

Winter 2022

Radley College Tennis Court

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Better Than The Last

Radley Club Newsletter

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Winter Edition



Highlights

The result of the delayed 2020 Men's World Championship (p4);

The opening of the new court at Westwood Country Club near Washington DC (p7);

Splendid news about the return of tennis to Sydney (p14).

Club News

RCTC Professional News

We are delighted to have Alex Machin as an Assistant Professional at Radley. He has become a valued member of the team, has rapidly settled in and already seems to have been here for ages. It is very good to have you on the Radley Pro team, Alex!

Visiting Professionals

It was very good to welcome back John Lumley to Radley, where he started his Professional career, for

his Exhibition Match with newly-(re)crowned World Champion, Camden Riviere.

They are both over from the US for the British Open Championships (of which more later) and kindly agreed to come over to Radley before it started. They arrived on Sunday 13 November to run Masterclass sessions with small groups of players.

This was followed up in the evening with an exhibition of top-quality singles, watched by around 70 club members and guests. In CJR's absence, assisting with the opening of the new court at Westwood Country Club near

Washington, John's father, Colin (former Open title holder and world number four), marked the best of three six-game set match. It went to a third set, as befitting an exhibition, with the result reflecting the current world rankings, as Camden emerged victorious.

The crowd were duly impressed by the skills of these two top Pros, who apparently play an entirely different game of tennis from the rest of us. It was a joy and inspiration to watch, so THANK YOU, gentlemen!

National League

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 them 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 have two 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 is playing in Division 1 for the Leamington team. Alex is representing the Wellington team this season and is captaining their Division 6 side.

Mike and Henry Henmen are playing for The Hyde, Bridport, in Division 5. They most recently had a match against Bristol, away, on Friday 10 November. Henry and Mike had wins, with their teammate, Jez Brodie, the Pro at the Hyde, losing to Bristol Pro, Ben 'Rhino' (as he so graphically describes his very individual style of play) Coleman, in three sets.



The Henmen, junior and senior,
at their second most-favourite club and court, Bristol

Radley Club Tournaments

On the 10 and 11 December, the club singles and doubles level championships will be held, so come along to see the best amateur players. Can Hamish Miller defend his Singles title?

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

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 below.



The Field Trophy, in silver

The Radley 2023 Field Trophy squad of players with handicaps of around 30 or better has been assembled and is well-prepared for its first match on

Sat 3 December, away, at Moreton Morrell. The side will comprise Henry and Mike Henman and Dave Harms playing singles and the doubles pairings of Charles Human & Tony Munsey and Simon Horobin & Paul Kettle. We wish them good luck!

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.

Radley has a fine record in this event, and we always look forward to the start of the competition. This year's campaign started brightly, with a win in the Qualifying Round away against Wellington in mid-October. The First-Round match was due to take place on Sunday 13 November away at Jesmond Dene, but it proved impossible to field a side, not least given the unfortunate clash with the Riviere/Lumley Exhibition.

We gave Jesmond a Walkover and, with regret, accepted that our Brodie Cup race was run for another year.

Other UK Club News

Bristol

Our friends at Bristol have sent the following message:



'To celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Bristol Real Tennis Club being open, we are hosting a Handicap Doubles team event from 9th-12th February 2023.

It is open to **ALL** amateur players, of any handicap. Provisional handicaps will unfortunately not be accepted. We will be reserving 16 spaces for Bristol pairs, and 16 spaces for visiting pairs. Visiting players & Bristol players will be put together at random to create a team of four.

For more information, or to register interest, please contact Ben Coleman at:
email@bristolrealtennisclub.org.uk.

Courts in Play:

Do you know the location of all the other real tennis courts in Britain? Take a look at this YouTube clip, which shows all the UK real tennis courts currently 'in play':
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dOP3iFD2mk4>.

Courts at Risk:

Middlesex University Tennis Court

The fight to preserve the fine, twenty-one-year-old court at Middlesex University continues, with the students running a Crowdfunding campaign to fund the appeal against the university's decision not to renew the counter plans being presented to the authorities there.

Middlesex University Real Tennis Club has, for over 20 years, been an integral part of the university's sports community. With a diverse membership base of students and external members from many walks of life, it has offered students the chance to play a fascinating sport in a welcoming environment.

The team regularly competes against teams from around the country and aims to continue this schedule of fixtures for the next academic year. A tightened restriction on funding has made this, at present, unfeasible, and so the student team worked on fundraising initiatives over the Summer.



The aim is to raise £10,000 for the team by the end of September. This total would fund in its entirety kit for the team and court hire fees for the academic year, and a team tour during the year.

From Faustas Vilimas (Student Captain):

Dear Members of the T&RA,

On behalf of the student team at MURTC, we would hugely appreciate your help! We are faced with the challenge of fundraising for the next year of student real tennis at MURTC.

The club have very kindly been funding a lot of tennis, but the demand for tennis amongst students is so high that we are now crowdfunding, to see if we can play more. The funds we are raising will go directly on court fees to enable us to play as much as we can and, should we hit our stretch target, will help us fund playing other universities over the course of the year.

We also have a shirt sponsorship option, if you have a business that you would like advertised on our student kits! Having had over 100 students on court during the fresher's fayre, we hope that this year's recruitment of new, young players will make this year the best year yet.

