

THE ROYAL TENNIS COURT



LIFE BEGINS AT 70

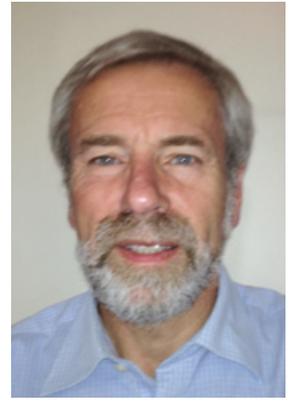
JOHN EAST RETURNS FROM MELBOURNE
WITH A MASTERS WORLD TITLE

Read more on page 3

The Spring Newsletter 2017

Number 118

Chairman's Chat



Twelve children and eight adults took part in the challenge on Red Nose Day to raise money for children's charities. The event included a quiz, treasure hunt and skills contest on the court. Congratulations to all who took part and the pros for organising. To date about £350 has been raised.

Well done to George Parsons, who has just won the Prested Cup, a handicap competition open to anyone aged under 20. A great achievement at the age of 11!

Saturday 6 May sees the "Battle of the Sexes", an enjoyable and keenly fought social (for adults) evening of tennis. On the following day RTC hosts a social match against the Jesters, which is sure to be a fun, but competitive day of tennis, with food and liquid refreshment. Then, on Saturday 24 June, is the **Summer Barbecue** in the club garden. This will be an afternoon event and tickets are on sale now. Back on court, the **King's Goblet** is a handicap doubles competition that is open to members and non-members. All standards are welcome.

Then, from 11-16 July, RTC will be hosting the **Real Tennis Champions Trophy**, a top-level tournament and what we hope will be the first of many. The world's top ten players have been invited. The players will battle it out during the week to reach the final on Sunday 16 July. This event is being promoted and sponsored by Historic Royal Palaces, with tickets going on sale in early May. Hopefully RTC members will receive priority booking before tickets are offered to the general

public, but you will need to be quick. A huge thank you to Michael Day, his team at Historic Royal Palaces, to the RTC pros and others for putting together what promises to be a fantastic tournament.

As a climax to the Real Tennis Champions Trophy, a prizegiving dinner will be held in the Great Hall at Hampton Court Palace on the evening of Sunday 16 July. Many members have asked me over the past few years when we can have another dinner in the Great Hall – well, now is your chance! I understand that tickets are now on sale and I urge you to purchase yours as soon as possible as there is a limited number and they are sure to be popular.

The Club's **Annual General Meeting** will be held on Sunday 14 May at 11am. This is an opportunity for you to meet the RTC Board and ask questions. After the AGM you will be able to view the club's singles and doubles finals. Members and non-members are welcome to watch some great tennis and there is no charge.

More details about the above events are elsewhere in the newsletter. Please contact the pros' office for tickets to social events or to enter competitions and social matches.

Julian Sheraton-Davis

DATES FOR THE DIARY

IRTPA National League

☛ RTC's Chris Chapman and Nick Hatchett host Leamington (Ben Taylor-Matthews and Robert Shenkman) in a semi-final at 6pm on **Friday 5 May**.

AGM and club finals

☛ The AGM at 11am on **Sunday 14 May** will be followed by the Barker Camm Cup (singles) and Harris Watson Trophy (doubles) finals.

Summer Barbecue

☛ Prepare your stomachs for **Saturday 24 June**.

King's Goblet Handicap Doubles

☛ Why not invite a visitor to partner you in this open competition? **Friday 30 June-Sunday 2 July**.

Real Tennis Champions Trophy

☛ This landmark event for the club and the Palace runs from **11-16 July** More details on page 5.

