



## THE RADLEY COLLEGE TENNIS CLUB NEWSLETTER

‘BETTER THAN THE LAST’



With thanks to Renaud Besnard for the photograph of junior players on the Radley court

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## RCTC Club News

A note from the Editor:

Dear Readers,

It has come to my attention that some recipients of *Better Than The Last* are failing to absorb the entire newsletter and so are missing important pieces of tennis news.

Reluctantly, I am prepared to accept that this may have something to do with the excessive length of recent editions. I intend that this one will be shorter and pithier – but no promises, as there is so much exciting news to report about *Planète Paume*!

Yours in tennis,

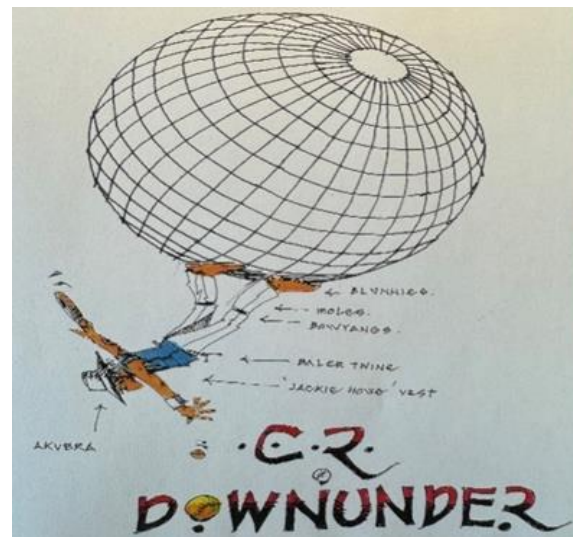
Maggie Henderson-Tew

## Professionals' News

The first piece of news is that CJR and Maggie will be away from Radley from 3 Sept 2024, returning on 1 May 2025. Radley College has, yet again, most generously granted a leave of absence to CJR for the greater good of global tennis (following periods during the past five years at the Oratory, Bordeaux, Washington and Bristol).

**Chris and Maggie** are off to open the new court in Sydney for the Sydney Real Tennis Club, located in a leafy suburb at the Cheltenham Recreation Club. Their objective will be to work closely with SRTC/CRC to get the court into the best possible shape for playing, expand the membership, and create a thriving, diverse and enthusiastic entity for the permanent professional team that will follow on.

Alas, construction has been delayed (but isn't it always?). The January 2024 target slipped to March, then April and, finally, building started in May. Rain and the discovery of asbestos caused delays and the current target date for completion is early 2025.



CJR and MHT have mitigated their disappointment with this delay by travelling to international courts (and large bits of the world between them), since 3 Sept.

Read about their time at the newest court in the US, at the Sand Valley Golf and Tennis Resort in Wisconsin, on P x.

On 1 September, the fast-improving amateur, **Archie Campbell**, arrived from Bristol to work with Nino and Alex as an intern until the end of the year. After this stint at Radley, Archie will come out to join Chris and Maggie in Sydney.

Archie has just finished his A levels at Clifton College where he played as much Rackets as possible - that is, before he discovered Real Tennis about 18 months ago, since when he has become fanatically keen.

Archie won the Plate event at the Junior World Championships in late August and claimed the British U19 Doubles title. His handicap has dropped to 30.7 and he is determined to press on from there.





Archie has been delighted by the warmth of welcome he has received at Radley and, if he has not met you yet, looks forward to doing so very soon.

[Incidentally, see the 'Radley Junior' section on P4 for more Radley-related success in junior tournaments.]

**CJR** took to the court over the summer with **Wayne Davies**, his successor as World Champion (1987-94), for the first time in 30 years. But this time he was working with Wayne rather than against him.

CJR and Wayne led a very successful two-day masterclass for young professionals on 16 and 17 May 2024 at the Hardwick House court. This event was arranged with the generous support of the Dedanists. The former Champions demonstrated how coaching and playing styles have changed in the past few decades, but that there is a lot that can still be learnt from more traditional styles of play.



'Mikko's' imagining of CJR and Wayne Davis discussing old times over a glass of their respective favourite beverage.

Note: after his RT career, Wayne became a croquet pro.

Congratulations to **Nino Merola**, on two counts; one on and one off-court. Continuing his purple patch of becoming the Most Valuable Player at the National League finals and winning the Category A Open at Manchester, he excelled in the King's Goblet at Hampton Court Palace in early August. He had wins against fellow professionals Vaughan Hamilton, Lewis Williams, Darren Long and long-standing British number one, Bryn Sayers, before playing the top seed and eventual tournament winner, Nick Howell. Nino lost to Nick, 3-6, 1-6 after a great run in his first time in this handicap event. His handicap now stands at its lowest ever, 2.7.

Off court, we send warmest congratulations to Nino and Tori Toates on their recent wedding, and we wish them and son Seppi a long and happy family life together. Nino and Tori kept their marriage as low-key as possible, but if any members would like to contribute to a wedding gift for them both, please contact [maggie.ht@btinternet.com](mailto:maggie.ht@btinternet.com).

This happy event was the justifiable cause of Nino's absence from the French Open (results of this tournament on P7) and so Nino's next major tournament will be the British Open.

As usual, this tournament will be played at The Queen's Club, this year from 15-24 November, and is, as it was last year generously sponsored by Sir John Ritblat.

**Alex Machin** is running the National League for the second year; a considerable task to which he rose splendidly last year. There is more about this League on P7.

Ending on a sombre note, we were saddened by the premature death of former Radley professional **Adam Phillips**, aged only 56. He died at his home in Cambridge in June, having had a seizure while sleeping.

Adam worked with CJR at Radley in 2018, after his 15-year stint as Head Pro at Lord's, and many members will recall his infectious enthusiasm as a coach and his advocacy for the game.

He played competitive real tennis with great intensity and, at his peak some 20 years ago, he attained a handicap of +2 as a singles player and reached the final of the British Open Doubles with Julian Snow in 2003.

Adam trained as a professional at Cambridge under the legendary/infamous Brian Church, having played lawn tennis and squash to a high standard. Alas, like Brian, Adam developed an alcohol dependency which affected every aspect of his life and health.



Adam Phillips on court

During his career, Adam worked at Canford and Hatfield before being appointed Head Pro at Lord's, where he spent 15 years.

Adam leaves daughters aged 13 and 11, whom he loved deeply, and his separation from them and his ex-wife in recent years was a source of great pain for him. He was universally liked and respected by other professionals and the real tennis community feels his loss keenly.

## Members' News

### - Radley Seniors

The final of the Knight Cup, the level championship of the Oxford club, was contested on 6 October by two Radley members, Mike Henman and Ashley Deakin. Mike emerged the victor, 6-1, 6-3, to take the title that Henman *père et fils* have won on several occasions.

The best two amateurs in that club, Henry Henman and Roman Krznaric, both previous winners, did not enter the event.

### - Radley Juniors

We are very proud of the success of our junior members, not least at the British Junior Championships, held at Queen's from 16-18 August.

Both the U16 and U18 British Singles titles were contested by Radley's Laszlo Garson, aged 14, and Max Warner, aged 13, who was, literally, the poster boy of the tournament, and two terrific matches ensued.

We want to pay fulsome tribute to Laszlo's accomplishments in real tennis over the past year. Although he did not win the biggest prizes on offer, he performed with skill and maturity. It was a total pleasure watching him play and his behaviour, on and off court, was impeccable.

In the nail-biting U16 final, Laszlo took the first set, 6-3, narrowly lost the second, 5-6, and was beaten in the final, tight set, 4-6. Both players had about an hour to recover before returning to the court for the final of the U18s, which Max won 6-4, 6-2.

Laszlo's triumphs in the British U14s and U16s in 2023 were reversed this year by Max, who has worked very hard on his game at his home court of Queen's, where the Junior Champs take place.





