

The Dedanist δ



The 1686 Jeu de Paume court at Versailles, (no longer in play), and Jacques-Louis David's painting of 'the tennis court oath of 20th June 1789' viewed from 'galerie dernière'

From The Editors

In this edition, the feature 'From the Marker's Box (on court activities)' is again absent: we welcomed the contribution for Edition 1 from our Ambassador at Wellington College, thinking it would be – or so we hoped – the first of a number of reports from other courts around the country as tennis picked up again from where it had been before 2020, but here we are, in a state of burnt-out expectancy (if such a state is possible), after a year of awaiting contributions from any other of our Ambassadors...

Regrettably, the editors present state (more the former than the latter) means that future editions of 'The Dedanist' will be published at six-monthly intervals, with Edition 5 arriving in early December 2022: we hope, however, that it will still be as well-received (according to reports) as heretofore; possibly more so!

Alastair Robson
Martin Village

Dates for your Diary...

Dedanists' fixtures Summer 2022

June

Sat 11th **PRESTED** MM: Chris Vigrass

Sun 12th **CAMBRIDGE** MM: Christie Marrian
(these dates differ from the original fixture list)

Sat 18th **LRTA/HARDWICK** MM: Carl Snitcher

July

Thur 7th **DEDANISTS' PRO-AM** MM: Josh Farrall

Sat 9th **OXFORD** MM: Freddy Adam

Sun 10th **BRIGANDS/RADLEY** MM: Freddy Adam

Fixtures 2022/2023 (from September 2022) will be published on the website in late June

**If you wish to play in any fixture
Please contact Match Manager**



Six Dedanists assembled in Bordeaux on the weekend of 7/8th May for a weekend of tennis on the new court, now situated adjacent to the Merignac airport.

Dedanists were: Tony Branfield, Chris Marguerie, Simon & Rachel Martin (who took the photos), Graham Meek, David Phillips and Alastair Robson (match manager).

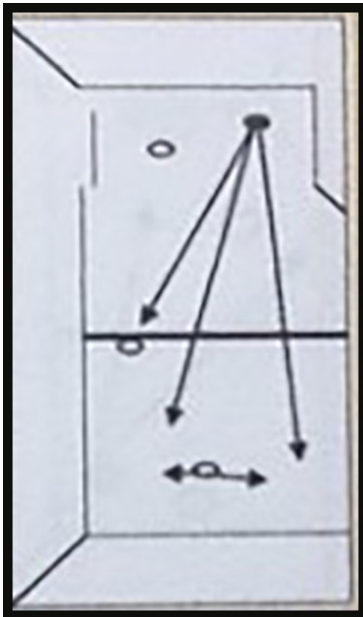
Match manager contact details can all be found on the website www.dedanists.org under the tab of 'Fixtures & Matches'.

Wood's Words:

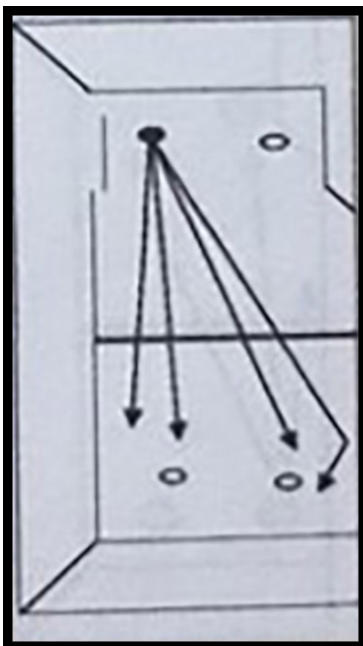
More pearls of wisdom from our Honorary Professional!

In Edition 3 Nick Wood offered advice on court positioning in doubles at the hazard end; in this edition he discusses positioning when at the service end...

1



2



Positioning at the Service End in doubles

As in the last section of Wood's Words, positioning is everything. When standing in position you'll find that your opponents will try to hit to where you are not. So, if you and your partner are well positioned at the service end, you leave very few targets for your opponents to aim for.

In diagram 1 the ball is struck from the Grille corner. From here your opponents can hit to the right handers forehand corner, backhand corner or the galleries. So, to best cover the service end, the player with the stronger volley should protect the galleries by advancing to the Door Gallery while the other can concentrate on the corners.

In diagram 2 the shot is struck from the return of serve corner. This can be hit cross court over the low part of the net to the forehand or over the high part of the net to the backhand. The galleries are hard to find from here, so you can retreat to cover the backhand corner and assist in covering the dedans, while your partner can cover the cut shot to the forehand corner and the force to the forehand corner of the dedans.

