

Radley College Tennis Court

Autumn 2023

**Better Than The Last
Radley Club Newsletter!**

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RCTC Club News

Professionals' News

We hope you have all had a very good summer, although it has not, by any measure, been a great one in terms of weather. Ah well. Only nine months or so until the next one...

Playing Real Tennis should always make you feel happier, but you now have the power to do what they say in the song:

'Everywhere you go, always take the weather with you
Everywhere you go, always take the weather, take the weather
The weather with you' (with thanks to *Crowded House*).

If you want to experience the positive feeling that comes from looking at a bright sunny day, you now have the option of having your racquet strung in a strong shade of yellow. Yes, it is guaranteed to convey instant happiness.



RADLEY
REAL TENNIS

Other colours are available, so whether you fancy trying the yellow or something different when you next need a restring, let the Pros know.

Their collective view, so far, is that it plays in a very similar way to the normal string but, it is a bit more slippery, which makes it easier and quicker to re-string. The cost is the same. It is possible that it will prove to be more forgiving to those who suffer from tennis elbow, but it is a little early to be sure.



Both Nino and Alex are using the yellow string as they prepare for the new tournament season. Alex will be masterminding the National League matches (see p2) all season and his first individual competition was the Category B Level Singles Tournament for players with handicaps from H10-19, held at Bridport over the weekend of 8-10 September (see p12).

Alex's hopes to gain entry to Qualifying for the British Open from 12-21 November, in which Nino will be playing.

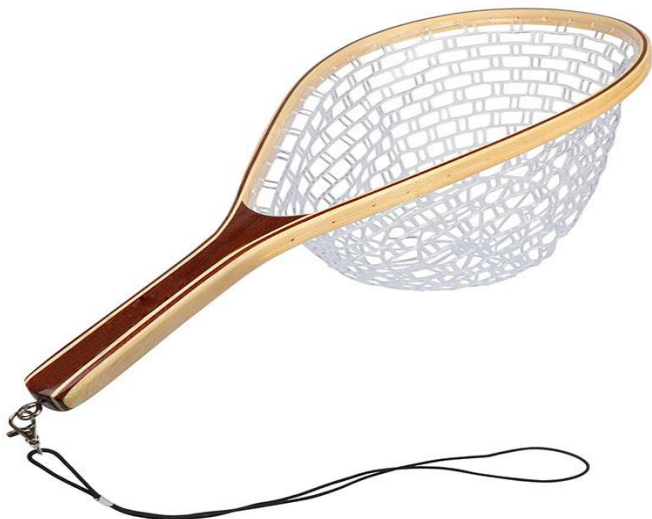
Club Kit

Nino is in the process of ordering more RCTC-branded club clothing for the new season, including polo shirts. If there is a piece of kit you would like the club to stock (fleece, cap, shorts and skorts...), he is open to suggestions. Let him know what you would find appealing, and he will get it priced up.

Grays are working on a commission from Nino of a limited edition of red Radley club racquets. If you want to order one of the new club racquets in advance, please mention it to Nino, as there will only be a small number available in this special order. The bespoke livery will cost about £50 extra, so the total will be £350 for an Xtra-tec and £230 for a standard frame.

Talking of racquets and makers, you may know that the US racquet maker, Gold Leaf Athletics, has ceased production of Real Tennis and Rackets equipment, but another company has dipped its toe into the water. Appropriate to the metaphor, the company, Wayward, is a manufacturer of fishing gear, which already has in its product range an item that is quite like a Real Tennis racquet.

The Wayward landing net shown below is described on their website as: 'A classic popular teardrop scoop net, lanyard attached'.



There is a Wayward racquet (see below) in the pro shop available for loan, with feedback welcomed. If enough people take a liking to it, Nino will stock some, in addition to the Gray racquets. While at Westwood, Maggie was given a Mark IV Westwood prototype racquet, which will be strung up shortly. I will be interesting to see how it matches up to the other Wayward and Grays' frames.



Above is a Wayward racquet frame, with the Radley logo on the throat. A photo of the new Radley club racquet, to be made by Grays, is not yet available.

Club Subscription & Court fees

RCTC has celebrated the 15th anniversary of its opening, and, apart from modest increases in court fees, we have been able to maintain the subscription rate at £62.50 per quarter since 2008, which just shows you how much we cherish our members!

It is hard to think of any other essential item (for RCTC membership is *de facto* an essential item) that has been so inflation proof over this period of time.

We still love you all dearly, but, given the level of inflation, the decision has been taken to increase this quarterly rate to £75 for seniors, with corresponding increases for other membership categories, starting in Q3. We are confident that this continues to represent outstanding value and that our wish to increase the sum total of human happiness is still being fulfilled.

This increase is particularly important if we are to continue to support appropriately our team of professionals in the future, which I am sure you will agree is an outstanding unit and the envy of many clubs.

Court fees will also increase; from £12 to £14/hr (per person for singles) and from £7 to £8/hr for doubles and for juniors.

Club Audio-Visual System update

Ben Geytenbeek will shortly be working his magic, and we will, at last, be able to offer sound and vision for members and guests, with live streaming and archive footage, all via a dedicated YouTube channel. More details to follow, as Ben swings into action. We can only apologise that it is taking so long to complete the project. Nearly there!

National League

The annual National League competition sees teams of Pros and amateurs with handicaps better than 45 representing clubs in various handicap bands, in divisions from Premier to 9.

This season, we are entering sides in the following divisions:

Divisions 3 - Alex Machin and Benedict Yorston
Division 5 - Mike Henman and Paul Bollerman.

Good luck to them in their home and away ties. Spectators are keenly encouraged to come along for the home matches, which will take place on Friday evenings, when two singles and a doubles will be played. Details of who is playing and when will be posted on the club notice board.



All those involved in this extended series of competitive matches, players, organisers and spectators, are very grateful to this season's National League sponsor, FLM Wealth Management (an appointed representative of St James Place Wealth Management, advising on the group's products and services). They have been generous sponsors for the

past two years and we thank them sincerely for continuing their support. To find out more about its products and services, please click on this link: <https://www.flmltd.com/>.

Radley Club Tournaments

The annual Radley Singles Handicap tournament, into which all members are entered (unless they prefer not to take part), has almost, but not quite, concluded, although it has reached the knock-out stage. The winners of the various groups are playing-off until a single champion remains. Both finalists will be invited to play in the National Club Singles Champions event, the Chetwood Trophy, early in 2024, down in Dorset, at the Hyde Club, near Bridport.

Inter-Club Tournaments

What follows is a sample of some of the inter-club tennis in which players from Radley will be involved over the next three to six months.

National Inter-Club Tournament

We would be pleased if three club members would like to represent Radley and enter a team comprising a singles player and a doubles pair into the National Inter-Club Handicap Tournament, which will take place at Moreton Morrell and Leamington over the weekend of 28/29 October? The entry form states that all players must be better than handicap 55 and be available on both days. Let Maggie know if you are interested on maggie.ht@btinternet.com.

The format is that a singles player and a doubles pair play in groups, off handicap, and prizes are awarded to the winning singles player, top pair and the best team.

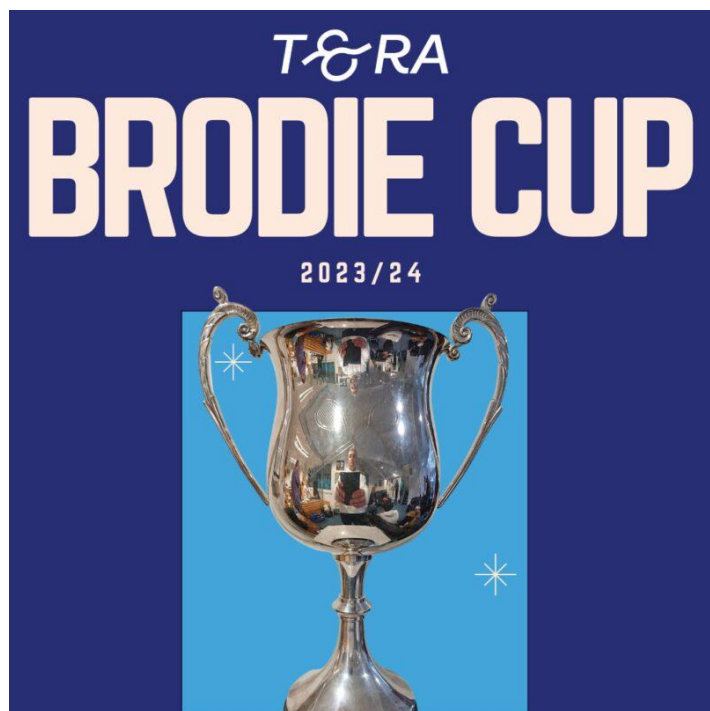


This year, the organisers are keen to encourage teams to represent their club, school, country or anything else that takes their fancy, and Radley would like to enter sides to represent the College and club. It is always an excellent and enjoyable event.

