



OVLTC History 1922 -2022



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(Member 1986 – to the present day.)

The Beginning

The early years of Onslow Village Lawn Tennis Club's 100- year life are obviously the most interesting.

In 1922 the All-England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club moved from Worple Road to its present site in Church Road and on 26 June it was officially opened by King George V and Queen Mary. This was followed by the wettest Wimbledon tournament in history. Suzanne Lenglen was the eventual Ladies' Singles Champion and Gerald L Patterson won the Men's Championship.

Onslow Village itself had come into existence in 1920. Planned as a garden suburb, its aim was tackling the acute shortage of working-class housing following the Great War. It's doubtful that many – if any - of the residents today would regard themselves as working class! 646 acres of land were purchased by the Village Association from the Earl of Onslow at a quarter of its market value. Tenants paid peppercorn rents to be part of this 'land fit for heroes to return to' from the horrors of the war. Plenty of green space, including a recreation ground, was part of the plan.

Within two years - on 6 March 1922 - a group of tenants of Onslow Village Ltd met to discuss the formation of a tennis club in the village. It seems very little discussion was actually needed and it was unanimously agreed that a club should be formed. There were three options put forward for control of

the club. Complete control by the Tenants' Committee, Partial Control by the Tenants' Committee or Complete Independence. Complete Control and Complete Independence were quickly discarded.

A long lease was considered essential, together with the option of partial control of the club by the members, and the possibility of financial assistance from the Tenants' Society in the shape of a loan. It was also decided that two members of the Onslow Village Tenants' Committee should be 'ex officio' members of the tennis club. Entrance Fees and Subscriptions were hotly debated along with the ground rent requested by Onslow Village Ltd. It was initially considered that the £8 per acre requested by the Tenants' Society was too high, but that a fee of £1 (i.e., Pre-decimal) for subscriptions to include an entrance fee for every member, for the first year, was a reasonable sum.

The programme for the construction of the courts was that two grass courts would be available for play in the current season, after rolling and beating out 'inequalities'. A third court needed to be levelled and seeded ready for play the following season. This would require a lot of voluntary labour. Sunday Play was discussed and it was agreed that play would be allowed on Sundays.

A committee was formed, from the Tenants' Association along with a request for volunteers to work on the constitution of the club and therefore on 6 March 1922, the date of the first inaugural meeting, Onslow Village Lawn Tennis Club was officially formed.

The Twenties

Although electric typewriters had appeared on the market in 1920 there were no computers, laptops, or word processors, and all the committee minutes were hand-written.

At the first official committee meeting of the club on the 13 March 1922 held at 6 Farm Walk, the pre-selected committee met and agreed to ask Onslow Village Ltd for a lease of 21 years. Rules were discussed and drafted ready for approval at the next meeting. These included that the official name should be 'Onslow Village Lawn Tennis Club' and that no one aged under 16 to be eligible for membership! A request for a loan of £50 to be repaid at £10 per year would be made to Onslow Village Ltd and also the possibility of a gift of money would be explored.

Interest @ 4% per annum by half yearly payments on the 1st Nov. & 1st May in each year. First payment of interest on 1st Nov 1922.

ON SLOW VILLAGE LIMITED.

To be repaid by five annual instalments of £10 each on the 1st day of May in each year, with instalment of £10 to be paid on the 1st day of May 1923.

	Cash Paid to Society	Cash Withdrawn Repaid	Balance due to Society.	Signature and Stamp where needed.
1922 Apr 25	50			Receipt signed by A. Scott, Chairman F. ... Secretary on behalf of several Members of the Committee
1923 May 3		10	40	F. ...
1924 May 1		10	30	F. ...

