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West Heath Club Tournament 2012

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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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Tournament Reports and Gossip

Finals Day Saturday 28 July



The West Heath Lawn Tennis Club 2012 Tournament is now over. Thanks go to the organisers, Sultan Gangji and Marjan Denis for bringing the event to a timely and successful conclusion, all those who have provided catering including the Finals Day Tea and the BBQ food, and particularly to those who provided the Gourmet Dinners. Also to all the competitors who have given us so much entertainment over the past fortnight and the spectators who have made the tournament the super event that we are all accustomed to.

Certain considerations prevent me from publishing absolutely everything which happened in the tournament, but most of the significant events have been documented below. To date we have had nearly 1,000 web site hits in July (with more to come) - down a little on previous years with the smaller tournament entry which presumably relates to the deluge of rain we saw in the early part of the season. Next year's tournament will be interesting with the availability of the hard porous macadam surface replacing the shale as a match surface alternative to grass.

Men's Singles Final



As most times in the recent past, this was played out between **Mark Stapleton** nine times a previous champion and **Cedric de la Chaise**, who only boasts seven titles!!!. Last year Cedric took the title after Mark had triumphed in 2010. Early in the first set Mark's first volleys were a bit conservative, Cedric's court speed allowing him to reach them and attempt the pass. However, towards the end of the set Mark hit the volleys closer to the lines. After exchanging breaks the score was 5 all. Then Mark broke Cedric whose serve had been a little shaky (compared with his normal solid performance, that is). Then Mark held to take the first set 7-5.

In the second set Cedric had two poor service games to give Mark a 3-0 lead. There were no breaks in the next three games as Mark reached 5-1 and then pushed Cedric to a couple of deuces on Cedric's next serve but Cedric held on. Serving for the

championship, Mark foot faulted at 30 all but delivered on the next serve and took the match with the following one. and then took the match on the next point. So the trend of Mark winning in two sets or losing in three continues.

Generally Cedric did not seem as consistent or on form as he typically is by the time he contests the final, whereas Mark served well and generally made the correct tactical choices, though Sultan and I did feel he occasionally gave Cedric a chance when he could have hit the ball for a winner.

Mark's tenth title means that he has now overtaken Sultan Gangji who claimed nine titles between 1976 and 1990 as the man who has won most West Heath singles titles.



Ladies' Singles Final



This was contested between **Lesley South**, a three-times champion, and **Margaux Valarche**, who is thirteen and the daughter of Elena Valarche whom she beat on the way. Margaret Murphy, who was leading Lesley in the semi-final when she fell and broke her wrist, was an interested bystander.

Lesley did not have the movement to threaten and did not seem to have her eye in sufficiently to hit the ball out of Margaux' reach. Margaux moved well and hit some good first serves but pushed her second serve. Margaux consistently hit good topspin forehands but relied totally on a sliced backhand which lacks bite but worked OK on the day. However, this will not be good enough against younger and more mobile opponents. In particular the topspin passing shot which dips over the net

would win quite a few points from opponents who have come in to volleys. Margaux' deep drives won her quite a few points as they forced errors from Lesley.

Margaux won 6-2 6-2 and may now be champion for a few years.



Men's Doubles Final



The two pairings of **Cedric de la Chaise and Paul O'Flynn** and **Mark Stapleton and Sultan Gangji** have one victory each in the event. However, Cedric and Mark have seven victories each with others, while Sultan tips the scales at 11.

Cedric was under a bit of a cloud from the singles loss and made a few errors which resulted in service breaks, but Paul and he caught up to 5 all. However, at which point Paul was broken and Mark served out the set 7-5. The second set was similarly close and Paul and Cedric won the tie break at the end of the second set, to take the match to a champions tie break. In this Sultan and Mark played more consistently to get an 8-7 minibreak to allow them to serve it out for a 7-5 6-7 [10-7] victory.

Ladies' Doubles Final

Playing against **Elena and Margaux Valarche**, **Jane Boyle and Ludmilla Stapleton** were attempting their third joint title in four years, while Jane was hoping to add the 2012 title to her 17 previous ladies doubles titles. Jane and Milly won the first set 6-3, mainly because of their solidity at the net while Elena and Margaux made errors, Elena missing backhand volleys in particular. In the second set Elena got her eye in and the pair were 4-2 up with Margaux serving. Margaux lost this serve, but the pair broke back to take the second set 6-4. In the ensuing champions tie break Milly and Jane made few errors and won the match 6-3 4-6 [10-3] to take their third title.



Mixed Doubles Final

Having been eliminated in the quarter finals in 2011, **Peter and Klara Fitzgerald** were contesting the final against **Sultan Gangji and Elena Valarche**. Now well used to grass-court play, Peter's heavy serve, mobility and reaction times at the net, and Klara's consistency and pace were always going to make it difficult for Sultan and Elena, nullifying Sultan's cheeky placement and Elena's aggressive volleying to a considerable extent. Peter returned more than he had a right to, and Sultan and Elena could not prevent forced errors, allowing Peter and Klara a 6-3 6-2 victory.



Finalists

Friday 27 July

The second Ladies Doubles semi-final was played today at 11:30 between **Ros Norkett and Michelle Wayne** and **Elena and Margaux Valarche**. The Valarches got off to a flying start for 4-1, but were then pegged back to 6 all, at which point Ros and Michelle won the ensuing tie break. In the second set Elena and Margaux broke at 5 all to gain a lead of 6-5 which allowed Elena to serve out the set for 7-5. Elena and Margaux got a deciding upper hand in the champions tie break which they won 10-3 for a 6-7 7-5 [10-3] victory and a place in the final tomorrow.