COMING UP

RTC

5 May: IRTPA National League semi: RTC v Leamington

6 May: Battle of the Sexes

7 May: RTC v Jesters (social match)

14 May: Annual General Meeting, Barker Camm Cup final and Harris Watson Trophy final

4 June: RTC v Bristol (social match)

24 June: Summer Barbecue

24 June: Junior Handicap Tournament

29 June: Spring Night Pennant final & dinner (20-40 hcp)

30 June-2 July: King's Goblet (handicap doubles)

11-16 July: Real Tennis Champions Trophy

ELSEWHERE

5-7 May: Over-40 Open Singles Champs (Seacourt)

15-21 May: Ladies' World Championship (Tuxedo)

27-28 May: Over-40 Amateur Doubles (Prested Hall)

6-11 June: US Professional Singles (Newport)

8-11 June: Jesmond Dene Cup (Jesmond)

10-11 June: U15 & U19 Doubles Champs (Wellington)

22-24 July: UK Professional Doubles (Prested Hall)

The Master of Melbourne

John East is making up for lost time after taking up real tennis later in life

In January many of the game's most experienced players gathered in Melbourne for the World Masters age-grade championships. The Royal Tennis Court's representatives were David Watson, Simon Barker, Fred Satow and John East. While all performed creditably, the outstanding performance came from John East, who was crowned world over-70s champion.

After warming up in Hobart by representing GB in the Danby Cup, a doubles tournament against the USA and Australia, John headed to Melbourne for the individual events. As the city ground to a halt for its annual jamboree of real tennis, Australian Open tennis and cricket, John and his American partner Dick Tanfield were just edged out by an Australian pair in the semi-finals of the doubles tournament. In the singles, both John and Dick upset the seedings by winning their respective semi-finals, and then John beat Richard 6-2 6-1 in the final to take the title. With age comes modesty and a lack of vanity, to the extent that John insists that there are no photos of his triumph!

Shortly after returning home, John went full of confidence to the UK over-70s championships at Wellington,

where he is also a member. Honours were reversed, though, as he lost to Dick in the semi-final (another RTC member, John Ward, beat Dick in the final). There was consolation as John (East) won the doubles with Robin Barlow, giving him two trophies in his first season in over-70s real tennis.

John's prowess at real tennis was foreshadowed in his youth when he won the prestigious National Rugby fives singles title in 1969. In any other era he would surely have secured many more titles, but he was unfortunate to play in the era of the game's greatest player, Wayne Enstone. John's record of coming runner-up 11 times means he must know how Tim Chisholm felt during Rob Fahey's period of dominance in real tennis.

John's switch to real tennis came in 1995 as, with injuries affecting his enjoyment of other sports, his brother Richard suggested he give it a try. Work secondments to Hong Kong meant he only got properly started in 2001, but since then John has regularly featured in the latter stages of club competitions, as well as being an enthusiastic participator in the National League. In 2015 he won the Calhoun Witham doubles tournament at Aiken.

John is looking forward to a long and competitive run in age-grade tennis. Judging by the way he speeds into Hampton Court on his high-performance motorcycle and then charges around the court like a man half his age, he may need to buy a new trophy cabinet.

Owen Saunders

After David Watson and Simon Barker helped Great Britain win the Cockram Trophy (over-50s), David had a busy time in the over-55 section of the individual events. In the singles he reached the final before coming up against the formidable Mike Happell, but David tasted success in the doubles with partner Jon Hamer. Simon reached the semi-finals over the over-50 singles before losing a thriller to John Prenn.

The events ended on a sad note as David Bryant passed away aged 68 following major surgery in Melbourne. David was a very popular figure and a great supporter of real tennis, both at his home club of Moreton Morrell and at the Tennis & Rackets Association. He was a huge influence on the RTO handicap system, having served as chairman of the international and national handicapping sub-committees. He also helped to develop the RTO booking system now in use at RTC.

Wood's Words: Left or right?

By Nick Wood

Camden Riviere has proven many wrong by overcoming what was thought to be a disadvantage in real tennis and becoming the first left-handed world champion since Howard Angus (1976-81).

In my mind, Camden has achieved two things to help him to the top. One was improving his footwork and speed about the court. Many of us thought his agility was good enough and other areas in his game required greater attention. How wrong we were! The other improvement was his backhand return of serve. Here Camden has overcome the traditional disadvantage of a left-hander – in fact I'd even go as far to say he revels in it.

With these two attributes, he overcame the might of his predecessor by neutralising his

opponent's dominant serve, and by retrieving and dominating at either end with his court coverage. Even as versatile a champion as Rob Fahey was unable counter this level of brilliance.

Advantages and disadvantages

While lefties struggle with the return of serve, keep in mind that after the return the leftie takes the advantage. Why? Most right-handed players hit the ball to the grille corner and the last gallery corner, both of which play into the hands of the leftie's forehand. The leftie can also predict this outcome and step up the court to attack the crosscourt, low net and backhand of the opponent.

