



THE ROYAL TENNIS COURT



The Force is with us

How we are coping with Covid-19 - Chairman's report

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The Summer/Autumn Newsletter 2020

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CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

The last time I wrote this column, it was February. All that was about to happen to our lives was entirely unforeseen. So, I am pleased at last to be able to write again in our Newsletter, to reflect on a tumultuous six months, and I hope this finds you all in continuing good health.

First, a reflection on how we dealt with the pandemic at RTC. As things rapidly changed in the third week in March, we hoped first to be able to continue playing tennis with some controls in place. However, this new

regime lasted only a few days before national lockdown was announced with all indoor sports (and pretty much everything else) closed.

Our first priority as a Board was to take all necessary steps to secure the Club's long-term future and protect the health and livelihoods of our Professional team. The Government's furlough scheme was immensely helpful and enabled us to continue to pay professional salaries



Board Talk 14/09/2020

Professional's Report: NW said that since reopening on Saturday 25 July court usage has been good, reaching 89% against the reduced capacity of 13 hours vs 16 hours before court closure as a result of Covid-19. Compliance from members with RTC Covid-19 rules has been good, the main issue being members arriving early for their game.

Finance Report: IW noted that income vs expenditure is proving to be reasonably balanced under the club's Covid-19 restrictions, as long as we do not lose more than 10 members from full membership. NW to take proactive actions with the Pro team to get more of the membership on court. We need 200+ members actively playing. The level of debt from some members remains a concern. NW to pursue.

Membership response to COVID-19: ND reported that Members were very supportive of the club during closure. Now we are open about 30 members accounted for half of the court bookings from reopening up to 13 September, though this is only a little less than in August 2019. This reinforces the need to get a broader cross-section of members back on court. The trial membership programme has restarted. The Board is looking to encourage busy 25-29 year olds to stay with RTC.

Covid-19 situation and RTC: PN (Board Covid-19 officer) noted that the T&RA's Covid-19 play safe guidelines had stayed largely the same since they were published in early July.

RTC's risk assessment and guidelines were underpinned by T&RA guidelines and it was proposed that this remained the case. The court is now open for doubles play with a fifth doubles player being allowed to sit in the corridor. Board member feedback on the situation was as follows: a) generally positive about the current guidelines given current circumstances b) thanks to the Pro team for enabling us to play with minimum risk by managing court usage and cleaning between games c) juniors have adapted well and are playing d) concern that as outside temperatures fall having no warm-up time becomes an issue, and heating the court with windows open becomes environmentally unfriendly e) NW reported that the Pros are very supportive of the court being open and are willing to do what is required to keep it open.

The Board asked PN to consider with appropriate Board members how to address the following going forwards:

i. Night Pennant playing format and modus operandi given six players present and match marking ii. National League modus operandi given up to six players present and match marking iii. Social matches modus operandi (no home match until March, but Hamsters in October) iv. Doubles - the fifth player potentially sitting in the dedans v. How to create some warm-up time vi. How to balance the need to aerate the court with the desire not to damage the court in adverse weather conditions, or to contribute adversely to global warming

AGM update: The number of people allowed to meet is still restricted by Government. The Board agreed to plan an online AGM for November. Day/time to be discussed.

Any Other Business: (a) KD noted that there was little possibility of being able to hold a prizegiving evening in the near future and that an online version seemed unworkable. The Carol Service is provisionally booked for Tuesday 15 December. However, it seems likely that numbers/active participation would need to be severely restricted and any on-court event would not be possible. KD was asked to recommend a go/no go position in advance of this date.

(b) GD/ND reported the intent to run matches such as Battle of the Sexes by team members playing matches individually. (c) SP noted that a junior British Open tournament is planned across a number of venues, and that she will encourage RTC juniors to take part. (d) PM reported that some repairs to the court are needed (plaster at lower levels). This is an HRP responsibility.

(e) NW has been approached concerning funding of the T&RA 'investing in professionals' (iip) programme and has had responses to a number of questions from T&RA Chairman David Watson. The next iip meeting is in November. NW has been working on some video coaching clips.

