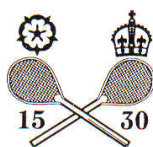


THE ROYAL TENNIS COURT

Hampton Court Palace



Photograph by Martin Bronstein

NOT A HAIR OUT OF PLACE

IMMACULATE HARMS AND DURHAM WIN HARRIS-WATSON DOUBLES

See page 8

The Summer Newsletter 2009

Number eighty-eight

chairman's chat

I am pleased to be able to let you know that we had a lively and busy AGM on 17 May followed by an excellent Barker-Camm final between those old adversaries Simon Barker and David Watson (report on page 5). You missed a cracker! We welcomed Paddy Sweetnam and James Sohl to the board and said farewell with immense gratitude to John Clark and Martin Bronstein, both of whom have been long-serving and dedicated members of the board.

John will be joining the trustees of the Professionals Development Fund and we have nominated him as the club's representative on the T&RA's tennis committee, to which we very much hope he will be elected as one of only three club representatives on the 12-man committee. I also very much look forward to Martin's future contributions to the newsletter when he is no longer constrained by being the editor! As requested in the responses to the questionnaire, we will be showing pictures of board members together with biographical details and a description of their respective roles on the board in the next issue.

We also took the opportunity at the AGM both to present to my predecessor Richard Stocks (pictured right) a long overdue modest token of our appreciation of his six years in office – a pair of real tennis cufflinks – and to present to Tom Carew-Hunt (below right) the Chris Ronaldson Trophy for the most improved player in the club, as determined by the professional team chaired by James Sohl.

You will see an advertisement below for a club member with some financial knowhow to join the Finance sub-committee. This is a very important sub-committee and I do hope several of our members will put themselves

forward to support Robert Falkner and David Best.

Several members of the board have been heavily involved in recent months in discussions with the T&RA about their overall expenditure and the vexed topic of affiliate fees. RTC is one of a growing number of clubs who have expressed real concern about both the expenditure and funding of the T&RA and have declined as clubs to pay affiliate fees but have left it open to the T&RA to approach directly any players who are not full members of the T&RA. As a result of our collective efforts the T&RA have withdrawn proposals for further increases in both subscriptions and affiliate fees for the coming year.



A review committee of the T&RA has been set up to be chaired by Judge Hegarty to consider future funding. My name was put forward to join this review committee, supported by several other club chairmen, but my insistence that the terms of reference should include both expenditure and methods of funding was considered unacceptable by the T&RA. We will await the review committee's recommendations with interest.

I wish you all wonderful summer holidays and hope to see many of you at the Summer Barbecue on 28 June, where you will be able to watch the later stages of the Summer Handicap Doubles. I am disappointed that I shall not be defending the title John Yarnall and I won last year as I am temporarily "off games", but I shall be rooting for John and his new partner, David Best.

Peter Ohlson

CLUB NEWS ● CLUB NEWS

Finance sub-committee member wanted

RTC seeks to appoint a member of the club to join the finance sub-committee to succeed Michael Moore, who has expressed his intention to resign following his move away from the London area.

The sub-committee of the board is chaired by Robert Falkner, the honorary treasurer, supported at present by Michael Moore and David Best. The role of the sub-committee is to keep a watchful eye on the financial position of the club; to review the audited accounts; to recommend to the board changes in subscription levels and the appointment of auditors. The sub-

committee meets once or twice a year.

The requirement is for a club member either with a professional accounting qualification or a thorough going knowledge of accounting and finance. The appointed individual should be prepared in due course to be considered for the role of honorary treasurer to the club.

Individuals who would be interested in the appointment should write to: Robert Falkner, 43 Montholme Road, London SW11 6XH or email robertfalkner@ntlworld.com, enclosing relevant information.

DON'T FORGET

SUMMER HANDICAP DOUBLES

It's on **25–28 June** and the closing date for entries is **12 June**. Spaces are limited, so contact the pros now if you wish to play.

THE REAL RIDE

Nick and Stef will cycle from Jesmond Dene in Newcastle to Seacourt on Hayling Island to raise money for the British Heart Foundation and the Parkinsons Disease Society. Go to www.justgiving.com/stefking or www.justgiving.com/nickwood14 to sponsor them, or ask them about it at the club.

