

TRAM LINES

YORKSHIRE TENNIS NEWSLETTER JUNE 2021

www.yorkshiretennis.org.uk • yorkshire.tennis@aol.co.uk



Message from John Crowther, Chairman of Yorkshire Tennis

Dear Tennis Friend,

I hope you've had an opportunity to get out on court. As before, tennis was one of the first sports allowed back on 29th March albeit with some restrictions which will be lifted shortly. This means that competition is reawakening from a deep slumber and District Leagues are getting going as well as the Yorkshire League.

In this edition of TRAM LINES we celebrate the winners of our LTA County Awards and those who have, in addition, gone on to win the LTA Regional Finals and will be considered for an LTA National Award.



I would also like to make special mention of Chris Day, who has given excellent service to both county and club as a player and administrator. He stood down from the Presidency of YT at the end of 2019 but still continues to contribute as a member of our management committee and chairing the committee which looks after sponsorship.

Over the next year, the LTA will be focussing on diversity and inclusivity making sure the sport is genuinely open to anyone who wants to play. Please look at the section on this subject and consider what you and your club could do to improve these vital factors.

As a result of the LTA Youth programme, we welcome into our Yorkshire Family around 270 primary schools who have taken up the sport and offer it to their young pupils. The LTA is extending the programme to secondary schools in September and we expect even more schools to be joining.

This is a bumper edition with an amazing amount of news and interest for everyone. We hope you enjoy it and if you have any feedback as to how we could make Tramlines even better we would love to hear from you. Have a great summer of tennis. John

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Success for Yorkshire's 2021 LTA Award Winners

Yorkshire Tennis is no stranger to Zoom. Council and Committee meetings on Zoom have been the norm over the past year and the 2021 Yorkshire Awards were presented in this format in January to a worthy range of tennis players, coaches and volunteers across the county. Many congratulations to all winners and highly commended.

Winners of County Awards progress to the Regional stage and Yorkshire



has achieved recognition in a number of categories in the North Region.

All regional winners now go forward to the National Finals which will be held on Thurs 24th June at 8pm on LTA's YouTube channel. Good luck to all our finalists!

Three of the North Region Award winners are featured in the following pages. The other two – Reuben (pictured above) and Leeds Community Tennis Programme will be featured in the Autumn edition of TRAM LINES.

2021 Yorkshire & North Region LTA Award Winners

Volunteer of the Year

Pat Powell, Rustlings LTC;
Highly Commended in North Region

Young Person of the Year

Reuben Newman-Billington, Graves Tennis Centre;
Winner in North Region

Official of the Year

Georgina Jackson
Highly Commended in North Region

Club of the Year

Brentwood TC;
Highly Commended in North Region

Communities and Parks

Leeds Community Tennis Programme;
Winner in North Region

Education – University

York St John; Winner in North Region

Disability

Brentwood TC; Winner in North Region

Coach of the Year – Performance

Richard Crabtree, Leeds RPDC;
Highly Commended in North Region

Coach of the Year – Development

Paul Johnson, Roundhay TC & Leeds Beckett University; Winner in North Region

Lifetime Achievement

Christine Place, Rufforth TC

Yorkshire's 2021 LTA North Region award winners

Coach of the Year – Development Paul Johnson, Roundhay LTC & Leeds Beckett University

Paul Johnson has been coaching since a teenager and has achieved so much even though he's only 28! Kingsley Tennis Centre in Hampshire was where Paul started playing tennis, aged 6, and then assisted with coaching from aged 16 and took his L1 and L2 coaching qualifications soon after. A gap year at Winchester Tennis Club gave Paul a different experience of coaching where he also completed his L3 qualification.

In 2012 he moved to Yorkshire to study at Leeds Beckett University (LBU) for a Sports Business Management degree where he has remained ever since. Paul graduated in 2015 and since then has taken on roles of University Tennis Co-ordinator alongside his Masters Degree, assistant coach to the BUCS team and is currently both University Tennis Co-ordinator and Assistant Coach.

He's also had spells as head coach at Sandal TC and in 2019 became head coach at Roundhay TC in Leeds. Paul's role and experience at LBU has brought many benefits to Roundhay TC.

At Roundhay he's organising a range of programmes including Beginners' Courses, Cardio Tennis, Team Training, Advanced Junior Coaching, Junior Development Coaching and Disability Tennis comprising Walking Tennis and working with Leeds Hearing and Sight Loss.

Juniors also have the opportunity to have training at LBU which is a great advantage for both the children and the club. Paul's team of coaches at Roundhay have all been through LBU, where they work as a strong team sharing regular development, both as a group and individually with Paul.

A number of older juniors have been working as Assistants on the coaching team and are now studying for their qualifications at LBU.

Since joining Roundhay LTC Paul has grown the club coaching programme from three to five days with currently 205 participants representing over a 40% increase during this time period.

In his role at **Leeds Beckett University** Paul achieved much before and during lockdown of 2020. He developed:

- **CPD courses for coaches and players online** comprising content such as singles and doubles tactics, match analysis, nutrition, psychology, warming up and cooling down exercises and mini fitness sessions using video clips and diagrams to bring it all to life
- **Coaches workshops** bespoke to the needs of attendees
- **Workforce Development Programme** for 14 tennis leaders and 4 L1 coaches
- **Support for 11 student coaches** linking then with local clubs, county training and mentoring through their next qualifications.

Paul is also involved with **Yorkshire County Tennis** where he is vice-captain of the 18U team.

So what are Paul's future aspirations? **Tutoring** is an area of considerable interest where he can bring to life all of his experience and inspire future generations of coaches; become **Captain** of a County Team; **Improve and grow** the Coaching at LBU and Roundhay; **Continue to develop the coaches** at LBU and at Roundhay, and help them to find their own routes in the tennis industry.