If you cover the court effectively you leave few options for opponents, which leads to errors.

From the Academy

Youth development

Intensive Coaching for Academy players from the World Champion

On Saturday 21st May the top 3 players in the world under 20 years old had 3 hours on court with World Champion Rob Fahey at the Oratory.

This session was arranged and funded by the Dedanists Society to give these 3 extremely talented juniors the intensive training they now need to progress to the next level.

The current handicaps of these 3 Seacourt juniors are Will Flynn 12.8, Max Trueman 14.2, and James Medlow 16.4. Will is nineteen years old and Max & James are just seventeen.



L to R: Rob Fahey, James, Max & Will

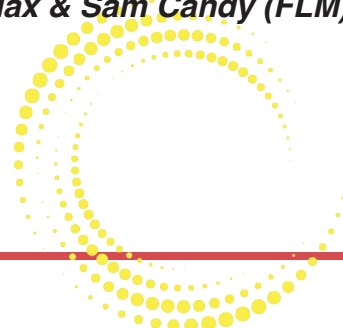


British Junior Academy Players Triumph in the National League

James Medlow & Max Trueman became the youngest ever team to win a National League Division when they defeated the Queen's Club in the final of National League 5.

The boys, both of whom are just 17, are members of the Dedanists Society Development Squad. They have had an incredible season with neither losing a singles match in the entire season, home or away! As a result, James Medlow received a new racket as the prize for being the League 5 most valuable player and Max Trueman was runner-up.

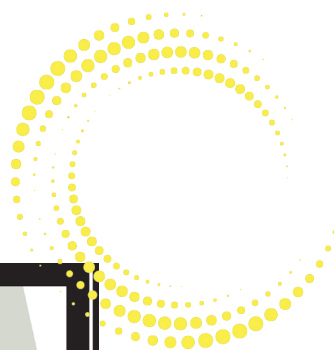
L to R: James, Max & Sam Candy (FLM)



From the Academy

Youth development

A Reminder!



World Junior Championships

22-24 August 2022
Seacourt, uk

The top 16 juniors in the world, competing for the title of 'World Junior Real Tennis Champion'

T&RA

Sponsored by


The Dedanists' Society

For more information email pweaver@btopenworld.com

This event will take place on August 22nd-24th 2022.

The top 16 juniors (U19) in the world have been invited to take part in this prestigious event. They will play for the title of World Junior Champion.

Juniors from as far away as Tasmania will be taking part in this truly international event.

The top 2 seeds Max Trueman and James Medlow are both currently members of our own Academy Senior Squad and have benefitted enormously from the coaching and support we have given them.

If any Society members would like to come and watch some fantastic

young juniors battle it out to become Junior World Champion, all are welcome! There will be an event dinner held on Monday 22nd August. The price for the dinner will be £30, once again all are welcome but this needs to be pre-booked. Please contact Paul Weaver pweaver@btopenworld.com if you would like to attend the dinner.

Away

TTT 2022

The organisers of the 'Tournoi des Trois Tripots' in SW France have circulated some details for the 2022 tournament: the dates are 13-18th October and the 4 proposed venues are –

Bayonne-St André, Urrugne, Labastide-Clairence, and (new this year) Bidarray. Here is a photo of the Bidarray court, which looks lovely, (as they all do). All are short, somewhat cramped trinquet courts: forcing for the dedans from the hazard side on all the trinquet courts is extremely dangerous!

The tourno can accommodate 28 teams of a minimum of 5 players; costings and details of (optional) dinners in San Sebastian and at the Chateau d'Arcangues (released to read shortly) [simon.mansfield@hotmail.com M +44(0)7973 297263]. The Dedanists are planning to send one (or more) teams: contact Guy Egerton-Smith: guy.egertonsmith@gmail for further details.

Jeu de Paume Bordeaux

A team of Dedanists recently visited the new Bordeaux court for a bit of a hit over the weekend of 7-8th May. A report of the weekend can be read on the Dedanists' website.



The Bidarray Court

From Behind the Grille

Articles mainly about the history of tennis

Margot of Hainaut's Backhand

Browsing recently, as one does, through Andrew Hussey's compendious and fascinating book on Paris (see Note 1), a throwaway remark caught my eye. In 1427 a young woman called Margot is recorded by a diarist (see Note 1 below) as having visited Paris from Hainaut (then a part of Burgundian territory in the Low Countries - now a part of Belgium) and that she played jeu de paume so well that she beat all but the strongest of men, doing so with a maliciously clever and powerful forehand ('devant main') and backhand ('derrière main'). According to Hussey, the mention of forehand and backhand indicated that racquets were in use by 1427.

