



**THE REAL TENNIS SOCIETY  
FIFTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
ON THE HISTORY OF TENNIS  
CASINO THEATRE  
THE INTERNATIONAL TENNIS HALL OF FAME  
NEWPORT, RI  
24 & 26 SEPTEMBER, 2025**

# UNITED STATES COURT TENNIS PRESERVATION FOUNDATION

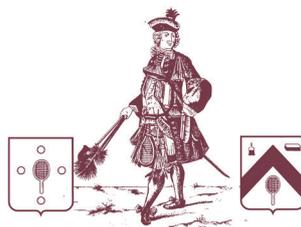


**Supporting the US community of court tennis through:**

## **PLAYER and JUNIOR DEVELOPMENT COURT CONSTRUCTION and RESTORATION EVENTS and PUBLICATIONS**

The U.S.C.T.P.F. is both a 501 (c) (3) charitable organization and a 501(j) Amateur Athletic Organization. Relying on the generosity of the court tennis community with contributions from foundations and patrons of the game to ensure a bright future for this historically significant sport. As stewards of the game, its supporters, and its future – we stand on the shoulders of those who came before to build a strong platform for the long term viability of the sport.

The United States Court Tennis Preservation Foundation (U.S.C.T.P.F.) USCTPF  
Atth. Jane Lippincott, Treasurer  
P.O. Box 194,  
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**U.S. Court Tennis  
Preservation Foundation**

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FIFTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
ON THE HISTORY OF TENNIS**



**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Inside Cover: The United States Court Tennis Preservation Foundation	
Table of Contents	1
Conference Schedule	2-3
RTS Welcome and Thank you to the ITHF, USCTPF, NTC, WCC	4
Welcome from the USCTPF, William McLaughlin	5
Gianni Clerici Fifth International Conference Dedication	6-7
Session 1: Paper 1: Richard Travers [Online]	8-9
Session I: Papers 2&3: T. Bernard-Tambour & Serge Vaucelle [Online]	10
Session I: Paper 4: Simon Talbot-Williams [Online]	11
Session II: Paper 5: John Shneerson	12-13
Session II: Paper 6: James Zug	14
Session III: Paper 7: Artists' Panel: "The Court: Art In Play", NAM	15
Session IV: Paper 8: David Best	16
Session IV: Paper 9: Alessandro Tosi	17
Session IV: Paper 10: Cees de Bondt [Paper in absentia]	18
Session IV: Paper 11: Theo Bollerman [Paper in absentia]	18
Session V: Paper 12: Panel "Creating History"	19
Session VI: Paper 13: Nigel à Brassard	20
Session VI: Paper 14: Ian Harris	21
Session VI: Paper 15: Rob Lake	22
Session VI: Paper 16: Luca Bottazzi	23
Newport Art Museum THE COURT: ART IN PLAY Exhibition	24
Inside Back Cover: The International Tennis Hall of Fame Museum	
Front Cover: Michele Desubleo "Young Figure with Racquet and Ball" (c.1640) Gift of Gianni Clerici (2023), Collection of the International Tennis Hall of Fame	
Back Cover: The International Tennis Hall of Fame Class of 2025	

# CONFERENCE PROGRAM WEDNESDAY 24th SEPTEMBER

**10:00-12:30pm**      **SESSION I:    FRANCE & COURT DEVELOPMENT**

**10:00am**              **Frederika Adam      Welcome & Introduction**

**10:15-10:45am**      **Richard Travers, Publisher of Royal Melbourne Monographs**  
[ONLINE]              ***“Court Tennis in Seventeenth Century Strasbourg”***

**10:45-11:45am**              ***“Early Tennis Courts in Europe”***      [ONLINE]  
**Thierry Bernard Tambour, Independent Art Historian & JdP Fontainebleau**  
**Serge Vaucelle, Professor of the History of Sport, University of Toulouse**

**12:00-12:30pm**      **Simon Talbot-Williams *“Court Development 2024-25”***  
[ONLINE]              Director of Court Development, T&RA, UK

**12:30-1:30pm**              **LUNCH Casino Theatre (\$15 or donation)**

**1:30-2:00pm**      **SESSION II:    UK & USA**  
Session Chair: Matthew Mitchell, T&R, Boston

**1:30-2:00pm**              **John Shneerson, Independent Historian**  
***“Joseph Bickley: The man who modernized tennis”***

**2:00-2:30**                  **James Zug, Author**  
***“Was Jay Gould Really a World Champion?”***

**TEA 2:45-3:00**

**3:00-4:00pm**      **SESSION III: EXHIBITION “THE COURT: ART IN PLAY”**  
Frederika Adam, Elizabeth Curren, Charles Johnstone,  
Robert Manice and Bill Sullivan

**5:00-7:00pm**      ***“The Court: Art in Play”* Exhibition Opening &**  
**Conference Reception, Newport Art Museum**  
76 Bellevue Avenue, Newport, RI 02840

**Exhibition RSVP with Freddy [frederikaaddam@hotmail.com](mailto:frederikaaddam@hotmail.com)**

# CONFERENCE PROGRAM FRIDAY 26th SEPTEMBER

## 10:00am-11:00am SESSION IV: SCOTLAND, ITALY & HOLLAND

10:00am **Frederika Adam** **Welcome & Introduction**

**10:10-10:30am David Best**, Independent Historian *“Tennis in Scotland”*  
[ONLINE]

**10:30-11:00am Alessandro Tosi**, University of Pisa *“A Racket in the Painting”*  
[ONLINE]

**Papers in Absentia:** **Cees de Bondt**, Independent Historian [www.nl-tennis.com](http://www.nl-tennis.com)  
[[realtennissociety.com](http://realtennissociety.com)] **Theo Bollerman**, Independent Historian

## 11:00- 12:00pm SESSION V PANEL: CREATING HISTORY

**Tim Edwards**, Official Photographer of the 2025 World Championship, UK

**Ben Geytenbeek**, T&RA Film Production and 2025 French Open; Founder Real Tennis News

**Alexander Robertson**, Sonder Podcast [www.sonderpodcast.co.uk](http://www.sonderpodcast.co.uk)

## 1:00-2:00pm SESSION VI: TENNIS TAILS: THE LONG 19th CENTURY

**Nigel à Brassard**, Independent Historian *“Stické Tennis - Time for a Rrevival?”*

**Ian Harris**, Independent Historian

*“1875 And All That: MCC, Tennis and Lawn Tennis”*

**Rob Lake**, Douglas College, BC *“A Revival of Tennis: Examining the Sport’s early days in Ontario, c.1874 onwards”*

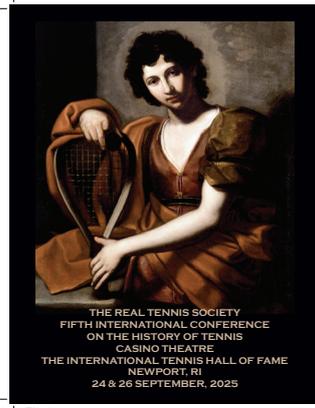
**Luca Bottazzi**, Author and Historian, Milan, Italy

*“The Game of Kings and the King of Games”*

**Friday September 26th:**

**CONFERENCE DINNER, STONEACRE BRASSERIE**

**Dinner RSVP with Freddy [frederikaaddam@hotmail.com](mailto:frederikaaddam@hotmail.com)**



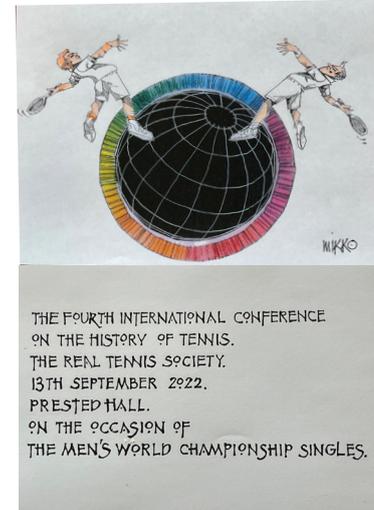
On behalf of the Real Tennis Society I would like to thank everyone for attending this fifth international conference at the beautiful Newport Casino Theatre. To our speakers, helpers and enthusiastic audience I hope you enjoy the six sessions with a total of 16 papers prepared for you this year - this is the largest conference we have had to date!

