

HISTORY OF DEAN LAWN TENNIS AND SQUASH CLUB

1884-1993

The Dean Lawn Tennis and Squash Club, (formerly Dean Lawn Tennis Club) which is situated in the heart of Edinburgh, was founded in 1884 when six Guarantors acquired the lease of the ground which had been previously used as a dump in Dean Park Crescent. The Guarantors were AW Black, JP Bannerman, Dr S Keith, WSC Shaw, W Whyte and WA Wyse. Two courts were originally laid out and at the end of the season in 1888 the Guarantors decided, in view of pending building operations which threatened to put an end to the Club, that a limited liability company should be formed which was called the Dean Grounds Association Limited. The site was purchased at a cost of £1,800 and a further two courts were laid out. At one end of the ground a handsome two-storey building built by Mackenzie & Moncur was erected which provided an ideal gallery for spectators as well as changing rooms and other facilities. It was decided at this stage that the Club should be managed by a Committee and that the ground should be leased from the Dean Grounds Association Ltd. and this arrangement still exists to-day. The new Club was officially opened on 27th April 1889 by Archibald Hewat, Chairman of the Board of Directors. The first Committee and Office-Bearers were elected; the first President was Dr RC Maclagan who held that office for 30 years until his death in 1919. The minimum rent to the Dean Grounds Association was £52 plus any surplus each year. It is interesting to note from a newspaper cutting that balls were supplied by Messrs. Thornton & Co. at a cost of 7/10d per dozen - a far cry from the current price of £13.50 per dozen.

WA Wyse was the first Secretary of the Club and he held this post for no less than 26 years, when he was subsequently elected Vice-President and later President. His interest in the Club was enormous and there is no doubt that the splendid spirit uniting all members at that time was, in no small measure, due to his efforts. The original membership of the club was 70 and rarely did it fall below this figure. The Club's activities continued during the winter when the courts were flooded for curling and skating. The Minutes, however, record that in 1913 this practice was stopped, as it was considered too damaging to the condition of the courts. At the outbreak of war in 1914 evening play was introduced for the benefit of Servicemen, and at the end of the war the ordinary membership was increased by a further 60 members who were only allowed to play in the evenings.

AD Flett, CA, was Secretary for a few years after WA Wyse, and after the war Norman Macdonald held the office for four years.

In 1925 WR Rainie was appointed Secretary and he held the position until 1938. During this time the financial position of the Club remained exceptionally sound and various large sums were spent on improvements. However, by the outbreak of the Second World War the membership began to fall drastically and it was doubtful whether the Club could continue. The Committee imposed certain economies and, with the help of the acquisition of block membership from Scottish Command and the introduction of Sunday play, disaster was averted and by 1942, judging by the bank balance shown in the accounts, the position had decidedly improved.

In 1947 Dr Angus Foggie, who later became President of the East of Scotland Lawn Tennis Association, took over as Secretary and it was during his term of office that the most radical changes in the organisation of the club took place. He was responsible for the abolition of evening membership, which had by this time become impracticable, and for the introduction of Junior Membership. He also initiated a system for the allocation of courts