

# THE ROYAL TENNIS COURT



## Bye bye baby

Chris Chapman calls time on a stellar nine years

*See page 3*

It's that man again: Fahey triumphs in the Champions Trophy

*See Pages 4 & 5*

Best King's Goblet yet

*See Page 6*

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# CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Much has happened since the last Newsletter back in March. I was delighted to see a good turnout of members for the AGM in May and, on behalf of the Board, I am grateful to you all for your continued support of our overall strategy. As I reported to the meeting, the Club is in good health from all points of view. Immediately after the AGM, we were privileged to watch another high-class display of tennis in the Club Championship final, Tom Freeman again prevailing over Phil Dunn in three tight sets.

We have been regularly reporting on the progress of our junior programme under the leadership of Sarah Parsons and Josh Smith, so it was great to hear that RTC has finally won the Peter Luck-Hille Cup. The final team of Olli Drew, Ross Morrison and Oli-Hampson-Evans won 5-1 against Seacourt, played at Wellington. It has been a wonderful season for all the juniors who remained unbeaten throughout.

In July, we hosted the third Champions Trophy in conjunction with Historic Royal Palaces. Ticket sales were up on the previous two years, though I would still like to see more RTC members supporting what has become one of the world's premier Real Tennis events. Those present were privileged to witness some marvellous tennis. It was a great pity that Chris Chapman had to retire hurt when about to close out the first set in his opening match against Ben Taylor-Matthews. As the tournament progressed, John Lumley emerged from the draw to meet Rob Fahey in the final, which Rob won in three tight sets. Big thanks go to our professional team and to all those RTC members who volunteered in a variety of ways to help stage another successful tournament; and of course to the sponsors Mitsubishi Electric.

In July, we received the news that Chris Chapman had secured an appointment at the Royal Melbourne Tennis Club and would be

returning home after a wonderful nine years at RTC, during which he has brought so much to the club and the game in general. Chris has worked unbelievably hard to become one of the world's finest players having reached World Number 3 behind only Camden and Rob. During his time here, he won the French Open singles, the British Open and Australian Open doubles and reached four other open singles finals plus the final of our own Champions Trophy in 2018. We were proud last year to host his eliminator challenge against Steve Virgona and he is set for another tilt at the World Championship early next year, having already secured enough ranking points.

Chris has been a dedicated professional to RTC's members, in his lessons, marking, tournament organising and all other aspects of his job, and a valued colleague and friend. I know I speak for everyone at RTC in extending our grateful thanks to Chris for his dedication, flair and skill, passion and enthusiasm, and wishing him, Carly and William a happy new life back in Melbourne.

Working with Nick, the Board has immediately set about reviewing the professional team and starting to find a replacement. Going forward, Josh Smith will take on the main tournament-playing role alongside his other duties. The new professional post has been advertised to fit with this change and we hope to have someone in place within the next three months. In the meantime, Nick, Josh and Lesley will be endeavouring to provide as close to the normal professional service as possible.



Michael Day CVO

## Board Talk 24/6/19

**Routine business: Finance:** No issues were noted and the Board was pleased to see a healthy financial position.

**Premises:** It was agreed that, given an expected change in personnel, any upgrade to the Pro room's storage would be put on hold to prioritise redecoration and improvement of the Ely Rooms (Josh Smith) and Apartment 53 (Chris Chapman).

**Membership:** The Board is pleased with the effectiveness of the trial membership offer and agreed to keep the price at £50 for three months and to monitor progress. Membership numbers are 478, which is down five after 'cleaning up' names of life members. Active membership increased by one.

**Tennis and Tournaments:** The Board was pleased to see the active participation and success of over 50/55 players in age category World singles and doubles tournaments. The Night Pennant format in future will insist on availability of at least one team member for the play-off and final. A-grade tennis practice will take place year-round,

alternating between Wednesday, Friday and Saturday. NW will run all sessions. If necessary B-grade players will fill in.

