

# THE ROYAL TENNIS COURT

## Hampton Court Palace



## WINNING GALLERY

THE CLUB EMBRACES THE ART OF REAL TENNIS

*See page 8 for more paintings by Clare Weatherill*

The Winter Newsletter 2013-14  
*Number 106*

# chairman's chat

Congratulations to Josh Smith, who passed his Real Tennis CPD part 1 professional examination at the end of December. It is a fantastic achievement in three months, and a credit to Nick Wood and our club. Congratulations also to Chris Chapman for winning the Henry Johns Trophy for the best all-round performance, on and off the court, by a young professional. Jean-Pierre Guillennot (JP) has not been around recently, meanwhile, as he had a long-awaited ankle operation at the end of December – we wish him well and a speedy recovery.

The Club Dinner was held on 19 October 2013, attended by about 60 people, and I believe a good time was had by all. It is a shame that numbers were on the low side, partly owing to it clashing with the half-term school holidays; hopefully this can be avoided in the future. We are always looking at alternative venues, but there are very few locations which are so convenient with parking and at a reasonable cost. Thanks to Linda Sheraton-Davis, Owen Saunders and John Halliday for their help with arrangements.

The Carol Service was held in the Chapel Royal and was attended by about 250 members and friends. There was a fantastic choir and music, and most attendees then returned to the tennis court afterwards to celebrate with mulled wine and mince pies. A big thank you to Helen Crossley, Owen Saunders and Nick and his team for making the event so successful.

On Bank Holiday Monday 5 May, we will be holding a Club Open Day. The court will be available for bookable time slots between 10am and 6pm for non-members to try real tennis. The time slots will include a short introduction on the history of the game, an idea of the rules and how to hit the ball. Time slots can be booked in advance by either ringing the club professional on 020 8977 3015 or by sending an email to [info@royaltennis.com](mailto:info@royaltennis.com).

At present we have very few juniors at the club relative to our size. JP and Nick Wood have been actively encouraging juniors to try the game, and you can find more details about what they have been doing, plus future dates for junior sessions, on page 5. Funding for juniors is often an issue, to cover court usage, equipment and transport costs. At present we have a very small fund and I hope that with your support we can make this grow so that no child is discouraged from playing the game at Hampton Court because of the cost.

On that note I wish you all a Happy New Year and a successful time on and off the court in 2014.

**Julian Sheraton-Davis**



## DATES FOR THE DIARY

### Pol Roger Trophy Final

☛ The club again plays host on **Sunday 16 March** to the final of the Pol Roger Trophy, the national inter-club knockout competition. A very strong Queen's team, who eliminated RTC in the semi-final (see opposite), will start as hot favourites against surprise finalists Cambridge, who include five students in their line-up. One of those is RTC member Ed Kay, who will be looking to keep up his giant-killing form.

### World Championship Final Eliminator

☛ In Chicago from **18-22 March** we will find out who will challenge Rob Fahey in May for the world title. Keep an eye out for details of live online coverage.

### Club Championship

☛ The A Grade of the Barker Camm Cup will take place over the weekend of **5-6 April**. This is an ideal chance for members to see the best amateur players at the club in competitive action.

### Annual General Meeting

☛ The club's AGM will take place at 11am on **Sunday 18 May**.

## COMING UP

### RTC

**16 Mar:** Pol Roger Trophy Final: Queen's v Cambridge  
**23 Mar:** RTC v Brigands (social match)  
**5-6 Apr:** Barker Camm Cup Grade A weekend  
**5 May:** RTC Open Day  
**18 May:** Annual General Meeting (11am)

### ELSEWHERE

**28 Feb-1 Mar:** Varsity Match (Lord's)  
**14-16 Mar:** Browning Cup (Canford)  
**16 Mar:** Field Trophy Final: Holyport v Manchester (Moreton Morrell)  
**16 Mar:** Brodie Cup Final: Radley v Middlesex U (Hyde)  
**18-22 Mar:** World Championship Final Eliminator (Chicago)  
**21-23 Mar:** National Over-60s (Manchester)  
**28-30 Mar:** Henry Leaf Cup (schools old boys, doubles, Middlesex U)  
**28-30 Mar:** Ladies' Masters (Holyport)  
**7-13 Apr:** Ladies' British Open (Seacourt)  
**25-27 Apr:** Category A Championships (hcp 0-9, Oxford)  
**26-27 Apr:** National Over-70s (Holyport)  
**1-4 May:** LRTA International (Holyport)  
**6-10 May:** World Championship Challenge (Melbourne)

# Catching up with old friends

*RTC's Pol Roger Trophy challenge saw them meet two familiar foes*

**T**he Royal Tennis Court's Pol Roger Trophy team could be forgiven for thinking there were only three real tennis clubs left in the country. For three seasons now, their campaigns in this competition have consisted entirely of matches against Oxford and Queen's.

