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West Heath Club Tournament 2011

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Club Tournament Drinks Sponsorship



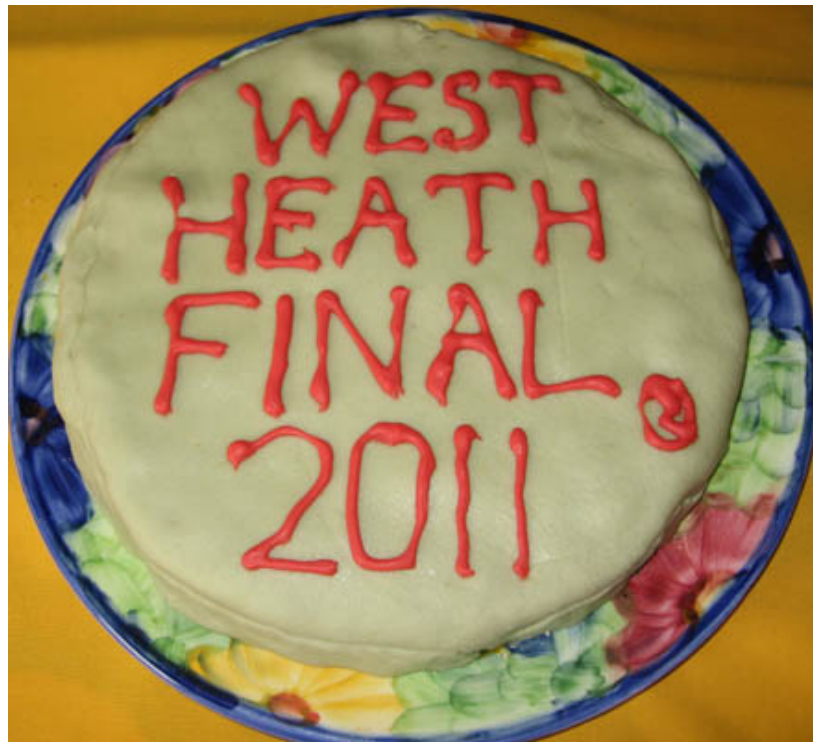
SABMiller plc is one of the world's largest brewers with brewing interests or distribution agreements in over 60 countries across six continents. The group's brands include premium international beers such as Miller Genuine Draft, Peroni Nastro Azzurro and Pilsner Urquell, as well as an exceptional range of market-leading local brands. Outside the USA, SABMiller plc is also one of the largest bottlers of Coca-Cola products in the world. SABMiller plc is listed on the London and Johannesburg stock exchanges.

Through their representative, Christine Thompson, SABMiller have generously agreed to sponsor the Club Tournament for the seventh year running by providing free beer for players and spectators during the second week. We are very grateful and wish SAB Miller every success in the drinks market in the hot summer tennis season!



Please help yourself to one beer for each day if (and only if) you visit the club house during the Gourmet Dinners Week and finals Day. Further bottles are £1 each. This rule is to ensure that supplies last until Finals Day at the end of the second week).

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(Chef : Carine Valarche)



2011 Winners (before completion of the Mixed)

Men's Singles Final

Kevin Ryan umpired the Final of the 2011 Mens Singles contested by **Mark Stapleton**, defending 2010 champion who had interrupted the almost continuous winning run of **Cedric de la Chaise**, who was keen to win back the trophy. Jeff Fine called the service lines in his suitably laid-back style.

The first set went with serve for the first three games, but then Cedric broke for a 3-1 lead after passing Mark at the net more than once in the game. Both then held serve until 5-3 when Cedric served for the set. However, in this game Cedric lost his nerve a little and played rather too defensively to allow Mark to break back. The pair then held serve until 6-6 when the tie-break kicked in. In the tie-break Mark played consistently well while Cedric lost concentration once more and made a number of unforced errors to hand it to Mark 7-0.



While the players were generally content with the line calling in the first set the spectators were aghast when a ball a couple of inches out was not called by Max Lickfold, who gave a lengthy explanation along the lines that the ball was not sufficiently far out to be called out, and, since the umpire was too far away to overrule then the shot and point stood.

In the second set Cedric got his passing shots going again and broke Mark in the first game. He was still making some errors by attempting fierce topspin on balls that seemed far too close to the ground, but this did not prevent the come back. Cedric broke again for 3-0, then again for a 5-1 lead which he converted to take the second set 6-1.



The stage was then set for a thrilling climax in the form of the third set (no Champions Tie Break in the Singles, remember). In the first game Cedric again lost concentration and was broken but in the next game earned a couple of break points and immediately broke straight back. The set then went with serve until Mark was serving at 4-5 on serve. At what looked like a routine game for Mark in which he was already 15-0 up, Cedric hit a beautiful wrong-footing shot which Mark could not return for 15 all. On the next point Cedric hit a very good return which Mark netted, and then another nicely angled backhand from Cedric gave him two match points. But he only needed one as Mark put a shot in the net to allow Cedric to claim the title 6-7⁰⁻⁷ 6-1 6-4.

Ladies' Singles Final

Since you could not get two more determined competitors in the Ladies Singles Final than **Ros Norkett** and **Elena Valarche** then the umpire chosen was **Paul O'Flynn** with his incision and experience of taking life-or-death decisions in seconds in the operating theatre.

Elena held the first service game, and broke Ros for a 2-0 lead, but Ros countered with some excellent strokes and a break of her own to get back on serve at 1-2. But the problem for the remainder of this set was that Ros was not serving well and was throwing in 2 or 3 double faults in each service game which gave her little chance of making the advantage of the service count. Another pattern of points which got established in this set was that Elena would come to the net on a shorter ball, but Ros would advance into the court giving Elena a winning option to put the ball in the corner which was behind Ros even if she could reach it. The net result was that Elena took the first set 6-1.

