



**East Camberwell Tennis Club Inc.** (A0000771N)

Riversdale Park, Riversdale Road, Camberwell  
PO Box 10200, Middle Camberwell 3124

[www.tennis.com.au/ectc](http://www.tennis.com.au/ectc)

After almost 120 updates over two years we have finally documented the first 100 years of the Tennis club. What an amazing story it turned out to be!

The Club was formed in the aftermath of World War I and the Spanish Flu pandemic.

On 21 April 1920 a group of 20 people met at the Pavilion Croquet Green and resolved that a proposal be presented to Camberwell Council regarding the erection of tennis courts in Riversdale Park.

On 12 May 1920 the first meeting of the East Camberwell Tennis Club was held. Mr Ray Thomas was elected as President, membership was capped at 120 and the Club colours were set as Royal Blue and Gold.

On 25 December 1920 tennis was played at the Club for the first time.

A couple of things stood out as we documented the history of the Club over the next 100 years, the support of the members and the contribution by the volunteers.

### **Members**

Since 1920 there have been thousands of people, mainly in the Boroondara Council area, that have been members of the Club. They have enjoyed tennis in a variety of forms, senior or junior competition, coaching or social play.

Some members only stay a short time, but others have been members for decades. Peter Dickinson is our oldest living member who joined the Club in November 1946! Charles Povey joined in 1970 and is still an active player and contributor at the Club.

The membership has grown significantly from 1920 when it was established with 120 members. Membership stood at 487 in 2020 and is currently 512. Families comprise 47% of the membership.

Our membership records show that around 60% of the members at the Club have been members for less than 5 years. Around 25% have been members for more than 10 years.

The turnover in membership has been a constant through the Club's 100 years. Situations change and people can no longer dedicate the time to play tennis. Others move out of the area.

However, the sport of Tennis is extremely popular and there are new members of the community that are always drawn to the game and join the Club.

It is this constant support that has allowed the Club to continue to exist and service the community for 100 years.

We hope that in return that all members have been able to get enjoyment from the game and have created their own friendship groups within the Club, whether it be as part of a competition team, coaching group or social play.

### **Famous members**

We are also very lucky to have had some famous members at the Club.

Probably no-one more famous than Kerry Melville (Reid) who played on the International Women's circuit and was ranked in the top 10 in the world from 1968 to 1979. She was an extremely successful player.

However, her main contribution to Women's tennis was as a member of the Original 9. These women paved the way for the formation of the Women's Tennis Association in the 1970's. Hard to believe when you think of all the Tennis Clubs in the world, one of these 9 women was a member of the East Camberwell Tennis Club.

Kerry was inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame in 2021.

Other famous players from the Club include Kerry Harris and Anne and Elizabeth Minter.

Steve Wood was also another famous member who was part of the Clubs

Men's A Grade Pennant victory in 1980. Steve went on to become CEO of Tennis Australia from 2005 to 2013.

### **Volunteers**

Since its formation in 1920 the Club has been managed by volunteer members. These are the people that have sacrificed their own time to first establish the Club and then to operate it, help navigate it through challenges and to constantly improve it.

When the initial Committee was formed in May 1920 all they had in Riversdale Park was a patch of land and a dream. They then had to raise money to fund the construction of Tennis courts and the clubhouse!

In our Centenary updates we have documented some of the recent contributions of our Life Members. These included the following:

- Geoff Plummer - construction of the new Clubhouse in 1993.
- Brian Harris - construction of courts 7 and 8 and the deck extension / shade sail.
- Charles Povey - LED light implementation and also obtaining government funding to pay the bulk of the cost.
- Roger Gill - managing the junior convenor role at the same time as being President and working with Council to ensure the best result for the Club from the new bike path.
- Geoff Edwards and Mike McIver - instrumental in the development of competition night tennis at the Club.
- Andrew Bell whose architectural skills can be seen in the design of the Clubhouse, shade sail, trophy cabinet, history wall and new club logo.

Over the 100-year life of the Club there have been hundreds of members that have volunteered their time.

“It would be impossible to enumerate all who have helped through the years. Many have done great things for the Club, and to them we offer our profound thanks.”

