

# THE ROYAL TENNIS COURT



Picture: Clare Buckingham

## All right Jack!

RTC bids a warm welcome to our new Professional

*See page 3*

Court times are changing

*See page 3*

Fixtures list — see page 4

**The Winter Newsletter 2022**

Number 131

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# CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Well, somehow, we seem to have staggered into 2022 with the club in decent health: it has been a few months of upheaval since the summer Newsletter.

First, I should record the departure of Josh Smith who left at the end of September to become Head Professional at Holyport. Josh came to us in 2013, having hardly ever picked up a Real Tennis racquet. From then on, he poured his heart and soul into RTC, developing both his own game and his all-round professional skills. He is currently ranked No.15 in the world with an aim to go higher.

For all members, he became known for the quality of his teaching and especially the work he has done to support the development of our successful Junior programme. He has also taken on a wider responsibility in the development of the T&RA's Investing in Professionals programme. We all wish him and Hailey every success in the future.

After some months of searching, we were delighted to announce that Jack Josephs will be joining the team of The Royal Tennis Court as our Trainee Professional in the New Year. Jack has been on the liP Apprenticeship scheme at Middlesex University Real Tennis Club for the last six months and has already made a strong impression there. He has taken a lead on training the new student intake while reducing his handicap to below 30 from a standing start and winning the liP Tournament at Queens.

By agreement with MURTC, and the T&RA who hold Jack's contract, Jack will continue to work through the liP programme to its conclusion next year. In early 2022, he will continue to fulfil important commitments at MURTC while initially working at RTC one day per week in January and two days per week in February and March. He will be full-time with us from April.

As Nick has said, Jack's passion for the game in general and the development of his own game is exactly what RTC are looking for. We're delighted to welcome him as part of the RTC team.

While I'm dealing with comings and goings, I'd like to record many thanks to Paul Mather who has stepped down from the Board after eight years taking responsibility for the Club premises, and to welcome two new Board members, Paul Wright and Doug Sheperdigian. Paul is taking on the premises role while Doug will oversee internal and external communications. Thanks to both of them for agreeing to serve the club in this way.

The court has been running on a full programme since September and we're delighted that occupancy is now above 90%, which we need for long term financial sustainability. I

know that some of you feel this inhibits you playing as much as you would like. But it also means we have a vibrant club with great competition at all handicap levels. Keep in mind that there are effectively some 220 singles slots to fill every week so with a proactive approach to booking ahead, a watchful eye on the email stream of late availability courts and a readiness to play sometimes outside the most popular hours, it should be possible to get at least one game per week.

We have also been consulting on the possibility of our playing slots starting on the half hour, which we think might encourage more use of the early and late courts. We'll finalise a decision on this soon.

I was very pleased to attend part of the RTC Development Tournament in September – an event designed by Nick to provide professionals throughout the country with an opportunity both for competition plus training and feedback. All involved felt it was a worthwhile venture that we might look to repeat.

It was also pleasing to see Nick and Scott pairing up for the first time for a crack at the British Open Doubles Championship at Queen's. They had two excellent wins before succumbing to Fahey and Howell in the quarter-finals.

Meanwhile, we sent a strong team to the Leamington Open Doubles Handicap Tournament in late November where the standout performance was from Giles Doy and partner Dan Worboys who reached their final.

We had a great turn-out for the Prize-Giving supper in October and a good turn-out for the Christmas Carol Service in the Chapel Royal, much missed last year due to the Covid lockdown.

These and other social events are a very important part of RTC and we are indebted to Katy Doy and her dedicated committee for making these happen. I know that you all enjoy them, so if you'd like to ensure they continue, please do offer some help to Katy in 2022.

As I write this the incidence of Covid, especially the new variant, is on the rise again. Naturally we all hope that it won't again impact on the activities of the Club as we move into the New Year. So, with fingers firmly crossed, I wish you all greetings for the festive season just passed and much Real Tennis in 2022.



**Michael Day CVO**  
**Chairman**

## Important! Change to Court timings

The Board sought feedback from the RTC membership late last year about a proposal to change the timings of court bookings. The Board want to thank everyone who completed the online survey, noting that a large majority of members were supportive, with only a few having concerns.

