

## The History of the Tennis Seniors Association of South Australia 1971 - 2011

(formerly the Tennis Veterans Association of S.A.)

The Association was initiated in 1971 and has grown in 40 years to a membership of 525, including 97 country members. It is now (2011) in a strong financial position, with no debts, adequate office requirements, a one third share of 12 courts, including a pavilion/storehouse, a two third share of an additional 6 courts and a half share of a clubhouse. These sharing's are with Pulteney Grammar School and Adelaide Hockey Club. It also boasts a strong and active committee, with many willing helpers.

In November of 1971 John P. Young of Victoria asked John Mehaffey to try to muster players over 45 years of age with a view to starting a SA Division of Veteran's Tennis. Victoria invited an S.A. team to Victoria for a match. Our team consisted of John Mehaffey, Dudley West, Kris Lasn and Brian Bates. The S.A. team lost to Victoria

The inaugural meeting to establish 'The Veteran's Lawn Tennis Club of Australia – S.A. Division', was held in the President's Room of the SA Lawn Tennis Association at Memorial Drive, North Adelaide, on Tuesday the 12<sup>th</sup> of December 1972. Present were John Mehaffey, (Convener and Chairman), Lance Hosking, (Acting Secretary) and 10 prospective members. The meeting elected John Mehaffey as President, Kris Lasn Secretary, with Lance Hosking as Treasurer and Assistant Secretary.

The following year (1973) saw 66 members, paying \$5 membership fees, \$2 of which went to the Veterans Lawn Tennis Club of Australia, as affiliation fees. Club ties were available for purchase by the members for \$3.50. A return match was played against Victoria. A trophy was donated by John Mehaffey for competition between the two States.

The first official Veteran's doubles event was conducted at the Drive with Tom Warhurst and Ken McGregor defeating Barry O'Brien and John Mehaffey 6/4 - 4/6 - 6/4.

The A.G.M. was held in October with the office bearers plus 18 members attending. The increase in membership from 0 to 66 in barely 2 years indicates a really great effort by all involved. The bank balance at this meeting was \$125.65. There were no women members at this stage.

<b>Names of male members' prior to 1972 that we have are;</b>	
D. West	Gordon Schwartz
Kris Lasn	Tom Warhurst
Gavin Battye	Malcolm Hall
Ray Lock	Barry O'Brien
Brian Bates	Neville Quist
John Mehaffey	J. Nelson
Lance Hosking	

Names we have in the period 1972-1973 are as below;	
T. Carey	R.T. Potter
J Wait	Ron Foreman
P. R. Haynes	A. Kerry
G.E. Johnson	Ron Hill
R.W. Piper	H. Brophy
J. Heinrich	A. Lanage
Harry Mc Master	Len Atkins
W.H. Perkins	J.E. Raggatt
J.K. Cooper	R.J. McLeod
A.F. Swann	H.D. Ross
G.C. Errington	John Bills
H.F. Walker	Kevin Lonergan
K.G. Koehne	W.S. Goodchild
D.L. Vincent	Stan Hawkins (current member-2011)
F. Pemberton	Max Boyce
Tom Gray (current life member 2011)	P. Conroy
O. Parmenter	Bob Oliver (current life member)
D. Davidson	Dave Rowe
Alf Clarke	Neville Quist
Ken Duthie	Jack Hann
Don Turnbull	

The office bearers remained un-changed until the 1974 AGM held in November when K. Koehne came in as secretary. The membership had grown by 4 to 70 with a credit balance of \$245.64. SA had entered 2 teams in the Australian Veteran's Team Championships, held in Sydney in January of 1974. There were 15 other teams. The cost per team was \$10 which covered all play, lunches and liquor for the 3 days!

What was establishing itself as a regular match against Victoria was hosted by S.A. in the Barossa Valley. Travel and wine tasting were capably handled by the hosts.

The meeting discussed the Australian Vet's Team championship to be held at the Memorial Drive lawn courts in the coming January. Women's events will be introduced for the first time. Beneficial Finance Co through Life Member Ray Paley was generous in its support also donating a perpetual trophy for the most outstanding veteran player. The first selection committee was established, the members being T. Warhurst, J. Mehaffey and K, Koehne.

At the AGM in November of 1975 the association had about \$770 with a membership of 87 although 42 were unfinancial! Lance Hosking came in as Secretary/Treasurer.

