
East Camberwell Tennis Club - Centenary - First 25 years - Recap

1 message

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Hi all, hope everyone is well and staying safe and healthy.

On the 21 April 2019 we first wrote to members advising of the club's centenary in 2020 and started to share some of the old history of the club.

Now, some 34 updates later, we have made it to 1945. What an interesting first 25 years in the life of the club it has been!

Here are the highlights.

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

Mr Ray Thomas was the first president, there were 120 members, 6 courts and the club colours were royal blue and gold.

In its early years the Club issued interest bearing debentures to members of the

club and local community to help fund construction of courts and the pavilion.

There were numerous debenture issues over the years and our records show that these were only fully repaid in 1944.

The 1920's was characterised by many social events include Dances/Balls and Picture nights. The Dances were covered in the social magazine "Table Talk" and who could forget the 1925 dance and the entry of Miss Celia Horton who wore a grey silk faille frock, finely beaded in silver, and Miss A Simmonds, who wore an apricot charmeuse dress bordered with brown fur, each carrying a posy of African marigolds and blue pansies, representing the clubs colours! Check out a copy of tickets we have from a 1927 Picture Night and the 1927 Cinderella Dance below.

We found out that Council had banned Sunday tennis in 1935 and despite effort by clubs in the region that ban was still in place in 1945.

In 1936 the club redeveloped its courts and replaced the asphalt with porous courts. En-Tout-Cas Courts Pty Ltd completed the work and gave the club 8 years to pay them back!

We also learned that to become a member a person had to play tennis at a certain level and be approved by the Committee.

It was only in 1940 that the constitution was changed to allow juniors to become members of the club.

The club held successful Easter Tournaments which were open to members and the general public from 1937 to 1941 and 1946 to 1951.

Camberwell High was opened in 1941 and from the very start the Club hired courts

to the school for use by the students. The club also started hiring courts to other schools in the area.

In 1942 (during World War 2) the Australia Government banned the production of non-essential goods which included tennis balls. The production capacity was to be re-directed to tasks considered vital for the war effort. The club then had to carefully manage its stock of tennis balls and determined that it could only make it to 31 August 1945 by issuing 8 new balls to members every 3 weeks!

By the end of 1944 the club was debt free for the first time.

During World War 2 the lady members at the club had formed an Auxilliary to help raise funds and knit socks, scarves, mittens and pullovers for the war effort. The Auxilliary raise the equivalent of \$26,000 in today's dollars which was amazing.

By 1944 the club had 92 members (42 ladies and 50 gents) with 20 of these members being in the fighting services during World War 2.

We also shared brief summaries of the people awarded Life Membership to the club during this period and their contribution. This included 5 Presidents.

Phew, that was a busy 25 years!

To round off the first 25 years of the club we thought we would share the Presidents report written by Dr Leslie Albiston for the 1945 AGM. If you recall we previously shared Dr Albiston's report from the 1944 AGM which was quite inspirational. For his last Presidents report Dr Albiston did not disappoint!

In our next update we will start reviewing the period 1946 to 1970. It wont take us 34

updates to finish those 25 years but we have found some great stories and have received reflections from old past members which we are sure you will enjoy.

Until next time.

ANNUAL REPORTS-
1944-1945.

To Members of the East Camberwell Tennis Club.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have much pleasure in submitting to you the presidential report for 1944-45.

This report closes a year which, I trust, will be the most eventful the world will ever know.

As far as the East Camberwell Tennis Club is concerned, the year has been a continuation of the fine effort the club has made to remain, not only in existence, but also to be a firmly established entity within the City of Camberwell.

In spite of the exigencies of war, and the handicap of being a club with limited playing facilities, we have managed, at the end of war, to be on an equal, if not a more solid foundation, than at the beginning of 1939.

For this we must thank the loyalty of those of our members who have had the today and tomorrows of the club ever in their thoughts.

We have a club which can now comfortably continue to future prosperity. There will be more expenses in upkeep, but these should be met and accounted for with comparative ease.

There really is no reason why the East Camberwell Tennis Club should not be one of the most successful organizations of its kind in Melbourne, and, in consideration of the difficulties of the past, the members of today and the future need have no misgivings if their hearts are with the club.

Some few years ago, I agreed, if you so desired to remain as your President until the end of the war.

The time has now arrived for me to vacate this honorable position in favour of one whose contact with you will be much closer than mine in the future.

I have had many years of happy association with you, it has been a source of great pride for me to see the club rise above its problems, and I leave you with a profound wish for your future prosperity.

In spite of the possible criticism of preaching, I would like, as a parting shot, to remind you that the future of Australia and indeed the world is very dependent upon people of your age and type.

I would beg of you to take your part, not only with your club, but also with your community, with a resolve never to forget what we owe to our boys, and never to forget what they have been through to make today and tomorrow a happy possibility.

In conclusion, I would ask you to join together in thoughts of great thanksgiving for the safe return of those we love, and in sincere sympathy for those whose loved ones will not come home.

May good fortune, good tennis, and many years of happy club membership be yours,

L. H. ALBISTON,
President.

20th September, 1945.



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