

A Journalist's View of the Tennis Trail



We were delighted when John Parsons, the Daily Telegraph's much respected tennis correspondent, agreed to come along to the Gloucester Trail to see the coaching team in action.

John visited St Peter's Junior School and, judging from his comments below, was impressed with what he saw. "I can hardly think of anything more daunting than trying to hold the attention of between 25-30 eight,

nine and ten year-olds for upwards of half an hour. Yet that is precisely what the coaches from the Cliff Richard Tennis Foundation were achieving, with apparent ease, when I dropped in on the nationwide Tennis Trail when it stopped off in Gloucester.

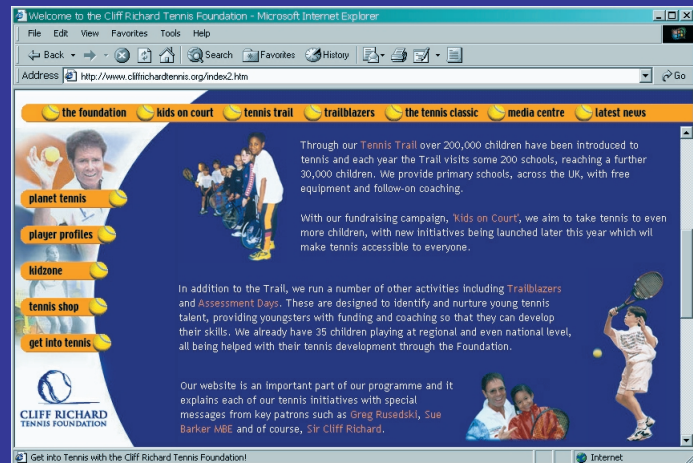
Even the least co-ordinated among the youngsters were totally focused trying to master the exercises they were being asked to undertake, with and without tennis balls. One only had to look at the way their faces lit up to have no doubt that they were having fun. And the realisation that tennis can and should be fun is surely the lesson the Trail wants most to get across in luring youngsters into the sport.

The session I attended was at St Peter's Junior School tucked away in hardly the most affluent part of Gloucester. Also watching eagerly and enthusiastically was Helen Cassey, Tennis Development Officer for

Gloucester City Council who said 'it was all part of the campaign to get youngsters off the streets and into playing. Tennis is a great sport, whether you are three or 83 and for both girls and boys'. And at the moment we have some great role models in Tim Henman and Greg Rusedski in the Davis Cup team. Later, after another group of youngsters had watched the promotional video which goes with the session, their teacher kindly allowed me to ask them a few questions which certainly bore out what Helen had said and emphasised the value of the scheme.

All but one of the 26 children put their hands up instantly when asked who Tim Henman was. I got the clear impression that most of the boys at least, would like to follow in his shoes although one rather spoilt the picture and underlined the need to press home the joy of tennis by adding firmly "but only if I can't be another David Beckham!"

We're a Star Site – And That's Official!



We knew that all our hard work would pay off. The Cliff Richard Tennis web site was included in a "Six of the best" round up of sites to browse during Wimbledon last year by none other than The Guardian newspaper. Just after we launched on the web, The Times voted us as their best site of the week. So if you haven't logged on yet, now's the time! All our website visitors will have hopefully enjoyed their trip, all thanks to Tim Gundry, at Avalon Internet, our site manager, who has even taken up tennis himself – www.cliffrichardtennis.org

Wimbledon Ways

This year we invited all our Trailblazers to spend a day at Wimbledon so that they could soak up the unique atmosphere at The Championships and get some inspiration for their own game. We gave each child a camera to capture highlights from the day and as you can see from our photographs, there were some very special moments!

- (A) Maria Wisdom met Barry Cowan, arguably the man of the championships, who gave 'Pistol Pete' Sampras more than a run for his money!
- (B) Mekaya Gittens chatting to the Wimbledon ball boys and girls
- (C) Robert Wood linked up with Richard Williams, the father who is almost as famous as his daughters, Venus and Serena
- (D) Andre Agassi signs a few autographs
- (E) Francesca Jackson and Ruth Fitzpatrick catch Virginia Wade who's on a break from commentating for the BBC



Another group of youngsters enjoyed a very special treat this year too. St Joseph's School from Devizes were the winners of our 2001 Poster Competition and they won a day at Wimbledon as their prize for creating the most imaginative poster that summed up everything that is special about tennis.

