

# THE ROYAL TENNIS COURT

## Hampton Court Palace



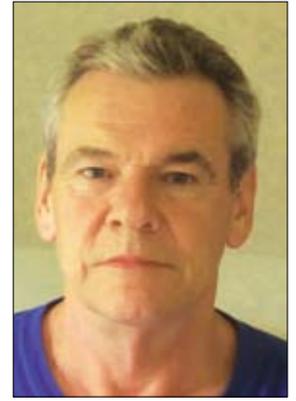
## THAT'S MY BOY

DAVID AND JAMES WATSON ADD TO THEIR TROPHY HAUL  
WITH THE FATHERS AND SONS AT LEAMINGTON

*See page 8*

The Winter Newsletter 2012-13  
*Number 102*

# chairman's chat



On behalf of the board I must begin by wishing everyone a happy and healthy New Year. Following our plea in the last newsletter we had a tremendous response to the National League Premier Division match versus Hatfield House on 12 January which was a sell-out. The next home match is on Saturday 16 February, so all those fans who missed out on the Hatfield encounter should contact the pros for tickets. We are extremely grateful to Events 2000 Unlimited for sponsoring the Royal Tennis Court's National League team.

We were also delighted to see more than 150 members and guests at the annual Carol Service in the Chapel Royal, many of whom stayed on for mince pies and mulled wine on court. This prompts my first housekeeping note, which is to remind members that, regardless of the circumstances, everyone must evacuate the premises when the fire alarm sounds. Although the reason may seem most likely to be burnt toast (or singed mince pies), until clearance is given we must follow palace procedures without fail in future.

Returning to tennis, the Barker Camm Cup Grade C, for handicaps 30 to 40, is being held on 19–20 January, with Grade B at the start of March. As ever at this time of year, the Lathom Browne and Seal Salver competitions are in full swing and you can monitor progress via the links on our excellent website.

The board has recently said farewell to Kate Lawrence, who is moving to the West Country. Kate has made a huge contribution to the board in a short time and has been particularly influential on the social committee, and we will miss her greatly. As I have mentioned before, we are always on the lookout for willing members to contribute to the board, so please contact any of us, or the professionals, if you would like to become more involved with the club.

We are very pleased to hear that the palace is making significant progress with the new interpretive displays planned for the court corridor. We are sure this will enhance the appearance of the club and greatly improve the visitor experience and understanding of the game. Our thanks to Nick Wood for building a really good relationship with the palace and for co-ordinating our input to this initiative.

On my second piece of housekeeping, I should remind members that Trophy Gate is closed to all vehicles from 18 January to 15 March. This presents an enormous logistical challenge to the palace, and members are asked to take careful note of the temporary arrangements and to allow extra time when arriving to play.

Finally, I must again remind members of the unacceptable increase in court cancellations, particularly within a few days or even hours of the booking. In the first fortnight of November alone there were over 40 cancellations, of which 20 were "late".

While we appreciate that there are times when late cancellations can't be avoided, this trend causes a great deal of inconvenience to the professionals and also to other members when suitable alternative opponents cannot be found.

We would ask that everyone keeps an accurate diary record of bookings, and help ensure that we keep cancellations and no-shows to an absolute minimum. We should also remind members that the financial penalties for cancellations must be paid promptly.

**Paddy Sweetnam**

## View from the grille

- A new, high-efficiency boiler has been installed by the palace for the court and changing rooms. As a club we have limited control over temperature, and we are chasing the palace to try to improve this.
- The palace will return and reinstate the seating and floor in the dedans once they are satisfied that the source of the dry rot outbreak has been located and addressed.
- Members of the committee are currently working on some ideas for future improvements to the club rooms, corridors and changing rooms.
- New honours boards are in preparation, with the existing boards about to be brought up to date.
- New shower mixers are being fitted in the men's changing room.
- New court lighting is still under consideration, subject to finding the right fitting at a reasonable cost.

