

Wales v Scotland 7th APRIL 2024

On this morning we were greeted by Lloyd Pettiford, assistant pro at MMTCC. It must be acknowledged that Lloyd, who has represented Wales at Rackleton, which includes table tennis, badminton, squash and tennis, was the instigator of the Welsh Real tennis team concept. Our enduring thanks to him.



The dominance of Welsh flags, daffodils and smiles were fully evident as the day before. The tennis started on time with some new members from the Welsh Squad of 23. Chris Lewis was up first against Bob Compton who he fallen to last year. Could Chris get revenge? Bob who has seen off many a low handicapper at Leamington is many people's nemesis. The match was a close affair with several 40 all's, but Bob always had his nose ahead and came through with the first scalp for Scotland. 3 : 6.

The captain and Derek Williams came into the breach against Bob and Nick Gordon. Nick came out of the blocks flying and ably assisted by Bob. Derek played well, volleying effectively. 5 all 40 all, could we do it? Sadly not, 5 : 6.

Derek and Marty Burn had the second singles of the day. Another nip and tuck match. Another 5 games all 40 all could Derek do it

this time. Sadly not ...again, 5 : 6.

Michael Llewelyn-Jones and Derek now warmed up took on the Marty Burn and Nick Gordon. There was no getting away from it that the Scots meant business. 2 : 6, another down! Was this to be a repeat of yesterday?

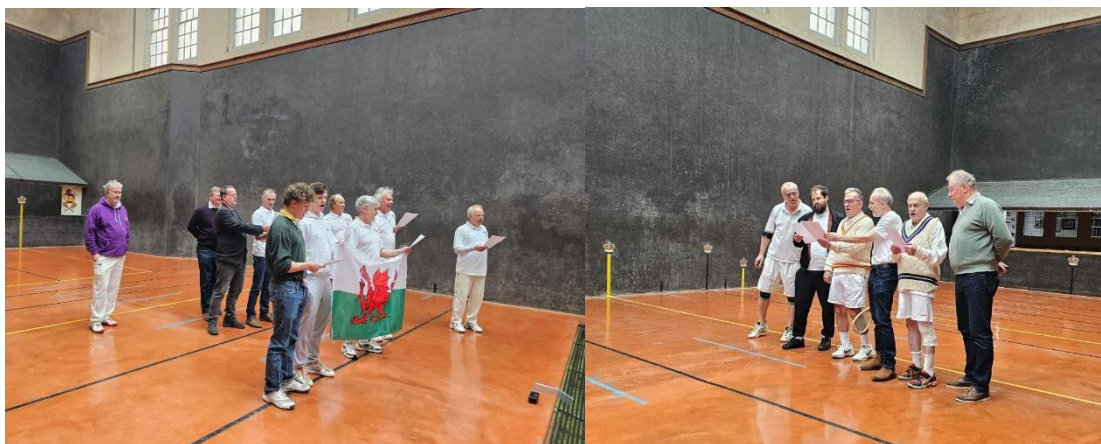
Chris and the captain bounced on court, having played a lot together, could this work? The tricky Bob Compton was there again with the enthusiastic and canny Miles Buckingham. Given Miles 'seniority on court he had to be the target. David chose to face Miles' given he had been on the receiving end of Miles' drag serve on many an occasion. On receipt of serve volleying off the penthouse was the order of the day and proved effective. Miles showed no sign of age as he managed to return several shots from the base of the tambour. It was a close match but at last our first victory. 6 : 4.

Michael took on Ian Falconer in a fast and open game. There was no singing of Cwm Rhondda or Delilah but Michael came off court smiling. 6 : 3. Two matches to Wales.

Jeremy Irvin-Singer and captain paired against Ian and Miles. Could David find Miles again. He did and Miles ducked as balls flew around his head. Miles' response was to slow the game down upsetting the captain's equanimity. The match became tense and tight and again another 5 all 40 all. Surely this would go our way. There were more Scottish smiles! 5 : 6.

Michael played Nick and found his form from the Saturday. Moving well despite knee straps he volleyed well and used the main wall effectively to see off the scampering Nick. 6 : 3. Three to Wales.

At 13.00 we sang the traditional National Anthems with "**Mae Hen wlad fy nhadau**" followed by the Scottish, "**Flower of Scotland**". What acoustics Moreton afforded. Interestingly there was better resonance when facing across the net. There is no doubt that we enjoy singing our National Anthems. We are undefeated in our singing.



Lunch was taken during play and consisted of **Welsh main**: Chicken, leek and Caerphilly cheese pie followed by **Scottish Desert**: Cranachan.

