MATHER’S DAY
JOHN MATHER STORMS TO THE LATHOM BROWNE CUP
See page 3

The Autumn Newsletter 2012
Number 101
chairman’s chat

At the end of a summer of sport like no other, I can only add my own postscript to certain naysayers (you know who you are!). To all those who said the Olympics and Paralympics would be an irritating non-event… I told you so! To all those who said Andy Murray wouldn’t win a major… I told you so! (And there are more to come.)

To all those who said the USA would regain the Ryder Cup… I told you so! (I was fortunate enough to be there, and I must confess that at 3pm on the Saturday I wasn’t so sure.) And while on the subject of a summer of sport, congratulations to John Mather, who won the Lathom Browne final 9-0 (see opposite). John’s win earned him a place in the Chetwood Trophy, which RTC hosted in late September. The game is obviously alive and well, as the two finalists (from Bridport and Bristol) were mere 12 and 15 years old.

We are so pleased that Nick Wood and Chris Chapman will be representing RTC in the National League Premier Division this season, so please keep an eye out for the Premier League fixture list so we can have bumper attendances at all the home matches! Your support is vital for our continuing participation in this competition and we want to give our loyal professionals the backing they deserve. As before, I would urge members to use the opportunity to bring guests to see top-quality tennis and enjoy a social event in such special surroundings.

I would also like to remind members that the annual Carol Service will be held in the Chapel Royal at 7.30pm on Wednesday 12 December. This was a great success again last year and because numbers are limited, you are encouraged to buy tickets as early as possible and, again, to bring guests to enjoy such a unique experience.

I would also draw your attention to the excellent weekly RTC News email which has, inter alia, a list of the various social matches throughout the season. Please contact Owen Saunders if you would like to take part.

Finally, as usual, I would like to wish everyone success for the new season whether representing one of the many RTC teams in various competitions or simply in their quest to master the giraffe.

Paddy Sweetnam

CHANGING ROOMS

A number of members have taken to using the club rooms and dedans for changing, leaving bags, clothing and shoes draped over the furniture.

Please use the changing rooms for the purpose of changing and not the club rooms. Do not leave valuables in the changing rooms.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Riviere flowing again
Camden Riviere, who will be familiar to many of you, has been dominating the pro tennis scene since his return from injury, winning the US Pro Singles in Newport, the French Open in Bordeaux and the European Open at Lord’s, the last of these concluding with a crushing 6-1 6-1 6-2 win over Bryn Sayers.

Rob Fahey makes his return to competitive action in November’s British Open at Queen’s, in which he has been drawn in the same half as Camden. Even with Fahey’s world title defence still 18 months away, this could still be a significant indicator of how the land lies.

British No 1 Sayers must get past Tim Chisholm and Steve Virgona.

Chris Chapman opens up against Mathieu Sarlangue, while Peter Wright faces Matty Ronaldson.

The women’s French Open saw Claire Vigrass extend her title run, beating our own Karen Hird 6-2 6-2.

Chicago
As this newsletter reaches you, the “international grand opening” of the restored court at Chicago will be taking place. There is already a buzz emerging from the Windy City, which is now a must for real tennis enthusiasts with wanderlust.

Summer Barbecue
July’s Summer Barbecue and raffle raised £220 for the RTC junior tennis programme, more of which to come.

COMING UP

RTC
27-28 Oct: Barker Camm Cup Grade E (hcp 50-59)
3-4 Nov: Harris Watson Trophy level doubles (early stages)
1-2 Dec: Barker Camm Cup Grade D (hcp 40-49)
12 Dec: Christmas Carol Service
16 Dec: RTC v RAF (social)

ELSEWHERE
25-28 Oct: Chicago grand opening
2-4 Nov: British Open singles qualifying (Hollyport)
3-4 Nov: Inter-club singles/doubles tournament (Moreton Morrell)
9-11 Nov: British Ladies Handicap (Moreton Morrell/Leamington)
11-20 Nov: British Open (Queen’s)
17/18 Nov: Brodie Cup: Hardwick or Jesmond Dene v RTC
22-25 Nov: Over-50 Amateur Singles Championship (Oratory)
23-25 Nov: Amateur doubles handicap tournament (Leamington)
24-25 Nov: LRTA Juniors (Radley)
2 Dec: Cambridge v RTC (social)
8/9 Dec: Pol Roger Trophy, Field Trophy and Brodie Cup quarter-finals
9 Dec: Mothers & Daughters (Hardwick)

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Mather lays on a masterclass

The Lathom Browne Cup final promised to be a tight affair. It was anything but

T
he final of the Lathom Browne Cup, the ten-month battle to become the club’s handicap singles champion, offered an interesting contrast between its two combatants.