A leftie may well have greater options and variation on serve,

particularly the railroad, but I'd argue that a rightie railroad, though slightly more technical, is easier to achieve a tight finish to the sidewall.

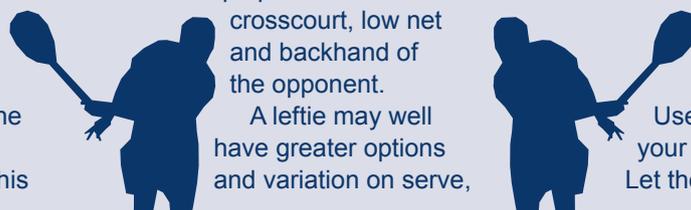
Righties playing lefties

The right-hander should take full advantage of the serve and the service end. In the rally, find your opponent's backhand as often as possible without undue risk. If you play to the opponent's forehand, keep it on the floor, wide and in the corners.

Lefties playing righties

Survive the serve, get as many returns of serve over the net as you can, and set chases to get to the service end.

Use your forehand to dominate your opponent's backhand. Let the battle continue!



Australian training boosts RTC

Our Pol Roger Trophy team saved top-flight status with the help of their roving Masters

Having lost their quarter-final at Queen's in December, RTC's Pol Roger Trophy team faced a crucial relegation decider in January. Again they were drawn away, this time at Seacourt.

RTC were quietly confident, but just a few days before the match Peter Wright had to withdraw. David Blizzard was able to step in and provided several options for the RTC line-up. Captain Phil Dunn went with his gut instinct and put himself in the doubles and Simon Barker in the No 3 singles slot (a decision that had nothing to do with avoiding the need to play over lunchtime!).

Without Peter the task was far more difficult – and became even more so when Seacourt revealed their team, which included Jonny Whitaker – who had played for Oxford in recent seasons – at third singles with a 14 handicap. Quite a change from the 30 handicap that Seacourt had fielded in their previous match. Ouch.

First up were the No 2 doubles pair of Phil and Blizz, against Charlie Danby and Mark McMurrugh. On paper the advantage was with RTC, but Charlie on his home court is very strong for a 22. The RTC pair were slow out of the blocks and lost the first set 4-6. Tighter serving from Phil, great volleying from Blizz at the net and judicious hitting into galleries allowed the RTC pair to assert themselves on the match and the second set went their way 6-2. The third was much the same, with RTC winning it 6-3.

The No 1 singles was next, between RTC's Nick Hatchett and Luke Danby

for Seacourt. On paper Luke was the favourite, and with Nick suffering from a stiff back it was not as close as it might have been – a relatively quick 3-6, 0-6 defeat for Nick. One each overall.

In the second singles, RTC's Tom Freeman was up against Hugh Latham, who despite having lost speed around the court is still a single-figure player, due to his immaculate length and cut. In the first set things were competitive, but Hugh took it 6-4 for Seacourt. In the second Tom found a serve that restricted Hugh and was able to reverse the scoreline of the first. The final set was unfortunately one-sided, with Hugh running out the winner 6-1.

The third singles was, then, a must-win. Simon Barker, up against Jonny Whitaker, may have been giving away a four-point handicap advantage and a larger difference in age, but he was back from a successful tennis "holiday" in Australia playing in the World Masters. He was moving well, serving well and established an early lead in the first set before just nicking it 6-5. The second set saw Jonny open up a 5-1 lead, but for



The victorious Cambridge team at RTC

Simon that's when a set really starts – soon it was 2-5, 3-5, 4-5, then 5-5. Then, on Simon's second match point, Jonny put a backhand into the net. Victory to RTC 6-5, 6-5, and game on for the final doubles!

David Watson was also back from "training" in Australia and was paired with James Sohl. They were up against ex-pro Tom Weaver and Seacourt captain Spencer Davies. David peppered the dedans and grille to such an extent that James barely needed to hit the ball. RTC won 6-2, 6-3 and with it avoided relegation. Now all we need is to find a way to get the whole team to Australia before each match...