The British Open was followed swiftly by the Junior World Championship in Bordeaux, to which the sixteen best U18 players are invited. Max and Laszlo once more contested the final, with Max recording another win, 6-3, 6-3.

This is a tremendous achievement for both these young players, and they have set a fine standard for other juniors to emulate.

To put their play into some sort of context, the very best player on *Planète Paume*, Camden Riviere, registered a handicap just better than 20 when he was 14, which underlines the excellence of Max's and Laszlo's progression. Max's handicap now stands at 26 and Laszlo's at 31.9.



The podium of the Junior World Championship, flanked by the President of the hosting Bordeaux club, Lea Van Der Zwalmen, Paul Weaver, who runs the British Junior Academy, Simon Roundell from the Dedanists, and the Professionals, Baudouin Huynh-Lenhardt and Nat Cherry.

**Note:**

Readers may be wondering if Radley's Henry Henman somehow sneaked in an extra birthday to render himself ineligible for the Junior World Championship?

The reason he did not play in the Junior events in Britain and France was that he spent the entire summer working as an intern at the Tuxedo club. His handicap now stands at 12.1, meaning that, on paper if not by title, he is the world's leading player under 18.

By a margin.



Theo Besnard and Radley's Ambrose Garson, before the match to play for the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> places in the Junior World Championship. Ambrose won, making it another very good day for the Garsons.

### - Radley College

There is yet more junior success!

On 21 September, the U15 British Junior Doubles title was won by the Radley College pair of Ned Cordle and Felix Moffett.

We are very pleased to announce that the Co-Captains of Radley College Real Tennis this season are Theo Henman and Mikolaj Rutka, who both enter their final year at Radley. We are sure that with them at the helm, it will be another splendid year for College tennis.

Hearty congratulations to all concerned on their progress as players thus far – and we are sure there is much more to come!

### Radley Club Tournaments

The 2024 Radley Singles Handicap tournament, in which almost all members take part, has begun.



The winner and runner-up will be invited to play in the National Club Singles Champions event 2024/2025 for the Chetwood Trophy, which will be held at the Hyde Club, near Bridport, on 14/15 June 2025.

The Trophy is named after Sir Clifford Chetwood, who died in 2009. He was the Chairman of George Wimpey Construction, one of the main sponsors of Real Tennis in the 1980s and early 1990s, and an enthusiastic member and long-standing President of RTC.

### Hosted at Radley

### The Dutch National Championships

'Dutch Week', as it has become known at Radley, is the time in August when large numbers of real tennis players and supporters descend on Radley from their lawn tennis club in The Hague to play in The Dutch Singles Championship.



Each year, more new players are introduced to the game and, for the past two years at least, the final has been contested between the strong brother and sister duo of players, Paul and Saskia Bollerman.

The final, played on 18 August this year, was a tremendous battle, with Saskia, H25.2, the Dutch Ladies champion for many years and world number 3, putting in her best performance in this tournament against her older brother, H18.7.

From 2-5 down in the best of 8-game set, Saskia recovered brilliantly to level the match at 6 games all. She confessed afterwards to rapidly increasing anxiety at the prospect of besting Paul, and her level dipped. He took the set and retained the title.

You can watch action from the Championship, recorded by Paul, by clicking this link:  
<https://www.bing.com/videos/riverview/relatedvideo?q=dutch+real+tennis+championship+2024&mid=17245157921DECC1B26717245157921DECC1B267&FORM=VIRE>.

### British Over-60s Doubles Championship

The British Over-60s Doubles took place in mid-September. The Radley pairing of Ashley Deakin & Tony Munsey took the title with a convincing win over David Watson & Ronald Paterson, 8-1.



Contrary to the poster's intimation, no decapitated players featured in the tournament; a relief to all.

### Scottish events

Admittedly, Radley is not in Scotland, but we are delighted to be the temporary home for Scottish tennis played in a *court de dedans* until another in the correct geography exists.

### The National Interclub Championships 2024

Radley's Nick Gordon and those other stalwarts of Scottish tennis, Ian Falconer and Dan Worboys, hope to repeat their 2023 success in the National Inter-Club Championship (teams comprise a

singles player and a doubles pair) at Moreton Morrell and Leamington in late October.

### The Scottish National Championships 2024 & '25

All three of these players entered The Tenth Scottish National Championships at Radley in June, which was generously sponsored, as it has been since inauguration, by Pol Roger Champagne and Tunnock's the confectioners; our favourite 'auld alliance'.



Every player in the tournament signed up to enter the 2025 iteration, and so, barring injuries and other unforeseen events, the draw looks pretty full already. It is a highlight of the Radley calendar, and we are delighted to fly the flag for Scottish tennis, albeit a long way south.



### Inter-Club Competitions

#### National League

In the annual FLM National League competition, teams of pros and amateurs with handicaps better than 50 representing clubs in various handicap bands, in divisions from Premier to 9.

Last season, Radley members Mike Henman and Paul Bollerman won Division 5, but Paul's recent move back home to the Hague will make regular tennis much more difficult for him. He has ended this phase of his tennis career in fine style (see above).



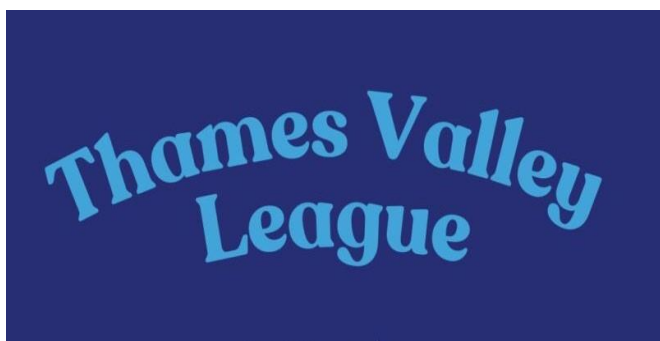
This season's National League and Super League sponsor remains FLM Wealth Management (an appointed representative of St James Place Wealth Management, advising on the group's products and services). The company will be delighted to discuss its products and services with any real tennis players. To find out more, please click on this link: <https://www.flmltd.com/>.

#### The Thames Valley League

The 2024/5 season of the popular inter-club handicap doubles competition, the Thames Valley League, began in September. Trudi Machin kindly agreed to take over from Maggie Henderson-Tew as the Radley captain.

A total of eighteen players represented Radley in our 2023/4 campaign. Although slightly fewer than the twenty-five individuals who participated in 2022/23, it is splendid that so many club members are keen to be involved each season.





Each team fields eight players, with pairs representing the H30s, H40s, H50s and H60s, broadly defined in keeping with the spirit of this event, which was devised by Mick Dean to combine the minimum of rules with the maximum of enjoyment.

In fact, the defending champions, Oratory, love the format so much that, when Holyport decided to withdraw, Oratory asked to field two sides and thereby plug the gap. Oratory 1 and Oratory 2 will contest the TVL this season.

## Selected UK Club News

### Falkland



A photo of the unique survivor of the court carré design, where the roof is the sky, the dedans is absent, the door IS the door onto the court and there are 'lunes' (targets behind the server) and an 'ais' (the green plank up the wall at the service end, projecting slightly above the side penthouse).

Every Real Tennis player MUST play at Falkland, so read on...