CLUB NIGHTS

Fancy a relaxed evening's tennis, where you may want to introduce a friend or family member to the game? Try a Club Night, on **20 June** and **18 July**.

Fabulous Fahey foils RTC

World champion puts on a masterclass to win National League for Cambridge

Just when you think Rob Fahey may be showing signs of vulnerability, he produces a performance that makes you think he could go on for ever. A display of ruthless brilliance from the world champion put paid to the title hopes of RTC's Nick Wood and Ben Matthews in the National League Premier Division final, as he inspired Cambridge to a convincing win in front of 100 spectators at Hampton Court.

All had gone to plan at first for table-topping RTC, with Ben overcoming an erratic start to pull away from Mark Hobbs for a 6-4, 6-2 victory. In the first set Ben was clearly the more comfortable rallier but was constantly high with his forces from the Hazard end, and the doughty Hobbs hung on valiantly, levelling at 4-4. Ben's class told, though, and he set a chase of 2 yards at 5-4 and 40-30 before sending down an unreturnable serve.

Ben stuttered early in the second set, but a double fault by the Cambridge man allowed him to go 3-2 up, and from then on it was plain sailing all the way to 6-2 and a two-set win.

This set the stage for Nick, who had beaten Fahey in the home league fixture back in the autumn. Home hopes were

high as he won the first two games, but Fahey elevated his game to a plateau that only he can reach, with punishing service returns and some wondrous backhand play from both ends. This was Fahey at his best, and with Nick struggling to find any rhythm at all Fahey soon levelled the tie for Cambridge with a 6-3, 6-0 success.

So it all came down to the doubles. Despite Nick and Ben's best efforts to target the weaker Hobbs, Cambridge took command early on, with Hobbs standing up to the pressure and Fahey coming up with remarkable reaction volleys when defending the dedans. The legs may be slowing slightly, but the eye remains deadly.

Once RTC were trailing 4-0 in the first-to-eight match, the writing was on the wall. Nick and Ben battled to stay in touch, but a sharp volley from Hobbs duly wrapped up an 8-4 win to give the visitors a fine away victory and leave a stunned crowd wondering what Fahey could possibly do for an encore. He settled for a broad grin and a few kind words for Maurice Lacroix, sponsors of the league and also his personal sponsors. They chose their man well – his timing could hardly be better.

Simon Edmond

DIVISION 4

(James Sohl, Fred Satow, Bernard Weatherill)

The side was a settled affair, with James, Fred and Bernard representing the club in all but one match (in which Paul Kettle substituted for Fred and played his heart out in a losing cause). We can say with satisfaction that James had a good season, winning most of his matches at No 1, and that Fred and Bernard... did not! If Bernard had been able to capitalise on match points in two matches which were lost narrowly (after over two hours' play), 6-5 in the third set, both he and the team would have felt better about the season. On the positive side, team spirit was exceptionally high, everyone played as hard and as well as they could, and no more harmonious threesome has ever represented RTC. Low-light of the season was when Paris "forgot" to get us lunch (hastily corrected when Bernard politely suggested they "un-forgot"); highlight was the excellent hospitality shown to us by our generous hosts in Bordeaux.

DIVISION 5

(David Blizzard, Robert Frost, James Herring, Paul Kettle)

It is all singles in Division 5, with three singles matches in each fixture. We began at home with a 2-1 loss to Cambridge, followed by a 2-1 victory at home against Holyport and then 2-1 losses away to Oratory (dodgy tambour) and Petworth (no excuse – unless the one way system counts). Oratory visited us in January and beat us 3-0 (I think they were given new rackets for Christmas), but we beat Petworth 2-1 when they visited in February. Our only successful trip was Holyport on Valentine's Day – a 2-1 win. We lost 2-1 in our final fixture at Cambridge (too far – or was it the wrong type of bell in the winning gallery)? With three wins and five losses, we finished fifth, albeit only two points behind third-placed Holyport. Paul Kettle wins the RTC team player of the season: for a good record on court and for travelling a long way for both home and away matches, having moved north of Oxford mid-season.



