



Newsletter

Issue 3 Spring-Summer 2023

SUMMERTIME! – Club Chair, Jenny Nicol

Welcome to the start of another Summer season. With evenings lengthening, when you look around, we all think how lucky we are to play in such lovely surroundings.

CLUBHOUSE WORK COMPLETED

The Clubhouse refurbishments have been completed and so we now have a very welcoming and comfortable space to host the calendar of social events organised by Judy Knight, our Social Secretary. Alongside these events we will be staging periodic fun tournaments, usually organised by the indefatigable Chris Hood. Please do come along and support them as not only are they fun but they provide the opportunity to meet members you might not normally come across.



Hallowe'en produced some exotic visitors to the quiz night in the clubhouse. Many more social events are in the pipeline - see below!.

REACHING OUT TO NEW PLAYERS

Having said how lucky we are to play tennis where we do, I would like to let you know that the Committee are just starting to consider how to offer access to some sectors of the community less fortunate than ourselves. Linda McMahon has for some time been coaching a group of children who benefit from participating in small coaching groups with extra supervision, and I would like to offer more Club support to this activity. We have also been approached by a lady who coordinates activities for Ukrainian refugees and I think the club can offer facilities to them also. It will be an effective way to increase the Club's connection with the local community and widen accessibility to the game we all enjoy.

RED COURT NEGOTIATIONS

Negotiations over the work needed to improve the drainage of the clay courts has been ongoing and most recently has been escalated to an independent

professional arbiter. I would like to thank you all for your long-suffering patience on this issue. I remain confident that the situation will be sorted out soon and will continue to press hard for a successful outcome.

COMMITTEE CALL

We are looking for new Committee members, particularly for the role of Safeguarding, and before long, we will be needing a new Chair. So please come forward if you'd like to help steer this wonderful Club into the future. To find out more, have a chat with any Committee member, or me at jennynicol12@gmail.com or phone 07507 782469.

LOTS TO LOOK FORWARD TO

Our club social calendar is healthy and growing. This is what's ahead. Check the website for details and additions:

- Mon, May 8** - King Charles Coronation tournament
- Fri, June 9** - Make your own greetings cards with pressed flowers and/or block printing
- Fri, June 23** - Summer Quiz Night
- Sun, July 23** - Wimbledon Finals Day
- Thu-Sun, Sep 14-17** - New format Club Championship - tournament with BBQ (see page 3)
- Fri, Sep 29** - Macmillan Coffee Morning, charity fund raiser with coffee, cakes, quizzes, raffle
- Fri, Oct 28** - Hallowe'en Quiz and Supper Evening
- Wed, Dec 6** - Wreath making with mulled wine, mince pies, followed by clubhouse decoration
- Sat, Dec 9** - Christmas Party

There is a **DEFIBRILLATOR** on the outside wall of the clubhouse, Code **C159X** Code is also on the defibrillator box.

Rugby club licence granted

Shropshire Council have approved Ludlow Rugby Club's application for its alcohol licence, with the provisos listed below:

3 large (more than 500 people) events a year only, including the Ludlow Spring Festival.

2 of these large events may span 3 days, provided they finish by 9pm. 2-day events must finish by 11pm.

8 smaller (less than 500 people) outdoor events a year.

21 days minimum between events.

Event management plan to be submitted to Regulatory Authorities and Safety Advisory Group.

Alcohol served outside from 9am to 9pm for Ludlow Spring Festival, and site to be cleared by 9:30pm.

Smaller events to finish by 11pm.

No parking allowed on the access track on the days of the Spring Festival.

Access track will be used for vehicular access for the Spring Festival. This will be used by vintage cars each day before the festival is open to the public and after it is closed.

Four additional pedestrian exits from the Rugby Club grounds to be provided - location not specified.

Spring Festival parking on the Cricket Ground. Park and ride may be provided. Only disabled parking at the Rugby Club.

Obligatory noise monitoring, at the boundary of the nearest property, at least twice, within an hour of the start of the event and an hour of the event finish time.

The Tennis Club is keen to continue its amicable relationship with the Rugby Club. The joint tennis and bowls committee will be closely monitoring the effect of this new licence, particularly how the Spring Festival impacts the tennis and bowls club and the local area.