If you want to get involved with like-minded others, please contact Maggie, who will do her best to team you up.

Or you can use this link to cut out the intermediary and go straight to the entry form:
<https://form.jotform.com/office665/national-inter-club-handicap>.

National Inter-Club Competitions



Well ahead of our opening matches, we have assembled our squads for this season's national inter-club tournaments, the Brodie Cup and the more senior Field Trophy,

The way the draw has worked out in the Brodie Cup, we will be playing away all the way to the eventual final. Our first round is on Sunday 12 November at Wellington.

Contrastingly, our draws are all at home in the Field trophy through to the final, commencing with our first round against Bristol on 2 December.



CHAMPAGNE

Pol Roger

Let us hope for happy endings in both these tournament and the opportunity to sample some of the sponsor's finest libation.

Old Radleians Real Tennis Society

THE OLD RADLEIANS REAL TENNIS SOCIETY - THE RAILROADERS

If you are an Old Radleian and would like to form a doubles pair to represent your alma mater, here is a date and possible event for your 2024 diary.

The Cattermull Cup takes place at the Middlesex University Real Tennis Court over the weekend on 27/8 April 2024 and is the annual schools' alumni tournament. If you would like to play, please let Maggie Henderson-Tew know on maggie.ht@btinternet.com, as she will be organising as many Radley pairs as wish to take part (I think Rugby once fielded four, but no pressure...).

The event is always great fun, well organised and, importantly, amply catered.

Hosted Tournaments:

RSPB – Radley Society of the Preservation of Bisques

Lobster pink clothing abounded at Radley on 15 July at the 2023 running of this popular, light-hearted and convivial tournament. The threatened element of the handicap system – the bisque – is central to this team tournament and features prominently in the rules.

Teams vie for the dubious honour of winning the ghastly trophy, the kitsch, animatronic singing crustacean, Larry the Lobster. The tournament organiser, commander-in-chief and head chef, Chris Lintott, always produces a large vat of lobster bisque for players and spectators, as a prelude to the excellent lunch. This year's soup was widely praised as his finest thus far.



The highly punitive rules are as follows:

All decisions about rules made by The Committee are final. Any argument shall risk loss of soup privileges and the following penalties:

First offence: Loss of dignity

*Second offence: Loss of finger **

*Third offence: Loss of limb, ***

Fourth offence: Loss of point

- *Player's choice, but must be own finger*
- ** *Marker's choice*

Notes - Failure to use allocated BISQUES and failure to display the Larry the Lobster in the clubroom of the winning club will be punished.

Teams from Prested, Cambridge, RTC, Radley and Oxford delighted in the complex and arbitrary nature of the rules and the awarding and removal of bisques. Lobster-themed clothing and food abounded, and much fun and camaraderie were enjoyed by all.

The Dutch Championships

Radley was delighted to host the latest iteration of the Dutch Singles Championships in August, when a large group of Dutch lawn tennis players from The Orange Club in The Hague come to learn, develop and exercise their real tennis skills.

They are a talented bunch of racquet sportsmen and women, and rapid progress was made by many of them. Prizes were awarded to the Most Improved Player as well as to the winner of the Dutch Singles Championship, the Plate event, the Ladies Championship and the Handicap doubles.



For the third year in a row, brother and sister, Paul and Saskia Bollerman, have competed for the main title. This year's final was an 8-game set, played level, with no quarter given or asked. Saskia fought hard, and it was wonderful to see her putting serious injuries behind her and covering the court so well, as appropriate to her ladies' world ranking of number 5.

The Dutch Champion is, however, Paul Bollerman, once again. He made few errors, played smart and aggressive tennis and tested Saskia's excellent volleying to the full, forcing for the dedans again and again. Paul retained his title and is a worthy winner, who, as he now lives in London and can play more regularly, will only get better.

Gefeliciteerd to him!

'Not the Varsity Match' – 23/24 Sept- Radley/OUTC

Not content with creating tournaments to honour and preserve the *bisque*, Chris Lintott has also established a firm favourite with alumni of Oxford and Cambridge Universities, now in its ninth year. The purpose is to enable those who did NOT play in the Real Tennis Varsity Match during their time 'up' to represent Oxon or Cantab.

In recognition of the importance of donning the Light or Dark Blue shirt, Pol Roger (the generous sponsor of the actual, or should we say 'real', Varsity Match) also supports this event, to the delectation of all participants.



Those who attended either university or have a reasonable claim to represent either place institutions are invited to take part in this tournament in which the emphasis is on taking part and the joy of playing the game rather than the result, although the bragging rights are nonetheless highly prized, as Oxford, this year's winner, will attest.

Radley College and Club Juniors

For fine performances by our College and club juniors in the British Junior Open, played in age categories, see below.

International Tournaments

British Junior Open

We begin a round-up of selected results from major tournaments with the juniors, moving on to those featuring the most experienced and finest players of the game. The major competition for our juniors concludes their season and took place over 18-20

August. The British Junior Open was played at Queen's Club and split into categories for the U12s, U14s, U16s and U18s, each open to players of all handicaps.

The players in each division with the lowest handicaps made their way through to the respective finals. Tuxedo member Kurt Mueller beat Oratory's Albie Tomlinson to win the U12 title and British juniors won the other three being contested, with considerable interest for Radley in each of them.



The event poster features Bertie Vallat, seeded number 1 in the U18s.

Unusually, the finals of the U14 and U16s were contested by the same two players, Radley's Laszlo Garson and Queen's member, Max Warner.

Max has won the U14 title for the past two years and also won the U12s in 2020 and 2021. He has prodigious match experience and a fine record for one who is not yet thirteen years old. He came into this year's British Open with his lowest-ever handicap of 37.5.

Laszlo has had a much shorter real tennis career, and this was only his second entry into the British Open. He came into the tournament on his lowest-ever handicap of H38.3. Both players were in good form and improving rapidly.

There was not much was between the players on paper, but playing level, on Max's home court and with far less tournament experience than his opponent, Laszlo faced a considerable challenge. He lost to Max in the U14s Round Robin and drew with him in the same phase of the U16s.

Laszlo then did a lot of thinking about his tactics and hats off, a round of applause and a drum roll to Laszlo for his performances in both finals.

In the U14s event, he stunned his opponent by barely making a mistake and storming away to take the first set, 6-0, with the second set following rapidly, 6-2. Later the same day, they met again for the final of the U16s, and this was an absorbing and thrilling encounter, in front of a full and appreciative dedans at Queen's.



The Runner-up in the U14/U16 Max Warner with the winner of both categories, Laszlo Garson. On the right of the net, runner up in the U18, Henry Henman, with the winner, Bertie Vallat.

The gap of a few hours was enough to produce an U16s final very different to that of the U14s. Max won the first set 6-2 and having caught up from 1-4 down to 3-4 in the second set, he suffered a heavy fall and had to leave the court for about ten minutes to recover. This was a difficult episode for both players, but they conducted themselves admirably.

When play re-commenced, Laszlo advanced to take the set 6-3, and so take the tense match to a deciding set. It was nip and tuck, with Max leading by a game

at a time until Laszlo managed to switch from catch-up to get-ahead and squeezed past to lead 5-4. Max levelled it for one set all, 5 games all and then led 40-love, defending chase 3. The tension and excitement of the final few games cannot be overstated, and all the assembled parents and supporters were made to suffer agonies as match points came and went. Laszlo eventually won with two forces, one into each corner of the dedans.