Photograph by David Glover

A delighted Rob Fahey and Mark Hobbs

FINAL NATIONAL LEAGUE TABLES

PREMIER DIVISION

	P	W	Pts
RTC	10	9	59
Prested Hall	10	7	47
CURTC	10	7	44
CURTC 2	10	3	29
Petworth House	10	2	17
Seacourt	10	2	13

DIVISION 2

Oratory 1	8	6	42
CURTC 3	8	6	40
Seacourt 2	8	6	39
RTC 2	8	6	39
Canford 1	7	5	27
Holyport 2	7	3	23
MTRC	8	1	13
Queens 2	8	1	8
Petworth House 2	6	0	7

DIVISION 4

Bordeaux	8	7	47
Paris	8	6	38
CURTC 5	8	4	26
RTC 3	8	1	15
Queens 3	8	2	14

DIVISION 5

Oratory 2	8	7	43
Petworth House 3	8	4	30
Holyport 3	8	3	25
CURTC 6	8	4	24
RTC 4	8	3	23
Oxford 1	8	3	21

DIVISION 8

Oratory 5	8	6	40
Petworth House 5	8	7	37
Canford	8	4	30
Oxford 4	8	3	29
RTC 5	8	2	18
Holyport 5	8	2	14

Beware the Ides of Cambridge

Fate conspires to thwart RTC's Field Trophy heroes at the final hurdle

Beware the Ides of March." The words rattled around in my head as David Glover zoomed us along the motorway towards Moreton Morrell. We were off to see our all-conquering Field Trophy team take on Cambridge in the final.

Why worry about the Ides? The sun was shining, the kites were wheeling in the sky looking for Sunday breakfast and the last time we played Cambridge in the final of this trophy, we thumped them 5-0. I could hear no covens chanting and there were no men in togas wielding large knives.

Moreton Morrell is a very pleasant club with a welcoming bar (roaring fire) and a frigid dedans. Temptations abounded in the form of free glasses of Pol Roger and the England v France rugby match on the widescreen TV, but we few RTC supporters are made of sterner stuff and we took our place in the dedans.

Mark McMurrugh and Fred Satow were playing David Mills and Burak Salgin and I began to hear ominous chantings (or was that my imagination?). The Cambridge pair were favoured on paper, and they proved it on court, running off with the first set 6-1.

The second set saw Mark in more of an attacking mood, and they were within shouting distance at 2-3. But then the moaning covens returned (were thunderous clouds scudding across the sky?) and the Cambridge pair ruthlessly applied the loud pedal to win the next three games and take the rubber 6-1, 6-2 in 54 minutes.

David Watson came on to contest the first singles against Robert Hird, also of

this parish but today the Cambridge No 1. Shivering in the dedans were Robert's sister Karen, one of RTC's star doubles players, and parents Doris and Ian, both RTC members.

Despite David's speed around the court and his incredible ability to dig out impossible balls from the corners, he was up against some young legs who could match him in racket skills and strategy. It was a good fight, but the Cambridge steamroller could not be stopped and Hird, in his second year at Cambridge, emerged the victor 6-3, 6-3.

Then came the RTC banker, captain Simon Barker playing a white-haired Duncan Colquhoun, the man he beat so easily back in 2004. If Simon did not believe in the Ides of March before the match, he must have converted afterwards. The man with the white hair played solid, no-nonsense tennis, made few errors and soon the witches were starting to cackle. Colquhoun took the first set 6-3. But the Ides had only started to work their evil ways. The old Simon returned and ran to a 4-1 lead in the second set. That's more like it! But Colquhoun then rolled off five straight games to win 6-4. Simon had no explanation for what he put down to a very bad day at the office.

So, Cambridge had a winning lead of 3-0. It was all over. Somehow that fact didn't seem to affect James Watson or Cambridge's Nick Brown as they fought tooth and nail through three blistering sets as though the cup depended on the result of their rubber.

James led the first set 4-0 and then saw it drip away to trail 4-5 (the witches were



Photograph by Murray Glover

James Sohl and Karen Hird on their way to RTC's only win

now cackling while doing a salsa dance on our graves), but he held firm to win the set 6-5. Brown was more consistent, though, and after taking the second 6-4 he kept up his offensive in the third and maintained his slight superiority to win 6-2. It was easily the match of the day.