A significant addition to the tennis landscape in Yorkshire was completed towards the end of 2020, with the development of a new 3 indoor court tennis centre at York St John University (YSJU).

The new facility stands proudly on the University's Haxby Road Sports Park, located a mile north of York city centre and will provide much needed indoor tennis provision for a wide range of players in the city.

Discussions around the development of an indoor centre started in the summer of 2017, following the opening of the purpose built £9.1 million Sports Park in 2016. Down the Line Tennis Academy had quickly established a successful coaching programme at the venue, and Head Coach Rowan Moss was keen to explore options for the development of an indoor facility at the site.

The team at YSJU shared the ambition to develop indoor tennis courts and a partnership was formed with the LTA North Regional Team to develop the project. After considering different indoor options, a 3 indoor fabric framed structure was agreed, to be located at the end of the main building at the Sports Park. This would involve re-orienting 2 existing courts and adding a third court before installing the indoor structure. The £1.1 million project would be jointly funded by YJSU and the LTA following the approval of a funding application in December 2018.

Work continued over 2019 to obtain planning permission and secure a constructor to deliver the project. Work was due to begin on site in 2020, just as the Covid pandemic struck which presented further major challenges. Work did however start in June 2020 and the new Tennis Centre was eventually completed in November 2020.

Unfortunately, the new indoor venue could only open on a limited basis initially due to the pandemic before

the country went into full lockdown in early January. The Tennis Centre was then able to more fully open for business in April after a frustratingly long wait!

As tennis starts to return to normal, York St John University Tennis Centre will provide a community accessible tennis facility throughout the year. It will offer an extensive range of junior and adult coaching through Down the Line Tennis, and students at the university will also have

access to a comprehensive tennis programme. There will be sessions for people with disabilities and the Tennis Centre will also host a range of tournaments. Club and recreational tennis players in York will be able to access the facility, providing the opportunity to play indoors during the long winter months.

The development of the new indoor Tennis Centre came about following the formation of a strong partnership between York St

John University, Down the Line Tennis Academy and the LTA and a collective determination to overcome the challenges and deliver the vision. The project came to fruition in less than 3 and half years from the first meeting to the Tennis Centre being completed, which is extremely quick for this type of project. It will provide much needed access to indoor courts for the tennis community in York and is a great addition to the tennis network in the region.



Education – University Award York St John



Brentwood Tennis Club

North Region - Disability Award Winner Yorkshire Tennis Club of the Year and Highly Commended in North Region

Brentwood TC is tucked away in a quiet residential area of Nether Edge, Sheffield. Many locals came across the club whilst out walking during the lockdowns of summer 2020 and winter 2020/21 and in common with many other outdoor Yorkshire clubs the pandemic has gained them a whole new group of members.

60% of new members who joined last summer have returned since the club reopened. With 255 members in total the club is almost at maximum capacity and there is a waiting list for coaching. The feature below outlines Brentwood's success story, a club that never stands still and constantly innovates.

The club has made a **number of facilities' developments** in the last year and has great plans for the next couple of years to ensure membership thrives and activities can continue to be expanded particularly after dark and during the winter months.

Two courts have been resurfaced and await repainting, two courts have been repainted, a fifth court has lights and a

sixth court is awaiting lights to be installed. The clubhouse has also been refurbished. Brentwood has other clubs nearby, for example, Eccleshall and Hallamshire, so focuses on activities that are different from competitors.

The activities are all led by **Ben Howarth, head coach**, and the team of volunteers including the very proactive committee. Ben has been at Brentwood for over 20 years and learned his trade at an early age from his dad, also a tennis coach.

Ben's CV includes a period working in childcare at a nursery school and he developed a link with the club when he took on a part-time coaching role. Ben's work in caring for children has provided many life lessons and has benefited him considerably as a coach.

Over the years Ben has expanded the activities for adults and children at Brentwood and what started with Saturday morning and individual coaching sessions has progressed to a full junior coaching programme, kids camps during

the holidays, team training, separate sessions for women and girls, box leagues and a range of sessions during the day across the week. Additionally, Sunday Socials, a club activity, are organised by volunteers.

Most clubs and coaches are busy in the evenings and at weekends so the question is how do you replicate this experience during the day time? Ben started small but now has a range of activities going on in the day time for everyone including school children, older adults, adults with injuries or illnesses and children and



adults with learning disabilities, mental health and well-being issues.

Activities include **Tennis Xpress**, a six-week course for adult beginners, which is all about learning the basics of tennis together including rallying, serving and scoring and then after six weeks joining the club for social tennis and competitive matches at their level.

Cardio Tennis has followed and more recently **Walking Tennis** which is aimed at older people and those with health issues and injuries as players rally without running, the ball can bounce twice and strengthening and co-ordinating exercises are undertaken.

Feel Good Friday sessions on a Friday morning are about playing tennis and combining this with breakfast, cooked

by the members. What Brentwood is promoting is the sociable and friendly aspects of a club together with playing tennis and enjoying the exercise.

Back in 2017 Ben started on his journey with **anyone with a disability and/or long-term health conditions**. He now has sessions going on all week either at Brentwood or in the community including:

- Tennis for young people with a learning disability, for example those with autism or ADHD, at primary and secondary schools;
- Tennis with Downs Syndrome adults and children where the focus is on the family all learning and playing together
- Working with Sheffield MIND to introduce sessions for people with mental health issues.

The feature on Page 8 provides some lessons from Ben on establishing Disability Tennis at clubs – learning what to do and importantly what not to do!

During lockdowns Ben kept in constant touch with members using his YouTube channel, which showed videos of him doing all kinds of work outs, tutorials and practices in his back garden.

Social media platforms of Instagram, Twitter and Facebook, together with the club website, promote the club to both members and the community. Photos, videos and posters advertise all of the club activities and encourage anyone to join in a session and try it out. Look North even paid a visit to the club on 29th March when tennis re-opened.