I am most grateful to the International Tennis Hall of Fame and especially Brewer Rowe and his ITHF team for hosting us. As one of only 48 courts in the world, the court at the National Tennis Club is a favorite both to play and as a venue for the many important events the Club hosts each year. We are also very happy to have the essential support of the Chairman and the Board of the United States Court Tennis Preservation Foundation which ensures the conference attracts as many speakers as possible and supports the production of the program.

Thank you again to Brewer Rowe along with Tony Hollins, the World Championship Committee and NTC members for supporting the conference as we are all very lucky the ITHF and NTC have taken on the men's 2025 Real Tennis World Championship in Newport. We wish everyone all the best for a most successful week.

Frederika Adam

The Real Tennis Society  
[www.realtennissociety.com](http://www.realtennissociety.com)





The United States Court Tennis Preservation Foundation (USCTPF) is pleased to support the Real Tennis Society's Fifth International Conference on the History of Tennis. While court tennis is a vibrant and growing sport (with new courts coming!) we all respect the rich and varied history of the game. The unique characteristics of the game and those surrounding it continue to amaze and delight to this day. Thank you to Frederika Adam and the Real Tennis Society for your commitment to bringing our collective tennis history to life.

To keep all of this going requires stewardship. The USCTPF is very pleased to see the support of the International Tennis Hall of Fame for this event along with its tremendous commitment to court tennis in Newport. Hosting the Women's Singles World Championship, the US Pro Singles playing for the Schochet Cup as well as this week's Men's Singles World Championship, all in this year alone, is quite an achievement. Kudo's to Dan Faber, Brewer Rowe, Tony Hollins and team for the great achievements and commitment to the game in Newport. The USCTPF is proud to partner with the ITHoF to support court tennis in Newport.

Finally, we are fortunate this year to have the addition of the Newport Art Museum into the conference via hosting the Exhibition "The Court: Art in Play". Thank you to the Newport Art Museum for recognizing the unique and artistic elements surrounding tennis and hosting the exhibition. Seeing the ITHoF, the Newport Art Museum and the court tennis community working together bodes well for the future of court tennis.

Thank you to everyone involved for your commitment to, passion for, and support of, the game we love.

William "Bill" McLaughlin

USCTPF Chairman

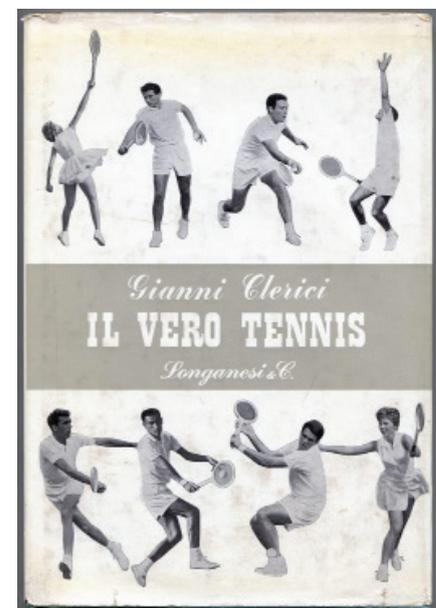
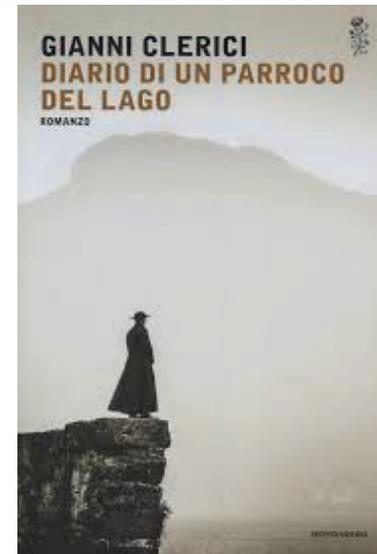
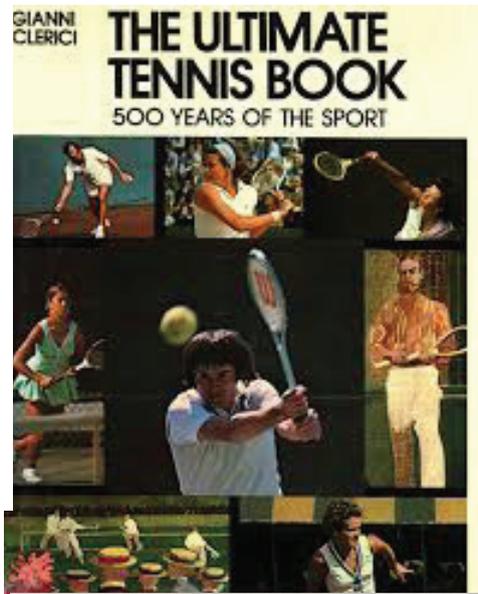
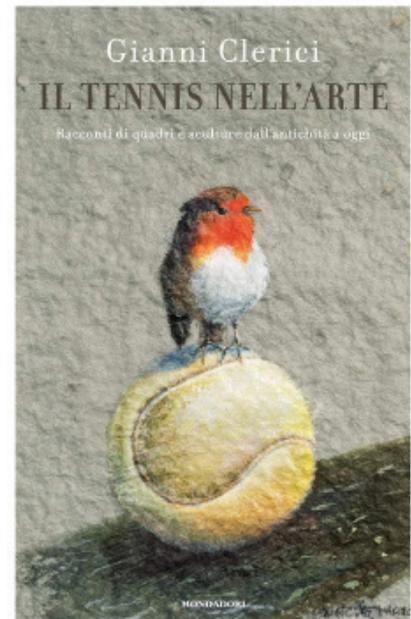
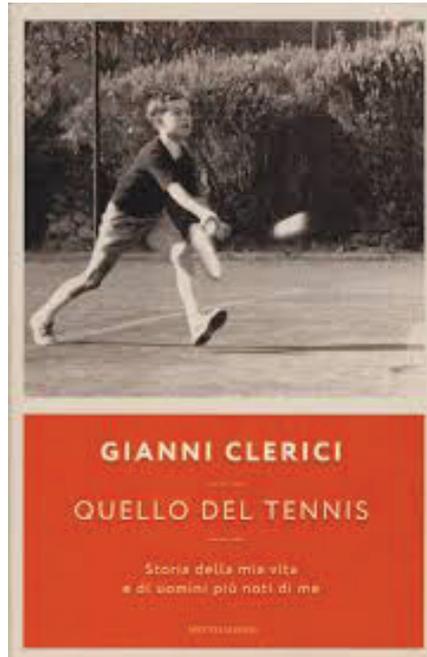
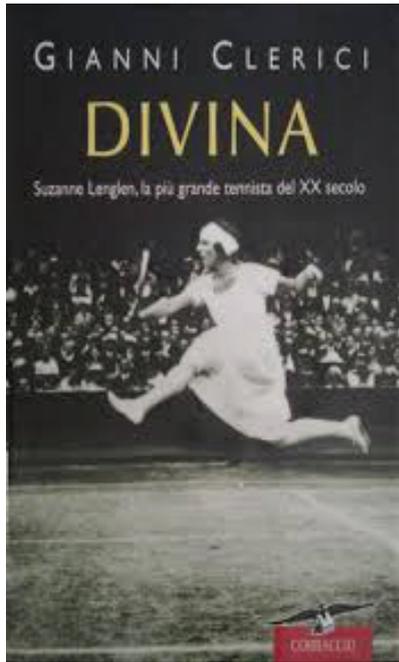
William McLaughlin, Chairman  
Jane Lippincott, Vice Chairperson and Treasurer  
PJ Yeatman IV, President  
Suzanne H. Peffer, Secretary

