

## 2019 MASTER HOME INTERNATIONAL WALES

<b>Event Dates:</b>	Friday 26 <sup>th</sup> - Saturday 27 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2019		
<b>Address:</b>	Sport Wales National Centre (SWNC), Sophia Gardens, Cardiff, and Cardiff Squash Rackets Club, Ryder Street, Cardiff		
<b>England Teams:</b>	<b>Men's O40</b>	<b>Men's O60</b>	<b>Women's O35/O45</b>
	Ben Hutton (Captain) Mick Biggs Nick Hargreaves Matt Marshall Mike Potter Tim Burrell	Ian Bradburn (Captain) Allen Barwise Tom Burton Mark Cowley Simon Evenden Jeremy Goulding Gordon McManus	Keeley Johnson (Captain) Kate Bradshaw Nicky Green Ria Kennerley Vix Smith Reka Gay

### MENS OVER 40 RESULTS SUMMARY

Team					Total	Position
		17	18	20	55	1
	9		17	18	44	2
	5	6		16	27	3
	1	5	7		13	4

### MENS OVER 40 REPORT

#### England vs Ireland

Great start from Mike to put us 1 love up with a solid and gutsy 3-1 win. Mike fought tirelessly against a steady Dara O'Flynn. He simply refused to give up, chasing everything and that proved too much for his opponent, picking off his many cross courts and working the space.

Ben started well with great straight hitting which seemed to desert him at 9-4 in the second. John Hurley managed to come back and nick the second. The third and fourth swung either way but Ben managed to straighten up at the crucial times to edge it 3-1

Matt started slowly, struggling to find a good length and opening the court up to soon going 1 down to the tricky Keith Moran. However, after a quick regroup went back on and took control of the T allowing him to hold and flick as he does and started working his opportunities well. Taking the next three games relatively comfortably winning 3-1

This was a tale of the patient and impatient. When Nick was patient with his play he was nip and tuck with his opponent. When he forced the rally he was hurt by the backhand volley drops of Kevin Knox. It was a good battle, but Kevin just came out stronger in the end winning 3-1.

An epic battle between Mick and Neal Murphy. Neal seeking revenge for his narrow defeat last year. It proved to be the case as he edged Mick out 3-2. A great match with plenty of gut busting rallies and some great drops from both. Awarded the best match of the Home Internationals. It really had everything.

So, after a brutal 5 hours of play England edge out Ireland 3-2



## England vs Scotland

First up this morning bright an early at 0930 for us old boys. Tim started us off in dominant fashion with a convincing 3-0 win. Tim's solid length hitting was too much for Barry Masson and helped him open the court up. Well played Tim. Good start for the boys.

Next on Ben had his usual ding-dong with Stuart Ayton. Anyone that knows us would know this would be a tough match. This was the case with a gutsy display of determination and a will to win that saw Ben over the line with a 11-9 in the 5th and revenge for a regional 3-2 reverse. The winner at 9-9 will be one for the grand kids (lol)

Matt up next against Peter O'Hara. We thought this would be a tough one, but Matt was far too strong for a rusty Peter. 2-0 up and Peter retiring in the 3rd. Here was us thinking Matt would be under the cosh this weekend after his pregnancy and new born but he's as fresh as a daisy. He then proceeded to attack the buffet like a hungry Rik Waller.

Nick was his usual physical self. Making his opponent always play one more ball. Solid back court hitting and holding the T making Grant Grey move that little more than he wanted.

Solid 3-0 win from the Machine.

Next up was our other machine all though slightly more abused machine after his brutal match last night. Do I, don't i is probably the best way to describe this one. Being 4-0 up it was probably more important that Biggie got

going but nothing more. Would have been more interesting had it not been a dead rubber, but as Mick said, it's better to lose the battle but win the war. Mick went down 3-1 to Andrew McBean. On to Wales we go!

### England vs Wales

Tim on first again and setting the tone for the rest of us to follow. Too much to handle when he twisted and turned his opponent Simon Dews taking the match comfortably 3-0. So much so that off he went on a mission to find some ales to toast out imminent victory as Ben Hutton followed him with another 3-0 victory against Steve Williams. Ben adrenaline pumping and sniffing victory as England Captain took the first two convincingly then laboured and snuck over the line in the 3rd.

On next was the imperious Matt Marshall continually insisting he isn't as fat as he looks and shouldn't have the nickname 'Pies'. He looked fresh as a daisy when he went on against Andrew Neale. Was slightly complacent at times but such was the superiority that when he needed to, Matt turned it on and won 3-0.