When presenting the prizes, Ronald Paterson, on behalf of the T&RA, spoke of his admiration and pleasure in being there for such a thrilling, tight and hard-fought encounter. As it was the last final of the day, this U16 final proved an electrifying climax to the tournament.



To the victors, the spoils...Bertie (l) with the U18s trophy and Laszlo (r) with the U14 and U16 salvors.

The U18s final is usually the concluding match but, given the fact that the U14s and U16s were being played by the same players, it was sensibly decided to bring forward the U18s final. In it, Henry Henman took on Bertie Vallat, a year his senior.

Bertie and Henry have tracked each other through the age category tournaments of the British Junior Open for years, playing each other in many finals and on plenty of other occasions.

In 2017, Bertie won the U12s, with Henry being the runner-up and then the winner the following year. In 2019, Bertie won the U14s, with Henry taking the title the following year. In 2021, Bertie won the U16s, with Henry taking the title in 2022. You get the idea.

Henry had to prioritise his GCSEs over his tennis during the past six months and so was a bit short of match practice, while Bertie played well on his home court. He emerged the victor 6-4, 6-0, taking his handicap to 11.2, his lowest-ever. The final was very entertaining, with some fine rests and Bertie making very few errors as he played his valedictory junior British Open.



Radley's Henry Henman in action against top seed Bertie Vallat in the U18s.

Radley College and Club player, Ambrose Garson, played in the U18 Division and returns to Radley for his final year as Captain of Real Tennis. With younger brother Laszlo arriving at Radley (on a Sports Scholarship) for his first term as the British U14 and U16 Champion, we expect sibling rivalry to drive them both to reach new heights.

Note: we were delighted by the announcement at the British Junior Open that Caspian Rugg was awarded the Nat Duncan Trophy (in the form of a fine new racquet), for his attitude to the game, demeanour and sporting behaviour during the tournament.

Caspian is one of the promising juniors who started playing at Bristol during CJR and Maggie's time there, and who also benefitted greatly from coaching visits by Mike and Henry Henman. Huge credit to Caspian for winning this splendid award!

Paul Weaver orchestrated the tournament expertly, yet again. The quality of the junior tournaments is so dependent upon the energy and immense amount of time that he, his partner Tory Wall and others expend on the junior development programme, jointly funded by the T&RA and The Dedanists.



Last weekend saw the British Junior Doubles Championships played at Holyport, played in the age categories of U15 and U19.

The U15s was a splendid event for Radleians, as College boys came first, second and third out of a total of nine entries. The Cordle brothers, Edward and William (below, with hanks to Team Cordle), beat Kit Kingsbury and Wilbur Hunter in the final, 6-3, 6-1.



The Barnes twins, Austin and Jerome, completed the podium. What a tremendous performance from these three pairs, who should improve ever further from this point.

The U19s event, contested by ten pairs, had its own share of glory for Radley, with our players making it to the final. Henry Henman, still only 16 years old, and Laszlo Garson, current holder of the U14 and U16 British Singles titles and just 14, had to face the Junior Singles World Champion, Max Trueman, and his partner, James Medlow, who have won the tournament for the past two years.

Henry and Laszlo played very well but the older players had too much fire power and took the title 6-2, 6-2. Max and James are the first pair ever to have won the title three times and it is a fitting conclusion to their outstanding careers as Juniors. They stand below, holding their trophies, between Laszlo (happier on the inside than he looks on the outside, we are assured by his father, Jeremy, whom we thank for the photo) on the left and Henry on the right.



Congratulations to all involved, and particularly to those from Club and College who carried the flag for Radley. They have made us extremely proud, on and off the court.

International U26 Events

The United States Court Tennis Association, the USCTA, hosted the Van Alen, Clothier, and Limb Cups (VACL) from July 11 -16. These biennial tournaments are for players under 26 years of age from the U.K, USA, and Australia and rotate between countries.

The Westwood Country Club held this premier international junior tennis team event and each country's team comprised 4-6 players. Before the team competitions began, all players took part as individuals in the U26 singles and doubles. Please read below the report by Henry Henman, written for *Chase The First*, the newsletter of the USCTA).

'The 2023 U26 US Singles and Doubles championships were held at Westwood Country Club from 7-9th July.

The tournament was set to be a tense competition, with the top 4 seeds all within 0.5 handicap points of each other and all in single figures. Players came to the event from all four (tennis) corners of the planet, coming from places such as Hobart, Seacourt, and Bordeaux.

The first day of the competition brought 10 quality matches. The highlight of the day came in the doubles, where a first-round upset was on the cards when Chase Motz and Nick Stenning convincingly won the opening set against the first seeds and eventual victors, Ollie Pridmore and Will Flynn. However, their hopes were smothered once the latter pairing became more at home on the court.

By midday on the second day of tennis, four players remained in the singles draw, the same four who eventually made it into the doubles final. In the singles, Erik Barker had a great result against the third seed, Max Trueman, which took Erik into the semi-finals. There he would face another Seacourt member, Will Flynn.

Both Will and Max would, however, get their chance to face off in the doubles alongside their partners, Ollie and Henry Henman, respectively. After two close sets of tennis, Will and Ollie took the third 6/4, decisively stopping a prominent comeback.

Erik's strong run in the singles continued as he knocked out yet another seed, this time the number 2 seed, Will. On the other side of the draw, another strong Westwood member, Noah Motz, took to the court, beating the 1st seed, Ollie, to book himself in an all-Westwood final.

Despite its 8:30 am start, a respectable audience came to watch the highly anticipated final. After some captivating tennis, Noah came out on top, winning 6/3 6/4 in what was a great final.

The pair had to bounce back quickly afterward to play the doubles final against the singles semi-finalists. Flynn and Pridmore took the match 6/4 6/3 after an amazing array of talent and skill was on show as some high-level tennis.

Many thanks to Ivan and James for marking all three tennis days and the hosting families for helping to facilitate the tournament.'



Oli Pridmore (Aus), Will Flynn (GB), Noah Motz & Erik Barker (US)

We have reproduced below, with grateful thanks, the report on the event written by Camden Riviere for *Chase The First*, the newsletter of the USCTA:

'VAN ALLEN, CLOTHIER & LIMB CUPS

by Camden Riviere

It was a busy July at the Westwood Country Club, hosting the Under 26 Championships and a week of international junior competitions between the US, Australia, and the UK. The US team of Freddie

Bristowe, Noah Motz, Erik Barker, Henry Smith, & Chase Motz came out victorious in both battles, bringing the US its first-ever joint Val Alen & Clothier Cup victories. Also played was the Limb Cup, which pitted the UK against Australia, with the UK coming out on top.

The tennis played on the week was of the highest quality I have ever seen at a junior level, but better than the tennis was the camaraderie and enjoyment had by all the players and teams.

It was fantastic to see lifelong friendships being made and memories that will last forever. It was an experience for the ages and one I am honored to have been a part of!

The first match for the US was the Clothier Cup, pitting them against an up-and-coming Australian side. Although the US were favorites coming into the match, the young Australian side was not one to be taken lightly, with lots of talent and enthusiastic play. The Aussies played well below their handicaps in all matches and showed they will be a force to reckon with in the future.



Day 1 was four singles matches, and one doubles match. At our team meeting in the morning, I warned the US team not to take the Australians lightly. I have played with many of their peers for a long time, and I know their team spirit and competitive nature are not something to discount. This was shown in their results, with all of the Australians playing well above their listed handicaps.

The singles matches started well, with Henry Smith, Erik Barker, & Noah Motz winning in straight sets, although the matches were closer than the scores. The final singles match pitted US #1 Freddie Bristowe against AUS #1 Ollie Pridmore. Freddie had just arrived from the UK due to work restraints and was pushed to his peak by the up-and-coming Australian.

Freddie was missing his typical backhand grilles and volleys, while Ollie's great retrieving pressured Freddie to hit great shots. It was a tight battle till the end, with Pridmore coming out on top 6-5, 5-6, 6-3.

The day's last match saw Motz & Barker take on Stenning & Webster-Jones. Some 15 points on handicap favored the US, but the Australians stepped up to play some of their best tennis of the week. The camaraderie and support of the teams in the galleries were incredible, creating a fantastic atmosphere. The match came down to the wire, with the US coming out on top 6-5 in the third!

