

A History of Harrow Lawn Tennis Club

Based on *Harrow Lawn Tennis Club: a brief history, 1880-2000*
by Alastair Lack¹. Editor of this revision²: Michael Hammond.

April 1, 2011

¹President HLTC (1995-2000)

²Acknowledgments: Carole Bellringer, Chairperson; Wendy Driver, President (2009-); Patti Axten, Hon. Secretary (1999-2009); Enid Silverstone, Hon. Secretary (2009-); Jean Keen; and Carolyn Leder, Curator of Harrow School's Old Speech Room Gallery.

Origins

The first record of the Harrow LTC's existence is in the Harrow Gazette of July 17, 1880:

HARROW LAWN TENNIS CLUB.—A double-handed tournament (ladies and gentlemen) will be held on the club ground next Saturday, the 24th inst. Two racquets will be given as prizes.

Nobody now knows to whom the two racquets went, but what is known is that the club was almost certainly founded in 1880, three years after the first championships at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club.

Archives

The Harrow Gazette¹ (1d. in 1880, 4 pages) is an invaluable record of club matches and events as well as an evocative history of life in Harrow. Depending on the efforts of the club's secretary to keep the newspaper informed, club activities are well-documented. Advertisements too make evident the club's existence. By September 1880 two local outfitters, FS Winkley and WL Stevens, are advertising in the Gazette for tennis coats, caps, sashes and ribbons in club colours. The colours go unrecorded. Three years earlier, advertisements for tennis racquets, nets and poles for sale had appeared, but no mention had been made of any local tennis club.

Another valuable resource to the local historian is that of the minutes of the club's various meetings. The club enjoys its meetings. Minutes of committee date from 1893, AGM minutes from the first in 1898. Someone in a fit of carelessness reputedly threw-out the first book of minutes (1880-1893)—it is not known who. The minutes that survive, though, are revealing. They are happy and sad. They record barbecues and Pimm's parties, and expulsions and obituaries. As the Timeline [section] makes clear, they are, unsurprisingly, a better record of financial and constitutional matters than of tournaments and match results. Leitmotifs include the balance of the books, the membership (worries usually about its decline), the lease, the courts, the move towards greater democracy for members and the continual adjustment of the rules.

A modern member will wonder at the time spent by the club and its committee on scrutinising the rulebook. The deliberations of the 1928 AGM are representative of thousands more, "Boys and girls over sixteen may play during recognized school holidays upon the introduction of a member at five shillings per week. This subscription entitles them to play at all times with or without the member introduction." Similarly representative, a 2008

¹Copies of the Harrow Gazette (1855-1921) may be found in the British Library Newspaper Collection and on microfilm in the Harrow Civic Centre Library.

committee agrees a Revised Etiquette: point 18 directs that underarm serves be allowed, but observes that it is considered good manners to warn one's opponent. A Supplementary Etiquette concerns league and other matches. In it, point 8 directs that spectators should neither enter into court disputes nor show disproportionate partisanship.

Courts

Four addresses have been home to the club: they are West Acre (1880-1926), The King's Head (1926-1961), Peterborough Hill (1962-1981) and Harrow School² (1981-).

West Acre, in the grounds of the Harrow School house, is as far as can be reasonably ascertained, the club's first home. The first lease there, with Mr J Stogdon, Housemaster of West Acre, expires in 1896. Thereafter the club and Mr Stogdon agree terms. He dies in 1919, but his wife continues to lease the courts until 1926, when she terminates the agreement, and Harrow moves to ground owned by The King's Head. There, the club remains until 1961 when the land is sold for property development³. The club then moves to the foot of Peterborough Hill into premises owned by Harrow School, and in 1962 a lease is agreed. The arrangement is ended in 1981, when the imminent expiry of the lease⁴, the destruction of the clubhouse and the club's difficult financial position lead to a search for new premises. Later the same year, the School agrees an annual lease for the use of the courts and the Boyer Webb Pavilion. The agreement continues today. And on October 2, 2004, the club celebrates the inauguration of twelve acrylic courts with an exhibition match by club coaches. The moustachioed gentlemen players with their wooden rackets, the ball girls and the umpire all wear traditional Victorian dress to echo the club's early years. The club hires for the occasion a ball machine and a speed gun. They are well worth the expense.

