

# The Dedanist $\delta$



## From The Editors

*The 1887 tennis court at Pau*

Interesting times: a World Championship challenge successfully defended; a new French Open champion; the British Open title retained; and with the New Year comes the Australian Open, the US Open, and the 30th Anniversary Boomerang Cup – usually a biannual event, it's going to be held just 364 days since the last, delayed by Covid from 2022. It would be foolhardy to try and predict the outcome of any of these.

Real tennis needs a constant flow of new players and new champions – or as Lucretius has it, somewhat more eloquently: “AUGESCUNT ALIAE GENTES, ALIAE MINUNTUR; INQUE BREVI SPATIO MUTANTUR SAECLA ANIMANTUM ET QUASI CURSORES VITAE LAMPADA TRADUNT” [“Some come, some go; some wax, some wane, and in short time the generations change, and like the athletes, pass the torch of life”].

New blood is the *raison d'être* for our Society, as our founding Chairman said in his report in the first edition of this magazine in 2021. Now therefore seems appropriate to note here the sterling work that Josh Farrell carried out as Chairman of the Society since its inception in

2002, and how, under his guidance, the Academy (and all who work within it) has produced a substantial cohort of young elite tennis players: the future of tennis, amateur and professional, has never been brighter.

The Editors wish to thank Josh on behalf of the membership, and it is fitting that he has been made President and an honorary Life Member of the Society.

Also in this edition, our new Chairman Simon Roundell, elected at the SGM last May at Queen's, has been invited to introduce himself to the membership.

Alastair Robson  
Martin Village

**The next edition will be in June 2024**

**From The Dedans**

## **Chairman's Report**

I owe it to my Godfather, Jamie Bebb, for introducing me to Real Tennis. It started with him taking me to have a go at rackets when I was aged 12, which was cold, difficult, and fun. I ended up playing rackets, very badly, almost every day at school. Tennis, to me then, was this rather mythical game played by grown ups on the most ridiculous court. One summer in my mid-teens I was by chance at Canford for a Summer Camp with Jamie's son and we were allowed on the Tennis court, so we spent a week just playing tennis trying to work out what was going on with no instruction which was bizarre. Jamie then took us to Lord's and Middlesex for more hits.

At University I had another encounter with Tennis. I was studying Architectural History and had to decide on a subject for my dissertation. Most students chose standard topics (Brunelleschi's Dome or Lloyd Wright's Falling Water). I reckoned if I wrote my dissertation on Real Tennis courts then nobody in the department would understand what I was on about and they would give me a 2:1 regardless. It worked.

I played a little bit of Tennis in my 20s at Lord's and Queen's. A little bit in my 30s at Canford, although never really enough to get any better. And then I started working at Wellington College. William Maltby very kindly built me a court and that was that. Through Wellington I became involved with both The Dedanist Foundation and The Dedanist Society. Both, in their own ways, are trying to break down that barrier that Tennis is only for grown ups and make it accessible to younger players. This is so important for the sustainability of the game, and through the Society's Academy it is wonderful to see the current new crop of teenage talent genuinely competing in senior tournaments such as the British Open this year.

Simon Roundell

## Wood's Words:

*More pearls of wisdom from our Honorary Professional!*

**– on this occasion  
executing the floor shot to maximum effect**

### Properties of racquet and ball

#### Useful properties of the racquet:

weight; stiffness of frame; tension in strings

#### Useful properties of the ball:

weight and density

Use these properties correctly, and striking the ball is made all the easier. Imagine the racquet as a falling pendulum weight, and position yourself so that the ball is falling when you strike it – ie after the top of the bounce.

Create (as and when possible) a situation so that the pendulum weight of the racquet falls through the dropping weight of the ball. These two objects collide, releasing enormous energy. We've all felt that shot (or not felt it) as the ball seems to disappear effortlessly across the net.



Now you know why!