It is a shame that a team with the quality of Seacourt will be competing in the Field Trophy rather than the Pol Roger next season. Our relegation battle would have made a worthy semi-final or even final. As it was, Cambridge (featuring RTC member Ed Kay) took the spoils in the actual final at RTC, defeating Queen's. **Phil Dunn**

• Ed Kay's progress has continued through a busy spring. First he narrowly lost a thrilling final of the Amateur Championship to Mathieu Sarlangue (while Peter Wright retained his doubles title with Jamie Douglas). Then Ed and Peter represented GB in the Bathurst Cup in Paris, where a Kieran Booth-inspired Australia were just too strong. • In the Brodie Cup (for players off 30-55), RTC's run came to an end in the quarter-finals, when Holyport edged them out 3-2.

Chetwood Trophy: Three go out in Dorset

Our Lathom Browne finalists put up a good fight representing RTC down in Bridport

There was strong representation from RTC in the Chetwood Trophy at the Hyde in January: as well as Lathom Browne winner Paul Wright and runner-up Giles Doy, Phil Dunn was also taking part (though representing Holyport on this occasion). In the group stages Paul battled hard to win two tight matches and progress as one of the three runners-up. Later on the Saturday, Giles edged a tense first encounter 6-5, and then took control in the other two matches to progress as group winner.

As evening fell on a very chilly Dorset court, Phil struggled to overcome the sizeable handicap difference to his opponents (26 point difference in one match!), winning his first match easily but then losing the following two.

In his quarter-final, Paul faced Ben Turner from Newmarket, who had raced through his group, losing only four games in three sets. Ben's form continued into the Sunday and he sent Paul packing, 6-2. Giles continued to be accused of being a bandit after a 6-1 win over Michael Pescod of MCC, but he came unstuck against Bruce Morrison from Oxford in the semis. Giles led 4-3, but Bruce's pace, spin and accuracy saw him win five games in a row and progress to the final 8-4. Bruce backed that up with an 8-2 final win over Ben Turner to take the title.

A very good weekend was had by everyone, and there was fantastic hospitality from the newly installed head pro, Jez Brodie. **Giles Doy**

A feast of champions

Excitement beckons in July, when the Royal Tennis Court hosts a top-level tournament

After a long period without world-class tournament tennis at Hampton Court Palace, the Royal Tennis Court will host a brand-new competition from 11-16 July: the Real Tennis Champions Trophy.

This new event, which is being organised in conjunction with Historic Royal Palaces, fits in with the club's strategic plan and will, it is hoped, play a major role in fostering increased interest in and exposure of real tennis. The event has been structured to minimise the impact of reduced court usage to RTC members.

Over the six days of the tournament, thousands of Palace visitors will have the opportunity to spectate, support and learn about the sport.

Tournament overview

The organisers have invited the world's top ten players to participate, and although the final line-up has not yet been confirmed, the vast majority of those ten players are likely to be competing. The event will be played with a unique format, including a revamped qualifying



process and a main draw that steps away from the recognised and predictable system currently used in other events.

The format

There are four places in the qualifying stage. The four lowest-ranked participants will play each other in one-set matches to nine games, and the two players with the best results qualify for the main draw. Qualifying will take place over one day, providing six quick-fire, high-pressure matches – exciting for both competitors and spectators.

The main draw sees the top six players plus the two qualifiers compete for the title, with each match now played over the best of five sets. Instead of the traditional knockout scenario, a different format will bring closely ranked players together throughout the tournament, hopefully making results less predictable than in many tournaments.

Spectators

Spectators will have the opportunity to purchase



tickets to view matches from designated viewing areas, while general palace visitors will have access to the side galleries – making for a very sizeable potential audience and a fabulous atmosphere for players. RTC members will have priority regarding the purchase of tickets – keep an eye out for booking details or ask the pros at the club.

Getting involved

RTC members have a chance to support the initiative in various ways, beyond welcoming players and buying tickets to watch matches. You could also help with the smooth running of the event by volunteering as stewards or by providing accommodation for the visiting players.

Prize Dinner

The event will have a fitting climax on Sunday 16 July, with an afternoon final followed by a Grand Prize Dinner, in the Great Hall at Hampton Court Palace.

Keep an eye out for details of how to buy tickets for the dinner (£150), which promises to be an august occasion at the end of a memorable week.

Where does all the court time go?