Figure 1. Inside of the Loan passbook, showing the £50 loan and annual payments of £10

Unfortunately, there is no record of the actual date the courts were first played on, but a best guess is 1 May 1922. Members had to provide their own balls, rubber shoes were to be worn by all players and play was organised as one set at a time with a maximum of 11 games. By July 1922 discussion was under way as how to treat the courts during the Autumn. Again, there is no record of the decision. There was, however, some debate about cows from the adjoining farm (where Powell Close and the infants' school are now sited) wandering onto the tennis courts, due to the 'inadequacies' of the wire fence at the time. Barbed wire was added to the fence at a cost of £1.11s.2p which was well in excess of their budget, but was considered necessary.

In 1923 at the beginning of the new season, a groundsman was appointed to tend the grass courts working from April to the end of September two days a week for eight hours each day. The third court would be in operation for this season and preparations were also under way for the formation of a fourth court, but cost prevented it being approved for the time being, especially as construction of a hard court was muted. All grounds were leased from Onslow Village Ltd. Six deck chairs were purchased at this time for Honorary Members to sit and enjoy the tennis!

Consideration was also given to moving the site of the courts to a slightly more sheltered area 'west of the Sports Field'. However, when the committee met to inspect the proposed

new site, it was not considered a big enough improvement to warrant a change.

At the start of the 1924 season the Committee were asked to supply a new net for one of the courts, the current one having been damaged by mice.

By 1925 rumours were that hard courts were to be laid down by the Tenants' Society somewhere in the village, but at that time it was only in discussion stage. At the AGM in 1926 OVLTC were informed that the Tenants' Society were prepared to lay down two hard courts (site then unknown) for a return of £50 to cover interest and sinking fund. The committee felt they could not possibly raise such a large sum.

At the same AGM it was learned that a proposal to join the Guildford Tennis League had been turned down as it would mean playing each opposition team twice and it was not considered that the club would get enough players who would be interested. At this time membership had reduced to around 50.

Between 1925 & 1928 one member had presented a flag to the club. A pole was then erected with this flag flying to show when the courts were playable. There is no clue as to the type of flag, or who was responsible for hoisting or taking it down again, but it conjures up some lovely images.

Membership by 1928 was around 60 although a maximum of 70 was deemed the cutting off point for the 3 courts. (All

adults of course!) Questions were raised as to whether it was the time to open the tennis club to non- residents of Onslow Village. As Onslow Village Ltd still controlled the club it was thought they might not approve of this change. It was also decided to try out a tennis ball called Wisden. Wisden was well known in the sporting world, and still today produces the Cricketers Almanack.

There was no pavilion, but OVLTC considered one was not really necessary as all members were from the village. Onslow Village Ltd still had plans for hard courts that would be open to the public and it was hinted that a pavilion to be used by both the tennis club and the public hard courts could be erected.

Club membership in 1928 was one guinea. (21 old shillings). Whist drives were held to raise funds. Also, about that time the club asked for a stile to be erected to provide easy access to the recreation ground.

By 1929 Onslow Village Ltd now had their 2 hard courts up and running and offered the use of one of them to the club at weekends. (These courts would in time become the current Courts 3 & 4). This would enable OVLTC to 'rest' each of their grass courts in turn in the early part of the season.

Also, that year a water supply was installed for maintenance of the grass courts. The LTA-approved Spencer Moulton was by then the ball of choice for the club.

The Thirties

At Wimbledon, this decade saw Fred Perry win his the first of his three successive men's singles titles in 1934. Helen Wills Moody won the last of her eight singles titles in 1938. And the BBC made its first broadcast from the Championships in 1937.

Between 1932 to 1937 plans were drawn up for a pavilion and a quote was accepted from Harwoods of Aldershot for £12.10s for the erection of a pavilion 'in the corner of A court' and a decision was made to plant a hedge and trees on three sides of the courts. It appears this original pavilion was actually situated close to the current Cricket/Football Pavillion. At this time there were still 3 grass courts but it is not clear exactly where 'A court' was. There was also talk of buying the cricket pavilion on the Recreation Ground for £10 and a proposal for OVLTC to purchase the hard courts but by 1937 Onslow Village Ltd seemed to have withdrawn this offer!



