

# THE ROYAL TENNIS COURT Hampton Court Palace



## THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

CONGRATULATIONS TO RTC'S POL ROGER TROPHY WINNERS

*Read more on page 3*

The Summer Newsletter 2015

*Number 111*

# Chairman's Chat



As I write this, the tennis court is surrounded by scaffolding, both inside and out. All the windows have been removed and timber repairs are being undertaken to the base of the main posts and windowsills. In some places the rot and woodworm infestation is worse than anticipated, in other places it is better. But clearly, from the extent of the defects found, action had to be urgently taken.

Understand that the works are on programme and that the internal scaffolding will be struck by the end of August, when the court handed back to us so that we can undertake essential works to prepare the court for reopening on Monday 14 September. The new LED lights have been ordered and delivery is expected very soon, with installation planned for the middle of August.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody who contributed towards the lighting fund, either by allowing their quarterly subscription to be used or through donations. The total contributions will be in

excess of £30,000, which is a tremendous achievement, and on behalf of the Board I would like to say a really big thank you for your generosity.

Back to tennis, and congratulations to Phil Dunn and his team for winning the Pol Roger Trophy (formerly the Field Trophy). This means that RTC are the top team club in the country, which is a tremendous achievement. More details of this and other club and individual triumphs elsewhere in this newsletter.

You'll also find details of forthcoming events, starting with the Barker Camm Cup final and social evening on Saturday 19 September. The Club Dinner and Prizegiving follows on Saturday 10 October, and then the annual Carol Service on Wednesday 16 December. Please do come along to support these events.

**Julian Sheraton-Davis**

## DATES FOR THE DIARY

### Reopening Drinks & Barker Camm Cup Final

Once the court has reopened, we can finally find a club champion for 2014-15, as David Watson and Nick Hatchett contest the Barker Camm Cup final on **Saturday 19 September**. It's a fascinating contrast: David is a perennial contender who loves a cut forehand, while Nick is a young, improving tyro with lawn tennis roots. David will know that he cannot feed Nick's volley – but will he be in a position to dictate the play? It's certain to be an intriguing match to watch, especially with a glass of Pol Roger in hand. **7pm start. Free champagne and canapés, followed by a cash bar.**

### French Open

After another unfortunate injury in the US Pro Singles (see p8), Chris Champan will be itching to gain some more World Championship qualifying points in Paris on **21-28 September**.

### Club Dinner & Prizegiving

Make a note of the annual celebration in the Garden Room at the Palace on **Saturday 10 October at 7.30pm. Tickets £80 (under-25s £40).**

### Annual Carol Service

The nights are drawing in... the Christmas Carol Service will again take place in the Chapel Royal, on **Wednesday 16 December at 7.30pm. Tickets £14 per person (under-18s free). Early bird £10 price for bookings made before 1 October.**

## COURT USAGE

The Tennis & Tournaments Committee has been looking at the very high court usage of recent years and the difficulty members have when trying to book court time. Measures taken to free up court time for general play include: fewer social matches and changes to their timing, no hosting of British Open qualifying, and rescheduling of events away from the busiest period (January-March).

## STOP PRESS

Just as this newsletter was going to press, it was announced that RTC's **David Watson** would be taking over as Tennis & Rackets Association chairman in November. Congratulations to David.

## COMING UP

### RTC

**19 Sept:** Barker Camm Cup final (see left)  
**1 Oct:** Autumn Night Pennant starts (40-55 handicap)  
**3-4 Oct:** De Laszlo Bowl (handicap doubles)  
**10 Oct:** Annual Dinner & Prizegiving (see left)  
**24 Oct:** Haphazards v RTC (social match)  
**25 Oct:** Brodie Cup 1st round (national inter-club event)  
**31 Oct-1 Nov:** Barker Camm Cup Grade F (60-90 hcp)

### ELSEWHERE

**25 July:** Mothers & Daughters (Hardwick)  
**13-16 Aug:** Pell Cup (doubles, Newport)  
**21-23 Aug:** Junior Open Singles Championships (Queen's)  
**21-28 Sept:** French Open (men's and ladies', Paris)  
**12-16 Oct:** European Open (Lord's)  
**20-25 Oct:** IRTPA Championships (Holyport)

# Champagne moment

The Royal Tennis Court team are national inter-club champions, having won the Pol Roger Trophy

After a wait of 11 years, the Royal Tennis Court can again bask in the glory of national champion status. Following two home wins in the earlier rounds of the Pol Roger Trophy, they were again on home ground for the final, although it promised to be a tense afternoon, as the visitors from Seacourt had already been to Lord's and Queen's and pulled off away wins.

