



THE ROMPA RECORDER

October 2023 Editor - Clay Iles

Welcome to the Autumn 2023 edition of the Rompa Recorder. Read about another highly successful Finals Day and much, much more. As always, Clay would welcome articles and contributions from members for the next edition at the start of 2024.

Tennis Etiquette

Etiquette plays an important part in the smooth running of a game. In view of the number of new members at Meads, some of whom have not played club tennis, important points to remember are:-

- *Get balls to the server. Nothing diminishes interest in a game more than when the person serving has to constantly trudge around fetching balls to start the point. Former Wimbledon referee Alan Mills, a fine player (the only Davis Cup player to have won a match 6-0, 6-0, 6-0) was regarded for his tennis court manners. Sometimes named 'Too good coming one,' from his genial comment after losing a rally whilst flipping a ball to the server so the next point could start.
- *When receiving serve try not to return the ball if it is a fault. It often confuses and delays starting the point.
- *When the ball is out on your side of the court, then call it out. Don't assume your opponent(s) sees it the same as you.
- *The server should always call the score before serving. It saves confusion and possible disagreement later in the game when no one seems to know the score.

The Summer Fair wasn't quite Dylan Thomas; but not far off.

'Round galleries and shies and stalls, pennies were burning holes in a hundred pockets. A tune on an ice cream cornet. A tuck of dresses. The sun shone strong from the bellying beer tents, the smell of the vinegar on shelled cockles. A rolling of trousers, a sunburn of girls and a lark of boys. Pale young men with larded hair, fags stuck to their lower lips, squinted along their swivel sighted rifles and aimed at ping pong balls dancing on fountains.

Not that, but there was enough going on to remind members, guests and passers by that Meads Tennis is not all twisting serves, adroit backhands and la-di-da doubles.



On the hottest day of the year, glistening Chris Kilroy on the table tennis table was the hero.

For three hours he endlessly blocked celluloid balls back to the groans

and sighs of frustrated all comers. We lined up one after the other for the opportunity to beat him. Only one player managed it, Ethan from Leaper & Stanbrook. He promptly then beat Sarah, in a play-off and immediately handed his £10 prize money to the club.

Elsewhere competitions were dotted around the club – putting golf balls onto a 10 pound note where Johnny took charge, slinging coins to a champagne bottle supervised by Glenda. Bernard controlled the coconut shying. There were stalls too under the watchful eyes, of Tony, Di, Jackie – bric a brac, clothes, books, drink, tennis balls and other add ons - grips, vibration dampeners, key rings. While in the pavilion several members had donated food, pastries and cakes. Thank you **Clare** and **Hazel** for giving up so much time and putting in such effort and enthusiasm to make the day a success.

BOOK CHOICE

What was it like?

Sometimes I'm asked, how was it? Years ago playing tournaments with minute headed wooden rackets that weighed a ton. I'm surprised those

days saw so few double handed backhands. You needed two hands to pick a racket up, let alone wield it. When every man on a grass court sped to the net as they served. And when women approached for a volley far more than men do today.

Anyone eager to know how it was should buy, beg for or borrow a copy of *A Handful of Summers* by Gordon Forbes. A book 'full of bubbling wit' as The Times described it.

The modest yet evocative title alone captures some of the golden years of tennis in the late fifties and sixties, 'golden' before avid professionalism took hold. So aptly described by the author a superb, classy, lean South African player who mixed with and sometimes beat the best in the world. He never captured a major singles title although he was twice South African Champion, in 1959 and 1961.

In those days everyone played singles and doubles and Forbes was a superb doubles player with his regular partner Abe Segal. Forbes's tennis was very, very good but it was as a writer that he excelled. Sequels were *Too soon to Panic* – also good and *I'll take the Sunny Side* – a memoir, which I have not read, but plan to.

The Club Championships – Sponsored by Leaper

Stanbrook

A highlight of the year. After weeks of fine weather, the forecast for finals day was so grim that Hazel in her gentle wisdom re-scheduled the start of play for 9 a.m. on the Sunday morning. Such is the interest in the tournament finals that no one, members and friends were deterred by that early Sunday morning start. With all four courts in play at the same



time choosing matches to watch was not straightforward. Engrossed in one match there was constant consternation of missing out on what was

happening on other courts. What's happening on court 3? Who's winning on court 1?