In 2011-12, RTC went to Oxford and won before losing out at Queen's in the semi-finals. Last season saw another trip to Oxford, which ended in defeat. When Oxford *again* came out of the hat next to RTC in last summer's draw, this time there was one significant difference: at last we had a home tie.

## **Quarter-final v Oxford (h)**

RTC's strongest suits were up first in that December match. The No 1 doubles pair of James Sohl and Phil Dunn were expected to control their encounter with Anthony Clake and Jonny Whitaker, and they did just that. Top singles man Peter Wright added a demolition job on Roman Krznaric. The Oxford man was no match for Peter's flawless volleying and canny shallow boasts off the service wall down the line into the dedans.

So far so good, then. In the No 2 singles David Watson, struggling with back problems, would have been delighted to win his opening set 6-0, but there would be no stroll over the finishing line against Miles Jackson, who changed his serve and reaped instant rewards. By the time the younger man was wrapping up a three-set win, poor David looked shattered.

Simon Barker was a few handicap points weaker on paper than Oxford skipper Rob Walker, but Simon thrives on such matches. Having trailed throughout a long first set, he nicked it 6-5, before Rob levelled the rubber 6-4.

## **WHAT IS THE POL ROGER TROPHY?**

This is the national inter-club knock-out competition, played off level over five rubbers (three singles, two doubles) by teams of seven players.

In 2011, the Field Trophy was split into two divisions, with the newly formed Pol Roger Trophy constituting the upper tier and the Field Trophy the lower tier. The four losing Pol Roger quarter-finalists face relegation playoffs to decide which two will drop down to the Field Trophy next season, while the two Field Trophy finalists replace them.

Last season, after defeat at Oxford, RTC beat Hatfield in a playoff. By reaching the semi-finals this time round, the club ensured Pol Roger Trophy action next season.

The last time the Royal Tennis Court won the trophy was 2004.

The third set inevitably wound its way to 5-5 – but it was Oxford who clinched the deciding game, leaving us at 2-2 with the second-string doubles to come.

James Watson and Simon Edmond were up against one familiar opponent in James Bates and one unfamiliar one in student Archie Burgess, a lawn tennis player who had only recently taken up the great game. On paper RTC were meant to have the edge, and thankfully this was the case, although the pair's 6-4 6-2 win was not without wobbles.

## **Semi-final v Queen's (a)**

Revenge for the previous year, then, and a semi-final date for RTC at – you

guessed it – Queen's, in early February. A look at the team lists showed that another dose of revenge would be a tall order, with RTC rated on handicap as the weaker opponent in all five rubbers.

First up was Simon Barker, against former rackets world champion John Prens. After a sluggish start, Simon pulled back from 0-4 to 4-4, but John rallied to close the set out. The second was closer than 6-2 suggests, but the Queen's man was always ahead. In the No 2 doubles, Simon Edmond and Geoffrey Russell came up against very steady opponents in Chris Herbert and Mark Smith. Despite long rests and several deuce games, the RTC pair fell behind early on in both sets and were unable to haul their opponents in.

It fell to Peter Wright to keep the tie alive, against a jet-lagged Conor Medlow. For half an hour Peter was as sublime as Conor was erratic, and RTC were soon a set up. However, Conor settled into a groove and was soon overwhelming Peter with his heavy forehand. The third set passed quickly and Queen's were into the final.

In the dead rubbers, James Watson and the doubles pair of James Sohl and Phil Dunn were soundly beaten, completing a fine day for a very strong Queen's outfit. In the final at Hampton Court on 16 March they will face Cambridge, who defeated Seacourt 4-1.

● Two RTC members had extraordinary victories while representing other clubs. Student Ed Kay (16 handicap) slaughtered Seacourt's Hugh Latham (5) to help Cambridge to the Pol Roger Trophy final, while in the Field Trophy Robert Frost (24) was Leamington's only winner against Holyport when he beat Horatio Cary (14).

