

SOUTHFIELDS LAWN TENNIS CLUB.

The first hundred years.

Compiled and produced by Norman and Sheila Marsden

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The facts in this history of the Club have mostly been taken from minute books, annual reports and financial accounts. The detail in these records is sometimes comprehensive but more often tantalisingly sketchy. I gratefully record my appreciation to those who wrote to me and others to whom I spoke who helped fill in some of the gaps. My thanks go also to all whose co-operation made the production of this book possible. If you have any comments or corrections, dear Reader, I shall be delighted to hear from you.

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FOREWORD

I am extremely proud and honoured to write the foreword to this history of the Club's first one hundred years.

The year 1884 was so memorable that it was known as the year of triumph for invention and initiative. When Southfields Lawn Tennis Club began Queen Victoria was on the throne three years away from her Golden Jubilee and Mr. Gladstone was Prime Minister; Marks and Spencer began their business activities and people were reading Kipling's and Robert Louis Stevenson's original new novels.

Tennis was all the rage, but what a Victorian tennis club was like is difficult to imagine. The All England Croquet and Lawn Tennis Club was already flourishing on its original ground in Worple Road and 1884 was an important year for them. Their championship programme, which had been men's singles only, was expanded to include women's singles and men's doubles.

We have few written records of our early days at Southfields but unlike the All England Club we are still playing on our original ground. Our men's challenge trophy was presented by Henry Kimber in 1886 and our first winner that year was Arthur J Slater.

I would like to take this opportunity to mention the loyalty given to the Club for many years by Roy and Margaret Perry. Their enthusiasm for the club and all its activities was tremendous and they still have the club very much at heart although now living in Cornwall.

It is a privilege and delight for me to be the Club's President in its Centenary Year. For the past twenty five years it has given me so much pleasure and relaxation. For the Club to continue its success it is essential that members of all ages come forward and offer their services both in management and other activities.

Norman and Sheila Marsden have given sterling service to the Club and I thank them for all the time and effort they have given in compiling this excellent book.

In conclusion may I say that the Southfields Lawn Tennis Club is known as the Friendly Club and may it remain so for the next hundred years.

Alwyn John Barnsley
President

CONTENTS

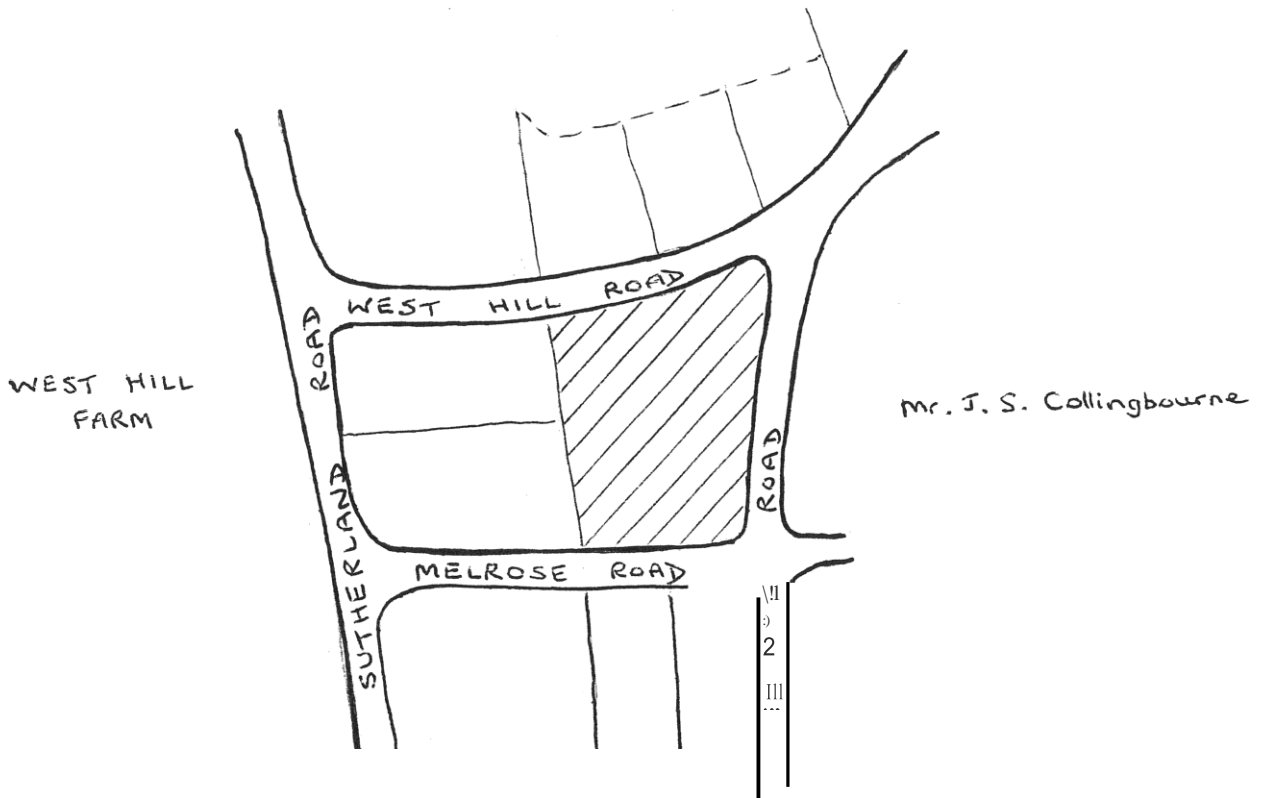
	Page
SLTC - The First Hundred Years	1
Fred Richardson Remembers	9
Funding the Fun	13
The Meeting Agreed That	
Notes and Quotes from the Minutes	23
Officers of the Club 1884 - 1984	35
Honorary Life Vice Presidents and Honorary Members	38
Longest Serving Officers and Membership	39

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SL TC - THE FIRST HUNDRED YEARS

In 1836 the Earl Spencer sold the part of his estate known as 'The South Field'. When, in 1846 he sold Wimbledon Park and its house, the area was poised to become one of the inner suburbs of London. The new owner, Mr. J. A. Beaumont, laid roads throughout the area and proceeded to sell off plots of building land. In 1860 the remaining vacant lots were offered for sale by auction as 'very eligible building land', and the auctioneers, Chinnock & Goldsworthy, also pointed out that 'the neighbourhood of Wimbledon has been pronounced by the medical profession to be the most healthful suburb in the Metropolis'. A number of these plots of land had been purchased by John McMahon du Pasquier, probably as an investment, and on 11th June 1866 he sold the area of land shown shaded on the sketch map to Henry Kimber, later Sir Henry, of Park Villa, Wimbledon Park Road for the sum of £950.



At this time the club's ground was bordered by West Hill Road (now Cromer Villas Road) to the north, by Avenue Road (now Gressenhall Road) to the east, Melrose Road to the south, and land later to be taken up by Cromer Court and its gardens to the west. Sutherland •Gr.ave was called Sutherland Road at that time and the area now occupied by Whitelands College was West Hill Farm. The first District Line trains began to run in June 1889 on the newly extended line from Putney Bridge station across the Thames. The line was electrified in 1905.