In the first game of the second set Ros played much better and held her serve for the first time in the match. Ros played more aggressively on Elena's serve, but somehow Elena managed to hold on. Ros then resumed the double faults and Elena broke and held her own serve for a 3-1 lead. Ros now upped her play again, winning her own service game and breaking Elena to level the score at 3 all. But at this point Ros started double faulting again and was broken, while Elena held to love to gain a 5-3 advantage. Serving to save the match, Ros won the first

point as Elena failed to pick the ball off her toes as she came in. Elena won the next two points to earn two match points, but then put her return wide and then failed to get an angled shot from Ros back over the net. At deuce again Ros stepped into court as Elena came in and could do nothing with Elena's deep volley and on the next point Ros put a ball in the sidelines to give Elena a 6-1 6-3 victory.



Paul was umpiring again after a 3-year break and commented that he had had a good game as he left the court with balls intact.....(all four of them).

Since I had seen Ros play Margaux, before the final Sultan asked me who would win. My response was that Ros would win if she played as well as she did against Margaux, otherwise Elena would win. In the event it was not to be for Ros at the second time of asking. However, the problem is not deep rooted, and could be solved by taking a bucket of balls on to the practise court occasionally to gain more consistency on the serve, possibly in conjunction with a few lessons focussing on service consistency - there is not much wrong with the action.

One also has to feel a good deal of sympathy for Ros because she has been beset with Valarches at every turn - four out of Ros's 6 matches have been against either Elena or Margaux or both, and although she has beaten Margaux on her own twice, Ros did not get the better of Elena during the tournament. It's sort of like the

Williams sisters - you might beat one, but it is tough to beat both in succession!



So despite her eccentric style of play, Elena is now the Champion. She deserves it for her dedication to the game (matched only by her passion for fashion), combined with a little coaching and her aggressive style of play which consists of coming to the net whenever the percentages say she should do so.

Since Elena is now the Champion then I suppose I ought to accede to her wish and put at least one pair of her shoes on the web site. So here they are.



Mens' Doubles Final

John Fox umpired the Mens Doubles Final between **Sultan Gangji & Mark Stapleton** and **Cedric de la Chaise and Joris Fletcher**. In the first set Joris and Cedric broke a couple of times to get to 5-2 to leave Cedric serving for the set, which proved to be a formality.



In the second set Sultan was not always covering the ball hit down the tramlines and it cost. After a few service breaks and Sultan managing to struggle through his second service game somehow, Cedric and Joris found themselves 5-2 up with Cedric serving for the match. Once he was 40-0 up on the serve Sultan and Mark decided it was time to do something about it, and managed to secure the next two points, but that was it as Cedric then finished off a point to take the match.

The disappointment was that we were all expecting Sultan to run round like a maniac now that he has his new hip and is fully recovered from the operation, but he was still relatively static.

Ladies' Doubles Final

Marjan Denis umpired the Ladies Doubles Final in which **Jane Boyle and Ludmilla Stapleton**, the holders, were challenged by a new West Heath pairing of **Christine Thompson and Philippa Huckle**. If you want to understand the difference in power and pace then just have a look at Philippa's classic service action - a great example for the juniors around these days. Christine and Philippa made a few mistakes but basically overpowered Jane and Ludmilla to win 6-2 6-3.



Mixed Doubles Final

After the tea break this was contested between **Ludmilla and Mark Stapleton** and **Jane Boyle and Cedric de la Chaise**. After two sets the score was 7-6 2-6, requiring a Champions Tie Break to settle the matter. Milly and Mark were [6-3] up in this when Cedric tried to pass Milly and the ball hit her racquet at waist level, which twisted in her hand, and it bounced up into her eye. The match was stopped at that point and is not expected to resume until a date when Milly's eye is no longer swollen.

The match was later conceded by the Stapletons, so the Mixed Doubles Champions are Jane Boyle and Cedric de la Chaise..

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Tournament Reports and Gossip

Finals Day - Saturday 23 July



There was an excellent turnout for the matches themselves - see the group photo at the bottom of this web page. However, the evening party was less well attended, though greatly enjoyed by all that did.

We all mourn the passing of the BBQ which seemed to have come to the end of its natural life and had to be demolished. It will be rebuilt the other side of the water stopcock cover to give more room near the club house.

In case you were wondering why the grass courts have not been nibbled by the birds quite as much recently, then this is partly due to a handsome, fashionable member introduced by Imogen Abbot, though he seems a bit shy and doesn't say much.

This is the end of the tournament web coverage, barring correction of mistakes or requests to insert more photos or information. I hope you have been suitably entertained. Joris, of all people, suggested to me that I was too politically correct in this column so I welcome suggestions for any improvements for next year. If I have missed out the most salacious gossip then either no-one has told me or I have been ordered by the chairman not to repeat it under pain of death!!!



Enjoy the remainder of the grass court season.

Friday 22 July

At last it seems to have stopped raining, at least until later tonight. Further, the weather forecast for Finals Day tomorrow does not include any rain for London.

Marjan Denis and Paul O'Flynn took on the number 1 seeds **Ludmilla and Mark Stapleton**. But Marjan and Paul got going a little to late and lost 6-1 6-4.

That completes all the matches up until the Finals. Of course the Mixed Final was supposed to have been played on Thursday evening, but it will probably be played after the Singles and Doubles finals if there is time.



Thursday 21 July

Although the grass has not been playable since last Friday, at least the shale courts were available for the two matches played.



Rachael Gangi provided the traditional Gourmet Dinner Thursday fish pie, which was enjoyed by all, and Lara and Andy Hunter made cheesecake and strawberry pavlova, of which no-one had more than four helpings!!



Philippa Huckle and Christine Thompson and **Marjan Denis and Julia Abbot** had some unfinished business to take care of after the deluge on Wednesday which caused all further outdoor play to be abandoned. The players fled for shelter with the score at 6-2, 1-1. However, after this it seems that Marjan and Julia did not get a further look in as Philippa and Christine won the remaining 5 games without interruption

for a 6-2 6-1 victory.



Jonathan Bell played **Cedric de la Chaise** in the remaining Mens Singles semi-final, and this was won by Cedric 6-1 6-0.

I had a strong complaint from Elena Valarche about the suppression of fashion pictures on this web page, specifically one of her and Lesley South taken by the Chairman. I have indeed had independent verification that her outfits are bang up to date. I agreed with her that her efforts to provide one-woman glamour and tennis-outfit fashion parades were appreciated by all, particularly by

those with an XY chromosome, but pointed out that the West Heath 2011 Tournament web page was primarily intended as a vehicle for reporting on tournament matches, Gourmet Dinners and associated activities of the 100+ members of the club during the tournament.

