

The ROMPA RECORDER

May 2022

Editor - Clay Iles

Open Day

A superb club 'open day' in April hopefully put an end to the rigours of winter tennis. At last sunnier, longer days. No more cancelled matches and sessions, skidding, soaking balls, low lying sun, gloves and hats, even coats on occasions, shall or shan't we tennis, is it too windy, is it too wet?

As tennis secretary Peter Stretton said, 'the open day was an opportunity to show what Meads tennis is all about.'

And show it did. In beautiful spring, nay, summer weather the club was seen at its best, each court staging games for a variety of members of differing levels of play. At the highest level there was an exhibition match between Chris Rummins, Hazel Sneath, Jung Tadsee and Alex Caulfield. In the afternoon Luciano ran a most successful and relaxed American tournament.

The winner was Mary Thorn. Lucy Parkin came 2nd.

Meanwhile Linda was selling £300 worth of raffle tickets for which members had donated a vast array of prizes.

Hosts Sheila and Clare made everyone welcome with a picnic like spread and games.

Competitions included 'Guess the number of eggs in the jar.' Winner – James Sneath. 'Find the hidden egg.' Winner – Jeremy Morrison.

Open day brought 6 new members.

Treasure Hunt

Earlier in April 10 teams took part in the walking treasure trail, organized by Clare and Brian Greenwell. The trail began at the club and ended at The Pilot (why not?). The trail explored Meads and Holywell. Nimble footers Gill and Garf Collins completed the trail in the fastest time. Joint winners were Sue and Kevin Boakes and Joanne and Tony Gale.



Treasure hunters enjoying some post hunt refreshments in The Pilot

Grass.

Sometime in March between songs of chiff chaff, great tit and other spring birds I once again heard the excited cry, 'Grass will soon be in!' As regular as the cuckoo, never a year passes without hearing it.

Seeing that the club does not have use of the grass courts until the third week in June this joyful rather premature exclamation sums up the

British tennis players' relationship to grass. It must be the influence of those green swards somewhere up the road, Wimbledon I think.

This particular enthusiasm however is not one I've been able to share.

But then my grass court experiences go back years to the days when many tennis clubs had more grass courts than any other surface.

Some clubs short of funds didn't employ a groundsman and members looked after the grass.

Grass courts need rest, so a club, for example, with three or four grass courts and one or two hard, was going to be pressed to lay off the grass for a while. The grass was therefore grossly over-used, any reliable bounce impossible and rallies non-existent. No wonder I learned how to volley!

This doesn't apply, of course, to the Meads Club grass courts where we are fortunate to have the courts tended by the staff who look after the grass in Devonshire Park. Many regard those courts as being second only to or even superior to the grass at Wimbledon.

Meads members should bear that in mind when they turn up to play on the grass in the summer only to have their hopes of an exciting game dashed when their reserved court is placed out of action. It may have rained in the morning or deemed necessary for rest. Frustrating certainly, but in the end it's for the benefit of the grass.

Clay's Coaxing Corner: Tip 1. Volleys.

Gently throw a ball underarm to someone and they'll reach out in front to catch it. Why? That's where they see the ball enter their hand. So the golden rule in volleying is to strike the ball way out in front. You see it hit the racket. No backswing, no follow through. Just a short push

movement, out in front, forehand or backhand. Hence volleys are often regarded as the easiest of shots. You have to do so little.

Sunday Club Afternoon April 22nd

Consternation! Numbers were suddenly down. Relax. Most of the club were spotted at the Congress wallowing in the London Philharmonic Concert. What a splendid way to spend a Sunday afternoon. So glad the music has returned after covid. 6 concerts a year, mainly during the winter. If you need the occasional break from club afternoon, there's the answer - music at the Congress.

Club Afternoons

They come from the four corners. Some cycle, others walk, the majority arrive by car. A weekly Saturday and Sunday afternoon ritual, shared by tennis clubs throughout the land – club afternoon. Often the heart beat of a club, where members meet members, where you play and change partners, where new members find their feet. Many never miss it. Not always for the faint hearted though. Beginners can feel intimidated and should check their standard of play is up to it. Not that it need be high. Plop in a serve, hit two or three balls over the net. Can you score? Do you know the rules. Do you know where to stand? That's beginner as 'new' to the game rather than returning to it after a few years absence. There is a difference. But even the seasoned club player can feel nervous. 'Will my service go in?' Why more don't serve underarm I'll never understand, especially these days when pros occasionally resort to it.

As an aside and for those nervous about their service gyrations I remember a player, he wasn't bad either and approaching county level, who used to serve like this – First he'd bend forward and tap the court firmly with his racket, then he'd arch over backwards to tap the ground twice behind him, after which he'd whirl his racket six times round his head before finally striking the ball.

Imagine as receiver having to wait for that and then again if he missed his first serve!