Representing the top half of the draw – those with handicaps of 44 or less at the time of the draw – was Don Ganson. A winner back in 1996, Don is a wily, experienced campaigner whose handicap has not moved violently up or down in recent years. He had to survive three consecutive 9-8 marathons on his way to winning Grade B, but then he hit his straps, dropping a measly total of three games in his quarter-final and semi-final combined.

The bottom half of the draw generally contains one or two dangerous improvers – and from early on John Mather established himself as one such threat. By the time he had won his Grade H semi 9-0 and final 9-3, he had brought his handicap down from 68 to 61. In accordance with the competition rules, his handicap was then updated to 61 – without this adjustment, the other seven remaining contestants might as well have hung up their rackets.

Nevertheless, John’s game was still improving, and by the time he had negotiated the next two rounds he was down to 58. This wouldn’t necessarily

found the grille twice to make it 5-0. By now Don was hitting more to John’s backhand, which seemed a wise course of action. Sadly for Don, everything was going John’s way, which was confirmed when a firm backhand from John hit the tambour very high up and floated down and across the court.

There was a sense of inevitability as it bounced up... and into winning gallery. 6-0, and surely no way back for Don.

Game seven was better for Don, reaching a decisive 40-all point. Surely this time he would break his duck... but after a high serve from John, Don went for a slightly ambitious attacking shot that flew high up and out above the main wall. The inevitable was looming, especially after the eighth game went John’s way, and when he added the first point of game nine he stood 40-owe 40 up – seven match-points, with eight games in hand just in case.

Pride spurred Don on, though, and he played his best tennis yet to claw back six points and reach 40-all once again. He even did the right thing on the following point, but John came up with two astonishing ‘gets’ that were rewarded with a backhand error from Don, giving John a superb 9-0 victory and his name on the honours board.

Simon Edmond

Close but no cigar for RTC members on the road

The autumn’s national T&RA Category tournaments offer many keen players the first competitive action of the new season, as well as enabling them to experience new courts and make new friends and rivals of a similar standard from around the country.

At Bridport, Phil Dunn was looking to add to his Category C success of last year, this time in the 15-19 division of Category B. He beat fellow RTC man Simon Barker on the way to the final, but Lewis Williams of Prested Hall was just too solid, winning 6-3 6-5.

Up at Moreton Morrell, Simon Edmond reached the Category C 25-29 final for the second consecutive year, but again he was stymied, this time in three sets by Patrick Sutton of Leamington. At Holyport, Richard Buxton also fell at the final hurdle in the 45-49 division of Category E, with Keith Beechener of Cambridge in top form.
Y
outh was the theme of this Chetwood Trophy, the event hosted by RTC each year for club handicap tournament finalists from around the country. Even after 26 contestants had been whittled down to 16 following the group stages, there were still four under-18s left standing, including the two lowest handicaps still in the tournament.

Group stages
The range of handicaps and ages was truly immense – one match featured 11-year-old Bristolian Hamish Dron against a 70-year-old, while Hugh Latham of Seacourt and Cameron Brown of Cambridge both had to deal with one serve/banned tambour restrictions in all three group games. Latham, playing off 7 and up against dangerous thirtysomethings, didn’t prosper – unlike Brown, an improving Australian off 31, who advanced from his group along with young Hamish and RTC’s own John Mather.

Five players advanced unbeaten: Angus Robertson of Hardwick, part of real tennis’s rock star element and an occasional visitor to RTC; Jonathan Platt of Middlesex, off 51; Henry Mullan of Bristol, just 15 years old but already down to 29; Radley’s Vincent Graham; and 20-handicap Levi Gale of Bridport, the National Under-18 champion.

Last 16 and quarter-finals
In the top half of the draw, Mullan and Graham advanced before Mullan edged past Graham 6-5 into the semi-finals, where he would meet Brown, whose deliberate, meticulous play brought him 6-1 and 6-0 wins to make him very much a marked man.

The other half of the draw saw much drama, beginning with an eye-catching clash of the two Middlesex entrants. Dara Walsh had beaten Jonathan Platt to win the club title up at Hendon, but this time Platt was the victor in the tightest of 6-5 sets. After Stuart Baxter had played the role of spoilsport by ousting Hamish Dron 6-5, Platt eased past him into the semis with error-free tennis.

