

## MALTA CHAMPIONS 2005!

The Maltese friendly tournament is staged each year to provide competitive experience to the national Maltese team to help their preparations as they strive towards Olympic qualification. This year, teams from the UK and Italy were invited to take part in an event funded by the Maltese Olympic Association. Six teams took part in the team tournament – a medley event with each team playing five games - one of each of Mens Singles and Doubles, Ladies Singles and Doubles and a Mixed Doubles with an individual tournament being held on the following day.



**The first match**, against Wimbledon, went to the wire. **Helen Steer** won the Ladies Singles for Comets and, together with her partner **Romana Rehman**, took the Ladies Doubles, both with easy victories. **Nick Pinnock** had a tight first end in the Mens Doubles, before losing in straight sets. **Tracy Barnard** and **Robert Heuting** had a set point at 14-12 up in the first set of their Mixed Doubles but also lost in straight sets. With the match score at 2-2, **Nick Pinnock** and **Jon Kendall** were under pressure to win the Mens Doubles – which they did, rising to the occasion in a tense game to win 15-13, 17-14.

The match against **Msida Arrows** was a more straightforward affair with Comets breezing through 5-0. This result meant that Comets topped the group and went forward into the final against Horsforth, a team from Leeds, containing **Craig Liversage** (ex-Herts County player and currently in the top 25 in the country) as well as several other Yorkshire County players. A very daunting task!

**The final** lived up to expectations – going all the way to the deciding game. Helen won the Ladies Singles against Kimberley Binns, though this time it was a tough fight in the first game which she won 13-12 only after setting. This appeared to break Kimberley's resistance and Helen went on to take the second set 11-4. Comets recorded a comfortable victory in the Mixed Doubles, with Nick and Romana winning against Neil Park and Nicola Read 15-2, 15-6. However, Nick was unable to repeat the feat in the Mens Doubles which he and Rob lost 15-9, 15-4 to the nationally ranked pairing of Craig Liversage and Russell Binns. Jon put up an excellent fight against Craig for the Mens Singles. Despite being a the underdog, he took the first set 15-12, but the long rallies took their toll and he eventually lost the next two sets 15-6, 15-1.

**With the match poised at 2-2**, Romana and Tracy took on the Yorkshire County pairing of Kimberley Binns and Gabriella Wilson (**and their tight hotpants**) for the title in a match that lasted over an hour. The Comets pair did not get off to a good start, making too many mistakes in a first set that saw them lose 15-6. The second set was a **nailbiter**, with numerous long rallies, excellent shots and great pickups. The crowd really got into the game, cheering and stamping their feet in appreciation after each rally. At 14-14, the tension was palpable, but despite facing three tournament points, Comets eventually ran out as winners 17-16. The start of the third set was very flat after the excitement of the second, and the Horsforth pairing were the first to raise their game, going 8-5 up at the turn. **But again Comets would not lie down, losing only one more point before taking the game 15-9 to win the tournament for Comets.**



Comets dominance of the Ladies events continued in the **Individual tournament** the following day with them supplying three of the four semi-finalists. Romana and Helen contested the final – with Helen winning 11-3, 13-10 to maintain her unbeaten record for the full two days. The Mens Individual event was won by Craig Liversage of Horsforth, who beat Kenneth Vella from Maltese club Pawla Wolves in a thrilling 3-set match that saw the Maltese national champion win the first, but fall away as he suffered from cramp in the latter stages.

Our trip coincided with the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting here including the Queen, so we had the real bonus of a tour around HMS Illustrious who was here guarding her'.

As a result of their performance, **Comets** have been invited back to play in a further tournament in **May 2006**, involving teams from Sweden and Sicily, as well as to take part in a junior event being run in October. By Tracy

## **COMETS COUNTY MIXED 1 V COMETS COUNTY MIXED 2 "THE GRUDGE MATCH!" 20 Dec 05**

The meeting of these 2 teams again proved to be very competitive. There is an extra edge to these matches given the familiarity of the opponents and their tactics. County 2 started the match well by winning two rubbers early in the match. County 1 asserted their strength and fought back. This produced good quality games and a competitive match. County mixed 1 ran out 7-2 winners but were made to win three of their 7 rubbers in the deciding game. No whitewash in either meeting this season luckily. Dave and Kate proved particularly strong on the night. It was a good result for Comets as it underlined the strength and experience we have in the club. The match was rounded off with a celebratory curry at Devdas in St Albans. The curry night was well attended by over 20 club members. The only negative aspect was damage to cars parked outside the restaurant. The match was enjoyed by all participants, even the spectators!

