

Bulletin No:40

From Dave Luddy, Bulletin Secretary, BTJA

February 2 2026

www.btja.co.uk

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[1. John Roberts](#)

John Roberts, the former tennis correspondent of The Independent for nearly 20 years, has sadly died aged 84.

He was a vice-president of the BTJA.

John was one of the original members of The Independent's sports department and was one of the key figures behind its success following the newspaper's launch in 1986. He was a beautifully fluent writer who wrote with great warmth. He had a great sense of humour and was unfailingly kind.



Born in Stockport in 1941, he joined *The Independent* at its launch in 1986 and remained its tennis correspondent through to his retirement in 2006, with a spell as football correspondent in 1990.

John began his career with the *Stockport Express* and also wrote for national newspapers, including the *Daily Express*, *The Guardian* and the *Daily Mail*, covering football and tennis.



While working as the *Express*'s sports correspondent in Northern Ireland from 1965 to 1968, Roberts got to know George Best and became the ghostwriter for the Manchester United star's weekly column. He later played a part in arranging a civic reception in his honour at Belfast City Hall after United won the European Cup and Best was named European Footballer of the Year in 1968.

He also authored several books, including former Liverpool manager Bill Shankly's autobiography, ghosting Kevin Keegan's first book and penning others on Best (*Sod This, I'm Off to Marbella*), Manchester United's Busby Babes (*The Team That Wouldn't Die*) and Everton (*The Official Centenary History*).



John was known as a great wordsmith. In a piece on Kevin Keegan, he described the former England international, noting that "Keegan wasn't fit to lace George Best's drinks."

A spokesperson for the All England Club said: "He was admired and respected for his knowledge and skills as a journalist, but he was also one of the sport's true gentlemen: an affable and witty companion in and away from the media centre, and always welcoming to new journalists joining the ranks."



Former colleague Nick Harris said he was a fine journalist, but, more than that, he was a lovely, funny, kind and gentle man."

John is survived by his wife Phyllis, children Chris, Leanne and Gerard, and grandchildren Noah, Jack, Mai and Hassie.

(courtesy of Paul Newman published in *The Independent*)



David Luddy writes:- "I first met John in Belgrade at the 1987 Davis Cup tie between the former Yugoslavia and Great Britain. He was very kind to a youngster on the tennis circuit. We did share a few drinks and opinions were very forthcoming. And in the following years when covering the U.S. Open in the 90s and the early part of the 21st

century we would always greet each other by saying the word '*opinions*' to remind us of 1987.



I remember once when he had a big spread in The Independent in 1997 on five times Wimbledon champion Lottie Dod. It was during the big pre-Wimbledon event at Eastbourne. He was so proud, and rightly so, that he invited me to his room to show me his distinguished work. He had 16 year old Martina Hingis pose as a 'Lookalike Lottie' in a replica 1887 tennis outfit - including a calf-length dress and holding a vintage racquet - to honour Lottie who was 15 when she first won Wimbledon in 1887.

The photoshoot was arranged with the cooperation of the All England Club and sponsors. Hingis was the youngest winner of a major at that time in the 20th century.

He was also known to put lots of books under his computer so he could type out those distinguished words.

As Nick Harris said he was a lovely, funny, kind and gentle man.

I can testify to that.



2. The 72nd BTJA Annual Awards Lunch

Julian Cash and Lloyd Glasspool along with Roger Taylor, were the winners at the BTJA's 72nd Annual Awards Lunch at the All England Club in early December.



Cash and Glasspool won the 'Player of the Year Award, finishing last season as the world No.1 pair. They won 60% of the vote in a ballot of BTJA members.

Jack Draper won 16%, Sonay Kartal, Henry Patten and Fran Jones all captured 8%.

Previous winners include Draper, Andy Murray, Emma Raducanu and Virginia Wade.



Last year Cash and Glasspool won 7 titles including **Wimbledon** and reached four other finals.

They were the first all-British team to win **Wimbledon** in 89 years beating Australian Rinky Hijikata and Dutchman David Pel 6-2, 7-6 in the final.

In 1936 Pat Hughes and Raymond Tuckey captured the title.

Cash and Glasspool also won in Brisbane, Qatar, Queen's, Eastbourne, the **Toronto Masters** and Vienna. They reached the finals at the **Miami Masters**, the **Monte Carlo Masters**, Rosmalen and the **Paris Masters**.

Nicholas Dann, agent for Cash and Glasspool, accepted the award on their behalf.



