

ESC History interview

Michael Campbell

9th March, 1934

1. What brought you to squash rackets, and when did you first play?
 - a. At Radley College, I first played fives, then squash came later – perhaps circa 1948. Became School squash champion later (q.v.)
2. When did you join ESC? Michael's share certificate says 20th September 1955, but he insists he joined on 6th July 1954
3. When did you first and last play at ESC?
 - a. First time probably the month I joined, i.e. July 1954, last time (tennis) around 2019?
 - b. I was Captain of ESC 3rds around 50 years ago (1971?) when my team mates were Charlie Fyfe, Brian Bathgate and three ladies – Anne Dewar, Sylvia Boyd and Irene Cowper. Shortly after, the Ladies went on to form their own league.
4. Would you like to provide a timeline of your early life?
 - a. Born in Minehead, Devon, when my mother came home from India where father was a tea planter. My Mother had to come back (because?) otherwise I would have been born in India
 - b. Aged 5 in 1939, went to Larchfield School in Helensburgh. I remember the bombing raids on Glasgow. Larchfield merged with the neighbouring Lomond School in 1977. (Lomond was Irene Cowper's Alma Mater).
 - c. Lived in Gullane at Lammerview House, Main Street
 - d. Aged 13 in 1946 went to Radley College, Abingdon in Oxfordshire, leaving around 1951
5. Were you a member of other club(s)?
 - a. Gullane golf club, Ravelston Golf Club
6. Who were among your most regular opponents?
 - a. Vic Macari and others...
7. Best sporting achievement
 - a. Beating Ted Dexter (who is/was a year younger) in the Radley College squash championship.
 - b. Scoring 66 (net 60) on Gullane 3, and getting a hole in 1 on the 15th at Gullane 2 (my handicap was 6 at the time)
8. You have been a (more than) regular sponsor – can you describe some of them?
 - a. A whole day event for youngsters. The Club closed for the day, and children (mainly autistic) sampled all our sports (see photo with youngsters in yellow T shirts).
9. What did ESC bring to your life?
 - a. Friends and sports
10. Who were your best friends at the Club?
 - a. Too many to name, but Charlie Fyfe and Julie Learmonth particularly in the last few years
11. What was your career?
 - a. Jan 1951 – Jan 1954, Signed on as a regular soldier for the Royal Engineers at the hotel on the corner of Queensferry Road and Queensferry Terrace. Posted to Barton Stacey camp, Hampshire, where I served my time despite the expectation I would go abroad (the Korean War was June 1950 to July 1953). I was not popular with the squaddies as I was invited to play squash with a couple of officers. Rising to the dizzy rank of Corporal, I was laterally the clerk of the annual leave department, a powerful and influential posting.
 - b. Barton Stacey (north of Winchester) was created in 1938, and played its part in the 1944 D Day landings by hosting the US 5th Division.
 - c. 1954 (?) Ketchen and Stevens lawyers, where I knew Bill Lindsay and Nicol Kilgour (both Chairmen of Hearts)
 - d. Lived in Spain in 1959 for 18 months – in Marbella when it was a fishing village. The decent hotel was £25 half board per week.
 - e. Stafford Exports 1975'ish?

- i. Alex Burns, a local farmer who I knew, was exporting used/reconditioned tractors to Ireland; I thought this was a possible project.
- ii. Sometime later (1980?), I was leaving Fraser's office to go the Club, and two gents of oriental appearance turned up at the door. They had driven all the way from England on the off chance of meeting the advertiser. Stafford Exports (named after the street where Fraser's office was) was born!
- iii. The visitors turned out to be Thais, and that started a long business relationship, extending until 2010? I regularly visited Bangkok, meeting and being royally hosted by Nikorn and Viboon.
- iv. The editor frequently called Stafford Exports from locations round the world when coming upon a wrecked or otherwise disabled ancient Fordson, Massey-Ferguson or other marque, offering to ship it back to Edinburgh.

12. Family?

- a. Got married (to Norma) in 1960, children Katrina (1964) and Rory (1961)
- b. Where were you living when you married? – Silverknowes.
- c. When did you move to 3 Hillpark Road, and when did you sell? 1969-2015

13. Are you happy with the progress the club is making, e.g. Padel, Table Tennis installations, and refurbishment in general?

- a. Padel seems to be doing well

14. Do you have any photographs, memorabilia or other records from ESC?

- a. I won't allow the archivist to take any of my photos away

15. Have you any other questions, or suggested topics?

- a. Why does the archivist ask so many silly questions?

16. Other information

- a. Met General Mazcek (he was Manager/barman 1957-1959)
- b. ESC played in the Edinburgh snooker league in the late 1980's
- c. Board member 1995-2000 'under' three Chairs – Mike Hunter, the editor and Sandra Kempston (Michael resigned on 11th December 2000).
- d. Larchfield School - Among its famous pupils were author Sir James Frazer and TV inventor John Logie Baird. In the late 1920s and early 1930s Cecil Day-Lewis and W.H.Auden taught there briefly. The school merged with St Bride's School for Girls in 1977 to form Lomond School. In 1998 Larchfield was sold to Cala Homes who converted into 11 flats and built 14 new flats at the rear.