Jimmy Van Alen  
James Zug  
Melissa Grassi Purcell  
Henry B. duP Smith  
Walter L. Deane  
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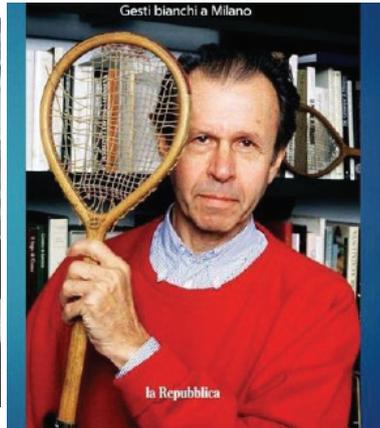
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Howard McMorris II  
Peter A. Vogt

Jonathan H. Pardee  
Julie Rinaldini  
Claire I.M. Voegele  
Simon P.B. Aldrich  
Vernon Peterson-Cassin

# GIANNI CLERICI



# GIANNI CLERICI



The Fifth International Conference on the History of Tennis is dedicated to Gianni Clerici (1930-2022). Gianni was instrumental in reintroducing “tennis” - pallacorda, racquetta, trincotto - to the history of lawn tennis in preparation for his *The Annals of Tennis: 500 years* (1976). The first six chapters on ancient ball games established the model for subsequent generations working on the long history of tennis. Gianni used his fame to raise awareness of Italy’s contributions to the history of pallacorda reinforcing his passion for tennis, culture and history. It is important that his legacy continues to be recognized for his contributions to both sports as broadcaster, man of letters and collector.

Gianni was inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame in 2006. In 2019, he was made the Honorary President as a founding member of the Club delle Balette which is dedicated to the promotion of the history of pallacorda in Italy. Along with Gianni, we hope that one day soon pallacorda in Italy will be the fifth country to have active pallacorda courts to join jeu de paume (France), real tennis (Australia and UK), and court tennis (USA).



# SESSION I Wednesday September 24th PAPER 1



**Richard Travers OAM**  
Melbourne, Australia  
richard@travers.net.au

## *“Court Tennis in Seventeenth Century Strasbourg”*

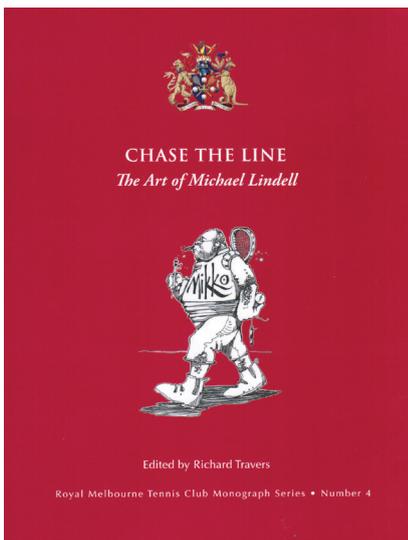
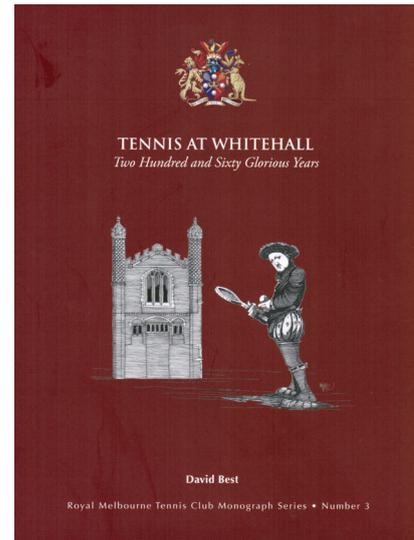
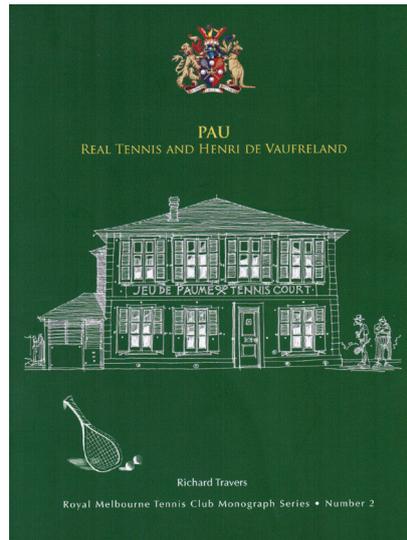
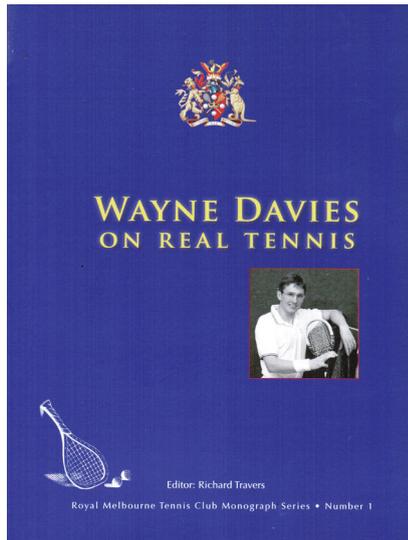
Court tennis became popular in Germany in the late 16th century. In 1602 in Strasbourg Johann Klapp, an acrobat, dancer and tennis professional, built conjoint tennis courts – the world’s first – after negotiations with the generally-supportive city authorities, whose only concern was their location. They were public courts of the quarré pattern, sharing a long wall, and covered. Klapp’s aim was to provide income for himself and his children. Business was brisk at first, then lessened. Klapp died around 1610 but Simon Maclet, the new owner, kept the courts going. No tennis was played during the Thirty Years’ War (1618-1648). Isaac Bion then later Daniel Bion revived tennis in Strasbourg, and it continued to be played until the French Revolution. The courts were then used for various purposes until the Franco-Prussian War of 1871, after which the property was bought by the city and demolished.