Debbie maintains, 'It's the flexibility I like (not that serve. Debbie means Club afternoon) You can arrange a doubles during the week and someone will drop out. So you have to ring round for a replacement. None of that on club afternoon. Turn up when you like and games are arranged for you. I love it.'

Not strictly competitive as in having an ultimate winner, like an American tournament say, most players try to win on club afternoon, even if it's only for the 20 minutes or so they are on court. Otherwise there would be no point in playing. Altercations are rare and much of the afternoon is filled with bonhomie and jest. Occasional mishaps, however, can occur, 'You should stand there.' 'My coach tells me to stand here.' 'When I say leave it, leave it. I'll take it.' 'When I do you miss it.' All good fun!

Club sessions.

A Reminder – Saturdays and Sundays 1.30-4p.m.

Mondays	1.30 – 3.30 p.m.	- Men
Tuesdays	9.30 – 11.30 a.m.	
Wednesdays	5 – 7 p.m.	

Thursdays	9 – 11 a.m.	
Fridays	1.30 – 3.30 p.m.	- Ladies

Clay's Coaxing Corner Tip 2.

Here's something for those playing in the singles event in the club championships. Why tennis is so easy!!?!?!? You only hit the ball in two directions – Across the court or down the line, that's why. The problem is which one?

Watch the pros and call out where they hit the ball. It often goes like this – cross court, cross court, cross court, cross court, down the line, cross court, cross court.

Something like 80% of shots go across the court. It's the long diagonal, more chance of the ball going in. Percentage play! You've heard that before.

Club Championships – Power of a plea (but then we all knew that).

On April 20th tennis secretary Peter emailed all members the awful news that the entries for the Club Championships due to close within 2 days, were down to the meagre number of 118, against last year's total of 145. Consternation, as 'shall I, shan't I enter?' ruminations went round the club. Within 24 hours the entry had suddenly risen to 149. So much for a plea and a record for the tournament I believe.

Now a second plea. Will all those who have entered please make sure you play your first round by June 3rd, when entries for the plate will be made. Remember 2 normal sets, tiebreak 6-6, 3rd set – championship tie break – first to 10.

Pavilion Redevelopment

Garf reports that the architect Simon Barker of Barker Shorten Architects has submitted plans based on the agreed overall design for planning permission. Sources for funding are being explored.

The new storage unit has been connected to mains electricity.

The area released by the old shed will be temporarily turfed. This will be a convenient place for the Wendy house, which is being repaired after gale damage (Garf neglects to say he alone is repairing it - more like rebuilding it. The Wendy house, which gave fun to so many small children, was actually wrecked. The workmen next door to court 1 slyly watch (picking up tips?) Garf add carpentry to his talents of tennis, writing, enterprise and music)

The screens in front of the pavilion were also damaged. Temporary repairs have been made. The club is still investigating building a practice wall. Full planning permission was required and granted.

Juniors

May Day Junior Tournament

7-9 yrs Winner – Theo Westlake.

 Runner up - George Parr

10-12 yrs Winner- Stanley Revell

 Runner up – Marin Bartet

Well played Gabby Pacheco-Lagoda

During the Easter Holidays grade 3 under 18 Girls Tunbridge Wells. She also singles and doubles and and doubles at the Weald tournament. Gabby also the under 14 County Cup, in her doubles and 3 singles out



Gabby won the tournament In won the under 14 under 16 singles Grade 3 played for Sussex in Dorset, winning all of 4.

Coaching for Juniors

Junior courses – Saturdays 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

For juniors 6 – 16 yrs.

Contact cestari.luciano@gmail.com

Tennis Camp for Juniors May 31st – June 3rd

Contact cestari.luciano@gmail.com

Roberto

Sadly, no more coaching from Roberto. He has left the coaching team at Meads to put in more time working with his daughters Gabby and Lily. As well as the coaching it means travelling with them to tournaments, thereby reducing his available time at the club. Roberto's commitment to Gabby and Lily in all weathers has been an inspiration to other children at the club. The family remain members of the club. We wish them very well and that the two girls will go on to fulfil their potential.

Jubilee Day at Rompa is on Friday June 3rd.

Jess, Sheila and Clare are running a family fun day for members, families and friends.

In the morning a two-generation tournament from 10 a.m, family games from 1 p.m, American tournament from 2 p.m. Prizes, Pimms and drinks on sale. Please dress in red, white and blue. Bring your own picnic.

Teams - A Summary of Results So Far...

This summer we have entered an impressive **7 teams** into Sussex leagues and we also have a mixed team (veterans) playing midweek



Hazel and Lucy in action on Chichester Clay

evenings. All our teams with the exception of the mixed veterans have played one or two matches and results have generally been encouraging.

The **ladies first team** have five points from two matches with a 4-0 victory over Hampden Park a recent highlight.

The **ladies second team** have won one and lost one.

The **ladies third team** secured an impressive 4-0 victory in their first match of the season.

The **ladies National League first team** have lost their first two matches against very strong opposition.

The **men's firsts** got off to a great start with a 4-0 victory and have high hopes of promotion.

