

## **The shuttlecock that travelled 78 million miles before landing on the ground**

During March 2019 four Badminton history enthusiasts from France visited the National Badminton Museum in Milton Keynes, bringing with them the International Space Station shuttlecock. The shuttlecock was taken on the International Space Station by the French astronaut Thomas Pesquet, a native of the Dieppe region. His mission started on November 16th 2016 and finished on June 2nd 2017. He spent 196 days, 17 hours and 50 minutes in space, for 3136 rotations around the Earth (travelling more than 78 million miles). During the mission he tested the flight of the shuttlecock in the International Space Station's weightless conditions. The shuttlecock belongs to the Toulouse Space Centre and was lent by courtesy of the head of the Proxima project, Mr Sébastien Barde.

Bruno Lafitte, Jean-Jacques Bergeret, Jean-Paul Didier and Micheline Richebois from the French National Archives Commission then took the shuttlecock to the 2019 Yonex All-England Badminton Championships where it was exhibited on the National Badminton Museum display stand. The shuttlecock then travelled to Badminton House in Gloucestershire where the shuttlecock was photographed with some of the very old battledores and shuttlecocks in the North Hall of Badminton House where the game was invented.



*Outside of the North Hall at Badminton House are Jean-Paul Didier, Jean-Jacques Bergeret, Micheline Richebois and Bruno Lafitte from the French National Archives Commission with the International Space Station shuttlecock.*



*The International Space Station Shuttlecock with old battledores and shuttlecocks in the North Hall, Badminton House.*



## **Yonex present the Museum with a framed T-shirt**

Yonex present the National Badminton Museum with a framed T-shirt. In 2019 Kento Momota was the first Japanese man to win the Men's Singles title at the Yonex All-England Badminton Championships. In return the Museum gave Yonex spare event programmes of the Yonex All-England back to 1984. This was for their museum in Tokyo that Yonex are trying to establish.

*Yonex's Dominic Bone presenting a framed T-shirt to Brenda Andrew from the NBM.*

## The game of badminton in 1863

The National Badminton Museum is indebted to David Jacobs of Southampton who has donated his copies of the Field Magazine to the Museum. The copies show many of the early rules of badminton from the 1870s. David, back in the 1990s, completed a considerable amount of research into these early rules.

David also informed us that he had discovered, through the Newspaper.com website, an article in the Wednesday 23 December 1863 Trewman's Exeter Flying Post, which had published part of an article called "Life in a Country House" from the December 1863 Cornhill Magazine. The Cornhill Magazine was a monthly Victorian literary journal. The relevant part to the game of badminton was **"If the weather be such as to introduce you to remain within doors, your co-operation will be sought for the a game at pool, badminton (which is battledore and shuttlecock played with sides, across a string suspended some 5 feet from the ground), and similar amusements."**

The game of 'battledore and shuttlecock' dates back to the 18th and 19th centuries. The roots of the game have been reported to go back to ancient times in China and other Asian countries. The game was played with rackets, battledores and even wooden paddles. 'Battledore and shuttlecock' was played without a net and without the boundary lines of a court. Two or more players hit the shuttlecock back and forth. This was usually a cooperative rather than competitive game. The players purposely hit the shuttlecock towards rather than away from each other. Their goal was to have as long a rally as possible keeping the shuttlecock up in the air and counting the number of consecutive successful strokes in each rally.

The present-day game of badminton developed from this much older game of 'battledore and shuttlecock'. Badminton was being played in at least 1863 and may

be a few years before that.

Many Badminton historians and coaching books have said that badminton started in 1873. The National Badminton Museum has managed to purchase for its reference library a Cornhill Magazine book July to December 1863. This book has the complete article of "Life in a Country House".

We know the game of 'battledore and shuttlecock' was played at Badminton House as early as 1830 because they still have in their possession two old battledores which have inscriptions handwritten in ink on their parchment faces. The oldest reads: 'Kept with Lady Somerset on Saturday January 12th 1830 to 21 17 with... (unreadable)'. The second says: 'Lady Henrietta Somerset in February 1845 kept up with Beth Mitchell 2018.'

We believe in the National Badminton Museum that the game of badminton evolved from the old game of 'battledore and shuttlecock' in 1863, or just before, in Badminton House. The game was not particularly popular in this country at that time and was taken to India by army officers of the British Indian Army. We know that some of the sons of the Duke of Beaufort were in the British Indian Army. Over the next decade the game was popularised in India by army officers and civil servants stationed there. The good weather conditions in India meant the game was mainly played outside. In about 1873 the game became more popular in this country with army officers and civil servants returning from India and forming Badminton Clubs mainly in the South of England.

One thing we did notice in the Museum, looking through the old press reports from the 1860s/1870s, was that the words 'battledore and shuttlecock' were used many times by the legal profession and politicians when describing that something had been passed backwards and forwards many times.

