THE BOYS OF SUMMER

NICK WOOD IS HAUNTED BY THE GHOSTS OF ASSISTANTS PAST AND PRESENT

Read more on page 7

The Autumn Newsletter 2016
Number 116
Chairman's Chat

Congratulations to the RTC juniors who took part in the British Junior Open at Queens in August – particularly to George Parsons, who won the under-12s event.

More good news is that the Wellington College court is now open and in use. Initial feedback is that it is a nice court to play on (see page 4 for more). Linda and I attended the Opening Dinner and I hope to have a chance to play on this court as soon as possible.

Recently some RTC Ladies played a return social match against Seacourt at Hampton Court and the event was enjoyed by all. If you are interested in playing in future ladies’ social matches please contact Helen Crossley; all standards welcome.

Linda and I are going to France to play in the Tournoi des Tripots at the end of September. This is a fun but competitive event with 85 competitors from several countries playing in 16 teams. RTC members will be playing in the Newmarket Royals and Newport teams. Matches takes place over five days on three courts – Bayonne, La Bastide and Urrugne – none of which are actually real tennis courts! I just know that we have to take our real tennis rackets and that balls are involved. As I have not been playing for a couple of months owing to an injury, I am looking forward to a mad few days. I understand too that socialising is a very important element! Keeping real tennis alive in the south of France in any format is important for the future of the game.

On Saturday 15 October we will be holding our annual Prizegiving event. This year it is being held on the court, with a buffet-style meal. At the time of writing some tickets are still available, although numbers are having to be restricted.

Julian Sheraton-Davis

Spot the tambour: the courts at La Bastide-Clarence (left) and Bayonne (above)

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Annual Dinner & Prizegiving
☞ Contact the pros now if you haven’t booked your ticket already – 7.30pm start on Saturday 15 October (more details opposite).

IRTPA National League
☞ RTC’s home opener features Chris Chapman v Ben Taylor-Matthews. Play starts at 6pm on Wednesday 19 October – more details on page 6.

British Open
☞ A chance to see the world’s best and cheer on Chris Chapman, at Queen’s from 12-21 November.

Pol Roger Trophy
☞ RTC face a tough away quarter-final against defending champions Queen’s. Why not go along and support the team on Sunday 11 December.

Annual Carol Service
☞ Prepare your lungs for Wednesday 21 December at the Chapel Royal (see page 3 for details).

COMING UP

RTC
1–2 Oct: Barker Camm Cup F Grade (60-90 hcp)
15 Oct: Annual Dinner & Prizegiving
19 Oct: IRTPA National League: RTC v Leamington
30 Oct: RTCv Jesmond Dene (social match)
5–6 Nov: Barker Camm Cup E Grade (50-60 hcp)
11 Nov: IRTPA National League: RTC v Manchester
24 Nov: Autumn Night Pennant Final & Dinner (40-55 hcp)
3–4 Dec: Harris Watson Trophy (level doubles)
11 Dec: Brodie Cup QF (RTC at home if they qualify)
17–18 Dec: Barker Camm Cup D Grade (40-50 hcp)
21 Dec: Christmas Carol Service

ELSEWHERE
10-16 Oct: European Open (Lord’s)
27 Oct: IRTPA National League: Holyport v RTC
29-30 Oct: Inter-Club Singles & Doubles (Moreton Morrell)
2 Nov: IRTPA National League: Petworth v RTC
12-21 Nov: British Open (Queen’s)
20 Nov: Brodie Cup 1st Round: Hatfield v RTC
25-27 Nov: Over 50 Amateur Singles (Lord’s)
25-27 Nov: LRTA Junior Tournament (Radley)
6 Dec: IRTPA National League: Wellington v RTC
11 Dec: Pol Roger Trophy QF: Queen’s v RTC
Come and join us as we celebrate the playing successes of the last season – there are still some places available at

THE RTC ANNUAL PRIZEGIVING & DINNER

On the Royal Tennis Court, Hampton Court Palace
Saturday 15 October
7.30pm to 10.30pm
All members invited