(f) A new defibrillator to match those installed in the Palace is now in place at the Club.

through until July. We were also very grateful to our loyal members, almost all of whom continued to pay their subscriptions at the full rate.

So, although we immediately lost around half of our usual income - from court fees and playing activities - we were able to meet all our financial obligations during this period, including our rent to HRP, and we did not have to make any significant call on our reserves. My thanks go to Ian Wimbush, Honorary Treasurer, and Nicola Doble, Membership Secretary, for steering the club's finances and membership arrangements during this difficult time.

June and July were a little frustrating as various other activities were allowed to resume but Real Tennis remained covered by the restrictions on gyms and indoor sports. The T&RA worked with other governing bodies (with credit especially to Badminton England) to lobby Government and Sport England and finally, on Saturday 25th July, play was permitted to restart. I was delighted to be first back on court with Owen Saunders at 7 o'clock that morning.

Most of you will, I'm sure, have had an opportunity to play since then and you will have seen all the Covid-secure changes we have made to protect members, our Professional team and their families. In this, we have followed all the T&RA guidance plus other precautions that apply to the particular layout of the RTC premises. I would like especially to pay credit to our Honorary Secretary, Paul Newton, who has taken on the demanding additional role of the club's Covid officer and to Nick, Josh, Scott and Lesley who have readily embraced cleaning and other duties to get the club functioning in this new world.

Chatting to members outside after games I know that you are all delighted to be back and that you accept the limitations on normal club operations as the cost necessary to create the safest possible environment. I shared some members' frustrations that doubles play was not initially included in the original T&RA guidance. However, after much discussion between clubs, the T&RA, Sport England and other governing bodies, we were pleased to open this up by the middle of August.

So, we are back, although in diminished circumstances. We have kept our financial position under close review and we can keep operating at this level for the indefinite future with, if necessary, some limited call on our

reserves, which support us through times like these.

However, I appreciate that being a member at RTC is not just about playing on our great historic court. It's also the chat and fellowship that comes from social exchanges between games and with the Professional team. It is being able to relax and have a drink in the club rooms and enjoy our usually active social calendar.

For now, I'm afraid those things must remain on the waiting list. At our September Board meeting we reviewed all the current protocols, noting that the T&RA guidance hasn't changed and that there have been new national general restrictions, including on groups of more than six meeting together.

We therefore concluded that, apart from a couple of minor changes, the current operating regime at RTC should remain unchanged.

'If you haven't played yet, I encourage you to get back on court if you can'

This also means that there is no realistic prospect of holding our much-delayed AGM in person (see Page 8 for more on this), our annual Prizegiving supper in October nor, unless there are significant national relaxations, our Carol Service at Christmas. All we can do is send our appreciation to each of you for your continuing patience and support that has been so vital.

In the coming months, please help the Professionals by observing all the current Covid-safe guidance, signing up to GoCardless direct debit for your court expenses so that they don't have to chase for payment, sending your scores in by e-mail, regularly checking the club diary and booking future courts. Lessons are still allowed so this is an ideal time to enlist some professional help to get your game back into its old well-oiled groove (!).

I remain hopeful that we can continue to play at least at the current levels and, as time goes by and things improve nationally, we can look to returning to running the Club in the way that we would all like to see it.

In the meantime, if you haven't played yet, I do encourage you to get back on court if you possibly can.

Our Covid-19 regime really does seem to be working, both in keeping members and Professionals safe, and in creating an enjoyable playing environment.

I look forward to seeing you, even if in the current circumstances it will have to be a rather fleeting glimpse!

Michael Day CVO

Life during lockdown

Nick Wood reflects on a strange time for our Professional families

Where is everyone!

It's like the plot of the latest Netflix offering - you wake up early one morning and everyone outside the window has vanished, life has inextricably altered overnight. You don't dare peak to the beyond in case whatever is out there gets in!

