

guildford international
volleyball club



A Club History

Guildford International Volleyball Club

History 1987 - 2007

In the Beginning.....

The first mention of G.I.V.C in any doomsday book (aka JB's diary) was in the week between 5th and 12th April 1987. This was when the first training session was held in the upper training hall at the old Sports Center in Bedford Road. If in years to come it is decided to erect a plaque on the site of the first volleyball to be spiked in Guildford it will probably be in row G seat 23 of Screen 7 at the New Odeon cinema.

I think that it is important to remember just why the club was started in the first place. Simon & Gill Hart used to play for Woking volleyball club, but they became disillusioned with the unwelcoming atmosphere at that club. They decided to start a club in Guildford and booked 4 weeks of sessions at the Bedford Road Sports Centre putting forward their own money for the booking with no guarantee that anybody would come. Posters were put up on the notice boards and Simon & Gill sat by the phone waiting for people to get in touch.

On the first Sunday there were a mixture of players some beginners & some with quite a number of years experience who all paid £2 for the pleasure. My memory of these early sessions was how friendly they were & I hope that this is still the first impression that we give to newcomers.

After the first 4 sessions it was apparent that there certainly was a demand for volleyball in Guildford so further Sunday sessions were booked & an extra session at Ash Manor was also arranged on a Wednesday night.

Traditions established

During the first summer two of the corner stones on which the club success has been built were established.

Firstly we held several social events, a night out for a curry in Guildford & a beach BBQ party plus many other evenings out in local pubs.

Secondly we entered our first tournaments, the very first competitive volleyball played by a Guildford team was at Crawley on 13th June 1987 & if I remember correctly we got beaten out of sight & picked up several Astroturf burns (who plays volleyball on Astroturf). Not to be deterred by this setback we returned to the fields of battle on 12th July at Ashcombe. Where in our first match we got beaten out of sight.

This prompted a drastic rethink by the club coaches & switching was introduced for the first time. Now cast your mind back to the first time you were introduced to the concept of switching positions & penetrating setters, of course it was confusing. Still with the aid of some beer glasses & coffee cups representing the setters (they are always that little bit shorter) we tried to suss it all out. The warm up was spent practising switching and not running into each other, much to the amusement of our opposition. But they were laughing the other side of their faces when we had finished with them.

The first season

Having also played at the Bath tournament during that Summer we felt ready for league volleyball so 3 teams were entered into the Surrey league, 2 men's & a ladies team. During October that year mid week training was switched from Wednesday night to a Tuesday.

Also at around that time another instance of what has become an established part of the club first came to light. The Au-Pair! As Guildford is a fairly affluent area of the country there are many families who can afford to "employ" an Au-Pair to look after their children & as volleyball is a popular sport in Europe which is taught in schools, each year there are a number of Au-Pairs who come along to Guildford to play volleyball.

Just prior to Christmas the club arranged it's first formal, i.e. booked, social event, a trip to see Blood Brothers in Guildford, it is good that both the club & play are still going despite some changes in cast. The club also arranged it's first Christmas meal which was at the White Hart in Bramley. The first season was completed without any major honours being won but the enthusiasim was starting to grow.

On May 15th 1988 the club held it's first AGM and the club's constitution was written, there are two important items in the constitution. Firstly the club shall provide volleyball in Guildford for people of all standards & secondly the name of Guildford International Volleyball club was decided, it was a close run thing with Guildford International Touring Side (G.I.T.S) being voted out as it was not very "media friendly".

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More teams, tournaments and sessions

During the Summer of 1988 we entered more tournaments, in addition to the ones entered the previous year we went to Oxford, [Havant](#), [Poole](#) & the invitational tournament at [Arun](#).

With the addition of a 3rd men's team in the Surrey league for the 1988/89 season it was decided to run an extra session on a Sunday and split the numbers between an advanced and open session. Attendance at the advanced session was by invitation only & was limited to 18 or so people, if you were unable to attend you had to let the coach know so that your place could be taken by someone else being invited along. If you failed to do this you were dropped from the session and had to wait until a space at the session became available.