*'Invitation to celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary:*

*2025 marks fifty years since the revival of Real Tennis on the Royal Tennis Court at Falkland Palace, Scotland. To celebrate this milestone (which stands on a rich historic road leading towards our ancient court's 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2039) you are warmly invited to participate in our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations by:*

- a) Encouraging either a representative team or individual(s) to travel to Falkland Palace in 2025 or 2026 and play competitively or socially with our members.*
- b) Entrusting such player(s) with an appropriate item from your club (ideally with a club logo) to decorate the National Trust for Scotland's visitor area, which is dedicated to real tennis.*

*Our small club of regular players continues to keep alive the spirit and game of Real/Royal/Court Tennis on the world's oldest tennis court (1539). Aficionados of the game come from afar to experience the game as it was played on this very court since the time of King James V of Scotland and his daughter Mary, Queen of Scots.*

*If it were not for our small band of dedicated players, this historic court could well become a static museum piece to be viewed, but not touched.*

*We welcome all interested players, whether they are simply intrigued by the game or are fellow Real Tennis players making a tennis 'pilgrimage' to play a match on Falkland court, which is surely the tennis equivalent of avid golfers seeking to play a round on the 'Old Course' in St Andrews.*

*RSVP by 1<sup>st</sup> November 2024*



Please email [fprtclub@gmail.com](mailto:fprtclub@gmail.com) with the subject line: 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of FPRTC.

In your reply, please indicate your club's willingness to support our celebration by:

a) publicizing our request amongst your members, encouraging any interested participants to contact us directly,

and

b) providing us with a suitable club item to decorate our visitor area.

Thank you warmly in anticipation of your full support for our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary project.

Kevin Gilbert and James Lindsay

(Co-Chairs)'

#### FPRTC in the Press

*'Eight local sports clubs across Fife, Perth and Kinross, including one that plays on the world's oldest tennis court have received a funding boost this week', reported The Scottish Herald on 15 October. 'As part of its annual Scottish Sport Fund initiative, Aldi has invested £7,000 in local groups to encourage healthier living and give each club a contribution to continue operating.'*

*Falkland Palace Royal Tennis Club, which works to keep the original game of Real Tennis alive, was awarded the maximum amount of £2,500. The club is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2025 and plans to use the funds from to enhance its visitor experience and increase participation with local school and university groups.'*



The court at Falkland as its best; with players on court and the sun shining.

To our surprise and pleasure, tennis at Falkland has been mentioned in the pages of the Scottish editions of *The Daily Express*, *The Sun* and *The Herald* during October. The piece below, lavishly illustrated with no fewer than seven photos, appeared in longer form in *the Daily Record*.

*'FORGET Wimbledon, the real history of British tennis lies at the world's oldest tennis court in Scotland. Some 483-mile drive north of the home of Wimbledon sits the 483-year-old venue that only plays a sport coined "real tennis".'*

*Speaking to the Daily Record, club member Kevin Gilbert explained how it differentiates from the popular game of today. There's thought to be only 50 "real tennis" courts remaining worldwide with around half of them dotted up and down the UK. Remarkably, anyone wanting to play on the historic course at Falkland Palace only has to pay £10 to get out on the court.*

*However there is one very large caveat to that tiny price - you have to know the rules of "real tennis" with no "absolute beginners" allowed. The court is now looked after by the National Trust for Scotland but it's the tennis club who are tasked with keeping a 500-year-old tradition going.*

*Kevin Gilbert added: "We get visitors from all over the world who visit us, and sometimes write or email us asking if they can have a game on the court and we always include them. "We're trying to keep alive the tradition of many centuries of play."*

N.B. For more about Scottish tennis, don't miss the last page of this edition of *Better Than the Last*.

#### Holyport



The Head Pro at Holyport, Josh Smith, has been appointed to the team of professionals at the club in Newport, Rhode Island ..... and the application for his US work visa has begun. Until that has been approved, he will continue working at Holyport with the former Radley pro, Josh King.

## Oxford



We are delighted that significant improvement in his health has enabled Andrew Davis to return to work at the Oxford University Tennis Club. It is good to have you back down the road, Andrew!

## Moreton Morrell



Following the retirement of Tom Granville, MMTCC's long-standing and much-loved head professional, the club has appointed Darren Long, who moves from Manchester, thus creating a vacancy at MTRC. The search is on for his successor.



Manchester Tennis & Racquet Club

## Prested Hall

The two courts at Prested, which are siblings rather than identical twins, are twenty-five years old this year and their anniversary was celebrated with a tournament and other celebrations. All was deemed a great success by those involved.



CJR wrote to the Prested Chairman and members thus:

*'The extended family of Ronaldsons sends heartfelt greetings and congratulations to Prested Tennis Club on the occasion of its 25th anniversary.*

*Two of us (Ivan and Matty) have worked at the club and we have all delighted in the successful establishment of a centre for real tennis in Essex.*

*Notwithstanding his eccentricities, Mike Carter demonstrated tremendous enterprise, tenacity and vision in building the two courts.*

*Subsequently, the enthusiastic members and professionals of the club have propelled Prested forward, so that it is now one of the powerhouses of the sport in Britain.*

*The Ronaldson clan send heartiest good wishes for the second quarter century of Prested. Onwards and upwards!*

*Kind regards, Chris'*



## The Tennis & Rackets Association

Although the game's governing body in the UK, rather than a club, this section of the newsletter seems an appropriate place to include the announcement of the successor to Fred Satow as Chairman of the T&RA:

*'I am writing to let you know that the T&R Board has unanimously approved the appointment of Richard Compton-Burnett as the next Chairman. This appointment is subject to member approval at the AGM in November 2024 and will take effect when my term of office expires at the end of that month.'*

*Richard has had a successful career as an entrepreneur in both the technology and healthcare sectors. He has been a T&RA Trustee for more than a year and has already made a significant contribution.*

*Richard played cricket and football for Cambridge and is also a high-quality Tennis player. He is actively involved in both games as a player and has a son and a daughter who have both enjoyed success at a national level in Tennis and/or Rackets.*

*Fred Satow'*

## National Inter-Club Competitions

Radley has entered teams in two of this season's major national inter-club tournaments, **The Brodie Cup** (for players with handicaps 30-50) and **The Field Trophy** (for players with handicaps roughly from 10 to 30). Radley won The Brodie Cup last season and won through to the semi-final of the Field Trophy.

Now is time to reset and go again, with Trudi Machin running the Radley sides this season, having taken over from Maggie H-T, who has filled the role for the past ten years. The campaigns begin with first round matches on 9 and 10 November, respectively.



The victorious Radley side in last season's Brodie Cup:

L to R – Theo Henman, Trudi Machin, Rory Acheson-Gray, non-playing captain MH-T, Mark Crawley, Hugo Acheson-Gray, Tony Munsey and Giles Fitzpatrick.

## National Inter-Club Championship 2024/5

Moreton Morrell and Leamington are hosting the National Inter-Club Champs on 26/27 October, which proved so successful for Radley last year. David Harris won the Singles event, representing Radley with Tim Roberts and Andrew Leslau.

## Selected National and International Events

- The Ladies World Championships will be held in the USA at The National Tennis Club, Newport, Rhode Island from 23rd - 31st May 2025. A new format has been established, more appropriately reflecting the stature of the tournament. Read on for more details.



The main Singles draw will be structured as a challenge event for the first time, to bring the elite level of the women's game into line with that of the men.

There will be four pairs only in the Doubles.

A Handicap Doubles event will run alongside

The U19 Girls' World Championship will be held at The Tuxedo Club, USA, in July 2025.

### **The Court Circular – or some of what is happening in the global RT community**

#### **Australia**

It is an exciting time for Real Tennis in Australia. The nation has taken over from the USA as the leading country of new court building. We applaud the new construction in Sydney; the planning process underway for a third court in Melbourne; significant anniversary celebrations at Hobart and Melbourne; and, we are thrilled to report, the strong likelihood of the return of active tennis play to Romsey in 2025.

#### **Hobart**

2025 marks not only the start of a new chapter for Sydney but is the 150th anniversary of the Hobart Real Tennis Club. HRTC is planning year-long celebrations, but events will kick off in a major way in January.

Firstly, the Men's and Women's Australian Opens on 6-14 January, including a 150th Anniversary Gala Dinner on 11 January, and the 150th Anniversary Handicap Doubles for all players, will take place from 13-17 January.

For more information, email the Head Pro, Brett McFarlane, at: [pro@hobarttennis.com.au](mailto:pro@hobarttennis.com.au).