So, 4-0 to Cambridge. On came Karen Hird and James Sohl in the final doubles to try to rescue some pride for RTC. Again, on paper, the Cambridge pair of Neil Roxburgh and Hugh Tomlinson were favoured to win, but they could not match the excellent teamwork of the RTC pair. Karen has a great eye, volleys well and is tactically sound, while James has the advantage of his height but can also bend to pick up the daisy cutters.

They won the first set 6-4, started to run away with the second set 4-0, when – aaaargh! – back came the Ides. Cambridge hit a blue streak to win six games in a row and steal the set.

When the RTC pair (Karen in particular) cut the return across court, they found that both their opponents were

vulnerable and they picked up both valuable points and good chases. The Cambridge pair's error rate increased, while the RTC pair grew in confidence to finally take the set 6-4 and give RTC its one victory of the day.

It was all over. Bottles of Pol Roger were presented to the 14 players and the Field Trophy was not presented to the winning side because someone had forgotten to return it. (The Ides of March? Pshaw!) The RTC team deserved their bubbly, having played superbly all year to reach the final, and there is no reason to doubt that they can do it all again next season.

And don't bother calling Simon Barker on 15 March next year. He will be firmly stuck in bed with the blankets over his head.

Martin Bronstein

CAMBRIDGE 4 RTC 1
(Cambridge names first): David Mills & Burak Salgin bt Mark McMurrugh and Fred Satow 6-1, 6-2. Robert Hird bt David Watson 6-3, 6-3. Duncan Colquhoun bt Simon Barker 6-3, 6-4. Nick Brown bt James Watson 5-6, 6-4, 6-2. Neil Roxburgh & Hugh Tomlinson lost to Karen Hird & James Sohl 6-4, 4-6, 6-2.

Barker the champ again

Simon Barker's love affair with the Barker-Camm Cup continues...

The form guide to this battle for the Barker-Camm Cup and the title of club singles champion on Sunday 17 May, AGM day, had suggested a David Watson victory.

David had had the upper hand over defending champion Simon Barker in their recent encounters, which saw his handicap come down into single figures for the first time in a few years.

However, arriving back from Hong Kong just three days before the match wasn't the ideal preparation for him.

The first set saw Simon capitalise on a sluggish David to dictate the play for the opening exchanges. There should be a special mention that Simon was lucky to still be on court after the third game, having hit a backhand volley straight into the marker's forehead! With Ben nursing a small headache and deciding that it was not a purposeful strike into the marker's box, he let Simon stay on court and the match continued.

It took David a while to get going and by the time he started to make some shots and get into the match, Simon was too close to the finishing line and managed to close it out 6-2.



A tired and relieved Simon Barker

The second set saw David impose himself and pull out a 4-1 lead. At 5-2, it was looking as clear cut as the first set had been – but then David began to tighten up and make a few errors. Simon won the next two games, saving a set point at 3-5, to set the score at 5-4 Watson. The 10th game saw some long exchanges and several deuces. The next

five minutes saw game points for Simon and set points for David until David strung two strong points together to take the game and the set 6-4.

After staging a miniature comeback, the momentum should have been with Simon, but David played the two best games of the match by his standard to open up a 2-0 lead in the final set. It was looking comfortable for him and I thought he was going to power through and win comfortably. But the momentum completely shifted once again, with errors creeping into David's game and Simon being as tenacious as ever. All of a sudden it was 5-2 to Simon and he was on the brink of yet another title. David dug deep and managed to win the next game, but Simon wrapped it up in the ninth game to take the match and the championship 6-2, 4-6, 6-3.

This is Simon's 10th championship, which is amazing achievement by any standard. It is also special when you consider that David spends most of his time with a slightly better handicap and has played No 1 in their National League team in recent years.

Ben Matthews

BARKER-CAMM ROUNDUP

Grade B: Nigel O'Hagan bt Paul Kettle 6-5 6-3

Nigel O'Hagan showed moments of his younger years, sliding the ball effortlessly over the net while gliding from corner to corner to retrieve the tenacious shots of his opponent. Paul Kettle dug his heels in, but Nigel made sensible choices, especially on return of serve, allowing the backhand drag serve of Paul's to come off the back wall and stroking the ball into the corners. Congratulations to both for a competitive game played in such a sporting manner.

