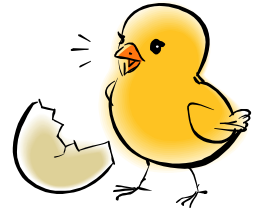


ASHTEAD TENNIS PLAYERS CLUB

Spring Newsletter



March 2008

Strolling down Woodfield Lane to Saturday afternoon club session, the sun was shining, birds were singing, and over the road, cricketers were practising in the nets.

It was 16th February.

This global warming business is getting out of hand, and it's time for firm action. I have fitted my reading lamp with a low-energy light bulb, to save the planet.

Assuming it works, Ashtead is still here, and the courts haven't boiled, now is the time to renew tennis club subscriptions. As usual, membership fees have been raised in line with, or a little bit less than, inflation.

In his first budget, our Darling chancellor declared war on plastic bags. But there was no mention of shoe tags, so we have laid in a stock of red ones for the new season. They are remarkably similar to the orange ones we had last year, but were the only colour we haven't used recently (apart from pink, which wouldn't appeal to the gentlemen).

Programme of events

All the old favourites are there. The club tournament will be played to last year's format, which seemed to go very well.

This year, finals weekend is scheduled for the weekend 6th – 7th September. This has been chosen to avoid clashes with other sporting events (national and local), and because team players found the diary brimming over with fixtures, when tournament matches were played in May and June.

Propaganda blitz

In our search for new talent, we will unleash a second wave of post cards to surrounding households, luring new members to the club. Trees, fences and the library will be plastered with the same message.



We once again feature in the spring edition of the Ashted Resident's Association newsletter, and for the coming year we have booked six monthly half page advertisements in the Ashted & Leatherhead Local. (That's six, monthly – meaning six. Not six-monthly, which would be two, if you see what I mean.)

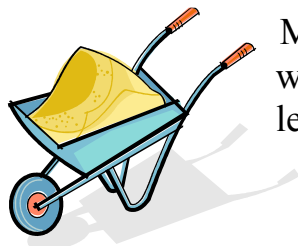
And of course, anyone who googles “Ashted tennis” is greeted with pictures of us, and an application form. Watch out for the stampede.

2008 AGM

Chairman Tom held a capacity audience spellbound with a resume of the club's affairs. The secret of achieving a capacity audience is to book a room that isn't too big. But no worries on that front - we attracted 27 adult members, which is a very respectable proportion of our membership. A keen interest was taken in the agenda items, which included:

Resurfacing of courts 1 & 2

Neither the cracks nor the paint daubs are going away. Roger Parker reported that there is no deep seated problem – but the surface has lost its elasticity, and the process of winter shrinkage and summer expansion has caused the cracks to appear.



Members of the committee have visited other clubs where courts have been resurfaced recently, to learn from their experience. Our favoured option is high quality macadam, with a fine grained texture.

The next step is to issue our specification to a short list of three contractors (including those who recently refurbished courts 3 & 4), with a view to ordering work to be done in the autumn, at the end of the playing season.



Club finances

Our treasurer, Mark Vidler, who works as an air traffic controller by day (and by night), has been diverted to Winchester.

Brian Bickers has kindly agreed to take over, and presented the club finances. These look healthy, but there is a backlog of auditing to complete. Being a small club, accountancy firms are not too excited by the prospect of taking on our business, so we are looking to make alternative arrangements – more of which later.

When estimates for resurfacing have been received, we will approach the appropriate authorities to see if we can secure help with the funding. The cost of the project is expected to be around £15,000.

We have also applied to the council for continuation of the rate relief previously granted to us by the council, and without which we would incur an annual bill not far short of £1,000.

Our lease



But before committing to any expenditure, we need to secure our lease on the courts. This was granted by the council in 1982 for 28 years, and therefore expires in 2010.

We have always enjoyed excellent relations with the council, who have indicated a willingness to negotiate a renewal – maybe for a longer period.

Happily, our club membership offers a wealth of professional expertise, including civil engineering (for when the courts crack up), medical (for when we crack up) and legal; Kate Ashton is a solicitor, and we are very grateful that she has agreed to participate in our dealings with the council.

Junior tennis

Tom expressed the club's thanks and appreciation to the Hammond family – Janice, Les and Andy, who do so much to keep the junior section in buoyant, boisterous condition.

Janice recounted a programme of coaching, club evenings and short tennis. The junior championships final had been exceptionally well attended, and we also had junior entries in the Carshalton tournament. In the coming season it is hoped that we will compete in the Dorking and Leatherhead junior league.

Meanwhile there had been hallowe'en and Christmas parties, and some of the (so to speak) senior juniors had helped Andy with the coaching, as part of their Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme.

So, a full and exhausting programme – but Janice sat down looking full of beans.

Wimbledon 2008

As in previous years, we expect to receive an allocation of tickets for the 2008 Wimbledon championships. All playing members, senior and junior, are welcome to join the ballot for the opportunity to buy a pair.

The Christmas newsletter included a feature announcing the launch of British Tennis.

We are advised by the LTA that this year, “recipients of tickets, and any family members using them, should be British Tennis* members and where they are not, they should be encouraged to join.”

* The directive actually states that recipients should have signed up to BT, but members are requested not to submit urgent job applications to British Telecom, as this will have little or no effect on the supply of tickets.

British Tennis

The LTA is extremely keen that all players should join, showering us with promotional letters and emails.

Benefits of joining include player ratings, advice from professional players and coaches, an e-newsletter, information on competitions and events, and..... entry to Wimbledon ticket ballots.

For the club, there are discounts in LTA fees based on the percentage of our members who join British Tennis.

Our LTA membership fee this year was £560.70.

In future we could qualify for a discount of up to 15%, depending on the proportion of our members who have joined British Tennis.

So if you have not already done so, please think about joining.

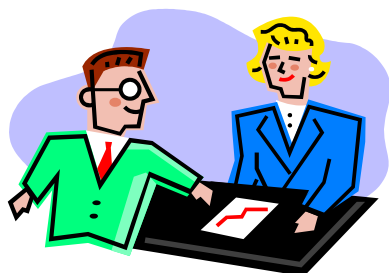
To find out more, and to apply for free membership, go to:
<http://www.lta.org.uk/Membership/> or call 0845 873 7202.

On this year's membership form, we have included a column to indicate whether you have joined British Tennis, and we would be very grateful if you would provide us with this information.

Situations vacant

Auditor

Our club finances are now arranged in such a way that auditing the accounts shouldn't take much more than a day at most.



We are looking for a suitably qualified club member, or perhaps a parent of one of our junior players, who can help us out by taking on the role of club auditor.

Fees are negotiable. Maybe a bottle of something?

Cleaner

Or if you fancy a healthy workout before bounding onto the courts, how about cleaning the clubhouse?

We have a vacancy for a cleaner.

Rates are again open to negotiation – around £6 per hour, for one hour's work a week.



Could appeal to a junior club member, or to anyone who fancies a bit of exercise when changing their library books.

* * * *

We would be extremely grateful to anyone who can help the club by taking up either of these roles. If you can spare us the time, please contact a member of the committee.

Ashtead Tennis Players Club is an equal opportunities employer.

