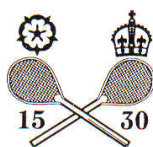


# THE ROYAL TENNIS COURT

## Hampton Court Palace



## WHEEL TENNIS

PROS CALL AT RTC DURING MARATHON CHARITY RIDE  
FROM NEWCASTLE TO SEACOURT

*See page 4*

The Autumn Newsletter 2009  
*Number eighty-nine*

# chairman's chat

High summer is now upon us, with a veritable cornucopia of sporting events from Wimbledon to Lord's to Turnberry (and for me the King George at Ascot) to keep us enthralled. Not least of these was the annual summer handicap doubles, now officially renamed as the King's Goblet, fought out over the weekend of 26–28 June.

It proved a great triumph for our lady members, Karen Hird and Kate Lawrence prevailing in the King's Goblet and Doris Siedentopf and daughter Sarah Hird winning the Cardinal's Plate. Nick Carew-Hunt and I were destroyed by Doris and Sarah and wondered at times whether we had a "ringer" on court, as so many of Sarah's winning blasts were distinctly reminiscent of Karen but not reflected in her handicap! It was a most enjoyable tournament, organised with military precision by the pro team and with a much more deserving outcome than last year's travesty of justice!

After a lot of discussion at the April board meeting, we opted to combine the doubles handicap tournament with a summer afternoon barbecue on the Sunday, assuming, wrongly as it turned out, that this would virtually guarantee a strong turnout. It was a shame to have to cancel but with a week to go and only 23 tickets sold, there really was no choice. In due course we will be consulting the membership to get some guidance on the preferred arrangements for next year.

This edition of the newsletter contains, as requested in the responses to the questionnaire sent out earlier in the year, brief biographical details of board members, individual mug shots to help you identify your board and a description of their respective roles on the board.

I am a little disappointed to have to tell you that the review committee charged with reviewing T&RA membership subscriptions and affiliate fees signalled by the T&RA in May to be chaired by Judge Hegarty has not yet been convened. However, having had a long conversation with Judge Hegarty, I am entirely satisfied that it will be comprehensive, thorough and consultative and its recommendations will be available in the winter.

My wife and I celebrated our ruby wedding anniversary last year and we have been to other such celebrations during this year. All of which reminded me of a little story told by the late Sir Clement Freud. This couple had reached the ruby landmark, and on the morning of the anniversary the wife presented her husband with a gold Rolex watch and invited him to a celebratory lunch at the Connaught, including his favourite dishes of potted shrimps and steak and kidney pudding washed down with an excellent bottle of Clos de Vougeot. At the end of the meal he enquired tentatively how it had been possible for her to finance such a lavish celebration. She explained that every time they had made love she had put £10 in a safe place. He responded: "That's amazing – if only I had known, I would have given you all my business."

I wish you all memorable summer holidays.

**Peter Ohlson**



## CLUB NEWS ● CLUB NEWS

### Club rooms

Need a unique venue for corporate entertaining or a social occasion? Are you aware that the club rooms are available to members for hire? You could combine your event with some tennis to make a perfect afternoon or evening – contact Lesley Ronaldson or ask the pros for more details.

### Court closure

By the time you receive this newsletter, the court should have reopened and will be sporting a fresh look, thanks to the repainting work carried out between 10 and 15 August. This should solve the paint problem encountered earlier in the year at the Hazard end.

### Lathom Browne Cup

We're down to the last two in the Lathom Browne, and lo and behold, the finalists are the last two winners of the trophy, Nicola Cavill and Oliver Lewis! Nicola made full use of her handicap allowance in defeating Robert Frost 9-5 in her semi-final, while Oliver beat David Jeffcoate 9-5. The final will be played towards the

end of August – check with the pros if you'd like to come along and watch.

### Newsletter postal opt-out

Some of you have expressed a desire to receive the club newsletter by email rather than post; indeed, the newsletter is already available to download at [www.royaltenniscourt.com](http://www.royaltenniscourt.com). If you'd rather not receive it by post, let the club know and you will be taken off the mailing list.

### Notes from a Duffer

#### COACHING

*I consulted a pro –  
I'll mention no name.  
Asked him how  
I could improve my game.  
After watching me play,  
He didn't say a lot to me.  
Just uttered one word:  
"Lobotomy"*

**Martin Bronstein**

## RESULTS

### Lathom Browne Cup

**Quarter-finals:** Robert Frost bt v Michael Day 9-6; Nicola Cavill bt Mark Trenowden 9-5; David Jeffcoate bt Allan Dallamore 9-7; Oliver Lewis bt Anthony Berry 9-7.

