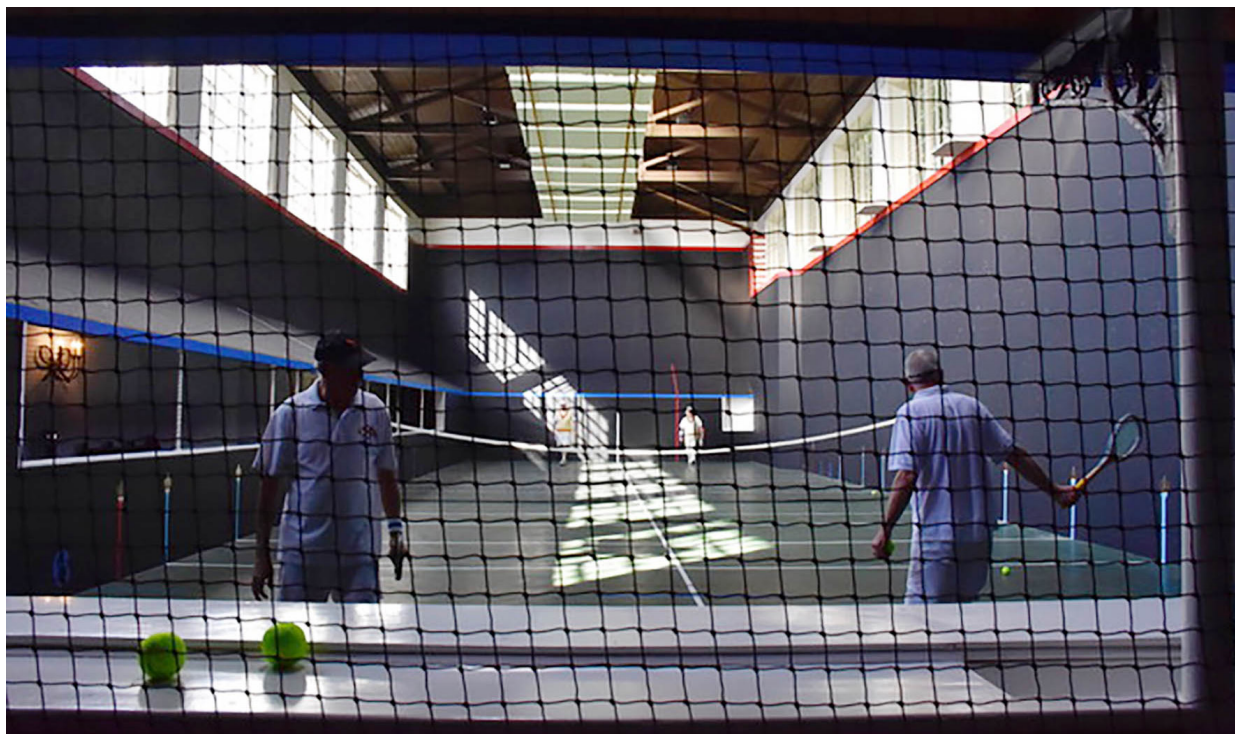


# The Dedanist $\delta$



*The tennis court, Fairlawne, Kent*

## From The Editors

**W**e were pleasantly surprised by the positive feedback received regarding the first edition of 'The Dedanist': so much so, that we were encouraged enough to press on and produce a second edition - which you are now reading; however, it would have been less of a slog for us had we not had to write all the articles for Edition 2 ourselves. Might the Ambassadors consider providing us with something for 'From the Marker's Box', other than merely our own efforts, for Edition 3 in the Spring? There must be something of interest going on in our clubs, now that court usage is nearly back to pre-Covid levels...

Like the Roman god Janus, 'The Dedanist' faces both ways in outlook: forwards, by including articles of the Society's involvement with youth development – which was, of course, the reason for the club's very existence – and backwards, by featuring in 'Behind the Grille' articles on the history of our extraordinary game, the most complex of the numerous 'gain-ground' ball games, (where the objective is to make 'chases' that occupy as much of the opponents' territory as possible, leaving them, on changing sides, with a much reduced area of ground within which to win the point).

