

### Benjamin Cup

The third annual Benjamin Cup was held on Saturday 18th July and was played in high spirits, firstly because it was the first tournament on court since lockdown and secondly because it benefited from being held on a baking hot summer day. Fifty players from men's and ladies' teams entered, who were split into five teams. The Olympians beat The Albatrosses 3-2 in the final. Stars of the show were Sam Laidler & Jilly Witcomb. They maintained a 100% record and were the winners of the Most Valuable Player awards of the day.

### Social Doubles Tournament

Sadly, the official Ripple Cup had to be cancelled this year, but a replacement handicap tournament was held on Sunday 6th September. 32 ladies and men took part, formed into four groups of four pairs. After a round robin played by each group, the two top pairs of each group qualified for the main play off, with the bottom two pairs going through to the plate event. Chris Barr-Hamilton and Charles Houlbrooke claimed the title, beating Sam Edmondson and Tom Laidler in the final. There was better news for the Laidler family when Jos Sclater and Tom Laidler won the plate final, beating John Milton and Grant Hume in a very tight match. Great fun was had by all.



### Ellie Fleming: our home-grown star

Ellie is well known to club members as the daughter of Elaine, our tennis section secretary, and as a regular behind the counter at the Café/bar. She has captained the Ladies A Team and this year won the ladies singles title in the Club Tournament for the fourth time. The picture shows her in her role as author of the article on the next page.



### England v the Rest of the World Event 2020

On Saturday 15th August Manor Park Sports Club held its 5th Annual England vs The Rest of the World Ladies & Gentlemen's Doubles Tennis Match. 48 players from Manor Park took part in this fun and hugely popular event. For the second successive year the match was won by England overcoming a strong Rest of the World Team by

291 games to 245 games, cutting The Rest of The World's lead in the series to 3-2. This year's event was again kindly sponsored by The Pickled Plum Restaurant & Pub Pershore and the winners' drinks were again kindly provided by John Milton. After the match players enjoyed a delicious socially distanced Hawaiian style meal prepared by Jill Holmwood and her helpers.

## Editorial

What an odd year 2020 has turned out to be! And thank goodness for tennis which has been the savior for both us and the club. Tennis members have shown that Manor Park is truly a 'home from home' in these challenging times and thanks to our three Chris's – Chris Barr-Hamilton, Chris Skinner and Chris Marlow – tennis playing and coaching has thrived throughout the summer.

The old adage practice makes perfect does stand up to the test and with more hours on the court the skills of our tennis membership have undoubtedly been honed to a higher perfection! Fixtures for our League Teams in the H&W Winter League are now being made so fingers crossed that the matches can be played and with success.

As the days draw in Indoor Tennis will become more in demand and members will notice a one-way system is now in operation to ensure social distancing. Manor Park and MACIT have now registered with the NHS Test and Trace System and the QR code is now on display for those with the App on their phone to check in.

If you are new to the club do make certain that you keep in touch and let us know if you would like to join a Rota, either in the daytime or evening. Contact the club office – there is plenty of tennis to get involved with and there is a new Ladies WhatsApp group which you can join.

Finally as we are will not going to be able to stage a normal Tennis AGM this autumn we are inviting any member who might be interested in coming on to the Tennis Committee to email their interest to our Tennis Secretary Elaine Fleming before our next scheduled meeting on 17th November. Also do let Elaine know if there are any other topics you would like brought to the Committee for discussion and action. Our next project will be the re-surfacing of the four astro courts and we are keen to get as much input from all members as to their preferred surface. Keep playing, keep fit and stay well.

### **The Sound of Music in Real Life: My Year in the Austrian Mountains** by Ellie Fleming

In the midst of all this pandemic malarkey, memories of my time in Austria seem very distant. But with beautiful mountains, 10-hour working weeks and an excessive amount of strudel to look back on, I can't say it's been a chore thinking about it again. So, why was I there and what was I doing?

As a German student at Leeds, it was compulsory for me to do a year abroad in either Germany, Switzerland or Austria. It's a tough life, I know. For me, who grew up watching Julie Andrews prance around Salzburg, this wasn't exactly a difficult decision. So, with a suitcase full of marmite and a tummy full of butterflies, I set off for Tamsweg, a small town in the Austrian alps to find and marry Captain von Trapp. I mean, to work as an English Language Assistant and speak lots of German...

Now, for anyone who knows anything about languages, you might be aware that Austro-German differs slightly from the German you learn in school. They have a different word for potato, for example. In this way, I like to think that going to Austria to learn German would be like going to Scotland to learn English – not too problematic. Going to *Tamsweg*, however, was like going to deeeeep Glasgow. As you can imagine then, my first three months were not the easiest. After a lot of mistakes, a lot of laughter and a lot of patient listening though, I finally began to understand what was actually going on around me. And no, it wasn't just yodeling, schnitzel and spinning round on mountain tops. In fact, pretty much no Austrian has even heard of *The Sound of Music*! Shocking, I know.

