



# THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OLD BOYS' LAWN TENNIS ASSOCIATION

## ANNUAL REPORT 2023

### Officers and Committee Members

#### President

- H.B. Weatherill (Malvern College)

#### Hon. Secretary

- C.M. Jenkins (St. Paul's School)

#### Hon. Treasurer

- P. Siviter (Bromsgrove School)

#### Committee

- J.R. Cooper (Chairman) (Colston's School)
- 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)
- J. Boden (St. George's College)
- B. Gordon-Smith (Bromsgrove School)
- B. Keenes (Bloxham School)
- C.M. King (Stowe School)
- J. Muirhead (Repton School)
- A.J.K. Tatum (King's College School, Wimbledon)

### Contact Details

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### Annual Report 2023

The Committee has pleasure in presenting its annual report for the year ended 30 November 2023.

#### New Members

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

#### Life Membership

- Alex Allen (QEH Bristol)
- Cameron Barr (Cranleigh School)
- Harry Beard (Millfield School)
- Thomas Billings (Eton College)
- Alexis Brand (Tonbridge School)
- Giles Brand (Tonbridge School)
- James Caulton (RGS Guildford)
- Max Clarke (Reed's School)
- Jamie Crowfoot (Dulwich College)
- James Douglas-Osborn (Bromsgrove School)
- Charles Hill (Bromsgrove School)
- Toby Jackson (Manchester Grammar)
- Harry Lazell (Reed's School)
- Oliver Mayo (St Paul's School)
- Max McAlister (Worth School)
- Andy Rodgers (Bury Grammar School)
- Stuart Shannon (Bromsgrove School)
- Rory Smith (Bishop Wordsworth's)
- Henry Woolhouse (Wellington College)

### Annual Membership

- Paul Thompson (Dame Allan's Schools)

### Five-Year Membership

- Finlay Bigwood (St George's College)
- Tom Dunlop (Bradfield College)
- Calum Jessott (Millfield School)
- Angus Robinson (St Peter's School)
- Tom Robson (Warwick School)
- James Sclater (Millfield School)
- Henry Trudgeon (Sherborne School)

### 2023 AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Association was held at The All England Lawn Tennis Club on 13 April 2023.

Messrs Weatherill, Jenkins 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, C. Boden, and King were all re-elected to the Committee and Mr J. Boden was elected to the Committee for the first time.

The Committee's Report and the Accounts of the Association for the year ended 30 November 2022 were presented at the AGM and unanimously adopted.

At the meeting of the Committee immediately following the AGM, Mr. Cooper was elected as the Chairman of the Committee for the first time.

### 2023 Annual Dinner

The Annual Dinner followed the AGM where over 65 members and guests enjoyed a thoroughly enjoyable evening at The Courtside at The All England Lawn Tennis Club.

Our 2023 Annual Dinner speaker was Dominic Inglot, former top 20 ATP doubles player and 2015 Davis Cup Champion.

Dominic was interviewed by PSOBLTA Committee member, Johnny Barr, who asked excellent and interesting questions which Dominic spoke openly and honestly about, including his tennis career, achievements and future plans.



Dominic Inglot at the Annual Dinner

The Geoff Brown Award was presented to Ashley Tatum, who stepped down from his position as Chairman, which he had held for the last ten years. The Association are grateful for his time and effort invested in the Association, and Mr. Tatum can be proud of the many accomplishments achieved under his leadership.

As always, it was a fantastic evening, and our thanks go to The All England Lawn Tennis Club for the excellent food and service.



## The Future of the Association

As set out in the 2022 Annual Report, the Committee requested feedback on two key matters being:

- i. Should the Association retain its current membership eligibility rules; and
- ii. Should the Association change its name to incorporate the word “independent”.

Firstly, the Committee would like to thank you for all your input and comments, and we have carefully considered all the points raised. A number of comments referenced that if we continue with using the term “Public” to describe the schools we are affiliated with, the Association could be classified as an outlier and risk not being understood or even seen as relevant by future school leavers. However, there was a strong appetite to retain the word ‘Public’ in the name in some form so that we can retain our “Pubs” abbreviation.

The Committee’s conclusion from the feedback was that our members believe that the Association is in very good health and as such we should continue to evolve from a position of strength and there is an overwhelming support to change the name of the Association and widen membership eligibility to include all independent schools, similar to the Independent School Tennis Association (“ISTA”) for its tennis events.

Therefore, as a result, the Committee would like to put forward at the 2024 AGM the proposed change of name to the “Independent and Public Schools Old Boys Lawn Tennis Association” which allows the Association to move forward, whilst also retaining its identity and can still be referred to as the “Pubs”.