There are no tennis club records available for the years between the founding of the club and 1923, but they may be locked up in 'The Metal Box'. This mysterious box is recalled by so many old members. Some say its contents were burned during a tidying-up at the clubhouse in the late 1960's, others believe the box lies forgotten in the garage or loft of a past member's house. It would be a wonderful stroke of fortune if it could be found with its contents intact. The only mementoes of this period are dance cards for the years 1891 to 1903, which indicate the social formalities of the time, and a programme of the music played at the club's celebration of its 21st anniversary on 19th July 1905.

The date of the foundation of the club is mentioned in the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 28th February 1934 - the club's golden jubilee year. Mr.A.H.Glazier, the chairman, gave an outline of the history of the club '..... from its foundation which dated from a meeting held in St.Michael's old schoolroom on 3rd March 1884; five of the existing tennis courts having been opened for play on 15th May 1884. It is worth noting that the first Honorary Treasurer was Mr.Henry Kimber, the owner of the land, who became the first Member of Parliament for the new Wandsworth constituency in 1885.

In March 1923 Sir Henry Kimber, the newly-elected President of the club, leased the ground to the club for a period of seven years from the 1st January 1923 at a rent of £50 per year. The lease of the land was in

the names of:

George Spencer Hoffman, Coombe Lodge, West Hill.

Walter William Slater, 22 West Hill Road.

George Henry Palmer, 10 West Hill Road.

Hugh Killingworth Punshon MVO, 45a Wimbledon Park Road.

Sir Henry Kimber died in December 1923 and the club formed itself into a limited company to buy the freehold of the land. The freehold title was registered to the Southfields Lawn Tennis Club Limited on 27th August 1924 for £1,000 plus £50 costs. The 1924 sale document was signed by:

George Spencer Hoffman

H.Cristopher Witherby

Hugh Killingworth Punshon

Finance for the purchase was raised by the issue of £1 debentures giving 5% interest. At a meeting held on 20th August 1924 debentures worth £1,500, redeemable on 5th October 1944, were allotted to purchasers. Sixty members bought debentures, their purchases ranging from £1 to £118. A further issue totalling £500 was made in 1926 to meet the costs of road charges for making-up Cromer Villas Road and Gressenhall Road, At a general meeting of the club in 1926 it was recorded that the further issue of debentures and the raising of the summer subscription from £2.2.0. to £3.3.0. would enable the club to free itself from all liabilities, both in connection with paving of roads and redemption of debentures, by the year 1942 providing 'no unforeseen liabilities arose in the meantime'.

Between 1924 and 1937 the Annual General Meetings of the limited company were held at St.Michael's School in Granville Road. Although a clubhouse is shown on its present site in a diagram of the club's grounds in the 1924 sale document, it is probable that lack of heating and lighting made it unsuitable for evening functions in the winter. It is worthy of note, however, that a telephone was installed in 1932.

The first AGM at the clubhouse took place in April 1937. A set of plans for altering and improving the

clubhouse, at an estimated cost of £250, had been outlined at the 25th February 1936 AGM when it was decided to put the work in hand for completion by 1st May 1936. At the 1937 AGM Mr.G.S.Hoffman was elected an Honorary Life Vice President 'in recognition of invaluable services rendered over a very long period of years' - he had been involved in the 1923 leasing and 1924 purchase of the club's land and, in particular, in the work involved in organising building of the new clubhouse. The statement of accounts for the year ended 31st December 1936 shpws:

Pavilion Expenses	£.	s.	d.
Cost of repairs and rebuilding	259.	0.	9.
Furnishing	21.	7.	7.
Radiator	7.	7.	0.
Cleaning	4.	5.	0.
	<hr/>		
	£292.	0.	4.

and for the first time expenditure on 'electric light' appears.

As may well be imagined, the club faced great difficulties during the 1939 - 1945 war years. Only two grass courts were kept in playing condition for most of this period. The remaining courts, apart from court 7, were kept in order but not used. The two hard courts remained in use for most of the time but, by 1946, court 6 was in a poor state. No new tennis balls were available after 1941 but ten dozen balls were collected from members for the 1942 season. In 1943 a few new balls were left from the previous season, and by this time Spaldings, who had a factory in Putney, were re-conditioning tennis balls and this enabled play to continue throughout the war.

In 1959 Wandsworth Council pressed the club to make provision for the installation of main drainage and to discontinue the use of chemical toilets. There were no funds available to undertake this work. The club's debentures were a continuing liability; the clubhouse needed re-roofing and other repairs; the surrounding fence was dilapidated; and there was pressure to lay a third hard court - so the club began to consider the sale of court 7 to raise capital.

Court 7 was a derelict grass court at the end of courts 1 and 2. Four townhouses, numbers 11, 13, 15 and 17 Cromer Villas Road now stand on this site. The court had not been maintained during the war and was badly overgrown. As early as October 1956 the club's committee had considered that this land should be used profitably and the erection of garages had been suggested.

The first steps to sell court 7 were taken in 1960 and the sale in August 1961 realised £6,267 after the payment of fees. During the winter of 1961 the third hard court was laid by En-Tout-Cas in red shale for £540 and the fence around the club was replaced for £496.7.6d. In January 1962 the groundsman's hut - known as Fred's shed because of its continuous use to date by Fred Richardson - was erected on a concrete base at a total cost of £68.4.1d. In June 1962 the committee turned its attention to the clubhouse and decided to spend £1,500 on repairs and alterations including the installation of main drainage, replacing the corrugated iron roof, re-wiring, the provision and fitting of a bar and general re-decoration. The total cost was eventually £2,069. When the work was completed the gentlemen's changing room had been re-located behind the ladies changing room; a storage area, a vestibule with side entrance and a kitchen/bar with serving hatch had also been built on. Each changing room had a flush toilet, a shower, and two wash basins with hot water.

After all of the club's commitments had been met, there was about £500 left from the sale of the land. In a recent letter to the club Roy Perry recalls the sum '...was solemnly invested in stocks and shares and we even had a sub-committee - Alan Tripp, Brian Easy and myself - to decide which shares to buy and generally manage the "portfolio". It seems laughable now'.

The extended and refurbished clubhouse was formally opened on Saturday 27th October 1962 by Mr.W.Oakley, an Honorary Life Vice-President of the club. The evening was rounded off with a social, dance and prize-giving.

Further changes were made to the clubhouse in May 1969 when a side extension to expand the bar area was built on at a cost of £221. This addition led to greatly increased bar takings.

In 1972 the Midway Social Club began to hire the clubhouse for its regular social functions. By 1973 it had established a monthly Saturday hiring for its own private socials and free access to the clubhouse on Tuesday evenings and Sunday lunchtimes as associate social members of SLTC. The arrangement was mutually beneficial as it provided club premises for Midway members and increased bar sales for the tennis club. Midway Club members, financed by SLTC, carried out major redecoration of the interior of the clubhouse in 1973, and improved the kitchen and bar facilities in 1976. The association ended in 1983 when the Midway Club was wound up because of declining membership.

By 1973 the club's red shale courts were in poor condition. Courts 5 and 6 needed relaying because their drainage systems had broken down, and the daily maintenance necessary for this type of court was being neglected because of difficulties in finding suitable labour. The surround netting on court 6 had almost completely rusted away and the hedges and banks around the grass courts were badly overgrown. Apart from the inconvenience to club members, the lack of maintenance was causing difficulty for the club's professional coach who worked on an agency basis from Tony Mottram's London School of Lawn Tennis, and there was a possibility that he would decide to stop coaching at Southfields. Some members felt that the change to a low-maintenance all-weather surface would change the character and enjoyment of their game, but reality was faced when in 1974 courts 4 and 6 were resurfaced by Grassphalte with porous tarmacadam.

