

TRAM LINES

YORKSHIRE TENNIS NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2023

www.yorkshiretennis.org.uk • enquiries@yorkshiretennis.org.uk



Message from Steve Jones, Chairman of Yorkshire Tennis

As the summer season concludes, I can reflect positively on the significant changes undertaken over the last year. In this edition, you will find contributions which illustrate the breadth of activity initiated and managed by our committed volunteer task force, with plenty of new faces and approaches.

The move from confirming governance to programme action is liberating and framed by the [County Annual Plan](#) we set up for 2023 at the outset. This plan remains under constant review by the senior team and can be found on the Yorkshire Tennis website. The board will be meeting this month to review our progress and set our agenda for the year ahead and beyond.

I am delighted that the



Advantage Yorkshire 2 funding scheme has now been launched with a good response from within the county. Further details can be found on page 17.

In defining the practical steps to support the widest possible access to playing tennis in Yorkshire, the **Community Engagement** team of volunteers has been formed. Further information is given on page 16.

The YT board has been delighted and challenged by the growth of **padel in Yorkshire** and nationally. In response, we have formed a discrete YT padel committee led by Peter

Vann and Angela Crossley. An article on padel developments and the new committee can be found on pages 22-23.

It is important to recognise the volunteers who delivered a very successful **Yorkshire County Championships** where high quality tennis from the county's best players was on show. We are keen to consider how we can build on this success next year. A report on the championships is on page 3.

Winning the **County Cup Race** last year was recognised at a wonderful event in June at Ilkley Tennis Club. Our stated aim is to be in the top three counties in this year-long competition, and as I write, we are well in the mix to meet that target. Our appreciation and support go to all those involved in raising the Yorkshire flag high. The celebration is described on page 5.

The scope of what Yorkshire Tennis can achieve is limited largely by the income we receive. **Partnership** income and sponsorship levels have a direct impact on our activities. We will be taking a fresh look at how we raise these funds. If you feel you are

able to help directly, or indirectly, we would be delighted to hear from you. Information on how you might support the county is available on page 21.

We have a cherished legacy of administration, coaching and playing excellence in the county, which we value, and will seek to archive appropriately. We have an extremely capable and experienced group of seasoned volunteers who are focussed on taking on this important task and creating a **Yorkshire Tennis Hall of Fame** to recognise and shine a light on those who have made significant contribution to Yorkshire Tennis in the past. You can read about the Hall of Fame event starting on page 11.

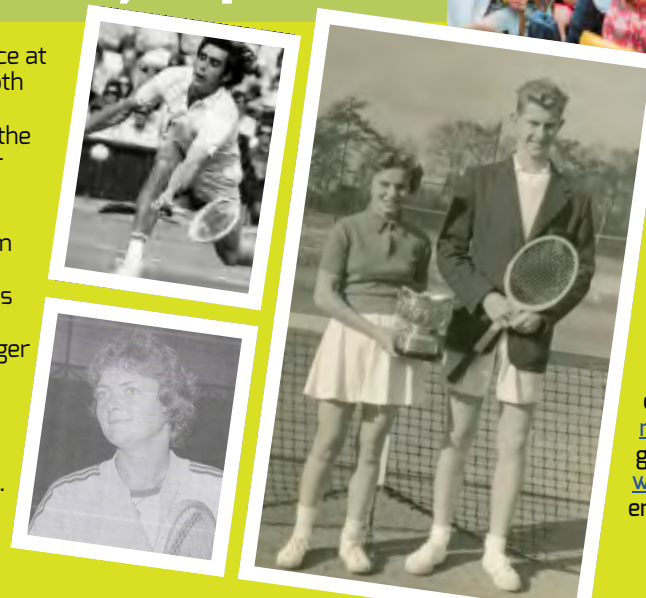
The board has been massively encouraged by the **number and quality of new volunteers** eager to get involved in shaping the future development of all areas of Yorkshire Tennis. Thanks to those putting their hand up, and finding their feet within our organisation. The door remains widely open to those who have a passion to volunteer in this wonderful sport we all enjoy.

HERITAGE

SPECIAL

Celebrating the launch of Yorkshire Tennis Hall of Fame and winning County Cup Race

Two special celebrations took place at Ilkley Tennis Club this summer. Both recognised contributions from Yorkshire's finest – at one end of the spectrum, those who are more or less embarking on their tennis careers while, at the other end, players who were successful from the 1960s onwards. Yorkshire Tennis hopes that our young tennis players will be inspired to match the achievements of stars like Roger Taylor (top right), Sue Mappin (bottom right), Mike Hann and Joyce Howden (far right) with great success at County Cup, Wimbledon, Davis Cup or Fed Cup. Definitely onwards and upwards!



SIGN UP TO RECEIVE YOUR COPY OF TRAMLINES DIRECT

Many Yorkshire players ask: "How do I get a copy of Tramlines?" The newsletter is sent digitally to clubs, coaches and various people involved in the county. Anyone can register for a copy by emailing marketing@yorkshiretennis.org.uk or by going to the home page of the website www.yorkshiretennis.org.uk, typing in your email address and pressing **SUBMIT!**

WORLD CLASS TENNIS AT BIGGEST LEXUS ILKLEY TROPHY TO DATE

Australian Jason Kubler and Swede Mirjam Bjorklund were crowned the new Lexus Ilkley Trophy singles champions.

Fourth seed Kubler defeated Sebastian Ofner 6-4 6-4 in the final to win his 21st career title and a first on grass. Kubler didn't face a single break point throughout the match, losing just 10 points in total on serve and needed just one break point in both sets to seal his maiden grass court title.

The 30 year-old had to fight his way through a punishing draw that included 18 year-old wonderkid Juncheng Shang and Rothesay Open Nottingham finalist Arthur Cazaux in the Q/F and S/F respectively.

In the women's singles, unseeded Bjorklund completed her dream week by defeating top seed Emma Navarro 6-4 7-5 in the final. This is the first

time the Swedish player has won a title at W100 level and, like Kubler, her first trophy on grass. She also beat the reigning champion, Dalma Galfi, in the semi-final.

The doubles finals were very close and thrilling affairs – top seeds in the Men's Doubles **Gonzalo Escobar and Aleksandr Nedovyesov** defeated **Robert Galloway and John Patrick Smith** 2-6 7-5 11-9. In the Women's Doubles **Nao Hibino and Natalija Stevanovic** played a semi-final match earlier on in the day before their final and then went on to beat **Maja Chwalinska and Jesika Maleckova** 7-6 7-6 to become champions.

The seating capacity on centre court was increased this year from 750 to 1000 and still seating sold out for the last three days. The plan is to

increase capacity further in 2024 to 1500/1600 seats.

As always the tournament would not be possible without the **army of people** who give up their time to help make it all happen. Thanks go to the hundreds of volunteers, to the ball crew from Ilkley Grammar School and to the fantastic grounds staff, coaches, club staff and management who work for months before the tournament to plan and prepare for this top-class event.

Without the support of **several businesses** the event could not be staged. Thanks to **sponsors** Investec, Moss and Moor, David Wilson Homes, Sagars, Dacre, Son and Hartley, 4 Sisters and 7 Brothers.

Rackets Cubed, Ilkley's Official Charity, received £1600 from their raffle alone.

Rackets Cubed helps primary school children in underserved areas by providing them with the key benefits of active participation in sports, enhanced education and a healthy diet.

Ilkley LTC is already delivering programmes in the Bradford area which have been very successful and is now planning to open up and interact with other areas of the community that potentially racket sports haven't been able to get into in the past.

It has been confirmed that the tournament will take place in 2024 and the club has a long-term vision. Rik Smith, Ilkley Chairman and Ilkley Trophy Tournament Director, said "There is no other grass court tournament of our scale further north than Nottingham so for tennis throughout the UK and for the LTA it's an incredibly important tournament. Tennis is very southern-centric so it's important a tournament of our size and stature does remain".



YORKSHIRE CHAMPIONSHIPS 2023

Amazing champions at John Charles Centre for Sport

Multiple winners of singles and doubles titles were a major theme this year.

16-year-old Molly Robinson won Women's Singles, Women's Doubles with Elena Bompieri, 18U Girls' Singles, 18U Girls' Doubles with Bethany Pratt and was a finalist in Mixed Doubles with Jonathan Dow. Read all about Molly's fledgling tennis career in the profile on page 8.

Jordan Reed-Thomas was the Men's Singles and Mixed Doubles Champions. This is the third Men's Singles title for Jordan. More about Jordan and his coaching career can be found in the profile on page 9.

Scott Hillerby retained his 18U Boys' Singles and Doubles crowns.

Toby Shaw retained his 14U Boys' Doubles title with Oliver Wilson and added to his titles by winning the 14U Boys' Singles and 14U Mixed Doubles with Bethany Pratt.

Seb Beetlestone won 10U Boys' Singles and Doubles titles and also won 11U Boys' Doubles title with Max Hodgkinson.

After winning the 10U Girls' Doubles title in 2022, **Emmanuella and Victory Idemudia** won the 11U Girls' Doubles title this year and Emmanuella also won the 10U and 11U Girls' Singles titles and 10U Girls' Doubles title. **Lucas Town** retained his Men's Wheelchair Singles title.

Max Hodgkinson won 12U Boys' Singles and Doubles titles, the latter with brother Neo. More about Max's successes can be read in the profile on page 9.

Finally, **Roberta Gaskell** was the 12U Girls' Singles Champion and was runner-up in 12U Girls' Doubles, 14U

Girls' Singles and Doubles and 14U Mixed Doubles.

As Roberta won the Yorkshire 12U Girls' Singles title she was invited to participate in Babolat Cup UK Finals in Birmingham on 23rd-24th September. The article about her performance is on page 9.

The winners of all the Yorkshire Championships events, both singles and doubles, can be found on the Yorkshire Tennis website.



■ A selection of winners and finalists at this year's Yorkshire Championships



YORKSHIRE SENIORS' CHAMPIONSHIPS 2023 - new champions at Huddersfield LT&SC

Only Steve Shipley retained his title as O50s Men's Singles Champion. These are the results:

Singles/Doubles	Age Group	Champion
Men's Singles	O35s	Matthew Parry
Men's Singles	O40s	Matthew Parry
Men's Singles	O50s	Steve Shipley
Men's Singles	O55s	Dave Mangham
Men's Singles	O65s	Brian Barrowman
Women's Singles	O35s	Danielle Brown
Men's Doubles	O40s	James Blackburn/Gregory Nicholson
Men's Doubles	O50s	Gary Bridgeman/Dave Mangham
Women's Doubles	O40s	Jill Le Pla/Kathryn Place



Masters tournament on grass courts of Chapel Allerton



The week of the 5th June 2023 was sunny and warm and the superb grass courts played really well. Given that much of the summer was wet and countless tournaments were affected by the weather the gods were definitely on Chapel Allerton's side.