**Social:** The Board was pleased that The King's Goblet tournament will cover its costs for the first time. The club will host a leaving party for Chris Chapman before he returns to Melbourne.

**Juniors:** The Board was pleased to see the engagement and success of our juniors in competitions, with the increase in junior numbers (now 35, of whom five are females), and with the £1,400 grant from the Queen's Club Foundation.

**Special items: Chris Chapman:** MD had received a letter of resignation from Chris Chapman giving notice of his return to Melbourne. The Board agreed that in establishing a succession plan it was important to prioritise Josh Smith's continuing professional and playing development at RTC.

**2020 WC eliminator bid:** The World Championship eliminator first round will take place between 20th and 30th

January 2020, with bids to be submitted by 10th December 2019. Chris Chapman has stated that he would like to play his match at RTC even if he is then located elsewhere. The Board agreed that it would be happy in principle to host this and would support a bid. OS will review the context for the bid in the light of our 2018 experience.

**Eye protection: PN** will draft a sign concerning risk and eye protection to display on court. SP will speak with Paul Weaver (T&RA junior programme) concerning eye protection with juniors.

**Health and Safety: Paul Newton** will take on Board responsibility for H&S.

**AGM member suggestions:** At the AGM, MD updated members on our actions to address matters raised at the 2018 AGM. These actions are noted in the 2019 AGM minutes. At the 2019 AGM two matters were discussed - the readability of the Roman numerals on the door locks, and the desire of the club to move further from cash. With regard to cash, it was agreed that we will monitor the situation and be ready to move to a cashless working model.



# A thank-you from Chris

## Chappers reflects on a glorious reign at RTC

As my last shift comes to an end as a Royal Tennis Court Professional on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> July I can't help but to think back over the nine fantastic years I've spent at RTC.

How lucky I have been to live and work at such a historic place in the UK, to work with such wonderful people and to meet so many fantastic members, many of whom have become lifelong friends.

Back in 2010 I got wind that Ben Matthews was looking to leave his post at RTC in search of new opportunities. I had heard much about RTC Head Professional Nick Wood, which led me to chase (pun intended) the opportunity to be mentored by Nick. I quickly applied for the vacant position.

Unbeknown to me, the week after I had been accepted as the new RTC assistant Professional, Carly and I met for the first time and, after only dating for three months, I was off to my new post at RTC with barely a word spoken about my departure.

Carly came for a "holiday" a couple of weeks after my arrival but we quickly cancelled her return flight. Former RTC Professional Stef King used to joke that Carly and I met in the departure lounge of Melbourne's Tullamarine Airport! Carly and I married in 2014 and welcomed our son William to the world in 2017.

The club's board and its members, as well as my fellow Professional team, have been so supportive of my Real Tennis endeavours and this support - together with the financial help of the Pro Development Fund - has enabled me to move from a low single figure handicap into the realm of the world's elite players. I have held a career-high World Ranking of



**A last group hug for the best team in the business**

*Pic: Tim Edwards*



**Chris and his poorly knee takes a well-earned rest at the Summer barbecue**

No.3 for more than a year, winning the French Open singles, a British Open doubles and an Australian Open doubles along the way.

I want to say a special thank-you to some people who, in particular, have shown or given me huge support in various ways. In no particular order: Owen Saunders, Steve Hunt, Nick Wood and Josh Smith - I couldn't have done this without your help. To my wife Carly - you have been the absolute rock that a professional

athlete requires and you have gone above and beyond to help me achieve many of my life's goals.

Finally, this goodbye is only temporary, as I'll be back in the UK for the British Open in November and I have already verbally entered the 2020 Champion's Trophy. I look forward to seeing many friendly faces again soon.

One last thanks,

*Chris Chapman*

# Rob runs rampant

World Champion and World Number 2 Robert Fahey made light of his 51 years to beat the 27-year-old challenger John Lumley in a thrilling finale to this year's Champions Trophy.

