

BRITISH LADIES HANDICAP SINGLES AND DOUBLES TOURNAMENTS 2021
Held at Prested 5th – 7th November 2021



Our second big tournament since lock-down, the British Handicap, was back in Prested again for 2021, with a slightly smaller entry than that of 2019, but the standard of play was excellent in both Categories, and our welcome in Essex much enhanced by the splendid café just a few steps away from both dedans.

The age range went from 16 to mid-70s, (with an extra generation in the dedans in the form of Baby Doy, joined a day later by local baby, Baby Baxter. Both appeared supremely uninterested in the sport, but give them time). Even discounting babies, the size range was also quite impressive, with at least three players around 5'0" contrasting with the draughty heights of Vix Harvey and her daughter Bella from Cambridge.



Play was in two categories for both singles and doubles, and was more or less continuous for two and a half days with matches being played to best of 8, or 40 minutes on the clock. Older contestants felt knees begin to buckle as the hours went on; even the younger ones lost a bit of their bounce by Sunday, although -thanks goodness -the knock-out stages were played best to 6.

Meanwhile there were a number of mishaps: a retirement just before the tournament started; a banged nose; a constricted chest; a knocked knee, not to mention Annabel Wyatt who organised the event already unable to play, with a rotator cuff injury. But what of the tennis? Too much to tell: one stand-out game was the Category 1 doubles final between Katie Leppard and Amy Pye against Georgie Willis and Mary Strevens, which went to the wire with the final hit zizzing down the backhand wall to give Katie and Amy victory.

In the Category 2 Singles Final, tall Belle Harvey met the petite newcomer Mary, in a much-anticipated match. Mary played aggressively from the start and bullied Belle into making more errors than she'd given the rest of the weekend. Even when Belle was well ahead in a game, Mary gave her no favours and played almost faultlessly, to win 6/2.



The Category 1 Singles was another mouth-watering prospect: Vix Harvey against Jacquie Siu, with a handicap in Jacquie's favour of Owe half 15/Rec half 15. There was a slow start by Jacqui who was having problems with Vix's angled serves, and the games progressed more or less in tandem to the inevitable 5/5. In the final game, both players still stayed in touch to 40/30 to Jacqui – she managed a cunning shot that flopped just under the dedans, to win the trophy.



Our thanks to Prested staff and members for their hospitality, an excellent dinner and celebration on Saturday night, and for hosting players. To Mark Hobbs and Zac Smith for the marking, and Ian Hawkey for the scoreboard and tennis-based admin. Special thanks to Annabel Wyatt who pulled it all together to create an excellent tournament, helped by Candida Nicholls.

Report by Linda Fairbrother



SINGLES KNOCK OUT MATCHES

Division 1 Singles Semi Finals:	Jacqueline Siu beat Linda Fairbrother 6 - 1
	Vix Harvey beat Sarah Sullivan 6 - 3
Division 2 Singles Semi Finals:	Mary Strevens beat Katy Doy 6 – 2
	Bella Harvey beat Peta Louise Jeffrey 6 - 3
Division 1 Singles Final:	Jacqueline Siu beat Vix Harvey 6 - 5
Division 2 Singles Final:	Mary Strevens beat Bella Harvey 6 - 2

DOUBLES KNOCK OUT MATCHES

Division 1 Doubles:	Katie Leppard & Amy Pye beat Mary Strevens & Georgie Willis
Division 2 Doubles:	Katie Doy & Peta Louise Jeffrey beat Jacqueline Siu & Sarah Sullivan