The **Women's Doubles O40s** was a round robin played over an afternoon followed by a lovely tea of sandwiches and cakes on the sunny balcony. **Kate Elgar and Clare Johnson** from Rawdon (pictured above) beat Cheryl Mitchell-Hagel and Sarah Pink from Ilkley in the final.

Mixed Doubles O40s was also a round robin event with many close matches and the final, very tight, was won by **Hester de Groot and Daniel Woolfson** from Heworth TC and York St John University who beat Lis Collins and Gary Calam from Skipton Tennis Centre.

Winners of the Men's events were all from David Lloyd Harrogate - David Brown (Men's Singles O60s), **Mark Coombes** (Men's Singles O50s) and **Richard Abel and Mark Coombes** (Men's Doubles O50s).

Sheffield and district annual tournament at Hallamshire and Beauchief



This tournament was staged at the end of June 2023 with a sizeable number of entries, some excellent matches and good crowds watching all week.

Beauchief LTC hosted a ladies' day on the Sunday of the tournament where matches were played to the semi-final stage. Most of the tournament was played at **Hallamshire LTC** and winners were:

- Men's Open Singles: Josh Bows
- Ladies' Open Singles: Louise Holtum
- Men's Doubles: Alex Jinks & Danny Lea

Visually Impaired events also took place for the first time this year which were organised by Janiece and David Wallace. The tournament hopes to repeat these events next year.

British Masters tournaments on three different surfaces

Yorkshire players have been successful this year across the four British Masters tournaments held indoors in February, on clay in June and on grass in August and September.

At the **British Open Masters Indoor Tennis Championships at Wrexham**, **Charlie Swallow**, won the inaugural men's 30 singles title; **Andy Hutchinson** retained his men's 55 doubles title but was unable to retain his singles title;

Wilf Jessop reached the Men's 75 doubles final; and **John Andrews** won both Men's 80 singles and

doubles titles. In the women's competition, **Susie Azoulay** won the women's 40 singles title, **Gill Brook** won Women's 60 Singles title and **Cath Davies** was a finalist in the women's 55 singles.

The **British Open Masters Clay Court Championships were held at the West Hants Club in Bournemouth**. **Wilf Jessop** was a finalist in the men's 75 doubles. **Mike Harpin and Paul Layfield** were finalists in the men's 60's doubles.

At the **British Masters Closed Grass Court Championships at Wimbledon**, **Charlie**

Swallow competing in the men's 30 singles and doubles was a finalist in the former and champion in the doubles; **Andy Hutchinson** won the Men's 55 Doubles; and **Susie Azoulay** was a finalist in Women's 40 Singles;

In the final British Masters tournament of the year, **British Open Seniors Grass Court Championships at Eastbourne**, **Wilf Jessop** was a finalist in the Men's 75 Singles; **Andy Hutchinson** was a finalist in the Men's 55 Doubles; and **Susie Azoulay** was a finalist in the Women's 40 singles.



■ Above left, Paul Layfield and Mike Harpin at Bournemouth; Top right, Andrew Hutchinson and Neil Howitt at Wimbledon; Below left Charlie Swallow with Andrew Higham at Wimbledon; Below right Susie Azoulay at Wimbledon



COUNTY CUP 2022 CELEBRATION

The first day of the Lexus Ilkley Trophy Tournament was blessed with sunshine and was fortunately the date chosen to host the celebration of one of Yorkshire's finest achievements – winning the year-long 2022 County Cup Race. A superb buffet lunch was served to players and guests in the marquee, followed by the presentation of a special award to all participants in the County Cup. President of Yorkshire Tennis, Geoff Newton, and Chair of Performance Committee, Karen Mitchell, presented the awards. It was a very sociable occasion and everyone was also able to watch the first day's play on the grass courts.



■ County Cup teams receiving their awards

County Cup 2023

With just Winter County Cup to play, it looks like Yorkshire will be in second or third place this year which is still a fantastic achievement. The table below shows how Yorkshire has performed in each age group. Note: the seniors' performance is not included in the County Cup Race.

Key highlights

● **Promotions for the Ladies' County Cup Team returning to Group 1** at the first time of asking and for **Ladies' 035s into Group 1** (pictured right) after missing out by a whisker for the last two years. All of the ladies in the 035s played four matches and won three.



Congratulations to Joanna Craven, Carina May, Danielle Brown and Nicola Mooney.
● **035s Men's Team**, returned to Group 1 this year and just missed out on being crowned champions following a narrow loss to Surrey. Richard Crabtree deserves particular mention as he won five of the six matches played and had played County Week just a



month previously.
● **10U Boys and Girls** were the best performing age group. **The Boys** won their four matches quite comprehensively in the North Area Finals with Max Hodkinson winning all his seven matches and only dropping three games in total.
● Max Hodkinson was also a key player in the **11U and 12U**

teams. In the former he won all the seven matches played and in the latter he won six of the eight matches. Maxim Sokol was another top performer for the 11U team and Neo Hodkinson for the 12U.

● **Ladies 060s** (pictured left) became national champions after beating Hampshire & IOW 3-0.

Congratulations to Gill Brook, Belinda Turnbull, Wendy Stirke, Cathryn Johnson and Sally Bickerton.

● **Men's 055s** were champions for the last two years but just lost out this year to fierce rivals Surrey 3-2 following two final set tie breaks in the deciding doubles matches. Congratulations to captain Andy Hutchinson, Richard Hutchinson, Paul Ranson, Cord Spilker, Roger Kuhlmann and Mark Coombes.

Performance in 2023 County Cups – summary details

Men/Boys	Result	Ladies/Girls	Result
Men's Group 1	5th, relegated to Group 2	Ladies Group 2	2nd, Promoted to Group 1
Men's 035s: Group 1	2nd, stay in Group 1	Ladies 035s: Group 2	1st, Promoted to Group 1
Boys 18U: Group 2	2nd, Stay in Group 2	Girls 18U: Group 1	National runners up
Boys 14U Didn't Qualify	N/A	Girls 14U: Didn't Qualify	N/A
Boys 12U: Qualified for Finals	National ranking 5th	Girls 12U: Didn't Qualify	N/A
Boys 11U: Qualified for Finals	National ranking 3rd	Girls 11U: Didn't Qualify	N/A
Boys 10U: Qualified for Finals	Champions in North Finals	Girls 10U: Qualified for Finals	4th, in North Finals
Boys 9U: Qualified for Finals	Runners-up in North Finals	Girls 9U: Didn't Qualify	N/A
Men's 045s: Division 1	2nd, Stay in Division 1	Ladies 040s: Division 2	Relegated to Division 3
Men's 050s: Division 2	3rd, Stay in Division 2	Ladies 050s: Division 1	3rd, Stay in Division 1
Men's 055s: Finals	National runners up	Ladies 055s: Division 2	2nd, Promoted to Division 1
Men's 060s: Division 2	Promoted to Division 1	Ladies 060s: Finals	National champions
Men's 065s: Division 1	3rd, Stay in Division 1	Ladies 065s: Division 2	3rd, Stay in Division 2
Men's 070s: Division 1	3rd, Stay in Division 1	Ladies 070s: Division 1	3rd, Stay in Division 1
Men's 075s: Division 2	1st, Promoted to Division 1		

SPECIAL OLYMPICS WORLD GAMES IN BERLIN AND MORE

What a year for Matthew Brough and Emily Clarke

In the last edition of *Tramlines*, we reported on the winners of the first Yorkshire Tennis President's Award, York Disability Tennis Network's Matthew Brough and Emily Clarke, being chosen to represent GB in June's Special Olympics World Games.

This is the world's largest inclusive sports event including thousands of athletes with intellectual disabilities competing together. There were over 7,000 athletes from 190 countries participating in 26 sports. They were supported by more than 3,000 coaches and 20,000 volunteers.

We were curious to know how it all went. To say it was the most amazing experience is probably a gross understatement.

Before the Special Olympics events

It was a two-week trip of a lifetime for Matthew and Emily which involved so much more than the sport of tennis but the tennis itself was quite intense.

It all started in **Stuttgart** where the focus was on team bonding, meeting the other two GB Tennis members, Lily Mills and Adam Brownsword, and other sporting participants. This involved playing many sports, including football, volleyball, and basketball. They were also interviewed by German TV.

Matthew and Emily then moved on to **Berlin** and spent a few days on tennis training and divisioning. The tennis training focussed on drills to improve their weaknesses with coaches Paul Singleton and Chris Enock.

Divisioning, a completely unfamiliar term, is all about assessing the players to ensure they play in the appropriate division with players of a similar standard at the Special Olympics.

This was a three-day process and one where Emily, who had previously only played green ball, had to play with a yellow ball.

The Special Olympics World Games

The opening ceremony took place in the Berlin Olympic

Stadium and where the Olympic flame had last been lit for the 1936 Olympic Games. There were 100 GB team members walking behind the British flag carrier, including Matthew and Emily.

The tennis events were played over five days – Matthew competed in Men's Singles, Emily in Ladies' Singles and the two played together in the Mixed Doubles. Matthew won a Gold medal, Emily came fourth in the Ladies' Singles and together in the Mixed they achieved a Bronze medal.

Not only did Emily have to face top quality serving from the men in the Mixed but she was also playing her first competition with a yellow ball. This makes her achievements even more astounding.

While competing in the events Matthew and Emily met many people of all ages and backgrounds and were particularly impressed by a 69-year-old US competitor who was accompanied by her own TV crew.

The spectacular closing ceremony was held in front of the iconic Brandenburg Gate with fireworks.

Sightseeing

Matthew and Emily, together with their families, were able to visit some of the top sightseeing spots in Berlin.



Visiting the Berlin Wall, with all of its emotional history, was an outstanding experience for all of them.

What happened next?

After arriving home that was not the end of the excitement. Matthew and Emily, together with their families, were invited to the Wimbledon Men's Final and also visited 10 Downing Street where they enjoyed a BBQ in the garden. At the end of September, they won Sporting Hero awards at the York Community Pride Awards ceremony at York Racecourse.

