

Autumn 2022

Radley College Tennis Court

Contents:

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

CONTENTS:

Radley Club News: p1

National Tournaments: p5

Other UK Club News: p9

Global Tournaments: p8

The Court Circular - Global Club News: p13

End Notes: p15

Autumn Edition:

On 9.9.22, John Moule, the Warden of Radley, wrote:

'With the nation, Radley College mourns. Words alone cannot adequately pay tribute to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Her service, leadership, humanity, and faith inspired us all, and her legacy will be felt for generations. The thoughts and prayers of the entire College community are with the Royal Family at this time of mourning; may the outpouring of love and good wishes from around the world be a comfort to them in the days and weeks ahead. May she rest in peace.'

This is the *King James'* edition of *Better Than The Last*, the Radley newsletter, being both the first of the 2022/23 season and the last of the 2021/22 season.

The weeks, indeed, months, have galloped past since the Summer issue. This Autumn edition features the customary mix of match reports, results and plaudits, tournament reviews and previews, and a selection of news from Radley and other clubs, nationally and internationally, not least regarding new court projects and old court restorations.



Club News

Stop Press

We will keep our members up to date with any significant news about CJR's health, as a result of his admission to hospital on 8.9.22. Chris is extremely grateful for the good wishes sent by so many within the Radley community and beyond. He sends this message to those who have kindly offered their help: 'the greatest help you can give is to support the club and make another booking.' Not so ill, clearly, that he wastes a chance of filling another court!

It is amazing the lengths to which CJR will go to avoid a party, as on 14 September 2022 he will celebrate 51 years as a real tennis professional. Congratulations!

RCTC Professional News

We want to bring our members up to date on changes to our professional team. Josh King, who has become a highly valued and valuable Trainee Professional in his eleven months at Radley, has left us to take a permanent position with Josh Smith at Holyport, where he will start work as Assistant Professional on Monday 12 September.

We thank Josh most warmly for everything he has brought to our club, on and off court, wish him every success with this move and look forward to welcoming him back to Radley when he is able to play here or simply come to visit.

The new face in the team will be that of Alex Machin, who has just completed the year of his T&RA/Dedanist sponsored 'Investing in Professionals' training with the Wellington College team of Adam Player (centre) and Danny Jones (right).



Alex is looking forward to starting his first job as an Assistant Professional and we are delighted that he has accepted the offer to move to Radley to work with Chris and Nino from the start of October.

The plan is to have, henceforth, a team of three pros at RCTC, to enable the club to continue to have a professional on duty whenever the club is open; a vital element of 'The Ronaldson Method' of court management.

There is fresh news of Victor Till, who we are very pleased will remain a regular player at the club, after his stint over last winter with the Pro team.

Tree surgery has not proved to be quite the career move for wish he hoped, and so he has changed direction and has applied to join the Police Force.

National League

We are delighted that the sponsorship of FLM Wealth Management (an appointed representative of St James Place Wealth Management, advising on the Group's products and services) is continuing for the forthcoming season of The National League.

The tennis community is fortunate to have found a committed sponsor in FLM and is most grateful for its support. To find out more about their products and services, please click on this link to their website: <https://www.flmltd.com/>.



The National League is split into different divisions by handicap, from the Premier to Division 10, and the ties within all of these going on throughout the season. These matches represent a great opportunity for club players to watch their top members playing alongside Professionals.

Matches are usually played in a home-and-away format, on a Thursday or Friday night, from around 6pm. The higher divisions play three singles and lower divisions lay a singles and a doubles rubber.

The matches can be long and the finishes late, but spectators are welcome to come and go during the evening, and support is always most welcome.

In the super-connected world of real tennis, it is quite normal for players to belong to and play for different clubs, and this is also the case in the National League.

Nino's strong performance last season, and his handicap improvement, means that he is now playing in Division 1 for the Leamington team.

Josh's campaign last year was similarly successful, and he will be playing in Division 5 for an RTC/Hatfield side.

Alex has signed up for the Wellington team for this season and will captain them in Division 6.

Radley Club Tournaments

Congratulations to all the winners mentioned below, commiserations to those who did not lift trophies and well done to everyone who took part.

RCTC Doubles:

We need to report the result of last season's Radley Club Doubles Championship, which was held on Sunday 19 June, with entrants playing for the Mick Dean Trophy. The tournament was named in recognition of MFD's prowess as a doubles player over decades, and as past winner of the British Open Doubles title with CJR in the 1980s (look at the wall vinyl under the penthouse by the winning gallery to see them in action back in the day).

The club doubles is a level competition, but all members were encouraged to enter, whatever their handicap. MHT and Jenny Jones can attest to the great enjoyment that resulted from the experience of playing MFD and James Mallinson in the first (and suffice to say, the ladies' only) round in the tournament.

The Final pitted Mike and Henry Henman (on the left, below) against Charles Human and Benedict Yorston (on the right), and the Henmen emerged victorious after an impressive and hard-fought battle.