The conversion of all three courts was beyond the club's resources at that time. Courts 4 and 6 were selected for resurfacing because they were on the same level which made the cost slightly lower. The money was found by selling the club's investments, then worth about £800, by using money that had accumulated in the bank, by interest-free short term loans from club members of £900, and by a back-up bank overdraft. The courts were laid in July and August 1974 for £2,700, including new surround stop netting and posts on court 6, and new net posts for both courts.

Since the bar extension in 1969, no major changes had been made to the structure of the clubhouse, apart from the installation of lightweight alloy windows and door

frames glazed with toughened glass, to save maintenance and to counter vandalism. It was becoming increasingly obvious, however, by the late 1970's that the ridge of the roof was sagging and this was causing the front wall of the clubhouse to lean outwards.

In the early hours of 1st April 1979 the clubhouse was damaged by fire. The prompt arrival of the fire services, called by a neighbour who had noticed smoke pouring from a ventilator, prevented serious damage to the structure but the interior decorations were ruined by smoke and water. All the ceiling and wall cladding had to be removed and this revealed the true state of the roof, confirming the worst fears about the general safety of the structure.

Instead of using the £5,750 received from the insurance settlement to repair the clubhouse and to re-instate the decorations, the club decided to seek professional advice on how the insurance money - plus a little more the club might be able to borrow - could be used to stabilise the structure, provide better bar and kitchen facilities, and better storage space. Several options produced by an architect were considered and contractors began work in 1980. Their work was completed by the turn of the year. Internal cladding, the construction of a new bar and kitchen, and internal decoration was carried out by a small band of club members who, led by Russell Newall, regularly gave their time and skills over a period of four years, finally completing the work on 30th April 1984. During this time outstanding contributions were made by two non-members, the fathers of Anthony Wilkins and Chris Butcher. Roy Wilkins built the brick bar front and installed the bar top and access doors, and Peter Butcher completely replaced and extended the hot and cold water systems throughout the clubhouse. For their generous contribution of their time and expertise - neither is connected with the trades concerned - they were made Life Social Members of the club. The cost of the clubhouse extension and renovations between 1980 and 1984 was over £14,000.

During the winter of 1983 court 5, the remaining red shale court, was relaid by Grassphalte with the same porous tarmacadam surface as courts 4 and 6 at a cost of just under £6,000. This was financed by a grant

of £1,000 from the Sports Council plus interest-free loans of a further £1,000 from the Sports Council and £4,000 from the Lawn Tennis Association.

What of the next one hundred years - or even the next ten? The changing rooms have not been improved since they were built in 1962; courts 4 and 6 are showing signs of wear; and how long can the grass courts survive? There is no doubt that a small group of members will face up to these problems in due course. The club has been very fortunate in attracting people who make a tremendous effort to keep it going. What motivates them is difficult to determine. Certainly the pleasure they get from playing at the club prompts some to 'put something back', and it could be a sense of the history of 'this precious little green oasis' as a member once described it. Perhaps more importantly it is a feeling, particularly at times when morale was low and it seemed an almost impossibly uphill task to carry on, that the contributions made by so many predecessors cannot be allowed to fade away.

* * * * *

FRED RICHARDSON REMEMBERS

I first came to work at the club in November 1946. I had seen an advertisement in the Wandsworth Borough News for a groundsman at the club. I knew Mrs. Roebuck, a long-time member then living in Melrose Road, and I asked her if I could help keep the grounds tidy until a proper groundsman came along as my shift work with the Wandsworth and District Gas Company left time during the day to take a part-time job. So I really started as an odd job man but I was persuaded by Mr. Onwood to mow the grass courts and eventually I became more and more involved in looking after all the playing surfaces.

At the time there were four grass and two red shale courts. No 6 red shale court was in very poor condition because it had been neglected during the war and most of the top dressing had blown away. I remember one of my early jobs was to break up the drainage clinker which had become exposed. This was really hard work because most of the pieces were about fist size, but eventually I got the court back into play after lots of applications of top dressing and many hours of rolling. I recall we used linen tapes to mark the lines. There was no lead or zinc strip available and the linen tapes, which had to be cleaned regularly, were held down with large wire staples.

The grass courts were easy to maintain but we did get a lot of daisies and court 4 eventually became so bad that, for this and other reasons, it was relaid as a red shale court to match the other two. I remember we had a brand new ATCO 14 inch motor mower when I first started - a bit surprising for 1946. Some of the club members had contributed part of their petrol ration during the war to run a motor mower, but the mixture had been set so thin to save fuel that by the end of the war the motor was burned out.

I didn't have the mechanical aids then that the club has now. The motor mower was it - no motor roller or petrol driven trimmers or weed-eaters. No Flymo. The heavy roller was a 10cwt water-filled beast which I could not pull on my own so my wife Winnie used to help me pull it.

The motor mower and hand tools were kept in a little lean-to shed behind the clubhouse. This was before the clubhouse was extended towards Gressenhall Road. It was always called the Groundsman's Shed but in fact there were also a couple of gas rings and a sink with cold water where the ladies used to make tea. It was very primitive because it had a beaten earth floor and there was no access from the clubhouse.

I've been saying for many years the clubhouse will be nice when it is finished. It's been expanded and altered throughout my time at Southfields but the clubhouse which I first knew is still part of the building although the Groundsman's Shed went when the rear extension was built on. The original structure had the main hall up to the new bar extension, the ladies' changing room was where it is now and the gentlemen's changing room was by the side of it where the open space is in front of the store cupboards.

There were bench-type lockers in the changing rooms and in the ladies there was an Elsan chemical toilet. The gentlemen had an Elsan in a lean-to cubicle behind the clubhouse, There's no need to guess who had to empty them. The gentlemen had a shower in their changing room - cold water only.

The lockers in the gentlemen's changing room were used to store the bar stocks - bottled beers and bottles of lemonade and fruit squashes. There wasn't much interest in beer, we only had a couple of crates at any time. The emphasis was much more on tea in those days. If there was going to be a bar we had a specially made table covered in linoleum which was set up by the gentlemen's changing room. This was really only for social functions and they were not held very often although I remember organised Scottish dancing every Wednesday evening for a time, and at a later date ballroom dancing lessons were introduced. We all paid two shillings and sixpence to cover the fees for the lady and gentleman who instructed us. The lady said I was very awkward to teach and suggested that it would help if another lady in the class, who was very good, partnered me. There were huge guffaws from Dr. Davies and others when the lady turned out to be my wife.

There was an annual dance held either at the Bull at

Sheen or at Wandsworth Town Hall. I think the club felt that it was important to have a prestige function once a year but I think they always lost money and they had died out by the late 1950's.

One social function my wife and I used to organise at the clubhouse in the early 1960's was a whist drive. We had been going to a whist drive at St. Michael's Church Hall for some time but a change of vicar brought these and other social functions to an end. There were about twenty or thirty regular players which was too many to invite round to play in people's houses. I got permission from the tennis club committee to run a whist drive on the first Saturday in each month as a tennis club function. We charged two shillings entrance which included tea and biscuits in the interval. We made about seven shillings and sixpence each session but few, if any, tennis club members came along except Roy and Margaret Perry occasionally. We stopped in the mid 1960's because most of the outsiders were elderly and had literally died off.