Taylor was the winner of the 'BTJA's Services to British Tennis Award.' accepting the award from our chairman Tumaini Carayol who also delivered the welcome speech. The left-handed Taylor won two U.S. Open Grand Slam doubles titles in 1971 and 1972 - first with John Newcombe and then with Cliff Drysdale. That's in addition to winning 9 titles in 19 finals during the Open era which began in 1968.

Between 1958 and 1982 Taylor won overall 31 singles crowns.



He reached three Wimbledon semi-finals in 1967, 1970 and 1973. It was in 1973 that Taylor defied the controversial ATP boycott. He played in the Championship and co-wrote with BTJA member Marcus Buckland about the experience in his book *The Man Who Saved Wimbledon*.

The former British No.1 and Davis Cup player (won 29, lost 11) also captained the Davis Cup team between 2000-2004.



At the Lunch funds were raised for the Stargardt's Connected (*Stargardt's disease is an inherited progressive disease that affects the retina*), and Merton Sports and Social Club for Visually Impaired People. £4884 was raised for the charities.



Writers, broadcasters, photographers, staff, players, coaches, agents, administrators and friends were among 166 people who attended the Lunch.



Our huge thanks to the AELTC for hosting the venue, our contributors to the raffle and help from Tumaini Carayol, Stuart Fraser, Karthi Gnanasegaram. Matthew Lambert, Gigi Salmon and April Tod for organising our biggest event of the year.

3. BTJA Committee Meetings and the AELTC

At the last BTJA committee meeting in October we discussed the treasurer's report, membership, and our Annual Awards lunch. There are three a year - April at the AELTC, June during Queen's and October plus the agm.

The next committee meeting will be in April.

If anyone wishes to raise any constructive points for your committee to consider and our meetings with the AELTC – then please contact me via email.

davidluddy@aol.com

The BTJA committee is Tumaini Carayol (chair) (*The Guardian*), Eleanor Crooks (vice-chair and secretary) (*Press Association*), Chris Bowers (treasurer)(*TV/Radio*), David Luddy (bulletins) (*TV/Radio*), Simon Briggs (*The Telegraph*), Clive Brunskill (*Getty Images*), Stuart Fraser (*The Times*), Russell Fuller (*BBCTV/Radio*), Matthew Lambwell (*Daily Mail*), Neil McLeman (*Daily Mirror*) and Gigi Salmon (*Sky TV/BBC Radio*).

There are 74 members (*including the President*) of the BTJA. This includes 47 full members, 25 associate and 2 honorary vice presidents.

As reported in the October bulletin there will be a new Media Centre at Wimbledon. The target date is in time for the 2027 Championships.

4. The 2026 Winter Bulletin Award – Neal Skupski

The unofficial winter 2026 bulletin award goes to Neal Skupski.

This follows him winning the Australian Open with new partner 31 year old American Christian Harrison. They beat Australian pair Jason Kubler and Marc Polmans 7-6, 6-4 in Melbourne.

It was only their second tournament together having played in Adelaide, also in January, reaching the semi-finals. They decided to play together in October once Skupski's partner Joe Salisbury decided to take a rest in the early part of this year. Skupski and Harrison once teamed-up for a Futures event in Glasgow in 2013 and lost in round 1.

It's Skupski's 18th doubles title including his fourth Grand Slam. His three other Grand Slams - are the 2023 Wimbledon doubles title with Wesley Koolhof and mixed doubles with American Desirae Krawczyk again at Wimbledon in 2021 and 2022.

Last year - partnering Salisbury, he reached the finals of the French and U.S. Opens. He also reached the U.S. Open final with Koolhof in 2022 and the mixed finals of the 2024 Australian and French Opens.

By winning the Australian Open Skupski is again world ranked 1, displacing British rival Lloyd Glasspool, having captured the top spot in 2022.

He's won almost 6 million American dollars in prize money.

His older brother, Ken Skupski, has played a significant role in his career, acting as his long-term doubles partner and now his coach.

Skupski went to Louisiana State University between 2008-2012. He studied sports administration as well as playing college tennis.

He was a top player for the LSU Tigers becoming the first freshman in school history to

earn All-American honours, twice in doubles (2009 and 2011) and in singles once (2012). He turned professional in 2013.



5. Top 100 LIVE@February 2 (am)

Britain has 16 players in the top 100.

That includes - singles (6) (3 men, 3 women) and doubles (10) (7 men, 3 women).



6. Brits – Live Singles@February 2 (am)

Jack Draper is world ranked 12, Cameron Norrie 26 and Jacob Fearnley 87.