## Fixtures Report 2023

Now well and truly back into the swing of things, 2023 was another packed calendar against well matched opposition for the PUBS.

The newly expanded calendar saw 25 fixtures take place between March and November 2023, with the PUBS taking home 12 wins, 2 draws and 11 losses. Clearly fine margins with such worthy opponents!

This year, as with most years, it has been a pleasure to see such broad participation across the membership, with fixtures catering for a good range of levels.

We have been pleased to welcome new fixtures into the calendar including Kings College London and Sherbourne School – long may they continue, together with the return of old favourites.

Particular 2023 highlights saw a stellar PUBS team secure a first win in the Cambridge Blues fixture, along with yet again, a closely fought draw in the Roehampton fixture – a match which has still never been won by either team!

I am perhaps most pleased to report that the PUBS showed incredible spirit across the board this year, winning at least one rubber in every single fixture in 2023 – which is no mean feat!

Thanks to all our wonderful members who joined us on court for another memorable season in 2023.

## March, April and May



PUBS vs Fitzwilliam LTC

The first fixture of this year was the annual match against Fitzwilliam LTC in Dublin, playing for the Courtney Salver. The fixture is always entertaining both on and off the court and this year certainly lived up to that, with the fixture taking place over the St. Patrick's Day weekend!

The tennis was played in great spirits, with Fitzwilliam LTC securing the deciding rubber to win 5-4.

Once the tennis was completed, the main event commenced with an excellent afternoon of watching rugby (if we exclude the England result!), washed down with some drinks and a highly enjoyable formal meal.

Despite losing both the tennis and rugby, the whole team had a hugely enjoyable weekend and once again friendships were renewed across the Irish Sea. We look forward to welcoming the Club in 2024 for a long overdue English double.

A close fought 3-1 loss to the Independent Schools Tennis Association was followed by a convincing win against Bradfield College, while Eton College extended their winning streak against the PUBS with a 6-2 win.

On 20 May, a prepared and in form PUBS team made their way to Fenners for the Cambridge Blues match, bringing home a historic 5-4 win for the PUBS, the first in this fixture. Clearly excellent preparation for the team number one, Mark Whitehouse, to make an impressive run in the Surbiton Trophy the following week. Well done, Mark on both counts!



PUBS vs Cambridge Blues

The team dug out a 5-4 win against Bromsgrove School, followed by a welcome return to a fixture at Iffley Road against the Oxford Penguins. On a challenging court surface, the home advantage proved telling with a 3-1 win for the Penguins.

On 25 May Sherborne School in Dorset hosted us for a new fixture this season in idyllic Dorset surroundings. The fixture looks set to grow into a firm favourite in the future.

## June and July

The Roehampton Club match provided another lovely afternoon of well contested tennis, ending in an honourable 2-2- draw... again! After this the PUBS really kicked into gear with back to back wins against Oxford Blues, The Leys School, St George's College, and Kings College School.

By half-way through the season, the tally stood at eight wins, one draw and four losses.



PUBS vs The Leys School

Felsted School put an end to the winning run with a high level of tennis displayed by both teams.

