

Welcome: To an attempt to keep Wednesday players, supporters, and spectators (when was the last time we had some – answers on a postcard please) informed – and maybe entertained. To do this requires an informed newsletter editor (if possible in this case) & I seek the assistance of all players and readers in this. Past experience indicates that such newsletters are usually written by their editors rather than assembled from contributions – but we shall see. Can we afford a legal team for libel suits Simon – or is Peter Murray available pro bono.

Headline News: The 2012 competition is up and running (subject to a short weather interruption). Congratulations to all involved with the new playing strips – which have made us all look a fair bit smarter. Now if only some of our hockey (especially mine) was as smart as the gear. A very large thank you goes to Robin Bailey who has already distributed more than 80 sets of the new playing ensembles in the right sizes and to the right people.

No More Waiting: Early arrivals in the 60s have become accustomed to being locked out of the stadium in 2012. Some fairly bizarre expedients have been used to attract the attention of those within – the strangest being to use a mobile phone to call the office. At least it's strange to the newsletter editor who no longer has a mobile phone. We welcome back our friendly ground controller – now again the gates are open when we arrive, the turfs are being watered, there is ice available, and we feel as though we belong again.

Letters To The Editor: It might be better if we limited these to hockey topics only. I am also sure that we can exercise more discretion than the West Australian, which has been known to publish letters from the likes of Colin Benporath, Bob Bowyer, John Mercer, & Bob Stidwell. In all cases the editor's discretion (or the lack of it) is final.

Situation Vacant: This is not a description of the space between the ears of those who attended the stadium on the 25th for a very pleasant run in the 41 degrees (including the newsletter editor). As this publication is produced from within the 60s its editor will generally be unaware of the happenings within the 50s group – and would much prefer to remain within the bar rather than leave it for a bit of investigative journalism. Are there any volunteers to take on the role of O/50s correspondents? If not, then perhaps the role of O/50s Deep Throat?

Christmas Party: A rather large thank you is due to all involved in the organisation of this function. Special mention to Bob Bowyer, whose tireless efforts throughout the year with the raffles (and in leaving my tickets out whenever he thought I'd won too much) raised a decent sum for various charities. Details of the disbursements were:

Salvation Army : Ron Venables (\$1000). Manna Industries: Bob Bowyer (\$1000). India Friends of the Needy: Lionel David (\$1000). Parents and Friends of Bristol House: Ivan Wilson (\$500). Telethon Speech and Hearing Centre: Nigel Thomas (\$500). Birds of the Air: Adolphus Abrahams (\$500). Joseph's Coat Inc: Ken Watt (\$500). Family Support WA: Dennis Reid (\$500). Total \$5,500.

Thanks also to the entertainer – Dave Herrington of the 50s. As far as I know the chief organiser was the usual suspect – thanks yet again Simon. No wonder the presentation of the trophy to the Gold team got overlooked with all the other things required to be kept in mind. Could I suggest to the

Gold players that the way to achieve a timely trophy presentation for this year is for some of you to volunteer to organise the 2012 party. Please form an orderly queue in the bar next Wednesday. Thanks also to the organisers and collectors of the in-advance finance – Bill Campbell and Brian Lester. Well done to you both. And not least thank you to the caterers and to Lionel who provided at least three terrific curries (from personal consumption experience).

Lionel David: Even those of you who seldom (or never) come into the bar afterwards will be aware of Lionel's recent retirement. Those of you who are long-term players will be aware of how much he has contributed to the quality of our Wednesday afternoons. Many thanks for many years. Great to see you back a couple of times as umpire and (not at the same time) consumer of a Corona or two.

A Thankless Task: We do not always acknowledge that the game can be difficult to play without adjudication – and so we offer a special thank you to those who turn up just to umpire. These include Johns Lindsay and Sanders, Ric Denny (during his injury – good to see you back) and the knee-monia sufferers Peter Hammond, Gordon Thomas, and Neil Mannolini. Please let me know those I've missed (any 50s?) and we'll make amends in a future issue – if any.

Thanks For The Beers: Happy birthday to Dudley Younger for last Wednesday (?). Good to see past players such as Dudley and George Winning continue to join us on Wednesdays. Many thanks also to Dudley for the sausages on the 1st Wednesday of the month.

Speedy Recovery: To John Dunstan, who we hear has just left hospital following the removal of gall stones and gall bladder. We hope that you feel well enough to join the past players on a Wednesday.

Impertinent Question: Do infants in infancy have more fun than adults in adultery?

Editorial Corner: Some of you may be thinking that this issue has handed out far too many bouquets and an insufficient number of brickbats. With a name like mine I have little choice but to look on the bright side (refer to Bing Crosby and Johnny Mercer – “Accentuate The Positive”). Beside which it is definitely editorial policy to grease the wheels rather than throw sand in them.

However I would urge all players to avoid personal abuse of the umpires – or indeed any abuse at all. One of the best ways to stop abusing the umpire is to do the job yourself – certainly works for me, but needs to be repeated as often as possible.

On which note most of us are old enough to remember Vern Gooch's two rules of hockey.

Rule 1: The umpire is always right. Rule 2: If the umpire is wrong refer to Rule 1.

Who Are We: I have no title for this newsletter as yet – any suggestions will be given careful consideration, but editorial (in) discretion applies. Those with long memories of Scarborough Hockey club's Flashes may need to be reminded that “Mercer's Mumbblings” will be ruled out immediately. The editor can be contacted:

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We may add a proper masthead and other technical enhancements in our next issue (or two).