Figure 2. Map of Onslow Village showing the position of the tennis courts in 1934

In 1936 Rules were created for 'Children Holiday Members' who had to be a minimum of 12 years of age, and providing toilets was now considered a matter of some urgency.

1938 was a busy year. At the AGM held in March a proposal was put forward that a playing-in system was required and this was carried unanimously. Later that same year the tennis balls were changed to Slazenger, which is still the ball of choice for the Wimbledon Championship if not currently for OVLTC.

The 2 hard courts were eventually acquired from Onslow Village Ltd, originally at a rent of £10 per annum but this was followed in August by a proposal to change the existing three grass courts to two hard ones. This was mainly due to the bad condition of the grass courts and the difficulty to maintain them in a good condition, although there was no explanation at that time, as to why three grass courts should become 2 hard ones. One committee member outlined a scheme of football forecasts which would raise funds towards converting the grass courts to hard ones. The idea was carried unanimously.

Onslow Village Ltd then offered £500 capital to convert the two original hard courts they owned to what was called 'modern non- attentive' hard courts and to change the 3 grass courts to 2 'non-attentive' hard courts where 'grass courts B & C' were currently laid. This was to be paid back at £52 per year with any excess in costs over the £500 to be paid by OVLTC. The courts would be on a par with those at Dorking TC, which were laid green with a loose finish.

At this point a piece of land currently used for the grass courts was claimed by Onslow Village Ltd in exchange for 5ft of land on the South of the Hard Courts, which may be part of the reason why only two hard courts were created. Although it is not entirely clear it appears the current Courts 1 & 2 were the site of the original grass courts and 3 & 4 were the Onslow Village Courts.

The new hard courts were completed in April 1939. Much of the discussion at meetings revolved around how many members there should be and whether these members should be winter and summer members, Onslow Village residents or not and the playing-in standard including juniors moving from junior to senior level.

By now a maximum of 16 juniors were allowed to join the club but no holiday juniors were accepted. This was not without its problems as in May 1939 (due to unsatisfactory behaviour) it had been necessary to call all the juniors together and explain the terms and conditions under which they were permitted to play

In 1939 a 21-year lease was granted by Onslow Village Ltd on condition they had trustees of the club in place. Five trustees were accepted.

The Forties

Having been dormant for the duration of the Second World War, Wimbledon resumed in 1946 – though the massive hole in the Centre Court roof, caused by a bomb in October 1940, remained until 1947.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 21st FEBRUARY 1940.			
EXPENDITURE		INCOME	
To Rent	£ s. d.	By Subscriptions	£ s. d.
Income Tax	52 0 0	Hon. Members	124 9 6
General Rates	10 0 0	Junior Members	2 5 0
Water Rates	1 12 0	Visitors Fees	12 15 0
Insurance	13 6	Sale of used Balls	4 2 0
Labour	4 5 6	Profits of Social Functions per Ladies Committee	5 5 6
Repairs, Accessories	16 8 11	Balance of Football Competitions 1938/39	18 3 10
Balls	30 16 0	Surpluses	3 0 6
Half Cost of Lease	3 16 8		
Printing, Stationery	3 3 2		
Balance, being excess of Income over Expenditure for the year	53 0 0		
Transferred to I. & F. A/c.	23 0 0		
do. Development A/c.	30 0 0		
	£53 0 0		
	£177 16 4		£177 16 4
DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNT.			
To Balance	£ s. d.	By Income and Expenditure Account	£ s. d.
	30 0 0		30 0 0
BALANCE SHEET, 21st FEBRUARY 1940.			
LIABILITIES.		ASSETS.	
Steady Creditors	£ s. d.	Cash at Bank	£ s. d.
Income Tax	11 4	in hands of Treasurer	65 1 3
Water Rates	8 0	Income Tax recoverable from Landlord	15 6
Income and Expenditure Account - Balance 1st Feb. 1939	£26 0 2	Stores, Gear and Accessories	6 14 9
Add Part Excess Income for year	23 0 0		7 10 0
Development Account	30 0 0		
	£79 19 6		£79 19 6
C. D. BAKER, Hon. Treasurer.			
Examined with Books and Vouchers and Certified to be in accordance therewith.			
February 24th, 1940.			
A. BISSETT		} Hon. Auditors.	
L. W. G. BRISTOW		}	