That completes all semi-finals, leaving only the five finals to play tomorrow. Congratulations and thanks to the organisers Sultan Gangji and Marjan Denis for the organisation of the tournament up to this point - and only one casualty so far!

Thursday 26 July

Thanks to **Marjan Denis and Moira Duncan** for a tasty curry and various delicious sweets.

The ill-fated second Ladies Singles semi-final started between **Lesley South** and **Margaret Murphy**. Margaret got off to a flying start and was leading 3-2 on serve, but then slipped and fell in the tramlines. She thought she heard something snap, and had to be driven to hospital for an X-Ray of her left wrist which turned out to have clean breaks in two places. Lesley South therefore goes through to the final to face Margaux Valarche. This is not the only time Lesley has benefitted from opponents having to withdraw, as in 2010 Elena had her beaten in a quarter final but had to cede to match to attend her daughter's wedding in Sicily, whereas Lesley then went on to win the tournament.



The Men's Singles semi-final between **Peter Fitzgerald** and **Mark Stapleton** had no such problems, despite the fact that Peter slipped a number of times and changed his shoes twice. The pattern of the match was Mark serving pretty close to 100%, and often coming in on the second shot, but probably not putting his first volley away and hitting a winner with the second volley. Peter sometimes succeeded in passing Mark on the second attempt. Peter's serve and strokes were hit with a lot of topspin, but not necessarily too close to the baseline, so that they came up at Mark and were difficult, but not impossible to return accurately.

Apart from Peter's unsuccessful attempts to ice skate on the court, the major distinguishing factor was that Mark made fewer errors than Peter and was able to successfully deploy a heavier serve. Mark won the first set 6-3 and then proceeded to win the second set 6-2.

Given that there was no chance of completing three matches due to the latish start, it was decided to play the second Men's Doubles semi-final rather than the Mixed final, so **Cedric de la Chaise** and **Paul O'Flynn** took on **Peter Fitzgerald** (once more) and **Dave Glover**. Peter and Cedric held serve, whereupon Dave and Paul were both broken. At this point Sultan Gangji sitting next to me was convinced that Dave and Peter would then prevail, but my view was the opposite. As soon as Sultan shook on the ensuing £5 bet, Dave and Peter proceeded to lose the next 3 games, but then broke Paul, leaving Cedric to serve for the set, which he did successfully for a 6-4 lead.



At the beginning of the second set the standard of tennis dropped significantly, just as the spectators were starting to get hungry! Paul came closest to holding his serve but failing after a number of deuces which meant all 4 players lost their serves, followed by a few holds. During the next stage of the match Dave Glover hit the shot of the match when (perhaps uncharacteristically) running a long way out of court to reach a very wide ball and returning the shot past Cedric (who was still in court) and around the net to place it in the corner of the deuce court to raucous applause. At 6-5 up Paul O'Flynn failed to serve it out, and the gloom was descending at around 21:10, making the shots in the ensuing tie break very much more difficult (you have to be able to see the ball to be able to hit it). However, matters proceeded through 3 all to 6 all, and at this point Cedric and Paul obtained a mini-break point which they converted to end proceedings 6-4 7-6. This was just as well as there really was no chance of seeing anything during a champions tie break!

Sorry about the picture. It really was that dark!

Wednesday 25 July Julia provided copious nibbles and Moussaka which went down very well judging by the way the French student contingent were lapping it up. Jane provided puddings. Thanks to both for a super meal.



The most anticipated match of the evening was the battle for tennis supremacy and a place in the Ladies' Singles final between **Elena Valarche** and her 13-year-old daughter **Margaux**, but in the end it was a bit of an anti-climax. Although Elena showed all her normal determination and came to the net whenever possible, Margaux had the perfect answer to this tactic, which was a topspin lob to within a foot of the baseline. Sometimes she missed but this was the exception. Staying back did Elena no good either, because Margaux would hit a ball deep and close to the baseline, and then put away the short return out of Elena's reach. And Margaux hit a few service aces too just for good measure. Apparently she has learned how to play her mother well.

So the first set went 6-0 to Margaux. In the second set Elena executed her strategy and Margaux made a few mistakes when trying to hit winners, but it was still only enough to give Elena three games for a 6-0 6-3 victory to Margaux. Elena said she was pleased as her game target was only one game.

When Antoine Valarche, Margaux' father, was asked which side he supported as he was watching from the clubhouse walkway his wise response was that he quietly supported whoever was playing at the clubhouse end!

The interesting thing is how Margaux will get on against either Lesley South or Margaret Murphy in the final. Possibly Lesley with her court cunning and placement might find a tactic to embarrass Margaux, but Margaret's game would probably suit her. We will find out on Saturday after the remaining semi-final is played tomorrow.



Peter and Klara Fitzgerald versus **Mark and Ludmilla Stapleton** had always promised to be a tight affair, probably worth of the final, and so it proved. Milly is usually very good at the net, but this advantage was somewhat nullified by Peter and Klara who are so quick about the court and reached a lot of volleys they had no right to get back. The first set went to a tie-break which was won by the Fitzgeralds. In the second set Mark had difficulty in holding serve as Milly's volleys were not clean winners and a lot were coming straight back. Mark also put one or two smashes in the net. To compensate he added a bit to his service power, but ultimately the attempt did not bear fruit as the Fitzgeralds continued to scramble everything back with very few unforced errors, and they took the second set 6-2 for a 7-6 6-2 victory.