The success of Brentwood is down to so many factors – the passion, enthusiasm and dedication of Ben Howarth; a very hardworking and involved Committee; a range of inclusive and accessible activities aimed at the whole community which are constantly evolving; consistent presence across a variety of media; and a welcoming, caring and friendly vibe that embodies everything a club stands for.



-BREAKFAST SOCIAL
-BREAKFAST COACHING
-TENNIS XPRESS
-WALKING TENNIS
-CARDIO TENNIS

FEEL
GOOD
FRIDAYS



■ Chris Day (far right) pictured at opening of new courts in 2018

LTA Meritorious Service Award

The May 2020 edition of *Tramlines* ran a feature on Chris Day's life and achievements in tennis, following the end of his three-year term as President of YT, so rather than reprise the contents of that article (which can be downloaded from www.yorkshirtennis.org.uk), these individuals tell their own stories about how much Chris has done for tennis from county, club and personal perspectives.

Peter Styant, vice-chairman, Barnsley Lawn Tennis Club said: "Barnsley Lawn Tennis Club is, today, a modern, inclusive, thriving and vibrant club. The club is skilfully led by Chris Day, who has, during his many years of chairmanship, been the driving force, visionary and utmost dependable person in his efforts to bring about the changes that were necessary at the club to bring it up to 21st century standards."

"There have been numerous challenges and traumatic events, but, without exception, Chris has had the vision and leadership skills to steer the club through these periods of

change. Many improvements have been completed and more recently three additional new courts were obtained. The playing facilities are now first-class, the structure and financial status of the club are first-class, all achieved by the leadership and management skills Chris brings to the club.

"Chris is now driving forward the latest development which will include additional clubhouse provisions to improve hospitality for all members and their families to enjoy."

"For many years Chris has made considerable efforts developing relationships with members and tennis associates. His involvement with numerous contacts has

resulted in many benefits, not least Chris's proudest achievement, the junior coaching programme at the club. This programme has produced several fantastic players over many years.

"In addition to all his management efforts Chris has found the time to compete in and win Yorkshire O55s tournament not too many years ago, in addition to his many triumphs in the annual club tournament. A very good tennis player too!"

"Chris's selfless endeavour and encouragement for the benefit of the club has been, without doubt, the overriding factor in establishing a modern facility at BLTC benefiting its members and the local

community. BLTC is fortunate to have such a determined and visionary leader and recognition of all Chris's efforts is fully deserved."

Elsbeth Lee, tennis partner at Barnsley Lawn Tennis Club, explains the important role Chris plays in the life of the club: "I have known Chris for about ten years, seven of which we have partnered each other in Mixed. We have co-captained, run tournaments and I have had the privilege of sitting with him on the Barnsley LTC committee. For reasons too long to list, Chris has been a fabulous mentor and inspiration to me, and a great supporter of Barnsley LTC. >>> CONTINUES ON P7 >>>

Congratulations to Chris Day

Chris Day, President of Yorkshire Tennis 2017-2019, Yorkshire Tennis Councillor, Chairman of YT Initiative Committee and member of a number of YT committees was recently awarded the 2020 LTA Meritorious Service Award in recognition of his outstanding voluntary service to tennis over a long period of time. He's also been Chairman of Barnsley Lawn Tennis Club for 20 years and continues to play tennis in the local tennis leagues and for Yorkshire in the O60s team.

>>> CONTINUED FROM P6

"Chris is well-known and well-regarded in tennis circles around the region, and with good reason. We are particularly lucky to have him at Barnsley LTC, where he has worked hard to secure funding to build three new tarmac courts and upgrade existing courts to artificial grass.

"He has been fundamental in the growth and expansion of the club, not only in the physical sense, but also demonstrated by the 40% increase in membership, under his direction.

"Chris is the life and soul of Barnsley LTC, with a wealth of information and wisdom to share... He is a pillar of our tennis club community."

"Chris's legacy will be his work in developing the Junior Programme and the number of children he has encouraged to play tennis. Chris has navigated the club through some turbulent times, in which his leadership and guidance has been gratefully received by many.

"Chris is the life and soul of Barnsley LTC, with a wealth of information and wisdom to share, coupled with a few amusing anecdotes. He is a pillar of our tennis club community. Chris makes time for everyone and supports players of all ages and abilities.

"His dedication to the sport can be recognised by the time and effort he invests to ensure Barnsley LTC's exponential growth. It can also be witnessed by the long hours he has spent playing (and spectating) in the pouring rain – a true titan of the Sheffield and District League!

"I have been given a wealth of opportunities thanks to Chris. I truly value his mentorship and he has inspired me to get involved in many volunteering positions with tennis, which have allowed me



"Barnsley Lawn Tennis Club is fortunate to have such a determined and visionary leader and recognition of all Chris's efforts is fully deserved."



■ Chris, pictured above, with Barnsley tennis members receiving 2018 Yorkshire Club of the Year Award.

■ Pictured left, with Barnsley tennis members receiving 2018 Sheffield and District League Club of the Year Award at the 2018 Annual Dinner.

to meet some fantastic people.

"I could not think of anyone more deserving of the LTA Meritorious Service Award than Chris. He has dedicated most of his spare time to tennis, prioritising the success of the club and its members. This award is a welcome recognition of Chris's hard work and selflessness."

John Crowther, Chairman, Yorkshire Tennis said: "Chris is very committed to tennis in Yorkshire and to the association, playing Seniors tennis for the County, chairing his own Club, Barnsley LTC, and undertaking different YT administrative roles, such as chairing the Initiative Committee which has the

extremely important task of raising sponsorship and donations from organisations and individuals which underpins our investments in the county from county training, competitions and facility improvements.

"As far as I recall, he has not missed an event or meeting the whole time I have known him. Always ready with a smile, and with his preparations beforehand, his contributions are very important for the success of the team.