Day 2 started with the US leading 4-1 overall and only needing one more match win to secure the Clothier Cup. At the team meeting, we tried to focus on taking each match seriously and not letting up. The pep talk worked as the US won all four doubles matches played in straight sets, giving them the Clothier Cup title by a final score of 8-1.

The Man of the Match award goes to Henry Smith, who went undefeated in all of his Clothier Cup matches and was the steady rock the team needed. Although the next day, the Van Alen began straight away, I wanted to take a quick second to thank some of the great folks in DC for helping create such a fantastic event for the juniors.

We can't thank the Motz family enough for their tireless efforts during the week, housing all the players, hosting everyone who wanted each night, and working hard to create a week to remember for everyone. With the help of the USCTPF, the kids were treated to different events every night, including a poker tournament, tournament dinner, BBQ & their days spent at the Westwood Club pool and Simulator Lounge.

Day 1 of the Van Alen was undoubtedly one of my favorite days of court tennis. The level of play, sportsmanship, team support, and atmosphere were incredible. On paper, all of the matches were to be close, and the US team would need a huge effort to win. Luckily that's exactly what we got.

Henry Smith was up first again, this time against Henry Mullan. We knew that starting with a win could help set the tempo for the day, and Henry S continued his steadiness from earlier in the week to bring that first win 6-4 6-3.

The match had many swings back and forth, but Henry S kept his cool and played to his strengths under pressure which became the deciding factor.

Next up was Erik Barker against Rory Giddens. With a 1-0 lead, the US knew it was time to apply some pressure, and Erik was the perfect person to do that. Erik's fiercely competitive nature and relentless retrieving were the ideal game style for this situation. By not giving any free points and playing with the same determination from the first ball to the last, Erik was to break his opponent's confidence and secure the win 6-1 6-3. 2-0 US leads!

The third match of the day pitted Noah Motz against Max Trueman. This was the epitome of a revenge game, as Max had defeated Noah in February at the Tuxedo Gold Racquet. It was a new day, though, and Noah, fresh off his time in Newport, was playing some of his best tennis to date. His forcing was on point, and he stuck to his strengths on the volley and retrieving to force Max into making many errors. There were many tight games, but Noah stayed poised and controlled under pressure taking the match 6-2 6-3. 3-0 US leads!

The final singles match of the day had Freddie Bristowe take on Will Flynn. With the US up 3-0 overall, we all felt something special could happen today. Freddie was out for vengeance after his loss to Pridmore and started to fire his signature backhands more accurately into the grille.

Will Flynn might be the hardest hitter on the planet right now, and Freddie did well to handcuff his forcing on the return of serve, allowing him to dominate the service end. Will did his best to battle back, but early leads allowed Freddie to stay on top, taking the match 6-3 6-3. 4-0 US!

The day's last match would be Noah Motz & Erik Barker against Max Trueman & Rory Giddens. The US could seal the Van Alen Cup victory with a win, while the UK grasped to stay in the event. It was a back-and-forth battle, with great play on both sides. The UK doubles teams seemed strong and practiced, but Noah & Erik have spent many hours on the court together.

After taking the first set 6-3, the US was down in the second but came back to take the set, and the match 6-5, clinching the Van Alen Cup on the first day of play! It was an incredible day of tennis, with each US team member stepping up, not just on the court but off the court, to support their teammates while they played.



The match came down to the wire, with the US coming out on top,
6-5 in the third!

Day 2 brought an interesting dynamic. The US had already clinched the Van Alen Cup after sweeping Day 1, but there were still four doubles matches to be played. At our team meeting, I tried to impose the importance of the matches that day, that there was a potential overall clean sweep that could be had, and that each match still contained our pride.

First up were Bristowe & Motz against Flynn & Trueman – a heavyweight battle in terms of pace! Noah & Freddie came out fast, taking the first set 6-2 before a very close second set emerged. The UK was playing better, feeling the pressure to get their first win. It was close, but the US took the set 6-5 for a 6-0 match lead.

The second match pitted Barker & Smith against Giddens & Mullan. Giddens & Mullan seemed to be the most practiced pair on the UK side, while Smith & Barker have played together the least on the US side. Their partner's comfort seemed to be the deciding factor in this match, as the UK team seemed to know each other's games better, allowing them to sneak crucial points and take the match 6-5 6-4. The US leads 6-1 overall.

The third match had the US team of Bristowe & Barker against Flynn & Giddens. The UK had finally gotten on the board, and you could feel some momentum shifting their way. Will Flynn certainly did, playing his best tennis of the week in this match and showing that he has a bright future in the game. Bristowe and Barker did their best to fight back, with

Bristowe stepping up to take control after losing the first set. It was an honorable fightback, but the UK won 6-2, 4-6, 6-4. The US leads 6-2 overall.

The week's final match was Noah Motz & Henry Smith against Max Trueman & Henry Mullan, and we couldn't have asked for a better finisher. The US team looked exhausted, while the UK team felt the confidence of a two-match win streak. The first set was over in the blink of an eye, 6-0 to the UK.



Team GB: Henry Mullan, Will Flynn, Max Trueman & Rory Giddins

However, Noah Motz came alive in the second set, covering the court like a madman and finding energy when he looked like there was none to be had. It was back and forth, but the US grabbed a tight second set to bring up a deciding third. Now the roles reversed again, the UK took the lead, and it was Henry Smith's turn to step up to the plate. With the US 5-3 down in the third, Henry took over the team in a crucial game to regain momentum and give Noah one last bit of energy to finish the match.

Finally, we saw the match at five-games-all, and I witnessed one of my all-time favorite moments in court tennis. The UK and Australian teams had been watching from behind the glass above the court, but at 5-all in the last match to finish the week, every player from the US, UK, & Australia made their way into the side galleries.

There was a delayed start to the game for all the cheers from the players in the galleries. They were cheering their teams on, but they were also cheering for the game, the spirit, and the amazing week we had all just been a part of. After each point, the cheering only got louder, and it

felt like the ground was shaking all around us as people stomped and banged their hands on the galleries in support.



Triumphant Team USA - Henry Smith, Erik Barker, Freddie Bristowe and Noah Motz, with Coach, Camden Riviere.

Four points later, it was over, the US took the match 6-5 in the third, and an amazing round of applause came for all the players involved. It is a moment that will stick with me for the rest of my life, and I hope it will do the same for the great competitors we saw this week at Westwood.

Thank you to the Westwood Country Club, Ivan Ronaldson, James Greenley, Dai Edwardes-Evans, & Bryan Stone for hosting and organizing a superb week.

If you were lucky enough to tune in, then you know that our hidden hero Ryan Carey was on hand to stream all week, and we can't thank him enough for always being there for us.

Report by Camden Riviere

Photographs by Caroline Marney'

Senior Tournaments

The Champions Trophy 2023

The tournament was played from July 17-23 at The Royal Tennis Court and John Lumley won the Real Tennis Champions Trophy 2023 by defeating Ben Taylor-Matthews in straight sets: 6-2, 6-5, 6-1.

British Open – Category B 2023

The Category B Level Singles Tournament is for players with handicaps from H10-19 and was held at Bridport over the weekend of 8-10 September.



There was considerable interest for Radley, as Henry (youngest in the draw) and father, Mike (oldest in the draw, sorry, Mike, but you know it is true), were playing, as were Alex Machin and ex-Radley Pro, Josh King. Henry swept all before him on his way to the final, where he met Vaughan Hamilton, who has joined Levi Gale in the Pro team at Prested Hall recently.

Henry started quickly and kept his foot down, surprising Vaughan with his attacking play and won 6-1, 6-2. This win has brought his handicap back, almost, to its pre-GCSE level, with more to come.

Congratulations to Henry on another fine performance!



The British Over 60s Doubles Championship

This tournament was held at Radley on 17 Sept, and defending champions and Radley members, Charles Human and Tony Munsey (below, right) were runners-up this year to previous winners David Watson and James Compton-Burnett (below left). Tournament organiser and multiple former champion, Mick Dean, is in the middle of the photo.



The Men's World Championship 2023

The Eliminator matches run by the International World Challenge Committee (IWCC) concluded some months ago. By beating Nicky Howell in Philadelphia, John Lumley earned the right to challenge Camden Riviere in the World Championship from 17-21 September at the Westwood Country Club, near Washington, VA.

