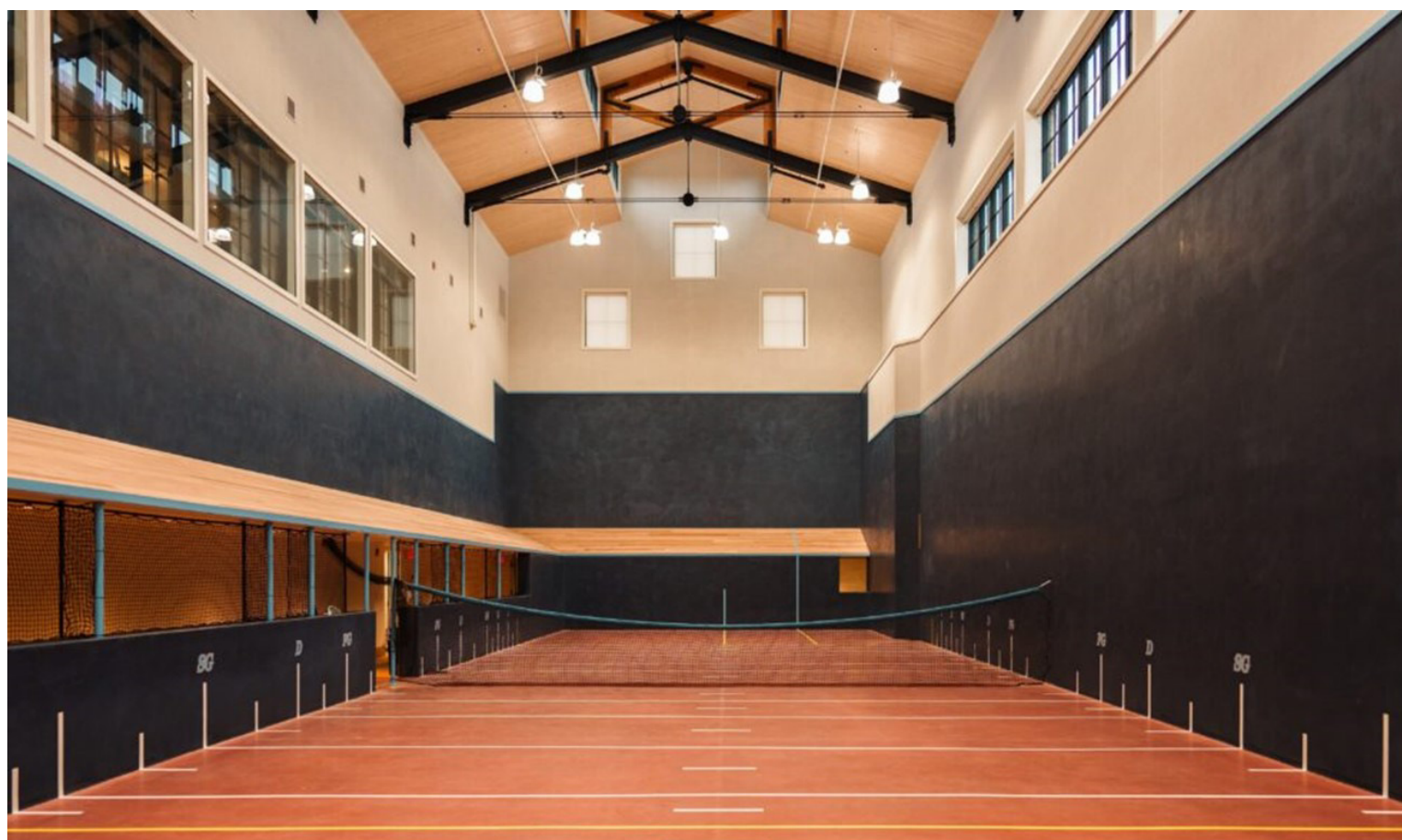

The Dedanist δ



The tennis court at Sand Valley Resort, Michigan, USA - officially opening in July 2024