By Carl Graham

## BADMINTON ENGLAND Announces Silver Club & Clubmark First For Hertfordshire



On 12 December 2005 **Comets Junior Badminton Club** became the first badminton club in Hertfordshire to achieve Silver Club/Clubmark accreditation, and one of only 25 nationally. By achieving the required high standards in duty of care and child protection, coaching and competition, sports equity and ethics, and club management required for accreditation, Comets JBC have shown that the money is being put to good use. Comets JBC hope it will be the first of many badminton clubs to be awarded accreditation. Comets Junior Badminton Club was originally started in September 1995 as Gosling JBC. Its aim was to introduce children to badminton, and ultimately help them become sufficiently skilful and confident to join a senior club. At that time the club played on 3 courts at Gosling Sports Park on Sundays in the hour before the Gosling (senior) BC. Both clubs changed their name and moved to Herts Sports Village when it opened in September 2003. We now run junior club night with coaching on 8 courts 6-7pm on Sundays. We have a strong squad of boys, and run two boys teams in the HSBA leagues, but we need more girls! Our biggest achievement is the number of our club members who have themselves become coaches: 6 Leaders (level 1 coaches who must be over 16) and 2 level 2 coaches (who must be over 18). Gill Bartlett, junior club secretary (and previously Chairman of the senior club for many years) said that the process of accreditation had taken about two year's altogether, as we thought it essential to involve all our members and coaches in any decision-making.

## The Player Profile



The Player: **Nick Pinnock**

Membership: **3.5 years**

Occupation: **Business Analyst (Nationwide) / Musician**

Favourite style of game: **Competitive**

Annoying Habit: **Brutal Honesty – although I am very proud of it.**

Your strengths: **Smash, Recovery, Court Coverage / movement**

Your Weaknesses: **I'm not telling you that!!**

Number of grey hairs: **I think it will all fall out before I get any!!!**

Fav people to partner: **Warik - always 100% effort, and up for any challenge. Hannes - watching people run to the net while his clear lands behind them is very entertaining. Dave Spring - Solid as a rock - what more could you want?**

Fav opponent: **Carl - seeing the shuttle come back at 100mph after the point has ended is very satisfying**

Last thing bought on eBay: **A tax disc holder for my new car**

Step forward or backwards after serve: **Sideways**

How long have you been playing? **9 years playing, with 9**

**year gap in between**

What inspired (?) you to start playing? **My headmistress, Mrs. Gray - at my primary school, badminton was all that mattered.**

**Comets T-shirts** – are still available, please see Gill or Dave Bartlett polo's (£12.99) and Tee-shirts (£7.99) - Medium and large size available.

## The Christmas Party 16 Dec 05 Beales Hotel, Hatfield



Another well attended Comets Social event took place at the Xmas Party, where we certainly set the standard compared with other guests. Best dressed in dinner jackets and fancy dresses, 1<sup>st</sup> to eat everything (except the horrible salmon mousse which was rather revolting), 1<sup>st</sup> to drink every drop (as expected by such a breed of athletes), 1<sup>st</sup> on the dance floor (well done Martin) and last to leave!

If Carl didn't buy you a drink (for the bruises he gave you during competitive play last year!) you better attend next year!

**Chris Fisher** definitely impressed with his dance



routine, **Dave** and **Gill** showed they still had the moves and **Nick** was leading the ladies with his Abba tribute dance, even I was dragged around the dance floor at least once, (thanks Tracy). Unfortunately everything came to rather an abrupt end at 12ish which seemed a little early, so the next party started in Rob and Nicola's hotel room. With a little free wine acquired from the bar (Rob) and a



disgusting bottle of Mint Baileys we did our best to keep the other guests awake, this is where my memory is a little hazy as I still cannot recall any of my hour long conversation with Howard! Carriages eventually left at 2am, however I was unaware that the party was soon to continue back at my house and although the numbers had dwindled by now, Carl and Nick still managed to continue drinking and of course discussing 'who had the best shots' till 4am. Good night!