Tennis - the generation game

Four generations of the Sellek family have played tennis at Ludlow – you may well encounter John and Christine, now the senior section of the family, or Guy and Zoe, the mid-section, or Tilly and Toby, the juniors of the clan. Guy has gone on to play all over Europe and here he describes how his love of the sport has developed over the years.

My First Tennis

I was about six when I first stepped onto a tennis court. My parents, Christine and John, took us to a park and I didn't have clue how to hit the ball, especially with a heavy wooden racket. But the experience was enough to get me excited about playing.

Ludlow Castle

Back in the 1970s the Sellek family joined Ludlow Castle Tennis Club. In those days the club had two shale courts and three grass courts. There was also a small sandpit near the clubhouse where I spent much of my time while my Mum and Dad were playing. I remember that next to the club was an allotment worked by Mr Adams. He was always very friendly, as were the members of the club. It soon felt like an extension of home.

I wanted to play tennis like my parents and pestered them to hit a few balls with me. I also played with other children of a similar age at the club when there was a spare court. In the winter and before the days of floodlights my Dad used to pick me up from school to rush to the club to play before it got dark - sometimes just 15-20 minutes.

Junior Tournaments & Leagues

At the age of 8 played in my first tournament, the Shropshire Junior Championships at Shrewsbury. I remember John Hardwick took me and three other Ludlow juniors. It seemed a big event at the time, and I can remember it like yesterday. I won one match out of three and like the other Ludlow players none of us progressed to the second day. Despite this, the feeling of competition made me want more. The first tournament I won was the Leominster under 12 boy singles and I've still got the trophy.

County Tennis

I progressed to the Shropshire County junior teams and I was also invited to train with the Hereford and Worcester junior squad. The latter lasted only until they

found out I actually lived in Shropshire! Eventually I progressed to the Shropshire men's county team.

League Tennis

During the 1980s Ludlow Castle 1sts were captained by my dad and eventually moved to the top division of the Shropshire league. In 1989 we came within a few points of winning it.

Some of my best memories are of playing for the club. My dad and I also joined the Burway Tennis Club.

Ludlow Castle Club Championships

One of the highlights of the tennis year was the Ludlow Castle Club Championships. Gary Walters beat me in men's singles finals more than once and, being a touch competitive, I used to take 12 months to get over it! I played many times in the men's doubles with my dad and the mixed with my mum. I'm not sure that they always enjoyed playing with me, but overall it was a great thing to do as a family.

I continued playing tennis at Staffordshire University, against other uni sides, and joined a local club too – a great way to meet people. After uni, we moved to Gloucestershire and I joined the East Glos Club in Cheltenham. With 30 courts this was fantastic. Today my wife Zoe and our three children play there as well as Ludlow. Toby and Tilly play junior National Club League, in the club championships and are starting in the adult teams, much as I did in Ludlow. I was invited to play for the Gloucestershire men's county team and various men's seniors county teams.

Seniors Tennis

At the age of 35 the world of seniors tennis opened up to me. I started to play on the International Tennis Federation (ITF) Seniors Tour at some wonderful venues and met a whole new group of people. The first time I played in the British Seniors Grass Court Championships at the All

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Sellek family players John (left), Guy and Toby (centre), Zoe and Tilly (right) with club members Julie Humble, Carolyn Michie and John Turner.



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The Court Locks code changes from May 1! Details on new Member ship card.

England Club. I was fortunate enough to play on Court 17. I managed to win but irrespective of the result it was awesome to walk through the gates of Wimbledon knowing that you're going to play.

I ended the year ranked 31 in the world for Over 35 Mens Singles and won my first ITF Seniors singles title, which felt unbelievable.

Since then, I've played at Queens Club, on Centre Court Eastbourne and reached the semi-finals of the



European Championships for Over 45s Doubles in Turkey. There, I met Leonid Stanislavskyi who at age 93 was playing in the over 85 singles! Leonid is now aged 98 and still plays. You can see him on You

Tube playing with Rafa Nadal and he told me that tennis keeps him alive. If I'm still alive in 46 years' time I want to be like him!

In 1999 I was asked to play for England in the Four Nations Championships in Dublin. Although it's certainly not professional sport I felt very proud putting on my England track suit and representing my country.