## Dates for your Diary

Dedanists' fixtures  
(until end June 2024)

### 2023

#### December

10 Middlesex Uni RTC  
MM Martin Village

### 2024

#### January

6 Hardwick  
MM John McVittie  
14 Newmarket  
MM John Burnett  
27/28 Paris  
MM Chris Marguerie /Carl Snitcher

#### February

2 Queen's  
MM Nick Browne  
3 MCC  
MM Carl Snitcher  
18 Oratory  
MM Katy Weston  
24 Hurlingham Pigeons  
MM James McDermott at Wellington

#### March

2 Hatfield  
MM Nick Brodie  
8/9 Jesmond Dene  
MM Jonathan Ellis-Miller  
16/17 Hyde & Canford  
MM David Phillips  
24 Petworth  
MM Robert Muir

#### April

20/21 Bordeaux  
MM Chris Marguerie  
21 Seacourt  
MM Paul Weaver  
27 Cambridge  
MM Christie Marrian  
28 Prested  
MM Chris Vigrass

#### May

8 Dedanists at Queen's  
MM Carl Snitcher/(AGM doubles & dinner)  
Josh Farrell  
24 Jesters at Queen's  
MM Martin Village

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

## From the Academy

Youth development



## This Season's Squad Members

### Cadet Squad

Squad Director: Nick Warner  
Max Warner (Age 11, h/c 50)  
Algenon Nottingham (Age 13, h/c 51)  
Laszlo Garson (Age 12, h/c 48)  
Caspian Rugg (Age 14, h/c 62)

### High Performance Squad No.1

Squad Director: Graham Tomkinson  
Levi Gale (Age 26, h/c 3)  
Lea Van der Zwalmen (Age 26, h/c 15)  
Florent Brethon (Age 21, h/c 25)

### High Performance Squad No.2

Squad Director: Mike Henman  
William Flynn (Age 19, h/c 14)  
Henry Henman (Age 15, h/c 18)  
James Medlow (Age 17, h/c 17)  
Max Trueman (Age 17, h/c 13)  
Bertie Vallat (Age 16, h/c 13)

## Queen's Club

August 18th-20th 2023

### Academy Players Triumph at The British Junior Championships!

Members of our British Junior Academy squads won this year's Junior Championships in the Under 14, Under 16 and Under 18 categories. All the beaten finalists in these categories were also squad members.

#### Results

U14 Laszlo Garson beat Max Warner 6/0 6/2  
U16 Laszlo Garson beat Max Warner 2/6 6/36/5  
U18 Bertie Vallat beat Henry Henman 6/4 6/0

The Under 16 final, in particular, displayed the exceptional level attained by our Academy youngsters. They played great tennis at just 12 and 13 years old.

The Under 12 section was won by Kurt Mueller (Tuxedo Club, New York) defeating Albie Tomlinson in the final.

**So, another season starts for our Academy Squads and they are off to a flying start!**



## The New Academy Season Begins...

On Sunday 13th August the Academy 2023/24 season started with a group session for the Academy Cadet Squad at Queens Club.

This first session was based around individual coaching with Ben Ronaldson. It also gave the squad a chance to get in some precious practice on the Queens Court, just prior to the British Junior Singles Championships which took place at Queens on the 18th -20th August.



*Three of the Cadet Squad at Queen's. L to R: Max, Caspian & Alex*

## The Academy Performance Squad on their first training session of the season

On Sunday 17th September the highly successful Academy Performance Squad regrouped at Seacourt after their summer break.

The focus for this session was on doubles play in preparation for the upcoming British U15/U19 Doubles Championships at Holyport.

Stefan Antanosov, the Academy's preferred fitness trainer was invited down for the day. Before any tennis was played Stefan supervised a group warm-up and stressed the importance of pre-match preparation. Throughout the day he spent an hour individually with each member of the squad in the Seacourt gym. In conjunction with the players he will present each of them with a fit and diet program for the coming season and progress on this will be reviewed at the session planned for early January 2024.

Performance Squad Director was also in attendance and all agreed that "we go again" in the 2023/24

season and aim to emulate or surpass the feats of 2022/23.

Stefan Antanosov putting the Squad through a tough warm-up before the playing session started... and it was tough!