From The Editors

All was going swimmingly in the offices of 'The Dedanist', with reports for this issue being assembled (vide infra) of a new court opening in Wisconsin, USA; news of planning permission (albeit with restrictions) being granted in respect of the restoration of the Dublin court, and an announcement (regrettably too late for inclusion) of the expected completion of building the new court in Sydney, Australia, in September – until a bombshell email from Paris was received regarding the catastrophic developments there, and the very high risk of its imminent total closure. Overconfidence reporting the perceived present healthy state of our game appears to have angered the gods... The comprehensive article from Rue Lauriston (see 'Whispers' section) sets out various business models for salvage of their club, but raising the financial sum required is a very tall order, and time seems to be very limited indeed. Closure would be a disaster. Almost certainly, no-one would have been more dismayed than our late (and much lamented) fellow member, Dr Adam Lawrence, winner of the Paris Racquet d'Argent 1963 and the Racquet d'Or 1964. Let us hope it can be saved.

Alastair Robson & Martin Village

Wood's Words:

More pearls of wisdom from our Honorary Professional!

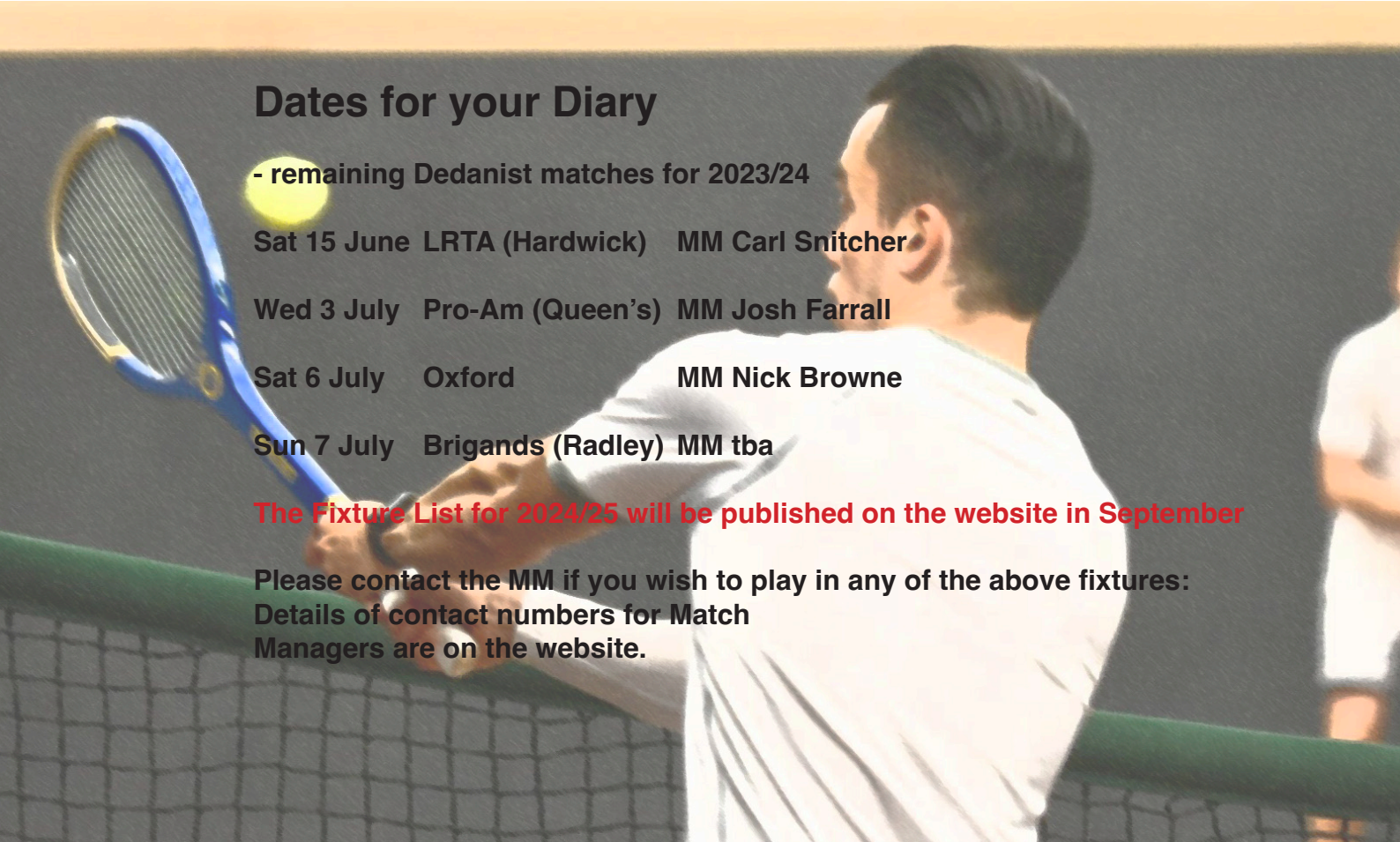
Our honorary professional Nick Wood says you can help yourself and the pros if you avoid hitting the heights

