

Chairpersons's News

This is always a good time of year. The winter is just about over; the evenings are getting lighter and the summer season is fast approaching. Let's hope we have a better summer than the last two years...!! Speaking of which, the club social evening will be changing back to Tuesdays as from April 7th so lets see as many members up there as possible – the more people that turn up, the better the sessions are.

AGM – Summary of Discussions

The AGM was held on March 15th back in the Old King's Head. This year was well attended, so thanks to all those that turned up and joined in the discussions. It's important that we get as wide a view as possible rather than leave everything up to the committee. Key items of note are as follows:-

Team Successes -- The Mens I and Mixed I teams both repeated their successes of 2006 and again came top of their divisions in the Summer 2008 leagues. Congratulations to all who played. Present results were mixed for all the winter leagues with some teams giving a stronger performance than others.

Coaching -- Dean stood down as club coach back in December last year when he took on full time employment elsewhere. Dean's efforts with the club have seen a growing junior section over the last couple of years and a very positive strengthening of coaching generally within the club. Dean's experience, enthusiasm and support in both coaching and other social events, has been greatly appreciated by everyone.

Dean continues coaching with the club during evenings and at weekends. However, the junior coaching sessions have now been taken over by Denise who has recently qualified as a tennis coach. I think the combination of Dean's experience and Denise's enthusiasm will serve the club well in the future. Thanks also to Matt who temporarily filled in while Dean / Denise were unavailable.

Socials -- Various social events have been arranged so please put these in your diaries:-

- Open Day – Saturday, April 25th (Adults & Juniors)
- American Tournament – Sunday, May 17th
- Summer Knockout Finals – Saturday, September 12th
- Summer Party – Sunday, September 13th

Various other events will be planned through the year such as quiz night / bowling evening. Details will be sent out when confirmed.

Election of Committee Membership -- All existing members of the committee were re-elected. It was also stated that the club urgently needed someone to step forward and take on the role of Facilities Manager. With recent issues concerning the lights and the consequent complaints from members and visitors alike, this is becoming an important position for the club. We welcome the support provided by various

members on an ad hoc basis but we really do need someone to take this on and act as a focal point to resolve these issues. (Vacancy: Facilities Manager; Would ideally suit retired person though not a pre-requisite; Male or female applicants acceptable; No salary but great job satisfaction – Please apply ASAP to avoid disappointment)

Wimbledon Tickets - To date approximately 50% of adults have applied for British Tennis membership and those members will be entered into the draw for this year's Wimbledon tickets for which we've been given approximately half of prior year's allocations. (6 pairs of tickets in total). If you want to be entered into future draws, then please apply for membership which is free for club members until 2012. You can join online immediately by visiting www.lta.org.uk/membership.

Membership Fees – Due to the current economic situation it has been decided to retain membership fees at the present level. It was viewed as prudent to take this step this year to retain membership even though we still continue to try to build a sinking fund for future club development / court resurfacing etc.

Jean & Graham's Xmas Party

Thanks again to Jean & Graham for holding the Christmas party. Unfortunately I wasn't able to attend on this occasion as I had already made plans for a weekend away in Devon (50 years in the planning ...!!). However, I hear that Graham lived up to the high standard he's set in previous years and served up a great meal which was greatly appreciated by all those that could make it.

On a general note it would be great if more members of the club joined in these events. They're open to all members alike whether full member, off-peak, Sunday night group or whatever. The success of these events really depends upon a wider attendance and they're a great opportunity to catch up with other members of the club. Obviously we all have conflicting priorities but these events are organised by club members for the benefit of the club – your club.

Litter / Court Security (Reminder)

Can all members please make sure they remember to remove any litter and lock the courts when leaving? There appears to be more empty bottles / ball tin lids and general litter being left on the courts. Please leave the courts as you would expect to find them.

Mac

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Captain's Reports

Men's 1

The Men's 1 team started this season looking to capitalise on the progress made over the summer which will see the team playing in Division 1 from April. The success we have enjoyed over the past few seasons can be attributed to the emergence of several new "youth team" (read under 45's) players and this season has been no exception. Simon Hardy & Alex Saltwell have both played an important role alongside more, ahem, "experienced" players such as Brian, Neil and Ian Hardie. Without doubt the younger players have benefitted from kind words of advice from the sage-like senior players; gems from Brian include; "just run and bl**dy hit it as hard as you can" whilst Neil's contain too many ***'s to print. We are placed second going into the final game of the season, having lost just once away to a strong Marconi side, with a positive result all but securing promotion to Division 2 for next winter.

Looking ahead to the summer we will be retesting Alan Hansen's debunked theory that you can "never win anything with kids" although our victory will be securing our place in the top division, having firmly shown that we are too good for Division 2. The returning Tom Partridge will add to the youthful blend with a few wise old souls hanging around to shout "yours!" as the top spin lobs fly over their heads. An exciting season awaits.

