

THE ROYAL TENNIS COURT

Hampton Court Palace



WINNERS

DOUG SHEPERDIGIAN ACCEPTS THE LATHOM BROWNE CUP
FROM CHRIS CHAPMAN, THE NEW BRITISH AND
AUSTRALIAN OPEN DOUBLES CHAMPION

Read more on pages 3 and 5

The Winter Newsletter 2015-16

Number 113

Chairman's Chat



The post repair works to the court have now been completed and the two external walkways have been reinstated, and by the time you read this the scaffolding should have been taken down and removed. Thanks again to the staff of Historic Royal Palaces and the consultants for undertaking these essential works.

The new court lights have been given approval by everybody using the court. We have just received our electricity statement for the last quarter and it would appear that we using about 50 per cent of the electricity compared with previous years. While it will mean that we can make real savings over the year, the savings would be even higher if the lights were turned off when not required. Perhaps I could ask you to consider switching them off on bright days.

It is great news that Nick Wood and Clare have a baby boy, Jasper. May he grow up as others brought up in the environs of the Royal Tennis Court and enjoy his surroundings!

Over the first weekend of January 2016 youngsters, both boys and girls, fought it out for the Wollaston Cup, Vaughan Trophy and Chairman's Cup. I was able to watch a semi-final and two finals on the Sunday and the standard was very high. Congratulations to the winners

and all who took part. The results are published on page 8 of this newsletter.

I am very excited by a new RTC social event: the Chairman's Challenge, which is to be held during the evening of Saturday 16 April. The idea is that this will be a fun and fund-raising event, hopefully to be held on an annual basis. Funds raised will be split between the RTC Junior Fund and a charity of the chairman's choice – this year I have chosen Centro Karen, a children's nursery located in the town of Salto in Uruguay. Centro Karen was set up in 1995 by, and had the continued support of, Graham Aston in memory of his late wife Karen (see web link below). Graham, who sadly died last year, was an active member of RTC and helped out at the annual summer barbecue with his wonderful pit roast. See page 4 for full details, and please put the date in your diary – it is going to be a night to remember.

www.britishuruguayansociety.org.uk/en/what-we-do/projects/el-centro-karen-salto

Julian Sheraton-Davis

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Chris Chapman v Bryn Sayers

Members and guests are encouraged to come and watch world-class tennis at the club at 7.30pm on **Wednesday 3 February**, as world No 5 Bryn Sayers takes on Chris Chapman in a 'friendly' match. The match is part of Chris's development and is being recorded by sports scientists from Brunel University for post-match analysis to help Chris's game. It is sure to be fiercely contested, as the two players have had some excellent battles in recent years. Please come and support Chris and help ensure we continue to have access to world-class tennis at the club. Tickets cost £10 (from the pros), and please note we will not be serving food on the night.

Amateur Championships

With the likes of Peter Wright, Ed Kay and Nick Hatchett, RTC has hopes of success as the UK's best amateurs do battle at Queen's on **20-28 February**. Keep an eye out for the singles and doubles draws nearer the time.

Chairman's Challenge

Test your skills and help charities at the same time by entering this challenge on the evening of **Saturday 16 April**. (See page 4 for full details.)

COMING UP

RTC

31 Jan: Brodie Cup semi-final: RTC v Prested Hall
3 Feb: Chris Chapman v Bryn Sayers (see left)
6-7 Feb: Barker Camm Cup Grade D (40-49 handicap)
27-28 Feb: Barker Camm Cup Grade C (30-39 handicap)
13 Mar: Pol Roger Trophy final
19-20 Mar: Barker Camm Cup Grade B (20-29 handicap)
24 Mar: Winter Night Pennant final (55-70 handicap)
31 Mar: Spring Night Pennant starts (20-40 handicap)
16 Apr: Chairman's Challenge (see page 4)
23 Apr: RTC v Haphazards (social match)
24 Apr: RTC v Manchester (social match)
30 Apr-1 May: Barker Camm Cup A Grade