About three times a week the professionals here at RTC are seen dangling from the windows collecting stray balls. It's a mystery how they get there. Or is it?

Please help the pros' safety by keeping your shots on the floor (where the traditionalists play). What an easy way to improve your game: simply keep the ball off the penthouse roof (this advice does not refer to the serve). By not putting the ball 'up', you do not give your opponent a chance of an easy shot.

Why does the ball go 'up'? Well, the main reasons are bad shot selection and then overhitting. If you choose to 'force' the ball, then you'll have to suffer the consequences: it's best to leave that shot in your bag along with the one iron!

My advice is to strive constantly to hit the ball to a good length – the first bounce should be at a yard worse than last, or hazard 1 yard. You will win points, or your opponent is more likely to lift the ball, making your next shot easier. In the meantime we'll keep up the thrice-weekly ball collection.



Dates for your Diary

- remaining Dedanist matches for 2023/24

Sat 15 June LRTA (Hardwick) MM Carl Snitcher

Wed 3 July Pro-Am (Queen's) MM Josh Farrall

Sat 6 July Oxford MM Nick Browne

Sun 7 July Brigands (Radley) MM tba

The Fixture List for 2024/25 will be published on the website in September

Please contact the MM if you wish to play in any of the above fixtures:
Details of contact numbers for Match Managers are on the website.

Corrigendum

CORRIGENDUM – The Editors have long wished for a ‘Letters to the Editor’ feature, so I was pleased to receive the following email shortly after the last issue was circulated. At last we had something for the column –

Thank you for the latest Dedanist newsletter. As proof that I have at least read the first page, I cannot help but put my pedantic foot forward and point out that the first hexameter of the Lucretius quote is itself missing a part of its own feet. On reading the line, it sounded as if a beat was missing and the culprit is to be found in the word ‘minuntur’. My initial thought was that this could be corrected simply by adding ‘que’ to the preceding ‘aliae’, but in fact the solution is even simpler for what is missing is just an extra ‘u’ as in ‘minuuntur.’ Q.E.D then.

Best wishes

[name and address supplied]

A check of my Lucretius quote revealed I had missed a typo at proofreading, I acknowledged the email, (witticism supplied by P G Wodehouse): ‘Rem acu tetigisti’ I wrote...

Bertie Wooster: “Rem –?”

Jeeves: “Acu tetigisti, sir. A Latin expression. Literally it means ‘you have touched the matter with a needle’, but a more idiomatic rendering would be – “

Bertie Wooster: “Put my finger on the nub?”

Jeeves: “Exactly, sir.”

(from ‘Jeeves in the Morning’)



From the Academy

Youth development



Current Squad Members

Cadet Squad

Squad Director: Nick Warner

Max Warner (Age 13, h/c 29)

Algenon Nottingham (Age 14, h/c 37)

Laszlo Garson (Age 14, h/c 33)

Caspian Rugg (Age 15, h/c 53)

Alex Boulton (Age 14, h/c 48)

High Performance Squad No.1

Squad Director: Graham Tomkinson

Levi Gale (Age 27, h/c 2)

Lea Van der Zwalmen (Age 28, h/c 16)

Vaughan Hamilton (Age 24, h/c 7)

Performance Squad

Squad Director: Mike Henman

William Flynn (Age 21, h/c 9)

Henry Henman (Age 17, h/c 12)

James Medlow (Age 19, h/c 13)

Max Trueman (Age 19, h/c 8)

Bertie Vallat (Age 18, h/c 10)



The British Real Tennis Academy Cadet Squad

The New Year kicked off with a Cadet Squad coaching day at the Queens Club on January 2nd with Ben Ronaldson and Dan Jones. A really good day with an excellent report and appraisal for each junior afterwards from Ben.