Hangover Doubles:

Every New Year, we hold a competition to honour the memory of our dear late member, Charlie Hodgson, who enjoyed his real tennis so enormously. This NY, the tournament was postponed and was instead played over the weekend of 16/17 July.

The 'Hangover' Doubles, as it is popularly known, features some quirky things, like silly hats and special rules. In the past we have played with such variations as: serving from the wrong end; reversing chases so that losing a chase wins it; partners staying either side of the centre line of their side of the court; wearing a tail and carrying a cuddly toy... This year, the variation was that each player had to take alternate shots, which led to much scurrying and generally hilarity.

The emphasis is this tournament is on having fun rather than the pure quality of the play or winning – and the tournament is none the worse for that! It is always a great day and open to players of any handicap. It has not been decided whether this might become a permanent summer event or revert to the New Year. More on this in due course.

RCTC Ladies' Singles:

On Sunday 26 June, this season's Radley Club Ladies' Championship was held for the first time since 2019. However, *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*, as the Final was a repeat of 2019, which saw MHT failing to match Sarah Backhouse, who retained the trophy for the third time, winning 6-4, 6-3, with Rebecca Kashti finishing in bronze position.



Sarah, Rebecca, and Maggie

RCTC in National Inter-Club Tournaments:

Of the three major national inter-club team competitions, the premier is the Pol Roger Trophy, to which entry must be gained via promotion from The Field Trophy and the third level is The Brodie Cup.

The format of all three competitions is identical, with three singles and two doubles rubbers and a team of seven representing either side.

The Field Trophy



The Field Trophy, in silver

Last season's first foray into The Field Trophy turned out well, and as the losing Finalist, Radley was offered

promotion to the exalted Pol Roger. It felt just a little too fast to be quitting the Field Trophy after one appearance, and so we politely declined the promotion and will again be competing for the fine trophy above.

The Radley 2023 Field Trophy squad of players with handicaps of around 30 or better will be assembled over the next month or so. Our first match is not until December.

The Brodie Cup

This team competition is for those with handicaps 30-50 and comprises seven players, with three playing Singles, off level, at H30, H40 and H50 and doubles pair playing at H35 and H45. Eligibility is determined by handicap on 1 September and the rules are always challenging, as handicaps may change during the competition, but only by a few points. Those improving too quickly may render themselves ineligible.

Radley has a fine record in this event, and we always look forward to the start of the competition. This year, our first match is away at Wellington on 16 October.

International Tournament at Radley

We were delighted to welcome back the Dutch Real Tennis Association from The Hague to Radley for 'Dutch Week' in August. Traditionally a damp and wet week, this was started in blistering temperatures, but as soon as the players headed for the Radley Golf Course, the weather reverted to type. Ah well...it was nice while it lasted.

Around 30 players and guests stayed in one of the College Socials and, as well as playing in handicap singles and doubles, and making extensive use of the College sport facilities, the main event was the Dutch National Singles Championship. It was last held in 2019 and contested between Paul and Saskia Bollerman, who are the son and daughter of the founders of the Association.

This year saw a repeat of that match-up, although in between Sos had an enforced layoff from tennis, required hip surgery, and only started playing again last year. It was great to see her back on court at Radley, in such good form and that her tennis is improving again. She remains ranked number three in the world among female players.

Paul's move to London means he is able to play much more than Sos, and his handicap has dropped below 25

for the first time. There is only a couple of points between them on paper and the final was a terrific contest of athletic and powerful play, with both players covering the court well and being particularly impressive on the volley. Paul retained his title by winning the match 8-2.

National and International Tournaments

We begin with a round-up of selected results from major tournaments with the juniors, move on to those in the U26 age category, and end with the seniors and the elite players.

The Juniors

2022 British Junior Championship

The future of Real Tennis, in the form of junior players, is bright, and this was reflected in the bumper entry of forty players in the Age Category divisions of the British Junior Championships, and in the high quality of play in all divisions.



These age category tournaments were staged at Queen's Club from 19-21 August: the U12s was won by Elliott Philpott from Washington; the U14s was won by Max Warner of Queen's, with Bristol's Caspian Rugg winning his group, and the U14 Plate (aka the U14 Girl's title) being awarded to Malati Rice of Bristol; the U16s title was taken by Radley's Henry Henman, who did not drop a game in the event!

Sebastian Kingsbury, a relatively new Radley player, is from another of our multi-generational family of tennis players, and it was very good to see him enjoying his first Junior tournament, alongside many young players from Bristol, who all started playing there during CJR's tenure (Oct 2021-April 2022).



Paul Weaver, flanked by players in the U12 division

At the top end, the U18 category was won by Max Trueman of Seacourt, who ended the season with his best-ever handicap of 13.2

The spread of clubs from which the entries came was impressively wide, extending from Washington in the West to Hobart in the East (or North to South, if you prefer).