²A multi-million-pound redevelopment of the Harrow School playing fields began on both sides of the Hill in 2002. By 2005 much of the work was done: a Tartan™ athletics track had replaced the School's cinder oval, and a showcase rugby/soccer pitch called Sunley Field had been laid at the centre of the new track. The School drill square and five tennis courts used to be where Sunley Field now is, but by 2005 the square had moved to the foot of Garlands Lane, and the courts moved also. Twelve new acrylic courts had replaced the School's old all-weather ones and the new courts named the Beckwith Courts after brothers Peter Beckwith OBE (Elmfield 1958) and Sir John Beckwith CBE (Druries 1960), who jointly funded them.

³Leigh Court now stands where The King's Head once did.

⁴The lease in 1981 was with Heathfield School. Heathfield had bought the land from Harrow School in the interim.

Finances

Despite ever-increasing expenses, the club has always tried to minimize its members' subscriptions. Some dates and figures are informative. In 1898 year subscriptions are one guinea for gentlemen and 15 shillings for ladies. The annual subscription for ladies is increased in 1905 to one guinea. This increase brings subscriptions into line with that of the gentlemen. Subscriptions increase slowly year on year. By 1928 members each pay £2-10s. Sixteen years later, the Treasurer takes the bold decision to double the fees for anyone who fails to pay by February 1; the club, with very few members at the time, is in discussions over closure. By 1948 individuals each pay £2-15s, by 1967 this figure is four guineas, and by 2009 it is £113. Subscriptions must increase if the club is to meet its financial obligations.

The financial terms of the club's various leases have always caused much discussion and some concern. In 1900 Mr Stogdon reduces the rent to £15 per annum (from what figure is unrecorded) in response to fears that the club can continue only if the rent at West Acre is reduced. The first of several financial crises is averted. In 1926 the AGM approves a scheme to acquire at a rent of £75 per annum a new ground at The King's Head, there to provide two hard courts and to put in order two grass ones. The following year's AGM decide that the grass courts be made into two more hard courts. In 1962 the club agrees with Harrow School a £25 per annum, twenty-one-year lease on the courts at the foot of Peterborough Hill. Betty Siddons, a member of the club, offers £1,000 towards the cost of a clubhouse and new courts. Without this gift, it is likely that the club would have disbanded. In 1981 the club moves for the last time. It agrees to pay the School £1,000 per annum or £15 per member whichever is greater⁵.

Ground Maintenance

A recurring theme of AGMs and committee meetings is the need for ground maintenance.

The club in its West Acre days periodically allocates money to spread ashes on the courts, to buy balls and to provide after-match baths when they are wanted. In 1893 balls are escaping beneath the wire netting, and in 1895 the clubroom is deemed by members to be a disgrace. In 1919 the club allocates up to £100 to renovate the West Acre courts after the difficult days of the Great War. The club similarly repairs The King's Head courts after World War II.

The club has oftentimes employed a groundsman, not always with happy results. In 1897 minutes record that Harper is not a success. Later, he is sacked. Subsequent groundsmen come and go and their wages fluctuate over

⁵The lease with Harrow School remained unsigned until 1983.

the years—thus, Smith, in 1922, has his wages reduced and the following year resigns owing to ill health.

Money is tight. For members to do voluntary work is an almost annual need, as is the periodic purchase of caustic soda to rid the courts of moss. The watering system at The King's Head requires an overhaul in 1958, and the pond by No. 1 Court is "full and malodorous."

Faulty sprinklers and stagnant ponds are trivialities, but the events of 1979 are disastrous: vandals burn-down the clubhouse, and within two years the club moves to new premises.

