

**St Martins Tennis Club**  
**Annual Report 2018/19**

*AGM 18<sup>th</sup> November 2019*

*A J Creasey*

I am pleased to report on another busy year at St Martins Tennis Club.

Thank you, and well done, to those of you who participated in the 2019 Inter Club Leagues, as usual we supported the leagues and I congratulate our ladies team for winning the division, I am not sure when we might have last won this league, if ever, so it was a great performance by our girls. Debbie, Natasha, Carol, Carrie and doubtless several reserves as well. Also we won Div 2 Mens so well done chaps!

We have run the normal internal competitions during the year and the trophies were presented at our dinner on Saturday night a couple of weekends ago. Thanks to Sue, Nina and Jane for organising the evening which was a great success.

When we hear from the Treasurer in a minute you will learn that the Club remains in a strong financial position our membership has remained constant. This year we did see notable retirements of some more elderly members who have decided that their tennis days are behind them, and we have also lost some less elderly, but individuals with nagging injuries who have taken a year off, I hope some of these may return in 2020! However, as you will see in the accounts our membership remains constant as far as “senior” members are concerned. But overall our numbers are well ahead as a result of our junior programme.

It is many years since we could genuinely claim to have an active Junior Programme, and indeed this time last year we had nothing to shout about. However, it was about this time that Richard Smeed did approach me with an idea that would radically change what we had been doing. Richard was doing a small amount of coaching at the Club, but with only a handful of kids, and frankly this was not sustainable for Richard. He suggested that if he was to relocate his Beau Sejour groups in their entirety then he would have the numbers to make it work, and the Club could demonstrate a comprehensive junior programme. After several chats and exchanges of e-mails the committee agreed to the concept and at the end of April we launched the St Martins Tennis Academy. In the end close to 100% of Richard’s kids choose to follow him to St Martins. The deal was that Under 10’s would pay no subs for the year. This was partly supported by the GLTA who contributed £350 to the scheme, this funded memberships for about 23 under 10’s given our normal charge of £15. The over 10’s, had a choice ideally they paid £35 and became full junior members, or they paid addition fees to Richard for their coaching, with that supplement past onto the Club. I am pleased to say the bulk paid the £35 and have become members. Further to this, we reactivated a class of membership we had used when Geoff Martel was coaching, we allowed parents of the children to pay £40 and use the courts to play with their children. They do not participate in any other elements of our tennis, but of course we hope some may in time, become full members themselves. In 2019 23 parents took advantage of this offer.

Richard held an Open Day in the summer, to further promote the Club, and we will do more of this in 2020. Richard’s programme is term time only, but he did offer some additional summer holiday tennis too. The weather over the last few weeks has been challenging, and that is always going to be the issue with outdoor facilities. Ideally Richard will keep going after Christmas but clearly Jan and Feb are not ideal months for u10’s to be trying to learn tennis outside. So, almost inevitably there will be a lull until the spring.

The guys will have noticed a large amount of Richard’s coaching kit in the mens changing room, and the Committee is investigating an additional shed that can accommodate the balls, rackets etc Richard has, please be patient whilst we sort this out!

Whilst we have held these regular events during the year, for many of our members it is the informal, social play, that is their preferred option and the courts are well used over the week, both day time and early evening by pairs, larger groups or families enjoying some exercise and a game of tennis. The various Club sessions continue to function but greater participation particularly on Friday evenings, and the gents sessions on Tuesday and Thurs afternoons.,

Those wishing to have a chance of taking part in the Club's Wimbledon Ballot will need to Opt-in on the LTA website, please do this as soon as possible rather than leaving it to the last moment, I know it's a chore but we have to follow the system as laid down by the LTA! Once you have opted-in and if you want to take part in the Club Ballot please send me an e-mail or write to me and I will add you to our list.

Following up a suggestion at the AGM last year we held a bbq at the end of June, this was well attended and we will look to repeat the concept in 2020.

Thanks to your committee who have also contributed to the running of the Club and its programme. I don't want to particularly highlight individuals for fear of missing the quiet contribution of others. However, I do want to thank Nick Bennett, Nick has been one of those with an injury that has kept him out of tennis this year, however, Nick has been looking after the website and has offered to keep that going if no other volunteer appears, Nick will not be standing for re-election.. I also most mention Eric, I can't begin to list all the things Eric does behind the scenes, but Eric too has had to succumb to failing joints and is hanging up his racket. Eric will be impossible to replace and it is only when something goes wrong, or breaks, will we full understand all the bit and pieces Eric "oiled and greased" to keep the club operating smoothly.

Jane Kinley continues in her role as our Welfare Officer, this post and the whole area of safeguarding, diversity and discrimination is a high priority for the LTA, and now we have such an active junior programme it must be alert to the ramifications. We adopted our "Safeguarding Policy" last year. It is available on the website and also a copy is on the notice board.

I should also like to thank Nina our Secretary. Nina has been waiting all year for an operation, as indeed has her husband, well Geoff had his operation a few weeks ago, and Nina is due to have her surgery very soon, we wish you well and hope that may be in 2020 you will be back on the court.

**My own position, well I am not sure when I became President, I have minutes of meetings in 1989 when I was Vice-President. Thereafter, I am not sure, what I do know is that Jenny Sherwill ended up in New Zealand and I became your President. So I have held this post for close to 30 years. Frankly that is not healthy for the Club (certainly not for Helen and possibly not for me). I await the election in a moment but if I am re-elected now, I hereby give 12 months' notice that I will stand aside in November 2020. The awful truth is that neither of the current, or nominated Vice-Presidents seek the job, so we do need to find a successor soon. Please all of you do give this your best thoughts.**

I would like to invite you for a glass of mulled wine and mince pie on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec, why not join Club Morning and stay on, or join us at say 11.30, whatever the weather!

Finally a special thank you to Helen who works tirelessly to get teams out, entries into competitions and so on, and especially keeping me on my toes!

