

# Radley College Tennis Court

6 July 2020

'A Yard and a Half' - The Newsletter

## The Umpteenth Week of Shutdown

### Bad News

Most of us probably shared the hope and expectation that we would be playing real tennis again, in some form or other, in early July, when indoor sports facilities were confidently expected to re-open. Alas, that was not to be.

The wait continues and we are not aware of the imminent opening of any UK club.

### Better News

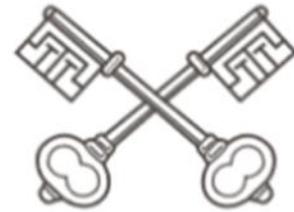
The FCO Travel Advisory has been lifted for a number of countries, including France and Spain, from Saturday 4 July, and there will be no quarantine for travellers returning to the UK from those countries after 10 July.

### Good News

There has been a momentous development, and that is the opening (at long, long last) of the much anticipated and brand new jeu de paume de Bordeaux. A report follows later in this newsletter. The opening of another court to add to the world's tally is always something to celebrate, and, in these difficult days, doubly so.

As far as we know, the courts in play stand thus: Aiken (which barely closed at all), The National Tennis Club in Newport, Rhode Island (which re-opened on 1 June) and Prince's Club in Washington (15 June), followed by Royal Melbourne and the courts of France. Play has returned to every nation that possesses a court, except England.

How depressing is that?



**RADLEY**  
REAL TENNIS

### Ready for Re-opening

Our governing body, the Tennis and Rackets Association, has been consulting with clubs and professionals about what changes will need to be made to ensure that participation will be as safe as possible for all players of the game. The T&RA's recommendations are expected imminently and when they arrive, we will adapt them for our own needs. We are also conferring with the Oxford club, as it makes sense to share best practice with our nearest neighbour.

### Radley College Tennis Club

There will need to be some changes, on and off the court, to make Radley ready for the resumption of play. It makes sense to combine these necessary alterations with some cosmetic improvements to the club, which has been in continuous and intense use over the past twelve years and is starting to show it.

Given the huge financial and logistical burden falling on Radley College as a result of the pandemic, we will be asking our members for some help to enable

us ready to re-open and play-on in appropriate style. We have the finest group of members that any club could wish for and we want our facilities to be up to the mark in every way.

We are using this edition of the newsletter to give advance notice of an appeal to raise sufficient money to enable us to re-fit and re-style the clubroom; allowing us to make the most of the excellent technology that exists for marking, filming and streaming matches; to improve our catering facilities; and, importantly, to improve and enlarge the working area of our tireless Pros.

Maggie is working with the College to co-ordinate the fund-raising and re-furbishing plan. When this stage is complete, we will send out further details. We realise that the pandemic has caused extraordinary pressure on businesses and individuals and we appreciate that it is a difficult time to ask for donations, but we hope that you will be in the position of being able to consider making a contribution when the moment comes. More on this in due course.

When a re-opening date has been announced, we will be ready to tell about the procedures that will be in place to protect all users of the club, be they members, school users or the professionals.

We want the club's response to Covid to be robust and, while the situation is challenging, it is also one we can turn to positive effect, in re-equipping our club and making it ready for the next decade.

### **The Professional Team**

Levi remains in Dorset, although we fear he may not be able to get near his local beach for the pressure of day trippers. We hope Bridport has fared rather better in that respect than Bournemouth recently.

Nino has been honing his racquet skills in readiness for a return to real tennis by playing padel at Prested, although eleven hours of play within 24 hours last weekend was probably over-doing it, he admits. He has the blisters to prove it.

As for our esteemed Head Pro, we must report that CJR has left Radley. For more details, read on...

### **Bordeaux**

CJR has gone AW(O)L, that is, Absent With Leave. He is still furloughed by Radley College, but the school has, with typical generosity, allowed him to work for another club, on a *pro bono* basis.



### **JEU DE PAUME DE BORDEAUX**

The first arrival in Bordeaux from Radley was a set of new balls, which CJR has presented (a handsome gift, indeed) to Le Jeu de Paume de Bordeaux. He had been making one ball a day during the Shutdown and the set he sent over arrived there in mid-June.

The plan is that CJR, Maggie and an international team will open the court and generate some momentum during what is left of this season. The few remaining members need lessons, court time, opponents, racquets and re-strings and there will be a good deal to do to help them develop regular playing routines again, after a break of seven years since the previous court closed.