With guest of honour
CHRIS RONALDSON
Head professional at the Royal Tennis Court 1979–2007 and World champion 1981–1987

Dress code: jacket and tie/cocktail dresses

There will be a Pol Roger champagne reception and canapés will be served throughout the evening

Tickets £25 (under-25s £10), available from the professionals

Start your Christmas celebrations by joining us at

The RTC Annual Carol Service

in the Chapel Royal
Wednesday 21 December 2016 at 7.30pm
Followed by mulled wine and mince pies in the club

Tickets: £14
(No charge for under-18s)

Tickets can be obtained directly from the professionals, or by phoning the pro shop

Paul has all the Wright moves

Paul Wright has joined the elite club of two-time Lathom Browne Cup winners

Paul Wright has become a two-time winner of the Lathom Browne Cup, beating Giles Doy 9-3 in the final. Paul, whose first win came in 2000, was conceding an intimidating 38 handicap points to Giles, having not had to give more than four points throughout the earlier rounds.

The finalists had taken some notable scalps on the way, with Paul downing the dangerous Geoffrey Russell as well as previous finalist Owen Saunders, and Giles beating the up-and-coming Alice O’Hagan.

Paul was focused from the start, racing to a 2-0 lead. Giles, who had seemed overawed at first, started using his pique serve to good effect, getting back to 2-2 as Paul had a moment of madness and smashed the ball into the (banned) tambour. Giles then inexplicably moved away from the pique to a serve that was frequently too long, allowing Paul to get on the front foot and hit the accurate length that the handicap demanded. Giles also yielded the service end too easily, giving up chase 2 or better several times when losing the point instead would almost certainly have been advantageous in the long run.

Paul raced out to a 7-3 lead, using the boast to good effect – probably a shot Giles doesn’t see too often from 70-plus opponents. Giles started to force for the dedans more often, but in the whole match Paul had to defend the dedans just three times, and he didn’t let any past him. Paul also only made three unforced errors in the whole match – a lesson in handicap play.

Paul closed out the match 9-3, proving solid in defence and error-free in attack, as Giles ran out of tactics.

Congratulations to both players and especially to Paul, who joins an exclusive club of two-time winners that includes, recently, Nicola Doble and Carolyn Nicholls.
**Wellington boost**

*There’s much to like about the world’s newest real tennis court*

Eight years after Radley’s court opened, another school has a new real tennis court, with Wellington College opening for play in the summer. Just 40 minutes’ drive from Hampton Court, it is a welcome addition to the region.

On the day when one delegation of RTC members visited for three hours of doubles, just before autumn term started, the sleepy campus was being drenched by a prolonged shower. The rain presented one early drawback of the setup at Wellington: the club uses the changing room of the fitness centre, which means a 30-yard scamper outside to the court after changing into your tennis clothes. For those of us who don’t think you ever should wear indoor sports shoes outside whether or not it’s raining, this is a problem.

However, there’s little else to criticise. The open area behind the dedans will prove very handy for events and allows for extra spectators, and the lighting on court is excellent, with the yellow ball very easy to spot against the blue background. While there were one or two slight ‘dead’ areas on the floor, the court displays few obvious traits that would make it difficult for a visitor to adapt (unlike, say, the bouncy castle effect of Middlesex or the small dedans of Radley on other recently built courts). The bounce is fairly lively, but it’s too soon to say how the court will ultimately behave once it’s settled down.

One thing the club definitely has going for it is Danny Jones. The head professional established a reputation in his long spell at Seacourt as an expert at encouraging and developing youngsters, so this role at a school where hundreds of young new real tennis players are on the doorstep should suit him down to the ground. The quality of the balls on our visit was exemplary too – no doubt many members who play elsewhere will appreciate that not every club provides balls of the quality we’re used to at RTC.

As this newsletter went to press, Wellington had just enjoyed its opening weekend and dinner, the latter of which was attended by a host of RTC members including chairman Julian Sheraton-Davis and our T&RA chairman David Watson (left), who was among the speakers.

