



SKILLS NIGHT

Thursday 4 November, 2021



Reviving the traditional of skills nights, 18 brave realists gathered in the dedans gallery to form six mixed-ability teams of three.

Skills Night might be described as real tennis meets It's A Knockout. Or jeu de paume meets Jeu Sans Frontières.

The "serve on target" skill - known as the "Coup de la Patagoire" in the heyday of real tennis prior to the French Revolution - usually confounds almost everyone. But the *Three Thirty At Haydock* team of Ben Martin, Alex Gibson & Andrew Hinds scored an astonishing 16 points in two minutes at that skill.

Despite that fine round, *The Haydocks* still came joint last, sharing the wooden spoons with Stephen Bough, Barry Nathan and Iain Harvey, who bore the aptronym, *Three Blind Mice*.

Consistently good play in all seven rounds by Tony Friend, Catherine Walker and Nick Esses, *Three Sheets To The Wind*, won them the coveted prizes of bubbly, chocolate and glory.

The convivial curry meal after the tournament was a great success and such a tonic after the long pandemic-induced break from such things.

Big thanks to professionals Chris Swallow and Jack Clifton plus the MCC admin team, who ran the games and organised the event wonderfully smoothly.

IAN HARRIS