With reigning champion and World Number 1 Camden Riviere absent, and local favourite and World Number 3 Chris Chapman (pictured far right), seeded 2, but sadly sidelined by a knee injury in his match against Ben Taylor-Matthews, the title seemed more up for grabs than usual during the blazing July days of the tournament.

The first semi-final proved a step too far for qualifier Matthieu Sarlangue as he went down fighting 6/1, 6/0, 3/6, 6/3 to Fahey.

John Lumley, seeded 5, might have been underdog to Ben Taylor-Matthews, but the Number 3 seed struggled to find his form in the match



and John ran out a deserved winner in straight sets 6/3, 6/2, 6/1.

The final on a perfect Sunday afternoon was an outstanding demonstration of Real Tennis at the highest level, lapped up by a packed

dedans crowd, a full Hazard penthouse gallery—and hundreds of curious tourists in the side gallery corridor, helped no end by a small army of Stewards at hand to explain the finer points of our glorious sport.

Rob came out fighting in the first set, rifling two dedans and two winning galleries to take the first game. He furthered his intent in the second game with blistering shots to the dedans and by the time he took the third game John looked a little dazed. He rallied to take the next two games before bowing to the inevitable 6/2.

The second set was a tighter affair, and all credit to John for taking the fight back to the World Champion. Close games and long deuces were the order of the day, but Rob again took the initiative with an outrageous backhand winner to the winning gallery. John took the 8th game against run of play but Rob proved again that no shot is ungettable at this level and took the set 6/4.

With the crowd roaring him on Rob opened the first game of the third set with a

## Golden couple

The fearsome pairing of Sue Haswell and Simon Talbot-Williams (pictured with Nick Wood and Josh Smith) won the Champions Trophy Amateur Handicap Doubles, overcoming a huge handicap disadvantage to beat Andy Anderson and Simon Cripps in the final on Sunday.

Andy and Simon, needing to win just two points in each game, decided on a 'Dedans or bust' strategy, which they



utterly failed to execute as each shot was expertly returned by Sue or Simon, seemingly at will. (The game was further complicated by Andy failing to hear the call to be on court; he was eventually found hiding in the Hampton Court shrubbery, in mortal dread of Sue's backhand spankings).

Sue and Simon then went on to put the seal on their victory by taking on Nick Wood and Josh Smith in an exhibition doubles match, which they duly won 7/5. She and Simon both won a splendid new racquet made by Gold Leaf Athletics, the sponsor of the event, to whom many thanks.

Other players in the tournament, played over Friday and Sunday, included the pairings of Michael Day and Owen Saunders, and Chris Swan and Nick Wood.

Having played each other, each team were then treated to the experience of playing two on one against Josh Smith and Zack Smart; a truly eye-popping lesson in how the game is played at the highest level.

The whole tournament was played in a fine sporting spirit and is a perfect opportunity to test your mettle against players you would never normally meet - get your name down for next year!





a blazing dedans shot to win it, and then blasted a side wall winning gallery to take the second.

The third game also went to Rob, but John settled his nerves and played outstanding tennis to take the next three games. The next two games were shared to level the score at 4/4, but Rob pounced on a couple of unforced errors by John to edge ahead 5/4.

With the Fahey forearm now punching the air after every rest the temperature was rising, in line with the beer consumption amidst the crowd.

In what proved the final game, John's every shot against what now appeared



to be a living force of nature earned him deserved cheers. It was not enough: Fahey's

blood was up and roaring: the winning shot demanded to be a winning gallery—and it was. 6/4 set and match to the man who just keeps winning.

After the final, spectators and players alike decanted to the club garden, where Rob and John were presented with their trophies by the tournament sponsor, Mitsubishi Electric, and a fabulous barbecue ensued.

The whole event was a triumph and the Champions Trophy is now firmly



established as one of the game's top events.

Huge thanks go to Oliver Buckley and Giles Doy for streaming services, to Peter Mather for social media, to RTC's Pros, the 19 (!) Stewards, and all those who billeted the players.