Membership

The histories of club and School overlap. The club was founded by, among others, a School Housemaster, Mr Stogdon, and employees of the School have oftentimes been members of the club. As long ago as 1958, for example, Harrow schoolmistress Alison Walker was Juniors' Captain. In Mr Stogdon's day, School and club were independent of each other; today they are not. The club has its president in the employ of the School and has on its committee a school liaison officer. What is more, staff and their families have privileged rates; the club is, after all, on School land.

In any given year, new members are few and resignations usual. There are nineteen resignations in 1924 for instance. A representative year is 1905, when minutes omit to record elections and resignations but show that membership is limited to seventy-five. Years later, in 1977, membership has increased only slightly to thirty-six families and seventy-eight individuals.

Over the years, membership has been small by many clubs' standards, and worried club committees often try to increase membership. In one big effort, the 1969 committee distributes fifteen-hundred leaflets to the Hill and to local independent schools. The leaflets extol the benefits of the club, benefits that include a child's sandpit and swing.

The club formally elected its members, and playing-in was standard practice. Carole Bellringer, who is now the club Chairperson and Child Protection Officer, was herself played-in by members of the 1975 ladies' team. Playing-in was no formality either, and candidates have been rejected. The committee of 1923, for example, refuses membership to a Miss Harries and gives no reasons for its decision. Playing-in ceases soon after 1979, and in the 1980s membership increases significantly.

In 2008 the LTA introduces individual British Tennis Membership. A rules change requires that every club member have individual BTM affiliation to take part in the ballot for Wimbledon tickets. The ballot takes place at the club's AGM, which has attendance increased from previous years. To ensure that Harrow secures as many tickets as possible, the club enrolls all of its members who are not already registered. Membership is free to tennis

club members until at least 2012.

Club minutes records some oddities with little by way of explanation, not least the debarring of Harrow schoolboys during term in 1927 and the curious admission of Fellows of Oxford and Cambridge in 1938.

General Meetings

As with any club, the committee and the membership have had their differences. In 1894 a general meeting is proposed to air members' grievances, and in 1896 a disgruntled membership accuses the committee of being self-elected.

The first AGM takes place "on the courts" in March 1898 with an election of the committee and a presentation of the treasurer's report. In subsequent years, the AGM takes place at various venues: in private homes, in the clubroom at West Acre, at the Public Halls⁶ on the Hill, in the clubhouse on Peterborough Hill and in the Boyer Webb Pavilion.

No AGM takes place in the 1917/18 season, and in 1943, 1944 and 1945 the few members present discuss whether the club ought to continue. Only five persons are present in 1943.

Committees and AGMs do much administrative work, which includes subscriptions, rule changes, revisions of playing hours and efforts to widen club horizons. A typical AGM from the 1890s to the 1990s has about fourteen or fifteen attendees. Recent AGMs have attracted over forty.

Matches and Tournaments

With so many meetings (committee meetings, sub-committee meetings, annual general meetings, extraordinary meetings) it is a wonder that for some any tennis is played at all. But from the pages of the Harrow Gazette, it can be seen that the club is strong in its early days. In 1883 the strength and fame of the gentlemen's first pair, Mr Ruault and Major Tulloch, is such that Maida Vale brings to the annual fixture "four gentlemen who all had won public tournaments." The club plays matches against Cumberland, Hampstead, Pinner, Northwood, Eastcote and others. In 1894 Harrow takes on the All England Club and loses by only six sets to four.

From the 1890s, match reports become infrequent. They are replaced by reports that matches have been cancelled owing to difficulties in mustering teams.

Difficulties aside, matches continue in an irregular fashion. In 1904 Mrs Paine organises mid-week games against local clubs. Pinner and Eastcote are most often the opposition. In 1968 Carolyn Keen instigates a

⁶The restaurant bar Café Café, 51 High St., is now on the site of the old Public Halls.

programme of coaching, and in 1970 Harrow joins the Middlesex League. In 1997 four of five teams gain promotion, and the club wins the Kenton Winter Mixed-Doubles League. Subsequently, several more leagues are won, and by 2007 Harrow has in the Middlesex League five gentlemen's and five ladies' teams as well as teams in other floodlit, ladies' and mixed leagues.