**Semi-finals:** Cavill bt Frost 9-5; Lewis bt Jeffcoate 9-5.

*Final to be played late August*

## COMING UP

### RTC

**10–15 Aug (4pm):** Court closure  
**15 Aug:** Club Night  
**28–30 Aug:** Wollaston Cup  
**12 Sept:** Club Night  
**10 Oct:** Club Night

### ELSEWHERE

**21–23 August:** Junior Open Singles, Queen's Club  
**27 August:** Super 11, The Oratory  
**11–15 Oct:** European Open, Lord's  
**18–25 Oct:** French Open, Bordeaux  
**15–24 Nov:** British Open, Queen's



# Girls of summer hold sway

*Karen Hird and Kate Lawrence fight their way to the summer handicap doubles title*

**D**on't expect objective reporting here: with John Clark, I was one of the 18 pairs that vied for the King's Goblet, the new trophy for the Summer Handicap Doubles competition.

Our combined skills, strategy and flukes almost upset the odds, missing the final by the thinnest of hairs. We were, after all, low men on the totem pole, having handicap of 55 compared to the cream of the crop, Karen Hird & Kate Lawrence and Oliver Buckley & Nicola Cavill, who both topped their groups with 35 handicaps.

We were in Group One, starting on the Friday afternoon, and startled our superiors with superb volleying from Clark and my completely unreadable shots. (If I didn't know where the ball was going, why should our opponents?) We allowed one defeat out of four to top our group. We were gracious in victory, not telling the other pairs that our combined age was 143 years. I mean, why rub it in?

Group Two was won by Malcolm Howlett & Gerald Smith, a visiting pair from Cambridge, with David Best & John Yarnall as runners-up.

We should have read the writing on the wall when Hird & Lawrence won Group Three without losing any of their four matches. David Glover & John Traversi came second, earning a spot in the quarter-finals.

But Group Four also produced an unbeaten pair in Buckley & Cavill, who showed merciless form in trouncing the group runners-up, Richard East & James Durie, 11-0 inside the 30-minute time limit.

And so to the quarter-finals on Sunday, a day marred by the cancellation of the annual BBQ because of lack of ticket sales. (Worse still, it was a beautiful summer's day...)

The Old Firm of Clark & Bronstein continued their roll, knocking out East & Durie. Not a convincing victory: when the bell went the score was four games each but we were leading 40-15 in the ninth game so were through to the semi-finals. And not a Zimmer frame in sight.

Hird & Lawrence just pipped Best & Yarnall 5-4, while Buckley & Cavill looked stronger than ever in beating



Photograph by Martin Bronstein

*Karen Hird and Kate Lawrence flanked by Gerald Smith and Malcolm Howlett*

Anthony Wolfe & Clive Dacre 7-3.

The lunch break was ruinous for our onward march: the intake of food and a long break allowing stiff limbs to get even stiffer. Our semi-final was against the Cambridge pair, who kept a lower error rate and we lost, heads still head high, 4-6.

The other semi-final saw tennis of a somewhat higher level as the two top handicaps fought it out point for point with some wonderful rallies and fightbacks to get to five games all. Had the bell rung a minute earlier, Buckley & Cavill would have won, but a rare error from Nicola gave that tenth game to Karen and Kate, who then won the next two points to lead 30-0 at the bell. A great match to watch and much sympathy to the losers.

In the final, Karen and Kate faced the Cambridge pair, who, while steady, could not combat the skill of Karen, who seemed to be in four places at once, nor the steady volleying of Kate (a relative newcomer to the game), who guarded the galleries as though they contained the crown jewels.

When the bell went, Karen and Kate were leading 6-4 and quite rightly took the King's Goblet, a new trophy designed for the tournament and destined to become a very enjoyable addition to the club's tournaments.

In the consolation event, the Cardinal's Plate, Karen's mother, Doris Siedentopf, and sister, Sarah Hird, beat George Jacobs & Ross Lewry 7-4 to pile more trophies into the Hird-Siedentopf

velvet-lined boot.

I would be an utter cad if I did not pay full tribute to Nick, Ben, Stef and Lesley for putting on a superb tournament, beautifully run and enjoyed by all. My only quibble would be with the our handicap...

