



The Veterans Squash Rackets Club of Great Britain

NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2024



CHRISTMAS MESSAGE



Although I predicted a quieter year than our 60th, we have had an increase in multi player matches, tours and club games.

Losing 3 big hitters, **Philip Ayton** (now Honorary Life Member), **Geoff Howes** (now Vice President) and **Nigel Belle** (our new President) is never easy. I am pleased to report that **Keith** and **Leesa Ragg** taking over the Tournament and **Ros Featherstone** as our new Secretary, admirably fill these gaps.

I want 2025, ending the first quarter of the new century, to be a year of working out how GB Vets keep themselves relevant in a rapidly expanding market of Squash tournaments. We will also continue



Ian Graham

competing with Golf and Tennis along with rapidly expanding Padel and Pickleball courts. Examining what we do well and can improve upon whilst losing the least popular activities will be the prime focus. There will be plenty of room for new ideas and members please let me know if you have any.

Sincere thanks to all our committee members who do far more work for GBV than we will ever be aware of. To all our members who play in matches and those who maintain their interest in these fixtures my thanks for your continued support. Wishing you a very happy Christmas and healthy New Year.

Ian Graham

NEW WEBSITE

Planned new features that are being developed for our new website

- 1. New Member Registration and Profile Management** – This feature is being developed to replace the current registration form. The new feature will allow members to maintain their own profile on the website to improve GDPR compliance and allow online registration for championships and fixtures in the future.
- 2. New Payment Gateway** – The Stripe payment gateway is being integrated with the website to allow credit and debit card payments for membership and event payments.
- 3. GB Vets Championships Events** – Several features will be added to improve the way the Championships are displayed on the new website and to allow members to register online for events using the new payment gateway.
- 4. New Integrated Administration Email Service** – New features are being developed to assist the GB Vets Committee send targeted templated emails to members using maintainable distribution lists.

5. New Tournament Management Service – A new service will be developed and integrated into the website that will have similar features to that provided to England Squash Masters. It will be used first for the 2025 Club Championships in May 2025.

6. Administrative Features – Several new administrative features are being developed to assist your committee.

7. Migration of Data from The Legacy Website – All the remaining information that was held on the old website will be migrated to the new site over the next year. This is a significant task as much of the data needs to be reformatted. Many of the photos held on the old website were in a low resolution (small files) and this will be improved where possible on the new site.

Whilst some of the features have already been completed, many will be completed by this Christmas and the remaining will be completed during 2025.

Brian Brock

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- **RESULTS! RESULTS! RESULTS!**
- **VODKA/RED BULL XMAS CAKE**
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The Veterans Squash Rackets Club of Great Britain

STUART HARDY - One Player, Five Questions Interviewed by Aubrey Waddy

At the end of the 2014/2015 season, Stuart Hardy was nominated as one of England Squash Masters' 'Players of the Year'. The citation included the comment, 'Stuart has played in nearly all the Masters events since they started'. That was the first ten years of ESM. The pattern has been mirrored in the subsequent ten years. In his remarkable squash career Stuart has competed in, word carefully chosen, well over 100 UK Masters events, plus numerous tournaments in Europe and further afield.

More details of Stuart's record will follow. For anyone looking into sporting success, his background is compelling. Stuart's aim, his quiet aim, has always been a simple one, to "play as well as I can." His attitude - again, his quiet attitude - is, "(squash is) a whole life thing." The passion in Stuart's presence at Masters events, even on court, isn't glaringly obvious. But it's there. In an outstanding generation of Masters players, he has won a remarkable tally of trophies.

A similar single-mindedness was at the root of his working career. Stuart spent his teenage years with his family in Zambia, where his father was a schoolteacher. The remote location didn't end his love for Marvel and DC superhero comics. His favourites were Spider-Man, the X-Men and of course, Batman. "Funny and juvenile," he happily says of his hobby. Maybe a hobby, but the early series in his collection are now worth thousands of pounds. The Superhero genre led Stuart at the age of eighteen, freshly back in England, "to want to make a difference." So he joined the police force.

Stuart thoroughly enjoyed the various parts of a long police career, as a detective, in the vice squad, the special branch, and finally in charge of the service in Salisbury. Retirement in 2000 freed him up to give more support to his second wife Karen in her antiques and restoration business, which was based in the middle of Salisbury. Stuart and Karen have four children between them, and five grandchildren. Stuart's son Stephen was a Wilts junior player. His grandson Aiden currently represents Wilts juniors, a fourth generation of Hardy squash players, in the lee of Stuart's Dad Hilton. Aiden is apparently not yet good enough to beat his Granddad!

