



## Annual Report 2021

# THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OLD BOYS' LAWN TENNIS ASSOCIATION

## Officers and Committee Members

President	H.B. Weatherill (Malvern College)
Hon. Secretary	J.R. Cooper (Colston's School)
Hon. Treasurer	P. Siviter (Bromsgrove School)
Committee	A.J.K. Tatum (KCS Wimbledon) – Chairman
	J.H. Barr (Stewart's Melville College)
	J. Basell (Royal Grammar School Worcester)
	C.P. Billington (Bradfield College)
	A.J. Blackman (Reed's School)
	C.P. Boden (St. George's College)
	E.A. Cooper (Bristol Grammar School)
	B. Gordon-Smith (Bromsgrove School)
	C.M. Jenkins (St. Paul's School)
	B. Keenes (Bloxham School)
	C.M. King (Stowe School)
	J. Muirhead (Repton School)

## Contact Details

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## Annual Report 2021

The Committee has pleasure in presenting its annual report for the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

### Chairman's Introduction

As you will read later in this report, April 2022 will herald two significant changes in key roles running the Association.

After eleven seasons as Hon. Fixtures Secretary, Edward Cooper will stand down from his role. The Committee has elected Jamie Muirhead to replace him.

After ten years as our Hon. Secretary, Jonathan Cooper will also stand down from his role. The Committee propose Chris Jenkins for election at the AGM as his replacement.

I would like to place on record my huge thanks to both Jon and Ed for the massive amount that they have done for the Association. Their two roles are quite literally the engine room of the Pubs and their hard work has enabled us all to enjoy the matches, dinners and communications from the Association over this lengthy period. They will be hard acts to follow, but we have great confidence in their successors.

### 2021 AGM

For the first time in the Association's history, its Annual General Meeting was held virtually via Microsoft Teams and took place on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021.

Messrs Weatherill, J. Cooper and Siviter were elected as President, Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer respectively. Mrs. B. Gabriel was re-elected as Hon. Independent Examiner.

Messrs Barr, Basell, Blackman, Billington, Boden and King were all re-elected to the Committee. The Committee's Report and the Accounts of the Association for the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020 were presented at the AGM and unanimously adopted. At the meeting of the Committee immediately following the AGM, Mr. Tatum was re-elected as the Chairman of the Committee.

## 2021 Annual Dinner

Given the pandemic, the Annual Dinner took place later in the year compared to normal and on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2021, 76 members and guests were present for a thoroughly enjoyable evening at The Courtside at The All England Lawn Tennis Club.

Our 2021 Annual Dinner speaker was Mick Desmond (recently retired Commercial & Media Director of The All England Lawn Tennis Club). It was fantastic to see so many PSOBLTA members back together, given the last major social gathering for most attendees was the 2020 Annual Dinner, which was just prior to the first lockdown!

Mick talked about the transformational changes he made to the commercial business during his tenure, which now make the AELTC a leading light in this sector in sports. Mick was expertly interviewed by PSOBLTA Chairman, Ashley Tatum and provided some extremely interesting responses on the change and the future of the commercial side of sport. A very fascinating evening listening to the aspects of the sport we love but know very little about.



*Mick Desmond*

## Personal note from the Hon. Secretary

As signified from the Notice of Nominations on the last page of the Annual Report, you will note that I am stepping down from the Hon. Secretary position in April 2022.

I would like to place on record my thanks to all the Committee that have supported me in my time in this position since March 2012. It has been hugely enjoyable being involved with the running of the Association. There feels a real energy in the Association and hopefully, it is in an excellent position to grow further. I am always delighted to see that each year we continue to attract many new members.

The organising of the Annual Dinner is always a highlight of the year – I particularly enjoy seeing all members come together for the main event of the year, which shows the Association at its most vibrant setting and is always a very entertaining evening. And, of course, seeing what form the traditional Steak and Kidney Pudding will take each year! For those of you who are not aware (or only been to a few Annual Dinners), the tradition of having Steak and Kidney Pudding as a main course, has occurred for nearly the whole of the Association's life. Maybe one to discuss at the upcoming dinner on whether the incoming Hon. Secretary is brave enough to select something different...

Being part of the Committee since April 2000, then the Hon. Fixtures Secretary and latterly Hon. Secretary has given me great pleasure over the years, so much so I have spent nearly half my life on the Committee! And for the upcoming year, I will enjoy being on the 'back-benches' of the Committee.

As you will see, Chris Jenkins is proposed as my successor as Hon. Secretary for the upcoming year. Mr. Jenkins has been on the Committee since 2015 and has already served the Association well but I know he is looking forward to adding his expertise to the operations of the Association. I can guarantee you that the Association's administration will be in excellent hands going forward, and I just hope he does not put me to shame too early on...please give it a year, Chris!

