player. Ed started off serving the railroad for the first three points, which allowed me

smash some returns and free my arms, which gave me a 40 love lead in the first game, and a great start.

Sadly, it wasn't to last. After a change of serve and constant striking of the galleries, Ed's stronger handicap prevailed, leaving these opening three points as my highlight. He breezed through, winning 6-2, 6-2.

Congratulations to the Cambridge team for winning a good match played in the right Varsity spirit. I look forward to having a crack at getting that trophy back next year!

Jonny Whitaker,
Oxford Men's Captain



FIELD TROPHY

For the first time in quite a while, our club enjoyed a good run in the Field Trophy, which is the second-tier inter-club championship. We reached the final, which was played away at Moreton Morrell, but, unfortunately, we came second. However, despite the loss, the result promotes Oxford to the first division, and we are

delighted to have the opportunity to play for the Pol Roger Trophy next season. Well done, and thank you, to Rob Walker (Captain), Roman Krznaric, Geoff Baker, Mike Henman, Alex Mullan, Jonny Whitaker and James Bates for securing this excellent result.

BRITISH LADIES' MASTERS

Holyport hosted the annual British Ladies' Masters Tournament, which actually is the rather grandly, and rather misleadingly, titled 'Over 40s' competition. Holyport was freezing over the weekend of 4-6 Feb and coats and gloves were the order of the day in the dedans, and were considered by some on court.



The only Oxford member to enter the competition was Maggie Henderson-Tew, who made it through to the quarter-final stage. She regarded it as a career highlight to have the opportunity to play (level – good grief!) in her QF against Penny Lumley, who is such a legend of the women's game, being six times World Champion, winner of umpteen other major titles, and still ranked as the world's number three female player.

The match was a (predictably) one-sided affair. The LRTA's reporter noted that Maggie got down really well to Penny Lumley's serve and defended the tambour heroically. But the former World Champion was far too classy, and although Maggie won plenty of points, and even had some game points, she couldn't actually win a game. Just winning one had been her optimistic target, but it was not too be.

In the second set, Penny was spanking the ball around her home court so successfully that Maggie was finding it hard to win any points at all, although she kept trying hard until the end. Penny went through 6/0 6/0 and went on to win the title, defeating Alex Garside, 6-0, 6-0.



NEPTUNE MVP

The Neptune Most Valuable Player Award, introduced in 2014, is presented to the player judged to have made the greatest overall contribution to student tennis at OUTC. This year, it was most deservedly won by Izzy Hunt.

Izzy had the best individual record at Varsity, winning her singles match and, with Clare Bucknell, winning her doubles rubber too.

But the MVP is not just rewarded for results and Izzy's competitiveness and excellent captaincy, combined with sporting spirit and perpetual good humour contributed greatly too. We are sorry to say goodbye to her as she graduates from Oxford this year.

LRTA DEVELOPMENT SQUAD

The performances of Izzy Hunt, Clare Bucknell and Evie Fleming at Varsity and the matches leading up to it, brought them to the attention of the LRTA as high

potential players. All three, plus last year's Blue, Sophie Dannreuther, have been invited to join the LRTA development squad, which will provide further coaching and support.

Men's Seconds (from left to right): Mark Fischel, Alexander Flint, Charlie Defries and Tim Dadd



VARSIITY SECONDS

Cambridge played hosts to this year's Varsity seconds. Like the Blues', their Ladies and Men's teams were both stronger on paper than ours and so it proved, with the Cambridge Men winning 4-2. Unfortunately, our ladies lost 0-6. The match was played in a spirit that mirrored

that of the Blues at Lord's and again, our teams were a credit to the club and fought well. I hope that when we host at Oxford next year we can repeat the atmosphere, but reverse the result! Our gratitude goes to Cambridge for staging the event and for their fine hospitality throughout.

TOWN & GOWN

Roger Nathan kindly organised a Town and Gown doubles match on June 13th. All who took part enjoyed some close-fought matches and the excellent atmosphere of the Clubroom. The entirely coincidental timing of the match with post-exam celebrations may have played its part in the 4-1 victory by the Town!

The match was played in very friendly and competitive manner, with plenty of support and a good level banter, and it is very much hoped that we can repeat the event next year.