## Birmal aluminium racket with steel strings c1924

The National Badminton Museum has managed to purchase one of the extremely rare Birmal aluminium badminton rackets. The racket was first advertised in the Badminton Gazette January 1924. They continued to advertise it until April 1926. The racket was made of aluminium alloy and was strung with a single strand of steel wire. It was priced in 1924 at 30 shillings (£1.50) and for 32 shillings you could purchase it with a special leather grip. This was one of the first rackets to have a leather handle grip. The racket was not a success. One of the main reasons was

probably that so much damage was done to the shuttlecocks by the metal strings.





*Visitors in the North Hall, Badminton House.*

## National Badminton Museum visit to Badminton House.

During the 2019 Yonex All-England Badminton Championships the National Badminton Museum in conjunction with Yonex was asked to organise a visit to Badminton House. Ben Yoneyama, Chairman of Yonex with his wife Joaan and officials and students from the Nippon Badminton Association, went on the visit. Also, on the visit were many people interested in badminton history from all over the world.

## All-England blazer

From 1904 until the 1970s All-England Champions were entitled to wear this blazer. This All-England blazer was donated to the National Badminton Museum by Heather Nielsen nee Ward (England) who, with Margaret Varner (USA), won the 1958 All-England Woman's Doubles Championship. Heather Nielsen also won the 1959 All-England Woman's Singles Championship. The Museum has had the blazer framed and is on display.



## BBC Antiques Road Trip

During the summer the National Badminton Museum, Milton Keynes agreed to the BBC visiting and filming for its Antiques Road Trip programme. The antiques expert who came with the film crew was James Braxton. James happened to mention to the television producer of the programme that he played badminton as a youngster. The producer therefore arranged for James to play against some of the England players training at the National Badminton Centre. During the game the BBC used a drone camera for filming above and also on the court. They then filmed some of the shuttlecocks and rackets belonging to the Museum. The programme was shown on BBC 1 during September.



*Geoff Hinder, Secretary of the NBM with James Braxton during filming at the Museum.*

*L. to R. England international players Max Flynn, Greg Mairs and Tom Wolfenden with James Braxton. They are looking up at the drone camera that was flying in the National Badminton Centre.*



## Visitors to the National Badminton Museum

During the year the Museum has many visitors. The photograph shows some young Chinese players with their coaches visiting the Museum, being shown round by volunteers Brenda and Bill Andrew with their grandson Daniel.



## Why not arrange to visit the National Badminton Museum!

If you are interested in seeing the collection of posters on display in the restaurant or any other items held or on display we will be pleased to see you and show them to you. Just get in touch and we can arrange for someone to meet you and show you around, let you have access to the office and items in-store, please contact:- [museum@badmintonengland.co.uk](mailto:museum@badmintonengland.co.uk) to arrange a convenient date and time. We look forward to seeing you.

**Finance** To maintain the Museum we are reliant on our Friends and donations and the very generous support of Badminton England. Counties and Associations are asked each year to support the National Badminton Museum with an annual subscription of £25 that goes towards the running costs of maintaining this unique sporting archive. For more information please contact:- [museum@badmintonengland.co.uk](mailto:museum@badmintonengland.co.uk)

**Membership** Sadly there has been a drop in the number of Friends over the last few years - if you can, persuade any badminton friends to join us in our quest to preserve the history of badminton.

## Providing a legacy for the National Badminton Museum

We owe special thanks to those who kindly remembered the National Badminton Museum in their Wills. These crucial gifts provide the major part of our total funding. Legacies have enabled the Museum to obtain important items that would otherwise be lost and to provide the display cabinets to preserve the rich history of badminton enabling visitors to see the development of the game from its very early beginnings.

People remember the Museum for many reasons: some love the game of badminton and had great times participating; others are conscious of the rich and varied

history of the sport.

Most do not want to see that history lost.

Whatever the reason, leaving a legacy won't cost a penny now and can even save tax on what you leave. Every gift, large or small, makes a real difference. After you have taken care of family and friends, please consider remembering the National Badminton Museum in your Will and help protect the history of this dynamic game of badminton.

If you do choose to remember the National Badminton Museum in this special way - thank you.

## The National Badminton Museum Trustees

**Bill Andrew**, Chairman of NBM.

**Geoff Hinder**, Hon. Sec. of NBM.

**John Herdman**.

**Di Troke**, President of Badminton England.

**Mike Robinson**, Chairman of Badminton England.

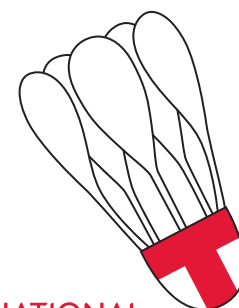
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