

John Parsons WIMBLEDON DIARY



STILL THE BEST

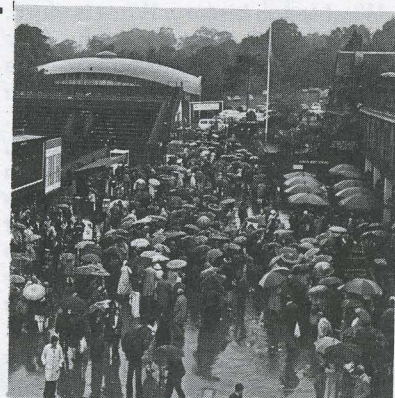
It was the coldest, dampest, most frustrating Wimbledon anyone could remember, but it reached a magnificent climax, with a tremendous women's singles final and the men's singles final struggle everyone had wanted.

Above all, though, it was a year in which the unique appeal of Wimbledon for players, overseas officials and the public was most clearly illuminated.

With the courts, other than Centre and No 1, cutting up badly because of the rain—Court 2 became probably the worst I have ever seen for an important championship match at this tournament—the endless delays also caused by the weather, the overcrowding in the first few days, the earlier starts which meant the walkways were never quite so free from rubbish as usual, it was the fortnight during which any Wimbledon knockers would be likely to appear.

Instead, the message came back loud and clear from all quarters "Wimbledon remains something special."

Bjorn Borg said so, not only for the whole six-months build-up to the championships, when he dreamed of little else than trying to equal Fred Perry's three wins in a row, but also on the eve of his final with Jimmy Connors when he said "I'd be here if we were playing for one dollar or 50,000 dollars. Money doesn't count at Wimbledon, it's the title."



"If you look at the great players over the years, they've all won Wimbledon at least twice. I want to be numbered among those greats when I retire ...

Virginia Wade

ADIOS, MARIA

WIMBLEDON is a great meeting place for old friends in the tennis world and it was a moment to recall some of the happiest memories to see famous old players like Lew Hoad, Frank Sedgman, Ham Richardson, and Pancho Gonzales together on one table in the restaurant with more recent champions, John Newcombe and Arthur Ashe.



Some old stars return each year for events such as the Grand Masters, others just to relive their own part in the greatest tennis championship in the world.

In Maria Bueno's case, her return was tinged with sadness, for it was to announce her retirement, at the age of 38, from all serious tournament singles play. In a way, this took place 10 years earlier when injury forced her to quit for five years after winning the women's singles three times.

"La Bueno" was among the most graceful players who has ever stepped onto the Centre Court which made it all the more disappointing that there were only five journalists at the Press conference she called to say farewell.

It was not their fault. The meeting coincided with the Ilie Nastase rumpus over his suspension, but it was unfortunate, nevertheless, that so few were able to hear Maria reminisce over the great joy which Wimbledon has provided for her over the years.

She may be back next year for doubles, but now Maria is concentrating on the fashion shop and the tennis school which she hopes will ultimately provide another Wimbledon champion from Brazil.



One of the many side attractions was the location filming of the

Paramount movie *Players*, starring Dino Martin Jr and Ali McGraw. Pictured below is the entry for a Wimbledon final between the characters played by Martin and Guillermo Vilas, while referee Fred Hoyles (right) accompanies them onto the Centre Court. Picture: Albert Evans.

MARTINA Navratilova, in a heart-rending press conference minutes after she had won her first Wimbledon singles final, echoed those comments. "At Wimbledon, you don't think about money," she said, with a candour which must have sent shivers down the backs of those most militant members of the Women's Tennis Association who only two years before had been threatening to boycott the championships unless they received equal prize money.