S.A. conducted its first Australasian Carnival including all States and New Zealand. with a record entry of 24 teams. Four categories were catered for 45+,50+,55+, plus a women's team .SA had a team in each section with an additional one in the men's 45+.

Many overseas players competed in Australia's first International Veteran's event in Melbourne, with SA's Dudley West and John Mehaffey selected to play for Australia.

Men held sway in the association until around 1975 when the following ladies' names appeared as an SA team playing against N.S.W., Vic, ACT and another SA team. Mary Jarrett, Philippa Webber, Delcie Burrell and Betty Bahr.

Betty and Philippa are still regular competitors in S.A. (2011) and other Seniors events.

<b>In 1976 these additional ladies' names were listed;</b>	
Pam Duval	Sheila Franzi
Jean Young	Marg Rice
Val Savage	M. Clapin
Daph Halliday	Heather Braid
Sally Coats	

Marie Aitken, another name that gets a mention in this period, and is still competing (2008), was evidently 2 years underage at the time. You wouldn't get away with it now!

1976 saw Betty Bahr, who had been the prime mover in enlisting lady members, added to the management committee with Ray Linke, Malcolm Hall and President John and Secretary/Treasurer Lance Hosking.

The financial situation during the year seemed to have increased by only \$2.97 with a membership of 53. 20 men and women from SA had ventured to Canberra for the Australian championships without winning but held their own in the social activities.

Social tennis at Auburn and at the SA Lawn Tennis Club, with BBQ, was attended by 20 and 17 respectively.

During 1977 the membership had dropped to 49, with the funds at \$832 due largely to the generosity of Ray Paley, Tom Gray and Bob Oliver, who each paid \$100 and were awarded Life Membership. As annual subscriptions at the time were \$6, this was of great help to the Association. The following year Ron Hill followed suit.

Three social tennis days were arranged, but one was cancelled due to lack of interest.

The Australasian Veterans Championships held in Hobart attracted 53 teams of which SA had one mens and one ladies' team.

Funds available was \$1039. The major office bearers remained the same.

It seems that no AGM was held to cover 1977.

At the Australasian Championships held in New Zealand in January of 1979, SA was represented by only 6 ladies. The team fees were paid by the Association. During this period the President expressed his concern at the lack of interest by members causing several planned social activities to be cancelled, and the drop-in membership. Indications are that total funds dropped by \$1 to a figure of \$1038, and at the AGM of August 1980 an increase of \$42 brought it up to \$1080 of which \$600 was accruing interest at the Beneficial Finance Ltd.

At this meeting Mike Daws was elected as Secretary/ Treasurer with John Mehaffey continuing as President. It was decided to apply for affiliation as a body to the SA Tennis Association.

The Championships held in Perth in January of 1980 attracted only 5 from SA. Three of this group joined 20 from the ACT for a week's tennis in Singapore.

The AGM for 1981 was held in September and saw a change of Secretary/Treasurer, with Pauline Ward taking the job. The total funds stood at \$ 1033, with annual Subs to be increased to \$10.

The 1981 Australasian Carnival was held in Melbourne with SA represented by only one mens team. President John urged SA players to enter, convinced that they would be converted to regular attendance.

Don Pike suggested a veteran's team competition at night during the winter and a veteran's grade in the Metropolitan lawn competition in summer. While the summer suggestion did not eventuate, the night competitions certainly have. It was to be a significant turning point for the success of the Association. The initial competition in the winter was run by Stan Hawkins and Secretary Pauline Ward, with 7 teams of 4 men. Each player played 1 set with each of the other members of the team against the corresponding members of the other team. This system is still in force, except that now, ladies and mixed doubles competitions are included. The courts used in this first year were Brendon Osborn's court at Marden, Lew Ward's court at Clarence Gardens, and Brighton courts behind the Brighton Council Chambers. The teams were, Kensington Gardens, with Stan Hawkins as captain, The Drive, with D Foote, Racket Barn with G Woollacott, Ward's Withers, with L Ward, Woodville R Colegate, Reade Park Don Pike, and J Thompson looked after the Rockers team.



photo taken in **1981**

*from left John Mehaffey, Eddie Drummond, Vin Kean and Ray Stoneham.*

In addition to the President and Secretary, 17 members attended the 1982 AGM, an addition of 7 from 1981. The Association has had several changes of name and at this meeting the name "Veterans' Tennis Club of South Australia" was adopted. The funds in hand amounted to \$975 and the fees became \$12. John Mehaffey and Pauline Ward continued as President and Secretary respectively. The success of the night competition promoted suggestions for a ladies and additional men's grades. Several social occasions were also held during the year.