**Julian Sheraton-Davis**

## DATES FOR THE DIARY

### National League Premier Division

- See the in-form Chris Chapman and the wily Nick Wood in their next home National League match on **Saturday 16 February** against Queen's, featuring British Open champion Bryn Sayers and the ambidextrous Queen's head pro Drew Lyons.

### Pol Roger Trophy

- The RTC team faces a battle for top-flight survival on **Sunday 3 February** at home against Hatfield House (see page 3). This is an ideal opportunity for members to spend a pleasant afternoon watching and supporting our top amateur players. Then RTC will host the final on **Sunday 10 March** – most likely a rematch of last year's Queen's v MCC final.

# RTC impaled on dreaming spires

*The closest of quarter-finals at Oxford went against RTC in the Pol Roger Trophy*

The Royal Tennis Court's attempt to become the nation's champion club for the first time since 2004 came unstuck in a 3-2 upset at Oxford, meaning RTC must play Hatfield to remain in the Pol Roger Trophy next season (the loser will compete in the second-tier Field Trophy).

RTC had won three a year ago 3-2, and had done it without our No 1 Peter Wright, absent with illness. This time he was fit to play, but instead we were missing Robert Hird (sadly retired), James Sohl (baby imminent) and Tom Freeman (representing Holyport this year), which left skipper Simon Barker struggling to juggle his resources.

The result was a call-up for Simon Edmond, who took a break from club newsletter duties to be a sacrificial lamb in the No 3 singles slot while the captain aimed to strengthen the doubles pairings and win both those rubbers.

First up for the visitors were David and James Watson in the top doubles. They were up against a hard-hitting but on paper significantly inferior pairing of Ashley Prior and Mike Henman, and the RTC club doubles champions duly put us one rubber up, 6-0 6-3.

Next up was our other 'banker', Peter Wright, who was up against Oxford captain Rob Walker. While the left-hander did match Peter for a few games, the gulf in class soon told and Peter ran away to an easy 6-3 6-0 win.

So far so good for RTC, then – but Oxford were tipped to win the next two rubbers. In the No 2 singles, Phil Dunn had to face a big improver, student Miles Jackson. Phil took his time to adapt to the tiny Oxford court and the first set was soon Oxford, 6-1, but in the second he found his length and forced more errors from the Jackson racket. The comeback was capped with a tense game at 5-5, which Phil won to bring RTC within a set of a semi-final.

Miles steadied his game and regained control, however, closing the third set out 6-1 to put Oxford on the board.

Nothing was expected of Simon Edmond in the third singles – and nothing is pretty much what the team got. Against James Bates, an opponent 10 handicap points better on paper, Simon fought gamely through a reasonably competitive first set but was railroaded to oblivion in a quickfire second. Soon the tie was level at 2-2,

with just the No 2 doubles to come.

Simon Barker and Karen Hird started as favourites against Johnny Beale and Alex Portz, a rackets player who is relatively new to tennis. Soon, though, it was apparent that Simon was suffering an off day while the talented Johnny had a hot hand. A 6-2 first set for Oxford set the alarm bells ringing.

After switching receivers for the second set the RTC pair made amends, levelling the match 6-2, and when they went 3-0 up in the third all seemed well. But Johnny was not finished, and his accurate forcing won more and more points as Karen was unable to find a serve that he couldn't attack, while Simon continued to struggle. That 3-0 lead slipped away and, remarkably, the Oxford pair stormed to a 6-4 win to eliminate RTC. It was a fine display from Johnny, backed up by good serving from Alex, but still the RTC pair were devastated to lose a match they were good enough to win.