**Results:** John Lumley def. Bryn Sayers 2/6, 6/3, 6/3, 6.5. Matthieu Sarlangue def. Darren Long 6/1, 6/2, 3/6, 6/4. Rob Fahey def. Nick Howell 4/6, 6/2, 6/0, 6/3. Ben Taylor-Matthews won against Chris Chapman (Chapman retired at 5/4). John Lumley beat Nick Howell 3/6, 2/6, 6/5, 6/5, 6/2. Matthieu Sarlangue v Chris Chapman, w/over to Sarlangue. **Semi-finals:** Rob Fahey def. Matthieu Sarlangue 6/1, 6/0, 3/6, 6/3, John Lumley def. Ben Taylor-Matthews 6/3, 6/2, 6/1.

**Final:** Rob Fahey def. John Lumley 6/2, 6/4, 6/4.

Pictures by Tim Edwards, Plough Studios



Rob Fahey and Hans-Joerg Hinkel of Mitsubishi Electric





# A Goblet of goodies

Owen Saunders and Nigel Penna (*pictured right*) made it back-to-back victories in the 2019 King's Goblet - RTC's only tournament open to all tennis players worldwide - saw 24 pairs battle it out over four days in the June sunshine. With handicaps ranging from mid-20's to high 80's, more than 15 clubs were represented in this year's contest. All matches are timed to 35 minutes, so patience, determination and good strategy are as important as good strokeplay.

Thursday's matches generally followed the handicap guide, with the team receiving the handicap winning 15 out of 21 matches. Sylvia Warren and Frederic de Sibert led the charge with three wins, including one over Paul Heaver and Candida Nicholls. At one point, Paul and Candida having only one serve and banned tambour, Candida slotted a backhand at the base of the tambour, giving their opponents game point. Candida promptly apologised to Paul, who responded "no need to apologise to me." He then immediately double faulted, sending the dedans into fits of laughter.

2016 champions Katy Doy and Sarah Lambie performed the turnaround of the tournament against Oxford's Liz Leach and Tim Roberts. With less than 8 minutes to go, and with Oxford 6/3 up, Oxford lost 6 out of the next 7 restes, and suddenly the score was 6-all. They edged the last game to take an improbable victory 7/6. Katy and Sarah would win all five group stage games to see them comfortably through to Sunday's knockout. But they were not in control for large parts of their Friday night match against Steve Hunt and Jed Dalton. Jed's pace at the back of the court, coupled with Steve's deft volleying, meant the gents dominated the first 20 minutes and kept the score tight at 4/4. However, a few lapses in concentration eventually saw Doy and Lambie prevail 8/5.

Friday's matches saw seven pairs start their campaigns. It also saw the arrival of the showboat, as the Bristol pair of Laurence "The Lozzatron" Brook and Matt "Skidders" Skidmore entertained the crowds with their team T-shirts and unpredictable play. Matt's between-the-legs hot dog shot first appeared during their win over Mike and Rachael Griffith, and made several further appearances throughout the weekend.

There was much talk in the dedans about the 2018 finalists Giles Doy and Laurence Brook going their separate ways with new partners. (For the record, Giles left Laurence.) In either case, the divide and conquer approach worked: Laurence and Matt made the top 8 with four wins from five, while Giles Doy and Andy Anderson secured their place with a win over Steve Hunt and Jed Dalton on Sunday morning.

Remember that Saturday at the end of June where the temperature reached 31C? This year's competitors certainly remember it - and as the heat rose some pairs' chances melted away. Karen Prottey and Dick Cowling met Simon Edmond and David Blizzard, resulting in one of three draws in the tournament. Lucie Stewart and Anna Dalton couldn't get past Drew Dowie and Bill Sproul, the latter taking a 6/3 victory. But others kept their cool: Warren and de Sibert inflicted two massive wins with a cumulative score of 20/2; and JP Broussard and Zuzana Botkova nabbed two victories to keep them in contention.