Grade C: David Durham bt Gareth Quarry 6-2 6-1

After David Durham won a long third game to move 2-1 ahead, he then began the most breathtaking display of target hitting. Gareth Quarry could only stand and watch ball after ball pass him, followed by the sound of the Perspex in front of Henry VIII's nose! The second set saw a change in tactics from Gareth, with more boasts to get more chases. But David simply started hitting the dedans from the Hazard end! Unstoppable.

Grade D: Nicola Cavill bt Simon Edmond 6-4 3-6 6-2. **Grade E:** Tom Carew-Hunt bt John Halliday 6-1 6-5. **Grade F:** Oliver Lewis bt James Pain 6-2 6-2.

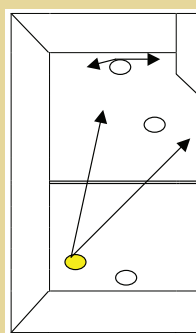
Wood's Words

Nick Wood on positioning at the Hazard end in doubles

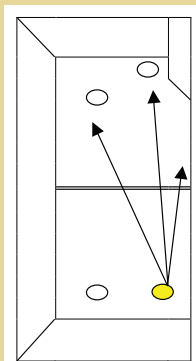
Positioning is everything! The worst thing you can do is stand still and hope the ball will come to you.

Between the two of you, you must cover all possibilities when possible, and with good movement and positioning you'll find it a lot easier to defend at the hazard end of the court. Try to be in position before your opponents strike the ball. And, at a risk of repeating myself – if you keep your shots off the penthouse, your opponents will find it very difficult to find any openings/weaknesses in your defence.

In the first diagram



the player highlighted at the service end can only reasonably hit cross-court, so the receivers must protect the tambour and grille. The grille player advances as far forward as they can to deter the opponent hitting for the tambour, while their partner sweeps around behind.



In the second diagram, the player highlighted can play towards the tambour or the winning gallery. The grille player stays back and only worries about the ball coming directly towards them, while their partner takes the balls that are struck cross-court or come off the tambour.

The occidental tourists

An RTC team relied on mathematical creativity on their spring tour of the Wild West

Richard East set off on his annual spring pillage of Wessex and beyond with a motley crew but this year given some greater dignity and gravitas by the presence of the chairman, Peter Ohlson. Not only was gravitas available, but also an official chronicler and archivist to record the horde in action. East plainly feels the time has come for his place in destiny.

Canford could barely stand the initial attack, Nick Carewhu Nt inscrutably sneaking an 8-7 singles win but reverting to tradition when sinking 9-10 in his doubles in the company of Keith Smith, who in turn had relinquished a well-constructed lead in his singles to be felled 7-8. The Sheraton-Davis duo fought back determinedly from 1-8 down, Linda defending gamely, but could not quite keep it up and lost 6-10.

Oliver Buckley and Julian (uno of the Sheraton-Davis duo) evaporated their early lead but clawed home 10-7 once Buckley got grille range. Then a stroke of scheduling genius from the Great Organiser (East) determined that the deciding game had been the filler match between Peter Flood, partnering the chairman, against Buckley and East.

RTC fought gallantly from both ends to win 6-3 (winners' names withheld).

Contentedly we rode off into the most spectacular African sunset to the sea and the charms of Bridport. We lost the first two matches, then Oliver and Richard won 8-5. Their form, and dare it be said, fitness, looked promising. The highlight was still to come, when Julian S-D had to dig so deep that he almost reached Australia. Neil Mackenzie, a remarkable 15-year-old of whom we hope we hear an awful lot more, took a 4-0 lead and Julian had to claw back, point by point, squeezing out a winner at 7-7, 40-all. It was a great performance by both players.

Another loss in a singles and we then redeemed ourselves, with the Great Organiser carrying himself and the chairman to a fine victory. This left us a mere 4-2 down according to the old scoring methods. However, carrying a City regulator in their midst, Nick Nt of oriental mind, the RTC team employed the reverse Polish notation method to the game results and, only having to stretch as far as the power of 4, came screeching to victory by a triumphant 7,938 points to 7,395.

