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# The Club Chairman welcomes you all to The 2017 Men's Real Tennis World Doubles Championship

Prested Hall Real Tennis Club is delighted to host the 2017 Championships, and to welcome all the players, markers, sponsors and spectators to our club.

When the call came through from Chris Davies of The T&RA last Autumn to say that Prested had been selected to hold this illustrious tournament, we were elated: it is truly an honour to receive the opportunity to receive *chez nous* the world's very best practitioners of this ancient and fascinating game. An especially warm welcome goes to new World Champion Camden Riviere

and his partner Tim Chisholm, here to defend their title against seasoned former champions and rising stars alike.

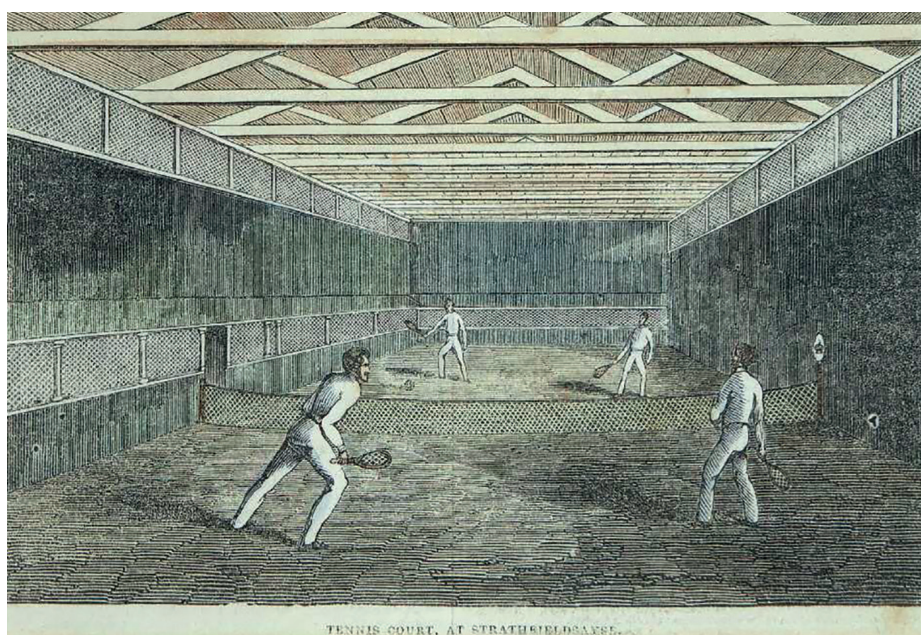
We pride our club on being a friendly and welcoming venue, and we encourage you all to explore our facilities, from the pool, gym, and spa to our newest feature, the padel courts. We hope you enjoy these and the social events our tournament committee has arranged.

We extend a very big thank you to all our sponsors, advertisers, streamers, contributors

and behind-the-scene workers; to our members who we know will be here in numbers to support the event; and of course to Mike Carter, without whom none of this would have been possible.

Finally, let me wish all players the best of luck and we look forward to a fabulous week of real tennis!

*Mike Norgrove*  
Chairman, PHRTC

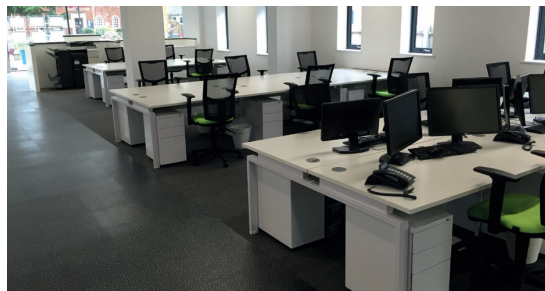


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# Programme of Events

## Tuesday April 18<sup>th</sup>

Welcome to the players for their day of practice

## Wednesday April 19<sup>th</sup>

	First round of the championship
11am	Lyons & Fowler vs Virgona & Chapman
3pm	Eadle & Player vs Matthews & Lumley
5pm	Fahey & Smith vs Durack & Gordon
7pm	Riviere & Chisholm vs Long & Greenhalgh

From 6pm Drinks & Nibbles in the clubroom sponsored by Grape Passions & Tiptree Gin Liqueurs\*

## Thursday April 20<sup>th</sup>

9am	Pro-Am Handicap Doubles
3pm	Final of the Pro-Am
4pm	First Championship Semi-final
6pm	Second Championship Semi-final

## Friday April 21<sup>st</sup>

9am	Handicap Doubles Tournament
4pm	Final of Handicap Doubles
5pm	High Class Padel exhibition match (in the next building)*
7 for 7.30pm	Gala Dinner with guest speaker, and Q&As with some of the best* (A golfing trip is on offer to visitors wishing to enjoy a round)*

## Saturday April 22<sup>nd</sup>

2pm	World Doubles Championship final: first 4 sets (Dinner will be available at the Hall)*
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## Sunday April 23<sup>rd</sup>

1pm	World Doubles Championship final: concluding sets to make best of 9  Followed by Awards Ceremony and photos (please don't disappear!)
-----	---

*Bon voyage!* We look forward to welcoming you back to Prested very soon.