The 1983 AGM saw the withdrawal of John Mehaffey's period as President after 13 years in office. His term saw the establishment of the Association from 4 members to what must have been more than 80, at that time, as 20 teams played night competitions. There were two men's grades and a ladies' grade. The A-grade men played in both the 1982-1983 summer season, while the ladies and B-grade men commenced in the winter of 1983. Glandore tennis courts were used for all matches.

The total funds were \$1835. Lew Ward took the reins as President, Graham Gabb the position of Vice President, with Pauline Ward continuing as Secretary.

An increasing number of SA players enjoyed interstate rivalry both at the Mildura Veteran's tournament and the Australasian Carnival in Christchurch, New Zealand. Several local social events were also held.

Brian Aitken was elected as Vice President at the 1984 AGM, and Marie Aitken became Secretary, with funds standing at \$2365. Three teams represented SA when Brisbane hosted the Australian Carnival at the beginning of the year.

A further change in the officers of the Association occurred at the 1985 AGM when Don Pike took over as Vice President, Malcolm Beddome as Secretary with Shirley McIntosh elected to the new position of Treasurer. Funds had fallen a little to \$2270, resulting in an increase to \$ 15 for membership fees. This included \$1 subsidy to the SA Tennis News Magazine, which the Association used to provide information for members. Earlier in the year 18 SA players ventured to Hobart to compete in the Championships there. Following that, the City and Country Vets competed for the inaugural 'Tom Gray' Shield, with the City victorious.

The summer and winter night competitions were gaining momentum with a mixed group added to the program.

Since SA was to run the 1986 Australasian Carnival a committee was established for this purpose. The Lawn courts to be used were Memorial Drive, Kensington Gardens, Adelaide Oval and Keswick & Wayville.

37 members in addition to the President, Secretary and Treasurer attended the AGM on the 2nd of June 1986 and were told that the success of the Carnival resulted in a membership increase to 241, with total funds in credit to \$13,000 .Don Pike as Tournament Director, with Pauline Ward as Tournament Secretary and Doug Ward, Bill Finger and many other helpers were thanked for their efforts. There had been 101 teams from all over Australia and New Zealand competing, involving 215 women and 282 men Four SA teams were victorious. In the individual Tournament there were 340 entrants in 36 events. SA had 6 winners.

The President, Lew Ward, congratulated Pam Wearne on her selection to represent Australia in the over 50s (Maria Bueno Cup) to play in Austria. She became runner up in the +50 doubles World Championships He also expressed the need for a Veterans Tennis Headquarters in SA. This was the first mention of what was to come to pass in 1995.

The night teams continued to grow with 6 mixed and 6 mens teams in the winter and 24 teams in the summer. During the winter of 1986 there were 8 mixed and 8 other teams playing at Glandore and 9 teams playing under cover at Athol Park.

The City versus Country, competing for the Tom Gray Shield, continued to be a regular event with the City winning at Clare.

Brian Dew took the reins as President of the Association with Brendon Osborn as Treasurer and Malcolm Beddome remaining as Secretary at the 1986 AGM. In July of 1986 the first edition of the SA-VET was prepared by June Raven and Malcolm Beddome. This continues to be an effective way to keep members advised of the many activities.

1987 saw the Association enter the computer age with about 230 members in the computer. The funds continued to increase up to nearly \$17,000. SA had a narrow win over Vic at Robinvale with accurate predictions that this popular competition would continue. Pam Harvey's election as Secretary was the only change to the officers. 39 players headed to Perth in January 1988 for the Australian Veteran's Championships.

Philippa Webber returned after successes in Italy, Yugoslavia and Switzerland, where she was called on to do some umpiring, which, according to her, was not as successful.

SA's inaugural State Veteran's Championships was scheduled to be conducted in May at Reade Park, but wet weather caused a change to the SA Hardcourt Headquarters at Goodwood. 88 men and 56 women were in the event.

31 teams played nights during the summer, involving around 160 players.

The 1988 AGM saw June Raven replace Brendon Osborn as Treasurer. The funds were \$20,500 and the membership had risen to 315. The Association was fortunate in having Ted Harvey primarily instrumental in preparing a constitution and on the 23rd of July 1988 it became an Incorporated Body. Doubles competitions continued with matches on 3 nights per week in winter and 4 nights in summer as well as on Saturday afternoons - an innovation.