There were lots of really good entries from schools up and down the country, but this one was the one that our judges liked the most. This design is now being incorporated in our 2002 Trail Poster.

A New Decade, A New Beginning By Sue Mappin



Cliff mentioned in his introduction that this newsletter spans a number of special anniversaries. 2001 has ended the first decade for the Cliff Richard Tennis Foundation, the charity that Cliff set up in October 1991 because he wanted to see more children and their families enjoying the pleasures of tennis. In 2002, we have two further milestones to look forward to. The first ten years of the Tennis Trail and, unbelievably, the 20th tennis event, re-named the Cliff Richard Tennis Classic this year. These are real watersheds in the charity's life and it is appropriate that we have embarked on the next decade with a new sponsor, Intelligent Finance, bringing fresh thinking and ideas to the table. As has been mentioned elsewhere, our "Kids On Court" Campaign is progressing very well and the funds that allow us to expand into new areas and relationships are coming

in. We are currently researching and developing plans that will take us through to 2005. We recognise how important it is for us as a charity not to become inward looking or narrow in our focus. If we fall into that trap, we won't grow in size, stature or influence and our ability to help children in sufficient numbers will be diminished. I believe that the key to our future success lies, in large part, in the relationships that we can form with other British care associations and charities who think like us and are also in the business of helping children in need. Together, we will be stronger and will achieve more.

We have started the process this year through pilot schemes with Kids Company and Sargent Cancer Care for Children and have high hopes of expanding these initiatives and of starting new ones in 2002. We are already talking to other like-minded charities that are concerned with children's health and well-being and to local authorities about specific initiatives in their boroughs. I expect some of these conversations to result in practical projects in the future.

We are also fortunate in that we have a tremendous groundswell of support from our friends in the tennis world and, through Cliff's influence, with many people in entertainment like Ainsley Harriott and Gloria Hunniford who can cajole their peers to support us. By allowing the Foundation to use their name and image in support of our work, they fulfil the all important role of helping us to raise our profile with the general public.

Thanks to our sponsors and supporters

The Cliff Richard Tennis Foundation is reliant on the generosity of sponsors, supporters and also Cliff's fans who buy tickets for his annual Tennis Event each Christmas. The proceeds from this event are put to very good use by the Foundation and fund a number of different projects. But in addition to this, these organisations deserve a very special mention:

- Intelligent Finance, our new three-year sponsor of the Tennis Trail and supporter of the Cliff Richard Tennis Classic
 - The British Tennis Foundation, the charitable arm of the LTA who have supported us for the last five years
 - MG Rover Group which provides the vehicles for our coaching teams
 - Wilson Sportswear which is donating clothing for the Foundation team, the Tennis Trail's coaches, fitness team and the Tennis Classic
 - The Foundation for Sport and the Arts who have given us sizeable grants over the years towards the cost of equipment that is donated to the Trail schools
- Sportsmatch who have awarded the Foundation two generous grants over the years in support of the Trail



Our grateful thanks go to all these organizations and individuals for their help and continued support for our work.

And Finally ...

If you would like to find out more about us, or make a donation, please visit our website at: www.cliffrichardtennis.org. Alternatively, you can e-mail us at: info@cliffrichardtennis.org or write to us at: The Cliff Richard Tennis Foundation PO Box 46C, Esher, Surrey KT10 ORB

match!

MAKING TENNIS ACCESSIBLE TO ALL CHILDREN

www.cliffrichardtennis.org



Photo Credit: Paul Cox

Hello and welcome to the 2001 edition of Match!

The last twelve months seem to have been filled with special dates. I celebrated my 60th birthday last year and this October, our charity reached its 10th anniversary. Looking forward to 2002, it will be ten years since we started running the Tennis Trail in schools (over 200,000 children introduced to the sport, and counting!) and so it is very appropriate now to thank our new Trail sponsor, Intelligent Finance. We are all enjoying working with them to bring fresh ideas and more tennis fun to new recruits up and down the country.

The Director of my charity, Sue Mappin, has never been one to let the grass grow under her feet and this year under the umbrella of our "Kids On Court" Campaign, she and her team have been busy forging a number of interesting new links with other like-minded charities. Do turn to page four to find out what's been going on and what is planned for the future.

