

Bryanston OB tennis 2015-2016

This year's OB tennis fixture was played on Saturday 13 August with 12 match-hungry Old Bryanstonians arriving at the school on a lovely sunny day (with some wind) by various forms of transport (planes, cars and a motorbike) to play OB v OB tennis. A fixture against the school teams earlier in the season had been cancelled due to rain and so this was an enthusiastic bunch of new faces turning up to play on the grass courts at the front of school.

The players: Mackworth Parker ('76), Jeremy Hewlett ('81), Simon Read ('84), Simon Blandford ('84), Lindsay Barnett ('84), Adam Pile ('91), Giles Morant ('98), Henry Davies-Evitt ('12), Oliver Backhouse ('13), Tobias Graves ('13), James Aburrow (husband of Josie Aburrow Smith – OB, '97), Harry Hewlett (son of Jeremy).

Given the great support we have experienced from Old Bryanstonians in past years, it was again fantastic to see such good representation featuring alumni spanning 37 years; a fine blend of experience and youth, and with Jeremy and Harry as father and son playing this year together. Last year three generations of Blandfords: Ollie, Simon and Robin played in the fixture.

Once the teams were organised and the customary warm up (and stretching) was complete in order to acclimatise to the 'near' perfection grass courts, the match began at 2pm, and concluded around 5.30pm.

The format being the same that would have been played by the school teams, with each team consisting of three pairs, and each pair playing three matches, one set per match and two sets against your opposite number pairing. Four sets in total with one point for a win and a draw being 0.5 points.

The games, as ever, were competitive and played in great spirit with everyone involved winning a set and certainly all entertaining their family members and friends who had turned up to watch; notable mentions for their high standard of match tennis would have to go to the closely contested final round between respective first pairings Oliver Backhouse and Henry Davies-Evitt versus Tobias Graves and James Aburrow with honours even at one set a piece on this occasion.

Anyone deigning to closely watch the action would also have been impressed by some glorious tennis strokes played on the grass by Lindsay, Giles and Mack, and the close partnerships formed between Jeremy and Harry (as father and son) and Simon Blandford and Simon Reed (as two of three representing the class of '84 on the day), all serving, volleying and rallying to fine victories during the day.

All in all, it was a lovely day of tennis and fitting to end in a draw (a trophy was awarded to one winning team, though a subsequent post-match re-count determined that the teams were, in fact, level on points and highlighted that scoring these matches is more complex than you would imagine! Apologies

all, I shall return the trophy next year and in the meantime continue to keep it on my mantelpiece on behalf of us all!).

What really was noticeable for the occasion, however, was the friendly nature with which everyone approached the day; it is an opportunity to return to Bryanston, play some tennis and to catch up with old alumni and share stories and glories of the past.

A huge thanks to Sam Tonks for making this such a fantastic day, being the best organised year yet including arranging the invites, welcoming us all, OB trophy, and even OB Sport advertising hoardings; and for arranging match tea and drinks. Thanks also to the school and Andy Marriot for continuing to support OB tennis.

And finally, thank you to all the players for returning for this year's fixture and we certainly hope to engage you again in future years and along with anyone else who would like to be involved. The vision is to get as many OBs (male and female) engaged as we can in future years and to give those interested the opportunity to bring family and friends and to play back at Bryanston on the beautiful grass tennis courts.

Adam Pile '91

If you are interested in playing in future fixture, please contact the school direct or adampfd@yahoo.com.