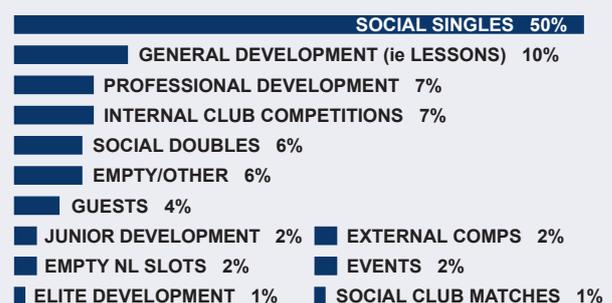
As we all know, we have a very busy court. The pros do an excellent job of filling up the court to over 90 per cent of capacity – but have any of you ever wondered just where the court time goes? How much is singles, how much doubles? Do internal tournaments such as the Barker-Camm Cup or Seal Salver take up significant amounts of court time? How much court time is given over to lessons, drills or other coaching/development? What is the balance between competitive and social tennis?

The Tennis and Tournaments subcommittee (Phil Dunn, Nicola Doble, Giles Doy and Nick Wood) have used the online booking system to find out the answers to these questions. In simple terms, we have counted up the different booking types (don't worry – it's not done manually), which allows us to divide up the 112 hours of weekly court time (7am-11pm, seven days a week) into various categories as listed in the chart. It isn't perfect yet, but we're working on improving things so you may notice changes to the online booking types soon.

Over the whole of 2016, court usage was as shown below. Each category does have variation from week to week, and there may be some overlap between categories at the moment, but it gives us a reasonable picture of typical court usage.

Phil Dunn

HOW THE COURT IS OCCUPIED



Also (negligible amounts): court maintenance, marketing/filming

National League

The club's National League teams have had a much harder winter than in recent years, as several other clubs (in particular Leamington) have really upped their games.

In the top division, however, the RTC duo of Chris Chapman and Nick Hatchett have been in contention throughout, and they have earned a home semi-final against Leamington on Friday 5 May. While Ben Taylor-Matthews is a dangerous opponent for Chris, both players will remember the 6-1 6-0 thrashing Chris handed Ben at the Palace back in the autumn. (Chris then beat Ben 6-5 in the third set in a much tighter away match - but between those encounters Ben did beat Chris in the Australian Open quarter-finals.) Nick Hatchett will be hoping it's third time lucky against the improving Robert Shenkman, meanwhile.

The winners of that tie will have the stern challenge of a trip to Holyport for a final against the Faheys.

Josh Smith and Phil Dunn both enjoyed notable wins in Division 2 (as

indeed did Tom Freeman while covering for an injured Josh), but they just missed out on a place in the final. The Division 3 trio of David Watson, James Sohl and Simon Barker also just missed out on the playoffs, with Simon also falling just short in the division's MVP race.

On paper our Division 4 outfit looked slightly outgunned by opponents, and sadly reality matched that diagnosis. Better news from Division 5, where RTC stumbled but just held on to second place in a very tight division. Fred Satow's squad will be hopeful of a home win in their semi-final to set up a final at Leamington.

RTC emerged from a ten-team Division 6 scrap in fourth place, earning themselves a semi-final at Middlesex. With the improving Simon Boorne and Peter Mather in their ranks, they will still have high hopes despite having to win away twice to claim the title.

Alas, our Division 7 and Division 8 teams struggled over the winter and missed out on the playoffs.

More praise for Wellington

Eight ladies from RTC took up an offer from Dan Jones, the head professional at Wellington Real Tennis Club, to go and play on the brand-new real court at Wellington College.

The RTC ladies (Linda Sheraton-Davis, Ann Balcerkiewicz, Helen Crossley, Gilly Nester-Smith, Jane Vaughan, Alison Cryer, Sarah Parsons and Di Wallace) were warmly welcomed and enjoyed a lively morning of doubles followed by a delicious lunch. There were nice modern facilities and the court was excellent: the lapis blue walls made the court seem bright and whilst the

bounce of the ball took a bit of getting used to we were assured that this was temporary as the court was still bedding in.

Everyone enjoyed the visit and thanks must go to Dan Jones for the invitation and to Linda Sheraton-Davis for arranging the day. **Di Wallace**

Very sadly indeed, Di Wallace passed away within weeks of writing this report of her visit to Wellington. Di was a relatively new RTC member but she had become a popular face at the club. She will be missed by all those who knew her. A celebration of Di's life took place in Old Woking on 11 April.