In this issue, you will be able to read lots of other news about some of our most successful individual players, the progress of our squads and how we are making some changes to the way we run and manage the Tennis Trail. I do hope that you find Match! an interesting and stimulating read. If you want to find out more about the charity, you can either log on to our website or contact us at the address on the back page.

Best wishes
C/R



Read how these two began as just "Kids on Court"

see page three

Twin Dynamos



Photo Credit: Yorkshire Post Newspapers Ltd

Martin;

Why do you like tennis?

It keeps you fit and I love competing against good players"

Favourite Player?

"Andy Roddick. I saw him at Nottingham and he looked cool."

Why did you start playing tennis?

"I didn't even know about the game before the Cliff Richard Tennis Foundation came to my school"

Daniel;

Why do you like tennis?

"I enjoy playing tennis because you meet lots of different people and get to go to lots of new places"

"I mega enjoyed my trip to Wimbledon this year with the Trust. My favourite two players were Kim Clijsters and Goran. I want to be like Goran and win Wimbledon."

Good luck, boys!

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF GETTING KIDS ON COURT



The Tennis Trail In 2002

The Cliff Richard Tennis Trail introduces tennis to children in state primary and junior schools and represents the majority of our work. Demand for us to visit schools has grown each year since the Trail started in 1992 and the scheme continues to be oversubscribed. Whilst the formula that we have always used – spending a week in one area, visiting about ten new schools in each town – works very well, we will be making some adjustments to the way we run things in order to try and satisfy demand. We recognise that, having visited some areas as often as three times, sometimes there simply aren't ten new schools that fit our criteria, but there may be four or five that do. We don't want to disappoint them, so in addition to our usual week long visits, we are going to start running a number of shorter one and two day Trails in 2002.

We have also developed a one-day training course for teachers and have piloted this at Claygate Primary School, which is close to our offices. The Trail visited this school in 2001 and one of their teachers is a real tennis enthusiast. She asked us to provide her and her colleagues with some special tennis coaching so that the school could start teaching tennis to the children themselves. We were happy to oblige and hope that it will be possible to offer a similar service to other schools in the future.

As a direct result of the Tennis Trail visiting the Basingstoke area in 2000, we met Nigel Long, who, at the time, was a stand-alone coach in a local park. Nigel has subsequently set up what is, we believe, the first independent tennis operation to receive funding from The Lawn Tennis Association as well as from Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council. 'Totally Tennis' is a tennis centre in War Memorial Park with four indoor and four floodlit outdoor courts. This year, the Basingstoke Trail was run in conjunction with 'Totally Tennis' and the children who we identified as having potential are now playing regularly in a squad with other young players at 'Totally Tennis'. The Tennis Trail will return to Basingstoke for its third visit to the area in 2002. Other confirmed locations are: West Glamorgan, Leeds, Ealing, West London, East Staffordshire, South Somerset, Hull, South Tyneside, Ulverston and Wimborne in Dorset.

The John Barrett Column

Anyone who watches Wimbledon from the comfort of their armchair at home cannot have failed to hear the dulcet tones of one of the BBC's regular commentators – John Barrett. John, who also writes a tennis column for the Financial Times, is hugely knowledgeable about tennis and a great supporter of our charity. We asked him to contribute his thoughts on youth tennis for Match! Here is what he said.

For all you Kids On Court, here is a tennis fairy tale:

Once upon a time there was a young tennis player from Northern Europe. Let's call him Rune. After showing promise in a few junior tournaments Rune was chosen to be part of a national squad of juniors who were to travel to the South of France in the spring to gain match experience in a series of minor tournaments. In charge was a coach. We'll call him Stefan. As the tour proceeded Stefan was amazed at Rune's insatiable appetite for practice. Every evening he was having to chase Rune off the court so that the team would not miss their meal at the Hotel.



"Come on Rune" yelled Stefan, "do you want us all to starve?" "Just a few more serves" Rune would call as he tossed another ball into the air. Eventually Stefan would literally

have to drag him to the team bus. So fast did Rune improve that one month after their return from France Stefan, who was also the Davis Cup captain, surprisingly chose the youngster to play in the match against New Zealand. The critics had a field day. "Stupid!" they cried. "Too inexperienced!"



