

FOUR AT FIVES

The sound is the giveaway. Before you reach the courts
– a game played in a court enclosed by four walls -
The sound of the ball's distinctive crack
As it strikes the wall, or slight boom on the door
– two inches of solid teak or other material -
Tells that there is a game going on.
Closer now, the voices can be heard
"Yours!" "Eleven eight. Sorry, eight eleven."
"This ball looks a little worse for wear."
As well as the slap of trainers on cement.
But, when you get to the gallery, the four
Are standing in a rough square, breathing heavily
And gloved hands on hips. A conversation
Is quietly but intensely carried on.
"It hit me." "Did it bounce?" "Yes."
"Let ball; who served that?" "I did."
"No, you didn't - you served the one
That came out of the nick." "Sorry."
"Am I in? All right. Twelve eight, second hand."
One moves towards the corner - throws the ball up
So that it first strikes the front wall above the board.

P.C.R.