Strasbourg, being on the border of Germany and France, and part of one kingdom then the other, was a centre for language studies. Philippe Garnier was a teacher who sought to prepare young Germans for their Wanderjahr in France. His *Gemmulæ Gallicæ Linguæ* (Gems of the French Language), first published in 1610, used conversational exchanges to cover four common situations, rendered in several languages. The last of the four sections, consisting of over 620 exchanges, was devoted to court tennis conversations based on a rather dysfunctional doubles match on one of Klapp’s courts in Strasbourg. The negative remarks about the handicap, the marking, the light and the performance of one’s partner bring a life to the game that contrasts with the usual dryness of early accounts.

**Richard Travers** OAM, FRACP, DHMSA (Lond.) is a physician who has played real tennis at the Royal Melbourne Tennis Club (of which he was a President) for forty years. His interest in the history of tennis was sparked by his translation in 2004 of the *Traité...du royal jeu de paume*, written by Manneviex in 1783. This has been followed by books telling the stories of real tennis courts in Lyon, Geneva, Hobart, Orléans and Compiègne as well as other tennis studies. In recognition of his literary contribution to the game he was awarded the George Plimpton Prize by the United States Court Tennis Association in 2019.

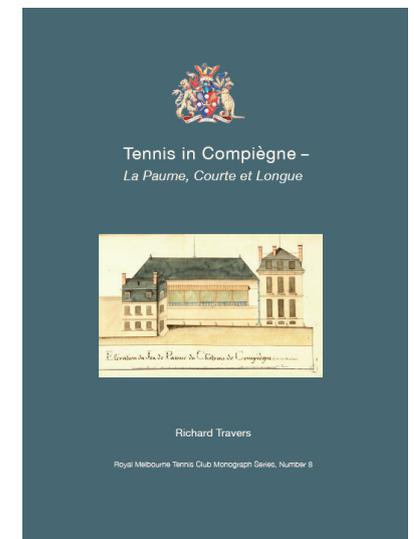
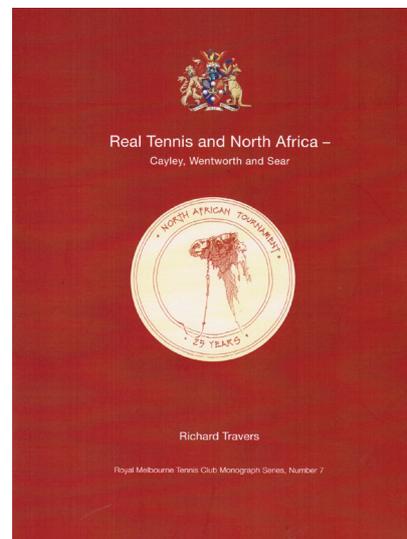
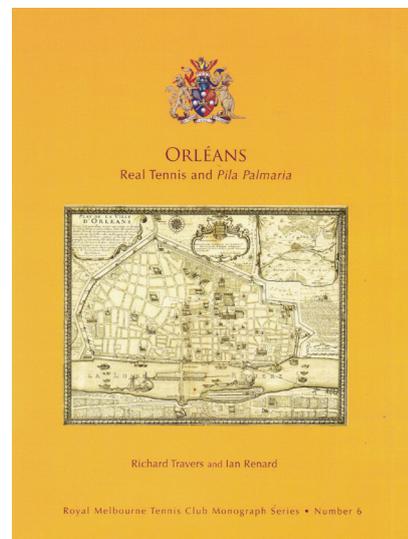
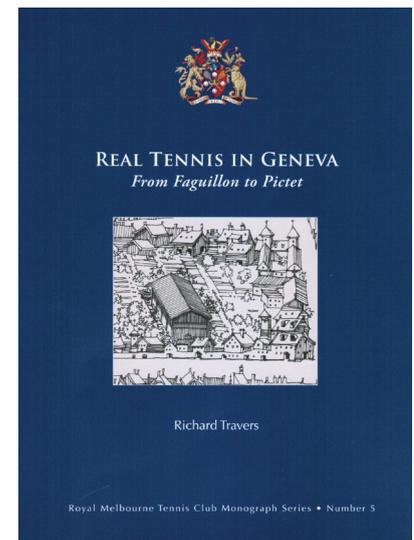


Image: model of Klapp’s double court  
2 rue du Jeu de Paume, Strasbourg  
Detail of the plan-relief of 1727  
Musée historique de Strasbourg  
(Claude Menninger, Inventaire Général)



# ROYAL MELBOURNE MONOGRAPHS SERIES

CONTACT:  
**RICHARD TRAVERS**  
[richard@travers.net.au](mailto:richard@travers.net.au)



# SESSION I Wednesday September 24th PAPER 2&3



**Thierry Bernard-Tambour**  
Historian, Renaissance Art Expert (SFEP)  
thierrybernardtambour@gmail.com

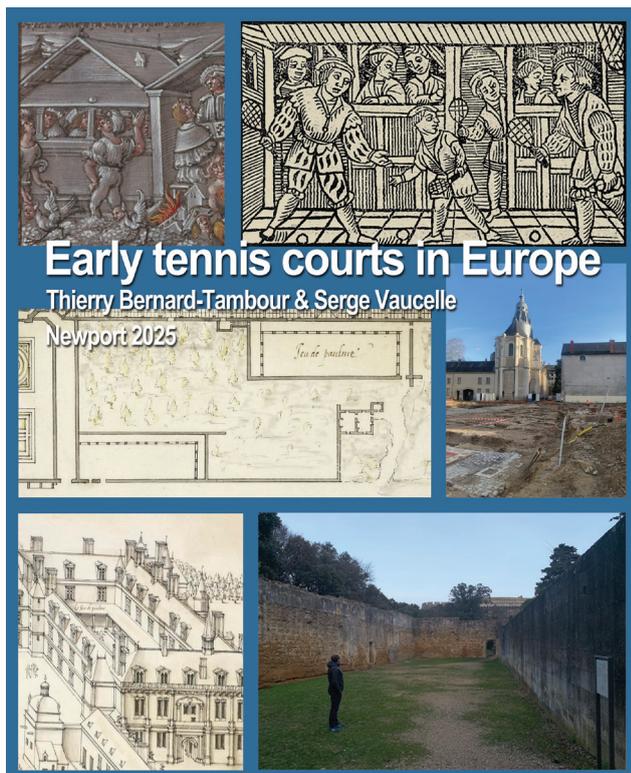


**Serge Vaucelle**, Associate Professor,  
Faculty of Sports Sciences, Toulouse University  
serge.vaucelle@utoulouse.fr

## *Early tennis courts in Europe: From the Diversity of Architecture and Rules to “Standardization”*

What did jeu de paume courts look like in late medieval Europe and throughout the Renaissance, and how did they evolve into the jeu de paume à dedans, designated by Italian sources as “alla francese” (in the French way)?

This question may today be addressed, at least in part, through the combined analysis of iconographic and documentary evidence, complemented by fifteen years of archaeological investigations recently published and carried out on multiple French sites.



