

## Essex Masters County Championship Reports 2013

### O40s Report

After successfully winning the County Championships last season, there were high hopes for the Essex O/40 squad for 2012/13. New regulars Ady Munro and Justine Miller joined Karina Bye and Tracey Hutchinson to create a particularly strong compliment of ladies. The men were relatively unchanged with one new regular, Andy Lager, uniting with Simon Gilhooly, Ian Smith and Philip Tuffee to complete the men.

With the help of Matt Freeman, Adrian Watling, Viv Gillard and Amanda Austin, who acted as reserves when required, the team celebrated comfortable wins over Bedfordshire (9-3), Hertfordshire (8-4) and Suffolk (9-3). The final match in the division was conceded by Cambridgeshire.

For the second year running, the O/40 Essex team progressed through to the semi-final stage. The opposition was Hampshire and the venue Wimbledon Badminton Centre. Much to the team's dismay, three of the strongest players were out of action. Karina was away on holiday, and Simon and Tracey were watching from the side lines with injuries. Without these players, it was always going to be a tight match. The team played particularly well and victory could have gone to either side. Unfortunately, Hampshire won 6-4.

Karina Bye

### O45s Report

The ICL division was a bit of a non-event with all 4 home matches being won 12-0, which may be some sort of record? 2 away matches were won equally comfortably, with 1 match unplayed due to cross-wires of the date, and 1 minor scare with a narrow win 7-5 away to Bucks.

The playing squad was: Amanda Austin, Donna Tubb, Lesley Pallett, Sue Crompton, Allison Pearson, Kit Yong, Jo Agar & Marion Neale; Trevor Rogers, Dave Wood, Richard Taylor, Felix Afum, Paul Belcher & Andy Bailey. We were indebted early in the season for help from the O50s squad with Paul Kirby, Pam Lee & Pete Moseley all helping out.

In between was the ICC, and taking over from a team that finished a very close second in the previous year was a tough act to follow. We started with a win vs. West of Scotland, and followed up with draws against Surrey & Lancashire. A win v Hampshire followed by another draw vs. Yorkshire left us with a mathematical chance of winning if we could defeat Herts in the final match. This was not to be as we lost 3-1, and ended up tied on points with Lancs, but placed 3<sup>rd</sup> due to them getting a winning draw in the match between us.

Donna Tubb & Amanda Austin remained unbeaten all weekend, and Dave Wood & Sue Crompton were unlucky to lose their unbeaten record v Herts in the last match. Jo Agar & Richard Taylor won a couple of important mixed games, securing the win v Hampshire, and Trevor Rogers, partnered by Danny Eghan on Saturday & Felix Afum on Sunday, contested all hard fought games, but only 1 men's was won.

So to the ICL play-offs, with an expected tough match against Hampshire who had enjoyed an even easier stroll through the South division, but we eased through 11-1 with the loss of 1 men's doubles.

To finals which were held for the first time at a new facility in Worcester. The draw pitted us against Cheshire in the semi, with Lancs playing Wilts in the other. Lancs progressed comfortably by score-line of 10-2, but had to fight hard to win all mens that went to 3 sets.

The semi vs Cheshire proved to be a tense affair, all square after the 1<sup>st</sup> round of men's, and again after the ladies, as Donna & Lesley lost for the first time. The reverse mens again saw the match all square, but the ladies made the decisive break by winning their reverse matches, so a 5-3 lead after the levels.

Lesley & Dave lost at top mixed, but Sue & Richard won an epic 3 setter to leave the match at 6-4. Surely one of the bottom 2 mixed would be secured for the win? It didn't look good with the loss of both opening 1<sup>st</sup> sets, and as it stood Cheshire would go through on sets won had they won both matches in 2 sets. The threat of failure seemed to spur on the Essex pairs as both Amanda & Trevor and Donna & Paul triumphed in 3 sets, to give a flattering match score of 8-4 – never in doubt!

The final against Lancs was a more straightforward match. As after Dave & Trevor completed another 2 wins, followed by a clean sweep in the ladies, the match was won at 6-2 thanks to the odd set won in defeat by Richard & Paul. With the pressure off, 3 of the 4 mixed were won, to secure a 9-3 win and

**ESSEX ICL O45 CHAMPIONS!** – Many Thanks to my Team! – Trevor 😊

Trevor Rogers O45 Captain

### **O50s Report.**

The Essex over 50's consisted of a few new players that had come up from the 45's, so was very strong this year.

Our performance in the league saw us have comfortable wins at home and away to Cambridge and Bucks, each time 12-0. This was not the case against Suffolk, we had a few first team players missing and they had a strong side out. The turning point being our first ladies against theirs winning the third 22-20 having saved a couple of match points. This allowed us some breathing space for the mixed and we eventually ran out 8-4 winners, so our over 55 reserves that had stepped in did us proud. Our home match against Suffolk was not played due to snowy conditions.