The time of year will make it a considerable challenge to attract new players to the game and new members to the club, but the team from Radley will do its very best to build momentum.

Bearing a letter from the President of the Bordeaux club, confirming his 'essential worker' status, CJR crossed into France via Le Shuttle a week ago. For the record, despite the FCO Travel Advisory and quarantine in both directions remaining in place, no one on border patrol duty seemed to have the slightest interest in seeing any documentation apart from a passport. Boarding was apparently both smooth and swift.

So it was that CJR, accompanied by Mike and Henry Henman (Absent With Leave from workplace and school respectively), passed without let or hindrance into France. The advance guard drove all the way in a day (not recommended), arriving in the early hours of Sunday, and they had their first look at the court later that day.



The team that will run the Bordeaux court will be a mixture of men and women, seniors and juniors, pros and amateurs, locals and visitors and ranging from very experienced players to absolute beginners. CJR and the Henmans will be joined on 8 July by Claire Henman and MHT.

In the past few days, Florent Brethon has travelled down from Tours to join the team. He has just completed his schooling and will be going to university in the Autumn to study Engineering. Florent wrote to CJR last year, asking whether he could combine tennis with improving his English by working over this summer at Radley, for board and lodging.

He was not deflected when it was explained that we were actually NOT a lawn tennis club and so it was agreed that, when and if we were able to help in Bordeaux, he would join us there, see the game for the first time and try his hand.

Florent went on court for the first time on Friday and it has been reported that, after playing for about 90 minutes, he has a sub-50 handicap. He has made a promising start in every way, and we hope that his presence, and that of others in the younger age bracket, will attract other juniors to try real tennis.



The building is both attractive and impressive, inside and outside, by night or day. Now that travelling to France is possible again, please come out and see for yourself!

The floor and walls play well, the ceiling is very high and the light is good. The fitting-out of the ground, first and second floor clubrooms and viewing galleries is not yet complete, but the fact that the court is in play is the most important thing.

There were some problems with the surface of the floor and remedial work was carried out several months ago. This re-surfacing has created a great deal of dust and a 'wet' clean of the floor is needed several times each day.

Events of various kinds are being planned.

There was a welcome event last week for current club members to meet the Radley contingent and the local players relished the opportunity to get on court with some decent balls, at last.

Eight members of the Jeu de Paume de Navarre travelled down to play on the Bordeaux court on Sunday 5 July and, for some of them, it was their first opportunity to play on a full-sized and complete court de dedans. They told us that there are, once again, encouraging noises from the Mayor's office in Pau about the re-opening of the tennis court there. It is an exact copy of the second court at the Louvre, was built in 1887 and although adapted for trinquet, tennis can be played there occasionally.

## Tennis on the Internet

### Camden Riviere

In past editions, we have featured several YouTube videos from former World Champion, Camden Riviere.

Here is another one you might enjoy:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2SgTOxny6bc>, which is a compilation of some of his finest shots in the World Championship in 2016 in Newport, when he took the title from Rob Fahey.

A rather more balanced edit of some of the passages of play from Newport, showing the extraordinary shot-making of both players, can be enjoyed using the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-VBgq2S3J28&t=63s>.

It is encouraging to read that the second of these two YouTube videos has been watched an impressive 45,000 times since it was posted in February 2017. By contrast, a video of the highlights of the first day's play from the 2018 World Championship

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nwuJaj\\_GQV0&t=172s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nwuJaj_GQV0&t=172s) has been viewed about 1500 times.

### Tennis events

20 June 2020 marked the seventh celebration of International Tennis Day, or 'ITD'. The idea of marking a day in the annual calendar for the celebration of everything to do with real tennis came from the sport's governing body in the US, the United States Court Tennis Association.

In past years, Radley has been one of the most active participants in ITD, staging tennis marathons and events all day that even spilt over into three days one year, when we recorded 54 hours of continuous play.

No such extreme performances were possible this year and so, instead, a Zoom call was organised by the USCTA at an unpleasantly early time for the Americans, an easy time for the Brits and a possible time for the Australians.

It was splendid, as several people who joined the call commented, to have the opportunity to see old friends in the international tennis community, swap stories about experiences of the pandemic restrictions and reminisce about the good old days when we could play tennis rather than just talk about it.



We will have to think of a suitable way of marking ITD in 2021, but at this point just playing at all sounds wildly exciting.