**Martin Bronstein**

## RESULTS

### KING'S GOBLET

**Quarter-finals:** John Clark & Martin Bronstein bt Richard East & James Durie 4-4, 40-15; Malcolm Howlett & Gerald Smith bt David Glover & John Traversi 6-4; Karen Hird & Kate Lawrence bt John Yarnall & David Best 5-4; Nicola Cavill & Oliver Buckley bt Anthony Wolfe & Clive Dacre 7-3.

**Semi-finals:** Howlett & Smith bt Clark & Bronstein 6-4; Hird & Lawrence bt Cavill & Buckley 5-5, 30-0.

**Final:** Hird & Lawrence bt Howlett & Smith 6-4.

### CARDINAL'S PLATE

**Rd 1:** Walter Thorpe & Glyn Saunders bt Keith Smith & Tony Whitfield 4-4, 30-15; Paddy Sweetnam & Susie Falkner bt Robert Butler & Mike Shattock 6-3.

**Quarter-finals:** Thorpe & Saunders bt Richard Gilbert & Alan Clarke 6-3; Doris Siedentopf & Sarah Hird bt Peter Ohlson & Nick Carew Hunt 8-1; Sweetnam & Falkner bt Patrick Jenkins & Jill St Aubyn 6-3; George Jacobs & Ross Lewry bt Robin Mulcahy & Andrina Webb 8-2.

**Semi finals:** Siedentopf & Hird bt Thorpe & Saunders 5-4; Jacobs & Lewry bt Sweetnam & Falkner 7-3.

**Final:** Siedentopf & Hird bt Jacobs & Lewry 7-4.



# The long and winding road

*Nick Wood and Stefan King found a unique way to stay fit in the off-season and to aid charity – a gruelling tour of England’s real tennis courts. Stef recalls the adventure...*

**O**n Monday 6 July, Nick and I, along with Chris Ronaldson, Andrew Lyons (Queen’s) and Danny Jones (Seacourt), set off on the inaugural Real Ride. Over the course of the next six days, we cycled 470 miles from Jesmond Dene Real Tennis Club in Newcastle to Seacourt on Hayling Island. We visited 12 real tennis courts, had a great time and raised approximately £6,000 for a number of charities, including the British Heart Foundation and the Parkinson’s Disease Society. We are very grateful to all the RTC members who supported us and donated to such worthy causes.

**DAY 1** got off to an inauspicious start as my bike had a flat tyre after 0.0 miles! Still, with Tour de France-like efficiency, the inner tube was replaced and we were on our way. Not far out of Durham, I picked up puncture number two, and once we were on the road again disaster struck! Nick’s new bike, resplendent in Newcastle Utd black and white, came to a halt. A jammed chain meant a delay while our van driver, Walter Thorpe, ferried the spare bike to our glum Geordie.

Lunch lifted the spirits, though, and we carried on through Ripon and on towards our overnight stop of Skipton. Faced with a very dangerous A road or a hilly route, we agreed to tackle the undulating Yorkshire countryside. Just the way to finish off a day.

Having already cycled 80 miles, we were faced with a trio of 16% climbs before a seemingly never-ending approach into Skipton. However, shortly before 9pm we made it to our hotel, rushed to the restaurant to make



*Nick Wood, Andrew Lyons, Stefan King and Danny Jones in Hebden Bridge*

sure we didn’t miss last orders and then collapsed on our beds. **105 miles done.**

**DAY 2** dawned, and we awoke to various aches and pains but raring to go. Chris set off early and we didn’t see him again until Manchester as he chose a completely different route! A gentle start took us through Keighley before we got reacquainted with the hilly terrain. The reward for our uphill effort was a spectacular sweeping descent into Hebden Bridge, which was possibly the riding highlight of the trip.

Lunch was slightly extended to avoid a torrential downpour. On to Rochdale, where three punctures slowed our progress, but soon enough we arrived at the Manchester Tennis and Racquet Club just as the heavens opened again.