It wouldn't be right for me to comment on members and their funny little ways because there are still too many members around who would know who I meant. But one thing I do recall was the members' very strict attitude to children at the club. If a child so much as walked in front of members sitting watching the tennis it was regarded as very bad manners and there was comment. They were never allowed in the clubhouse. Until very recent there were pieces in the club rules about children's behaviour and I believe at one time you could get your sub back if you resigned because you had been annoyed by members' children.

I said I wouldn't mention the eccentricities of members but I can't resist telling you about Jimmy Ley's geese. Up where the four red-brick houses stand there was a derelict grass court. It had been abandoned during the war and was covered in dense scrub. Jimmy Ley bought seven geese and fenced them in on the court to keep the undergrowth down. This worked quite well but he kept forgetting to feed them so I used to boil up mash and bring them fresh water. One day I found that one of them had broken its neck, but it was still alive, so I quickly took it down to the RSPCA in Putney on my bike. They said they would kill it humanely by gassing but that would make

it inedible and suggested I should wring its neck and eat it. They said it wasn't suffering much discomfort so I took it down to the coalyard in Gressenhall Road and asked if any of the eight or nine coalmen, big tough chaps, would wring its neck. None of them would but old Mrs.Boxall who ran the coal business, she was about eighty, did it without blinking an eyelid. I gave the carcass to Jimmy Ley and I suppose he ate it - he didn't give me any. We had to get rid of the rest of the geese eventually because neighbours complained that their food was attracting rats.

In my time at the club its fortunes have changed a lot. There were times when there were so few members it hardly seemed worthwhile carrying on. There was always a lack of money. On one occasion we used a flattened dustbin lid to mend a hole in the corrugated iron roof of the clubhouse. Maybe there were too many tennis clubs in the area. The Wilderness, now called Cedars, in Melrose Road is still going strong but two others, one by St.Michael's Church and the other in Girdwood Road had to be closed down. But in more recent years we seem to have expanded our membership.

I was very pleased when, in March 1960, the club made me an honorary life member. Good luck to the club and its members past and present. I like to see it busy. With tender loving care it could see its 200th anniversary.

* * * * *

FUNDING THE FUN

Five main sources of income have supported the club - subscriptions; the issue of debentures; profits from social functions and jumble sales; bar profits and letting the clubhouse. There has also been a substantial income from coaching fees.

Subscriptions

For forty years, from its foundation until 1924, the club had no hard courts. The subscription was therefore related to the cost of maintaining the club for twelve months although its grass courts could only be used between April and October.

The first reference to summer fees dates from the 1926 AGM when the subscription was raised from £2.2.0. to £3.3.0. A sulllller fee of two guineas had probably been in force for many years but the club needed the additional guinea to meet payments of interest to its debenture holders and to maintain a reserve to meet any early redemptions. When the subscription was raised to three guineas the concession of reduced fees for the third and subsequent members of a family who joined was discontinued. There is no record of what this discount was worth.

For many years there had been an additional fee for Sunday play. At the 1926 AGM it was proposed that the summer subscription should be a flat rate of £3.10.0. to include Sunday play but the directors felt they were under a moral obligation to make Sunday play a separate item •.....owing to certain conditions which had been imposed by a member at a time when subscriptions to the original issue of debentures were badly needed. The Reverend F.J.Sibree was President of the club at that time and is listed as holding debentures worth £50 but there is no evidence of who imposed the conditions.

A winter fee of £1.1.0. is mentioned in the record of the 1928 AGM in the context of changes in the rules for winter members. As the annual accounts for 1925 include receipts for the winter season it is probably safe to assume that one guinea was the winter subscription when the hard courts came into use towards the end of 1924. Summer fees rose in 1928 to £3.13.6. inclusive of balls. 1

In 1933 the special subscription of 10/6 for Sunday play was abolished. It is not possible to be certain that the fee had been 10/6 from the start. In 1935 a £2.12.6. summer subscription for new members living outside a two mile radius from the club was introduced. Those paying this fee could not be committee members. The £2.12.6. concession for two miles distance was extended to all members in 1937 '..... to retain members who otherwise would have resigned' but there is no reference to eligibility for committee membership.

The first junior members were acknowledged in 1939 when children of members and their children's friends aged between ten and seventeen were allowed to play on all courts, except the three top grass courts, for a fee of £1.1.0. for the summer season subject to supervision by the groundsman or a member of the committee. They were not allowed to play on grass courts on Saturdays or Sundays. The club had two hard and five grass courts at the time.

The distance concession was withdrawn in 1941 when summer subscriptions were set at £3.3.0. for all members. Members living locally had been paying £3.13.6. since 1928. It is interesting to note that this new fee meant a return to the level set fifteen years earlier. The next rise, to £4.4.0., was not until 1946. A summer concessional rate for those living more than two miles from the club was, however, re-introduced at £3.3.0.

At some stage the 1925 winter rates of £1.1.0. had been increased to £1.15.0. because the 1951 AGM agrees to retain the full week winter subscription of £1.15.0. and the weekend only or weekdays only of £1.5.0.. The summer fee was however set at £4.4.0. for all, whether two miles

away or not and a rate of £2.12.6. for those between eighteen and twenty one was introduced.

Summer fees rose again in 1952 to £4.10.0. and the distance concession was, once again, re-introduced; those living outside a three miles radius were charged £4.4.0. No change was made to the summer rates for those aged 18 - 21, but winter rates rose to £2.2.0. for the whole week and £1.10.0. for weekends or weekdays. In 1955, when winter rates went up to £2.10.0. for the whole week and £2 0.0. for weekends or weekdays, balls were supplied during the winter season. It was also conceded that upon prior notice and payment of fifteen shillings per calendar month members could play from month to month during the winter, and it was in 1955 that a new junior category was introduced for those between the ages of twelve and eighteen. The fee was £1.5 0. and balls were supplied. Play was restricted to one grass court, if not required by seniors, and one hard court. Those of high enough standard were allowed to play as a 'senior' member by invitation but their fee was £2 12.6. until twenty one years of age. All these various categories and subscription rates must have been a nightmare to administer, particularly for the Treasurer.

The club's attitude to entry fees and non-playing members fees has varied considerably. In 1926 the entry fee was raised from £2.2.0. to £4.4.0., but in 1928 it reverted to £2.2.0. In 1931 the first ten new members to join for the summer season were admitted without an entry fee in an effort to keep membership around one hundred. The first twelve to join in 1932 were granted the same concession. In 1934 the entry fee went down to £1.1.0. **but** in the period 1935 - 1937 it was discontinued. It was back again in 1938 at 10/6 and continued at this level until 1961.

The receipt of non-playing members subscriptions is recorded in the accounts for 1925 but the first reference to the actual rate of 10/6 per annum is in 1934. This rate continued until 1960 when it was increased to 15/6.

By the mid 50's the membership categories were much too complicated and changes in subscription rates were more frequent until, eventually, annual increases became necessary to match inflation. The trend is illustrated below:-

	1954	1964	1974	1984
	£	£	£	£
Senior summer	4.10.0.	5.15.6.	9.50	
winter	2. 0.0.	1.15.0.	2.50	
annual				60.00
Student summer	2.12.6.	3.15.6.	7.00	
winter	2. 0.0.			
annual				
Junior summer	1.10.0.	2. 0.0.	4.00	
winter				13.00*
28 day m				22.00
Visitors	5/-	5/-	25p	2.00
Social m	10/6	15/6	2.00	6.00
Entry fe	10/6	10/6	1.00	

* One pa social or playing member.