These words were written by our former President Dr L.H. Albiston as part of

his report to the Annual General Meeting of the Club in 1944!

On that note we sign off on the Centenary updates!

We hope you enjoyed the story and that it provided some distraction through all the lockdowns and constant news about COVID-19 over the last two years.

We wish you and your families a merry christmas and a happy new year.



Original Clubhouse

### **Key dates in the history of the Club**

12 May 1920	Club formed - Ray Thomas first Club President
16 June 1920	First Club Member event - Picture Night
7 July 1920	Foundation Ball held at Camberwell Toan Hall
25 Dec 1920	Official opening of four courts (2 earthen / 2 asphalt)
1921	First debenture issue to members and community to fund court development and clubhouse construction
2 May 1921	First Club Championships (170 of 180 members participated)
End 1921	Total of six courts available
1936	Court re-development: from asphalt to en-tout-cas
1937	First annual easter tournament (including non-members)
1939	Camberwell Council bans tennis on Sundays
1940	Junior membership introduced for the first time
1941	Camberwell High opened - started hiring courts at Club
28 Feb 1942	World War II - government prohibited manufacture of all sporting goods (including tennis balls) - rationing of tennis balls introduced at the Club
1944	Club debt free for the first time
1944	20 members enlisted in armed forces - World War II
1951	Last annual easter tournament
1957	Clubhouse extension

1960	Ray Thomas (First Club President) passed away
1960	Camberwell Council ban on Sunday Tennis lifted
1969	Bert Tonkin donated trophy for best Pennant player (still awarded to this day)
1972	Family membership category introduced
1982	Night tennis is born - Court lights installed on courts 2 and 3
1987	Courts 1 - 3 rebuilt
1989	Courts 4 - 6 rebuilt
1993	Current clubhouse built
1996	First female President - Pieta Boyles
1999	Court lighting installed on courts 4 to 6
2006	David Close appointed Club coach
2008	Courts 7 and 8 built
2008	Water tanks and water harvesting system installed
2010	Court lighting installed on court 1
2014	Deck extension and shade sail built
2019	Court lighting upgraded to LED

**Membership size**

1920: 120

1945: 92

1970: 151

1995: 352

2020: 487



KERRY MELVILLE

Ranked in top 10 for 12 consecutive years from 1968 to 1979.  
Australian Open singles champion - 1977  
Australian Open doubles champion - 1968 and 1977  
Wimbledon doubles champion - 1978  
East Camberwell Tennis Club - Women's champion - 1962 to 1964





Original 9 - 1970  
Kerry Melville (Reid) - front, second from left



Original 9 - 2021 (US Open Womens final)  
Kerry Melville (Reid) - third from left



Kerry Melville (Reid)  
Australian Tennis Hall of Fame - 2014  
International Tennis Hall of Fame - 2021

XITROTE **LIVES**

Charter Member of World Tennis

Kerry Harris



Kerry Harris

Australian Open - singles - semi-final 1972

Australian Open - doubles - winner 1972



Anne Minter

International career from 1981 to 1992

Highest singles ranking - 23 (1988)

Australian Open singles - quarter final - 1988

Australian Olympic team - 1988

East Camberwell Tennis Club - Women's champion - 1977 to 1980



Elizabeth Minter

International career from 1980 to 1990

Highest singles ranking - 66 (1987)

US Open - Junior girls singles champion - 1983

Australian Open singles - 4th round 1984

Australian Open doubles - quarter final - 1984 (with sister Anne)