Tennis at York Disability Tennis Network and beyond

For Matthew and Emily and all the other tennis players this organisation has made such a difference to their lives. The participants and their parents and carers help each other through an informal support network.

They play matches and practice two or three times a week at one of the YDTN clubs (David Lloyd York, Wigginton TC, York University and

Strensall TC) and play tournaments at weekends which can be within Yorkshire or further afield like the recent tournament in Grantham whilst the National Championships are in Bolton.

YDTN is growing but more girls and young women would be ideal as currently Emily and previous Special Olympics competitor, Laura Campbell, are the only female role models.

Matthew's successes have been recognised as he is a part of the LTA's Development Squad for Disability and attends four sessions a year which are held at different venues, including the National Tennis Centre, in Roehampton.

These development squads will provide Matthew with the opportunity to represent GB at the Virtus Global Games, the largest elite sports event for athletes with an intellectual impairment. These Games are Matthew's next goal.

Yorkshire Tennis wishes Matthew and Emily, along with all the participants at YDTN, much success and continued enjoyment on the tennis court.





MEET MOLLY ROBINSON A CHAMPION MANY TIMES OVER

A-Level student Molly Robinson is a winner on court but my goodness does she work hard. She was one of the first group of players, aged 12, to train with Richard Crabtree and his Cultiv8 coaching team at the Leeds RPDC based at John Charles Centre for Sport. Molly continues to train with Cultiv8 who are now resident at Leeds Beckett University in Headingley.

Molly started playing tennis at Thongsbridge LTC near home in Huddersfield at age seven and is usually on court at Becketts four days a week.

There are occasions when she travels over for a 7am session, then goes to school at Wakefield Girls' High School (WGHS) and returns to Becketts for afternoon and evening coaching or fitness training in the gym where she might be sharing facilities with the likes of the Brownlee brothers.

This dedication is down to a team effort by school and

family. Molly's lessons are fortunately mostly in the morning meaning only a small amount of catching up outside of formal lessons is required. Molly's parents give her tremendous backing around school and training in spite of their busy working lives. Dad Jonathan works at a multi-national company and generally ferries Molly around while mum Krista is Director of PE at WGHS.

Outside of her training Molly enjoys playing netball and hockey which are the primary sports at WGHS. In terms of

tennis tournaments Molly has been playing on the British and 18U ITF Tours and also participated in the 18U County Cup and Ladies' Winter and Summer County Cups.

She played a significant role in the runner-up spots achieved by the 18U girls in Group 1 in March and in last November's Ladies' Group 1 Winter County Cup in Bath.

In the first half of 2023 Molly scaled back her tournaments and training in order to focus on GCSEs which she excelled at. However, she still managed her best result in 18U Junior National Girls' Singles in April where she battled through to the quarter finals.

She recently reached the semifinal of a British Tour event in Edinburgh and played an ITF tournament in Poland in

early September.

Molly enjoys school life and the company of her school friends. Support from girlfriends is an important part of her life and she couldn't imagine studying online from home which is a method used by some young players to manage their schooling with their tennis training.

Plans post A Levels are to study in USA and she's currently working with Sarah Borwell of Tennis Smart to enable her to find and gain acceptance to one or more US Universities. It's a tough process which requires significant dedication.

YT wishes Molly success with her academic and tennis aspirations and looks forward to reporting on her next steps and achievements in future editions of Tramlines.

Thank goodness he chose tennis – Meet coach Jordan Reed-Thomas

Jordan Reed-Thomas spent most of his formative years in Switzerland as mum Jane worked in Zurich for Zurich Insurance. Jordan, like many young boys, played tennis, cricket, hockey and football but fortunately for tennis this became his No1 sport.

Tennis training and competition in Switzerland is similar to Britain so Jordan played in the equivalent of county and other junior tournaments.

He moved back to Britain in 2016 to study at Leeds Beckett University where his degree was in Sport and Business Management. He played County Week and it was here that he met Richard Crabtree. Following completion of his degree he joined Richard and his Cultiv8 set-up as a coach.

Jordan is thoroughly enjoying his coaching role as he is involved in the training of some of the best young boys and girls in Yorkshire, including Molly Robinson.

This comprises mainly squad training focusing on

skills-based games although he will do some one-to-ones where the focus is on particular aspects of the game, for example, attacking points and then going over the points and discussing what the player might have done differently.

Jordan is playing tournaments when he can. This summer he played County Week in Eastbourne, Yorkshire Championships and the British Tour at Ilkley where he lost in the final. Eastbourne and Ilkley both suffered with rain this year and conditions were so different from the heat in 2022.

As to the future, Jordan loves his role with Cultiv8 and says there is nothing better! He is currently studying for his next level of LTA coaching qualifications and aspires to eventually become a top Level 5 coach like Richard Crabtree. He would also like to assist with one of the junior county teams given that he is involved in the training of many of them.



Max becomes 11U National Junior Boys' Singles Finalist

Max finished runner-up at the 11U Junior National Boys' Singles in August which was the best performance by a player from Yorkshire at the Nationals.

His achievements here gave him the opportunity to play for the 11U GB team at home and abroad and compete against some of the best players from Europe.

He was also invited to a French tennis training camp lead by the national coaching team where he trained with some of the best British players on clay courts and on the beach too!

As Yorkshire's 12U Boys' Singles Champion, Max was eligible to play in the Babolat 12U Cup.

However, this clashed with an invitation for Max and brother Neo to train with some of the best European players at the Dunlop Mouratoglou training camp. This was a reward for their hard work and for their many achievements during the last year.



Many congratulations to Roberta, winner of Babolat 12U Cup

As Yorkshire's 12U Girls' Singles Champion, Roberta was invited to play in the Babolat 12U Cup against all the other 12U Girls' Singles county champions at Edgbaston Priory Club.

She battled over two days and came out the winner. Her reward for becoming the Babolat 12U Cup Champion is one week at the Rafa Nadal Academy by Movistar in Mallorca, as well as a 12-month sponsored contract with Babolat UK.

Roberta now goes on to represent GB in Babolat Cup European Masters finals in Lyon, France in February 2024.



Yorkshire's players have participated in both national and international tournaments this year and some have achieved success that they could only previously have dreamed of!

- **Naiktha Bains**, from Leeds, has enjoyed her best season to date on the women's doubles circuit. At the end of 2022 she was ranked 220 and in early October this year she reached her career high of 87. In 2023 she's won four ITF doubles titles but her career highlight of making the Q/F at Wimbledon with partner Maia Lumsden was truly amazing. They became the first British women's doubles pair to reach this stage of The Championships since 1983.
- **Luke Johnson**, also from Leeds, has won five Challenger doubles titles this year. In the last edition of Tramlines, we reported on his two titles with regular partner Sem Verbeek and a ranking of 135 an increase of 80 points in five months. Luke played with Julian Cash in the top grass court tournaments this summer and

although not going further than the first round this experience clearly stood him in good stead. Back on the Challenger circuit Luke has teamed up with Tunisian Mansouri Skander and won a further three tournaments and his ranking has improved yet again to 120 at end October.

- **Johannes Monday**, from Hull, is just 21, and has had a successful summer on the ITF/Challenger tours having won four ITF and one Challenger doubles titles. He reached the second round in the doubles at Wimbledon Championships. His doubles ranking currently stands at 216 and singles at 737 (end October). The rest of the year Johannes is at University of Tennessee where he's been studying since 2020. Highlights of his tennis career at University include, gaining his highest singles and doubles ranking of No2 in March 2023 and being named ITA National Rookie of the Year and SEC Freshman of the Year in 2021.
- **Paul Jubb and Kyle Edmund** have both rejoined the tours this summer following lengthy periods sidelined by injuries.

Paul, now 23, from Hull, was plagued with an ankle injury for the first half of the year and while recovering has been working on the mental side of his game. He's been playing in ITF tournaments in GB recently as his singles ranking had declined to 625 after reaching a high of 196 following successes in ITF and Challenger tournaments in 2021 and 2022.

Kyle, 28 and from Beverley, attained a world ranking of 14 in October 2018 but is now ranked 546. He was a part of the winning Davis Cup squad in 2015 and reached the semi-finals of the Australian Open in 2018. After three knee surgeries and two years off the court, Kyle is back on court and reached the ITF Edgbaston final in October.

● **Phoebe Suthers**, 20, from Huddersfield, is now in her final year at Loughborough University and in September won her second successive World Deaf Tennis Championships mixed doubles silver medal with Lewis Fletcher. Phoebe was also a finalist this year in the women's singles and doubles at the Australian Open's first international deaf tournament.



■ YORKSHIRE'S INTERNATIONALS: (clockwise from top left) Naiktha Bains; Luke Johnson; Phoebe Suthers; Johannes Monday; Kyle Edmund; Paul Jubb.



RECOGNISING THE COUNTY'S BEST PLAYERS FROM THE PAST 70 YEARS

What an amazing day it was on 23rd September 2023. Around thirty of Yorkshire's players from the past 70 years, together with their guests, enjoyed meeting up over lunch at Ilkley Lawn Tennis and Squash Club. It was a very appropriate venue given virtually every one of them would have played there at some time, whether it be for their clubs, at tournaments or at other important events.

Those from Yorkshire who have made a significant contribution to tennis in the county or nationally were also present. A number of attendees came long distances including from Germany, London, Sussex and Southampton and many were meeting one another for the first time in more years than they would care to remember.

No event had been held recently to celebrate the achievements of Yorkshire Tennis and the change in 2022 of Yorkshire

Lawn Tennis Association, which went back to 1884, to Yorkshire Tennis Ltd, seemed a good reason to arrange a reception.

The opportunity was taken to recognise the teams and individuals from Yorkshire who have contributed to or achieved some of the greatest triumphs for the county on the tennis court or those from Yorkshire who have occupied significant positions in the administration of British tennis by inducting them into a Hall of Fame.

YORKSHIRE'S HALL OF FAME



A Yorkshire Tennis Hall of Fame is the brainchild of John Crowther (pictured right), chairman of Yorkshire Tennis from 2014 to 2022, and arose out of conversations he had over the last few years which came into focus when Yorkshire won the County Cup Race in 2022 for the first-time and beating their arch rivals Surrey by two points.