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**T&RA Category B Championships: Mr Smith goes to Bridport**

Josh Smith made a positive impact down in Dorset in September during the T&RA’s Category B Championship for those with handicaps of 10-20.

In the opening round he was up against Moreton Morrell’s Tom Bomford, a familiar foe from the National League. Josh made short work of him, storming through 6-0 6-3 to earn a semi-final with the No 1 seed, the hard-hitting Zak Eadle of Radley. Despite standing up well to the onslaught, Josh couldn’t quite prevail, going down 6-4 6-4 – a very respectable effort against a 9.6 handicap opponent, who went on to beat Ben Ronaldson in the final (nice to see Ben back in competition, though).

In the 15-20 section of the draw, Simon Barker also made a strong start, beating the home assistant pro Jeremy Brodie 6-3 6-1. Unfortunately, injury meant Simon then had to retire in the second set of his semi-final against Cambridge’s Alex Evans.
The first RTC tournament of the new season had a distinctly autumnal feel, as a hardy group of players and spectators braved the rain to gather for the De Laszlo Bowl. The De Laszlo is doubles with a twist – players cannot cross the centre line and players are paired by matching the best and worst handicaps.

Saturday
The first of the groups saw closely contested matches. Each pair won one, so advancement came down to the games won/lost ratio. After some tense calculations, Terry Marsh and Stephen Hunt’s ratio of 0.928 narrowly pipped Lindsay Hatchett and Sarah Lambie to second place in the group, by 0.005!

In the second group, Chris Swan (27) and Lucie Stewart (94) were the most lopsided pair in the tournament. Chris’s consistent railroad serves were a highlight, and despite Lucie’s initial hope that her opponents would hit all balls to her partner’s side of the court, she should be proud that her rapidly improving game saw her finish the day as the ‘last woman standing’. David Peregrine-Jones and Ron Slade’s doubles nous saw them through to the knockout stage in second place.

The afternoon continued apace with plenty of even games. Relative newcomer Simon Cripps learned rapidly to heed experienced partner Alan Dallamore’s advice – an effective strategy ensuring they proceeded.

In the last group of the day, a tense encounter saw Ian Wimbush and Richard Lewis come back from 1-5 down against Vernon Morris and Nick Hyams to take the set 6-5. The last match of the day decided who would clinch the last place available in Sunday’s knockout stage – Vernon Morris and Nick Hyams were by this stage too effective a pairing for Ben Simonds-Gooding and Katy Doy, securing the set 6-2 to progress.

Sunday
Sunday’s knockout rounds saw five of seven matches finish 8/7 – thrilling for the spectators, nailbiting for the players and hard work for the dedicated markers, Josh and Lesley.

In the first quarter-final, at 7-7, 40-40, Alan Dallamore’s cries of “LEAVE!” went unheeded as Simon Cripps tapped a short ball into the net to see off any hopes of progressing. As on Saturday, Chris Swan’s rapid railroad serves proved insurmountable for Morris and Hyams, and the plucky pair progressed to the semi-final 8-3.

In the bottom half of the draw, Andy Anderson and Giles Doy took an early lead against Slade and Peregrine-Jones before just holding on for a tense 8-7 win. And while Mike Shattock and Martin Bronstein raced away to a 7-4 lead in the last quarter-final, Wimbush and Lewis pulled off the comeback of the tournament for another 8-7 win.

Perhaps the highlight of the semi-finals was Wimbush and Lewis’s ‘Irish Jig’ – a novel motivational tactic for the pair, who staged an outrageous comeback from 0-5 down to Anderson and Doy. Despite support from the dedans for the underdogs, Anderson and Doy just managed to cross the finish line, again 8-7. The other semi-final saw Marsh and Hunt build a 4-2 lead, only for Swan and Stewart to come back and take the match 8-7.

Anderson and Doy raced away to a 5-1 lead in the final and, despite Swan and Stewart’s best efforts, the pair couldn’t be prevented from taking the title by 8 games to 4.