ELSEWHERE

31 Jan: Pol Roger Trophy semi-final: Queen's v RTC
12-14 Feb: Billy Ross Skinner (mixed doubles, Hatfield)
16-25 Feb: US Open (Chicago)
20-28 Feb: Amateur Championships (Queen's)
26-27 Feb: Varsity Match (Lord's)
26-28 Feb: British Ladies' Masters (Holyport)
4-6 Mar: Over-40 Amateur Doubles (Prested Hall)
13 Mar: Brodie Cup final (Bridport)
18-20 Mar: Over-60 Championships (Manchester)
18-20 Mar: Henry Leaf Cup (schools old boys, Queen's)
4-10 Apr: Ladies' British Open (Seacourt)
22-24 Apr: Category A Champs (0-9 hcp, Oxford)
23-24 Apr: Over-70 Championships (Holyport)

Northern exposure

Our Pol Roger Trophy winners survived a chilly Manchester to cruise into this season's semi-finals

Despite the weather getting steadily worse north of Watford, the RTC team all made it up to Manchester in December for the first round of the defence of "our" Pol Roger Trophy (including James Sohl, who had fitted winter tyres to his ridiculous car especially for the trip). After a practice the evening before and for an hour before the match itself, we were confident that the Manchester court would provide funny bounces, particularly from directly in front of the tambour, and that layers were going to be necessary (many, many layers and possibly hats).

First up were Phil Dunn and James Sohl in the second-string doubles against Guy Maxwell and Mark Seymour Mead. After a few shared games in the first set, the RTC pairing steadied the ship and came away with a 6-3, 6-1 victory. The first string singles pitted RTC's Peter Wright (was his bandana against the cold?) against teenager Robert Shenkman, who had been honing his tennis at Queen's over the summer. Despite some outrageous retrieving from the tambour, speed of movement and generally high level of tennis, Robert went down 6-3, 6-4, 2-0 RTC with three to play.



Nick Hatchett warms up before reluctantly removing a few layers for his match

Nick Hatchett, in the second string singles, was up against Robert's father and Manchester captain Simon Shenkman. A solid first set from the RTC man and it was quickly 6-1. Simon used his home court advantage and rackets background to put more pressure on Nick in the second, helped by Nick forcing consistently into the middle of the net, but nevertheless the set got away from Simon towards the end and was finished by Nick's first force on target - a 6-1, 6-4 victory putting RTC over the winning line 3-0.

Tom Freeman had the unenviable task of playing while the majority of his team-mates were enjoying lunch. His opponent was another youngster, rackets specialist Alex Dunccliffe-Vines, who played predominantly right-handed but with a few left-handed forehands thrown in. Both players were using and defending pace with aplomb but Tom was too consistent during the important points and wrapped up a 6-4 6-3 victory.

Last up were the first string doubles pairing, with RTC's David and James Watson against Mark Openshaw-Blower and Adam Holloway. The latter were certainly doubles specialists, with Adam fearless at the front of the court (including standing at hazard the door in front of the tambour on occasion), while Mark was finding good angles from the back. However, the Watsons are also no strangers to doubles and had too much firepower, giving RTC a 6-2, 6-4 victory in a high-quality match and a 5-0 win for RTC on the day.

Next up for the defending champions is another away tie: a semi-final at perennial contenders Queen's on Sunday 31 January. **Phil Dunn**

Fred's sigh at plight, Sheperdigian's delight

Fred Satow couldn't quite become the first person since 1959 to retain the Lathom Browne Cup

A year on from his thrilling last-gasp victory in the 2013-14 Lathom Browne Cup, Fred Satow finally met his match in Doug Sheperdigian, who denied Fred's attempt to retain the club's handicap singles championship with an impressive and well-planned display in the delayed 2014-15 final.

