

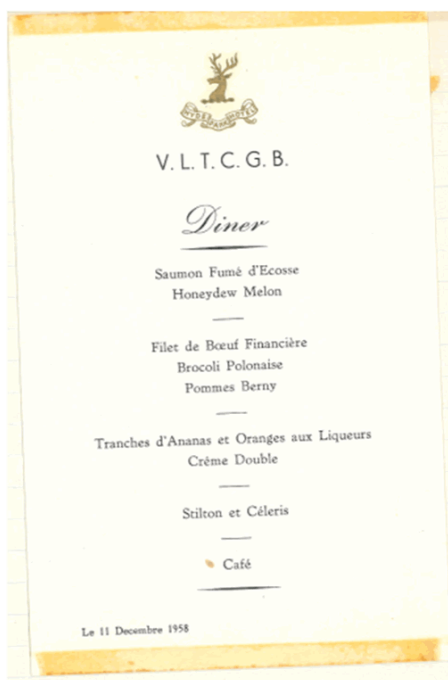


THE SENIORS' LAWN TENNIS CLUB OF GREAT BRITAIN

HISTORY

Foundation and Early Years

In 1958, when the Veterans' Lawn Tennis Club of Great Britain was formed, there was no organised playing of veterans' tennis in the British Isles although many other countries were ahead of Britain in this respect.



Menu of the 1st dinner held to discuss formation of the VLTC of GB

Dennis Coombe, the New Zealand Davis Cup player and Tom Todd jointly decided during the covered court tournament at Torquay in November 1958 that it was time to form a club for older lawn tennis players.

On their return to London a dinner was arranged at the Hyde Park Hotel for a few of their close friends who were all keen tennis players despite their advancing years. The dinner was held on the evening of 11th December.

The title of the club had already been decided by the two initiators - The Veterans' Lawn Tennis Club of Great Britain - and the initials VLTCGB were printed on the menu that evening. After the dinner a meeting was held and it was resolved that the first committee should consist of Dennis Coombe, Jack Deloford, Pat Hughes, Harold McCarthy, Dr. Dick Sandys and Gwyn Tuckett. Harold McCarthy was elected Chairman. The treasurer was Stanley Clark and the organising secretary Tom Todd. It was unanimously agreed that Leslie Godfree M.C. be invited to become the club's first president and Stanley Doust, Sir Gerald Hargreaves, Lt-Colonel Archie Kingscote and Dr. Bill Lillis to become Vice-Presidents. All accepted.

It was also proposed that the committee should elect up to forty honorary members of any nationality or residence and over the age of 45 who were acknowledged to have contributed to the continued advancement of the game of lawn tennis. Certain qualifications were required of those wishing to join the new club. Firstly it was required that prospective members must be over the age of 45, living in the British Isles and British at the time of their birth. The last requirement was so the Irish veterans would be eligible to join. Playing qualifications which the



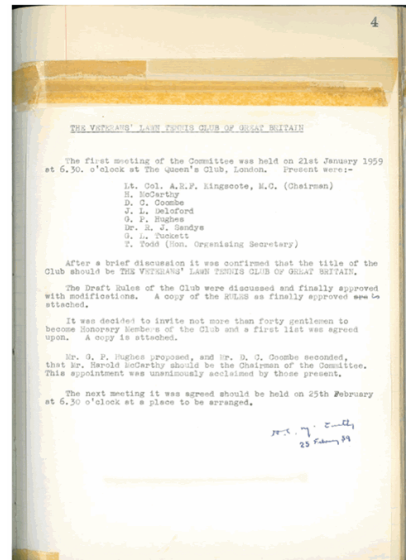
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committee considered necessary included having played in the Championships at Wimbledon, having won an event at an open tournament, or having played for one's country. The qualifications were subsequently amended.

The main object of the club, apart from the playing of veterans' tennis, was **to promote the playing of lawn tennis in its original spirit - for the love and enjoyment of the game alone.** It was decided that the club colours should be two narrow gold stripes on a dark green background.

The dark green was intended to represent the evergreen outlook of the members and the gold stripes the serene and yellow of advancing age.



Minutes of first meeting of the Veterans' Lawn Tennis Club of Great Britain

Throughout 1959 the membership steadily increased and by June of the following year it was possible to organise a champagne cocktail party at the Hurlingham Club. The party was well attended and many of the leading personalities of the tennis world were present.

Then by the end of the year it was felt that the club was sufficiently well established for the first annual dinner to be held. The date of the dinner was 7th December and the venue the Carlton Tower Hotel.

Before long a team selection committee was appointed and consisted of Dennis Coombe and Leslie Godfree. Pat Sherwood was appointed match secretary while Eric Lowden took over the responsibilities of the treasurer. Bill Latham became the club secretary. Matches were soon arranged against many prominent clubs including The All England Club, The International Club, The Queen's Club, The Royal Navy and The United Banks.