Returning to Stuart's accomplishments, brace for a long paragraph. He has to date picked up twenty English regional Masters titles - the first in the Norths o-50s in 2004/5, and something like seventeen runner up trophies. To give context to the competition he has faced, in the 2013/14 season he lost no fewer than four regional finals... to the late Mark Cowley, Ian Bradburn, Jeremy Goulding and Peter Alexander; throughout his career, he has had to compete with an

outstanding group of players. Further afield, Stuart was a losing finalist in the World Masters o-50 Championships in Johannesburg (to Peter Alexander, "a great athlete") and in 2014, a bronze medallist in the o-60s in Hong Kong, losing to the formidable John McRury. In 2015 he won the o-60 US Open Masters title in Charlottesville VA. He has ten European titles to his name, four Jesters Amateur Championships, and in GB Vets, ten singles titles.

Stuart's ten years as captain of Wiltshire are far eclipsed by his England Masters career. What a thrill that has clearly been. "The first time I pulled my England shirt on it felt like winning the world cup." His first cap was in the o-45s, before the formation of England Squash Masters. He has played in seventeen Home International weekends, as captain ten times, and is proud never to have been on the losing side.

Missing from this catalogue of success for a full twenty years was the national title Stuart cherished. At last, in May 2024, he won the o-70 British Open title in Birmingham. It was, he says, "a joy and a relief." He had previously lost four finals, to Cowley, Clive London, Steve Johnson and Peter Alexander.

Stuart has an organised approach to preparation and competition. He tries to learn from the players he meets, considering them individually. "I do have slightly different tactics for different opponents, and try to impose my game." For the last eighteen years a bedrock of his training has been weekly sessions, in the gym and, intensely, on court, with Barry Featherstone. Indeed it was Stuart who first introduced Barry to court routines. Note the absence of gratitude at Masters events from Barry's opponents.



Stuart Hardy

And there is of course a familiar background story: one of the costs of all the squash has been four knee surgeries, with injuries undoubtedly preventing Stuart from winning more trophies. "These things happen."

On a lighter note, although a passionate Englishman, Stuart is actually a dual international, having represented not just England, but... Thailand! During an extended holiday in the far East, Stuart played a chance game at the famous Hong Kong Football Club. This led to an exhibition match in Bangkok. His opponent was David Lines, the pro at the Bangkok British Squash Club and up to that time, the best player in the country. Stuart won 3-2. He was immediately invited to represent Thailand in the annual 'Hong Kong Threes'. With Stuart playing first string, the Thai team triumphed, winning the championship for the first time. Afterwards they enjoyed, "the best buffet I've ever seen in my life!"

Growing up, Stuart played "many, many, sports," cricket, badminton ("my best sport"), table tennis, golf (down to 8 handicap), a little football and rugby, but it was an injury from martial arts, and inspiration from Jonah Barrington's book, 'Barrington on Squash', that led him to join Wessex Squash Club in Swindon. He started, aged 24, at the very bottom of the box leagues, 28 of them in those days. A few years later he won the first of five club championships, plus many caps for Wiltshire, and twelve county titles, at o-35, o-45 and doubles.

A strong thread running through Stuart's squash life has been his involvement with England Squash Masters. He has huge admiration for Martin Pearse, with whom he helped to run ESM in its founding years. "We wouldn't be here if not for Martin," he says. For the last six years he has been Chairman of England Squash Masters, which goes from strength to strength. Stuart emphasises the contribution of the ESM committee, and he is proud of the early strapping, "We organise Masters squash in England, and support it worldwide."

At the end of Stuart's second decade of Masters squash, it's interesting to speculate how long he'll go on. However many more years it is, it will be in his own quietly effective way and will probably involve more trophies.

PS Just as we were exchanging messages to finalise the article, out of the blue Stuart came up with, "And I never even got to my remarkable collection of historical books on squash." Truly a squash nut, I thought. Stuart's next message said, "Something of a squash nut, as you've probably gathered." Yes!



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Here are Stuart's five questions.

1. What was your hardest match?

It wasn't one match, apparently, it was a good few. Against Mark Cowley! I would say my two Final victories over him were very sweet! Just very rare results! Mark would probably smile to hear Stuart's comment, "Mark was a nightmare to play."