Figure 3. AGM March 1940 showing Income & Expenditure

In February 1940 it was agreed that any member who left to join the Forces would be allowed to play as a guest when home on leave. The committee also agreed to keep the club going despite the wartime difficulties. At the AGM of 1941 it was proposed and accepted that the junior section be discontinued but facilities be granted for children to learn the game as long as they were accompanied by an adult.



Figure 4. Circa 1941. Standing on the site of where the clubhouse now is. Unknown. Edwina Williams. Doreen Alexander

The Committee reluctantly decided in Spring 1943 that play would stop on the courts for the duration of the war. It had become impossible to obtain tennis balls or other equipment. The Committee would remain in place until the club was in a position to restart. The Ladies Committee were to explore the possibility of whist drives and dances to raise funds.

By August 1944 a decision was made to have old balls reconditioned so that the club could re-open at the earliest possible date. On this note an EGM was held in April 1945 and it was agreed to open the courts on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays from 2pm from 5 May for 22 weeks in the hope the reconditioned balls would last that long!

The membership during 1947-1949 stood at around 100 seniors and 41% of them had played in matches for the club.

In 1948 Mr S Jeffery offered a cup to the Club for a Mixed Doubles handicap tournament. This was gratefully accepted, and the cup is still in existence although the tournament is not played every year.

The Fifties

Two 17-year-old Australians, Ken Rosewall and Lew Hoad, played at Wimbledon for the first time in 1952, and in 1957 Queen Elizabeth II made her first visit to the Championships.

In 1951 Guildford Corporation purchased the courts from Onslow Village Ltd and in future all rent would be paid to the Borough. OVLTC joined the LTA. There was an ongoing problem with cricket balls being hit into the courts from the Recreation Ground and a request was made to the Guildford Corporation for vehicular access and that the ground at the side of Court 1 be made into a car park.

During 1953 an EGM was called to discuss an anonymous gift of a cup to be played for by clubs with hard courts in the Guildford area. This had been raised by Merrow Tennis Club and also involved Mrs Jowett of OVLTC. The Chaucer League (which our Men's league still play in the Summer) was formed in 1954. Although it started as a mixed league by 1958 OVLTC were able to enter a Men's team.

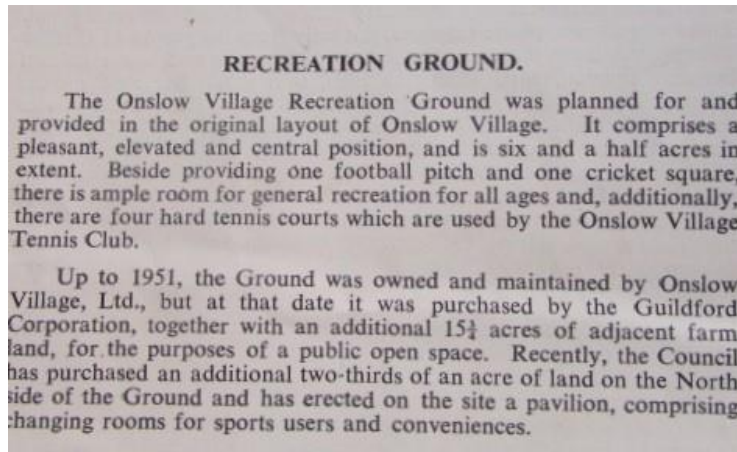


Figure 5. Taken from a Souvenir Programme of Onslow Village Coronation Celebrations in 1953

The original pavilion was not on the site of the current clubhouse, but was further over towards the Recreation ground and was a wooden building. Throughout the years proposals had been made for a new clubhouse but raising the money for it always seemed to be beyond the club. However, by 1956 the OVLTC had its own entrance to the Recreation Ground and the promise of a car park, and a new 21-year lease with Guildford Borough was signed.