## No 2 doubles

The opening doubles match looked like a close one on paper, and so it proved. For RTC, skipper Phil Dunn paired up with Tom Freeman, and while in theory it was a balanced pairing, with Phil's back-court skills and Tom's reaction volleying, in practice they struggled to cope with a strong Seacourt pair.

The visitors had their own complementary styles, with the thunderous striking of Louis Gordon supported by the astute play of the experienced Charlie Danby. They took the first set 6-4, and momentum swayed one way and the other in the second before the Seacourt pair nicked it 6-5 to seal the first rubber. All those watching agreed that the quality of play was abnormally high for a second-string doubles match.

## No 1 singles

First blood to Seacourt, then, but next up was RTC's banker. Peter Wright was expected to take care of Hugh Latham with ease – though the Seacourt man has been a fine player in the past, he is



RTC captain Phil Dunn savours the win with Pol Roger's James Simpson

no longer as mobile as he once was.

Despite some devastating returning from Latham (no mobility required for that), Peter was, as ever, a model of consistency, barely putting a foot wrong. Soon it was over 6-3 6-1 and the match was level again.

## No 2 singles

David Watson was up against Ben Boddington, a former Radley student who is studying at Exeter University. Ben had achieved crucial three-set wins at Lord's and Queen's over players of similar handicap to David, so it was never going to be easy.

However, David's form had gradually picked up through the autumn and winter and he was peaking at just the right time. The early games were long and tight, but David upped the ante midway through the first set and his opponent had no answer. No sooner

was the set in the bag 6-3 than David was pulling clear in the second. A 6-2 set closed out a superb performance – the best from David in some time.

## No 3 singles

That win put Nick Hatchett in position to give RTC the trophy. Seacourt's top doubles pair a very strong one, so this match was key, and while Nick was a player very much on the rise, Seacourt had their own unknown quantity in Tom Weaver, a former professional who reached 2.5 handicap just a few years ago but plays less often now.

Would Nick be able to cope with a more experienced opponent? Of course he would. His serving was tight, his volleying as crisp as ever and his returning (on the odd occasion he had to visit the hazard end) probing and venomous. The win was never in doubt, and if anything the 6-3 6-2 score flattered Nick's victim.

## No 1 doubles

The trophy was RTC's, then, and James Watson and Simon Barker could now enjoy their dead rubber against Paul Weaver and 6-handicap Luke Danby. They even won the first set 6-1 before Luke got going and showed his class in controlling the next two sets.

A memorable day, then, and another triumphant one for captain Phil Dunn, who, while not finding his best form personally, kept a close eye on opponents and managed his resources astutely throughout the season.

## • NEWS IN BRIEF • NEWS IN BRIEF •

### Wellington boost

The ground has finally been broken on a new court, as HRH the Earl of Wessex formally began the construction work at Wellington College in Berkshire.

### Success on foreign shores

Ed Kay played his part as the No 1 player in a UK team that won the Van Alen and Limb Trophies, under-26 amateur internationals against a weak USA team and a strong Australia one. Meanwhile another roving RTC member, Oliver Buckley, made it to the final of Newport's handicap doubles tournament with home player John Murphy.

### Seal Salver

David Watson has retained his Seal Salver title, defeating Richard Moore.

### A Maiden(head) title

Congratulations to our Pol Roger Trophy captain Phil Dunn, who has become Holyport's club champion after beating fellow RTC member James Watson, 6-3 5-6 6-2.

### In memoriam

It is with sadness that we mark the passing of John Chawner, who died in May at the age of 81, and John Sparkes. Both were valued long-term members.

## Spring Night Pennant

The dominant team in the 20-40 handicap Night Pennant series, made up of David Blizzard, Dick Cowling and Scott Levy, pressed home their superiority in the final against Simon Edmond, Owen Saunders and Anthony Wolfe.