"Perhaps, his crowning achievement and acknowledgement was his tenure as president of the county which he carried out in an exemplary manner."

Don Stewart, Chairman of County, Club, Community and Schools Committee, Yorkshire Tennis said: "Chris has been a strong member of CCCS since its inception and a reliable and helpful support to me as Chairman. He is always diligent in looking at the papers etc and has thought about the issues.

"Even while president he never tried to take control but made his points with clarity and with the aim of making sure we made sensible and reasonable decisions.

"He challenged, questioned and argued always with a view to ensuring debate rather than seeking to impose his views. A valuable friend, critic and conscience. Much appreciated."

Making tennis inclusive and accessible to everyone – getting started with the LTA

OPEN COURT

Open Court is the national programme funded by Sport England and the LTA which involves clubs and other venues collaborating with key partners to provide opportunities for disabled people to get involved in tennis.

This is all part of the LTA's vision to ensure tennis is 'opened up' to people from all backgrounds, including those with disabilities.

LTA run 'Open Your Doors' workshops which aim to build understanding of:

- what is meant by 'disability'.
- the barriers to participation in tennis for disabled people.
- how to overcome challenges and barriers through positive change and adjustment.
- how the LTA can support clubs and other venues.

A package of equipment and support has been developed including:

- small club grant access (£250 max)
- inclusive equipment package
- insight and research support
- bid writing support
- expertise and advice from LTA North Region team

Clubs and venues that are interested in following up can contact the LTA at disabilitytennis@lta.org.uk or speak to one of the North Region Participation Team to find out how to plan and deliver an appropriate and relevant programme.

As well as attending virtual or in person workshops the module will also be moving online as part of LTA Youth in the coming months so keep an eye out for that.

Just to stimulate readers' interest here are some stats:

- 14 million people in the UK have a disability or long-term illness
- 23% of people in Yorkshire and Humber have a disability v 13% in London
- Disabled people who play tennis at least monthly are predominantly those with learning disabilities or learning difficulties
- 27 venues in Yorkshire deliver disability tennis



Open Court
Disability Tennis



Learnings over four years from Brentwood TC and head coach, Ben Howarth

Ben Howarth started with an Open Your Doors Workshop back in 2017 and was given considerable support and mentoring by Matt Elkington, LTA Disability Development Partner. Matt's advice was instrumental in identifying and meeting a number of community groups and agencies alongside Paul Sheard, Participation Development Partner, LTA North Region.

To quote Ben: "The first year was a major learning curve. I used this time to attend meetings, find out who everyone was, build rapport with them and assessed the skills, understanding and patience required to start any programme. I was constantly keeping my ear to the ground finding out what was going on in the area."

One of the most influential people in this research period was Dawn Wood, Community Link

Partner, Links Schools Partnership. Starting in special needs secondary schools, Ben went with Dawn to schools and learned first-hand how to work with children, for example those with ADHD or autism, and participated in a variety of sports.

Through this work experience Ben got to know the PE teachers and the children and was able to trial ideas and gain valuable feedback. In Ben's second year he moved on to primary schools with the support of Dawn.

Ben went into three junior schools for 6 sessions and two secondary schools for 6 sessions and all the schools attended a Team Challenge festival at the club. The children are encouraged to join the club and participate in coaching and competitive programmes if they feel comfortable to do so.

As part of his early

research Ben became involved with DS Active a programme run by the Down's Syndrome Association (DSA).

They offer expert training to coaches so Ben took advantage of this and was able to run his own sessions at Brentwood which include Down's Syndrome family sessions.

Word has spread so families come from all over the county to participate and several have gone on to become club members and join in other sessions including Feel Good Fridays.

The achievements at Brentwood TC have come about over a number of years based on hard work and dedication with the help and support of many individuals and organisations. If any club or venue wants to have a chat or visit Brentwood, contact: benhowarth.tenniscoaching@gmail.com

What's coming up this Summer in Yorkshire

For many players, both adults and juniors, the lack of any competitive tennis in 2020 and the first half of 2021 has left a real gap. So, the desire to get back on court and play in local leagues, county and national competitions has never been greater. However, not everyone wants to compete and there have always been plenty of opportunities to watch great tennis in Yorkshire which has been absent since the summer of 2019. So, whether playing or watching tennis this summer just go out there and enjoy!

Ilkley Tennis and Squash Club is not hosting the Ilkley Trophy this year, and spectators will not be seeing top ATP Challenger and ITF competitors gracing the superbly prepared grass courts, but there are other competitions taking place at the club on the grass courts.

Spectators and competitors alike can also make the most of the friendly hospitality in the club's café bar and enjoy visiting the town voted the Sunday Times 'Best Place to Live in the North and North East 2021.' For those who don't know the Ilkley Trophy has moved this year to Nottingham for Covid-19 safety reasons but will return to Yorkshire in 2022.

Competition kicks off at Ilkley with **Men's Group 3 of LTA Summer County Cup** from Monday 19th – Friday 23rd July. The counties of Norfolk, Derbyshire, Northamptonshire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and Somerset will be battling it out over five days and there is always plenty of room for spectators to move around and watch the matches.

The Ilkley Open, Grade 3, commences on Saturday 24th July for a week and there will be events for everyone including juniors, adults and seniors. **The LTA British Tour** returns as well from Monday 26th – Saturday 31st July and as a Tier 2 event usually sees entries from performance players with a rating of 3.2 or better providing experience for those seeking to become professional players.

Finally, for the first time Ilkley will be hosting a **Grade 2 Summer National Tour for 10U and 11U** from Sunday 1st to Wednesday 4th August. These

are designed to offer the best players in the country in their age group the opportunity to compete against each other and improve match play and mental skills.