*Many thanks for your support,
Faustas Vilimas*

Seacourt -

'The Seacourt Silver Racquet 50th Anniversary is taking place February 2-5, and the club is offering Real Tennis enthusiasts the chance to purchase limited edition vintage Dunlop Real Tennis balls as part of the event's fundraising efforts.



Seacourt is rolling out the red carpet in preparation for the spectacular 50th anniversary of its Silver Racquet event, taking place February 2-5, 2023. One of the special efforts being made for this milestone event is the sale of vintage Dunlop Real Tennis balls, perfect for RT enthusiasts and historians, or anyone interested in owning a rare piece of Real Tennis history.

According to legend, a small batch of these balls was machine-made by Dunlop and unfortunately released just about the time that companies like Grays began releasing lightweight racquets, effectively rendering Dunlop's Real Tennis balls unplayable (as they are too heavy for modern, lightweight racquets to withstand). Now considered collector's items, these Dunlop balls are a rare find, indeed.

Seacourt has 76 balls available for purchase in vintage condition commensurate with age. The balls are being offered at £20 each, or at a slightly discounted rate of £90 for five balls. Postage to be paid by buyer, but in-person collection from Seacourt or Queen's Club is also available. All proceeds will benefit the Silver Racquet 50. If you are interested in purchasing a piece of this Real Tennis history, please email Seacourt Head Pro Andrew Lyons at realtennis@seacourt.com.



CJR comments: "These balls were made in the late 1970s, I believe as a one-off test batch by Dunlop, of in excess of 30,000. When I got to Hampton Court at the end of the decade they were in use, and dreadful things they were. I think the idea of trying a machine-made ball had come from someone close to Dunlop, perhaps Peter Walker, but it all happened while I was in Melbourne, and I was removed from things like this that were going on in Britain.

These balls failed to be satisfactory on three counts, and not because of racquet changes. 1. They were smaller than regulation. 2. They were heavier than regulation. 3. They were temperature sensitive; dropping like stones in winter and behaving like India rubber when it was warm."

Maggie H-T adds: "I believe that some Dunlop balls are being used at Falkland Palace, where the roughness of the walls and lack of a ball-maker means standard real tennis balls are both impractical and unobtainable."

National Tournaments

We begin with a round-up of selected results from major tournaments with the juniors, moving on to those featuring the most experienced and best players of the game.

The Juniors

There is a plethora of tournaments before Christmas for players up to the age of 24. A number of Radley Club and College players will be taking part in the following events, in which we wish them good luck. This edition of *Better Than The Last* will record some of these results, with more to follow, and considerable success, we hope.

British Under 15 & Under 19 Doubles Championships

The late-running U15 and U19 Doubles for 2022 were held at Holyport over the weekend of 24/25 September.

Radley's Henry Henman (tallest, youngest and the only one wearing a Radley top in the photo below) and his long-standing rival in past years of age-category singles events, Bertie Vallat, played together, and made it to the final against Junior World Champion, Max Trueman and fellow Seacourt player, James Medlow, twice. This quartet comprise the top four players in the world under the age of 19 and all have handicaps well under 20.



Radley brothers Magnus and Ambrose Garson teamed up and, like Henry and Bertie, had to face the considerable might of the pair from Hayling Island (shown on the right above) who took the British U19 title.

More success for a Radley junior player, this time in the U15 event. The final was between our Laszlo Garson (in Radley red below) and Algie Nottingham (Wellington) V Queens Club pair Max Warner & Francesco Saviotti. This very close match ended with a win for Laszlo & Algie 6/3 6/5.



Tournament organiser Paul Weaver writes: *'Many thanks to Josh King for his excellent marking throughout and to the Holyport Club for allowing us to play on their beautiful court (and for their excellent catering). A special thank you also to Henry Henman for coming along to help run the U15 section.'*

LRTA U21 Singles Championship 2022

This inclusive tournament, organised by the Ladies' Real Tennis Association, was played at Radley over the weekend of 19/20 November. There had been a late appeal for sponsorship and the female players of Hatfield should be applauded for stepping forward to support this important tournament.

This year, fourteen players, grouped by handicaps ranging from the 60s to the 90s, competed for the Fiona Deuchar trophy. It was won by Cordelia Lamming (Queens), who started the tournament with a handicap of 86 and dropped to 77.2 as a result of her win in the final against Olivia Boulton (Seacourt) 8-5.

Olivia's wins and losses evened out over the event and she emerged with her entering handicap of 62.3. The finalists are pictured below.

Congratulations to the winner and her fellow finalist, and well done to all fourteen players who took part for doing their bit to raise the profile of junior tennis for girls.



Particular mention should be Jill Newby and Alex Garside for running the event, for yet another year, on behalf of the LRTA, and to Nino and Alex who marked throughout.

LADIES
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ASSOCIATION



Interschools Singles Championship 2022

On November 27, different handicap bands of the Interschools Singles were held at Radley and Wellington with considerable success for Radley College boys and club members.

The British U18 Singles Handicap Championship 2022

On 10 Dec, at the Wellington club, junior players will vie for the title of U18 singles handicap champion.