Our main opponents would be Herts, who again had a very strong team. Our away match again hinged on a crucial mens match. We were 4-3 up with our first mens taking on their first men and again from match points down managing to win it in the third 25-23. We then won three of the mixed to give us an excellent 8-4 win. At home they did not a very strong team and we beat them 10-2 to put us through to the play offs where we would meet Surrey.

This match was played on neutral ground and we proved too strong for the Surrey side on the day, running out 9-3 winners to take us through to the finals, that this year were being played at a brand new venue at Worcester University.

We had been seeded 2 and in the semi final had to play the team from the south west, Avon. After winning 7 of the 8 level doubles this had put us through to the final before the mixed had started and we eventually won through with a very comfortable 10-2 win, and so to the final. This was to be played against Yorkshire

who had triumphed earlier in the day against Derby 9-3.

We knew this was going to be very close as they had strength in depth. Our first and second mens pairs went on first and managed to win both to put us 2-0 up, our ladies were next up and we lost both of these. In the reverse again it was 2-2, with our first ladies winning a close match against their second ladies and our second men losing a three setter against their first men, so 4-4 going in to the mixed, but we were behind on games, so we had to pick up three of the mixed. Fourth mixed went on first and did us proud, Andi Stretch and Ross Ranson, who had stepped in as reserve played a blinder and won it in three, with a very close third set win.

Our first mixed then had the reverse happen, losing a close three setter. Our second mixed won in two straight very comfortably giving us a 6-5 advantage. We still needed to win the last match to take the title but unfortunately lost in two therefore being on the wrong end of a 6-6 losing draw. So close yet so far.

In the ICC this year our strong team had to go to Bournemouth to try and regain its rightful position in the premier league, having been demoted last year. When we arrived we were advised that there were only 5 sides, so we had to play each team twice, once on Saturday then again on Sunday. The teams competing were Surrey 2, Kent, Sussex and ..... We managed to win every match on Saturday 4-0 and on Sunday the teams were trying to take a rubber of Essex. This was not the case and we won our four matches 4-0 again, giving us promotion back to the Premier league next year and if the team stays together will have a very strong chance of winning.

I would like to thank all of the players that helped make my job easy and enjoyable, people that represented our over 50's were

Viv Gillard, Pam Dallow, Andi Stretch, Loreen Roberts, Pam Lee, George Joseph, Kim Yong, Paul Kirby, Ross Ranson, Gary Webb and John Stretch.

Peter Moseley  
Team captain

### **O55's Report**

This season was a disappointing year for us as we only managed to play 3 games out of the 6 that we were scheduled to play. The games did not get played as one was bad weather and 2 were unavailability of players one from Bucks and one of Essex.

In our league were Suffolk, Northants and Buckinghamshire. Our campaign started at Northants where we won 12-0. Then we played Suffolk at home and won 8-4 and we played them in the return fixture and won 8-4.

Despite only playing 3 matches we qualified for the play offs where we met Surrey. This was going to be a very strong match and it was made more difficult as I was unable to field my first team. I was forced to draw on 2 players from the O 60's team – Linda Scrace & Roy Lord to help us out. In fact Roy won a men's with me and a mixed with Linda. Actually if the Essex players were not already over 60 they become 60 this year. The team put up a strong performance against their younger opponents but sadly we lost 10-2. The score does not reflect the match result.

I would like to thank Lim Loo, from Dragons, who kindly came along to support us and found it difficult to contain his excitement!

My thanks go to the players who played this season:

Jane Noremborg, Chris Pennock, Barbara Childs, Janice Flower, Linda Scrace , Hazel Keeble Peter Emptage, Kevin Martin, John Kindred, John Stretch and me.

### **ICC Championships Weekend 12/13 January 2013**

The O 55's went to Hatfield not feeling too hopeful, we hoped to do enough to enable the team to stay up. On Saturday we drew our 3 games with Kent, Lancs & Surrey. We came away very pleased with the days results especially with a draw against the favourites, Surrey. On Sunday we opened up with a 4- 0 win against Nott's, than a 2-2 draw with York's. With 1 game to go we were in with a chance of becoming runners –up. Essex had to beat Cheshire, Kent had to draw or beat Lancs and Surrey had to beat York.

Must be the first time Essex have supported Surrey. We beat Cheshire 4-0, Surrey beat York and Kent beat Lancs. This meant we became runners-up to Surrey. Essex was the only team to take a point of Surrey

So from being hopeful to stay up we came a commendable second. We were successful due to a great team spirit and some brave team selections.

I add Kevin Martin came away from the weekend undefeated and he has not stopped reminding us!!

Thanks to the following players who made it a successful weekend:

Jane Noremborg, Chris Pennock, Barbara Childs, Janice Flower, Peter Emptage, Kevin Martin, John Kindred and me.

Gary Webb

O55's Captain