Elena countered that she had selected and purchased a different pairs of shoes for each of the Gourmet Dinners, plus another for the Finals Day BBQ, that the shoes represented an international selection from as far afield as France, Russia, New York and Liverpool, that a not inconsiderable proportion of her doctor's salary as Director of Training for Sexual Health goes on such shoes, and that these shoes surely deserved full coverage on the West Heath web site. In the end, since clearly the fashion coverage in British Tennis and Hello magazines is inadequate, I offered to set up a new web page to include pictures of her in her latest tennis apparel and non-tennis outfits, should she really want me to do so, and assured her that any tennis outfit she wore in her Ladies Singles final against Ros Norkett would be suitably photographed and published.

Wednesday 20 July

Yet another wet day, with the grass courts out of action, and again the matches were scattered across a variety of venues.

Fortunately, two (well one and a half) of them could be played on the West Heath shale, so the slightly damp, umbrella-equipped local spectators could be suitably entertained.

Vandana, Sanjiv, Anahita and Dhananjay Talwar provided exotic Indian cooking for this evening's Gourmet dinner which was much enjoyed by all, including those in the process of drying out after playing or watching.



The biggest question mark was whether it would be an all Valarche Ladies Singles Final, so the match **Ros Norkett** versus **Margaux Valarche** on the nearest shale court was the main focus of attention - particularly since it took Christine Thomson 2 hours battling through traffic to get to the other local match which therefore started late.



Tennis, or at least tennis clubs, has been a large factor in Margaux' life (see picture) since she was born and Elena insisted on dumping her and Carine at West Heath to fend for themselves so Elena could get on with her own tennis. She is now twelve and has improved both her placement, consistency and strategy over the last year since her 2010 6-2 6-0 defeat at the hands of Ros. So it was always going to be interesting to see if this was any match for Ros's powerful forehand, but with a tendency to erraticism (please note the careful spelling here). In the first half of the first set Ros started a little inconsistently, while Margaux generally went with the odds, making few unforced errors and generally giving the opportunity to Ros to make the errors, and Margaux went into the lead. However, Ros started to get her forehand going more as the match went on, and her error rate dropped, with the result that she started to hit winners on a higher percentage of the points and make fewer mistakes. Ros won the first set 6-3.

In the second set Ros relaxed slightly at the beginning and got broken by Margaux who then looked like she would take the second game on her own serve. But after a long series of deuces, Ros eventually took it and then proceeded to play better and better. Margaux tried a variety of tactics to break up Ros's rhythm. Drop shots were a good idea but the slow shale courts made it very difficult to get the ball short enough and Ros was able to reach them. Margaux also came in to volley, and made few errors at the net, but of course she is not yet that tall, nor does she have long arms, and it was relatively easy for Ros to pass her compared to a bigger adult. There were other games Margaux got to multiple deuces, but could never make the breakthrough to get another game on board, so Ros took the second set 6-1.

Although Margaux was disappointed with the score and the missed opportunity to beat her mother in the final, in the event she did very little wrong. It is no shame to play your best and lose and the result was due to the fact that Ros played out of her skin (with a number of spectators making exactly the same comment) and the court surface favoured Ros as it gave her much more time to line up the forehand and get the consistency with her strokes that she sometimes lacks.

Philippa also made a very valid comment after the match, "Well, there's always the practise court." and a combination of this and the natural growth and increase in strength each year in the early teens means that Margaux has a wonderful opportunity to show Ros in 2012 how much it is possible to improve in the next 12 months. Ros already knows that the difference from 2010 (when she defeated Margaux 6-2 6-0) to 2011 required her to play at her very best, and it is now up to Margaux to use the next 12 months to ensure that the 2012 result (should they be drawn again against each other) is the one that she wants. Go for it Margaux!

In the local Ladies Doubles Semi, **Marjan Denis and Julia Abbot** were 2-6 1-1 against **Philippa Huckle and Christine Thompson** when the deluge finally came and put paid to any remaining hope for the evening.

Mark Stapleton beat **Geoff Isaacs** 6-1 6-2 in the first of the Mens Singles semis to claim his place in this year's Final.

Cedric de la Chaise and Joris Fletcher were 6-0 4-0 up when the heavy rain came, and their opponents, **Paul O'Flynn and Simon Button** did not think it worth rescheduling just to lose the final two games, so they conceded.

Sultan Gangji and Mark Stapleton beat **Jeff Fine and Geoff Isaacs** 6-1 6-4.

Tuesday 19 July

Given the rain, the West Heath courts were again out of action. So matches were played at a variety of tennis clubs and facilities across North London. There are no photos available of soaked tennis players from this evening, unfortunately.

The delicious Gourmet Coq au Vin tonight was provided by by Bill Thom and his wife, and, as previously exposed in this news source(!!) the pudding did indeed have a significant chocolate element - consisting of chocolate pear with cream.

Mark Stapleton made the most of home advantage by organising his match with Jeff Fine at one of

Mark's clubs. I'm not saying that this was the only contributory factor in Marks defeat of Jeff 6-1 6-1, of course, but it does make sense to exert the minimum of effort on the way to the final if you can.



Jimmy Lee took on **Cedric de la Chaise**. Jimmy has previously done very well at the Templars tournaments and plays in the Templars Mens I team, partnering Oran Hecht. Cedric won the first set 6-4. Jimmy pulled out all the stops in the second, and was 4-1 up, with Cedric getting decidedly edgy about the momentum of the match. Unfortunately at this point a downpour ensued which resulted in a short break, which must have been time enough for Cedric to settle himself and come up with a plan B. And thus, incredibly, on the resumption Cedric polished off the last 5 games for a 6-4 6-4 victory.