The Tayleur Cup – British Under 24 Open Doubles Championship 2022 and The Eric Angus Cup - The British Under 24 Open Singles Championship 2022 and The U21 Open Singles Championship

These prestigious and long-running competitions, sponsored by The Dedanists, have many eventual national and world amateur and professional champions amongst previous winners. This year's concurrent events will take place at Middlesex University from 14-18 December, immediately after the start of school Christmas holidays.

The final tournament to be catalogued is the National Parent and Child Championship (which MHT, amongst others, pressed to be made more inclusive than the previously-named 'Fathers and Sons' competition), will take place at Leamington on 6-8 January. The current holders are Mike and Henry Henman.

The age of child is unspecified and so this event nicely bridges the junior and senior events. We suspect that the age of the oldest child to have won this tournament will have been in their 30s, but further investigation must be done.

Senior Tournaments

In reverse chronological order, what follows is a summary of recent high-level tournament action in

The British Over 50s Amateur Singles Championship 2022

This prestigious event was staged at Lord's, on 18-20 November, and its trophy, the Bridgeman Cup, was won, once again, by Peter Wright.

Peter has had, even by his high standards, a tremendously good year. At the World Masters Amateur Championship in Paris, back in May, he was the successful GB Over 50s team captain and the Over 50s singles champion.

Peter has won the British Over 50s Amateur Championships and the Bridgeman Cup for the fourth consecutive time, along the way beating Simon Barker, who was winner of the World Masters Over 55s Singles in May, and David Watson, who is himself a five-times former winner of the Bridgeman Cup, in two high quality

matches. Only the late Colin Dean recorded more consecutive wins than Peter has achieved so far.



Ronald Paterson presents Peter Wright with the Bridgeman Cup

The National Over 70s Handicap Singles 2022

The Over 70s tournament will be held at Leamington over the period of 30 November/1 December.

International Tournaments

The 1812 Tournament

The 1812 Tournament followed historical precedent, as the GB team met the Americans on their home soil. The Red Coats won again.

The T&R website reports:

'Hot on the heels of winning both the men's and ladies' Bathurst Cups, Great Britain has once again taken home top honours in a Real Tennis tournament, this time the exciting 1812 event, based on the real-life War of 1812.'

As history buffs know, the War of 1812 (18 June 1812 – 17 February 1815) was fought by the United States of America and its indigenous allies against the United Kingdom and its allies in British North America, with limited participation by Spain in Florida.

It began when the US declared war on 18 June 1812 and, although peace terms were agreed upon in the December 1814 Treaty of Ghent, did not officially end until the peace treaty was ratified by Congress on 17 February 1815.'



The triumphant British '1812' team with the flag, trophy and celebratory drinks. Radley's Nick Brown is in the centre, behind the Union Jack.

The British Open Singles and Doubles Championships 2022

With the generous sponsorship of the Ritblat Foundation, the British Open was held at Queen's Club from 13-22 November. Camden Riviere, absent last year, returned to reclaim the title that John Lumley took in 2021, when John beat Ben-Taylor-Matthews in the first all-British Final since that world-class amateur and legendary Old Radleian, James Male, beat Mike Gooding in 1999. For more about Mike, who died recently in such sad circumstances, please turn to P19 of this newsletter.

Lachie and Ben Ronaldson commentated on the Singles final, which was marked from the net, as he insists on doing, by Andrew Lyons. You can enjoy the action of the Singles and Doubles Championships by using this link to the T&RA's YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCz4vpvhBrBB-ZLFRzCxxwBCA>.

You will note the high number of viewings of the Singles Final, which is testament to the attraction of this match-up between the two top male players for the past 15 years, Camden and Rob Fahey.

Camden has not lost a singles match for over ten years (apart from two World Championship challenges against Rob Fahey) and so his tremendous record, long-time position as World Number One and handicap of +16 made him the firm favourite to reclaim the British Open title he last won before Covid changed everything.

Camden did not disappoint, and again won the title he held in 2019, 2017, 2016 and 2014.



Camden Riviere holding the Cutty Sark Trophy

The fact that this competition was Rob Fahey's last as a Tournament Professional playing singles made him the crowd favourite, and he was given a hero's welcome and send-off when he played his last match, appropriately enough against Camden, in the Final.

Although the match will go down as a loss on his record, Rob played with typical verve and grit and Camden could never switch to cruise control during his 6-1, 6-3, 6-5 winning of the Cutty Sark trophy. If you look carefully at the photo above, you can count all Rob's wins (as well as CJR's seven and Lachie Deuchar's six), although these were well before he had his hip replaced in 2021.