Fred has shown repeatedly over the past two years his ability to cope with giving up sizeable handicap allowances, employing his sound technique and astute shot selection. Here the 28-handicapper would have to concede rec 30-owe 1/2 30 to Doug (48) - a big ask against an improving player who had left no stone unturned in his meticulous preparations.

As well as booking lessons with the pros, Doug had also had several games against players whose handicaps are close to Fred's in order to acclimatise

himself to that level and identify potential pitfalls. He even managed a spying mission, watching a game of Fred's! It all paid off: from the start Doug was on the front foot. He was not put off by a few inevitable errors, knowing that his fairly high-risk approach would result in enough winners or force enough errors from Fred to make the most of that rec 30 start.



Doug Sheperdigian and the vanquished 2014 champ Fred Satow

Fred did his best to dig in, but Doug's trademark out-to-in forehand into the server's backhand corner is a vicious shot that you just don't expect from a 48 handicap, and it was too much for Fred. Before long Doug had run away to a 9-3 win and a deserved success: the thorough preparation had certainly paid off for him.

This wasn't the American's only success of the winter: turn to page 4 to follow his exploits in RTC's rampant Brodie Cup team. **Simon Edmond**

Yes I Can(dy)!

Youth and experience are blending to perfectly in RTC's Brodie Cup run

RTC's Brodie Cup team brushed aside Hardwick in imperious style in December to reach the semi-finals. On the first outing for the club's new limited-edition team shirts, the team followed up their 3-2 first-round win at Hatfield with a crushing 5-0 victory, conceding only 20 games.

First up was RTC's overseas player, 'Sherpa Digian'. Sherpa Digian's superhuman strength comes from a childhood spent in the rarefied low-oxygen atmosphere of Nepal's eastern mountainous region. This was more like a stroll over the Downs rather than climbing Everest, as Sherpa Digian made a mockery of his 48 handicap to win 6-1 6-0.

Great comedy partnerships need a contrasting pair. RTC's own version, Campione and Saunders, were next up. Saunders: wistful, chatting to the dedans, making mistakes, forgetting the game plan. Campione: determined,

focused, putting away all her chances ruthlessly. The pair came home comfortably 6-2 6-1.

Next up, and with the chance to secure victory for RTC, was the 45+ doubles pairing of Izzy Candy and Paul Newton. Candy deserves automatic selection into any RTC team, purely on the grounds that her surname makes writing headlines so much easier. Eye Candy, Candy Girl, Yes I Can(dy) etc.

The guile and experience of Newton were an excellent foil for the youthful exuberance of Candy, who leapt like a salmon and snapped up any volleys that came her way. Newton, with the speed and agility of a cuddly koala, marshalled proceedings majestically. A 6-1 6-0 win wrapped up the match 3-0 for the loss of only five games.

Next up, playing in his first Brodie Cup dead rubber, was Martin Daly. Daly saves his best for the Brodie Cup, and the shouty Scot played a beautiful

game against Richard Oldham. However, he considers the match to be a failure due to not serving his famous drag serve into the winning gallery, the sole criterion on which he judges success or failure in a match. Impressively, at 3-5 down in the 2nd set, Daly reeled off 12 out of the next 13 points to win the set and the match.

The final rubber saw Paul Wright take on Simon Constantine in the 30 singles rubber. The pair didn't disappoint. Wright made things tough for himself by persisting with his railroad, which the T&RA have verified as having the least amount of spin of any railroad in the world. Despite this, he dug in and played exquisite tennis to win 6-3 6-4.

So RTC progress to the semi-finals for the first time in living memory. Tough selection decisions await skipper Dick Cowling, but RTC can be very happy with their day's work. The smart new shirts did the trick. **Owen Saunders**

National League mid-term report

With no Premier Division in the National League this season, RTC's top team is the one taking part in Division 2, where Nick Hatchett has enjoyed a couple of strong wins but David Watson and Tom Freeman have so far found success harder to come by. Seacourt have made a storming start here.

