

Christmas 2020

Radley College Tennis Court

'A Yard and a Half' - The Newsletter

The Last Newsletter of an Extraordinary Year

Since starting to prepare this newsletter, the Covid rules has been tweaked, adjusted, tinkered with and changed again. You have probably heard today's grim news that we must close after Christmas Day, with no tennis on Boxing Day or for the foreseeable future.



Radley is lucky to be one of the few clubs where competitive singles and household doubles have remained possible recently and members have certainly made the most of the fact.

A glance at the Radley Booking Sheet over recent weeks will confirm the level of enthusiasm of our members for their tennis.

Nota Bene

The club's bank account has changed, with immediate effect. From today, please can all your RCTC payments be made to the following payee:

Radley College Leisure Ltd - Real Tennis.

Sort code: 60-01-01

Account number: 46625836.

2020 has been a very tough year for so many people and those of us who are well-employed, well-housed, well-entertained and who have supportive and loving families and friends are exceedingly fortunate.



A Very Merry Christmas to all our Members and a Huge 'Thank you' for an Enormous Amount of Patience, Resilience, Enthusiasm and Loyalty this year

2021 will be, we hope, will be a much more positive and predictable year, and much will rest on the efficacy of the vaccine and the efficiency of its roll-out across the country and through the population.

Although always mindful of the bigger picture, this 'Yard and a Half' Newsletter will continue to focus on the game that gives us so much joy (with, at least for most of us, an equal measure of frustration!) and will continue to serve up items of interest from the community of players of which we are part.

Club News

Motto

One of our members suggested a further enhancement of our newly adopted club motto. We send thanks to Robert Warner for the witty and determined style of his amendment below.



Media

A second piece of news is that Ian Yorston, former Head of Physics and IT Development Director at Radley, has kindly volunteered to lead the designing and installing of filming and

recording equipment at the club. We are very grateful to him, as attempts to push this forward in the past have come to naught and his knowledge of the constraints and requirements of the school will be vital to the successful completion of the project.

We are very keen to be able to offer our members and visitors the opportunity to see themselves play, to enable coaches to use filming and playback for lessons, and to stream all sorts of real tennis, from friendlies to major exhibition matches and from inter-club contests to major competitions.

More on this subject in due course, but if you wish to add your views, please contact Maggie.

New Courts – Latest updates

Holland

Discussions continue. Court dimensions have been confirmed with the planners of the sports centre, who have incorporated the tennis court in their plan for the new municipal sports park, 'The Strip', in Scheveningen, close to The Hague.



Today, we heard from the NRTB that the planners had a positive meeting with the Sports' Director of the Municipality of The Hague and colleagues. Those driving 'The Strip' project have reaffirmed their commitment to the idea of the court and so we must now wait for the wheels of bureaucracy to turn.

Our Dutch real tennis-playing friends await the Municipality's decision with great eagerness.

Vienna

That is Vienna in Virginia, of course, and not Vienna in Austria (although there were fine courts in that centre of the Austro-Hungarian Empire).

We have heard momentous news from our friends in the US. The initial fund-raising target has been reached for the new court that is planned in Virginia. This ensures the court will definitely be built.

The club can steam ahead with design plans for the replacement of the glass-walled Prince's Court in McLean, near Washington, with a court at the Westwood Country Club in Vienna, VA.



Haven Pell has led the fund-raising effort, which has been a spectacular success, clocking-up an average of about \$100,000 per month in donations.

When the more detailed internal specification of the ancillary facilities has been agreed, there will be another round of fund raising.

The design phase is progressing fast, and construction should begin in the Spring and be completed before Christmas 2021. With the sort

of speed and efficiency shown to date, it looks as if new records will be set for every phase of the project.

Congratulations to all involved!



Israel –

We suspect that Israel would be a long way down most people lists of likely places for a new court, but there has been a recent and unexpected announcement of plans to bring the first tennis court to this country, where the game has never been played.