## **NEWS IN BRIEF • NEWS IN BRIEF • NEWS IN BRIEF**

### **Bridgeman Cup**

As the country's finest over-50s descended on the Oratory, David Watson narrowly failed to make it a hat-trick of titles. After easy progress to the final he was up against old rival John Prens, and at a set up and 3-0 up in the second set it all looked very promising. Back came Prens, though, taking the second set 6-4 and the third by the same margin. In the plate competition, RTC's Sue Haswell took the spoils.



*Age shall not wither them: David Watson, Sue Haswell and John Prens*

### **National Category E tournament**

After the previous newsletter went to press, your editor discovered an RTC success that had flown under the radar. In the national Category E event for those with handicaps of 40-49 at Holyport, our chairman Julian Sheraton-Davis won both his semi-final and final of the 40-44 section in straight sets – an achievement matched in the 45-49s by Helen-Frances Pilkington. Congratulations to both.



# Brodie Cup: a classic showdown

*Skipper Owen Saunders laments an RTC tragedy as gladiatorial Jesmond prevail*

After last year's Herculean efforts of trying to organise a trip to Jesmond with only two weeks' notice, the Fates conspired to hand us the return fixture in this year's Brodie Cup. Like Jason selecting his Argonauts to hunt down the golden fleece, Owen Saunders showed the wisdom of Tiresias as he selected a fine crew of men and women to embark on their mission.

It all started well: fine victories for Fraser Shorey in the 30+ singles, and for Dick Cowling and Matthew Webb in the 35+ doubles, for the loss of only seven times games in total. This was starting to make the Parthian victory over the Romans at Carrhae look like a close contest. Cowling's victory meant he has now won in the Brodie Cup playing at 50+, 45+ and 35+ matches: comparisons with the great Milo of Croton are not far-fetched.

At this point the Jesmond captain was seen sacrificing a pigeon to Nike in the

palace gardens and consulting the augurs as to the divination of the entrails. Soon things started to turn.

In the 40+ singles, Justin Gregory was undone in three sets by a canny veteran, and then Alan Dallamore ran out of puff in his 50+ singles match. Both went down valiantly.

In the decisive 45+ doubles rubber, Richard East and Helen-Frances Pilkington fought hard and looked to be on the verge of a comeback, but in the end were narrowly beaten by hard-hitting opponents.

So another year goes by without

success. In an emotional press conference after the defeat, captain Saunders handed in his resignation, pointing out that his five-year record (played 8, won 2, lost 6) is simply unacceptable.

The traditional punishment handed to losing RTC captains will now be meted out: Saunders is scheduled to fight two heavily armed gladiators, three Nemaean lions and a bear from the Caucasus in 'Family Hour' at the Coliseum. Tickets can be bought from the professionals and lunch is included.

## WHAT IS THE BRODIE CUP?

The Brodie Cup is a national inter-club knock-out competition that allows players with handicaps in the 30-55 range to represent their club, experience different courts and chase some silverware. There are three singles rubbers (30+ handicap, 40+ and 50+) and two doubles (35+ and 45+).

The competition was born in 1998-99, and the Royal Tennis Court has yet to win it. I have it on good authority that 2014-15 will be our year, however...

## A competitive Raleigh

*David Best finds that Walter was a bit of a Wally on court*

Although there is no record of Sir Walter Raleigh playing tennis at Hampton Court, the Elizabethan adventurer was a keen player and known to have attended the Queen when she was in residence at the palace. It therefore seems likely that he would have taken advantage of the tennis facilities at Hampton Court: his choice would have been between Wolsey's open wooden-walled tennis play, on the site of our present court, or Henry VIII's magnificent roofed court that was next to the Chapel, but now converted into apartments.

Sir Walter, though, seems to have sometimes lacked self-control when playing tennis. An example of this occurred in 1580 when, having just been released from Fleet Prison after finding sureties for keeping the peace following an affray, he was arrested again after getting involved in another brawl outside one of the tennis courts at Whitehall. This time he was committed to the Marshalsea to cool off.