In this edition, the loss of the 'bisque' to the handicap system is lamented, and in the article on the origin of scoring a compelling case is made – if only by its logicity – for why we use the system we do, which sweeps away (we like to think) the many other theories involving clock faces, or various proposals with their origin in astronomy or geometry, currency used in wagers (a very common practice, agreed) and such like: the one theory we think most fanciful (but quite elegant), is, because indoor courts in France are marked in chases of one foot, thus allowing 14 before the floor line for 'dernière gallerie', a point would be called by the marker '15' to differentiate without doubt to the players that a point and not a chase had been made... (it falls down because the present scoring system was in use long before any French indoor courts had chases marked on the floor (and, of course outdoor courts have never had them). 'A' for effort, though.

We hope this edition will again interest and amuse, and even stimulate a Correspondence column – emails are awaited!

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# From The Dedans

Chairman's report



## The Academy - Is It Worth It?

The British Real Tennis Academy is the national coaching programme for the best young players in the country. Each year, 25 or so players are selected for a programme of tennis coaching, matchplay, physical training and sports psychology. The players are 12 to 24 years of age and amateurs and professionals of both genders. They are selected according to age, handicap and potential. They are coached by the best players of their time such as Rob and Claire Fahey, Chris Bray, Nick Wood, Bryn Sayers and Ben Taylor-Matthews. The Academy is run by the Dedanists' Society who launched it 15 years ago and partner with the T&RA to pay for it. What are the outcomes? Is the Academy worth it?

### *At the top end of international tennis.*

Witness the recently completed British Open Singles! Academy players, past and present, dominated the entry and the results. The winner, John Lumley, and the losing finalist, Ben Taylor-Matthews, are both Academy alumni. 20 of the 24 players in the main draw are past or present Academy players, 17 of them alumni and 3 of them current players. One of these, William Flynn, age 18, is the youngest UK player ever to have played in the main draw.

### *At the top end of national and club tennis*

The annual influx of Academy alumni raises the quality of play in club matches and national tournaments - and the quality of club coaching. Over the last 15 years, the Academy has generated 80 alumni who are now 20 to 40 years of age and have current handicaps of +6 to -29. Most are still playing. What an addition to real tennis!

## John Lumley

Many congratulations to John Lumley on winning the 2021 British Open. He is the first UK player to win a national open singles title since Bryn Sayers won the British Open in 2012 at the age of 27. Research suggests that it typically takes top players 10,000 hours or 13 years of practice to reach their peak and that they do so at 30 to 32 years of age. John was in our British Academy from 2007 to 2013 before moving to the USA as a club professional. He is now 29 years of age. He has done his 10,000 hours. We detect a will to win burnished with Australian DNA, US culture and a world champion mother. Dedanists and supporters wish him well and hope for more titles to come.

## Investing In Professionals (IIP)

IIP is a national T&RA-led programme to transform the recruitment, training and accreditation of real tennis professionals such that they deliver more, earn more and continuously attract a healthy supply of new applicants to the role. The training and accreditation are as much for existing as for new professionals. The training is as much about business and club management as about real tennis. The Dedanists are especially interested in the IIP apprenticeship scheme to recruit and train 4 new professionals a year for the foreseeable future. Last year, the Dedanist's Society and the Dedanist's Foundation together donated £8,000 to support the launch of IIP and the apprenticeship scheme. The Society committed to include apprentices in as much of its Academy coaching programme as possible. This year, Dedanists are delighted to applaud the success of IIP and its many outstanding achievements. In its first

year of operation, it's outstanding for IIP to have recruited 4 good apprentices, 2 of them from outside the game. It's outstanding to have brought together, for the first time (?), a core of senior professionals to agree in detail the skills, knowledge, training, accreditation and career progression that the role requires. It's outstanding to have engaged 30 or more club representatives in planning the programme so that they know it, own it and are more likely to support and implement it locally. It's outstanding to have raised more than £40,000 in donations from a standing start.

Covid stopped real tennis in its tracks, paused day-to-day activity and provided the game's movers and shakers with a special opportunity to plan a new future. Through the leadership of David Watson and Chris Davies, the T&RA took this opportunity. The T&RA has led the IIP programme from the beginning in terms of vision, drive and funding. Dedanists have played their part too - especially John Whiting as facilitator extraordinaire and Carl Snitcher as fundraiser extraordinaire.

We look forward to the new regime of professional recruitment, training and standards bringing new and talented outsiders into our game and refreshing it accordingly.