In the first of the Ladies Semi-Finals, **Lesley South** was hoping to make amends for her defeat at the hands of **Elena Valarche** last year in the club tournament. What!! you might say, didn't Lesley win the final to [become 2010 champion?](#) Well that is true, but en route she was defeated by Elena who then had to make a quick exit to Taormina for her daughter Daria's wedding, and thus conceded the place in the semis to Lesley. This time, Lesley got off to a good 4-1 start, mainly because Elena was in too much of a hurry to try to win the points quickly. But that was as good as it got, as Lesley then said she was "crushed" by Elena who proceeded to win with 11 out of the next 12 games for a 6-4 6-1 victory. This raised the inevitable question as to whether it would be an all Valarche Ladies Singles Final. Only Ros Norkett now stands in the way of this.



Marjan Denis and Paul O'Flynn must now be starting to get a bit of a reputation as the destroyer of married couples! No this does not refer to a frequent citing in divorce proceedings (though one never knows), but more to a habit of beating them in the Mixed. In this case it was the turn of **Klara and Peter Fitzgerald**, and the match was a very tight "affair" which was all square at 4-6 6-3 after two sets. But Marjan and Paul got the edge in the Champions Tie Break to win it [10-6] and earn a place in the semis. Ludmilla and Mark Stapleton are next (!!!!?)

Sue Ehr and Jimmy Lee played **Jane Boyle and Cedric de la Chaise** in the first semifinal of the Mixed. Cedric and Jane won the first set 6-3 and everyone was hoping for a competitive second set, but Jimmy got cramp at 1-0 down and had to retire (possibly due to having to play Cedric first in the Mens Singles).



Monday 18 July



I was panicking a little last night as Sky choose yesterday evening to make some change to our phone line and broadband which ensured that neither was working as I headed for the Gourmet Dinner. Needless to say it is rather tricky to update this web site without a broadband connection and all the stuff is on a desktop PC which is not very portable. Maybe the phone call to Sky did the trick or maybe it was a date thing as all was fine by the time we got back home at 00:30!

The scrumptious nosh tonight was Lasagne provided by

Marjan Denis, which all went as various people helped themselves to second helpings.

As for the tennis, again Templars and Dave Glover allowed matches to be played there on a wet evening, and the draw is in decent shape. The worst is the Mens Singles draw in which 6 matches must be played before the final on Saturday.



In the Ladies Singles **Moira Duncan** had a good match against **Ros Norkett** but lost with a service break in each set 6-4 7-5 to the first team captain and number 2 seed.

Margaret Murphy has forsaken her husband and numerous daughters in Australia for a year or so to come and play grass court tennis at West Heath, among other things. She played **Lesley South** and took 4 games off her in the first set, but only two in the second, so Lesley won 6-4 6-2.

In the Mens Singles **Paul O'Flynn** was given a walkover over **Alex Fine** and then had to play **Jonathan Bell**. Paul put up a good fight, but the win went to Jonathan 6-4 6-2.

In the Ladies Doubles, **Elena and Margaux Valarche** played **Jane Boyle and Ludmilla Stapleton**. The Valarches were 5-3 up in the first set, but lobs from Jane and Milly threw their rhythm out, particularly Elena's and the number one seeds took it 7-5. A similar thing happened in the second set with the Valarches gaining the advantage with a 3-1 lead, but Jane and Milly came back to reach 5-4 and leave Milly serving for the match which she then closed out. It seems that Margaux played very consistently throughout but that Elena was rather more variable.



Sunday 17 July

Given the soaking the grass courts have had over the last couple of days and the puddles on the shale court at West Heath, it seemed unlikely that any matches would be played today at West Heath.

However, Dave Glover and Templars came to the rescue. As a result a large number of matches took place today on the Templars courts, which has left the tournament draw in good shape.

In the mens singles **Laurent Deckers** beat **Landon Kulick** 6-1 6-1.

Cedric de la Chaise beat **Simon Nelson** 6-2 6-0.

Jimmy Lee beat **Dhananjay Talwar** 6-1 6-2. As an occasional spectator it looked like Jimmy's strength and consistency was too much for Dhananjay.



The next match was probably a record with young versus old ex-champion giving the biggest age difference ever. The number 4 seed **Jane Boyle** played **Margaux Valarche**. This was a fascinating encounter of the veteran who has won in all events many times, against the youngest (twelve), up-and-coming girl player in the club. Jane's strengths include power on the serve and the forehand, and a wicked backhand drop shot which Margaux rarely reached.

Margaux' strength included the ability to place her serve, a cracking forehand if given the time to line up the shot, and a fluid movement about the court. The conditions were not ideal for tennis as the court was wet, the balls heavy, and when the sun did come out it was accompanied by plenty of wind as well. This tended to favour Margaux as it increased Jane's unforced error rate when she tried to put pace on the ball.

Margaux took the first set 6-4, but her strategy was not yet right as she hit too many balls short and straight to Jane. In the second set Jane put on more pressure, putting away any short service returns from Margaux and placing the ball well, and Jane equalised the match 6-3.

Margaux started to get the strategy together in the third set. In particular she realised how effective Jane's drop shots had been and started to do a few of her own to keep Jane guessing. Early in the set Jane made a few unforced errors, to give Margaux a 2-0 lead, which she never surrendered, though I doubt she was expecting it would take quite so much effort to win the required additional four games. In the last game Jane had was holding her own and had high hopes of getting back on serve, but the key was the penultimate point where Margaux just scraped an embarrassingly deep shot from Jane off her toes and just managed to plop it over the net for a winner, setting herself up for a 6-4 3-6 6-3 victory over someone more than 50 years her senior.

After rushing around in the mixed, **Brian Coffey's** knee took a turn for the worse and he and **Laurant Deckers** had to withdraw, giving **Cedric de la Chaise** and **Joris Fletcher** a walkover in the quarter finals.

Sultan Gangji and **Mark Stapleton** played **Alex Fine** and **John Fox**. Alex and John were very proud of the six points that they earned against the number two seeds. Shame that four of them were not in the same game!

Elena Valarche and **Jonathan Bell** had a very good match against **Anahita** and **Sanjiv Talwar**, winning 6-0 6-0.