This was followed by a day with Chris Bray at the MCC in February. We took this opportunity to introduce fitness trainer Stefan Antanasov to the squad. We are very careful with the fitness aspect of training players of this age but Stefan will certainly play an important part in their development within the Academy in years to come.



The final Cadet Squad Day of the season took place at Wellington with Dan Jones in April. Once again excellent feedback on each junior from Dan Jones to close a very successful season.



Performance Squad

The emphasis in the Performance Squad is on individual one-on-one coaching with top professionals. Since Christmas, all members of the Performance Squad have been improving their game. Individual sessions have taken place at Queens Club, Leamington, Seacourt, Radley, RTC, and MCC. The rate of improvement within this impressive group of youngsters continues with Will Flynn winning the Seacourt Silver Racket in February and Max Trueman, James Medlow and Will Flynn all winning their matches in the final of the Pol Roger tournament to take the trophy back to Seacourt for the first time in 14 years!



Above: James Medlow, Paul Weaver & Max Trueman proudly holding the Pol Roger trophy. Thanks to the 'youngsters' in Seacourt's team, Seacourt were victorious this year. Top & Bottom Right: Will Flynn & Max Trueman, finalists in the Seacourt Silver Racquet, Will won the coveted trophy.



2023/2024 Academy Achievements *by Graham Tomkinson*

Cadet Squad

Max Warner & Laszlo Garson ranked #1/#2 in the World U16

Laszlo Garson - U14 British Singles Champion

Laszlo Garson - U16 British Singles Champion

Performance Squad

Max Trueman & James Medlow – Amateur Doubles Champions (Youngest ever winners!)

Max Trueman, James Medlow & Will Flynn – Pol Roger Tournament Champions

Max Trueman & James Medlow – U19 British Doubles Champions

Will Flynn – Seacourt Silver Racket Champion

Will Flynn – U24 Doubles Champion

Bertie Vallat – U18 British Singles Champion

Henry Henman – Youngest ever player to qualify for the British Open

Henry Henman – Cat B (10/14 h/c) Champion

Henry Henman – Interschool Singles Champion

High Performance Squad

Robert Shenkman – UK Amateur Singles Champion

Robert Shenkman – USA Amateur Singles Champion

Robert Shenkman – MCC Silver Racket Champion

Robert Shenkman – MCC Gold Racket Champion defeating Jamie Douglas in the fifth set.

Robert captained the GB Team to success in the 2024 Bathurst Cup.

Robert defeated Bryn Sayers in the inaugural National League Premier Division and was 6/6 with Rob Fahey in the same event..

In Australia, Rob was leading by a set to love and was 5-5 with Kieran Booth, the only amateur who ranks above Robert.

In the last few months Robert had strong wins over J Giddins, Will Flynn, Bertie Vallat and Ben Yorston with an impressive victory over Leon Smart – all in major competitions.

Overall his handicap has improved to +2.5 (from +1.1) in 2024 so far..

Levi Gale recorded strong wins against Max Trueman, Craig Greenhalgh, Claire Fahey (1), Henry Henman, Lewis Williams, Vaughan Hamilton and



Right: Rob Shenkman



went down in a 4/6 against Ben Taylor-Matthews in the 5th set in the British Open at Queen's Club. All this against the backdrop of his first appointment as Head Professional at Prested Hall. Levi's handicap has improved from 4.1 to 2.1

Lea van Der Zwalmen combines a full time career role as Business Management Consultant, Chair of the Bordeaux real tennis club with her competitive career. She remains some 10 handicap points better than her local professional. She had a strong match against Kieran Booth (world no 1 amateur) in Australia going down 2/6 5/6 and a commanding win over Nigel Pendrigh (6/3 6/0 6/0). She led the Rest of the World Bathurst Cup ladies to a win over GB, beating Tara Lumley 6/0 6/0 and 6/1 6/1 recently. Tara is the No 3 lady player in the world.