## *A Date for your Diary*

### **DEDANISTS' FIXTURES DEC 2021 - APRIL 2022**

Dec 4 Wellington  
Jan 8 Hardwick  
Jan 16 Newmarket  
Jan 22-23 Paris  
Feb 5 MCC  
Feb 6 Petworth  
Feb 19 Oratory  
Mar 6 Pigeons/Wellington  
Mar 12 Hatfield  
Mar 19 Seacourt

**If you wish to play in any  
fixture please contact  
Match Managers**

## National fixtures (selected)

### DECEMBER

1-2 O70 Hcp Singles Leamington  
15-19 U21 Open Singles MURTC  
U24 Open Singles MURTC  
U24 Open Doubles MURTC  
18-19 U18 Hcp Singles MURTC

### JANUARY

7-9 Nat Fathers & Sons Leamington  
Club Hcp Singles (Chetwood Trophy) Hyde  
9 T&RA v Army Queen's  
14-16 Nat Schoolgirls Hcp  
Singles & Doubles Wellington  
14-16 Cattermull Cup (Alumni) Hcp MURTC  
22 Field Cup/Pol Roger SemiFinals  
23 Brodie Cup SemiFinals  
28-30 Leamington Open Hcp Singles  
Leamington

### FEBRUARY

3-6 Silver Racquet Seacourt  
6 InterSchools Doubles (t month!'13) Level  
Oratory  
InterSchools Doubles (U16) Level Radley  
Inter Schools Doubles (Seniors) Level  
Queen's  
12-20 Amateur Singles & Doubles  
Championship Queen's  
25-27 Inv Mixed Doubles (Billy Ross-  
Skinner) Hatfield  
O40 Amateur Doubles Prested Hall  
Sir A Noble Trophy Jesmond Dean  
27 Inter Schools Hcp Doubles Wellington  
Inter Schools Hcp  
Doubles (U14) Wellington

### MARCH

3-6 Spring Hcp W/end Queen's  
4-5 151st Varsity Match Lord's  
5 Field Trophy Final Moreton Morrell  
Pol Roger Final RTC  
Brodie Cup Final Hyde  
11-12 Inter-Universities Cambridge (tbc)  
11-13 Over 60s Kershaw Cup Manchester  
12-13 Prested Hcp Doubles Prested Hall  
18-20 40-49 Hcp Singles Wellington  
18-20 20-29 Hcp Singles Moreton Morrell  
30-39 Hcp Singles Hatfield House  
50-59 Hcp Singles Prested Hall  
60+ Hcp Singles Oratory British Ladies  
Radley  
19-20 MCC All comers Lord's  
26 LRTA v Queen's Queen's

## From The Marker's Box

*On court activities*



*'Congratulations to John Lumley on winning the 2021  
British Open Singles Championship last month!'*

A full fixture list is beginning to make its presence known, with reports of the Warwickshire Weekend and matches v. Manchester, the 'Hamsters' of Hampton Court and Middlesex University now to be found on the website.

Dedanist activity seems to be nearly back to full strength, limited perhaps by continued travel uncertainties and reports of minor injuries to regular players for the Society – reflecting over-enthusiasm after the months of confinement, perhaps?

The next few months look busy too, and include another visit to Rod McNaughtan and the Paris court - D.V.- by Dedanists (and a rendezvous with the Society's only International member, from the Paris club) in the offing in January; you-know-what permitting – (an article on the Paris court and some of the other delights of the 'City of Light' can be found in the section 'From Other Courts')...

## Wood's Words:

*Our Honorary professional Nick Wood's advice on how to make the court work for you*

### 'The fine art of serving'

**Bobble, Side wall, Giraffe, Demi-Pique, Railroad.** There are many, many serves to try but what do we hope to achieve with them?

#### Priorities

1. Put the ball into play
2. Prevent your opponent from playing an attacking shot OR persuade your opponent to return to your strength
3. Win the point - an ace!

Those who only go in search of the ace will often draw a dud. Choose your serve carefully, depending on whether you hope to pin your opponent down or encourage your opponent to hit to your strength, and position and balance yourself. Find your target to guide the serve - this may be a mark on the wall or penthouse, or a spot on the ceiling, or you may have to visualise a target. For high serves I imagine a basketball hoop on the wall. To be accurate it is important to achieve the correct pace, line and length. It is these three elements that will produce aces. Initially, avoid spinning the ball as this will only increase the chance of inaccuracy. As you improve and gain in confidence, and it is appropriate, spin can be added.

#### SERVES

**The Bobble** is often used as a second serve but can also be devastating as a first serve. When used well, it can pin your opponent tight to the back wall, making the return very awkward.

**The Side Wall** can die against the back wall and has a propensity to push your opponent backwards. I often see this served with too much spin at the cost of accuracy.