2. Who was the best player you encountered (on court)?

"Jonah Barrington." Stuart met Barrington while representing South Marston in the national club knock out tournament. "He gave me a lesson, a masterclass." Stuart made what sounds to have been a tactical error in winning some points early on with good drop shots, after which he was "lobbed relentlessly."

3. What was your biggest disappointment in squash?

Stuart went to the 2024 World Masters Championships in Amsterdam with a realistic chance of winning. He had previously beaten everyone in

the o-70s draw. In the semi-final he led Robert Anjema 2-1 and in spite of narrowly losing the fourth game was confident of winning. At the start of the fifth, with a 2-0 lead, Stuart injured his suspect knee and could put up no more than token resistance after that.

4. With the experience you have now, starting again in 2004, what would you do differently?

After some um-ing and ah-ing, Stuart finally comes up with his response to this question: "Nothing! I've played all over the world, in twelve different leagues, many different teams. Maybe I could have played the odd point better!"

Fifth question, chosen by Stuart:

5. Why do you play squash?

"I absolutely love the game, the skill, the preparation, the stamina, the gladiatorial nature of the sport. I'm going to play as well as I can for as long as I can."

2024 CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS

A disappointingly smaller than usual entry for the 2024 Club Championships meant that the Tournament matches were played, predominately, all on Sunday 8th September.

With a few players in more than one tournament the logistics of scheduling were complex, and a couple found themselves with a very full Sunday, **David Parker** especially had a busy day.

The youngest age group in the Men's Singles was the Over 60 with only 4 entries. This was won by **Nigel Bacon**, beating **Teejay Sogunro** in the final. The other singles were won by **Allen Barwise**, **Stuart Hardy** and **Barry Featherstone**. **Dale McCarter** won the Non-County 40-49 and the busy **David Parker** the 60+ event.

The O'40 Doubles was won by **Dermot Hurford** and **Nigel Stiles**, the O'60 by **Stuart Hardy** and **Allen Barwise**, Allen having a particularly hard day as he also won the Mixed Doubles with **Catherine Ruffle**. An error on the marking sheet meant that in this match they played best of 5 to 15 points and the match

went the full distance. **Geoff Howes** and **Paul Temple** won both the O'70 and O'75 Doubles.

A break was held in the middle of proceedings for the 61st AGM followed by a superb buffet supplied by the catering team at Colets. A big thanks to Colets for again supporting The GB Vets and allowing us to hold our tournament on their courts.

Glassware was awarded to the winning and runner up players with the presentation of the Burrell Trophy to **Barry Featherstone** and the Norman Hunt Salver to **Geoff Howes**. As this was my final tournament as Tournament Director, I would like to thank all the players who have supported us over the past 19 years, and thanks also to my main helpers on the finals weekends of **Jane Belle**, **Jackie Kinder** and my wife **Chris**. I wish **Keith Ragg** all the best as my successor.

Geoff Howes
Retired Tournament Director

For full Championship results go to:

<https://gbvets.leaguemaster.co.uk/cgi-county/icounty.exe/showtournamentlist>



Allen Barwise (L)
Stuart Hardy



Dave Clarke, Dave Stanton, Allen Barwise,
Stuart Hardy, Dillwyn Rosser, David Parker



Kevin Connors, Allen Barwise,
Dillwyn Rosser



Bryan Francis, Stuart
Hardy, Ian Graham



David Harris (L)
David Parker



Retiring Officers
Nigel Belle, Phil Ayton, Geoff Howes



Dermot Hurford (L)
Philip Ayton



Barry Featherstone (L)
Chris Ansell



David Parker, Geoff Howes, Nigel Belle, Ros
Featherstone, Dillwyn Rosser, Robert Smith



Roger Sulley, Alastair McMeckan, Geoff Howes,
Paul Temple, Robert Smith



Teejay Sogunro (L)
Nigel Bacon



Dan Sweeney, Nigel Belle,
Dale McCarter



Dan Sweeney, Karen Hume,
Allen Barwise, Cathy Ruffle



Chris Howes (L)
Jane Belle



The Veterans Squash Rackets Club of Great Britain

REGIONAL & MULTI-PLAYER MATCH RESULTS

NORTH – PONTEFRACT

27-29 Sept

6 WINNERS

MO60 Eamonn Price
MO65 Nick Gollaglee
MO70 Stuart Hardy
MO75 Barry Featherstone
WO45/50 Cathy Ruffle
WO65 Lynne Davies

