

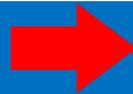
THE ROMPA RECORDER

YOUR QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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Features in this month's issue include:



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***MEETING MARIA**



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GETTING TO KNOW YOU!
reveals all....

Membership Secretary Maria Louka

*What drew you to become a Meads LTC member? - I was encouraged to join by Noel Bennett . He is my neighbour and three years ago we met at a drinks party. Having recovered from an operation and become fitter, I felt able to play again.

*How long have you lived in the area ? - I moved from North London and have lived locally for three years.

*What career path did you follow? - Secretarial. My father was keen for me to be an accountant as I was good at Maths at school and also sat Additional Maths and Statistics. However, I ended up staying on for an extra year to take up the secretarial course.

*How did you manage during the various Lockdowns? - I thought I might finally be able to edit my novel but instead I ended up working more regularly at St Wilfrid's Hospice as a number of older volunteers had dropped out. I was very happy to do so.

*Although an experienced player, are there areas of your game you are still keen to improve? - I would have said improving my movement around the court by playing more regularly but having joined the club on March 27th, I injured myself on March 30th!

*Which players have inspired you over the years? - I loved the way Chris Evert kept her cool on court and I liked her outfits. More recently, it would be Nadal and Tsitsipas.

*Do you have any favourite haunts in and around Eastbourne? - The Dolphin in South Street has great live music and lovely food. I also like the light and airy Beach Deck with its great views. It used to be The Secret Garden where a useless gardener like me could stock up on attractive silk plants and flowers.

*Do you have any particular favourites when it comes to authors/music/TV/films? - John Grisham and Jilly Cooper; Elvis, The Beatles, Motown and Greek/Latin music; period dramas and Strictly; The Shawshank Redemption, Dirty Dancing and Pretty Woman.

*Who would be guests at your fantasy dinner party? - Elvis (in black leather), Morgan Freeman, Thierry Henry and Lewis Hamilton. We could feast on meze, lamb and Debbie's Eton Mess from the ROMPA Kitchen!

*Did you have any childhood ambitions? - I wanted to be a dancer and attend ballet and tap classes but this was unheard of for a Greek Cypriot girl in the 60s.

* In the event of a fire, what precious items would you grab first? - Mum and Dad's irreplaceable British passports (they arrived in the UK from Cyprus in 1952). Plus my cat, Kiki.

*Finally, is there anything about you that might surprise your fellow members? - I have played with Roy Emerson and against Virginia Wade in a round robin corporate event at Queen's Club.

(Many thanks for your full and entertaining responses!)



FINALS DAY REPORT

With typical efficiency and foresight, Tennis Secretary Peter Stretton had arranged for glorious weather to gild the key day in the Meads LTC calendar and a feast of competitive tennis kept a healthy crowd royally entertained. Quite apart from the action on the court and the excellent catering provided by the ROMPA Kitchen, the day featured a romantic proposal and an unusual supporter in the form of a tortoise so no one could accuse Meads LTC of laying on a dull event!



The two singles finals got things underway in fine style and although Jamie Francis and Polly McCarthy fought gamely till the end, their opponents proved able to operate at such a consistently high level that the results of each match were never really in doubt. Lem Cassidy mixed up his shots to devastating effect to secure the men's title while Gabby Pacheco-Lagoda grew into the ladies' game and moved Polly cleverly around the court before rounding things off and tasting victory with a raking crosscourt forehand.

The Vets Men's Doubles was a well contested battle characterised by long tactical rallies and judicious use of the lob as the sun proved ever more problematic. Despite some piercing backhands from Bernard Lien-Lambert and Colin Lockett's amazing court coverage, Noel Bennett and Mike Dixon's greater consistency eventually won the day and continued their successful run in the event.



The Mixed Doubles proved an equally absorbing struggle with the sun again proving tricky to counteract. Hazel Sneath and Chris Rummins combined well with the former executing ground strokes of great depth and the latter showing Inspector Gadget-like reach to pull off impressive volleys. However, their young opponents turned out hard nuts to crack with Tom Large serving powerfully and Gabby Pacheco-Lagoda eventually finding her range to hit some crunching ground strokes. Their straight sets victory was well earned and the level of tennis played by both pairs was undoubtedly one of the day's highlights.