**The Giraffe** loops high in the air, lands on the penthouse and kicks across the court, forcing your opponent to backpedal rapidly and/or make them play from the grille corner of the court. This serve is best delivered with a twist of spin.

**The Demi Pique** is a good serve to confuse the volley return of serve. Striking the penthouse near the service line, the ball carries onto the wall then on its way down it preferably shaves the edge of the bandeau before dropping dead weight against the back wall.

**The Railroad** traditionally runs along the bottom edge of the penthouse and will keep close to the side wall, which encourages your opponent to hit cross court. Often too much emphasis is put on spin - allow a natural action to impart spin so that pace, line and length are not sacrificed.

## From the Academy

*Youth development*



*Top: Action on court in the Under 19's doubles championship held at Holyport. Left: Winners, Medlow & Trueman. Right: Runners Up, Garson & Henman.*

## All Four Finalists come from The British Academy!

### British Under 19 Doubles 2021

After two tight semis, the final pitted the two seeds against one another, and the match did not disappoint. Henman and Garson started quickly, rushing to 3/0 without relinquishing the service end. The Seacourt pair did not look flustered, and after setting a chase started to dictate the play and took the next 6 games and the set 6/3. The tennis on court was high level, tremendous attacking cut shots and drives were met with resilient defence on all sides, much to the delight of those in the stands. The second set was more closely fought, with neither pair going more than two games ahead. Trueman and

Medlow began to exert just a little more pressure from the service end and limit the Radley pair from finding chases and forcing them to play higher risk shots. Trueman and Medlow were just too strong in the end and played the final few games with solidity in both attack and defence, to take the set 6/4 and the match.

It really was a pleasure to watch all of the tennis and to see the tennis stars of the future play at such a high level in all aspects of the game. It is a credit to them and those who support them.

## Great Performances by Two of our Academy Players

In mid-November, Lea Van der Zwahlen, a member of the Academy's High-Performance group, reached the final of the Raquette d'Or Tournament. Lea played the current world No.6 (the top player in France) Matthieu Sarlangue 4-6, 4-6, 3-6. The Raquette d'Or is one of France's premier Real Tennis events and Lea was the only female player to enter. A fantastic achievement! Lea also reached the final of the doubles with fellow Academy player, Florent Brethon, a member of the Academy's Development Squad whose promising start at Bordeaux and Radley was featured in the last edition.

## Academy Season off to a Great Start

The 2021/22 Academy Season has got off to a very successful start. So far there have been 10 group sessions involving all of the members of our various squads, plus one-on-one sessions for members of the High Performance squad. The group sessions took place at Seacourt, Queen's, Oratory, Wellington and Middlesex. Our Academy players have been coached by top professionals, Nick Wood, Ben Matthews, Andy Lyons, Rob Fahey, Bryn Sayers, Dan Jones and Chris Bray, with gym sessions by Andy Chinneck.

# From Behind the Grille

Articles mainly about the history of tennis

## The Origin of the Scoring System in Real and Lawn Tennis or Walking the ‘Quinze’

**W**e know how it goes. First Point 15; Second Point 30; Third point 40 (formerly 45); Fourth point (Game or, if 40 all (deuce), then two ahead). But why?

For the first time, at least in the English language, but taken entirely from French sources, the Editors present what they believe is the first credible answer to that question. Aware as we are that readers of *The Dedanist* (all three of them) like to cut to the chase, and avoid the boring bits, we'll start, as we customarily do, with the Conclusions, which are:

- That the numbers 15, 30, 40 (or 45) aren't points as such but each one is a 'quinze', deriving from one of a number of versions of the ancient game of *Longue Paume*. The winner of 'un quinze' could take 15 paces towards the cord that divided the pitch, thereby reducing the area in which the opponent could win a point. To put this into context, a *longue paume* pitch (terrain) could be 65 to 80 metres in length or indeed, in one version of the game, limitless, at least on the receiving side and depending on the number of players (between 2 and 12). By comparison, real tennis or *courte paume* – the clue is in the name - is played on a much shorter court of around 30 metres in length.

- You may well ask how 45 became 40, and it is for the following very practical reason. Because *Longue Paume* terrains (pitches) varied in length, on some it was judged that 45 paces would take the player with the serve so close to the cord that the receiver had no reasonable chance of returning it. So, on winning the third point, it became the custom that the player took ten rather than fifteen paces, making 40 in all.