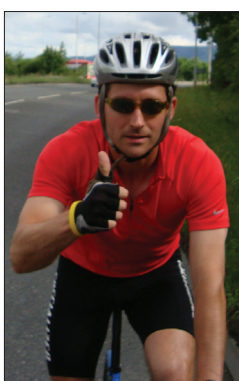
The day wasn’t over, though, as our overnight stop was still 20 miles away. A nostalgic ride for me past my university took us south of Manchester and on to Goostrey. Before we arrived, there was yet more trouble for the

Newcastle bike, so Nick once again had to make use of the spare. Sue Heap, mother of MTRC club manager Stella, very kindly accommodated all six of us and treated us to the most amazing hospitality. **72 miles done, 177 in total.**

**DAY 3** began with a hearty breakfast courtesy of our Host of the Tour, Sue, so fully energised we set off in the direction of Stone. 2½ hours of solid cycling earned us a coffee break in Rugeley before we arrived in Lichfield for lunch. Our route then took us along the A38, which, being a busy dual carriageway, was a bit hairy, but we made it to Leamington Tennis Court.

On to Moreton Morrell, and then to Fossedene Manor, our accommodation for the evening. The Lewis family, members of Moreton Morrell, allowed us to stay in the annexe of their lovely home and we had a very relaxing evening in the Warwickshire countryside. **99 miles done, 276 in total.**

*Continued on page 5 →*



*From far left: the boys take a short break at Queen’s; Stef gives the thumbs-up... or if he hitching a lift?; Nick has more equipment troubles*

← Continued from page 4

**DAY 4** arrived and we were all feeling pretty good. Chris set off early again, leaving us with a recommendation for breakfast and directions to his neck of the woods: Oxford and Radley.

Just 20 minutes in, the Newcastle bike repeated its chain-jamming trick, causing mild-mannered Nick to throw his helmet in disgust!

After Oxford, Radley was the next stop, and then Oratory School. Mark Eadle, who had the original idea for the Real Ride but could not participate due to injury, was on hand to cook up a great barbecue, and this was greatly appreciated. *62 miles done, 338 in total.*

**DAY 5** started with what seemed to be a lot of discussion about how steep Remenham Hill is, and whether we should look to avoid it. After a leisurely ride to Henley, we took it on.

On to Holyport Grange, where Andy Chinneck greeted us. There followed what I felt was the least enjoyable part of the ride, along the A4 cycle path to Queen's Club. A quick sandwich and it was home time. At RTC the realisation of how far we had cycled started to hit home, even if there was still a day to go. Nick's girlfriend Clare did a fantastic job feeding us all, and Ben was understandably delighted to see his colleagues. *57 miles done, 395 in total.*

**DAY 6**, the final frontier, and one of our earliest starts. We were joined for the day by Geoffrey Shields, a Queen's Club member, and we set off at 7.30am.

A miserable day weather-wise took us on a showery trip via Petworth House. The heavy rain and steep hills didn't dampen our spirits, and soon after 4.30pm we arrived at Seacourt. About 40 people were waiting for us, and it was great to see so many faces there. Little did we know that we were about to be bombarded with water bombs!

Nick Jones, a Seacourt member, fed and watered us while we wound down after a fantastic week. *75 miles done, 470 in total.*

With a great sense of achievement at not only reaching our destination but also raising so much money, we parted ways with weary legs, broad smiles and a promise to each other to find a similar challenge next year.

*The draw for the signed Rob Fahey rackets has been made: the two lucky winners were Allan Dallamore and Richard Wear.*

## News from the pros By Nick Wood

### Margaret Twyford

The cleaner has now retired from working at the Palace. Margaret, known to most of the early-morning players, is a much-loved character who always kept the members and professionals on their best behaviour. She has been at the Court for over 20 years and will be sorely missed, and I'm sure you'll join me in wishing her all the best in her retirement.

### 2009-10 season Tournaments

This season will host the usual abundance of events, with just a few changes... In the **Barker-Camm Cup**, the two finalists of each grade qualify for the next grade up, giving them a chance to compete in a higher grade. In addition to the **Wollaston Cup** (Junior Handicap Singles) there will be a Junior Level Singles (< 40 h'cap) and a Junior Level Doubles (< 30 h'cap). These events are yet to be named. If you would like to donate a trophy for the either of these new events, please contact Nick.

The **entry forms** for the season's tournaments are enclosed with the newsletter. Please complete and return them by **1 September**.

### IRTPA National League

We hope to field teams in five divisions of the league this year, including a Premier League team comprising Nick Wood, Peter Wright and Stef King. Peter

is a new member; he started playing at Holyport seven years ago and reached the British Amateur finals, and is at present a 4 handicap.

Ben Matthews has been asked to represent Oxford in the Premier League as their first-string player. We wish him the best of luck; he's going to need it when playing RTC!