Jan Choinski is 124, Billy Harris 131, Arthur Fery 150, Jack Pinnington-Jones 181, Jay Clarke 183, and Dan Evans 190.

Emma Raducanu is 28, Sony Kartal 55, and Francesca Jones 64.

Katie Boulter is 119 and Harriet Dart 178.



7. Brits – Live Doubles@February 2 (am)

Three British players are at the top of the world rankings with five in the top 10.

Neal Skupski, having won the Australian Open, leads the way followed by former world number one Lloyd Glasspool at 2 and partner Julian Cash at 3.

Joe Salisbury is 8 and Henry Patten is 9.

Then there is Luke Johnson 28 and Marcus Willis 76, - making it seven Brits in the top 100.



There are also three British women in their top 100. Olivia Nicholls is at 26, Maia Lumsden 76, and Emily Appleton 93.

Alicia Barnett is at 118, Madeleine Brooks 123, Harriet Dart is 133, Ella McDonald 157, Sony Kartal 166, Emily Webley-Smith 167, Amelia Rajecki 188 and Freya Christie 199.



8. Did you know - Brits (chasing ranking points)@February 2

(Progression over 6 years)

2026 have won 13 titles with 11 beaten finalists

-

2025 won 218 titles with 194 beaten finalists

2024 won 182 titles with 149 beaten finalists

2023 won 149 titles with 148 beaten finalists

2022 won 147 titles with 118 beaten finalists

2021 won 108 titles with 104 beaten finalists

-

2026 so far (in brackets 2025 titles/finalists)

Grand Slams

Won 1 (2)

(1) MD-Neal Skupski (with Christian Harrison) (Australian)

-

Final 0 (3)



ATP Finals (end of season)

Won 0 (1)

Final 0 (1)



ATP

Men's Singles

Won 0 (1)

Final 0 (3)



Challenger

Won 0 (15)

Final 2 (12)

(1) Monday
(1) Pinnington-Jones



ITF

Won 3 (61)

(1) Basing

(1) Broom

(1) Gill

-

Final 1 (37)

(1) Maxted



Men's Doubles

ATP

Won 1 (11) (*Brits partnering Brits **in bold** - count as one title*)

(1) Patten (*Heliovaara*) (**Adelaide**)

-

Final 1 (10) (*Brits partnering Brits **in bold** - count as one finalist*)

(1) Cash/Glasspool (**Brisbane**)

-

Challenger Doubles

Won 2 (12) (*Brits partnering Brits **in bold** - count as one title*)

(2) Stevenson (**Broom**/Cleeve Harper)

(1) Broom (Stevenson)

N.B. Broom/Stevenson – won same title:

-

Final 1 (9) (*Brits partnering Brits **in bold** - count as one finalist*)

(1) Broom/Ben Jones

N.B. Broom/Ben Jones - all-British finalists:

-

ITF Doubles

Won 2 (57) (*Brits partnering Brits - count as one title*) (*Brit partners - in brackets*)

(1) Broom (*Hussey*)

(1) Hussey (*Broom*)

(1) Murgett

-

Final 2 (52) (*Brits partnering Brits - count as one finalist*) (*Brit partners - in brackets*)

(1) Hands (*Wendelken*)

(1) Leather

(1) Wendelken (*Hands*)



Women singles (*in brackets 2024 titles/finalists*)

WTA

Won 0 (0)

Final 0 (0)



WTA 125

Won 0 (3)

Final 0 (0)

-

ITF

Won 0 (20)

Final 1 (20)

(1) Dart



Women's Doubles

WTA

Won 0 (0) (*Brits partnering Brits **in bold** - count as one title*)
Final 0 (2) (*Brits partnering Brits **in bold** - count as one finalist*)



WTA 125

Won 0 (2) (*Brits partnering Brits **in bold** - count as one title*)
Final 0 (7) (*Brits partnering Brits **in bold** - count as one finalist*)



ITF Doubles

Won 4 (31) (*Brits partnering Brits in brackets - count as one title*)

(2) Rajecki (Brooks)

(1) Brooks (Rajecki)

(1) Dart (Lumsden)

(1) Dudeney

(1) Lumsden (Dart)

N.B. Brooks/Rajecki, Dart/Lumsden won same titles

-

Final 3 (36) (*Brits partnering Brits in brackets - count as one finalist*)

(1) Appleton

(1) Dudeney

(1) Stojanovic



9. LIVE WORLD RANKINGS (British)@February 2 (am)

▲▼ **Ranking changes since Jan 1 2026**

Men's singles

Age

12 ▼02 Jack Draper (10) 24 (22/12/01)