Hobart Real Tennis Club, founded 1875

#### **Melbourne**

*'MCC Real Tennis Section – The Melbourne Cricket Club have a long-running connection with the game of real tennis and have their own vibrant tennis-specific section, which has been running since 2007.*

*In response to the current and sustained enthusiasm for the game in Melbourne and to allow further expansion, we are thrilled that a plan is advancing for a real tennis court to be built at the MCC Glen Iris Valley Lawn Tennis Club, located on the Riversdale Golf Course, Mount Waverley, Victoria [about 25 minutes' drive south-east of the RMTC in Richmond]. The proposal has now been approved by the existing lawn tennis club members, and local planning approval is being sought in 2024.*





*The Royal Melbourne TC is supportive of the plan, and the prospect of another club in the city is a most exciting one. Real Tennis in Melbourne has had a successful, continuous 140-year history including the move from the city centre club over 50 years ago to its current base in Richmond.'*

Checking the following webpage will provide greater detail: <https://www.mccrts.com.au/>.

We understand that the entire project redevelopment programme at Glen Iris will cost in excess of A\$25m, a startlingly large figure, but one which is apparently not a major problem for the cash-rich MCC. This huge price tag reflects the considerable ambition of the plan, which includes squash courts, pickleball, upgraded lawn tennis courts, new social facilities, and a real tennis court.

Hopes are high that this third court in Melbourne should be built sometime in 2026/27, reports Alistair Curley, Chairman of ARTA.

...and while we are talking about Melbourne...

The fiftieth anniversary of the opening the **Royal Melbourne Tennis Club** in Richmond is being celebrated by RMTTC in October 2024.



'Mikko' celebrates the proud arrival of the new courts in 1974 and continuation of the club in Melbourne on a new site.

Chris and Lesley Ronaldson have been invited to Melbourne as Guests of Honour and will be at RMTTC for the festivities.

You may not know the story of the well-crafted deal that enabled the new club in Richmond to get off to a roaring start, so here it is, in brief. The Committee cleverly managed a significant arbitrage opportunity, as land values in the Melbourne CBD rocketed; selling the old court and club site (founded 1882) in central Melbourne and buying a much larger site in the suburb of Richmond and preserving continuity of play by making, as a condition of vacating the old club, the completion of the new one.

**SAVE THE DATES** 19th - 26th October

Help celebrate the wisdom and the boldness of the Committee in their decision to move RMTTC from Exhibition Street to Sherwood Street, Richmond

**CASUAL DINNER** SAT 19  
Join us at RMTTC for a casual dinner where we will mark the events of 1974

**MON 21 - FRI 25** **REAL TENNIS**  
Handicapped tennis events all week - daytime or evening, young or old, there will be something for everyone.

**GALA DINNER DANCE** SAT 26  
Hosted in the MCG's Olympic Room. Come and join the fun by booking your table of 10 now

Spread the word to old, new, active, not so active, and retired members. ALL are welcome!

With the proceeds of the sale, the tennis club was able to buy a 30,000 square feet site in Richmond and built two real tennis courts, two squash courts, a swimming pool, changing rooms, a Pro shop and a Pro's flat on the premises. It opened on 24 September 1974, with CJR as its founding Head Professional.

Owing to the Middle East oil crisis and waves of industrial action, the Ronaldsons worked first at the old court in the city for nine months.

With the closure imminent, all facilities were thoroughly run down, CJR recalls. Before his arrival, there had been no pro for some time and the club's fortunes had fluctuated, including some very low ebbs indeed. In 1971, for example, there were fewer than 30 playing members.

The new club was very different and has had a continuously successful history. Although it opened in 1974, the official opening was delayed six months to coincide with the centenary of the court in Hobart.

Lord Aberdare, President of the Tennis & Rackets Association at that time, opened the court, and the legendary Pierre Etchebaster gave a coaching clinic. Pierre was over 80 years old when he held court, immaculately dressed, as always, in long white trousers, which had been the uniform of Professionals for time out of mind.

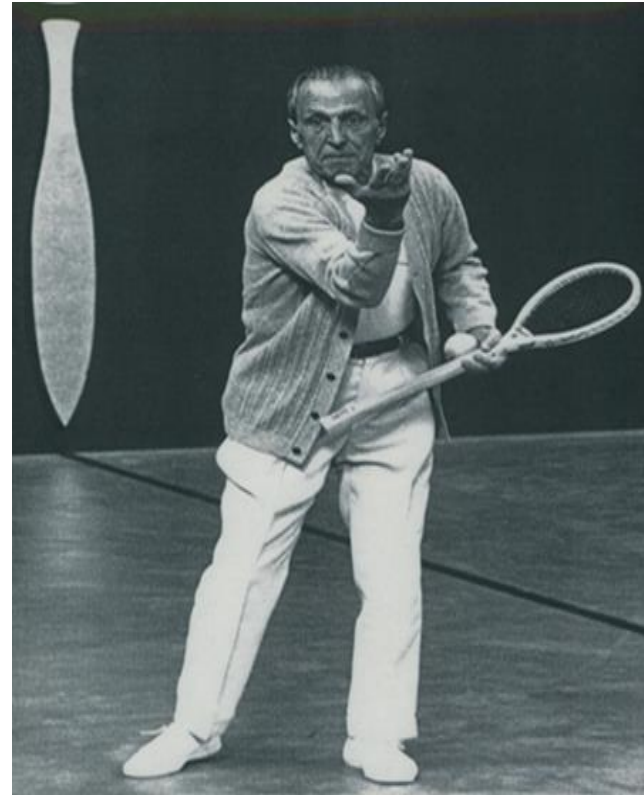
Pierre had extraordinary status in the game of tennis, as befitting the man who had held the title of World Champion from 1928-1954, when he retired, undefeated at the age of 60.

Those gathered in Melbourne in 1975 were conscious that they would never see him in Australia again and this would be their one and only opportunity to go on court with the great man.

Thus it was that the 'clinic' Pierre gave was highly unusual, as he was on the court with at least 80 other people. Watching Pierre serve an underarm twist, with astonishing accuracy, though a corridor in the throng of admirers, was a sight CJR remembers well.

Despite living in New York from 1928 until his retirement back to his birthplace of St-Jean-de-Luze, Pierre did not speak very good English but had developed the most expressive manner of conveying coaching information with his facial and hand gestures. Here is a wonderful photo of him on that day in Melbourne, in his favourite cardigan, demonstrating how to do it.

Incidentally, you will notice that his gut-strung racquet does not have a grip on it. Just think of the blisters...they made 'em tough in those days.



In deference to Pierre, he and his partner and fellow ex-World Champion, Northrup Knox (WC 1959-1969), had been seeded as the top pair in the Opening Doubles Tournament, but Pierre's ankles were so badly swollen from the long flight that he was not able to play. 'Norty' Knox played in the Singles (losing to the young home Pro, Chris Ronaldson).

The second seeds in the Doubles were the English pair of Frank Willis (who challenged for the World Championship in 1969) and Norwood Cripps, and they won the tournament, with Frank also winning the Singles and the centenary Hobart event, the inaugural Governor's Cup.

In building the first courts anywhere in the world in over fifty years, the Melbourne project team took considerable risks by using untested materials and design.

The courts were of shuttered concrete construction and were covered by a corrugated plastic roof, designed to be



low maintenance, and quite revolutionary for its time. People had no idea whether or not they were building a white elephant.

The twin courts, which play similarly, were constructed side by side but split on level, as the whole site is sloping. Each court has a dedans with two rows of seats and glass behind into the double clubroom. Behind the North court is the bar and lounge and behind the South court is the kitchen and eating area.



All is open plan, and the area is capable of holding a few hundred people, which makes it a great venue for staging large-scale events, like major championships and the bi-annual and legendarily successful Boomerang Cup.



The pool tops off the ensemble.