### Tennis Overseas

#### France

On the ITD Zoom call, we heard about the early-stage plans for the construction of a new court in central Paris, which would be extremely exciting. More news on this as soon as we have it.

#### Holland

Representatives of the Dutch Real Tennis Association, the *Nederlandse Real Tennis Bond*, are in discussions with a lawn tennis club in The Hague about the possibility of re-purposing a little-used indoor tennis hall.

We appreciate that conversations about major capital projects, or any kind of unplanned expenditure, are difficult to have in the present climate and so are impressed and pleased to hear that discussions have been initiated in the past few weeks and are moving forward purposefully.

The Dutch Championships, held for the past 12 years at Radley, will take place in August in Bordeaux. The format will have to be altered to accommodate rules on groups, indoor play, distancing and the rest, but it is very good to know that there will be some sort of tournament this summer.



We hope that Paul Bollerman will travel down to defend his Men's Singles title and that Stephanie Zaajier will make a stand to retain her first Ladies' Singles title.

### Competition Corner

#### Sports Trivia Quiz -

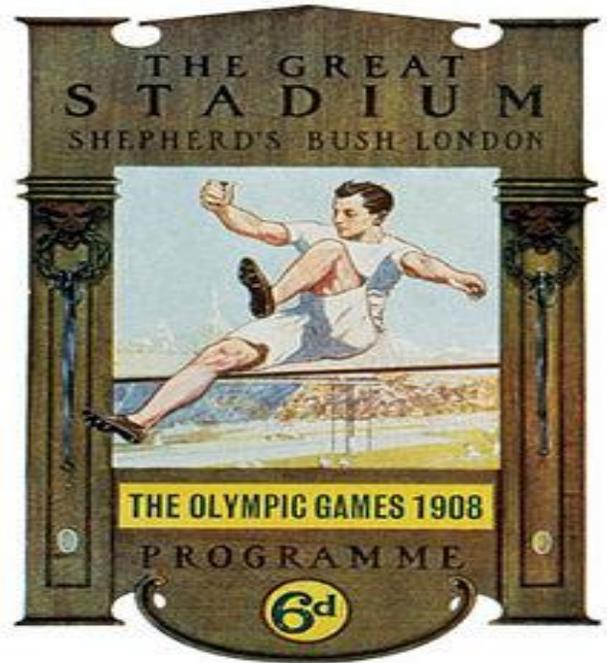
By now, we have all built a fairly encyclopedic knowledge of the 1908 London Olympics. But there is more!

Not only has a piece of film of the Games come to light that may be of interest, but more trivia has been unearthed. The video is better enjoyed without the music, we feel, even when it is an accompaniment to the synchronized penny-farthing riding (yes, really): <https://www.olympic.org/london-1908>.

The 1908 Games were notable for being the first and last in which Jeu de Paume and Rackets were played, although 'Longue Paume' was an Exhibition Event in the Olympic Games of 1900 and 'Real Tennis' (alongside 'Basque Pelota') was an Exhibition Event in 1924. In both these years the Summer Games were held in Paris.

Firstly, one correction must be made. Jay Gould II, the American who won the Gold Medal, was not the only American to participate in the Jeu de Paume competition, as erroneously claimed in the last newsletter.

Out of the total of eleven competitors, two were American and the rest represented the United Kingdom. The American Charles Sands finished in ninth (and last) place, jointly with the domestic players William Cazalet and Charles Tatham.



Are these statements true or false?

1. The Jeu de Paume competition was held at the court at Lord's Cricket Ground.
2. The United Kingdom, with a team of 676 competitors, finished first in the medal table for the first and only time in Olympic history and won over 150 medals.
3. Lasting a total of 187 days, or 6 months and 4 days, these games were the longest in modern history.
4. The middleweight Greco-Roman wrestling final between Swedes Frithiof Martensson and Mauritz Andersson was postponed by one day to allow Martensson to recover from

a minor injury. Martensson duly recovered and won the Gold Medal.

5. The London Games contained some winter sports, including four figure-skating events.
  6. The first African-American to win a Gold Medal at any Olympic Games was John Taylor, in the medley relay team. This event, no longer included in the Olympics but ripe for restoration, comprised a team of four men, of whom two ran 200 ms and the other two ran 400 and 800 ms, respectively.
- Very sadly, Taylor died, less than five months after the Games, of typhoid fever.
7. The Swedish swimming team contained a lemming.
  8. Women participated in two events only; lawn tennis and archery.
  9. The diving events included one entitled 'Fancy Diving'.