**Semi-finals** (3 February):

*Queen's v Petworth; Oxford v MCC*

*Final at RTC on Sunday 10 March*

**Relegation play-offs** (3 February): *RTC v*

*Hatfield House; Seacourt v Leamington*

## COMING UP

### RTC

**27 Jan:** RTC v MURTC (social)

**3 Feb:** Pol Roger Trophy playoff: RTC v Hatfield

**16 Feb:** National League Premier Division: RTC v Queen's

**24 Feb:** RTC v Brigands (social)

**2-3 Mar:** Barker Camm Cup, Grade B (hcp 20-29)

**10 Mar:** Pol Roger Trophy final

**21-24 Mar:** LRTA Masters

**7 Apr:** RTC v Jesters (social)

### ELSEWHERE

**24-31 Jan:** US Open (Philadelphia)

**25-27 Jan:** Leamington handicap singles

**1-3 Feb:** Billy Ross Skinner (mixed doubles, Hatfield)

**7 Feb:** National League Premier Division: Hatfield v RTC

**10 Feb:** Old Etonians v RTC (social, Holyport)

**15-22 Feb:** Bathurst Cup (international amateurs, Holyport)

**16 Feb:** Manchester v RTC (social)

**22-23 Feb:** Varsity Match (Lord's)

**23 Feb-4 Mar:** Amateur Championship (Queen's)

**10 Mar:** Field Trophy final (Moreton Morrell)

**10 Mar:** Brodie Cup final (Hyde)

**23-24 Mar:** Jesmond Dene Cup

**9-14 Apr:** Ladies' British Open (Seacourt)

**15-21 Apr:** Ladies' World Championships (Paris)

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### *Bryn battles back from the brink*

Bryn Sayers ended Rob Fahey's nine-year British Open title streak in stunning fashion at Queen's in November.

Trailing 2-6, 0-3 in the final, Sayers somehow dug in and turned the match around. He stole the second set 6-5 and added the third 6-1, before Fahey ran away to a 4-0 lead in the fourth set. Incredibly, Sayers again fought back and won a deciding 11th game to become the first UK winner of the British Open since James Male in 1999.

Chris Chapman enjoyed two excellent wins before falling to Sayers in the quarter-finals. Chris and Nick Wood suffered a shock quarter-final defeat in the doubles, however, to John Lumley and Conor Medlow.

### *Lumley confirms his rise and rise*

John Lumley retained his national under-21 and under-24 titles at Middlesex in January. In the under-24 final Lumley beat Conor Medlow of Queen's in straight sets.

### *Barker Camm Cup latest*

After winning Grade F of the Barker Camm Cup, Paul Casha stormed into the final of Grade E (50-59 handicap) before falling to Nick Carew Hunt. Paul Newton and Harry Walker will contest the final of Grade D (40-49).

# My kind of town

*Soon after the opening of the restored Chicago court, an RTC delegation flew out to try it out*

**T**he newest court in real tennis is actually almost 90 years old: the court at the plush Racquet Club of Chicago opened back in 1924, but the Depression and the rise in popularity of lawn tennis meant it was converted in the early 1930s and used for the newer game. Another court was lost to the sport of real tennis...until now.

The court was in use again from the start of August last year, but the club had an official opening for more than 250 members in September and then, in late October, a grand international opening that included much camaraderie, a gala dinner and a doubles tournament. Among the RTC members who were there to mark the occasion were Susie Falkner, Sue Haswell and Karen Hird, while Chris Ronaldson was also in attendance as one of many former world champions invited.

That four-day spectacular, however, was a mere amuse-bouche for the ultimate test of a new court: the 2-4 November visit of a Royal Tennis Court team of bons viveurs for a social match. The ten-strong team, led by the jetsetting Richard East, came, saw, conquered and revelled, as Captain East describes below...

**F**ellow members, Chicago was to die for. We flew over storm Sandy, and then ten of our club members made their way to the Racquet Club of Chicago on your behalf to play against them in their first international match in 80 years, since the court was shut in 1932.

The club is an icon. Sixteen impeccable rooms for visitors, squash (singles and doubles), rackets (two courts), and a beautifully restored real tennis court, built by Bickley (his last), which plays just like Moreton Morrell. The club also houses innumerable dining rooms, a swimming pool, a gentlemen's bar, a snooker room and a bowling alley. It stands two blocks from Lake Michigan (360 x 100 miles of fresh water, for those of you who have forgotten your geography), and is just a mile from the city centre. And the weather was perfect.