During October in that year we had talks with [Carshalton](#) (later known as [Chessington](#)) about some of our players playing for their National League team as they were having problems in putting a team out & on 20th November 1988 we had our first player registered to play National League. By the end of the season some of our players had distinguished themselves enough to be selected to play for the Surrey Representative team in the county championships in Leeds.

3 prizes & International travel.

On Sunday 30th April 1989 Guildford won their first trophy at the Nova Tournament in Oxford, this was followed up with further hardware from the [Lepe](#) tournament (Winners of the plate) & The Barton & [Wyatt](#) Cup at our very own tournament which was staged on Stoke Park as part of the Guildford show. This event proved to be very popular & featured an "exhibition" match between [Ashcombe](#) & Richmond, an interview on County Sound Radio station & several public have a go sessions. It was as a result of these sessions that the club started to run some junior coaching sessions at [St Peters](#) school in Guildford.

During the summer the club further enhanced it's international reputation by making two trips to the continent, the first was to a tournament at [Gennep](#) in Holland, we had planned to the previous year but our efforts were scuppered by a ferry strike.

Our second trip was to visit our twin town of Freiburg in the Black Forest, a trip organised with the help of the Guildford Twinning Association.

Further Expansion into the National League

Another season and Guildford entered two more teams into the Surrey League, by now the club was running 4 Men's & 2 Women's teams. With there now being 2 men's teams in Division 1 it set up the first of many 1st v 2nd matches. Although these matches went true to form the seconds managed to somehow survive in division 1, meanwhile the First team were starting to get the measure of the Surrey league teams and qualified along with the Women's 1 for the [S.E.V.A](#) cup at the end of the season.

Another significant event for the club was that our friends at Carshalton felt that they were unable to continue to run a National league team and invited Guildford to "take up the franchise", although initially entered under the Carshalton name by the start of the 1990/91 season the Surrey Giants were bom, reflecting the mixture of players from different Surrey clubs.

In the Summer of 1990 we again visited [Gennep](#) & this time with a little help from our continental friends the Ladies won first place in their division & the men achieved a very respectable 3rd. This combined with a runners up place in the [Lepe](#) tournament and Winning the plate trophy at the [Dowty](#) tournament meant that it was another very successful summer for the club.

Away from the court the club continues to grow

Again the club ran a successful tournament as part of the [Guildford](#) show, this time one of the teams was made up with the juniors who had originally been part of the have a go sessions the previous year. Another trip the Freiburg followed shortly afterwards, this time combined with a grand tour of Europe.

During the summer Guildford entered a raft in the Guildford Lions Raft race on the river, although we did not come first I think that we certainly made an impact on both fellow competitors & spectators.

In July 1991 the club became a member of the Guildford sports council

A club does not run it self & Guildford have always been lucky to have had keen committee members, coaches and

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referees. We have always encouraged people to take up the vital roles by subsidising the cost of courses & subscriptions for referees & coaches..

In addition to the usual committee posts the club has always had a social secretary & for many years a press and publicity officer who has kept the local newspaper & radio stations informed of our successes. As can be seen from our press cuttings.

As a result of our efforts in publicising the club & the sport of volleyball in 1992 the club won the E.V.A Promotion Award

Junior Volleyball

The efforts made as a result of the Guildford show resulted in the formation of a junior team which played in the Surrey league for a couple of seasons. Apart from this the club has been active in promoting junior volleyball both in conjunction with the Surrey youth service at Park Barn school & as part of the Surrey Action Coaching Scheme which we ran for 2 years starting in 1992 in association with Surrey council & local schools. The aim of the scheme was to provide high quality coaching to school children & establish links with local clubs so that when they left school they would not give up playing sport. A team containing some of the juniors from this scheme (& one or two more experienced players) entered the club tournament at Shalford Park in 1993.