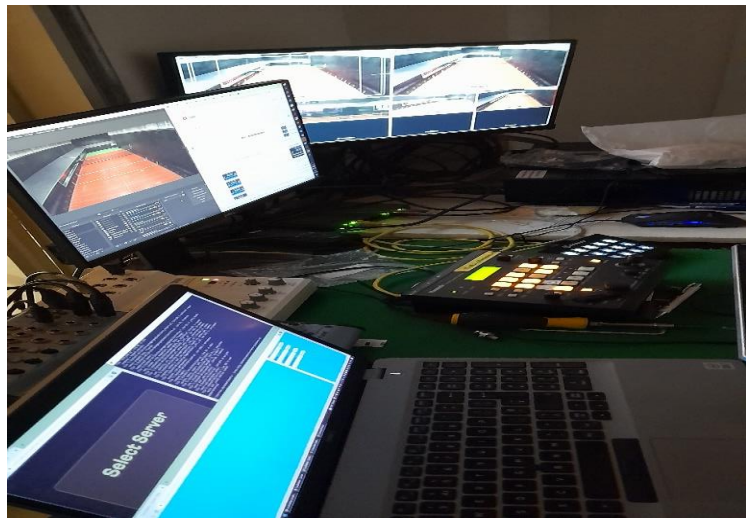
A T&RA tribute to Rob Fahey's extraordinary career can be viewed on P17 of this newsletter, in 'End Notes'.

The British Open Doubles final took place the following day and featured four previous holders of the British Open Singles title. Tim Chisholm's was 20 years and two knee replacements ago; his partner,

Bryn Sayers, won it in 2012; and John Lumley and Cam won it a year and a day ago, respectively. CJR and Lachie Deuchar, holders of thirteen British Open Singles titles between them, commentated.

The constellation of talent on court ensured a splendid match and a tremendous display of fast, and at times furious, doubles play. The speed of play and pace of shots made it clear why top-level doubles competition is NOT marked from the net and why Ben Ronaldson sensibly presided from the dedans.

Ben Geytenbeek continued with his first-class streaming of the Championships. Ben said that he has been given "fairly free rein by Queen's and the T&RA 'to develop the quality of streaming of top-flight tennis in the UK'". Ben has worked, entirely as a volunteer, to improve the camera, audio and mixing set-ups.



The nerve centre of Ben's operation was a cold cupboard on the open balcony above the court at Queen's

Ben has worked tirelessly at the control desk above throughout Qualifying and the Championships, only going home to sleep occasionally.

He has created his own customisable scoreboard and viewers will have been impressed and intrigued in equal measure by the statistics shown regularly during play and the use of the five on court cameras for close-ups and cut-aways.

His innovations have considerably enhanced the experience of viewing, and our great thanks to him for all this impressive work.



John Lumley and Camden Riviere beat Tim Chisholm and Bryn Sayers in four sets, having lost the first to them

Camden has continued to play, and win, while carrying a stress fracture in his left ankle for the past few months. The only signs of it were the occasional grimace and rub, but the problem was severe enough for him to wear ankle and calf supports (see above).

Camden's next big match will be his wedding in his hometown of Aiken, South Carolina, in early December, after which he will be taking a recuperative break. We wish him and Julia great happiness together and congratulate him on a fine string of tournament wins this year. See below for further details.

The French Open 2022

This event was held in Paris and Camden beat Darren Long, Bryn Sayers, Nick Howell and Chris Chapman on his way to winning the Singles title in October.

The Men's World Championship

Rob Fahey's 2020 defence of the title he so audaciously reclaimed from Camden Riviere at Queen's Club in 2018 had to be scheduled two years

later than planned, and again pitted against Camden in this thirteenth and final defence of his World Championship title.



Rob is acknowledged as the greatest-ever player of real tennis and, although past his best days as a player, can still awe and astound opponents and spectators with his supreme gladiatorial spirit and extraordinary skill. He did so again in this best-of-thirteen sets-over-three-days'-play format and sets eight and eleven are particularly worthy of repeat viewing.

The three days of play were available to watch live for a fee, but are now available to watch at no cost on YouTube, using this link:

The story of the World Championship is of another epic encounter between these great players. Camden emerged the worthy victor, but Rob recorded RTC wins on two of the three days' play. Regaining the WC title will have presumably made the loss of 1.5 handicap points during the Championship a matter of no importance whatever, but it is worth showing how the match results have been recorded on Camden's page on RTO:

15-9-22	+16.5	+16.0	Prested Glass	Rob Fahey	6/3 3/6 5/6 6/2	L
13-9-22	+16.0	+16.5	Prested Glass	Rob Fahey	6/2 6/2 6/3 5/6	W
11-9-22	+17.5	+16.0	Prested Glass	Rob Fahey	5/6 6/3 4/6 6/2	L!

This breakdown illustrates the magnitude of Rob's achievements over the three days' play, at the age of 54. *Salute, Magister.*

In Rob Fahey's own words this is what a best of thirteen sets format is: "The physical, mental, emotional, tactical and tennis demands of a best of 13 set match are unlike any other format tennis players compete in. There are no "secret weapons", no "brilliant night out" that will get you through a best of 13. Whereas you might surprise someone with something on the night of the British Open final, by day 2 of a World Championship match that "weapon" has been worked on and solved, that "brilliance" has faded and you are back to the drawing board. Best of 13 is a true test of tennis, if you have any weakness – it will be found, if you like to play to a strength – it will be taken away from you, it comes down to who has the best all-around game, the strongest body, the strongest mind, the biggest will to win and the nerve to stick with it all. At 2 sets all in a best of 5 matches there are still some questions to be answered and the natural ebbs and flows of a match can decide the outcome. At 6 sets all, in the best of 13 sets, there is nothing left unanswered. It is 2 players looking at each other, looking inside themselves and deciding who has the heart to win from here. There is nothing in Tennis that can compare to this!"