The expected benefit is that we will enable an additional hour of play each day, thereby taking a little pressure off court time. Overall, the club will proceed with a six-month trial to switch court bookings to begin on the half hour. This trial will start on Tuesday 1st March, using a new booking sheet template.

The first court of the day will become 06:30-07:30 and will largely be allocated as Professionals' training time. Members can book this court if the Pro team do not. The last court of the day will be 22:30-23:30. The 06:30 and 22:30 courts will attract the off-peak rate.

The Board will review court usage and any other unexpected effects later in 2022 and make further changes if necessary.

# Say hello to Jack

I grew up in Woodside Park, North London, and recently graduated with a First-Class Honours degree in Industrial Economics BSc at the University of Nottingham Business School. I have a strong background in Table Tennis, which has taken me all over the world, competing in Sweden, Israel, Austria, Germany and most recently representing my University at the Tri-Campus Games in Malaysia. I am a driven individual with a passion for all sports related activities, including the social side!

My career in Real Tennis began eight months ago, which coincidentally (or not) was also the first time I had ever played the sport! After graduating in September 2020, I came across the Investing In Professionals programme via an advert online.

Having never heard of Real Tennis the opportunity described in the advert seemed a bit too good to be true! However, when I was invited to meet Chris Bray at Middlesex University Real Tennis Club, I soon realised what an amazing opportunity this would be for me and was over the moon to learn that I would be invited for an interview shortly after.

My time at MURTC has been incredible, I couldn't have asked for a better introduction to the sport from the professionals, members and students at MURTC, and I have Will Burns and Chris Bray to thank for investing so much of their time in me both on and off court.

I am absolutely over the moon to be joining the professional team at RTC and I cannot wait to get started! I quickly identified RTC as an extremely professional and well-run club with a rich history, as well as a supportive and motivating working environment to excel and sustain a long-term career in the sport. This led me to



apply for the role and I feel honoured to have been selected to be part of the team.

I am very determined to excel at the game of Real Tennis and I am committed to becoming a rounded professional and player at RTC. I have already been made to feel so welcome at the club and I am really looking forward to getting to know all the members!

**Fun fact:** After graduating from university I started my own business, JLeague Limited, hosting FA-affiliated weeknight five-a-side football leagues targeted at the Jewish community in North London. JLeague has already seen over 500 players participating so far, including around 100 female players! I am responsible for all parts of the business and have learnt so much along the way - check out @jleague\_5aside on Instagram if you want to see more!

RTC put in a strong showing at the Leamington Open Doubles at the end of November. Four RTC pairs entered a total field of 25 pairs, playing a round-robin group stage before a straight knockout. Nick Jeffery and his son Ben raced their way through their group, winning two matches comfortably and one tight 6/5 win. They eased through their first knockout round 6/0 but came unstuck against local Leamington pair Paul Brennan and Caroline Dixon.

King's Goblet champions Owen Saunders and Nigel Penna (Jesmond) progressed through their group with two wins from three, and

used their solid, tight, consistent play to overcome local favourites (and defending champions) Freddie Dixon and Chris Kroeger. However, a 6/3 defeat in the quarter finals to Prested's Chris Vigrass and Clive Turner ended their charge for glory.

Dick Cowling and David Stephens won their (smaller, Covid-hit) group with two straightforward wins, but a tight 6/4 loss against Slora and Lintott (Leamington) saw their chances end at the Round of 16 stage.

Lastly, Giles Doy and Dan Worboys (Prested) won their group with two wins and a 6/5 loss, then defeated Candida Nicholls (Holypport)

and Fiona Harrison (Jesmond) in a tight 6/4 win. The quarter final was one sided, with Giles and Dan overcoming the Wells father-and-son pairing 6/0, then a surprising 6/4 win in the semi-final against Leamington pair William Todd (a fast improving 30 handicapper) and Simon Gill (42 handicap)

Giles and Dan met Brennan and Dixon in the final, but it proved a match too far. Paul's exceptional and hard-hitting strokeplay and Caroline's deft gallery defending kept Giles and Dan at bay - a 6/3 win to the home team, demonstrating the control they had of the final match.