The 'wizard' Mike potter was not to be outdone went off with his usual attitude. Never say die and chasing everything. Too much control over his opponent and had him working from corner to corner and if not for the rhythm breaking blood injury in the 2nd would have been an even more convincing 3-0. Fitter faster stronger would describe it.

Whipping boy Biggsie playing yet another dead rubber struggling mentally to motivate himself after the brutal 5 setter last night. He wins one. Mick had a tough 3-1 against the very experienced and tricky Matt Crowley. After struggling in the 1st and not really hitting his targets, Mick composed himself and steadied the ship with a mixture of hold and length hitting to win in 4.





**Most Important Match of the weekend:** Mike Potter vs Dara O’Flynn

**Best match of the weekend:** Mick Biggs vs Neal Murphy

**Shot of the weekend:** Ben Hutton vs Stuart Ayton @ 9-9 5th

**Quote of the weekend:** Tim Burrell - “I’ve got a nice room! It’s very roomy”

**Best Dancer of the Evening Ceremony:** Mick Biggs



So, England win all three getting stronger as the weekend went on. 3-2 Ireland, 4-1 Scotland and finally 5-0 Wales. It’s been a fantastic weekend and a real honour to be captain of the O40 National Team, made all the more sweeter, being crowned Home International Champions 2019. Thank you to all my team for making my job very easy and for making the weekend one that will stay with us, logged in the memory bank forever. Well played boys!! And thank you everyone involved for making it such a fantastic weekend.

**Ben Hutton**  
**Captain**

## MENS OVER 60 RESULTS SUMMARY

Team					Total	Position
		20	20	20	60	1
	0		1	8	9	4
	1	20		17	38	2
	1	15	4		20	3

## MENS OVER 60 REPORT



The O60s Team met at Cardiff Squash Club 4pm to discuss the team order and tactics for the weekend. Bradders confirmed he wouldn't be able to play due to injury but with Mark Cowley (ex-World Champion) as a replacement the team would be even stronger. Tom Burton was worried about a knee niggle, so we agreed he would play lower down the order. 'Newbie' Gordon McManus was welcomed and presented with an England tie. It was stressed that we should play as a team, that vocal support

would be loud, and no quarter should be given. However, Cowley seemed to be more interested in his specialist subject of dwarfs!

### **England v Ireland**

First on was our number 5, Tom Burton, who was more than a match for Maurice Furgrave until his injury became apparent in the third game when he struggled somewhat ... nevertheless a 3-0 win and we were on our way. Next on was New Boy Gordon who started a little nervously but his mobility and drop shots were too much for Eamonn O'Keefe the Irish captain. Simon Evenden (whose name had been left out of the Tournament brochure!) was pumped up to say the least and he bounced on court like Tigger. His opponent, Michael Rodin, hit the ball extremely hard but was prone to make mistakes and Simon was able to retrieve almost anything. Allen Barwise similarly was just too quick for the Irish No 2 Michael Conlon. Jeremy Goulding, flying the flag at No 1, was initially taken aback by the tenacity of Dave Lalor who had game ball in the first, but normal service was quickly resumed to complete a 5-0 team victory over Ireland with no games dropped.

### **England v Scotland**

With Tom taking no further part in proceedings Simon was first on and his fitness shone through against Scotland's John Charles. Once again Gordon performed with grace and skill to beat Norman Patterson to take us 2-0 up. Jeremy had a potentially tough match against the Scottish captain, Robin Ridley, who has some brilliant winning shots, but Robin got frustrated by many of the ref's early decisions and lost concentration. 3-0 to Jeremy. Mark Cowley was next on and, as expected, showed no mercy. There was a suspicion of a smile on one occasion, but we decided it was wind. His opponent, Dave Hickman, had been Scottish champion 12 years previously but was only just making his comeback after a lengthy absence. 3-0 to the unsmiling assassin. The final match between Mr Barwise and Peter Chivas was undoubtedly the best of the weekend. Peter is fit, gritty and a remarkable retriever playing cross court drop shots from amazing situations. Allen was always just ahead in the first two games but lost the third and had to work incredibly hard to sneak the fourth 16/14 ... a magnificent match. Once again a 5-0 victory for England.

An enjoyable evening was spent at Cardiff SC where a meal was provided and not too many drinks were consumed ... so we had a few more back at the hotel.