In terms of where I lived, Tamsweg – which was covered in snow by mid-November – was not actually a ski resort. However, it was only a 15-minute bus ride away from three beautiful ski areas – Grosseck, Aineck and Fanningberg. As a language assistant, I was only contracted to work 10 hours a week so you can imagine I spent a lot of my free time on the slopes. In fact, on Mondays I would teach two lessons in the morning, finish at 10 and could be at the top of the mountain by 10:30! Like I said, it's a tough life sometimes. The beauty and appeal of the area wasn't reliant on snow, though. As soon as the season ended and the fields turned from white to green, I went on bike rides and hikes to viewpoints that gave even Malvern a run for its money! A particular highlight was walking up to and swimming in the Prebersee, a lake which just 2 months earlier had been frozen solid.

Anyway, I could go on and on about my year abroad. In fact, I often do. But when you've spent 9 months in a place as beautiful as Tamsweg, met people as lovely and welcoming as those that I met there and *actually* improved my German, it would be rude not to. The only shame is that I wasn't there for longer - oh, and that there were no tennis courts!

## Changes to club facilities

**Acrylic courts:** much delayed work to resurface the acrylic hard courts numbered 9-12 was achieved in June. There was a requirement for fine weather and a sunny week did occur. At the same time the fence between the pairs of courts was replaced. Major work has been undertaken to cut back shrubbery above Court 10 with the aim of preventing the recurrence of the slippery surface in the far corner of the court.

**Grass courts:** the playing surface of the grass courts left much to be desired in summer 2019. A decision was taken to rest the courts this summer and to apply surface dressing in early autumn. It is hoped that the loss of court availability, even though it would have been useful, will be amply repaid by the provision of better playing conditions next summer.

**Squash courts:** the club has been the fortunate beneficiary of the recent closure of the Hornyold Squash Club, with a substantial sum transferred, expressly to refurbish the squash courts. New floors have been fitted, with new plaster work on the walls. Court 4 has been reformed with a glass back wall and a new provision for spectators, all ready for the autumn season.

**Indoor bowls:** Covid-19 presents serious problems for the indoor bowls section because elderly bowlers are so vulnerable to the disease. There is a national requirement to install pumps to provide a large throughput of fresh air, made more difficult here by the low roof (insisted on by the planners). This has been achieved.

**General appearance:** the large new signboard replacing the squash court windows is a pleasing advertisement for the club. A new 'estate agents' style display set in the veranda window is a long overdue replacement for the A4 sheets which once provided information for visitors when the clubhouse is closed. The grounds maintenance company deserves praise for the overall tidiness of the site.

## Tennis membership

Loyalty to the club and enthusiasm for tennis have proved exceptional this summer. Thanks to an influx of new members, adult membership at the end of August was well up on last year and only ten below the record set 2004. Courts have been in play morning, afternoon and evening as never before.

## Tennis Coaching

**Sessions begin as from Saturday 19 September.**

### Adult Coaching Groups – Indoor Acrylic

Tuesday 9.00 – 10.30 am

Wednesday 9.30 – 12.30 p.m.

### Junior Outdoor Groups

#### Older Tennis 14 – 18 years

Monday and Thursday 7.30 – 8.30 p.m.

#### Green to Young Teens 11 – 14 years

Monday and Thursday 6.30 - 7.30 pm

#### Orange/Green 9 – 10 years

Monday and Thursday 5.30 – 6.30 pm

Saturday 10.00 – 11.00 a.m.

#### Red Mini Tennis 3– 8 years indoors

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday 4.30 – 5.30 pm

Saturday 9.00 – 10.00 am

## Junior competitive highlights

Needless to say, all junior related competition has been severely curtailed over the summer. But the club tournament and the LTA singles box leagues have provided some competitive opportunities and the winter junior league matches are about to begin. A good number of our junior players are now involved in county training sessions as listed here in alphabetic order: Freddie Bookham, Thomas Bookham, Sam Cassidy, Sam Clements, Isabelle Da Silva, Seb Forester-Smith, Sam Laidler, Sally Lewin, Hendrix Lloyd, Luca Mainini, Emma McKay, Joe McKay, Lilia Mico, Eva Mico, Ed Montgomery, Lewis Parker, Bethany Pye, Oliver Ruddick, Holly Stevens, Ollie Stevens, Ruby Taylor, William Unsted, Madeline Walsh, Zoe Walsh, Leo Waplington, Ben Williams, Daisy Williams.

## Tennis Committee 2019-2020

Chairman:	Jane Poynder
Hon. Treasurer:	Geoff Titmuss
Membership Secretary:	Cleland Newton
Hon. Secretary:	Elaine Fleming
Grounds Controller:	Sam Mackenzie
Fixtures Secretary:	Joel Talcott
Club Coach:	Chris Skinner
Child Protection:	Ali Tuck
Committee Members:	Pete Clarke
Anna Laidler	Steve Lewis
Jo Marks	Dianah Marlow
Joe Riley	

## TENNIS SECTION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING TUESDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2020 at 8.00 pm

Due to the Covid regulations it will not be possible to hold an open meeting so this will be held 'behind closed doors or even by Zoom' with only existing committee members attending. However, if any member would like to put their name forward to become involved with the Committee or have any suggestions you would like the Committee to discuss do please get in touch with the Tennis Secretary Elaine Fleming: [elaine@thenoak.co.uk](mailto:elaine@thenoak.co.uk) prior to 17th November.