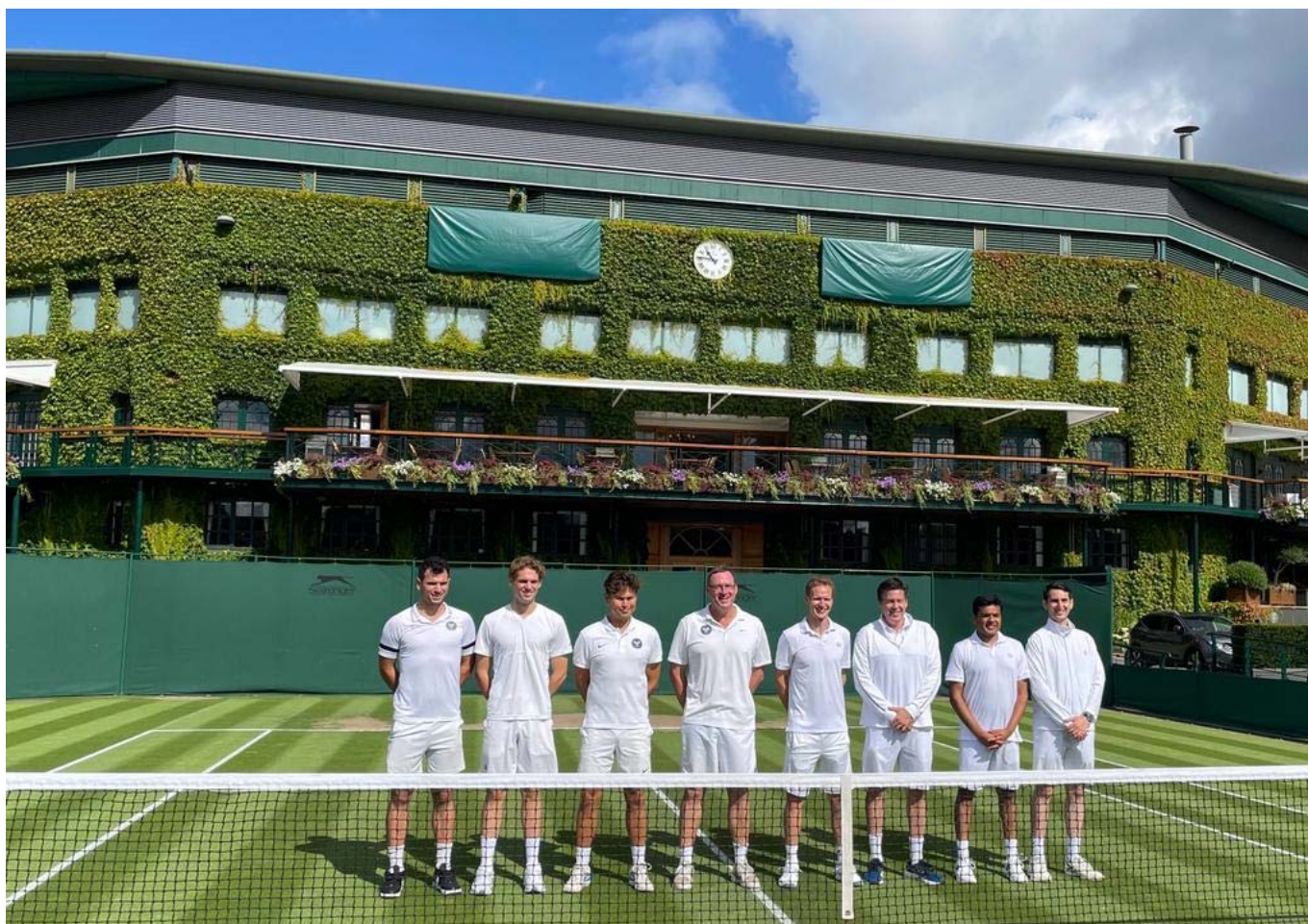
In June, the PUBS team of Miles Edmeston, Max Clarke, Adrian Blackman and Ed Fry brought home the trophy against the Independent Schools LTA, avenging the earlier PUBS loss in April.

The Edgbaston Priory fixture was one to look forward to during a quieter mid-season July. The PUBS battled strongly but eventually went down 6-3 to a strong opposition side and very gracious hosts.

### **August to November**

In August, things started heating up again on court with a 2-2 draw with the Seniors of GB and a solid 3-1 win against Ealing LTC.

However, the run in to the end of the season was a tough one, with narrow defeats in the showcase fixture with the AELTC, a new fixture against Kings College London, Cumberland LTC, Campden Hill LTC and the IC of GB, punctuated by a 6-3 victory against the Armed Forces.



PUBS vs AELTC

Clearly stamina in the fifth set is an area for our improvement. Perhaps conditioning work should be our new year's resolution...

### **Another thoroughly enjoyable season - here's to 2024!**

Thank you once again to our generous hosts and enthusiastic match managers. You give up your time to make the PUBS the thriving association that it is. Fixtures are the beating heart of this Association, and it would not be possible without your support. Thank you for your hard work.

The 2024 calendar is currently taking shape and should be published on the website shortly - watch this space.

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, and it would be great to have as many of you on the court as possible.

Fixture lists, match reports and further photos can be found at [www.psoblta.co.uk](http://www.psoblta.co.uk).

We also now have an Instagram page - follow us for live updates here:

<https://www.instagram.com/psoblta/>

Look forward to seeing you on court in 2024!

## D'Abernon Cup

The last time that the format of the D'Abernon Cup was changed was 21 years ago, where, instead of many fixed date early rounds of matches, group qualifying events were introduced and since then, has been extremely successful.

However, in 2023, a new competition structure was announced, which retained the qualifying events above, with a modification to the knockout rounds.

For the first time in the tournament's history, instead of quarter-finals and semi-finals being played on fixed dates over the summer months, an eight team knockout event was held on one fixed date to determine the two finalists, who would subsequently compete for the trophy at AELTC in early September.

### Qualifying events

Once again, we thank St George's College and Reed's School for allowing the qualifying events to be held at their respective facilities in early April.