John Mather defeated Robertson, while 12-year-old Nicky Milton made the most of burgeoning talent, no shortage of confidence and a 38-point handicap start over Gale to beat his Devon club-mate 6-2. Neither Milton nor Mather was at his best in their quarter-final, but the Bridport tyro picked his game up to sneak through 6-4.

Semis and final
Thus we were faced with two semi-finals both pitting youth against (relative) experience. In the first of these, Henry Mullan had to work out how to derail the Cameron Brown steam train, and he did just the right thing: rather than trying too hard, he simply played his natural game. Relying on your technique may be a foreign concept to many of us, but Master Mullan has the skills to do just that, and he out-served and out-returned Brown on the way to a 6-2 win.

Could Milton do likewise? Platt had been very sensible in his previous two matches, but now the cracks started to show, and he did just what you should not do against an exuberant youngster: he overhit and repeatedly found the back penthouse. Milton seized on these gifts as if it were Christmas morning, pounding ball after ball to the base of the tambour in a fashion that should be well beyond any 58-handicapper. Soon he had demolished his hapless opponent and had set up a final showdown with ‘old man’ Mullan (who, lest you forget, was 15 to his opponent’s 12).

Despite their youth, there was a contrast in styles and approaches. Mullan was technically sound and tactically mature, while the left-handed Milton seemed determined to play every ball off-balance, with one foot or even no feet on the ground (see photos). After Milton’s spectacular semi-final display, you might have thought the handicap (rec 30–owe ½ 30, one serve, banned tambour) would be too much for Mullan, but a faultless start saw him claim a lead that he would never relinquish.

A 6-4 success for a worthy winner, then, at the end of an enthralling weekend characterised by matches played in excellent spirit before a packed dedans of supporters. Huge credit must go to Nick Wood and his professional team for organising the weekend, marking tirelessly (until 12.20am on the Saturday night!) and making all our visitors feel so welcome.
Neptune British Open 2012

By the time you read this, Chris Chapman will have competed in the French Open, European Open and IRTPA Championships. These events are quickly followed by the Neptune British Open, held at Queen’s Club on 11–20 November. The event promises all of the top players in the world, including world champion Rob Fahey, the return of the in-form Camden Riviere, Steve Virgona, Bryn Sayers, Tim Chisholm and Ben Matthews. There hasn’t been a gathering of such strong players for many a season, so you will not want to miss this one. Get to Queen’s, watch some great tennis and support Chris Chapman in his quest to break into the top five.

Also, Nick Wood will partner Chris in the doubles.

For ticket information, contact the Tennis & Rackets Association (website www.tennisandrackets.com, email office@tennisandrackets.co.uk).

Parties at the Royal Tennis Court

After a few quiet seasons without the club hosting members’ parties and functions, we are now again promoting the club’s facilities for such events. We have wonderful rooms and a lovely garden for you to host and entertain friends and business colleagues. From a simple business meeting to a party for 50 people, we can cater for all your needs. Contact Nick Wood on 020 89773015 or nick.wood@royaltenniscourt.com.

Participation and involvement make the difference!

The club and professionals welcome your support for all the upcoming events such as the club tournaments, social events such as the Carol Service on 12 December and the Premier National League matches (dates yet to be released). Watch out for notifications of all events on club noticeboards and in the weekly emails.

Stef finds his target

Stef King writes...

Stef and Jemima’s brief “mini-moon” took them to Provence, where they called in on RTC member Stephen Cronk and his family. Stephen moved from Teddington to Provence in 2009 to make wine – you may well have tried his Mirabeau rosé at the club already. Waitrose took nearly all his rosé production this year, and Jancis Robinson MW rated it as one of the top three Côtes de Provence rosés of the year.

Now he’s turning his hand to red wine and is working with an established producer in the area to make a classic blend of Grenache and Syrah – southern Rhône in style (not dissimilar to a Gigondas or Vacquieras). This wine has been ageing in old oak foudres since 2007, so it is very smooth and perfect for drinking now. It is available to RTC members at a reduced rate in the run-up to Christmas...

Usual retail price £10.99 per bottle.
Special RTC members’ prices:
Single bottle: £8.99
Case: £45 (£7.50/bottle)
4 cases or more: £40/case (£6.67/bottle)

Please speak to the professionals if you would like to take advantage of this offer.
Many sporting winning streaks are truly exceptional: Ed Moses did not lose a 400m hurdles race for almost 10 years; London 2012 wheelchair tennis gold medallist Esther Vergeer has won 470 matches in a row; Lance Armstrong won seven consecutive Tours de France between 1999 and 2005 (oh no he didn’t – Ed.). In real tennis, the Olympic title has been held for over 104 years by American Jay Gould, who in that time has not dropped a set. It was time to bring the title back to Britain.