I know that as a result of these schemes we have created some volleyball converts, one such player is Hannah Ryder who returned to the area after university & is involved with the Farnborough Volleyball club.

In subsequent years the club has provided coaches for the Surrey Police & Guildford Councils F.I.S.H (Fun In School Holidays) scheme. We have also forged working relationships with local schools, such as Howard of Effingham School & the ACS International School in Cobham where we have played some of our home matches & also coached pupils in out of school hours sessions.

Success continues.

During the early 1990's the club continued to win trophies :-

- 1991 1st Surrey Womens league, The team won the title with an unbeaten record.
- 2nd in the Mens competition @ Assende in Belgium
- 3rd in the Mens competition @ Gennep Holland
- 3rd Surrey Mens division 1

1992 was the year we nearly won a lot of things.

- 1992 M2 Runners up in division 2 Surrey league.
- M3 Runners up in division 3 Surrey league.
- Runners up in the womens cup @ Lepe
- Runners up in Mens division 4
- 3rd in mens division 2 @ Ashcombe

1993 by comparison was a lean year with only a 2nd place for the mens team @ Lepe.

On 23rd February 1993 the shining glass fun palace, or the Spectrum Sports center as it sometimes known opened for the first time, we were full of hope but also a little apprehensive about this new venue for training. Certainly it offers excellent sports facilities & at first we were daunted by the amount of space around the court, having been used to the cramped conditions in the old Upper Training Hall at Bedford Road.

Our worries were, would people travel to a center away from the middle of town, away from the station It also felt a little impersonal, even now you sometimes feel out of place because you are wearing sports kit in a leisure center. What we did not realise at the time was that our biggest problem at the Spectrum would be it's popularity. Everyone wants to use the facilities for everything from Badminton , Gymnastics through to Wedding fairs & cat shows, usually at weekends & usually involving our training sessions being affected.

By far our biggest problem were the Guildford Kings basketball team who somehow managed to qualify (I use the term loosely) for Europe. This involved midweek matches taking several nights to set up the court & let the visitors train. During that season we lost nearly 30% of our sessions.

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The club struggled but not as much as the Kings who lost all of their matches in Europe and were bankrupt the following summer.

Back in Winning ways

After the disappointments of 1993 we got back to our winning ways in 1994:-

- 1994 Runners up in the Surrey Mens div 1
Winners in the Mens tournament @ Lepe
- 1995 Winners Surrey Mens Div 1
Runners Winners Mens div 1 @Ashcombe
Runners up in mens competition @ Lepe
- 1996 Winners Surrey Mens Div 1
Winners Mens div 2 @Ashcombe
- 1997 Runners up Surrey Mens Div 1
Winners Surrey Mens div2

National League Changes

After 5 years coaching Adam Wein decided to stand down as the National League Team coach during the 1996-97 season, so the club were faced with the daunting task of finding someone to step into his shoes. Eventually we selected Brian Shadwell who took over for the 1997-98 season. It is a testament to the coaching & concepts that Adam had introduced to the team, that in the early sessions a lot of what Brian thought he was going to introduce as revolutionary new ideas were already well ingrained in the players minds.

At this time we also decided to rename the team to Guildford Giants in recognition of fact that the club was now performing 99.9% of the team administration, but at the same time the team continued (and still does to this day) to welcome players from other Surrey & local clubs.

Celebrating 10 years

In 1997 we celebrated the first 10 years of the club with a Dinner Dance at the Inn on the Lake in Godalming, while being more formal than the average GIVC social event it typified the social spirit within the club. This wasn't & isn't just a club where people come to play volleyball, there were usually groups within the club who shared interests other than volleyball, whether this was Ceroc dancing, windsurfing, caving, cycling or music.

Indeed during the 90's the club boasted not one but 2 bands, one played an interesting sort of jazz fusion while the other featured 2 guitarists & 3 French members of the Ladies team, not surprisingly called "French Connection".