Camden is now 35 years old. Could it be possible that we will still be applauding his supreme skills in nineteen years' time? It would be a brave person who would bet against it.



Camden's fiancé, Julia, is on the left of the photo above, which includes a number of familiar faces from the Radley club: Henry and Mike Henman are either side of Camden, and on the right of the picture are Sarah Backhouse, with Natasha and Ned Batstone. Our members were out in force at Prested!

THANK YOU to Camden and Rob for providing yet another superb match and showcasing the best of real tennis, and congratulations to Camden for becoming World Champion for the second time and to Rob for being the GOAT and ending his singles tournament career with great glory.



Smiles all round, for Rob, his wife, Ladies' World Champion, Claire Fahey, and their children, shown on court, with Camden Riviere, at Prested.

Bidding by clubs for the right to stage the Final Eliminator of the World Championship in September next year has been invited by the IRTPA. Bidding will close at the end of November and the host club will be announced on before Christmas.

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

This round-up of news from courts and clubs begins with a review of the Opening celebrations at the new Washington court, at the Westwood Country Club, in Vienna, Maryland.

The Court Circular

a.k.a. International Club News

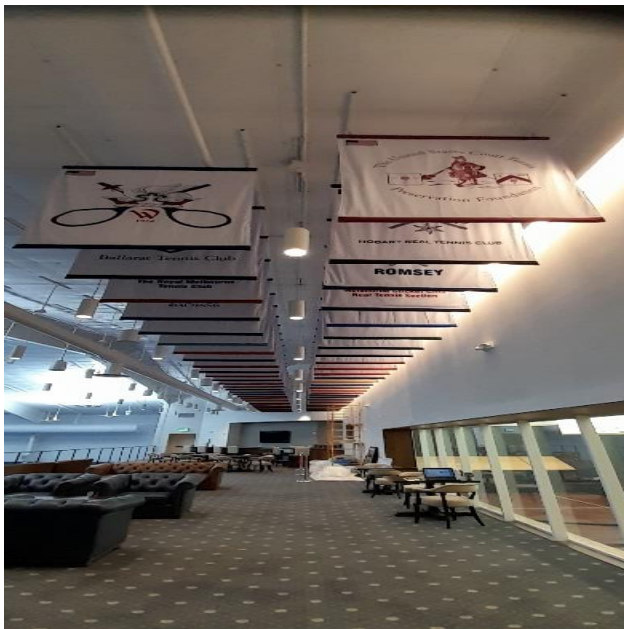
Rather than follow strict alphabetical order by country, in this edition it seems entirely appropriate to start with the new court in Washington, go on to a progress report of construction at Sand Valley and the thrilling news from Sydney. To finish is the latest on prospective courts in the UK.

USA

Washington:

The new court at the Westwood Country Club is not only open but packed with enthusiastic players; some new to the game and others who have transferred from the previous court at Prince's Club, just a few miles away.

The only glass main wall in tennis history has already been consigned to history, as that court has been rapidly dismantled by the club owners. This leaves Westwood flying the court tennis flag in Virginia, and it is the first on the left in the photo below.



The Tambar, with a splendid view into court tennis on the right and over the lawn tennis courts to the left in this photo

Talking of flags, a banner has been put up for every existing club in the tennis world, plus entities such as the Dedanists, Brigands, the LRTA and the international governing bodies, and even for two US courts not yet built, in Charleston and Wisconsin. Optimism, indeed!



The Radley banner, hanging in the Westwood Country Club

The tennis court is a handsome structure and fills one end of a brand-new indoor tennis hall but is separated from the three carpet lawn tennis courts. At first floor level, the felicitously named 'Tambar' (see above left) is open to the LT but divided from the RT by glass walls, giving a splendid view while limiting the noise. It is a design that works extremely well and should really come into its own during tournaments.

Translucent panels above the side penthouse improve lighting, which otherwise is indirect and illuminates the court and the 30 feet high ceiling. Changes to the angle of the tambour and the colour of the penthouses will improve the already very good court and adjustments to the air-conditioning system will make hearing much easier.

Westwood Country Club, is a most impressive venue for 'court tennis' as the game is known in the US, with its 58,000sq ft club house, championship golf course, indoor and outdoor pools, ten indoor and outdoor lawn tennis courts, fitness centre, restaurants, bars *et al*.

The official Opening took place, amid a myriad of festivities, tournaments, cocktail parties and a most stimulating one-day conference on the future of tennis, during the period of 3-6 November 2022. Nearly 300 donors, supporters and players gathered for the Gala Dinner and the Official Opening ceremony on court the following day.



Haven Pell, far left, watches HRH The Earl of Wessex, racquet in hand, declare the court open.

We were greatly honoured to have HRH The Earl of Wessex as Guest of Honour at the Gala Dinner, and to declare the court open the following day.

His Royal Highness, as he does whenever possible on his visits to tennis courts, spent time on court with younger players, and ensured that their experience of real tennis was an extremely special one.