When CJR arrived, he was the sole pro, but in November 1973, he hired his first assistant. Colin Lumley (future World Number Four), who arrived straight from school and had his 17th birthday just four days after starting at RMTC.

History repeated itself when CJR hired Colin's son John (currently World Number Two), straight from school, to be his assistant at Radley, in 2010.

In June 1975, Chris's second recruit was Lachie Deuchar (future World Number One), who was even younger than Colin.

When Chris and Les Ronaldson, plus two small boys, returned to Britain in 1978, RMTC had 420 members. The Melbourne club has continued to flourish and is on a firm financial footing.

RMTC has an active and highly successful internship programme and CJR has arranged for a number of Radley boys and other British and international juniors to spend time at the club during gap years. RMTC has benefited from their enthusiasm and there has been a very positive effect on the visitors' handicaps.



#### - Romsey

Following an introduction by Mike Garnett, who has kept the Real Tennis flame alight in Romsey over the past 20 years, CJR and MH-T visited the former Cope-Williams court in Romsey, an hour's drive from Melbourne, where tennis has seldom been played for the past two decades.

The current owners, David and Tara Cowburn, took over the property about two years ago and are running a successful wine production business there, taking grapes from a number of producers and creating sparkling wines for them.

On arrival, they found the whole property needed renovation and this included the tennis court,

which is part of a conference and residential complex with 18 en-suite bedrooms, a cricket oval, dining facilities for up to 200 people, plus the kitchens and other necessary features.



The court on the Kilchurn Wines Estate, Romsey, from the service end.

It has been, and remains, a considerable undertaking to restore the estate to full economic viability, but it is clear that the owners have a firm resolve to do what is necessary to return the court into playable condition, appoint a Professional to run the court and club, and to update the club facilities, which are extensive and impressive. Late 2025 is the target for the resumption of regular play.



The Australian Open was held here in the 2000s and could be again. There are few courts in the world that can rival its spectator capacity and facilities, and a much brighter future beckons.

## Sydney

CJR and MHT will be at the Sydney court from the day it opens (by Christmas, we hope!), getting the new court into good shape for play, building the membership and creating a thriving, diverse and enthusiastic entity for a permanent professional team to inherit.

The inaugural Sydney team will comprise Gap Year students, recent graduates and retired amateur players.



*Understandably cheerful members of SRTC on court at RMTc.*

We will welcome any Radley members and everywhere else who wish to visit the newest court in the world in early 2025 and enjoy some winter sunshine.

Please contact Maggie on [maggie.ht@btinternet.com](mailto:maggie.ht@btinternet.com) to discuss details of an individual or group/team visit.





Construction is moving ahead nicely and recent photos (above and below) illustrate developments. Chris Cooper has reported on the pouring of the cement for the tilt-up wall panels and their erection, with a stop-motion video link: [The tilt-up panel walls are being poured! — Sydney Real Tennis](#).



SRTC reports:

*'We are also very privileged to have the support of Chris Ronaldson, who, along with Maggie Henderson-Tew, will be helping set up the new court. Many of you will know Chris well. He is not only the first man to win a real tennis Grand Slam and the world's longest-serving professional, but he has also been instrumental in the continuing success of our game through the establishment of new clubs or revitalisation of existing ones.'*

*Chris has very kindly volunteered to kick things off and help us recruit the first permanent professional for Sydney Real Tennis.'*

*The return of Real Tennis to Sydney will be celebrated with a full calendar of events in 2025. The highlight will be a grand opening gala event, memorabilia auction and inaugural tournament, **The Easter Bilby** (NB. A 'bilby' is a the lesser-known Aussie marsupial), which will run from 11th April – 21st April 2025.'*

Note from MHT:

Attending 'The Bilby' could be the focus of a fantastic family holiday over the 2025 Easter holidays, and the venue, the events and the weather will all be brilliant,

whether or not visitors want to play in the Real Tennis matches, take advantage of the plethora of other events at the club or enjoy the attractions of Sydney.



In addition to the Real Tennis Founders' Cup and more tennis play, there will be lawn tennis, croquet and bowls on offer at the Cheltenham Recreation Club, as well as padel, golf, squash, climbing the Sydney Harbour Bridge (with harness attached, you will be pleased to learn), a harbour cruise and a trip to Blue Mountains – not to mention the fine beaches close to the city!

If you need help with logistics, just drop me a line at [maggie.ht@btinternet.com](mailto:maggie.ht@btinternet.com).

*'Please add this to your calendars and we look forward to welcoming you to the world's newest real tennis court.'*

Michael Fitzgerald

President, Sydney Real Tennis Cheltenham.'





## France

An important book, under the direction of Jean- Yves Dufour on INRAP, was published earlier this year. It traces 15 years of archaeological excavations of the tennis courts of France. It includes the sites of Versailles, Écouen, Chinon, Rennes, Villers-Cotterêts, Suze-La-Rousse, Lourdon, Marseille, etc.



To learn more, follow the link *CNRS éditions* here:  
<https://www.cnrseditions.fr/catalogue/revues/ra-26-archeologie-et-histoire-des-jeux-de-paume-en-france>

### - **Bordeaux**

The club in Bordeaux is going from strength to strength under the leadership of Radley member and the World number two female player, Lea Van Der Zwalmen. The recent World Junior Championships were a triumph and our congratulations go to all involved at JdPdB.



Our heartiest congratulations to LVDZ on retaining her World Ladies' Rackets' Singles' title on 5 May at Queen's Club, holding off the most tenacious of challenges from Claire Fahey, who won the first two games. The match was outstanding, lauded as the finest-ever female rackets contest, lasted 2.5 hours, and went to a deciding game. The score stood at 13-all before Lea triumphed.

Lea remains the only woman to have held the Rackets World Championship title since it was inaugurated in 2015. Impressive enough, but for someone who lives in a country without a single Rackets court, this achievement is remarkable.

Click on this link to watch the match:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BErV3yHiUSg>.

### **Chinon**

There is no progress to report on the restoration of the diminutive 16C 'tripot' court in the *rue jeu de paume*. The project appears to have stalled over the details of the archaeology of the site and complexities of reconstruction.

### **Paris**

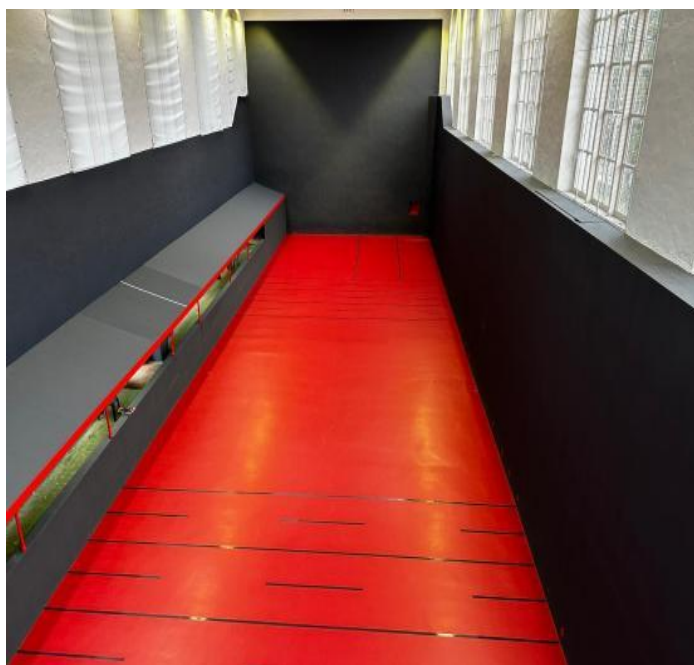
We send thanks to Jonathan Ray, wine critic of *The Spectator*, who sent the following clipping from *The Oldie* magazine, July edition. We have heard nothing more recently about the appeal to buy the court for the members, and the existential threat remains.



