

## **Fives celebration at the 50th birthday of ZuoZ Fives Club Zurich (6-8 September 2013)**

Report by John Reynolds

The half century of the Zurich branch of ZuoZ fives was celebrated, appropriately, by some 50 players (and their ages spanned about five decades – from early 20s to early 70s). Half of those were from England - including several players who had travelled to ZuoZ at the time the Lyceum's old boys' club was formed back in the early 1960s. Old Citizens Geoff Bates, David Cooper, Gordon Stringer and David White were regular visitors to the Alpine courts in the 1950s and 1960s and they were back again for the birthday party. Stringer (who picked up a life-time-contribution-to-fives award at a recent EFA event) has the honour of being the only UK honorary member of the ZuoZ Fives Club Zurich. Alongside these veterans were some of the country's most eminent players (such as leading lady players Emily Scoons and Karen Hird, top veteran Grant Williams and recent Kinnaird champion Matt Wiseman).

The thriving state of ZuoZ fives was evident from the strength and technique of its younger contingent and the continuing enthusiasm and skills of its more senior players. Younger players included recent school leavers Katerina Kuenburg and Jessica Rees, current Zurich keeper Renato Buechi, his brother Felix, Kevin Michaelsen and Michael Kuenburg. They are of course standing on the shoulders of those players such as Dieti Mettler (who, it has emerged, was one of the Swiss players in the recently publicised film of ZuoZ fives in the early 1960s) and the other founders of the club including the peerless and much-lamented Benny Oei. This flourishing of talent is also a direct result of the investment in coaching by the lyceum - much of it from Howard Wiseman and his team - over the past two decades and of the energies of the weekend's indefatigable fives host, Daniel Haering.

And the weekend showed that standards of fair play ("fair play" merits its own chapter in one of the lyceum's prospectuses from the 1950s which I have seen) were as high as ever. The players divided equally into the main draw and the festival. The winning pairs in both main tournament and festival were combinations of ZuoZ players and English visitors. Sunday's main tournament was won by Michael Kuenburg (who had shown himself to be a fearsome fast bowler in the first eleven cricket match the previous day) and Matt Wiseman (who was at the Lyceum coaching for a couple of weeks). Kuehnburg's cutting and powerful hitting, in alliance with Wiseman's all-round game, were too much for Englishmen Ronald Pattison and Chris Morris, although the former bossed mid-court on occasion and the latter retrieved like his life depended on it.

The festival was won by the Lyceum's chemistry teacher Peter Suess and English visitor Mark George Jacobs (another of the Old Citizen contingent).