They put on a terrific lunch for us, after head pro Steve Virgona had organised the match immaculately; our hosts then looked after us for the rest of Saturday until we all gave in. Said hosts were Jeffrey Durkes and Davis Anderson, who had clearly put much of their own money and effort into bringing their court back to life. I have invited them to bring a team to RTC whenever they can.

The result was an 8-4 win for our team of Tim Lintott, Martin Bronstein, Alec Miller, James Wilson, Linda and Julian Sheraton-Davis, Barbara and Donald Carse, John Murphy (Newport) and myself. The locals have all obviously only just started playing, after their 80-year hiatus, and will be very much better when we next meet them. I will definitely go again if they will let me.



*Many thanks to Barbara Carse for these photographs of the restored court and the sumptuous club rooms*



## BILLY THE RAT CATCHER

There are great murals in the gents' urinal at Chicago testifying to the prowess of the subject of the club's emblem. Billy the Rat Catcher, a London-based bull terrier, was the world champion rat killer, claiming a remarkable record in 1823 of some 100 rats in 5½ minutes – just over three seconds per rat. This rather gruesome mark lasted until 1862.

By the time he set his record, Billy had already lost an eye to the sport, and he would continue to compete in rat-baiting until old age, reportedly with just two teeth remaining. While the brutality and cruelty of the sport and this legendary 26lb combination of agility and fury may seem an unlikely inspiration for tennis players, there can be no doubting Billy's determination and competitive nature. Next time you get a chance to see Camden Riviere in competition, he may remind you of someone...

# Chapman, a soaring Magpie

*Like his beloved Aussie Rules team, Chris Chapman is on a hunt for glistening bounty*

**A**fter a 2011-12 season disrupted by injury, this winter has been far brighter for Chris Chapman. His two crushing wins at the British Open in November, over players who should in theory have been tricky opponents, illustrated the marked progress in his game, which are also reflected by his accumulation of world ranking points and the reduction of his handicap to plus 3.

It is just reward for all the hard work Chris has put in during the 30 months since he arrived from Melbourne, and pleasing progress for contributors to the development fund (see box below). Here he discusses his game and goals...

## **Your results and handicap point towards real progress this season.**

### **What has changed?**

Experience is a major factor in real tennis, and each tournament I feel I'm gaining this, first by defeating players ranked below me and then by getting to play one of the top four seeds in quarter-finals.

### **Are you fighting fit and injury-free?**

I'm feeling really good at the moment. The only injury I've had, touch wood, was in September 2011 [a torn hamstring at the French Open], and I believe I learnt a valuable lesson from it. Stef has been great in setting up a more structured system aimed at peaking for tournaments and giving the body time to recover following certain tournaments.

### **Which performance has pleased you most so far this season?**

My two British Open wins have been the best all-round performances, defeating two talented players [Mathieu Sarlangue and Ricardo Smith], and even though I lost to Camden Riviere at the IRTPA Championships, it was a very close match.

### **What in particular have you been working on with Nick Wood?**

A number of things, really: shots like my cut volley return, the retrieve of the cut volley in the forehand corner, but other than that just concentrating on clean ball striking, because that is really the only thing I can control.



### **Although you're yet to beat any of the "elite" five or six players in a major tournament, you're clearly giving them more trouble. Can you sense a change in their approach when they play you now?**

Unfortunately I'm also yet to take a set off them, which will change soon, but I can see that they are very pleased to see the back of me after defeating me, which I take as a compliment. Hopefully before long I'll be defeating them myself.

### **What are your goals for 2013?**

My first is to continue to make quarter-finals, and if I can continue that I will get to 100 ranking points, which I need for an official world

ranking. I currently have 80. The second goal is to take sets off the "elite" group of players.

### **What tips have you picked up from watching RTC members and marking their matches?**

Yeah, I've picked up many tips from the many ten-minute marks I've done... but they are possibly best saved for an exhibition match!