However, they had a few more problems in the follow-on match against **Ludmilla** and **Mark Stapleton**, losing the first set 6-1. In the second set they got their act together a bit more, reaching 6-6. But the ensuing tie-break did not go their way, leaving Ludmilla and Mark winners 6-1 7-6⁷⁻³. Somehow Elena and Jonathan did not seem as incisive as they could have been in putting the ball away, and it cost them.

Christine Thompson and **Sultan Gangji** had a right royal battle with **Sue Ehr** and **Jimmy Lee**, which was about as close as it can get. The score after two sets had been played was 4-6 6-4. However, in the ensuing tie break Sue and Jimmy just got the upper hand to win the match 6-4 4-6 [10-8].





The match between **Lesley South and Mark Webb** and **Carine Valarche and Vince Sudbery** was yet another tight affair. Vince and Carine played particularly well in the first set. Both Vince and Carine were prepared to run all over the court to retrieve shots, and this enabled them to take the first set 6-3. In the second set Mark and Lesley's class came to the fore. They went for the spaces a bit more and made fewer unforced errors, returning the favour by winning the second set 6-3. In the champions tie-break Carine and Vince were 5-2 up, but then seemed to suffer from nerves when trying to finish it off. They missed a few serves and hit a few shots out, and ultimately it cost them as they lost the champions tie-break [10-6].

Lesley and Mark then went on to play the number 2 seeds **Jane Boyle and Cedric de la Chaise**, but fared rather worse in this encounter, though they did get one game in each set. So Jane and Cedric won it 6-1 6-1.

Saturday 17 July

Displaying great commitment and initiative, **Geoff Isaacs and Jeff Fine** and **Jonathan Bell and Maciek Janowski** went to South Hampstead to play their doubles match. It sounds like a good match too, as the score after two sets was 4-6 7-6, leaving all to play for in the Champions tie-break which Geoff and Jeff won by the narrowest of margins, for an overall 4-6 7-6 [10-8] victory.

Margaux Valarche beat **Kerryn Arcari** 6-4 6-4

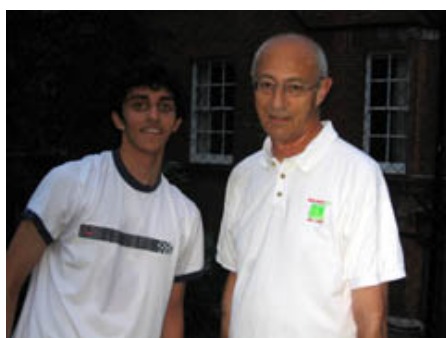
Sue Ehr and Jimmy Lee played well to beat **Ros Norkett and Jeff Fine** 6-4 6-2.

Mark Stapleton beat **Dudley Leigh** 6-2 6-0.

Friday 16 July

Bearing in mind the dreadful weather forecast for the weekend, some competitors took advantage of the lack of rain on Friday night to play outstanding matches.

Marjan Denis and Julia Abbot beat **Moira Duncan and Lesley South** 6-4 6-2. Moira and Lesley had a slow start and went 4-1 down in the first set, but managed to get back to 4-4 before losing it again. Form did not improve much from there for the pair, and Marjan and Julia played well to win the second set 6-2 for an overall 6-4 6-2 victory.



Jonathan Bell beat **Tomas Pech** 6-2 6-1.

Paul O'Flynn and Simon Button beat **Sanjiv and Dhananjay Talwar** 6-1 6-1.

Dhananjay Talwar beat **Paul Rubie** 7-6 2-6 6-1. Must have been an interesting game and, in the absence of a match report, looking at the photo it could be that Paul lost the last set because he does not eat enough carrots!!!

Thursday 14 July

Clara and Peter Fitzgerald played a strong game against **Jen Ehr and Dave Glover**, taking the first set 6-4, Jen holding her serve but Dave losing his. In the second set Jen and Dave raised their level to allow Jen to serve for the second set at 5-3. But it was not to be and the Fitzgeralds forced a tie break which they subsequently won.

The Fitzgeralds are new to the club but are clearly the ones to watch in the mixed.

Moira Duncan was made to work hard against **Julie Fletcher** who got most of the balls back, but Moira came out on top for a 6-2 6-1 victory.

Elena Valarche beat **Marjan Denis** 6-1 7-5. Marjan can be a slow starter in singles matches, but Elena was on a tight timetable as she had to go to work after the match. It looks like it was over before Marjan really hit her stride.

Susan Grossman and Laurent Deckers were up 8-5 in the Champions Tie Break on the resumption of their match against **Sanjiv and Anahita Talwar**. But the Talwars won both of Susan's service points, held their two service points, and took the match [10-8] on the first of Laurent's serves.

Bill Thom tried to disrupt **Jeff Fine's** rhythm with lots of drop shots, and this seems to have worked somewhat in the first set, but Jeff is too wily an old fox to be much phased by such a tactic and proceeded to win 7-5 6-0.

Wednesday 13 July

There were a number of matches played today. Some might have been played yesterday...

In the close battle of the sons, **Alex Fine** beat **Daniel Stapleton** 7-5 7-5.

Sultan seems to have given himself a walkover against Jason Maratos!

Klara and Peter Fitzgerald beat **Kerryn Arcari and Geoff Isaacs** 6-2 6-2.

In the evening matches :-

Jane Boyle and Ludmilla Stapleton, the number one seeds, beat **Vandana and Anahita Talwar** 6-3 6-2. This score was closer than I imagined it would have been, which shows the improvement of the Talwars from a couple of years ago.

Carine Valarch and Kerryn Arcari beat **Susan Grossman and Margaret Murphy** 7-6 6-3. It looks as if this was just a warm up for Carine in preparation for her next match.....



Carine Valarche and Vince Sudbery took on **Julia Abbot and Barry Adamson**. Those who know Barry's game will appreciate his powerful backhand, which goes for a winner on the majority of occasions but can also misfire, but will also know that he can be inconsistent (notwithstanding the fact that he told me after the match that he played brilliantly). In the event Julia was a little inconsistent too. Carine and Vince, however, have pretty sound groundstrokes and Carine served well too. The result was rather one-sided as Carine and Vince won 6-1 6-0 which is perhaps a rather more convincing defeat over Julia and Barry than one might have supposed.