Answers to all these questions will appear in the next edition of the 'Shutdown Newsletter' (if there is one) or in the periodic 'Yard and a Half' club newsletter.

### Word Play

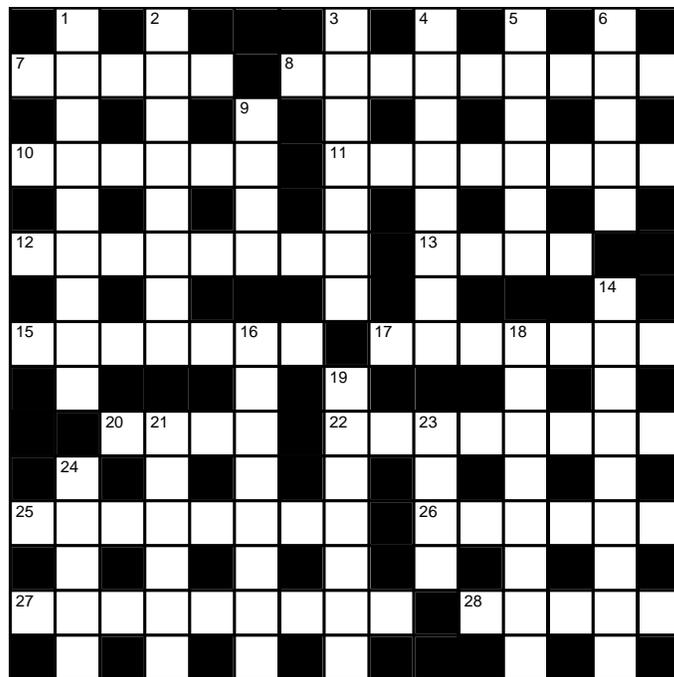
On 4 July, the T&RA website featured a second crossword from Tim Harper, whose first one appeared in an earlier newsletter:

<https://www.tennisandrackets.com/news/real-tennis-crossword-july-20>

We are delighted to offer, as an exclusive to Radley members, a tennis-related crossword from Simon Horobin. Our thanks to him for sending the following, to tantalise and entertain.

This is a prize crossword, with a copy of Simon's most recent book, *Bagels, Bumf and Buses – A Day in the Life of the English Language* on offer to the sender of the first correct answer out of the hat.

Email your entry to Simon before the closing date of 31 July, at [simon.horobin@magd.ox.ac.uk](mailto:simon.horobin@magd.ox.ac.uk).