There are also many opportunities for everyone, whatever the standard, to play singles in **local tennis leagues** and to see areas

where they operate go to www.localtennisleagues.com. Leagues are up and running in Kirklees, Harrogate and Sheffield and in Leeds a new league launched in April. A York League is planned to commence in June.

These leagues are for adult players who want to take part in some friendly, yet competitive mixed-sex singles matches in their local area. Matches can take place at any venue convenient for both players, including the many park courts across the county. Players can be any ability as players are grouped with similar level opponents. Players sign up

for specific rounds and have an approximate eight-week period to organise and play 5-7 matches. Players who complete at least three of their matches by the halfway point are rewarded with a free tube of balls. There are prizes as well for winners of each group.

For juniors who like playing with their friends **Team Challenge** is just the thing. In 2019 26,000 players thought so! They comprise short matches, small teams and cater for any number. It's competitive but everyone's a winner.

There are two formats – 'match weeks' which slot into weekly coaching programmes, usually half-way through a term, and are a great way to play competitive, fun matches in small teams; and 'festivals' which are bigger events that can take place at any time, often at weekends or in the holidays.

These can involve the whole club and can be themed around events. If anyone is interested in signing up for a Team Challenge all the details can be found at: lta.org.uk/workforce-venues/coach-teach/programme-development/team-challenge

TOURNAMENT WATCH

Grade 3 and 4 Tournaments are taking place across the County as follows:

- Chapel Allerton May Grade 4: 30th May – 5th June
- Huddersfield Open Grade 3: 10th – 16th July
- Chapel Allerton Summer Grade 3: 18th – 24th July
- Ilkley Open Grade 3: 24th – 31st July
- Sheffield & District Junior Closed Grade 5: 26th – 30th July
- CCS Grade 4: 8th – 14th August
- Thongsbridge Open Grade 3: 15th – 21st August
- Yorkshire Championships Grade 3: 18th – 29th August

Applications can be made online at: competitions.lta.org.uk/tournaments



Bubwith Tennis Club – local, friendly, well-managed and fit for the future

Located in East Yorkshire, about eight miles from Selby, this village community club, established in 1963, has much to be proud of. With three excellent artificial grass courts, including one with new floodlights replaced in December 2020, the club has all year-round tennis but much much more to offer its members.

The club is run by the volunteer committee and a mission statement agreed at the AGM outlines to members the direction the club is heading. The committee members have defined roles and every year they aim to recruit one or two

replacements to bring fresh ideas and energy to ensure the club continues to be successful.

The one exception to the DIY approach is the court maintenance programme – the courts are all professionally maintained which ensures that they are always in the best condition even though this comes at a cost. The club has also developed a 25-year plan for court replacement, court rejuvenation and fencing with funds planned to come from grants, loans, fund-raising and sensibly priced membership subscriptions.

Activities, including the regular coaching for adults

and juniors provided by I Can Play Tennis, social club nights, monthly handicap tournaments and competitive tennis, are what makes the club.

In 2020 with no league tennis available the club arranged friendly matches against other local clubs. Social events are an important part of the club's fundraising and involve the whole community including:

- A Beer and Cider Festival held annually from 2007 until 2018 in conjunction with Bubwith Leisure and Sports Centre (the tennis club's landlords), providing an important revenue stream

for the club. The next Festival - which has evolved into the more family friendly 'Summerfest' - is planned for 2022.

- 24-hour Tennis Marathon which this year is being held on 19th and 20th June to raise funds for the Club, Yorkshire Air Ambulance and Friends of Bubwith School.

Engagement with members and the wider community is essential for Bubwith Tennis Club and one of the new committee members has taken over this responsibility. A new fresh website (www.bubwithtennisclub.co.uk) communicates everything that is happening which, combined with social media posts and emails, ensures everyone is kept up to date with events at the club especially during the pandemic.

Success for Yorkshire clubs during pandemic





Northowram Tennis Club

A journey of three years and finally opening in July 2021

Success for Yorkshire clubs during pandemic

The development of this new tennis facility has been a labour of love for a number of people but particularly for Peter Thornton, who doesn't even play tennis, but was keen to develop the disused facilities after moving to Northowram from Todmorden.

The courts were originally laid in the 1960s by the local council and were used on a pay-as-you-go basis. In the 1990s a club was established and they participated in the Calderdale League competing in the first division at their height. But by around 2000 the courts unfortunately fell into disrepair and became unplayable so members moved to other clubs in the area.

Around three years ago, on walking past the weed-ridden mess, Peter thought about playing tennis and out of interest put a post on the 'What's on in Northowram' page of Facebook to see if anyone was interested in playing at the site and received 65 responses in 24 hours! So the journey to new courts and a new club commenced.

In 2018 Peter approached

Calderdale Council whose response was lukewarm to say the least as they had no money and the only way forward was for a club to be formed and the assets would be transferred to the club.

Peter again put a post on Facebook to arrange a meeting and 50 people attended from which a committee was formed including Peter as chairman, Don Stewart of Yorkshire LTA as secretary, John Manogue (Fred) and local councillor Peter Caffrey.

Over two years, quotes for the redevelopment of the courts, including floodlights, were sought and a range of funding sources were investigated. Grants were secured comprising £45K from Sport England and £10K from SUEZ Communities Trust together with £13K from small grants, donations and a race night. Finally, at the end of 2020 a 50-year lease was granted by Calderdale Council to Northowram Tennis Club.

In early 2021 the works on the courts commenced and on 30th April the courts had lines painted and the nets were put



up. Painting of the courts will be undertaken in June and the club will be officially opened on Saturday 3rd July with significant razzamatazz.

The club is aiming for 100 members combined with pay and play and there are plans for schools to use the courts, disabled tennis, friendly matches with other clubs, teams to participate in the Calderdale League in 2022 and plenty of social events.

Play has not even

commenced but the 13 strong Committee, led by Chairman John Manogue and Peter Thornton as Secretary, are already looking towards the future, including the development of a clubhouse.