For some the highlight of the clubs social calendar was the Christmas Barn Dance, but for many others it was the annual ski trip. Always arranged during the gaping hole that always appears in the National League fixture list for no apparent towards the end of February & early March. Despite many suggestions of "lets go somewhere different this year" these trip invariably were to the high resorts of the French Alps. The mode of transport varied between car, mini bus, ferry/ski train & the height of near door to door luxury Eurostar. Whether staying in a chalet or apartments there were always memorable stories to tell, enough for a whole book on its own.

Considering the potentially dangerous combination of alcohol, late nights, tired bodies & skiing there were surprisingly few injuries.

Onwards & Upwards

In 1998 we held what turned out to be the last tournament on Shalford Park, now split from the protective umbrella of the Guildford Show we had to provide our own catering & even though we had a member of Guildford Councils Environmental Health Department playing for us we couldn't escape the rigours of Food Hygiene laws being enforced on council property, as volleyball teams at tournaments expect to be fed & also not being able to afford to lose a revenue stream from the tournament we had to find a new home for our expanding tournament. So for 1999 we moved to the Guildford & Godalming rugby club where we were already holding our Christmas barn dance.

The 1998-99 season was a very successful one for us, as a humble little Division 4 team we were drawn away to Stoke (Division 1 - now Newcastle Staffs) in the Cup. An upset was on the cards as we took a set off them, but in

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the end we couldn't maintain the pressure, but it did put our name on the map, with the result being on Teletext & in some of the national newspapers.

The result spurred the team to realize their potential achieving a level of consistency that had previously only been seen in glimpses, they went on to clinch the Division 4 Championship & more importantly promotion to Division 3.

Radical Expansion

For the 1999-2000 season we added not one but 2 additional National League teams. The success of the men's team the previous season meant that there were now enough players to put in a second team back into Division 4. A less than convincing first couple of seasons, but the team still managed to go up a division in 2001 as Division 4 was disbanded. So just like in the early days of the Surrey league Guildford found themselves with 2 teams competing in Division 3 East.

Another first for Guildford was the addition of a women's National League team. After several years of losing 2 or 3 good players to Ashcombe just when it looked like there would be a strong team yet never quite reaching the critical mass of players who would be around, the clubs committee took the plunge & entered a team for the 1999- 2000 season with Mike Richardson as the coach.

Putting Guildford on the Volleyball Map

At some point in early 2000, possibly enthused by the optimism of a new millennia, Guildford answered the call from the English Volleyball Association to bid to host a European Championship qualification match. Would we have been so keen if we had realized quite what that entailed? I'll leave the answer to those who were still laying the Taraflex floor in the small hours of Saturday morning.

It turned out that we were the only club foolhardy enough to have put our names forwards so we were awarded the match.

The weeks leading up to the match were a blur of hotel bookings, flight enquiries, hall inspection, press releases, coach hire & loads of other things you just wouldn't realize were necessary – where do you get hold of the Austrian National anthem & flag?

Anyway the despite a couple of hitches, one being that nobody actually knew how to lay a Taraflex court, the match was a great success & all the little problems were soon forgotten over a few beers with the Austrian team in the Kings Head.

It couldn't have been that bad as we did it all over again the following year for the match against Romania, where to "entertain" the crowd before the match we played Egham who were at the time in Division 1.

New NVL Horizons

After a first season of finding their feet in the National League the women stormed to 2nd place in 2001 & into the play-offs. A comfortable win over Oxford left only Tonbridge standing between the team & a place in Division 2. A noisy band of supporters accompanied the team to Kent & with the score at something like 24 – 13 to take a 2 sets to 1 lead & Tonbridge looking a beaten team thoughts started turning to celebration & specifically bottles of bubbly. Now with hindsight it is easy to talk about not counting chickens etc etc but we somehow managed to let the lead slip & also the match.

