

It's not just CRICKET!...

Words Jim Cottrel

HAVING lived in Stratford for most of my adult life, I have always associated the sports club on the recreation ground as 'the cricket club', as most likely the majority of Stratfordians have. How wrong I was.



Outgoing chairman Joe Harvey (Left) pictured with incoming chairman George Fisher.

AFTER a recent visit to what is actually named the Stratford Sports Club, I was amazed to discover the range of sporting activities, and the fantastic facilities this club offers.

From Tennis and Squash to Snooker and Athletics, together with Hockey and Cricket, and soon also able to offer Boxing, the club caters for a vast cross-section of popular sports.

Housed within a stunning, recently refurbished Clubhouse, which has survived two major floods over the past decade, Stratford Sports Club is set in

beautiful surroundings on the south side of the town and offers facilities that are second to none.

There is ample parking and an attractive terrace overlooking Stratford's riverside Cricket ground, which in the summer months is an ideal place to relax, have a drink and watch the very high standard of cricket on show.

The club is well equipped to provide flexible accommodation for a range of business meetings, training courses and seminars, and can also be booked for social events and parties, with a delightful bar area and dance floor. There is also the opportunity for members to watch a wide variety of major sporting events on the big screens located within the bar area.

Current Chairman Joe Harvey, who stands down at the end of this year and hands over the reins to George Fisher, summed it up quite nicely: "The work that everyone has put in to rescue the club from the terrible floods, and to see it as it is now, with the range of sporting activities on offer, is a major achievement; we are all very proud of Stratford Sports Club".

And so they should be. With the club's ethos of 'youth development', it is the ideal starting point in sport for any would-be future sporting star. The extent of experience and knowledge offered by the coaches within their specialised disciplines is vast, so whether you're a youngster wanting to start out in a particular sport, or someone who just

wants to further develop key skills, Stratford Sports Club is a fantastic place to start.

Incoming Chairman George Fisher also added; "I want to pay tribute to the wonderful service given to the Club by Joe Harvey over a 14 year period. We all owe him a huge debt! I am very excited at the prospect of taking over as Chairman and I believe that the Club has enormous potential and a fantastic future.

The Club has three key aims:

- 1. To promote enjoyment of sport.**
- 2. To provide opportunities for the complete spectrum of ability from the recreational player or athlete to those at the elite level.**
- 3. To be an organisation which is at the hub of Stratford life, both for the benefit of members and for the wider community.**

I have been incredibly impressed by the dedication and enthusiasm of the Chairmen of the various sections, as well as the professionalism of the staff, led by the Sports Club Manager, Sally Willes."

There is so much on offer at Stratford Sports Club, that it would be foolish to even attempt to cover it all in this article, however here's a brief description of the sporting activities available:

Athletics: Founded in 1979 Stratford Athletic Club welcomes all people from the age of 8 upwards. Aiming to cater for runners of all abilities, ranging from those who just want to relax, enjoy themselves and get fit all the way across the range to those who want to compete at the highest level that their ability and dedication can take them.

Cricket: Established as a cricket club in 1845, Stratford Cricket Club fields a range of teams from their first XI, *The Panthers*, who play at a very high level in the Birmingham and District League, through to junior cricket and coaching sessions. Memberships range from senior player, junior player or just social membership.

Hockey: Stratford Hockey Club boasts 5 men's teams, 1 mid-week men's Veterans Team, 3 ladies teams, a mixed team and an active Junior Section (which plays friendlies, tournaments and Vixens). Recent successes include 2009/10 Men's 1st Team becoming the 2009/10 West Midlands Premier League Champions; The Ladies 2nd Team reaching the Quarter finals of the 2009/10 England Women's 2nd XI Trophy and the Men became The Mercian Summer League Champions 2009. The club has strong connections with Stratford-upon-High School, making use of the all weather pitch facilities available there.

Snooker: The snooker section opened in the summer of 1999 following a successful transition from Stratford-upon-Avon Union Club. Members enjoy a warm welcome together with superb facilities that include 4 Riley Aristocrat snooker tables which were installed at the beginning of 2008 and are superbly maintained. Each table is fully equipped with its own set of accessories to enjoy the game.

Squash: Run by Dave Petty, the Stratford Squash Club was probably the worst hit by the floods of a few years ago being originally located beneath the original level of the main club. It now boasts three state-of-the-art fully refurbished courts which, like the rest of the building, are now 'flood resistant' due to the use of high quality 'wipe clean' materials and flood/drainage defenses during the club's £100,000 renovation. The club hosts three teams playing in county leagues, and junior coaching is available to non-members. Squash courts can also be booked online for the convenience of members.

Tennis: Stratford-upon-Avon Lawn Tennis Club has 7 carpeted tennis courts, 5 of which are floodlit. Regular social evenings and day sessions are held in a friendly environment throughout the year, along with a full coaching programme. The club are continually looking into how it can improve facilities to provide a year round tennis coaching program.

Boxing: Stratford Boxing Club will soon be moving from their previous home on Tyler Street, and are over the moon to be relocating to Stratford Sports Club. The club will be making use of a unique space under the squash courts, created when they were re-built three years ago, and will offer modern training equipment, a gym and sparring ring.

Stratford Sports Club really is the ultimate venue for sporting activities in the area. Coupled with the catering and conference facilities which can provide a high quality service to help you stage a successful event and can cater for a large range of functions, finger and fork buffets, pre- and post-theatre snacks, formal business lunches, adult parties and dinner dances. The club really does offer the complete package.

For further information, or to arrange a visit to view the facilities contact the club on **01789 297968** or for business enquiries telephone **01789 296629**.

Stratford Sports Club Limited, Swans Nest Lane, Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 7LS.

admin@stratfordsportsclub.co.uk
www.stratfordsportsclub.co.uk