League matches are never at the expense of domestic tournaments, which have ranged from the first record of a tournament in 1880, to American tournaments, to juniors' tournaments, to present-day social tennis get-togethers.

Prizes and club days do much for morale. In 1953 Mr and Mrs Michell present a cup in their name to the winner of an American tournament, and in 1955 Mr and Mrs White award a cup to the champion of the gentlemen's singles. These and the Ryan and Pettit cups are contested up to the 1980s.

Harrow has often held club days and ladies' days. They have often been on weekdays as well as weekends. In 1948 club days are Tuesdays (2 p.m.) and Wednesdays (6 p.m.). In 1955 ladies' day changes from a Wednesday to a Tuesday after the committee observes that "tennis clashes with Ducker⁷." Open days have recently been held on Saturdays.

Club Spirit

The first AGM (1898) endeavours "to put a little more life into the club," and over the years, inventive members have lots of ideas on how best to do so. In 1900 Mrs Kenyon is asked to provide teas for those members living far from the courts. And in the club's first year, two "subscription" dances take place. Dances again take place in 1929, then dwindle and stop, and restart in 1954. They are usually a great success. In 1965 members are offered tournaments, dances and bridge evenings. Sporadic advertising campaigns increase membership, as in the 1969 campaign when fifteen-hundred leaflets are distributed on the Hill.

Harrow has survived much. The most difficult periods for the club have been the two world wars, the loss of The King's Head lease, and the search for new premises on Peterborough Hill and the subsequent construction of new courts and a clubhouse. In these times, members have toiled to preserve the club. The later move to the Harrow School courts is a time of exertion and anxiety also.

Notable Members

The list of members to have given valuable service is a long one. The first President appears to have been JT Horley. The grass court at his home in Roxborough Park is used for matches in the 1880s. When it is too wet to

⁷Ducker, now derelict, is the old Harrow School bathing place. It was open to the public in the early 20th century.

play on the grass, matches take place instead on the three cinder courts at West Acre.

Early stalwarts on the committee include Mr Stogdon, Housemaster of West Acre, and long-serving Secretary Dr Williams. Mrs Leaf, Tony Beresford, Steven Holloway and Bernard Simpson all hold office. Others include Dr Pennefather, Treasurer in the first decade of the 20th century and later-times, President; HJ Wasbrough, Secretary in the 1920s; and GFS Davis, who is instrumental in keeping alive the club during World War II and who in 1944 is President, Secretary and Treasurer. Andrew Duncan and PK White hold many posts in the 1950s and '60s. And there are many more. But worthy of special recognition is Miss HL Eddis. Miss Eddis joins the club in 1904, becomes a committee member in 1919 and is President from 1961 to 1964. For forty-five years, she is on the committee; for sixty-nine years, she is a member of the club.

Archives chronicle committee members more often than they do players, but several players stand out. Often referenced are Major Tulloch, the Messrs Ruault, Templer, Charles, Holmes and the Misses Ruault, Charles, Capper and Kinloch. Whether any of them have played at the All England Club as well as at Harrow is not known, but Mr and Mrs Bobby Michell—he is Harrow LTC President in the '50s—are known to have played at Wimbledon. Others surely have done so as well, particularly in the early days of both clubs.

Deserving of mention even though he never played tennis at Harrow is Spencer Gore. Spencer Walter Gore⁸ (1850-1906) is educated at Harrow School, where he excels at cricket and captains the School team. He is a schoolboy at Harrow before it has tennis courts⁹. In 1877 he becomes the first ever Wimbledon Gentlemen's Singles champion. An inscription¹⁰ on a bench that overlooks Harrow's tennis courts honours him and his achievement.