Anyone interested in attending the showpiece event on 3rd July should look out for details on the club website: clubspark.lta.org.uk/NorthowramTennisClub, on Facebook, Twitter and Halifax Courier.



Wigginton Tennis Club

Success for Yorkshire clubs during pandemic

Excellent facilities at an inclusive club providing tennis for all

Wigginton Tennis Club is situated in the large villages of Wigginton and Haxby on the northern outskirts of the City of York and has four floodlit all-weather carpet courts.

The club has always had a progressive and welcoming attitude and is run for the benefit of all members. Phil Langley, current chairman, has been a member at Wigginton for over 30 years, which has helped to shape his values.

So, when he took over the reins five years ago it was with his intention to continue the club's progression.

With the help of Danny Sapsford and Bright Ideas for Tennis, they devised a plan to make the club more inclusive



■ York Disability Tennis Network session at Wigginton TC

and improve the facilities for future generations to enjoy for years to come. This included the development of a disability coaching programme that has been extremely rewarding.

The club started working with York Disability Tennis Network in 2014 and introduced 'I Play 30' sessions in 2020 in conjunction with 'Choose 2 Youth'.

This year has seen The Blueberry Academy join the programme, none of which would have been possible without the dedicated team of volunteers, Disability Coach Rob Hodge and financial support from one of the commercial partners Ground Solution Services.

Here's what Danny Sapsford has had to say: "I've worked with Wigginton

Tennis Club on numerous occasions over the past few years. I have always found them to be well organised, enthusiastic and committed to providing tennis at an affordable price for all.

Their disability programme is a shining example of how tennis can be adapted for everyone and has made Wigginton Tennis Club one of the most inclusive clubs in the area. Everyone at the club deserves a huge pat on the back."

As Phil says, this has probably been the most challenging year in the history of the club and he hopes the club will be able to extend their usual warm welcome to their friends, visiting clubs and everyone that participates at Wigginton Tennis Club and provide tennis for all for years to come.

YORKSHIRE TENNIS PLAYERS REFLECT BACK ON

2020

We've gone through a year like no other in most of our lifetimes and we are all hoping that things will return to some kind of 'normal'. Several Yorkshire players outline below what life has been like over the last year and how much they are looking forward to the summer of 2021 and beyond.

View from a coach – Charlie Swallow

Charlie Swallow is a full-time coach at Chapel Allerton Tennis and Squash Club, a County tennis player, representing Northamptonshire, a keen cricketer and golfer. Before 2020, summers were spent on court, around 40+ hours per week, teaching a variety of players of different ages and abilities; playing County Cup for Northamptonshire, local league tennis, cricket matches in the Airedale and Wharfedale Cricket League and golf where he has a handicap of 10. In Charlie's own words:

"The first lockdown in March 2020 was quite enjoyable to start with as the fast pace of life slowed down and I used



A year to forget or remember?

the time to speak to family and friends and watched many memorable sporting events. I also looked at various new coaching ideas for both tennis and cricket and made use of various online resources and e-learning.

"For someone who is usually so active and never sits still I very quickly got bored! I decided to take up running which helped with my fitness levels and set myself weekly goals in terms of distance and time. I also lead fitness sessions on Zoom for Chapel Allerton members and did Zoom tennis and fitness sessions with some clients who were in their gardens or garages.

"In common with so many others

I missed the interactive and sociable elements of coaching and playing competitive sport. Getting back on court has been brilliant and as a tennis coach I've been busier than ever as people have been encouraged to pick up a racket again or even for the first time.

"Competitive cricket matches have re-commenced and I've also taken on the head coach role at my local club. I'll be at Ilkley Tennis Club this year for County Week Men's Group 3 where I hope to win another 15 out of 15 matches as I did in 2016 when I joined the prestigious 15-15 Club."

It's good to see the competitive spirit lives on!

View from an adult club player – Janet Curvis

Janet Curvis is a club and team player at Craven LTC in Gargrave, North Yorkshire and illustrated below are Janet's ups and downs of the last year:

"When the first lockdown happened we were just a couple of weeks from the start of the competitive tennis season so it was hugely disappointing as we had all got fitter, been practising and having coaching. But the glorious sunshine meant we could cycle and garden and it felt strangely surreal to be cycling on such quiet roads.

"The grass courts at Gargrave were



available mid-May and were baked hard. It was so much fun to be back again, though strange to be so careful handling tennis balls!

"Winter lockdown this year, however, was a different experience. The short dark days, lack of social contact coupled with the diminished capacity to tolerate the situation and listen to the bleak news made cheerfulness a lot harder.....but out came the bike three months earlier than usual and I braved even the coldest days.

"Courts were booked in advance for 29th Marchin fact most courts were booked for most of that first week. And how nice it was to see old friends and laugh with each other again....mainly at each other's hairstyles and match sharpness!

"This year has, however, made some of us hesitant to recommence the tennis season. The pandemic has made our worlds a little smaller but perhaps also more grateful for our sporting friendships."

Janet is pictured above (far left) with other Craven LTC tennis members,

View from junior players – Oscar and Priya

Pupils of Jess Redfearn, Oscar and Priya, have written their personal story about life in the last year:

"Before Covid-19 lockdowns, Daddy used to wake us up too early every morning shouting at the annoying cat. We used to take ages getting washed and dressed so we had to rush to school every day (boo). We would play tennis, squash and cricket two or three times a week and twice a week Oscar would play rugby.

"We used to like visiting friends and family and going on walks and bike rides. We liked going out to nice pubs and restaurants, we really liked going on holidays to the seaside and on planes where we could swim in the sea. We really wanted a doggy but mummy wouldn't let us have one.

"We really missed our friends during

REFLECTIONS ON 2020



lockdown and had to play with mummy and daddy instead, which was OK, sort of. They weren't as good as our friends at sports, because they're old. We did a million bounces a day on the trampoline which Pat (next door neighbour) said really wasn't annoying. We think she was just being nice.