An objective of the Hall of Fame is to provide inspiration for future players. The initial criteria for induction into the Hall of Fame were set



as follows:

- being part of a Group 1 County Championship winning team and/or
- playing for Yorkshire at County Week at least ten times and/or

- playing in a main draw at Wimbledon and/or
 - playing for one's Home Country including GB and/or
 - occupying a position of national significance that reflects well on the county
- John and his committee needed to start somewhere so the first inductees into the Hall of Fame were those eligible who could attend a lunch on 23rd September.

At the event, a citation was read for each of them and they were presented with a certificate by President of

Yorkshire Tennis, Geoff Newton.

It has been recognised that the history of tennis in Yorkshire is not widely accessible as records are currently dispersed in many printed and written documents around different people in the county so an aspect of the project for the Hall of Fame is to establish an online record of all Yorkshire players, competitions, clubs and administrators, which will be accessible to everyone.

Further individuals will be inducted in future ceremonies.



THE FIRST 32 INDUCTEES

● **Members of the 1963 winning Yorkshire Ladies' Group One County Cup Team. Champions again after 62 years**

● **Joyce Howden (nee Fulton)** has had a tennis career spanning more than 75 years which all started at Chapel Allerton LTC where she still plays today. She notched up 23 playing weeks at County Week, won 15 Yorkshire Championship titles, played for England in three international matches and at Wimbledon for eight years. Her best performance was getting to the 4th round of the Mixed Doubles with Roger Taylor. Joyce was President of Yorkshire Tennis in 2002.

● **Sally Holdsworth** has played with or against some illustrious players over her career. She beat Virginia Wade in the British Junior Championships but Virginia got her revenge at Wimbledon in the Ladies' Singles in 1970. She reached the last 16 of the Wimbledon Mixed Doubles in 1969. After completing her playing career Sally joined the ITF as an Executive Director and as part of her hotel business ran Wimbledon's Last 8 Club and the International Box.



YORKSHIRE'S COUNTY WEEK TEAM AT EASTBOURNE
Left to right: Miss J. A. Taylor, Mrs. R. Stannion, Miss M. H. Cooper, Mrs. C. Clark, Mrs. P. Harbutt, Miss E. Starks, Mrs. W. S. A. Hesse (non-playing captain) and Miss S. Holdsworth.

■ (above) Yorkshire ladies team 1963; (above right) Yorkshire men's team 1967; (below right) Mike Hann and Roger Taylor

● **Margaret Berrington (nee Cooper)** played County Week on 11 occasions and for England six times between 1981-88 in Home Nations Tournament. Margaret played in the Seniors' County Cup for many years until retirement in 2018. She continues to play regularly at her club Armley LTC.

● **Members of the 1967 winning Men's Group One County Cup Team. Yorkshire secured the title for the first time since 1907.**

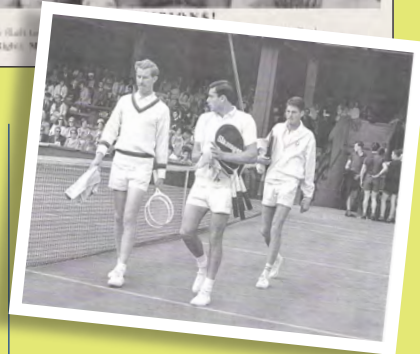
● **Roger Taylor MBE** started playing tennis in Weston Park, Sheffield relying on his mother Lillian for hitting practice. He reached the British Junior Finals at age 16, was talent spotted by the LTA and subsequently moved to London where he got a job at Fred Perry Sportswear. He played

County Week seven times between 1959 and 1980 and by 1968, the beginning of the Open era, he was already one of the best 20 players in the world. His playing record includes 31 singles titles and a highest ranking of 8, 2 Grand Slam doubles titles and he reached S/F three times in the singles at Wimbledon. Roger was appointed Davis Cup Captain in February 2000.

● **Mike Hann** played 17 times for Yorkshire at County Week. He was a member at Chapel Allerton LTC and won the club's Men's Singles title for the first time at the age of 15. In 1955 he won the Wimbledon Boys' Singles title and went on to play at the Wimbledon Championships for 13 years in the singles and/or doubles between 1955 and 1967. He reached the 3rd round in the



Back Row (Left to Right) ...
Front Row (Left to Right) ...



singles on three occasions and the fourth round in doubles once in 1963 when he and Roger Taylor beat the top seeds Bob Hewitt and Fred Stolle. Mike was President of Yorkshire in 1984, has served on the All-England LTC and Championships Committees and is now a Vice-President of the club.

● **Members of the 1988 winning Men's Group One County Cup Team**

● **Simon Ickringill** was nine years old when he started playing at Keighley TC and



Yorkshire Men at Eastbourne

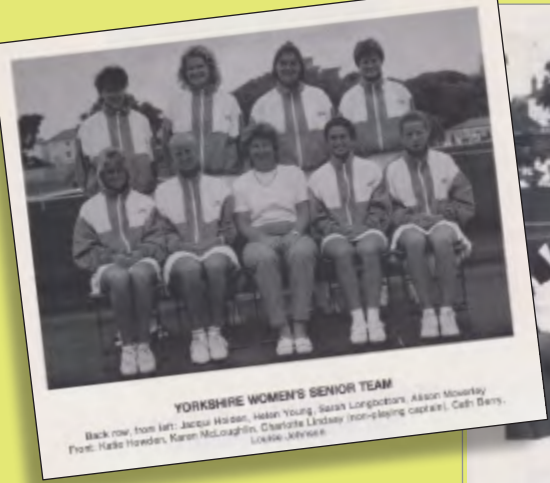
Back Row: Richard Crabtree, Jonathan Murray, Jason Torrey, David Sherwood, Ben Gudwisk
Front Row: Gary Henderson, Ben Riley, Steve McLaughlin, Steve Heron



Yorkshire Men at Eastbourne, Gro

Back Row: (Left to Right) Gary Masterson (JTB), David Sherwood, Jonathan Murray, Jason Torrey, Ben Riley, Steve McLaughlin, Steve Heron
Front Row: (Left to Right) Jason Torrey, Ben Riley, Steve McLaughlin, Steve Heron, Gary Masterson (JTB)

■ (clockwise from top left)
Men's team 2001; Men's team 2003; Men's team 1991; Men's team 1967; Men's team 1992; Ladies team 1991



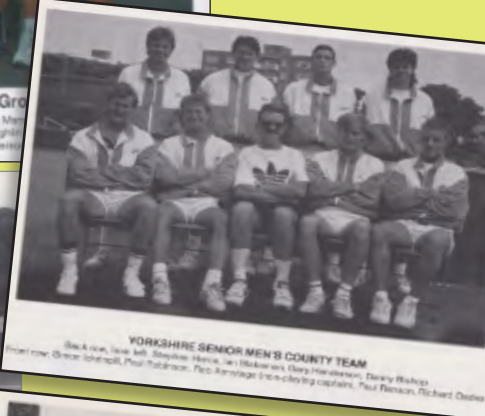
YORKSHIRE WOMEN'S SENIOR TEAM

Back row, from left: Jacqui Wilson, Helen Young, Sarah Longcocks, Alison Mowbray
Front: Niall Howden, Karen McLaughlin, Charlotte Lindsay (non-playing captain), Cath Berry, Louise Johnson



YORKSHIRE SENIOR MEN'S COUNTY TEAM

Back row, from left: Paul Ranson, Mike Penning, Gary Henderson, Stephen Heron
Front row: Richard Hutchinson, Andy Cansell, Rob Armytage (non-playing captain), Simon Ickringill, Ian Blakeman



YORKSHIRE SENIOR MEN'S COUNTY TEAM

Back Row: (Left to Right) Steve Heron, Ian Blakeman, Gary Henderson, Danny Watkins
Front Row: Simon Ickringill, Paul Ranson, Rob Armytage (non-playing captain), Paul Ranson, Richard Oakes



THE CHAMPIONS!

Back Row (Left to Right): R. H. Sherwood, J. E. Collins, J. S. Moss, P. W. Paul
Front Row (Left to Right): M. P. Hain, J. K. Jarvis (non-playing captain), R. Taylor, A. E. M. Giblin

moved to Ilkley LTC in 1974. He played for the club's men's first team from age 19 and became head coach in 1981, a position he held for over 40 years until his retirement this year. He started playing for Yorkshire in 1979, participated in three Group 1 winning teams and was Yorkshire Men's Singles Champion an impressive eight times. Simon represented England in Home Nations and GB at over 35s, 40s and 45s. At age 49 he won the 045s national title. His world class kick second serve earned him the nickname 'Kickers Ickers'

● **Ian Blakeman** played County Week for seven years having switched to Yorkshire at the age of 23 and was also part of the 1991 winning team which he cites as one of the best years of his tennis career. He beat most of GB's top ten players and was inspired by playing in the same tournament as John McEnroe although didn't actually play him!

● **Stephen Heron** had a county career spanning 20 years from 1983, aged 14, and was part of 4 County Week winning teams in 1988, 1991, 1992 and 2001. He played for England in the Home Nations matches and for GB at U14 level against Boris Becker.

● **Andy Hutchinson** continues to captain and play for Yorkshire. Part of the 055s winning teams in 2019 and 2022 he also captained 035's and 045s to national glory, the former in 2000 and 2004 and the latter in 2013. He still plays on the national and international circuits, has won seven national titles and represented GB men in the World Championships.

● **David Hirst** was involved in four County weeks. At one stage he worked in Portugal for Roger Taylor but later returned to Yorkshire as a county coach and regional coach for the North East. As David wanted to improve his tennis, he moved to Germany to coach and play semi-professional tennis and set up his own tennis school

over 30 years ago which he continues to run with his wife and son.

● **Philip Brook CBE** was introduced to tennis as a result of a flyer through the letter box which offered a free week of lessons at Rastrick Tennis Club and has never looked back. His first County Week was in 1978 aged 22 and he went on to play a further seven times. The highlight of playing County Week was in 1986 when he and Stephen Heron won 11 out of 12 matches. Philip won the first ever 14U event at the Yorkshire Championships and played for Cambridge University between 1975 and 1977. Philip's involvement at Wimbledon started as a scoreboard operator and he ended up as Chairman of AELTC and the Committee of Management of the Championships from 2010 to 2019.

● **Rob Armytage** was the non-playing captain in 1988 having previously played County Week 11 times. He had an outstanding career winning the Yorkshire

Doubles Championship seven times and the Mixed Doubles with Sally Holdsworth. His last year as men's captain was in 1996, a position he held for 15 years. Rob was England's captain in 1994.