Clearly he did not learn the lesson,

for he was in trouble again a little over a decade later. He had just been conditionally released from a spell in the Tower of London after upsetting the Queen by secretly marrying Elizabeth Throckmorton, one of her ladies in waiting. He was soon back playing tennis at the Whitehall, but started to argue with the marker over a disputed point. According to the surviving papers of his barrister, Sir John Dodderidge, when he did it a second time he was unceremoniously dragged back to the Tower. Ironically, Raleigh was posthumously dubbed 'Fortune's Tennis Ball' because of the highs and the lows of his life that seemed to toss him about like a tennis ball.

It is perhaps a pity from Raleigh's point of view that the T&RA's code of conduct – which calls for players to 'exercise self-control at all times, and to always accept the decisions of referees, markers and other officials without question or protest' – wasn't in place when he was alive, as it might have spared him some anguish.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### *It's points that count*

Paint isn't the only means of artistic expression in this edition of the



newsletter: RTC member Valerie O'Donnell is developing a portfolio of tennis images using pointillism as a technique. This image of Melbourne-

based British professional Jonathan Howell (based on a photo of Jonathan at Ballarat) offers an example of her work. Feel free to contact Valerie on 01628 676696, 07770 934880 or [valerieanneodonnell@gmail.com](mailto:valerieanneodonnell@gmail.com) if you are interested in finding out more.

### *Farewell*

Late last year Ken Crossley, father of club champion Charlie and husband of membership secretary Helen, passed on. Ken was a national badminton coach and wrote several books on badminton.

# Test your knowledge

*How well do you know your real tennis? Find out with the help of our fiendish quiz*

## World Championships

1. World champions of real tennis have been recorded since which year?
2. The Championship challenge match is the best of how many sets?
3. How many years after taking up the sport did Pierre Etchebaster become world champion?
4. Who, one day in May 1821, walked 64km from Paris to Fontainebleau (a mere ten-hour walk), played and won a match after an hour's rest, and the next day walked back again?
5. Where did the men's world title match take place in which the players were not allowed to strike a ball on the court before the beginning of the match?
6. Name the three champions who regained the world championship (1 point for each).
7. Who has challenged for the world title three times in the 21st century without success?
8. Who was runner-up in the 2009 ladies' world championship?

9. Who has won the ladies' world championship the most times?
10. Four current RTC members have won the ladies' world doubles title. Name them (1 point for each).

## Everything else

11. What name is given to real tennis in the United States?
12. At which club would you have found Nick Wood as head professional in 2006?
13. Who was the last person other than Steve Virgona or Rob Fahey to beat Camden Riviere in a grand slam singles event?
14. The Royal Tennis Court team last won the Field/Pol Roger Trophy in 2004 (see p3). But when did they last reach the final (team pictured above)?
15. Name all five clubs in the world with two courts (1 point for each).
16. Who is currently the best French



- player by some distance?
17. Two people have won the Lathom Browne Cup more than once in the past 20 years. Both are still active members. Who are they? (1 point for each.)
  18. Name the three clubs at which Chris Ronaldson worked before coming to Hampton Court in 1979 (1 point for each).
  19. Which is the southernmost active real tennis court in the UK?
  20. How many different club champions (Barker Camm Cup) has RTC had since the millennium?

*Now find the answers at the bottom of page 7.*

## How did you fare?

**1-10:** Must try harder **11-15:** Respectable  
**16-20:** Pretty good **21-25:** Excellent  
**26 or more:** Is your name David Best?  
**Richard Buxton/Simon Edmond**

## Junior development

**A**s part of the junior development plan aimed at getting more young people playing real tennis, Nick Wood, Julian Sheraton-Davis and I have been working at making contact with schools around Hampton Court. One part of the plan is to get schools in on a regular basis. This is proving difficult, as transporting children from schools during the daytime isn't easy, but we will overcome this as there is a lot of interest and enthusiasm.

Another part of what we have been planning is junior training camps, where players from different sporting backgrounds and ages are invited to come along to learn the basics of the game over a two- to three-day period.

Recently 10 boys and girls, aged 11-15, experienced the wonders of real tennis and the unique atmosphere of Hampton Court. They had a sense of excitement walking down Tennis Court Lane, and having seen the Royal Court and the club rooms they all knew they were somewhere very different.