By Jon



## The Player Profile



The Player: **Cathy Copp**

Favourite style of game: **definitely-mixed as I really do like men!**

Your strengths: **The only down side is that I don't get to smash much which I think is my strength!**

Your Weaknesses: **I am just too inconsistent**

Annoying Habit: **you tell me as it obviously doesn't annoy me!**

Number of grey hairs: **not many, honest, but what I do find I**

**pull out and yes I am naturally blonde and an Essex girl!**

Last thing bought on eBay: **I've never bought anything**

**because I am a computer dinosaur**

How long have you been playing: **since I was 7**

Step forward or backwards after serve: **I step forwards after serving or I think I do**

What inspired (?) you to start playing?

Interesting fact about you – outside badminton? **I once**

**ran along a beach naked, I'm a twin, I used to be a physio for members of the royal family**

Funniest Moment on court: **definitely when Carl farted during a match. Even funnier when I confronted him about it afterwards.**

## CLUB HANDICAP TOURNAMENT

**See the notice board to enter!**

Mens Doubles / Ladies Singles 5 Mar 06

Mens Singles / Ladies Doubles 26 Feb 06

Mixed 19 Mar 06

Finals Night 26 Mar 06

### New scoring system Introduced

A new scoring system is currently being trialled at international level pending a future decision in May 2006. The International Badminton Federation have decided that the scoring system will change to matches of 3 x 21 points where each 'win' scores a point and the service changes sides: **also just one service per side in doubles**. The service is started in the right side if the score is an even number and left if not.

**We thought to understand this better it would be fun to adopt the new system during a future club night** Thurs 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb has been chosen, details will be posted.....

## Match Night Food by David Spring

Following my unexpected Gordon Ramsey Award at the Christmas Party, I promised to write an article on the importance of the choice of food for match refreshments. I will also go a little further to talk about food before a match.

Depending on players' circumstances, many will not have had the chance to eat prior to a match – or have chosen not to in order to achieve peak performance. Eating too much food, or the wrong food, before exercise can impair your performance or cause indigestion, sluggishness, nausea, and vomiting. On the other hand, if you haven't eaten in six hours and try to play, you may feel weak and unmotivated. Your goal is to have fuelled your body with nutritious food that is no longer present in your stomach when you play. Carbohydrates are easily digested, but foods high in protein and fat will linger in the stomach for some time, depending how much you ate. Large meals can take about four to six hours to empty from the stomach.

**Snacks**, depending on their content, take about 1/2-1 hour to leave your stomach. Eating a high carbohydrate snack (e.g. pasta) two hours before playing can leave you ample energy and a calm stomach. Many players avoid large amounts of food within two hours of a match, but can tolerate a light snack within one to two hours.

Now to my normal choice of refreshments and the reasons for them:



**Water** – the best drink before and during exercise. If a drink is too high in sugar, the liquid will remain in the stomach longer and cause “sloshing”. Always ensure you have had plenty of water to drink during the day of your match. Sports drinks are designed with a small amount of quickly absorbed carbohydrates and electrolytes to replenish sweat and blood sugar, so these can be good in limited quantity.

**Chocolate** of some kind – high in sugar and can be easily absorbed into the blood system to increase energy levels. Generally reckoned to be best are jaffa cakes, as the sponge gives slightly longer lasting energy. Jelly babies are an even faster acting source of sugar into the blood stream and also come highly recommended. Low blood sugar can be a cause of cramp.

**Plain crisps** – the salt content in crisps will reduce the likelihood of players getting cramp, which can be caused by salt imbalances due to sweating. Other flavours of crisp contain mono sodium glutamate – artificial flavouring – which will reduce the effectiveness.

**Bananas** – high in potassium which will also reduce the likelihood of cramp, while providing a good source of short and long term energy. Too much could give you indigestion so beware!

**Grapes** – another good source of sugar for those needing energy – and healthy for those worrying about their waistline!

**Sausage Rolls** – something a little more substantial for after the match – to soak up the beer that will be consumed in the pub!

If you want to achieve peak performance, you must look after your stomach!

Coming in the next edition

✍ How many hits will a Cadburys cream egg take before it makes a mess

✍ Maltese Police launch badminton investigation over stolen trophies!

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The new Badminton fitness DVD 'How to run around and look stupid!'

Why the committee banned the editor from publishing document X

NEWSLETTER: COMET JAN06

(send your comments and articles to jkendall@diaf.pipex.com)

# The Comet Awards 2005



## The Comet Flyer awards – Xmas 2005

As is usual at this time of year, the committee took a reflective look back at the year just passed and identified a number of members whose particular talents or actions deserved club-wide recognition. Given the prestige associated with these awards, the committee naturally gave the matter much deep thought (with a bottle or two of wine to help the process)...