● **In 1991 Yorkshire did the double as both men and ladies topped Group 1.**

● **Members of the 1991 winning Men's Group One County Cup Team.**

● **Stephen Heron, Simon Ickringill, Ian Blakeman and Rob Armytage (non-playing captain). As above for 1988**

● **Paul Ranson** played in 5 County Week teams including the Group 1 winning teams of 1991 and 1992. His playing highlights include meeting Fred Perry, winning a clay court tournament in France in 1989 and playing in the Remington Family Championships with his dad in Switzerland and where they came up against a young

John Newcombe. He's continued to play for Yorkshire in O35s, O45s and O55s and was part of the winning O45s team in 2022.

● **Members of the 1991 winning Ladies' Group One County Cup Team.**

● **Jackie Holden** represented Yorkshire ten times at County Week, she was Yorkshire Ladies' Champion twice and represented England in the Home Nations. She was inducted into the Mississippi Hall of Fame in 2022!

● **Sarah Thomas (nee Longbottom)** played County Week 12 times, played over 15 years of both Summer and Winter County Cup, also represented GB as a junior on three occasions and played for England.

● **Karen Mitchell (nee McLoughlin)** recalls winning the 18U Group One County Cup at the Queen's Club and her first coach being Sally Holdsworth. Karen played for the senior county team some ten times and continues to represent the county in the O50s. Karen won the LTA Meritorious Service Award in 2020 for her voluntary work over many years for Yorkshire. She's chaired the County Training and Performance Committee for over eight years and has led the drive to provide a Safeguarding process for the county and clubs.

● **Helen Young (nee Longstaff)** started playing for Yorkshire aged 13 in 1985. She won the Gold Medal for doubles at the World Police and Fire Games in Calgary in 1997.

● **Katie Charnock (nee Howden)** won all three Yorkshire Championship titles in 1996 winning Ladies' Doubles with Karen Mitchell and Mixed Doubles with Gary Henderson. She played County Week four times. Katie won the National and European Mother/Daughter events with mum Joyce.

● **Charlotte Lindsay** played two sports for Yorkshire both tennis and badminton. She played County Week ten times with the record of winning 15 out of 15 rubbers with Sue Mappin in Group 2 at Frinton. However, County Cup week did not start so well for Charlotte as on her debut against Essex



she lost 6-0 6-0 against Christine Truman and partner! She gradually made her way into the team and her partnership with Sue Mappin lasted as long as Sue was available. Charlotte was county captain for 16 years and Yorkshire President in 1992.

● **Louise Marshman (nee Johnson)** was a County Champion at U12, U14 and U16, played for the O35s and is currently playing O40s.

● **Members of the 1992 winning Men's Group One County Cup Team.**

● **Ian Blakeman, Stephen Heron, Simon Ickringill, Paul Ranson and Rob Armytage (non-playing captain).** As above for 1988/1991

● **Mike Harpin** first represented Yorkshire in 1975 in an 14U match against Durham & Cleveland and recalls in his first county match, partnering John Howarth, losing against David Lloyd and partner. Mike has represented Yorkshire at all levels between 1975 and 2007 and captained the O35s to the title in 2004. He was a part of the O55s GB team at the World Championships in 2018.

● **Richard Hutchinson**, youngest of the three Hutchinson brothers, was Yorkshire Junior Singles Champion at every age group. He's played in the O35s and O45s teams winning the national title in 2022 for the second time. This year Richard has joined Andy in the O55s team.

● **Members of the 2001, 2003 and 2006 winning Men's Group One County Cup Teams.**

● **Richard Crabtree** has played at least 15 times for the County, continues to play for the County Week team and in addition he's a stalwart of the O35s team. He coaches some of the best youngsters as part of his Cultiv8 group and has a number of very promising Yorkshire players under his charge.

● **Ben Gudzelak** has played at least seven times for the senior county team and has captained the O35s team for a number of years including achieving R/U position this year in Group 1.

● **Other players not part of a Group One County Cup winning team**

● **Sue Mappin** played County Week on 14 occasions and the first time at age 14. She attained a top 30 singles ranking but her major successes came in doubles where she reached a top 4 ranking. She reached the S/F of all Grand Slams partnering Lesley Charles including at Wimbledon in 1976 and 1977. Sue was a member of the 1974 and 1978 winning Wightman Cup teams and also played in 1976 and 1977. At the end of her playing career, she was the first woman to be appointed to the LTA Board and was the first LTA National Women's Team Manager.

● **Wendy Carter** started playing at County Week in 1968 and went on to play for a total of nine years. In 1969 she won

the Mixed Doubles with Geoff Newton at Junior Wimbledon. She represented Scotland in a Home Nations match against England. She played Wimbledon Ladies' Doubles with Lesley Charles in 1971 and with Sue Mappin in 1973.

● **John Howarth** played for the County 11 times in the same era as Rob Armytage although was never a member of a Championship winning team. He won the Yorkshire Championships singles twice and played for GB in the Italia Cup O35s three times and O45s three times. He captained England in the Home Nations.

● **Gill Brook** played County Week nine times and she continues to play for the County through the various age ranges and now plays for the O60s. She won Yorkshire Championships' titles, including singles and doubles at junior level, Ladies' Doubles in 1977 and Mixed Doubles with Philip in 1980. Gill continues to play ITF tournaments around the world, is currently ranked 20 in the World O60s and recently won the World Championship Mixed O60s event with Chris Hearn. Gill was a strong supporter to Philip when he was Chairman of AELTC and her pictures were regularly seen on TV and in the press.

● **Katie O'Brien** made her debut at County Week in 2021 in Group 1 at Eastbourne and made a repeat appearance this year at Nottingham. She has played many times at junior level and at Winter County Cup. She was Junior 18U National Champion, represented GB in the Fed Cup four times and made 12 Grand Slam main draw appearances including 8 at Wimbledon. She reached a career-high WTA singles ranking of 84. She is now an LTA National Coach.

● **Geoff Newton, John Ramsbottom and Peter Wilkes** were all inducted into the Hall of Fame. As well as playing at a high level, including for Yorkshire at County Week, they have excelled as administrators at the top of the national game. Their profiles can be found as part of other features on pages 18 and 20 in this issue of Tramlines.



■ Katie O'Brien



■ Roger Taylor



■ Sally Holdsworth



■ Mike Hann



■ 1988 Men's Team (LtoR) Rob Armytage (non-playing captain), Phil Brook, Ian Blakeman, Geoff Newton, Simon Ickringill, Stephen Heron, Andy Hutchinson and David Hirst



■ 1991 Ladies' Team (LtoR) Sarah Thomas, Karen Mitchell, Jackie Holden, Charlotte Lindsay (non-playing captain), Helen Young, Katie Charnock, Louise Johnson



■ Wendy Carter and John Howarth



■ Joyce Howden



■ Sue Mappin



■ Paul Ranson



■ Gill Brook



■ Richard Hutchinson and Mike Harpin



■ Margaret Berrington



■ John Ramsbottom and Peter Wilkes



■ Ben Gudzelak and Richard Crabtree

New board of Yorkshire Tennis Ltd 2023: deep dive on two board members and their committees

Steve Jones, chair of the Yorkshire Tennis board, has spent this year recruiting volunteers to the board and developing a structure of committees that reflects the core priorities and objectives around **competition, volunteering, performance and participation**. There are two new board members who are responsible for the new areas of **Community Engagement** and **Club Engagement** headed up by Nat Wright and Chris French respectively. The following provides an introduction to the areas and some of the work that is being undertaken.

UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Chair, Nat Wright is responsible for developing and supporting initiatives to promote tennis participation in communities that have traditionally been seen as harder to reach. Following an open advert to clubs a number of people are now involved and several pilot projects are being established to support the uptake of tennis from a wider demographic and broaden the appeal of tennis to minority groups, particularly minority ethnic groups.

Actively promoting and delivering opportunities for disabled people

Open Court, part of the LTA portfolio of supporting clubs and other venues to open tennis up to people from all backgrounds, was featured in some depth in Tramlines in November 2021.

The programme provides disability specific sessions

including learning disability tennis, wheelchair tennis, visually impaired tennis and deaf tennis. The programme is also expanding into other long-term health conditions, such as, mental health and dementia.

Louise Assioun is leading the team for Yorkshire Tennis and she and her business partner, Sue Morrison, run LUSU. They are experts in inclusive sport and activity and are committed to changing the attitudes, techniques and skills of people within educational and sporting environments.

A number of volunteers are working with Nat and Louise to make tennis more inclusive in Yorkshire and the following are examples of programmes that are being developed and supported by LTA's Open Court and Matt Elkington, Disability Development Partner, LTA North.

Starting Inclusive Tennis at Graves Tennis Centre

Graves has been a site of wheelchair tennis for many years but has lacked any real focus. **Joseph Newman-**

Billington has recently joined Graves as Tennis Manager and he has a wealth of experience being around top wheelchair athletes at Loughborough University.

Graves now runs regular wheelchair tennis and recently introduced a block of sessions for adult beginners in partnership with Ben Howarth from Brentwood Tennis Club. The plan is to become a hub for wheelchair tennis and offer a range of services including individual lessons, group sessions as well as hosting local and regional competitions.

To support this Graves organised a **Tennis Open Day in September**. Over 200 players came in to try tennis for free. There were junior players spanning ages 4 to 17, adults, wheelchair sessions and visually impaired sessions. Feedback from the event is being used to develop future opportunities for inclusive tennis.

Growth of Ability Tennis at Brentwood Tennis Club

Tramlines has featured

Brentwood and Ben Howarth Tennis Coaching on a number of occasions. The club has won several awards in recognition of its achievements with disability tennis including LTA Yorkshire Club of the Year and Yorkshire Disability Award Winner in 2021.

The range of Ability Tennis programmes has expanded significantly over the last couple of years to include:

- **Inclusive** sessions open to children aged 5 to 16 years with an intellectual or learning challenge and their family
- **SEND for kids** open for children aged 5 to 11 years with a neurodiverse way of thinking
- **Walking Tennis** for everyone and beneficial for anyone with long term health conditions including heart disease, diabetes and cancer.
- **Visually Impaired Tennis Club** was awarded the Yorkshire Club for All award in 2022. Their aim is to get as many people with a visual impairment trying out tennis
- **Ability Autism** a weekly session for adults who have extra life challenges with their learning.