### **England v Wales**

This was the match we had expected to be the toughest but the late withdrawal of both the Welsh numbers 1 and 2 came as a bit of an anti-climax. Nevertheless, we had a job to do and concentration was needed. We played on one of the exhibition courts at the Welsh National Institute where there were many spectators and, with the England girls playing on the next court, the atmosphere and camaraderie were excellent. Simon was first on, and keen to maintain his unbeaten record, defeated Wyn Edwards 3-0. Gordon, becoming more confident with each game, and always a classy player to watch, took out Adrian Alderton 3-0. Jeremy played the extremely mobile Welsh No 1 Ceredig Emmanuel (proper Welsh name that!) and won without too much trouble. Mark was expected to win fairly easily but Paul Hounsell, the Welsh No 4, never gave up and was rewarded by taking the third but then lost to Mark 3-1. Allen also had another tough game at No 2 against David Wright, who like Peter Chivas of Scotland, is able to take the pace off the ball and play unexpected boasts and drops ... nevertheless Allen came through to win 3-0. The Championship was ours and it was time to celebrate.



An early evening cocktail party (suppose it would be called pre-drinking nowadays) was arranged in Messrs Bradburn and Cowley's room and our Scottish opponents and their Women's team were invited to our little soiree. A substantial amount of gin and tonic was drunk, nibbles were nibbled and Flower of Scotland played on the ipad several times over and over. Everyone agreed it was a great success.



The evening meal and presentation were also hugely enjoyable with England taking all the silverware. Non playing Captain Bradders accepted the O60s trophy on behalf of the team and thanked the organisers for a brilliant weekend. Lynne Davies was so impressed she made enquiries about becoming English.

**Ian Bradburn**  
**Team Captain**

## WOMENS OVER 35/40 RESULTS SUMMARY

Team					Total	Position
		20	20	19	59	1
	0		15	4	19	3
	0	10		2	12	4
	6	20	20		46	2

## WOMENS OVER 35/40 REPORT



After driving for many hours and sitting in lots of traffic, all England Women's team members finally arrived at Cardiff Squash Club to prepare for a weekend of enjoyable but competitive squash, to determine who will be Women's O35/40s Home Internationals 2019 Champions.



This year our team consisted of 4 new recruits (Nicky Green, Ria Kennerley, Vix Smith and Reka Gay), and 2 old chicks (me and Kate Bradshaw).

#### Team Order

- 1 Nicky Green
- 2 Keeley Johnson
- 3 Ria Kennerley
- 4 Vix Smith
- 5 Kate Bradshaw
- 6 Reka Gay

#### Friday 26th April 2019

First call of duty was for numerous team photos to be taken in our kit, which is always a fun event. After many different poses and photo re-takes, we went and got warmed up for our first match against the always cheerful Irish ladies. They are full of smiles and positivity and are always a pleasure to play.

5pm and Reka Gay went on, very keen, to play her debut match. Reka played Suzanne O'Shaughnessey. Reka played strong and solid squash and took the first game 11/2. Suzanne got her eye in a bit more and gained a few more points in the next two games but Reka then upped her game too and kept control of the match and won comfortably. Great first England cap win for Reka, 3-0, 11/2, 11/7, 11/6.



Next on playing, also her debut match at No 3, was Ria against Ciara Cullen. Ria played really nice squash, taking the ball early and constantly keeping her opponent at behind her, and having total control of the match. Ria won 3-0, 11/4, 11/6, 11/6.

No 1, Nicky Green was next on and was a bit nervous playing her debut match, but Nicky still managed to hit enough quality shots and hit dead nicks to take a 3-0 win over the lovely Irish team captain, Saoirse O'Sullivan. Game scores were 11/5, 11/8, 11/6. Nicky was relieved to get her first match out of the way.

England Women's team are now 3-0 up against Ireland which is a super start to our weekend to try and retain our title.

Vix Smith was our final debut player of the day who was up against Ali McGee who wore the most amazingly bright pink eye protective glasses I ever seen. Vix was on top form and won the first two games quite quickly. The 3rd game consisted of long rallies but Vix took the win 3-0, 11/5, 11/4, 11/7.

Last to play was me, Keeley, team captain, very proud of the new team players so far. I had a really nice game with Siobhan Parker, bit of a slow start for me in the first 2 games, but I finally warmed up physically and mentally for the last game and won 3-0, 11/6, 11/7, 11/2.

First win of the weekend to England ladies.



Dinner was at the club and was a very delicious spaghetti bolognese followed by mini nice cakes. We then all made our way to the hotel for a good night's rest ahead of tomorrow's matches.

### Saturday 27th April 2019

Early rise for everyone as our match against Scotland started at 09.30 and we needed to get a good breakfast inside us.