1957 saw the formation of the Off-Peak group although at that time it was known as 'afternoon members.' Play was weekdays except Wednesdays, Bank Holidays and Tournament Days. In 1959 this was changed to allow play on a Wednesday rather than Friday so that the Guildford County School could use the courts on Friday afternoon.

Plans were drawn up for the new clubhouse and these were approved by the committee, but were returned by Onslow Village Ltd with some criticism. Guildford Borough advised the

club that no funds could be allocated to this project but they would be prepared to build the clubhouse and then charge additional rent. This was not considered a good option as by now OVLTC had raised almost £1,000 by holding dances, jumble sales and similar fund-raising events. The options were a brick building for £980 or a wooden one at £860. The brick one was chosen but without a breeze block inner liner or veranda which could be added at a later date. This figure would become £1,200 with all the fixtures and fittings.

Various names were suggested for the opening of the clubhouse and Geoffrey Paish who had been a Davis Cup player agreed to do this. A date of 4 April 1959 was chosen for the official opening of and all parents were advised that children should play outside in future and not in the clubhouse. Although there are photos of the occasion, frustratingly there seems to be no report on the opening of the clubhouse.



Figure 6. Opening of the clubhouse 1959. Geoffrey Paish of the LTA with his wife Sylvia, and Mr Tickner, who became President in 1961

The Sixties

1961 saw two British Ladies in the Wimbledon Singles Final, when Angela Mortimer beat Christine Truman. And in 1968 the Championships finally became open, with professionals now allowed to compete alongside amateurs. Rod Laver and Billie Jean King were the first singles champions of the new era. Laver won £2,000. Billie Jean's prize money was £750 – how things have changed, in every way...

In 1960 OVLTC bought Premium Bonds to the value of £50, with any winnings belonging the club. Members were given a list of the numbers so that they could check for winning numbers. There is no record of any wins being recorded, and in later years the amount appeared to be written off, as no one seemed to know what had happened to the Bonds.

At the AGM in 1961 a Mr Tickner was elected as the First Club President in recognition of his work for over the previous 30 years

The mind slightly boggles that also in 1961 a portable typewriter and a flame thrower were purchased for the club. The latter was apparently to dispose of weeds!

In the hope of instilling some responsibility into the younger members a junior committee was formed with 5 'responsible' juniors.

During the late 1950s and early 1960s the club had a drinks licence and sold alcohol, but by 1962 the new Licensing Act

meant it would be necessary to have at least 6 amendments to Club Rules as the Act became more rigid with hefty penalties. It was therefore decided to close the bar.

At the AGM in 1963 it was announced that there was a 'Lack of Spirit' in the club, and only five members who were not already on the committee attended the AGM. (Not sure a lot has changed since then!) The behaviour of some juniors continued to be a problem. Improperly attired juniors would be asked to leave the courts, and membership cards would be issued. By the AGM in 1964 a small number of juniors had been removed from the club as it seemed their sole purpose was to make trouble.

During this time cricket continued to be played on the Rec, and provision was made to buy chain link fencing to protect the bottom of new fence panels. There was also a problem with cricketers using 'our' car park, and occasionally horses were brought through the club grounds!

In the 1964/65 season it was reported at the AGM that the junior hut had suffered at the hands of hooligans who had completely wrecked it. It had previously held a bar billiard table and a boisterous evening culminated with an oil lamp being knocked over. It is believed boys had been found in the main Club House as well, having entered through a window and four days later 6 windows were broken. The police were not successful in tracing the culprits.