Very recently, Lea defeated Claire Fahey at rackets to become the Ladies World Champion. It was a long and exciting match with Lea winning 18-13 in the fifth

(best of five) in a match that lasted over 2 hours. Both ladies played excellent rackets – almost certainly the best ever match played between two ladies.

PLUS

60% of both the world top 10 and top 20 players are current Academy or Academy alumni including #1 Riviere and #2 Lumley.

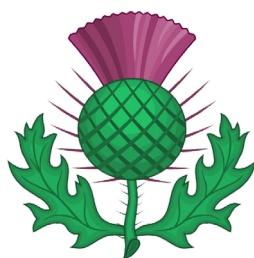
100% of the top 8 ladies players in the world are alumni of the Academy programmes .
Max Trueman is the world junior champion (under 19) from 2022.



*Top: Levi Gale
Left: Lea Van Der Zwalmen*

From Other Courts

Home



Celtic Challenge 2024 – Wales v Ireland and Wales v Scotland

The first weekend in April saw the court at Moreton Morrell occupied by Wales v Ireland on the Saturday and Wales v Scotland on the Sunday, organised by David Phillips, following a concept suggested by Lloyd Pettiford, Moreton Morrell's assistant professional.

Wales made heavy weather of their matches v the Irish Real Tennis Association, (who had had a bit of a loosener with a match against Leamington on the Friday evening), losing by 3 matches to 8.

When (and if) the Dublin court is restored to play, I suspect they will be a formidable side.

Wales fared no better on the Sunday, losing to Scotland by 5 matches to 8.

From all accounts it seems to have been very good fun indeed: at 13.00 on each day, the Welsh contingent sang 'Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau' (any excuse, what?); Ireland responded with 'Ireland's Call', and Scotland with 'Flower of Scotland': renditions of National / unofficial national anthems were enhanced by the splendid acoustic that the Moreton tennis court has for music (of every hue).

It is an event hopefully to be repeated annually, and in anticipation thereof, Wales intend to form a Welsh Real Tennis Association; motivated perhaps by having been 'sent homewards, tae think again' – despite being undefeated (so they say) in their singing...



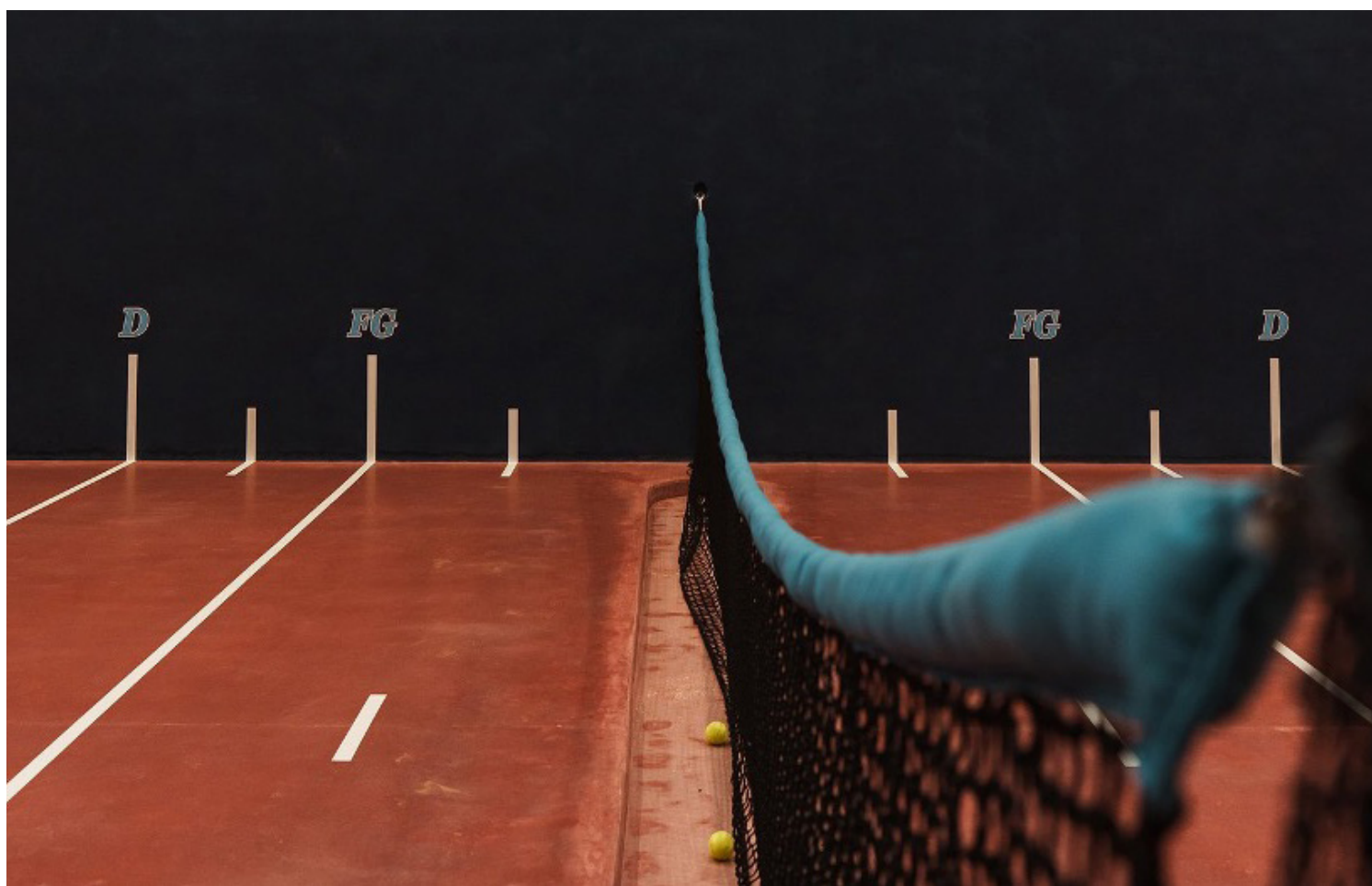
Sunday's 13.00 face off – (Scotland can give thanks they weren't confronted by the haka)

