

JUNE/JULY 2009 NEWSLETTER

COURT RE-OPENING - HISTORY IN THE MAKING

Welcome to the new look Club newsletter, and breaking with the tradition of introducing key dates first, it seems only fitting that we commence with a feature on our court-reopening event, which took place on Sunday 21st June. Around 70 members and guests turned-up for an afternoon of fun, and to witness the grand ribbon cutting ceremony by one of the Club's youngest members together with one of the longest serving members, Holly Hoban and Phyllis Jessop respectively. Along with a memorable speech by Ken Jessop, the afternoon included exhibition tennis, a barbecue, competitions and was a successful celebration of this new chapter in the Club's history.



Photos from left to right: at the ribbon, Holly Hoban and Phyllis Jessop; the speed serving competition was a particular hit; children enjoying Keith's coaching session.

KEY DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Final's Day Sunday 19th July

Schedule of play

10am ladies' singles / 12pm men's singles / 2pm ladies' doubles / 4pm men's doubles / 6pm mixed doubles

(subject to change by up to 1hour, so all finalists should be at the Club at least 1hour before their match is scheduled to commence)

NEW COACHING SCHEDULE

JUNIORS - Mondays and Wednesdays (to recommence in September)

ADULTS - Saturdays (ongoing)

10:00-11:00 Beginners

11:00-12:00 Improvers

12:00-13:00 Intermediates

These sessions are pay and play costing £8 for members and £10 for non-members.

ADULTS - Wednesdays (to commence on Wednesday 9th September)

For junior tennis courses, please call Ben on 07812 250921, or go online to book places. Adult sessions are drop-in, but there are discounts for block bookings.

ADULTS— Monday 19:00 - 20:30 (technical and tactical play, not for beginners) £8 per session

NB for this session only, please contact Keith on 0790 5769230

SUMMER Coaching

For juniors of all ages (5-16years) on Monday to Friday starting on the following dates:

July 20th

August 3rd

August 10th

August 24th

For further information, visit <http://gardenstennis.com/summer-camps.php>

Full details also available via the coaching link on the website.

For all enquiries, please call Ben on 07812 250921.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Club committee meets once a month to discuss a variety of matters relating to the maintenance and efficient running of the Club on your behalf. If anyone would like to see the minutes of these meetings then please contact David Riggs at clonmore99@btinternet.com A summary of June's meeting is outlined below:

Finance

Subscription income this membership year is currently down on last year, but it was agreed that this is expected due to the re-surfacing work. Membership however is expected to increase now that the work is complete.

Bar sales are considerably down from the same point in 2008. Again it was agreed that this was to be expected in light of the recent re-surfacing work. Andrew stated our main objective is for the bar's profit-margin to return to something closer to its long-run average of 50%.

Financing of lights on court two was also discussed. It should be possible to upgrade to a phase 3 electrical supply – the necessary first step to installing the additional lights.

Ben asked if there is a therapy room available for hire, since he would have at least three people potentially interested. It was generally agreed that there is no appropriate space in the hall for that type of rental use.

Membership

The current membership numbers are:

Full = 97 Junior = 30 Social = 10. Otherwise, in Juliet's absence, this item was not discussed.

Coaching

Ben gave an update on the current situation: the Saturday morning sessions have been re-established; and there are also mini tennis sessions on Mondays & Wednesdays. Ben would like to develop the Friday sessions for keener children.

Ben's proposed a straightforward strategy of running good, enjoyable sessions and for most of the promotion of the coaching programme to be generated by word-of-mouth.

In terms of marketing, he also hopes to be able to develop a single webpage where people can sign up and pay for coaching sessions. Ben said he was very keen to push the junior programme and asked if it would be possible to get a list of (junior) non-renewals from previous years. Ben argued that under-7s are the key to developing a successful junior programme.

Ben asked about the policy regarding guest fees for non-members having lessons. These are £2 per time.

Club Development & Re-development

A discussion took place on backdrops for the courts. An estimate has been received and it is hoped to have new backdrops in place soon. There was some discussion about the desirability of placing lateral netting on court 4. Brian said there are different opacities of material – and he would look into it.

James highlighted that the frequency of Club use is increasingly significantly, such that we may well have to adopt a system of blocking out certain peak periods for specific groups – and not just for social tennis, as is currently the case.

David asked if we could turn the direction of the doors leading from court 3 to 4, and from court 4 to 5 & 6; since they currently open down a set of steps. This was approved.

Grand Re-opening Event

This was discussed and a format for the event agreed.

Social Events & Newsletter Items

In light of Michael's absence, and the lengthy discussion about the re-opening event, this item was not otherwise discussed.

A.O.B.

Brian proposed getting wi-fi for the bar. While it was noted that it isn't easy for the Club to get a cheap deal, because we are a business client, this was approved.

It was also suggested that wi-fi, in combination with a coffee machine in the bar could help attract daytime use. Brian kindly offered to donate his coffee machine.

Nigel reported that Robin Reeves has entered the Club in a table-tennis competition, and around eight members have declared an interest in playing in the Club team.