Max Trueman, Henry Henman, Max Warner, and Elliott Philpott with their respective trophies

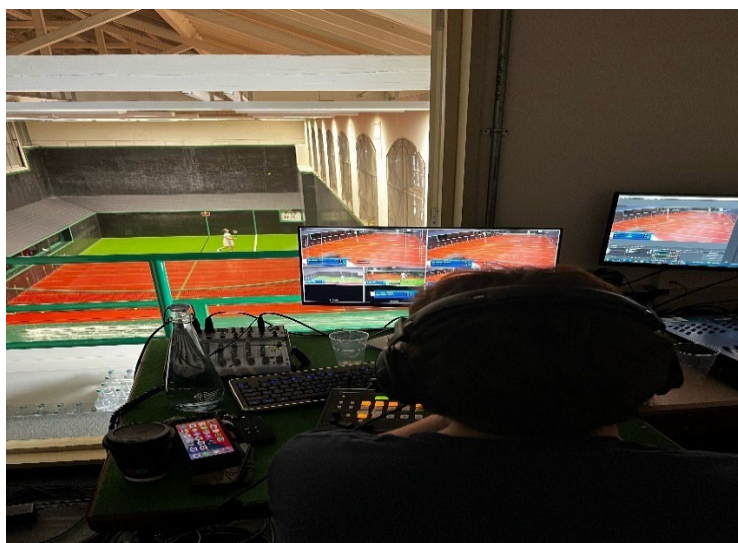
Special mention must be made of Radley's Garson family. Laszlo played in the U14s and U16s events, reaching the Final of both. Having beaten Max Warner 6-0 on his way to the U16 Final, Laszlo lost to Max the following day in the U14 Final, but Laszlo emerged with honour, having distinguished himself by his demeanor on and off the court throughout the tournament.

Laszlo's elder brother, Ambrose, came successfully through two group stages in the U18s, but his progress was halted by one of the four semi-finalists, who were all lower than H20, which is a credit to the strength and depth of this current cohort of U18 players.

The tournament is open to juniors from any nation and of any handicap, with the preliminary rounds played level in handicap groups. Paul Weaver, Director of British Junior Tennis, was the Tournament Director, yet again, and this was his 23rd British Open.

Radley's Ben Geytenbeek and Jackie Siu did a great job of masterminding the livestreaming of the event from both courts, which was a first for the event, and was greatly appreciated by friends and family who could not travel to Queen's.

Links to the footage are available on the T&RA's YouTube channel, accessed via the following link: <https://www.tennisandrackets.com/news/british-junior-championship>.



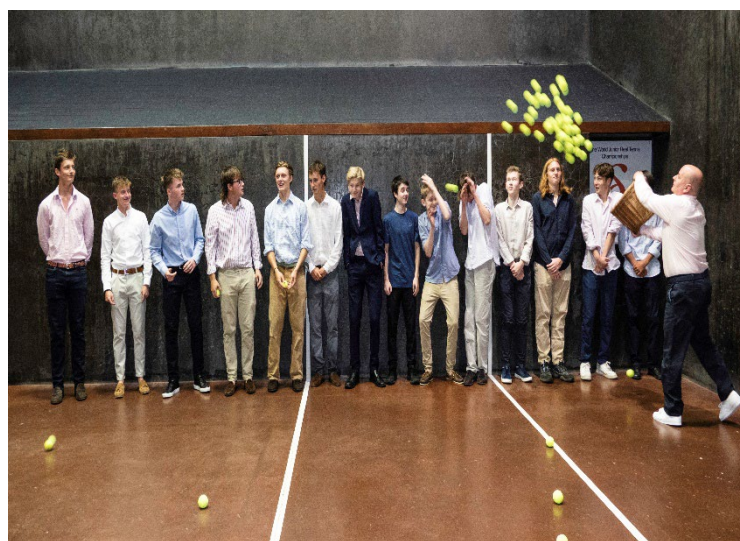
Ben Geytenbeek, hard at work streaming action from both Queen's courts

2022 Junior World Championship

The British Juniors was followed immediately by the bi-annual World Junior World Championship, held at Seacourt from 22-24 August and sponsored by The Dedanists. The top sixteen U19 players in the world were invited to enter and we are very proud that 25% of the invitees were Radley players.



Representing Radley were George Acheson-Gray, Jonty Duncan, Magnus Garson (the eldest of the three brothers), and Henry Henman, of whom none were seeded. It is a huge accolade to have been invited to play.



The field of players being showered with balls by Andrew Lyons, Head Pro of Seacourt

Henry knocked out third seed, James Medlow (brother of Conor Medlow, the British Pro at the Chicago club), to set up a Semi-Final against Bertie Vallat (Queen's). Bertie came through this high-quality match to play Max Trueman in the Final. Max emerged victorious, to claim the World Junior Champion title.



