

Email from former member Gordon Pool – 6th November 2008.

Hi

With nothing better to do I looked up your web site just to see how the WELTC was doing and was delighted to see that you are still thriving and have just opened your new courts.

I cannot remember exactly when I joined the club but it must have been about 60 or more years ago when I was still at school and was a member for quite a number of years. We moved down south to England in 1970 but again I cannot remember if I was a member right up until that time. I was the club secretary for a few years possibly when either Andy Kyle or Ian Hendry were Presidents. When I joined, the club had a coach called Gertie East who coached in a tennis dress that was nearer grey than white and with a sun visor of similar colour. She was about 92, perhaps a slight exaggeration but it seemed about that to us as juniors she stood in the middle of the court never moved and had a "fag" hanging out of one side of her mouth as she coached.

I remember all the different courts we had over the years "all weather" that seemed to be reasonably efficient for a year or two and then seemed to clog up and flood and at one time we switched to red blaise which tended to require watering a lot and made a mess of shoes and socks with dust if too dry.

For a while I used to run dances for club funds at Woodlands Hotel in Barnhill but most Saturdays I was the only West End member there except perhaps for Nigel Stewart who was the club treasurer and he used to help me on the door checking the tickets. In those days hotels could only get late licenses for the bar if they were running an outside function so Games Club, Panmure Rugby Club and DHSFP RFC used to have Saturday dances there and we used to have one every three or four weeks. It was a bit disheartening with no support from our members but as I knew most of the members from the other clubs it did not matter too much. We raised a bit for club funds, I had a feeling it was supposed to be towards a new pavilion but probably ended up replacing the courts which we seemed to have to do at fairly regular intervals. The pavilion must be heading towards being a listed building by now !!

One last recollection in the red blaise era. We had to water quite a lot and I think possibly because the groundsman was on holiday I had to go down (we lived in Norwood Terrace) one lunchtime to water the courts for a mid week match. We had a garden type oscillating sprinkler and if you were quick you could move it without going back to the tap to turn the water off. Anyway I was doing court one when Hugh Wilkie turned up to help and after chatting for a while I noticed that the court had started to flood on the other side of the net. I waited until the sprinkler was spraying the other way and jumped over the net to move it but unfortunately caught my heel on the top of the net fell flat on my face of the flooded court, in my office suit, got covered from top to bottom it soaking red blaise and to crown it all as I stared to get up the sprinkler came back and drenched me from head to foot again "ce la vie"

I attach a photo which someone took all these years ago going from left to right on the bench I am first then I think it was Jimmy Latto (his sister is on the photo on your web site) Graham ??? (cannot remember his surname) then Ebith Landsman (who is also in your team photo) I think the lady standing in the door had a surname Norrie but not sure and last but not least on the wall little Joyce Barclay.

Hope all the above is of interest

Best wishes

Gordon Pool



Dear Geoff,

Although you still have the original pavilion I assume the old circular zinc shower from the mens changing room is long gone. In the days of Bob Clark, Andy McGill, Len Higgins, Graham Bell and Andy Kyle there used to be another player called, again I think Jimmy Sangster who when he was not playing tennis always had his pipe in his mouth. With the circular shower (the sprays came out horizontally) he used to shower after a match and smoke at the same time - He was barely the height of the shower so clouds of pipe smoke used to be seen coming out of the top of the shower unit which we all found amusing.

I have remembered the surname of the 3rd person on the bench, it is Graham Johnson and I think the lady standing in the doorway was Chris Norrie but I could not swear to it..