His Royal Highness, The Earl of Wessex, pictured on-court at Westwood before the Exhibition Doubles, which featured Tim Chisholm and Camden Riviere on the left of the photo and John Lumley and Steve Virgona to the right, beside Mary Livingston, President of the US Court Tennis Association

Prince Edward referred in his speech at the dinner to the quality of the Exhibition Doubles, played between Tim Chisholm and Camden Riviere, John Lumley and Steve Virgona, which was thoroughly enjoyed by several hundred enthusiastic spectators.

Haven Pell launched his book 'Round the World in Fifty Courts', which almost sold out before the official launch date. It proved to be a compelling read, as you can see below.

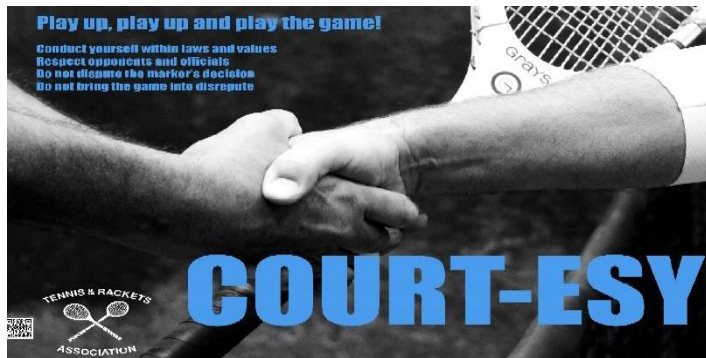


The Westwood real tennis Pros, being the British combination of Ivan Ronaldson and James Greenley, have been busy devising a programme of introductory sessions and coaching clinics for men, women and juniors. As a result, the court is full, from early every morning until closing time, seven days a week.

Alongside the opening festivities, there a symposium at which Alastair Curley, President of the Australian Association, ARTA, spoke about the launch of a co-operative project between the major national tennis association to develop an ambitious and achievable ten-year plan for the game.

He emphasised the importance of this process being more bottom-up than top-down initiative, with opinions and input being sought from everyone in the game, regardless of their role or length of experience.

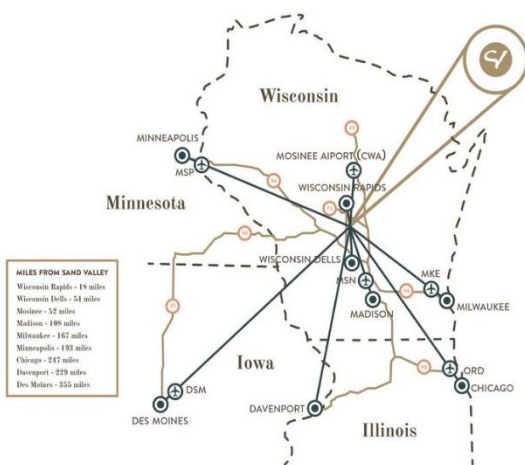
A SWOT analysis was undertaken by all those gathered together and the details will be circulated in due course.



During the wide-ranging discussion, Haven Pell made the observation that, as alignment of interests is a vital part of the relationship between a sponsoring organisation and the activity it supports, the tennis world would do well to target as potential sponsors those organisations for whom integrity and civilised behaviour, i.e. “no cheating”, would play to their values. This is an intriguing thought and should stimulate thought amongst the Powers that Be in our game.

Wisconsin

Michael Keiser is a Chicago club member, and the originator of the idea to build a real tennis court in Nekoosa, in the vastness of rural Wisconsin, on his hugely successful golf and tennis destination resort, Sand Valley.



The following link takes you to the website for the thriving, multiactivity, 12,000-acre Sand Valley Resort, and shows the golf courses, 15 grass and hard

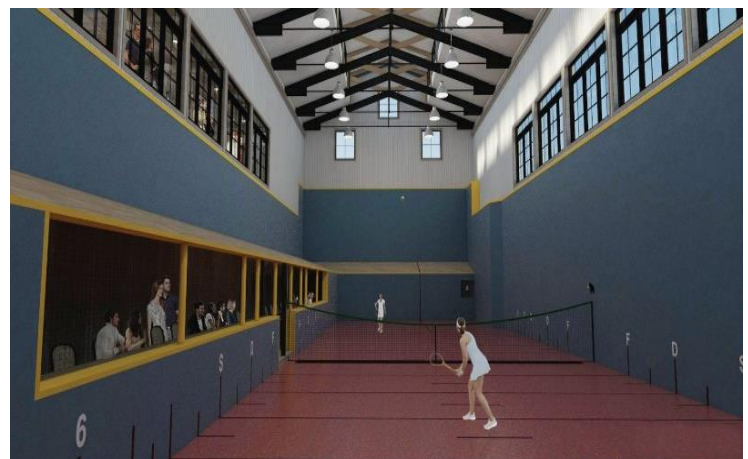
surface lawn tennis courts, trails for mountain biking and hiking and well-stocked lakes and rivers for fishing, with facilities for skiing, snowshoeing and outdoor ice hockey in winter. The 2023 arrival of real tennis is mentioned and photos of the progress being made with the project can be found here:

<https://sandvalley.com/?NCK=8772611141>.



Construction of the court is well underway, though presumably will be slowed considerably by the tough Wisconsin winter. The latest news of the progress of the project is that the opening is scheduled to be September 2023, at the start of the next season.