To get everything completed before the heavens were due to open at lunchtime was no easy matter.

THE RESULTS...

Men's Singles final – Jonathon Scriven beat Peter Bray 7-5, 6-1.

A surprise victory for some; the power of Peter's forehand and first serve, the nagging penetration of his fine backhand would surely prevail. But those expecting such a win hadn't considered Jonathon's shrewd match playing ability.

A tall, strapping player, he toned down the natural aggression of his own game to confound Peter's strengths with touches and consistent soft slices. Even Jonathon's usually belligerent forehand sometimes became a rather gentle undercut thrust.

He is club champion for the second year running.



**Ladies Singles Final –
Emma bt Polly**

**McCarthy Williams 7-
6, 6-4.**

Several times a young
teenager has won the

tournament or at least been in the final. Not that Polly the beaten
finalist is anywhere near a veteran.

This match comprised two closely fought sets either of which could have
gone the other way. Emma's ground strokes, not especially aggressive
but effective in their consistency, teased errors from Polly.

**Mens Doubles Final – Chris Rummins/Jung Tadsee bt Peter
Bray/Jonathon Scriven 7-6, 7-5.**

All four players displayed an abundance of power and spin in a close,
spirited encounter. The first set was decided by a tie break 11-9. More
serve and volley might have decided the match earlier one way or the
other.

Ladies Doubles Final

**Mars Schellevis/Polly McCarthy bt Lucy Parkin/Sarah King Spooner 7-6,
6-3**

Full of exciting rallies and close games this match did much to dispel the
gloom of the increasing grey, windy weather. Lucy and Sarah had a point
to win the first set at 5-3, when a fine serve by Polly saved the set. Lots
of good, reflex volleys by all four players compensated for some erratic
serving.



OTHER RESULTS

Mixed Doubles Final

- Jonathon

Scriven/Mars

Schellevis bt Chris

Rummins/Hazel Sneath 6-1,7-6.

Vets Mens Singles Final - John Kulenicz bt Mike Dixon 6-2, 6-2.

Vets Men's Doubles Final - Kevin Boakes/Chris Kilroy bt John

Haining/Nick Price 6-4, 6-7, Tie Break.

Vets Mixed Doubles Final - Kevin Boakes/Sue Boakes bt Colin

Lockett/Brigid Argyle 6-2, 6-2

The Plate (pictured)

Simon Gisby/Carol Robson bt Patrick Horsefield/Peter Turvey

THE ROMPA RECORDER INTERVIEW – Garf Collins

Each edition of the Rompa Recorder includes an interview with a member. This time I'm delighted to chat to **Garf Collins**. For the past 7 years he's been the club's vice chairman.

- 1. Why, when and where did you start playing tennis?** My wife Gill, and I used to play short tennis with our son. I also played occasional games of tennis with Gill (a sobering experience!) That was in London. I didn't play regularly until I joined ROMPA, which must have been 11 years ago.

- 2. Have you played other sports?** Table tennis was a passion in my teens and twenties. I'm not sure if running counts as a sport but for many decades I've jogged 3 or 4 miles every morning. Also I swim in the sea most days between April and November.
- 3. I know you enjoy music. Is that only classical? Which composer's music do you especially enjoy?** Apart from classical music I like modern jazz. Strange name for something from the 50s and 60s. Difficult to choose which classical composers. At the moment it's Schubert. Jazz composer – Miles Davis.
- 4. Do you play any instruments?** I played the violin for many years until I had a problem with a seized-up finger. I'm now looking for another instrument. The vibraphone is one possibility.
- 5. As a published author of short stories which writers have influenced you?** Writers I've enjoyed include Anton Chekhov, Edith Wharton, Somerset Maugham, P.G Wodehouse, Richmal Crompton and William Trevor. Difficult to say how far they've influenced me. You'd have to read something I've written to judge that.
- 6. Do you like watching tennis? Other sports?** I do like watching tennis. I don't watch other sport regularly, but I did enjoy our women's football team in their great triumphs.
- 7. What has been your career?** I started work as a physicist. Then after 8 years I joined the computer industry in the early days of online systems, which proved to be a lucky choice. Over the years I moved from technical roles to managing the business. I particularly enjoyed working with small businesses and helping them grow to commercial viability.