## Pau

Former World Champion Wayne Davis recently returned to work as a real tennis club pro, after a gap of some decades, and spent several months working at the tennis court at the club in Pau. It is not quite back to its full glory as a *cour de dedans*, being still a *cour sans dedans*, *tambour et grille*, but further progress rests entirely on the motivation and attention span of *le mairie*, the mayoral office.

Wayne is back in the US, where he has had investigations into potentially serious health issues, which we are delighted to hear have been resolved positively. He looks forward to returning to Pau or to another club in need of his help.



The fine new livery of the court in Pau shows what the shabby court in Dublin (see right) could become again.

## Ireland

### Dublin -

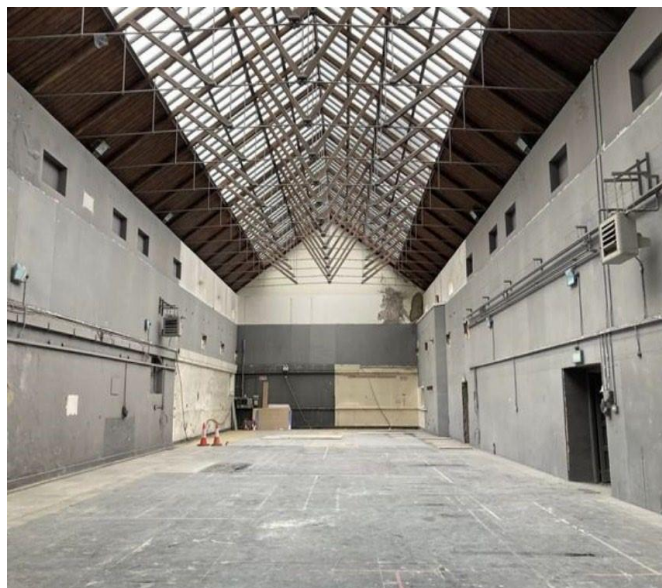
Over many past editions, we have repeated hopes for a decision about the conditional planning permission granted in 2016 to convert the Real Tennis court in Earlsfort Terrace into part of a science centre for children. It has now been given. The website of the

Irish Real Tennis Association gives a helpful recap of the situation:

[Irish Real Tennis Association](https://www.irishrealtennisassociation.com/).



However slow the political process, work has begun to make the court fit again for use as a tennis court, but only, alas, as a subsidiary use. The interior of the court has been cleared of structures accumulated within it over the past 60 years of so, including a mezzanine floor at one end.



Tim Edwards, photographer to the T&RA, took this splendid photo from the service end in mid-2023. The court cleaned out and tantalisingly tambour-ready looked the same when MH-T visited in mid-2024.

In September 2022, the Office of Public Works submitted a fresh application for essentially the same project as in 2016; to create a Children's Science Centre...the new application states "*The An Bord Pleanála conditions of the 2016 grant of permission relating to the Real Tennis Court have been fully incorporated into this new application*".



The magnificent, naturally lit space can be seen again in its entirety; the court floor is visible and some handsome chase lines and numbers remain visible on the floor and walls.

As these few photos suggest, restoration would be relatively straightforward, if not cheap, and would be SO worthwhile. What is particularly impressive is the quality of the materials, and the specification of the building, with underfloor vented heating from the attached boiler house and a handsome staircase to the first floor of the space beyond the court that houses storage rooms, boiler and water tanks and could be converted into accommodation for a professional.



IRTA member Mark Keogh studied Engineering at TCD and had 'labs' inside the court, he recalls. This view is from the outside the court but inside the covered space that divides it from the car park of the National Concert Hall of Ireland.

The doorway (see above and below) in the Main Wall will need to be closed up but, happily, the quarry from which the original stone came nearly 120 years ago is still open.

Considerable thanks to Roland Budd of the Irish Real Tennis Association who arranged for a visit for himself and MH-T recently. They were delighted to be let into the building and allowed to wander freely for 90 minutes. Many photos were taken.



This photo shows the hole punched through the main wall, the visible wall and court lines and, in the foreground, the impressively reflective floor where a couple of slabs have been cleaned.



These photos of the base of the tambour and a hole in the floor and wall in front of it, show the impressive thickness of the construction materials. The floor comprises slabs laid on supporting brick pillars, with a considerable void that can be heated, like a Roman hypocaust system.



## The UK

### England

It has been hoped (for a good while already) that the next new courts in England would be in Derbyshire and Worcestershire. However, there is no further news about the project to turn a Victorian gym into a real tennis court at **Repton School**, to the southwest of Derby.

This is largely because of the change in government and the threat of significant tax changes to the private educational sector. The Governors have a lot on their plate. However, the T&RA's Director of Court Development, Simon Talbot-Williams reports that the appetite (to continue the metaphor) remains considerable for the court and the bringing of Real Tennis to Derbyshire.



It will make a fine tennis court, but not this year.

### Scotland

#### Edinburgh

The possibility of a court being created out of unused squash courts at Merchiston Castle School seems to be receding, giving the school's insistence that the removal of asbestos from the building (projected to be around £500,000) would have to be funded by the tennis court project, thus significantly increasing its cost and reducing its viability. No replacement project has yet emerged.

## USA

Congratulations to Dacre Stoker on his appointment as President of the USCTA. News like this comes to us from the USCTA, courtesy of its excellent monthly magazine, *Chase The First*, from which we often quote, with thanks.

### Charleston

*'Negotiations are now underway with Buddy Darby and the Charleston Squash Club to contribute toward building a new facility in Charleston that includes squash and court tennis. Leveraging the unwavering interest in building a court in Charleston, the donor cash on hand, and our board's full support, we are now in an excellent position to produce a favorable outcome for the long-running CCT campaign to build a court in the area.'*

No photos, plans or further information are yet available. As far as we know, there is still no firm timetable for completion.

### Wisconsin

Three reports follow on visits to Sand Valley Golf and Tennis Resort, Rome, Wisconsin:

#### - Sand Valley



The Grand Opening of the court at the Sand Valley Golf and Tennis Resort was held from July 18-21, to celebrate the newest and eleventh Court Tennis facility in the United States.

*Chase The First*, the newsletter of the USCTA, trumpets:

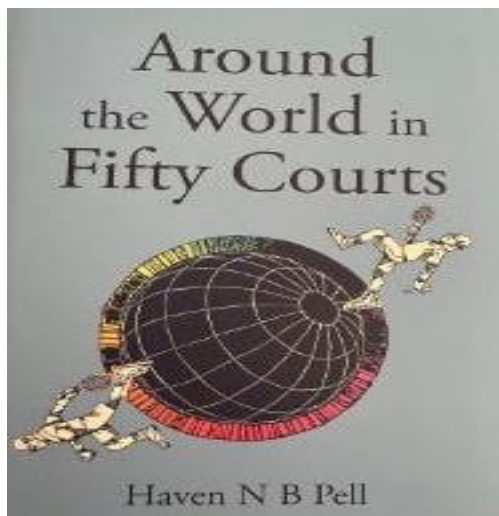
'The Keiser brothers, Michael and Chris, have unveiled the country's 11th court, which serves as the focal point of a brand-new Tennis Centre, which includes 15 outdoor lawn tennis grass courts and facilities including a Pro shop, locker rooms and dining facilities.