From Other Courts

Away

The 11th real tennis court in the USA has just opened at Sand Valley, Wisconsin [see photo of the court on page 1]. Sand Valley is a huge public access resort with a clubhouse and dining facilities, lodges, five golf courses (no buggies!), sixteen outdoor grass lawn tennis courts and two bocce (much like pétanque) courts, and lakes for fishing and kayaking and the like.

A four hour drive (220 miles) from Chicago's O'Hare airport, it is reasonably accessible, by US standards. A Grand Opening is being held from 18-21st July 2024.



An MCC tennis team included the court in their itinerary when they went on tour to the USA last October. One of the players reports "It's a lovely court; excellent lighting, very even bounce, the walls are very true and take cut. Sand Valley is an extraordinary undertaking!"

PLANNING PERMISSION GRANTED FOR DUBLIN COURT RESTORATION

Planning permission (with reservations) has been granted [April 2024] for restoration of the Earlsfort Terrace tennis court in Dublin, built in 1884 by the Guinness family.

Detailed information with regard to requirements imposed can be found on the Irish Real Tennis Association's website irishrealtennis.ie (see item 2 'News' section).

[The stipulation regarding the requirement for 'demountable penthouse galleries' leaves your editors scratching their heads in some perplexity; but perhaps this is not an insurmountable engineering/architectural problem...]



Interior of the Dublin tennis court – venue for the 1890 World Championship – in 2021

From Behind the Grille

Articles mainly about the history of tennis

‘The Exercise with the Small Ball’

The Greek physician Galen (129AD – c216AD) influenced medical practice in Europe well into the 19th century. Indeed Byron suffered blood-letting – one of Galen’s teachings for reducing fever – by his doctors when ill with malaria in 1824, despite protesting ‘there are many more die of the lancet than the lance’ (and how right he was).

One of Galen’s many influential treatises was ‘The Exercise with the Small Ball’. The uses of exercise were twofold, he considered: ‘firstly for the evacuation of the excrements and secondly for the production of the good condition of the firm parts of the body’ (say no more). He then dismissed running, horseback riding, jumping, throwing the discus and boxing as being too risky for injury and even death, concluding that ‘as the exercise with the small ball has the advantage that it does not involve any danger, then surely it must be the most beneficial of all’.

