

An innovative class is proving popular at a West Yorkshire club; attracting both group exercise fans and those who want to improve their tennis game. Workout editor Christina Eccles tried out a session.



Thongsbridge Tennis and Fitness Club boasts a dedicated strength training facility as well as traditional tennis, with Cardio Tennis bridging the gap.

# Cardio Tennis bridges gap between sport and fitness

AS one of the top tennis facilities in the Yorkshire area, Thongsbridge Tennis and Fitness Club is no stranger to success.

Championing tennis for all ages and abilities, the Holme Valley based club has built up a loyal membership base, thanks to its range of facilities and its family friendly, community feel.

In addition to traditional tennis, the club's offering also includes fitness classes and a dedicated strength and conditioning facility, with Cardio Tennis sessions sitting on the timetable as a popular way to bridge the gap between sport and fitness.

Cardio Tennis coach Danny Sykes explained: "You don't have to be able to play tennis and it's for all ages. One of the main things people like is that you always have a goal at the end of each exercise – you're chasing the ball down like you



would in a tennis match.

"We have a lot of people who come simply to become fitter, but some come to use it as a way to improve as a tennis player."

With participants ranging from beginners to experienced tennis players, Danny's task as a coach is to tailor sessions to suit all levels. He has also slightly adapted the classes to make them more representative of a real tennis match.

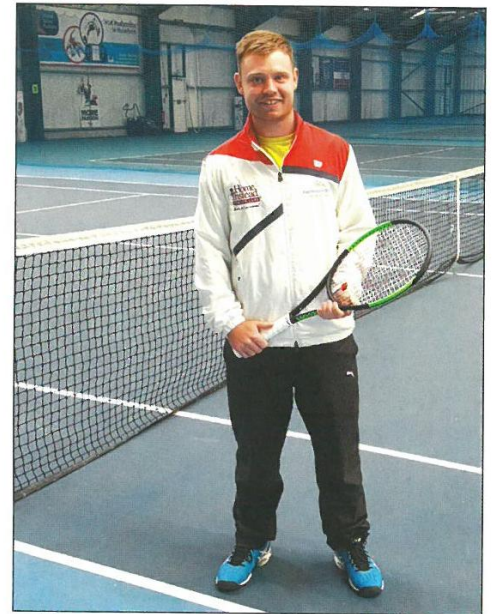
He added: "We have changed from continuous running to more interval training, which makes it more tennis specific and more realistic. You don't keep jogging in the middle of a match; it's more stop/start."

Providing locals with both a fitness facility and a social hub, the well established club recently marked its centenary with a special celebration day for the whole family.

Highlights included a BBQ, taster fitness sessions and sporting demonstrations, with money raised from the event going towards supporting charities and for club improvements.

Danny added: "The day went very well. We were able to deliver a fun filled day that catered for everybody.

"People were able to play and watch tennis, have their faces painted, do different gym classes and enjoy a BBQ. It was a great family fun day."



Cardio Tennis coach Danny Sykes.

## Class offers something a bit different from the norm

SINCE leaving school PE lessons behind, the only experience I've had of tennis in recent years has been watching Wimbledon, while drinking Pimms and eating strawberries and cream! So to say I was out of practice would be a bit of an understatement!

But despite having not even picked up a racket in years, I was excited to try Cardio Tennis and find out more about how elements of the sport could be delivered through a group fitness class.

Within the group of seven taking part, I was definitely

the least experienced as the others were all regular tennis players and some of them avid attendees of Cardio Tennis. But, thankfully, it didn't matter as for this class it's not essential to have perfect tennis technique.

What you do need to have is enthusiasm and the willingness to try something different, as it's definitely not your typical fitness class. The drills were fun and engaging, incorporating both fitness circuits – anything from star jumps to squats – with tennis skills.

And although my skills were fairly limited, I was pleased

with the fact I managed to hit most of the balls sent my way; even if a few of them looked in danger of smashing the nearest window!

It also appeared to be a very sociable session. Throughout the class, all the ladies were chatting to each other and as well as working hard, it was clear to see they were having a good time.

All of them meeting up in the cafe for a coffee after was also nice to see and proved that this is a facility which works hard to be a social club as well as a tennis and fitness one.

Not only was Cardio Tennis a great workout, it also has the added benefit of helping you feel like you're learning something new.

Although I'm not quite ready for my Centre Court debut yet, if I was to attend regular sessions, I can see how these classes would help to improve my fitness levels as well as my tennis, making it perfect for those who want to up their game, as well as beginners who just want to try something new.

If you like your cardio fast paced and fun, this is the class for you!