Of course this doesn't count when there is an ice-cream vendor just 20 paces outside and three children are on the verge of meltdown. Do we, don't we? Who, and how, do we choose to sacrifice! Episode one ends on this cliff-hanger...

The backdrop to this crazy adventure is all about activities undertaken to disarm the mutinous. There are the main (young) protagonists, collectively known as J.E.D. Constantly demonstrating cunning intelligence, they help to stimulate 'the keepers', who require nimble and creative



exercises to maintain order and some reign on sanity. Surviving in what can only be described as an paradisaical paradise whilst the outer world has gone mad!

First things first: align and feed the troops and create areas of activity. With the best will in the world, any signs of discipline quickly evaporate. Even a seemingly innocuous task such



as self-educating the offspring is a step too far: "sit still and read this, if you have any problems, just ask. Sorry, *where* do you think you are going? No, a scooter ride to see if Josey is on duty in Custody is not going to happen, unless you sit down and finish your work." "But, but but..." "NO! Grrrr..!"

The Club Dining Room has become our

Tennis and tournament chat

In spite of the club operating differently since re-opening we will proceed as best we can with our tournament play for the 2019/20 and 2020/21 seasons. It also gives us an opportunity to re-think how some of our tournaments are run.

Lathom Browne: There are seven matches still to play for last season, and the current situation looks like this:

A Grade: Simon Edmond progresses as grade winner, beating Nick Jeffery in the final. B Grade: Paul Newton will play the winner of Julian Webb vs Peter Dann. C Grade: Chris Stanton and Ross Morrison will decide the winner of C Grade. D Grade: Oli Hampson-Evans and Finn Hanley meet in the final. The winners of the four grades will be randomly paired up for the final stages of the tournament.

Barker Camm: Last season's A Grade will be played as soon as possible. Meanwhile, the first stage of the new Barker Camm competition saw Sarah Lambie take on Richard Hodge in the final of the G Grade earlier in September, with Richard taking the crown 6/1 6/2. Both progress to the F Grade draw in early October.

"Not the Varsity Match": RTC took part in four matches as part of the (now remotely held) "Not the Varsity Match" tournament for alumni of Oxford and Cambridge Universities. Oxford won overall by 2.5 wins to 1.5 wins; John Dagnall and Simon Cripps winning their fixtures against Julian Webb and Rob Butler respectively. Sarah Lambie added a win for Cambridge against Charlotte Barker, while Karen Prottey and Oliver Buckley's match split the honours evenly.

RTC's Virtual Battle of the Sexes: in the same spirit as Not the Varsity Match, the RTC's Battle of the Sexes event (postponed from the summer) is being reincarnated in the form of singles matches played throughout October. Will the RTC Ladies retain their title for a second year? Find out in early November.

In the big leagues: RTC has entered six teams for the upcoming National League season. These will get underway throughout October.

Inter-club matches: we have arranged social matches for the upcoming season. Our first match is against Wellington (away) on 22nd November. We will keep all inter-club matches under review and may need to make a late decision on cancellation. We will keep you updated as best possible. We have tentatively confirmed plans for a Bordeaux v RTC inter-club match, in Bordeaux, for the weekend of 9-11 April 2021. Contact myself (rtcfixtures@gmail.com) or the Pro Team for more information!

Save the dates: Don't forget to save the RTC Calendar as a bookmark on your phone or computer: just head to <http://bit.ly/RTCCalendar>

And a plug for our podcast: look out for the Sports Insider Podcast (released w/c 21st September), where Josh Smith, Lesley Ronaldson and Giles Doy talk about the club, the sport, the future and the Professional circuit.

Giles Doy

main design and operations centre. Building robots, created to distract and subdue J.E.D, has been one of the successes. Early on it was boot camp training, but this was soon abandoned as it was deemed too much fun and ultimately, we think, where the J.E.D force established its unity and plan for overall domination.

Very wise for their years, J.E.D do allow some time for 'the keepers' to mistakenly assume they are still on top of the situation. A little exercise for the grown-ups, maybe some free time outside.