Luckily by 1966 it was generally agreed that the junior behaviour had greatly improved, and some juniors had refurbished the junior hut on their own initiative.

By March 1968 a Ladies toilet was in place. This was necessary as the toilets in the pavilion on the recreation ground had been closed! This also brought about an increase in subs to cover the cost even though GBC had granted £120 towards the costs initially and this was followed by a further grant of £47.

The Seventies

The BBC had first broadcast Wimbledon in colour in 1967, and by the Seventies widespread colour tv ownership increased our enjoyment of the Championships. Bjorn Borg won the first of his five successive titles on the parched courts in 1976. And the following year the Queen's Silver Jubilee was marked by a British win as Virginia Wade won the Ladies' title.

By 1978 the club minutes at last started to be typed rather than hand written. There is no more mention of the flame thrower though.

Certain things cropped up repeatedly over the years. In particular the behaviour of juniors, late subscriptions, the rise and fall of membership, tennis balls, the club lease and working parties for the maintenance of the club and courts.

During the 70's the club jogged along with no outstanding events and in 1978 the student and adult membership stood at 90 and membership was closed for the year.

The Eighties

John McEnroe was the talk of the decade at Wimbledon and all the other Grand Slams too. Brilliant tennis, great matches, terrible temper...a flawed genius. Martina Navratilova won six singles finals in a row from 1982 to 1987.

1980 saw the club house broken into three times, and eventually the police stayed overnight for surveillance and arrested someone from Brixham. This also resulted in OVLTC receiving a small amount of compensation. Also, by 1980 the club house had a dart board and in 1982 added a table tennis table and joined a Table Tennis League in 1983.

In September 1983 it was decided that from the start of the following season there would be a committee member on duty at every general play session. By 1984 the kitchen had been refurbished, which included a stainless-steel sink to replace the original porcelain one.

A practice wall was considered in early 1985 but was considered low priority and the idea was scrapped.

By 1985 the Men had a toilet in their cloakroom, and the Ladies cloakroom had also been updated, and there was a suggestion to create a path from the car park to the club house. (This happened and is still in use)

In 1986 the table tennis section was disbanded due to the extra work it created and continued friction between club members over its use. Also, in this year the afternoon (off-peak) session was in danger of folding due to lack of members.

1987 saw OVLTC joining the Aldershot & District Tennis League, where they still play to date, and currently have 3 Men and 3 Ladies teams.

1988 found the committee discussing floodlighting and a practice wall was raised again. By 1989 quotes were underway for floodlights and the practice wall again took a back seat. By the time of the AGM in 1989 the carpet tiles in the clubhouse had been laid, a shed had been erected and new hotel quality crockery had been purchased.

A grant from Guildford Borough Council of £1,800 had been agreed towards the addition of a practice wall. However, at the AGM a vote for a practice wall or a ball machine was taken and the ball machine won. GBC were advised of the change.

In June 1989 OVLTC had its own logo designed sweatshirts and in 1990 the sons of Frank Jowett (deceased president) presented the club with the Jowett trophy to be played as a mixed veteran's tournament.

The Nineties

One of the enduring memories of the decade at Wimbledon was perhaps in 1993 when Jana Novotna cried on the shoulder of the Duchess of Kent after losing her nerve and the match from a winning position in the Ladies' Final against Steffi Graf. Jana laid this ghost to rest five years later by winning the title. The men's singles championship was dominated by Pete Sampras, who won the first of his seven titles in 1993.

By June 1990 planning consent was given to floodlighting courts 1 & 2 with an 8-metre height restriction and a 9pm cut-off time, and by December 1990 the floodlights had been installed and floodlight play commenced. The council had agreed a grant of almost half of the cost which was a great help.