Nick Wood and Chris Chapman, with their warm personalities and

great experience, put the players at ease. They learned about chases using the various lines as short footwork targets. They learned about the handmade balls and got used to their feel, texture and bounce of them. They handled the oddly shaped rackets and discovered the diminished size of the sweet spot compared to what they are used to on a lawn tennis racket. And finally, they got the idea of sometimes *not* hitting the ball in order to win the point!

All the players got a better understanding of the game and are keen to do more.

Nick and I have more camps in the diary for Easter (8-11 April), and the players are also keen to have their parents come and have a game, which we shall arrange soon.

**Jean-Pierre Guillonnet**

● The trustees of the Dedanists' Foundation (a charity that aims to increase youth involvement in real tennis) have kindly awarded the Royal Tennis a grant of £764 to support the club's junior programmes.

## Autumn Night Pennant

As far as the Night Pennant was concerned, it was a long, long autumn, with this final actually taking place in January. The final was the proverbial game of two halves. The team of John Dagnall, Paul Newton (sub for Tim Lintott) and Vernon Morris dominated in the singles, streaking ahead in the early part of the evening to a 3-0 lead. It would take a tremendous effort from the opposition to overhaul them... yet this is what Dan Callaghan, Karen Prottey and Paul Heaver set about achieving.

The doubles saw Dan, Karen and Paul dominating, and the comeback resulted in three wins to tie the match. As so often happens in Night Pennant finals, it came down to the tally of games won during the evening: the final result was 30-28 in favour of John, Paul and Ringo – sorry, I mean Vernon – to give them the title.

Well done to all who participated.

# Club competitions

## Barker Camm Cup

The Barker Camm Cup is well under way, with the 60+, 50-59, 40-49 and 30-39 grades all but completed:

**Grade F:** Doris Siedentopf beat Ian Wimbush. **Grade E:** Sarah Parsons beat Stephen Price. **Grade D:** John Leach to play Paul Newton. **Grade C:** John East beat John Leach.

After Doris Siedentopf became the first grade winner in October, Grade E weekend in November saw Stephen Price slip into the role of giant killer, defeating Matthew Nash, David Best and Alan Dallamore on his way to the final. Scott Levy, playing wrong-handed, took out Doris before running into Sarah Parsons. Sarah then edged out Mike Shattock before defeating a tired-looking Stephen Price, playing his fourth match in 24 hours, 6-5 6-1.

Of the Grade D 'fortysomethings', John Leach claimed one final place while Paul Newton thrashed Dan Callaghan in a much-delayed semi-final.

John Leach carried his form into Grade C weekend, where he took advantage of a somewhat weakened field to claim a surprise final place before succumbing to John East.

Grade B weekend in late February decides which two players from the 20+

brigade will join the big guns battling for Charlie Crossley's club title.

## Harris Watson Trophy

The race for the club level doubles title is down to the final two pairs and a repeat of last year's final.

Defending champions Charlie Crossley and Tom Freeman were expected to make short work of Simon Barker and Rob Oglander in their semi-final, but they struggled to put their stubborn opponents away and in the end only progressed by the narrow margin of 6-2 5-6 6-4. In what was supposed to be the tighter of the semi-finals, David and James Watson eased past Phil Dunn and James Sohl 6-5 6-2.

## Seal Salver (2012-13)

David Watson retained his title in this competition for over-50s, beating John East 9-3 in the final.

As you play off your age rather than your real handicap in the Seal Salver, poor John received a mere 12-point allowance from David, whereas their actual difference was 23. A tough ask for John, and for anyone against someone who is maintaining a handicap more than 40 points below his age. Congratulations to David.

# View from the grille: premises

There have been a number of recent changes to the galley kitchen and the club rooms that have been designed to improve members' experiences at the club.

The changes to the galley kitchen have been completed, and now all the drinks and the associated cleaning facilities are located in one distinct area. To this end the galley kitchen now contains a new sink, high-speed glass-washer, two under-counter drinks fridges and a new Flavia drinks machine dispensing high-quality teas and coffees. The instructions regarding the use of the machine are located on the wall adjacent to it; all drinks cost £1.

As members are no doubt aware, the club is experimenting with swapping the club rooms around, so that the dining room now overlooks the Palace gardens, the lounge is now located nearer to the professionals' office and the drinks station in the galley kitchen.