The Men's Doubles semi-final played this evening was between the second seeds - **Sultan Gangji and Mark Stapleton** - and the "Jefferies" (**Jeff Fine and Geoff Isaacs**). The Jefferies put up a good fight, finding a formula with Geoff serving and Jeff putting away fine angled volleys, but Sultan and Mark had the pace and placement to do a lot of damage, eliciting a few service breaks in the first set to win it 6-2. In the second the Jefferies put up slightly sterner resistance, making fewer errors, but still sufficient to give Mark and Sultan a 6-2 6-4 victory.

Tuesday 24 July Thanks to Irene and Peter for a very tasty Malaysian meal followed by meringue and fresh fruit (the strawberries were particularly delicious).



When **Cedric de la Chaise** played **Geoff Isaacs** in one Men's Singles semi-final, it was clear from the knock-up that Cedric could hit the ball closer to the lines and with more pace than Geoff, and with fewer errors. And he was faster about court. In the match Geoff played well, but did not have the pace, placement and consistency to seriously trouble Cedric, though he did hit some winners and forced errors from Cedric. Cedric won 6-1 6-2.

In the outstanding quarter-final, **Peter Fitzgerald** played **Jeff Fine**. This was a particularly deceptive match for the spectators because Jeff seemed to be really struggling in the first set, which Peter won 6-3, but seemed to be well on top and having Peter running all around the court in the second set. Since the spectators were not following the game score closely, it came as a bit of a surprise to find that the protagonists suddenly shook hands, and later announced that Peter had won the second set 6-0.

Jeff seemed to have control in the second set, standing in the centre of the court and moving Peter around at will. Peter's drives had a lot of topspin but some seemed to lack pace and depth and it appeared as if Jeff was having no trouble in coming in to put volleys away, while Peter slipped a lot and could not seem to put the ball beyond him. Yet Jeff felt he played poorly in the second set and never had a grip on it. It just goes to show, doesn't it!





The Ladies' Doubles semi-final between **Lesley South and Liz Goodfellow** and **Ludmilla Stapleton and Jane Boyle** was played on court 3, which suffers significantly from the setting sun. As usual the main problem for Lesley and Liz in particular was that they were taking a long time to get going, resulting in Jane and Milly winning the first set 6-0. In fact Liz and Lesley agreed that by the time they did get going in the second set they were starting to get tired!! Typically neither Jane nor Milly were hitting the ball hard, relying more on just getting everything back and in court from the baseline, and putting away volleys when at the net. Lesley and Liz were trying to generate pace on the ball to put it past the advancing Milly and kept making errors. The second set was much more even than the first, on serve until 4-5 with Liz serving to even up the set. But at this point she put 3 consecutive points into the net, and, although forcing an error on the next from the opponents, on the second match point Liz again made an unforced error to hand Jane and Milly a 6-0 6-4 victory.

Monday 23 July

Thanks to Marjan for stepping in at short notice to prepare a meal for 14 or so who dined at the first Gourmet dinner. Everyone thought it was very tasty.

Apologies for the "soft focus" effect on a number of yesterday's pictures. This was promised to some of the ladies, but not quite in this manner. The offending thumb print on my mobile's camera lens has now been removed, giving a noticeable improvement to this evening's pictures.



The match between **Marjan Denis** and **Margaux Valarche** was always going to be a fascinating match and this view was shared by the five spectators. On paper Marjan has the strokes and power to put pressure on opponents and hit winners, yet Margaux, still only 13, is improving all the time and is now well capable of outright forhand winners and service aces, with more to come as she grows taller. Both players can get nervous at times, and the match was played at 14:30, not to avoid the worst of the midday heat, but for the rather mundane reason that the parking restrictions outside the club finish at 14:30 on a weekday. After a little research, Marjan was advised that the best tactic would be to hit to Margaux's backhand, as Margaux uses backhand slice on grass but does not yet keep the ball low enough to be that difficult.

The first set started with Margaux holding serve without too much difficulty, but Marjan had to fight through a couple of deuces to establish parity. In her second service game Margaux slipped in a couple of service aces and Marjan made a few mistakes. Margaux then broke Marjan. The pattern of a number of points was that Marjan would hit the ball to the Margaux backhand, producing a soft but not too short return, on which Marjan then tried to generate some pace for what would have been a winner and ended up hitting the ball out. Furthermore, Margaux was anticipating and moving well to short or wide balls compared with other opponents which left a smaller margin for error for Marjan

At this point I had to leave, but apparently the set proceeded along similar lines, Margaux winning it 6-2. The second set went along similar lines, although Marjan said she tried hitting to the Margaux forehand to get some returns with pace which ought to have suited her better. But by that time Margaux was in a rhythm and Marjan was not, so the change of tactic had no major impact and Margaux took the second set 6-1 for a 6-2 6-1 victory.

The next match for Margaux is against her mother Elena, whom she claims she can beat, though none of these matches have been on grass as far as we know. Now that one will be an intriguing encounter which ought to take place at 18:00 on Wednesday.

The match between **Sue Lattimer and Sally Tornow** and **Jen and Claire Ehr**, was the first time that the Ehr sisters had played on grass this season. And to be completely honest it did show. However, playing chess for England, netball and AS levels all make competing demands on Jen's time, so perhaps it is only to be expected. In the first set both made a lot of unforced errors. Jen plays more tennis than Claire and can certainly hit some pacy shots, but there was little sign of this in the first set, which Sue and Sally won 6-0. There was slightly more consistency from the sisters in the second set, but not enough to make a significant difference and the final score to the veterans was 6-0 6-1.