East Camberwell Tennis Club - Women's champion - 1981



Steve Wood

International career from 1985 to 1987

Highest singles ranking - 495

CEO - Tennis Australia - from 2005 to 2013

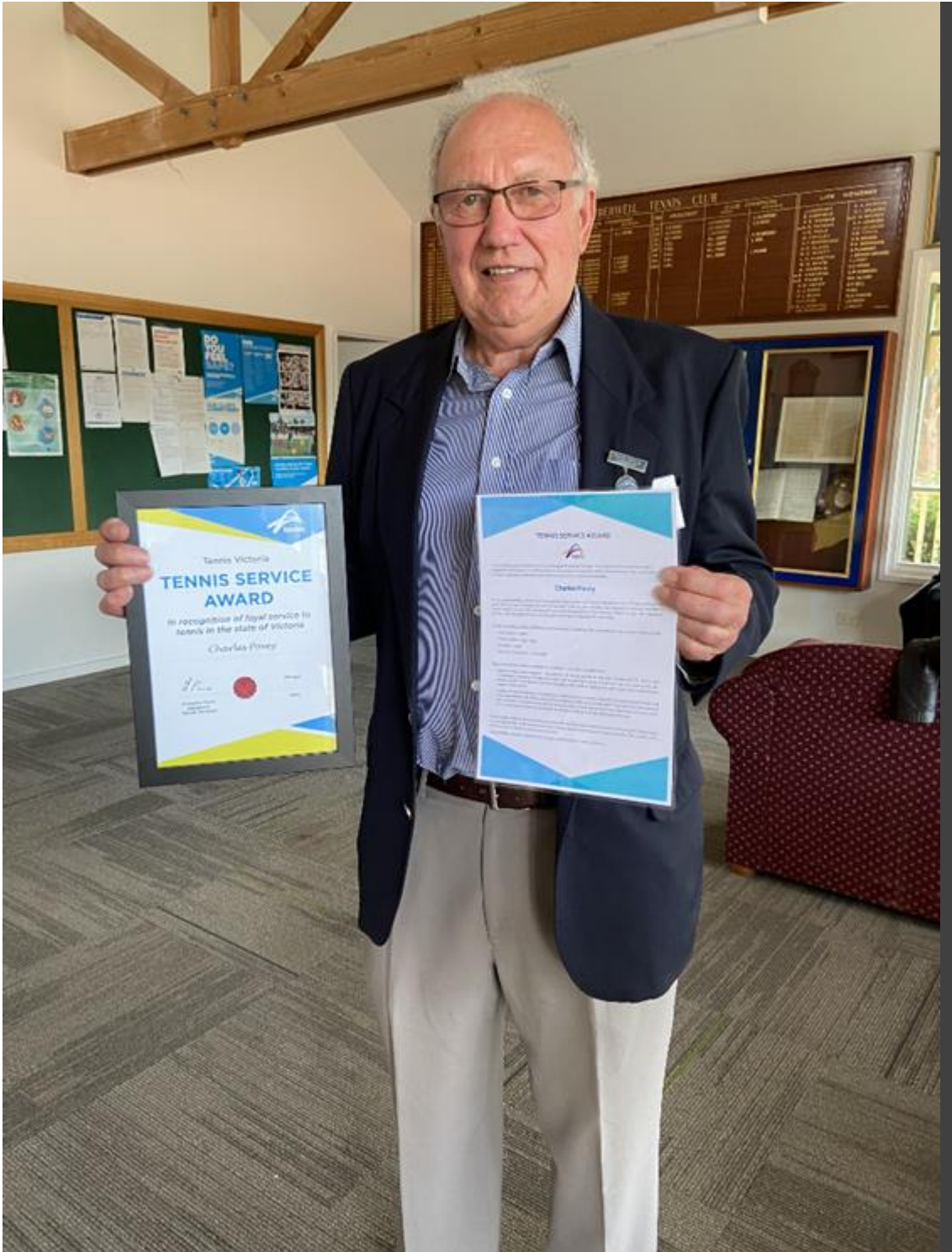
East Camberwell Tennis Club - Men's Champion - 1979 and 1980



Peter Dickinson (right) in 2020 - Oldest current member of the Club  
Joined as a junior in 1946!

Andrew Bell (left) - Life member and secretary of Club - joined in 1979

Cam Dickinson (centre) - former Member and Coach of Club



Charles Povey  
Tennis Victoria - Tennis Service Award - 2020  
East Camberwell Tennis Club member since 1970



Geoff Plummer

Tennis Victoria - Tennis Service Award - 2021  
East Camberwell Tennis Club member since 1980





Brian Harris (right) with David Close and Alicia Molik  
Opening of Courts 7 and 8 - 2008