Photo Credit: Tim Edwards

When Rune lost the first two sets of the opening rubber against Wimbledon quarter-finalist Onny Parun, it looked as if the critics had been right. But Rune, digging in and finding his confidence at last, fought back magnificently to win the match 6-4 in the fifth set. Inspired by Rune's performance, the team went on to win the tie by four rubbers to one.

Improbable as the tale may sound, it is in fact a true story. In 1972, 15-year-old Bjorn Borg, guided by his coach and captain Lennart Bergelin, did beat Onny Parun to launch a brilliant career that brought him five successive Wimbledon titles and six French Open crowns. All the hard work he had put in as a junior had paid off handsomely.

Watching Borg's amazing progress – and influenced by it – was a young American left-hander who lived in Douglaston, a suburb of New York. The boy was being coached at the

nearby Port Washington Tennis Academy by Australia's legendary Davis Cup captain, Harry Hopman who predicted a great future for the lad.

When the 17-year-old reached the semi-finals of the International junior tournament at Forest Hills in 1976 it seemed Mr Hopman had been right. Watched by dozens of his friends, as well as by his family, he led 5-2 in the final set against Ecuador's Ricardo Lcaza and reached match point. But somehow the victory slipped through his fingers as he lost the set and the match in a tie-break. While lcaza's supporters rushed on court to congratulate him, the loser, alone and disconsolate, slumped in his courtside chair, head in hands, and sobbed his heart out. He had wanted to win so badly. That was the moment when I knew that John McEnroe would one day become a great player. Over the next eight years he would collect four US Opens and three Wimbledons among a total of 77 singles and 77 doubles titles. When you add his 68 Davis Cup singles and doubles victories you realise that McEnroe was one of the greatest players of modern times.

How lucky for the world's tennis fans that these two magnificent champions appeared at the same time. Over the next few years they would give us some truly memorable matches, none better than the Wimbledon final of 1980 (Borg's last win against the mercurial American), with its fourth set tie-break that lasted a full 20 minutes and ended at 18-16 to McEnroe.

So, as you ambitious youngsters set out on Sir Cliff's Tennis Trail, remember Bjorn and John. Each in his own way proved that if you work hard enough and believe in yourself strongly enough, anything is possible.

'Kids On Court' Round Up



ALAN HALSALL

It's been a year of ups and ups for the 'Kids On Court' Campaign. Some high profile new patrons have joined the campaign to work alongside stalwarts like Ainsley Harriott, Gloria Hunniford, Martine McCutcheon and President, Sue Barker. We are delighted to welcome Coronation Street's very own Alan Halsall (Tyron). Since he became one of our Patrons, rumour has it that he is now less keen on working in the garage, because he has taken a serious interest in tennis.



MIKE READ

Another newcomer and great chum of Cliff's is DJ Mike Read. Mike, who is appearing in this year's Tennis Classic at The NIA, is

a very keen player (watch out, Cliff!) and is captain of his local club.

We have held a number of successful fundraising events in the last 12 months that have enabled us to embark upon some new programmes to help young children and teenagers who, for a variety of reasons, need help more than most.

This summer, for example, we joined forces with Sargent Cancer Care for Children – whose patron is Cherie Booth QC. The charity provides psychological and social support for youngsters who have survived cancer or are in remission from the illness.

all the children staying at the centre, regardless of their physical stamina or level of experience. Such was the success of the trial – it turned out to be one of the most popular of a very varied programme of activities on offer – that we plan to expand and repeat the exercise next year. We are also developing an association with Camila Batmanghelidjh of Kids Company in Southwark, South London. Camila founded Kids Company as a place of refuge and safety for exceptionally vulnerable children who, she felt, had been failed by the system. Many of the youngsters she helps, feeds, teaches and provides solace to regard Camila as a second mother, sometimes, their only mother.



It operates with a skilled network of specially trained Sargent social workers who are based at all the major cancer centres in the UK. In addition to this work, they run an annual residential summer camp at Malcolm Sargent House in Bexley, Kent. This is a pioneering centre that provides a wide range of educational, vocational, therapeutic and social activities for adolescent survivors of cancer as well as for the siblings and friends of those who have died. The aim is to provide adolescents with a positive experience to balance the trauma and help them towards leading more independent lives. The Foundation was invited to run a tennis coaching camp at Malcolm Sargent House, which was open to

Many of these children have been physically or sexually abused, some have had to become carers for their siblings or their own parents. Whatever their situation, Kids Company is there for these children and Camila never closes, not even on Christmas Day.

