

## **HISTORY OF THE ST. MARY'S TENNIS CLUB**

The very first meeting was held on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> September, 1956 in the presbytery. At this meeting Mr. R. Johnston (Bob) was elected President, M. Ryan as Secretary and Mr. Turville as Treasurer. Other names that are recorded as being present at this inaugural meeting are G. Walsh, S. Hassett, Mrs. Hickling, M. Bakewell, Mr. Crow, Mr. Towns, B. Dandy, P. Arundell, D. Orr, Mrs. Stanhope, B. Meagher, B. Burgh. It is interesting to note that 2 names for the Club were voted on at this meeting. St. Mary's won by the narrowest of margins to Riverside, 12 to 11. So began the life of St. Mary's Tennis Club.

Fr. Ashe kindly gave the Club an area of 180' x 124' to construct tennis courts. In the meantime matches were played on courts belonging to Mrs. Friend. Early meetings were held at St. Francis Xaviers and then at the homes of members. Over the next few years members put in plenty of manpower in clearing, grading, leveling and marking the boundaries for the courts and surrounding area. The erection of a 30' x 10' pavilion with fencing, posts and drainage, supplying court lines and nets were attended to on an ongoing basis. Numerous monthly dances, penny nights and film nights were held to raise funds and with a loan of £1000 from Fr. Ashe two en-tout-cas courts were officially opened by Fr. Hollis (a Jesuit Priest from Loyola) on 1<sup>st</sup> July, 1962. Court Captains were then required to ensure that all members had equal court time. Their jobs were to open the courts and collect fees. It is noted that children under 12 had use of the courts on Saturday mornings and children over 12 were to use them on Sundays.

In 1963 the Club entered 2 teams in the H.D.T.A. Saturday Mixed Winter competition. We were given Sections 5 & 7. So began our strong involvement with competition tennis. Late in 1964 power was connected to the pavilion. In the summer of 1966 the Club entered 1 ladies team in the Tuesday midweek comp. together with 1 boy and 1 girl team in the Saturday Junior comp. It was then necessary for the Club to introduce Selection Committees to select members for the relevant competitions. In no time at all we had teams playing H.D.T.A. Tuesday and Thursday Ladies, Saturday Mixed, H.D.J.T.A. Juniors (which later changed to NEJTA) and D.V.T.A. Thursday Ladies. As the Club continued to grow so did our need for an extra court. In 1970 permission was given for the Club to take over the asphalt basketball area at the end of court 2 and convert it to another en-tout-cas court. In 1971 the Club acquired the school's lunch room building and had it moved to replace the pavilion. By the end of the 1970's we had up to 10 teams in each of our Juniors, Tuesday Ladies and Saturday Mixed. The club had been using Dr. Cordonier's court which he kindly offered, as well as hiring courts at Mr. Paiges in Watsonia, Watsonia Tech. School and at times other clubs in the area. We needed to expand.

In 1980 after lengthy discussions with the Shire of Diamond Valley, four en-tout-cas courts were constructed in the area known as 'Kalparrin Gardens' in Yando Street. In July 1982 the clubroom constructed at Kalparrin was officially opened. During the 80's night tennis became popular and preparations were made to place lights at Kalparrin Courts. On the 4<sup>th</sup> July, 1990 two courts were lit and in July 1992 the remaining two courts were lit. As the Kalparrin Clubroom had showers, we were able to enter teams into V.T.A. Pennant, and having lights night teams were entered into N.E.N.T.A. Mens, Ladies and Mixed competitions.

Over the years the courts and clubrooms have needed ongoing maintenance, but in 2003 the clubroom at the Church courts was deemed unsafe by the Banyule Council. The Church courts were also in need of re-surfacing again. After lengthy negotiations between the Parish, School and Tennis Club an agreement was reached to surface the Church Courts with synthetic grass and erect a new clubroom for the use of all parish groups. This was completed in March 2005.

Over the years there have been many members who have contributed to the success of the tennis club. In particular, we thank the members listed below who made a commitment to be the President of the club and those that have been rewarded by the club with Life Membership.

**PRESIDENT**

1956-57 Robert Johnston  
 1960-61 Graham Purnell  
 1961-64 Stan Hassett  
 1964-73 Peter Hedger  
 1973-81 Owen Doyle  
 1981-84 Pat Heagerty  
 1984-85 Judy Newell  
 1985-86 Anne Elder  
 1986-90 Mary Simpson  
 1990-94 Ewen McDonald  
 1994-99 David Johnston  
 1999-02 Jean Branagan  
 2002-05 Lina Charles  
 2005-10 Helen Pendry  
 2011 - Peter Marcato

**LIFE MEMBERSHIP**

1977 Stan Hassett  
 Tess Rayner  
 Pat Cox  
 June Miller  
 Peter Hedger  
 Pat Heagerty  
 1981 Owen Doyle  
 Terry Evans  
 1983 Peter Dordevic  
 1987 Judy Newell  
 1990 Mary Simpson  
 Ewen McDonald  
 1991 Patricia Beare  
 Sylvia Mason  
 1992 Myra Gaywood  
 2010 Grace Ross  
 David Johnston  
 2011 Peter Clifford  
 Tony Martinelli  
 2012 Peter Cantwell  
 2014 John Rayner  
 2016 Edith Sutherland