For the men after a season of both teams playing in the same division, the teams were split into the East & West Divisions for the 2002-03 season. There was a definite feeling that the West division was the weaker at that time, so the top team was put there. This certainly paid off as with only 2 defeats all season the team confidently marched to the Championship & promotion to Division 2.

Not to be outdone & having had a couple of seasons to lick their wounds & regroup, the women followed the men into Division 2 as Champions in 2004. This turned out to be a golden year for the women's team as they followed this triumph up with victories at: - Gennep, Ashcombe & a highly emotional (& for Ivana – painful) win at the Weymouth tournament in June.

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Raft racing & Beach tournaments

After entering a raft in the annual Guildford Lions Club Raft Race in the early years of the club, things went a little quiet for a few years. But we made a spectacular return in the late 1990's, entering the "Supercraft" class complete with a Hawaiian theme & princess sitting proudly at the bow, although it didn't take long for other teams to pelt her with water & flour bombs. We won both the best decorated raft & the fastest time.

This feat would have been repeated in 2000 with a Viking theme, but despite throwing a man overboard as the raft approached the finish line we were disqualified for having too many people on the raft.

In addition to our regular jaunts to European tournaments – Gennep, Enidhoven, Ertwelde & Assenede we have also discovered the joys of Beach Volleyball, taking teams to the Dutch Beach tournaments at various locations along the North Sea coast :- Hook of Holland, Renesse, Vroumpolder & Scheveningem.

In 2003 while Britain enjoying the hottest day on record, some brave souls from Guildford were doing their best to play beach volleyball on an equally hot Dutch beach, but by the Sunday afternoon it had become a battle for survival against the elements & heatstroke.

Considering how many outdoor tournaments we attend there have been surprisingly few cases of "Rain stopped play" (only the loss of a single days play at Cambridge & Bath spring to mind), that of course was before 2007 when Bath was completely cancelled & Ashcombe decidedly heavy under foot.

Charity, Cup Finals & a New Home

In 2001 & 2002 we got involved in a hugely ambitious charity project to bring together volleyball & live bands at Guildford Spectrum under the name of "Balls to the Music". Organised by Frances White the proceeds went to the Princes Trust & top mens teams were invited to take part along with musicians from the ACM in Guildford. In the second year Guildford entered a team & found them selves playing against a Portsmouth team that included Markus Meyer, Ian Towers & Josh from Big Brother refereed by one of the other house mates, the first & probably last time that GIVC will be featured on the pages of Heat magazine.

Following on from the successful International matches Guildford was selected as the host for the National Finals weekend in both 2002 & 2003. In the later of these we managed to break with tradition in not using the dreaded Taraflex, instead we negotiated a good deal on a bizarre tile like arrangement from Sportscourt.

The junior finals day was hosted at our new venue for our National League matches, ACS International School in Cobham. I think it is fair to say that the school doesn't need the money that our matches bring in, but they are very keen to build relationships with local clubs where we can help out with coaching & refereeing. When we can also bring prestigious events such as England v Norway internationals it cements the good relationship we have developed over the years.

Surrey League Success

Throughout the clubs history we have been solid supporters of the Surrey Volleyball Association, in 200x a Surrey representative team, made up of many Guildford players won the County Cup. In 2004 Guildford almost completed a clean sweep of Surrey titles as the mens teams won the Division 3 & Division 1 titles, with the women just narrowly being beaten into 2nd place. In 2005 & 2006 the roles were reversed, as the women were crowned champions & the men runners up.

A Club for families

As the club has grown over the years, it has also matured. From some fairly wild parties in the early days, as people started getting on the property ladder the wild house parties were replaced with dinner parties. Unlike most team sports volleyball can of course be played in mixed teams & the social aspect of the club can be a big plus.

Throughout the history of the club, even from the earliest years, couples have got together & we have been to many weddings of people who met through the club. As time has gone on a lot of these couples have started families & it is great that the kids are always made very welcome & they really enjoy volleyball.