**Academy Performance  
Squad Players  
Dominate the  
British U19 Doubles  
Championships!**



ENTER NOW

*L to R: The finalists: Laszlo, James, Max & Henry*

**The Under 19 Doubles Championships took place on the 23rd-24th of September at Holyport Real Tennis Club.**

This Championship attracted 10 pairs of juniors. The early groups saw some good matches with Isabella Harvey (Cambridge) & Lydia Compton-Burnett (Wellington) doing extremely well. The final group featured no less than 4 sub 20 handicap players and the Tennis was therefore of a very high standard, thrilling the large crowd of supporters in the Dedans. The top 2 pairs played in the final with a 6/2 6/2 win for Seacourt pair James Medlow



& Max Trueman over the Radley pair Henry Henman & Laszlo Garson. This win for James & Max was a historic third time in a row (the first time that this has ever been done), and a fitting end to their "Junior" careers.

**A Great Day with Rob Fahey for the Academy Cadet Squad!**

On Tuesday 24th October, four members of the Academy Cadet Squad were privileged to spend the day being coached by former World Champion Rob Fahey at the Oratory.

This coaching day formed part of the season-long coaching plan for the squad which takes them to different clubs to be coached by some of the game's top coaches.

Max Warner, Alex Boulton, Caspian Rugg, and Laszlo Garson really enjoyed their day despite some tough training routines! These sessions provide a great basic platform for these promising 12-14-year-olds who should go on to be the Academy Performance Squad stars of the future. Each of the boys was presented with their new personalised Academy training tops.



Paul Weaver  
Academy Director

## This Season's Update on the High Performance Squad

Robert Shenkman (Amateur) - currently the World no. 11 of players and at 27 years old is the only one in the top 15 who is under 30 years of age. Had great victories over Tim Chisholm, Darren Long, Lewis Williams, Chris Chapman and Jamie Giddins in the last 6 months. Lost 6-5 in the fifth to Jamie Douglas in this year's exciting Gold Racket at Lords. Currently enjoying a handicap of plus 1.,1

Levi Gale (Professional) - recently appointed as Head Professional at Prested Hall Tennis Club.- ranked no 19 of all players in the world and enjoyed good wins over Josh Smith and Zak Eadle recently. His current handicap is 2.9 and he has his high hopes of a plus handicap this season.

Lea van der Zwalmen (Amateur) - currently the top amateur lady player in the world and has not lost to another amateur lady in the last 7 years. She combines a role as a Business Management Consultant with chair of the Bordeaux real tennis club with trying to improve her own game and progress against Clare Fahey (the World no. 1 and Professional)!! Lea has recently struggled with a ligament issue but is making good progress and looking forward to this year's tournaments.

*Graham Tomkinson*

## Success for the Academy at the British Open

Members of our Academy have had their best-ever performance in the British Open. Five members of the Academy Performance Squad joined the more established players Levi Gale and Robert Shenkman to take on some of the world's best Real Tennis players at Queens.

### A summary of their excellent performances.

**Robert Shenkman** - Reached the 1/4 Finals, then lost to No.4 seed Nicky Howell in 4 sets.

**Levi Gale** - Good first-round win and then a great 5-set thriller, only narrowly losing out to the No.3 seed Ben Taylor-Matthews in round 2.

**Ollie Pridmore** - Defeated Claire Fahey in the first round! Lost to No.2 seed John Lumley in the 2nd round.

**Bertie Vallat** - Great first-round win over John Woods-Casey (4.5 h/c). Lost to No.5 seed Steve Virgona in round 2.

**Will Flynn** - Took Zak Eadle (6 h/c) to 5 sets in round 1

**Max Trueman** - Lost to Nino Merola (6.7 h/c) in a deciding set in the qualifiers.

**Henry Henman** - Good performance in the qualifiers against Bertie Vallat. Along with partner Nino Merola, took a set off of Camden Riviere and Tim Chisholm in the doubles!

The bottom 5 players on this list are all 18 - 20 years old and they have made many of the established professionals take notice of the "new kids on the block". I'm sure that in the next few years many of these young players will rise to the top of our game.