We have Haven Pell to thank for this addendum to his excellent recent book of travel reminiscences, and his blog article appeared under the title of:

*'Around the World In Yet Another Court'*

*'Back when I had a website in the pre-Substack years, I serialized a quest story about a lifetime of involvement in a tiny sport that was the forerunner of tennis.*

*In 2022, the serialized chapters became a book called 'Around the World in Fifty Courts' because that was more or less all there were, and over about 60 years, I had finally played them all.*



*Done and dusted as my English friends say, but then another court tennis court was built. What to do now? There is hardly a market for a second printing of the book, as there are only about 5000 people in the world who play the game, and an ambitious print run of 700 has very*

*nearly sold out. Solution: back to serialization. Eat your heart out Charles Dickens.*

*Nekoosa, Wisconsin Is an unlikely location for a court tennis court but proving to be an ideal venue for destination golf courses. The town has a population of about 2500 and it hosts a paper mill now owned by a Canadian company called Domtar, but formerly by the Nekoosa Paper Company, then Great Northern Nekoosa then Georgia Pacific, all because of mergers.*

*The central Wisconsin setting is important. For hundreds of millions of years, the surrounding area encompassing parts of several states was a giant sea. Milwaukee had coral reefs...In due course, the sea disappeared, and mammoths came and went over a few million years ending a short 10,000 years ago, but all of that was eventually replaced by glaciers, which eventually receded leaving a lake and masses of sand of the kind found on Martha's Vineyard – white and very soft. It proved a fertile area for pine trees that were very useful in making paper, but paper-making in the United States is not what it used to be. The sand – lots and lots of sand – remained.*



*The Keiser family stepped in and bought 13,000 acres, enough for about 30 golf courses, and has built five of them already. They have a long and distinguished history in destination golf thanks to developing resort complexes in Bandon Dunes, Oregon, Cabot Beach, Nova Scotia, the Dunes Club in Buffalo, New York, and soon Wild Spring Dunes in Texas and Rodeo Dunes in Colorado.*

*They are really good at this and Michael Keiser, a son of the founders, is also good at court tennis, and a great enthusiast and advocate for the game.'*

*'A new court tennis court is a source of great excitement in a game that has less than 50 of them in the world. True, not all of the players in the world try to play them all or write a book about it, but there is room between great excitement and pathology.*

*In mid-July, four court tennis devotés – Peter Pell (nephew), Adam Inselbuch, Bradley Allen and I spent four beautiful days at Sand Valley. We played on all five golf courses and in the court tennis court twice. Some tried the grass tennis courts that the Keisers also built on the property.*

*No money was exchanged as no bets were made. Similarly, no results of court tennis are especially germane. If you are 78, the question is "can you do it at all?" not "can you do it well?" Wins and losses were sprinkled about with everyone having some of each. Extra credit was quietly given for those displaying skills in "customer ball."*



Messrs Pell, Bradley and Allen on court at Sand Valley

*As a developer of 2 courts near Washington DC, I was particularly interested in how the court tennis court looked and played. For the moment, the technology appears to be fairly settled: use Armourcoat plaster on the walls and power-float the floor, like they did at Morton Morrell in*

*England. We had done both at Westwood near Washington two years ago with great success and there was no reason to invent a new mistake, so Sand Valley did the same. The result was also excellent, and the court is entirely suitable for competition at the highest level.*

*The ceiling is among the highest in the world along with Paris and New York, thus opening the door to any number of high serves that are harder to execute elsewhere. Yet the building does not impose on the surroundings because it is partially buried in a hill of sand.*

*Care was given to the interior decoration of the court, and the pale blue accent color, the font of the chase and hazard markings, but most importantly the mammoth logo, which are sublime. There is glass wall viewing from a restaurant located above the penthouses that reminded me of Philadelphia, Bordeaux and Fontainebleau.*

*All the other aspects of the court appear to be well "within the envelope" of the largest (Fontainebleau) to the smallest (Oxford) courts in existence today. Afficionados will enjoy speculating on the differences between their home courts and this new one.*

*Court tennis players, especially those who love to play golf, will be well rewarded by finding an opportunity to visit Sand Valley and play on Michael Keiser's brainchild. Sand Valley caters to groups of golfers, so the staff should be especially good at arranging several days of golf, lawn tennis, and court tennis for groups of most any size.*

*Well done to the Keiser family, and best wishes for every success. We were graciously hosted by Michael Keiser in a four-bedroom house overlooking one of many lakes, a lovely setting for after dinner cigars and adult beverages.'*





An enthusiastic article was published recently in the 6 September issue of *Racquet* magazine and written by the Features Editor, Wendy Laird. She clearly loved her first experience of our game when she visited Sand Valley.

Welcome to Court/Real Tennis, Wendy, and for helping us with our mission; to convert the world, one person at a time! To read her full article, click here: [Tennis Heaven Among the Dunes | Racquet Magazine](#). What follows is an extract:

# RACQUET

*'Tennis Heaven Among the Dunes, by Wendy Laird*

*I'll be honest: the 950-year-old precursor to modern tennis does have a fusty, old, patina that's accreted over the centuries, due in part to the fact that most remaining courts are cloistered inside the walls of clubs or literal palaces. But this new court—in the middle of Wisconsin, recall—shrugs all that off: anyone can play; no club-member, school-tie, Brahmin-ness necessary.*



*So I did. And I can report that, fusty or no, there's a very good reason court tennis has lasted this long: It's gorgeous. It's old-school. It's esoteric. It's also a rollicking good time. You swing a long, heavy racquet—as hard as you can—at a handmade ball (that's right; the pro must HAND-MAKE EACH BALL, sewing wool melton around a cork center), and it feels really good.*

*Balls bounce off walls and penthouses and into windows with little bells that alert you to a score. Balls that hit the center net gather in what I have to assume is every tennis player's dream: a runnel that corrals all the balls and encourages them to roll down to a basket at one end.*

*The sport's current upsurge is partly thanks to people like Sand Valley co-owner and court tennis player Michael Keiser. In an "if you build it they will come" moment, he brought in niche expert after niche expert to create the cavernous, bespoke arena required to play the game. And come they did: in July, the US National Open was played here.*

*Keiser's goal is to field a traveling team from among local high school kids. For now, it's free to guests of the resort, and court time is available for a fee to anyone else who wants to explore the deep roots of tennis in one of this country's most dramatic settings.*

*With five world-class courses and more on the way, golf is Sand Valley's raison d'être. But mine, and yours if you seek to play tennis the way it was meant to be played, should be a visit to Wisconsin. Maybe don't bring your skis.*

*Wendy Laird is Racquet's Features Editor and a frequent contributor. She intends to become an insufferable expert on arcane racquet sports, and, to that end, will gladly accept honorary memberships to fusty clubs.'*

Living in Seattle is not the ideal place to become an enthusiast for Court Tennis in the US, but we are pleased that Wendy Laird enjoy her introduction to the game and her time on court at Sand Valley.

## End Notes

Three picture items with which to finish:

## The Last Gallery-

1. Radley member Ben Loxton-Edwards went hiking in the French Basque area during the summer and was fascinated to see the frontons and trinquet courts

dotted around, in gorgeous rural settings, looking deceptively and enticingly like real tennis courts.



2. Much closer to home, MH-T recently visited Heythrop House, below, to find what remains of its real tennis court.



The grand frontage of Heythrop House

Built as a private house by the Brassey family in the last quarter of the 19C, it fell on very hard times, became derelict, was restored, served as a bank's training centre, was sold to Mr Kassam (of the Oxford United football stadium), was turned into an hotel, sold on and massively refurbished. Yes, folks, there is (or at least, was) another court in Oxfordshire.

MH-T visited Heythrop House and Park during the summer, now a Warner Leisure hotel, about 12 miles north of Woodstock, where it sits in 440 acres of glorious parkland about 40 mins drive from Oxford.

It is a massive house and, with (alas, ugly and extensive) annex accommodation, has over 300 rooms. It must have haemorrhaged money during COVID but was busy when I visited, and it seems that the golf, spa and adults-only combo is packing in the punters.

The website photo shows the Italianate frontage (the builder had his head turned by the Grand Tour, in the course of which he married an aristocratic Italian) and there are pendant front wings. Behind and parallel to the RH wing is the real tennis court, which sits at right angles to The Orangery and so is connected to the house.

The court can be seen properly only from the outside, but this means venturing into a rather unglamorous and odoriferous back courtyard, from which the proportions of the court and the original height of the windows become clearer.