Our defending Division 3 champions have fared slightly better and look to be in a three-way scrap for top spot. It's particularly rewarding to see Josh Smith back and winning

matches after such a long injury break. Division 4 has barely got going, while Simon Fox and Fred Satow are unbeaten in Division 5, in which RTC are strongly chasing a powerful Cambridge squad.

Our Division 7 team has had a tough start, but Division 8 promises much: after two matches Peter Mather's outfit have dropped just one set in six rubbers. Division 9 has a huge 11 teams, but Saverio Campione's three wins from three have helped RTC into contention.



The Royal Tennis Court Chairman's Event

Saturday 16 April 2016
19:00 – 22:00

A fun skills challenge for players of varying handicaps in 5 teams of 3 players, with each team selected by the pros

Supported by Pol Roger, this event will raise money for two charities: the RTC Junior Development Fund and Centro Karen, a children's nursery in Uruguay set up by the late RTC member Graham Aston.

To enter the challenge, or to purchase limited spectator tickets, please contact the professional team on **020 8977 3015**.

Entry fee: £50

Spectators' tickets: £25 (includes a glass of Champagne and canapés)

Chappers opens his account

Congratulations to Chris Chapman, who earned some silverware at the winter Opens

While Chris Chapman did not quite manage to reach the eliminators for the World Championship, the winter tournaments still brought notable success for him in the shape of his first two Open titles: the British Open doubles in tandem with Steve Virgona, and then the Australian Open doubles with Rob Fahey.

British Open

In the British Open at Queen's, Chris's world title hopes ended with a straight-sets quarter-final defeat to world No 4 Bryn Sayers. After Virgona had then squeezed past Sayers in five sets and Tim Chisholm had inflicted Rob Fahey's first defeat of the season, Virgona controlled Chisholm in the final to claim his second British Open title. In the doubles, he and Chris had signalled their intent with a remarkable 6-0 6-0 6-0 'triple bagel' semi-final win over former RTC protégé Ben Taylor-Matthews and Kieran Booth, but the final offered a stern challenge: the proven pairing of Sayers and Ricardo Smith, who had been impressive in beating Fahey and Chisholm.

With Chris aiming to minimise the errors and enable Virgona to control the match with his accurate power-hitting, the Aussies took the first set 6-3. But Sayers was on song and the English duo soon levelled the match.

The pairs shared the first four games in the third set, but then superb defence by Chris and world-class attack by Virgona saw them take four straight games and the set. At 5-3 up in the fourth the Australians were on the brink of victory – but again back came the English, who saved four match

points on the way to 5-5. The 11th game was an easy one for the Aussies, though, and Virgona had his eighth British Open doubles title – and Chris his first.

Australian Open

In early January it was time for a homecoming for Chris, with the long flight to Melbourne. Seeded third, he had no alarms on his way to a semi-final against Fahey, and, like so many of their meetings in recent months, it was not a brief match. Chris fought valiantly and caused the world champion plenty of problems, but the wily champ always seems to raise his game just when it matters, and he prevailed in the fifth set, both players looking almost as exhausted after the 3½-hour match as your correspondent felt, having watched the online streaming from home after a 3am alarm call.

Would that marathon take its toll on the 47-year-old Fahey in the final against the much fresher Ben? At 4-0 to Ben in the opening set, anything seemed possible – but then Fahey moved into top gear. Ben's railroad was pummelled back into the dedans, and when he tried slower serves Fahey's cut volley was similarly too good. (How do you serve to this man?) Eighteen of the next 21 games went to Fahey.

In the doubles, Chris and the champ never looked in trouble against Booth and Taylor-Matthews, dropping just five games in three sets and giving Chris a second Open doubles title.

The ladies' Open in Melbourne saw the all-conquering Claire Fahey seemingly unaffected by her baby bump as she whitewashed Penny

Lumley in the final. She then teamed up with improving Dutch youngster Saskia Bollerman to defeat Penny and Tara Lumley in an entertaining doubles final.