5 FINALISTS

MO40 Neil Cross
MO60 John Parkes
MO65 Neil Harrison
MO70 Ian Graham
WO65 Lesley Sturgess

6 SEMI FINALISTS

MO60 Nigel Bacon
MO65 Allen Barwise
MO65 Richard Millman
MO75 Chris Ansell
WO65 Sue Pynegar
WO65 Julie-Anne Pegram

WEST – CHELTENHAM

1-3 Nov

4 WINNERS

MO65 Nick Gollaglee
MO70 Stuart Hardy
MO75 Barry Featherstone
WO65 Julie-Anne Pegram

4 FINALISTS

MO45 Tim Burrell
MO55 Steve McLoughlin
MO60 John Parkes
WO65 Lynne Davies

6 SEMI FINALISTS

MO40 Tony Webb
MO70 Ian Graham
MO75 Chris Ansell
MO75 Bryan Francis
WO25/40 Gemma Barber
WO55/60 Tammy Bennett

EAST – IPSWICH

6-8 Dec

5 WINNERS

MO55 Steve McLoughlin
MO60 Eamonn Price
MO65 Richard Millman
MO70 Stuart Hardy
MO75 Ian Graham

5 FINALISTS

MO40 Tony Webb
MO50 Matthew Stephenson
MO75 Barry Featherstone
WO35/40 Gemma Barber
WO55 Mandy Akin

6 SEMI-FINALISTS

MO50 Neil Cross
MO60 Darren Withey
MO70 John Petruschke
MO70 Geoff Redfern
MO75 Chris Ansell
WO55 Julie-Anne Pegram

GB VETS VS POLICE

16 NOVEMBER – POLICE WIN 8-6

Rhiwbina Squash Club, Cardiff

A trip to a new Club and new opponents for the GB Vets! The Rhiwbina Club in Cardiff was the venue for the first fixture between the GB Vets and Police Squash UK.

John Parkes (2) won 3/1, **Damian Jay** (6) lost 1/3, **Rob Reid** (7) and **Peter Call** (8) both unlucky to lose 2/3. **Rob Blair** (9) won 3/2, **Lynne Davies** (11) up against an ultra distance runner lost 1/3 whilst **Nick Sheppard** (12) playing up against fellow GB Vet **Gemma Barber** lost 1/3. **Wendy Norris** comfortably won 3/0. New members **Peter Bailey** (10) lost 1/3, **Graham Millership** (14) won 3/1, **Karl Becker** (3) won 3/1, **Ian Fenner-Evans** (4) won 3/0, **Dave Robertson** (5) lost 2/3, **Simon Spencer** (1)



GB Vets Players: John Parkes, Damian Jay, Rob Reid, Peter Call, Rob Blair, Lynne Davies, Nick Sheppard, Wendy Norris

playing fellow GB Vet **Tony Webb** lost 0/3.

Huge thanks to Rhiwbina for offering to host the match – it's a really nice Club! Thanks also to Jason Foster (Chair Police Squash UK), Tony Webb and Gemma Barber for organising the day and the Police team. Finally thanks to all the GB Vets who travelled to Cardiff to play.

Nick Sheppard, Match Manager.

GB VETS VS CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY

19 OCTOBER – GB VETS WON 8-7

GB Vets Players: John Parkes, Damian Jay, Rob Reid, Peter Call, Rob Blair, Lynne Davies, Nick Sheppard, Wendy Norris

Vodka & Red Bull Christmas Cake

Ingredients:



1 cup of water
1 tsp of baking soda
1 tsp of salt
4 large eggs
1 bottle of vodka
2 cups of dried fruit

1 cup of brown sugar
1 cup of sugar
lemon juice
nuts
1 can of Red Bull



Method:

1. Sample the vodka to check quality.
2. Take large bowl, check the vodka again.
3. To be sure it is of the highest quality, pour one level cup and mix with a little Red Bull and drink.
4. Repeat.
5. Turn on the electric mixer, beat one cup of butter in a large fluffy bowl.
6. Add one teaspoon of sugar. Beat again.
7. At this point it is best to make sure the vodka is still ok.
8. Flavour with Red Bull to taste.
9. Try another cup - just in case turn off the mixerer.
10. Break two legs and add to the bowl and chuck in the cup of dried fruit.
11. Pick fruit off floor.
12. Mix on the turner.
13. If the dried fruit gets stuck in the beaterers, pry it loose with a drewscraver.
14. Shample the vodka to check for tonsisticity, flavour with a little Bed Rull.
15. Next ssiffst two cups of salt. Or something... who giveshz a shi**.
16. Throw a pinch of Bed Rull over your shoulder.
17. Pick up the can, mop the floor.
18. Check the vodka.
19. Now shift the lemon juice and strain your nuts.
20. Add one table.
21. Add one shpoon of shugar, or somefink. Whatever you can find.
22. Turn the cake tin 360 degrees and try not to fall over.
23. Don't forget to beat off the turner.
24. Finally, throw the bowlthrough the window, finish the vodka and kick the dog.
25. Fall into bed.