Fresh from their not-too-strenuous exertions in beating the out-of-form Ehr sisters, **Sally and Sue** then took on the first seeds **Ludmilla Stapleton and Jane Boyle**. However, these were an entirely different proposition and gave very little away. Jane Boyle modestly confessed to an almost immaculate first set in which she claimed to have made only one unforced error and which her pair won 6-1. Certainly the accurate placement from the seeds caused a number of unforced errors from Sally and Sue, who also made a number of good shots to win points. But it was always the case that, with accurate placement Jane and Milly could make life more difficult for Sue and Sally than the other way around, and the second set went 6-2 to the seeds for a 6-1 6-2 victory.



Jen Ehr's business for the evening was not yet concluded when she also partnered **Dave Glover** against **Peter and Klara Fitzgerald**. Jen was still not hitting shots cleanly in the first set, and the husband and wife pair claimed a couple of serve breaks for a 6-3 set. Throughout the first set Peter was relying on good reflexes to react to shots at the net and throwing himself about the court to just scrape volleys over which Jen and Dave were not expecting to come back, to the delight of the spectators, and this continued into the second set. Meanwhile Jen had got the measure of the grass court bounces and started to hit clean forehand winners and some fine services. At 2-3 down in the second set with Jen on serve, it looked like Jen and Dave might equalise, and my feeling at this point was that the momentum would have been with them for the rest of the match. However, after a considerable struggle, the Fitzgeralds won this vital game and held serve for a 5-2 lead, and although Dave's serve was not threatened, he and Jen could not prevent Peter from serving it out for a 6-3 6-3 victory.



Peter and Klara had previously started a mixed match against **Anahita Khamed and Maxime Saillard**. However, at 0-3 down, Anahita had to withdraw with a right arm got too sore to continue, perhaps not accustomed to the quantity of tennis which she ended up playing at the weekend.

Playing against current champion **Cedric de la Chaise**, **Dudley Leigh** had a game target of three. However, Cedric runs for everything and rarely gives away free points, so Dudley fell somewhat short of his target, though he did get one game in the second set. Although Dudley played well, Cedric generally had a convincing response to all of Dudley's shots. Both enjoyed the game which Cedric won 6-0 6-1.

Vince Sudbery commented that there had been no match report for one of his matches, but on being encouraged to write one himself, thought about it for a few seconds and then declined on the grounds that perhaps the moment had passed.

Sunday 22 July



Elena Valarche started the defence of her 2011 title with a match against **Moira Duncan**. Elena won 6-1 6-1. Later, they both demanded a glamour pic, so here it is!

In the mixed, **Derek Ng and Margaux Valarche** played **Julia Abbot and Geoff Isaacs**. The first set was a very tight affair, won narrowly by Geoff and Julia 7-5. Derek and Margaux seemed to get their eye in at the beginning of the second, and allowed the opposition only two games paving the way for an exciting conclusion with a champions tie break.

However, among the spectators who were getting very excited was Margaux' mum, Elena, who complained that the match had been very nerve-wracking so far and that she was feeling very tense. Meanwhile, Margaux, who is only 13, seemed to be having no such nerves, though feeling slightly embarrassed by the shouts of "Well done bebe" from the direction of the spectators. Fortunately it did not break her concentration too much while she and Derek were struggling to retain parity in the breaker. However, towards the end they started to get the upper hand and finally managed to win the breaker and match [13-11].



In the match between veteran pair **Lesley South and Liz Goodfellow** and **Sue Ehr and Marjan Denis**, Liz was, as ever, a slow starter, and this allowed Sue and Marjan to take the first set 6-1. However, Liz and Lesley's guile and court cunning then came to the fore, to allow them to take the initiative in the second set and win it 6-3. The champions tie break ensued, and Lesley and Liz took the early initiative. Sue and Marjan put together a string of points and were threatening, but then Lesley and Liz hit some accurately-placed shots to take the remaining points and [10-6] breaker for a 1-6 6-3 [10-6] victory.

Carine Valarche and Vince Sudbery played the first seeds **Mark and Ludmilla Stapleton** in the mixed. Carine and Vince played some fine shots, but were no serious match for the experienced pair of Mark and Milly. Nevertheless, by careful placement and dint of trying Carine and Vince got two games in each set. Since the match was on court 2, the watching spectators were suitably

entertained.

During the match between number one seeds **Paul O'Flynn and Cedric de la Chaise** and challengers **Dhananjay and Sanjiv Talwar**, Marjan Denis was heard to mutter what a treat it was to play with someone like that, and had to be reminded that she did indeed frequently play with Paul in the mixed doubles. At first it looked like it might be a whitewash for the number one seeds, but the Talwars pulled out a good service game in the second set. Cedric then had a little vibration (not quite a wobble) on his own serve where he kept hitting net serves, at least one of which only ended up in the correct service box because of the net chord. However, in the end he got it right and forced the final game through.

Thanks to Moira Duncan and Julia Abbot for providing an ample and tasty tea, quite a bit of which was home made. It all went.





Ros Norkett and Michelle Wayne got an early lead in the first set against **Julia Abbot and Margaret Murphy** to take it 6-2. However, they took their eye off the ball a little in the second, while Julia and Margaret upped their game to take it to 5 all. But at this point the second seeds put in some effort to finish off the match and took the set and match 7-5.