Runner-up, Bertie Vallat, and World Junior Champion, Max Trueman

Congratulations to all involved, and to the organisers for an excellent tournament. You can reprise the action of the final day's play by clicking on the Seacourt YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2OWk3EWB2A8>.

British 10-19 Handicap Championship

Over the weekend of 3 and 4 September, three Radley players took part in this annual tournament at Bridport. Henry Henman and Benedict Yorston advanced from the early round into the 10-14 category and Mike Henman played in the 15-20 section. Henry beat Benedict to play Bertie Vallat, once again, and Bertie emerged the victor in straight sets to win the competition.

Jez Brodie, the Bridport Pro reports:

'Two prodigies from Radley battled it out for the second semi-final... Benedict Yorston and Henry Henman. They had some epic restes in the first set, but Benedict's experience and composure encouraged enough mistakes out of Henry to secure

the set. Henry didn't give up though and played much more patiently to win the second set. He refused to give Benedict any free points and waited for his opportunities to hit the targets. Not only was momentum in Henry's favour, but also fitness... Benedict picked up a nigggle, and Henry pounced on the opportunity, taking the 3rd set convincingly.'



In the Final: *'Once again, two great friends had to face one-another. Henry Henman and Bertie Vallat are both quality juniors and two to watch for the future.. They had some epic rallies and having watched both of them over the weekend, it would have been hard to pick between them. Unfortunately for Henry though, he had emptied the tank in his semi-final. He clearly had the heart to win but didn't have the legs. Bertie on the other hand looked fresh and wasn't going to give Henry any sympathy. For every quick point that Henry smashed in, Bertie would put Henry through two punishing restes and took the match in two sets.*

Thank you to the T&RA as always for their sponsorship. Thank you to the competitors for coming all the way to west Dorset. It was great to see so many younger competitors, playing quality tennis, but also showing great sportsmanship, winning or losing. There was a great atmosphere in the club room and the Dedans, and everyone who played can be proud of their performance.'

British Under 15 & Under 19 Doubles Championships

The junior tournament action continues, with the late-running U15 and U19 Doubles for 2022 being held at Holyport over the weekend of 24/25 September.

Amongst the other entrants, Henry Henman and Laszlo Garson will be teaming up and we wish them every success. A report will follow in due course.

U26 International Series

A series of three-way international matches were played in Ballarat, Hobart and Melbourne between Australia, Britain and the USA.

CLOTHIER CUP FINAL RESULT
USA defeated Australia 9 matches to 0

LIMB CUP FINAL RESULT
GB defeated Australia 9 matches to 0

VAN ALLEN CUP FINAL RESULT
GB defeated USA 5 matches to 4

After 14 days in Australia, the UK team of Robert Shenkman (c), Henry Mullan, Ivo Macdonald and Radley's Ben Yorston (pictured below, far right) returned home victorious, having claimed a host of trophies from their tour matches in Hobart, Ballarat and Melbourne.



Senior Tournaments

The Bathurst Cup

The Bathurst Cup is a Davis-Cup format team competition for the best Australian, British, French and US amateurs, first played in 1922 and irregularly thereafter until the recent past, when a two-year cycle

was established. This iteration will see women's teams playing for the first time in a parallel event to the men's.

All the action will take place at Lord's, which is why the famous weathervane of Old Father Time from that cricket ground features on the poster. Spectators will be welcome throughout. The event culminates in a black-tie dinner in The Long Room on 15 October.



The Men's World Championship

The men's world championship tournament follows on rapidly from the juniors, but Rob Fahey's 2020 defence of the title he so audaciously reclaimed from Camden Riviere at Queen's Club in 2018 has had to be scheduled two years later than planned.

A few tickets are still available for this best-of-thirteen sets-over-three-days'-play format. All enquiries for the various on and off-court events should be sent to: rtwc2020@gmail.com. There is a handicap doubles tournament, a Pro-Am event and a Gale Dinner at Prested Hall Hotel. For those who have not visited the two-court club at Prested, this should be a chance to see the place at its best.

We will keep an eye on the T&RA webpage: <https://www.tennisandrackets.com/news/world-challenge-2020> for details of the streaming of the WC and will pass on the information to our members closer to the start of the Championship.

This could be the last chance to see Rob, the greatest-ever player of our game, playing tournament tennis, as he has said that he will retire after this unprecedented 13th defence of his World Championship title, but never say never...



French Open 2022

This event will be held in Paris, and we understand that Rob Fahey has entered. Will this be his last major singles tournament?



Other UK Club News

Prospective courts in the UK

The fight to preserve the fine, twenty-one-year-old court at Middlesex University continues, with counter plans being presented to the authorities there.

As was reported in the Summer edition of 'Better Than the Last', there are a number of conversations about new courts, being conducted alongside the 'Save MURTC' campaign, which are at various stages of maturity. This multiplicity is putting the volunteer resources of the T&RA under a fair amount of strain.