Harrow Lawn Tennis Club's most noteworthy player is Miss B Bingley. In 1885 Miss Bingley is club ladies' singles champion, the same year that she is Wimbledon ladies' singles runner-up, having been defeated by Miss M Watson. Blanche Bingley must, by any estimation, be Harrow's greatest

⁸Spencer Walter Gore had a son Spencer Frederick Gore (1878-1914), who also was educated at Harrow and later became the first president of the Camden Town Group of Post-Impressionist painters. His Landscape c.1908-9 (oil on canvas, 50.6 x 61 cm) hangs in Harrow School's Old Speech Room Gallery. He died from pneumonia aged only thirty-six. His son Frederick Gore RA (1913-2009) was a distinguished painter also.

⁹Harrow School had no tennis courts in the 1860s. It did have Eton Fives, racquets and squash courts. An Etonian named EM Young, who came to Harrow as a Master in 1863, introduced Eton Fives to Harrow. Today the School has nine Fives courts. Racquets is a modified version of Fives, and squash is a modified version of racquets.

¹⁰In Honour of / SPENCER GORE / The first Wimbledon Men's Singles Champion, 19 July 1877 / Mr Bradby's House, 1863³-1869² / Kindly donated by Stephen Pollock-Hill, The Grove 1961³ (superscripts denote summer and autumn terms at Harrow).

player for Mrs GW Hillyard née Bingley is subsequently six-time Wimbledon champion¹¹ (1886, 1889, 1894, 1897, 1899 and 1900) and runner-up a further seven times. The official history of Wimbledon observes that there have been greater players than Mrs Hillyard but none with so stalwart a performance at Wimbledon.

Timeline

1880: The first reference to Harrow LTC is in the Harrow Gazette (July 17, 1880). Two subscription dances take place at the Public Halls on December 27 and January 18, 1881. “Inclement weather” causes two members of the gentlemen’s team to fail to turn up against Pinner. By September 18, FS Winkley (Tailor, Hosier and Hatter) of High Street, Harrow, and WL Stevens (also Tailor, Hosier and Hatter) on the Hill advertise coats, caps, sashes and ribbons in Harrow colours. The Harrow Gazette includes advertisements from 1877 for racquets, nets and poles for sale.

1881: Harrow LTC plays Stanmore in a friendly match. Representing the club are Major Tulloch, Messrs Ruault, Templer, Charles, Holmes and Misses Ruault, Charles, Capper and Kinloch. Other matches are played against Pinner, West Middlesex, Elstree and Maida Vale. Club finals take place on July 30 at “the club ground.” Mr Templer defeats Mr Ruault to become the first recorded Gentlemen’s Singles champion.

1882: The first known fixture is played on JT Horley’s grass court at his home in Roxborough Park. When it is wet, matches take place instead on the “club cinder courts.” Fixtures with Nomads, Sunbury and Vandals are arranged. “Refreshments of a light character” are provided for the club finals.

1883: The fame of Mr Ruault and Major Tulloch, the Harrow Gentlemen’s first pair, is such that Maida Vale brings to the annual fixture “four gentlemen who all had won public tournaments.”

1884: Fixtures include Worcester Park, Hampstead and The Anonyms.

1885: Miss Blanche Bingley is club ladies’ champion and Wimbledon ladies’ runner-up. Miss Bingley wins Wimbledon in 1886 and again as Mrs Hillyard in 1889, 1894, 1897, 1899 and 1900. ET Maitland Jones takes over as Secretary from J Ruault. Mr Ruault had been Secretary since the club’s foundation. Matches take place against the Middle Temple and Hyde Park clubs.

1886: A Fixture with Cambridge University Past and Present is arranged.

1888: The club plays a match on “the recreation ground.”

1889: The club is recorded as the *Harrow Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club*, the first, and it seems the last, mention of *Croquet* in the club’s official name.

1891: Club fixtures comprise three gentlemen’s matches, one ladies’ match

¹¹<http://www.wimbledon.com/heritage/history/roll-of-honour/ladies-singles>

and three mixed matches. Opponents include Stanmore, Burgess Hill and The Inner Temple.