26 RECHERCHES ARCHÉOLOGIQUES

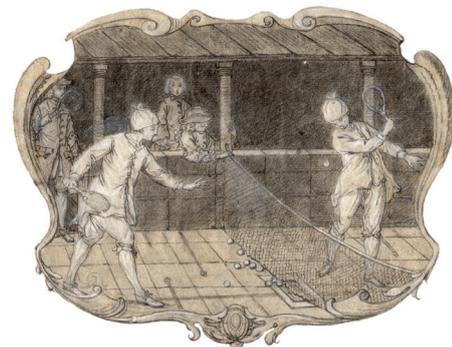
Sous la direction de  
Jean-Yves Dufour

## Archéologie et histoire des jeux de paume en France

De Versailles à la Marseillaise  
(XVII<sup>e</sup>-XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle)

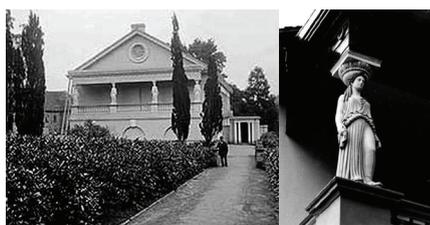
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Archéologie et histoire des jeux de paume en France  
de Versailles à la Marseillaise (XVII<sup>e</sup>-XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle)



CNRS ÉDITIONS Inrap<sup>+</sup>

# SESSION I Wednesday September 24th PAPER 4



**Simon Talbot-Williams**  
**Court Development, T&RA**  
**simon@talbotscott.co.uk**



## *Real Tennis Court Development in the UK and worldwide 2025-2030.*

**USA Charleston, South Carolina**, development of a “court” tennis court is underway north of central Charleston at Charleston Racquet Club. Re-purposing a basketball court to form an integrated racketsport community. Wow, it’s the way forward! We will come back to Re-use and integration.

**Australia Sydney Open!** A new real tennis court integrated into a lawn tennis, bowls and croquet club can to fruition at Easter 2025 with the opening of the court at The Cheltenham Recreation Club, Sydney. Inspired pursuit of local government funding to support the development. Probably the largest public grant since Lottery funding for Bristol c. 30 years ago. Again, we will come back to Integration and then we mustn’t forget how critical human capital can be! Ballarat has received a huge injection of such resources with control passing to Chris Ronaldson and Maggie Henderson-Tew.

**UK Hewell Grange, East Worcestershire.** This Humphrey Repton inspired neo classical 1819 court, was part of the Earl of Plymouth’s former Hewell Grange Estate. Last played on before the collection of 20 listed buildings became a “Borstal” in 1946, restoration and re-use has been our target for over four years. Located between Bromsgrove and Redditch, the sale of the whole estate to the nominated buyer has been in process for nearly three years. To be fair, issues have been many and varied!

**Repton Old Gym, Derbyshire.** VAT on school fees has been everyone’s concern in the UK private school sector but under the stewardship of Headmaster Mark Semmence, Repton remain keener than ever to pursue the opportunity to convert their redundant Old Gym.

**Hurlingham Club, London.** A plan in gestation since 1868 (6 months before the club opened in Spring 1869!) the area at the north east end of the recently constructed indoor tennis courts provide the perfect opportunity for finally achieving the full spectrum of racket sports at The Hurlingham Club. This could be a carbon copy of the fabulous facility at Westwood Country Club, Vienna.

Each project/prospect requires huge human resources and devoted local project champions who can help develop the business and financial case to persuade stakeholders of the viability of new real tennis courts.

### **Re-use and Integration**

Why do we feel re-use and integration are so important. Well, in the UK we have huge issues with viability so any opportunity to take advantage of previously embedded capital and economies of scale are hugely welcome. This isn’t to say that we don’t have very generous Benefactors offering to help but everyone is now so focused on sustainability, recycling and a viable future.

So, we have to integrate, we have to be the attraction which other sports will subsidise to ensure they stand out as the pre-eminent racket sport facility in their area. Hewell Grange and Repton will be perfect examples and we will be looking for more! They don’t come around very often but we have to take advantage when they do!

**QUESTIONS PLEASE!**

# SESSION II Wednesday September 24th PAPER 5



**John Shneerson**  
**Independent Historian and Book Collector**  
**Cambridge, UK**  
**john@shneerson.org.uk**

## *“Joseph Bickley: The man who modernised Real Tennis”*

Joseph Bickley arguably had more influence than anyone on how real tennis is now played. But he remains an enigma; no one knows much about him and he is thought to have taken the `secrets` of his methods to the grave. His early life was a surprising contrast to his work in the game. He only came to this when he was bankrupt and when Queen`s Club was being built. His career advanced with the support of Charles Rose, an irrepressible enthusiast on whom the character Toad of Toad Hall is based. Rose enabled Bickley to develop his skills on his three courts and then to roll them out in the UK and USA. Bickley`s secrets will, for the first time, be revealed in this talk.

### **Bibliography**

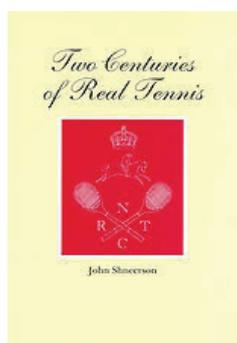
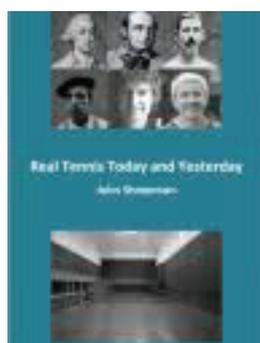
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Shneerson, John, *MCC More than a Cricket Club. Real tennis and other Sports at Lord`s*, Oxford, Ronaldson Publications 2020.

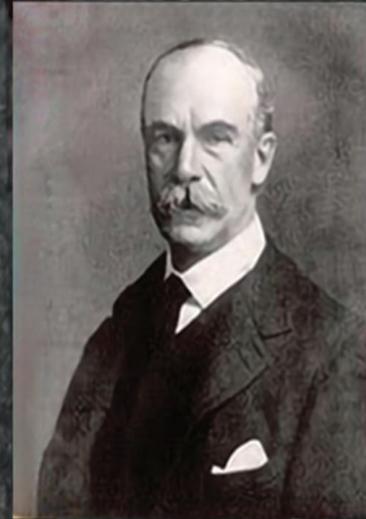
Shneerson, John, *Real Tennis Today and Yesterday*. Oxford , Ronaldson Publications 2015.

Shneerson, John, *Two Centuries of Real Tennis*, Oxford, Ronaldson Publications 1997.

**John Shneerson** learned to play real tennis at Queen`s Club and then Oxford University. He has remained a keen player and has also played competitive squash, Rugby fives, cricket and golf. In the 1990s he was instrumental in saving the tennis court at Newmarket, restoring it and setting up a members` club. For his three books on the game the US Court Tennis Association awarded him their prestigious Plimpton Prize in 2024 for literary excellence. His latest book is *An Unlikely Partnership: Joseph Bickley and Charles Rose*, was published in August 2025.