David and Scott led the way with three wins out of three, their 6-5 singles wins proving crucial before the team showed its doubles prowess to good effect. All that remained was for the players to enjoy a late dinner, courtesy of head chef Nick Wood.

# Partners for life

*More proof that a winning handicap doubles pair can be just like a good marriage*

**B**rought forward to May because of the summer court closure, the King's Goblet summer handicap doubles again proved to be the most sociable and entertaining of competitions, with a wide range of playing standards and styles on display.

Often the most successful pairings in this discipline are those in the middle of that range, with handicaps in the 40s and 50s. This time, however, that theory was shot to pieces as the semi-finals featured three of the four highest-handicap pairings plus the lowest of all the 15 pairs involved.

Before all that excitement, however, there was a tricky group stage to negotiate, featuring groups of five each playing four 20-minute timed matches. The brevity of these encounters made for some tense conclusions as the buzzer went. Just two pairs progressed with unblemished records, both

husband-and-wife pairings: Giles and Katy Doy (81 handicap) and Karen and Hans Prottey (52). In the 40-minute quarter-finals the Doys enjoyed a thumping 11-4 win (partly down to being given an incorrectly generous handicap allowance by the marker!), but the Protteys had a battle royal with Simon Edmond and David Blizzard (25). Although Hans raised his game way beyond his high handicap, Simon and David made the most of the opposition's imbalance (46/68) and a strong finish gave them a 7-6 win.

In the semi-finals, Simon and David faced (for the third time in six matches) one serve, banned tambour and restricted chases, this time against David Glover and David Peregrine-Jones (67), who had enjoyed a 10-2 quarter-final win. With David G minimising the errors and David P-G more erratic but coming up with

winners, it was too much for Simon and David, who succumbed 9-6.

In the top half of the draw, the Doys were up against the 2013 champions, Peter Brown and Paul Mather (69), who had come through a 7-7 thriller in their quarter-final. Again, it was close throughout, but by now Giles and Katy had gained some extra doubles nous and they pulled away to 9-7 by the buzzer to reach the final.

After 36 matches, the final brought a fitting end to the weekend, with the players battling right down to the last ring of the bell. When the bell rang at 7-7, though, it was the Doy partnership who were ahead on points in the 15th game, giving them the title.

Always enjoying their tennis and never getting down on themselves or upset with each other, Giles and Katy really performed as a strong pair, and they will take some beating next year.

# Fahey's title, but a sweet start for Candy

*Claire Fahey is not the only player in the ladies' game with a bulging trophy cabinet*

**C**laire Fahey, who has had such success against the men lately, unsurprisingly retained her Ladies' World Championship at Leamington, winning a high-quality final against her sister Sarah Vigrass. Claire lost just five games in five matches - four of them in that final.

## **British Open**

Claire had warmed up for the World Championships by winning April's British Open at Seacourt for the sixth year in a row. After brushing aside former great Penny Lumley 6-0 6-0, she beat her sister 6-2 6-1 in the final.

In fact, only one match in the entire tournament went to three sets - but it was a thriller, featuring our own Harriet Ingham against Irina Dulbich of Middlesex/MCC, seeded sixth, in the second round. While Irina relied on her railroad serve and volleying, Harriet had the superior floor game, but neither could consistently control the match. In the end it came down to nerve, and that is where Harriet comes into her own, so she advanced, 5-6 6-4 6-5. In the quarter-finals, she led fourth seed Freddy Adam 5-3 but failed to win

another game thereafter as the American raised her game considerably.

RTC's Karen Prottey and Isabel Candy also reached the second round. In the doubles, Sue Haswell and Harriet reached the semi-finals. Isabel won the doubles plate, while Harriet took the handicap doubles with Irina Dulbich.

## **World Championships**

Straight after Seacourt, it was up to Leamington for the first Ladies' World Championship held in this country since 2007. There were no significant upsets as the Fahey/Vigrass dominance was underlined again, but Harriet Ingham again impressed, dispatching former champion Sally Jones 6-1 6-2 before giving Sarah Vigrass some real problems in the quarter-finals. The 6-2 6-3 scoreline did not really do Harriet justice.