1893: By May 20, the club has recorded four consecutive victories. The first recorded committee meeting takes place on March 4 at Mr Stogdon's house in West Acre. Present are Dr Williams (Hon. Sec.) and Messrs Harvey, Horley (President) and Sandworth. The Secretary asks permission to buy new wire netting to prevent balls escaping from the courts. Club competitions are played in one week in June, not from May to October, as had been the case.

1894: The club plays an All England team, and loses by only six sets to four. Members propose a general meeting to air their complaints.

1895: The Chairman calls attention to the poor state of the clubroom at West Acre. A new roller for the courts is acquired.

1896: The club agrees an annual tenancy at West Acre with the owner, Mr Stogdon.

1897: There is trouble with Harper, the groundsman, who is "not a great success in many ways, being incapable of performing the required duties."

1898: The first AGM is held in March. Eleven members are present. They decide that a committee is to be elected and is to comprise a President, a Secretary, a Treasurer and nine other members, three of the twelve to retire each year. In 1898, annual subscriptions are 1 guinea for gentlemen, 15 shillings for ladies and 3 guineas for families. The committee agrees in December to spread ashes on No. 1 Court at a cost of £7.

1900: The committee fears that the club can continue only if the rent at West Acre is reduced to £15 per annum. The owner, Mr Stogdon, agrees and crisis averted, the club continues.

1901: The AGM is held at the Public Halls in the High Street.

1902: The committee decides to rent "the whole cottage" at 3 shillings per week. The cottage, used for changing, is in the West Acre garden.

1904: No tournament is held, but three courts are in use. Nos. 1 and 3 Courts are gravel (a precursor of modern shale); No. 2 Court is ash.

1905: Membership is limited to seventy-five players, and the limit is reached. The subscription for ladies is increased to 1 guinea to bring it into line with that of the gentlemen.

1906: The club plays Cumberland Club and Northwood Club.

1907: Mrs Kenyon arranges American tournaments i.e., handicap tournaments on Tuesday afternoons.

1910: A new garden hose is bought, and benches are repaired and repainted.

1914: The committee comprises Mr J Stogdon (President), Miss HL Ed-dis (Hon. Sec.) and Miss Holme (Hon. Treas.). Annual subscriptions are 1 guinea for individuals and 3 guineas for families.

1915-1918: Little activity is recorded during the Great War. There are no minutes of AGMs for 1917 and 1918. Eight members only attend the 1916 meeting. In 1915, the AGM decrees that any member who resigns during

the war may be re-admitted without an entrance fee.

1919: Business resumes after the war. The committee, with GFS Davis as Secretary and HL Eddis as Treasurer, is authorised to spend a sum not exceeding £100 on the maintenance and repair of the premises at West Acre.

1920: After the death of Mr Stogdon in 1919, Mr Davis tries to obtain for the club a five-year lease at West Acre. The widow of Mr Stogdon promises to consider the matter.

1923: The *vetting system* persists. A Miss Harries is refused membership.

1924: There are nineteen resignations—a heavy year. The Secretary and the Treasurer are requested to invest such a sum as they think fit into National Savings Certificates.

1925: “The difficulty in raising teams, [an] absence of facilities, and [an] undesirability of occupying the courts on Saturdays” result in no matches being played.

1926: The termination of its tenancy at West Acre imminent, the club discusses the prospective new ground at The King’s Head. The aim of the AGM, in Roxeth Hall, is to procure two hard and two grass courts at a rent of £75 per annum. The club moves to The King’s Head.

1927: The AGM decides that the two grass courts be made into hard courts. The committee rules to debar any Harrow schoolboy from playing during term.

1928: The annual subscription for individual members is £2-10s.

1929: Twenty-five new members are elected. They include Ove Arup.

1936: A lack of interest means that gentlemen’s and ladies’ matches are dropped. En Tout Cas conducts work on The King’s Head courts.