While not wanting to be negative, glass-half-empty or defeatist about the subject of building and renovating courts, it is just a plain fact that many projects are discussed but VERY few happen. Over the past couple of years, it has seemed that what proposals there were, were all outside the UK. However, the retreat of the worst of Covid in the UK has seen an upswing in the casual, and more serious, discussion of a number of possibilities around the UK. Around a dozen, actually.

Here is the latest update on one of them; the very real Real Tennis court on the Hewell Grange estate, followed by a short comment on Repton School.

Hewell Grange –

You may recall from a Lockdown edition of this newsletter, photos and a piece about the court that is part of the estate of Hewell Grange, near the village of Tardebigge, near Redditch, in Worcestershire. Here it is again, but if you remember it all, skip to P13.

The entire estate is currently for sale, as a single piece or divided into Lots, one of which could be the tennis court.

The brochure for the sale is available here:

<https://lc.zoocdn.com/d9d49639f0bf813ce6ea28ce37e6e280dd3e8a3c.pdf>.

The handsome, detached building, housing the court and ancillary facilities, has most recently been used as a gymnasium. It has been known about in tennis circles for a long time but has not been discussed as a court that might be easily brought back into use, not so much because of its condition, its location or its lengthy use as a gym, but because of its ownership.

Since 1946, it has been part of the UK penal system.

Hewell was once the seat of the Windsor-Clive family until Death Duties forced the sale and donation to HM Gov. of significant property assets in England and Wales, including those at Hewell.

On becoming part of the Government's estate, Hewell Grange started its new life as a Remand Home in 1946 and ceased to be a Young Offenders Institution in 1991, at which point it was turned into HMP Hewell Grange, an Open Prison for adults.



The prison was closed in 2020, after a number of incidents of violence, and a damning report by Her Majesty's Inspector of Prisons, which condemned the facility as "squalid, demeaning and depressing" and the worst such facility that the Inspectors had ever seen.

For those who are not students of the British penal system or too young to remember such institutions as Borstals being invoked by parents/teachers as a threat to misbehaving children ('if you keep on doing X, you will end up at Y'), here is a short explanation.

The 'Borstal system' was an English reformatory system designed for youths between the ages of 16 and 21 and was named after an old convict prison in Borstal, near Rochester in Kent.

The system was introduced in 1902 and a 'Borstal' was a type of youth detention centre in the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland and in several member states of the Commonwealth. In India, such

detention centres are known as Borstal Schools, and many continue to function.

UK Borstals were run by HM Prison Service and were intended to reform young people. They are not renowned for achieving this objective. Rather than satisfying one the four classic functions of incarceration (incapacitation, deterrence, retribution and rehabilitation), they were best known as 'breeding grounds for bullies and psychopaths'.

Borstals were officially abolished under the 1982 Criminal Justice Act and replaced by institutions called 'Youth Custody Centres'.

Hewell Grange is Grade 1 listed and regarded as a leading example of the late Nineteenth Century 'Jacobethan' style of building that mimicked the 'Prodigy Houses' of the Elizabethan Age; vast piles built to impress other courtiers and nobles and large enough to entertain the monarch in lavish and potentially bankrupting style.

Hewell Grange was an enormous vanity project and so grandiose that it was obsolete and unmanageable as soon as it had been completed, as it required an army of staff to run the house and the extensive grounds. The surrounding Grade 2* parkland had been laid out for the previous house in the park by various designers, including Capability Brown and Humphrey Repton, and is of national significance.

Since the Second World War and its change of ownership, it is unsurprising that Hewell Grange and its gardens have rarely been open to the public and, since being decommissioned in 2020, no public access has been permitted.

Hewell Grange Tennis Court

The estate contains over twenty listed buildings, including the real tennis court, which was built around 1820 by Thomas Cundy Snr. in a Neo-Classical style, and was adapted c.1891, probably by Bodley and Garner who were responsible for the mansion house.

It is not known whether Joseph Bickley was involved in the project, though it would have been surprising if he were not, given the date and his pre-eminence at that time as *the* builder of tennis courts.



The interior of the court, with the tambour visible on the right, in front of an interior wall that would need to be removed to restore the court to correct length. The decorative state is poor, but the structure is sound.

The online Listed Building entry reads: 'Former Tennis Court at Hewell Grange is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

** Architectural quality: the building, which was apparently turned from a riding school to a Real Tennis court by Thomas Cundy sen. c.1815-16 retains the essentials of its early-C19 appearance with a portico of Coade stone caryatids and its original fenestration and wrought iron galleries to the exterior; * Intact survival: the loss of the penthouse around the wall of the interior is regrettable, but sufficient of the original structure survives to give a clear indication of the purpose and functioning of this rare building type; * Group value: the building blends well with its architectural and landscape setting, and is placed in a significant landscape by Lancelot Brown and Humphry Repton (Grade II*) and placed close to the Ruins of the former Hewell Grange (Grade II).*

The tennis court was designed by Thomas Cundy Senior for the sixth Earl of Portsmouth c.1820. Although some part of the building may originally

have been used as a riding school, it was referred to as a 'tennis court' in an article in the Gardeners' Chronicle of 1843.