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Here's the fixture list for the rest of the 2021/22 season. For more information on any of these events, contact the Pro team. We've also included dates for selected national events and tournaments that RTC members often compete and attend. (Check the T&RA website for more information.) More events will be confirmed soon. Keep up to date with all the events on our online calendar. Head to [bit.ly/RTCCalendar](https://bit.ly/RTCCalendar) and save it as a favourite!

**Giles Doy**

Date	Event	Description
22nd & 23rd <b>JANUARY</b>	Pol Roger Cup Semi Finals	National team competition for handicaps <25
28th-30th	<i>Leamington Open Handicap Singles</i>	<i>(At Leamington/Moreton Morrell)</i>
5th & 6th <b>FEBRUARY</b>	Under 25's Tournament weekend	Club competitions for RTC members aged under 25
5th & 6th	Leamington & Moreton Morrell v Hamsters weekend	Hamsters match at Leamington and Moreton Morell
24th (to 21st May)	Spring Night Pennant	Round robin team tournament played on Thursday nights
26th & 27th	Barker Camm C Grade	Level Singles, handicaps 35-45
5th <b>MARCH</b>	Pol Roger Cup Final	National team competition for handicaps <25
5th & 6th	Bristol v RTC club match	A two-day match in Bristol, open to all handicaps
12th	MCC v Hamsters club match	Hamsters match at MCC
18th-20th	<i>T&amp;RA Category Level Singles</i>	<i>Level Singles, played in handicap bands</i>
26th & 27th	Barker Camm B Grade	Level Singles, handicaps 25-35
9th <b>APRIL</b>	RTC v Middlesex University	Club match against Middlesex University, open to all handicaps
16th	Holyport v RTC club match	A one-day club match at Holyport, for handicaps below 40
<b>23rd</b>	RTC v Jesters	Club match against Jesters, open to all handicaps
7th & 8th <b>MAY</b>	Cambridge & Newmarket v RTC club match	A two-day match in at Cambridge and Newmarket courts, open to all handicaps
12th (to 6th August)	Summer Night Pennant	Round robin team tournament played on Thursday nights
14th	Chairman's Event	Social event on the RTC court
15th	Annual General Meeting and Barker Camm A Grade Final	
26th to 29th	King's Goblet Weekend	4 day handicap doubles tournament, open to all real tennis players around the world
10th to 12th <b>JUNE</b>	Fontainebleau v RTC club match	A three-day event at Fontainebleau Palace



# Watsons are winners at the double

It was a case of 'double doubles' delight for David and James Watson, who won both the annual Club Doubles Finals which - owing to Covid chaos - ended up being played a week apart!

The COVID delayed 2019/20 club doubles final was first played between familiar adversaries - David & James Watson vs Phil Dunn and James Sohl.

The Watson's got off to the stronger start to move 3-1 ahead but were pegged back as the challengers played solidly and consistently, forcing errors from the family pair. At 5-all it the set was evenly poised but the Watsons went 40-0 up and despite a late rally hung on to take the first set slightly against the run of play.

The second set was a different story with Phil and James playing strongly and dominating from the service end where despite a late rally they took the set convincingly 6-1.

Receiving at the start of the decider allowed David & James to switch receivers and this shifted the momentum. The first three games were tight with both pairs gaining a string of game points but unable to convert. Somehow all three went the way of the Watsons and this pattern was sustained through the remainder of the set with multiple deuces, but the Watsons somehow snaffled the key points to win by a flattering score line of 6-0.



Richard Harris presents the trophy to James and David Watson, with finalist Phil Dunn

The title was theirs for a whole week as the 21/22 event took place the following (Halloween) weekend!

Eight pairs competed and some great doubles was in evidence throughout. The semi-finals saw David & James Watson prevail over David Blizzard & Simon Edmond, while in the bottom half Phil Dunn and Tom Freeman overcame Simon Barker and Geoffrey Russell in three sets.

The final was a tense affair - the Watsons keen to hold on to the trophy for more than a week and Phil and Tom pushing hard to depose the defending pair.

The first set was very tight with David & James taking an early 2-0 lead, immediately pegged

back to 2-2. All the games were tight with deuces and 40-40's but the Watsons moved to 5-3. They looked poised to take the first set only for Phil and Tom to find another gear with strong serving and positive play.

The pressure told as two games slipped quickly away and Phil and Tom held two set points at 40-15.