\*More information on the Prested website and our worldchampionshipdoubles facebook page



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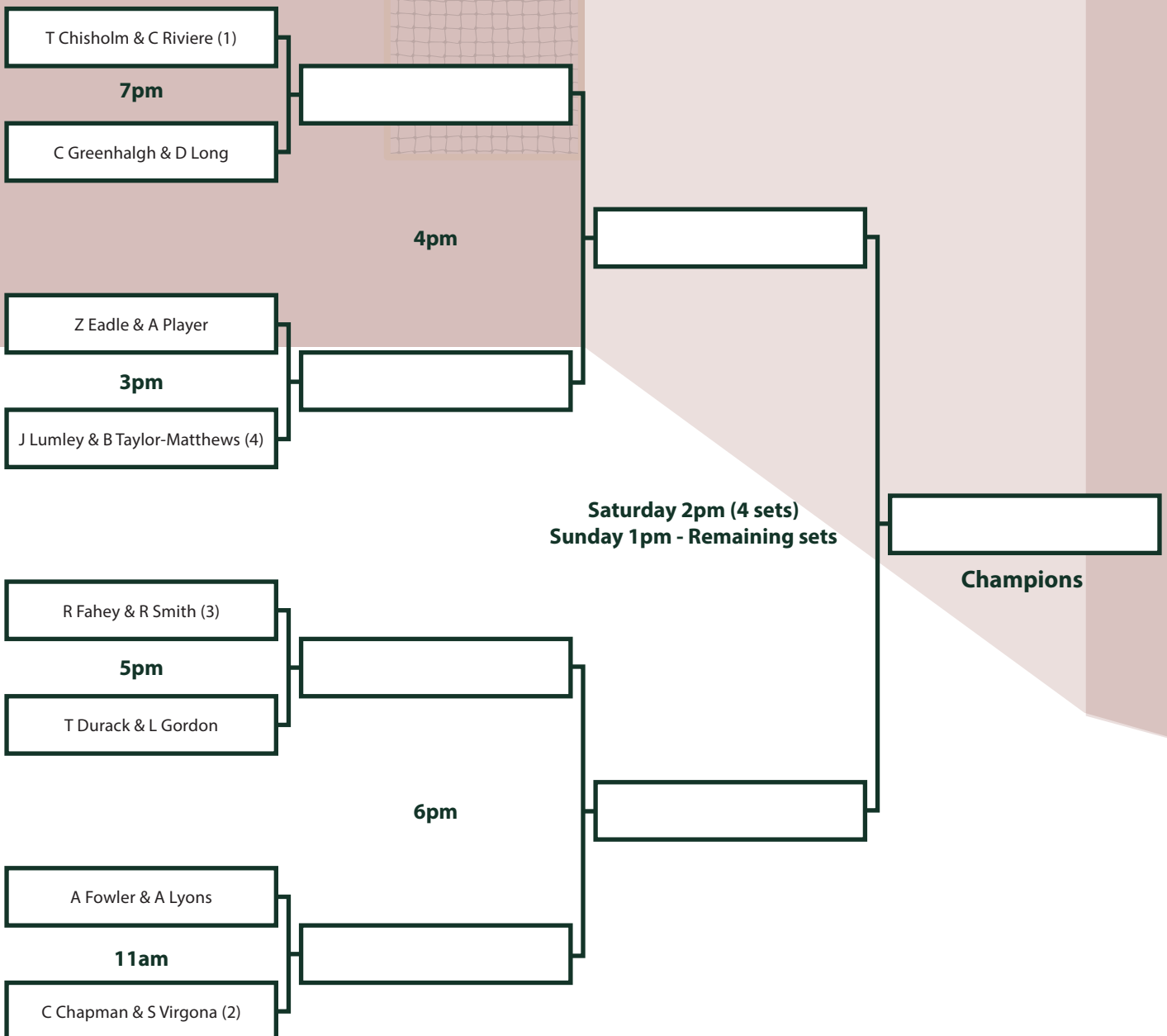


**Holders: Camden Riviere/Tim Chisholm**

**Quarter-finals**  
Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> April

**Semi-finals**  
Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> April

**Final**  
Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> April  
Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> April





# Gold Leaf Athletics



**Gold Leaf Founder Sean Quinn with Ben Taylor-Matthews, Camden Riviere and Chris Chapman**

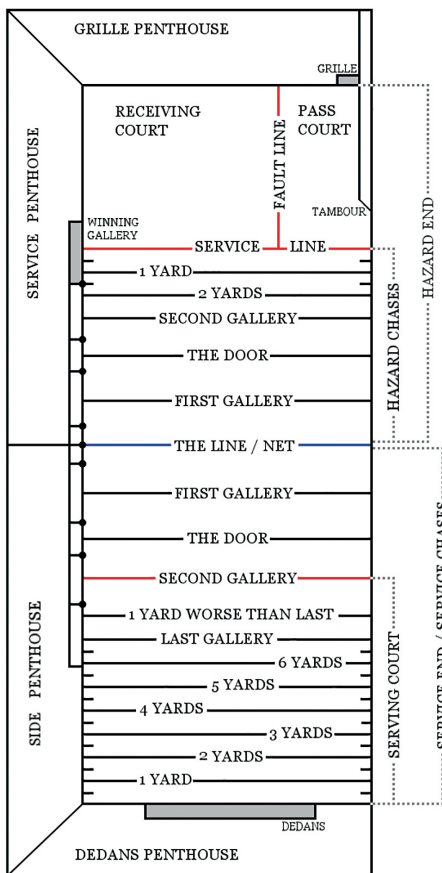
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# Simplified The Rules of Real Tennis



- The court is asymmetrical and players serve only from the end which has a very wide hole in the back wall (the *dedans*).

- Serving is an advantage – mainly because of the uncertainty created for the receiver (once a rally is underway) by the vertical kink (called the *tambour*) in the long main wall.

- Point scoring is as in lawn tennis 15/30/40/maybe deuce and advantage/game. However, the server retains serve at the end of every game, only relinquishing it when there's a chase to play off (see below). Sets stop at 6 games.

- There are 4 basic ways to lose a point: i) if you hit the ball into the net; ii) if you hit the ball out of court into the roof or above the “out of play” line; iii) if you serve a double fault; iv) you fail to beat a chase (see below).