The tennis court was altered in 1891 when the roof was raised to twenty feet, and the dressing rooms remodelled. The building was again altered to serve as a gymnasium for the remand school at Hewell Grange in 1946 and continues as such to the present. A photograph taken at the end of the C19 shows one, or perhaps two small classical kiosks attached to the south side of the tennis court building. It is unclear if these were garden ornaments or also served as entrances to the larger building.



Two of the four Coade stone caryatids were ordered in 1821. Eleanor Coade's manager at her Lambeth factory was William Croggan, following John Sealy's death in 1813 and until her own in November 1821. His Order Book for May 1821 records '2 cariatides [sic] with baskets on their heads 6 ft. 6 ins. high 45 guineas each.' Similar Coade stone caryatids were used in some number by Soane at the Bank of England, his own houses in Lincoln's Inn Fields and Pitzhanger Manor, Ealing as well as Buckingham House, Pall Mall, London... and were modelled on those of the Erechtheion on the Acropolis.'

***MATERIALS:** brick with colour-washed stucco render and a slate roof. At the western end are four Coade stone statues.*

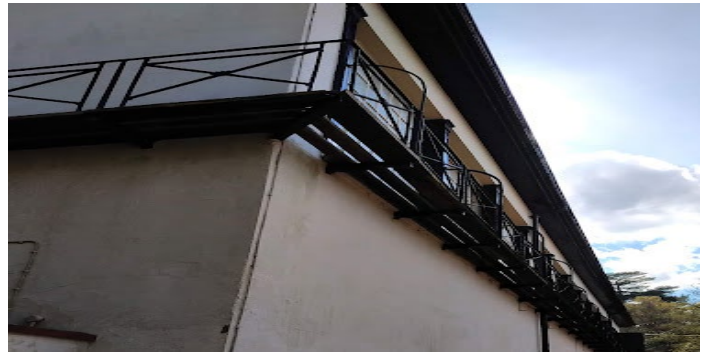
***PLAN:** the court is laid out to the normal jeu dedans pattern, with the serving end to the west. The three former penthouses around the east, west and north sides have been removed, but the tambour (buttress-shaped playing surface) is still at the south-east corner. The upper walls have large windows with a maintenance balcony to the exterior. At the western end is a portico above the entrance and changing rooms.*



***EXTERIOR:** the western end has three projecting bays with relieving arches which have a continuous band at the level of their springing and keystones. The left hand two bays have blank doorways, but the right bay has an entrance. At first floor level is a balustrade with vase-shaped balusters and square piers which support the four Coade stone caryatids based on those. These support a flat-roofed porch with a wooden entablature which has a dentiled cornice and projecting, plain paterae to the frieze.*

Above this projection, the gable end wall has a circular opening with moulded surround and plain barge boards. Both flanks have plain walling to their lower body, above which is a continuous row of eleven large windows, each of 7x9 panes, divided by square pilasters which have moulded caps and bases. In front of the windows is a continuous

walkway formed of cast iron brackets with a decorative handrail with lattice pattern panels.



The brackets support a platform of planks, and the walkway continues around the north, south and east sides of the building. The east gable end also has a circular opening to the gable. Projecting in front of the eastern end of the lower body of the southern flank wall and continuing east beyond the tennis court building is a late-C20 brick retaining wall.

***INTERIOR:** the windows in the upper wall are divided by wooden pilasters with moulded bases and caps, similar to those on the exterior. The ceiling above the long flank walls takes the form of a generous quadrant to each side, formed of wooden boarding. The central section of the ceiling has suspended flat boarding but was formerly open to allow illumination from a pitched, central skylight at either side of the roof ridge. The tambour at the south-east corner ends at the height of the continuous, projecting window ledge which continues along the east and west walls and marks the limit of play.'*



The T&RA is in active and detailed discussions with four of the six prospective buyers of the estate, to explore the possibility of the tennis court, which has its own access and the potential to be separated from the rest of the estate, being brought back into active use. Happily, its Grade II listing protects the court from change of use. However, any sale involving a government department, in this case, The Ministry of Justice, is certain to move slowly.

There are new court construction projects in the following counties at various stages of discussion:

Buckinghamshire, Derbyshire, Devon, Gloucestershire, Greater London, Middlesex, Worcestershire, Wiltshire, Yorkshire and, further north, there is the glimmer of a possibility of a court at a school in Edinburgh.