Reka played Mhairi Dougal (Jim Douglas' daughter). Reka had played Mhairi many times previously but had never beaten her so today's match was a very big match for Reka. They hadn't played each other for quite a few years, but Reka was doubting herself, so we kept telling her that she's a different player now to several years ago. She's such a good player now, she just needed to believe in herself and her capability. It was such great match, both players performed amazingly. Reka played some superb backhand drives and volley drops which received many claps and cheers. All games were very close, it was a nail biting and exciting match, fantastic to watch. Reka played brilliantly and won 3-0, 12/10, 11/9, 12/10, so proud of her on her win as it wasn't just a team win, it was a personal win for her which meant a great deal to her and to us too.



3rd string Ria went on to play Mairi Vines. Ria was far too strong for her opponent, fabulous volleying, she dominated the match from beginning to end and taking the win, very easily, 3-0, 11/4, 11/3, 11/1.

Next on was Nicky Green who was nervous again about playing but once she started, her racket skills showed. Nicky played the lovely Elaine Inglis, they both seemed to enjoy the match, having banter on court with each other. Nicky won comfortably 3-0, 11/5, 11/4, 11/3.

Kate was next on court playing her first match of this Home Internationals but has had previous England caps. Kate played Carole Begg, which was a good game but Kate was too strong and won 3-0 11/6, 11/8, 11/9.

I played Karen Robertson which was fairly played. Good first game, then I upped my performance in the second to go 2-0, but then nearly let the third game slip due to lack of concentration, so I gave myself a little kick of motivation to make sure I didn't drop the third game. 3-0, 11/8, 11/4, 11/9.

It was then time for lunch and to change location for our final and toughest match of the weekend and which would determine which country would take the Home Internationals 2019 title.



2pm and it was kick off time for the big match, England versus Wales at the Cardiff National Sports Centre. It was a breath of fresh air to change clubs and play on some decent courts finally. We knew we were going to be in for a tough match, and even the other 2 counties weren't confident that England were going to be victorious. But though I knew differently, I was very confident we would win but I was still was rather nervous for us all.

The seating behind the glass back court was full, one side with English supporters and the other side full of Welsh supporters. Even though us English were outnumbered, we made enough cheering noises to drown out the Welsh.

First on was Kate versus Clare Catto. This was such a superb match with both players putting in 100% effort and both determined to do their best to win for their country. Kate was on top form, attacking the ball so well, volley at every opportunity and smashing in aggressive across court shots, taking a 2-0 lead and getting the English team and supporters so excited as we were on our way to our first victory against Wales. But we underestimated Clare's grit and determination to not lose and after brilliant rallies and lots of running by both girls, Clare managed to win the 3rd and 4th games making it 2-2 and making the match even more exciting. Kate and Clare went on for the 5th and final game, tired but wanting to win for their country and take the first win. All supporters shouting for their players but still being respectful and clapping the oppositions good shots. It was nip and tuck all the way in the last game, my nerves were shot to pieces throughout the whole game. Kate reached match ball first and we all had our fingers crossed for the win but Clare didn't let the pressure get to her and won the rally making it 10/10, meaning either player had to win the game by 2 clear points. After a long and tense rally, Kate won the point and was once again serving for the match. With fingers crossed, hands covering up eyes, we all willed Kate to win the final point and she did. All the England supporters jumped for joy and cheered. Kate walked off court very happy and was greeted by the team with hugs and high 5s. Match score 3-2, 11/4, 11/6, 8/11, 13/11, 12/10.

### **One nil to England**

Next on was third string Ria Kennerley against the very experienced Helen Barnard. This was predicted to be a tough match but Ria's superb lob serves put Helen under pressure from the start, then Ria would play a great across court drop which Helen was nowhere near and before you knew it, Ria was 1-0 up.

Second game was a bit tougher, Ria's serves weren't as high and Helen started to read her across court drops and would play a straight drive, catching Ria out but Ria still managed to win the game 12/10. In the 3rd game Ria's quality lob serves resumed, causing Helen to struggle to return them and Ria changed the across drop to a straight drop which won her many points. Ria was soon serving for the match and won first time. 3-0 11/6, 12/10, 11/8.

### **Two nil to England**



Next on was Nicky Green versus Hannah Wright-Davies which was also set to be a great match. Nicky started off really well, hitting across court nicks, reverse angles and killing the ball so well. Nicky took the first game quite easy but half way through the second game, Hannah started to move a lot more and read Nicky's shots and made the game tough for Nicky to win but she still managed to take the game 12/10. 2-0, to England, one game to go to secure the match. Hannah came out fighting in game three and started to volley drop off from Nicky's serves which put Nicky under pressure and Hannah won the game. Hannah continued to get stronger and stronger and before we knew it, the match score

was 2-2. It was very tense in the supporters' camp but we were all enjoying watching such a quality match.