Jeff Fine had little difficulty in the first set again **Tomas Petch**, who does not normally play on grass. Jeff's domination proceeded with the first 3 games of the second set, but the Tomas stepped up his grass court play and Jeff thought he could coast, which proved to be a mistake which then cost him quite a bit

of extra time on court as Tomas proceeded to catch up to 5 all. However, Jeff then woke up again and applied himself to the task in hand to close out the second set 7-5 for a 6-1 7-5 victory.



In this match the highly partisan and mainly British crowd were determinedly rooting for **Vandana and Dhananjay Talwar** whom they considered the undisputed underdogs in their match against **Elena Valarche and Sultan Gangji**. This had little effect in the first set, which the fourth seeds took 6-1. However, the Talwars both stepped up their service games in the second set, though Vandana's efforts were particularly fine, and reaped the rewards with an improved, but not sufficient scoreline, as Elena and Sultan took it 6-3. Generally Elena played very solidly throughout, and particularly at the net, while Sultan was not always sure where to stand while Elena was putting away the volleys. However, a good time was had by all the enthusiastic spectators for whom this match represented the culmination of their day's entertainment.

Saturday 21 July



Michael and Carol Clark provided a super tea for competitors, social tennis players and spectators.

Marjan Denis and Julia Abbot played out their singles match. Julia later said that she was grateful for the odd point where Marjan was distracted and made an error, but it didn't really happen often enough and Marjan won 6-2 6-0.

Peter Davies and Dudley Leigh lined up against **Dave Glover and Peter Fitzgerald** the number 3 seeds. Although Dudley and Peter had game or break point in a number of games, but were unable to convert most of them, losing 6-2 6-1. Dudley played consistently throughout, while Peter D hit a number of good serves, returns and other shots but took his eye off the ball on a few crucial smashes, allowing the better consistency of Dave and Peter F to win through.





This was a fascinating match in which **Peter Fitzgerald** beat **Sanjiv Talwar** 6-0 6-0. However, the score did not really tell the whole story as, every time we concentrated on the match Sanjiv hit a number of winners, and forced a number of errors from Peter, though clearly it was not sufficient to win any games.

In his match against **Geoff Isaacs**, **Vince Sudbery** did well to win four games in the first set, but in the second he could not sustain this, to allow Geoff a 6-4 6-0 win.



Geoff also played his next round match against **Paul O'Flynn** but Paul was not able to reach Vince's total of games against Geoff, losing 6-0 6-2.

Moira Duncan beat **Anahita Khamed** 6-1 6-1. The two games Anahita did win she hit out and it paid dividends, but she is not used to playing on grass and the ball comes through fast. Also, although she has coaching in France, the training does not include the service, which of course is key on grass.



Eugen Belin and **Sandip Sen** took on the number four seeds, **Geoff Isaacs** and **Jeff Fine** in the doubles. Unfortunately the seeds were too solid for them and the result was 6-0 6-0 to the veteran pair.

Sanjiv and Anahita Talwar took on the number four seeds, **Sultan Gangji** and **Elena Valarche** in the mixed. The report was that they won one game in the first set and three games in the second.



In the battle of the veteran ex-champions **Jane Boyle** played **Lesley South**. It looked as if the first seven games set the tone for the match as Jane took the first set 6-1. However, Lesley turned the tables and won the second set 6-1. In the ensuing one set match the competitors (who are no spring chickens) probably wished they were able to play a champions tie-break, but the format for the singles is three tie-break sets. It looks like Lesley got the upper hand to take the final



set 6-3 and match 1-6 6-1 6-3.

Friday 20 July

Liz Goodfellow and **Lesley South** beat **Moira Duncan** and **Carine Valarche** 6-4 6-0. It looks like Liz and Lesley got the measure of Moira and Carine and could take full advantage in the second set.

The Reality

The Dream



Nice, errr, shoes Elena. Cheer up Liz, at least you won this one even if you have not played Elena yet.

Tuesday to Thursday 17 to 19 July

Margaret Murphy and Sandip Sen played **Vandana and Dhananjay Talwar** on the shale. Margaret and Sandip broke early to lead 3-1, but the Talwars, who had not played on shale for several years got their eye in to win the next five games and take the first set 6-3. In the second set too, Margaret and Sandip, again broke early to lead 3-1 and reach 6-5 but Talwars levelled won the set tie break relatively easily. Sandip's game was a mixture of strong winners and double faults. Margaret's game was much more steady; as was Vandana who kept kept the rallies going until opponents faltered. Dhananjay had an excellent all round game, strong serves and aces, base line ground strokes and some great drop shots. Shot of the match was his Federer-esque backhand cross court drop shot parallel to the net to the opponents backhand.



In the Men's, newcomers had good results. **Eugene Belin** beat **David Cohen** 6-1 6-1 and **Maxime Saillard** beat **Michael Clark** 6-2 6-1, both impressive performances.

Julia Abbot and Margaret Murphy beat **Susan Grossman and Anahita Khamed** 6-0 6-0. This was Anahita's first doubles tournament game. The consensus of the spectators was that she should have gone in for the singles as well.



Eugene Belin and Sandip Sen beat **Landon Kulik and Daniel Stapleton** 7-5 6-1

Monday 16 July

Dudley Leigh beat **Dhananjay Talwar** 6-3 7-5

Dave Glover and Jen Ehr beat **Susan Grossman and Landon Kulick** 6-1 6-0

Good news! The jet stream is turning North, which will mean we should get some decent summer heat soon. Whether this will happen in time for the second week of the tournament to be played on grass remains to be seen.