**Jonathan Cooper - Hon. Secretary**  
[\(psoblta@live.co.uk\)](mailto:psoblta@live.co.uk)

## Fixtures Report 2021

As perhaps expected, it was another disrupted year for Pubs tennis in 2022. Many matches were 'pencilled in' with fervent optimism at the start of the year. However, due to lockdown persisting in some form or another until mid-June and a backlog of social plans and holidaying needed to be cleared for the second half of 2022, it meant we were quite light on fixtures being played once again.

### The (almost) Invincibles

Of the 34 matches which we were hoping to play, eight were played resulting in four wins, three draws and a solitary loss. Arguably we could claim five wins if we include the Pubs v Fitzwilliam quiz (see later)!

Some excellent victories took place in 2022. These were against the ever-impressive Eton College, by the finest of margins against Felsted College, sociably winning at Ashmanworth and getting back to winning ways against Beckenham. Hard fought draws were against St George's Hill, Seniors of GB (impacted by some terrible weather) and Edgbaston Priory.

Special thanks to Sebastian Lyon for hosting the Ashmansworth fixture; and even more thanks to him for ensuring the teams were carefully selected to ensure a Pubs win!

Having won in 2019 and 2020 against the All England LTC, they were the club to prevent the 2021 Pubs players as being immortalised as the Invincibles. Being our only loss in the year despite having a strong Pubs team assembled for the occasion. Despite having to hand back the Peter Jackson Cup, it was a most enjoyable day on the excellent grass courts.



*PSOBLTA team photo v AELTC*



*PSOBLTA v AELTC*

### The alternative Courtney Salver

It would be remiss not to mention another first for the Association. Given the pandemic, our annual tennis fixture against Fitzwilliam LTC for the Courtney Salver was postponed. However, we did not want to miss the opportunity to celebrate one of our favourite weekends of the calendar with our friends at Fitzwilliam, so we arranged a "friendly" quiz over Zoom. Conor Boden volunteered to be the impartial quizmaster and what a quizmaster he was.

A truly excellent evening with a lot of banter and laughs along the way, and obviously all participants bonded over one item – a few pints of Guinness during the evening!

The rounds included (i) Andy Murray; (ii) Sporting namesakes; (iii) Wimbledon; (iv) England v Ireland; (v) General knowledge; and (vi) Tennis in general.

On the initial count of the scores, it appeared that the PSOBLTA had secured a win 27.5 points to 22 points...however, unbeknown to all on the quiz the Boden/Fitzwilliam effect algorithm was being applied in the background and somehow the PSOBLTA win was initially announced as a slight loss – FLTC: 28.5 points to PSOBLTA 27.5 points! There followed a number of appeals before justice was eventually served and the Association was rightly awarded the win – Formula 1 take note, it is possible to sort these things out after the event!



Full reports of those matches can be found at the Association website ([www.psoblta.co.uk](http://www.psoblta.co.uk)) – which I would recommend checking out.

As ever, we have a huge amount of gratitude to those that make the season happen. This also could not happen without the generous and welcoming hospitality of our opposition for which we are very thankful as well as their patience for such a disrupted season for the second time now.

### **Call to arms**

The 2022 calendar is in progress and with renewed optimism that many matches to be played this year! Please check the website for more details and any updates.

Also, we strongly encourage anyone interested in playing to get in contact with the captains as soon as possible – new members and new players are always welcome to the teams. We continue to recruit a lot of new members despite the inability to play all the matches we had hoped, and it would be great to have as many of you on the court as possible.

Even better if you would like to sign up as a pair to a fixture with another member. Full details of all the matches can be found at [www.psoblta.co.uk](http://www.psoblta.co.uk).

### **Changing of the guard**

On a personal note, 2022 will be my last year of assisting with the scheduling of the fixtures, as I step down from my role as Hon. Fixtures Secretary. 2022 will be my 11th year at the helm – bettering my brother, Jonathan, in that position by one year (although that was not the reason to stay in the role as long as I as did!). Over those 11 years there have been over 375 fixtures arranged (sadly many of recent years coming to nothing!) and over 50 different opposing teams. We started with just over 20 matches per year in 2012 and at our peak in 2017 and 2018 reached up to 40 matches – with now a steady 34 or more matches in the calendar since 2014.

I put my name forward to assist in the role back in 2011 as I was (and still am) a huge fan of the Association, its aims and the people that support it. I, like many, other players found the Pubs a great avenue after leaving school to continue to play competitive-level tennis in a friendly, relaxed and quite often stunning venues. As I received so much from the Association myself on court and making new friends off of it, I wanted to give something back. Although that still holds true – unfortunately work and family commitments have made it harder and harder to devote the time the role requires or deserves to ensure the next wave of school leavers are able to benefit in the same way that I did.