To find out more contact: benabilitytennis@gmail.com

Developing Young Tennis Leaders supporting Inclusive Tennis Competition – run by Susy Puskas

This programme provides opportunities to help young players increase their confidence and knowledge of rules and regulations and can lead towards becoming tennis coaches or on court tennis officials later on in their lives.

In 2022, young tennis leaders and volunteers helped out with the Inclusive Tennis Competition and Visually Impaired Tennis event at John Charles Centre for Sport.

Feedback showed that these young tennis leaders are interested to learn more about supporting people with additional needs and enjoy helping out at events.

As a result, these youngsters volunteered to score at this year's 8U Mini Red event at Yorkshire Tennis Championships.

Pilot project encouraging diversity within clubs

Alice Robson was the 2020 LTA National Development Coach of the Year and is now Head Coach at Ackworth TC, Barnsley LTC and Slazenger TC.

A number of parks within low socio-economic areas are being linked to local clubs. Children aged 4 to 8 are offered an affordable six-week introduction course at the local club which is a nice way to introduce players and their families to the club.

The pilot aims to see if this initiative helps to break down barriers and make people feel

welcome within tennis clubs so players continue their tennis journey.

Alice's 2020 award citation highlighted her passion for, and success with, engaging women and girls in tennis. She's now using this experience to focus on encouraging more females to get into and stay in coaching by working on the inclusion and diversity of the workforce.

She's been instrumental in setting up the Yorkshire Females Coaches Network where female coaches regularly meet and discuss any issues they may have,

build their confidence and come together to inspire the next generation of female coaches.

There have been three workshops in the last year and topics included developing your workforce, managing your team and analysing player performance.

At the most recent workshop in October coaches from Cultiv8/Leeds Beckett University discussed coaching players at county level and above, organised live coaching and hosted a question-and-answer session.

UNDERSTANDING CLUB ENGAGEMENT

Chair, Chris French is leading a team of volunteer champions who will assist clubs and their committees to help develop their facilities, increase number of people playing tennis and increase sustainability.

Champions all have a wealth of knowledge and experience and will be able to support clubs in attaining their goals. Each area of Yorkshire has a champion and

short biographies for each of them are included below.

Club development plans usually require financial support from donations, grants, crowdfunding, sponsorship and loans. Champions will be able to signpost clubs towards funding in their area including the **Advantage Yorkshire 2** loan scheme.

A maximum of £24,999 can be applied

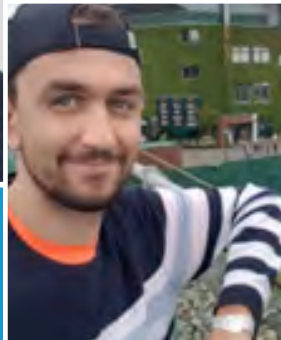
for and is interest free for up to five years. The loan system will ideally work with other funding partners as YT loans must be matched pound for pound.

A total of £300K will be made available by YT over a three-year period. All details, of the loan scheme, including eligibility criteria and application form, can be found on the YT website:

www.yorkshirtennis.org.uk/advantage-yorkshire-accelerating-community-engagement-ace/



■ CHAIRS & CHAMPIONS: (above) Nat Wright; (top row, LtoR) Chris French, Elizabeth Opie, Jess Redfearn; (bottom row, LtoR) Andy Lucas, Jim Mellor, Katie Draper; Pete Bridgewater



Spotlight on key volunteers on the community and club engagement committees

● Nat Wright: Chair of Community Engagement and Club Engagement Champion for Yorkshire West area.

Nat's career in the NHS started as a GP and he has 30 years' experience in senior leadership positions. He's chair of Adel Tennis Club in North Leeds, part of the 2,500-member Adel War Memorial Association, and is secretary of the AWMA Board.

● **Chris French: Chair of Club Engagement and Advantage Yorkshire 2.** Chris spent his career as a Police Officer and on retirement in 2008 became a full-time volunteer. He's chair of Pocklington Tennis Club,

responsible for sponsorship, fundraising and grants for Pocklington RUFC and is a trustee and co-founder of the charity Pocklington in the Community.

● Andy Lucas: Club Engagement Champion for Kirklees and Calderdale area

Andy has been chair of Liversedge Tennis Club for the last six years. His experience of doubling membership, developing the facilities and services and dealing with difficulties, such as the cost of energy and electrical cabling at the club means he has very active experience to pass on to clubs in his area.

● Jess Redfearn: Club Engagement Champion for South Yorkshire area.

Many readers will know Jess as an administrator for Yorkshire Tennis responsible for the YT website and social media platforms. Jess is superbly qualified for the role as she's been heavily involved in developing tennis participation

in her local area and across the wider Yorkshire region for many years, is on the Sheffield and District Committee and is a Tennis Coach at Fulwood LTC. Her passion is encouraging grass roots tennis from tots to vets.

● Elizabeth Opie - Club Engagement Champion for York area.

Elizabeth moved to York eight years ago and is a member of Fulford TC, is a member of the club committee and enjoys playing for her club in local leagues and Yorkshire League as well as having fun and making good friendships on and off the court.

● Pete Bridgewater: Club Engagement Champion for Hull and East Riding area

Pete is Tennis Manager of PB Tennis. Tennis has brought him a lot of enjoyment throughout his life and his aim is to pass this on and get as many people involved in tennis as possible. Through coaching, his goal has been to help people achieve their personal best.

● Katie Draper: Club Engagement Champion for Harrogate and Skipton area

Katie played as a junior at Bedale TC and returned to tennis some 12 years ago and plays at Starbeck TC. She was previously chair of Starbeck TC and continues to help out organising tournaments and social events. She plays in mixed teams in Harrogate league and in York Fulford ladies league.

● Jim Mellor: Club Engagement Champion for North Yorkshire East area

Jim has been involved in sport and sports development all his life. He was Head of Physical Education and Sport at Scarborough Sixth Form College until his retirement in 2016 and has been a Level 4 coach in the Scarborough area for over 30 years. He is still an active player, captains his first team in the Driffield League and has represented Yorkshire in the Seniors' County Cup.

Big thank you to the Yorkshire Tennis 'retired' volunteers

John Ramsbottom, dedicated to tennis as player, county and national volunteer

John Ramsbottom had an excellent playing record for the county and won many tournaments. His club tennis was played at Heaton where he also held committee positions. John became a Yorkshire Tennis councillor in 1983 and then an LTA councillor in 1986. He was appointed to the LTA Main Board from 2002 to 2006 and held the following positions – LTA Council representative, chairman of Tennis Operations Board and a member of AELTC Wimbledon Championships Committee. He became an LTA Life Vice-President in 2008. His YT roles included president in 1993, secretary and chairman and led the Initiative Committee until 2020. John was awarded LTA Meritorious Service Award in 2012 and a major profile on him was included in Tramlines in November 2021.

Peter Wilkes BEM, half a century of devotion to Yorkshire Tennis

Peter Wilkes has enjoyed a Yorkshire Tennis career comprising both playing for Yorkshire and involvement in high-level administration for



■ Stephen Freegard, Liz Wilson, Peter Wilkes and John Ramsbottom, pictured at Hall of Fame Lunch

Changes to the governance of Yorkshire Tennis at the end of 2022 resulted in a number of retirements from the organisation. Tramlines is, therefore, taking the opportunity to thank the previous councillors and trustees who are no longer involved but have given so much of their valuable time to YT over the years. **John Crowther**, chairman from 2014-22 and **Ian Hargreaves**, councillor, secretary and latterly treasurer, from 1999 -2022 were featured in some depth in the November 2022 edition of Tramlines.

Yorkshire and LTA. Peter's 50 years' of 'Services to Tennis' were recognised in 2019 with the award of the British Empire Medal in the Queen's New Year's Honours List.

County Tennis playing achievements include 18U, Men's and Mixed Doubles titles at the Yorkshire Championships; playing at County Week between 1972 and 1977 and represented Yorkshire at both junior and

senior levels. He played at Junior Wimbledon in 1963 and 1964. Peter also enjoyed his club tennis at Wakefield LTC where he was club champion for a number of years.

Yorkshire LTA achievements which commenced in 1970 include 25 years as a Wakefield district councillor; member of various committees including Finance & General Purposes, Commercial Development, Initiative and chairman of

Championships Committee. He was president in 1989 and became a trustee in 2017

Yorkshire representative on LTA Council from 1988 to 2014. During this time he served as chairman of various committees including marketing, professional tennis advisory and scrutiny, Davis Cup, Fed Cup and Aegon Classic. Peter was awarded the LTA Meritorious Service Award in 2014.

Carolyn Rothwell, helping Yorkshire become top county

Carolyn Rothwell is a director and player at Harrogate Spa Tennis Club and has been actively involved in all the tennis developments and introduction of the two new Padel courts at the club. Carolyn joined Yorkshire LTA Council in 2014 and soon after became chair of the Competitions Committee and was a member of the management committee.



Jan Hornby, inspirational leader

Jan Hornby is the founder of the charity Pelican Park Community Trust. The committee was formed in 2009 to improve much needed sport facilities in East of the City of Hull. A joint investment from the LTA, Friends of Pelican Park and Hull City Council in 2014 ensured the four tennis courts were resurfaced, floodlights were installed and a new clubhouse was developed. Jan joined the Yorkshire LTA Council in 2018 and became a member of CCCE committee.



Don Stewart, instrumental in helping Yorkshire clubs improve facilities

Don Stewart joined Yorkshire LTA in 2013 at a time when he was president of Heaton Tennis & Squash Club. He joined the management committee and subsequently became chair of the Clubs,



County, Community and Education Committee. Highlights of his time with Yorkshire Tennis include: **working with a group of colleagues** on the committees who were committed to helping tennis in Yorkshire and working together successfully in pursuit of that goal; **overseeing investment of over £650K** into tennis clubs in Yorkshire to assist in the development of facilities especially for grass roots tennis; **helping to transform YLTA** from its outdated unincorporated status to the modern limited company that it is today.

Liz Wilson, life-time of achievement as player, coach, referee and administrator

Liz Wilson's involvement in tennis comprises so many successful aspects that a summary does not do Liz justice! Her **tennis playing career** started at Rawdon 70 years ago and from there she developed her interest and love in **coaching**. After gaining all her qualifications Liz became a professional tennis coach at a time when there were very few female coaches.

Liz went on to coach across Yorkshire at various clubs, schools and in parks and became a county and regional coach. She was the first resident coach at Ilkley and coached some of the best Yorkshire players including Simon Ickringill, Kyle Brassington and Jane Tate (nee Donald).