Former Radley Pro, John Lumley, who combines being Number 2 in the world with the position of Head Professional in Philadelphia, had his first tilt at the world title. He had Rob Fahey and Steve Virgona as practice partners and looked very sharp, fit and as well-prepared as possible for the biggest match of his career.



The splendid photos by Tim Edwards, used in the match report below, with thanks, appear on the T&RA website.

Congratulations to John for getting himself into the position of being the first Brit to challenge for the world title since Julian Snow in 1998, a mere twenty-five years ago, but it is the first year since 1981 that there has not been an Australian in the Challenge match.

The fine and hospitable setting of Westwood, with its world class facilities, was a fitting setting for the 2023 Men's World Championship. There were social events and sporting activities for the spectators throughout the Challenge week, including real tennis and lawn tennis, backgammon, pickleball and squash tournaments. Copious amounts of eating and drinking were *de rigeur*.

John Lumley proved to be a most worthy challenger. He looked eager, surprisingly relaxed and very quick, and won the first game on the opening day. The play was of high quality and John had his chances, but Camden was just too strong over three and a quarter hours, taking all four sets: 6-4, 6-2, 6-3, 6-4.



The characteristics of the Westwood court, specifically the slippery penthouse and the relatively small dedans, meant that most of the services were railroads. John concentrated most of his attacks on Camden's backhand, but Cam survived the onslaught.

Both players retrieved in remarkable fashion, covering a great deal of ground and the average reste was very long. In what was a critical moment in the fourth set, and the match, with Camden starting to look wobbly, blowing hard at the end of passages of ferocious play and down two games to love, John was not able to press home his advantage.

The psychological benefit of winning the final set of the day would have been the most tremendous boost, but Camden regrouped and took the last set on Day 1, requiring only three more from a possible two days' play to retain the World Championship.

During the following day's rest for the players, there was considerable speculation among those at Westwood about the second match day. Would we see Camden charge through to claim the first three sets and end the match? No, it turned out, we would not. The second day proved to be remarkable.

John wrested a tense first set, 6-5, and led 3-1, 40-15 in the next (sixth) set. From that point, Camden raced through five games to take the second set and continued the run to lead 5-2 in the seventh set. However, and saving four set points on the way, John clawed back to take that seventh set, 6-5, and with Camden looking exhausted and rather lame, John won the first four games of the eighth set. Camden recovered his spirits and closed the gap to four all, whereupon, after tortuous passage of play, a set that lasted over an hour eventually went to John, again 6-5. Spectators were treated to an impressively resilient performance, with John delighting his supporters and the neutrals by taking the day and winning 3 sets to 1, in four hours.

This astonishing session of play concluded with a marked contrast in the apparent condition of the two players. As they went back to their respective changing rooms, and carrying bags of ice, John looked as if he could play on for several hours more, but Camden looked sore, tired and dejected.

The aggregate score now stood at 5 sets to 3 in Camden's favour, but the momentum had shifted to John. This set up a thrilling deciding day's contest, in which play would continue until one player won seven sets in total.

Speculation was rife about Camden during the following rest day. There seemed to be something wrong with him. Was he injured? Was he unwell? What we were seeing was not the man whose preparation and physical condition had never before been in doubt.

Rob Fahey was clearly extremely impressed with John's performance, commenting that there was "a new kid on the block". John had demonstrated his maturity as a player and a competitor and won many new admirers for his skill, temperament, and sportsmanship.

The third and final day's play was different again to the preceding two. Camden came onto court without the knee support he had worn on the second day and appeared refreshed and purposeful, while John looked thoroughly determined.

Both players must have been conscious that the outcome of the first (ninth) set was absolutely critical. That intensity produced the finest set of the match.



The spectacle of these two superb retrievers competing for the greatest prize in men's tennis was different to the contests we have seen in which Camden faced Rob Fahey. In his last few World Championship Challenges, whether defending or seeking the title, we have become used to seeing Rob end points as quickly as possible, with a heavy strike at one of the winning openings or by slotting the ball into a gallery to set a chase.

Camden battled his way to lead 4-2 but John fought back and levelled the set at 5-5. On Camden's first set point, he was unlucky to see the ball bounce back off the edge of the last gallery to lose a second gallery chase. This was followed by John getting a set point himself, defending chase better than two. Camden won it with a fine return. John had a second set point, defending chase three, which Camden also won with a volley return on the floor.

John came so close, so very, very close, but in the end two points was the difference and Camden took the set, bellowing his delight. He now needed only one more set to retain his title of World Champion. In the tenth set, John did not fold, but although he fought incredibly hard, Camden eased away to take it 6-3, to his evident relief as well as delight. It had not been the match that he or those watching had expected.

John and Camden have been close friends and playing partners for years and it was good to see their mutual respect and friendship reinforced by the intense experience of this match.



The 2023 Challenge turned out to be, rather against the odds, an extremely exciting encounter, in which John proved his credentials as a future World Champion, as Camden acknowledged in his on-court speech after the match.

You can watch the Challenge Match in its entirety, on which CJR commentated in his typically masterly fashion, by going to the USCTA's YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HhI3IECZkvU>.

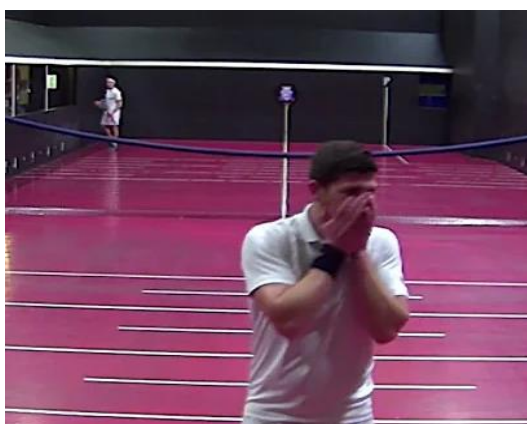
The French Open 2023

The French Open tournaments for men and women will take place in Paris from 24 Sept to 1 October, with plenty of interest for Radley in the women's event, with club members ranked two and four in the world and with high seedings for this competition.

Clare Fahey played Radley's Lea van der Zwahlen in yet another fine match, showcasing the two best female players in the world. Lea so, so nearly took the first set, surging to 4-0 and going 5-4 and 40-15 up. Clare, once again, as befitting her handicap and seeding, emerged victorious, winning the French Ladies' Open 6-5, 6-1.

It was good to see Clare being pressed so hard, as it brought out the best in both players, not least in their applauding of the good shots of the other. Disappointment for Lea, undoubtedly, but comfort in the knowledge that the gap is being closed.

The Men's Final, between the two US-based Pros, Briton Nicky Howell and Australian Steve Virgona, followed the ladies' match on court, and Nicky won in straight sets: 6-5, 6-5, 6-1, finishing the match with a shot into the winning gallery. Congratulations to Nicky on coming through a tough 5 set semi-final against Bryn Sayers (Queen's) and taking his first national singles title.



Nicky Howell teamed up with fellow US-based Pro Leon Smart but could not take the Doubles in addition to his Singles title. Steve Virgona and Ben Taylor-Matthews (Bristol), took the title, having come through their Semi-Final against Rob Fahey (retired, yes, but only from Singles tournament play) and Rod McNaughton (Paris), which was marked by Clare Fahey. It is rare but welcome to hear a female marker. Steve and Ben won the French Open Doubles title 6-3, 6-5, 6-2.



Clare Fahey and Tara Lumley beat Lea van der Zwalmen and Saskia Bollerman, both Radley members, in the Ladies Doubles final, winning 6-5, 6-2 and making good Clare's loss (with partner Nicola Doble) in the Final of the recent Ladies World Championship Doubles.

You can use this link to watch the streaming, which includes interviews of the players before and after matches, by Radley member Ben Geytenbeek: <https://paumefrance.com/open-de-france-2023/>.



While you are there, do take a look at the archive footage, you can watch some of the finest moments from the 2022 final, in which Camden Riviere played Chris Chapman, neither of whom played this year, by clicking on this link...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tvqGQktK6Ng>.

and if you listen closely, you will hear someone actually exclaim: "Oh, la la!". Only in France...