It was in 1991 that a long-overdue water heater was installed in the kitchen, and in 1992 Audrey & (President) John Allison generously donated an Honours Board which was to be officially unveiled at the 1993 AGM but was delayed until later in the year and held on the Wimbledon draw evening.

By November 1993 planning application had been submitted for Courts 3 & 4 to be floodlit, and once again the possibility of a practice wall was mooted along with the idea of converting the existing courts to artificial grass.

Towards the end of 1994 planning was approved for floodlights on Courts 3 & 4. However, 'barn doors' were to be fitted to these lights and to the existing ones on Courts 1 & 2 to shield the bungalows behind the courts.

By September 1995 three quotes had been received for the lights on courts 3 & 4 and work was completed by October.

In 1997 the club was to celebrate 75 years of existence and it was decided to mark the occasion on 7 September 1997. This unfortunately turned out to be the day after the funeral of Princess Diana and the club considered cancelling the event, but after much discussion it was decided that the plans were too far advanced and the event would go ahead. Past members were invited plus one pair from local clubs. Some members were dressed 1920's style and lady members acted as waitresses and there was also a Master of Ceremonies. This was all held in a large marquee erected at the side of the club. Apart from one Gentleman guest collapsing in the heat and an ambulance being called it was a very successful day!

By late 1997 various options were looked at for relaying the courts, including applying for a lottery grant or LTA loan. Both these came with restrictions, one of which was switching to artificial grass. This has consistently been regarded as unviable for the club.



Figure 7. Club Finals Day 1997

By 1998 the clubhouse heating had improved with the installation of a fan heater set on the wall. At one committee meeting the idea of a practice wall was mooted yet again, but this was not met with much enthusiasm.

In 1998 it was found necessary to put up a notice to members about wearing recognised tennis attire. This had been prompted by a member turning up to play in jeans!

There was a constant battle to maintain a sign at the end of the drive up to the tennis club – always useful in helping visiting teams to find the tucked-away club. The sign had disappeared on several occasions and only the screws had remained, though the present sign seems to have survived for some time.

In 1999 the Ladies teams joined the Woking league for the Summer Season having decided they were not keen on the format of one set in the Summer ADLTA league.

There was a good student section at this time, and courts 1 & 2 had been resurfaced aided by a £4,500 grant from GBC with the rest funded by the Club itself.

The Noughties

Serena & Venus Williams dominated the Wimbledon Championships during this period, beginning a dynasty that would bring them 12 singles titles between them, plus another six in doubles. Roger Federer won the first of his eight singles titles in 2003.

By 2000 OVLTC had a website and this year also saw the erection of junior honours boards.

In 2001 it was obvious that renewing the club lease was the most important outstanding item at the committee meetings, especially as the original proposal for renewing the old lease did not include a Right of Way. Eventually just before the end of 2001 agreement was reached with GBC for a new 25-year lease with 5-year rental increases in line with RPI.

Junior Coaching as always was an issue as was the behaviour of some of the juniors, but this had been an on-going theme since the start of the club!

Night-time 'parking up' (drinking, drug-taking, and on one occasion a car being torched) was becoming more and more of a problem in the car park. In April 2002 the council installed a gate at the top of the drive which they planned to lock every evening, although OVLTC were also given keys. Over the years keys have been lost, padlocks have disappeared and in recent times the council have just ignored the arrangement.

At the AGM in 2003 a proposal to make the clubhouse non-smoking was passed by 22 votes to 3. Also, at the end of 2003

an EGM was called to discuss disaffiliation of OVLTC from the LTA. 26 members voted in favour, non against and 1 abstained. The number of Wimbledon tickets available to the club had drastically reduced, due to a change in allocation which worked against smaller clubs. The Club did not meet the criteria for loans as one stipulation was that a club must have at least 25 years left on its lease and previous consultation had shown LTA schemes were often a lot more costly and over the top for a small club.