This year’s De Laszlo Bowl provided fantastic tennis from across the range of handicaps, and an impressive number of tightly contested matches. A massive thank you to everyone who played or attended, for the amusement of attempting to avoid each other and the centre line, the calls of “LEAVE” and “YOURS”, and also to Josh and Lesley for their firm, eagle-eyed marking. Next year’s tournament is sure to be hotly anticipated and contested.

Katy Doy

JUNIOR COACHING
This season’s junior development sessions are just around the corner. Sign up your youngsters now to guarantee a spot.

Sat 15 Oct, 3-5pm  Sat 19 Nov, 9-11am  Sat 22 Oct, 3-5pm  Sat 26 Nov, 3-5pm
Sat 29 Oct, 3-5pm  Sat 10 Dec, 3-5pm  Sat 12 Nov, 3-5pm

To sign up, contact the professionals. Sessions are fairly priced to encourage participation in as many as possible: £10 per session for all dates. All extra monies raised are held in the RTC’s Junior Development Fund to assist with future initiatives to assist juniors to take up real tennis. Equipment is provided, including protective eye wear. We just ask that appropriate and clean shoes are worn.
The Grand National

The elite players make a welcome return to the National League this season, including Chris Chapman

After a one-year sabbatical, the world’s top players return to the National League this season, and of course the Royal Tennis Court has a competitive team. Joining professional and world No 7 Chris Chapman will be the improving Nick Hatchett, who will get a welcome chance to take on some challenging opponents and to play in front of some large galleries.

The first match for the new-look RTC team, on the evening of Wednesday 19 October, sees prodigal son Ben Taylor-Matthews travel down from his new home of Leamington, in partnership with the youthful Robert Shenkman. While Chris and Ben know each other’s games inside out and are sure to have a close battle, the match between Nick and Robert holds many unknowns, so it should be an intriguing evening. Contact the pros if you’d like to come along and watch.

The next match after that for Chris and Nick will be on Thursday 27 October at Holyport, where Chris will take on former world champion Rob Fahey and Nick will pit his wits against Claire Fahey.

2016/17 preview

The reward for Josh and Phil Dunn after a successful season is a crack at Division 2, where they will face some very testing opponents. They open proceedings against a talented young squad at Bristol, where Phil spent several years studying. Their first home match is on Friday 14 October, against an experienced Oratory duo of Marc Seigneur and Roman Krznaric.

Speaking of experience, no Division 3 teams will match the combined wisdom and bulging trophy cabinets of RTC’s David Watson, James Sohl and Simon Barker. RTC also has teams in Divisions 4-8, so the chances of some more titles are strong. (Indeed, Bruce Leith’s Division 8 team have already notched up a 3-0 win in their opener.)

2015/16 roundup

Simon Fox’s Division 5 team travelled up to Cambridge in July hoping to upset a talented team that had dominated the division. Simon put up a great fight against Jimmy Campbell, but the home captain just held on to take the opening rubber 6-5 in the third set. Fred Satow was up next against Andrew Petrie, a man known for hot and cold streaks of form – and unfortunately for RTC this was one of Andrew’s hottest days. A 6-1 6-1 stroll secured the title for Cambridge.

Geoffrey Russell salvaged some pride in the match between the two No 1 players, beating Charles D’Oyly 6-3 in the third set.

All in all, RTC made it to five finals from the seven divisions it entered, but Josh Smith’s Division 3 team was the only one to emerge triumphant from those finals.

French Open

The first big event of the new season did not go well for Chris Chapman as he resumed his bid to climb the world rankings and gain points in the race to challenge for the 2018 world championship. Seeded fourth, Chris went to Paris optimistic of taking care of old rival Kieran Booth (the fifth seed) to set up a semi-final against the new world champion, Camden Riviere. However, a 4-6 5-6 5-6 defeat scuppered those hopes.

The other half of the draw saw a major upset as Ben Taylor-Matthews (seeded third) lost to Nick Howell of Newport in five sets. The defeat would drop Ben from No 6 in the world to No 7, with Bryn Sayers (absent from Paris) regaining his status as the UK’s No 1 player.