I did not see **Bill Thom and Aruna Gunasekera** play **Maciek Janowski and Jonathan Bell** being on court, though would have liked to and this one would have been fascinating. After two sets the score was 6-3 3-6, leaving all to the champions tie-break. It looks like this was won convincingly by Jonathan and Maciek [10-4].

Margaux Valarche (twelve) and **Peter Davies** took on **Ros Norkett and Jeff Fine**. Margaux lost her first service game, though Peter's was won to love, but Margaux otherwise played very well. In particular she had the beating of Ros's serve, able to produce a very awkward spin lob over Jeff's head which Ros very rarely was able to hit in, and this resulted in a break of serve early in the second set.

However, Peter lost his serve on a couple of occasions, probably because he was reluctant for some reason to serve and volley. Jeff and Ros played consistently throughout, though occasionally could not cope with the pace and placement of Margaux's ground strokes, but nevertheless took the first set 6-3.

The second set started with Margaux holding her serve and breaking Jeff, but Ros and Jeff broke back and drew level at 2-2, then proceeded to take the next 2 games. At 4-3 down Peter missed a smash

which would have equalised to 4-4, and after that the more experienced pair closed it out for a 6-3 6-3 victory.

Margaux is a joy to play with as she rarely makes unforced errors, can generate winning pace on groundstrokes, and serve where you ask her to with good placement though not yet huge pace. Just wait until she gets a little taller!

Monday 11 July

Carine Valarche (fourteen) took on the Aussie might of **Margaret Murphy** on a shale court, as there was a men's match on the grass. Margaret took the first set 6-4, but Carine came back well in the second to win it 6-2, but then seems to have run out of steam in the final set which Margaret took 6-1. Well played and make the most of it, Margaret, because you won't even get close next year, if you are still around!!!

After the match Margaret emailed, "I had a good match with Carine last night. She was such a great competitor for her young age. I was so impressed with her poise and good grace while playing against an 'oldie' like me. I want to congratulate Elena for having such a wonderful daughter."

Sunday 10 July

Dudley Leigh and **David Cohen** played an epic first set in their singles match, lasting over an hour. It was pretty close until Dudley finally took it 6-4. From the spectator's area it appeared to be akin to a war of attrition. However, in the second set Dudley appeared to have worked out a better strategy, which seemed to consist of enticing David to come in, then hitting the ball deeper to the forehand corner of the court for a winner.



Brian Coffey probably did not believe his luck when Michelle Ganz had to withdraw from their mixed partnership, but found that

Philippa Huckle was still looking for a partner in the mixed doubles, Philippa being one of the top women at the club. They played **Jen Ehr** and **Dave Glover** in an interesting match on centre court. It was a fascinating contest between Dave's style of shot, which depends very much on a late take-back, following by an explosion of power which either ends up in the net, or goes

whistling past the opponents, Jenny's clean tennis, Philippa's power and Brian's enthusiastic for running around the court despite his dodgy knee. The first set was very tight indeed, going to a tie-break which was won by Dave and Jen. However, the second set did not require a tie break, and Dave and Jen won it 6-4 for a 7-6 6-4 victory.

In the mixed, **Sue Ehr** and **Jimmy Lee** seemed to have little difficulty in overcoming **Vandana and Dhananjay Talwar**, despite the frequent coaching which Vandana is now receiving and the improvement in her standard.

Ros Norkett and Sally Tornow played **Margaux and Elena Valarche** in the mixed. Since Elena is almost as keen on winning as she is on her tennis, she decided to partner her younger daughter as Margaux is clearly getting stronger by the month. Additionally, the determination of the Valarches and the strength of Margaux's ground strokes and Elena's volleying were always going to be a tough obstacle for Ros and Sally, but they set about their task and matters were even until 5-5 in the first set, at which point the Valarches took the set 7-5. The first set result seemed to give the Valarches a boost, and they proceeded to take the second set 6-1.



Moira Duncan and Darren Lee attempted to upset the form of **Elena Valarche and Jonathan Bell**.

As the men's number 4 seed, Jonathan played very well and was very quick around the court, so he and Elena got off to a good start, from which there was then no turning back. The eventual result was a convincing win to Elena and Jonathan of 6-1 6-0, although Darren and Moira felt it was a better match than the score might indicate.

On Saturday a potential new member appeared, **Tomas Pech**, and he was immediately intercepted and entered into the tournament singles.

So on the Sunday he played **Peter Davies**. Though clearly a strong player, this was the first time Tomas had played on grass, and Peter managed to take advantage in the first set to sneak it 6-2.

However, in the second set Peter's level dropped a little and Tomas got the hang of the grass a bit better, and was able to use his power and mobility about court to take it 6-3, leaving everything to play for.

In the final set the score was even at 2-2, but Tomas's superior power enabled him to break Peter, who fell in the next game, which affected his concentration in the next couple of games, to allow Tomas a 5-2 lead. Peter then staged a mini-comeback to get the score back to 5-4 with Tomas serving for the match, and Tomas made no mistake in closing it out for a 2-6 6-3 6-4 victory.



Interestingly the match started before the mixed which Elena Valarche and Jonathan Bell won, but finished well after it. Tomas will get the opportunity to find out whether he has improved his grass court technique when he plays the number 4 seed, Jonathan Bell, in the next round.

In the evening **Susan Grossman and Laurent Deckers** took on **Anahita and Sanjiv Talwar**. It must have been an exciting match as the Talwars took the first set 6-2 but the second set went to Susan and Laurent 6-4. Unfortunately rain then set in and the Champions Tie Break will be played on Thursday evening.

Saturday 9th July

Simon Nelson got off to a good start by beating **Sanjiv Talwar** 6-0 6-1. Sanjiv has been having regular coaching and is very much improved, but Simon can play very well indeed if he is in form and warmed up properly.

Jason Maratos had more of a struggle against **Yusef Samad**, and the match clearly was very tight as it went to a third set. Jason took the first, but Yusef came back to win a second set tie-break, but Jason repeated his performance of the first set to win 6-3 6-7 6-3.