### Notes and Supporting Evidence

The evidence presented below is anecdotal, in that it isn't corroborated by witnesses, but is part of the oral tradition of *Longue Paume*, the much older country cousin of *Courte Paume* which was played by hand in open fields by villeins and peasants who simply called the game they were playing 'Paume'. The phrase 'jeu de main, jeu de vilain', suggests, slightly disparagingly, that everyone played it, and they did so well before the stone structures of castles and



*Charles Delahaye ('Biboche') [1825–1906]; aged 55. Tennis professional at Tuileries Gardens, Paris, for 34 years.*

cathedrals of the 14th and 15th century made possible the game which eventually differentiated itself by reference to its smaller size – *Courte Paume* – the game we play today. *Paume* itself comprised a family of ancient 'palm' games that were defined according to the way the ball was struck - *la balle au tamis* (tambour), *la balle à la main* (hand), and *le ballon au poing* (fist) – all of which were played under the open sky without walls. Bearing in mind that players of *Longue Paume* were not necessarily literate or, it might also be said, rich enough to bet on the outcome, and given that the rules varied from town to town and region to region, it's not surprising that they weren't codified until the 19th century – much later than those of *Courte Paume* (first described in Italy by Scaino in his *Trattato della Palla* of 1555, and by Forbet in France in 1599). On the question of scoring, Scaino notes (as Erasmus had done in 1520) vaguely that the manner of counting in fifteens had been adopted 'years ago'.

**So here's what we have:**

- Who's the idiot who invented the scoring system in tennis?

<https://www.digitalmarmelade.com/2014/06/quel-est-le-con-qui-a-invente-la-facon-de-compter-les-points-au-tennis/>

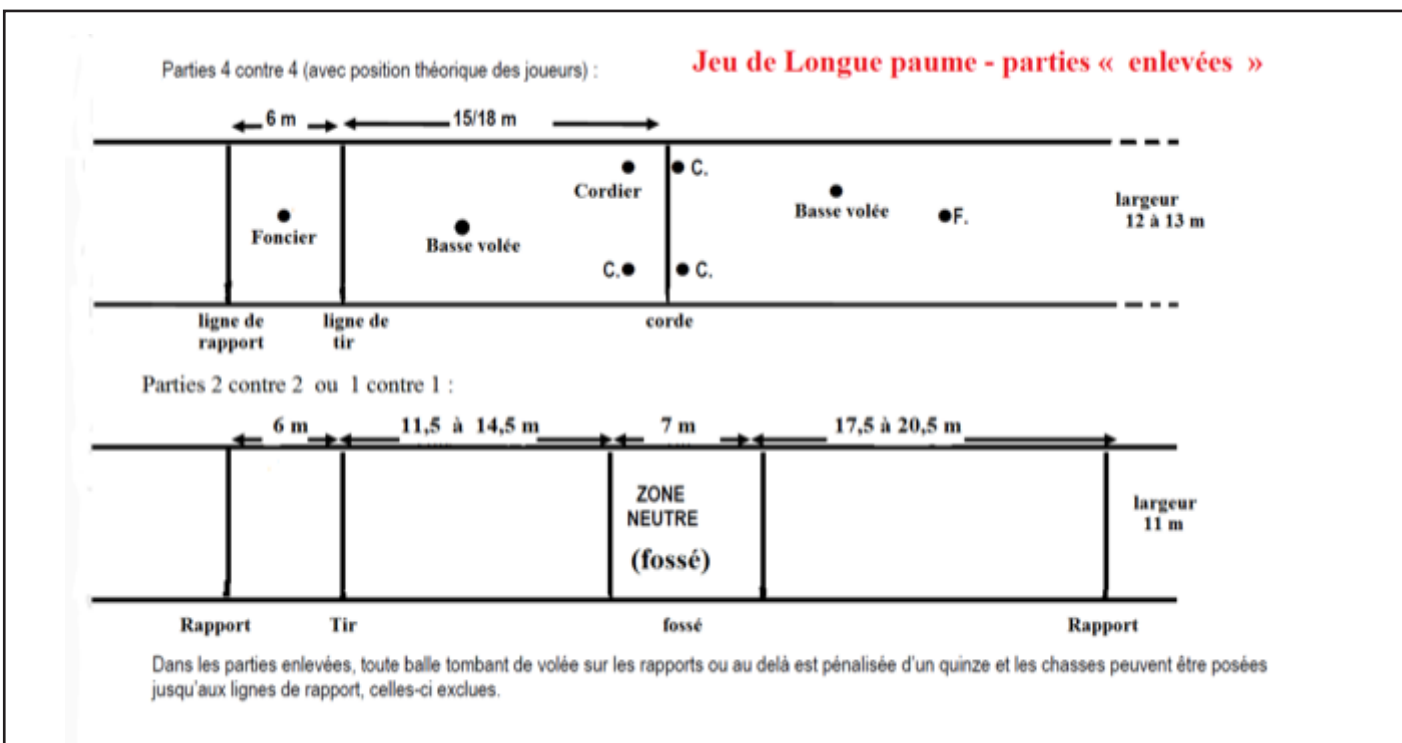
1 • 'A celebrated paumier of the 19th century, Charles Delahaye, used to say that the 'quinze' represented a measure of length. In his youth he was present at a Longue Paume match where points weren't scored, but where the server walked forward to a new service line 15 feet closer to the net when he played a winning shot. If he won again he continued to walk 15 feet, and so on, until, having won four points, he arrived at the net. His opponent did the same. When both players got to 45 feet they had to win two further points to take the game'.