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Celebrating the 20th Anniversary

Almost 20 years to the day that the club was formed the Men's team beat Sheffield Hallam in the Division 2 play off match to clinch a place in top Division. Having failed at the last hurdle in 1994 & 95 to RAF Harriers & Loughborough respectively fate dictated that it would be 3rd time lucky for Guildford.

As the club moves into its 3rd decade there is much to look forward to, on an International & National level the sport will enjoy unprecedented interest ahead of the 2012 Olympics in London. With club chairman John Biddiscombe also on the board of Volleyball England as Marketing Director Guildford is represented at a national level.

Locally the Community Sports Coach is introducing volleyball into more & more schools in the area & GIVC is working towards Volley 123 club accreditation with a view of developing junior volleyball once again.

There are plans for a significant development of the sports facilities at Surrey University that can only benefit the club & we are also in the early stages of working towards getting a beach court facility.

So lets hope that the next 20 years are as exciting as the last.

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Guildford Mens NVL

	Team	Division	Position	Pld	W	L	Sf	Sa	Coach
1990	Carshalton	Div 4 South	10 th	18	1	17	15	52	
1991	Surrey Giants	Div 4 South	11 th	20	5	15	25	53	
1992	Surrey Giants	Div 4 South	8 th	22	9	13	37	50	
1993	Surrey Giants	Div 4 South	6 th	22	10	12	41	43	
1994	Surrey Giants	Div 4 Central	6 th	22	13	9	46	37	
1995	Surrey Giants	Div 4 Central	4 th	20	15	5	50	29	
1996	Surrey Giants	Div 4 South	3 rd	18	12	6	40	24	
1997	Surrey Giants	Div 4 South	6 th	21	12	9	43	40	Adam Wein
1998	Guildford Int	Div 4 South	3 rd	16	11	5	39	21	Brian Shadwell
1999	Guildford Int	Div 4 South	1 st **	20	18	2	58	21	Brian Shadwell
2000	Guildford Int 2	Div 4 South	11 th	20	1	19	9	58	Paul Cooper
	Guildford Int	Div 3 South	6 th	18	7	11	31	42	Brian Shadwell
2001	Guildford Int 2	Div 4 South	7 th	12	0	12	??	36	
	Guildford Int	Div 3 South	2 nd	20	16	4	53	28	Oli Adams
2002	Guildford Int 2	Div 3 East	9 th	18	3	15	13	47	
	Guildford Int	Div 3 East	7 th	18	8	10	36	33	
2003	Guildford Int 2	Div 3 East	7 th	16	5	11	19	40	
	Guildford Int	Div 3 West	1 st **	18	16	2	51	13	
2004	Guildford Int 2	Div 3 East	4 th	16	9	7	33	26	
	Guildford Int	Div 2	2 nd	15	11	4	39	20	
2005	Guildford Int 2	Div 3 East	3 rd	16	13	3	43	15	
	Guildford Int	Div 2	2 nd	16	13	3	43	20	
2006	Guildford Int 2	Div 3 East	4 th	18	12	6	42	20	
	Guildford Int	Div 2	7 th	16	8	8	33	32	
2007	Guildford Int 2	Div 3 West	8 th	16	2	14	12	42	
	Guildford Int	Div 2	2 nd **	16	11	5	41	20	

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Guildford Womens NVL

	Team	Division	Position	Pld	W	L	Sf	Sa	Coach
2000	Guildford Int	Div 3 South	5 th	16	8	8	32	31	
2001	Guildford Int	Div 3 South	2 nd	16	12	4	??	16	
2002	Guildford Int	Div 3 East	4 th	14	9	5	34	26	
2003	Guildford Int	Div 3 East	5 th	13	6	7	25	26	
2004	Guildford Int	Div 3 East	1 st **	20	14	6	49	33	
2005	Guildford Int	Div 2	7 th	16	9	7	35	34	
2006	Guildford Int	Div 2	5 th	16	10	6	31	24	
2007	Guildford Int	Div 2	3 rd	16	10	6	39	32	