Every opportunity is carefully measured by the J.E.D force. Planning takes place during any moment the grown-ups are distracted - something that has only been recognised in hindsight.

Not all is lost: there are some heroes in this tale. Here we see a counter-intelligence operation where,

unbeknown to certain individuals, some actual education is being achieved. We call this 'Operation Hayle storm.'

A little normality is always welcome. Casting our memories back to a time not so long ago, we now use this large space for a made-up activity which incorporates some most unusual terminology and rules. Training for 'Operation Take on the World' is tough, but ultimately we think this might catch on.

On a run of nine episodes, the creators of Habitat-Cum-Paradise are not at all keen on a second series. As a Press release might say: "We feel that no-one deserves a second series. To put everyone through this again would only bring about stale repetitive plots about fake heroes, lack of preparedness and botched communications."

However, a US winter equivalent cannot be ruled out!



It's been a strange time to have taken over as RTC Social Secretary! However, even with a much-reduced calendar of events it's not been entirely quiet on the social front!

The Chairman's Quiz was held virtually on Saturday 16th May. We had over 20 teams join in on the night, including representations from Prested Hall and Moreton Morrell keen to exercise their grey matter. Congratulations to **The Lethal Leiths** who scored a table-topping 43 points! The Legal Eagles and Four Wise Monkeys filled the rest of the podium with 40 points each.

Thanks to generous donations from keen quizzers we raised more than £500, which has been split between the Professional Development Fund and the Junior Development Fund. Thanks again to all those who were able to join us for a great night of quizzing (and some questionable guessing)!

We are currently aiming to push our annual prize-giving for the 2019-2020 season back to either January or February 2021. Keep your fingers crossed that the restrictions on gatherings will have lifted sufficiently by then – we are very much looking forward to toasting the successes of last season with you all!

We are currently liaising with the Chapel Royal about this year's RTC Carol Service. This event is likely to pose a number of challenges, given the current Covid-19 restrictions. We will be in touch with more details as soon as we are able to confirm them.

If you have any ideas for great virtual social events, do drop us an email at social@royaltenniscourt.com.

Katy Doy



Simon Cripps, left, and RTC members at the tournament welcome reception

History of the Boomerang Cup

In 1993 The Royal Melbourne Tennis Club (RMTC) invited Bordeaux, Manchester and Philadelphia to compete in a teams' handicap event. Manchester accepted the invitation, and in January 1994 a match took place between RMTC and The Manchester Tennis and Racquet Club. The match - singles and doubles - was won by Manchester.

Afterwards players assembled at the house of Allan Willingham, a Melbourne member, and burned a boomerang in his back yard. The ashes were gathered and now rest in an attachment to the Boomerang Cup trophy – and so began the Boomerang Cup. Today it is a teams' handicap doubles competition, with an individual handicap doubles competition. The tournament, now biennial, grew and grew: in January 2007 there were 37 teams and 220 visitors, including 24 from overseas Clubs.

Played in January, the tournament is a great opportunity to escape the northern winter. RMTC members are renowned for opening their homes to visitors, others stay in hotels. There is lots of tennis but also lots of time off - each player plays six or seven days out of the 12, giving plenty of time to enjoy the many delights of Melbourne.

A bonzer Boomerang!

As a first timer to the Boomerang Cup at Royal Melbourne Tennis Club (RMTC) my first impression was the sheer scale of the competition: 165 players across 32 teams from the UK, USA, the Netherlands and Australia. I also realised that this was going to be competitive when I saw the names of Julian Snow and Penny Lumley in the mix!

Teams play in groups in a round-robin section. The top teams move to the finals and the other teams into a keenly-contested plate event. There is also a highly competitive handicap doubles tournament in which pairings play in groups in a round-robin section, with the top pairings moving into the KO stage and the finals.