Another 5 setter for the England versus Wales match. Nicky and Hannah both tired but keen to win, went on to fight for the last game and match. It was so close and exciting. With one player taking 2-3 point lead then the other playing pulling it back to make the game score level. Nicky finally got to match ball and once again all the England team and supporters had their fingers crossed for the win, but Hannah sadly won the point making it 10-10. Once again each player needed to win by two clear points. It was Wales' turn to win this time.

Game Scores 2-3 11/5, 12/10, 5/11, 7/11, 10/12



A superb match with both players giving their all. The team score was now 2-1 and the pressure was then on for the next two players, Vix and Sarah as the result would either mean England win the Home Internationals or Wales pull it back and make match score 2-2 and really applying the pressure for the No 2 string players. It was all very tense in the England camp!

### Two – one to England

Next on was Vix Smith who I've renamed vicious Vixs and she went on and bashed her opponent up 3-0 in about 5 minutes! No messing about on Vix's part, she went on, attacked the ball, ran around court really fast and beat Sarah Creed rather comfortably. Securing England Women's team win of the Home Internationals 2019. The England camp was jumping for joy, cheering and enjoying the teams victory. 3-0, 11/8, 11/4, 11/5



### Three – one to England

I was so pleased with the team's success as it meant that the pressure was off me in my game against Anna Vaughan-Hawkins. I still wanted to win though to make it a convincing win against Wales. I moved really well in the first game and attacked well but in the second game, I switched off too much as we had won and I lost determination to win and was just going through the motions on court. Anna is too good a player to not put in 100% effort and so I lost the second game 11/9. Losing the second game made me wake up and realise I didn't want to lose. I got my determination back to win. I went on for the third game, head strong and ready to attack and it worked. I continued to do the same in the fourth and secured a win 3-1. 11/5, 9/11, 11/4, 11/5

### Four – one to England – CHAMPIONS for yet another year



Us ladies made our way back to the hotel to get ready for a night of celebrations but we made a detour via the alcohol aisle in the local supermarket on the way back to stock up on lots of bubbles, gin and snacks to enjoy before the presentation dinner and drinks.

The whole team and our supporters (all glammed up) met in "The Gays" room to have our celebration drinks and nibbles. Everyone was very jolly and up for a good night of partying. More photos were taken of us all in glad rags, a face time call from my brother Paul Johnson to congratulate us on our win, then off to the celebration dinner we went.



It was a super night, lots of laughs and lots of alcohol. England taking a clean sweep across all age groups. It was fun collecting our medals as half of the medallions kept falling off the ribbon, after 7 attempts of trying to fix mine, I gave up and just wore the ribbon and held the medal!

Once we received the winning cup, us ladies made it back to the dinner table and followed the tradition of many previous years and filled the cup with bubbles and all England female team members took many celebrations gulps of Prosecco. It's often the highlight of the evening.

There was an awards ceremony for the best female player of the weekend and the two nominees where our lovely Kate Bradshaw and her Welsh opponent, Clare Catto. Both players totally deserved their nomination as their match against each other earlier that day truly was a super match. Kate and Clare played excellent shots, never stopped running and their

determination to win was amazing. Unfortunately Kate didn't win this award, for 2 reasons, one, it wouldn't be fair to have beaten her opponent twice in one day and 2 because she ate a huge chocolate bar all to herself and didn't share it with the judge of the award. He was so upset that Kate didn't give him a piece of chocolate, he gave the 'female player of the tournament' to Clare (no biasedness involved at all) hehehe.



I'd like thank all my fellow team members for playing so well and bringing the trophy home for another year. Thanks to Tony Gay (Reka's husband) for his coaching in between games, and for letting us know that 'there's nothing wrong with straight drop.' That saying will stay with me for a long time.

A huge thanks to my mum and dad, Rosie (Nicky's daughter), Alex and Nick (Kate's sister and brother in-law) and Tony for their fantastic support and company over the weekend, it was lovely to have them all there to cheer us on and make us laugh.

I would also like congratulate both of the England Men's teams for winning their age group event in the Home Internationals. I would like to thank them also for their support, injury care advice, muscle ache spray, squash grips and for being so drunk they made us ladies seem sober, lol.



Well done England, I'm very proud of you all.

**Keeley Johnson**  
**Team Captain**