# An Unlikely Partnership



**Joseph Bickley & Charles Rose**

## ORDERING INFORMATION

An Unlikely Partnership: Joseph Bickley and Charles Rose: is due to be published late 2025  
Coffee table hardback edition @ £30.00 + £6.00 UK p&p

### **SPECIAL OFFER: Two books by John Shneerson**

**An Unlikely Partnership and MCC More than a Cricket Club £50 + £8 UK p&p**  
Leather-bound limited library edition, signed by the author @ £110.00 + £8.00 UK p&p  
Email orders/enquiries to [kathryn@ronaldsonpublications.co.uk](mailto:kathryn@ronaldsonpublications.co.uk) or 07790 070575 or :-  
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***Book signing available during the World Championship week!***

## SESSION II Wednesday September 24th PAPER 6

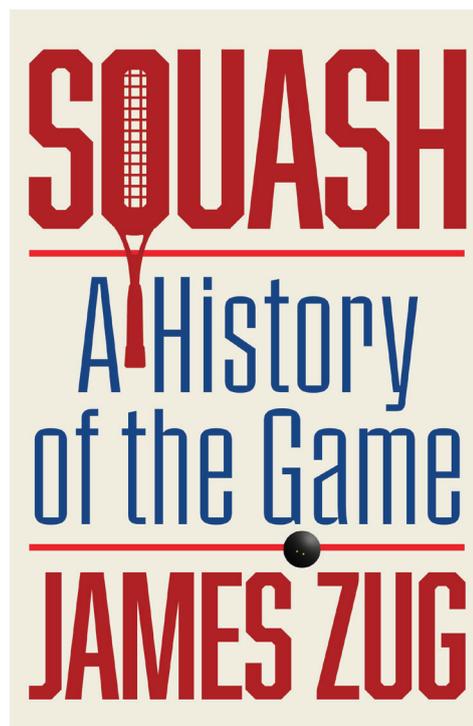
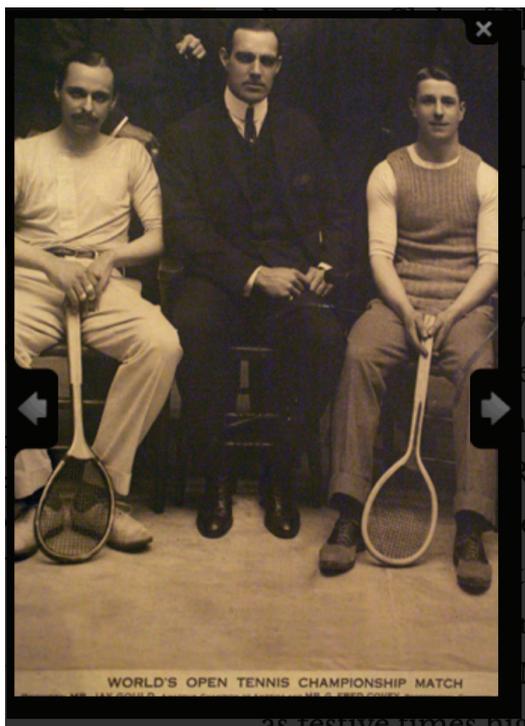


**Jim Zug**  
Author and Historian  
[jameszug@gmail.com](mailto:jameszug@gmail.com)

### *“Was Jay Gould Really a World Champion? The Legend of the 1914 Articles”*

As we gather for a Challenge, let’s think back to another. For a century, people have argued about whether Jay Gould was ever really world champion. Did the American amateur’s March 1914 win, seven sets to one, over Fred Covey in Philadelphia constitute a complete world championship match, or was there an agreement that the Challenge was home-and-away and Gould needed to win a second leg at Prince’s Club in England to properly assume the title of world champion? Many historians, from Robert Henderson in the 1930s to Bert O’Neill in the 1970s to Michael Wooldridge and Kathryn McNicoll in the 2000s, have researched this question. Perhaps we can glean some answers from their work.

**James Zug** is a historian and journalist. To celebrate the sesquicentennial of the building of the first tennis court in the country—the Buckingham Street court in Boston in 1876—he is working on a new book: *A Hundred and Fifty Years of Tennis in America, 1876-2026*. He was the ninth president of the USCTA, serving from 2017 to 2021; a USCTA board member from 1998 to 2021, a U.S. Court Tennis Preservation Foundation board member since 2014 and the chair of the USCTA Awards Committee. He has been an active player for the past thirty years in New York, Washington and Philadelphia. This past spring he finished his life list of the world’s tennis courts, by playing on the new Sydney court. An award-winning journalist, he is the author of a half-dozen books, including one on the history of squash in America, which Scribner is reissuing next month in a revised, paperback edition.



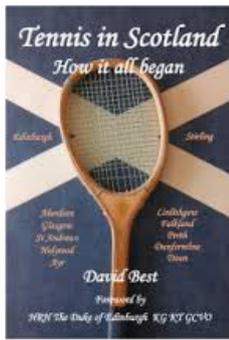
# SESSION III Wednesday September 24th PAPER 7

## “THE COURT: ART IN PLAY” Newport Art Museum ARTISTS’ PANEL

**Frederika Adam, Guest Curator**  
**Elizabeth Curren**  
**Charles Johnstone**  
**Robert Manice**  
**Bill Sullivan**



# SESSION IV Friday 26th September PAPER 8



**David Best**  
**Historian**  
**best\_david@hotmail.com**

## *“Tennis in Scotland”*

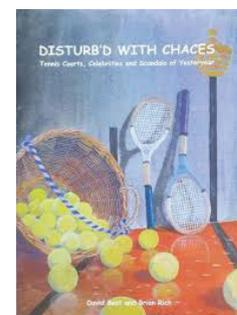
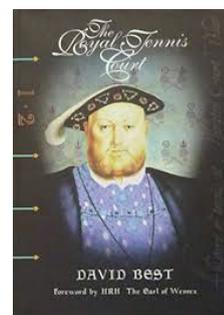
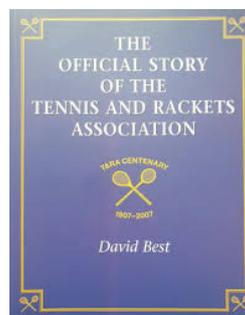
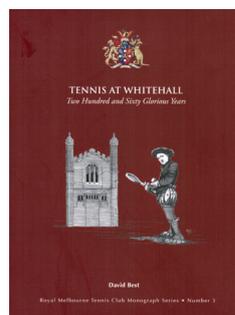
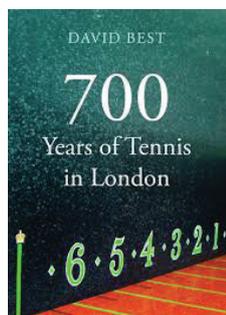
This paper attempts to explain the history of tennis in Scotland, from its introduction into the country in the middle of the thirteenth century, through to the present day. It covers the royal enthusiasm for the game, especially the Stuarts and their courtiers, through to its spread to the general population in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, especially in Edinburgh where there were at least seventeen tennis courts. It moves on through the more subdued years during the 1700s to late Victorian times when the tennis court at Falkland Palace was restored and shortly afterwards the court at Troon built. The paper concludes with a brief history of the Falkland Palace Tennis Court.