There are external images of what the new tennis centre will look like (above) and an artist's impression of the court interior (below), which looks remarkably like Westwood, which can be no bad thing.



The following text is taken from the ‘Tennis Center’ (sic) tab on: <https://sandvalley.com/real-estate>:

'Since introducing its grass tennis courts in 2018, Sand Valley has become a mecca for racquet sport enthusiasts. Beginning in 2023 those tennis players will have a place to call home: the 13,000-square-foot Sand Valley Tennis Center.

Opening in 2023, the Tennis Center, adjacent to the resort's 15 grass tennis courts, features outdoor seating overlooking the grass courts and the 18th hole on Sedge Valley. Inside, guests can relax and recover with food and drink at a bistro-style restaurant with a brick wood-fired oven overlooking an unexpected example of the rich history of tennis: just the eleventh Court Tennis court in the United States. The Tennis Center also features a fully stocked pro shop.

The history of Court Tennis (known as "Real" or "Royal" Tennis in other parts of the world) stretches back to the 13th century. King Henry VIII of England is said to have played the game. Guests will have the chance to learn the game and enjoy competitions and exhibitions throughout the year to get to know the true origins of the modern game of tennis.'



Alas, the Yellow 'S' of 'Sand' did not survive the transfer process to this newsletter, but it is a most appealing logo.

Sydney:



These smiles reflect the excitement of the project leaders in Sydney

News just in is that the Sydney court has had a major grant from the NSW State Government of A\$1.399m, and a condition of this grant is that ground must be broken on the construction by July 2023 and be completed by Dec 2025. The target date for opening is 18 September 2024.

Congratulations to all involved!

The real tennis court at the Cheltenham Recreation Club has received planning approval and members of the real tennis section are working hard on the final bit of fundraising, for the remaining sum of A\$500,000 needed to complete the funding.

A dedicated fundraising website has been established, which has regular updates on progress, <https://www.sydneyprealtennis.com.au>, and a further document has been updated with information of donor categories:

[Donor_categories.pdf \(mcusercontent.com\)](https://www.sydneyprealtennis.com.au/mcusercontent.com/Donor_categories.pdf).

Using this link takes you straight to the photomontage of the court in situ:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5fa1e8450653912714e0f8c0/t/6048853931390f164858f928/1615365452717/Photomontage.PDF>.

It is possible that, after hiatus of 17 years, a new real tennis court in Sydney could open at the start of the 2024 season. This would mean successive new court openings in Westwood in September 2022, Sand Valley in September 2023 and then Sydney. What a prospect!



These are heady days, with positive news on the Charleston project (same city, but in a different location than the now-defunct Daniel Island proposal), Chinon and Pau in France, Hewell Grange and Repton School in England and who knows where else that courts may be possibilities in the near future.

End Notes

Firstly: "Rob Fahey, on behalf of its Members, the T&RA applauds your distinguished contribution across the years. So many tributes have been made and many more to come and congratulations on reaching your yet another (your nineteenth) British Open Singles Final in your retirement year.



The world of Tennis owes you a huge debt of gratitude. As a player, you have been peerless. As a coach, you have nurtured your enthusiasm for the game across multiple generations.

As a Club Professional, in more recent times, your personality draws in more members. Finally, your support for the Investing in Professionals programme has encouraged your fellow professionals to join the mission to support the future of Real Tennis.

Whilst many people demonstrate triskaidekaphobia, you have embraced the number thirteen as the key to your accomplishments. You have won 13 World Championships (two successful challenges and eleven successful defences). You have won the British Open Singles Championships on thirteen occasions, six times a finalist, your first in 1991. You have thirteen British Open Doubles Championships to your name, seven times a finalist, your first in 1990. So, in total that is thirteen times as an unsuccessful finalist, not that you measure these metrics, but 39 British Finals in total throughout your illustrious career. Robert Fahey MBE OAM, you are a legend!"

- Chris Davies, CEO T&RA



The T&RA has posted this video on its website, as well as this transcript above, to pay tribute to Rob Fahey's extraordinary career, now he has retired from competing in tournament singles:

<https://www.tennisandrackets.com/news/a-tribute-to-rob-fahey>.

Secondly: The Palace of Versailles has produced a video on the history of *jeu de paume* and the evolution of lawn tennis, which can be watched by clicking on this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e6W8lAmwY4>.

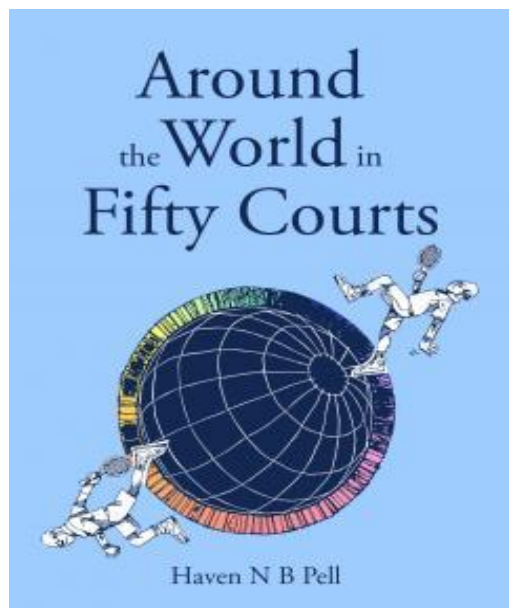
Thirdly: In another excellent offering from the French tennis community, Gilles Kressman features in a short film about *jeu de paume* filmed at the Paris court, with on court action from some of the top women players, including World Champions, Penny Lumley and Claire Fahey, and the best French jeuer, Matthieu Sarlangue. The link is here:

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

(Almost) The Last Word

Haven Pell, leading light of the US Court Tennis Foundation, who has been a leading 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 in 2022, with visits to Wellington and Fontainebleau.