Subscriptions formed about 90% of the club's income in the 1920's but fell to about 85% in the 1930's, 40's and 50's. The most dramatic decline was between 1973 and 1976, a time of rampant inflation, when they formed less than 50%. The balance was made up from bar profits and fund-raising projects: activities which, as now, fell to a dedicated few to organise. This decline was stopped in 1978 and subscriptions now contribute about 80% to income.

* * * * *

Debentures

When the club was formed into a Limited Company in 1924 it was decided that two thousand £1 debentures bearing interest at 5% per annum with a 5th October 1944 redemption date should be created. Only 1,500 were issued initially. The money raised was used to purchase the freehold of the club's ground and lay two hard courts. The remaining five hundred were held in reserve against the eventual cost of making up adjoining roads. In 1926, to meet these charges, the five hundred were issued plus eighty five of the previous issue which had been redeemed early.

The club was not able to redeem its debentures on the due date of 5th October 1944 because its financial reserves at that date were under £200. This meant that from 1944 the assets of the club were at the disposal of the debenture holders, but as it was war time there was little risk of a 'take-over' by developers. This situation continued until 1949 when the club offered to convert the two thousand 5% debentures to 4% debentures redeemable on 31st July 1969. 1,448 were converted and 552 were redeemed but immediately re-issued. The sale of court 7 in 1960 enabled the club to buy out all debenture holders and a chapter, which hopefully will never be re-opened, was closed.

* * * * *

Social Functions and Fund Raising Ventures

Dances and Socials; Whist, Bridge and Beetle Drives; Film Shows and Reviews; Sweepstakes and Draws; Suppers and Barbecues; Cheese and Wine Parties; Jumble and Bring-and-Buy

Sales; Car Treasure Hunts. All have contributed to club funds although, sadly, some losses are recorded.

The formal dances at the turn of the century are perhaps the most intriguing. A few dance cards from the era have survived. With a tiny pencil, attached to the card by a silk cord, partners for the evening would be noted against each dance listed. Woe betide any gentleman who failed to claim his partner before each dance began.

The club held a 21st anniversary concert and prize-giving on 19th July 1905. Where it was held is not known but the Red Imperial Band took part and the programme shows there were several singers. They may have been club members.

Socials and dances became more frequent at the clubhouse after it was renovated in 1936 but a formal dance towards the end of each year continued to be held. These generally took place either at Wandsworth Town Hall or at The Bull at Shene. Photographs from as late as the 1950's show the ladies in long evening dresses and the gentlemen in either dinner jackets or, in a few cases, full evening dress. These occasions usually included the club's prize giving. They became less successful during the 1950's and in 1954 they were discontinued.

The description of a function as a social and dance usually meant that there were novelty dances with spot prizes and party games. The club had its own specialities, particularly hockey played with a cotton floor mop head instead of a ball. In the late 1940's no social at the club was complete unless Teddy Eades brought along his suitcase full of props, including the mop hockey kit. Some of these socials made substantial sums of money apart from enhancing bar takings.

1950 saw the only Southfields musical review. For three nights members put on a 1½ hour show to full houses at the club. Peggy Tavener on the club's own piano and talented support from such well-known performers as Mary Eades, Gordon Rowe, Janet Oakley, Jim Faulkner, Frank Butler, Mr. and Miss Adams, and Jack Barkey.

Jumble sales were a post-war innovation for the club. They have been held in the clubhouse, in local church halls, the Boys Club in Southfields and even in Wandsworth Town Hall. The ladies of the club bore the brunt of organising these rather messy Saturday afternoon occasions but profits of between £50 and £100 were not unusual. One or two jumbles were followed by an evening social and dance at the club.

A more modern money spinner has been the barbecue. At first the club provided all the food including steaks and sausages against an entry ticket. Volunteer cooks sweated over the charcoal for about three hours and had to be masters of the forced smile when the fire had died and twenty latecomers arrived together. Between 100 and 150 people were catered for on these occasions. Recently the do-it-yourself barbecue has been introduced. You bring the meat and the club provides the fire, salad and a baked potato, cutlery and plates. The 'meats' that guests bring along to cook have been rather exotic - squid on one memorable occasion which a Japanese lady deftly turned with long chopsticks. Barbecues continue to be a popular social activity.

* * * * *

Bar.Profits

The bar came into licenced being in 1938 Very modest profits of about £10 a year were made pre-war but in the 60's and 70's profits of over £150 a year were common. The club now looks to the bar for profits of about £1,000 a year and with the new bar well established and a good drinking membership this should be sustainable. Alcohol naturally forms a substantial part of over-all sales but increasing sales of soft drinks are keeping the demon in its proper place and are just as profitable.

* * * * *

Letting the Clubhouse

The income from letting the clubhouse was at its peak when the Midway Club was hiring it for its own private socials. Receipts of £200 - £300 a year from these and one or two other lettings to tennis and Midway club members for their own family parties helped to maintain the clubhouse. Bitter experience had shown that letting to outsiders can be profitless because of their complete lack of concern resulting in damage to fixtures and fittings and annoyance to neighbours.

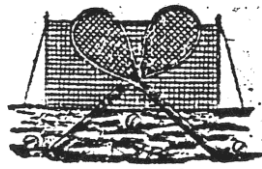
The recently completed renovation of the clubhouse has attracted a morning letting from a children's play-group. This use has never been tried before but it seems to be working well. The sand pit and large piece jigsaws are however proving something of a temptation to tennis members.

* * * * *

Coaching Fees

Professional coaches have paid fees for the use of the club's facilities for many years. Qualified club members have also given class coaching to juniors, handing the entire fee paid by pupils to the club. For two years, as an experiment, adult coaching was given on the same basis in an effort to raise the standard of beginners to the level required to join the club. Although several pupils achieved the standard the overall results were not worth the effort and the scheme was discontinued. The income, which amounted to about £300 in each year, as a generous donation to club funds by those concerned.

* * * * *



WANDSWORTH TOWN HALL

SOUTHFIELDS
 .ltaw.n G[:enni!I - htb
 DANCE.