1937: An objection to Sunday-morning matches is overruled.

1938: The club admits Fellows of Oxford and Cambridge. The Fellows must pay visitors’ fees. To water the courts the club considers the British Overhead Irrigation Co. Ltd.

1940: The AGM adopts “Rule 13: during the continuance of the war, persons temporarily resident in Harrow may become temporary members.”

1941: Three hundredweight of caustic soda is bought to eliminate moss on the courts. Members start voluntary work on Saturday, March 2.

1943: GFS Davis, the Chairman, and only four others attend the AGM. They discuss the club’s future—as they do again in 1944 and 1945—and decide to continue. They co-opt a master from Malvern College onto the committee. Malvern share Harrow School premises during World War II.

1944: The AGM decides to double subsequent subscriptions for members that fail to pay their subscriptions by February 1. GFS Davis is President, Secretary and Treasurer.

1945: After discussion at the AGM, it is decided that the club shall continue.

1948: Club days are Tuesdays (2 p.m.) and Wednesdays (6 p.m.). There are two gentlemen’s, two ladies’ and two mixed matches. Fixtures include

Northwood and Hatch End.

1950: After forty years of service, Dr Pennefather is elected an honorary member. He has been “many times” Secretary and Treasurer.

1952: Famous people at the AGM include Andrew Duncan, Tony Beresford and John Leaf.

1953: Mr and Mrs Michell present a challenge-cup trophy to the winners of an American tournament. The club discusses its tenancy. The aim is to extend the lease to either seven or fourteen years at a rent not to exceed £100.

1955: Mr and Mrs White present a challenge-cup trophy to the winner of the gentlemen’s singles competition. Ladies’ day (a Wednesday) “coincides with Ducker.” Ladies’ day is changed to a Tuesday. Matches are played against Old Harrovians, Pinner and Northwood.

1956: In July, members complain that the hut at The King’s Head is in “a disgusting state.”

1957: Two long-serving members are elected to honorary membership: Mr White and Mr Wasbrough.

1958: Miss Alison Walker undertakes the duties of Juniors’ Captain. The watering system is overhauled at a cost of £90. The groundsman complains bitterly in writing that the adjoining nursery’s cultivator is throwing stones over the bank by the courts. In October, the committee discusses the plan of The King’s Head to redevelop the tennis courts and the adjacent nursery garden.

1959: The committee debates whether to buy the freehold on The King’s Head site or to move elsewhere on the Hill. The committee considers Bowden House, Orley Farm School, the British European Airways courts in Shaftesbury Avenue, Harrow Cricket Club and the home in South Hill Avenue of Mrs Leaf. The pond by Court No. 1 is “full and malodorous.”

1961: Mr Michell, President, and Dr James, Headmaster of Harrow School, negotiate the proposed construction of three courts at the bottom of Peterborough Hill. The estimated cost of red all-weather courts is £1,759. In February, The King’s Head pays the club £1,500 compensation. The club determines to carry on, even if it must do so in a dormant state.

1962: In August, a twenty-one-year lease between Club and School is agreed at £25 per annum. Messrs Keen, Miller, Ryan and Duncan are appointed trustees to hold the lease. Betty Siddons offers £1,000 towards the cost of a clubhouse and new courts on Peterborough Hill. Without this gift, it is likely that Harrow LTC would have disbanded. In playing terms, the club is dormant.

1963: There is much work and some delay in constructing the clubhouse and three courts.

1964: Work parties help with construction. Play begins.

1965: Bridge evenings in the clubhouse are introduced.

1967: The club comprises seventy-eight adults, thirty-six juniors, ten non-

playing members, six students and six honorary members—in total, one-hundred-and-thirty-six members.

1968: The committee determines to increase membership by displaying posters in libraries and writing to local independent schools. The only match is against Harrow Masters and their wives. Carolyn Keen instigates a successful programme of coaching.

1969: To increase membership, the club distributes fifteen-hundred leaflets to the Hill and to local independent schools. A sub-committee forms to arrange inter-club matches.