- There are 3 basic ways to win a point: i) if you hit one of the three winning openings: the *dedans* (see above), the winning gallery (the one which has a bell, farthest from the net on the receiving side) or the *grille* (the one metre square opening in the corner of the receiver's back wall; ii) if you, as the server, make the ball bounce a second time at the receiver's end in the big red area known as the stroke area; and iii) if you beat a chase.

- Chases: The game's unique feature. If, during a rally, the ball bounces (at the server's end) a second time, the distance of its second bounce to the back wall is measured (with the help of the yard lines marked out on the court). At this stage no point is won or lost from that rally. The closer the second bounce is to the back wall, the better the shot. Let's say the second bounce is 4 yards from the back wall, that's called Chase 4. When either player/team is within one point of the game, and there is one chase, or if there are two chases, players change ends and the service swaps over. Now, the previous server, who let the ball bounce on “Chase 4”, must constantly ensure his shot(s) will land, **second bounce** (if the server does not hit it), *better than 4 yards*, ie closer to the back wall than 4. If it's going to be worse than 4 (eg 6 yards) the server may leave the ball and claim the point. Meanwhile the server has the entire receiver's end to aim at, and can hit the ball anywhere (in play), including the galleries, to win the point (assuming not returned by the receiver).

- The same in reverse happens (more unusually) with “hazard chases” at the receiving end, and the galleries too have impact with the “chase” ...(but we're keeping it simple!).



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# An Incomplete History of Tennis



Prince James Duke of York

Scholars tell us that hand-ball (*jeu de paume* in French) was played by the Greeks and the Romans, and by even earlier civilisations. There are references in the classics to a game that was played in a stone court, as is fives in our country today. *Pilare*, in Latin, was to play ball and *pila* was the word for a ball. Hence, *palla* in Latin and *pelote* in French. The Roman legionaries, moving into Gaul, perhaps brought the custom of hand-ball with them. What is certain is that the game came to be played against the walls of town buildings and keeps of castles, and in and outside monasteries and ecclesiastical buildings. At a time when England held vast territories in France, the game was not slow to spread to our island. Indeed, the origin of the word *tennis* is thought to stem from the Anglo-Norman imperative *tenez!* The cry of warning given by the server, “Take this! Play!”

The shape of the court, as we know it today, evolved slowly over the Middle Ages, but, by the end of the 15th Century, approximate dimensions had been agreed, an overall length of 90 ft and a breadth of 30 ft. (The Prested courts conform to the average as assessed by “The Field” magazine in a 1906 survey of extant courts, with a few minor mods. For instance the *dedans* is slightly less wide, so as to discourage too much forcing, the *tambour* slightly squarer for the same reason, and the winning gallery slightly larger, for the opposite reason!).

Though tennis is traditionally styled the “Game of Kings” (and, indeed “The King of Games”), early records show that it was the ecclesiastical high-ups who first put their stamp of approval on the game. Prelates, abbots and minor clergy played it with almost religious fervour. In certain provincial towns in France, the bishop of the diocese received a tithe of tennis balls on Easter Day. The game became a veritable craze with choristers and schoolboys, and was frequently cited as a cause of truancy. The monastic type of building clearly lent itself to wall games, and it is thought that the *eteufs* or tennis balls were made from the discarded robes of monks.

During the Middle Ages, players began to protect their hands with a leather glove. Later this glove was to acquire gut strings in the style of a guitar. As this somewhat imperfect instrument evolved, a short six-inch handle came to be added to it. Early drawings depict this *battoir* and indicate that it was covered with vellum, a practice which led to the stealing of manuscripts by unscrupulous persons. A scholarly performer was once aghast to observe that his hired *battoir*

was covered with still faintly decipherable fragments of a lost decade of the Roman historian Livy.

Throughout the history of the game great stress is laid on its therapeutic value. The Greek doctor Galen recommended it as the most salutary of all exercise. The first rules of tennis ever published, Hulpeau’s *Ordonnance du Royal et honorable Jeu de la Paulme*, Paris, 1592, began “ You gentlemen who desire to strive with another at tennis must play for the recreation of the body and the delectation of the mind, and must not indulge in swearing or in blasphemy against the name of God”. Pepys, in a diary entry of April 4th, 1668, writes, “...how my Lord of Pembroke says he hath heard the Quaker at the tennis-court swear to himself when he loses”.

## Royal Exponents of Tennis

It is hardly surprising that generations of French and English kings were taught the game in their youth. Charles II of France was painted with a racquet in his hand at the age of two. The commoner was only too anxious to try his hand at the Game of Kings, and repressive measures, for the most part ineffective, were enacted in both France and England in order to restrict the game to nobility only. Henri II was the star of all the French kings, though the much loved Henri IV was the greater zealot. In England, James I’s son, Henry, who sadly died at eighteen, was reputed to have been a brilliant performer. The English royalty played in courts at Windsor, Whitehall, Westminster, Wycombe and Woodstock. It is well known that in Shakespeare’s *Henry V*, the hero, having been insulted by the Dauphin with a gift of

tennis-balls, threatens to “Strike his father’s crown into the hazard” warning him that “he hath made a match with such a wrangler that all the courts of France will be disturbed with chases”. Henry VII and Henry VIII were both keen supporters and excellent performers, the latter being responsible for the building of the first Royal Court at Hampton Court Palace. In fact the present court, built in 1625 by Charles I, used one of the older court’s walls in its construction, and Charles II then had the roof raised. Father and son were devotees of the game all their lives and both used to rise at five or six in the morning to play. Pepys, after a visit to the new tennis court at Whitehall, wrote of Charles II, “...but to see how the king’s play was extolled, without any cause, was a loathsome sight, though sometimes he did play very well and deserved to be commended, but such open flattery is beastly”. It is known that his brother, James II, was also a fine player – surely one of his few redeeming features! – and there is also a well-known portrait of him playing as a boy with a short-handled racket before a crowd of ladies and gentlemen in the *dedans*. His son-in-law William III, played from time to time, fortified, we are told, with stoups of Spanish wine. The untimely death of Frederick Prince of Wales in 1751 was due, according to that inveterate gossip, Horace Walpole, to a “blow upon the stomach from a tennis-ball” – one of a number of royal casualties resulting from tennis.

