



Seasons Greetings to all our members



It's time to share some reflections on the past year at our Club as well as ideas for the future.

Barrie Guy

Most of you are aware of the sad passing of Barrie in June this year. Through his illness and treatment, I never once heard Barrie complain; indeed, he was always cheerful and positive.

Everyone who met Barrie experienced his charm and gentlemanly behaviour – both on and off the court. When I talk to those who knew him longer than I did, he is remembered most as a very accomplished and successful team player with an admirable sense of fairness. He served the club as Chair from 2017-2020 and for a short period between 2019-2020 also as Treasurer. When Barrie decided to stand down as Chair and remain as Treasurer he was instrumental in my agreeing (reluctantly I have to admit) to stand for election as Chair. Barrie could be very persuasive! He discussed with me changes that he thought were needed in the club's management structure and encouraged me to accept the challenge.

Barrie will be remembered in many ways. One of Barrie's close friends and long-time playing partners has indicated their intention to present a trophy to the club in his memory. At the donor's request the perpetual trophy will be presented to the winners of a mixed doubles tournament – one of several tournaments planned to initiate this summer (see below).

Barrie and I had a shared vision of how we could build on the great improvements in the club's courts (resurfacing and installation of lights) and what changes could help make Alnwick an even better tennis club. At a personal level, I feel the best way for me to honour Barrie's memory is to complete what he persuaded me to take on. We have made great progress over the last 3 years and have benefitted from an influx of enthusiastic new members but there is still much to do both on and off the court. My playing days may be coming to an end but there is much to do off as well as on the court.

We were very fortunate that one of the members of the Management Committee, Dennis Greenslade, agreed to take on the role of Treasurer – thank you Dennis.

Club Development

Member Retention

The committee has devoted a lot of time to discussion of this (with amazing support and guidance from colleagues at the LTA), in particular how can we meet more effectively the expectations of club members. Watch for a survey of member opinions in the New Year. You can also email your suggestions at any time to me ernieharpur@gmail.com or send a WhatsApp message.

Meanwhile, what I hear consistently, particularly from the younger members, is “more competitive tennis, please”. We have had a very successful year with our teams (more below) but there is also a desire for more opportunities within the club. We have started to address this with the introduction of fun American tournaments and an invitation doubles tournament (thanks to Ray Huntly, supported by James Huntly). The committee has also endorsed Ray’s plans to introduce a variety of other opportunities for competitive tennis during next summer. Ray has produced an impressive list of possibilities. We are a small club and can’t do everything at once but there will definitely be more opportunities this coming summer. Their success will depend on member participation, so I encourage you to give it a go.

Attracting New Members

Continuing to attract new members (and pay and play visitors) is also a continuing theme to help increase court usage and provide additional revenue. Personal advocacy is proven to be one of the most effective ways of recruiting new members to sport’s clubs. We will introduce an incentive (a prize draw) for our members to bring in at least one new member to the club. More in the New Year on this.

Volunteering

The support and hard work of volunteers is essential if a small community association like ours is to thrive. We are very grateful to all those who give their time for the benefit of the club – most importantly the members of the committee. In addition, it has been very gratifying to see so many willing to come and contribute to workdays to keep our venue looking good. There are now too many to name personally but thank you to all who have contributed in any way.

Team tennis

Five of our teams performed magnificently in the Northumberland and Durham summer leagues winning an impressive array of trophies (see photo) and promotion for next season.



Congratulations to the teams and the team Administrators:

Open Ladies (Heather Ives)

Open Men (Grant Watson)

Under 45s mixed (Grant Watson)

Ladies Vets (Judith Short)

Mixed Vets (Judith Short)

Our sixth team, the over 60s men, was not so successful but to quote the team captain, Roy Searle, the matches were played in a very sporting manner and enjoyed by all despite the results. The opportunity to interact socially with members of other clubs was appreciated.

Organising teams can be challenging and time consuming so many thanks to our team administrators.

Reports of some other highlights of the year, including the visit of coach and players from St Mary's University, Winona, Minnesota in May, a corporate health and wellbeing event played out on our courts in June and the invitation doubles tournament organised by Ray Huntly in September can be found [here](#) in the Club News Section of the website.

Wimbledon

Don't forget, if you would like the chance to attend Wimbledon this coming summer, you have until Jan 14th to use your free LTA Advantage membership to opt in to the [Wimbledon ballot](#).

Best wishes to all for a very happy, healthy and peaceful New Year,

Ernie Harpur

Chair