Sunday 15 July

With the sousing of rain that the grass courts have had over the last 2 weeks, even a Sunday of wind and some sun was insufficient to make them properly playable for serious, close tennis matches. Hence the shale and other venues were used for the majority of matches which were played.

The brave contenders in two singles matches did play on grass. **Carine Valarche** took on **Lesley South**, who has won the Ladies Singles in the past. Carine put in a good performance in the first set to get to 5 all, but Lesley took it 7-5. In the second set Carine was broken twice by Lesley to trail 0-4, and then got a migraine headache,

possibly due to the pressure exerted by Lesley, so Lesley generously agreed to postpone the conclusion of the match to another day.

Sanjiv Talwar and Daniel Stapleton also elected to play on grass. It looks like Daniel took a bit too long to get going as he claimed his two games only in the second set.

The surprise of the day was the battle between the number two seeds **Paul O'Flynn and Marjan Denis** and **Geoff Isaacs and Julia Abbot** on the shale courts. Against the seeding Geoff and Julia took the first set 6-1. Julia played a defensive game, blocking the ball back when Paul put pace on to try to put the ball past her at the net, while Geoff's job was to hit the winners. Paul felt he was not playing very well, mainly because he had arrived last and got the shortest warm-up time. Marjan voiced no opinion on this, at least not within my earshot.

In the second set Paul and Marjan picked up their game and won it 7-5, paving the way to settle the match with the new-fangled Champions Tie Break.

In the Champions tie-break Julia and Geoff had a sporadic edge of a mini-break, while Marjan and Paul could not seem to get the lead, though they equalised a few times. In the end Paul and Marjan missed a couple too many and Geoff and Julia won the deciding tie-break 10-7.

Steve Gordon and Peter Davies elected to play at Templars, where conditions were ideal. Throughout the match Peter made a number of unforced errors on groundstrokes as the ball came through fast and high, but also won a number of points with shots to the backhand corner and putting away the incoming volley. Steve scored on forehands and on first serves. Peter spent the whole match trying to keep the ball off Steve's penetrating forehand, and failing to a large extent in the first set which Steve took 6-2. However, in the second set the tactic became more refined and Steve had little answer as he surrendered the set 1-6. In the 3rd set under floodlights Steve played more defensively, as the score reached 3 all, at which point Peter had a lapse on service, while Steve held after a number of deuces, invariably consisting of him winning the deuce points while Peter equalised on the ad points. At 3-5 down Peter put in a superb service game to love, but although he obtained deuces on the final game, eventually could not prevent Steve from closing it out. Paul O'Flynn will be the next person to try to avoid Steve's forehand.

Eugene Belin beat **David Cohen** 6-1 6-1

Tomas Pech beat **Sandip Sen** 3-6 6-2 6-0

Derek Ng and Margaux Valarch beat **Maciek Janovski and Moira Duncan** 6-2 7-5. In the first set Maciek and Moira found it difficult to cope with Derek's slice and both opponents service pace, though Margaux did throw in a few double faults for good measure. In the second set they stood back which worked well enough to get them to 5 all, but then Moira was broken and Margaux had eliminated any double faults by this stage to serve it out.

Saturday 14 July

Vince Sudbery must obviously have taken it upon himself to organise some Tournament matches at Templars, as his name is the common thread in the two matches played today. He beat **Landon Kulick** 6-1 6-0 in his singles match, but he and Michael Clark lost to **Sanjiv and Dhananjay Talwar** in a close-fought 6-4 7-5 encounter.


The Talwars held on to an early break in the first set. In the second set, at 3-5 and a couple of match points down, Vince and Michael, of the "when the going gets tough, the tough get going" brigade, saved both of them, broke back Sanjiv's serve and levelled the score at 5-5. Another break followed and then Dhananjay, made of tougher nerves and resolve, made sure of the match with a couple of aces in the final game. Vince was running around like a teenager, picking up drop shots, Michael made excellent interceptions at the net, Sanjiv's winners were because of placement, not power, and Dhananjay had both strong returns and unreturned serves with some clear aces. An enjoyable interesting match.

The weather forecast says the sun will come out tomorrow afternoon, but regrettably, after that the rain is forecast to predominate, so perhaps playing Tournament matches at other clubs (rather than on grass) is going to be a necessity. Keep your fingers crossed.

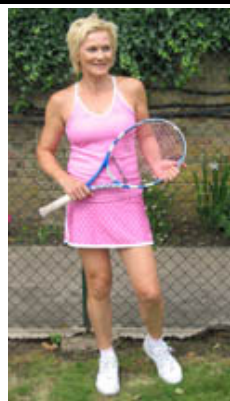
Wednesday 11 July

The tournament draw for the 2012 Web Heath Tournament is now on this web page

Singles: [Men's](#), [Ladies](#) Doubles: [Men's](#), [Ladies](#), [Mixed](#)
[Order of Play](#), [Match Reports](#), [Biographies](#), [Gossip](#), [Rules](#)