Each winner was presented with a trophy (beautifully created by Jon K) at the Christmas Dinner on 16 December. A full list of the recipients is below:

### The Big Girl's Blouse award – Richard Clemow

A man who is not afraid to show his feminine side..... On arriving at HSV one club night, Richard was horrified to find that Jette had 'forgotten' to pack his sports shirt. Handily, Jette had a spare shirt of her own which Richard borrowed for the evening. He might have got away with it if he hadn't been so tall, but it isn't often you get to see his 6-pack. Rather fetching he looked in it too.....

As a special treat for you all, Richard will be providing us with his unique insights into the current fashions shaping our on-court clothing in the next edition.

### Best Performance in a Supporting Role – Helen Spring

Helen played the role of devoted wife-to-be to perfection during last season, turning out to all of Dave's matches to cheer him on in the run up to their summer wedding. If you stood close enough, you could see her gazing dewy eyed at her hero, whispering quietly 'those calves...., that grunt...., that smash...., mmmm'. The really amazing thing is that they are now married and she's still supporting him. It's all right Helen, now you've got him, you can stop pretending to like the game and get back out on the football pitch!

### Daz Doorstep Challenge – Carl Graham

A man we admire for his wife's ability to turn him out each week in dazzling whites – despite his best efforts to make them completely filthy by throwing himself after every lost rally. Note to Carl: Don't know if you've noticed, but the club was renamed 2 years ago - time to update the T-shirt collection.

### Teddy Sheringham super-sub award – Graham Hall

This man's commitment to badminton cannot be questioned. He has played for EIGHT of the nine Comets mixed and mens teams in 2005 – either as a regular team member or a sub. Such is his dedication, I'm sure he'd have played for the ladies too - if only he owned a skirt. Note to Graham: Have a word with Richard Clemow – I hear he knows a good supplier!

### The George (Tom, Dick and Harry) Cross – Helen Steer

I am sure you will agree Helen deserves this particular honour for her significant sacrifice on behalf of our troops in action abroad. On our tour of HMS Illustrious (in port during our Maltese visit) Helen overheard the troops mentioning they had had a very dull time stationed in Malta while looking after the Queen and were leaving the next day for Gibraltar. Not one to see others suffer, and putting her own performance in the next day's tournament in jeopardy, Helen bravely offered to show them the bars and restaurants of St Guliens that evening before they left port - a suggestion which the sailors and airmen were happy to accept. Clearly the late night didn't affect her too badly as she was the only player to win all her matches in both the individual and team tournaments!

### The Gordon Ramsay award for match night refreshments (not) – Dave Spring

Pringles, Terry's chocolate orange, Penguin biscuits and pink wafers.... With such excellent refreshments to fuel them is it any wonder that Dave's mixed team is top of the County League Division 1 this Christmas! Happily, Dave has agreed to write an article for us – sharing his secrets on how best to sustain your energies during that all important match. [See page 3 for full details.](#)

### Overseas Contribution to Comets Badminton Club – Craig Liversage

Craig played in the Herts Restricted tournament run by the County organisers in September. On hearing that Comets had entered a team into the tournament in Malta, he commented that he was pleased Comets were entering as 'at least that means my team won't come last'. Well, indeed, he was correct in one sense. His team in fact came second – with Comets beating them in the final!! You can read more about this epic encounter on page x. Unfortunately, Craig was unable to attend the Christmas Dinner to receive his award (together with a large slice of humble pie) in person, but on being told of his award asked me to pass on this very gracious thank you message, 'We weren't trying anyway'.

(Many of you will remember Craig, who was a member of Gosling for approx 15 years before leaving in 2003 to move to Leeds.)

### Guy Fawkes Award for Treason – Rob Hueting and Nicola Harrison

Having joined Comets last year, Rob and Nicola have been living as double agents ever since. They were unmasked earlier this season when they played together for Gadebridge against our SWHerts Mixed 1 team and actually had the cheek to win their three games, thus condemning the Comets team to their first defeat of the season. Off with their heads!

Nominations for next year's awards are now open.... All suggestions should be passed to a member of the committee in a brown envelope (preferably containing at least £5!).

Tracy Barnard