Bill Thom and Vince Sudbery are two wily old birds who know a thing or two about tennis, though, of the two, Vince is probably the better mover nowadays. In the event Bill's better shots and more highly developed guile produced a win for him 6-3 6-2.

Back in action, **Vince Sudbery and Dudley Leigh** took on the might of the Templars duo of **Dave Glover and Jimmy Lee**. As Dudley so eloquently put it, there was nothing in it apart from the difference in ability. Jimmy and Dave won 6-1 6-2, but a good time was had by all.





Sorry, I don't have much to report on the next match as I missed it completely, much to the disgust of the two competitors, so have to rely on reports from the players and 3rd parties! However, after four sets of tennis **Elena Valarche** was complaining about feeling tired. It emerged that she had thought it best to warm up properly before her match with **Julia Abbot**, so played two hard sets against Lesley South beforehand. Elena claimed she played very well to beat Julia 6-2 6-3 and was well satisfied with her win.

However, as is often the case, this version of events, while entirely true, was not necessarily the whole story. At the Cumberland that evening it emerged from a reliable 3rd party source (no phone taps involved, honest), that Julia's friends Roy and Angeka had held a party on the Friday night to celebrate Roy's 60th, for about 60 people, and that there was consumption of much wine, not least by Julia, who had also been a full and enthusiastic participant in the singing which ensued. From the source there was some question whether Julia would have been in much of a fit state to play a singles match the following day, but obviously she was (wasn't she?)

Anyway, even after two such matches, Elan needed little persuading to play another couple of sets of social tennis.

Joris and Julie Fletcher beat **Margaret Murphy and Bill Thom** 6-4 6-3. It's nice to see Joris back playing tennis from his terrible injuries last year.

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	Men's Open Singles Holder : Cedric de la Chaise <u>Sponsored by SABMiller plc</u>				
Round1 Sun 10 July	Round 2 Sat 16 July	Round 3 Tues 19 July	Semi-finals Thurs 21 July	Final Sat 23 July	Winner
	Mark Stapleton (1)	Mark Stapleton 6-2 6-0	Mark Stapleton 6-1 6-1	Mark Stapleton 6-1 6-2	Cedric de la Chaise 6-7 ⁰⁻⁷ 6-0 6-4
David Cohen	Dudley Leigh 6-4 6-1				
Dudley Leigh					
Vince Sudbery	Bill Thom 6-3 6-2				
Bill Thom					
	Jeff Fine (5)	Jeff Fine 7-5 6-0			
	Sultan Gangji (3)		Sultan Gangji w/o (away)		
Jason Maratos		Jason Maratos 6-3 6-7 6-3			
Yusef Samad					
Landon Kulick	Laurent Deckers 6-1 6-1	Geoff Isaacs			
Laurent Deckers					
	Geoff Isaacs (5)				
	Paul O'Flynn (5)	Paul O'Flynn w/o	Jonathan Bell 6-4 6-2	Cedric de la Chaise 6-1 6-0	
Daniel Stapleton	Alex Fine 7-5 7-5				
Alex Fine					
Peter Davies	Tomas Pech 2-6 6-3 6-4	Jonathan Bell 6-2 6-1			
Tomas Pech					
	Jonathan Bell (4)				
	Jimmy Lee (5)	Jimmy Lee 6-1 6-2	Cedric de la Chaise 6-4 6-4		
Paul Rubie	Dhananjay Talwar 7-6 2-6 6-1				
Dhananjay Talwar					
Simon Nelson	Simon Nelson 6-0 6-1	Cedric de la Chaise 6-2 6-0			
Sanjiv Talwar					
	Cedric de la Chaise (2)				



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	<div>Ladies' Open Singles Holder : Elena Valarche</div> <div>Sponsored by SABMiller plc</div>			
Round 1 Sun 10 July	Round 2 Sun 17 July	Semi-final Wed 20 July	Final Sat 23 July	Winner
	Lesley South (1)	Lesley South 6-4 6-2	Elena Valarche 6-4 6-1	Elena Valarche 6-1 6-3
Margaret Murphy Carine Valarche	Margaret Murphy 6-4 2-6 6-1			
	Marjan Denis (3)	Elena Valarche 6-1 7-5		
Julia Abbot Elena Valarche				
Margaux Valarche Kerryn Arcari	Margaux Valarche 6-4 6-4	Margaux Valarche 6-4 3-6 6-3	Ros Norkett 6-3 6-1	
	Jane Boyle (4)			
Julie Fletcher Moir Duncan	Moir Duncan 6-2 6-1	Ros Norkett 6-4 7-5		
	Ros Norkett (2)			



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		<div>Men's Open Doubles Holders : Cedric de la Chaise & Joris Fletcher</div> <div><i>Note there is a champions tie break instead of a 3rd set</i></div> <div><i>Sponsored by SABMiller plc</i></div>		
Round 1 Sun 10 July	Round 2 Sun 17 July	Semi-final Wed 20 July	Final Sat 23 July	Winner
	Cedric de la Chaise Joris Fletcher (1)	Cedric de la Chaise Joris Fletcher (w/o - medical)	Cedric de la Chaise Joris Fletcher 6-0 4-0 (conceded - weather)	Cedric de la Chaise Joris Fletcher 6-2 6-2
	Brian Coffey Laurent Deckers			
Paul O'Flynn Simon Button	Paul O'Flynn Simon Button 6-1 6-1	(Wednesday 18:15)		
Sanjiv Talwar Dhananjay Talwar				
Dudley Leigh Vince Sudbery	Dave Glover Jimmy Lee 6-1 6-2			
Dave Glover Jimmy Lee				
Jonathan Bell Maciek Janowski	Jonathan Bell Maciek Janowski 6-3 3-6 [10-4]	Jeff Fine Geoff Isaacs. 4-6 7-6 [10-8]	Sultan Gangji Mark Stapleton 6-1 6-4	
Bill Thom Aruna Gunasekera	Jeff Fine Geoff Isaacs (4)			
	Alex Fine John Fox	Sultan Gangji Mark Stapleton 6-0 6-0		
	Sultan Gangji Mark Stapleton (2)			