The Watsons held their nerve and brought the game back level to deuce and somehow stole the game, taking the set 6-5 from a sudden death 40-all.

The second set proved less dramatic as the champions took the first four games in style, finally closing the match out 6-1. Richard Harris was on hand to present the Trophies and welcomed the chance to reminisce



**THE KING'S GOBLET 2022**

**ENTRIES NOW OPEN!**

**Thurs 26 – Sun 29 May**

After a two year break, the King's Goblet is back for 2022! Entries for the Royal Tennis Court's open handicap doubles tournament are now open.

Visit [royaltenniscourt.com](http://royaltenniscourt.com) and follow the banner on the top of the page for more information and entry form



Andy Anderson, Ali Cryer and Kevin Hanley won the Bisque Real Tennis tournament organised by Giles Doy - and if you want to know how a Bisque Tournament works, ask him!

This year the IRTPA National League is being generously sponsored by **FLM Wealth Management** which means a sponsored celebration for RTC if we reach a final!

There are four teams in Divisions 3/4, 5, 6 and 8. The combining of Divs 3 and 4 has meant that there are some single figure players in that division, so it is pretty hard going for James Hamblin's team with Scott Blaber, Phil Dunn and

James Watson, but they are holding their own and gaining match experience. Perhaps they need support!

Simon Barker's Div 5 side are in the middle of the field re points but had some great matches and narrowly lost to the leading team, Seacourt.

In Div 6 Nick Jeffery is leading his troops, now second on the ladder, and he is only two points behind

the Most Valuable Player in the Division to win the bag and racket!

In Div 7 RTC, led by Captain Alex Fell, are only one point behind the leaders and Dick Cowling, Doug Sheperdigian and John Leach are all vying for the Div 7 MVP in joint second place.

So it's all to play for! Do feel free to come and support our teams. You will be very welcome.

Their dates can be seen as bookings on the RTC booking sheet. Results and future matches are on this link: [www.irtpa.com/match-schedules/](http://www.irtpa.com/match-schedules/)



# Gentlemen and players

**Murray Glover** died on November 26 2021 at the age of 88. His health had been failing for some time. He joined RTC in 1959 and for decades was a familiar face to a great number of members.

In 1972, following the so-called 'Palace Revolution' that led to improvements in the way the club was run, a new committee was formed, to which Murray was appointed. He served on the committee from 1973 until 1981. From 1973 to 1977 he was the club's Honorary Secretary and edited the club's Newsletter for many years.

On the subject of the club's newsletter, his workload, in addition to editorship, comprised the following when sending out each newsletter issue: inserting the newsletter into some 850 envelopes, hand-writing the address on each one, sticking a stamp on each envelope (no self-adhesive stamps in those days) and posting them.

How this contrasts with more recent times, when a team of "Stuffers" (up to eight strong) assembled quarterly to fill rather fewer than 850 newsletters into envelopes and had the stamping/franking done elsewhere.

Murray achieved all this in addition to

holding down a demanding job in the advertising business. As Honorary Secretary, he had to arrange the 30 annual inter-club matches which involved endless corresponding and telephoning and ensuring, in the absence of a handicapping system, evenness in individual matches.

On the Real Tennis front, Murray took up the game at Oxford – having to learn by watching opponents as, in those days, there was no resident professional at the Merton College court. It was not long before his natural ability led him to be part of a combined Oxford and Cambridge side contesting the Van Alen Trophy, both here and in the USA. In 1958 he captained the Oxford team. In 1976 he partnered Howard Angus to win the Cockburn Cup (a pro-am doubles that was played three times at Hampton Court) and in the early '80s captained the RTC team that won the Field Trophy on several occasions.

Due to hip problems, Murray gave up Real Tennis in 2003 but continued to play table tennis for his local club until a stroke in 2011 put paid to further sporting activity. He will be greatly missed by those of us who knew him; he leaves behind his widow Janet, his four children and his grandchildren

*A personal footnote from David Francis Seelig:*

Murray and I were very old friends. I visited him regularly in recent years when we tried to put the world to rights, drinking coffee and eating biscuits endlessly in the process. He stimulated my interest in table tennis and gave me a great deal of help in showing me how to keep the ball on the other side of the table when returning a shot!