RTC pressed onwards to Bristol. Keith and Nick blasted their way to a 6-3 victory against the Sandow and Steen, but Flood and Ohlson flaked out 2-10 to Peter Jones and Lindsay Henniker-Heaton. Henniker-Heaton proved just too much in singles with Nick Nt, winning 10-6. Oliver Buckley found Nigel Harradine could cover a little more ground a little more quickly and went down 5-10. The Great Organiser hit form yet again to win 10-8 with a restored Buckley against Sam Beale (right-handed) and David Whitaker.

However, Keith Smith and your chronicler went down 8-10 to Sam Beale (left-handed) and Colin Archer. Richard East barely put a foot wrong when he and the chairman beat Davis and Archer 10-9 in a rousing finale.

The match score of 4-3 against us was not what we had planned, but B&B did have ground to make up after a defeat at the Palace in November. However, they were perhaps a little fazed when our determined wrangler (Cantab) Nick Nt recalculated the score under the Polish notation and brought the RTC home 75-65, using only the power of 2.

John Clark

Watch out Ronaldsons, here come the Hirds...

There may soon be a new First Family in real tennis, with the rise and rise of the Hird triplets continuing apace at Cambridge and Oxford.

Robert and Karen are studying at Cambridge, while Sarah is at Oxford – which means that they can have one court each on which to practise! Naturally, all three played in the real tennis Varsity match this year – but that was clearly not enough for such multi-skilled racketeers. All three played in the badminton match, too, with Karen facing Sarah at No 1.

Karen, who is now regularly getting to finals of the big real tennis tournaments, is clearly a natural. Having only taken up squash at university in order to improve her real tennis footwork and angles, she immediately found herself in the second team last year and the first team this year. She was also talked into trying Eton Fives and, in addition to playing Varsity, reached the quarter-finals of the Nationals. Robert is down to 8.6 handicap and was the runner-up in the recent Under-21 Open. Like Karen, he also represented England in badminton at all junior age groups up to under-17.

But what about their studies? You hardly need ask: Robert got six A grades at A-level, while Sarah and Karen got five A grades each. Robert won a gold medal in the UK Physics Olympiad and a silver medal in the UK Maths Olympiad, and he was awarded a scholarship at Trinity on the strength of his first-year exams.

Stars Of Tomorrow?



Two-year-old triplets Robert, Karen and Sarah Siedentopf cheered on their mother Doris to the semi-finals of the British Ladies Handicap Tournament (Div 1) at Holyport, as reported in last month's issue.

Three's a crowd (above, from left): Robert, Karen and Sarah Hird were destined for real tennis stardom from the age of two – and all three duly reached the National Under-12 finals (right)



FAMILY FORTUNES: Three members of one Tylers Green family reached the national finals of the Under-12s real tennis championships. Robert third lost in the final while his sisters Karen and Sarah finished 16 and 17 in the girls final with Karen emerging as the winner of the championship which was played at Queen's Club.

News from the pros

By Nick Wood

Season review

The Season of 2008–09 is drawing to a close. To all members of the Royal Tennis Court, I hope you have enjoyed it.

This being the end of my first season as head professional here, and I can reflect on what has been an enjoyable 12 months. With a new era and a new professional team, some changes were inevitable; however I have always been conscious of the terrific history, tradition and particularly the success of the Royal Tennis Court of which Chris Ronaldson played a massive part.

I would like to thank Peter Ohlson and the board for their guidance, and I would especially like to thank all the RTC members for the welcome and the enthusiastic support given to Stefan, Ben, Lesley and me. Moving from one club to another involves a continuous process of listening, learning and adjusting, and through the March questionnaire we received a lot of positive feedback on which I will endeavour to act. Some of the main points for the professionals were...

1) Balls A minority of members were unhappy with the state of the balls. It is not easy keeping everyone happy. We will continue to work hard to ensure that you are playing with some of the best balls in the world.

2) Shop merchandise I fully appreciate the lack of stock suitable for lady members; it is not easy finding good quality white clothing. I am looking for a new range for next year, but in the meantime a Summer Sale is now on for certain stock items.