The newly-titled Chalice Challenge on Saturday afternoon pitted the 8 lowest handicaps against each other. Owen Saunders took full advantage with a delightful main wall boast straight into the winning gallery in the third game to get to 40-all...and then fluffed a sitter to lose the game. Geoffrey Russell and Jed Dalton took the title, beating Owen Saunders and Dick Cowling in the final. Their reward? A set of tennis against Chappy and Josh, and their +2 combined doubles handicap. The amateurs raced to a 5/2 lead, but the Pros (with one



serve and banned tambour) led a mini fightback to make the final score of a 6/4 loss slightly more respectable.

Sunday lunchtime saw the business end of the tournament - the top 8 knockout. The two teams that won all five group matches found Sunday tougher than the rest of the weekend. Doy and Lambie were no match for Stewart and Dalton, not least after Lucie launched a forehand onto the hazard top wall, only to bounce on the floor, and slip into winning gallery. Simon Cripps and Ian Wimbush kept their composure in Quarter Final 2 to send Warren and de Sibert packing, winning 9/5. The third quarter final was a partial rematch of last year's final, as Anderson and Doy took on Saunders and Penna. A crucial 8th game saw the latter take a decisive 5/3 lead, which they held at the buzzer. Brook and Skidmore's crowd-pleasing performance wasn't enough to beat Dowie and Sproul, who won 8/3.

Saunders and Penna kept their tight, error-free tennis display going in the semi-final, edging out Cripps and Wimbush 6/5. Dowie and Sproul's journey ended as their game couldn't unlock Stewart and Dalton's relentless returning to keep restes going; the ladies' spot in the final secured 10/4.

Owen and Nigel had to give nearly 40 points handicap difference in the final, and when Lucie and Anna took early control of the service end and the scoreboard, it looked a tall order. But even in a 35 minute match there is time for patience and precision. The packed dedans and top gallery watched as Owen and Nigel pecked away at the scoreboard after going behind a few games early on. Finally, Owen and Nigel won by 7 games to 6.

Huge thanks to everyone who participated, helped with catering and to the Pros (who sewed 191 balls in 4 days!) for a thoroughly enjoyable four days of tennis. The King's Goblet is turning into one of the big tournaments in Real Tennis in the UK, showcasing our friendly and welcoming membership, our court and our gardens.

Can Owen and Nigel make it an unprecedented hat-trick? You will have to wait until 25-28th June 2020 to find out! Want to be first in the know about the 2020 tournament? Email [kings.goblet@royaltenniscourt.com](mailto:kings.goblet@royaltenniscourt.com) to join the mailing list.

Giles Doy

# Tom triumphant

Tom Freeman, left, retained his standing as RTC Club Champion by beating Phil Dunn in a thrilling Barker Camm Cup final following the RTC Open Meeting in June.

In front of a packed crowd Phil was in top form in the first set, facing down Tom's usual attacking game with some beautifully judged subtle shots. A worthy winner at 6/2 and the betting odds were narrowing in the hazard viewing area.

Trouble is: Tom thinks defeat is a four-letter word. Upping his usual power game to 11 on the Richter scale he found an extra edge to his athleticism and blew Phil into the weeds 6/1 in the second set.

Phil's fans were preparing to count their losses in the third set,



but Phil came back strongly, aided by uncharacteristic errors by Tom in the second game. With the scores locked at 5/5 a decider seemed on the cards.

But Tom dug deep and, hitting the ball as hard as any top professional, clinched the deciding game 6/5 with a devastating display of power tennis.

## News in Brief

### New Trainee at RTC

As part of RTC's commitment to the development of future Real Tennis professionals, we are excited to announce that Zack Smart will be training among the RTC team. Zack is a talented lawn tennis player who came to the game through the T&RA TRACS programme. He will be working hard on court to reduce his 21 handicap, and develop his administrative and management skills in the office. Please make him welcome and encourage him. Thank you to the T&RA and Dedanists Society for funding this initiative.