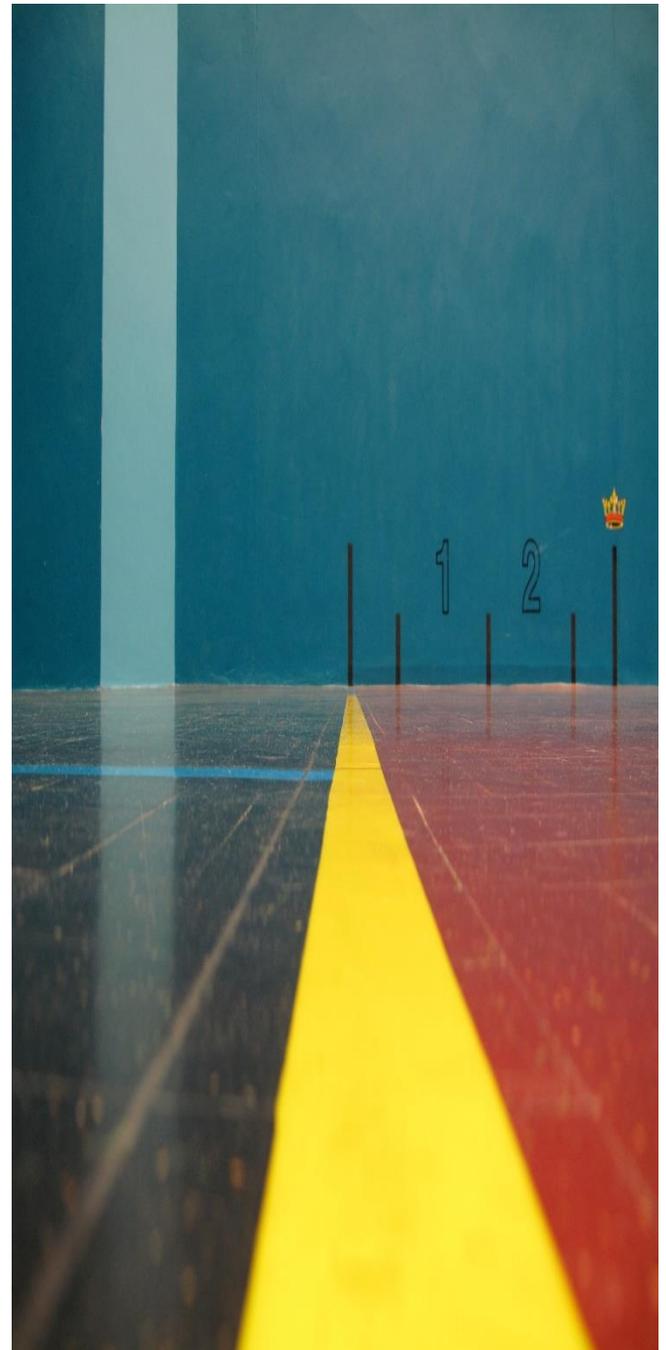
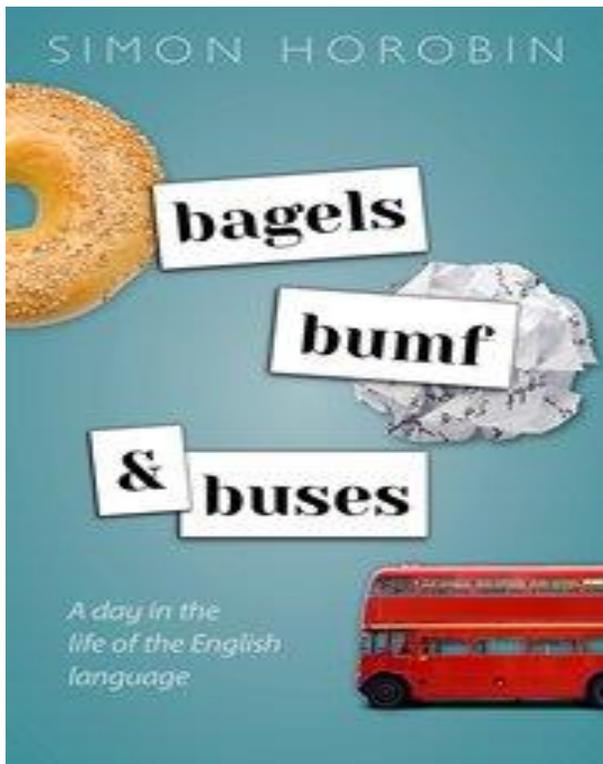


### Across

- 7 First ones on court after lockdown getting in a new groove (5)
- 8 Pair regularly hitting drop shot with no top spin - it's spineless! (9)
- 10 End danger (6)
- 11 Chaps on cycle riding around quarter (8)
- 12 Posh gathering up for tennis, perhaps? (4,4)
- 13/5 One reputedly losing her head while her husband played tennis (4,6)
- 15 Fantastic set, getting everything back with head of racket (7)
- 17 Embarrassed when poor player has a hack (7)
- 20 Oval-shaped objects - don't put them all in the basket (4)
- 22 Charge about empty Rome in a circuitous route (8)
- 25 Grand tournament (8)
- 26 Beat leading amateur? Heartless critic - net's faulty! (6)
- 27 Recognising true form of tennis is getting fashionable - good! (9)
- 28 Set out with a bit of spin and cutting (5)

## Down

- 1 A Californian star, drunk on court, falls (9)
- 2 Old man has endless rally on base of white line, like those marking the chases (8)
- 3 Game with lots of ins and outs (7)
- 4 Spotted speedy runners beating the chase (8)
- 5 See 13 Across
- 6 Railroad shot into dedans! (5)
- 9 Concept held back by Granta editor (4)
- 14 Professional player showing no 11 (9)
- 16 Youth is immersed in strategy - he's setting the place alight! (8)
- 18 Pair beaten by heartless juniors getting colours (8)
- 19 Using force to get 6-0 fast (7)
- 21 Interview on the radio presents opportunity for point-scoring (6)
- 23 Serve giving pain in the neck (4)
- 24 Secure final in Melbourne, left with result in 19 (5)



*The Tambour and Service Line at Radley,  
as photographed by Freddy Adam.*

**Stay Fit and Stay Safe!**

*This Newsletter, the eighth of 2020,  
was compiled by Maggie Henderson-Tew*