World eliminators

The men now head to Chicago for the US Open in February. For the likes of Chris and Ben this means another shot at the big guns and a chance to gain early points in the 2018 World Championship race.

Meanwhile, Virgona and Chisholm could be forgiven for thinking ahead to their March showdown in the World Championship eliminators. Chisholm will surely have to win the opening Tuxedo leg of the tie before heading to Chicago for the second leg and potentially a third.

Riviere, the world No 1, has not played in a tournament since last June, but he is reportedly fit again and can concentrate on his training while Virgona and Chisholm fight it out. It will be a long tussle between now and 17 May, when Fahey, the champion since 1994, strides out on court in Newport, Rhode Island to defend his title yet again.

WORLD RACE

- 1 Camden Riviere
- 2 Steve Virgona
- 3 Tim Chisholm
- 4 Bryn Sayers

Virgona faces Chisholm in the first eliminator in March, at Tuxedo and then Chicago. The victor will then take on Riviere for the right to challenge Rob Fahey for the world title.

• NEWS IN BRIEF • NEWS IN BRIEF • NEWS IN BRIEF •

Watson's at it again

Serial trophy collector David Watson won his fifth National Over-50s title in November, strolling to success at Lord's emphatic wins over John Prens and Simon Shenkman (pictured with a smiling David). In the New Year David teamed up with son James to retain their Fathers & Sons title at Leamington, defeating the Seymour-Meads 8-2.



the Carol Service in the magnificent Chapel Royal. Afterwards, guests went back to the court for mince pies and mulled wine, to catch up with friends old and new. Thanks to Helen Crossley for organising the service and to Owen Saunders and Lindsay Hatchett from the social committee for organising the post-service refreshments.

Practice drills

Members can now sign up to drill coaching in fixed time-slots: Mondays 11.00-12.30 and Fridays 11.00-12.30. The practice drills can help players implement the knowledge and changes learned in lessons.

Carol Service

In December more than 200 members and guests attended

DAVID VAUGHAN (16/08/26–28/10/15)

David had been ill for a few months; it was peaceful, he was not in pain and he just slipped away at home. Many of his friends managed to visit him over recent months and he remained cheerful to the end. His wife Jane has been, and remains, wonderful was soon busy arranging the Thanksgiving Service.



the British Over-45 champion in the early 1970s.

Thereafter he took up real tennis (only wishing he had played earlier!) and was a stalwart member of RTC from then on. His zenith was to win the World Over-60s (he told me this was achieved by being slightly less injured than any of the other contestants!). He

was also an active member of Queen's, the Hurlingham Pigeons, Petworth and possibly other clubs.

David went to Cranleigh School and then, after a spell in the RAF just after the end of the war, went to Trinity College, Oxford, where he was a squash blue and also played hockey and lawn tennis with distinction. He went on to become one of the leading squash and lawn tennis players at Hurlingham for many years and served on the committee there with distinction. He also played his squash at the RAC and was one of the best amateur players of his generation, culminating in him becoming

One of his favourite clubs was the Jesters, of which he was a member for 66 years, having served on its committee and having been its chairman and thereafter its president up to 2015. He was the archetypal Jester: always cheerful, interested in others and particularly the young, a wonderful host and always charming and good fun both on and off the court.

He will be much missed!