Qualifying - at St George's College

KCS Old Boys, Old Reardonians and Old Etonians qualified from the pool held at Reed's School, and Old Westminster, Old Paulines and Old Georgians qualified from the St George's College event.



## Knockout event

For the inaugural knockout event, on Sunday 30 July, we secured eight courts for a full day at Eton College on Sunday 30 July, with a fantastic day of tennis to look forward to with eight teams battling it out with two places in the final to play for.

As it turned out, the hope for good weather at the end of July never materialised, with some quite horrendous playing conditions and torrential rain towards the latter part of the day.

However, every team and player that turned up played through the inclement weather and after a very long (and wet) day of tennis, Old Reptonians qualified for the final, and unbelievably a shootout was required to secure a place in the final for the Old Georgians (against the Old Reptonians), for their second time as finalists in the history of the competition.



Knockout day - at Eton College

With over 220 games of tennis played over 32 matches, the knockout day was a fantastic success, and we look forward to continuing this format into 2024 and beyond.

## The Final

The final was played on the most glorious day on Sunday 3 September on the Aorangi courts at the All England Club.

The first round of matches set the tone for the rest of the tie with some highly competitive play and the Old Reptonians edging it 2-1. This continued in the second round when opposite numbered pairs played each other and the Old Reptonians established a 4-2 lead having crucially won two of the three rubbers in this round.



The Finalists - Old Georgians and Old Reptonians

The Old Georgians, to some extent turned the tables in the final round of matches and their first pair won to bring the score to 4-3, but once again the Old Reptonians showed their superior strength in depth winning the two remaining rubbers comfortably to complete a 6-3 victory.

After the presentation of the trophy to winning captain Jamie Muirhead, the participants had a welcome shower on a very hot day before enjoying a splendid afternoon tea courtesy of the All England Club.

Overall, the day reflected very well on the PSOBLTA and in particular, the D'Abernon Cup. The final was played in a well-fought, friendly and fair spirit as befits the competition with some fantastic shot-making from both teams.

While Old Reptonians deservedly took the honours, the general consensus was that Piers Foley of the Old Georgians was player of the day winning all three of his matches with partner Jamie Boden and without dropping his serve.



2023 D'Abernon Cup Winners - Old Reptonians

Congratulations once again to the Old Reptonians, commiserations to the Old Georgians and, most importantly, a big thank you to the All England Club for once again so kindly hosting the Association's showcase tennis event of the season. Thanks also to Charlie Billington for organising this year's competition with his usual aplomb.

If you would like to enter a team for the 2024 D'Abernon Cup please contact Chris Jenkins for an entry form ([psoblta@live.co.uk](mailto:psoblta@live.co.uk)).



## Recruitment

Once again, we have welcomed a fantastic number of new members to the Association, alongside 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.

The Association continues to publish updates via Instagram ([www.instagram.com/psoblta](http://www.instagram.com/psoblta)) so please do follow us to see the latest updates.

We are always looking to add more photos and match reports, so please feel free to send Chris Jenkins anything you would like published.

## PSOBLTA Merchandise

A reminder that PSOBLTA merchandise is available to purchase by contacting the Hon. Secretary ([psoblta@live.co.uk](mailto:psoblta@live.co.uk)).

The following Association merchandise is available:

- Association ties (silk)      £15.00
- PSOBLTA cap                      £15.00

We are currently sourcing a new supplier for match shirts - more information to follow in due course.

Given the excellent value, we encourage all members to wear a PSOBLTA tennis shirt when representing the Association and the PUBS tie whenever possible!



## Finances

The Committee is pleased to report that the Association is in good financial health. The Association's balance sheet at 30 November 2023 reported net assets of £19,530 (30 November 2022: £14,839).

A full set of accounts will be presented at the 2024 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 Cooper, Gordon-Smith, Keenes, Muirhead and Tatum.

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## NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

to be held at The All England Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club, Wimbledon  
in The Courtside, at 18.30 on Thursday 7 March 2024

## AGENDA

1. To approve the Minutes of the AGM of 13 April 2023 and consider any matters arising.
2. To receive the report of the Committee and Accounts for the year ended 30 November 2023.
3. To elect the Officers, Committee, and Independent Examiner for the upcoming year.
4. Proposed alterations of the Rules of the Association:
  - Rule 1: Proposal to change name to "*The Independent and Public Schools Old Boys' Lawn Tennis Association*".
  - Rule 3: Proposal to change to "*The Association shall consist of Old Boys of Independent and Public Schools (as defined by the school's website) at the time of their application for membership and who shall be proposed and seconded by Members of this Association and approved by the Committee.*"
5. Any other business.