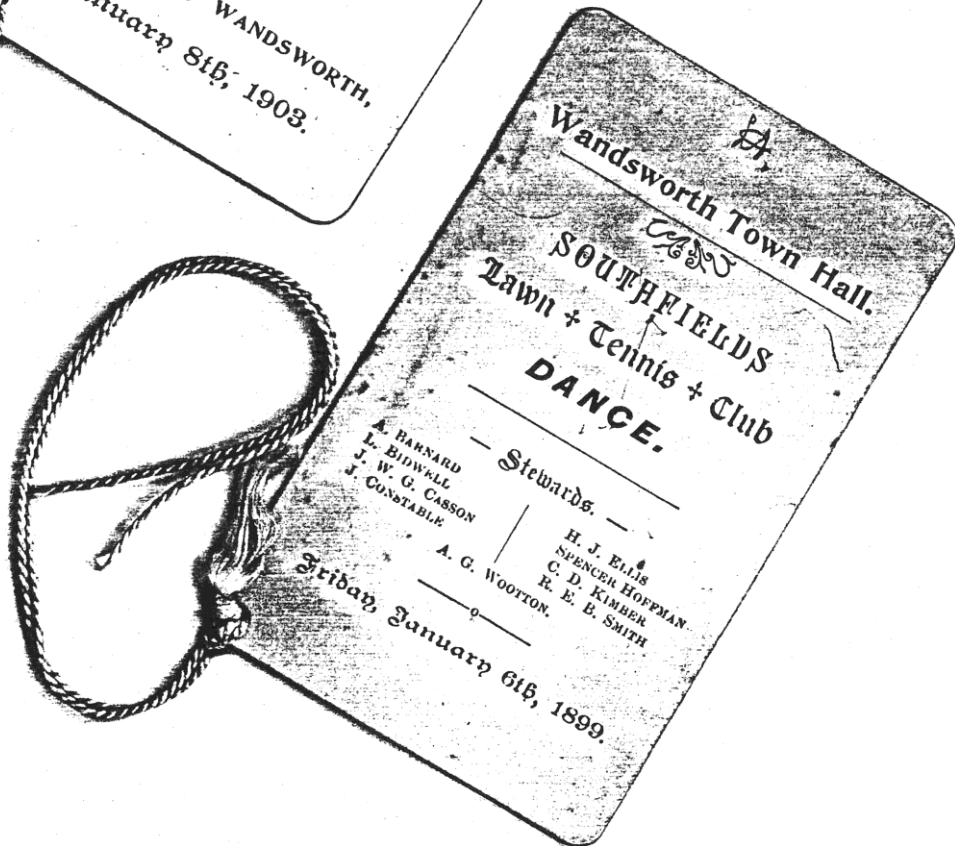
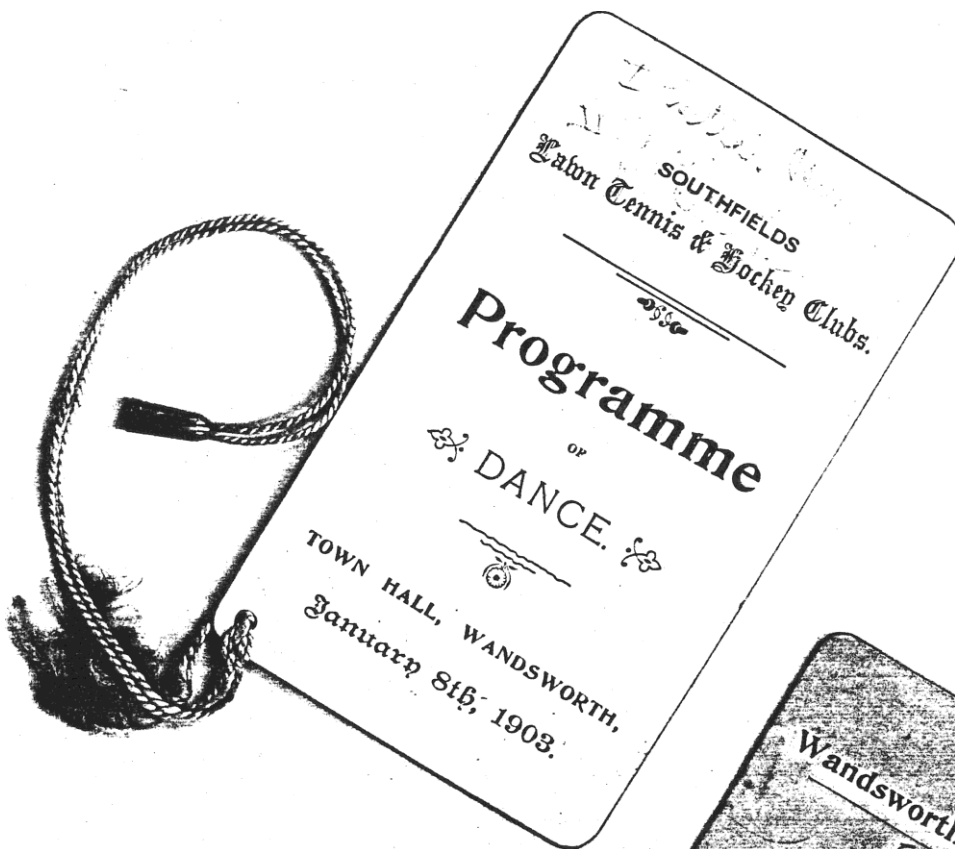
-FRIDAY, 1st - APRIL, 1893.

Programme.

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- E>cTILI. "L'Imi'ic, Yeau"
 - 1 V.&.LSI: "Cariott", "....."
 - 2 V.&.LSI: ".Pa.u rCiinl,ds"
 - 3 PoXJU. "Fnr,olity"
 - 4 V.&.LS& "L'EtoiePo/4ird!"
 - 5 LA.NcEItS. "La Cirole., "
 - 6 V "san!;:1,ag"O."
 - 7 VALSE. "SMr la Piaci."
 - 8 VAUZ: .. "La sennata."
 - 9 B.&ItN DooIt. DA.NCR-: "Iota"
 - 10 VALSE "Ac,ciamai"
 - 11 CERS. "Ki,r:-eftneRer,e/J"
 - 12 VALSE "T:JeaM.Jy'sEyd"
 - 13 VA.LS --uo "Anrrt!.AffDUr"
 - 14 VALS& "ifarg-,erite"
 - J;> POLE:A "J'ivacitt"
 - 16 LANCEIIS. "A") and 'A,-riet"
 - 17 VALSE "Aj,iln>d.ite"
 - 18 HI SCBI: "MarieSiuar."
 - 19 VALS: "lin Prmier Rouff1,l,dh"
 - 20 GA.LO? "r,im Pref"

EXTRA

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THE MEETING AGREED THAT

Notes and quotes from the minutes

During the first few years of the Company, the Minutes of the Annual General Meetings record only the statutory formalities, but later records of these and other meetings make interesting reading from time to time•.....

'The Chairman, Mr.A.H.Glazier, drew attention to the fact that the club was entering on its Jubilee Year. He outlined the club's history from its formation in 1884 and the circumstances which led up to the formation of the Limited Company in 1924, and in conclusion called upon all members to re-stimulate interest in the club so that it might be enabled to carry on the fine record that it had enjoyed during the past fifty years'

AGM 28 Feb 1934

(Mr.Glazier presented a Jubilee Cup in 1934)

•••••and the following year.....

'The Chairman, Mr.A.H.Glazier, referred to the success of the Jubilee celebrations and said that they were very grateful to Mr.C.M.Croft for lending the club chairs and a marquee tent on that occasion. It was also due to the very efficient work of the groundsman, Martin, that the courts were kept in wonderful condition in spite of the drought that was experienced'

AGM 26 Feb 1935

(The abbreviation 'Mr' before the word 'Martin' is deleted in ink from the hand-written record of the meeting - it was presumably the class distinctions of the day that prompted the amendment. G.Martin, ex-assistant groundsman at the All England Club, was engaged by SLTC in October 1925)

.....and at the same time.....

'It was decided that the telephone installation should be kept on but, if any member felt he or she would like to contribute to the cost, they could do so'

AGM 26 Feb 1935

.....but times were changing.....

'The following Special Resolution.....was unanimously adopted "....nor shall play commence before 2pm on that day" (Sunday) is now altered to read as follows "such rules and regulations shall provide that, if Sunday play be sanctioned, the club shall not employ any paid servant to work on that day" and it was unanimously resolved that "....play shall be permitted on the courts on Sunday..."