Could Jeremy who played so well on Saturday see off James Carnegie-Brown? I wonder if the thought of others enjoying the Welsh pie deflected his mind. 2 : 6



Sadly, the top 3 Scottish seeds had to pull out so instead an exhibition match of 3 sets took place between our lowest 2 handicappers Nick Jamieson HC 22.3 and Simon Talbot-Williams, his senior, HC 35.3. Nick was given his Welsh cap for being our best player. Simon receiving 15 and Nick owing 30 was quite a difference. Ball control and speed of reaction were the essence of the game and Nick took advantage of some cunning well delivered serves to give him significant in roads and Simon struggled to cut to a chase leaving him stranded at the hazard end for long periods. In the second set, Simon improved his consistency and returning

taking to Nick all the way to 5 all, were we to have another set? Sadly, this was not the case. 6 : 4, 6 : 5 to Nick. It was another thrilling match. We enjoyed Sue Haswell's real time critical analysis of Simon's play. Over the two days Simon gave his all for the Welsh cause and the onlookers were the beneficiaries. We are proud to have 2 such quality players in the Welsh squad.

Following this Peter Lewis and Geraint Thomas came on to take on the ever-smiling Dan Worboys and proud Ian Falconer the later pair having played together on several occasions. The handicap difference was in favour of the Scots who came out flying and whether Peter and Geraint needed more time to get used to each others playing styles, the handicap they were giving to the Scots proved too much. 0 : 6

Peter stayed on court to play Dan and this proved a much closer affair going to 5 all in the final game. Could we do it on this occasion? Sadly not, despite Peter's best efforts. 5 : 6.

Chris Lewis had been quietly contemplative keeping his focus from the beginning to the end of the day. Buoyed up having beaten his nemesis in the doubles, Chris relaxed and played his natural game putting James Carnegie-Brown to the sword. Well done Chris, a much needed Welsh victory. 6 : 0. Four to Wales.

To the final match of the day. Geraint against Dan. Geraint was still wincing following the doubles defeat and went up a gear with great returns and managing to stay for the majority of the server's

end. Geraint's sheer grit, against the at times the unrelenting Dan, came through providing us with the final victory of the day 6: 4, (five to Wales). A positive memory for next year. Well done Geraint.

Afterwards both captains spoke to thank their teams, visitors and the opposition. Lloyd was thanked for his marathon session at marking and for the super lunch we all enjoyed. We thanked Sue Haswell for supporting the Welsh team almost continuously for the two days and for providing intervals when she marked. Thanks were given to all those non players who had come to watch and many for staying until the end.

To mark the Scottish player who had contributed most to the day, Dan awarded his bottle of Champagne to Miles Buckingham and the Welsh captain his equivalent prize to Chris Lewis. Chris has only been playing Real Tennis for 2 years and who during the day played great tennis winning 2 out of his 3 matches. It was pointed out that Wales had 4 matches going to 5 games all and none had gone their way, but that is tennis. Scotland deserved the win. The winning captain, Dan, awarded the team's bottle of Champagne to Lloyd for his excellent marking, banter and wider contribution.

Results

(One set to 6 unless stated otherwise)

9.00, Chris Lewis, v, Bob Compton, 3 to 6, Scotland

9.35, David Phillips & Derek Williams, v, Bob Compton & Nick Gordon, 5 to 6, Scotland

10.10, Derek Williams, v, Marty Burn, 5 to 6, Scotland

10.45, Michael Llewelyn Jones & Derek Williams, v, Nick Gordon & Marty Burn, 2 to 6, Scotland

11.20, Chris Lewis & David Phillips, v, Bob Compton & Miles Buckingham, 6 to 4, Wales

11.55, Michael Llewelyn Jones, v, Ian Falconer, 6 to 3, Wales

12.30, Jeremy Irwin Singer & David Phillips, v, Ian Falconer & Miles Buckingham, 5 to 6, Scotland

13.05, Michael Llewelyn Jones, v, Nick Gordon, 6 to 3, Wales

13.40, Jeremy Irwin Singer, v, James Carnegie Brown, 2 to 6, Scotland

Three Setter Exhibition Match Wales

14.15, Nick Jamieson, v, Simon Talbot Williams, 6 to 4 & 6 to 5

15.25, Geraint Thomas & Peter Lewis, v, Ian Falconer & Dan Worboys, 0 to 6, Scotland

16.00, Peter Lewis, v, Dan Worboys, 5 to 6, Scotland

16.35, Chris Lewis, v, James Carnegie Brown, 6 to 0, Wales

17.10, Geraint Thomas, v, Dan Worboys, 6 to 4, Wales

Matches. Wales 5 to Scotland, 8

Games. Wales 57 to Scotland 62

The weekend was a great success both on and off court. National pride was evident from the start to finish and camaraderie abounded. There is something different for playing for one's country and I feel a great sense of satisfaction as I look back over the two days. Thank you all. Until next year.

Cymru am byth.

David Phillips. Welsh Captain 2024.

Photo gallery from both days