Our Family

Our three children are the fourth generation of our family to play tennis. We're now starting to play matches together. Toby and I travel back from Cheltenham to play league matches for Ludlow which reminds me of when I used to play with my dad for the same teams. There are not many sports where you can share these experiences together. Toby was fortunate to be a ball boy at the ATP Tour Finals at the O2 for two years. Being on court with Federer, Nadal and Djokovic are lasting memories. It's great that my parents still play tennis and if our children are still playing at my age and having as much fun as I do then that will be the greatest measure of success.

The Future

Tennis has opened many doors for me and my family, taken me to some great places and introduced me to many interesting people. However, if I could only play once more anywhere in the world, it would be at Ludlow Castle, with my family.

CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS

Whilst Finals Day was under represented (and under supported) a good afternoon with good quality tennis prevailed...



Winners: Mixed: Chris Dowden and Linda McMahon (left) defeated Guy and Tilly Sellek. Ladies Doubles plate: Tilly and Zoe Sellek (with organiser John Turner, right) defeated Mo Walker and Jackie Thomson. Men's Singles: Chris Dowden defeated Guy Sellek in a



three set thriller with Chris winning the championship tie break.

Special thanks to Chris Hood for supporting me and making sure this event was an eventual success! - John Turner

NEW LOOK FOR NEXT TOURNAMENT

The 2023 Club Championships tournament will run in a new format. It will be held over four days, Sept 14-17. More details later via Clubspark and website.

Coach Richard Tennant to take on new challenges

Richard Tennant, our tennis coach for the last 9 years, is leaving in June, to pursue new challenges. Well-known to many club members, especially juniors, Richard has been a very popular and successful coach, who will be missed. We thank him for all he's done for the Club. i2C are meanwhile managing the search for a new coach.

COUNTY SENIORS' SUCCESS

Ludlow's Iain MacDonald and Seabury Salmon played in every fixture without dropping a set for Shropshire in the 2022 Men Over 65s national league, with the county winning all their matches and gaining promotion to national division 2. Shropshire beat Derbyshire, Durham, Northumberland, Cumbria and Northants to top the group. Iain (right in the picture) and Seab also retained the 2023 Shropshire 65 Men's Doubles title that they also won in 2022.



Fellow Ludlow veteran John Sellek (left in the picture) won the 75 Men's Doubles title, partnering Shrewsbury Club member Geoff Norton (right). The seniors men's and ladies' competitions drew 80 entries, a record.



In the County Senior Mixed doubles, Ludlow's Linda McMahon and her partner David Williams were narrowly defeated in the 50s final.

Next year, let's see more Ludlow Castle players in these competitions! We have the players, and it's fun!

Newcomers' Corner

MATT MORRIS

South Shropshire born and bred, I moved to Ludlow nine years ago. I played football through my twenties, got hooked on road bike racing in my thirties, then gravel riding and ultra endurance racing in my forties.

After becoming weary of the cold winter miles and a couple of years shy of hitting fifty, it felt like a good time to try something new.



My 8 year old daughter Eleri started weekly group sessions at the club in Easter 2021, and I became a parent member so we could play the odd game together. Since then, she's become more keen and has this year joined the Shropshire county under 9s squad. Realising the need to up my game to keep up with her, I took the plunge and became a full member in February.

I've only played tennis a handful of times in the past, so it's been a bit of learning curve. The yellow tennis balls come at you a bit quicker than the orange ones my daughter sends my way! Luckily, I've been able to sneakily listen in on her sessions with Richard Tennant, so managing to pick up a few pointers here and there.

Since joining the club, I try and play a singles match each week and attend the club socials (I don't think I'll be troubling the Tuesday night boys just yet though!). Everyone's been very welcoming and encouraging. I've definitely caught the tennis bug and if I can tame my erratic forehand/backhand/volley/service, my aim is to be consistent enough to take part in the club league in the future. Thank you to everyone for the warm welcome!

LARA RICHARDSON

My late dad was a member of Ludlow Tennis Club. He brought me along to a social, as a guest, when I was 14. I remember everyone being really friendly and having a great time.

I'm now 41 and have recently moved back to Ludlow, having spent the last 20 years working in London and Surrey.



I was an avid squash player, but having a couple of years off due to lockdowns meant that my 40 year old body decided that squash was a bit too jarring. So, I found my old tennis racquet (that my dad had bought for me when I was 12!) and attended my first of many socials.