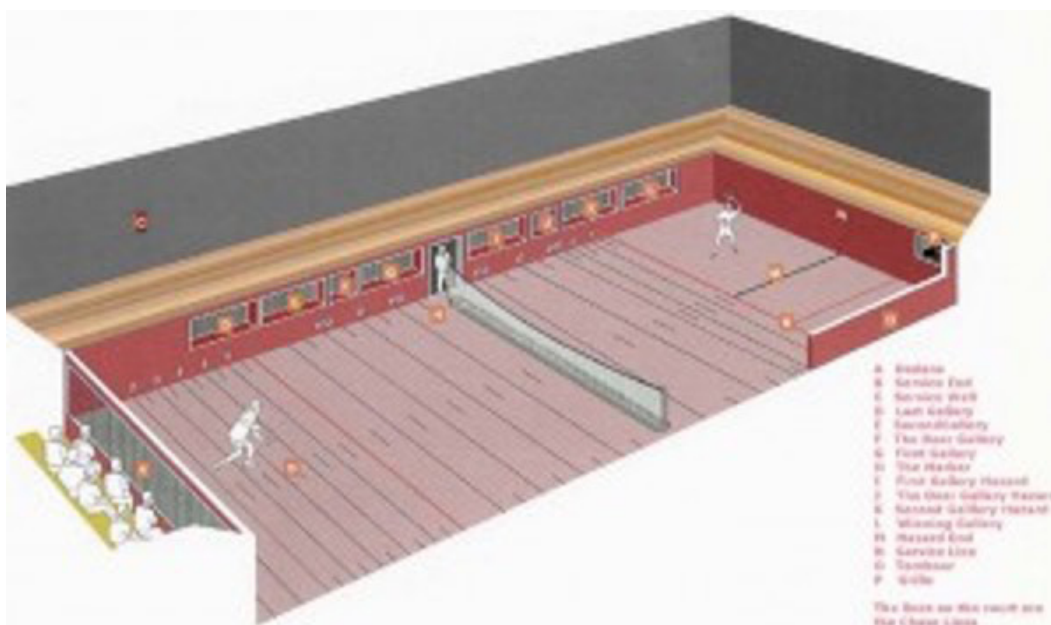
# From Behind the Grille

Articles mainly about the history of tennis

## What's in a name?

David Best (of the RTC Hampton Court, and our foremost contemporary historian of our game) delves into the past to solve the mysteries of real tennis's terminology –

As tennis players we scurry around a court full of features with strange names, but do we know where they came from? Many of the words are French in origin, such as those used for architectural features like the tambour, grille, and dedans, names dating back to when the game was particularly popular in France.



The **grille** is the oldest feature and could be found in the early jeu quarré tennis courts where there were only two penthouses, like the court at Falkland Palace. In those courts the grille was the largest of a number of winning openings cut into the end walls (otherwise known as ‘lunes’). The origin of the term **grille** is unknown, but some historians suggest that it dates back to medieval times when the game was popular with the clergy, and that it refers to. The barred openings in monasteries through which monks could talk to people outside, or possibly a buttery hatch. (This is not to infer that the game of tennis has a monastic origin, which nowadays is an idea that is viewed with considerable scepticism). [Vide infra ‘The Clergy and tennis’– ed].

The **dedans** was introduced in France in the middle of the 16th century to accommodate extra spectators and provide a better viewing experience. This in turn created the need for a third penthouse to house it. The origin of the word is ‘interior’. Present knowledge indicates that the first court to have a dedans in this country was the court at Hampton Court, when Charles I built it in 1625 as a replacement for Cardinal Wolsey’s old wooden-walled court.