I have been trying to remember the name of the tall lady on the left of the cup in the ladies team photo. I can remember all the bunch in the back row and the smaller lady on the right Anita ????? (She married I think Ron Ellis and latterly played at Games Club)

I left Dundee on about 27th December 1969 and a few years later I joined a club down here when the kids were old enough to play tennis. I had not played for many years as not long after moving here I ruptured my Achilles Tendon playing squash and was unable to travel up to work in London for 12 weeks and I could not afford to do that again. The club I joined here has 17 courts, about 650 seniors 550 juniors and 150 non-playing members not bad for a town of 30,000 and there is also another club in the town but with only 4 courts. The annual sub for seniors this

last year was I think, (my wife still plays) was £277.00. Ten of the courts are floodlit and of these 5 are covered by airhalls in the winter - the members have to pay extra for these in the winter. The club house is pretty big, it is brick built with a large lounge/bar and kitchen downstairs and a hall upstairs that can be used dances, parties etc. The men's changing room is about the size of your whole pavilion if you count in the large communal shower and toilets and the ladies facilities are similar. There is quite a large balcony over looking the main match courts. The mix is 5 grass 10 Astroturf or whatever they are called and two shale - none of the members like these shale courts but they may have been stipulated by the LTA as part of their loans to give the juniors practice on this type of court. Needless to say the juniors don't like playing on them either. I am not sure how the finances all worked out but I seem to remember they got pretty large soft loans from the LTA to build the clubhouse . There are umpteen teams both men's and ladies and a number of full time coaches to coach the juniors and the under employed housewives !

I do not think I have any more photos taken at the club - I don't know who took the one I sent but if I am mistaken and do find any more I will send them.

Regards

Gordon

Dear Gordon,

Thanks for your email with even more interesting history in it! Thanks also for agreeing to let me put your letter on our website. I know that many members will be interested in what went on at WETC back in the 1960s and I am sure there will be members (or their parents) that will remember you. I was nine when you left Dundee, but was at school in Luton Beds back then. I've only been in Dundee since 2001 and only playing tennis since 2005, though I used to play a fair bit of squash at one time.

If you have the names of the people in the photo on our website, I'd appreciate those too. I'm sure others in the club know this, but no one has told me! Part of my mission is to use the website to make people more aware of the club history, since newcomers like me (and potential new members) are often interested. I gather there are more early photos from the club lurking somewhere in the pavillion, and I plan to scan and display these as they appear - I'll let you know when I put these on the site so that you can take a look.

Your new club is huge! Quite different from WETC. I guess in the area here, St Andrews club is maybe a similar size and we also have The NextGen which has six indoor courts and 5 outdoor, but is over at Monifief, so a bit of trek from the West End.

Incidentally, where are you living now?

I'll let you know when I have put your letter on our site - hopefully it won't cause you too much trouble/embarrassment with former girlfriends!!!

Thanks again for making contact,

Geoff.

Dear Geoff,

I cannot remember all the Ladies First Team names but here is what I can remember

Back Row L to R

Ruby McGill, **Barbara** ?? Devlin, ???? Latto, Ebeth Landsman

Front Row

Had an unusual Name I think but cannot remember, Anita ????? (Mrs Ron Ellis) I think she was originally from Argentina or Brazil.

I am still in touch with 4 ex WELTC members who I have known for 60 odd years in fact we were all up in Dundee in September to attend one's Golden Wedding at Rufflets. I have sent an e-mail to two of them to ask if they can remember the names that I cannot supply. I pasted the photo on to my e-mail so that they can see the team.

So you went to school in Luton - the club I was a member of was Harpenden LTC - they have a web site which shows some details of the club.

Regards

Gordon

Hi Geoff,

I have had an e-mail back from the Harrogate Branch of the geriatric mafia and ex-WELTC and he confirms that it is Barbara Devlin with Elma Latto standing next to her. In the front he thinks she was Ella Vlandy who might have been at some stage a hockey international, I assume for Scotland. Anita Ellis, who I see you already know about, was I think, originally Senorita Anita Losana or something like that and came, again I think, from either Argentina or Brazil but not sure which.

I also sent a copy of my e-mail to Bearsden (another ex WELTC member) but he is not noted for his speedy replies but in fairness might be away in his house in Barra or whatever. I will let you know if/when I get a reply and if it contains anything different.

Regards

Gordon