Peter Luck-Hille has announced that he and his wife are leaving England for good and exchanging their home in London for one in Tel Aviv. We will be sorry to say 'goodbye' to Peter, who has been one of the 'movers and shakers' in the British real tennis scene for decades, but England's loss will be Israel's gain.

Peter has already started working on a characteristically ambitious project, to create not one but two racquet clubs in Tel Aviv, each with a real tennis court amongst its facilities. Bringing tennis to a country where it has never existed is an exciting prospect and, for the absence of doubt, Peter regards air-conditioning as essential. What a relief!

For those of you who do not know Peter, he is the man who conceived the idea of building the first real tennis court in London for 100+ years.

The two courts at Queen's were built in 1888, and, in 2000, Peter brought real tennis to Hendon, by designing and funding the majority of what at that time was referred to as 'The Millennium Court' at Middlesex University.

Peter also played an important role in the design of the court at Wellington and made a crucial and generous financial contribution that enabled it to be completed in 2016.



Dan Jones (left), Head Professional, and Peter Luck-Hille (right), inside the Wellington College court, during its erection by Beard Construction (which company also built the Radley court).

In addition, Peter has advised and contributed in different ways to a variety of building and renovation projects in England and in the US. His contributions to the English game have been many and varied, and Peter leaves a visible legacy in this country, for which all tennis players should be most grateful.

A long-standing sponsor of competitive tennis for professionals and amateurs, Peter is committed to actions that will help to secure the future of the game. One way in which he has done this is through The Dedanists'

Foundation, which shares his focus and runs various events in his name.

We wish the Luck-Hille family a smooth transition to Israel and every success to Peter's court building endeavours.



The Dedanists

You may not know a great deal about The Dedanists, but they do a lot to secure the future of the game in England, through Junior tennis.

The Dedanists is a non-profit group within the UK tennis community, headquartered at Queen's Club, that exists to raise money and distribute funds through its charitable arm, The Dedanists' Foundation (<https://www.dedanistsfoundation.org>).

These grants are used to support the future of the game through increasing youth involvement in real tennis: attracting more juniors to play and retaining their interest long-term through development programmes, like the Junior Academy, competitions and tournaments.

The Annual Report of the Dedanists has just been published and, despite the stresses and disruptions of this year, many positive things have been recorded. Below are some of the highlights.



The focus on junior tennis has meant that some of the Dedanist-sponsored competitive events in the annual calendar have still been able to go ahead, under the Covid exemption for U18s. Two of note are the inter-club team event, The Peter Luck-Hille Cup, and the National U18s Handicap Championship.

Special Mention for Radley

The Dedanists' Annual Report states:
'Congratulations to Radley on being the home club and primary developer of 22% of the young players in the Academy.'

This is a fantastic achievement and those involved, being Mick Dean, CJR, Nino and Mike Henman, and the most recent Master in Charge, Andrew Bishop, can be very proud of their efforts and of the development of the six Radley boys currently in the Junior Academy.

The Report goes on to detail the most significant improvement in the handicaps of Junior Academy players over the last 12 months.

Radley members Magnus Garson and Henry Henman are highlighted for their 'Outstanding achievements in this regard'.

Our congratulations to these two players and all others mentioned.

In the summary of Junior Tennis Championship Winners in the 2019/2020 season, the Report includes Radley's Benedict Yorston as Winner of the U20s category. You will have seen his name all over the Radley booking sheet, now he is back at home from Merton. He has made certain he is never far from a court – and it shows!

A final mention for the Dedanists is that they have supported The Grille Project. This has created a Grille at Seacourt that lights up when hit and has proved to be extremely popular with juniors who have used it.