## The Maitre-paumiers

It is an incredible but documented fact that between 1550 and 1700 there were no fewer than two hundred and fifty courts of various shapes and sizes in Paris alone. Small wonder that Shakespeare refers to “all the courts of France”, since many of her provincial towns could boast half a dozen or more of them. It was not until the fashion-ridden reign of Louis XIV that courts began to fall into disuse, because he, and therefore his courtiers, preferred to use the game as a medium for the laying of extravagant bets rather than playing themselves. This did at least encourage exhibition matches between the leading professionals, the *maitres-paumiers* of the day.

As the kings and many nobles employed their own professionals, the status of these men was considerable. In France, they had their own guild with appropriate escutcheon, shared admittedly in early days with the makers of boot and clothes-brushes, and they were protected by royal patent from unauthorised vendors of tennis balls and rackets. Statutes existed which set out minutely the duties and obligations of the *maitre-paumier*, as it was considered important to prevent the tennis courts from harbouring undesirable elements of society. The *paumier*-apprentice had to learn the difficult art of making racquets and balls, special tools and equipment being required for the job. Before being admitted to his guild, the apprentice was called upon to give proof of his skills, not only as an artisan, but also as a player.

It would seem that the *paumier* had to employ a considerable staff of assistants known as *marqueurs*. They called the chases, marked up the games and sets, cleaned the court and rubbed the players down after their game.

Our thanks to The T&RA for the above.

## The Post War Years

Turning to more modern times, writes *Mike Carter*, the game rather lapsed into the doldrums after the Second War, but, in 1966, the Danby family resurrected Seacourt (built 1906) on Hayling Island. In the Eighties Chris Ronaldson organised a group to restore Holyport (1889). Then, in 1989 The Oratory School near Oxford built a court and a revival was under way, helped considerably by the new National Lottery Fund, which provided funds for a new court at Clifton near Bristol and the restoration of the Bridport Court (1885). The Harbour Club (1993) converted an intended car park into a low-roofed court, and the Rose-Bickley court in Newmarket (1901) was renovated. By the time of Prested’s Lottery application (for just one court) the grants board thought enough had been sent the way of Real Tennis, so the request was refused (and was anyway not exactly helped by Feering Parish Council, who formally objected, saying the village neither needed nor wanted any such sports or health facility).

So, instead, we scrimped and saved, and realising that one court would be twice as difficult to promote as two, went the extra distance, creating (with Queens, Melbourne and New York) only the fourth pair in the world, opening in 1999. Later that year, Cambridge rescued its second court from squash, while, down the road, the Middlesex University court was also built. More recently, public schools Radley (2008) and Wellington (2016) have funded new courts.

Meanwhile, sadly, the Harbour Club court was closed, and Troon has been allowed, criminally, to remain derelict; but nevertheless that’s still a healthy net gain in the last 50 years or so.

## Past Champions

The Singles Championship is the oldest in the world, dating back to 1740 when it was won by a certain Mr Clerge. Raymond Masson, Joseph Barcellon, and Edmond Barr (all seen in paintings of the time) dominated the title through the 18th and early 19th Centuries, usually unchallenged for decades at a time. Peter Latham, Cecil Fairs, Jay Gould, and Fred Covey were dominant in the first part of the 20th Century, and then Pierre Etchebaster (Fr) held the title, for a war-interrupted and rarely challenged 27 years. The USA then took over with Notty Knox and the Bostwick Brothers who shared 17 years until Howard Angus, having already been World Rackets Champion, wrested the title for Britain in 1976, giving way to Chris Ronaldson in 1981. Mike saw Wayne Davies (Aus) bulldoze his way past a shocked CJR at Queens in 1987, and, after 7 years, in came Rob Fahey. As most readers will know, Rob’s rule lasted till last year (in 2002, by just 7-6 against Chisholm), with a somewhat more youthful Camden Riviere fulfilling his life-long dream.

Strangely, the Doubles Championship is a very recent introduction, won the first time in 2001 by Chisholm and Snow. Fahey and Virgona then dominated the next 12 years until Chisholm and Riviere took the title. It’s remarkable that four of the five named above are here for this 2017 event.



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# REAL TENNIS AT PRESTED HALL



*Richard Smith*

**1994:** Prested Hall was acquired from the Sherwood family. Planning consent was in place to convert the semi derelict Hall into a hotel, and build a golf course with a new club house. We managed to get that changed to two real tennis courts, plus space in the existing derelict workshops for a gym (which came much later) and clubroom. Real tennis was the entire *raison d'être* for what is now the large tennis & health club and spa, together with the hotel and weddings business.

**1997:** Our lottery application having been refused, The T&RA were no more generous, not even to help finance innovations such as the glass wall; a loan was all I had requested. The Chairman of its Council suggested we might convert it all to warehousing and the "Court Development Officer" said we needed a sound engineer's report to sanction the glass wall, in case it was too noisy. Although he was unable to describe what level of decibels he'd like to not hear, our response that we'd double- or even triple- glaze it, if necessary, fell on deaf ears.

**1998:** In April, the first turf was ceremonially dug by a hard hatted Sue Haswell (then Ladies World No 2 and only a couple of points away from being Ladies Champion). By the end of the year when Adam Mickelborough arrived from Australia as our first pro, it was possible at least to hit a ball around. While

Mike was in Australia for the Cockram trophy (January '99) Adam installed the net and painted the floor, and play commenced.