### East wins again

John East retained his world over-70s singles title in Newport, USA. He credits his success to his Hamsters and Marauders training

### A winning mix

At the LRTA Mixed Handicap Doubles tournament at Seacourt, the final match of the tournament meant RTC had guaranteed winners, as the match pitted Sarah Lambie & Neil Sinclair versus Giles & Katy Doy. It went all the way to the wire at 7 games all with Sarah & Neil nosing over the line first. Well done to all four players for performing so amazingly!

### Ladies on top

RTC's ladies triumphantly retained the Battle of The Sexes trophy in June after a fiercely contested and sometimes controversial match. Coming from 0-2 down and seemingly having lost the third match, Karen Prottey's team clawed their way back to draw 2.5-2.5. Well played all!

## Second time Lucky!

After losing the Luck-Hille Cup in the final last year, our RTC team were out for revenge this year and they proved unstoppable. They were unbeaten all season, beating Petworth, Oratory, Wellington, Oxford and finally Seacourt.

The final, played at Wellington against Seacourt, was a fantastic victory (5-1). Huge congratulations to the winning team in the final: Oli Drew, Ross Morrison (captain) and Oli Hampson-Evans, pictured victorious with their cup.



Thank you too to the other players who played this season (Finn Hanley, Alex Neale and George Parsons). Next season we look forward to our intermediate players participating in this great event. Particular thanks to Paul Weaver who was the tournament organiser and to the Dedanists' Foundation which supported the event.

Overall, our juniors are going from strength to strength with excellent participation in our beginner, intermediate and development squads. More and more juniors are playing regular matches and are seeing their handicaps being slashed. We are really keen to get even more juniors trying the game and are particularly keen to get more girls and

state schools involved in introductory sessions. Please do let us know if you have any specific contacts in secondary schools in the Richmond, Kingston-upon-Thames or Elmbridge boroughs.

Huge thanks to the Pros for all the work they put into our junior programmes.

Sarah Parsons



# Sign up for RTC Social Matches!

Social Real Tennis matches are a great way of meeting and playing different people at different courts and can help you improve your game in a sociable atmosphere.

All handicaps are welcome. The cost of matches (in the UK) and lunch is typically £15-20 per person - plus it doesn't count towards your normal three bookings at RTC!

Upcoming social matches this autumn:

- RTC v Hamsters (at RTC) - Sunday 1st

September

- RTC v Petworth (away) - Sunday 6th October

- RTC v Cambridge (away) - Saturday 14th December

- RTC v Newmarket (at RTC) - Sunday 5th January 2020

And further afield:

**RTC v Bordeaux (away) - late May Bank Holiday (Saturday 23rd-Monday 25th May 2020).** Experience the world's

newest court at Bordeaux with a three-day trip!

**RTC v Fontainebleau (away) - Saturday 13th & Sunday 14th June 2020.** To celebrate the twinning of Richmond and Fontainebleau, we will take an RTC team to experience the beauty of the Fontainebleau court.

Ask the Pros for more information or e-mail [rtcfixtures@gmail.com](mailto:rtcfixtures@gmail.com) to sign up. Spaces are offered on a first come, first served basis. **Giles Doy**

## Remembering Robin...

Tennis came late to Robin, but that only encouraged him to throw himself into the sport, competition and every social opportunity. He joined RTC in 2003 and soon discovered the extensive touring possibilities in the US, France and Australia, generating a large group of friends, all of whom will miss his cultural curiosity and mischief.

In 2010 Robin was invited to join the Hamsters in their periodic pursuance of a youth policy. His major contribution was culinary, in the guise of a delicious pie that, after lunch, he declared to be of squirrels and other roadkill that he had gathered outside his delightful cottage on Wimbledon Common.