The untouchable Riviere demolished Booth (6-0 6-0 6-2) and then Rob Fahey in the final (6-3 6-0 6-0). He also won the doubles, with John Lumley.

In the ladies’ tournament, Claire Fahey predictably swept all before her in the singles, defeating Penny Lumley 6-1 6-1 in the final. In the doubles, she teamed up with our own Isabel Candy for a 6-1 6-2 win over Penny and Tara Lumley to give Isabel a first Open title, just two years after taking up the sport! Hearty congratulations to Isabel, who also gave the fourth seed Freddy Adam a fright in the singles quarter-finals.

Pol Roger Trophy and Brodie Cup preview

RTC have been handed the toughest of draws in the Pol Roger Trophy, the national inter-club knockout competition. With only last year’s finalists being seeded, there was a one-in-three chance that we would be drawn against one of them, and lo and behold RTC face a trip to Queen’s to take on the defending champions (see right).

A tough test on 11 December for Phil Dunn’s team, then. In the Brodie Cup (for those with handicaps over 30), Dick Cowling’s team open up at Hatfield in a rematch of a tense battle last season at the same court.

1st round, 11 Dec Semi-finals, 29 Jan Final 12, March

(H) Queen’s (1) (H) (RTC)

(H) Prested Hall

Oxford

Petworth House (H)

(H) Seacourt

(H) Cambridge

MCC (2)
Return of the King
Stef King and Ben Taylor-Matthews partied like it was 2008 in an entertaining return

We welcomed back to the club former professionals and friends Ben Taylor-Matthews and Stef King in July, for an evening of exhibition doubles. The format saw the alumni take on mixed doubles pairings made up from current pros Nick Wood, Chris Chapman and Josh Smith. In the relaxed spirit of the evening, Owen Saunders was called upon to mark, presiding over a bizarre system whereby bonus points could be awarded or deducted if the crowd felt they had been suitably entertained.

Stef and Ben quickly got back into the swing of things, showing that the old telepathic understanding was still there. Stef, despite his lack of tennis in recent years, never looked out of place. At the other end, the dancing feet of Nick were a joy to welcome back, with many newer members being mesmerised by them for the first time.

Josh, playing in front of his biggest crowd to date, stepped up to the mark, and big-game experience will only help him. Chris and Ben, as you would expect from top 10 players, showed an array of skill and don’t-try-this-at-home shots that kept the crowd wowed. Shot of the evening goes to Chris, crisply volleying back a shot while semi-supine in second gallery.

As is required in such matches, it came down to a deciding game in the third and final match, with the current RTC boys nicking it. Many thanks to the 60 members who had a raucous evening — it was nice not to have to be quiet in the dedans for a change!

• NEWS IN BRIEF •

British Junior Championships
Congratulations to George Parsons of RTC, who won the British Under-12 Open Singles Championship at Queen’s in August. It was a remarkable 8-5 victory in the final for George, coming as it did against Seacourt’s James Medlow, who had beaten him twice in earlier group stages. Peaking when it matters most is a gift that will stand him in good stead as he develops.

George’s victory is testament to the hard work put in by Nick Wood’s pro team and Julian Sheraton-Davis JP Guillonnet to develop junior tennis at the club.

Seal Salver
This season the Seal Salver has taken on a new format. It is still open only to full members who are over the age of 50 at 1 September, but in order to speed up the arranging and playing of matches, the first stage of the tournament is being played on a league basis.

Each league will comprise of four players playing one set against each other. The winner of each league will progress to the knockout stage to join the eight seeds.

Meanwhile, defending champion David Watson has booked his final place in the 2015-16 incarnation of this traditionally late-running competition. He will meet either John East or Fred Satow.

HAVE YOU TRIED SPORTS MASSAGE?
You don’t need to be a high-performance athlete to have sports massage. Whether your muscles ache from injury, over-training or doing a new activity, sports massage can help you recover more quickly.

There are many techniques used in sports massage which can improve circulation, assist to increase muscle flexibility and range of movement, as well as enhancing your sense of well-being.