I never played with or against him on any Real Tennis court but did face him on the paddle tennis court in Walton-on-Thames. For many years we played Rackets against one another on Sunday mornings at his *alma mater* Wellington College. On one occasion, Murray had just returned from a holiday in the Basque Country where he purchased a *cistera* (which resembles a large eviscerated banana) and used it on court. It is challenging enough to hit a Rackets ball cleanly but he managed to catch the ball cleanly time and again and sling it back with interest - no mean feat!

He was a consummate crossword solver, specialising in the Times Listener Crossword and two other equally-challenging crosswords. Being interrupted by anyone when he was working on the Listener, was more than anyone's life was worth!

ooOoo

The Royal Tennis Court lost one its most popular members last summer when **Bernard Weatherill QC** sadly passed away in July aged 70.

Bernard was the elder son of Bernard Weatherill, Baron Weatherill, who served as Speaker of the House of Commons between 1983 and 1992. He was educated at Malvern College and the University of Kent. Choosing a career in law he was Called to the Bar at Middle Temple in 1974 and made Silk in 2002.

It was at Malvern that his interest in sport developed and where he learnt to play rackets, representing the college in the Public Schools Championships at Queen's a number of times in both singles and doubles competitions, but it was at Real Tennis that he later excelled.

Bernard had been a member of the RTC for more than 40 years, having joined the club when his great friends Chris and Lesley Ronaldson moved to Hampton Court in 1979. They had met at the University of Kent

where Bernard's room was next to Chris's. Lesley recalls that throughout his life he always insisted that it was he who introduced Chris to Real Tennis when he took him to see the game at The Queen's Club.

Bernard served on the RTC Committee from 1983 to 1990 with specific responsibility for tennis and tournaments. At Hampton Court his name is to be found on the honour boards as Doubles Champion, winning the Savage Trophy in 1984 and 1986, and later in 2002 the Harris-Watson Trophy. Overseas he represented Great Britain many times in the Cockram Cup (Over 50s) and then in the Bostwick Cup (Over 60s). He was also victorious in the Billy Ross Skinner (National Mixed Doubles) partnering Lesley Ronaldson in 2001.

Bernard's legal experience as a QC was of great benefit when he represented The Queen's Club as part of the membership acquisition that came to a successful conclusion in 2007. As a keen sportsman he

was a member of a number of clubs including Hurlingham, where he was an Honorary Member. There he served on the Main Committee for five years and as a Trustee for another 19. He was also a long-standing member of the All England Club and the Royal Wimbledon Golf Club. For six years he served on the T&RA Council and later the Board. Off court Bernard will be remembered for his warm personality, charm and wicked sense of humour.

Bernard is survived by his wife Clare and children Julia and Thomas.

ooOoo

It is with great sadness that RTC shares with you the news of the joint funeral of Brian and Viola Mason. Brian passed away just before the very first lockdown on 29 February 2020 and Viola sadly passed away last August.

Our condolences go to Ian, Heather, Elizabeth and Joanna.



# Truly a tee time to treasure



A merry group of 18 RTC members took themselves to the scenic St George's Hill Golf Club for a terrific day of golfing and even better company late last year. The day started with a welcome at the club, coffee and a review of the score cards including team tactics. There was some light drizzle on teeing off and over the first few holes, but this didn't dampen our spirits and soon the weather cleared and the conditions were spot on.

All the teams had a great time with fantastic shots played by everyone with some rather testing but beautiful holes. The teams

gathered at the end of the day for cream tea, a good catch up and a tot up of the scores.

After a closely fought round the winners were Minty Oldham, Tom Mcneilis, Simon Cripps and David Blizzard, with the runners up Joanna Parker, Owen Saunders, Izzy Candy and Laurence Harris.

We had a competition for nearest the pin and the mens'/ladies' longest drive. Owen Saunders (aka Mr Accurate) won nearest to the pin, with David Blizzard conquering the mens' longest drive and Izzy Candy for the ladies. Both drives were well over 200 yards!

Congratulations to all the competition winners and a huge thanks to our hosts, Les Ronaldson, David Watson, Simon Cripps, Tina Grol and Joanna Parker, who contributed £450 in green fees and their time to host towards the day.

From the profit after prizes, mementos of the day and refreshments, more than £230 was donated to the RTC junior fund so a fantastic result. We look forward to another golf day next year!