Robert Doleman

The Modern Jesters President

The song below, written by Andrew Page, reflects the widespread affection for David Vaughan within the Jesters, a social roaming club

VERSE 1

*He is the very model of a modern Jesters' President.
He's jocular and genial. He's never shy or hesitant.
At squash and real tennis he's a venerable veteran.
For after-dinner speakers, we have never known a better 'un.
His repartee is witty, never given to vernacular –
Unless he's on the port, when his capacity's spectacular.
From Sparta to Jakarta and from Bogota to Borneo,
You'll never find an evergreen-er President than Vaughnio.*

REPRISE

*You'll never find an evergreen-er President than Vaughnio.
You'll never find an evergreen-er President than Vaughnio.
You'll never find an evergreen-er President than horny
Vaughnio.*

VERSE 2

*He's working on his girth a bit, like many men of eighty are.
The growth in his circumference has made his speeches weightier.
His blazer keeps his tummy in – don't ask him to unbutton it!
At realers, in his flannels, he can still put heavy cut on it.
A source of inspiration and of wisdom to the juniors,
A fount of generosity towards the impecunious,
He's never one to argue or reply to others testily.*

In triumph and disaster he's magnanimous and jesterly.

REPRISE

*In triumph and disaster he's magnanimous and jesterly.
In triumph and disaster he's magnanimous and jesterly.
In triumph and disaster he's magnanimous and jester-jesterly.*

VERSE 3

*Although his hair is whiter and his teeth are getting denture-y,
He likes his women younger by a quarter of a century.
He loves to take 'em dancing and go twirling 'em and swirling 'em,
At Hampton Court and Queen's Club and the RAC and
Hurlingham.
The Peter Pan of Jesters, he is staving off senility.
It's Jane, and not Viagra, that's the cause of his virility.
In short, you'll never find a man whose temperament is placider
Than Vaughan our ancient President, the Jesters Club
Ambassador.*

REPRISE

*Let's toast our ancient President, the Jesters Club Ambassador.
Let's toast our ancient President, the Jesters Club Ambassador.
Let's toast our ancient President, the Jesters Club Ambassa-
bassa-dor*

Harris Watson Trophy doubles

In early December the club's elite players descended on the Palace to compete for places in the final of the Harris Watson Trophy, the club's level doubles championship.

While two pairings enjoyed byes to the semi-finals, the third and fourth seeds had to negotiate quarter-finals. First up were James Sohl and Simon Barker, who had no trouble with Simon Edmond and David Blizzard. David Watson (aiming for a 14th consecutive final) and James Watson looked slightly out of sorts against Stephen Goss and Fred

Satow but advanced without any major scares.

Defending champions Peter Wright and Ed Kay moved into the final past Sohl and Barker 6-2 6-4 but were made to work hard. The second semi-final was meant to be tight, but while the Watsons upped their game considerably, club singles champion Nick Hatchett and Tom Freeman struggled for rhythm. The more experienced pair gave nothing away and soon wrapped up a 6-2 6-2 win to set up a repeat of the 2014-15 final, which should take place in the spring.

It's Parsons by a nose

Sarah Parsons survived a gruelling slog in the early stages of the Barker Camm Cup

The long build-up to decide the club singles championship has begun in earnest. The format of the Barker Camm Cup allows each level of player to enjoy competitive action against their peers, with the two finalists of each grade then getting to test themselves one division up.

Grade F (60+ handicap)

In the opening weekend, the finalists represented a new generation of players. Paul Teuten, a new member who had joined recently from a squash-playing background, saw off wiser opponents on his way to the final against a youthful opponent in Oli Stewart. The match consisted of long rallies, great court coverage and so many short chases of 3 or better, the marker couldn't even begin to recall how many. Fittingly it concluded with a fine forehand floor shot to the grille, struck by young Master Stewart, the winner 6-3 2-6 6-1.

Grade E (50-59)

It's not often we see a hat-trick of wins in this competition, but Sarah Parsons did just that, winning Grade E for the third year running. Despite not being the lowest handicapped player, she upped her game to see off a tough field and won in epic circumstances in a memorable final.



Grade E winner and Sarah Parsons and Ben Simonds-Gooding after a battle royal

Sarah's route to the final involved an unorthodox win against the improving Paul Teuten. With the game poised at one set all, Paul had to retire due to evening commitments. Sarah then saw off John Mather in three sets, her ability to find the dedans and win chases at key points proving the difference.