"During the first lockdown we played with our friends on Houseparty, but daddy kept kicking us out into the garden. We still went to school during the second lockdown because mummy and daddy work in the NHS. I really missed not being able to see a lot of my friends who didn't go to school and I couldn't play sport.

"We still went on lots of walks and bike rides around Sheffield. We found lots of new places to walk, near where we live and played hide and seek, made dens and climbed trees. We also played lots of board games and played on our scooters and in the garden.

"The worst bits about lockdown were not being able to go out to places and play sports and see our friends face to face. But the best bits of lockdown were that we could see friends on Houseparty and I could do the schoolwork at my own pace. We loved having lie ins, for once daddy didn't wake us up. We had really fun family kitchen discos.

"We were definitely happy to go back to school and sport, it just about felt like normal being back again playing tennis with our favourite coach Jess, plus rugby, squash and cricket and hopefully going on holiday somewhere warm soon."

View from Senior GB International and County Player – Wilf Jessop

In 2018 Wilf represented GB in the 70-and-over team and individual events at the World Championships in Umag, Croatia, and as part of his 70th Birthday Tour played eight tournaments in Croatia and Spain in the space of 12 weeks.

He repeated the World Championships experience in 2019 and in the team event won 2 singles and 4 doubles rubbers, so combined with his 5 wins in 2018 remains undefeated. Wilf is also captain of Yorkshire's 70-and-over team and in 2018 and 2019 they finished runners-up in Division 1.

In recent years Wilf has supplemented tennis with other sports, namely table-tennis, bowls and Racketlon, the multi-discipline racquet sport involving table-tennis, badminton, squash and tennis. In the 18 months Wilf played Racketlon he reached World No. 1 in his age group. He's now given up other sports in order to focus on tennis.



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Inevitably, Wilf's busy sporting life came to a halt due to the pandemic and his story of lockdowns and a more hopeful future follow:

"The first problem that the pandemic-affected year 2020 presented was the cancellation of the GB Clay Court Championships in May. This is usually a key event after which the GB Seniors teams are usually selected. My plans for the year included a return to Skiathos for a tournament, in addition to the possible trip to Mallorca for the World Championships.

"Like many, many other people our holiday plans were frustrated. Oddly enough, although 2020 was a virtual write-off, in one sense it was my best-ever season. The GB Indoor Championships took place in January and I came through four tough matches in the 70's singles to win my first-ever National singles title. To cap a great week my partner and I also won the doubles.

"There was hope that the pandemic would abate and allow 2020 County matches to go ahead as normal, but that soon proved to be impossible and the season was ultimately abandoned without any matches being played.

"I actually contracted Covid-19 in early April 2020. I wasn't hospitalised although it hit me very hard. I felt pretty dreadful and lost half a stone in a week as I couldn't

face the thought of food. The road to recovery was a gradual one, but by the middle of May I was back playing again.

"Although I play all of my seniors tennis at Hallamshire, I'm also a member at a smaller club, Hallam Grange, and it was here where my recuperation gathered pace with some very competitive singles against a fellow member. As soon as doubles play was permitted, I got back together with my fellow seniors at Hallamshire once more.

"As for 2021, there are still a few seniors tournaments taking place in parts of Europe but the vast majority have been cancelled. But as our country and the rest of the world starts to get back to some normality, tournaments in the second half of the year are being optimistically put back onto the calendar.

"The World Championships may yet go ahead in Mallorca in October but as regards who gets selected for GB that's very hard to say. As for County matches, the LTA has adopted a more cautious approach for 2021, organising counties regionally rather than nationally.

"This is to be an interim season, the plan being to return to the normal structure in 2022, but it will at least provide players with some competitive seniors tennis, something that we can't wait to get our teeth back into!"

Where are Yorkshire's county players on court this Summer?

With no County Cup events staged in 2020, apart from the 18U who played just before the first lockdown, and were National Champions (Boys) and Runners Up (Girls), there is a lot of enthusiasm for this year's matches.

Summer County Cup matches are being played across GB and spectators can follow our teams from Monday 19th – Friday 23rd July

Yorkshire Men, in Group 2, are playing at the Northern LTC, Manchester and will hope to be promoted to Group 1 but have to beat Middlesex, South Wales, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire and Buckinghamshire. They will be looking for lots of support with a pleasant drive on M62!

Yorkshire Ladies, in Group 1, are playing once again in the top group in Eastbourne and will be playing reigning champions Hertfordshire along with Surrey, Middlesex, Hampshire & IOW and Leicestershire. After retaining their place in the top group in 2019 the Ladies will be looking for another good performance.

Over 35s County Cup matches are being held in Eastbourne from Friday 30th July – Sunday 1st August for Men and Friday 20th – Sunday 22nd August for Ladies

Yorkshire O35s Men, in Group 1, will be playing Kent (2019 Champions), West of Scotland and Surrey.

Yorkshire O35s Ladies, in Group 2B, play South Wales, Warwickshire and Lancashire. The team is led by Natalie Gill who is captain for the first time and is very excited at the prospect. Natalie is a coach and has found the last year tough as she was unable to play or work. As she said the last time this happened was when she was 13 and had damaged her hand playing netball!

The good news is that since



■ O35s Ladies in 2019 (above L to R) Rebecca Fong, Nicola Mooney, Natalie Gill, Gillian Kilner and Becky Lee.
■ Members of O70s and O65s Teams (right L to R) Pauline Knight, Rosemary Carter, Audrey Reed and Sue Welch

29th March Natalie and her team have all been playing and Natalie herself has been busier than ever coaching and has seen lots of new people coming into the sport which has benefited from the promotion of one of the first sports back post lockdown.