In 2004 due to anti- social behaviour on the Rec, the council agreed to move a bench and some waste bins which were close to the courts and were often used as goalposts by footballers. In early 2005 club volunteers laid the path that runs down to the bottom courts. This has saved a lot of muddy feet both on the courts and in the clubhouse over the years.

During this period the floodlights were upgraded and the council approved an extension of the lights until 9.30p.m.



Figure 8. Trophies and Medals on display on a Club Finals Day

2010 to present day

2013 saw a British player – Andy Murray - win the Men's Singles at Wimbledon for the first time in 77 years. He won again in 2016, but otherwise it was Novak Djokovic's decade with five singles titles.

By now the Annual Quiz Night in Autumn had become the major fund raiser. Around 100 members and non-members attend each year. Originally held in the clubhouse it had moved in the late 1980s to Onslow Village Hall to accommodate the growing numbers.

Other social events have been held on Club Nights during the Summer months with varying themes and have proved very popular. Finals Day has been held annually on the Saturday after the Wimbledon Championships finish and besides the tennis involves a BBQ, Pimm's, and Strawberries. Club members volunteer as Umpires.

2012 saw a celebration of 90 years of OVLTC, with some members dressed 1920's style and wooden racquets being the order of the day.



Figure 9. The Clubhouse with refurbished windows and doors

An Academy Group was formed in 2013 for rusty/new players and proved popular with several players having regular coaching and the Club also re-joined the LTA.

New windows and Doors were installed in the club house in 2015. This was a big improvement and since then the club has continued to be updated with new furniture, kitchen units, storage cupboards in the Ladies Cloakroom, a ball store cupboard in the Gents, and new flooring in all areas.



Figure 10. In 2019 the coaching was directly organised by the committee, previously it was run by an outside organisation.

The courts continue to be resurfaced, or cleaned as and when required, and work began early in 2021 to re-surface courts 1 and 2 and install upgraded fencing. The floodlights have been replaced and modernised but they were erected on the existing poles.

OVLTC has also embraced new technology by moving its membership database online and using Clubspark to administer memberships and subscriptions. This new way of doing things helped to increase membership to approximately 130 adults and 110 juniors. Hopefully these members will become the lifeblood of the club as it enters its second century!

In 2020 COVID changed everyone's lives and OVLTC closed its doors on 22 March, something only World War 2 had previously managed to do. But good use was made of this 'dead time' by making improvements to the clubhouse, courts and fencing.

On 13 May 2020, the courts were opened for singles play only with strict guidelines and on 1 June doubles play was again permitted, though with strict social distancing in place. The clubhouse itself remained closed for much of the time. And while Wimbledon was cancelled in 2020, OVLTC managed to run its annual tournament with Finals Day moved to September.

Unfortunately, on 5 November with the Government ordering another lockdown, tennis was again halted.

It was not until 2021 that the courts and clubhouse were again re opened but there were still certain restrictions to clubhouse use. By then the membership had grown substantially and a temporary halt was put on taking in new members.



Figure 11. A selection of players in the annual tournament – Finals Day 2021.

Throughout its one-hundred-year history, OVLTC has been more than just somewhere to play tennis. You only have to look at the donations from members and their families to see that the club is a community in its own right, with many friendships being formed and having a very important role in the lives of so many people. These donations and presentations include an Honours Board for the annual Club Finals, an umpire chair, two benches, a barometer/ clock and a cherry tree. A fridge, music player and microwave have also found homes in the club house.



Figure 12. Presentation of the Cherry Tree by the family of Maurice Bland. (President until 2013) April 2014



Figure 13. Presentation of the Umpire's Chair by John & Audrey Allison's Daughters. September 2018. Both pictures with myself, Carole Lee during my time as President.

As we start the 2nd century of Onslow Village Lawn Tennis Club, we hope it will continue to flourish, and bring pleasure to young and old alike for the next 100 years.



Figure 14. 2022 saw the repainting of courts 3&4 ready for a few more years of tennis