See it in action here:

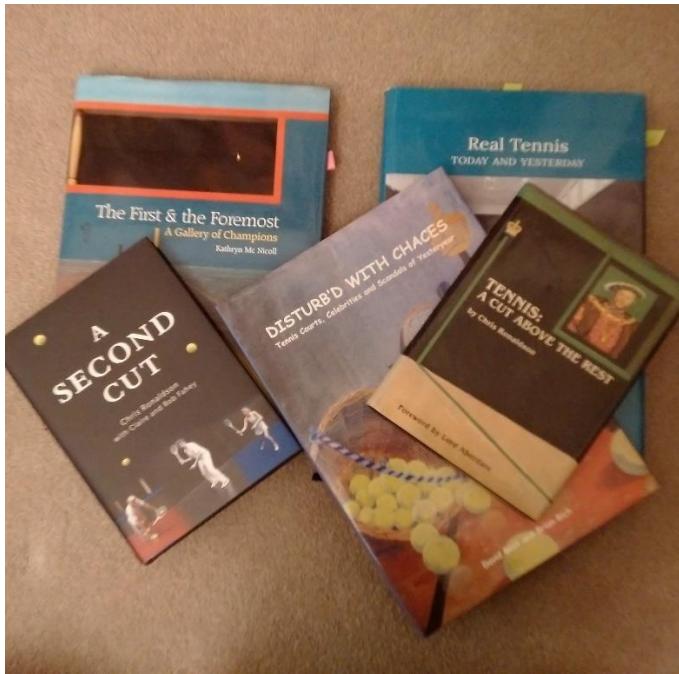
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4mwNUmeyh2g>.

The Radley Club Shop

Sweatshirts and Polo shirts in white and navy are stocked in the RCTC shop in a range of sizes, as well as racquets and grips. Nino runs the shop, so ask him for anything you need.



The club also has on sale a wide range of books on real tennis from Ronaldson Publications.



Some recent, and not-so-recent, titles from RonPubs

The latest of these books has just been delivered and it is a history of the MCC with a difference. Entitled, *MCC, More Than A Cricket Club - Real Tennis and other sports at Lord's*, it has been written by Newmarket member, John Schneerson, who also wrote *Real Tennis Today and Yesterday* (2015), pictured above.

John's latest book covers the history of the other sports that have been played at Lord's since 1787. These include, archery, baseball, billiards, golf, hockey, lacrosse, lawn tennis, rackets and squash.

Please ask the Pros to find out more or rush in to pick up a last-minute gift.

The club will remain open throughout Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. A few courts are still available. Don't hold back! Your guests from the same household will be most welcome.

HELP!

Our Radley protégé, Florent Brethon, will be spending his long summer vacation of 2021 at Radley, honing his tennis and his English, and, he hopes, gaining the 4 weeks work experience required by his Engineering course at Rouen University.



The main requirement of this period of work experience is that it will enable him to know what it is like to be 'on the bottom rung of the ladder' and so he must not 'make important decisions or see customers'.

Examples of the sort of paid or unpaid work he needs to find are: manufacturing something in a workshop; product labelling and packaging; or order preparation. Working in English is essential.

If you have any ideas for Florent or think you might be able to help, please contact Maggie. We recommend Florent highly as a prospective team member.

Quiz Corner

The photo below of soldiers exercising on a tennis court was identified within hours of the publication of the last 'Yard and a Half' newsletter.



Mike Garnett, author of many books on real tennis, including the brand new one, *Tennis; Histories and Mysteries*, was in touch in a flash.

He told us that he knew this photo well, having used it in a book he wrote in 2017, entitled *Tennis – From a Bygone Era*. He told us that was taken in 1915 when the Trinity/Clare court at Cambridge was taken over for officer training.

Mystery solved. Thank you, Mike!

Finally, and much more seriously....

We want to thank the Council, the Warden, The Bursar, the Estates Manager, HR and all in the Radley College community for their extraordinary support of the Real Tennis Court Club and Professionals during what has been an extremely challenging and disrupted year.

Secondly, we want to thank you, our members, for making it another year to remember and for being the best group of members any club could wish to have.

Thirdly, let us hope for a rapid end to the latest shutdown and a less eventful and more tennis-filled year in 2021.



**Relentlessly Positive
Positively Relentless**

Have a wonderful festive season, despite all the disruption, and see you on court as soon as possible in 2021.



Happy New Year

Stay safe, stay fit and stay well.

*This Newsletter, the twelfth and final one of 2020,
was compiled by Maggie Henderson-Tew*