Incidentally, you can also enjoy the literal translations by Google Translate of French into English, by which 'The Draw' becomes 'Paintings'.

The Court Circular a.k.a. International Club News

What follows is a by-country report on the actual and potential court projects in every country in which the game is played currently, and a couple where it is not.

Good progress is reported in the US Mid-West, from the Sand Valley court in Wisconsin, which should be completed and open for play in October this year.

Plans for the court restorations in Chinon and Pau in France move forward.

In England; the restoration of the court at Hewell Grange in Worcestershire; the creation of one inside a listed Victorian gym at Repton School in Derbyshire; and advanced discussions about a court at the Hurlingham Club in London, are the hottest British projects at present.

The news from Australia has just got even better and it seems that we may be able to look forward to two new courts rather than one, as another Melbourne court is under serious discussion, in addition to the Sydney court that is now reaching a significant stage in its creation.

Australia

Melbourne

We understand that a vote is imminent at a well-established multi-sports club in Melbourne on a proposal to build a real tennis court as part of a major re-development programme, for which the funding is already in place. The Royal Melbourne TC is supportive of the plan, and the prospect of another club in the city is a most exciting one. Real Tennis in Melbourne has had a successful, continuous 50-year history, since the move of the city centre club to its current base in Richmond, the city is growing fast and is now the largest city in Australia.

We hope for a positive vote, rapid progress on the project and being able to report more soon about the possible opening of a new (third) court in Melbourne in 2026.

Sydney

There is good news on the new Sydney court:

'The Sydney Real Tennis club is delighted to report that significant progress has been made during the past 12 months:

- *fund-raising has now reached A\$2.6 million, comprising private donations from around 280 individuals and a grant from the NSW Government*
- *The breaking of the Ground Ceremony was held in June, coinciding with International Tennis Day*
- *final revisions to the 2021 planning approval are expected to be approved by Hornsby Council in September 2023 (this includes relocating rather than demolishing the croquet pavilion and a repositioning of the lift so that it can service the upper floor of the club)*
- *a builder has been appointed, and work is underway to obtain a Construction Certificate and to firm up the cost of the project*
- *construction is expected to start early next year, and if all goes to plan the court will be ready for play in the last quarter of 2024*
- *regular progress updates are available at <https://www.sydneyrealtennis.com.au>'.*

France

The Comité Français published its Q2 national newsletter, which can be viewed now in English as well as French, by clicking on this link:

[Microsoft PowerPoint - CFCP Q2 2023 V3 EN \(constantcontact.com\)](https://www.constantcontact.com).

Moreover, the decision has been taken to extend the use of the English name of the game, alongside its French equivalent, by using:

Real Tennis France@JeudePaumeRealTennisFrance



One of the announcements is about Thélème, the French-designed and produced racquet business, which is the brainchild of Paris member, Charlie Hurstel. It is probably the first French racquet produced for about 100 years, but more research needs to be sure about this. Does anyone know? If so, please let Maggie know.

More information will be found on the project website: <https://thelemerealtennis.com/>.

The 'Margot' is the first racquet to be produced by Thélème, and is named in honour of the remarkable Margot of Hainault, who was a contemporary of Joan of Arc, and a fine *paume* player. She was summoned to Paris by King Philip *Le Bon* to display her skill at the game.

The Series I racquet has sold out and the Series II will be released, also in small numbers, in November 2023. The price is Euros 599.



The description of the racquet reads:

'Handmade by our craftsman in the Loire Valley in France

- *Balanced alloy of different wood species and carbon sheets*
- *Exterior appearance of raw wood and varnish, highlighting the materials and artisanal know-how*
- *Optimal ball control and enhanced power*
- *Handling suitable for experienced players and beginners alike*.

Bordeaux

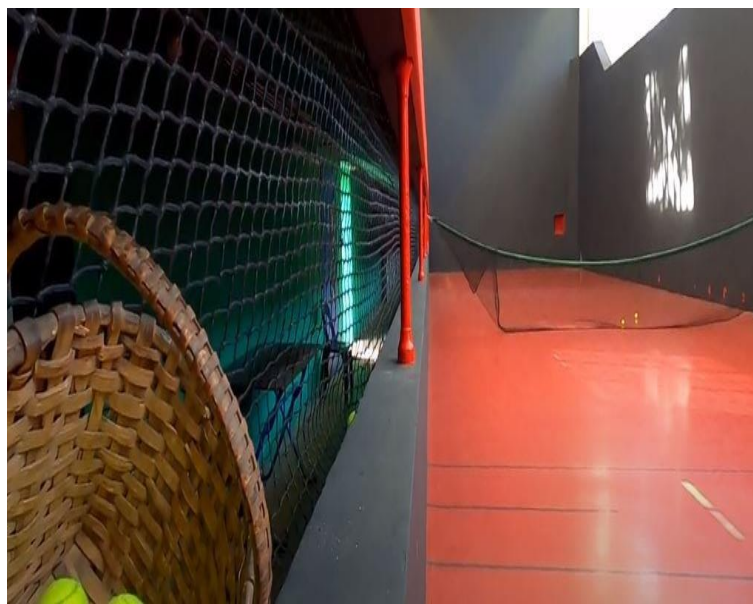
The latest Bordeaux club newsletter has been published and you can read it, and find out more about the club, at the following website:

<https://www.jeudepaumebordeaux.fr/>.

Pau

If you happened to visit Pau on 16 and 17 September, you would have been able to see Real Tennis being played the court as part of the *European Heritage Festival*. The Jeu de Paume de Navarre orchestrated the open-house and demonstrations at the court over the weekend, which was very well attended.

Echoing some of the comments in the Bordeaux newsletter, here is an update on the restoration of the Pau court for tennis. It has not yet commenced, and so the court still lacks a tambour and the grille and dedans penthouses. It was adapted (actually, butchered) for *trinquet* and needs a good deal of internal work to be restored to its full glory as a tennis court.



There have been some cosmetic improvements already, as the interior has been completely repainted, the floor now being oxblood red and the walls dark grey (see the photo below left, which also features one of Radley's old nets, donated several years ago).

LED lighting has been installed and the 'cathedral' windows have been blacked out. From 17 September, the court will now be used solely for *jeu de paume*. Hurrah!

The full interior restoration is unlikely to be completed before 2025 and will, of course, depend on costs at that time, as well as local politics. The municipality owns the court and so they will continue to call the shots.

A commitment to restore the court to playing condition and host international tournaments appeared in the Mayor's election manifesto. As he was elected for a second term (although presumably not just on the basis of his support for *jeu de paume* in the city), it seems that there is the best chance in years that the court will, eventually, be brought back into full and proper use.

Wayne Davies, the former World Champion (1987-94), who retired from working in real tennis decades ago, has just arrived in Pau, and will be spending a month there, assisting with coaching and introducing people to the game. To see the interview filmed by Ben Geytenbeek with Wayne and Jeu de Paume de Navarre Club President, Simon Berry, during the weekend of 16/17Sept, click here:

https://youtu.be/NJmrRwR_OI4

Ireland



Dublin -

Over the past few editions, we have repeated hopes for a decision about the planning permission granted to convert the Real Tennis court in Earlsfort Terrace into part of a science centre for children.

The website of the Irish Real Tennis Association gives a helpful recap of the situation.

'In 2016, Ireland's Office of Public Works submitted a planning application for a Science Museum to include

use of Dublin's historic Real Tennis Court for temporary exhibitions. As a result of the IRTA's engagement with the planning process, and that of the international real tennis community, built heritage conservation organisations, and others, a condition was attached to the resulting permission which provided that "The developer shall submit a detailed proposal to the planning authority for the temporary reinstatement of the penthouse galleries and any other essential features required for playing Real Tennis matches."