Yorkshire Seniors County Cup matches are, for one year only, being played in groups of neighbouring counties with no promotion or relegation. All matches will be played outside so good weather is hoped for!

Events are O45s, O50s, O55s, O60s, O65s and O70s. Groups consist of 4, 5 or 6 teams.

Yorkshire O65s Ladies' team is captained by Audrey Reed and they were just about to play their first match last year v Kent when the lockdown came. The team practices along with the O70s at Chapel Allerton during the winter months, organised superbly by Sue Welch, but the schedule for the year came to a halt when indoor courts were banned followed by lockdowns 2 and 3. Audrey's team will

be playing this summer against Cheshire, Lancashire, Northumberland and Hereford & Worcestershire.

Yorkshire County Championships will once again be held at John Charles Centre for Sport from 18th – 29th August. This year competitors will be playing all matches, including Seniors events, at this one venue. Entries open on 3rd July and tournament code is YOR210111. Referee is Dave Kitchen who is looking forward to organising 63 events!

Men's coordinator for Yorkshire senior teams – your county needs you!

The County needs a volunteer to step up. Come on gentlemen there must be someone out there who can take this on which is an exciting and influential role.

Sally Bickerton, who is Tennis Secretary and Women's captain at Rawdon Tennis Club and member of the O55s Yorkshire Team, took on a similar role for the Ladies senior teams 18 months ago. She volunteered, having played tennis in Yorkshire for over 35 years, because she wanted

to give something back to the County for all the pleasurable times she's enjoyed both playing and meeting people through tennis.

The role involves liaising with the various age group captains, including helping them identify players for their squads, supporting their organisation of fixtures, providing necessary accessories and consulting with the tournament organisers.

To quote Sally: "I especially

enjoy the contact this promotes between me and the various players across the County. Old rivals are new colleagues. Long-term I intend to help encourage more practices and possibly a mini-league between the four county regions during the winter months."

Those who are interested or would like to have a discussion then please contact Karen Mitchell or Dave Kitchen. Their details can be found on the Yorkshire Tennis website.

Update from Gavin Sutcliffe: Participation Development Partner, LTA North Regional Team

There's no doubt the desire to play sport safely and get outside with the easing of restrictions after each lockdown has placed recreational tennis to the fore with a surge in interest. And with most other activities now permitted in some form, it's great to see this trend continuing. I'm regularly hearing reports from venues across the region of membership growth, courts being busier, a volume of new enquiries and coaching programmes filling quickly.

This has also been reflected in some of the national data showing a 6% growth of people playing our sport in 2020 despite the restrictions, and data showing a growth of 370% for court bookings in the same period.

This obviously hasn't come without challenge. None more so than in our indoor venues which have faced extended periods of enforced closure impacting not only access to the indoor courts but also other crucial income generators like the gym and café. Bradford based venues, Heaton & Ilkley, endured



further localised 'Tier 3' indoor restrictions last year to boot.

That said there has been resilience, adaptability and togetherness in abundance meaning Yorkshire's indoor network of venues can bounce back as we head back to a

semblance of normality. And of late it's been nice to talk actual 'tennis' rather than deliberating and interpreting what the latest set of guidelines means for playing or delivering tennis safely.

Although January 4th to March 29th was a lengthy lockdown, it did give a chance for better planning and a phased return to play using the lessons of last year, longer term thinking around facilities development, and how to further 'Open Tennis Up' to attract and retain new players.

On the last point it's been fantastic to see the appetite from primary school teachers for LTA Youth Schools which the LTA launched in March with more than 750 teachers completing the training and accessing the equipment or coaching grant so far and the up take on LTA Youth Start courses has been equally successful with over 500 courses uploaded and 2,700 new players signed up in the North to date..

Similarly, there has been a lot of conversation around 'What's changed and what's here to stay?'

The uptake of online booking systems due to requirements for safe play has resulted in nearly 75% of Yorkshire clubs now offering online court bookings (Clubspark or otherwise), and nearly 30% of these offering courts to the public on a 'pay and play' basis.

Over 60 gate access systems have been installed to date across the North Region to help facilitate this. Use of cash and cheques has significantly reduced amidst the growing use of online shopping meaning more venues offer membership payments online.

And love it or hate it, the use of Teams or Zoom for meetings will still have a place for the likes of webinars to make 'attendance' accessible for more and to retain some efficiencies for meetings.

Let's hope for the final lifting of restrictions allowing for a great summer of tennis in Yorkshire. In the meantime, please get in touch with me or a member of the regional team should there be anything we can help with. Please contact me via: Gavin.Sutcliffe@LTA.org.uk

SCHOOL SCENE

A fantastic and successful new LTA Youth Schools Programme

New LTA Junior Programme for tennis, LTA Youth, is designed to pave the way for a new generation to pick up a racket and play.

LTA Youth coaching programme offers a fresh modern approach to tennis in schools, clubs and parks. It builds on the success of previous LTA initiatives, such as Tennis for Kids and Team Challenge, to create a clear path that supports kids' enjoyment of tennis, progression and an informal competitive environment within which kids will thrive.

New LTA Youth Schools' content has been created to develop key character qualities such as perseverance, resilience and respect which complement the school sports curriculum. This is all part of the LTA's objective to help young people live happier and healthier lives, with a target of inspiring 10% of children in Britain to play tennis once a week by 2023.

The Schools' Programme is designed specially for primary schools and brings together free PE lesson plans, personal development resources, teacher training



and much more. Teachers taking part and completing online training receive a £250 reward voucher for their schools with a free activity pack.

As at mid-May 269 Yorkshire Primary Schools have completed the training – 248 teachers and 21 School Sport providers and the course only went

live on 17th March! Schools are really embracing this new programme which has been designed by teachers, for teachers and it's all FREE.

Anyone reading this and wants to find out more should register online at: lta-tennis.force.com/schools/s/login/SelfRegister