### **Apart from your family, what do you miss most about Australia?**

That's an easy one: the Aussie Rules was and still is a big passion of mine. When I worked in Melbourne, the winter months of my work schedule were worked around when Collingwood were playing. I'm not a morning person, but I do often wake up for the game that starts around 5am London time to watch it online.

### **If/when you win a tournament, will you get a new tattoo to celebrate?**

Yeah I'll definitely have to add to my collection and get something to remember my first Open victory. Not sure yet what it would be, so I'll have to keep you posted.

## **RTC Professional Development Fund**

**C**hris Chapman is now producing a regular blog, bringing us all up to date with his progress and that of the RTC team in the Premier Division of the National League at [www.chrischapman23.blogspot.co.uk](http://www.chrischapman23.blogspot.co.uk). The trustees of the Professional Development Fund hope that you will take the opportunity to make this one of your favourite sites and give Chris the support he deserves as he navigates his way into the top layers of professional tennis.

We are delighted he has made such rapid progress to get to ninth in the world, and we are very pleased to have supported him with training expenses and also with ensuring he can play all the major worldwide tournaments to hone his skills further. We hope to continue to support him with his expenses to play all the major tournaments in 2013, but we do have to rely on your support. In some cases this has been continuing support from the very beginning of the fund and we much appreciate the loyalty of those who have contributed so extensively. New support – both through donation and real-time support at Chris's matches – would be very much appreciated and we simplify donation procedures by adding any donations to the quarterly subscription direct debits.

If you would like to contribute and help Chris's success, please either complete a donation form in the pro's office or contact John Clark at 3 Langholm Lodge, Petersham Road, Richmond TW10 6UX, stating how much you would be prepared to contribute quarterly, or in any other form. Both Chris and the trustees will be delighted to hear from you.

# With friends like these...

*Prodigal son Ben Matthews defied RTC in the National League – but only just*

**W**e had to wait until January for the Royal Tennis Court's first home match in the Premier Division of the National League, but it was a mouthwatering fixture, with the opposition from Hatfield House being led by world No 6 Ben Matthews, a very familiar face after his five years at the club from 2006-11.

## **No 2 singles**

With Nick Wood having to watch from the sidelines with a dicky ankle, Peter Wright stepped in for RTC alongside Chris Chapman, who was eager to continue his good form of the winter in a much-anticipated clash with his good friend Ben. First, though, Peter had to take on Jon Dawes, the Hatfield head pro who has had so many injuries in his 36 years that he is effectively the Steve Austin of real tennis, only without the Six Million Dollar expense.

Jon can still play, though, as he demonstrated in the autumn with a victory over David Woodman at Lord's that earned him a semi-final berth in the European Open. A tough task, then, for Peter, who was three handicap points weaker on paper. It was the RTC amateur who made the stronger start, though, taking advantage of serves that fed his favoured volley return and backing up his own serves with more solid volleying.

A 3-1 for Peter became 5-3, but then Jon fought his way back to 5-5 and it was anyone's guess who would take the set. The RTC man then strolled through a love game, however, and it would set the tone for the second set, as

Peter took control and never looked like relinquishing it. Soon he was closing out an impressive 6-5, 6-2 win to put the home team one up.

## **No 1 singles**

As the No 1 players began their match, the difference in pace from the opener was evident, with both Chris and Ben forcing with great power when the opportunity arose. This made tight serving critical, and early on it was Ben's railroad that stood up to the test as he nudged 3-0 ahead, despite some long, tight games.

Chris's railroad was also in good nick, however, and he began to turn the set around, game by game. By the time he had clawed his way back to 3-3, he was finding the dedans with main-wall forces regularly and a shift in momentum was clear. Chris kept it up and won a long ninth game to take the set 6-3, leaving the audience sensing an upset and Ben wondering just what he had done wrong.