CHERRY MISTMAS





The Veterans Squash Rackets Club of Great Britain

CLUB MATCH REPORTS

GB VETS VS DORKING – 26 SEPTEMBER – LOST 2/3

A fatal accident on the M25/26 prevented **Mark Ainley** and **Nigel Belle**, due to play doubles together, from getting to the match. **Mick Lowe** at No 1, returning to squash after a shoulder injury, played well and won the first game but his opponent's constant running and retrieval was too good, and he lost 1/3.

Kim Ricks at No.2 although playing some

wonderful shots, was up against an opponent, whose deceptive style and intelligent game was just too much, and she went down 0/3. Acting captain, **Derek Wright** at No. 3, was always ahead as he has been in previous encounters and won 3/0. As Mick, **Richard Mosley** at No.4 won the first but his opponent worked out the right tactics to thwart Richard's better shot making and kept putting the ball out of reach.

A win to Dorking 3/1. **Kim** and **Derek** teamed up to play doubles against 2 very accomplished players. A very close fought contest winning the first in a sudden death play off 15/14 and the second 15/13.

The meal afterwards was fantastic with 3 courses. A very enjoyable end to an excellent evening.

Derek Wright, Match Manager.



Both teams

GB VETS VS LEE-ON-SOLENT – 7 OCTOBER – LOST 1/4

This match was played in early October after lapsing for several years. Paul Oldway, the club coach put a side together hoping to match the GBV team.

Nigel Warr had an entertaining match against Doug Alexander but the Lee man was too

accurate and eased through 3-0. Meanwhile **Carl Goulding** was going 0-2 down before staging a stirring comeback to take his match 3-2 on his debut for GBV. **Ian Graham** had a great match against his much younger adversary, Stephen Marcus but lost 1-3 as did **Chris Lock**

against Alwyn Lewis. **Geoff Lees** at first string lost 3-0 to Paul Lacey and his recent lack of match practice did not help him on the night. Lee hosted a very tasty supper and drinks and thanks to everybody for turning out.

Ian Graham, Match Manager

GB VETS VS BOURNE, FARNHAM – 18 SEPTEMBER – LOST 2/4

A good evening and some very competitive squash enjoyed by all. **Peter Call** No.1, a quite brilliantly competitive match but lost 9/15 in the 5th. **David Stanton** No. 2 up against fellow GB Vet **Steve Jackson** went down 0/3, but

not without a fight. **Peter Culver** No.3 another competitive match both players with similar styles but a 1/3 defeat.

John Petruscke No.4 got close in a couple games but succumbed 0/3. Captain, David

Parker, played a captains game winning 3/0, whilst 'she who rarely ever loses' **Kim Ricks** battled to an impressive 3/1 win.

David Parker, Match Manager

GB VETS VS JESTERS – RAC – DOUBLES – 13 OCTOBER

On the 13th October four enthusiastic GBVets doubles pairs headed to the RAC Club at Woodcote Park for an encounter with the Jesters. **Julia Ledger**, a long standing but lapsed Vet, paired up with **Nick Sheppard** to face **James Dubois** (a GB Vet) and his partner. Unfortunately, despite two close games, the pair went down 13/15,12/15,9/15. The Vets' no.1 pairing of **Peter Culver** and **Dave Stanton**

had the same result - again an extremely tight match 15/17, 16/17,14/17. **Mandy Akin** and **Karen Hume** faced the formidable **Shayne Baillie** (a GB Vet) and her fit young partner. Although they lost in four, it was a very tight, competitive and enjoyable match-12/15,13/15,15/13,13/15. **Robert Smith** and **Mark Ainley**, a relative newcomer to GBVets, put up a strong fight against 2

youngsters but went down in four, 5/15,13/15,15/13,8/15. A 0/4 loss for the Vets but a highly competitive, social event.