In addition, the lounge benefits from two new sofas and will soon be getting a new coffee table to further enhance the space. The room swap is only for a trial period – please e mail [frasershorey@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:frasershorey@yahoo.co.uk) (or place a comment in the new comment book in the professionals' office) whether you are in favour or not of this change, so that we can get a consensus as to which room arrangement is more popular. Members should be aware that the rooms can easily be swapped back to the original configuration if that is the preferred option.

Finally, members should have noticed the new abacus scoring system that has been introduced in the dedans netting. Hopefully players are making use of the facility as it avoids those embarrassing differences of opinion with regards to the game score. Many thanks must go to John Halliday for sorting this out.

Fraser Shorey

## NATIONAL LEAGUE

Our teams are again enjoying a bountiful time in the National League. In Division 2, Charlie Crossley and David Watson have teamed up to good effect and look well placed to claim a home final by topping their league. Phil Dunn, James Sohl and Simon Barker have absolutely laid waste to Division 4 and a home final seems a certainty.

In Division 6, both RTC teams are in the hunt. Paul Wright's team are surprising no one by topping the Division 7 table, and while it has not gone quite so well for Peter Mather's squad in Division 8, there are no such worries in Division 9, where Justin Gregory has led by example, meaning RTC is top in four of the six divisions in which it is competing. A strong spring harvest looks possible.

## TABLES

### DIVISION 2 (5-10 hcp)

<b>RTC1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>28</b>
MCC/Prested Hall	4	1	16
Canford	3	1	14
Oxford	4	2	14

### DIVISION 4 (15-20)

<b>RTC2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>40</b>
Jesmond Dene	6	4	33
Cambridge	6	4	31
Hatfield	5	1	9
Oratory	6	0	6

### DIVISION 6 (25-30)

Cambridge	5	5	33
<b>RTC3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>25</b>
Canford	5	4	24
Leamington	6	2	24
<b>RTC4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>23</b>
Hatfield	5	2	14
Oxford	5	1	12

### DIVISION 7 (30-35)

<b>RTC5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>36</b>
Hatfield	5	3	28
Cambridge	5	3	24
Middlesex U	5	3	22
Prested Hall	4	1	12
Petworth	6	1	12
MCC	4	1	10

### DIVISION 8 (35-40)

Oxford	6	3	32
Middlesex U	6	4	30
Seacourt	6	3	27
Petworth	5	3	20
<b>RTC6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>17</b>
Leamington	4	2	16

### DIVISION 9 (40-45)

<b>RTC7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>34</b>
Oxford	6	4	33
Moreton Morrell	5	3	28
Middlesex U	4	2	19
Newmarket	4	2	16
Leamington	5	1	16
Hatfield	4	2	14
Canford	5	0	2



# Professional news

By Nick Wood

## Josh Smith

Josh Smith is coming up to six months at RTC – wow, has that flown by! Those who regularly visit the court will have met Josh and will no doubt agree that he has been an exceptional introduction to the professional team. His canny ability to take on all aspects of the role has been seriously impressive: from ball-making and lessons to the administration and dealing with the membership, he has learned and developed at every step.

In early February Josh took part in his first competition, the Seacourt Silver Racquet. To qualify he came up against an old Seacourt stalwart, Paul Weaver, several handicap points the better on paper and with home court/crowd advantage. As a raw player, this first tournament was a great experience for Josh, who had never performed in front of a crowd. He had points in the second

set to go 4-3 up, but it didn't quite happen and he was defeated 2-6 3-6. All in all, though, a good performance and a big learning experience.

Because of his rapid improvement, Josh has also moved from Division 8 to Division 6 in the National League.

## Chris Chapman

Chris is back in full swing after the shoulder injury he incurred during the British Open in November, forcing him to miss the Australian and US Opens.

Back on his regular practice courts at RTC and with Rob Fahey at Queen's Club, he is enjoying every minute of it. No one wants an injury – however, the time off has proven to be of some benefit. Often time away from such intense concentration can be a relief, which shows in Chris's striking of the ball. A refreshed outlook and confidence will put him in good stead for the

beginning of next season. In the meantime, Chris will be arranging some 'challenge matches' leading up to the start of his first tournament back. Watch out for the dates and please come along and support him.

## Wood's Words

Keeping it simple in this edition... Simple is the best way to approach your game. Simple shot selection, simple execution, simple strategy! All helped with good racquet preparation, good footwork and a still head. Simples!