AGM 22 Apr 1938

.....and then.....

'It was unanimously resolved that application should be made for licence to sell liquor and the committee were authorised to frame such rules as might be necessary with regard to hours of opening and closing of the bar and other regulations with regard thereto'

AGM 22 Apr 1938

.....our reputation for friendliness is long-standing.....

'It was decided that two members of the club should act as host and hostess on each Saturday during the first half of the season for the purpose of looking after new members'

AGM 22 Apr 1938

••....and there seems to have been plenty going on.....

'Mr.C.W.Stephens agreed to form an entertainments committee. Mrs.Crowell offered to organise a bridge tournament. Miss Christie offered to run a cold buffet supper on Wednesday evenings in the pavilion and take charge of the arrangements. These offers were gratefully accepted'

AGM 22 Apr 1938

.....there is little reference to the war years but.....

'Mr.Matthews beseeched the members to make more use of the club during the evenings as every effort was being made to maintain the usual social activities•

AGM 18 Apr 1940

.....**and**.....

'Mr.Glazier proposed, and Mr.L.Matthews seconded, that members of the Forces should be allowed to play at the club on weekdays for a green fee of 1/- and Sundays 2/-, this was carried unanimously'

AGM 18 Apr 1940

.....nevertheless, these were difficult times.....

'The question then arose as to if it were possible for the club to continue. The Secretary reported having advertised for a groundsman but no replies were received, therefore if it was the members wish to carry on it would once more fall to them to do the work on the courts..... Members were asked if it was their wish to carry on and it was unanimously agreed that it should'

AGM 8 Apr 1945

.....the war was over and.....

'It was suggested that the committee should try to institute better teas•

AGM 7 Apr 1946

.....the following year help was at hand•.....

'Mrs.Bentley undertook to supervise the providing of teas for members during the season. The charge to be 9d per head'

AGM 2 Apr 1947

.....**and**.....

it was agreed that a groundsman be engaged two days a week, one of which was to be a Friday, for maintaining the courts and general upkeep of the grounds'

AGM 2 Apr 1947

.....life was steadily returning to normality.....

'It was agreed that a gramophone would be purchased from club funds when the committee considered it appropriate to do so taking such factors as the state of club funds and the possible removal of Purchase Tax into account. Mrs.Halford kindly offered to continue to lend the Set and Records for the required period'

AGM 23 Feb 1949

.....and at a meeting called to discuss the handling of debentures and alterations to the rules.....

'The Chairman referred to members of the Forces being allowed to play upon payment of a green fee. It was agreed that this was a wartime resolution and did not now apply'

Extraordinary General Meeting 29 Apr 1949

.....into the 50's and, as ever, money was a problem.....

'The Chairman reviewed the state of the club finances, while the Secretary pointed out that he had lent the club £30 in both this year and the previous year to tide over the period from 1st January to 1st May when subscriptions began to be received'

AGM 1 Mar 1950

.....but standards must be maintained.....

'The suggestion that a 6d tea, consisting of liquid tea and a bun, be substituted for the usual 9d tea was not favourably received'

AGM 28 Feb 1951

.....then, possibly prompted by a wet spring.....

'A committee of Ways and Means be appointed.....to enquire into and report upon the construction of an additional hard court'

AGM 30 Jun 1953

.....decisions, decisions.....

'It was agreed by 16 votes to 12 that the geese be allowed to remain on the unused court unless the committee felt, at any time, their removal to be necessary'

AGM 22 Mar 1954

.....the Chairman, Mr.J.R.Ley, said.....

'It is possible to run this club on an income of under £500 per year'

AGM 22 Mar 1954

.....and the next year....

'The Chairman reminded ladies that if they wished to play on Sunday mornings they must not hesitate to come along'
AGM 9 Mar 1955

.....but, back to the important issues.....

'In view of the rise in prices generally, the charge for a set tea at the club at weekends will be raised from 9d to 1/- per person'
AGM 9 Mar 1955

.....then, two gentlemen.....

'Mr.Cook proposed and Mr.Barker seconded the suggestion that, when the ladies had prepared and served weekend teas, all washing-up and clearing should be undertaken by the gentlemen. This was unanimously approved'
AGM 14 Mar 1956

.....however.....

'The appearance of ladies on Sunday mornings to play tennis was mentioned; it was agreed to call a meeting of all winter members to discuss any change in order of play that might be thought necessary'
Committee meeting 22 Oct 1956

..-----SO-----

'At the meeting of winter members on October 31st it was agreed that the appearance of ladies on Sunday mornings did not call for any special planning. The ladies would be welcome to join the present friendly and informal arrangements. However, since the custom of mens doubles was time-honoured, it was agreed that those who wished only to play mens doubles would not be asked to play in mixed games'

.....surely not a lack of enthusiasm when.....

•It was agreed that finals day would have to be 18th August. The Chairman (Mr.J.Martin-Smith) said he had found a cup and he was compelled by the committee to undertake to present it. The Secretary was asked to write to members asking them to watch'

Committee meeting 13 Aug 1957

.....but there is always work to be done•...•.

'Mr.Richardson would be on holiday for two weeks from 17th August. Mr.Barker agreed that they would try to prepare courts for the weekend of 24th-25th and the feeling was that thereafter members should try the adventure of self-help'

Committee Meeting 13 Aug 1957

.....and the ever-present problem.....

'The Treasurer suggested that in order to meet the cost of this (advertising on London Transport) and of the programme for renewing the fencing for the lower hard court, the bank should be asked for a short term loan. He was authorised to negotiate with the bank for an overdraft of £40 •

Committee meeting 17 Feb 1959

:followed by a revolutionary suggestion.....

'It was proposed that existing arrangements for supplying teas at the weekend be amended and that in future only tea, biscuits and cake be supplied•.....after a long discussion it was agreed that the new arrangement should be given a month's trial '

AGM 15 Apr 1959

.....after the geese.....

'Miss Patrick asked to be allowed to start a small kitchen garden on the spare ground behind court No.1. Permission was readily granted'

AGM 15 Apr 1959

.....and, ever conscious of technological advancement•.....

'The committee were asked to look into the possibility of having a telephone with a coin-box installed'

AGM 15 Apr 1959

-----SO-----

'The Secretary reported that he had approached the Post Office Telephone Sales Department regarding a coin-box in the clubhouse. The Post Office say that this cannot be done at present as the Vandyke exchange, being a new one, has not yet got the necessary equipment to cope with this type of installation'

Committee meeting 22 Apr 1959

(A coin-box telephone was finally installed in 1963)

••...fortunately.....

'It was agreed that the Directors would not accept an offer of £30,000 made by Messrs.A.W.Taylor and Company for the purchase of the club and ground but the club continue to operate and function as a Tennis Club as heretofore•

Extraordinary General Meeting 21 Sep 1960

.....but, at the same meeting.....

'It was agreed to sell the spare piece of land for a sum of not less than £4,000'

.....and other changes must come.....

'The Secretary reported that there was a feeling among some members that No.4 grass court should be converted to hard when funds became available from the spare plot of land..... On a show of hands 23 members voted in favour of the conversion and 5 against•

AGM 22 Mar 61

.....and sometimes decisions were easier to make.....