**Minty Oldham**

## Sign to save Middlesex

RTC members may have seen the T&RA news announcement that the Executive body of Middlesex University have advised MURTC that it can no longer support Real Tennis on the university campus. The management agreement allows for a four-year notice period of closure which seems likely to be ratified after the Executive has made its proposals to the governing body.

Enabled by the Luck-Hille Foundation, many of you know what a wonderful court MURTC has, and how successful the club has been. MURTC will appeal the closure decision to the University, and are seeking the support of the wider Real Tennis community.

Many of you will already have signed the petition to save MURTC. The club's aim is to achieve in excess of 5,000, and the Board of RTC would certainly encourage you to add your name to the petition if you wish to support the efforts of the club to reverse the decision of the University Executive.

**Petition to Save MURTC** This link gives details of the decision and of the appeal, as well as giving you the opportunity to add your name to the supporting petition.

**Michael Day CVO RTC Chairman**

## Learning valuable lessons

The Club is always keen for members to enjoy their tennis, whether it's social or competitive games or game development, and the Pro Team enjoy providing as good a service to achieve this as possible.

More than 95 per cent of games are successfully arranged with opponents, proving that having plenty of playing members (almost) guarantees a successful booking. This is true throughout all playing levels.

It is game development that proves to be the tricky area to deliver. However, it has been noticeable that the number of member training sessions - members *practising* rather than playing games - has increased considerably. Members are taking what has been learned in a lesson and putting it to task in a training session, rather than expecting it to work the next time they step on for a game.

Whether it's Peter Wright playing '16's' with Nicola Doble or Mark Sherwin out on court at 07:00 as a solo practice, the way to make considerable changes and improvements to your game is to take lessons and to find time to practice and drill.

The Pro Team are currently trialling a different provision of lessons - more news on this to come. In the meantime, keep up the good work!

**Nick Wood**

## Welcome volunteers are welcome

We have really enjoyed introducing Jack Josephs, our new trainee Professional, to the club this month as he begins his career at RTC. We're looking forward to him getting to know all our members as he settles in fully!

We would like to hold a Welcome Event for Jack and are looking for a team of three to four volunteers who are able to plan and organise a doubles exhibition match in March. The plan will be for members to have the opportunity to join Nick, Scott and Jack on court for quickfire doubles matches. We are looking for volunteers to advertise the event, to plan, order and serve refreshments and to help with the general running on the day. Any costs incurred (eg ordering refreshments) would be reimbursed by the club. If you are able to volunteer to lead or help run this event, please contact Katy Doy via [social@royaltenniscourt.com](mailto:social@royaltenniscourt.com). We would be happy to discuss any questions before you commit.

**Katy Doy**

# The PDF - how it works

The RTC Professional Development Fund - the PDF - was set up almost 20 years ago. Its purpose is to help RTC Professionals gain increased competitive experience and to improve their playing skills and it is open all the Professional team.

The PDF is independent of the Club. The Club, of course, continues to develop the Professional team in many and varied ways. However, the PDF is in a position to fund those things that might be considered not entirely within the scope of the Club's responsibilities. The PDF can also provide extra assistance where a Professional demonstrates exceptional potential which extra funding might help to realise. For example, it financially supported Chris Chapman's Eliminator match when he was at RTC.

In recent years the support for RTC Professionals has included gym memberships, fitness equipment, physio costs, nutrition, assistance with travel and accommodation at tournaments, hosting ad hoc events such as invitation matches

or providing assistance with the costs of hosting World Championship Eliminator matches.

The Fund has three trustees - currently Simon Barker, Charlie Packham and Owen Saunders - who are in regular contact with the Pros in order to discuss what help might be appropriate.

The PDF makes a report at each AGM outlining its recent activity. It is funded by ad hoc contributions from members and also by a small levy included in each member's quarterly subscriptions.

Thanks in part to members' support of the PDF, we have been able to work with the Club to help RTC continue to develop world-class playing Professionals, which is vital for the continued health and development of the game. If you would like to provide a one-off donation or regular assistance to the Fund, please contact one of the Trustees.

Owen Saunders

## Social update—Katy Doy

In November, 60 members gathered on court for our latest prizegiving and to bid an official farewell to Josh Smith.