Sports massage is tailored to individual needs and is complementary to physiotherapy and other forms of treatment.

Jean-Pierre (J-P) is a sports massage therapist, having qualified at St Mary’s University, Twickenham, some years ago. Clients from all walks of life have benefited from his expertise, including real tennis pros, personal trainers, cyclists, Zumba teachers, runners, City workers, lawn tennis pros and parents.

“You certainly helped me to get back on court after my ankle injury” — CC
“The improvement in the range of movement in my neck enabled me to return to cycle racing” — BJ
“It feels like I’ve been WD40ed! It’s so much looser” — JS
“My regular maintenance massage releases all the tension from travelling and working in the city” — NG

For appointments, contact Jean-Pierre Guillonnet on 07831 806232 or via jguillonnet@virginmedia.com
Back in July, 1st Belmont Guides tried their hand at the game, and they had a whale of a time.

While they were interested that former Chief Guide Lady Baden-Powell had lived in the Palace for more than 35 years, and that Henry VIII had played here, they were most interested by the uncanny resemblance between their brilliant host for the day – Josh Smith – and pop singer Ed Sheeran. So the day ended with lunch in the garden followed by a trip round the maze, and 13 new members of the Josh Smith Fan Club.

**RTC Top Ten**

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<th>Rank</th>
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<tr>
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**RTC’s Patron writes**

You may recall that the club sent our Patron, Her Majesty the Queen, a card for her 90th birthday on 21 April. The card was a picture of the outside of the Royal Tennis Court, the original having been painted by Claire Weatherill. The Queen sent an invitation to attend the Patron’s Lunch in the Mall in June, and eight RTC members and relatives attended the event. She also sent this letter (left) thanking Julian Sheraton-Davis and the club for the birthday card.

**Results**

**Lathom Browne Cup**


**De Laszlo Bowl**

- Quarter-finals: Terry Marsh & Stephen Hunt beat Alan Dallamore & Simon Cripps 8-7; Lucie Stewart & Chris Swan beat Vernon Morris & Nick Hyams 8-3; Giles Doy & Andy Anderson beat David Peregrine-Jones & Ron Slade 8-7; Ian Wimbush & Richard Lewis beat Mike Shattuck & Martin Bronstein 8-7.

**French Open (Paris)**

- Men, Quarter-finals: Camden Riviere beat Rich Smith 6-0 6-0 6-0; Kieran Booth beat Chris Chapman 6-4 6-5 6-5; Nick Howell beat Ben Taylor-Matthews 6-1 3-6 1-2 6-3; Rob Fahey beat John Lumley 6-1 6-3 6-1.
- Semi-finals: Riviere beat Booth 6-0 6-0 6-2; Fahey beat Howell 5-6 6-1 6-2 6-5. Final: Riviere beat Fahey 6-3 6-0 6-0.

- Doubles, Semi-finals: Riviere & Lumley beat Chapman & Taylor-Matthews 6-3 6-4 6-5; Fahey & Ricardo Smith beat Matthieu Sarlangue & Rod McNaughtan 6-0 6-0 6-4. Final: Riviere & Lumley beat Fahey & Smith 6-5 6-0 6-5.

- Ladies, Quarter-finals: Claire Fahey beat Aga Jagielka 6-0 6-0; Irina Dublish beat Saskia Bollerman 6-1 2-6 6-3; Freddy Adam beat Isabel Candy 6-1 6-5; Penny Lumley beat Tara Lumley 6-1 6-2.
- Semi-finals: Fahey beat Dublish 6-1 6-1; Lumley beat Adam 6-0 6-3. Final: Fahey beat Lumley 6-1 6-1.


**Keith Smith**

Just as this newsletter was going to press, the desperately sad news came through that Keith Smith, one of the most popular members at the club, had died after battling cancer for more than two years.

An enormous character, Keith played in the regular Sunday morning doubles and was a long-standing member. A tireless supporter of many charities, he had endless stories and jokes to entertain his fellow players.

The funeral will be on 13 October.

In September we also lost John Bennett, a keen former member of the club, at the age of 87.