For various reasons, work did not start on the project, and permission lapsed in late 2021. In September 2022, the Office of Public Works submitted a fresh application for essentially the same project; to create a Children's Science Centre. This application is largely a re-submission of the 2016 application, updated (among other differences) to incorporate the condition imposed by An Bord Pleanála in 2016 that "*The developer shall submit a detailed proposal to the planning authority for the temporary reinstatement of the penthouse galleries and any other essential features required for playing Real Tennis matches.*"

Indeed, the new application states "*The An Bord Pleanála conditions of the 2016 grant of permission relating to the Real Tennis Court have been fully incorporated into this new application*", and "*The Real Tennis Court building will be refurbished including the restoration of the tennis court (to a playable condition), and to facilitate space for temporary displays and exhibitions.*"

Decision

In a decision dated 23 Nov 2022, Dublin City Council granted permission subject to a number of conditions, including in relation to the Real Tennis Court.

The IRTA engaged Cunnane Stratton Reynolds to submit an appeal relating to this decision. A decision on this appeal from An Bord Pleanála was expected by 28th April 2023. However, on that date, we received a notice from An Bord Pleanála informing us that, "due to a backlog of cases", the Board was not able to determine the case by that date. It now states that it will endeavour to determine the case by 20th July 2023.'

UPDATE: by the end of August, no decision has yet been made, nor any update given to the statement above. The IRTA will be informed when the status changes and a decision has been made, and we will report it in due course.

FURTHER UPDATE: by the end of September, still no decision had been announced.

However slow the political process, work has begun, in preparation for whatever decision will be made. The interior of the court has been cleared of structures accumulated within it over the past 60 years of so, including a mezzanine floor at one end.



Tim Edwards, photographer to the T&RA, took this splendid photo recently of the court, cleaned out and tantalisingly ready for its next use.

The photo above is from the Service End and the tambour is clearly visible. The doorway in the Main Wall will need to be closed up but, happily, the quarry from which the original stone came nearly 120 years ago is still open.

The magnificent, naturally lit space can be seen again in its entirety; the court floor is visible and there remain some handsome chase lines and numbers on the floor and walls.



Tim Edwards posted this, and other photos of the court, recently on Facebook, and we are delighted to be able to reproduce them here, with thanks to him and James Walton, for passing them on.

USA

There has been a major development in the story of the US challenge to wooden racquets and the dominance of Grays in the Real Tennis racquet market. Firstly, there is the Wayward company's production of racquets (see p2) and, secondly, a recent ruling by the Rules & Equipment Committee of the US Court Tennis Association about the use of graphite racquets, also manufactured in the US. What follows is a statement from the USCTA:

'Rule 4. RACQUETS

For a provisional period of one year, from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024, non-wood racquets may be used in USCTA events where those racquets are designed for the game of tennis and approved by this Association. Further, on all racquets, regardless of material, the internal dimensions of the head shall not exceed 241mm in length by 178mm in width and the overall length of the racquet shall not exceed 680mm.

For this period, the non-wood racquets approved for play in USCTA events include the two current models (light and heavy) manufactured by Harrow Sports. Any additional models of non-wood racquets will be reviewed on a case by case basis by the USCTA Rules & Equipment Committee and are not eligible for play in USCTA events during the provisional period.

Racquet frames made of wood, designed for the game of tennis, and meeting the above dimensions remain approved for play in USCTA events unless the Association determines that further review of a specific all-wood model is required.

For this period, non-wood racquets may not be used in the US Open, US Professional Singles, the National Open, and the US Amateur.'

It remains to be seen how popular and successful the graphite frames prove, particularly in relation to tennis elbow and any other physiological reactions to their relative stiffness.

Lest we forget, the historical and cultural value of the wooden frame is intrinsic to the game of Real Tennis and the trialling and creeping acceptance of non-wooden frame, arguably, more for commercial reasons than any other, needs careful consideration and evaluation.

Charleston, S.C.

We are delighted to include the following announcement about the future of Real Tennis in Charleston.

'IMPORTANT NEWS FROM CHARLESTON

by William McLaughlin

We have some important and positive news to share with the donors to the court tennis project in Charleston, SC. After a longstanding and consistent effort to build a court at Daniel Island, the Foundation, and the principals at the Daniel Island Club and Charleston Court Tennis, have all agreed to terminate the court tennis project at the Daniel Island site.

Regretfully, and with a continued sense of fiscal prudence, this decision was made by mutual agreement of all parties.

Persistent inflation and challenging local building conditions created a problematic scenario where the project cost meaningfully exceeded the funds raised from donors over recent years. Over the past year, serious attempts were made by all involved to reduce building costs and, at the same time, try to raise the substantial sums needed to fund the project cost. While constructive, these efforts ultimately proved to be unsuccessful.

Over the years, approximately \$300,000 was expended on on-site planning, permits, architectural plans, and miscellaneous expenses. The remaining capital of roughly \$2.63M remains in hand and is invested at the Foundation in short-term money market funds, which are now earning attractive yields.

At the Foundation, we are mindful of the collective donor's longstanding intent to build a court in Charleston and have been examining other sites. To that end, we are encouraged to report a dialogue involving a

new local partner has begun. On behalf of the Charleston Squash Club, Buddy Darby has expressed an interest in working with the Foundation and Charleston Court Tennis to build a new court. Buddy is someone known to our game, known to the national squash community, and is well-regarded locally in Charleston.

These negotiations are now underway, and we will report on the status of this new project as it materializes. Please know that the entire board of trustees of the USCTPF supports this effort. The full capabilities of the Foundation and our advisors will be brought to bear to make this project work. We look forward to communicating more details in a reasonable time.

Best regards,

Bill

William F. McLaughlin, Jr.

Chairman, USCTPF'

A court in Charleston, and close to the historic and attractive centre of the city, in 2027, perhaps?

Wisconsin



We have just received a photo of celebratory champagne being drunk on the about-to-be-completed court in the new Tennis Centre at the Sand Valley resort in Nekoosa!

The court is not yet ready for play, but it looks close to completion and should be playable later in October.

What a handsome structure, with a clerestory in the roof structure for extra light. In other ways, it looks quite similar to the court at Westwood, with the large windows in the out of play area above the side penthouse, presumably giving a great view from a bar or internal viewing terrace, and the unpainted, unstained penthouse roof.

The large, suspended globe lights are a particular feature, and we wonder what effect they will have on players following a high ball on its descent?



We are intrigued by the three rectangular recesses above the out of play line above the grille penthouse, reminiscent of the lunettes of a *Court Carre* like Falkland Palace.

Do these give a view onto the court when shutters are removed or are they an aesthetic detail?

The Last Word

The Spectator, the longest surviving weekly magazine in the world (first published 1828), included an article on 18 September about Real Tennis that makes considerable reference to the Men's 2023 World Championship and includes comments from various luminaries of the game, including CJR.

Under the title: 'Inside the weird world of real tennis', Thomas Hodgkinson, a Holyport member, focuses on the Lumley family and the preparation from birth of John Lumley to become a challenger for the title.

Although it is always a source of joy to see the game referred to positively in print, it is regrettable when misleading statements and errors make it into print. Thomas perpetuates the myth (scotched by Roger Morgan nearly 30 years ago in his authoritative and meticulously researched work on tennis and associated games in Europe *Tennis: The development of the European Ball Game*), that the court is modelled on monastic cloisters.

The court is actually much more like a Medieval town square in appearance, with a church (main) wall, buttress supporting the spire, and a facing row of shop fronts with unglazed, open windows, the grille being a shop window with the shutter closed, and a penthouse roof to keep the rain off the shopkeepers.

Monastic cloisters are square and open on all four sides, which is not an ideal layout for tennis play. That is not to say that monks did not play the game. They certainly did, and often too much and too enthusiastically, to the chagrin of medieval ecclesiastical authorities, who repeatedly banned brethren from playing, but they did so by adapting the outdoor street game to the constraints of monastic architectural design.