### Club matches

This season will see the return of more social club matches. Generally held on a Sunday, these matches create the opportunity to meet players from visiting clubs, play against opponents other than your regular RTC members and offer a great hospitality to other like-minded real tennis players. If you are interested in playing and/or helping arrange a match, please contact Richard East.

**Fixtures:** **4 Oct** RTC v Hurlingham; **11 Oct** RTC v The Hyde (Bridport); **15 Nov** RTC v Canford; **6 Dec** RTC v Bristol & Bath; **10 Jan** RTC v Manchester; **21 Mar/11 Apr/16 May** RTC v TBA.

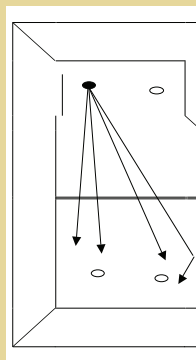
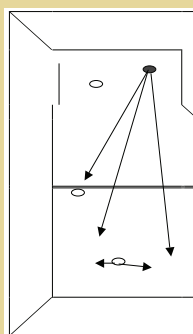
Ben and Stef will be jetting off to compete in the Pell Cup, a professional doubles event in Newport. If you haven't made a trip to Newport, I thoroughly recommend it as it is a wonderful place with great members and plenty to do and see, especially in the summer. There a number of events for overseas players – for more information, please ask the pros.

## Wood's Words

Nick Wood on positioning at the service end in doubles

As in the last section of Wood's Words, positioning is everything. When standing in position you'll find that your opponents will try to hit to where you are not. So if you and your partner are well positioned at the service end, you leave very few targets for your opponents to aim for.

In diagram 1 the ball is struck from the Grille corner. From here your opponents can hit to the right-hander's forehand corner, backhand corner or the galleries. So to best cover the service end, the player with the stronger volley should protect the galleries by advancing to the Door Gallery, while the



other can concentrate on the corners.

In diagram 2 the shot is struck from the return-of-serve corner. This can be hit crosscourt over the low part of the net to the forehand or over the high part of the net to the backhand. The galleries are hard to find from here, so you can retreat to cover the backhand corner and assist in covering the dedans, while your partner can cover the cut shot to the forehand corner and the force to the forehand corner of the dedans.

If you cover the court effectively you leave few options for opponents, which leads to errors.



# The Atlantic drifters

*Richard East describes a colourful summer tour of wins and whinges in the USA*

**T**he team for RTC's summer US tour was the usual combination of dredged-up old-timers, eager neophytes, recalcitrant serial complainers and world-weary management. The destination was the annual shindig in Newport, Rhode Island, in late June, followed by a couple of days' R&R in Philly to recover from the exertions induced by Newport.

Travelling this year were your goodself tour manager, playing with Jim Stephen, accompanied by non-playing team physio, mother hen, sweeper and factotum Irene Stephen, both from Ballarat; Victoria Carew Hunt, playing with Beth Curren from Washington; Dr Robin Mulcahy of the eternal whinge, playing with the Androgynous Webb; and No-knees Buckley (now since happily restored to half his former glory), playing with John Murphy, president of Newport. A more random line-up it would be hard to locate in the annals of touring history.

Getting there was our first problem. No-knees was to arrive from New York by car, the Androgynous by Peter Pan bus from Boston, the Stephens from Ballarat via London, the remaining three by US Scareways from London. Of these, those who went early at least arrived in the USA on time, if not at the court; the trio from London were treated to the outstanding pleasure of US Scareways' finest, sitting on the plane at Gatwick for three hours while they lied to us about what was wrong with it, feeding us nothing save one glass of water, and then as a result missing our connection in the US. At least we were collected in Providence that night, unlike our luggage and tennis kit, which US Air had declined to put on the same plane as us. This led, quite predictably, to the first of yours truly's problems with herding cats (in this case Robin and Victoria), who are in a class of their own as serial and unapologetic escapees.

However, at least we were not scheduled to play our first game until the Thursday, so were able to regroup, get our kit back, and have a hit on court before retiring for the first two socials. The tournament started the next day, after the predictable whingeing from the prime whinger about the quality of the breakfast and the arrangements in

general. There won't be much more about the tennis in this report; suffice it to say that Jim and I, and John and Oliver, progressed to the quarter-final stage but no further on the Sunday, and the others not quite so far, hampered as we all were by incessant touring of Newport's finest sites – or, in my case, the Black Pearl, the Canfield House cocktails bar, and the New York Yacht club final dinner, where I delivered the speech on behalf of Her Majesty, which you can read below.

