

Otto the birthday boy

Not only is Otto Hart the oldest player at the Head World Masters Squash Championship, but today is his birthday - he turns a youthful 84.

A former badminton player, he only took up squash as a 56-year-old, an age when most are retiring from sport, but since then he has made the most of it and is always keen to travel the world using squash as an excuse.

While New Zealand is to his liking, there have been a couple of mishaps, one self-inflicted the other not, that have blighted his stay so far.

"I picked up some food poisoning the other day which was not very pleasant and caused me to rest up more than expected and I also damaged the thumb on my racket hand which has been well treated by the very good physios you have here.

"I really had no-one to blame but myself for the injury. I am very fond of New Zealand chardonnay. I always enjoy drinking a litre of the wonderful wine, but when you have a second and even start thinking about a third then accidents can occur and that is exactly what happened in my hotel room."

Otto has also struggled a bit with the cooler temperatures on court compared with the warmth of southern France where he could be playing in temperatures up to 40C.

"At my age you need the ball to bounce, to come back to you. It's a long way from the back of the court to the front on old legs," he said. There would be plenty of others who would say that it is a long way at any age, let alone 84.

Otto has a couple of days off to recover from both illness and injury and to enjoy his birthday, which could stretch over two days if he decides to follow the time clocks in both hemispheres.

Otto has a rare affliction that has partially paralysed both sides of his face, making it impossible to smile, but you know that he will be smiling inwardly as he celebrates another year on the planet.

Otto, we all salute you. Cheers!



Birthday boy Otto, bandages and all.

Double Decker bus

This leaves Worcester St (outside the Holy Grail/Rydgess Hotel) and travels via the Christchurch Squash Club, Christchurch Football, Burnside, Squash HQ and Squashways before returning to its starting point. It is a great way to see the city. Take a ride on the old London Double Decker.

Lost a wallet?

On Sunday night a couple from England met the Deputy Mayor of Christchurch, Norm Withers, at the Cocktail Party. Norm gave them one of his business cards. Next day Norm received a call from Ballantynes department store saying that someone had left their wallet on a counter and it had his business card in it. Is this someone from the tournament? If so, please contact Neil Blanchfield at tournament control at the Christchurch Squash Club.

Photos on the web site

A large selection of photos have been uplifted to the website www.worldmasterssquash.com. If you have family and friends at home following the championships, please tell them.

Final Farewell Dinner

Only 30 tickets left. Contact tournament control at the Christchurch Squash Club.

It's a small world

Ian Gardiner, Championship Referees Director, was chatting with Vaman Apte (seeded 9/16 men's 50-54) yesterday. Vaman's father played test cricket for India and was coached by L.P. Jai. Ian's mother, Edna, still alive and well at 93, used to be a pen friend of a L.P. Jai from Bombay (Mumbai). You guessed it - the same L.P. Jai. Even with India's one billion people the world can sometimes be frighteningly small.

Lost and found

Please check at the venue where you played or tournament control at the Christchurch Squash Club.

Event HQ phone number is 374 6536.

**Wine and Cheese at the Burnside Squash Club,
6pm tonight. All welcome.**

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