And my immediate reaction was to agree and that, yes, this was probably good evidence that Margot had been playing with a racquet, suitably stringed, because how else could she play a strong, wickedly clever cross-court backhand - certainly not with the back of a bare hand. It'd hurt too much, and even I wouldn't want to do that.

In fact I assumed that, before racquets (or bats) were used, players of jeu de paume would essentially have played only forehand shots using both hands, gloved maybe or bound with cloth or leather, rather in the way I seem to remember playing fives with gloves at school. No one would play a backhand shot in the sense of using the stronger arm to play a shot on the weaker side if it meant the ball would hit them on the back of the hand, would they?

It turns out they would, and did.

This from Gil Kressmann's tennis dictionary (see Note 2 below) - my translation and underlining:

Coup d'Arrière Main (Backhand Shot)

This is an old French expression used until the early 20th century to mean 'coup de revers' (reverse shot) but still used by the English who translate it as 'backhand'. In the earliest days, real tennis was of course played by hand, usually

gloved. A right handed player receiving a ball on the left would return it using either the back of his hand (or 'behind hand' (derrière main) in even older usage), or his other hand.

So there it is. In 1427 Margot might well have played her backhand shots with a gloved hand without a racquet, and we might add the word 'tough' to describe her. And there's still no evidence, as far as I can tell - please correct me if you know of any - that stringed racquets were in use in the early 14th century.

I would add that the job of being a professional paumier involved making balls not racquets and that the racquet makers (raquetiers) weren't referred to as a separate group until the late 16th century. According to a Parisian census of 1292, there were 13 paumiers in Paris. In 1467, Louis XI incorporated the Maitres Paumiers as a professional group with the aim of standardising the manufacture of balls, and not until 1571 - nearly 150 years after Margot astounded the people of Paris with her talent - did Charles XI incorporate racquet makers separately as producers of racquets made of wood with handle grips (manches) and strings (cordes). Eventually, in 1696, the two professions were treated the same - for tax reasons (see Note 3).

Not much more is known about Margot from Hainaut (or Margot la Hennuyère, as she's known in Belgium) other than that during her visit to Paris she was probably part of the retinue of Philippe le Bon, the jeu de paume loving Duke of Burgundy, and that, at some point later in life, she entered a convent. She remains, however, the world's earliest named woman player of any sport.

Martin Village
May 2022

See note references....

Note 1 - Andrew Hussey - *Paris - A Secret History* (Viking - 2006)

Note 2 - From *Le Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris*, P 123

'En cette année 1427, vint à Paris une femme nommée Margot, assez jeune, comme de 28 à 30 ans, qui était du pays de Hainaut, laquelle jouait le mieux à la Paume qu'oncques homme eût vu, et avec ce, jouait devant main derrière main très puissamment, très malicieusement, très habilement, comme pouvait faire un homme, et peu venaient d'hommes à qui elle ne gagnât, si ce n'étaient les plus puissants joueurs'.

Note 3 - Gil Kressmann - *Tout ce que vous avez toujours voulu savoir sur le tennis sans jamais savoir où le trouver* - Editions Arena, Paris 2012

Note 4 - Lespinasse, René de: *Les Metiers et Corporations de la Ville de Paris XVe - XVIIIe siècles*.

Note 5 - <https://curieuseshistoires-belgique.be/margot-la-hennuyere-la-premiere-sportive-dont-lhistoire-a-retenu-le-nom/>



Medieval tennis,
France, c.1510

[Ed. - There is much here for further discussion: Julian Marshall in his 'Annals of Tennis' (1878) writes briefly about Margot, referring to her as the 'Joan of Arc of tennis', but despite Joan being a contemporary (being burned at the stake in Rouen in 1431 by the English) they seem to have little if anything in common; Marshall also has some fairly trenchant (and disputatious) opinions on how Margot played tennis, and recently Gil Kressmann has made an interesting suggestion that Margot may have played *longue paume* in the Low Countries (with a bat?), but all this will have to wait for the next edition...].

Whispers in the Galleries

Gossip and tittle-tattle from the world of tennis

A recent circular from the Sydney Real Tennis Club concerning their fundraising campaign for their proposed new court – the first new tennis court to be built in Australia for 25 years – informed us that they received \$250,000 in February from an anonymous donor for the naming rights of the court. Other naming rights opportunities are also available: for the pavilion, dedans, club room, winning gallery and all other galleries. One suggestion might be to name Hazard Second Gallery 'The Castlemaine XXXX gallery' – for obvious reasons...