There is no doubt that in terms of consistency and shot selection, this is an upgraded Chris Chapman from the 2011/12 version, and the second set offered more evidence of this. Ben opened up a 3-1 lead this time, but again Chris pulled him back. At 4-4 and 40-30, Chris forced a high shot from Ben on to the service penthouse, and a 5-4 lead was in his sights, but the ball cruelly dropped vertically near the back wall, leaving him unable to return it, and the chance was gone. Less than a minute later, Ben was forcing accurately to claim his own 5-4 lead.

Chris played a very strong game to make it 5-5, within one game of a huge win over his +6 handicap rival. But Ben was the more solid in the decisive game, taking it to 30 to level the match.

Again the momentum had shifted, and with Chris not quite able to maintain the high level of the first two sets, Ben eased away to a 6-1 third-set win, levelling the tie on the night and setting up a deciding doubles.

## **Doubles**

After a short break to catch their breath, both were back on court for the doubles. The Hatfield pair started more strongly, with Ben showing why he is the one with a world ranking and Chris not quite finding his targets. Despite some superb volleying at the galleries from Peter – even reacting somehow to pacy net-cords – the visitors pulled away to a 6-2 lead. It was around this point that the long night looked like it was taking its toll on Ben, who was walking gingerly between points, and the next three games lasted much longer than he would have wanted. He got the result he wanted, however, with Hatfield closing the match out 8-3 to seal a 2-1 overall victory on the night.

The defeat leaves RTC winless after two of their six matches, after a 2-1 loss at bookies' favourites Queen's in December. Next up is a return match up at Hatfield on Thursday 7 February, where I'm sure Nick (if fit) and Chris would value some travelling support, before RTC host Queen's (including British Open champion Bryn Sayers) on Saturday 16 February.

## **RTC around the National League**

**R**TC's teams are prospering again down the divisions of the National League, led by the Division 2 squad of Charlie Crossley, David Watson and Simon Barker and Division 3's James Sohl, Phil Dunn and Tom Freeman.

While the Division 2 team trail only Seacourt on goal difference at the top, the Division 3 trio are sitting proudly at the summit and look well placed to retain that title. James Sohl also leads the "MVP" race, unbeaten in three singles and three doubles matches.

In the 20-25 handicap Division 4, our quartet has suffered from the lack of a No 1 to take on the league's several talented 19s and 20s (including Karen Hird, who is

playing for Lord's this season). Sue Haswell, who has prospered lower down the order so far, may have to take on the mantle as her handicap descends.

The Division 5 team, led by unbeaten skipper Simon Fox, are in the thick of a tight dogfight in an eight-team league, while Division 6's defending champions lie handily placed in second, their sole defeat having come at leaders Petworth. In-form Fraser Shorey has three wins from three for RTC. Finally, the deep Division 7 squad have only played two matches so far but look like being serious contenders. Scott Levy and Dick Cowling helped them to an eye-catching win at Petworth in November.

## NATIONAL LEAGUE TABLES

### PREMIER DIVISION

	P	W	Pts
Hatfield	4	3	21
Queen's	2	2	11
<b>RTC</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>
Prested Hall	2	0	3

### DIVISION 2

Seacourt	4	3	25
<b>RTC</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>25</b>
Cambridge	4	2	18
Queen's	4	2	16
MCC	4	1	11
Petworth	4	1	11

### DIVISION 3

<b>RTC</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>23</b>
Prested Hall	3	3	22
Oxford	3	2	15
Hatfield	4	1	11
Holyport	4	0	8

### DIVISION 4

MCC	4	3	23
Moreton Morrell	4	2	18
Cambridge	3	2	14
MURTC	4	2	14
Oxford	3	2	13
<b>RTC</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>

### DIVISION 5

Leamington	4	3	23
Oxford	4	3	21
Hatfield	3	3	19
<b>RTC</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>18</b>
Canford	3	2	15
Cambridge 3	3	1	11
MCC	4	0	10
Cambridge 4	3	0	7

### DIVISION 6

Petworth	4	4	26
<b>RTC</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>20</b>
Prested Hall	4	2	16
Holyport	4	2	15
Cambridge	4	1	13
Canford	4	0	6