Note: Charles Delahaye, nicknamed Biboche, was born in 1825 in Amiens, Picardy, where his father owned a courte paume court, and it would have been in Amiens, which even today is a stronghold of longue paume, that he saw the longue paume game being played. He retired after a lifetime as a professional paumiste in Paris in 1896.

2 • Marcel Lazure, a historian of Longue Paume, was interviewed in 1976 See it here: <https://fresques.ina.fr/picardie/fiche-media/Picard00805/la-longue-paume-en-picardie.html>

Lazure said:

'The origins of Longue Paume are ancient. The game the Romans called 'pila' was passed from Greece to Rome, and there can't be any doubt that the Romans brought the game to Gaul.... According to the most reliable authors, the traditional 15,30,40 of Longue Paume, which have since been taken up by tennis, represent not points but distances. Games being made up four points, when the player had won the first point, he took 15 paces. If we call each pace 30 centimetres that's altogether about 4.5 metres. When he won the second, he walked to 30 feet, and the third to 45 feet. It seems that it was thought this gave him too much advantage, so they pulled it back to 40'.



**The Court** *Diagrams of dimensions of courts for longue paume - note that a point is referred to as a 'quinze'*

3 • Tennis – Pratique et Société • Martine Reneaud et Françoise Rollan • 1995

Maison Des Sciences de L'Homme d'Aquitaine

<https://books.openedition.org/msha/7191>

The authors offer this:

'In Longue Paume the server who has won a point goes forward 15 feet, then 15 more for the second point, and so on, four points leading to the net (filet) since the pitch (terrain) in this instance at Roye in Picardy, measured 60 royal feet either side. It must have been reckoned that going forward 45 feet conceded too great an advantage, so it was decided, no doubt, that 40 feet would mark the point at which two points would win the game. This convention was not general'.

Note: A 'pied royau' is 32.48 cms.

**Longue Paume is still played in France, in the towns and villages of Picardy, avidly, by local teams, and every Sunday in Paris in a corner of the Jardins de Luxembourg. Walking the 'quinze' is no longer part of the game, but it has left its mark, so to speak, in the scoring system of real and lawn tennis.**

**Other Sources:**

*Le Jeu de Paume, son Histoire et sa Description - Edouard Fournier • Paris • 1862*

*La Paume et Le Lawn Tennis • E de Nanteuil et G de Saint-Clair – Delahaye • Hachette • Paris • 1898*

*Les Sports et Jeux d'Exercice Dans L'Ancienne France - J Jusserand • Paris • 1901*

*Le Jeux de Balles et Ballons Picards • Marcel Lazure • Centre Régional de Documentation Pédagogique de Picardie • 1996*



**longue paume as played in Picardy today**



# From Other Courts Home

## The 'bisque' and the 'half-bisque'

It is very regrettable that, with the introduction of the modern handicap system, the 'bisque' and the 'half-bisque' (or 'biscon') have fallen into desuetude, to be replaced by the handicaps of 'owe half fifteen' for a two point difference and 'owe quarter fifteen' for a one point difference: neither modern handicap gives, to my mind, much advantage in a set – although better than nothing, of course – and both are certainly very much less of an advantage than being given a 'bisque' or 'biscon'....

Admittedly, there are some die-hard individuals who still occasionally use these ancient handicaps to enliven a game, and a few 'unofficial' tournaments have used them at Moreton, (and possibly other clubs too), and Radley have recently formed the RSPB ('Radley Society for the Protection of Bismques') and play matches using these medieval weapons against other clubs – for a bizarre trophy, known as 'Larry the Lobster'. (I know no more).