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	<p>Ladies' Open Doubles Holders : Christine Thompson & Philippa Huckle</p> <p><i>Note there is a champions tie break instead of a 3rd set</i></p> <p><u>Sponsored by SABMiller plc</u></p>			
Sunday 10 July	Round 1 Sat 16 July	Semi-final Tue 19 July	Final Sat 23 July	Winner
	Jane Boyle Ludmilla Stapleton (1)	Jane Boyle Ludmilla Stapleton 6-3 6-2	Jane Boyle Ludmilla Stapleton 7-5 6-4	Christine Thompson Philippa Huckle 6-2 6-3
	Vandana Talwar Anahita Talwar			
	Ros Norkett Sally Tornow	Margaux Valarche Elena Valarche 7-5 6-1		
	Margaux Valarche Elena Valarche			
	Marjan Denis Julia Abbot	Marjan Denis Julia Abbot 6-4 6-2	Christine Thompson Philippa Huckle 6-2 6-1	
	Lesley South Moira Duncan			
Susan Grossman Margaret Murphy	Kerryn Arcari Carine Valarche 7-6 6-3	Christine Thompson Philippa Huckle 6-1 6-0		
Kerryn Arcari Carine Valarche				
	Christine Thompson Philippa Huckle			

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		Open Mixed Doubles Holders : Ludmilla Stapleton & Mark Stapleton <i>Note the change to a champions tie break instead of a 3rd set</i> <i>Sponsored by SABMiller plc</i>			
Round 1 Sun 10 July	Round 2 Thurs 14 July	Round 3 Sun 17 July	Semi-final Tue 19 July	Final Thu 21 July	Winner
		Mark & Ludmilla Stapleton (1)			
Moir Duncan Darren Lee	Elena Valarche Jonathan Bell		Mark & Ludmilla Stapleton 6-1 7-6 ⁷⁻³		
Elena Valarche Jonathan Bell	6-1 6-0				
Susan Grossman Laurent Deckers	Sanjiv Talwar Anahita Talwar	Elena Valarche Jonathan Bell 6-0 6-0			
Sanjiv Talwar Anahita Talwar	6-2 4-6 [10-8]				
	Marjan Denis Paul O'Flynn (4)			Mark & Ludmilla Stapleton 6-1 6-4	
Bill Thom Margaret Murphy	Joris Fletcher Julie Fletcher	Marjan Denis Paul O'Flynn 5-1 (retd)			
Joris Fletcher Julie Fletcher	6-4 6-3		Marjan Denis Paul O'Flynn 4-6 6-3 [10-6]		
Klara & Peter Fitzgerald	Klara & Peter Fitzgerald				
Kerryn Arcari Geoff Isaacs	6-2 6-2	Klara & Peter Fitzgerald 6-4 7-6			
Brian Coffey Philippa Huckle	Jen Ehr Dave Glover				
Jen Ehr Dave Glover	7-6 6-4				
Sue Ehr Jimmy Lee	Sue Ehr Jimmy Lee				
Vandana & Dhan. Talwar	6-1 6-0	Sue Ehr Jimmy Lee 6-4 6-2	Sue Ehr		Jane Boyle Cedric de la Chaise 6-7 6-2 [3-6] (conceded)
Margaux					

Valarche Peter Davies	Ros Norkett Jeff Fine 6-3 6-3		Jimmy Lee 6-4 4-6 [10-8]		
Ros Norkett Jeff Fine					
		Christine Thompson Sultan Gangji (3)		Jane Boyle Cedric de la Chaise 6-3 1-0 (retired)	
	Lesley South Mark Webb				
Carine Valarche Vince Sudbery	Carine Valarche Vince Sudbery 6-1 6-0	Lesley South Mark Webb 3-6 6-3 [10-6]	Jane Boyle Cedric de la Chaise 6-1 6-1		
Julia Abbot Barry Adamson					
		Jane Boyle Cedric de la Chaise (2)			

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Player Biographies

Cedric de la Chaise

Strong right-hander who was singles champion for six years in a row. However, in 2010, after yet another singles battles between him and Mark Stapleton, Mark managed to break the trend and emerged as champion.

Sultan Gangji

While Sultan's eye is as good as ever, his mobility on court reduces year on year and the hip operation must be looming. Once again, an appearance in the semis is the most that Sultan can hope for this year.

Mark Stapleton

Strong right-hander. Mark is married to Ludmilla whom he partners in the mixed doubles. Mark had his work cut out to defeat Cedric de la Chaise in the 2010 men's singles final, but proved equal to the task to emerge as champion, despite my predicxtion at the start of the tournament!

Jane Boyle

Jane holds more West Heath ladies singles titles than any other West Heath member, past or present (1974, 1976 - 1981, 2000 and 2001), a record of which she is justifiably proud. In 2010 Jane won the Ladies Doubles, partnering Ludmilla Stapleton, and was runner up in the Mixed Doubles, partnering Cedric de la Chaise.

Lesley South

Lesley first won the Ladies Singles in 1999 and again in 2002. For a few years she has not been a member of West Heath, and has been running the catering at the Globe LTC. However, Lesley rejoined West Heath in 2010 and has proved to be consistent enough to win the Ladies Singles title again in 2010 in a final against Ros Norkett.

Jennifer Ehr

Jennifer's tennis has come on in leaps and bounds in the last few years and her serve ought to be the envy of all the ladies and most of the men. Jennifer is capable of holding her nerve in a tight spot and delivering the shots to beat an opponent. Although only seeded 2, my money is on her to win the Ladies Singles this year, or if not to give Jane Boyle a real run for her money in 3 sets.

Ros Norkett

Ros is Ladies first team captain and was the 2010 runner up in the Ladies Singles. When on form she has a very good server and hits the ground-strokes with pace, but can be inconsistent at time.

Marjan Denis

Marjan was the 2004 title holder, beating Christine Thompson in the final. In 2006 she lost in 6-4 in the third against Malika Sood, and in 2007 lost in straight sets to Christine Thompson, so the record says that a semi-final appearance is the best that Marjan can ope for again this year. She currently plays her league tennis for Brampton (who put on some good quizzes in which Marjan has appeared in the winning team at least three times that I know of).

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