3) Communication We spend an immense amount of time on the phone arranging games and earlier in the season we introduced the 'Tennis Diary', which is sent out by email. Also, with an ever improving newsletter and fantastic website we hope that we are covering traditional and modern communication methods. If you haven't heard from the team recently, please get in touch. We may have the wrong contact details.

The professional team

I would like to thank Stefan, Ben and Lesley for all their work – Stef particularly, as he managed so expertly while I was away competing. He has settled in to the professional life at Hampton Court very well, offering an organised, efficient and tidy method. He quickly returned to a strong playing standard and has lowered his handicap to 7. This summer we will be working on improving that further.

Lesley, you're an angel! Thank you for assisting by covering the court, often at the most antisocial of hours. Your

lasagnes cannot be beaten. And Ben! What a difference! Given an opportunity, you've taken hold with both hands. It has been great training with you, and you thoroughly deserve your plus handicap.

I have enjoyed working with you all this past year and look forward to the challenges of next season.

Finally, congratulations to all trophy winners, notably Simon Barker, whose handicap has bounced back and forth and yet who still has a firm grasp of the club singles championship (see page 5).

Changes to club competitions

A few changes will take place to the club tournaments. Firstly, entry forms will be sent out with the next newsletter at the end of July – the closing date will be 1 Sept 2009. This is so we can get the season going and relieve pressure on court time during the busiest part of the year.

Secondly, the two finalists of each Barker-Camm Cup grade will now qualify for the next grade, giving an added bonus to those who do well in this event. Also, to encourage a greater entry to the Barker-Camm Club Singles Championship (A Grade), the draw will be posted on 1 February 2010, the matches to be arranged Feb–April with the assistance of the professionals, with the final being played some time in late April 2010.

IRTPA National League

Ben and I were pipped at the post in the National League final (not our finest hour!), beaten by an on-form and determined world champion (see page 3).

For RTC members, the league is an excellent event that brings world-class players for you to watch, support and be inspired, while meeting and getting to know other Royal Tennis Court members. We hope that all who came along to watch over the past six months enjoyed the evenings. Ben and I would particularly like to thank Richard and Judy Gilbert for the season-long support at both home and away matches, and thanks as well to David Glover for your thoughtful contribution and skill behind the lens.

For the players, it is a great opportunity to compete. The National League is important for younger players such as Ben, as it increases the number of matches in the season and provides great mental and physical challenges at different courts. After a successful season, Ben has been approached by another club to represent them in the National League as a No 1 player. This is a great chance for him and has come as a result of hard training and strong results. He is stepping up to compete with the big boys! I'm watching my back...

Next season's National League may well see a new RTC Premier team of Nick and Stef.

Sponsorship

The IRTPA National League is the largest event in the tennis calendar and involves players from the highest echelons to those of a handicap in the bracket. It is broken into divisions and played off level.

From its inauguration in the 1980s it has had sponsorship to cover the event, but last season there was no prize money for the divisions in which the pros played, though Maurice Lacroix generously provided fine watches for the most valuable player in each division. Maurice Lacroix has been involved with the league for a few years and has enjoyed a 'tick-tock' relationship with the game.

The IRTPA is looking for sponsorship for Div 1 to Div 4, having secured sponsorship for the Premier Division. It is looking for a total of £4,000 for Div 1, and a further £4,000 for the remaining divisions. It is a unique opportunity for those connected to a business to have facilities for corporate entertaining and watching this sport. The IRTPA is also looking for a sponsor for next season's National League shirts, which are given to all players in each division. The cost is approximately £5,000. The branding opportunities are all there for a company

wishing to keep its name in the public eye but using far less of its marketing budget in these frugal times. Are you a possible sponsor? Please get in touch with me, Nick Wood, at royaltenniscourt@btconnect.com or Susie Falkner the IRTPA's CEO, at ceo@irtpa.com.