However, the current table is not up-to-scratch and a new one would cost about £400.

The purchase of a new table was approved.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 9th July, rather than 2nd, due to the Wimbledon Championships.

WANTED : CHILDRENS' RACQUETS

The Club coach Ben will be running a couple of sessions for St Paul's Summer Club during week beginning 27 July (Monday afternoon and Wednesday morning) - two courts will be reserved during these sessions. However it is anticipated that 20 racquets will be required in total, so if anyone has any racquets lying around which they wouldn't mind loaning Ben for these sessions, please contact either Juliet or Ben directly.

"COMMENT FROM" BRIAN HOBAN

Editor - Can you remind our members of your role and responsibility on the Gardens' Club committee?"

Brian - In general I have been responsible for aspects of the Club involving maintenance, refurbishment and replacement.

Editor - You were instrumental in the resurfacing of the tennis courts, would you say this was one of the largest undertakings the Club has ever taken?"

Brian - Without doubt it is the biggest project completed since I guess the building was constructed. We tinkered around on the edges, installing a new deck and a new bar, various improvements to areas around the courts, and many attempts to revive the courts, but in the end came to the conclusion that they had gone beyond their useful lifetime, and they let the Club and members down.

Editor - What would you say was the biggest challenge on the project?"

Brian - The proposal to remove the shale worried many people who loved the surface for its qualities of pace, feel and play. In time after considerable explanation I think people were reassured that we would place great emphasis on choosing a surface that had as many shale qualities as possible, but without the impossible maintenance. I hope members will agree that it's speed and cushioning have fulfilled those goals.

Editor - How will this change the Club for the future?"

Brian - The new courts will allow us to present a perfect playing surface nearly 52 weeks of the year. The extra court, and extra playing time over a year will allow greater capacity for members to enjoy playing.

Editor - How do you believe the Club will receive a payback from its investment?"

Brian - Most importantly current members should be rewarded with better playing facilities which will help their enjoyment, and new potential members should will be encouraged to join in order play on courts that are hopefully amongst the best locally available.

Editor - lastly, with this years Wimbledon now finished, who are you tipping to win the men's final next year?"

Brian - As a fellow Celt I have to opt for Andy Murray.

Editor - Finally, I'm sure the rest of the committee and all Club members will join me in saying a big "thank you" for all your efforts and support in coordinating and managing this significant refurbishment programme for the benefit of the Club.

NEW CLUB DROP-IN SESSIONS

A new Wednesday morning drop-in session (9.30 - 11.30am) has started but needs more participants; please phone Juliet (020 8789 0865) for more information.

Another idea currently being considered is a junior Club evening for older juniors, to compliment the younger junior sessions on a Monday and Wednesday evenings. The date and time is currently under review, and full details will be found through the coaching link on the website.

WIMBLEDON FORTNIGHT AND VOLUNTEERS NEEDED !

Wimbledon fortnight was another busy period for the Club, and a special thank you to all Club members who volunteered for a session behind the bar, and in particular a big thank you to Nigel and Julie for their extensive efforts running the bar, and Tony and Karen for doing the barbecue.

However more volunteers are still needed to help run the bar, not only for Club sessions throughout the year but also for private weekend functions, a valuable source of income for the Club. Training will be given. Anyone interested in helping, please see Nigel for details.

SURREY WINTER LEAGUE - FINAL POSITIONS

The Club has now received confirmation of the outturn for last season.

Men's i, 2nd, promoted one place
Men's ii, 2nd, promoted one place
Men's iii, 1st, promoted two places
Men's iv 2nd, promoted one place
Ladies' i, 1st, promoted two places
Ladies' ii, 5th, demoted two places

Overall an excellent season for the Club, and we wish the teams well in their respective new divisions in next season's winter league.

CLUB SESSION ETIQUETTE

Club sessions (Tuesdays and Fridays from 6pm and Sundays from 2pm) are the main opportunity to drop in and enjoy some social tennis (men's, ladies' and mixed doubles). Members should be prepared to mix in with whoever is there and at the end of a set, come off court to mix around again or find out who is waiting to play. These sessions have priority on courts 1, 2, 3 and 4.

At all busy times, unless playing in a match, members are asked to be aware of others waiting to play and not to stay on court indefinitely.

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

The committee wishes to thank all our members, both existing and new, for their continued patience during the refurbishment works. We now have four courts to be very proud of, and if you haven't come along to test them out, why not pop down to one of the Club sessions either during the week or on a Sunday afternoon.

We are also in need of volunteers for the finals day, and looking for umpires, linesmen (and women) and ball boys. If you or a member of your family are willing to help out, please contact James Wright.

And finally as a reminder, if you have any comments or feedback, please log onto the website @ <http://www.gardenstennis.co.uk/blog.html>.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Hon. Secretary	David Riggs	07720 774000	clonmore99@btinternet.com
Treasurer	Andrew Elliot-Frey	0208 785 6371	aefrey@btinternet.com
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