

Week Commencing 14th March 2005

At the Leamington Closed Championships held last Saturday in Warwick, Mark Jackson (County Council) finally achieved the top - winning the Wright Hassall Mens Singles championship. He has worked his way up during 19 years of league play through cadet, junior and youth competitions to contest at the highest level. Two years ago he nearly made it, but lost in the final. This time he made sure when he worked hard to beat a previous winner Jon Williams (Whitnash) in the fifth with a score of 13/15, 11/9, 11/3, 9/11, 11/5. Before that he had had to overcome another former champion Mark Woolerton (Whitnash) in their semi-final 11/8, 10/12, 16/14, 11/8. Jon Williams had seen off Ian Packford (St. Georges) in his first 'Finals night' appearance in the other semi 5/11, 11/8, 11/9, 7/11, 11/9. Jane Dickens (Whitnash) was Ladies Singles champion in 2003, runner-up in 2004 and was determined to reclaim the trophy. She faced former champion Samantha Apostol (AP Sports) who has recently returned to league play after a gap following her marriage. Jane proved in top form and took the title 11/9, 11/7, 11/9. Jane Dickens and Mark Jackson were defending their Frangmere Properties Mixed Doubles title and faced Jon Williams and his partner Julie Richardson (Wellesbourne). Jane and Mark emerged the winners 11/4, 11/9, 11/4. The Frangmere Properties Mens Doubles was a closer affair and a repeat of last year's final, but with the opposite result as this time Jon Williams accompanied by Earl Sweeney (St. Georges) came out on top over Mark Jackson and Mark Woolerton with the narrowest of margins, deuce in the fifth 9/11, 11/6, 8/11, 11/4, 12/10. The Loveitts Ladies Doubles final featured the two singles players facing each other. Last year's winners Jane Dickens and her partner Stephanie Hawkins (AP Sports) however lost out in the fifth to Samantha Apostol and Janice Rowan (BGN) who came from behind to win 11/13, 16/14, 6/11, 12/10, 11/6. Janice Rowan also won the Veteran Ladies Singles, which was opposed for the first time in recent years. She was made to work hard by Carol Meredith (AP Sports), who managed to fit in playing a match alongside umpiring all afternoon and evening along with two other County umpires Frank Stevens and Bob Montgomery, who kindly offered to come to ensure correct standards of play were maintained. Janice won only in the fifth 11/3, 10/12, 12/10, 11/13, 11/6. The Veteran Singles was picked up by the 2003 champion Earl Sweeney. He saw off Pete Dunnett from Wellesbourne 11/7, 6/11, 11/4, 11/7. The Veteran Over 50 Singles however was won by Pete Dunnett, who came back from two sets down to see off last year's champion Phil Paine (County Council) 9/11, 3/11, 11/4, 12/10, 11/8. This year Leamington decided to hold a Veteran Over 60 Singles and the inaugural final saw Bert Banks playing his St. Georges teammate Alf Chapman. Bert played in the first Over 50 Singles some years ago and finished runner-up, but did not make the same mistake this time and will take this trophy home with the score of 11/8, 11/5, 14/12.

Navinder Matharu from Colebridge cruised over Edward Freeman (AP Sports) 11/8, 12/10, 11/8 in the Junior Boys singles. Sister Charlotte Freeman (also AP) however was able to take the Junior Girls Singles, after being runner-up last year, Sophie Cooper (Eathorpe) her opponent, with the score 11/8, 11/8, 11/8. The Junior Doubles were won by Navinder Matharu and Chris Burgess (both Colebridge) 11/6, 11/9, 11/7 over the young cadet pairing from Rugby in their first league season, Jack Randle and Stephen Maddison. Jack Randle outplayed his team-mate Stephen Maddison in the Under 15 Boys 11/7, 13/11, 12/10 but was himself beaten in the Under 13 Boys where third colleague from Rugby Matthew Outhwaite got the upper hand 14/12, 11/9, 11/7. Young Matthew also won the Under 11 Singles 11/6, 12/10, 13/11 over Lawrence Sweeney from St. Georges. Charlotte Freeman took her second trophy when she retained her Under 15 Girls Singles title, Katie Hawker from Eathorpe providing the opposition this time 11/4, 11/5, 11/3. Hannah Saville (Eathorpe) took the Under 13 Girls Singles by seeing off newcomer Charlotte Spencer from Free Church 11/9, 6/11, 11/7, 13/11.

The Bombay Tandoori Grade 1 Singles is a prestigious event competed for by the best players in the league and this year was no exception. Jon Williams ensured he went home with one trophy by

beating Earl Sweeney 11/4, 11/7, 11/8. For Earl this was the second year running when he ended up runner-up! Chris Burgess gained another trophy when he picked up the Grade 2 singles against Navinder Matharu 11/9, 11/8, 11/6. Edward Freeman successfully defended his Grade 3 Singles, overcoming Janice Rowan 13/11, 11/5, 10/12, 11/7. Jack Randle added to his tally by again beating clubmate Stephen Maddison this time only in five sets 8/11, 13/11, 4/11, 11/4, 11/6 in the final of the Grade 4 Singles. The Grade 5 singles was an all Free Church affair with Tom Hunt from division A playing Jack Hobbins from div B in his first half season, with Tom winning 11/4, 11/5, 11/2.

The Handicap Singles final often features players from either end of the league and this year was no exception. Lawrence Sweeney from division A was matched with a handicap of + 54 against Justin Rai from Whitnash in division 1 from scratch. The outcome was that the odds very much favoured ten year old Lawrence, who made it to the total of 61 whilst Justin only had 17.

This was the third year of the Ray Meredith Memorial Parent/Child Doubles and like last year Paul and Michael Rowan made it to the final. Unfortunately dad Paul was ill, so with the agreement of all sides, wife Janice substituted, but once again the Rowans ended up as runners-up. The winning side was the Randles, dad Ian with his son Jack, who cruised to 11/3, 11/8, 11/6 victory for Jack's third success.