There is no shortage of Real Tennis on the two courts at RMTC, with the tournament starting on the 11th January and finals day of the Boomerang Cup and handicap doubles on the 25th January. Courts open at 07.15 and finish at 22.00 in order to process all the matches.

The organisation is amazing, with functions and great Australian hospitality throughout. The finals dinner and prizegiving are held at the Australian Club in Melbourne. RMTC even commissioned unique monographs from the cartoonist Michael Lindell ('Miko') lampooning all the teams.

Every team has a nickname and Lesley Ronaldson, Bruce Leith (captain), John Dagnall, Ian Barry and I arrived at RMTC as the Royal Tennis Court Thorns (think Tudor rose...).

I got to Melbourne on the 7th and after visiting my billet in a leafy

glade of the city suburbs went - rather jetlagged - straight to RMTC, walking into the Pro shop and a very warm welcome from Chris Chapman, who gave me a tour of the club. I suddenly felt right at home.

Lesley, Bruce and John took a long look at the fixtures in our group of Hobart Devils, Hardwick Hackers, Ballarat Nuggets and Seacourt Sirens and realised we had landed in a very tough group. The assessment proved correct: we had some difficult matches and only managed to defeat Seacourt Sirens. As a result the Royal Tennis Court Thorns moved into the plate competition only to meet the Scappers, another RMTC team. My abiding memory was facing Vince Scopelitti (one of the organising directors of the Boomerang Cup) and his devastating range of railroad serves, to which I had no answer. The Real Tennis Court Thorns crashed out of the plate.

Meanwhile, in the handicap doubles I teamed up with Ian Barry (honorary Thorns member and fellow West Ham Utd fan) to play our first group match against a local RMTC pairing. I had no idea what to expect but we had tremendous support in the dedans from all our teammates, family and friends.

It was all a bit of a blur but through the intensive use of what I now know is called the African Hunting Dog serve we won 8-1. I was maybe a bit too focused, as Ian actually had to tell me that the match had finished!

For me this was the highlight of the tournament, even though Ian and I won all our group matches

to qualify for the KO stages and came through the last 16, the quarter-finals and into the semi-finals, where we met our match 5-8. An incredible experience and we came off court to a fantastic team BBQ that Lesley had prepared, at which we drowned our sorrows.

A huge thank you to my teammates and to RMTC – this is only a small glimpse of what the Boomerang experience is about and the camaraderie shared, especially with the Oxford Unicorns and the Seacourt Sirens, was amazing.

It was interesting to note the other teams' custom-made shirts and rackets for the tournament – maybe something for the Royal Tennis Court Thorns to consider for the Boomerang 2022? The planning starts now!

Simon Cripps

The romance of Romsey

As a sidebar to the Boomerang tournament my doubles partner Ian Barry and I visited Romsey Real Tennis Court, which is unique - but sadly due to be closed and sold. The gentleman caretaking the property told us we were probably playing the last match at Romsey!

The court, one hour north of Melbourne, is a relatively new court built in the 1990s but used in recent times as an art gallery. It was owned by Gordon Cope-Williams who, when he heard about HRH Prince Edward making his world tour of Real Tennis courts in 2018, converted it back to a Real Tennis court in time for his visit. Gordon sadly recently passed away and the property, which includes a vineyard, conference centre and cricket pitch, is now for sale. The future of the Real Tennis court looks uncertain.

As there is no official Romsey club or members Royal Melbourne supplied us with a basket of Romsey balls and we played for two hours. The court has a glass wall behind the receiver's end and is several feet longer than RTC's court. The walls are also made of different materials, which took some adjustment. The viewing galleries are set very high and the ball has an unpredictably high bounce - ball boys would be an asset!

We finished our game with a bottle of sparkling wine from the estate to toast the short history of Romsey. It is sad it may close as Romsey is unique on so many different levels. I think a few RTC members would approve of the positioning of the lounge bar area right behind the glass wall, not to mention the wine on tap from the vineyard!

SC

Loving lockdown? You bet...