### **Bibliography**

- The Royal Tennis Court; A History of Tennis at Hampton Court Palace*, Ronaldson Publications, 2002  
*The Official Story of the Tennis and Rackets Association*, published by the Tennis and Rackets Association, 2007  
*Disturb'd with Chaces*, co-written with Brian Rich, Ronaldson Publications, 2009  
*Tennis at Whitehall*, part of the Royal Melbourne Tennis Club's Monograph Series, 2017  
*700 Years of Tennis in London*, Ronaldson Publications, 2021  
*Tennis in Scotland*, how it all began, Ronaldson Publications, 2024

**Forthcoming:** Tompkins – Britain's Greatest Tennis-Playing Family

**David Best** having taken up tennis at Hampton Court in 1979, Best was soon hooked on the game and began to develop a passion for its history. This was noticed by Chris Ronaldson, then the head professional at Hampton Court, who encouraged him to research and write a history of tennis at the palace. In 2002 *The Royal Tennis Court; A History of Tennis at Hampton Court Palace* was published. Since then, Best has had a number of books published dedicated to various aspects of the game.



# SESSION IV Friday 26th September PAPER 9



**Alessandro Tosi**  
Università di Pisa, Italy  
alessandro.tosi@unipi.it

## *“A racket in the painting”*

Paintings and prints produced between the end of the sixteenth and the middle of the seventeenth centuries testify to the vast and complex panorama of themes and motifs which marked the development of the imagery linked to the game, and to tennis as its most noble, fascinating expression.

This paper is an invitation to reflect on the meaning of placing a real tennis racket in a painting, its metaphorical and allegorical dimension linked to the perception and the representation of the game in early modern Europe.

### Short Bibliography

Alessandro Tosi, Tennis in early modern visual culture, in “Nuncius”, 28, 1, 2013, pp. 85-114

**Alessandro Tosi** is associate professor in history of modern art at the Department of Civilization and Forms of Knowledge, University of Pisa, and Director of the Museo della Grafica in Pisa. He conducts research on the history of visual arts from the early modern age to the present, focusing in particular on the relationship between art and science, on the history of drawing and prints, and on the history of gardens and sport. He has published a large number of papers on these research areas, presenting papers to many national and international symposia and conferences. He coedited the international symposia *La conquista del visibile: Galileo e le arti* (2006), *Tennis and the Scientific Revolution* (2012). He has organized various exhibitions, including *Golf is Art* (2022) and *Fashion Sport Tourism* (2023).



# SESSION IV Friday September 26th PAPERS 10&11

## PAPERS IN ABSENTIA:

*A huge thank you to Cees and Theo for preparing these papers for the conference which are available to download on the RTS website.*

[www.realtennissociety.com](http://www.realtennissociety.com)

**Cees de Bondt**, Independent Historian, Holland

**In preparation for his forthcoming book:**

***“Caravaggio’s Infamous Tennis Match:  
The Mystery around a Caravaggist Painting”***

Giambattista Tiepolo, *Death of Hyacinthus* (c.1752-53)

Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid



**Theo Bollerman**, Tennis Historian, Holland



**“English ballgames came from Flanders”**

**Etymology and historical facts prove without doubt, that the English ballgames were brought to Great Britain by Flemish merchants, already from the 11th century on.**

Photo: Theo with the 1909 trophy won by our first clubchampion, Prince Lev Urusov, who after the revolution went to Paris and joined Baron de Coubertin in the Olympic Committee.

# SESSION V Friday September 26th PAPER 12

## PANEL: CREATING HISTORY

Since the 2000s, the sport has embraced new types of media and resources for documenting and promoting court/real tennis worldwide. We've invited panelists who have broken new ground while working regularly to produce great content and images that quickly become part of the rich visual history of "tennis".

**Ben Geytenbeek**, Founder Real Tennis News; Film production and webstreaming for the T&RA and internationally [Joining us Online from the 2025 French Open, Paris]

**Tim Edwards**, Official photographer of the 2025 Real Tennis World Championship, T&RA and owner Plough Studios, London

**Alexander Robertson**, Founder of Sonder Podcast [www.sonderpodcast.co.uk](http://www.sonderpodcast.co.uk)  
The first Sonder podcast was with former World Champion Howard Angus.

Moderated by **Frederika Adam**



# SESSION IV Wednesday September 26th PAPER 13

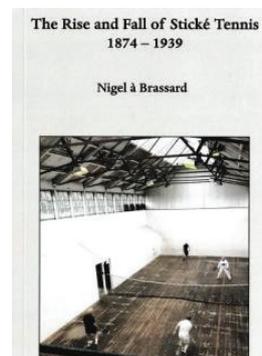
**Nigel à Brassard, BA. MA. MSt. Sports Historian**

**nigel.abrassard@btinternet.com**

**www.sportshistorian.co.uk**



***“Sticke tennis - Time for a revival?”***



During my twenty-minute slot, I aim to convince the audience of the need to build a sticke court in Newport and start sticky at Newport's real tennis court.

My talk will provide a timeline for the nineteenth-century sporting revolution in Britain and the emergence of modern sports. The history of outdoor and indoor sticke tennis. Sticky tennis - a modern twist. Why and how sticke tennis could be revived.

## **Bibliography**

Books and journal articles on real, lawn, and sticke tennis, chess, cricket, croquet, cycling, football, hunting, jousting, polo, rowing, rugby, and shooting etc.

## **Lectures and Presentations include:**

HM Treasury in Iceland, Japan, Mexico, and Taiwan, 1993-97.

Speaker at International Conference on the History of Tennis 2018 and the British Society of Sports History Annual Conference 2018.

Speaker at the Britain and the World Conference, University of Winchester, 2024

Presenter at Friends of the Bodleian, Bodleian Library, Oxford, 2024

## **Publications include:**

The Rise and Fall of Sticke Tennis 1874-1939, Ronaldson Publications, Oxford, 2017 and 2024

A Glorious Victory, A Glorious Defeat, Antony Rowe, Chippenham, 2001

Keats in Rome, Anthony Eyre, Cirencester, 2003, 2004, 2021

Profiles in Polo, McFarland & Co., Jefferson, NC. 2007

Heroes and Highlights of Sports History in England, English Heritage, Swindon, 2022

VIDES, Volume of Interdisciplinary Essays, University of Oxford, Oxford, 2022

British Women Travellers in the Long Nineteenth Century, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2025

**Nigel à Brassard** was awarded a BA in Modern History from King's College London and then worked in investment banking in London, Sydney, and New York. Subsequently, he was awarded degrees in Sports History and Culture (De Montfort University) and History of Art, and Arts & Literature (University of Oxford). He plays sticke tennis at Hartham Park and real tennis at Lord's cricket club and Radley.

# SESSION IV Wednesday September 26th PAPER 14

**Ian Harris**  
**ianlharris@gmail.com**



***“1875 And All That:  
Including lots of good things Lord’s, Prince’s & A Few Genuine Dates”***

In 1872 the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) codified the laws of tennis, unifying the game. When lawn tennis emerged, burgeoning with multiple codes, just a couple of years later, it seemed reasonable that the MCC, which was the guardian of the laws of cricket, rackets and tennis, should take the lead. That process, which started on the playing field of Lord’s in 1875, and continued in the columns of *The Field* magazine, is well documented. But what of the people at the heart of that process? Where was the Chair of the MCC Tennis Committee, Spencer Ponsonby, when this story kicked off? Why did Ponsonby reappear nominatively-extended, as Spencer Ponsonby-Fane, when he signed off the Laws of Lawn Tennis in May 1875? What was tennis’s resulting existential crisis and how did high-falutin’ sporting lawmakers from Lord’s, Prince’s and All England resolve it within a few years? Across the pond in the USA, how did James Dwight change his mind about lawn tennis, having “voted it a fraud” when first he tried it around 1875? And in later years, what did Spencer Ponsonby-Fane do for the enduring benefit of both Lord’s and The Newport Casino?