		Men's Open Singles Holder : Cedric de la Chaise Sponsored by SABMiller plc			
Round1 Sun 15 July	Round 2 Thurs 19 July	Round 3 Sun 22 July	Semi-finals Thurs 26 July	Final Sat 28 July	Winner
		Cedric de la Chaise (1)			
Dudley Leigh	Dudley Leigh 6-3 7-5		Cedric de la Chaise 6-0 6-1		
Dhananjay Talwar		Dudley Leigh 6-3 6-0			
Eugene Belin	Eugene Belin 6-1 6-1				
David Cohen					
	Geoff Isaacs (4)			Cedric de la Chaise 6-1 6-2	
		Geoff Isaacs 6-0 6-4			
Vince Sudbery	Vince Sudbery 6-1 6-0		Geoff Isaacs 6-0 6-2		
Landon Kulick					
Steve Gordon	Steve Gordon 6-2 1-6 6-4				
Peter Davies		Paul O'Flynn 7-6 4-6 7-5			
	Paul O'Flynn				
	Jeff Fine	Jeff Fine 6-1 7-5			
Sandip Sen	Tomas Pech 3-6 6-2 6-0		Peter Fitzgerald 6-3 6-0		
Tomas Pech					
Sanjiv Talwar	Sanjiv Talwar 6-0 6-2				
Daniel Stapleton		Peter Fitzgerald 6-0 6-0			
	Peter Fitzgerald (3)			Mark Stapleton 6-3 6-2	
Maxime Saillard	Maxime Saillard 6-2 6-1				
Michael Clark		Maxime Saillard w/o			
Adam Cohen			Mark Stapleton 6-4 6-1		
Alex Fine					
		Mark Stapleton (2)			
					Mark Stapleton 7-5 6-2

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Ladies' Open Singles
Holder : Elena Valarche

Sponsored by SABMiller plc



Round 1 Sun 15 July	Round 2 Sun 22 July	Semi-final Wed 25 July	Final Sat 28 July	Winner
	Elena Valarche (1)			
Anahita Khamed		Elena Valarche 6-1 6-2		
Moir Duncan	Moir Duncan 6-1 6-1			
	Margaux Valarche (3)		Margaux Valarche 6-0 6-3	
Julia Abbot		Margaux Valarche 6-2 6-1		
Marjan Denis	Marjan Denis 6-2 6-0			
Lesley South				Margaux Valarche 6-2 6-2
Carine Valarche	Lesley South 7-5 6-0	Lesley South 1-6 6-1 6-3		
	Jane Boyle (4)			
Margaret Murphy			Lesley South 2-3 retired (broken wrist)	
* ?	Margaret Murphy	Margaret Murphy 7-6 6-3		
	Ros Norkett			

	(2)			
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Singles: [Men's](#), [Ladies](#) Doubles: [Men's](#), [Ladies](#), [Mixed](#)
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		<p>Men's Open Doubles Holders : Cedric de la Chaise & Joris Fletcher</p> <p><i>Note there is a champions tie break instead of a 3rd set</i></p> <p><i>Sponsored by SABMiller plc</i></p>		
Round 1 Sun 15 July	Round 2 Sun 22 July	Semi-final Wed 25 July	Final Sat 28 July	Winner
	Cedric de la Chaise Paul O'Flynn (1)			
Michael Clark Vince Sudbery		Cedric de la Chaise Paul O'Flynn 6-0 6-1		
Sanjiv Talwar Dhananjay Talwar	Sanjiv & Dhananjay Talwar 6-4 7-5		Cedric de la Chaise Paul O'Flynn 6-4 7-6 ^[8-6]	
	Dave Glover Peter Fitzgerald (3)			
	Dudley Leigh Peter Davies	Dave Glover Peter Fitzgerald 6-2 6-1		
Eugene Belin Sandip Sen				
Landon Kulik Daniel Stapleton	Eugene Belin Sandip Sen 7-5 6-1	Geoff Isaacs Jeff Fine 6-0 6-0		
	Geoff Isaacs Jeff Fine (4)		Sultan Gangji Mark Stapleton 6-2 6-4	
	Adam Cohen David Cohen			
	Sultan Gangji Mark Stapleton (2)	Sultan Gangji Mark Stapleton (w/o - injury)		Sultan Gangji Mark Stapleton 6-2 6-7 [10-7]


Singles: [Men's](#), [Ladies](#) Doubles: [Men's](#), [Ladies](#), [Mixed](#)

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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 15 July	Round 1 Sat 21 July	Semi-final Tue 24 July	Final Sat 28 July	Winner	
	Jane Boyle Ludmilla Stapleton (1)				
Sally Tornow Sue Latimer		Jane Boyle Ludmilla Stapleton 6-1 6-2			
Claire Ehr Jen Ehr	Sally Tornow Sue Latimer 6-0 6-1		Jane Boyle Ludmilla Stapleton 6-0 6-4		
	Marjan Denis Sue Ehr				
Moira Duncan Carine Valarche		Liz Goodfellow Lesley South 1-6 5-3 [10-6]			
Liz Goodfellow Lesley South	Liz Goodfellow Lesley South 6-4 6-0			Jane Boyle Ludmilla Stapleton 6-3 5-7 [10-3]	
	Vandana Talwar Anahita Talwar				
	Elena Valarche Margaux Valarche	Elena Valarche Margaux Valarche 6-2 6-2			
Julia Abbot Margaret Murphy			Elena Valarche Margaux Valarche 6-7 7-5 [10-3]		
Susan Grossman Anahita Khamed	Julia Abbot Margaret Murphy 6-0 6-0	Ros Norkett Michelle Wayne 6-2 7-5			
	Ros Norkett				

