

Memories of a lifetime in Fives

Ian Fuller looks back on his 44 years at the heart of the RFA in many varied roles



Ian Fuller has completed 44 years' service to the RFA. In that time, he held all the important offices: Hon. Sec. 1976-83; Deputy President 1993-95; President 1995-97; Gen. Sec. 2003-08 and 2011-15, Treasurer 2003-16. He attended more than 140 RFA Committee/Board meetings, and we asked Ian for his memories.

"My first Committee meeting is etched in my memory. Shortly after leaving school I was told I'd been elected as an RFA Committee member and on the day of the first meeting I was advised by one of the younger members that it was "the done thing" to meet beforehand in the 'Bunch of Grapes'. More than a few beers later we walked, slightly less nervously in my case, to the meeting to be greeted by a sea of faces shrouded in a cloud of pipe smoke. More than half smoked a pipe – it almost seemed a pre-requisite to being on the Committee!

"Discussions were quite genteel in those days – "I don't think we need do anything about that," "Let's leave things as they are" and the classic "Well, of course in my day..."

"The hours discussing the detail of the Incorporation of the RFA and the move to Charitable Status sticks in my mind. The involvement of all Board members to ensure both were put on a proper footing was exemplary and ensured a successful transition.

"My involvement in three defining moments in the history of the Association

will be a source of pride:

- Re-drafting the Constitution with Lionel Lawson and Peter Dunscombe in the 1980s to recommend, among other things, the creation of a paid Gen. Sec. This was revolutionary at the time but was agreed by the AGM and has continued to this day.

- The merger of the RFA and RFA Club in the 1990s. This tricky and sensitive issue could not have been achieved without the co-operation of David Barnes, then RFA Club President, and the way the memberships welcomed the initiative was a delightful surprise.

- The creation of the 'Fives Forum,' which was hatched over a beer with the then EFA Chairman, Michael Constantinidi. Through the later

involvement of John East, the Forum became the Fives Federation and the signing ceremony between the EFA and RFA seemed like a historical occasion.

"A major highlight for me was being

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elected President. During my term I played in virtually every tournament and it was exciting to see the enthusiasm for the game at local level.

"I've been privileged to work with over 20 Presidents – some adopted more of a hands-off approach, chairing meetings and attending tournaments, others more of an executive role. Each had at least one or two initiatives they wished to introduce, which always brought a freshness to proceedings. I couldn't count how many Board members I've worked with, but the energy and enthusiasm they all brought helped the RFA to become the successful organisation it is today.

"The Association is far healthier and more professional than ever before and seeing the strength of the current younger membership on and off the court bodes very well for the future."



LEFT (FROM TOP) Ian winning the Vintage Singles in 2015; taking over as General Secretary from Michael Beaman in 2003