The Vets Mixed Final required Colin Lockett to show great resilience after his previous contest and he was soon involved in an even closer match with his

partner, Mary Thorn. Up against Sue and Kevin Boakes, they found themselves under pressure from Kevin's incisive volleys and sliced serves which helped the Boakes to secure the opening set. Mary Thorn's incredibly consistent ground strokes proved more telling in the second set, however, backed up by some accurate passing shots from Colin, and their win meant that a tie break beckoned. Although behind initially, Kevin and the steady Sue came back strongly and secured victory in one of the day's tightest battles.



The Men's Doubles was an altogether more clear cut affair, Chris Rummins and Lem Cassidy combining to excellent effect to make life very difficult for Jung Tadsee and Aaron Box. Straining every sinew, the latter proved unable to solve the problems posed by Chris with his clever angles and Lem with his powerful serves and variation, a straight sets win ensuing.

The Ladies' Doubles saw Gabby Pacheco-Lagoda and Polly McCarthy combine against Hazel Sneath and Lucy Parkin in what proved to be an intriguing tactical contest. Taking the pace off the ball at times, Hazel and Lucy lured their young opponents into over hitting on occasion and at 4-4 there was little between the pairs in the opening set. Polly and Gabby steadied themselves to win the next two games, however, and proceeded to pull away to secure the following set 6-2 with Polly serving strongly and Gabby putting away more volleys.

With the sun beginning to set on a fantastic day's play, the spectators were then treated to the closest of all contests in the Plate Final. Brigid Argyle and Barry Winn seemed up against it to begin with as Yvo Miles' steady play and Andrew Murphy's decisive volleys brought them the first set. As Brigid's effervescent net play and Barry's ever more reliable ground strokes began to

take effect, however, the match began to swing and after securing the second set a fantastically entertaining tie break also went Brigid and Barry's way - eventually!



Clare Greenwell and Mary Thorn had, of course, won the Vets Ladies' title prior to Finals Day itself and therefore joined the ranks of those who proudly received their trophies from Linda Saunt and Garf Collins. All involved in making Finals Day such a success must take a bow, too, not least the Umpires who had to maintain concentration levels on a baking morning and afternoon, the Rompa Kitchen staff who catered to the thirsty hordes and to the organiser par excellence, Peter Stretton. He may have looked the picture of swan like serenity but no doubt much frantic paddling was going on under the surface!



COACHING CHAT

With the end of the season in sight, and playing conditions having returned to something like normal 'post-pandemic', it seemed like an appropriate time to sit down with Luciano Cestari and chat about the excellent progress being made by our coaching team.

In post since October 2019, one might have thought that Luciano would have felt seriously handicapped by the Covid outbreak but he actually saw it as a positive in that indoor facilities locally were more adversely

affected while Meads LTC benefited from its outside courts and players were duly attracted to the club. The junior element has been a focus since he took over and he feels that we are, in fact, ahead of schedule in terms of increased membership and the programme being offered to them. Now the challenge will be to keep our young players linked to Meads LTC and subsequently turn them into senior members. Luciano's links with Eastbourne College and St Andrew's, particularly his work with an elite group at the former, can only be of additional benefit.

Luciano enjoys coaching all ages but the juniors especially. Whoever he is working with, however, he tries to make caring for their particular needs his priority. After all, while a session may be one of several for him, for his pupil it is a singular opportunity. And, of course, Luciano is only one of three experienced coaches available to our members. He speaks very highly of Clay Iles and Roberto Pacheco-Escobar and feels that as a trio they complement each other to excellent effect. Indeed, he feels that Clay is quite possibly the most talented technical coach he has seen in action while Roberto's absorption of detail and drills over a decade has made him ever more adept at bringing the best out of players.

Luciano is possibly working in cooler conditions than those he experienced in Argentina and Iberia but he has never come across more impressive grass courts and coaching colleagues who visit are frequently bowled over by surfaces we perhaps take for granted at times. Having coached top ranked junior players in the past, Luciano certainly shares members' hopes that Gabby Pacheco-Lagoda may one day be our own Emma Raducanu. With a nod to the past, however, I finished our chat by asking him to name someone he had particularly admired over the years and he chose Fabrice Santoro for his skilful ball control.