RTC's mysterious Night Player finds an empty club rather to his liking

He had seen it all before. After the Great War had removed practically every loved and familiar name from his address book, some filthy pestilence had swept in from God knew where to attack the ranks of those who had stayed on the Home Front. No longer was death limited to the trenches, now it visited the nurseries, the drawing rooms and bedrooms of the homes for heroes, the young and fit its preferred prey. This latest bout seemed to have a different target audience but the results were the same. Quarantine, the tennis court shut down, British horse racing cancelled.

Not that it mattered much to Aubrey St John Harmsworth, the RTC Club Champion of 1934, for funds were lamentably low: non-existent in fact. Friend Taylor, his previous 'banker', was absent, cowering in his cottage. Not that he could blame the little fellow; one of the Elderly Court Blockers, he was understandably nervous of the virus. Never the less, there had been an abrupt thoughtlessness about his sudden absence that rankled.

Wandering into the office he found it deserted. The staff were on Government Furlough, not allowed to lift a finger under the strictures of the rules. Aubrey had a quick trawl through the desk drawers in search of details as to how long this incarceration would last.

"This is a vital update from the Government about Coronavirus" didn't tell him much that he didn't know already - but of more immediate interest was a



handsome leather wallet containing a number of debit and credit cards, all belonging to Gideon Turbot-Fyshe, an accomplished player and a scion of the Hampshire Fyshe.

From his eyrie in the gallery, Aubrey had often watched and admired the lad's spirited play. Before the war he had known the family well. Old Freddie Fyshe and he had shared many a bottle at the Café Royale and Aubrey felt confident that young Gideon would not begrudge him the necessary means for an innocent flutter, indeed he would probably be very glad to do so.

An assiduous search of *The*

Times revealed reports of racing from around the world and his sporting soul yearned for the track. The miracle of technology, combined with Gideon's generosity, would enable him to partake and he hastened about getting the arrangements in place.

In isolation he had the use of the club telephone and Baird's visual miracle in the sitting room, surely it was not beyond the wit of man to conquer these complexities? With the families marooned in their flats, Aubrey was free to solve the technological mysteries undisturbed.

Occasionally an empty wine glass would be noticed or a newspaper tidied away but

these were the only signs of his presence, he was quite invisible. Only the children sometimes stared, as if glimpsing a shadow and wondering what had made it.

A knowledge of the television controls was quickly mastered, Sky Sports discovered and after an hour of hit and miss, the Sky racing channel hove into view. In a delirium of joy, he found instructions of how to set up an account through the club's mobile phone with the Sky bet app.

Never had losing money been so easy. Aubrey was gratified to note that Gideon's debit card expired in October 2021. No fears then of a premature curtailment to the fun.

And the world was suddenly his oyster. The Scandinavian race courses of Halmstead and Ostersund beckoned him to place his bets, from Oklahoma the thunder of hooves around the Will Rogers Downs track quickened his blood and the siren call of Hong Kong's Happy Valley made his restless soul soar.

There was a plentiful supply of the very drinkable house claret, enough beer to ensure that the next three months would be convivial - and limitless funds from the family Fyshe.

Settling comfortably onto the sofa, Aubrey felt he had dealt rather well with this emergency.

As a previous prime minister would have said: "Crisis, what crisis?"

Paul Davis

The Wright Stuff

When Nick Wood asked me if I would like to sit on RTC's Tennis & Tournaments' committee, he mentioned that there wouldn't be too many meetings, that I wouldn't have to write minutes, and that it was all quite informal.

He then dropped in to the conversation (*once* I had agreed to join) that writing a piece for the RTC Newsletter would be a good idea. Lesson #1 learned! I won't lower my guard in the future! However, having already agreed to being on the "T&T-Team-of-Three", here I go...

I've always played a variety of sports, though I focused on lawn tennis as a junior and after university when I played full-time for a few years. But, once I started a 'proper job', local rugby seemed like a good idea - until broken ribs and a punctured lung persuaded me

RTC's Peter Wright, one of the world's top amateurs, kicks off a regular column for those looking to up their game

to hunt for something safer.