With this in mind, the inaugural Corinthian Cup took place during the Olympic Games, with the aim of breaking America’s stranglehold on the event. Nineteen teams from England, Australia and the USA battled for the right to claim the title back from Gould.

Taking place at Newmarket, Hatfield and Cambridge, the tournament comprised team doubles and pairs doubles tournaments, all off handicap. There was also a host of social activities including parties at the Cambridge colleges, punting, a barbecue at the magnificent Childerley Hall and a prize dinner at the Imperial War Museum at Duxford. Gould was said to be unhappy at the decision not to use Queen’s (scene of his most recent victory), but the committee did not relent.

With this in mind, RTC took a Royals team that embodied the Corinthian spirit: Karen Hird, Sue Haswell, Simon Edmond, Owen Saunders, Richard East, James Dubois, Ginnie Fisher and Robin Mulcahy. Added spice was given by the presence of RTC members David and James Watson in a hybrid team also containing Cambridge and Seacourt players, and of RTC’s Fred Satow in the Hatfield team.

In the group games, the Royals’ first match could not have been tighter, beating the Ephemerals by one game after a 2-2 draw meant game difference determined the winner. The Ephemerals team captain did not know this rule for determining the result, and therefore he was not upset when his player double-faulted to hand the Royals victory.

The opening weekend cocktail party took place on the lawn at St Johns, in glorious late summer sunshine. Despite plentiful free champagne and a post party detour to the Mitre, behaviour remained Corinthian and CB Fry would have had nothing bad to say.

Against familiar foes Hatfield Hedonists, ruthless team selection meant only Hird, Haswell, Edmond and Saunders played. Despite rumblings in the changing room, the strategy paid off with a handsome 4-0 thrashing.

In the remaining group games, the Royals progressed comfortably. Ruthless Haswell hardly put a foot wrong and Ginnie Fisher was a revelation, showing great tactical nous. With progress already assured, the loss against the Hardwick Hooligans in the final group game was not relevant.

Going in to the quarter-finals, the main challengers looked like the Royals, the Watsons’ team and Melburnian team the Wanderers. The Americans were out, and the title would have a new home. By quirk of fate the quarter-final saw a rematch against Hardwick. With more riding on the outcome this time, RTC were comfortable winners.

In a semi against the Watsons’ Not Quite True Blue, Hird and Haswell played magnificently to beat Watson and Watson, then Fisher and Mulcahy saved match point at 2-7 to win valuable extra games and only lose 7-8. Haswell and Edmond came from behind to win, leaving Saunders and Dubois needing to win seven games to see the Royals through. But Ed Pearson and Nick Jones were far too strong, the set was lost 8-2, and Not Quite True Blue progressed. Sue Haswell won eight rubbers out of eight, making her the only unbeaten player in the team event.

A special mention must go to East, who stoically accepted the selection for the semi-final and took a bullet for the team. He was last seen with a glass of pinot in hand, wandering the corridors of Cambridge muttering something about how he would have “shown the Watsons a thing or two”.

Not Quite True Blue were majestic in beating the Wanderers to take the title – so a partial success for RTC despite the Royals leaving empty-handed, and a decidedly British victory. Jay Gould was unavailable for comment.
Move over, Bradley Wiggins! Our newsletter stuffing crew made sure they also sampled the view from the Olympic throne at the Palace. Above: Chris Winn with Florence Hepburn and her sister. Below: Tom Kendall, David Seelig and David Glover.

The RTC Annual Carol Service
in the Chapel Royal with Chapel Royal Choir and Organ
Wednesday 12 December 2012 at 7.30pm

Followed by mulled wine and mince pies in the club

Tickets: £14 (or £12 per head for groups of four or more)
PLEASE APPLY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE
Available from the professionals

If applying by post, cheques, made payable to the Royal Tennis Court, should be sent to the club with the application (please enclose SAE)

Flood defences stand up to deluge

Often in life, there is a line that one simply must not cross. Normally that line is a mere metaphor – but once a year it takes an unforgiving physical shape down the centre of the court during the de Laszlo Bowl.

This is a handicap doubles event like no other: players may not cross the centre line that extends up the court to the last gallery line. Many of the nuances of doubles play are thus thrown out of the window, with unusual tactics and ruthless targeting of a pair’s weaker member the order of the day.