There were also first-round wins for RTC's Helen-Frances Pilkington and Isabel Candy - but not for Linda Sheraton-Davis, who was drawn against Claire Fahey!

In the doubles (won by the sisters supreme), Harriet and Sue narrowly lost their semi-final to Penny and Tara Lumley. Isabel Candy tasted more success in the handicap doubles.

## **LRTA Mixed Handicap Doubles**

Twelve months ago, Isabel Candy didn't even have a real tennis handicap. Such has been her progress since then that she has reduced her handicap to 47 and won matches at the British Open and World Championships. She ended a notable first season by winning the LRTA Mixed Handicap Doubles at Seacourt with her father Tom, also an RTC member.

The Candys won all their group matches before storming to the final 6-1 and 6-0. In the final, against Sophie Dannreuther and Dipesh Mahtani, they trailed 5-7 but saved several match points as they climbed their way back to 7-7 and 40 all. The RTC pair took the final point to take the title. Look out for further progress from Isabel next season.



*Tom and Isabel Candy*

# Special Kay rises and shines

*Nick Wood on a high-quality final of the Harris Watson Trophy and new champions*

This year's Harris Watson Trophy final was a highly competitive match, with all four players on song, particularly the father/son combination of David and James Watson, who played with great consistency and skill. James, the "enforcer", provided the power plays while David was in full retrieval mode, dealing with the inevitable quality from their opposition.

It would have been easy for that high-calibre opposition, top seeds Peter Wright and Ed Kay, to arrive feeling relaxed, but there was no sign of misplaced confidence. They knew from the very first rally that their opponents weren't there just to make up the numbers.

Big hitting, bravery and skilled play on both sides made for a most exciting match, and although Peter and Ed won the first set 6-1, the rallies were long and points were hard-fought. James was notably trying to intimidate Ed at the net with potent shots for the galleries; I'm sure Ed was happy to come out unharmed and maybe a little surprised at what he managed to get back over the net.

The crowd were certainly sitting on the edge of their seats. Meanwhile, Pete, the brick wall, chipped, chiselled and volleyed with such consistency and power it would be easy to think the Watsons would never make it to the service end - but that they did, regularly. The sheer pace opened up the court on occasion, allowing for the accuracy to play a part, creating some quality chases.

The second set continued in a similar style of play, the Watsons still punching hard and with relentless tenacity. The No 1 seeds, a little perplexed at the fine form of their opposition, were unable to hold off the onslaught in the

second set, as the match was levelled at one set all (6-5).

The third and final set began, and the play continued with little between the pairs. Perhaps the onset of tired legs (not surprising after the frenetic pace of the match) was all that made the difference; the quality of the of the top seeds was too much for the opposition to maintain such an exhilarating tempo. Though the match was decided by a 6-2 set, it was by no means an easy finish.

Congratulations to Peter Wright and Ed Kay, who claimed the wonderful Harris Watson Trophy claret jugs. A fitting demonstration of the step up and quality of RTC's finest.

## DAVID WATSON'S DOUBLES PROWESS

*Despite losing this year's final, David Watson has an enviable record...*

- 1984** The year of his first Savage Trophy win (since renamed the Harris Watson Trophy), in tandem with Bernard Weatherill
- 13** The number of these titles he has won to date
- 7** His title tally with Richard Harris (all between 1999 and 2008)
- 3** The number of different partners he has won with (Bernard Weatherill, Richard Harris, James Watson)
- 13** The run of consecutive finals he has now contested, winning nine of them

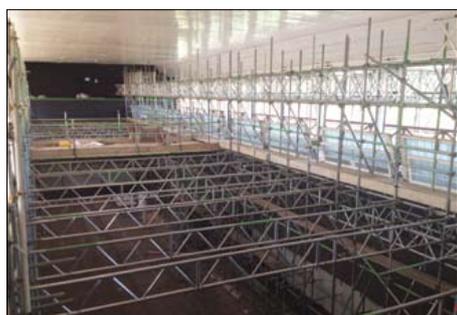


## Court works update

Scaffolding has been erected inside and outside the court and the roof structure lifted, taking off the loading from the main window posts. All the windows have been removed from the east and west elevations and set aside for repair and refitting.