One can imagine it being converted without too much trouble and, no doubt, the facilities of the hotel would be well used by the players and guests. Indoor sport facilities would open up a new customer base, and RT could attract a more active and younger crowd than seem to be attracted currently to this adults-only hotel.

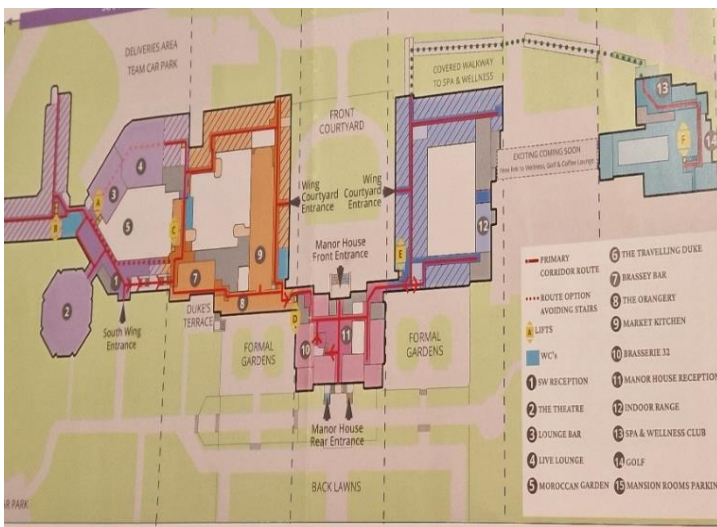


The inside view below shows a mezzanine floor has been inserted and so the court windows are at an appropriate height for the restaurant inside. No tambour or other traces of the court remains to view.



The far wall has a storage area behind it that would have been part of the original court and begins, I think, level with the tambour. I was not able to gain access to what lies beneath, to see whether anything more of the court is visible or survives. A return visit may well yield more.

The Manager was not available when I visited but she and I have exchanged friendly emails since then. She is interested in the history of the building and open to the idea of a visit from a group of players.



The former tennis court, with characteristic outline, is numbered 9, the Market Kitchen, on this plan of the hotel's facilities.

Please let me know if you would be interested in coming along to Heythrop by emailing me at: [maggie.ht@btinternet.com](mailto:maggie.ht@btinternet.com).

- During our visit to the court in Romsey, we saw this racquet, a 'Stellar', which is a name that I had never seen before, and it is labelled 'Made in Pakistan'. CJR felt its throat shape suggested it was a racquet made in the 1970s, before design changes were made that improved the shaft strength of racquets.

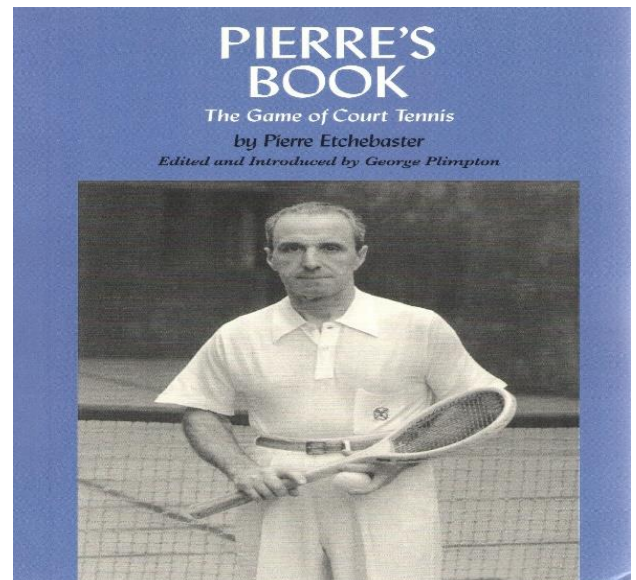
Has anyone more information about this racquet. Who? Where? Why? When?



## The Last Word

New publications:

- Bravo to New York Racquet Club members, Ted Goneos and Adam Inselbuch, who have recently reprinted *Pierre's Book*, first published in 1971, after Pierre Etchebaster's retirement as Head Professional from the NYRC.





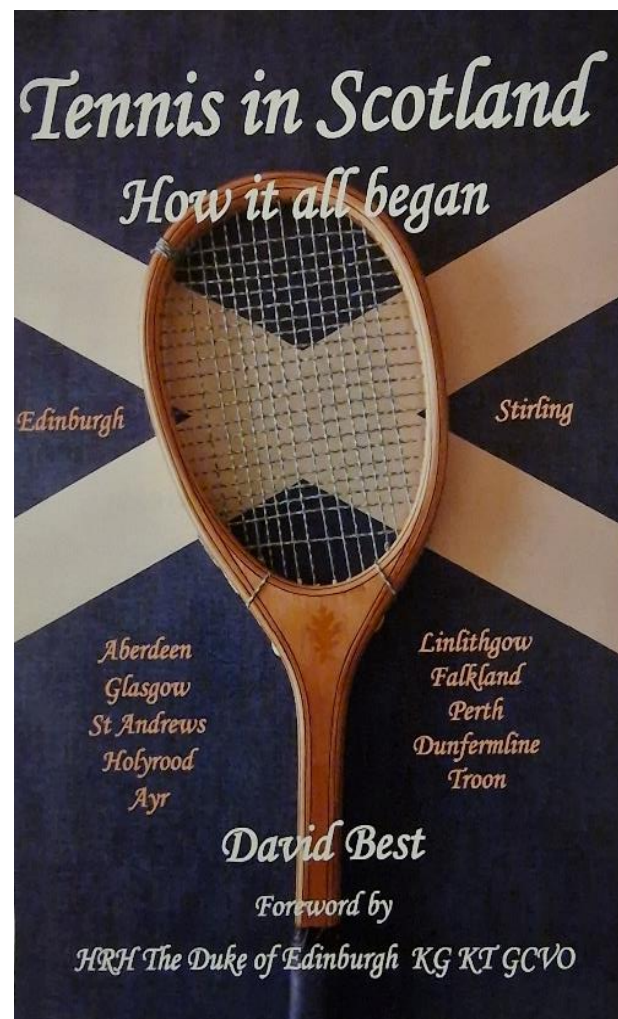
- It is appropriate that David Best should be given the last words of this edition of *Better Than The Last*, given the depth and breadth of his decades of research and writing on real tennis.

Since the publication of his *700 Years of Tennis in London* a few years ago, David has been busy researching the history of the game in Scotland, which is something that has never before been undertaken to this extent. His work has produced some fascinating information, some of it rather startling.

Tennis playing in Scotland was first mentioned in the 13th century and at all levels of society, not just by the ruling Stuarts and their courtiers. Having said that, James VI of Scotland (later James I of England) highly recommended the playing of 'catchpule' (as the game was called in the Scots of that time), in the letter of advice and treatise on government, the *Basilikon Doron* ('private gift' in Ancient Greek), that he wrote for his eldest son, Prince Henry, Duke of Rothesay.

During the 16th and 17th centuries, tennis was just as popular in Scotland as in other European countries: evidence of tennis playing has been found at over fifty (50!) different places across the country, from the English border to the Moray Firth. Edinburgh alone boasted an impressive 18 tennis courts.

HRH The Duke of Edinburgh KG KT GCVO has graciously written the Foreword to David Best's latest work. David's remarkable findings are set out in this beautifully produced coffee-table sized volume, published by Ronaldson Publications in October 2024. A copy of this hardback can be obtained by clicking on this link: <https://ronpubs.com> to access the company's book catalogue.



Thank you for reading the Radley newsletter,  
*'Better Than The Last'*,  
 compiled by Maggie Henderson-Tew,  
 and with illustrations by 'Mikko',  
 a.k.a. Michael Lindell.  
 To him, grateful thanks, as always.

To comment on any item, please contact Maggie  
 by email: [maggie.ht@btinternet.com](mailto:maggie.ht@btinternet.com)