Four social events were held, and the Country Vets won the Tom Gray Shield at Lameroo. A most successful Teams Carnival at Berri, with 31 teams, gave a strong indication of it becoming a regular event. The event was run in May of 1988 by the newly formed Riverland Division of the Association with Ken Smith, its President, at the helm.

With a view to the future, despite a funds increase to approaching \$27,000, the subscriptions were increased to \$25 per City member, with Country Divisions, \$30 plus \$8 per member at the 1989 AGM. The membership total was 339, including 31 Country members from Northern Areas and the Riverland.

During the summer, 39 teams of 5 or 6 players competed on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday afternoons, using courts at PAC, Broadview and Woodlands Centre at Athol Park. The various Interstate, Country and teams Carnivals continued to attract increasing interest. Social activities were conducted to raise money for the future development of a SA Headquarters.

The Northern Areas Division which had been formed on 23/10/88, with Twink Sparks as President, sent players to the City for a Challenge match with an invitation for a return match in their area. These have become a regular event played in a social atmosphere. The 2nd SA Vet's Championships, intended to be run at Murray Bridge, were cancelled due to lack of entries.

SA was represented by 22 players in Brisbane for the Australasian Championships.

In October 1989 the Association made itself available to run the 2nd Australian Masters Games in conjunction with its SA Veteran's Championships. Over 290 players competed. Both were most successful and helped considerably to bring its year's surplus up to \$17,000 making the total Fund/Assets to \$43,600 by the time of the 1990 AGM. Several other Social activities also contributed to make the year financially successfully. The membership stood at 250 metropolitan and 70 from the country. The many activities continued to be run with great enthusiasm. They were: City v Country, City v Northern Areas, SA v Victoria, SA v New South Wales, The Australasian Championships in its turn, and of course the many night Competitions. In addition, the Country Divisions were conducting many events. The Teams event run mainly by the Riverland Division, with some input from the Association in May of each year was particularly popular. Mr. Robin Archer, who continued to be B-Grade Men's coordinator and the association recorder, donated a perpetual trophy for the B-Grade Men's Comp.

The South-East became the third Country Division of the Association due to the efforts of Robin Ey and his committee. New Zealand was the site for the 1990 Australasian

Championships and 38 SA members made the trip with limited success. Kevin Lonergan was chosen to represent Australia in the 55+ team

A change of President was required at the 1991 AGM as the 5-year term limit had been served by Brian Dew. Don Pike was elected to the position. The other officers were unchanged. Brian left the Association in a healthy state with a membership of 320, including 70 from the country. He noted that committees would be required to handle the challenges of hosting the Von Cramm Cup for international players in the over 70 age group, the Headquarters Development, and to run a successful SA Veteran's championship, apart from the other normal duties.

The Association's membership had risen to 360 which included 68 from the country. 78 teams competed during the summer in night and Saturday competitions. During this period some of the coordinators for these activities were Pam Harvey, Don Pike, Stan Hawkins, Malcolm Beddome, Marlene Molnar, and Robin Archer, who also acted as Recorder. Available funds were \$60,300.

Brian Dew, with a group of helpers, organised a very successful Von Cramm Cup, which was opened in a very elaborate ceremony, by the SA Governor, Dame Roma Mitchell in April 1991. At the same time, Dean Billing and Colin McInnes were representing Australia in the Britannia Cup for men over 65.

By the time of the 1992 AGM, the membership had risen to over 400, with 99 country members, the funds were in excess of \$79,000, 36 teams were playing in the winter night comps, and 44 in the summer, playing at Payneham, Roselands, Woodlands and Peake Reserve. The need for its own Headquarters was indeed vital.

The activities and events which had become normal yearly occurrences were continuing with 140 players entered in the State Veteran Championships. Also, the Association hosted a social hit with some Japanese tourists. The office bearers remained the same as the previous year.

The move to establish a Headquarters was gaining momentum with 2 Special General meetings held in 1992. It was anticipated that the cost would be in the vicinity of \$330,000. An approach to develop a venue in conjunction with Keswick and Wayville Tennis Club was rejected by them, so new negotiations were started involving the setting up of a consortium in conjunction with Pulteney Grammar School and the Adelaide Hockey Club. A Steering Committee was formed comprising D. Pike, B. Dew, C. Mander, E. Harvey and G. Alexander. This committee was empowered to negotiate with the other parties, committing the Association to a maximum of \$150,000.