The rotted post and windowsill sections have been removed from the west elevation and the posts temporarily supported on blocks. Oak timbers are being made for fitting as replacements or repair. The rotted timbers on this elevation have suffered badly from death watch beetle as well as wet rot. On the east elevation, the timber repairs are not so extensive, with just minor repairs required.

Other works include the raking-out and repointing of the brickwork to the east and west elevation, plus some brick repairs. Works are on schedule.



# National League

Another healthy trophy haul for RTC's teams

After a mixed start to the season, RTC's National League teams built up some real momentum over the winter and spring, resulting in another impressive tally of three division titles and three runners-up.

In the Premier Division, Chris Chapman and Peter Wright secured second place in the table with ease, despite a narrow home defeat at the hands of the all-conquering Holyport



Faheys (pictured). In a home semi-final against Leamington, Peter thrashed Darren Long before Chris notched up another win over Ben Matthews in three sets, despite not finding his best form. Beating a player of Ben's calibre while below one's best augurs well.

This meant a trip to Holyport for a final in front of a packed crowd. With Peter unavailable, Darren Long filled in and did RTC proud, defeating Claire Fahey 6-4 6-2. So all Chris had to do was beat the world champion...

Chris had already twice taken Rob Fahey to three sets in the National League, and it was tense again as they scrapped their way to 5-5. So often the champion raises his game here - but instead Chris did so to move within a set of the title. However, Rob pulled ahead in a tight second, winning it 6-4, and a 6-2 third set tied the match up.

In the deciding doubles, Chris and Darren moved 3-2 ahead, but the Faheys settled and stormed to an 8-3 win. A great effort from RTC, though.

Special thanks must go to Carly Chapman, meanwhile, for for all her help with the meals on the National League Premier Division evenings.

## Division 2 (10 hcp +)

David Watson took the 'MVP' prize and RTC claimed top spot. But Cambridge had RTC member Ed Kay. After James Sohl lost to Alex Evans, David fought hard but was unable to defy Ed, and the Cambridge duo emerged victorious.

## Division 3 (15 hcp +)

RTC gradually assumed control as the season progressed, and what could have been a challenging final against Cambridge became far easier with the absence of Cambridge's No 1, Jamie Giddins. Nick Hatchett, Phil Dunn and Simon Barker all completed very easy victories to complete a fine season.

## Division 5

After climbing into second place, RTC defeated Cambridge 3-0 in their semi-final to set up a final at Hatfield. Geoffrey Russell lost at No 1, while skipper David Blizzard had a stunning 6-0 6-1 win at No 3, but the tightest match was Simon Fox's tussle with John Woodman. Alas, it was the home player who nicked the decisive game at 5-5 in the third set. So near yet so far.

## Division 8

The youthful trio of Peter Mather, Harriet Ingham and Justin Gregory controlled this division, and although Moreton Morrell put up a good fight in the final, the title was always going to be RTC's. Harriet won the No 1 match with ease, while Peter and Justin both recovered well after losing opening sets.

## Division 9

This division was split into East and West divisions. Third place in the West meant RTC had to do it the hard way, but Elvira and Saverio Campione did just that with wins in their semi-final at Holyport. They went one better in the West final at Oxford, with No 1 John Leach and both Campiones victorious.

This meant a 'final final' against East champions Middlesex University. First up was John Leach, who settled after taking a set to get used to the bouncy court but just missed out 6-5 in the third. Paul Newton, in for Saverio, then won 6-1 6-3 thanks to his fine serving,

This left Elvira in a position she relishes, and at 5-5 in the third set she had the grit to close out the match and give RTC the title and a remarkable hat-trick of away victories.