**1999:** By June, the glass court was also completed, and the venue was officially opened with a small deputation from The T&RA, plus Howard Angus, Chris Ronaldson, Penny Lumley and many others in attendance. The Ton-Up doubles was inaugurated, Mike and Chris defeating Adam and Martin Fairbrother in the final. Frank Willis (the most delightful and entertaining player Mike says he has ever watched), Howard Angus, Penny Lumley, and Chris Ronaldson were invited to be Founder Honorary Life Members.

**2001:** In September Prested joined the RTO handicap system.

**2002:** In April, Rob Fahey and Steve Virgona gave a super exhibition match. In July Ivan Ronaldson arrived as Head Pro after we had been a bit in the doldrums. Ivan instigated a fascinating debate on *realtennis.com* about the theoretical handicap of a cake. This lasted a few brilliantly funny weeks till it was excised by Julian Snow, who was, sadly, The T&RA-appointed moderator on the site.

**2003:** In March, unrelated, possibly, to the cake, Prested handicaps (of new players) were reduced by 5 in RTO because we were winning too many matches!! In November, we reinstated the European Championships which had lapsed, in which Rob Fahey beat Chris Bray in the final; and the next thing we knew, with no By your leave, nor

Thank you, was that the newly revitalised tournament would be held at Lords in future. Ivan discovered that a young lad on work experience at Prested might become quite a useful player. Welcome to Ricardo!!

**2004:** We won the Brodie Cup. Rob Fahey, after 10 years as World Champion, was invited to be our fifth Honorary Life Member, and said we were the first club to make this gesture of recognition.

**2005:** In January, member Joe Hills put two successive drag serves into the winning gallery. In the summer Ivan Ronaldson left for Washington, and his cousin Matty joined us.

**2006:** Ricardo's school friend Adrian (AJ) Kemp arrived to join Matty and Ricardo as a trainee professional.

**2007:** In May, we promoted and hosted the IRTPA ProDoubles. In September, Prested fielded a team in the Premier Division the National League.

**2008:** At the World Masters in New York, Prested became the first (and maybe still the only) club simultaneously representing Great Britain in all three age group teams: Mark Nicholls in the Cockram (over 50s), Mike Carter in the Bostwick (over 60s), and Jeremy Lyon in the Danby (for over 70s). Representing The Gilbert Comprehensive School in Colchester (and Prested!!), AJ and Ricardo put a cat among several pigeons by winning the "Henry Leaf Tournament", previously thought to have been an exclusive domain of expensive public schools. Nine years later we discover this outrage had been expunged from the records, but the truth has now been reinstated.

**2009:** We held our 10th Anniversary Pro-Am and Handicap Doubles. One of our promising juniors, a Claire Vigrass, was invited on a bursary to Lords.

**2010:** In March, Will Stephens set a Guinness World Record for the most consecutive number of opponents in Real Tennis Singles. Prested initiated and hosted The Prested Cup

for Amateurs Under 20, won by a certain Claire Vigrass.

**2011:** Ricardo led Prested to win the Atcheson Gray Pro-am, hitting 20 winning galleries in the 8-game-set final. Meanwhile, Claire, who started playing here aged 11, became the youngest ever Ladies World Champion, at 19, and left Lords.

**2012:** Prested hosted the first leg for the World Championship eliminator between Ben Matthews (as he then was) and Bryn Sayers.

**2013:** Trying to retain the Atcheson-Gray, Ricardo and Mike (aged 66) played a totally exhausting eight 7 & 8 games sets in one day, only to lose in the final to Claire (Yes, her again!), partnering Rackets World Doubles champion James Coyne.

**2014:** In June, Will Stephens and Richard Ramjane set another World Record for the most consecutive number of opponents in Real Tennis Doubles; and (Tony) Blake's Old Racket was initiated.

**2015:** In May we hosted the World Masters Danby Trophy.

**2016:** We reintroduced the lost and forgotten IRTPA Pro-Doubles, won by Ricardo Smith and Ben now Taylor Matthews, slightly improbably beating Fahey and Chapman in the final (in the fifth set). The crowd went wild! Claire returned to her roots and now is to be known as Mrs Fahey. Ricardo's Padel is getting more and more serious. New, brighter, LED lights were installed with gratefully received financial help from The T&RA, who then also kindly awarded us this great event. The name Ricardo being a bit too Spanish-sounding perhaps, he announces he would now like to be known as Rick, or Rich, or Richard, please. But old habits die hard.

**2017:** In February, Rob Fahey, now MBE, joined his wife here, so Prested has the most incredible team of pro's imaginable.

**April 2017: The World Doubles!**



*Claire Vigrass (now Fahey)*

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**Camden Riviere (20.5.87)**

Camden was born in Charleston SC and raised in nearby Aiken SC. Starting court tennis at the age of 5, Camden spent his younger years rising through the junior and amateur ranks before turning professional at the age of 17. Since turning professional Camden has amassed numerous titles, the most important of which is becoming the current holder of the Doubles World Championship in 2015 with fellow American Tim Chisholm, and becoming the holder of the Singles World Championship in 2016.

**Chris Chapman (23.4.85)**

Australian, based at the Royal Tennis Court, Hampton Court Palace. With Virgona Won 2015 British Open and 2016 Australian Open. Also lost two Open finals (US 2016 and Australian 2017) each time to Riviere & Chisholm. Chris recently lifted his World singles ranking from 7th to 4th and now hopes to make the 2018 World Championship Eliminators, and go even further!