It is most likely Galen was proposing exercise on the lines of volleyball and beachball as we play it today – this is borne out to some degree by the recent discovery of a Roman mosaic from c. 4th century AD in a villa in Sicily which depicts a number of women playing various sports (including discus-throwing, of which Galen disapproved), wearing what looks very much like two-piece bathing suits (who says the bikini was invented in 1946?):



Such exercise with the small ball continued into the Middle Ages, if the illustration below is anything to go by:



And so it continues, almost unmodified, until present times -- as this photograph of England's beach volleyball team in action at the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham illustrates (even the ball is almost identical):



All is well and good, and the 'good condition of the firm parts of the body' are being well attended to, but the introduction in the sixteenth century of a racquet into exercise with the small ball seems to have introduced just those risks Galen wished to avoid...

Facial and eye injuries in almost all the racquet sports have long been recognised as a hazard (Jem Belcher, the bareknuckle prize fighter and England Champion from 1801-1805 lost an eye playing rackets), and limb injuries from falls occur periodically. Now we come to the nub of the matter: historically, head injury in real tennis seems to have



been pretty infrequent – there are stories of players of old hitting their heads on the lintel of the entrance and dying, but they are few – until recently, that is: anecdotal evidence, I accept, but on the tennis courts at Leamington and Moreton Morrell in the last six years there have been a corresponding number of head injuries, all from falls during play. All were of a severity requiring hospital assessment for concussion/injury; two cases resulted in admission, with one fatality. All players were aged over 70.

Perhaps the babyboomer generation is playing for longer than earlier generations did, ignoring signs and symptoms of age and infirmity.

Eye protection is now recommended by the T&RA – perhaps head protection should be considered too by ‘senior’ players.

Exercise with the small ball seems to be attracting those hazards Galen wished to avoid.

*

Norman Hyde writes:- ‘When I ride my motorcycle I always wear a helmet, so when I began to suffer with stability problems on court it seemed wise to investigate head protection for tennis use.

My decision was made when a fellow member of the Leamington Club fell and cracked his skull, resulting in a six month ban on driving in addition to his medical problems.

After some research, I settled on ‘Headstrong’, particularly because of its ‘gel-filled’ aspect.

When the guard takes a blow eg from the wall or floor the gel spreads, absorbing energy, meaning that the head is brought to a stop more slowly, rather like the crumple zone or the airbag of a car in an accident.

We are all fortunate to be able to continue playing our great game into our declining years (the handicap does not lie!). Whilst some bodies remain robust and solid, others of us should look to our weaknesses, then act accordingly.’

Headstrong.eu is the company which makes Norman’s protective headband. Using the code ‘Hyde’, Headstrong will give a 10% discount and send the correct version of the product for tennis use.

Whispers in the Galleries

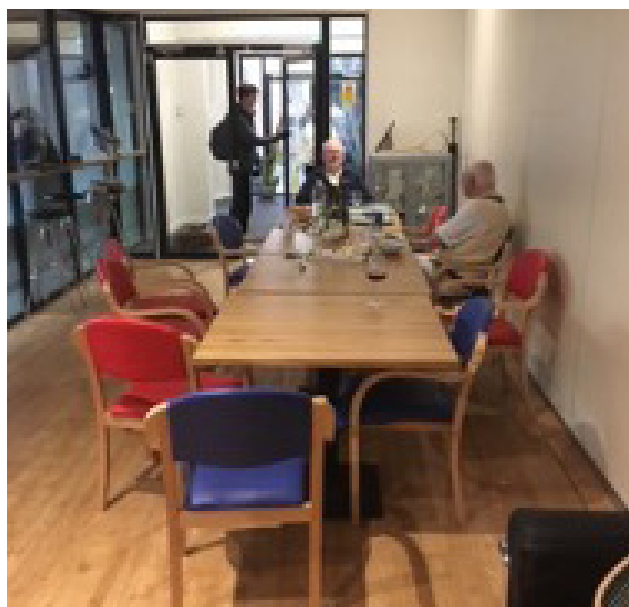
Gossip and tittle-tattle from the world of tennis

Middlesex University Real Tennis Club decided in 2021 to refurbish its 21- year old clubroom 'by giving it a café feel to encourage socialising'. This is the 'artist's impression' of the intended new design of the space:



When the Dedanists visited the court for their annual fixture V MURTC in December 2023, this was what they found:

The Dedanists' fixtures secretary, together with a member of the Middlesex team, appear to have cleared all the lunchtime provender from the makeshift dining table, which is composed of the three café-style tables in the first drawing, now rammed together to simulate the original – and now unaccountably missing – elegant French oak carved refectory dining table, which comfortably seated 12, and which had been donated to the Millennium Court by Peter Luck-Hille when the court was opened in 2000... MORAL: An 'artist's impression' is one thing; but reality is quite another thing.