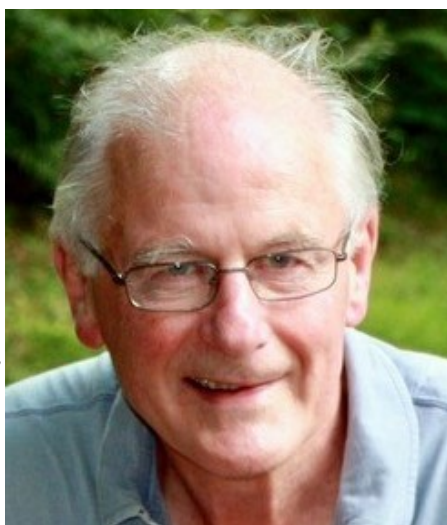
He won the King's Goblet at RTC in 2011, surprising himself as much as his partner, and declared it to be the first successful pot hunt of an extensive sporting life (which may, or may not, have included the stalking of a man-eating tiger during his youth in India).

To describe Robin's behaviour on West Country Tours or at Hamster AGMs as "intriguing" would only be a reflection of his Jesuitical upbringing. He had a gift for seeking to undermine existing management and rules, and then proposing that nothing short of his own dictatorship would suffice. But when push came to shove, he would collapse in giggles and profess that he was only, but necessarily, kicking the tyres.

Ironically, when he sought to set up his own regular doubles matches under the banner "The Elite Doubles" to rival those of East, Stocks and Ohlson, the project imploded when the usual suspects pointed out that "e-lite" might be a more appropriate title.

Always willing to draw on his medical experience, he saved one eminent RTC member from premature demise by delivering through the dedans netting a brief but effective analysis of the perils of smoking.

Robin's passing is a great loss for all his



**Two RTC members pay tribute to the late, much-loved, Robin Mulcahy 1940-2019**

many friends in the game. Our thoughts are with Pat and Robin's family.

**Nick Carew Hunt**

I didn't meet Robin until he was well set in his ways, living in Wimbledon in his own fortress, after retiring from medical practice and having taken up real tennis as a pastime. He irrupted into my life, while I was occupied with putting together plans and teams to play in handicap doubles tournaments on a worldwide basis, as well as at Hampton Court and in the UK.

He was a natural as a team member and travelling companion, and hardly curmudgeonly at all. He spent the next decade travelling with me and others, particularly Nick Carew Hunt and Alec Miller, intent on making life miserable for me as team leader. The arrangements were never good enough, handicaps were always to his disadvantage, our opponents cheats, the expense crippling...

His lawyers, Carter Ruck & Co, were always being instructed to bring compensation

claims against me for having failed to ensure that he had won another trophy, while he himself spent enormous effort attempting to organise rebellion against my team leadership, so as to displace me and take over the Eternal Leader role for himself.

I've been on several tours with him to our three favourite courts in the West Country, to the US (Newport and Aiken), to Australia, sometimes with one of the three tennis-playing Crunts, thus providing him with multi-day opportunities to complain about me, and to attempt to disrupt the arrangements. And his tennis went on improving throughout.

But the results were always the same. Huge effort to get through the rounds to sight of triumph, disappointment as we reached semi-finals or even finals, but never to win, followed by vituperative attacks against, and demands for replacement of, Eternal Leader. Never a moment of consideration for the fact that he had personally been on court when we actually lost together.

During those years, we got him into the MCC, as he loved going to watch cricket, and into the Hamsters, to whom he delivered the same treatment he handed out to me, and from the grasp of which club he constantly regretted that there was no escape, as there is no provision for resignation in its rules.

And through all these years he became a mellower person, took up with the lovely and long-suffering Pat (who became Mrs Mulcahy when he was on his death bed), and had his own crosses to bear, with the death of his daughter, and surgery for himself.

In his later days he became a better player than me, and I was able to give up fearing the letters arriving from Carter Ruck & Co. He became quite sociable and helpful, so it is with great sadness that I, as all of us, must reconcile myself and ourselves to his sudden departure. *Nil nisi bonum de mortuis.*

**Richard East, in sadness**