The match was followed by lunch at the Halfway House, where many plausible reasons to the loss were expostulated-watch out next year, Jesters!

Karen Hume, Match Manager



The Veterans Squash Rackets Club of Great Britain

FESTIVAL RESULTS

“FESTIVAL OF SQUASH” – 17TH NOVEMBER RAC WOODCOTE PARK

The RAC won the Festival of Squash at Woodcote Park for the first time on November 17th. Playing on the singles and doubles courts, the RAC were convincing winners. (51 points) Runners Up were England Squash Masters (45) who raised a team at short notice after the unfortunate withdrawal of the Army (who had most of their players deployed overseas). GBVets were third (42) with last year’s winners, the Escorts, collecting the wooden spoon (32).

Matches are age handicapped at this event and an adjustment for 2024 produced a lot of very close matches which gave the day a great atmosphere. By numbers, 25 players contested 36 matches. Many stayed on to enjoy the light buffet and take the opportunity to meet up with old friends (and enemies!). Thanks to RAC and



RAC’s Shayne Baillie receiving the Trophy from GB Vets Chair Ian Graham

James Dubois. Team captains, **Shayne Baillie, Stuart Hardy and David Parker** (from afar). GBVets fielded 15 players in Cardiff the day before which made the weekend one of the most successful in recent memory. And yes, our amazing fixtures secretary Nick Sheppard was there on both days!

Special thanks to **Jane and Nigel Belle** who have consistently produced a schedule that works despite the inevitable late withdrawals and injuries on the day.
Ian Graham



The RAC winning team

GB Vets players: Cathy Ruffle, Dale McCarter, Dan Sweeney, Nigel Bacon, Allen Barwise, Ian Graham, Derek Wright, Mark Ainley, Nick Sheppard, John Prestwich, Ben Hansford (guest)

JERSEY FESTIVAL – 10TH OCTOBER ST. HELIER

The Vets took a truly cosmopolitan team to St Helier for their annual squash festival. Players from England, Scotland and Wales made significant contributions to the weekend.

Placed in group A in Division 4 we started against the Trojans, a team which narrowly beat us last year. With a slightly stronger team this time we managed a 3-2 win, our winners being, David, Robin and Cath, close defeats for Nick and Ali. Top performer was Robin a new and very welcome member of the Vets fraternity.

Second match came against Old Brentwoods, a 5-0 win courtesy of Lynne, Cath, Robin, David and Nick. Lynne taking the lead with an excellent performance against a tough opponent.

Third group match saw us play the hosts 2nd team, the Vets were far too strong and came home 4-1, wins again for the top end of the team with Ali just losing out to a younger opponent.

The final on Sunday morning was against the group B winners, Hove. Cath played a superb retrieving game against a good opponent



Allen Barwise

providing the most competitive and longest game of the final, coming through 3-1. One up to the Vets, at 4 Robin also playing well won 3-0. Next up at 2 was Nick, he used his own brand of squash to confuse and frustrate his opponent, winning 3-0. With the match secure, David narrowly lost an entertaining game 2-3. Vets No1 Allen then took on a much younger player, taking the first game with excellent backhand drop shots and court tactics. Unfortunately, during the second game he was taken out by his opponent and had to retire hurt. Having won the Division, the team collected their trophies and celebrated well into the evening.

A fabulous event, run by an excellent team and set of helpers. We will hopefully be invited back again next year.

Allen Barwise (Team Manager)



GB Vets team: Gray, Ruffle, Goy, Barwise, Ridley, Gollaglee.

GB Vets players: Allen Barwise (Team Manager), Nick Gollaglee, David Gray, Robin Ridley, Cathy Ruffle, Alison Goy, Lynne Davies



The Veterans Squash Rackets Club of Great Britain

WORLD MASTERS CHAMPIONSHIPS AMSTERDAM – 15-22 AUGUST



Arriving a couple of days early to prepare for the Championships we were met with a rather different and indeed unexpected type of weather, rain. Never mind, Amsterdam is a great City with lots to explore, so a couple of days sightseeing interspersed with a few warm-up games took us to registration day.

It is easy to get around Amsterdam with a very efficient tram and metro service and Uber, so travelling was straightforward. The only issue was avoiding being run over when crossing the road by a torrent of

rather fast electric bikes!

The Frans Otten Stadion is impressive with 20 squash courts, tennis courts, padel courts and gym. Despite the intermittent rain outside, the courts were hot, very hot, particularly the upstairs set of 10 courts, not a single yellow dot in sight!