With the lowest and highest handicaps paired together, the evenly matched pairs in the middle prospered, and after the group stage the surviving players were all in the 42-62 range. Only one of the four group-winning pairs – David Stephens and Phil Beard – won their quarter-final, and they were then eliminated in the semi 8-6 by Alan Dallamore and Peter Flood. The other semi was an 8-7 thriller, with Helen-Frances Pilkington and Terry Marsh just getting by Alec Miller and David Peregrine-Jones.

All signs pointed to a close final, but instead Dallamore and Flood pulled away to a comfortable 8-2 win.
Humphrey’s bogey man
Paul Casha was too strong for Joel Humphrey and the rest as the Barker Camm Cup got under way

The long road to the club’s level singles championship began in October with the 60-plus handicap Grade F of the Barker Camm Cup, and it was Kings Goblet winner Paul Casha who claimed the spoils, with Joel Humphrey also earning promotion to Grade E.

Both played at a level well above their handicaps. Paul sailed through to the final in his casual style, while Joel had a humdinger of a three-set semi against Tim Taylor-Roberts, winning it with a penthouse/bounce-back-into-dedans shot at 5-5, 40 all. To his credit, Tim took it very sportingly.

Joel was perhaps a little jaded from his epic semi-final as Paul took the first set easily. In the second set Joel rallied and pushed Paul much harder, but he was unable to put a stop to the Casha run, Paul winning 6-0 6-3.

The Royal Tennis Court Newsletter is published four times a year and the editor would love any contributions from members. Please get in touch if you have any ideas for the winter issue, either via the professionals or by email at the address below.

Editor: Simon Edmond newsletter@royaltenniscourt.com

**RTC Top Ten**
Amateur handicaps
October 2012

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**RESULTS**

Lathom Browne Cup
Final: John Mather beat Don Ganson 9-0.

Barker Camm Cup
Grade F, quarter-finals: Paul Casha beat Neil McEvoy 6-3 6-4; Phil Beard beat Nigel Teare w/o; Tim Taylor-Roberts beat David Glover 6-3 6-1; Joel Humphrey beat David Peregrine-Jones w/o. Semi-finals: Casha beat Bears 6-0 6-2; Humphrey beat Taylor-Roberts 6-4 5-6 6-5. Final: Casha beat Humphrey 6-0 6-3.

De Laszlo Bowl
Group stage qualifiers:
- Group 1: 1st Nick Carew Hunt & Sarah Parsons, 2nd Alan Dallamore & Peter Flood.
- Group 2: 1st Peter Mather & John Mather, 2nd Alec Miller & David Peregrine-Jones.
- Group 3: 1st Dick Cowling & Ron Slade, 2nd Scott Levy & Paul Mather.
- Group 4: 1st David Stephens & Phil Beard, 2nd Helen-Frances Pilkington & Terry Marsh.

Quarter-finals: Miller & Peregrine-Jones beat Carew Hunt & Parsons 8-4; Pilkington & Marsh beat Cowling & Slade 8-5; Dallamore & Flood beat Mather & Mather 8-5; Stephens & Beard beat Levy & Mather 8-5.

Semi-finals: Pilkington & Marsh beat Miller & Peregrine-Jones 8-7; Dallamore & Flood beat Stephens & Beard 8-6.

Final: Dallamore & Flood beat Pilkington & Marsh 8-2.

Seal Salver
Quarter-finals: John East beat Fred Satow 9-1.

RTC v Hurlingham Pigeons
Social, handicap
RTC won 5-1
James Wilson beat David Fox 8-7; Andy Anderson beat Rachel Heslop 10/6; Nick Carew Hunt beat Caroline Fox 10-2; Robert Frost & Michael Day beat Corin Jenkins & Simon Mansfield 10/9; Michael Day lost to Corin Jenkins 3-10; Andy Anderson & Robin Mulcahy beat Richard Dalzell & Andrina Webb 10-7.

French Open
1st round: Steve Virgona beat Peter Wright 6-1 6-0 6-1; Kieran Booth beat Chris Chapman 3-6 6-2 6-1 1-6 6-3.

Quarter-finals: Virgona beat Peio Sarlangue 6-0 6-1 6-0; Tim Chisholm beat Ben Matthews 1-6 6-2 6-2 6-3; Camden Riviere beat David Woodman 6-4 6-3 6-4; Bryn Sayers beat Booth 6-3 6-0 6-2. Semi-finals: Chisholm beat Virgona 6-1 6-4 6-1 6-4; Riviere beat Sayers 6-0 2-6 6-0 5-6 6-3.

Final: Riviere beat Chisholm 6-5 6-4 6-2.

Doubles final: Chisholm & Riviere beat Virgona & John Lumley 6-3 4-6 6-2 6-5.