We started working with Kids Company in August and have devised a special coaching programme with the aim of encouraging some of the 16 and 17 year olds, who are regulars at Kids Company, to become assistant coaches and thus able to teach the younger ones. So far, we have run several tennis sessions in the local park, but the aim is to convert and equip one of the old railway arches adjacent

to Kids Company's base into a fully equipped mini tennis centre. The youngsters will be involved in painting and decorating the arch so that it is turned into a welcoming environment. Whilst in the short term this will only help a small group of very vulnerable children, we hope that it will become a template for many similar schemes that could operate in other parts of the country where children are in need of support. Southwark Council have been persuaded to upgrade the park courts and join with us to run a Tennis Trail in 2002.

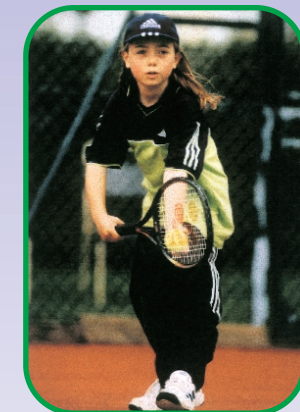


Most readers will know that each year at Christmas, Cliff hosts a Pro-Celebrity tennis event at The NIA in Birmingham with the proceeds going towards the Tennis Foundation. This year's event, held on Sunday 16th December was the first with our new sponsor, Intelligent Finance, the new bank from the Halifax, who are also the new sponsors of the Tennis Trail.

To mark this new relationship we gave the event a new name – The Cliff Richard Tennis Classic – and devised a different format for it with two mixed teams of celebrities and professionals battling it out for the Challenge Trophy awarded by our sponsor. We'll be posting some photos of the Tennis Classic on our web site soon, so watch out for them.

Trailblazer Tales

Many of our Cliff Richard Trailblazers have had an outstandingly successful tennis season this year. You will have read about the twins, Daniel and Martin Regan, on the front page. Here is news of some of the others who deserve special mentions.



Jade Curtis aged 11 from Saltash on the border of Devon and Cornwall is one of the most promising players of her generation. Regarded as one of the top 12 & Under players in Europe, Jade has notched up successes at a 12 and Under tournament in Germany where she beat the top Israeli player and some of the better Italians. Last March, Jade was the youngest child ever to represent Cornwall in the 18 and Under County Championships held in High Wycombe against Buckinghamshire. She won every singles match! Jade has been playing tennis since she was 7, has benefited from attending several Cliff Richard Tennis Foundation Assessment Days, and is now part of the LTA Futures Programme.

Mekaya Gittens aged 11, from Slough in Berkshire, won the 12 & Under County Championships in Berkshire this September. Mekaya only began playing tennis in the summer of 1998 on the Tennis Trail and has been receiving help from the Foundation since then. She has progressed very quickly and was named Player of the Year in the BATS awards in December 2000 and in the same month played in front of a crowd of 9,000 fans at Cliff's Pro-Celebrity Tournament in Birmingham.

Michael Bowler from Yorkshire is just a few points short of being a 4:1. This year, he qualified for the BTCA Player Plus finals and was also picked to play in the National Clay Court Championships. He represented Yorkshire in the Sixteen Counties and won a place in the British Junior National Championships.

Francesca Jackson was one of the finalists in the HSBC Tournament. She has had a string of successes this year including winning the 13 & Under Inter-County Cup in Sunderland and both the 12 & Under and 14 & Under tournament in St. Austell.



The Foundation has recently confirmed its support for the International Tennis Federation's pan-European campaign "Don't Be A Dope!"

This initiative is intended to tell young people about the dangers of steroids and other performance-enhancing drugs. The International Tennis Federation hopes that it can educate younger players about the harmful long-term effects of taking steroids before anyone tries to convince them that there might be benefits in taking the drug. The Federation is touring a number of Under 16 tennis tournaments to spread the word. They have also produced an animation providing more information and this can be accessed either from our website www.cliffrichardtennis.org or on the ITF's new site for junior tennis players at www.itfjuniors.com