So within three years of the formation of The Veterans' Lawn Tennis Club of Great Britain it was established on a sound footing and has since, as the first veterans' club in Great Britain, continued to lead the way.

The VLTC of GB played an important part in establishing in 1974, with LTA approval, The Veterans' Lawn Tennis Association of Great Britain. The first



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President and Chairman was Russell Young DSO, who was a Vice-President of the VLTC of GB at the time.

Middle Ages

For the next forty years our club seems to have cruised along with very few changes. However, there were two major fixture additions. For decades our most popular fixture has been the match with the Norwegian Tennis Veterans. The inaugural fixture was held in 1969 and each year we have alternated home and away for The Tom Todd Trophy.



The Norwegians have hosted us all over their spectacular country and usually both teams and their supporters stay in the same hotel and sight-see and dine together. When at home this fixture has frequently enjoyed a kind invitation to play on the hallowed Courts of the All England Club, developments permitting.

A memorable innovation in 1990 was the new fixture with The Fitzwilliam Club played alternately in Dublin and the UK, latterly for The Ivar Boden Cup. Our Irish and Norwegian friends have often come over and joined us at Torquay or other events and I suspect that there is yet more mileage to be gained in top quality international social tennis in different forms.

The club has not been slow to celebrate its anniversaries by arranging events to allow long-standing tennis friends to keep in touch. We celebrated our 25th anniversary with a reception on the 14th October 1983 at the Hall of the Worshipful Company of Stationers and Newspaper Makers in the City of London.



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In 1986, in recognition of her contribution to lawn tennis, Mrs Kitty Godfree, wife of Leslie Godfree MC, was invited to become the first patron of the club, a position she held until her death in 1992. From 1998 until 2007 our Patron was Mrs Marjorie Todd, the widow of our co-founder Tom Todd. Right up to the end she would travel across from Guernsey to Torquay to support us.



Ten years later it was a dinner/dance on 1 May 1993 in the Debenture Holder's Lounge at the AELTC & CC. The same venue hosted our 40th anniversary on 2nd May 1998. And right up to this day our Wimbledon Cocktail Party on the second Monday goes from strength to strength. Just as at Hurlingham in 1959, so in 2011 many leading personalities of the tennis world were present - including a Godfree!

Turn of the Century



The new millennium seems to have sparked more changes or is it just that they are closer to hand? So far as playing is concerned there seems to be a gradual change of focus in the club's activities. The Dennis Coombe Cup (Doubles knock-out competition) was last held in 2000 and is in abeyance due to a lack of support.

The Harley Watkins Cups for doubles has also recently had to be put on the back burner. This once popular handicap doubles week-end had been held for decades at The Palace Hotel, Torquay, scene of many a famous tournament. Dwindling support and a leaky roof over the historic grand old wooden floor have contributed to a suspension of activity. It will be for our future members to decide if we should resurrect this type of event.

On the other hand we have a growing list of international fixtures, thanks to the industry of our members. The year 2006 saw our first match with the Dutch Veterans played at Woking and then alternately home and away. Two years later the club competed against the Israeli veterans in Tel Aviv. And now we have fixtures against German teams. The hospitality offered to our club has been a delight and we are hard put to return it. In recent years members have found that if they can become involved in, say, just one of these home and away international fixtures, their tennis life experiences a new dimension.



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At some point, probably much earlier in our history, the club moved from a selection committee to the appointment of match managers. It then became the custom for members to offer their availability to each manager as early as possible. The manager then looks at the quality of opposition and selects and notifies the team. With the widening of the age range and fixture list we are still having to learn how to balance things to satisfy as many members as possible. But it was our 50th year that saw the most memorable change. In 2008 Ladies were both admitted to membership and came to serve on the committee. And as if that was not enough we have changed our age criteria from 2010 so youngsters of 35 are now veterans!

To mark our 50th Anniversary Honorary Member Lord Naseby hosted a cocktail party on the terrace of the House of Lords on 10 July 2008. The following day a match was played against one of our first opponents of fifty years ago - the AELTC together with our Norwegian, IC, Queen's Club and Fitzwilliam friends. This serves to remind us that as a Club of No Fixed Abode we are greatly indebted for the assistance we receive from the members of The All England Lawn Tennis Club and The Queen's Club for hosting our meetings, social events and some of our fixtures.

Hopefully, embracing ladies and enabling 35+ to move seamlessly from open to veteran competition will serve The Veterans' Lawn Tennis Club of Great Britain well in the next fifty years.

..... and to the Present Day

In March 2013 we changed our name to The Seniors' Lawn Tennis Club of Great Britain, which was in line with policy being adopted by the ITF and LTA.

The embracing of modern technology has enabled us to deliver informative and up to date Club information to our growing membership.

We strive to adopt an interesting and diverse fixture list every year, embracing new locations both home and abroad whilst maintaining historic links with our friends in Norway and the Fitzwilliam Club in Dublin.

We look forward to the next 60 years with optimism!