26 ▲01 Cameron Norrie (27) 30 (23/08/95)

87 ▼16 Jacob Fearnley (71) 24 (15/07/01)

-

124 ▲01 Jan Choinski (125) 29 (10/06/96)

131 ▼03 Billy Harris (128) 31 (25/01/95)

150 ▲39 Arthur Fery (189) 23 (12/07/02)

181 ▲22 Jack Pinnington-Jones (203) 22 (30/03/03)

183 ▼08 Jay Clarke (175) 27 (27/07/98)

190 ▼05 Dan Evans (185) 35 (23/05/90)

-

206 ▲05 George Loffhagen (211) 24 (19/04/01)

215 ▼15 Oliver Crawford (200) 26 (30/04/99)

230 ▼11 Ryan Peniston (219) 30 (10/11/95)

238 ▼04 Johannus Monday (234) 24 (22/01/02)

242 ▲20 Toby Samuel (262) 23 (06/09/02)

260 ▲58 Charles Broom (318) 27 (24/04/98)

279 ▲27 Liam Broady (306) 32 (04/01/94)

-

303 ▲12 Harry Wendelken (315) 24 (18/12/01)

325 ▲52 Felix Gill (377) 23 (01/06/02)

328 ▲05 Oliver Tarvet (333) 22 (29/10/03)

335 ▼03 Giles Hussey (332) 28 (26/05/97)

341 ▼03 Hamish Stewart (338) 26 (30/07/99)

351 ▲31 Paul Jubb (382) 26 (31/10/99)

360 ▲63 Max Basing (423) 23 (02/10/02)

379 ▲13 Aidan McHugh (392) 25 (09/07/00)

-

404 ▼120 Alastair Gray (284) 27 (22/06/98)

420 ▼01 Stuart Parker (419) 28 (30/07/97)

447 ▲48 Lui Maxted (495) 22 (02/12/03)

454 ▲14 James Story (468) 24 (05/03/01)
 477 ▼120 Henry Searle (357) 19 (29/03/06)



Selected Others Age

692 ▼115 Anton Matusевич (577) 24 (30/05/01)
 702 ▼101 Millen Hurrión (601) 26 (22/06/99)
 811 ▼01 Oliver Bonding (810) 18 (18/06/07)
 858 ▲98 Luca Pow (956) 21 (01/02/05)
 863 ▲03 Charlie Robertson (866) 19 (07/10/06)



LIVE WORLD RANKINGS (British)@February 2 (am)

▲▼ Ranking changes since Jan 1 2026

Women's singles Age

28 ▲01 Emma Raducanu (29) 23 (13/11/02)
 55 ▲16 Sonay Kartal (71) 24 (28/10/01)
 64 ▲13 Francesca Jones (77) 25 (19/09/00)
 -
 119 ▼19 Katie Boulter (100) 29 (01/08/96)
 178 ▼02 Harriet Dart (176) 29 (28/07/96)
 -
 236 ▲21 Mingge Xu (257) 18 (02/10/07)
 262 ▼06 Yuriko Miyazaki (256) 30 (11/11/95)
 267 ▲50 Katie Swan (317) 26 (24/03/99)
 273 ▲74 Mika Stojšavljević (347) 17 (15/12/08)
 275 ▼10 Heather Watson (265) 33 (19/05/92)
 -
 330 ▼25 Amarni Banks (305) 23 (08/10/02)
 397 ▼237 Jodie Burrage (160) 26 (24/05/99)



Selected Others Age

403 ▼24 Emily Appleton (379) 26 (01/09/99)
 434 ▲04 Alicia Dudeney (438) 22 (28/05/03)
 437 ▼03 Victoria Allen (434) 24 (26/02/01)
 458 ▲16 Ranah Stoiber (474) 20 (25/05/05)
 473 ▼26 Amelia Rajecki (447) 23 (03/06/02)
 477 ▲51 Ella McDonald (528) 20 (04/08/05)
 568 ▲35 Esther Adeshina (603) 24 (04/10/01)
 590 ▲04 Hannah Klugman (594) 16 (18/02/09)
 724 ▼09 Brooke Black (715) 18 (20/11/07)
 982 ▲102 Ruby Cooling (1084) 18 (3/11/07)
 995 ▲04 Tegan Bush (999) 18 (01/01/08)



LIVE Men's doubles (minimum top 400)@February 2 (am)