CHRISTOPHER LYSTER (1925-2016)

Christopher Lyster was playing regularly and enjoying his tennis thoroughly at the grand age of 89. In the past few years, though he dearly wanted to continue to play, he satisfied his tennis desires by keeping in touch with RTC and the professionals' progress and helping out during the British Open at the Queen's Club. He was the measure for sporting gentlemen on the tennis court and will be missed by all those who knew him.

NATIONAL LEAGUE TABLES

PREMIER DIVISION

Holyport	8	5	66
RTC1	8	5	62
Leamington	8	6	61
Cambridge	8	4	55
Manchester	8	4	55
Petworth House	8	1	25
Wellington	8	1	18

DIVISION 2

The Oratory	6	5	40
Queen's	6	3	25
RTC2	6	3	24
Bristol	6	1	14

DIVISION 3

Queen's	10	8	63
MCC	10	6	49
Paris	10	7	49
RTC3	10	5	44
Cambridge	10	4	27
Hatfield House	10	0	22

DIVISION 4

Warwickshire	6	4	35
Seacourt	6	4	29
Cambridge	6	3	29
RTC4	6	1	11

DIVISION 5

Leamington	8	6	46
RTC5	8	3	37
Queen's	8	5	35
Canford	8	3	34
Petworth House	8	4	33
Moreton Morrell	8	3	26

DIVISION 6

Oxford	8	6	46
Newmarket	8	6	46
Middlesex U	8	5	43
RTC6	8	5	41
MCC	8	5	34
Hatfield House	8	3	32
Holyport	8	4	30
Moreton Morrell	8	2	29
Prested Hall	8	3	23
Petworth House	8	1	18

DIVISION 7

Leamington	8	8	56
Holyport	8	6	47
Middlesex U	8	5	41
Cambridge	8	3	29
Seacourt	8	3	26
RTC7	8	2	24
Oxford	8	1	14

DIVISION 8

Leamington (Levy)	8	6	48
Petworth House	8	6	44
Leamington (Bryan)	8	5	41
Middlesex U	8	6	40
Holyport	8	5	35
Hatfield House	8	4	34
Canford	8	4	33
Newmarket	8	3	32
RTC8	8	4	31
The Oratory	8	2	24
Oxford	8	1	21
Moreton Morrell	8	2	20

What's in a name?

David Best delves into the past to solve the mysteries of real tennis's terminology

As tennis players we scurry around a court full of features with strange names, but do we know where they came from? Many of the words are French in origin, such as those used for architectural features like the tambour, grille, and dedans, names dating back to when the game was particularly popular in France.

The **grille** is the oldest feature and could be found in the early *jeu quarré* tennis courts where there were only two penthouses, like the court at Falkland Palace. In those courts the grille was the largest of a number of winning openings cut into the end walls. The origin of the term is unknown, but some historians suggest that it dates back to medieval times when the game was popular with the clergy, and that it refers to the barred openings in monasteries through which monks could talk to people outside, or possibly a buttery hatch. (This is not to infer that game of tennis has a monastic origin, which nowadays is an idea that is viewed with considerable scepticism.)

The **dedans** was introduced in France in the middle of the 16th century to accommodate extra spectators and provide a better viewing experience. This in turn created the need for a third penthouse to house it. The origin of the

word is 'interior'. Present knowledge indicates that the first court to have a dedans in this country was our own, when Charles I built it in 1625 as a replacement for Cardinal Wolsey's old wooden-walled open court.

Nothing is known of the origin of the **tambour**. It is only a feature in modern triple-penthouse *jeu à dedans* courts. It has been suggested that it may have been introduced as an additional hazard to counter the effect of the dedans as a winning opening, thereby bringing the game into better balance. The only explanation for the name to have surfaced so far is that there was once an old court in France with a figure of a drummer (*tambour*) painted on the sloping face. The tambour in our court was added by Charles II in 1660.