The court is living on borrowed time anyway: it will be compulsorily closed in 2026 by the University (with the full support of the Student Union), the rationale being 'repurposing the building will provide an indoor Sports Hall on campus'. About 50 students, out of a population of 20,000, play real tennis, it claims.

It's a great court, and it will be a catastrophe to lose it; play on it as much as possible pro tem – gather ye rosebuds while ye may...

A Plea from Paris

The email below has just been received by (amongst others) those Dedanists known to have visited the Paris court. It is now included in the newsletter for circulation to all members; the situation in Paris appears grave, and the seemingly impossibly short duration of fund-raising compounds the situation. Further information can be obtained via the links within the article.

We have received the following from a joint member of MMTCC and Paris and wanted to share it with you.

The Paris Jeu de Paume Club needs to be saved! Please help!

Dear Jeu de Paume players and friends,

You might have heard... or not... that the Paris Jeu de Paume Club is about to be sold by the SCI (Société Civile Immobilière = Property Management Company, Property Investment Company) that co-owns the club. Deadline: end of 2024.

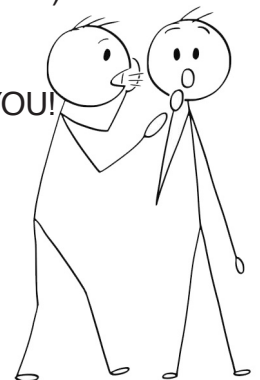
The street floor, first level and basement rented by a fitness club and a dance and comedy school will be kept by the SCI. The three upper floors rented by the Jeu de Paume Club will be sold.

The buying price, which was negotiated, is **3.8 million Euros**, a great deal for the chic Paris 16th District the Club is located in, a heritage treasure built in 1907 that simply **cannot** be destroyed.

It is 4,000 €/square meter. A similar building with apartments in this area is a minimum of 10,000 €/square meter. If we don't buy the Club at this negotiated price, it will be sold without any problem to other prospects by the current owners (the SCI). The purchase is the only condition to perpetuate the jeu de paume in Paris.

We are counting on the 300 or so members of the Paris Club (jeu de paume + squash) to buy the 3 upper floors but it won't be enough to cover the 3.8 millions.

We also need the financial help of the entire world of jeu de paume, which mean **YOU!**



How can you contribute to buy the Paris Club?

You can help by investing personally (donations and/or buying shares of the building) and also by spreading the word to your families, acquaintances and various associations such as the IRTPA, USCTA, ARTA, the Dedanist Foundation, the Real Champions Club, etc.

A special meeting with video conference was held at the Paris Club on May 2, 2024 with a presentation of the issue which you will find below when [clicking on the link](#).

We count on your help to save the Paris Club!

We will contact you again soon to give you more information.

If you can, we would like to get from you as soon as possible an idea of how much you would invest and which solution you would prefer: donation or buying shares of the building, or both. The funds will need to be credited early October 2024 to a special bank account yet to be open if the operation goes through with enough investors. You will be notified in the coming months about the technicalities and hopefully tax exemption possibilities in your country for donations.

Don't hesitate to ask questions if any.

You can contact the Paris Club Manager, Lilian VIMAL DE MURS at manager@squashjeudepaume.com

LONG LIVE THE PARIS JEU DE PAUME !

Best regards,

Gil KRESSMANN, Honorary President of the Paris Jeu de Paume Club

gil.kressmann@wanadoo.fr

Patricia GALLAGHER

patgall@wanadoo.fr

*****STOP PRESS*****

The Paris court committee are now offering Overseas Life Membership (to include full access and use of the club & 10 free tennis courts per annum) for a one-off fee of €5,000.00