PRO RESULTS

US Open Singles

Winner: Camden Riviere

Runner-up: Steve Virgona

US Open Doubles

Winner: Nick Wood & Camden Riviere

Runners-up: Rob Fahey & Steve Virgona

Under-21 Open Ch'ship

Winner: Tom Weaver

Runner-up: Robert Hird

Under-24 Open Singles

Winner: Bryn Sayers

Runner-up: Ricardo Smith

Under 24 Open Doubles

Winner: Bryn Sayers & Ricardo Smith

Runners-up: Paul Knox & Tom Weaver

OUTC Open for 0-9 hcp

Winner: Ben Matthews

Runner-up: Jon Dawes

World Doubles Ch'ship

Winners: Rob Fahey & Steve Virgona

Runners-up: Bryn Sayers & Ricardo Smith

Two Davids topple Watson goliath

Photograph by Martin Bronstein



The years of the Watson name gracing the Harris-Watson glory board have come to an end. David Durham and David Harms beat David Watson and daughter Clare in the final of the Harris-Watson Cup, the club's doubles tournament.

Watson and his former partner, Richard Harris, donated the competition, winning their own trophy six times in nine years. This year, however, when the two professional head-hunters put their combined talents together, it was too much for Watson and daughter. Durham (above left), who runs his own head-hunting consultancy, has been playing for 15 years, after many other sports including basketball (he's tall and American...). Harms, who works with Durham, went to Canford and so played rackets, realers and squash from a young age, but then specialised in squash. He boasts a fine handicap of 6.

When asked about their doubles strategy, Durham replied: "We have a very clever strategy - I go as far up court as possible and crouch under the net and let Harms do all the running about." [Out of Harms' way, then? Sorry - Ed.]

Martin Bronstein

RTC have the last laugh over Jesters

The Jesters put up 10 players for a recent social match against RTC, and it was a close call for RTC to come home 4-1, as three of their four wins were tightly contested.

Wayne Begley and Oliver Buckley flagged after a steaming start but squeezed home over Anthony Wilson and Corin Jenkins 6-5 in the third. Nick Carew Hunt and Owen Saunders used local knowledge to win 6-4, 6-5, while Richard Stocks and Julian Sheraton-

Davis powered to victory 6-1, 6-2 over Simon Mansfield and Clare Weatherill.

Bruce Leith and Geoffrey Russell prevailed in an excellent battle with Patrick Jenkins and Caroline Janes, but then Mark McMurrugh and Fred Satow were defeated 6-3, 6-3 by Bernard Weatherill and Chris Herbert.

Sharp-eyed readers may have noted that many Jesters are also RTC members, which made for a very convivial day.

John Clark

RTC Top Ten

Leading handicaps
May 2009

1	Peter Wright	4.1
2	Dave Harms	6.2
3	Robert Hird	8.6
4=	David Watson	11.3
4=	Simon Barker	11.3
6	Marcus Ward	12.2
7	James Sohl	15.7
8	Buster Mottram	18.2
9=	Karen Hird	20.4
9=	James Watson	20.4

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 autumn issue

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RESULTS

Spring Night Pennant

Final: Ralph Cake/Peter Flood/David Peregrine-Jones (sub) bt Robin Mulcahy/James Durie/Simon Pearce 9-4.
Cake bt Mulcahy 6-5; Flood bt Durie 6-2; Peregrine-Jones lost to Pearce 6-4.
Cake & Flood bt Mulcahy & Durie 6-3; Cake & Peregrine-Jones bt Mulcahy & Pearce 6-1; Flood & Peregrine-Jones lost to Durie & Pearce 6-2.

Lathom Browne Cup

Quarter-final draw:

Robert Frost (27) v Michael Day (37)
Nicola Cavill (39) v Mark Trenowden (43)
Allan Dallamore (47) v David Jeffcoate (43)
Anthony Berry (54) v Oliver Lewis (58)

COMING UP

RTC

20 June: Club Night
25-28 June: Summer Handicap Dbls
28 June: Summer Barbecue
30 June: Limb Trophy - RTC v Oz Jnrs
6-11 July: The Real Ride
18 July: Club Night

ELSEWHERE

5-7 June: Over-40s British Open, Seacourt
21-23 August: Junior Open Singles, Queen's Club



Thanks to Jim Day for sending on this picture of a wall painting seen in a medieval building in Lucerne not long ago. It can't be a lawn tennis player, so could it be that Roger Federer's Swiss ancestors played real tennis?