

Official Opening of the RLTA Clubhouse: 1st May 2005



A gala celebration was held on Sunday 1st May 2005 to officially open the new clubhouse. More than a hundred members and former members had a wonderful afternoon in balmy autumn weather to witness the ribbon cutting by our State Member for Cleveland Darryl Briskey, accompanied by life members of the RLTA, Merna Bach and Jack Finney.



Our president Ian Somers welcomed the assembled masses which also included our Mayor Don Seccombe, Deputy Mayor Alan Beard and Federal Member for Bowman, Andrew Laming. Ian thanked both the State Government and the Redlands Council for their financial support for the project and praised both Darryl Briskey and Don Seccombe for their respective roles in that process. Ian also paid tribute to both the Architect Shane Keefe and the builder Steve Bell and his team for the way in which they went about their business and in the quality of their end product, something of which we are all very proud.



Our Patron and long-serving life member Jack Finney took us all on a journey down memory lane and helped put the new clubhouse in the context of the club's history. The keen-eyed observer will note that the Mayor (shown seated) came dressed for tennis while long-time tennis player Jack Finney came dressed as a Mayor!



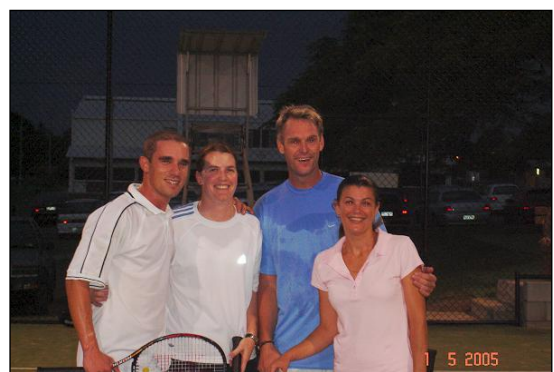
Following a few appropriate words of wisdom from Ian, Jack, Don and Darryl, the ceremonial ribbon was cut and a plaque unveiled.



The official opening was followed by a celebrity tennis match involving Darryl, Andrew Laming, Mayor Don Seccombe and Deputy Mayor Alan Beard. The match proved very competitive and the large crowd were kept on the edge of their seats. Just for the record, Don and Alan went home with both the bragging rights and two bottles of "Clubhouse Red" for what was a victory for the "oldies".



In yet another victory for the "oldies", our former coach Jeff Schneider and the brilliant Nicole Seccombe (nee Johnson) won the two bottles of "Clubhouse White" in a mixed doubles match against the new coach Jani Kroyherr and his partner Minyon Jones, one of the stars of our Thursday evening competition. The standard of the tennis in this match was so good it seemed worthy of a Wimbledon final. (But then it did follow the celebrity match).



This was followed by a match involving four other tennis coaches from the Redlands district: Sean Doyle, Steve Parr, Frayne Bloor and Ian Rothman. The tennis was very entertaining but on this occasion it was Frayne and Ian who gave Sean and Steve a tennis lesson and were also presented with souvenir bottles of Keith Collyer's favourite drop, Clubhouse Red.



Keeping with the spirit of the occasion, the builder Steve Bell and his right-hand man, carpenter Chris Barwick, took on our architect Shane Keefe and the electrician Clinton Barwick (who just happens to be the brother of Chris) in what was billed as a "friendly" grudge match. To the casual observer it certainly appeared that the two brothers had both played a bit of tennis (in fact both were stars of the RLTA in their junior days), but the same casual observer was overheard to say that he thought both Shane and Steve should hang on to their day jobs!

But the tennis was only part of what was on the menu for the opening day celebrations. It was a fantastic excuse for a reunion of present and past members to relive the glory of past matches and to renew old friendships.



Our friendly bar staff Kym Reimers and Les Finney kept the refreshments flowing while chief chef Reg Griffin and his volunteer veterans ensured that the new BBQ was put to good use.



Speaking of BBQ's, Yvonne was still selling raffle tickets to help pay for it. Even the Mayor was not quick enough to escape.



Someone once said that as a tennis player Tony Leigh made an excellent guitarist! It may or may not be true, but Tony and his band certainly cranked up a storm to keep the party-goers rocking on until late into the evening. What a way to christen the new clubhouse and to let all our neighbours know that we were celebrating.