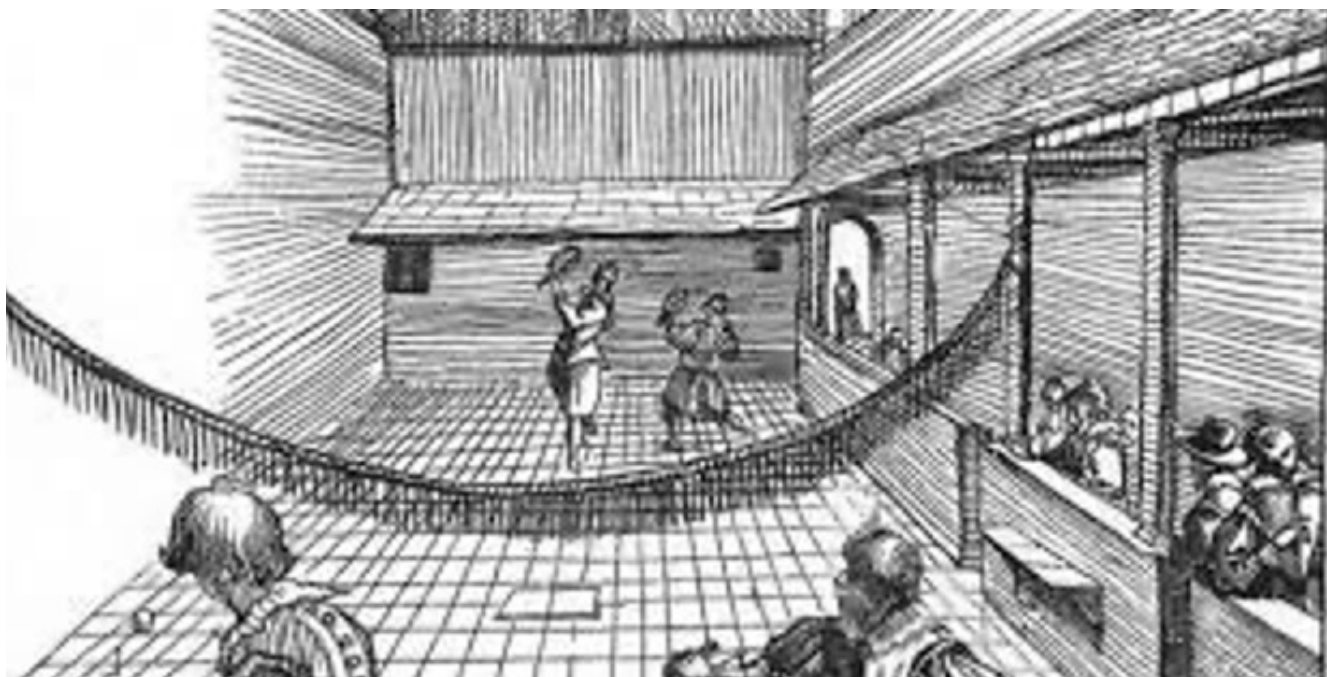


Nothing is known of the origin of the tambour. It is only a feature in modern triple-penthouse jeu à dedans courts. It has been suggested that it may have been introduced as an additional hazard to counter the effect of the dedans as a winning opening, thereby bringing the game into better balance. The only explanation for the name to have surfaced so far is that there was once an old court in France with a figure of a drummer (tambour) painted on the sloping face.

The painted line around the top of the battery wall at the point where it meets the penthouse roof is the **bandeau**. It comes from the French word bande meaning narrow 'band' or 'strip'. One theory is that the bandeau was originally the dead-ball line in early tennis courts, because areas of the court above that line have no meaningful purpose except for the penthouse's role in the service. The raised walls' only purpose seems to have been to minimise the risk of mishit balls flying out of the open courts. Later, when roofs were fitted, these walls were used to support the structure.

**Chase** is another strange name. Chases have been part of the game since time immemorial and feature in a number of European variants of tennis that are still played today. The word is derived from the French word chasse (hunt). In times past, adaptations of the word have been used to describe the whole game, such as the old Scottish word for tennis 'cache', with the courts there being known as 'caichepules'.

Sometimes a poor shot results in 'chase the line', but what was the line? The Old English meaning of the word is 'cord', although its origin is thought to be Germanic meaning 'flax' or 'fibre'. Originally the two halves of courts were divided only by a cross-court floor line. The first mention of a cord stretched across the court to separate the two ends was during the 1530s; later came fringed cords and later still the net.