**Tim Chisholm (31.10.69)**

Tim has been Racquets Director at The Tuxedo Club since 2010. He has challenged for the Singles World Championship three times coming very close in 2002. He won the inaugural World Doubles Championship in 2001 and won it again with Riviere in 2015. Tim is one of very few players who has won

# Meet the Players

all four Open singles and doubles titles – a career slam. Currently, one of the elder statesmen of the game at the top level; Tim is now viewed as more of a doubles specialist by his peers...a nicer way of saying he does not like to run as much as his younger partner. Most importantly, Tim is the father of the three most beautiful children in the world, and husband to the gorgeous and darling Darcey.

**Tom Durack (13.5.82)**

Tom is the Head Professional at Petworth House. He came into the game 16 years ago aged 18 from a lawn tennis background. He currently plays off a handicap of 3.9 and regularly competes in the major National and International tournaments whilst running a very busy club which has over 400 playing members. Tom will be partnering his Assistant Professional Louis Gordon with whom he recently reached the Quarter-Finals of the 2016 British Open. His interests away from real tennis include travel, snowboarding, golf and motorsport.

**Zak Eadle (13.7.85)**

Currently assistant pro at Radley under the tutelage of Chris Ronaldson. Recently became the British under 24s champion aged 21, after winning the Under 21's the year before. Current holder of the young professional trophy (The Taylor Cup).



**Robert Fahey, MBE (30.4.68)**

Should need no introduction but just in case: World Champion from 1994-2016, with, also, 48 Open Singles wins, and won first Open Doubles in 1990. Subsequently 41 further Open Doubles titles and World Doubles Champion with Steve Virgona 6 times 2003-2015. Now working at Prested Hall, and partnering Prested's very own Richard, they're looking for a bit of home support to help them along!

**Andrew Fowler (25.7.77)**

Australian, started playing at Ballarat and turned pro in 1994. Won three Open Doubles Tournaments (Tasmanian and Victorian) and is now working at Queens.

**Louis Gordon (15.6.91)**

Louis works at Petworth House, assistant to his partner here Tom Durack. He started

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playing age 12 at Seacourt and first turned Pro at the age of 18 but after a brief spell decided to do something completely different. He returned to tennis in 2015, and plays off 6.9. Tournament success: Won the Seacourt Silver Racket in 2011, and the Under 24 British Doubles 2012, and reached the semis of the Pro-Doubles at Prested in 2016.

**Craig Greenhalgh (25.5.85)**

Craig has been a pro for 15 years, initially at Manchester, and has been Senior pro at Oxford since 2011. Under 21 singles, and Under 24 doubles finalist. Taylor Cup Winner 2007. Has been in National League Winning teams for Divisions 1, 2 & 3.

**Darren Long (26.9.88)**

Darren was at Canford under Steve Ronaldson for 6 years, and in 2015 he moved to Manchester to broaden his horizon as a Professional at a new club and whilst doing so being given the opportunity to experience more of the tournaments available on the Pro circuit. Current holder of the 0-9's championship, and has won both the US and British Pro Singles Satellites. Darren is known to play aggressively forcing for dedans and grilles (although some would say the penthouse too?). He enjoys playing his doubles with Craig Greenhalgh, and they've played together in the British Open for the last 2 years, successfully reaching the Quarter-Final in both before losing to Steve Virgona and Chris Chapman on both occasions.

**John Lumley (7.8.92)**

John is currently ranked 11th in the World and trying to climb the rankings. He has been working at the Racquet Club of Philadelphia for the last 3 years and has been travelling to all of the events this season. John won his first Open Doubles title at the 2016 French Open with Camden Riviere. He also reached the doubles semi-finals at the 2016 British Open and the 2017 Australian Open. John is playing with Ben Taylor-Matthews in this year's World Doubles. They have had a good season so far making the British Open semi-final where they lost to the current World Doubles Champions. The pair are also playing together in the 2017 U.S. Open and will be very comfortable by

the time they compete at the World Doubles at Prested Hall. John loves to hit the little white ball during the off season and after the World doubles will be trying to make a ton of birdies.



**Andrew Lyons (31.8.71)**

Ambidextrous Real tennis player with two forehands, enjoys coaching at all levels, probably more well known for marking, having marked all World Championship singles since 2004. He says "I'm really looking forward to the World Doubles at Prested, a fantastic venue for a great tournament and with a great bunch of members!" (Editor's note: With his smooth talking and ability to go left or right, really should take up politics.)

**Adam Player (1.9.82)**

I started playing Real Tennis as a junior at the age of 12 at Seacourt Tennis Club under the coaching of Peter Dawes & Dan Jones. After helping them out part time I took up the position of assistant pro in 2002 and continued as senior pro under Dan after Peter's retirement until August 2015. I then had a brief period working outside the game, but continued to help out part time, mainly at Petworth and Tuxedo. In August 2016 I joined the new team at the newest court in the world at Wellington College. In the short time we have been open we have got over 70 students from the college playing the game and have built the membership up to just over 60 members. My tournament successes are 3 x Seacourt Silver Racquet Wins in 2006, 2013, 2017, Browning Cup Semi-Final 2015, British Open Doubles Quarter-Final 2015 and the UK Pro Doubles Semi-Final 2016.

**Richard Smith (29.7.85)**

I started playing at Prested Hall in 2003 under the tutelage of Ivan Ronaldson. I have spent the majority of my tennis career at Prested, and after a short spell at Newport R.I. I am delighted to be back, and am now pioneering Prested's new padel tennis project. I have been in and around the top 10 of the real tennis rankings for the last 10 years (Editor's note: currently world's 3rd best doubles player on handicap.) With AJ Kemp won the Henry Leaf in 2008, and with Bryn Sayers won 4 Under 24 doubles titles. I also won the "British Challenge" in 2012, and in 2016 won the UK Professional doubles with Ben Matthews.