## Pol Roger Trophy Final

We will be hosting the final of this competition on Sunday 16 March, with Queen's Club taking on Cambridge. Some of the best amateurs in the country will be representing their clubs in the final of this prestigious event. Come along and enjoy some fine tennis.

# World Championship countdown

*The race to challenge the evergreen Rob Fahey in Melbourne is coming to an end*

**W**ill we have a new men's world champion this May, 20 years after the last time the title changed hands? The two-year race to challenge Rob Fahey in Melbourne is now down to just four runners, and at the time of writing Camden Riviere remains the form horse. RTC members will have noted his obvious potential back in 2006 when he spent some months at the Palace as a teenager – now, after some injury worries in 2011-12, the American left-hander is realising that potential.

By the time you read this, the early eliminators may have been settled already. World No 1 Riviere was up against his friend and doubles partner Tim Chisholm at Newport and Tuxedo (best of three five-set matches), while Steve Virgona and Bryn Sayers faced off at Queen's and Chicago. The winners of these eliminators will play a 13-set-three-day final eliminator in Chicago (18-22 March) for the right to



*Rob Fahey in 2010 after retaining his title at Melbourne, the venue again this year*

challenge Fahey in Melbourne.

Before the eliminators began, there were two grand slam tournaments in January. First up was the Australian Open in Melbourne, and with Riviere and Virgona absent, Fahey and Sayers were seeded to meet in the final.

Prodigal RTC son Ben Matthews had

other ideas, though, and an impressive five-set win over Sayers brought him his first grand slam final appearance. He battled gamely against the world champion, but at the end of each of the three sets Fahey just had too much in the locker. A 46th grand slam singles title for the great man.

The players moved swiftly on to New York. Riviere strolled to the final, while in the other half of the draw the enigmatic and talented rackets world champion, James Stout, upset both Matthews and Chisholm to reach his second US Open final. Riviere has Stout's number, however, and the final was over before it had begun, a 6-1 6-0 6-0 shellacking confirming that Stout still has some way to go – and that Riviere will take some beating between now and May.

Meanwhile, the world champion lies in wait. Although he will pass 46 years of age just before the Melbourne showdown, the fitness and motivation are clearly still there.

**SE**

**Quiz answers from p5:** 1. 1740 2. Thirteen sets 3. Six years 4. Edmond Barre 5. St Stephen's Green, Dublin (court of Sir Edward Guinness), 1890, won by Thomas Pettitt 6. Peter Latham, Cecil "Punch" Fairs and Fred Covey 7. Tim Chisholm 8. Karen Hird 9. Penny Fellows/Lumley (six times) 10. Lesley Ronaldson, Alex Garside, Sue Haswell, Karen Hird 11. Court tennis 12. Petworth 13. James Stout, in the 2010 US Open semi-final 14. 2009 15. Cambridge, Prested Hall, Queen's, Melbourne, New York 16. Mathieu Sarlangue (2.4 handicap) 17. Nicola Cavill (now Doble), Carolyn Nicholls 18. Oxford, Melbourne, Troon 19. Hyde, Bridport (50° 43' 48.3312"N) 20. Four (Simon Barker, David Watson, Peter Wright, Charlie Crossley)

# Carols and canvases

*A successful Carol Service was followed by the unveiling of the winner of our picture competition*

**T**he Carol Service took place in the Chapel Royal a week before Christmas Day and was wonderfully supported by over 200 members and guests.

Special thanks must go to Helen Crossley for organising the service. Thanks also to Tony Whitfield for arranging the orders of service, to Lindsay Hatchett, Geoffrey Russell, Nick and Clare and Josh and Emma for helping with the food and mulled wine and to Owen Saunders for coordinating the event.

Thanks also to those of you who submitted entries into the first annual 'Tennis at Hampton Court' picture competition. The winner and runners-up were on show in the club rooms at the Carol Service. The winning entry, from Clare Weatherill, is a fantastic watercolour entitled *Waiting for a Game* and will soon be hung in the main corridor for all to enjoy. This will also be available to purchase as a greetings card.

The painting on the cover of this newsletter, also by Clare Weatherill, now hangs in the club rooms. It is kindly on loan from a member and has cost the club nothing. Prints are available to buy via the professionals in two sizes.