That these quaint old names have survived, having been passed down through the centuries by tennis players, serves only to help preserve the game's unique and wonderful heritage.

*Adapted from RTC Newsletter Spring 2017 [with permission]*

# From Other Courts

## Away

### PAU

Very good news comes from France – the tennis court at Pau is presently being restored exclusively for tennis.

A copy of the Tuileries court in Paris built for Napoleon III, the Pau court opened in 1887 primarily for the English and American expats in the town, to complement the golf course and the Hunt, plus the lawners courts which were sprouting up – those in the Parc Beaumont have now been supplanted by the 5\* Hotel Parc Beaumont, now conveniently less than 100 yards from the court.

There have been noises off for some time about its restoration, which proved nigh impossible to execute until now: firstly, the idea blew hot and cold depending on the political leaning of the town's various mayors, which stalled progress for some years (the court is owned by the Municipality), and secondly, it had been converted to a trinquet court in the 1950s, but now the trinquet players have finally relocated to a dedicated Basque ball games centre to the north of the town.

The court has been repainted internally in its original colours - grey-black walls and 'sang de boeuf' ('ox blood') for the floor – also the original colours of the Tuileries court. It is now available for tennis seven days a week, members are being recruited, and, although the interior remains FUBAR [see 'The Dedanist', issue 1], there are plans to reinstate the end penthouses, restore the original pitch of the service wall penthouse, expose the tambour and expand the dedans into a winning opening once again, instead of its present Perspex glazed viewing area (see below).



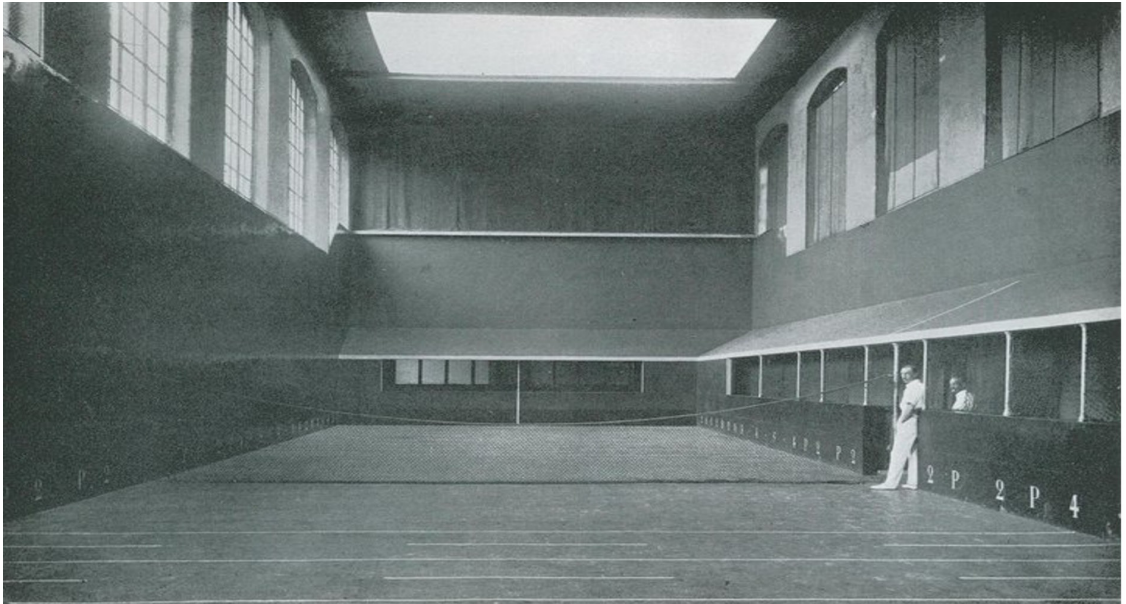
*The view from the dedans since 1952*

It is intended that a clubhouse and restaurant will follow; it's an ambitious plan – almost on the scale of one of François Mitterrand's 'Grands Projets' – and it is going to need time and money... In the meantime, Wayne Davies (World Champion 1987-93) has arrived to manage the early months of its fulltime use and is seeking to train up a local member as his assistant and hopefully successor.