## NATIONAL LEAGUE TABLES

### PREMIER DIVISION

Holyport	8	8	54
<b>RTC1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>45</b>
Leamington	8	3	32
Petworth	8	3	28
Queen's	8	1	14

Semi-final: RTC beat Leamington 3-0

Final: Holyport beat RTC 2-1

### DIVISION 2

<b>RTC2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>46</b>
Cambridge	8	7	42
MCC	8	4	33
Seacourt	8	3	28
Petworth	8	0	13

Final: RTC lost to Cambridge 0-3

### DIVISION 3

<b>RTC3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>39</b>
Cambridge	8	4	37
Moreton Morrell	8	5	35
Paris	8	4	31
Prested Hall	8	2	25

Final: RTC beat Cambridge 3-0

### DIVISION 4

MCC	8	5	43
Oxford	8	5	41
Radley	8	5	38
<b>RTC4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>28</b>
Hatfield	8	2	22

Final: MCC beat Oxford 3-0

### DIVISION 5

Hatfield	8	6	43
<b>RTC5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>40</b>
Cambridge	8	4	36
Canford	8	4	28
MCC	8	1	9

Semi-final: RTC beat Cambridge 3-0

Final: Hatfield beat RTC 2-1

### DIVISION 6

Prested Hall	8	6	45
Petworth	8	5	43
Oxford	8	5	40
<b>RTC6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>37</b>
Hatfield	8	4	35
Canford	8	0	0

Final: Prested Hall beat Oxford 3-0

### DIVISION 7

Middlesex U	8	6	48
Leamington	8	4	38
Cambridge	8	6	36
<b>RTC7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>31</b>
MCC	8	1	25

Final: Middlesex U beat Leamington 2-1

### DIVISION 8

<b>RTC8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>48</b>
Moreton Morrell	8	5	40
Oxford	8	4	33
Petworth	8	3	31
Seacourt	8	2	26

Final: RTC beat Moreton Morrell 3-0

### DIVISION 9 (West)

Oxford	8	7	47
Holyport	8	5	37
<b>RTC9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>33</b>
Canford	8	3	29
Leamington	8	2	28

West semi-final: Holyport lost to RTC 1-2

West final: Oxford lost to RTC 0-3

Overall final: Middlesex U lost to RTC 1-2

# The view from the chair

*Chairman Julian Sheraton-Davis reviews the past 12 months and looks ahead*

I would firstly like to thank the kind support I have received from the other members of the Board over the past 12 months. Without their support my job would not have been possible. Particular thanks must go to Geoffrey Russell and Ian Wimbush, who have worked so hard in getting the club finances into shape. A big thank you also to James Sohl and Fraser Shorey, who have resigned from the Board.

I would like to express a warm welcome to the new Board members: Paul Mather, who will take on responsibility for the premises, Phil Dunn, responsible for tennis and tournaments, and Paul Newton, for taking on the unenviable task of honorary secretary.

We are very fortunate at RTC to have what is probably the best team of real tennis professionals anywhere. They all work incredibly hard to ensure that the club not only runs very efficiently and is an enjoyable place to come and play tennis. Through their efforts we manage to achieve almost 98 per cent court usage, a tremendous achievement. On behalf of the Board and members I would like to express my gratitude, and I hope their physical issues will be resolved in time for next season.

## **Twin goals**

At my first AGM, I set out two principal objectives for my three-year tenure as chairman: firstly to raise standards, secondly to try to increase the number of active junior players. A number of physical improvements have been undertaken to the premises over the past few years, with more to come this summer. We now have a better relationship with Historic Royal Palaces, which has been mutually beneficial. We have a much-improved accounting system than enables us to keep an accurate track of all income and expenditure. There are still areas for improvement, but I firmly believe we have made some genuine progress in a number of areas.

With regard to juniors, the number of coaching sessions has increased significantly and the number of junior members has almost doubled in the past two years. Part of this is due to having dropped the joining fee, annual subscriptions and court fees for juniors.

We now have more juniors on court and junior matches at home and away. I do genuinely believe that a healthy junior section is essential for the a successful real tennis club. JP Guillonnet has been instrumental in spreading awareness of real tennis at RTC to the local schools and tennis clubs and let's hope this continues.

In March we won the final of the Pol Roger Trophy, the top inter-club amateur competition, against Seacourt – well done to all those who played in it. This year RTC were the runners-up in the Premier Division of the National League, just losing out by two matches to one against Holyport.

The Board is always aware of positive and negative criticism. We are only too well aware how difficult it is to get courts, particularly at peak times, and how frustrating it can be. We are looking at measures to free up more courts.