8. Major tasks you have undertaken for the club include the sale of the land by court 1 and pavilion re-development. How did you deal with the challenges? The sale had unexpected legal issues and the pavilion quite properly demanded taking account of many points of view against a background of rapidly increasing costs. Both tasks have increased my respect for Leslie Wilson – the original chairman. He took on a disused playing field, managed to buy the land for the club and then get the current pavilion built. In comparison I'm enjoying a walk in the park.

9. Which well known people would you ask to a small dinner party? Melvyn Bragg, Emma Barnett, Kenneth Clark, Jeremy Al-Khalili, Shirley Williams and Gill Collins. If the conversation flags Gill can always think of a topic.

10. Is there anything about you that might surprise other members? I once sat in the Queen's (now King's) coach. The one in which he went to the Abbey for the Coronation. We met a man not far from Sydney, Australia who told us he had been making the Queen's coach. He took us to a large outhouse where he flung open the doors and there was the coach in all its glory. As we sat in the coach he proudly pointed to the heating, the bullet proof glass and the soft springing. In the doors there was marquetry from UK history e.g. a small piece of the Mary Rose. Asked how he would get the coach to England he casually said, '747.' We have no idea where the funding came from. His previous connection with the royal family, he explained, was looking after the Duke's four-in-hand horses.

One final thing - Am I allowed a commercial?

It takes a lot of time and effort by the members of the committee to keep a members tennis club like Meads going well. We could always do with some help.

Currently we need someone to assist the membership secretary. The main work is in the early months as renewals become due. We also need someone to take on

the role of tennis secretary. Organising the annual tournaments is a typical task. Please ask Hazel for more information.

FOR SALE –Bargain of the month! 2 premium rolls of 32mm Astro Turf surplus to requirements.

Size 3m x 4m and 2m x 4m – Total 20 sqm.

Builder's merchant's price = £15 per sq. m inc vat (value approx. £300)

Price £125. Phone Graham Hibbert Tel 01323 416 279. Mob. 07802 883

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All proceeds to a Macmillan coffee morning.

MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNING for Cancer Support.



Organised by **Val**. Held at the end of September, this year proved more successful than ever.

The event raised nearly £1750.

Thank you club members who donated cakes and raffle prizes and those who worked tirelessly in the kitchen.

The Eastbourne Rock Choir, led by Charlotte Nash treated everyone to a set of lovely four-part harmony songs.

THE NEW PAVILION

Thank you Garf, Hazel, Brian and Linda for steering the club towards revamped, brighter premises. The plan as previously exhibited in the pavilion proved unaffordable.

Work now begins on the new plan **early in November**.

Current plan: *Toilet/ shower rooms to be refurbished. *Social space modernised. *New patio and doors. *Improved lighting. *Kitchen



extended. *Refitted with serving hatch to club rooms. *Same entrance but kitchen separated from entrance lobby.

The building changes will provide a lighter more convenient facility

with modern equipment and services.

Cost £69,000 approx. Builder – Reid & Co. Completion – end of February, chosen to minimise impact on club life.

THE BENHAM TROPHY is awarded each year to a junior member who has shown the most application and enthusiasm.

Congratulations to this year's winner **William Roseman**.

Seen here receiving his trophy from Hazel and Ethan Hunter of Leaper Stanbrook.

STOOLBALL a mixture of cricket, rounders and baseball has always been popular in Sussex. Some Meads Club members already represent MTC stoolball team. Sarah, who captains the team, now in Division 1, is anxious to increase numbers keen to play. Those interested in taking part in this summer game should contact Sarah King-Spooner Tel.07866 257319

TENNIS TRIP to the DIEPPE TENNIS & SQUASH CLUB.

The club has 3 indoor and 5 outdoor tennis courts.

Many members have expressed interest.

Anyone else keen to join the group should contact **Bernard Tel. 07775 907668**

JUNIOR TENNIS CAMP - 24th- 27th October.

For children from 5-14 years old. Coaches – Olly, Noah. For more details please contact Luciano – cestari.luciano @gmail.com. Tel. 07538 656905

FINALLY IN SADNESS WE REMEMBER DAVID PROSSER. He passed away earlier this summer. A former county tennis player he was a member of ROMPA for several years. He won the club championships in 1994 and 1995.

If anyone would like to contribute to the next edition of the ROMPA RECORDER please contact Clay Iles – clay.iles1@hotmail.com.
Thank you Mike for formatting, distribution and photography