The painted line around the top of the battery wall at the point where it meets the penthouse roof is the **bandeau**. It comes from the French word *bande*, meaning narrow 'band' or 'strip'. One theory is that the bandeau was originally the dead-ball line in early tennis courts, because areas of the court above that line have no meaningful purpose except for the penthouse's role in the service. The raised walls' only purpose seems to have been to minimise the risk of mishit balls flying

out of the open courts. Later, when roofs were fitted, these walls were used to support the structure, as was the case in our court when the Surveyor of the King's Works, Inigo Jones, was asked to design a roof in 1636.

Chase is another strange name. Chases have been part of the game since time immemorial and feature in a number of European variants of tennis that are still played today. The word is derived from the French word *chasse* (hunt). In times past, adaptations of the word have been used to describe the whole game, such as the old Scottish word for tennis, 'cache', with the courts there known as 'caichepules'.

Sometimes a poor shot results in chase the line, but what was the **line**? The Old English meaning of the word is 'cord', although its origin is thought to be Germanic meaning 'flax' or 'fibre'. Originally the two halves of courts were divided only by a cross-court floor line. The first mention of a cord stretched across the court to separate the two ends was during the 1530s; later came fringed cords, and later still the net.

That these quaint old names have survived, having been passed down through the centuries by tennis players, serves only to help preserve the game's unique and wonderful heritage.

NEWS IN BRIEF • NEWS IN BRIEF • NEWS IN BRIEF

Court repairs

The court will close for around a week in late May/early June (dates to be confirmed) for floor and plaster repairs.

Rugby union

Oliver Buckley (right, behatted) and his Hatfield/Leamington partner Richard Bray won the Schools' Alumni Doubles (Cattermull Cup) at Middlesex University. Oliver's Rugby pair won their group and defeated Taunton in the final.



No doubles double for HFP

Helen-Frances Pilkington almost pulled off an impressive double by retaining the Billy Ross Skinner Trophy mixed doubles title at Hatfield, which she won with fellow RTC member Bernard Weatherill last year. However, she and her partner, Simon Jenks of Queen's, were denied in a close final by Izzy Hunt

of Queen's and Holyport's Ed Popplewell.

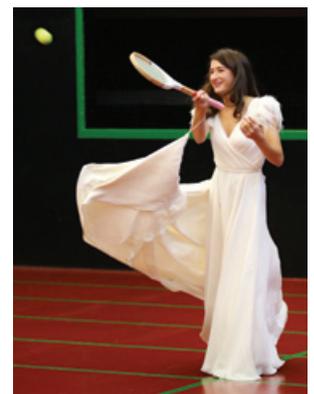


Star of the future

George Parsons won the handicap event at the Prested Cup, an under-20s event, in April. He prevailed in a dramatic final in which he had to beat a better than 3 chase to stay alive at 5-5 and 0-40 down. A fine way to win – especially with Rob Fahey marking! That success follows George's triumph on home ground in the Wollaston Cup (left) in January.

Phoebe's big day

Huge congratulations to RTC member Phoebe Webb, who held her reception at the club after her wedding to Dan McCullagh. Naturally, Phoebe made sure she was suitably attired in white before stepping on court (right).



Ladies' open day

A trial hit left lawn tennis players confused but enthused

Back in January, J-P Guillonnet invited eight ladies from his lawn tennis training sessions to Hampton Court Palace to try out real tennis on the Royal Court, with Nick Wood taking charge of their training in his calm but firm, authoritative and light-hearted manner.

Apart from one 'bandit' from the Queen's Club, none had played real tennis before, and some of them had never even seen the court. We had players from England, Ireland, Spain, Germany, Poland and Greece, so this was a truly international festival of ladies' real tennis.

Nick took the players through a warm-up and explained the court in enough detail for all to understand without confusion.

Then came a problem for a lawn tennis coach: while J-P spends a lot of



time trying to get his players to hit through the ball, Nick was now undoing all this work by (correctly, of course) telling them not to hit through it! It suddenly occurred to J-P that he had shot himself in the foot by introducing them to this game. One of the beginners described it as "like hitting a volley after the ball has bounced".

After nearly two hours on court, all players had a better understanding of the game, but there were still some foggy looking expressions on court. Still, the ladies did enjoy being indoors and playing tennis with warmth under foot and a coffee readily available.

As a result of their experience, some of the mums decided it would be a fun thing to let their children have a go the next time the club held a junior open morning session.