In International news, Dean Billing's team won the Britannia Cup in Austria, while Kevin Lonergan's team came 5th in the Von Cramm Cup in England.

There were no changes to the officers of the Association at the 1992 AGM with Don Pike remaining as President, Brian Dew, the Vice President, Pauline Ward, Secretary, and June Raven the Treasurer.

In the life of the Association various changes have been made to the constitution, one being the minimum age for membership going from the original 45 to the current 35, to comply with international policy.

Attention was given at the 1993 AGM to preparations for the January 1994 Australasian Carnival, which was in the hands of the Association. Brian Dew, as Executive Chairman of the occasion spoke of the excellent work being done by the various sub-committees, being

convened by Joan Young, Dean Billing, Janet Wang, Warwick Bills, Pam Harvey and Don Murrie.

Changes to the Officers of the Association were that Marlene Molnar took over as Secretary and Tony Wright became Treasurer.

1993 saw continuing interest in several events namely, Tristate event between SA, VIC and NSW at Mildura, the SA Veteran's championships, City versus Northern areas, Riverland versus Murray Bridge, South-East versus Northern, and City versus South East. Early in 1994 there was the Metropolitan against Country match played at Berri, won by the Country.

The Australasian Carnival in January 1994 proved a great success with a profit of nearly \$8000 bringing the total assets to \$120,761. Some 1000 players in 98 mens and 81 ladies' teams competed. In the individual tournament, 490 players entered. The success of the event was attributed largely to Ian Craig.

Liz Horne in the 45+ team (in Perth) and Don Pike in the 60+ team (in Northern California) were selected to represent Australia in the ITF World events.

Mid 1994 the membership of the Association stood at 540 including 166 from country Associations.

With the prospect of a new Headquarters Venue gaining momentum Treasurer, Tony Wright, prepared an extensive "Financial Viability" report assuming a cost of \$665,000. With a Commonwealth Grant of \$237,000, the Hockey Club, the School and our Association would need to find about \$143,000 each. With promising negotiations with the Commonwealth Bank and using the offer from The Tennis Association of SA to guarantee a loan amount up to \$65,000, the project was looking feasible.

By the time of the AGM in August 1994, President Don Pike, was able to present architect's plans and indicate that 5 companies were expected to tender for the project. The Headquarters committee met many times and were complimented on their efforts.

A successful State Veteran's Championships had been conducted at the Memorial Drive during the previous 12 months.

The election of officers resulted in Joan Young becoming President, Don Pike Vice-President, Marlene Molnar continuing as Secretary, and Robert Bickmore became Treasurer.

SA continued its regular annual presence of teams at the Australian Veteran's Carnivals in all states and including the ACT and New Zealand. 1995 saw 8 mens and 10 women's teams competing at Canberra

The changes to the officers at the 1995 AGM were Robert Groth to Vice- President and Dean Billing, Treasurer. The great interest in the new Headquarters Complex saw 50 people attend this meeting. Don Pike advised the meeting that preparation was under way for the 2 International Tennis Federation Cups which SA was hosting viz the Crawford (Men's +70), and the Alice Marble (woman's +60).

Concern about the unevenness of the court surface at the South Park complex was raised, giving prelude to a future saga.

1996 AGM saw no change to the Association's officers. Continuing interest was shown in social tennis and in entering teams for competitions in other Associations.



At the 1997 AGM it was reported that the Association now had 469 city members and 162 country members. Fred Rodda had reached a world ranking of 9 in the +75-age group. The main Officers of the Association were elected as President, Robert Groth, Vice- President Graham Alexander, Secretary, Marlene Molnar, and Treasurer, Dean Billing.

Concern about the irregular surface of the new Centre prompted the consortium to take legal action. The surface was considered sub-standard for both hockey and tennis, Graham Alexander put the Veteran Tennis Association's case.

SA won both the "Bob Mc Carthy" and the "Max and Pat Phillips" Shields at the year's Tristate event at Mildura.

By winning the very last set of the day SA managed to sneak in, in the City versus Country match.

The other regular annual events were successfully conducted.

Stan Hawkins and Fred Rodda were chosen to represent Australia-- Stan in the Britannia Cup (65+) which came 7<sup>th</sup>, and Fred in the Bitsy Grant Cup (75+), where they were runners-up to the USA.