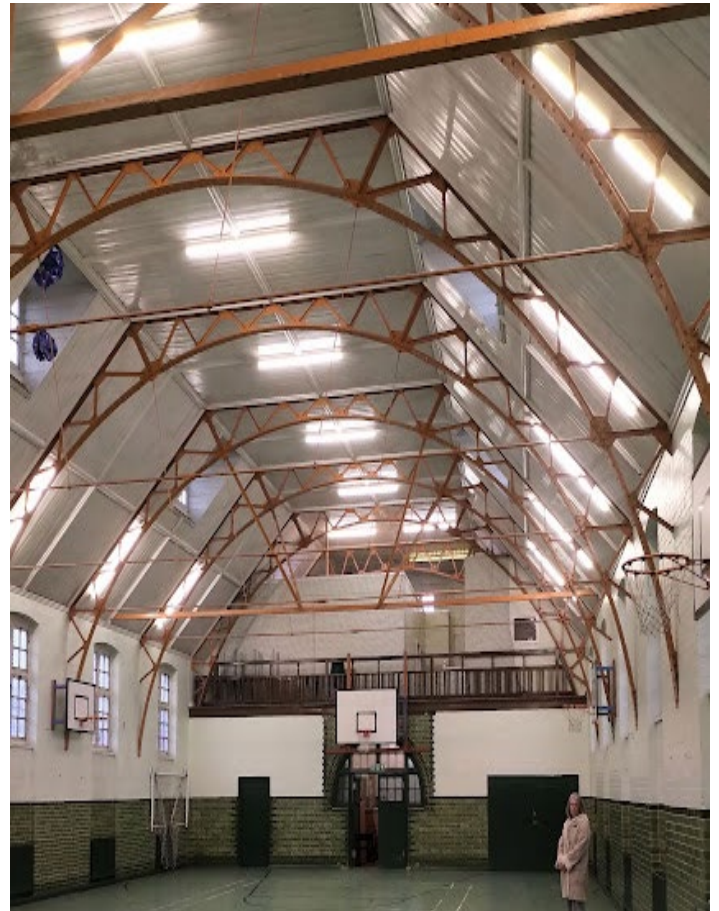
It is worth saying that most of the potential projects are at schools, as this is the best place to develop generation after generation of young players.

In Derbyshire, Repton School, a co-ed boarding school, set in on attractive parkland, has an old, listed gymnasium that is ripe for re-purposing.

The T&RA's Director of Court Development is liaising with the school, and we hope for positive news in the near future. Funding, needless to say, will be a critical issue, but there appears to be significant support from the school for the metamorphosis.



Happily, the internal dimensions are exactly what is required for a tennis court.



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

Australia

Sydney:

Latest news on the court building project at the Cheltenham Recreation Club is that, after receiving planning approval, the real tennis section has been working hard on fundraising for the real tennis court. Chris Cooper, the Honorary Secretary of SRTC reports:

'To date, \$1.3 million has been raised in donations, pledges, and pro bono contributions, and a further \$1.4 million is required. Support for the fundraising efforts is being provided by the clubs in Melbourne, Hobart, and Ballarat, as well as the Australian Real Tennis Association, whose President, Alistair Curley, visited Cheltenham in May.'

The current focus is on securing a cornerstone funding partner, and several avenues are being pursued in Australia and internationally. Funding is also being sought from the State Government.

In July, Chris and Claire Cooper met with the Chief Executive and Development Officer of the Tennis and Racquets Association in London to discuss fundraising amongst the real tennis community in the UK.

A dedicated fundraising website has been established, which has regular updates on progress.
<https://www.sydneyrealtennis.com.au>.



USA

Washington:

The new court structure has been built and the interior should be completed this month, with play commencing immediately.

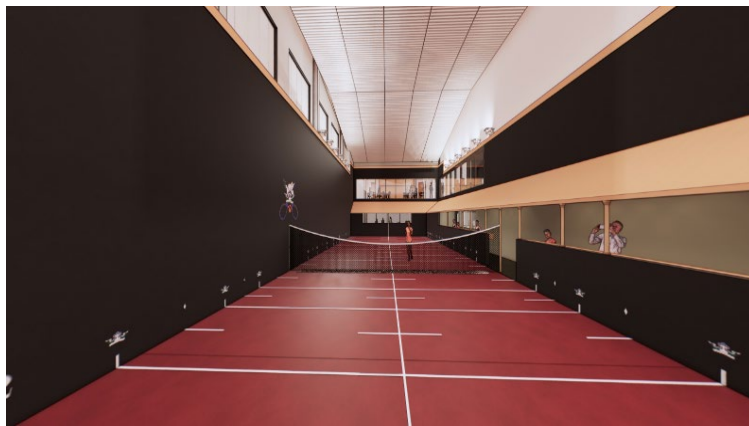
As soon as the new court is finished, all real/court tennis activity will relocate from Prince's Club, Tyson's Corner to the club's new, long-term home, at the Westwood Country Club, Vienna, Virginia. just 3 miles away.

The floor has been laid, the joinery completed, and the opening is near. Chase lines and other paintwork will complete the job.



Translucent panels above the side penthouse improves lighting, which otherwise is indirect and illuminates the court and the 30 feet high ceiling. The website for the new court is here: <https://washingtoncourttennis.com/newlocation/> and there is a lot of information about Westwood, the impressive new venue for the court.