### DIVISION 7

Oxford	4	2	19
Petworth	4	2	16
<b>RTC</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>14</b>
Oratory	3	2	15
Hardwick	3	0	4

# Pro news

By Nick Wood

## Junior programme

The Royal Tennis Court has been working to set up a Junior Programme to help create more opportunities for youngsters to play at RTC. The court is so busy with adults playing that finding space for juniors is not easy, yet it is of paramount importance for the growth and development of the club and game. The Junior Programme aims to set aside court time during school holidays for coaching courses; each course will take beginners through the basics of the game, through fun and enjoyable activities and then introduce them to existing young members and events.

Local schools have been invited to take part in an introduction to the game. We hope to encourage some kids to sign up to junior coaching camps, which will take place early in the summer holidays.

We would also like to encourage RTC members to put forward any children who would be interested in learning to play. Are your children interested in the game, and would their friends like to join in? Please inform the professionals if you have children or know of any who would like to play real tennis. When we achieve the required number, we can start to arrange the coaching camps.

## Club rules and etiquette

The club and professionals encourage the continuation of etiquette on court, such as...

- Arriving in plenty of time before games
- Applauding opponents' good shots
- Calling score/chases clearly and fairly
- Always be polite
- Continuous play - no dawdling between points or at the change of ends

## Wood's Words

Head pro Nick Wood on the importance of bending your knees

Using your legs effectively is all-important in the game of real tennis. More than just being the driving force to motor us around the court, the legs play a huge part in the way we hit the ball.

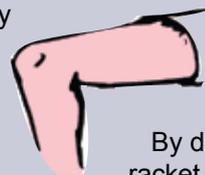
The legs do so much more than move us around. With every step, upper body twist or strike of the ball, the legs are there to catch us (hopefully), always staying under us to make sure we are able to plant our feet securely, acting as stabilisers. Their strength, speed and suppleness help create good footwork.

Within the technique, the legs play a part in hitting the shot. They act like pistons, allowing you to drop (or, when required, rise) your

height to the level necessary to strike the ball. Dropping your height into the shot gives the ball two things: lift and backspin. The pros often see the opposite from members – legs straightening while trying to hack down the back of the ball in an attempt to create severe cut! This is not endorsed by the professionals!

By dropping through the ball, the racket will follow and descend down the back of the ball, thus creating the lift and spin. Using the legs in this way allows you to use the arm/hand for control and dexterity.

Therefore, by working your legs more effectively, not only will you gain in fitness, you will also achieve greater control over your shots.



# Social inter-club matches

In the first half of the season the club have hosted social matches against Hurlingham, Oratory and the RAF, as well as a well attended and successful trip to Cambridge, with another coming up in Manchester.

All levels of people have played, with handicaps ranging from 8 up to 72

– so no one should worry that these matches are not for them. If you haven't played in one, they are an excellent way to mix competition with pleasure and to meet new tennis enthusiasts.

There is a sign-up sheet in the pros' office for people to express an interest in social matches, and anyone who

fancies playing can sign up on there or simply email Owen Saunders (owensaunders@hotmail.com). Spring fixtures are in "Coming Up" on page 3.

Look out also for the intra-club Battle of the Sexes match, coming soon, in which the men will be determined to make up for last year's defeat.

# Genetic engineering

*Nine years on from their previous Fathers and Sons title, David and James Watson have added a second crown*

Yes, the trophy-guzzling Watsons have added more silverware to their bulging swag bag once again. This time father David and son James ventured up to Leamington and returned with the Fathers and Sons title, having lived up to their top seeding by defeating the Colquhouns of Cambridge 8-3 in the final. David and James also won the title back in 2004.

In addition to the level event for the strongest pairings, there is also a handicap event featuring a wide range of ages and abilities, making it a tempting option for any parent/child combinations out there.