We applaud his energy, ambition and achievement in leading successful fundraising efforts twice in his life for courts in Washington and for writing a book at the same time as working tirelessly on the Westwood project.



The reminiscences of his travels, *Round the World in Forty Courts*, has been produced by Ronaldson Publications and is a splendidly entertaining read. The first edition has almost sold out (the Library edition has sold out completely) and an early reprint is likely. 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.’

The Last Post

Mike Gooding - January 1, 1965 - September 27, 2022

Very sadly, we have to report the untimely death at the age of 57 of Mike Gooding, the finest real tennis player produced so far by Scotland, who was most recently Head Professional in Newport, having been principally based in the US for over 30 years.



Maggie H-T writes: Mike had a long stint as the Head Pro at the New York club, where I visited him in the late 1980s, on a business trip. We had become friends when he was the Head Pro at Hatfield and had become my tenant, living in the house next door to mine on Fore Street, less than 100 yards from the court.

Needless to say, this friendship counted for nothing at the NYT&R club, where women were (and remain) treated with disdain and ushered rapidly into a side room on entering the building. Mike had the good grace to be very apologetic and it was great to catch up with him.

He, like Alastair Curley, the fellow Scot who is the current President of the Australian Real Tennis Association, were both brought into the game in 1979, by CJR, during his brief stint as Head Pro at Sun Court in Troon.

Mike was 14 years old and a junior international badminton player for Scotland when he started playing real tennis. In 1983, he was invited by CJR to join the Pro team at Hampton Court as a Trainee and he developed strongly, working with CJR and Lachie Deuchar, ultimately reaching the position of Number Two in the world at Singles.

CJR comments that Mike probably had the fastest hands he ever saw on court, and his speed around the court and rapid reaction time, made him especially

effective as a doubles player. He was fearless playing 'up', as his super-quick reaction time made him a volleying machine; he had a strong tournament record and a string of notable successes.

Amongst his achievements were the following: Mike won the Taylor Cup for Young Professionals in 1985; the British Open Singles title in 1996, beating Lachie Deuchar by 3 sets to 1; The European Open Singles in 1996, in which year he was awarded the David Warburg Salver for the Best Performance by a Professional in 1996, and again in 1997. In both those years, he won the French Open.

Mike won the Stephen Tayleur U24 Doubles Trophy from 1985-88 with the outstanding amateur Julian Snow. Mike was sought out by a succession of fellow Pros, and he and his long-time partner, Chris Bray (the current Manager of the MCC court at Lord's), won the British Open Doubles title three times, in 1991, 1993, 1994. In 2005 Mike did so again, but with Nick Wood (the Head Pro at Hampton Court) this time. He also reached the Final in 1995, 1996 and 1997 with, successively, Chris Bray, Lachie Deuchar and Rob Fahey.



A Message from USCTA President - Mary Livingston

'I am writing to share the sad news with our American court tennis community that Mike Gooding, long-time US-based professional, passed away yesterday at the age of 57. Please find the note below that International Tennis Hall of Fame CEO Todd Martin sent to the Newport membership this morning.

Mike was a tremendous player, tireless teacher, and good friend to many of us for decades in Newport, Lakewood, and New York. We will miss the energy and drive that was second to none.

There will be moments to remember his contributions in the weeks and months to come but for now, on behalf of the Board of Governors and the USCTA, I wish Mike peace and ask each of you to hold his family in your thoughts.

Very best,

Mary'

From Todd Martin, CEO International Tennis Hall of Fame

'It is with a solemn and sober heart that I share the tragic news that our long-time teammate, Court Tennis Head Professional, and friend Mike Gooding has passed away. Mike had been battling bladder cancer for more than a year.

In addition to being a valued teammate, Mike enjoyed an extraordinary life and career. Most importantly, Mike was a loving husband to Amanda and father to Lara and Tabatha. Mike was an esteemed athlete, having once been the Court Tennis World #2 in singles. His teaching abilities were lauded by all - from his peers to the countless beginners he introduced to the game. I regularly heard from younger professionals that Mike's coaching in doubles was "second to none".

He shared his love of Court Tennis, its history, and the benefits of the game generously with so many.

For those of us who worked most closely with Mike, we knew him as a kind, spirited, intelligent, and caring man...and indeed, he was always up for a chat.

I ask that you keep Amanda and the girls, and Mike's extended family and friends in your thoughts and prayers as they grieve the loss of someone so dear.

Todd'

This would be a very sad note on which to end the final newsletter of the year, so we end by sending our readers the warmest good wishes for their real tennis and for whatever festival or holiday they will celebrate over the winter.



HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

This last Newsletter of 2022 was compiled by

Maggie Henderson-Tew