After marriage and children Liz set up her own **school of tennis** and employed several coaches. She was instrumental in establishing the Yorkshire

Tennis Coaches' Association in 1978 and its subsequent growth.

She was a director and board member representing the English counties of the British Tennis Coaches Association and acted as a coaching assessor for both LTA and YT. She inaugurated the BTCA Awards, chaired the committee and the disciplinary committee.

From a **Yorkshire Tennis** perspective, Liz became a councillor in 1985, held numerous positions including chairman of executive council, chairman and member of several committees including management, rules, disciplinary, marketing, championships awards and county development.

She was president in 1999-2000 and 2008-10. Her legacy involves re-establishing the annual report and establishing the County Awards and presentation evening. She served as an LTA councillor for two years.

Liz has been a **tennis referee** for many years and continues to support tournaments in the county and wider afield.

In terms of **awards and accolades** Liz received a

Lifetime Achievement Award at 2019 Leeds Sports Awards in recognition of her involvement in a wide spectrum of sport and in the Leeds City Sports Federation where she was Chair from 2002-13.

She was pivotal in establishing these awards in 2003. She has also received the LTA Meritorious Service Award in 2007 and in 2012 was highly commended at the Yorkshire Women of Achievement Awards.

Stephen Freegard, life-long interest in tennis

Stephen Freegard's life of tennis all started when he went to Horsforth TC with his parents in his pram! He played Yorkshire League for Horsforth from the age of 14, later moving to Rawdon, where he met his wife Lorna.

In 1966 he joined Ilkley where he was team captain for some 15 years, tennis chairman and committee member.

His **playing record**, as well as Division 1 Yorkshire League, included playing in junior

county teams, winning local tournaments and club championships.

Stephen's first connection with **Yorkshire LTA** began through his father, Ray, who was secretary of Yorkshire League with Bunny Heron. Stephen took over from Bunny in 1975 and also at that time became a Yorkshire LTA councillor.

In 1987 he became chairman of the association and relinquished responsibility for the leagues. That year Stephen also had the honour of being president. His other roles included being a trustee and chairman of the Initiative Committee.

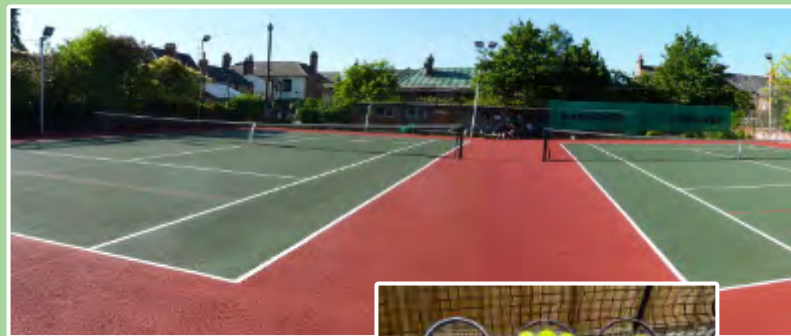
This latter role was established to raise money for the county's activities through the introduction of businesses as major supporters. These businesses included a number of clients of Stephen's TV production company and some of them continue to support Yorkshire Tennis today.

In 1991 Stephen was elected as an **LTA Councillor**, a position he held for some 20 years. During this period, he chaired the marketing committee and was a member of the funding committee.

CLUB NEWS

Pocklington: all courts now have floodlights

The latest development at this club, which was voted Yorkshire Tennis Club of the Year in 2019, means all six astroturf courts are now floodlit. The club was awarded a grant of £35k from East Riding of Yorkshire Council to pay for the last two courts to be floodlit. This means that more tennis and more coaching can be carried out all year round. The club was originally proposing to construct two indoor tennis courts and were on track to fund the £500k development, however as Covid 19 hit in 2020/1 the project costs rose massively making the funding unrealistic. A better option to install floodlights on the two remaining unlit courts was decided as part of the club's development plans.



Heworth: four court club is best performing in York in 2023



This very active club, based just half a mile from the city centre, has four all-weather courts two on East Parade and two in Glen Gardens and a modern clubhouse. 2023 has been a record-breaking year for its seven teams in the York League achieving five promotions in the York tennis leagues across men's, women's and mixed divisions. The women's first team won all 12 of their matches, the mixed teams achieved promotion with two out of their three teams and both men's teams managed promotions from their leagues. The club has attracted a number of new junior and adult members this year helped by developing a wide range of new coaching sessions meaning there is something for everyone at the club whatever their level of tennis.

A message from Yorkshire Tennis President – Geoff Newton OBE

My tenure as President is drawing to a close and I would like to say what an honour and a privilege it has been to serve the county during a period of significant change but also of great success.

When I started my term, I attended one meeting in person and then Covid struck, with all the challenges that came with the pandemic. Two years plus of online meetings fortunately came to an end in May 2022, when we celebrated two years of Awards and had a great turnout.

This was followed by success on the field of play with Yorkshire winning the 2022 County Cup Race which was celebrated with an awards ceremony at the beginning of the Ilkley Tournament in June this year attended by over 100 people.

The Ilkley Tournament itself was very successful and it is so important for tennis in Yorkshire, and

indeed in the north, that this event goes from strength to strength.

Both our County Cup Race win and the success of the Ilkley Tournament are testament of the amazing efforts and dedication of many people, and I would like to single out the leadership and commitment of Karen Mitchell, Head of Performance at Yorkshire Tennis and Rik Smith, Chair of Ilkley LTC.

It is evident from the many visits and conversations I've had with clubs across the county that we have recovered well from the pandemic with activity levels and membership generally back to pre-Covid levels.

There is much more that we can do to grow participation and become a more inclusive sport and the newly formed Community Engagement Committee, led by Nat Wright, will ensure there is clear focus on these areas

– tennis must be a sport for all if it is to be sustainable.

I would like to mention the very successful launch of the Yorkshire Tennis Hall of Fame. This initiative, led by former YT Chair, John Crowther, is all about ensuring we recognise and maintain the heritage of tennis in Yorkshire.

Finally, can I take the opportunity to thank all my colleagues on the Boards of the YLTA/YTL for their support and encouragement during my tenure as President, and I wish Steve Jones and his team every success in guiding the county over the next few years. Onwards and upwards.



Geoff Newton receives OBE

The above picture shows Geoff with his OBE, which he received recently from the Princess Royal at Windsor Castle.

Nominate your Yorkshire tennis hero – do it today!

The annual **LTA Tennis Awards** highlight the incredible achievements and contributions of people in tennis across Britain.

Launched by former LTA president Cathie Sabin OBE, the LTA Tennis Awards celebrate the many thousands of inspirational individuals involved in tennis, dedicating their precious time and energy to the continual development and growth of the sport.

Over the past eight years, the awards have illustrated the depth of service and talent within the tennis community across Britain and served as an inspiration to others to volunteer, coach, officiate or to play tennis.

The awards also highlight the talent across the tennis community in Britain. Last year's winners were judged from over 2,600 public nominations, and this year the LTA is hoping to break the 3,000 barrier.

Yorkshire has amassed several national and regional awards in the last five years so it really is worth putting in a nomination. The 2024 national winners will be announced at the National Awards presentation at Wimbledon in July 2024.



Nominations are open for 2024 and close on 30th November 2023. Details can be found online at: www.lta.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/lta-tennis-awards/

Yorkshire LTA School of the Year 2023 - Ashville College, Harrogate

Ashville College not only gives many opportunities for pupils to play tennis but has also opened up tennis to the community and other local schools. This is possible given there are six hard courts and nine courts with temporary nets and lines drawn on a hockey all-weather pitch.

Tennis is a **part of the curriculum** in both junior and senior schools and during the summer, for those who wish to play more, they have **opportunities after school** on four evenings a week, lunchtime clubs and evening and weekend matches against other independent schools.

There are also intra-house matches consisting of singles, doubles and mixed formats. To encourage the whole family to play, social tournaments are arranged for pupils and their parents, friends and grandparents.

Through the school's links with Angela Crossley Tennis Coaching pupils have the opportunity to train for their **Tennis Leaders' Award**. They then help out with organising and umpiring matches and supporting tennis activities at the junior school.

Ashville College hosts all the **Division 2 Schools Tennis fixtures for Harrogate**. Nine



local schools participate in the competition with each competition having over 60 players playing doubles on 15 courts. The **Ashville Cup** provides more competition for local schools at both primary and senior levels.

Several pupils are on the **County Training programme** and one player is on the national pathway who is given additional coaching outside of school by **Head of Tennis, Sophie Cousins**.

Tennis was not a major sport at the college, particularly for girls, until Sophie joined nine years ago. She played tennis at national and international levels as a junior and was ranked No1 in her home county of Lincolnshire. She represented GB and reached

the junior Wimbledon pre-qualifiers at age 18.

When competitive tennis internationally came to an end due to injury, Sophie moved into coaching. She played in BUCS competitions at Loughborough University where she studied for her degree in Sport and Exercise Science followed by a Masters in Education.

Not surprisingly, Sophie is a very talented sportsperson as apart from tennis she played rounders for England Ladies and nowadays also plays Padel to a very high standard.

Girls have so many more opportunities to play sport these days with cricket, rugby and football joining the traditional sports of rounders, netball and hockey.

If Sophie was starting out

now she would no doubt be a top player in many of these sports and be encouraging other girls to participate and enjoy the health and mental wellbeing aspects of an active lifestyle.

Yorkshire Tennis Partnership Scheme

Yorkshire Tennis has ambitious plans for growing participation and for ensuring the county performs at the highest possible level. These include:

- support for inclusive projects so that anyone can play the game
- financial support for grass roots tennis including loans
- ensuring county training and competition is of a high standard and that the county teams remain among the best nationally
- support for advancement of elite players and coaching programmes.

All of these activities cost money and we are inviting companies to support tennis in Yorkshire by entering into partnership with YT.

Partners enjoy a range of benefits including branding opportunities, association with specific events and promotion of your company via the YT website and social media. Partners can also purchase tickets for major tennis events in the UK.

For more information, visit: www.yorkshiretennis.org.uk/partnerships. To discuss this exciting opportunity, contact: chris.day5819@outlook.com

Update on safeguarding in Yorkshire Tennis

Yorkshire Tennis has two officers to help support clubs and county tennis with safeguarding. They are **Rosie Nicholl and Helen Longstaff**. LTA Regional Safeguarding Officer, Hannah Knox, undertakes support visits for clubs as well as investigating safeguarding concerns. Helen is newly appointed in the role of County Safeguarding Officer as Karen Mitchell has stepped down to focus on her role as Performance Chair.