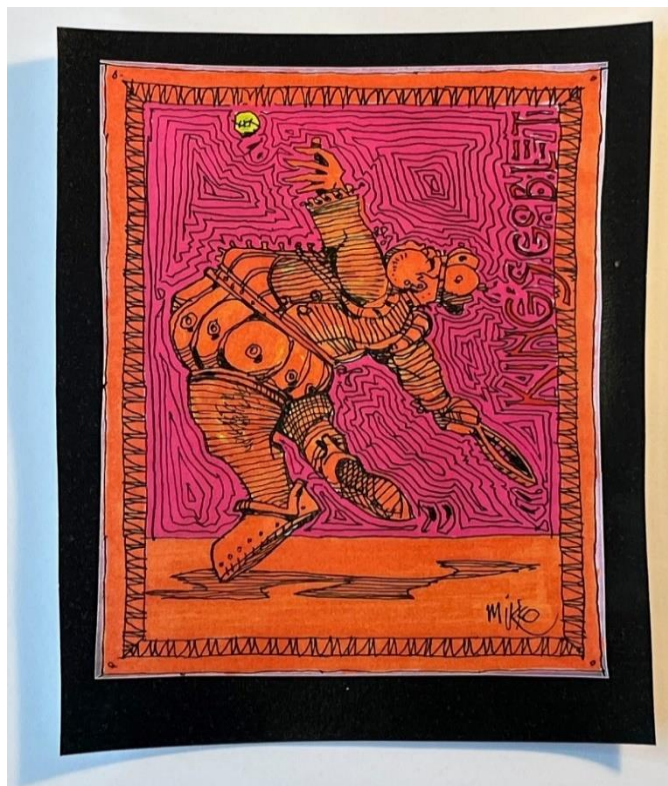
The Spectator article implies that the game originated with the Tudors, when it was already hundreds of years old in their reigns, having

been imported to England from Continental Europe early enough to become so popular that it was banned by Richard II pre-1400.

The tambour is referred to *The Spectator* article as the 'timbour' (which typo, we are sure, made Thomas cringe); handicaps that are worse than scratch are presented as minus something, presumably to make the plus numbers of the better-than-scratch players appear more logical, but is, alas, not how the system works; and the World Championship Challenge match is called 'the finals', which does not really reflect the nature of the elimination process and the Challenge Match, being more like boxing or chess in its format than lawn tennis tournament play.

The Last Gallery

Australian players are artists! Well, at least two of them create splendid artworks with a real tennis theme and some of 'Mikko' (Michael Lindell) is below and Graham Hyland's work is below that.



Firstly, Mikko has for decades been delighting and amusing our community with his inimitable celebrations of the history, personalities and style of real tennis. We have featured many of them in past editions of this newsletter, and with the artist's generous permission, here are two more, with the first being on the theme of The King's Goblet tournament, held at Hampton Court Palace.

From doublet and hose to polo shirt and shorts, Mikko has gone all contemporary by producing a drawing for the World Championship Challenge of the protagonists in their 'predominantly whites'.



...and now from graphic to sculptural art. Graham Hyland lives in Hobart, used to be a tennis pro and one of the best players in the 1980s and 1990s. He is an accomplished furniture maker and wood turner and has made various racquet frames out of rare and fine indigenous Australian wood (like Huon pine) that are objects of beauty, but definitely not designed for play.



In London, and therefore easily and quickly accessible, are some single racquets, which he calls 'tennis art frames', and some double tennis and rackets racquet creations, like the 'rackets art frame' shown above. These are available for sale and, as Christmas is coming, with scarcely more than 100 days to go, Graham is prepared to sell them at tempting prices. To discuss these racquets further, please contact Maggie.

If the thought of expanding your existing collection of Real Tennis objects and memorabilia is appealing, or if perhaps you are keen to start to collect, contact Maggie at maggie.ht@btinternet.com for more information, images and prices. She is in touch with several people who would be interested in selling some of their books, prints, racquets and other items. For example, one of our Radley members has a fine and unframed print of David's famous painting of the court at Versailles, *Le Serment de Jeu de Paume*.

Stické tennis in Oxfordshire

Have you heard of stické tennis? There are very few courts still standing and even fewer where one can play this late nineteenth century game, but there are at least two in Oxfordshire. To find out more about the game, click on this link:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stick%C3%A9>



This splendid photo of the wooden stické court at Taplow Court near Maidenhead shows clearly how like a Real Tennis court it looks (although this looks rather like a scale model made out of matches).

Stické courts are typically wooden and rather shorter and narrower than Tennis courts and vary in their interior design but are close cousins. The building above is no longer used for play, but as a dining hall (see photo below) by the Buddhist retreat that occupies the Elizabethan mansion house and estate.



If you would like to own your own court, you could make a bid for the Hartham Park estate near Corsham in Wiltshire, which has a court on which play is both possible and has been permitted. The asking price for the whole is a hefty £8m and it remains to be seen what the next owner will want to do with the stické court and estate.

Kirtlington Park is an outstanding Palladian house set in Capability Brown parkland, near Kirtlington village, which is NE of Woodstock.



The Georgians built the glorious mansion house, and the Edwardians added a stické court to the property. It is currently used for storage, although lawn tennis was played in it until about 20 years ago.

Radley member Simon Holland lives within yards of the court, upon which he has gazed with considerable longing for years and years, thinking of a return to stické, or even (in his wildest dreams) its conversion into a Real Tennis court.

The Editor visited a few weeks ago and was duly bowled over by the stunning Grade 1 landscape and the thought of creating a tennis court there.



The lawn tennis net post (centrally, below left) pokes up above the items stored inside the stické court. Behind it is the original cladding of the walls; wooden slats inside and outside and a cast iron frame supporting the semi-glazed roof.



Alas, the current building would need to be about 25% larger in every direction to be an appropriate size for Real Tennis. However, there is the space... Fellow visitor, Andrew Bishop, and our host, Simon Holland, provide a sense of scale in the photo above.

End Notes

A few items complete this season's issue, one concerning health, the second, safety and the third, success.

Andrew Davis

We are extremely sorry to hear of Andrew Davis's ill health. He has been the Head Pro at Oxford for more than a decade, was Assistant to Alan Oliver for eons before that and is well known to many Radley members. We wish him all the very best with his treatment over the next six months and a complete recovery thereafter.

T&RA Announcement

On an altogether different note, we are delighted that the T&RA has, at last, produced guidance on protective eyewear, strongly recommending its use for players of Real Tennis and Rackets. The detailed guidance can be viewed here: <https://www.tennisandrackets.com/real-tennis/tournament-rules/t-ra-eye-protection-notice>.

Howard Angus, pictured below, a former World Champion of both games, worked on the project of testing and validation.



The following statement is taken from the T&RA website:

'Following a risk assessment, it was recommended that eye-protection testing in Real Tennis was carried out with some urgency. Although eye-protection is recommended, this is currently not mandatory. There have been cases of eye injuries in the sport, some of which have been lifechanging. The testing process was designed to assess the protection provided by a selection of representative eye-protectors, which are currently available.

Eleven varieties of (largely WSF approved) eye-protectors were submitted to the Experimental Techniques Centre, Brunel University, for simulated impact testing, which involved a Real Tennis ball being fired at velocity onto the lens. The testing was performed in accordance to BS7930-1:1998 (Eye protectors for racquet sports). Although written for squash, the test methodology was considered to be representative and applicable to Real Tennis.

Real Tennis balls were fired at three speeds, 45mph, 70mph and 90mph, directly at the head form (frontal). The process was repeated from a 45 degrees angle at 45mph (lateral), representing a likely deflection off racquet or tambour or bandeau. Carbon paper was placed on the iris, covering the eye position on the head form, to determine whether the eye suffered any impact.'

The T&RA advice on Eye Protection is that if players wish to purchase eyewear, they are recommended to choose brands that conform to International Squash Specifications. The relevant one for play on British courts is UK BS 7930-1:1998.

Eye, Aye, Skipper

With apologies for the dire pun, and in case you had not heard about Radley's stunning success in elite level rowing recently, you should know that Radleians have excelled internationally this year.

The Radley Society's newsletter trumpeted the following exceptional performances: 'Radley's Tom George (2008, G Social) and Ollie Wynne-Griffith (2007, D/J) won silver in the Men's Pair, Charlie Elwes (2010, J) won gold in the GB Eight, and Felix Rawlinson (2014, F) won gold in the GB U23 Eight.

In August, Bob and Gabriel (6.2s) won gold in the GB U19 Eight.

This is the first time that a single nation (GB) has won all three Eights' events at the three World Championships (Senior, U23 & U19). Radley is the only school that has had pupils or past pupils in all three boats!'

We wish you a most enjoyable, successful
and
injury-free 2023/4 season of Real Tennis.



Camden Riviere, three times the Men's World Champion

*This revised Autumn 2023 Newsletter
was compiled by
Maggie Henderson-Tew.*