'It was agreed unanimously that Mrs.B.S.Fisher should be presented with a small statuette, suitably inscribed, on the occasion of her 70th birthday•

Committee meeting 16 Aug 1961

(Mrs.Fisher was a playing member at that time)

.....and still.....

•several ladies were undecided about joining for the winter. It was agreed they could defer paying their winter subscription until November 15th and would not be expected to pay if they did not get sufficient tennis to their liking, and withdrew•

Committee meeting 21 Sep 1961

.....possibly as a result of a not entirely successful year financially.....

'A football syndicate amongst the members was agreed'

AGM 29 Mar 1967

.....we have always had our over-enthusiastic hitters.....

'It was decided to pay Mr.Golding 30/- towards the removal of a tennis ball lodged in a drainpipe•

Committee meeting 3 Oct 1967

.....and the weather is as bad as ever so•.....

'Members were asked to think about court No.6 being turned into an all-weather one•

Committee meeting 15 Jan 1968

.....as always.....

'The need for co-opting members on to the committee was stressed particularly in view of the vacancies that would exist in 1969'

Committee meeting 15 Oct 1968

.....someone had a thought so.....

'It was suggested that wooden seats be purchased and placed by No.1 court. This was considered a very good idea, but it should be left until the question of how much money was needed for the bar rebuilding was resolved'

Committee meeting 31 Mar 1969

(Subsequently two seats, one presented by Roy and Margaret Perry, one by Al and Cynthia Barnsley, were installed)

.....an important issue was raised when.....

'A discussion was held on the future of the bar.....the bar was essential to the profit of the club and Mr.Roy Perry and Mr.F.Richardson volunteered to take over this task, which offer was gratefully accepted'

AGM 29 Mar 1971

.....**but**.....

'....volunteers are urgently needed for the summer (bar) season'

Committee meeting 1 May 1972

.....there is growing concern about the clubhouse and.....

'The Chairman said that the (proposed) increases in subscriptions were dictated by the pressing need to renovate the roof and front of the clubhouse, and to purchase a new lawnmower'

AGM 30 Mar 1977

.....and, to make life easier for the Treasurer.....

It was recommended by the retiring committee that separate summer and winter rates be abolished and an annual subscription be levied, the annual subscription to be renewed 12 months after joining and subsequently on that date each year..... •

AGM 5 Apr 1978

.....at what was probably the shortest AGM ever.....

'The Chairman said that the condition of the clubhouse made further discussion very uncomfortable and, as the statutory business of the club had been dealt with, he proposed to close the meeting. There was no dissent'

AGM 4 Apr 1979

(The clubhouse had been damaged by fire three days before. Everything was covered in soot; there was no usable seating and no electricity; and the minutes were taken by candlelight)

.....under Applications for Membership it was agreed that.....

'Applications from Wimbledon players were to be judged on their merits'

Committee meeting 4 Jul 1979

(There was concern that allowing Wimbledon competitors to practice on the club's grass courts would quickly wear out the courts)

.....a further cause for concern was recorded.....

'Charringtons were again on a "go-slow" preventing sufficient stocks of beer reaching us'

Committee meeting 15 Nov 1980

.....but work on re-building was progressing well.....

'The clubhouse was coming along nicely thanks again to the willing "Monday Night" helpers'

Committee meeting 23 May 1982

....and, eventually.....

'Mr.T.Norman reported that the new bar was now open and the committee thanked Russell Newall and the rest of the Monday evening team for all their hard work in achieving this'

Committee meeting 3 Oct 1982

.....old traditions die hard, but.....

'After much discussion it was agreed that for a trial period the clothing rule would be changed to permit tennis clothing of predominately one pastel colour to be worn, with the exception of shoes which must be white tennis shoes. White tennis clothing would of course still be preferred'

Committee meeting 31 Mar 1983

* * * * *

	President	Chairman	Honorary Secretary	Honorary Treasurer
1884		Dr.H.W.Hoffman	E.Homfray	H.Kimber
1885	Rev.W.Read		"	"
1886	"		"	C.F.Wootton
1887	"		C.D.Kimber	H.A.Everest
1888	"		H.A.Everest	vi.Cumming
1889	"		"	"
1890	"		"	"
1891	"		L.R.Burro\ '1s	"
1892	"		"	"
1893	"		H.F. Jootton	"
1894	"		"	"
1895	"		"	H.H.Eccles
1896	Dr.H.W.Hoffman	A.Woods	C.O.Ridley	"
1897	"	"	"	"
1898	"	"	A.E.Porter	"
1899	"		"	"
1900	"		"	"
1901	"		C.a.Ridley	"
1902	"		"	"
1903	"		J.A.Blake	"
1904	"		"	"
1905	"		"	"
1906	"		H.C.Grenfell	"
1907	"		"	"
1908	"		H.K.Punshon	"
1909	"		"	W.P.Sissons
1910	"		"	"
1911	"		G.S.Hoffman	"
1912	"		"	"
1913	"		"	"
1914	"		"	"
1915	"		"	"
1916	"		H.K.Punshon	R.Broadley
1917	"		"	"
1918	"		"	"
1919	"		"	A.Ho\ '1e11
1920	"		"	A.l•Jhitworth
1921	"		"	G.H.Palmer
1922	"		"	"
1923	Sir Henry Kimber		"	"

1964	J.Stewart	B.S.Easy	R.Perry	A.C.Tripp
1965		"	A.J.Barnsley	"
1966		R.Perry	"	"
1967		A.C.Tripp	Miss F.Wheatland	Mrs.F.Easy
1968		"	"	"
1969		Dr.D.Davies	Mrs.B.Lickens	"
1970		"	Mrs.P.Holdsworth	Miss E.Hunt
1971		Dr.J.Anson	"	"
1972		"	"	"
1973		R.Perry	Miss F.Wheatland	Dr.J.Anson
1974		"	N.W.Marsden	"
1975	Dr.D.Davies	"	"	"
1976	"	"	"	Mrs.M.Perry
1977	"	"	"	"
1978	"	"	"	"
1979	R.Perry	N.W.Marsden	A.Wilkins	Mrs.S.Marsden
1980	"	"	"	"
1981	"	M.Wilkinson	Miss S.Pringle	"
1982	"	"	"	"
1983	A.J.Barnsley	"	A.Wilkins/ Mrs.M.Bailey	"
1984	"	"	"	D.Bilsborough

HONORARY LIFE VICE PRESIDENTS

1935	W.W.Slater
1937	G.S.Hoffman
1938	A.H.Glazier
1939	N.J.C.Lawson
1942	L.Houdret
1951	Dr.G.E.O'Riordan
1955	T.G.Marri ott
1961	W.Oakley
1968	R.Perry TD
1982	N.W.Marsden

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

1960	F.Richardson
1965	H.J.Barker
1974	R.Lazenbury
1980	Mrs.P.Holdsworth
1980	Mrs.M.Perry
1984	J.M.Fraser

HONORARY LIFE SOCIAL MEMBERS

1982	R.Wilkins
1982	P.Butcher

The Longest Uninterrupted Service as Officers of the Club

President:	Dr.H.W.Hoffman	1896 - 1922
Chairman:	A. Joods	1896 - 1923
Secretary:	N.J.C.Lawson	1925 - 1934
Treasurer:	G.H.Palmer	1921 - 1933

The Longest Uninterrupted Membership

W.W.Slater joined the club in 1886 and was a member for 49 years until 1935 when he was elected the club's first Honorary Life Vice President.