A TGV from Gare Montparnasse will deliver you to Pau direct in under 4h30; a flight from CDG takes half that time.

Contact Jeu de Paume de Navarre on +33 (0)6 63 28 10 69 (mob) or by email at [jpn.secretaire@gmail.com](mailto:jpn.secretaire@gmail.com)

*The Pau court in 1924*



*After its conversion to trinquet in the 1950's*



*Now (partially) restored to tennis once again in 2023*



# Whispers in the Galleries

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

## The clergy & sport

Reading up about the multifarious 'ball and wall' games played in the Basque region, and the great variety of gloves, rackets and baskets used by the players and the size and composition of the different balls, (all this will hopefully appear in a future article for 'The Dedanist'), I came across this photo of an anonymous curate, in his soutane, playing pelota in 1951. He looks very determined, and I suspect he dished out harsh penances... This set me thinking about the clergy and sport in general, and tennis in particular.



Notwithstanding Roger Morgan's theory, (and David Best's opinion – *vide supra*), traditionally, it is thought that tennis owes its medieval origins to monks, whose physical confinement meant that exercise was probably lacking, (ditto rackets in the Debtors' prison, where no doubt boredom also played its part; if not, dare one say it, in the monasteries too).

The clergy in England have long been involved with sport, driven by the maxim *mens sana in corpore sano* no doubt, fearing that the Devil makes work for idle hands: the Northampton Saints Rugby Club was founded in 1800 by the curate of St James's Church, Northampton, and in 1850 the Rev. James Pycroft, a Devon clergyman, wrote his treatise 'The Cricket Field' in which he enthused about the game and its character-forming attributes. However, he also had his misgivings about its darker side – betting on the result of matches. But this is an old habit, in the world of tennis too, as we know from the 'tripots' or drinking dens (and probably worse) associated with the tennis courts in France, and the story of Anne Boleyn being dragged to the Tower of London whilst watching (and betting on) a tennis match being played at Greenwich...



Between 1860 and 1900, about one third of Oxford and Cambridge blues of various sports were later ordained as clergy, (probably by then having ceased to play), but with the arrival in the 1870s of lawn tennis, the opportunity came to reappear on court, the new game gaining popularity among upper and middle-class ladies, who were taking it up with enthusiasm, recruiting single young gentlemen, together with what have been described as ‘unathletic curates’, as their on-court partners.



*The Tennis Party (1885) – Sir John Lavery.*

*[Aberdeen Art Gallery]*

Whilst there has probably been a cohort of actively playing clerics down the ages - Noel & Clark’s ‘History of Tennis’ mentions a Rev JM Hardwick at the Leamington Club in the 1910 era, but makes no comment as to his ability -- active participation seems to be dwindling these days, although there are apparently a number of lawners-playing clergymen in the UK, and certainly one Catholic priest has umpired – if not played – in the US Open (John McEnroe might have behaved better had he been performing in front of him).

Currently, the T&RA has one active ordained member and a quick perusal of the 2023 Jesters membership list reveals three ‘Reverends’, but which of the five Jester ‘ball and wall’ games they play isn’t recorded (if they still do). There may others elsewhere I haven’t identified, of course.

Finally, it would be remiss indeed of me not to mention my two favourite sporting clergymen: firstly, a schoolboy hero, the Rev David Sheppard, (a Cambridge blue, cricket in this instance, who went on ordination), who played cricket elegantly for Sussex and England in the 1950s...



and secondly, the Rev Robert Walker, of the Canongate Kirk, Edinburgh, seen here gliding, also elegantly, across Duddingston Loch in Sir Henry Raeburn’s fine portrait of 1795, known as ‘The Skating Minister’.

A.M.R.

*[With acknowledgement to Hugh McLeod’s ‘How Sport became the new Religion’ (The Conversation 1 March 2023) © Creative Commons] & Ann Sumner’s ‘Court on Canvas: Tennis in Art’, Barber Institute of Fine Arts (2011).*