I pass over the responsibilities and honour to Jamie Muirhead – together we are overseeing the 2022 season. It is in no doubt very safe (and dare I say, better) hands and I wish him the very best of luck with the role.

Hopefully see you all on court or at the Annual Dinner in 2022!

**Edward Cooper - Hon. Fixtures Secretary**  
([psoblta.fixtures@gmail.com](mailto:psoblta.fixtures@gmail.com))



## D'Abernon Cup

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, we had to cancel the 2021 D'Abernon Cup once again, which means the competition has not taken place for two years.

Given restrictions have eased, the D'Abernon Cup is back for 2022.

With the previous success of having three qualifying events and new teams wishing to enter, we will continue this format for the 2022 D'Abernon Cup whereby the prior year finalists will automatically qualify for the quarter-finals along with the winners and runners-up from each qualifying event. The three qualifying round robin days for this year's competition will take place on Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup> March ( David Lloyd Raynes Park ), Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> April (Reed's School), and Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup> April (St. George's College). If you would like to enter a team for the 2022 D'Abernon Cup please contact Jonathan Cooper for an entry form (email: [psoblta@live.co.uk](mailto:psoblta@live.co.uk)).

As you will have noticed there has been a change to one of the qualifying venues and it has been transferred from Stoke Park to Reed's School, this is due to the sale of Stoke Park. Over the years we have been very fortunate with support from the King family for allowing us to use Stoke Park as a qualifying venue (and for other fixtures), so we would like to note our sincere gratitude to the King family for all they have done for the Association.

## New Members

We were delighted to welcome the following four members to the Association during the year:

### Life Membership:

Jamie Whiteford	<i>Millfield School</i>
Colin Bennett	<i>Hereford Cathedral School</i>
Jon Procter	<i>King Edwards, Edgbaston</i>
Paul Martin	<i>Colston's School</i>

## Recruitment

In recent years, we have had a good number of new members, both life members and also a growing number which have taken advantage of the five-year free trial membership for recent school leavers.

The aim of our five-year trial membership is to provide us the opportunity to introduce many more school leavers to the Association, a significant number of which we hope will chose to apply for Life Membership before their fixed term is completed.

As we grow our fixture list each year, we are keen to continue to grow our membership in parallel so we have more members playing more matches and enjoying what the Association can offer. Please be as active as possible in recruiting members. Application forms can be obtained from the website ([www.psoblta.co.uk](http://www.psoblta.co.uk)) or are available directly from the Hon. Secretary.

## Website and Social Media

The PSOBLTA website ([www.psoblta.co.uk](http://www.psoblta.co.uk)) is the place to find all the latest news from the Association including any new fixtures added during the year, D'Abernon Cup draws and match results.

Also, we are always looking to add more photos and match reports, so please feel free to send Jonathan Cooper anything you would like published.

We are pleased to announce that the Association continues to publish news updates via Twitter (@PSOBLTA), so please do join our followers to read the latest news and comments.

## PSOBLTA Merchandise

A reminder that PSOBLTA merchandise is available including a tie, Nike branded tennis shirts and caps. Merchandise can be purchased by contacting the Hon. Secretary ([psoblta@live.co.uk](mailto:psoblta@live.co.uk)). Given the excellent value, we encourage all members to wear a PSOBLTA tennis shirt when representing the Association and the Pubs' tie whenever possible!

The following Association merchandise is available:



Association ties (silk) £15.00



PSOBLTA Nike Dri-Fit Tennis Shirt £38.95



PSOBLTA cap £15.00

## Finances

The Committee is pleased to report that the Association is in good financial health. The Association's balance sheet at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021 reported net assets of £14,378 (30<sup>th</sup> November 2020: £14,153).

A full set of accounts will be presented at the 2022 AGM.

## Nominations

The following nominations have been received for the offices of President, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer and Hon. Independent Examiner:

President	Mr. H.B. Weatherill
Hon. Secretary	Mr. C. M. Jenkins
Hon. Treasurer	Mr. P. Siviter
Hon. Independent Examiner	Mrs. B. Gabriel

The following members of the Committee retire by rotation in accordance with Rule 8 and being eligible offer themselves for re-election: Messrs E. Cooper, Gordon-Smith, Keenes, Muirhead and Tatum. In addition, Mr. J. Cooper (currently Ex Officio) is proposed for election to the Committee under Rule 9.

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

(6.45pm on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2022)

The Courtside, The All England Lawn Tennis Club

### AGENDA

1. To approve the Minutes of the AGM of 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021 and consider any matters arising.
2. To receive the report of the Committee and Accounts for the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021.
3. To elect the Officers, Committee and Independent Examiner for the upcoming year.
4. Any other business.