James

Ladies 1

What can I say that hasn't been said before? Our close knit unit of 5 have battled again this winter season to hopefully have secured a promotion back up to Div 2 for next winter. The weather was not kind, as every other team I'm sure will agree, and re-arranged matches became a regular occurrence. Thank goodness our fixtures secretary had a moment of brilliance when originally setting our fixtures. At the start of the season we didn't have 1 match in March - by the end of the season we had 1 every week! That's what I call forward planning. Many thanks to Denise, Cathy, Helen and Judy for being so committed to the team. Well done ladies.

I'd also like to especially offer my congratulations to Simon Hardie for coming through his first season hopefully not too scathed. He has done a fantastic job of being Fixtures Secretary for the club. He has been on the ball (sorry) with re-arranging countless matches; he even sends reminders (is that because he doesn't trust my memory??); but most of all he has been really efficient and helpful at all times. Well done Simon - keep up the good work (but remember for next season

please - Ladies 1 do have social lives occasionally - so don't think you can schedule us for 5 Friday night matches again!!).

Lynne

Mens II

A funny old season. Apart from the usual problems with the weather 2 teams did not turn up for matches. We suffered several 8-0 drubbings but on my record won 6, lost 5 and drew 1. Mac topped the points league, followed by Bob. Paul Kelly and John Arber were slightly behind but probably only as they played fewer matches, with John having the best percentage success rate.

Mens 2 struggle in the winter league as our small team pool means we have problems near the end of the season when we cannot replacements from other teams, and we were not helped by Ian Hodges being out for several weeks with injury. We were grateful for help from Paul Fordham, Alex, Ian Clenaghan and Rob Watkins. Paul Fordham's return to competitive tennis for men's 2 in the summer should help us out.

Bob

Mixed 1

Following the extraordinary performance of the team to win the league in Summer 2008 (Played 12, Won 10, Lost 1, Drawn 1), the trophy was presented at the AGM amid tremendous scenes of euphoria from the 15 attendees. Stock 1 has now won the trophy for the 3rd time in 10 years – mind you it means that we always end up relegated the following summer. This summer it will be different. The success has been carried on to this winters league, where the current status is Played 10, Won 6, Lost 2, Drawn 2 and currently we are in the top half of the league. Nothing funny to report – we turn up, we win. I must apologise to Cathy for volleying (actually a misnomer for this effort) into the net from 1 inch with an open court in a recent match against Blackmore. As always, thanks to the usual core of people for playing (Denise, Lynne, Helen, Cathy and Simon), who with me comprised 90% of all the players used. Thanks also to Iain, Rob and Tom.

Iain

Mixed II

Mixed II have had a fairly good season this winter with approximately 5 wins; 3 draws and 3 matches lost. Again it's been a very varied team this season but a good performance by all. Thanks to everyone who has played in the matches especially through some of the cold, winter evenings.

Dale

Here's the first in what could be the start of a new feature in your STC News.

Players in disguise!!

Who is this? – no clues – answer at foot of page



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HIP INJURY PREMATURELY ENDS TENNIS CAREER

It is with considerable regret that Stock Tennis Club announce the retirement from tennis of Mike Zucker due to a recurrent hip problem.

Mike joined Stock in 1990 on a free transfer from Lake Meadows reserves. His speed and movement around the court soon had him progressing into team tennis and the highlight of his career was a Mens doubles title in the early 1990's.

In addition to representing the club on court, Mike has travelled on 4 of the club European tours and also presents the popular quiz nights.

In recent years those characteristic slam dunk smashes have taken their toll on Mike's hip and he has decided to call it a day. He always said that he would like to retire at his peak, but nevertheless he soldiered on for another 15 years or so.

It is likely that Mike will follow in the footsteps of your editor, namely you haven't seen the back of him simply because he's stopped playing. His presence and humour around the court however, will be missed.

[Ed – maybe he'll make time to write an article for the newsletter!!]

Fixtures News

I would like to inform you that we have a new league secretary for the Brentwood league. John Pullin from Billericay tennis club has taken over the role. Following a recent meeting we have agreed on a Brentwood and Chelmsford league website where members/captains can look up results/tables during the season.

Here are the links: www.cdltf.co.uk <http://www.billericayltc.co.uk/brentwoodleague.html>

And finally

No captain's report from Ladies II captain Jenny as she has been busy training!! And no sign of the infamous banana and wine diet!!

I'm taking part in the Flora London Marathon 2009 on 26/04/2009 to raise money for Whizz-Kidz and I'd really appreciate your support. It's easy to sponsor me online by credit or debit card - just go to my Justgiving page - <http://www.justgiving.com/jennynugent>. Justgiving sends your donation straight to Whizz-Kidz and automatically reclaims Gift Aid if you're a UK taxpayer, so your donation is worth even more. I hope you'll join me in supporting Whizz-Kidz. Thank you. Jenny