Waiting in the final was Ben Simonds-Gooding, another rapid improver who had taken five points off his handicap since September. Round one saw him coming out on top in a nailbiting three-setter against Araminta Oldham, in which he fought back from 15-40 down at 5-5 in the final set. His semi against Mike Shattock was more comfortable.

Almost as soon as Ben had finished his semi-final, he was back on court for the final with Sarah, who took advantage of having fresh legs to win the first set 6-2. Her fierce, backhand cut volley from the serve was working very well and it seemed as if almost half her returns found the nick or the dedans.

The second set was much more tightly contested, as Ben tried some new serves, forcing Sarah to adopt a more defensive return which resulted in some fantastic rests and a tense 6-5 conclusion in favour of Ben.

The final set started at 3-3, and both players, having each played seven sets in the past 24 hours, were looking fatigued. There was lots of changing ends and points were won from scoring good chases and hitting targets quickly. The first match point for Sarah, at 5-3 and 40-15, saw Ben beating a chase of better than half a yard by cleverly looping the ball into the corner of the dedans. The tide seemed to be turning in his favour as he again saved a match point at 5-4. However, it wasn't to be, as Sarah hit what must have been her 30th dedans of the day to seal the match and the title.

Both Sarah and Ben will no doubt relish the opportunity to test their skills against the fortysomethings in February's Grade D weekend.

John Mather

Any questions? The Annual Dinner explained

Back in October, 80 members and guests attended RTC's annual Prizegiving Dinner, held in the Garden Room at the Palace. Prize-winners of all ages and handicaps were recognised, as guests enjoyed a Pol Roger reception followed by a three-course meal. Live music, from Bronstein & Co's jazz duet, was very popular. Many people have asked questions about the dinner and made suggestions. In order to help members' understanding of the event, here are some of the frequent questions and comments we receive.

Why does it cost so much? I can't afford it.

The ticket price is set so that the event breaks even financially at approximately 120 guests. If you had champagne, a three-course meal and unlimited wine and soft drinks at a local restaurant, the cost would not be far off the cost of the prizegiving dinner. Although we subsidise tickets for juniors, we do not think it would be a good use of club funds to subsidise full members. The general principle is that social events should at least cover their costs.

Why not hold it somewhere else?

We have in recent years held the dinner at Hampton Court

Golf Club, and have looked into other local venues. None offers significantly better value for money. We have also looked into holding it on the court, but the logistics are very complex, with very little cost saving.

Why isn't it a dinner dance?

If the event is well supported and members are enthusiastic, then there's no reason it can't be a dinner dance.

Why can't we do it in the Great Hall?

The Great Hall costs a very significant sum to hire. Even after a generous discount from Historic Royal Palaces, the cost of the dinner would be closer to £150 per ticket, and we would need to have at least 200 guests. If the annual dinner is successful and well attended, we will continue to look each year into the viability of holding it in the Great Hall.

I don't own a tuxedo so I can't come.

Although the dress code is black tie, men are more than welcome to attend in lounge suits. Several have done so – as they do not own a tuxedo or because they hadn't seen the instructions – and they have said they did not feel awkward and thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Owen Saunders

Legends of the fall

The Autumn Night Pennant final was a family affair

The Autumn Night Pennant final saw the two top teams from the group stage pitted against each other, Julian Sheraton-Davis's team having come through against Saverio Campione's trio the previous week to face John



Julian and Linda Sheraton-Davis with their super-sub Vernon Morris

Dagnall et al. With each team down one player (Patrick Griffith standing in for Ian Scoffield in the Dagnall team and Vernon Morris joining the Sheraton-Davises in place of Doug Sheperdigian), it was set up to be a well-matched contest. First up were Julian and John, each approaching their game with their usual clarity of thought and determination. It was nip and tuck to 4-4 before Julian's sense of purpose and crisp volleying gave him the set.

Next was Linda Sheraton-Davis, up against Patrick. After a tight beginning, Linda asserted her grip on the set with some excellent volleying and tight

servicing, keeping Patrick under pressure and taking it 6-1.