That hunt saw me arrive at Holyport one Sunday morning in 2001, to try the game of Real Tennis out with a certain Mr Wood, who was the Head Professional there at the time. Like many, I enjoyed the combination of hitting, running and thinking (though I was less enamoured with the regular thrashings I suffered from opponents in long trousers and cricket sweaters).

Things have at least improved on that front, and I have been fortunate enough to help RTC win a couple of Pol Roger titles, and to get my handicap to a point (5) where I have

played events in the UK, France and America.

The unique nature of most clubs, with one court, and many members playing on similar days and times, means that our paths may well not have crossed here at Hampton Court. But, if that changes, then hopefully you can stop me (suitably socially distanced of course) down Tennis Court Lane in the future to discuss the game (there is a lot to discuss after all!), sport in general (chances are that I have played it / would like to play it / will watch it / or have some items relating to it on my Racketeer web-site), or indeed anything which you believe could be improved at the club (Nick - I'm sure that there won't be much of that). Best wishes,

Peter Wright

Now you can see how to do it...

Video coaching has long been involved in many other sports, so why not Real Tennis?

With the power and compact nature of modern cameras we can now provide videos of your lessons. You will all have experienced that one great lesson where suddenly it all made sense and you could see the road clearly ahead - but by the time you have got home it is already becoming a distant memory. Well, now you get to take the lesson home with you!

An in-depth look at a particular shot, be it a serve, backhand or volley, a video lesson will give you the visual perspective of the coach, where you can see your own actions, corrections and improvements,

providing the chance for you and the coach to reflect on previous sessions.

What to expect: the video coaching session can look at any specific shot, aspect of a shot, movement, or mechanics.

The resulting video will include an explanation of the issues, demonstrations to follow, and actions to implement.

Head Professional Nick Wood will be providing the video coaching sessions, the result of which can be reviewed personally or for follow-up coaching sessions with any RTC coach.

For more information contact Nick Wood.

Editor's Note: Eagle-eyed readers will notice that this edition of the Newsletter contains some articles that appeared in the Spring issue. This is because the Spring issue was e-delivery only while the Club was closed and not all members receive an e-edition. It is also important to ensure historical continuity of the printed product and its content. With our tennis future still uncertain, the Editor would welcome contributions, written or pictured, to the next Newsletter, likely to appear in February. Please submit copy to newsletter@royaltenniscourt.com

Thanks, and I hope you keep safe and well. *Andy Anderson, Editor*

AGM: your online presence is needed

You will recall that we have already set and cancelled two dates - in May and August - for our Annual General Meeting. We have previously sent out the Chairman's Annual Report and our audited Accounts for the last year. Given that there remains no prospect of holding the meeting in person at the Club, the Board has decided to hold an online meeting for members at **7.30pm on Wednesday 18th November.**

We will distribute AGM materials in time for this meeting and will go briefly through the agenda and then open the meeting for questions and discussion. Because of the difficulty of enabling online voting, the formalities of the AGM will be carried out on 4th December by the officers of the Club, with all members able to vote by proxy after the meeting on 18th November. While this is not ideal, it is the only option in the current circumstances.

Please do make a note of the date of the 18th November in your diary and be ready to join in - formal notice and papers will be e-mailed/sent shortly.

Paul Newton, Honorary Secretary

Trebles all round...

The Pro team feel so honoured to have received your wonderful support during lockdown. To show our support we ran a draw in August, with players entered when making a booking. One member was drawn to win a bottle of Club wine each week. Our lucky winners were: **Ron Slade, Geoffrey Russell and Lucie Stewart!**

Poetry Corner...

*On the cold Autumnish night
The Palace lights shone so bright
And the players turned up ready
and excited about their "fight"
However very soon into warmup
both conceded their bodies a tad tight.
And the following rallies and rests
Well they must have been quite a
funny sight!
It was a closely contested match
Though loads of shots were not
exactly right.*

Teresa McNaughten