## **Court closure**

On 1 June the tennis court closed for 14 weeks. This allows Historic Royal Palaces to undertake essential repairs to the bases of the posts which support the roof. The work involves erecting scaffolding inside and outside the court and then slightly lifting the roof to take the load off the posts. Other works will include repointing, brick repairs, external and internal decorations and reinstatement of the west elevation external walkway. All this work is being undertaken at no cost to RTC.

HRP are very aware that the closure deprives our members of a court facility and also deprives the professionals of their income. Geoffrey Russell and Ian Wimbush have agreed with HRP a substantial rebate on our annual licence fee, which should cover the majority of direct and indirect losses. I am very grateful to the HRP management for their support.

While the internal scaffolding is erected, we will also take the opportunity to replace the court lighting system. Most of the lights are 40 years old and have reached the end of their useful life. We are replacing the 36 fittings with 24 high-power LED up-lighters mounted on poles between the windows. These new light fittings are more efficient – we calculate that as a

result of savings in energy costs the payback period will be in about 9-10 years. The new lighting system is capable of providing more than twice the present lighting levels, but for the majority of court usage we will probably run them at about 60-70 percent power.

The request for donations to the lighting fund has brought in over £30,000, including donations of nearly £10,000 from members. I am overwhelmed by your generosity and would like to express my deep appreciation on behalf of the Board and all the members for your fantastic generosity.

Once the internal scaffolding has been removed (programmed for the end of August), then RTC can undertake essential maintenance work on the court, including filling of cracks and repainting the court and lines. You must appreciate that there will be major building works going on, including redecoration of the club rooms, therefore during the summer closure the club premises will be closed to members for safety reasons. However, it is understood that HRP are proposing to arrange tours of the works. If you are interested in looking at the works close up, please let me know and I will pass on your details to the tour organiser. The professionals will still be on the premises apart from vacations, so email messages can be left. The office will be manned on a part-time basis until the beginning of September.

## **Roll on autumn...**

It is hoped that the court will re-open on Monday 14 September. We will hold a social event at the club on Saturday 19 September, followed by the club dinner in the Hampton Court Garden Room on Saturday 10 October and then the annual carol concert on Wednesday 16 December. (See page 2 for more details.)

I hope that you have a good summer, hopefully getting some real tennis at other local clubs, such as Holyport, Petworth and Bridport, who have kindly offered our members access to their courts during the period of closure. I look forward to seeing you back at the club in September.

*(As spoken by the chairman at the club's annual general meeting in May)*

# Raising the Barre

David Best recounts a day from RTC's regal past

On a Saturday afternoon in May the Flower Pot Gate, on the road to Kingston, quietly opened to allow a pony carriage, drawn by two beautiful grey ponies, to sweep discreetly into the Broad Walk and travel along to the entrance of the tennis court, where the occupants alighted.

This was May 1864, Saturday 21st to be precise, and the occupants of the carriage were their Royal Highnesses, the Prince and Princes of Wales. They had come to watch a match between the new world champion, Edmund Tompkins, and the man who had previously held the title, the celebrated Frenchman, J Edmond Barre. The royal couple were joined in the dedans by the prince's cousins, the Duchess and Princess Mary of Cambridge.

The prince, who had learnt to play tennis at Hampton Court six years earlier, had by this time developed into a competent player of both tennis and rackets, although the *Surrey Comet* reported that "he appeared to be growing stout and hearty". After the match, the prince took to the court for a game with Barre. The Frenchman was now 62 years old and well acquainted with the Royal Tennis Court.

Why the prince chose to play with Barre, rather than the reigning world champion, may have been because of

the respect he had for him. Barre was no stranger to playing with the French ruling families, but this is the only reference to his having a game with a member of the British royal family to have surfaced so far. Barre had been recognised as the world champion from 1829 to 1862, longer than any other champion, although he did not have to face the intense competition that modern players do.

After his exertions on court, the prince and his princess stepped outside and climbed into their waiting carriage. There to greet them were 300 to 400 local people who, despite attempts to keep the visit secret, had heard of the



*The Prince of Wales (centre) on court in 1858 with Colonel Loyd-Lindsay. In the dedans are the Princesses Mary and Augusta of Cambridge, with the artist, Ella Taylor, in the foreground*

royal visit and were eager to catch a glimpse of them. It is said that the prince "bowed graciously and cheerfully to the loyal salutations that he received".