In the final singles, Vernon began to hit the dedans repeatedly. Stephen Price put up a spirited defence under the onslaught, but the set went to Vernon 6-3. John et al needed all the

doubles to retrieve the match from 0-3.

John and Patrick faced Julian and Linda in the first doubles. This was evenly matched, but with Julian and Linda maintaining the pressure on their opponents, they were able to take the set 6-5, and therefore the match.

John and Stephen saved some face by taking the fifth rubber 6-3, and the last was cancelled after an injury to Vernon.

This closely fought contest was played in excellent spirit, with great fun had by all participants. Congratulations to the victorious trio, who celebrated with a wonderful lamb casserole prepared by Lesley. **Paul Newton**

Doys engineer Brunel victory

RTC's Giles and Katy Doy have won the Brunel Cup at Bristol, a handicap doubles event held to celebrate 30 years since the formation of the club.

Giles and Katy (who, you may recall, won our own King's Goblet doubles last summer) won all five of their group matches to qualify for the final. They were up against a home pairing of Clive Archer and James Dron, who couldn't cope with the handicap of owe 30-rec 30, one serve, banned tambour. Giles and Katy won all the crucial points to race to an impressive 4-0 4-0 win.

There was a really good turnout in the dedans for the final and the earlier matches, proving that Bristol is one of the friendlier clubs to visit. **Phil Dunn**

Junior events

Ed Kay may be one of the world's top amateurs, but he remains happy to turn up every January and concede enormous handicaps in the Wollaston Cup (for those aged under 25).

However, young George Parsons was the star of the show, storming to the title. In the Chairman's Cup (level singles) Ed beat Alex Rozier-Pamplin, while the Vaughan Trophy (level doubles) saw Ed and Alex (pictured below with Jane Vaughan) beat Peter Mather and Isabel Candy.

Ed lost a close National U-24 final at Middlesex University, meanwhile, but won the doubles with Jamie Giddins.



RESULTS

Lathom Browne Cup

Final: Doug Sheperdigian beat Fred Satow 9-3.

Pol Roger Trophy

Quarter-final: RTC beat Manchester 5-0. David Watson & James Watson beat Adam Holloway & Mark Openshaw Blower 6-2 6-4; Phil Dunn & James Sohl beat Mark Seymour-Mead & Guy Maxwell 6-3 6-1; Peter Wright beat Robert Shenkman 6-3 6-4; Nick Hatchett beat Simon Shenkman 6-1 6-4; Tom Freeman beat Alex Duncliffe-Vines 6-2 6-4.

Brodie Cup

2nd rd: Hatfield 2 RTC 3.

Quarter-final: Hardwick 0 RTC 5.

Junior tournaments

Wollaston Cup final: George Parsons beat Peter Mather 9-1. **Chairman's Cup final:** Ed Kay beat Alex Rozier-Pamplin 6-1 6-3. **Vaughan Trophy final:** Kay & Rozier-Pamplin beat Isabel Candy & Mather 6-0 6-2.

Harris Watson Trophy

Semi-finals: Peter Wright & Ed Kay beat James Sohl & Simon Barker 6-2 6-4; David & James Watson beat Nick Hatchett & Tom Freeman 6-2 6-2.

Barker Camm Cup

Grade F final: Oli Stewart beat Paul Teuten 6-3 2-6 6-1. **Grade E final:** Sarah Parsons beat Ben Simonds-Gooding 6-2 5-6 6-4.

RTC Top Ten

Singles handicaps
January 2016

1	Peter Wright	3.6
2	Ed Kay	5.3
3	Nick Hatchett	8.2
4	Charlie Crossley	9.5
5	David Watson	12.0
6	Phil Dunn	15.0
7	Tom Freeman	15.6
8	James Watson	16.5
9	James Sohl	17.5
10	Simon Barker	18.6

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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