BRODIE CUP

Unfortunately, and despite our team's valiant efforts, we bowed out of the competition at the semi-final stage in an away match against Radley. All who took part enjoyed a terrific day's tennis and our hosts laid on a great lunch for the players. A goodly number of spectators enjoyed the day, with a full dedans and

LADIES' WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Izzy Hunt and Clare Bucknell beat Maggie Henderson-Tew and Evie Fleming in a very hotly-contested all OUTC quarter-final of the doubles Handicap competition within the Ladies' World Championships. Izzy and Clare stormed on to the final, but lost to a steady pair to whom they had to give handicap, for the first time in the competition. Izzy narrowly beat Maggie 6-5, 6-4 in a high-quality semi-final in the Plate

Maggie Henderson-Tew and Mike Fleming receiving the trophy on behalf of the Town team



upstairs gallery for much of the day, which further enhanced the atmosphere of this highly competitive local Derby. Grateful thanks go to our team captain Tim Dadd, who put his heart and soul into ensuring that our team practiced and played well. Without his motivational skills, we would certainly not have had such a good run in the competition.

competition of the World Champs, but lost in the final 6-5, 6-1 to a fast-improving Saskia Bollermann, of the Dutch Real Tennis Association. The first Dutch woman to win a real tennis tournament was duly thrilled at the outcome! Rumours of a real tennis court being planned at the lawn tennis club where she plays in The Hague are exciting and, if it is built, it would bring a lot of talented racquet players of all ages and both genders into our game.



STUDENT TENNIS SPONSORSHIP

OUTC is delighted to announce that student tennis at Oxford will continued to be sponsored by Neptune Investment Management. Neptune will remain the exclusive corporate sponsor of student tennis for the next three years. The funding provided will be applied to court time and coaching costs, and various Varsity-related expenses, such as players' kit, rackets, accommodation and travel. We are tremendously grateful for Neptune's ongoing generosity to tennis at all levels of the game – and especially here in Oxford!



COMMITTEE

I would like to say a big “Thank You” to the Club Committee, which has been kept busy with various tasks at the Club. Roger Boning (Senior Member), Stuart Herbertson (Treasurer), Jonathan Clark (IT), Liz Leach (Membership), Ed Wigzell (Facilities) and Roger Nathan (Facilities and Compliance) are all deserving of our thanks, as is former Club Chairman, Martin Mercer, who manages the Club accounts so efficiently.

The committee is also delighted to welcome Ben Graves and welcome back Maggie Henderson-Tew, our Student Captains for the year. Maggie has been continuing to work hard on our student members' behalf and is delighted that a three year renewal of the current sponsorship deal has been agreed with Neptune Investment Management, securing funding to September 2018. This will ensure that, together with support for the Varsity Match from Champagne Pol Roger, the grant from the University Sports Federation, support from the Club's Senior Members and other donations, student tennis at Oxford will continue to be well-funded.

VIDEO-FEED

Those that came along to support Craig and Roman in the Division One Final were treated to the first screening of a streamed live match from the camera in the grille. The picture quality was excellent and it enabled those in the Clubroom feel a part of the match. Tim Dadd, Roger Nathan and Ray Cooke are all to be thanked for their efforts in introducing this innovation to the Club. Further developments, including a camera feed from the dedans, and sound, are planned.

COURT FLOOR

As described in the last newsletter, the heave on the court floor continues to be monitored on a quarterly basis. Thus far, the largest movement outside of the tolerances set is around half a millimeter. Final measurements will be taken next year, after which we will review the results and decide upon what, if any, action needs to be taken.

COURT LIGHTING

Ed Wigzell has been looking into the possibility of improving the quality of the lighting on our court through the introduction of LED lights. Three quotes have now been received and are under review. In addition to providing better and more even lighting, LED units would reduce energy costs and need less maintenance. Should we decide to make the change, the court would need to be closed for a day or two, but as much advance warning as possible would be given.

CLUB DÉCOR

The club was starting to look a little shabby, but is much smarter now with the re-decoration of most areas now complete. Even the oven upstairs has had a much-needed clean!

Please would all players do their best to keep the club presentable at all times, but particularly after a match. A little while back, a team left the clubroom in a considerable mess after their match, which was unpleasant for those visitors using the club the following day, who did not gain an appropriate impression of our club. It is everyone's responsibility to clear up completely after a match.



Always react with conviction and speed.

When it comes to playing real tennis, reaction times are key. You need speed and agility to quickly change direction and put yourself in the best possible position to gain advantage. For our funds, it's no different. That's why we take a hands-on approach to fund management, aiming to react quickly to any changes in markets to make the most of any upswings - and just as importantly, defend against the downturns too.

The value of investments can fall as well as rise and you may not get back the amount originally invested. If you are unsure about the suitability of an investment please consult an authorised financial adviser.

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(OXFORD) LIMITED

Unit 4, Ashville Way, Oxford OX4 6TU
Tel: +44 (0) 1865 714715 • Fax: +44 (0) 1865 717718
Email: sales@mayfield-press.co.uk
www.mayfield-press.co.uk

Oxford University Tennis Club, Merton Street, Oxford OX1 4JD
Telephone (01865) 244212 • e-mail: real-tennis.club@studentclubs.ox.ac.uk • www.outc.org.uk