**Ben Taylor-Matthews (27.7.84)**

Ben will be familiar to many Prested members having had a brief working stint at the club, and is now the head pro at Leamington. He played National League with Ricardo, and hosted his World Championship eliminator here at the club, which he won, in 2012. He won his first major in the US Open Doubles in 2010 with Steve Virgona, and is a regular in the latter stages of events. In 2016 he delighted friends and Prested members by partnering Rich to win the IRTPA Pro-Doubles here.

**Steve Virgona (25.9.78)**

The Head Tennis Professional at the Racquet Club of Chicago, Steve has played in many World Championship Singles Eliminator Series Matches and challenged in 2010 and 2012. Steve was the doubles world champion with Rob Fahey from 2003-2015 and has won seven Open singles championships including four Australian Opens, two British, and one U.S. Open. He has won seven National Open titles, six U.S. Open Doubles Championships (with four different partners), and eighteen French, British, and Australian Open Doubles, and has a career Slam in Open doubles championships. Between singles and doubles, he has won thirty-one Open titles and is ranked #3 in the world.



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# THE HISTORY OF PRESTED HALL

*Prested Hall in the Snow 1928*

When Mike and I first visited Prested Hall in 1994, writes Celie Parker, it had been empty for seven years and was forlorn and virtually derelict. It was owned by the Sherwood family, (who continue to live and farm locally), but they had been forced to move out in 1939 when the Hall was requisitioned by the army, and had never moved back at the end of the war.

Prested (variously known as Prestwood, Perested, Peresteda and Porsted) has ancient origins. The first known named occupant was one Bricmar (or Bricmarus) and, in 1086, the Domesday Book tells us that the owner of Peresteda was Ralph Peverell, who had two beehives, a mare and a foal. After his son Brien, came Nicholas Engaine of Colne Engaine, politician and Sheriff of Essex and Herts.

The Weston family lived at Prested for many years. Michael was the first, followed, in 1258, by his son Humphrey de Persted. Eventually, the estate passed, by marriage, to the Tindall family of Great Maplestead in 1678. At this time, the manor of Prested Hall was described as having “appurtenances and divers lands and tenements in Feering, Messing, Inworth”.

In very early times Prested was referred to as one of Feering’s “two capital maners”, and by the late 18th century it had become a “mansion-house”, so was always a house of some standing. As for its age, English Heritage visited in the 1990s and identified roof timbers dating back to the 15th century.

In the 19th century the local area was known for its seed production, and Nathaniel Newman Sherwood, partner of the Hounsitch seed company Hurst and Sons, was a regular visitor to his trial grounds in Feering. He decided to buy Prested Hall for weekend parties, but soon moved the family full time from Streatham to Prested, in 1890.

Visitors at that time would have enjoyed lots of shooting, lawn tennis, good meals, laughter and musical evenings. Edward, the younger of Nathaniel’s two sons, was a talented musician and wrote and conducted for Hurst’s Music Society, and the company cricket team famously defeated Sutton Seeds on the lawn at Prested in 1895. In 1912, Nathaniel celebrated the 50th anniversary of his association with Hurst’s with a large garden party at Prested. The staff from the Feering trial grounds gathered with the London staff, who were collected from the station in farm wagons.



*A bit of Prested’s fine stained glass*



*The two Sherwood children in the brougham in front of Prested Hall, at The General Election in 1929*

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At the time of Edward Sherwood's death, there were six women employed in the house, six gardeners, a groom, a chauffeur and three gamekeepers. In 1934, the Sherwoods embarked on major extensions, adding a new entrance hall and a ballroom, conservatory and outbuildings, though, sadly, they only had a few years to enjoy their enlarged home before it was requisitioned by the Army, perfect for its seclusion.

During the 50 or so years since the war and before our arrival, the Hall was used as a maternity hospital, a home for the elderly, a guest house, and, in the 1950s, SCOPE (formerly The Spastics Society) was based there and opened some radical rehabilitation workshops, which though completely derelict in 1994 were kept and renovated, and form the hub of the buildings that are now the tennis and health club. Every now and then, someone pops by from Prested's past. It's always a pleasure to meet mothers who gave birth or those who were born here, and a recent guest showed us the letter her grandfather received in 1935 when he was employed as under gamekeeper.

We also remember Elsie, a former parlour maid (in the 1930s, with her sister Mildred) who came for tea, in her 90th year. She told us how she used to hold a candle at an attic window and act as sentry while her sister climbed down a rope to visit her young man.

Another frequent visitor during our restoration of the house was Sybil Llewelyn (née Sherwood) who grew up, with her brother Nat, at Prested. Having assumed that the Hall was in too bad a state to save, her enthusiasm was particularly special.

We were thrilled to be able to reveal the many beautiful period features and architectural ironmongery of a fine house that had fallen on hard times, and bring it into a new era including, in 2008, the building of a large "Orangery" to house winter weddings, conferences, shows, etc; and, indeed, Tennis Championship dinners!

Mike obtained planning permission for his beloved real tennis on condition that we restored the Hall, fit for "hotel use", with no definition of standards. We started on a simple B&B basis, but are proud to have developed it into a nice comfortable hotel (involving a great deal of restorative and building work, adding 12 bathrooms in the process). All along the way we have been helped by brilliant staff who have made a huge contribution to our TripAdvisor ranking (we are nearly always their top ranked hotel in Essex) and have hosted very many hugely happy and successful weddings.



*The Prested cricket team in front of the Hall, 1933*



*Tea & Picnics at Prested Hall, 1928*



*A group of Red Cross nurses in the old conservatory in the Hall*

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# Padel

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Keep on Googling and it is not entirely clear whether Padel started in Mexico, headed south and came back up to the USA, or whether it started in Argentina and worked its way north (changing slightly as it hovered over the yet-to-be-built wall). In the USA the courts are larger.

What is certain is that, from The Americas, it headed firmly east and embedded itself in Spain with the smaller courts.