Finally, after Andrina had disappeared back to Boston, it came time for the rest of our little band to decamp to Philadelphia. This turned into just the best performance by a herd of cats who did most definitely not wish to be corralled into one space at one time, with their luggage and all their purchases (you know who you are).

As RCOP have declined to forward me the scores, I presume it was a massive thrashing, one way or the other. Certainly it led to another Oliver Buckley classic, thumping

Richard Tanfield off the court from the wrong position as usual, and to Jim and myself dealing death with our backhand volleys to more renegade colonials.

The evening that followed may have contributed to our less than massive victory over Philadelphia the next day (though, as they still refuse to send me the score sheet, I am not sure by how large a margin we won).

And then, sadly we had to say goodbye, but not before the eternal whinger started complaining that somebody had stolen his racquet, a subject he revisits to this day. But luckily I didn't have to sit next to him on the plane, so some inoffensive native got the brunt of his ire. And, when we got back to Heathrow, he lost us, his case, his tennis kit, and his rag, in that order.

On the other hand, having Victoria, Irene, Beth, Andrina, Jim, Oliver and John on the team was a pure delight. And I look forward to seeing them all on the next trip, whenever I have recovered enough to participate again.

## **Last time Richard East was in Newport, in 2007, he reported on negotiations between Dubya and the Queen regarding the return of Rhode Island to the Crown. Here is her update two years on...**

*My former and future loyal colonial subjects,*

*You will recall that, shortly before your last election, Dubya visited me in London, doubtless with the intent of drumming up support for the Republican cause. In a spirit of majestic magnanimity, I offered to rid him of the electoral albatross of New England, and take it back to my crown. As I pointed out to him, this would ensure the Republican party victory, as well as giving those very New Englanders the comeuppance they so richly deserved in his view, and he was mightily attracted to the idea.*

*However, I have to report that all my patient negotiations with Dubya on returning Rhode Island (never mind the rest of New England) to my sovereign empire came to naught. So, Dubya, in my view, justifiably, and inevitably, lost the election. Now both our countries have new governments. I am pleased with yours for you, but deeply displeased with mine for me.*

*Barack seems a fine upstanding man, even if his wife is a bit touchy feely. Whereas Gordon Brown is a small, abrasive, discourteous, nail-biting, redistributive tax and spend bully. And Scottish to boot! I am the Queen of England, for heaven's sake, so why can't I have an English Prime Minister? So let me restate to you the offer I made to Barack on his recent visit to my house: The U.S.A. gets Scotland!!, with all its remaining fish, oil, and golf courses, clans and exiles. You can call it a state, colony, or dependency, as you wish, but I would be wary of making all the natives citizens. Look what happened to Britain.*

*[For me, at a stroke, this will remove all the Scottish members, including Gordon Brown, from my parliament, and from England. And I get an English parliament and Prime Minister again.]*

*In exchange, all I ask of you is to return Newport and Jamestown to the English crown. (I am no longer interested in having New England thrown in too. Too much corruption, too many crooks, and far too many former Scots for my comfort.) And you get to keep all the fish that Kip hasn't yet killed. This is to be coupled with rent-free summer occupancy of a modest house on Bellevue Avenue for my roaming teams.*

*I think this is a pretty good offer. But, to sweeten the deal, I will also endeavour to persuade the Irish to come on board for this once in a lifetime offer: leave benighted Europe (and its cheese eating surrender monkeys) and join the Scots in your great country, where their hearts really lie. Plus their fish too.*

*How can you refuse? Please lobby Barack to accept this offer. I trust he will be ready to sign the deal when he next drops by for tea.*

*HMQ Elizabeth Regina II*

# Meet the board members

*Some members expressed a desire in the club questionnaire to know more about the RTC board and their respective roles – so here they are*

## Peter Ohlson



The formal role of the chairman is to chair the board, appoint directors as required, allocate responsibilities to board members and develop the club's strategy with the head professional for

approval by the board.

In practice the buck stops with the chairman, and a variety of issues have to be addressed in consultation with the board. There are also some "ceremonial" duties. Peter has been extremely lucky to be assisted by a strong but also very committed board.

Most of Peter's career was spent in food manufacturing and marketing, with 10 years as managing director of a large company. He then spent 14 years as a headhunter, latterly as senior partner of one of the big firms.