▲▼ Ranking changes since Jan 1 2026



01 ▲08 Neal Skupski (09) (with U.S. Christian Harrison)
 02 ▼01 Lloyd Glasspool (01) (with Julian Cash)
 03 ▼01 Julian Cash (02) (with Lloyd Glasspool)
 08 ▲02 Joe Salisbury (10) (taking break until April 2026)
 09 ▼06 Henry Patten (03) (with Finland's Harri Heliövaara)
 28 ▲09 Luke Johnson (37) (with Poland's Jan Zielinski)
 76 ▲02 Marcus Willis (78) (sometimes with Joshua Paris)
 -
 101 ▼04 Joshua Paris (97) (sometimes with Marcus Willis)

114▲27	David Stevenson	(141)
119▼34	Jamie Murray	(85)
197▲08	Ben Jones	(205)
-		
211▲07	James Mackinlay	(218)
215▼08	Mark Whitehouse	(207)
225▲75	Charles Broom	(300)
236 same	Johannus Monday	(236)
242▲05	Harry Wendelken	(247)
246▲03	Cameron Norrie	(249)
247▼14	Jacob Fearnley	(233)
268▼16	Hamish Stewart	(252)
274▲15	Tom Hands	(289)
288▼09	Scott Duncan	(279)
-		
315▲18	Finn Bass	(333)
319▲05	Connor Thomson	(324)
365▲23	Finn Murgett	(388)
387▲39	Emile Hudd	(426)



[Selected Others](#)

404▲17	Liam Hignett	(421)
417▼21	Lui Maxted	(396)
453▼73	James Story	(380)
510▲32	James Hopper	(542)
566▲07	Harry Rock	(573)
681▲63	Luca Pow	(744)
742▼42	Charlie Robertson	(700)
761▲15	Max Basing	(776)
762▲15	Luc Koenig	(777)



[LIVE Women's doubles \(minimum top 300\)@February 2 \(am\)](#)

[▲▼ Ranking changes since Jan 1 2026](#)



26 same	Olivia Nicholls	(26)	(with Slovakian Tereza Mihalikova)
76 same	Maia Lumsden	(76)	(sometimes with Harriet Dart)
93▼04	Emily Appleton	(89)	(sometimes with Holland's Isabelle Haverlag)
-			
118▲05	Alicia Barnett	(123)	(with France's Elixane Lechemia)
123▲02	Madeleine Brooks	(125)	
133▼20	Harriet Dart	(113)	(sometimes with Maia Lumsden)
157▲08	Ella McDonald	(165)	
166▲17	Sony Kartal	(183)	
167▲28	Emily Webley-Smith	(195)	
189▲35	Amelia Rajecki	(224)	
199▼05	Freya Christie	(194)	
-			
206▼36	Jodie Burrage	(170)	
221▼42	Eden Silva	(179)	
227▲148	Alicia Dudeney	(375)	
255▼10	Mingge Xu	(245)	
260▼12	Yuriko Miyazaki	(248)	
265▲01	Emma Raducanu	(266)	
287▼47	Naiktha Bains	(240)	



10. Podcasts

On our website www.btja.co.uk are some amazing stories from our more 'experienced' members. The initial idea came from Mike Dickson.

The podcasts include top photographer Clive Brunskill, current President April Tod, organiser of our annual lunches for over two decades, recollections from Nigel Clarke, who reveals all on the infamous nine-man brawl in the Wimbledon press room, plus from John Barrett, Ron Atkin, Richard Evans and Barry Flatman. Chris Jones is the presenter and producer of our podcasts.



11. Website editor/social media duties/BTJA articles request

The website editor is James Buddell.

The website address is www.btja.co.uk

We would be delighted to receive old or new articles for our website that you would like published.

Please contact me by email.



12. Contact Details

You are welcome to send any updated information ASAP (email, postal address and mobile number) to our secretary Eleanor Crooks.

eleanor.crooks@pressassociation.com

Also do copy me in so you can receive the bulletins.

davidluddy@aol.com



13. BTJA development

We would like to hear from you re: the future development of the Association.



14. Bulletins

There are six bulletins a year. The next official bulletin will be at the end of March (41), then May (42), July (43), September (44) and early December (45).

If you want anything included do email me.

Distribution is going to honorary members.



15. Finally

Good to see some of you in Melbourne and hopefully will see some of you on the ATP Tour during Spring.

I can be contacted anytime by email.

davidluddy@aol.com



Best wishes



David Luddy

Bulletin Secretary, BTJA

www.dliradiosport.com

February 2 2026