(Thanks to Luciano for making time to talk in his busy schedule.)



HOUSEKEEPING/DIARY DATES

*A reminder that courts 1/2 will be out of action on October 4th for maintenance.

*On October 10th there will be a Junior Tournament with three age groups competing between 9am and 12pm, Luciano reports. He will then be donning his chef's hat to oversee a fund raising BBQ from 2pm onwards. Hopefully, members will have registered their interest by October 6th and paid in advance via the club post box or through Linda Saunt, Peter Stretton, Maria Louka or Hazel Sneath.

*Jess Gisby has kindly taken on the role of Junior Rep on the Committee. (She can be contacted using the club e-mail.) Thanks go to George Roseman, her predecessor, for his hard work in the post.

Bernard Lien-Lambert, meanwhile, has agreed to take on responsibility for looking after the courts.

*A reminder that the defibrillator code is displayed on the club notice board and that the Guest Book is back in use.

*Tuesday Club Session - this runs from 9.30 - 11am for returners/beginners so do consider coming along. The ROMPA Kitchen will be open as an added attraction! A Ladies' Club Session will run on Fridays from 1.30-3.30pm commencing October 1st.

*With the nights fair drawing in, as they say in Scotland, a reminder that the Floodlight meters are to be found in the right hand cupboard in the kitchen area. The rate is £4 per hour with a cut off time of 9pm in order to comply with planning regulations.

*Well done to the winners of the most recent American Bank Holiday Tournament, Chris Kilroy and Julie Bon. Thanks as ever, also, to Julie for monitoring weekend numbers.

*Thanks to Val Rimmer and all those who supported her Macmillan Coffee Morning event. Also to Garf Collins and his team of weeders and to Hazel Sneath for her tireless work in sending e-mails to keep us abreast of club news.

*With the progress and achievements of our Juniors in mind, do keep an eye on our Facebook page. It is great to be able to celebrate Sienna's U10 wins in Crawley and Croydon and keep track of the mark made by Gabby anywhere from Edinburgh to the south coast!

(I would be more than happy to receive updates on the achievements of younger players via my e-mail mei ard@sky.com)



TEAM NEWS



What a great end to the competitive season for Meads LTC! We are celebrating a trio of triumphs with the Ladies' 1st and 2nd teams securing promotion alongside the Men's 2nd team. And how close the Ladies' 3rd team came to joining them, finishing its league programme in third place but on the same points as the runners up. Unfortunately, the Men's 1st team ended up being relegated but they too had their successes including a 4-0 victory against Seaford.

Jubilant Captain of the Ladies' 1st team, Hazel Sneath, congratulated the nine players used on their unbeaten season while Men's 2nd team skipper, Noel Bennett, was equally proud and felt that having a tight knit

group at his disposal who play together regularly was a key factor in the success.



No doubt members will have kept track of our teams' progress via coverage in the local paper or the club's Facebook page. Thanks go to roving reporter/photographer Mike Dixon for keeping Meads LTC in the news and also for overseeing fixtures in the Comber Cup where his managerial skills (if not necessarily results) will doubtless have drawn the attention of a certain Daniel (Levy, not Wasp!).

CREATIVE CORNER



LIKE MANY OF OUR MEMBERS, I WAS INSPIRED BY EMMA RADUCANUS TRIUMPH IN THE US OPEN AND THE JOY WITH WHICH SHE PLAYED SEEMED TO LIFT THE MOOD OF THE WHOLE NATION HOPEFULLY THE FOLLOWING TRIBUTE CAPTURES THE 'EMMA EFFECT'....

Yours was a heady concoction, of technique and power and grace,

But what we'll most remember is that smile upon your face!

It lifted all our spirits in a Covid/Brexit world

You put a spring in every step with a range of skills unfurled

The fearlessness of youth seemed to help at every stage

Till it seemed you scarce believed the ease with which each page

In your fairy story turned, to reveal a landmark new,

Then the final challenge came and you somehow saw things through.

Those high wire tension rallies and the fight shown by your foe

Took late night watchers' breath away and spread a golden glow.

Big star in the Big Apple, you laid on a Broadway show

And we thank you for those shots, that smile, for a future bright we know!

HAPPY PLAYING, EVERYONE!