The official opening will take place, amid a myriad of festivities, tournaments and other enticements, from 3-6 November 2022, and further information can be gathered by checking the website above.



Wisconsin

Michael Keiser, a Chicago club member, and the originator of the idea to build a real tennis court in Nekoosa, in the vastness of rural Wisconsin, sends positive news of the progress of the project.

Ground was broken over the summer and the real tennis court is under construction, and will add this facility to the successful, thriving, multi-activity, 12,000-acre Sand Valley Resort.

The resort features golf courses, grass and hard lawn tennis courts, trails for mountain biking and hiking and well-stocked lakes and rivers for fishing, with facilities for skiing, snowshoeing and outdoor ice hockey in winter. You can read about the existing facilities using this link:

<https://sandvalley.com>.

There is luxurious accommodation of every type (lodge rooms, cottages, and suites) to tempt individual visitors and groups to the three public courses: Sand Valley, named the 'Best New Golf Course of 2017'; Mammoth Dunes was named the 'Best New Golf Course of 2018', and *Golf Digest* completed the hat-trick by deciding that the third course, The Sandbox, was 'Best New Short Course of 2018'.

The new court and club's logo has been inspired by the mammoths whose remains have been found in the surrounding hills. Resemblance to any player living or deceased is entirely coincidental!

The court should be ready for play at the start of the 2023/24 season, and we await photos of the building with great interest.



Alas, the Yellow 'S' of 'Sand' did not survive the transfer process to this newsletter, so you will have to use your imagination, but you will be able to see the real thing at the new court at Westwood Country Club, Vienna.

Banners will be displayed there representing every club, including, of course, Radley, as well as every national body and dedicated tennis group, such as the Dedanists.

End Notes

The Last Gallery

On their way to Stansted recently, CJR and MHT took the opportunity for a slight detour to pick up four fine new ball baskets or the club, which had been made by Paul Weir near Leighton Buzzard.



Paul Weir and one of new ball baskets he has made to measure for the Radley basket hole.

It was fascinating to tour his workshop and to see a skilled craftsman at work. We heard about the origin of the Somerset reed and how it is cut, bound, shipped, and prepared for use. The techniques Paul employs are centuries old, as are the types of tools and terminology, all of which seems entirely appropriate for the making of baskets destined for a real tennis court.

The finished articles are really beautifully made - so please treat them with due reverence and care! It is the first time Paul has made ball baskets and he has made the bottom extra-strong and able to be replaced. The baskets should require minimal maintenance and ought to last a good deal longer than previous ones, particularly now we have been given good advice on their care.

We had not been told by previous makers that, to prolong the life of your wicker baskets, they should be brushed hard once a year and then soaked in cold water for several hours. After this treatment, they should be hung up to dry slowly. It sounds brutal, but apparently works a treat.

Paul is a Yeoman of the Worshipful Company of Basket makers and has worked on a variety of interesting commissions, He was asked to renovate garden furniture at Sandringham:



The Royal Family on wicker garden furniture at Sandringham in the 1940s

has made elegant sidecars for early motorbikes;



A sidecar for a Phelan & Moore 1906 motorbike



A sidecar for a Phelan & Moore 1912 motorbike

and this one:



An AJS motorbike with sidecar and picnic basket ensemble

and has added the finishing touch to several vintage and veteran cars.



If you need any fine basket ware made, from fishing and wastepaper baskets to furniture or even an eco-coffin, please contact Paul, who is delighted to work on commissions. You can contact him via his email:

info@bedfordshirebasketmakers.co.uk.

We hope to see more of his fine handiwork at other real tennis clubs up and down the land.

(Almost) The Last Word

Haven Pell, leading light of the US Court Tennis Foundation, who has been a key driver of the new court project at Westwood Country Club in Virginia, has satisfied his ambition of playing on all the 'live' courts of the world by completing the tour with visits to Wellington and Fontainebleau.

The reminiscences of his travels, *Round the World in Forty Courts*, is at the printers and will be available to coincide with the official opening of the Westwood court in early November.

The book is being produced by Ronaldson Publications and promises to be a splendidly entertaining read. You can order a copy of this and other real tennis titles here: <https://ronpubs.com/>.

(Absolutely) The Last Word

Do have a browse through the pages of the ultimate real tennis repository at this address: <https://rt42.org/>.

RT₄₂

The website states: ‘

Over time we hope to build upon our foundations and to provide answers to questions about all things real tennis.

We want to collaborate with the whole tennis community, and welcome comments and suggestions to help us achieve our goal... We want to draw upon and share your knowledge about anything and everything you can think of.

In RT42 you will find an ally in spreading knowledge of every kind, so please use us and help us provide material for the tennis world at large.’



We send every player good wishes for an uninterrupted 2022-2023 season.

This fourth Newsletter of 2022

was compiled

by Maggie Henderson-Tew