Prizes were handed out; champagne and food were enjoyed by all and Michael Day gave a wonderful overview of Josh's time at RTC.

Josh spoke movingly of all he had learned during his time at RTC, the wonderful privilege of living at the palace and the dear affection with which he holds RTC's membership. We know Josh was incredibly touched by the very generous donations made to his leaving gift - many thanks to all members who contributed.

A total of 175 members and guests were able to gather and enjoy the traditional Carol Service held at the Chapel Royal in December, followed by mulled wine and mince pies on the court afterwards. After a year's hiatus it was wonderful to get back to this most special of festive celebrations. The mulled wine flowed plentifully and went down very easily! There were lots of mince pies to go round too - the record for most eaten by one individual during the evening is believed to stand at four, a challenge laid down in preparation for next year!

We look forward to welcoming our new professional, Jack Josephs, to RTC in January. We

will be putting together an informal social event to welcome him to the club and look forward to seeing many of you there. Watch out for details soon.

A particular note of thanks is due to the small and committed troupe of members who have helped enormously with events since the court's reopening. Events at RTC are only possible with the generous support of volunteers and we are hugely grateful to those who have stepped up to help. We will continue to mail out when help is needed for events. If you are able to help before or after an event, there's always a drink with your name on it in the fridge!

## Turning the Tableys at Holyport

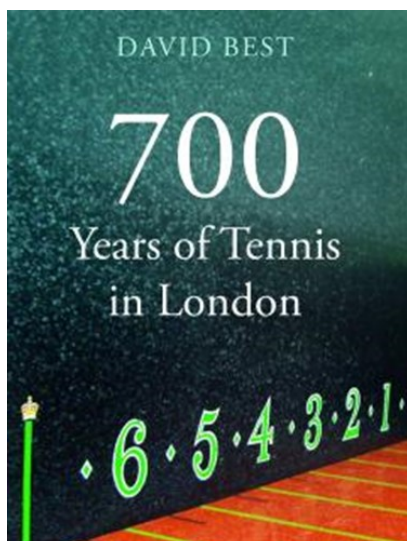
**The Holyport Tabley Vase is a one-day ladies' doubles competition played off handicap.**

**RTC's Sarah Lambie and Katy Doy played in the morning group stage against three other pairs from Holyport and other nearby clubs. With 25-minute timed matches there was no time to get warmed up and ready for play, but that did not matter in their first match which they won 8/2.**

**Their other two group matches were tighter affairs, with each side trading games until the final bell. A 4/3 win against Jill Akers and Sarah Sullivan (Hatfield) and a 5/4 loss to Ros Emrys-Roberts and Liz Fisher (also Hatfield) put Katy and Sarah second in their group.**

**In the knockout they defeated Oxford's Mary Joyner and Anisha Charania 6 games to love, followed by the final against Pam Tomalin and Chantelle Harding (Hardwick). By this point Katy and Sarah had fully rediscovered the doubles partnership that has brought success in the past, improving their strokeplay and understanding of the Holyport court all the time.**

**In the end, it was too much for the Hardwick ladies, Katy and Sarah emerging victorious 8/0 in the final. Congratulations to Katy and Sarah on their win!**



## The Best gets (even) better

RTC's David Best is the author of five important books on the history of Real Tennis, including a history of tennis at Hampton Court and the history of the T&RA. In 2018 the USCTA awarded him the prestigious George Plimpton Prize for literary excellence.

Now David has published his latest tome, an exhaustive history of *700 years of Tennis in London*, which gathers together everything previously known about the game in our great city and also features many new discoveries and revelations gleaned through his meticulous research.

It has already gained high praise in Real Tennis circles; comments to the publisher include

"DB's book is a beauty, succinct, authoritative and beautifully referenced" and "It is a great achievement and very informative and interesting. It will be invaluable for anyone who wants to delve into the background to the game."

The book can be obtained from Nick in the Pro shop for £40, or if it needs to be posted, direct from Ronaldson Publications for £45 via Kathryn McNicoll on 01865 318183 or [kathryn@ronaldsonpublications.co.uk](mailto:kathryn@ronaldsonpublications.co.uk).

A few signed leather-bound limited editions at £140 plus £7 p&p are available from the publisher.