

Good afternoon ladies & gentlemen, honoured guests, past & present committee members, coaches, enthusiastic tennis players and generous supporters!

I am Chris Wilson, chairman of the club. Thank you for coming to help us celebrate this special anniversary for Ramsbury Tennis Club and for finding your way here despite the change of venue due to the weather! The more mature among you will be pleased to hear that I am not going to emulate Wimbledon tradition by singing in the rain and giving a Cliff Richard impression!

First of all I must thank those who have made this event possible: Ian Smith & Roger Henry for organising the whole thing, the food and drink and the display, Lois, Isobel, Chunyuan and others for helping with the bar and tea, and Bob Osmond for getting us in here at short notice.

I would also like to thank John and Shelley Sawers for offering us their garden at Upcot, which would have been a fitting venue as their courts were often used by the club in the early days, including for County grass court training. I'm delighted we have Sir Geoffrey Owen with us, whose family home it was and who is still President of Wiltshire LTA. We are sorry to have missed Upcot this time.

I am not going to say a lot as you will probably have seen some notes about the history of the club on our website, in the parish magazine or attached to your invitation; and there is a display of trophies, photographs and memorabilia by the stage which you should have a look at if you haven't already!

But there are a few things I do need to say about this wonderful club which in 50 years has come from nothing to 7 courts, over 400 members and Wiltshire Club of the Year - for the 4th time! Of course, it's all about people who get things done. I'm delighted that we have at least one original committee member here - Ethel Hutchings our President, who was a driving force from the beginning and with Moyra James was so influential in developing the juniors as a key part of the club which continues to this day.

We were delighted to award a new juniors trophy this year in Ethel's honour, which is on display today. I mentioned our 7 courts, and a key part of the club's success has been the excellent facilities that have been built up and progressively enhanced over the past 50 years. For most of that time the man behind our progress has been Ian Smith, committee stalwart and currently our Honorary Treasurer.

We have a photograph here of Ian helping build our first shed, and from there things have gone from strength to strength. With the support of the Recreation Centre and generous donors, some of whom I'm pleased are here today, we built a new pavilion opened by Greg Rusedski in 2009, converted courts 1&2 to clay and last year opened courts 6&7.

With those facilities, membership has grown to its current remarkable level, also supported by a great coaching offer for both juniors and adults. We are pleased to have a number of our coaches past and present here today, but I couldn't let the moment pass without singling out Roger Henry for the work he has done as a coach himself, then with the coaches and supporting the juniors in particular, as well as his work with the County. We are still growing, and looking to the future.

There are dreams of covering courts 6&7 to provide indoor courts when we can raise the funds, so more people can play more tennis in all weathers! So in conclusion please join me in giving three cheers for Ramsbury Tennis Club! Before you continue enjoying yourselves with the tea and reminiscing, we have one task to perform, which is to award the trophy for Best Junior of the Year which hasn't been awarded for the past 3 years. I would like to ask Jennifer Gorrington to present the trophy to the remarkable Andrew Luo.