When Prince Albert Edward first came to the Royal Tennis Court in 1858, to be taught the game by head professional Henry Case, he immediately enrolled

as a member. Later, in 1901, he became the first patron of the Royal Tennis Court when he ascended to the throne as Edward VII. He had insisted on paying the annual subscription of £1 after it was introduced in 1896, and when he became King he voluntarily increased his contribution to £5: A true friend of the RTC.

## Pro tournaments

Camden Riviere has been at it again. First the world No 1 combined with Tim Chisholm to claim the world doubles title in stunning style, destroying the long-time champions Rob Fahey and Steve Virgona 5-0 in Tuxedo. Then he retained his US Pro Singles title at Newport, beating Virgona in straight sets.

Sadly, Chris Chapman turned an ankle during his win over Claire Fahey and was unable to play his quarter-final against Tim Chisholm, which hurts his World Championship race hopes.

Peter Wright got one over the pros when he won the T&RA Category A title, for 0-9 handicaps. He beat Darren Long in two sets at Oxford.

## RESULTS

### Barker Camm Cup

**Grade B, semi-finals:** Jed Dalton beat Robert Frost 6-3 6-2; Simon Edmond beat Mark McMurrugh 6-1 6-2.

**Final:** Dalton beat Edmond 6-5 6-2.

**Grade A, semi-finals:** David Watson beat Phil Dunn 6-3 6-4; Nick Hatchett beat James Sohl 6-1 6-2.

### Seal Salver

**Final:** David Watson beat Richard Moore 9-4.

### Lathom Browne Cup

**Quarter-finals:** Doug Sheperdigian beat Sarah Parsons 9-5; Katy Doy beat Ian Wimbush 9-8.

### Pol Roger Trophy

**Final: RTC beat Seacourt 3-2**

Phil Dunn & Tom Freeman lost to Charlie Danby & Louis Gordon 4-6 5-6; Peter Wright beat Hugh Latham 6-3 6-1; David Watson beat Ben Boddington 6-3 6-2; Nick Hatchett beat Tom Weaver 6-3 6-2; Simon Barker & James Watson lost to Luke Danby & Paul Weaver 6-1 1-6 0-6.

### Ladies' British Open (Seacourt)

**Semi-finals:** Claire Fahey beat Penny Lumley 6-0 6-0; Sarah Vigrass beat Freddy Adam 6-2 6-3.

**Final:** Fahey beat Vigrass 6-2 6-1.

**Doubles final:** Fahey & Vigrass beat Adam & Irina Dulbish 6-1 6-3.

### Ladies' World Ch'shp (Leam'ton)

**Semi-finals:** Fahey beat Adam 6-1 6-0; Vigrass beat Lumley 6-1 6-0.

**Final:** Fahey beat Vigrass 6-3 6-1.

**Doubles final:** Fahey & Vigrass beat Penny & Tara Lumley 6-0 6-0.

### World Doubles (Tuxedo)

**Final:** Camden Riviere & Tim Chisholm beat Rob Fahey & Steve Virgona 6-3 6-1 6-3 6-4 6-4.

### US Pro Singles (Newport)

**Semi-finals:** Riviere beat Chisholm 6-3 6-5 6-2; Virgona beat Fahey 6-1 6-4 4-6 4-6 6-4. **Final:** Riviere beat Virgona 6-2 6-3 6-2.

Image courtesy of the Royal Collection Trust

## RTC Top Ten

Singles handicaps  
July 2015

1	Peter Wright	2.1
2	Ed Kay	6.4
3	Charlie Crossley	8.9
4	Nick Hatchett	10.0
5	David Watson	11.4
6	Tom Freeman	13.4
7	Phil Dunn	15.8
8	James Watson	15.9
9	James Sohl	17.7
10	Simon Barker	19.8

## 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 autumn issue, either via the professionals or by email at the address below.*

Editor: Simon Edmond  
newsletter@  
royaltenniscourt.com