The **men's seconds** have six points from a possible eight after a draw and a 4-0 victory against local rivals, Hampden Park.

We have a new **third team** captained by Barry Winn and they recorded their first points recently in an encouraging draw against Cooden Beach and followed this up with another draw against Plumpton.

We also have a **mixed veterans team** playing in the Mike Comber Cup but they have yet to play any fixtures.



The newly formed third team after their draw with Plumpton

A complete list of fixtures and results for all our teams is on our website on the Tennis and “Teams” page and also on the noticeboard in the clubhouse. You will see that there is normally a match on a Sunday throughout the summer starting at 10.30. So, why not grab a coffee from the clubhouse and cheer on one of our teams one sunny Sunday morning.

Crispin steps down as treasurer.

Some tasks are always there – beating away, crucial yet unheralded.

Club treasurer is one such. Crispin took on the role in 2011, forthwith steering the club's finances through thick and sometimes thin.

Two words about Crispin. First, he is a fine tennis player, not overtly competitive, but one who strikes the ball with pace and control. What more could you want on a tennis court?

Second, his retiring nature didn't seem suitable for club executioner.

Until – we were by the side of court 1. A hawk, falcon even, hurled itself at an unsuspecting, pecking pigeon by court 2. After some racket waving and yelling the predator flew off leaving the dazed, stricken pigeon under the bench.

Three of us gazed at each other. It would have to be dispatched. By whom ...?

Instantly Crispin took the initiative, 'I'll do it.'

Two of us sheepishly made off, leaving Crispin to his solitary task. I lingered by the club gate guiltily and watched Crispin seek out a dustbin lid and gardening spade.

Minutes later as he approached I said to an unperturbed Crispin, 'Are you okay?'

'Oh,' he said. 'The pigeon was only dazed. When I got close, he flew off.' So that was all right then. Cool, authority guiding our finances. We have been lucky.

The Rompa Recorder - Member INTERVIEW



Barry Winn

When did you start playing tennis? In my teens with a close friend who had his own court. I didn't play regularly until my mid-twenties. I flew executive jets and my racket was the first item into my overnight bag.

Why did you start playing? Tennis was my second choice of sport after soccer. I took it up for fear of injuring myself at football. Also not having a nine to five job made it difficult to play regularly for a team.

Are you keen on other sports? I enjoy skiing and have skied in Canada, the USA, France, Switzerland and Italy. I also play bad golf. My best ever handicap was eighteen.

Apart from sport what else interests you? History, geography and anything to do with aviation. I love reading, with a real book that is, and not a digital monstrosity! I'm also interested in politics, but with all the craziness going on perhaps I should say it angers me.

How did you get into aviation? In my early teens I tried the Scouts, Sea Scouts and Life Boys. None of them interested me until I tried the Air

Cadets. They took us to RAF Manston for 'air experience' and to fly a Chipmunk. It was wonderful. When the pilot told me I was a natural I was hooked. From that day aged 13 I set my sights on becoming a pilot.

When I was 18 I began my Private Pilots Licence. At the King Air Flying Club, Biggin Hill I won the student of the year award. After obtaining my degree I embarked on a Commercial Pilots Licence Course. I then obtained a position with an executive jet operator MAM based at Heathrow. Then I joined Monarch Airlines flying the B737 out of Gatwick. I moved on to Singapore Airlines as Commander. I then joined Qatar Airways before returning to Singapore Airlines and flew with them until my retirement in 2017.

Do you miss flying? Yes I do, but not the constant jet lag.

What brought you to Sussex? I'm originally from Tonbridge. Working overseas I sent my 3 daughters to Moira House. On my occasional visits to the school I would see the lovely club opposite and think 'that looks a nice club to join when I come home'.

Do you enjoy music? I love music and going to gigs. I enjoy everything from classical and new age to progressive and Hard Rock. The best band for me is Genesis.

Who would be your fantasy dinner guests – A tricky one. Table extensions out - James Delingpole, Ricky Gervais, Matthew McConaughey, Denzil Washington, Julia Roberts, Halle Berry, Judy Dench, Mike Rutherford, Novak Djokovic, and Julian Assange. There'd be so much talk, no time to eat.

Do you have a favourite travel destination? Mexico, Canada, in particular British Columbia, Italy and New Zealand. In these places I

found the people warm and friendly, the food delicious, lifestyle laid back and scenery beautiful.

Is there anything about you that might surprise other members? In the executive jet world I flew many VIPs. They included Paul McCartney and family, Steven Spielberg and family, Sir James Goldsmith, Elton John, Jodie Foster, Lee Kwan Yew, the Emir of Qatar, David Steele with a Liberal party delegation to meet the Supreme Soviet in Moscow and Leningrad in 1983.

Thank you Barry for sharing the details of your life with us.

If anyone would like to contribute news or articles to the next edition of:

The Rompa Recorder please contact Clay Iles. Clay.iles1@hotmail.com