Apparently, in the very early days of Prested's real tennis courts, Mike came off court, to be told by a man who'd been watching for 20 minutes or so, "I saw people playing this last week in Spain." Mike said he thought that it was very unlikely as he knew, or thought he knew, there were no courts in Spain. The visitor was totally adamant it was the same game, being played in Sotogrande.

As Mike and Celie were by chance off to southern Spain, while on holiday they abandoned the beach for a day, not something to do lightly, and went exploring. They saw dozens of funny wire cages, vaguely resembling tennis courts, but, despite driving for miles in large circles and asking everyone, there was no sign of a real court.

16 years on, and several of us, keen tennis players, having played a bit of Padel in Spain, started badgering Mike to build a court. The clamour grew, and then Ricardo (then our real tennis

Head Pro) became hooked, and Mike felt he was left with little choice but to bite the bullet. The line of persuasion was mainly that the game requires cut rather than top-spin, and people might well gravitate to real tennis from it.

His research was not encouraging, starting in S.W. France (simply because that's where he was next going on holiday) where all he found were three former masonry courts built in a long line and completely tumbled-down.

But we persuaded him anyway, so off he went, and we were all pleased he found SpanliteUK who have made a very interesting, affordable lightweight building to house the project.

So what is this game that's taken Spain, and is now taking the rest of Europe, by storm?

Well for starters, it's very simple. And terrific fun. The rules are, basically, don't hit the ball into the net, and ensure your shot will, if not volleyed, land on the floor inside the walls. The (under-arm) serve has the added complication that it must not hit the metal surround (unless it's already bounced a second time.) You can boast the ball off the glass your own end, but not off the metal. Scoring is the same as for lawn tennis, and that's it!





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# HOW WE GOT HERE

I've been playing real tennis for about 50 years since my last year at Cambridge, being taught there by the legendary Brian Church, often before or after Prince Charles was smuggled in and out of the back door by his body guards. It's a shame his interest didn't last as long as mine, but he obviously has other stuff to deal with.

When I left Cambridge I was living in South London, could not possibly afford to join Queens, and only knew Lords as a closed shop. Outside the university it all seemed very elitist. But at Hampton Court there was a tourist attraction, the court, and virtually no activity. I used to speed out there on my old Royal Enfield 750, and have an occasional game with I know not who now; and nor can I remember how anything was ever arranged. I think membership was £5 pa (I'm still a full member and it costs a bit more nowadays) and once anything was booked we had to call a Mr Evans, who had a grace and favour house in Tennis Court Lane. He had the key, and we collected it from him when playing, and locked up afterwards.

In about 1972, Derek Barratt came as a part-time pro, but didn't stay very long as he went off for a proper job as a schools rackets pro. There were one or two other short-termers, and then along came Chris Ronaldson in 1979, who transformed the place into the hive of activity it is now, helped of course by Nick Wood, who originally came as an assistant/trainee, and is now a legend in his own right.

Hampton Court was about the only club I ever played at, until we moved from south to north London, and Hatfield became easier to get to.

By then I had decided I wanted to build, or restore, a court, and make the game

more accessible to a wider range of players. To this end, I had started scouring the country seeking out old abandoned courts, with huge help from Chris Bray, who used to call me on my very early mobile phone (called a transportable, bought in 1986), and give me directions to places on his To-Find hit-list. One in Coventry was stuck with a long lease and dedicated to medieval banquets, one turned out to be in a borstal, and one, Newmarket, was a glazier's warehouse, but The T&RA were already onto that. Some I never found and probably were destroyed decades prior.

After dallying with the idea at a large country house (which I only managed to buy two thirds of!) near Moreton Morrell, which became my main club for a few years, I then, with encouragement from Suffolk Coastal DC, bought a place near Ipswich, with 25 acres, including some badly storm damaged woods, into which I thought I could discreetly slip a timber-clad building, even a very large one. They assured me they'd find a place for me within the grounds, but once I got there they threw up all sorts of objections.

I then launched a plan (this is now 1991), to buy Bawdsey Manor, a huge mansion in an idyllic cliff-top spot twixt the sea and the river Deben, which had been used by the RAF, and from where Watson-Watt won the war (according to some) with his radar. The MOD was selling the 40-bedroom pad, plus 13 attractive old houses, plus 125 acres, plus a vast generator-containing bunker, plus tennis and squash courts, plus two huge office blocks, derelict farm buildings etc etc etc, for a measly £1.5m. Surely I could find 160 Londoners to buy a quarter share in each bedroom, for a measly £11,000 or so each, so they could have one long weekend per month there?? But no, in 1991, nobody but nobody was putting

money into property, especially not into this unusual concept, and the "The Bawdsey Weekend Project" flopped!!

The exercise was not without incident, however, as the MOD were at one point threatening me with all manner of ghastly retribution because, as they put it, I was broadcasting the (false) fact that I had a contract to buy it, and this was jeopardising their sale. This was absurd as my brochure started with the words "we are hoping to buy....", but a number of people got very over-excited by my plans. By remarkable coincidence, Celie finished up working there some years later after a language school had bought the place. She had to hail her Deben ferry by waiving a white tennis racket across the water. But that's another story.

One day in early 1994, going from Ipswich to London, we saw a huge "Golf Club Site For sale" sign on the Kelvedon bypass. That was Prested, and, with some changes to the planning consents, off we went, as described elsewhere in this brochure, and here we are.

Somehow I will ensure that the courts don't become warehousing, and that tennis can be played here indefinitely (until, that is, we're all replaced with robots).

*Mike Carter.*

PS. It goes without saying to those who know her, but I'll say it for those who don't, that literally none of our achievements at Prested would have been possible without the loyal and magnificent, steadfast and strong support of Celie, throughout our twenty three years here, and the slightly longer time together prior to the Prested acquisition. Thank you, Celie.

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