Fahey marches on relentlessly

Claire Fahey (née Vigrass) of Prested Hall won her seventh British Ladies' Open title at Seacourt in April, stretching an unbeaten run in the ladies' game that dates back to 2008 (when RTC's Karen Hird beat her to win the French Open). It was a perfect warm-up for her defence of her world title in May, at the Tuxedo Club in New York state.

Despite a strong field, Claire was untroubled in defeating Irina Dulbish 6-1 6-1 in the semi-finals and then her own sister, Sarah Vigrass, by the same

scoreline in the final. Claire and Sarah then picked up their fifth British Open doubles title as a pairing, beating Irina and Freddy Adam.

Isabel Candy put in a good showing as RTC's only singles entrant, winning her first match before taking a set off Freddy Adam, the sixth seed. In the doubles Isabel also won one match before losing out to RTC's Sue Haswell and her partner, the promising Dutch player Saskia Bollerman. Their run ended in the semi-finals against Fahey and Vigrass.

RTC Top Ten

Singles handicaps
April 2017

1	Ed Kay	0.7
2	Peter Wright	6.2
3	Nick Hatchett	6.8
4	Charlie Crossley	9.5
5	Phil Dunn	14.1
6	Tom Freeman	14.8
7	David Watson	17.2
8	James Watson	18.3
9	Simon Barker	18.4
10	James Sohl	19.1

YOUR NEWSLETTER NEEDS YOU!

After nine years, the editor has decided it's time to hang up his mouse. Do you fancy taking on this challenging but immensely enjoyable role? If so, please get in touch via the professionals or by emailing newsletter@royaltenniscourt.com

SUMMER HOG ROAST

After a well earned break last year, the BBQ team are at it again and will be holding a hog roast in the garden from 1-5pm on the afternoon of **Saturday 24 June**, with guests welcome to carry on socialising in the garden into the evening if they wish.

There will be fine food, a chance for guests to learn something about real tennis, and fun and games for youngsters. Tickets are available from the professionals (£20 for adults, £10 for juniors over 16, free for under-16s).

RESULTS

Barker Camm Cup (Club championship singles)

D Grade, semi-finals: John Dagnall beat Adrian Hughes 6-4 4-6 6-3; Andrew Fleming beat Ben Simonds-Gooding 6-2 6-1. **Final:** Dagnall beat Fleming 6-2 6-4.

C Grade, semi-finals: Peter Mather beat George Sleightholme 4-6 6-5 6-4; Simon Boorne beat Scott Levy 6-5 6-0. **Final:** Mather beat Boorne 2-6 6-4 6-5.

B Grade, semi-finals: Geoffrey Russell beat Mark McMurrugh 6-5 6-2; David Blizzard beat Chris Swan 6-4 6-3. **Final:** Russell beat Blizzard 6-2 6-4.

Lathom Browne Cup

Quarter-finals line-up: Adrian Larkin v Alex Barker; Matt Haswell or David Blizzard v Paul Heaver; Benedict Treloar v Stephen Barbour; John Mather v Fred Satow or Michael Day.

Pol Roger Trophy

Relegation playoff: Seacourt lost to RTC 2-3. **Final (at RTC):** Cambridge beat Queen's 4-1.

Brodie Cup

Quarter-finals: RTC lost to Holyport 2-3.

Australian Open (Melbourne)

Quarter-finals: Ben Taylor-Matthews beat Chris Chapman 6-3 6-5 5-6 2-6 6-4. **Semi-finals:** Camden Riviere beat Taylor-Matthews 6-1 6-1 6-0; Steve Virgona beat Rob Fahey 6-5 4-6 1-6 6-3 6-1. **Final:** Riviere beat Virgona 6-3 6-3 4-6 6-4.

US Open (Philadelphia)

Semi-finals: Camden Riviere beat Ben Taylor-Matthews 6-0 6-2 6-3; Rob Fahey beat Steve Virgona 6-5 6-4 6-2. **Final:** Riviere beat Fahey 6-4 6-4 6-3.

Ladies' British Open (Seacourt)

2nd round: Frederika Adam beat Isabel Candy 6-3 6-5 5-6 2-6 6-4. **Semi-finals:** Claire Fahey beat Irina Dulbish 6-1 6-1; Sarah Vigrass beat Saskia Bollerman 3-6 6-3 6-0. **Final:** Fahey beat Vigrass 6-1 6-1.