● Back in November, David Watson also retained the Bridgeman Cup, the national tournament for over-50 amateurs, at the Oratory. Seeded only fourth, he outclassed top see Mark Drysdale 6-2 6-3 in the semi-finals before defeating John Prenn 6-3 6-2 in the final.



*Above: David and James Watson with the Colquhouns.  
Below: David with Bridgeman Cup victim John Prenn*



## RESULTS

### Barker Camm Cup

**Grade E, semi-finals:** Paul Casha beat Terry Hopcroft 6-0 6-4; Nick Carew Hunt beat Sarah Parsons 6-4 2-6 6-5.

**Final:** Carew Hunt beat Casha 6-2 6-1.  
**Grade D, semi-finals:** Paul Newton beat John Dagnall 6-3 6-3; Harry Walker beat Richard Morgan 6-5 5-6 6-5.

### Seal Salver

**Quarter-finals:** David Watson beat Philip Squire 9-4; Michael Seymour beat Bernard Weatherill 9-3.

### Harris Watson Trophy

**Final stages, 1st rd:** Nicola Doble & Michael Day beat Peter & John Mather 6-1 6-2. **2nd rd:** Fred Satow & Stephen Goss beat Geoffrey Russell & David Blizzard 5-6 6-4 6-5; Sue Haswell & Simon Edmond beat Doble & Day 6-4 6-0.

### Winter Night Pennant

**Final:** Dagnall/Parsons/Flood beat Gregory/Cake/Smith 9-5. John Dagnall beat Justin Gregory 6-2; Sarah Parsons lost to Ralph Cake 2-6; Peter Flood beat Keith Smith 6-4; Dagnall & Parsons beat Gregory & Cake 6-5; Dagnall & Flood beat Gregory & Smith 6-2; Parsons & Flood lost to Cake & Smith 2-6.



*From left: Peter Flood, John Dagnall, Sarah Parsons, Keith Smith, Justin Gregory and Ralph Cake*

### Chicago v RTC (social, handicap)

**RTC won 8-4 (Chicago names first):** Bulley & Donovan beat Julian Sheraton-Davis & Don Carse 6-4; Bulley & Donovan beat Linda Sheraton-Davis & Barbara Carse 6-2; Von Weise & Depree lost to James Wilson & Martin Bronstein 5-6; Chip von Weise lost to Alec Miller 4-6; Tom Shumaker lost to J Sheraton Davis 4-6; Anderson & Depree lost to Bronstein & L Sheraton-Davis 4-5; Turnbull & Tanfield beat Richard East & Tim Lintott 5-1; Turnbull & Webster lost to John Murphy & Bronstein 2-5; Don Utrotska lost to D Carse 2-5; Utrotska & Harold lost to East & B Carse 3-5; DeYoung & Schwalm lost to Wilson & Miller 4-5; Brown & Schwalm beat Murphy & J Sheraton-Davis 5-3.

### British Open

**Semi-finals:** Rob Fahey beat Camden Riviere 6-5 6-5 6-4; Bryn Sayers beat Steve Virgona 6-4 6-2 2-6 6-4. **Final:** Sayers beat Fahey 2-6 6-5 6-2 6-5. **Doubles final:** Fahey & Virgona beat Kieran Booth & Sayers 6-2 6-3 6-0.



## FIT FOR PURPOSE?

We have all suffered anguish on court, but few have volunteered for it as readily as those who attend Stef King's 'Fitness Factory' sessions (aka torture chambers). The classes have got the better of Martin Daly,

Nicola Doble, Owen Saunders and Karen Prottey, judging by this photo – and now we shall see whether their handicaps shoot down accordingly...

## RTC Top Ten

Amateur handicaps  
January 2013

1	Peter Wright	3.3
2	Dave Harms	8.4
3	Robert Hird	9.4
4	David Watson	10.7
5	Marcus Ward	14.2
6	Tom Freeman	14.8
7=	James Sohl	15.3
7=	Simon Barker	15.3
9	Phil Dunn	15.8
10	James Watson	15.9

## The Royal Tennis Court Newsletter

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

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