**Ian Harris** is a founder/director of Z/Yen, the City of London’s leading commercial think-tank. He is the co-author of several books, including the best-selling novel “Clean Business Cuisine” and the award-winning book “The Price of Fish: A New Approach to Wicked Economics and Better Decisions”. Ian is also a relentless blogger at <https://ianlouisharris.com/> writing about “travel, theatre, music, cricket, tennis and life”. Ian describes himself as an amateur historian; more a storyteller than historian in truth. He is an even-more-amateur tennis player, playing real and modern tennis using both arms with similarly ordinary results regardless. Ian graced our 2022 Prested conference with a performance piece on 14th century Burgundian wine, tennis and song. Uncowed, at Newport Ian will roll the clock forward some 500 years, to celebrate the 150th anniversary of key events and people that helped make tennis, real and modern, the games they are today.

# SESSION IV Wednesday September 26th PAPER 15



**Rob Lake, PhD, MA, BSc (hons), FHEA**  
**Douglas College, British Columbia, Canada**  
**roblake29@hotmail.com**

## *“A Revival of Tennis : Examining the sport’s early days in Ontario, c. 1874 onwards”*

Despite the recent successes of Canadian players on the world stage, a glaring gap remains within the sport’s historiography. This presentation advances our understanding of the sport’s development in Canada, focusing on its historical epicentre of southern Ontario. Aspects related to the unique social composition of Canadian elites, blending aspects of British and American cultural practices, brought class tensions that were rooted most strongly in the perceived middle-class needs for social reform and distinction. These features coloured the experiences of early tennis players and administrators. Drawing from British cultural practices, early clubs and tournaments emerged as repositories of upper-middle-class class values of behavioural self-control, refined tastes and propriety; they were enclaves where the connected practices of social exclusion and conspicuous consumption proliferated. The ideology of amateurism conditioned their approach to play, which equated fair play with respectability, but found its limit with the marked advance of commercial interests, drawn from North American expansionist ideology. As lawn tennis in Canada developed and matured, those in positions of power lent on both British and American cultural values and practices to carve out their own distinct spaces.

**Dr. Robert J. Lake** is an instructor in Sport Science at Douglas College, in Vancouver, Canada. His academic research has focused on historical and sociological aspects of tennis, and he has written extensively on tennis history. His first book *A Social History of Tennis in Britain* (Routledge, 2015) won the Lord Aberdare Literary Prize awarded by the British Society of Sport History. Another book, the edited collection, *Routledge Handbook of Tennis: History, Culture and Politics* (Routledge, 2019), received an honourable mention in the North American Society for Sport History outstanding book award. He is the former President of the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport and is currently Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Sport in History* and Series Editor for the Routledge Research in Sport History book series. On the side, he writes stock market analyses for Seeking Alpha, and drives for Uber!

Book Series Editor, Routledge Research in Sports History  
Editor-in-Chief, *Sport in History*  
Associate Editor, *International Journal of the History of Sport*

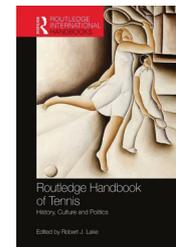
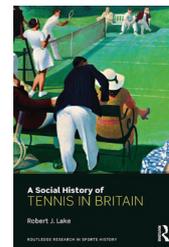
### Books:

*New Dimensions of Sport in Modern Europe: Perspectives from the ‘Long Twentieth Century’*: <https://www.routledge.com/New-Dimensions-of-Sport-in-Modern-Europe-Perspectives-from-the-Long/Dichter-Lake-Dyreson/p/book/9780367712969>

*Routledge Handbook of Tennis: History, Culture and Politics*: <https://www.crcpress.com/Routledge-Handbook-of-Tennis-History-Culture-and-Politics/Lake/p/book/9781138691933>

*Sex Integration in Sport and Physical Culture: Promises and Pitfalls*: <https://www.routledge.com/Sex-Integration-in-Sport-and-Physical-Culture-Promises-and-Pitfalls/Channon-Dashper-Fletcher-Lake/p/book/9780367139414>

*A Social History of Tennis in Britain*: <https://www.routledge.com/A-Social-History-of-Tennis-in-Britain/Lake/p/book/9781138695313>



# SESSION IV Wednesday September 26th PAPER 16



**Luca Bottazzi**  
**Faculty of Sports Science, University of Milan**  
**lucabottazzi@yahoo.it**



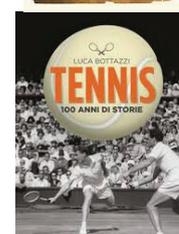
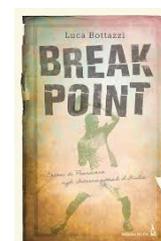
## *“The Game of Kings The King of Games”*

Gianni Clerici fascinated my thoughts, with his extraordinary masterpiece 500 Years of Tennis. Thus, my passion for tennis history and research was born, once I finished my adventure as a professional on the ATP circuit. A game so ancient and rich in history that it has been called the game of kings the king of games. In this way Charles V, emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, arrives in Italy in Mantua on April 2, 1530. Supreme monarch, he possesses a kingdom where the sun never sets, so vast is it. From Asia to Europe to America stretches his influence, Christianity, and love of a racket game already called “Tennis”! In Mantua, an ideal city fashioned by the genius of Giulio Romano, the emperor is hosted by Marquis Federico Gonzaga, a 30-year-old contemporary of his. Two nobles, but above all two men, both enraptured by a common passion for the game of Pallacorda, Jeu de Paume for the French, Royal Tennis for the English. In those Mantuan days, Palazzo Te presents, in addition to magnificent rooms capable of illustrating myths and legends of ancient Greece, a room that is set up for the game. A place in which evocative events develop, to write an unrepeatable testimony. Thus, Pallacorda is shown to be an activity capable of opening dialogue between people as well as between nations, both friends and enemies. It thus realizes the harmonious human interlocution capable of reconciling, precisely through play, political and power conflicts. The racket thus proves to be a passport par excellence for every city in the world. In tennis, the form changes in every point played, since time immemorial; as well as in its evolutions, due to the continuous technological progression of materials. What, on the other hand, remains in actuality is enshrined in the depths of the substance, its deep DNA. A fundamental aspect because it proves to be a bridge capable of uniting distant eras. X Factor determinant, offers the key to understanding how, in its own way, the tennis of Charles V, of Camden Riviere, of Jannik Sinner, have much in common. These days, tennis is no longer the game of kings, but it still remains, without question, the king of games.

**Luca Bottazzi** is a former ATP 136 professional tennis player. He is a researcher and lecturer at the Faculty of Sports Science, University of Milan. He is the author of numerous publications on sports, teaching, and the history and evolution of the game.

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# THE COURT: ART IN PLAY

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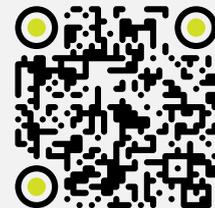
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