	Michelle Wayne (2)			
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		<p>Open Mixed Doubles Holders : Cedric de la Chaise & Jane Boyle</p> <p><i>Note the change to a champions tie break instead of a 3rd set</i></p> <p><i>Sponsored by SABMiller plc</i></p>		
Round 1 Thurs 19 July	Round 2 Sun 22 July	Semi-final Tue 24 July	Final Thu 24 July	Winner
Mark & Ludmilla Stapleton (1)	Mark & Ludmilla Stapleton	Mark & Ludmilla Stapleton 6-2 6-2	Peter & Klara Fitzgerald 7-6 6-2	Peter & Klara Fitzgerald 6-3 6-2
Ros Norkett ANO				
Carine Valarche Vince Sudbery	Carine Valarche Vince Sudbery 5-7 0-1 (retired)	Peter & Klara Fitzgerald 6-3 6-3	Sultan Gangji Elena Valarche 6-1 6-3	
Richard Nightingale Sally Tornow				
Peter & Klara Fitzgerald (3)	Peter & Klara Fitzgerald 3-0 (retired)	Derek Ng Margaux Valarche 6-2 7-5	Derek Ng Margaux Valarche 5-7 6-2 [13-11]	
Anahita Khamed Maxime Saillard				
Susan Grossman Landon Kulick	Dave Glover Jen Ehr 6-1 6-0	Sultan Gangji Elena Valarche 6-1 6-3 (?)	Sultan Gangji Elena Valarche w/o	
Dave Glover Jen Ehr				
Vandana Talwar Dhananjay Talwar	Vandana Talwar Dhananjay Talwar 6-3 7-6	Derek Ng Margaux Valarche 6-2 7-5	Derek Ng Margaux Valarche 5-7 6-2 [13-11]	
Margaret Murphy Sandip Sen				
Sanjiv Talwar Anahita Talwar	Sultan Gangji Elena Valarche 6-1 6-3 (?)	Derek Ng Margaux Valarche 6-2 7-5	Derek Ng Margaux Valarche 5-7 6-2 [13-11]	
Sultan Gangji Elena Valarche (4)				
Derek Ng Margaux Valarche	Derek Ng Margaux Valarche 6-2 7-5	Derek Ng Margaux Valarche 5-7 6-2 [13-11]	Derek Ng Margaux Valarche 5-7 6-2 [13-11]	
Maciek Janovski Moira Duncan				
Geoff Isaacs Julia Abbot	Geoff Isaacs Julia Abbot 6-1 5-7 [10-7]	Derek Ng Margaux Valarche 5-7 6-2 [13-11]	Derek Ng Margaux Valarche 5-7 6-2 [13-11]	
Paul O'Flynn Marjan Denis (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. But in 2011 Cedric regained his supremacy. Come to Finals Day for this year's exciting installment of de la Chaise vs Stapleton.

Sultan Gangji

Sultan's eye is as good as ever, and with his new hip he is much more mobile. However, the competition in the singles is too stiff and once again, an appearance in the semis is the most that Sultan can hope for this year. Perhaps better luck in the doubles.

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 prediction at the start of the tournament! However, normal order was restored in 2011 and Mark will have to play well to stop another sequence of wins by Cedric.

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.

Margaux Valarche

Margaux is now 13 and has been steadily improving year on year and is now reported to be beating her mother, who was the 2011 Champion. In the 2011 tournament she lost to Ros Norkett in the semi-finals. Though she has a superb eye for the ball, she is not yet totally consistent, but has a winning forhand on the right ball. Her serve and groundstrokes are improving in power as she naturally grows taller and stronger. Sooner or later she will be able to beat all the current mature contenders in one tournament. The only question is when.

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. But she has not entered the singles this year for some reason.

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 times. In 2011 she played well in the semis to leave Margaux Valarche feeling she had a long way to go, but in the finals against Elena Valarche Ros could not sustain a consistent game and paid the price.

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 hope 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).

Klara Fitzgerald

Held to be a better player than her husband Peter, Klara is an unknown in the 2012 tournament. Watch this space.

2011 Finals Day

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(Chef : Carine Valarche)



2011 Winners
(before completion of the Mixed)



Click on the photo for a more detailed version

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Tournament Rules

1. The tournament officially begins on Thursday 12 July and the Finals will be played on Saturday 28 July except for the Mixed which will be played on Thursday 26 July. If rain prevents play the finals will be played on Sunday 29 July. The draw will be in the club house and on the web site on Wednesday 11 July to allow competitors to arrange matches during the week. First round matches must be played before or on Sunday 15 July (except for the Mixed - see [Mixed Draw](#)).
2. A chart of available court times is drawn up and competitors are asked to book the courts they intend to play on.
3. The player(s) whose name(s) appear at the top of the fixture is(are) responsible for challenging their opponent(s).
4. The Tournament is to be played on all the courts (before the shale court resurfacing starts), apart from the Semi-Finals and Finals which will be played on grass, unless the weather does not permit. In the event of disagreement between the opponents on the surface to be chosen, this will be decided by the spin of a racquet.
5. New balls will be available for the Finals.
6. All rounds are to be played within the scheduled times indicated at the top of each draw sheet to allow smooth progress. **Extensions will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and with permission from the joint referees.**
7. All singles matches will be best of 3 tie-break sets. The doubles events will have tie breaks in the first two sets but the 3rd set will be a match tie-break (i.e. Champions tie-break where the team reaching 10 points with a margin of 2 will win). The rules of the tie-break are displayed in the club house.
8. All matches must be continuous and appeal for bad light will be considered after 9 p.m.
9. Please give your entry fee to Moira Duncan or Marjan Denis. The fee is £3 for one event or £5 for two or more.
10. Competitors are expected to volunteer to be lines persons on Finals Day.
11. The Mixed Doubles final will be scheduled for Thursday 26 July.
12. The Joint Referees are Sultan Gangji and Marjan Denis, whose decisions will remain final.

Sultan Gangji and Marjan Denis