What on earth am I burling on about? First, some definitions verbatim from my 1999 copy of *The Laws of Tennis* ['he' really means 's/he', of course]:

A bisque is one point in a set conceded to an opponent. The player receiving the bisque may take it to win one point in each set at any time subject to the following:-

- a] he may not take it during a rest
- b] If server, he may not take it after serving one fault
- c] if he takes it to win or to defend a Chase, he may not do so before the time comes to change sides. Then, if there is only one chase, he may take it and need not change sides or he may take it after changing sides but, after he has passed the Net he may not go back again; and
- d] if there are two chases the players must change sides before the bisque is taken.
- e] it may not taken at set point.

For example: you have a bisque, the score is 40-all, and your opponent is about to serve, defending (say) chase 2. Difficult to beat, so you claim the bisque and are awarded the point. Your opponent loses the game.

The player receiving a biscon may take it:  
a] to call 'Chase Off' and so annul a chase about to be played for; or  
b] to annul a first fault served by him, or, [crucially]  
c] to add a second fault to one served by his opponent.

It is c] which can make the 'biscon' to my mind, an even more powerful weapon—given the right circumstances.

For example: you have a biscon; the score is 40 all, and your opponent is serving, defending (say) chase last gallery. Not too tricky to win (so you keep the biscon up your sleeve, hoping for a better opportunity to use it (in the next game perhaps), but – surprise! – his first serve is a fault. Now you claim the biscon! Server loses the game.

Not always like that, of course, but timing is all: if taken too early they may not influence a game very much; on the other hand, if left too late, or just completely forgotten about in the heat of battle, they won't influence a game at all.

The Trophée Kressmann is a very enjoyable singles and doubles tournament 'for amateur men and women over the age of 50', and is played annually in memoriam Édouard Kressmann, a tennis player at Bordeaux (and author of *A Manual for the Apprentice of Real Tennis*\*), who died in the changing room of the Merignac court after a game, glass of wine in hand, aged 78. It moved to Fontainebleau when the Merignac court was sold off, but next year it will return to the new court in Bordeaux.

All entrants to the singles tournament are awarded a biscon for every five years of age over 50—which makes for interesting matches (especially for the marker). Paying attention to the score and one's position (server or receiver) on court is paramount: short-term memory—or the lack of it—can be severely tested; not a few players just forget completely!

If you are eligible (ahem!) then join in: it's a terrific tournament in a very fine city. Recommended.

*\*Édouard Kressmann's book of instruction from Pierre Etchebaster is available in an English translation from Ronaldson Publications (see website).*

# Away

**The Paris club** has been infuriatingly frosty in time past – the tiresome French tennis pro (now mercifully retired) often refusing to speak English on the telephone – but since Manchester’s Rod McNaughtan became the pro there in 2015, he has been nothing if not enthusiastic in his welcome; and, surprisingly, the Parisian tennis players seem to have thawed remarkably in recent years too, if their noticeably increased conviviality towards the Dedanists and their recently established annual fixture in late January is anything to go by. (OK; they found the need by some Dedanists, on their last visit, to observe Burns’ Night - overenthusiastically, some might say - a little beyond them, but then, we don’t get madly excited by Bastille Day, so that is forgivable).

Is the court difficult to find? Yes and no. 74 rue Lauriston, in the 16th Arrondissement, is simple enough to find on foot; it’s a mere ten-minute walk from the metro at Arc de Triomphe and the delights of the ‘Étoile’, with its 12-exit roundabout. Actually, it is dead easy to negotiate it, if you are driving a car with UK number plates - the locals are so terrified by your driving they will give you a very wide berth... OK, with a lot of parp-parping perhaps, but a facetious grin (on your part) will disarm them.

By taxi, the difficulty is all houses look the same in this elegant area of Paris, and the sign with the tennis racquets above the entrance of 74

is hard to spot; your taxi driver may need a second run at it, down the one way street - despite your frantic gesticulations from the back seat (‘İçi! İçi!’).

Up the marble staircase to the third floor, and the club is revealed. Oak panelled walls and a fine Fin de Siècle court with large arched clerestory windows and a pitched roof to a height to rival Notre-Dame, and glazed like a Kew Gardens greenhouse - all providing excellent natural light.

There is also an excellent bar: mind the step.