## Club Tournament 2020

The Club Tournament got off to a slightly later start than usual due to the pandemic, but once tennis became one of the first activities to be up and running the club became busier than ever with lots of people venturing forth for much missed exercise and meeting friends and it became apparent that it would be possible to run the event after all. There were good entries across all events as there was no other competitive tennis to distract people, indeed very little competitive sport at all. Some great tennis was enjoyed throughout the rounds as prospective juicy encounters were publicised by Chris and people came down to enjoy a drink from the bar and a view from the bank. The Men's Semi-final between Simon Wikeley and Tobie Timmermans stood out as a highlight with Simon narrowly triumphing in a third set tie-break.

Finals Day was a beautiful sunny day, albeit a little chilly in the shade, but alas the dreaded virus had come back to haunt us and a number of events had to be postponed due to people returning from holidays and needing to quarantine or otherwise self-isolating. Nevertheless, with crowds, exceeding those at the US Open, there were matches to entertain throughout the day.

The Men's Singles Final was one of the first events of the day and proved to be an interesting contrast of styles between the old-school Mark Rowe and Simon Wikeley who was looking to regain the title which he won in 2017 and 2018. Simon eventually won out in two fascinating sets.

The Ladies Final was an encounter between reigning champion Katie Lewin and Ellie Fleming a previous 3 times champion. In a high-quality match Ellie came out the winner in straight sets to get her name back on the trophy. Katie Lewin soon returned to court with partner Alice Davey in the Ladies Doubles Final where they fought back from a set down to take the title against Hannah Griffiths and Jilly Witcomb.

The lack of a Mixed Doubles Final or a Men's Doubles Final meant that a walkover could be revoked, and a Men's Doubles Semi-Final between Chris Skinner and Paul Burgess and Ben Westwood and Simon Wikeley took place. This was an exciting match in which Skinner and Burgess came through 7-5 in the third set and a few weeks later take the title.

In other events Julian Clapp and Tom White took the Men's 60+ trophy against Bob Mannion and James Noon while Bethany Pye took the U14 Girls Singles in a round robin event.

### Club tournament results: Adults

**Men's Singles:** Simon Wikeley

r/u Mark Rowe 6-2 6-3

**Ladies' Singles:** Ellie Fleming

r/u Katy Lewin 6-2 6-3

**Men's Doubles:** Chris Skinner & Paul Burgess

r/u Chris Marlow & Tobie Timmermans 7-5 7-6

**Ladies' Doubles:** Katy Lewin & Alice Davey

r/u Jilly Witcombe & Hannah Griffiths 3-6 6-4 6-4

**Mixed Doubles:** Simon Wikeley & Bethany Pye

r/u Chris Marlow & Rachel Prudden 7-5 6-3

**Men's Doubles 60+:** Julian Clapp & Tom White

r/u Bob Mannion & James Noon 7-5 7-5

**Mixed 50+ Doubles:** Geoff & Penny Smith

r/u Rory Guilding & Jenny Poole 6-4 6-2

**Family Doubles:** Paul & Lois Burgess

r/u Tom & Sam Laidler 6-2 6-2

### Plate events

**Men's Singles:** Dave Smith

r/u Pete Moore 6-4 6-4

**Ladies Singles** Simona Armstrong

r/u Lesley Lowndes 6-4 4-6 6-3

**Men's Doubles:** Al Cooper & Graham Upton

r/u Geoff Titmuss & Lee Smith 6-3 6-4

**Ladies' Doubles:** Paula Daniel & Tracy Morgan

r/u Susan Fairlie & Sue Allman 6-3 6-2

**Mixed Doubles:** Roger Kennell & Jenny Poole

r/u John Milton & Di Marlow 6-4 2-6 6-3

**Men's Doubles 60+:** David Fraser & Gerry Nash

r/u Geoff Titmuss & Graham Upton 7-6 7-5

**Mixed 50+ Doubles:** Charles Houlbrooke & Vicki

Advani r/u Andy & Bev Bond 6-4 7-5

### Club tournament results: Juniors

**10U Mixed:** Monty Cooper r/u Will Unsted

**14U Girls:** Beth Pye r/u Holly Stevens

**14U Boys:** Oliver Ruddick r/u Jo McKay

**18U Girls:** Emma McKay r/u Lilia Mico

**18U Boys:** Samuel Cassidy r/u Sam Lea

**14U Girls Doubles:** Lois Burgess & Bethany Pye

r/u Lilia Mico & Holly Stevens

**14U Boys Doubles:** Sam Laidler & Sam Clements

r/u Joe McKay & Oliver Ruddick

**18U Boys Doubles:** Sam Laidler & Sam Cassidy

r/u Sam Clements & Sam Lea