## Julian Sheraton-Davis



Julian was co-opted on to the board in 2004, having expressed concerns about the poor state of some of the club premises. He is also chairman of the premises sub-committee. Over

the past five years he has endeavoured to maintain and improve the club's facilities for the benefit of members, guests and the professionals.

Julian is a chartered building surveyor and runs his own surveying and architectural practice based in Twickenham, specialising in projects to listed and historic buildings.

## Paddy Sweetnam



As you may recall from the summer newsletter, Paddy joined the board earlier this year. He will be helping to review the club's marketing plan, particularly with a view to attracting

new members, as well as being a member of the social committee.

Paddy runs his own residential property development company and is mad about most sports as a player or spectator.

## Geoffrey Russell



Geoffrey is the company secretary, so he is responsible for the general administration of the club (which is a company limited by guarantee). This includes keeping the minutes of

meetings, reviewing contracts, making returns to Companies House and advising on the range of miscellaneous issues which arise. He is also a member of the membership sub-committee.

Outside the club, Geoffrey is engaged in restoring listed buildings, and is a partner in a recently launched retail venture (having previously been a partner in a City law firm).

## Helen Crossley



Helen has been the membership secretary since 2002 and as such, she chairs the membership sub-committee. All the applications for membership go through this

committee before being put before the board. She works full-time and so if you need to discuss your membership, it is best to contact her by email: [hcrossley213@btinternet.com](mailto:hcrossley213@btinternet.com).

## James Sohl



James joined the board this year and is responsible for driving matches. He is charged with developing a motivated team of tennis and tournaments sub-committee

members who will promote playing opportunities within the club. These include club competitions, National League, social matches etc.

He is also the youngest board member and tries to represent the younger members of the club.

His day job is running Sutton Tennis Academy, the family business which is the largest performance tennis facility in the UK. He brings with him years of experience at both a playing and operational level within tennis.

## Robert Falkner



Robert looks after the club's money! As treasurer, he keeps the books and records, pays all the bills which can vary from the large quarterly licence fee paid to the Palace for the court itself

and club rooms, through to paying the daily newspapers supplied by the local newsagent.

The professional staff collect and bank the court fees, which are usually paid in cash, but Robert accounts for the bankings and related costs and, based on takings, pays the pros their wages, as well as dealing with HMRC for PAYE and NI.

He deals with all the members' direct debits for their RTC quarterly subscriptions and completes the club's VAT return each quarter. He also prepares the annual accounts for audit, and, in preparation for the next year produces the club's budget for board approval.

Before he gave up full-time work, Robert worked for British Airways for 18 years in both the commercial and finance functions, and before that 17 years with Ernst & Young.

## John Yarnall



John joined the board in 1998 and served as honorary secretary for eight years before handing over to Geoffrey Russell in 2006. He has remained on the board

since then, serving on the membership sub-committee as well as carrying out more specific tasks.

## David Seelig



David is a stalwart of the club and long-standing board member who carries out no end of tasks in his roving role.

Many of these duties are on the social side, including tireless

work organising the annual Christmas carol concert and the summer barbecue. He also arranges the distribution of the club newsletter.



# Vital statistics

*Owen Saunders is setting his sights on becoming the Bill Frindall of real tennis...*

**N**eed to know how many backhand winners Federer hit during Wimbledon? No problem. Looking for Tiger's 2007 greens-in-regulation statistics? Easy. Want to find out the Test match average of left-handed batsman married to women called Doris? Tune in to *Test Match Special* and they'll tell you soon enough. So the question that's been troubling me lately is: where are real tennis's statistics?

With this in mind (and with one eye on finding the magic ingredient to get my handicap down), I recently put together a tennis scoresheet. The aim was threefold: it must be simple to record during a match, must require minimal after-match rejigging to get the final product, and must produce stats that players find useful in analysing their performance.