Originally, there were two courts, but one has been converted into four frantic squash courts. It’s the same story all over Paris – before the Revolution there were more than 250 tennis courts in play, now just the one. The others? Almost all are lost and gone forever, but a few buildings remain: one in the Tuileries Gardens, now an art gallery of French Impressionists (worth a visit if you have time on your hands), which replaced the very short-lived court in the passage Sandrié, pulled down - to the fury of Paris’s tennis players - to make way for the Opéra Garnier (also worth a visit).

In rue Mazarine, in the Latin Quarter, there were six in a row, like ducks, but now all are gone except for one, the ‘Restaurant Alcazar’ - for many years a ‘restaurant trendy’, (their description, not mine) - frequented by Charles Aznavour & Jane Birkin, Johnny Halliday & Sylvie Vartan, David Bowie and the like, in days past (see photo) - even ‘Plastic Bertrand’, if you remember him, the French punk rocker whose big hit ‘Ça plane pour moi’ sold a million, but which was, I’m afraid to say, truly execrable. (It can be currently heard as the soundtrack of a TV advert for Kellogg’s corn flakes).

That glittering crowd have all now given way to today’s ‘gilded youth’, who may occasionally include Rod McNaughtan (or so he tells me), and occasional visiting tennis players, who shall remain



nameless – (but thanks for keeping up the reputation of the club, Leamington). Interior dimensions reveal that it was plainly a tennis court, with a glazed roof similar to rue Lauriston's - but the tambour has gone and around the perimeter a



*The Restaurant Alcazar post-Terence Conran*

also, surprisingly, bookable by tourists.

The only access after a night on the town is through a side door with a brass bell marked 'VICTIMES DE NUIT', (a euphemism for the VD Department, possibly?). You then weave your way carefully through a busy A&E ("bonsoir! bonsoir!...ooh, la! la! Pardonnez-moi!") in search of the lift for the 6th floor...



The hospital is immediately adjacent to Notre-Dame; so close, in fact, that you will be rudely awoken at 6am by 'the bells, the bells', pealing the morning Angelus....and loud they are too! If that weren't bad enough, you may also find that, (depending on the room you have been allocated), whilst dressing for the day ahead, you are being watched closely through your bedroom window by a leering stone gargoyle. But it is all good fun, and, anyway, you are on holiday. Regrettably, COVID-19 has closed the hotel part of the hospital indefinitely. Paris will never be quite the same again...



balcony for diners has been added. The kitchens used to be housed in the galleries - until the recent facelift of Terence Conran's 1960s design. Nothing stays the same.

On the Île-St-Louis, across the bridge behind Notre-Dame, away from tourist hubbub, is the 'Hôtel du Jeu de Paume': elegant and expensive - the Faheys stay there during the French Open - but now there is little evidence of the original tennis court (still worth a visit-check your credit card balance first).

Talking of hotels, the most ancient hospital in Paris, the Hôpital Hôtel-Dieu, has accommodation, of a modest Ibis-type standard, on its top floor, intended mainly for the use of patients' visiting relatives, but

# Whispers in the Galleries

*Gossip and tittle-tattle from the world of tennis*

## 'The Case of the Disappearing Refectory Table'...continued

**T**hose who play at the Middlesex Court in Hendon are waiting with bated breath to see if Middlesex University, on whose land the court sits, will be disposed to extend the life of the court there, or snuff it out altogether and redevelop the site for other purposes. There is, incidentally, still no explanation as to the fate of the magnificent refectory table that once adorned the dedans only to be replaced by the four tables visible in the accompanying photo which robs this 'eating area' of any atmosphere it once had...



## Development Opportunity in Dublin

**T**he Irish government remains unable to decide what to do with the 1885 Dublin tennis court; (converting it back into play would be too simple). It was bequeathed by Lord Iveagh to the State in 1939, in expectation of its continued use for the game of real tennis. Wrong. It was immediately given over to the Engineering Dept of UCD, which relocated some years ago, having removed the galleries and generally wrecked the Connemara marble flagstone floor. Vacant now for about ten years, planning permission given to alter its use to a children's

science museum and part-time real tennis court - complete with removable penthouses [eh?] - has recently expired without any attempt at building being commenced, so that idea is presumably now dead in the water, like the one before it (a 320-seat recital hall). The building is watertight, and the estimated cost of restoration isn't that prohibitive...any philanthropists among our readers with a spare €750,000? My only caveat would be that if purchase proves impossible, a long lease (equally watertight) is negotiated...



Wishing you all a very Happy  
Christmas & a Joyful 2022!