Clare Weatherill's paintings, including 'Waiting for a Game' (centre)

## RTC Top Ten

Handicaps  
February 2014

1	Peter Wright	4.1
2	Charlie Crossley	4.2
3	Dave Harms	10.0
4	David Watson	10.5
5	Ed Kay	14.1
6	Tom Freeman	14.2
7	James Sohl	15.0
8	Phil Dunn	15.4
9	Simon Barker	15.5
10	James Watson	16.3

## World rankings

By ranking points  
February 2014

1	Camden Riviere	834
2	Rob Fahey	699
3	Steve Virgona	638
4	Bryn Sayers	461
5	Tim Chisholm	270
6	Kieran Booth (amateur)	172
7	Ben Matthews	166
8	James Stout	149
9	Frank Filipelli	101
10	Chris Chapman	90

## 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 spring issue, either via the professionals or by email at the address below.*

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## RESULTS

### Harris Watson Trophy

**Quarter-finals:** Simon Barker & Rob Oglander beat Simon Edmond & Stephen Goss 6-4 6-2; Phil Dunn & James Sohl beat Geoffrey Russell & David Blizzard 6-1 6-1.

**Semi-finals:** Charlie Crossley & Tom Freeman beat Barker & Oglander 6-2 5-6 6-4; David & James Watson beat Dunn & Sohl 6-5 6-2.

### Barker Camm Cup

**Grade F, semi-finals:** Doris Siedentopf beat David Glover 6-1 5-6 6-3; Ian Wimbush beat Glyn Saunders 1-6 6-1 6-3.

**Final:** Siedentopf beat Wimbush 6-3 6-2.

**Grade E, semi-finals:** Stephen Price beat Alan Dallamore 5-3 1-6 6-5; Sarah Parsons beat Mike Shattock 6-4 5-6 6-5.

**Final:** Parsons beat Price 6-5 6-1.

**Grade D, semi-finals:** John Leach beat Karen Prottey 6-2 6-2; Paul Newton beat Dan Callaghan 6-1 6-2.

**Grade C, semi-finals:** John Leach beat Nicola Doble 0-6 6-5 rtd; John East beat Michael Day 4-6 6-4 6-4. **Final:** East beat Leach 6-5 6-0.

### Autumn Night Pennant

**Final:** John Dagnall/Paul Newton (sub for Tim Lintott)/Vernon Morris beat Dan Callaghan/Karen Prottey/Paul Heaver 7-6.

### Seal Salver (2012-13)

**Semi-final:** John East beat Graham Prawn 9-7. **Final:** David Watson beat East 9-3.

### Pol Roger Trophy

**Semi-finals:** Queen's beat RTC 5-0; Cambridge beat Seacourt 4-1.

### Field Trophy

**Semi-finals:** Leamington lost to Holyport 1-4; Manchester beat Moreton Morrell 3-2.

### Brodie Cup

**Semi-finals:** Jesmond Dene lost to Radley 2-3; Middlesex U beat Hatfield 3-2.

### US Ladies' Open (Washington)

**Semi-finals:** Amanda Avedissian beat Melissa Purcell 6-4 6-2; Claire Vigrass beat Kathy Carson 6-0 6-0. **Final:** Vigrass beat Avedissian 6-1 6-0.

### British Open (Queen's)

**Semi-finals:** Bryn Sayers beat Rob Fahey 4-6 1-6 6-5 6-3 6-4; Steve Virgona beat Tim Chisholm 6-2 4-6 6-5 6-2. **Final:** Virgona beat Sayers 6-4 6-2 0-6 5-6 6-2.

### Australian Open (Melbourne)

**Men's semi-finals:** Rob Fahey beat Kieran Booth 6-4 6-2 6-5; Ben Matthews beat Bryn Sayers 2-6 6-1 6-0 4-6 6-3.

**Final:** Fahey beat Matthews 6-3 6-5 6-4.

**Ladies' semi-finals:** Claire Vigrass beat Prue McCahey 6-0 6-0; Kate Leeming beat Sue Haswell 6-2 6-4. **Final:** Vigrass beat Leeming 6-1 6-1.

### US Open (New York)

**Semi-finals:** Camden Riviere beat Kieran Booth 6-1 6-4 6-1; James Stout beat Tim Chisholm 6-1 5-6 5-6 6-3 6-5.

**Final:** Riviere beat Stout 6-1 6-0 6-0.