Young Persons Welfare Ambassador

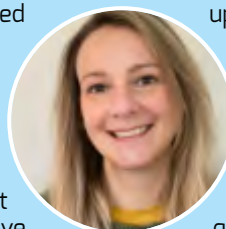
The LTA has been running a pilot project to try and engage



and raise awareness of Safeguarding with young people. Young people were invited to apply from across the country to be part of

the Young Persons Welfare Ambassador Project.

From Yorkshire two people were selected to be part of the group of 25 - Lewis Stirling from Roundhay Tennis Club and Eleanore Lake from Leeds Beckett University. They have been working on various projects over the past year to help shape and build how Safeguarding information is delivered to young people.



More can be read about the project here: www.lta.org.uk/about-us/safeguarding/young-persons-welfare-ambassador/

Club Support Visits

A support visit will be focused around the self-assessment spreadsheet which can be downloaded from the LTA website. There are also

updated templates for various documents.

These should be reviewed by all club committees every two years. Rosie and Helen are more than happy to help with any queries clubs have and can advise clubs in accessing more support from the LTA. They can be contacted at: safeguarding@yorkshiretennis.org.uk

New padel courts and more facilities to come at Harrogate Spa

Harrogate Spa Tennis Centre started out in what is now the car park of the Old Swan Hotel, Harrogate in 1947 and moved to a greenfield site at Claro Park in 2015 when six high quality tennis courts and a small clubhouse were built.

Plans made a few years ago for indoor tennis courts changed more recently following the dramatic increase in the cost of steel and the equally dramatic growth in the sport of padel.

Padel became a reality when two courts and canopies were opened in May 2023 together with a larger pavilion with café and bar. The ambition remains to open indoor tennis courts on the site over the coming years.

Since introducing padel the club has been very busy. Manager, Yasmin Torry, estimates 200 new members have joined for padel and pay and play is very popular with people booking through Playtomic.

Tennis and padel coaching is provided by Strive Coaching. The club is completely accessible which means they are able to run Accessible Padel for wheelchair users and those with learning disabilities. The club also participates in the Inclusive Padel Tour which is for partnerships who are both able and disabled.

Club Padel Championships are underway and other activities that have been arranged include inter-club matches, tournaments and a charity event.

Harrogate Spa also had the privilege of hosting training sessions for the GB Women's Seniors' padel team over several days in August.

Team Manager, Sally Fisher, was joined by Nicky Horn, Audrey Henderson, Natalie Gill and Sally Bickerton and the training was carried out by Belen Castrillo.

Belen was one of pro tennis's hottest prospects in her youth before she contracted Lupus. Belen switched to padel and has gone on to become a multiple world and Spanish national champion.

If anyone wishes to visit Harrogate Spa then please contact Yasmin Torry at harrogatespatennis.staff23@gmail.com

YT padel committee and more new courts in Yorkshire

A new YT Padel Committee has been formed headed up by Peter Vann and Angela Crossley to manage the many aspects of the sport. Padel specific sub-committees are being developed including for competition, participation and social media.

Although volunteers have come forward, more are needed who have the energy and expertise to really help develop the sport in Yorkshire. If anyone is interested in volunteering, email peter.vann@icloud.com

or acrossley@ac-tenniscoaching.co.uk.

Wetherby's first courts at Grange Park Sports Club opened at the end of October and will be showcased in the next Tramlines.

Meanwhile, two more clubs have opened padel courts in Yorkshire - Chapel Allerton LTSC in August and Harrogate Spa TC in May and are featured here. Several more courts are in various stages of planning, possibly as many as 30 in Yorkshire which must surely be the most developed county for Padel.



Chapel Allerton's new padel courts a fantastic addition for 143-year-old club



Formed in 1880 at the heart of Chapel Allerton with 17 members, the tennis club has grown from five grass tennis courts and a wooden pavilion, to 15 tennis courts of various surfaces, six squash courts, a gym and clubhouse.

In 2023 two padel courts with a canopy have been added to the facilities. Pavescape did all the groundworks, Pro Padel built the courts and Fordingbridge installed the canopy.

An opening day celebration took place on Saturday 26th August. Around 200 people visited the club enjoying a host of different activities. The official opening of the courts by Eddy Stallworthy, General Manager, and Scott Wilson, Chairman,

started the festivities and everyone toasted the club with Prosecco.

This was followed by two exhibition matches, men's and ladies' doubles events. The former included two of Chapel A's coaches, Charlie Swallow and Jake Fox, and padel professionals Javi Serrats and Alberto Crespo whilst the ladies included three GB seniors Rosie Connell, Nicky Horn and Sally Bickerton who were joined by Maria-Christina Balatsouka.

Members then had their first opportunity to try out the courts with coaching clinics and free play sessions that went on until 10pm. Snacks, fruit and cakes were offered to all by sponsors Zoom by Ocado.

The courts have been extremely busy in September and October as the Club has hosted several free taster sessions, club play takes place three times a week, coaching sessions for beginners, intermediates and advanced have commenced and court bookings, especially in the evenings, have been very popular.

A hundred members have now joined the first Box Leagues and friendly matches with other Yorkshire clubs and social tournaments are being arranged.

If anyone wishes to visit the club or find out more about the courts and the building process please do not hesitate to contact Eddy Stallworthy at eddy@chapel-a.co.uk

Tennis in the parks – 1,500 courts already transformed

The LTA has been on a mission in the last 18 months to transform park tennis courts in poor or unplayable condition across England, Scotland and Wales. 1,500 courts in nearly 500 parks have been completed through the LTA Parks Tennis Project, as part of a £30 million investment by the UK Government and LTA Tennis Foundation.

Since May this year, the LTA has worked with local authorities on the delivery of 50 park events across Britain. These events have launched newly refurbished courts to officially mark their reopening and highlight the opportunity to play locally. The LTA has worked closely with local communities to promote the new facilities and all venues and activities can be booked through the LTA website.

Thousands of players are already making use of the new courts and booking platform, with a record high of two million people playing in parks in the last year. In Yorkshire nearly 60 parks have been identified for activation and investment involving 200 courts.

The first two projects, where work has started are in Sheffield at Hollinsend and Ecclesfield parks. Over the last seven years, £350K has been invested in six Sheffield parks resulting in huge growth in the number of people playing tennis there. Over 5,300 unique players have booked a court or taken part in a weekly activity over the last year. Premier Tennis are the operators working with the council to drive participation.

Other local authorities which have adopted technology to open up their courts to the public with success include parks in Harrogate, Rotherham, and York. The next local authorities where investment is targeted are Doncaster and Bradford.

It is the LTA's ambition to increase participation in tennis by 500,000 following completion of this project. Key to this is **Free Park Tennis**, a new programme that is beginning to be rolled out and delivered by local volunteers in parks at 10am on weekend mornings.

We know that for many people, cost,

equipment and having someone to play with are the key barriers to getting started or returning to playing tennis – Free Park Tennis removes these barriers.

If readers would like to get involved in running a Free Park Tennis session you can register via the link below. Guidance, training and all equipment is provided at parks running the sessions.

Stay up to date by following @LTAParks on Twitter/X or visit: www.lta.org.uk/what-we-do/park-tennis-project/

Tennis in and around Scarborough area

Tennis has an illustrious history in Scarborough and was once the beating heart of Yorkshire tennis. The prestigious North of England Championships were originally held at South Cliff Tennis Club in the early 1900s and was won on four occasions by Laurence Doherty, the first real superstar of lawn tennis; and Dorothea Douglass, who went on to win Wimbledon seven times.

The championships moved to the **Filey Road site**, with its immaculate grass show courts, described at the time as the best outside Wimbledon. The venue would go on to host five Davis Cup ties, and the Slazenger Pro Championships that were won on three occasions by Fred Perry.

However, by the end of the 1950s the golden age of tennis in Scarborough was coming to an end and in 1968 plans were approved to turn the Filey Road site into a multi-sport leisure centre. By 2018, the courts had fallen into disrepair and the resident Scarborough TC left the site to merge with neighbours Hackness TC.

Further up the coast in Whitby, the tennis courts at West Cliff also closed in the early part of the twenty first century as tennis venues faced issues of remaining sustainable.



Yet despite these challenges, the last year has seen some very positive signs of recovery for tennis on the east coast.

The two disused courts at **Whitby Leisure Centre at West Cliff** were reinstated in April this year following a £730,000 project, that also included a refurbished games area, and are available to the public on a pay and play basis.

Children from West Cliff Primary School were the first to play a set on the courts and also put the improved games area through its paces.

The fast-growing sport of **Padel Tennis** has recently arrived at **Scarborough Rugby Club**. Two Padel courts were officially opened at the club in May this year and have proved very popular and the venue is now looking to further extend its racket sports provision.

Hackness and Scarborough TC continues to be one of the

leading clubs in the area and is celebrating its centenary this year. The club, which was once voted as one of the ten most picturesque settings in England, has three grass courts and two hard courts.

It held an open day in August to celebrate the centenary that was delivered in partnership with the Bright Ideas for Tennis Charity and former player Danny Sapsford. The day saw a fantastic turnout with coaching sessions, an American tournament, and barbecue although an exhibition match unfortunately had to be cancelled due to poor weather.



At **Scalby TC**, two courts have been resurfaced and work preparation undertaken to install floodlights on the two lower courts. There are also plans to install a gate access

system at the venue for two courts that can be booked by the public, and a similar system is planned for the single public court at **Filey TC**.

There is also now exciting news for the restoration of courts at the historic site at **Filey Road**. Agreement has recently been reached with the McCabe and Guthrie families, who live in the area, to support the reinstatement of four hard courts, two of which will be floodlit. The refurbishment work is due to take place in early 2024 subject to planning approval, and once complete the courts will be open to the public. The restoration of Filey Road will undoubtedly prove to be a huge step forward in reviving tennis in the area.

There are still challenges remaining for tennis in Scarborough. Access to the indoor tennis centre at George Pindar School remains difficult, but the LTA North Team is working with the Hope Sentamu Learning Trust who operate the school site, to find a solution to improve access to the centre and deliver an enhanced tennis programme.

However, significant progress has assuredly been made for tennis in the area over recent times and Scarborough can once again claim its place as a major force in Yorkshire Tennis.