The guinea pigs for this were Nicola Cavill and Simon Edmond in their Barker Camm Grade D final. Despite a technical hitch (my laptop ran out of power; fortunately I had good old pen and paper back up), all worked reasonably well. However a flaw was revealed: no method of recording flukes. And so history does not record how many of the nine winning openings hit in the match by our newsletter's editor were off the frame

	Match		Set 1		Set 2	
	Ben Matthews	Mark Hobbs	Ben Matthews	Mark Hobbs	Ben Matthews	Mark Hobbs
Result	W	L	6	4	6	2
<b>Points</b>						
Total rests	153		86		67	
Total rests won	67	50	36	30	31	20
Total rests lost	50	67	30	36	20	31
Chases laid	34		19		15	
% of total rests won	44%	33%	42%	35%	46%	30%
% of scoring rests won	57%	43%	55%	45%	61%	39%
<b>Winning Openings</b>						
Winning gallery	4	3	1	1	3	2
Dedans	7	3	5	2	2	1
Grille	2	4	2	3	0	1
Total winning openings	13	10	8	6	5	4
Winning tambours	5	1	3	1	2	0
<b>Service</b>						
Total serves	67	86	39	47	28	39
% of total serves	44%	56%	45%	55%	42%	58%
% of own service points won outright	55%	43%	51%	43%	61%	44%
First service %	81%	81%	77%	79%	86%	85%
Double faults	1	1	1	0	0	1
Volleyed service returns %	33%	33%	36%	28%	28%	39%
<b>Strokes / Errors</b>						
Strokes - unforced errors made	19	12	13	6	6	6
Strokes - forced errors made	17	28	8	15	9	13
Total errors made	36	40	21	21	15	19
Unforced errors as % of total rests	12%	8%	15%	7%	9%	9%
Forced errors as % of total rests	11%	18%	9%	17%	13%	19%
<b>Chases</b>						
Total chases laid	20	14	12	7	8	7
Service side chases laid	16	11	10	6	6	5
Hazard chases laid	4	3	2	1	2	2
Chases successfully defended	14	7	7	5	7	2
Chases successfully defended %	74%	47%	64%	63%	88%	29%
Chase off	2	2	1	1	1	1
Chases not successfully defended	5	8	4	3	1	5
Chases not successfully defended %	26%	53%	36%	38%	13%	71%

## The stats breakdown from Ben Matthews' match against Mark Hobbs

of the racket (and I am far too honourable to say).

In each rest, four basic pieces of information are recorded:

- Who served, and whether it was a first serve, second serve or a double fault.*
- Whether the receiver volleyed the return of serve.*
- How the point was ended (classified between won chase; lost chase; chase off; a stroke (ie ball taking its second bounce in the winning area on the Hazard side); unforced error; forced error; grille; winning gallery; dedans; winning tambour).*
- Any chases that are laid.*

The only subjective item is deciding between a forced and unforced error. This depends on factors such as the expected skill level of the player (and whether or not the player swears loudly and hits the dedans ledge with their racket after finding the net).

This information is recorded in a way that produces a scoresheet showing various statistics, which are

then summarised for each set.

The system was first used in anger for the National League Premier Division final between RTC and Cambridge. In consideration of the continued sanity of our head professional, all records of Nick's 2-6 0-6 loss to Rob Fahey have been deleted from the archives, so the scoresheet from Ben's victory over Mark Hobbs is shown above.

Ben's aggressive game led to 28 forced errors from his opponent (compared to 17 from Ben), and Ben's higher number of chases (20 versus 14) was rewarded as he successfully defended 74% of his chases (compared to 47% by his opponent). Both started nervously and improved (evidenced by a reduction in unforced errors at the same time as an increase in forced errors). Note to Ben: I will remove all reference to your double fault only on payment of a large sum into my numbered Swiss bank account.

There are a huge number of stats that could be added. Some of these may require recording more data during the match (eg distinguishing between forehand and backhand winners; chases hit into the gallery nets). Most would just require updating the calculations (eg percentage of points won off first and second serves; game points saved).

Not everyone is impressed with initial results: on pointing out to Rob Fahey that his victory over Nick contained ten unforced errors, I was given a look that suggested the system might need refining!

If anyone has any comments or suggestions for additions and amendments, it would be great to hear from you at [osaunders@hotmail.com](mailto:osaunders@hotmail.com).

## RTC Top Ten

Leading handicaps  
August 2009

1	Peter Wright	3.7
2	Dave Harms	6.2
3	Robert Hird	8.6
4	Simon Barker	11.3
5	David Watson	11.9
6	Marcus Ward	12.2
7	James Sohl	16.7
8	Michael Bray	18.0
9	Buster Mottram	18.6
10	Karen Hird	19.2

## The Royal Tennis Court Newsletter

*is published four times a year and the editor would love any contributions from members. Please get in touch if you have any ideas for the winter issue*

Editor: Simon Edmond  
[simonrichardedmond@  
yahoo.co.uk](mailto:simonrichardedmond@yahoo.co.uk)