It is genuinely the best thing I've done since moving back. While there's a huge range of players; everyone is incredibly welcoming and willing to play a friendly game at socials. I've had some great coaching sessions with Richard, taken numerous tips from Chris Hood; I've made friends, improved my game, (there was plenty of room for that,) laughed a lot and finally bought myself a new tennis racquet. Although I'm keeping hold of the old one.

While Ludlow Tennis Club has brought many new memories – it's cherishing some old ones that means the most. The Club reminds me of my dad – a far superior player to me. But I'm working on it.

EXTERNAL LEAGUE TEAM NEWS

LADIES

In the Hereford and Worcester League, Ladies A won 2 matches, but lost 4, finishing 6th out of 7. Unfortunately, we lost a couple of key championship tie breaks, so perhaps need to practice these! Had we gained just 2 more points, we would have avoided relegation, but unfortunately this was not to be! Onwards and upwards next season!

Ladies A squad: Rosie Connolly, Rhian Jones, Mary Lambert, Linda McMahon, Carolyn Michie, Sarah Pass



Ladies A teamers Linda McMahon, Carolyn Michie (back), Rhian Jones and Rosie Connolly (front).
Image by Trevor Patchett

Our Ladies' B team finally completed their winter season in H&W Division 5W on a soggy evening in early April! We narrowly missed promotion, finishing joint 3rd on points, despite a winning draw v Hallow B.

Ladies B squad: Jenny Nicol, Julie Humble, Stephanie Brayford, Teresa Pass, Holly Fothergill + guest appearances from Deborah Rackham and Christine Hood!

The Ladies' C Team had a very enjoyable first season in the H&W Winter league. We had a couple of hard-fought, long matches against Eardisley and Ledbury who were the overall winners and won our 5 other matches, finishing 3rd. We enjoyed the team camaraderie and meeting the ladies of other clubs. Refreshments were pretty good too, home and away!

Ladies C squad: Deborah Rackham, Jane Cook, Debbie Locke, Val Cooke, Nicky Chase, Judy Knight, Gladys Rhodes, Jackie Thomson, Helen Graham.

MEN

In the Men's H&W Winter League, the A team came 2nd in Div 3 West, just missing promotion again. The standard of play in these top leagues is impressive, and the team has done well to maintain its position this season.

Men's A squad: Guy and Toby Sellek, Ian Pearmain, Tom Bordewey, Alister Price, Iain MacDonald, Martyn Jones, Jon Lewis.

Our Men's B Team played in the H&W Winter League for the first time, and had a very successful season. We won 7 of our 8 matches, 4 of these were 4-0 rubber wins. We narrowly lost our first match 3-1 after three tie breaks; which in the end made all the difference to the final table, with our team coming a close second to Leominster. However, finishing second has secured promotion to Division 6 next season. So many congratulations and well done to all 12 players in the squad.

Men's B squad : Andy Cooke, Peter Simon (played every match and topped table for games won), Duncan Johnson, Andrew Joyce, Ed Povey, Chris Davies-Bell, Paul Pelling, Mark Edwards, Angus Cooke, Nick Wilding, John Turner, John Sellek.

MIXED

The Shropshire Autumn League Mixed A Team narrowly missed promotion, ending third place in division 2. But disappointment for Mixed A in H&W Div 2 Winter League, relegated despite valiant efforts by all players. A number of matches were hampered by poor weather and the inflexibility of other teams to offer suitable match dates. The team are looking forward to a better season next year.

Mixed A squad : Martyn Jones, Rhian Jones, Linda McMahon, Alister Price

Our Mixed B team finished 6th out of 7 in the H&W Winter League with 4 losses and 2 losing draws. A couple of key players had injuries, but we managed to field a team for each fixture, with 10 players playing over the season - 5 men and 5 ladies.

Mixed B squad: Alister Price, Carolyn Michie, Seabury Salmon, Julie Humble, Iain MacDonald, Mary Lambert, Rosie Connolly, Rob Tanner, Richard Smith, Debbie Locke

Our Mixed 3rds had a good debut season, finishing third behind two strong competitors, Leominster B and Hallow C. Well done to all the squad.

Mixed C squad: Duncan Johnson, Paul Pelling, Nick Wilding, Stephanie Brayford, Jane Cook, Debbie Locke.