GB Vets members abounded in the entry and indeed many were hoping to collect medals over 30 members competed.

The Matches, well playing a South African, German, Aussie or Finnish opponent was

a very noisy event, but created an excellent competitive atmosphere. Not much room between courts so at times it was rammed but I think this is also part of a World Event.

It was obviously impossible to follow and report on every GB Vets Members' game, indeed on occasions the rather non-Brian Brock IT system made it difficult for even the players to find the right court let alone supporters. Suffice to say that GBV Players performed with great credit and a list of the top finishers is shown below:

GOLD

Larry Grover (MO75)
Ann Manley (WO75)

SILVER

Barry Featherstone (MO75)

BRONZE

Ian Ross (MO75)

4th: MO60 Eamonn Price, WO65 Karen Hume 5th: WO60 Mandy Akin, MO65 Dermot Hurford,
6th: MO65 Nick Gollaglee 7th: MO65 Kevin Connors MO70 Stuart Hardy.

The Finals dinner was well represented, and I am sure enjoyed by all. It is increasingly difficult to find good locations for these large events, but Franz Otten was

in general a good location, a great effort to cope with the 1000+ competitors for food, the lack of a prescribed warm up area, (we were not allowed to use the gym),

was probably the most disappointing part. Let's finish on a high, some great games, some fun, some bonhomie, this is what squash is about!
Robert Smith

Adrian Wright



Barry Featherstone



Adrian Wright, the Silver Fox, has amassed 37, yes 37, Regional Tournament wins and this amazing record has held for many years. However at the East Regional held in Cheltenham in early November Barry Featherstone broke this record with 38 wins!

With no immediate challenger in sight Barry's record is likely to continue for quite a while. Congratulations to both players!

I stayed up all night to see where the sun went. Then it dawned on me.

How does Moses make his tea? Hebrews it.

This girl said she recognised me from the vegetarian club, but I'd never met herbivore.

I didn't like my beard at first. Then it grew on me.

PUNS

When chemists die, they barium.

I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. I can't put it down.

A dyslexic man walks into a bra.

I tried to catch some fog. I mist.

What do you call a dinosaur with an extensive vocabulary? A thesaurus.

I know a guy who's addicted to brake fluid. He says he can stop any time.

They told me I had type A blood, but it was a type O.

Jokes about German sausage are the Wurst.

A soldier who survived mustard gas and pepper spray is now a seasoned veteran.



The Veterans Squash Rackets Club of Great Britain

GB VETS VS SCOTLAND JOHN RAE & JIM DOUGAL COMMEMORATION

The biennial event took place at the excellent Watsonians Squash Club in Edinburgh on 30th November. It was a much awaited clash with the Vets looking for revenge from their defeat in Carlisle two years earlier. **Ian Ross** and **Allen Barwise** arranged the fixture with the vast majority of players having Scottish heritage paying homage to John & Jim.

In a nine a side fixture, the Scottish team got off to a flyer, **Robbie Blair** losing out to the Scottish captain, **Ian Ross**, a five set win for the home player who used all his court craft in winning the first tie. Robbie's first defeat in 16 matches for the Vets.

Catherine Ruffle then came across a regular HI opponent, Kath Temple, unfortunately, Kath proved too strong on this occasion winning 3-1. New Vet, **Sue Strachan** then had a tough encounter with **Mhari Dougal** losing out in a close 3-0.

The Vets were already 3-0 down and looking ragged. A late pull out meant Robbie Blair had the opportunity of playing again against **Emilo Fazzi**, the Scottish O70 captain, thankfully Robbie played a more controlled brand of squash to take it 3-0.

Robin Ridley, another recent recruit from North of the border came across Paul Macari, this was always going to



GB Vets team

be close as it turned out, Robin losing the first set but coming through to seal an impressive win in four sets.

At one, **Allen Barwise** then took on the Scottish O55 international captain, Andy Meldrum. Allen was two sets down before he figured out Andy's unusual style of play. Digging in and showing all his resilience and touch play, Allen came through 11-9 in the fifth. A great game for the large crowd to enjoy.

Dave Hickman, a new Vet recruit won comparatively easily against the stalwart Bryan Jackson, Dave coming back to his best, post injury. **Pete Buchan** then played the tough Scot, Colin Grant, this was a battle with Pete coming out on top playing some excellent length and drop squash.

Vets had a guest player, **Colin Cruickshank** playing **Alex Sinclair**, in an entertaining encounter Colin took the spoils. **The Vets winning with an unlikely 6-3 score line.**

The trophy was presented by Mrs Dougal to the winning Vets captain Allen who gave a speech commemorating both John and Jim after a very nice buffet and several libations.

Allen Barwise



Both teams inc. supporters

GB VETS GOLF DAY – SURBITON 9TH SEPTEMBER

On Monday 9th September 17 hardy golfers assembled at Surbiton Golf Club for the 9th Annual GB Vets Golf Day. The weather was splendid for early autumn and with the course in fantastic condition we had the prospect of a great day's golf ahead of us.

There were prizes for the best scores for men and separate prizes for the women.

Overall winner was **Geoff Howes** with **Allen Barwise** runner up. **Catherine Ruffle** won the Ladies with **Gitti Rosser** second. Also various other awards were given for longest drives and nearest the pin.

Nigel Belle was successful in getting nearest the pin, which was an improvement on his usual wooden spoon prize.

Jane Belle joined us and enjoyed a day on the course driving a buggy for Gitti.

After the golf we were treated to a fine 2 course meal with the usual post golf analysis of where we need to improve our game.

The 10th Golf Day will be held, again at Surbiton, on Monday September 8th 2025

Geoff Howes



Barwise, Howes, Parker



Howes, Ruffle, Rosser



The Veterans Squash Rackets Club of Great Britain

NEW MEMBERS

We warmly welcome the following new members who have joined since the last Newsletter:

Carl Goulding	-	Bournemouth
Michael Quartley	-	Prestbury
Wendy Norris	-	Swansea



NEW YEAR – NEW KIT?

Why not treat yourself to some new kit for 2025 or better still put it on your Christmas wish list and hopefully someone might buy it for you!

Go to www.iprosports.co.uk click on 'Club Zone', scroll down and click on the GB Vets logo and then follow the on screen instructions. Enjoy!

UPCOMING MATCHES FOR 2025

DATE	EVENT	VENUE	CONTACT
10/12 January	Midlands Regional	Wolverhampton	ESM Website
16 January	GBV vs Roehampton	Roehampton	Nick Sheppard
18 January	GBV vs Eton College	Windsor	Nick Sheppard
24/27 January	Jesters Tournament	RAC Pall Mall	Jesters Website
1 February	GBV vs Oxford Uni	Oxford	Nick Sheppard
1 February	GBV vs Fitzwilliam	Dublin	Tammy Bennett
5/9 February	Nationals	Thames Ditton	ESM Website
23 February	GBV vs RAF	Wolverhampton	Nick Sheppard
6 March	GBV vs Hurlingham	Hurlingham	Nigel Belle
8 March	GBV vs Middleton	Middleton	Ian Graham
22 March	GBV vs Chichester	Chichester	Ian Graham
31 March	GBV vs RAC Pall Mall	London	Nigel Belle
18 April	GBV vs Oxshott	Oxshott	Nigel Belle
16/18 May	GBV Club Championship	St. Albans	Keith Ragg
? May	Gibraltar Tour TBA	Gibraltar	Allen Barwise
21 June	GBV vs Civil Service	Nottingham	Nick Sheppard
28 June	GBV vs ESM	Thames Ditton	Ian Graham
18 July	GBV vs Limpsfield	Oxted	Nigel Belle
8 September	GBV Golf Day	Surbiton	Geoff Howes
25 September	GBV vs Dorking	Dorking	Nigel Belle
26/28 September	North Regional TBC	Pontefract	ESM Website
2 October	Jersey Festival	Jersey	Allen Barwise
31 Oct/2 Nov	West Regional TBC	Cheltenham	ESM Website
16 November	Festival of Squash	RAC Epsom	Ian Graham
28 November	GBV vs Purley TBC	Purley	Nigel Belle
5/7 December	East Regional TBC	Ipswich	ESM Website

YOUR 2024/5 COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT
Nigel Belle

CHAIR
Ian Graham

VICE PRESIDENTS

Tony Gathercole, John Woodliffe, Tom Hendry, Geoff Howes

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

Jonah Barrington, Mike Clemson, Alex Hamilton, Philip Ayton

HON. SECRETARY
Ros Featherstone

HON. TREASURER
Robert Smith

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SCOTLAND
Ian Ross

NORTH
Allen Barwise

WALES
Lynne Davies

MIDLANDS
Andy Murray

Sign on the side of a lorry carrying scaffolding: "Your erection is in safe hands with us."