1970: Harrow LTC joins the Middlesex League. The gentlemen finish sixth in Division 5, and the ladies, seventh in Division 3. The club participates for the first time in the ballot for Wimbledon tickets.

1973: The Treasurer, Steven Holloway, who reports in absentia, informs the AGM that for the previous year, income had been down.

1974: The AGM announces the death of Miss Eddis. Miss Eddis had joined the club in 1904, had become a committee member in 1919 and had been President from 1961 to 1964. For forty-five years, she had been on the committee; for sixty-nine years, she had been a member of the club. The club officials are Michael Wheeler (President), Tony Beresford (Vice-President), Bernard Simpson (Hon. Sec.) and Steven Holloway (Hon. Treas.).

1976: Coaching films are a success. Members compete for three cups: the Michell, the White and the Ryan and do so until the 1980s.

1977: The club advertises itself. It boasts gentlemen's and ladies' teams, social tournaments, three all-weather courts, and a child's sand pit and swing.

1978: The club discusses its difficult financial position and the expiry of the Peterborough Hill lease. The club determines to find other premises on the Hill, preferably at Harrow School.

1979: Vandals burn-down the clubhouse. Its loss exacerbates the problems of small membership and inadequate funds.

1980: On June 21, the club celebrates its centenary with a party at the home of Jean Keen. The club and Harrow School negotiate use of the School courts and the Boyer Webb Pavilion. Hugh Lumb is the club coach.

1981: Club and School agree a lease for the use of the School courts at £1,000 per annum or £15 per member whichever is the greater.

1984: The club worries over the state of the School courts.

1985: Annual subscriptions are £16.50 for full members, £33 for families and £5.50 for juniors.

1986: The courts are resurfaced. The club considers introducing bar facilities at the Boyer Webb Pavilion.

1989: The club has eighty gentlemen, eighty ladies and forty-five juniors.

1991: An annual club dinner is introduced (or possibly reintroduced). This year it is at La Giralda in Pinner.

1992: Pete Rutland takes over as coach from Fraser Wilson. The Gentlemen's Team is in Division 7 and the Ladies' Team is in Division 2 of the

Middlesex NW League.

1994: The club enters two gentlemen's and two ladies' teams in the Middlesex NW League.

1995: A club logo is designed; branded clothing is introduced. The Ladies' 1st Team wins the Kenton Winter Floodlit League.

1996: The first quiz night is held. It is at Orley Farm School, and the question master is Roger Fraiss.

1997: Four of the five teams in the Middlesex NW League gain promotion. The committee organizes more social events than ever. They include tournaments, dinners, quiz nights and President's Pimm's.

1998: The Club and School discuss the lease in the light of School plans to expand the sports facilities.

1999: Winter matches burgeon: nine teams contest more than forty matches. Paul Hopkins replaces Pete Rutland as coach.

2000: To celebrate the Millennium, the club plants a Sweet Chestnut Tree and produces a photographic record of the year. The club builds a website: <http://www.hltc.net/>. The committee comprises Alastair Lack (President), Roger Fraiss (Vice-President), Patti Axten (Hon. Sec.), Peter Detre (Hon. Treas.) and Carole Bellringer (Chairperson).

2001: Alastair Lack awards a cup in his name to Christopher Walker, the first winner of the juniors' tournament. Cliff Gray takes over as coach from Paul Hopkins. John Graham is Cliff's assistant.

2003: TC Blau-Weiß Kassel e.V.¹² visits Harrow LTC. The event (Jul 24-Jul 27) is inspired by club member John Glass, who has ties with the German town of Kassel. The two clubs enjoy each other's competition and friendship, and alternate visits in following years. The ladies' doubles cup has little room left to engrave new names; a new one is purchased.

2004: The committee determines that for summer fixtures ladies will provide homemade sandwiches and cakes; gentlemen may have pizza delivered. Harrow LTC visits TC Blau-Weiß (Jul 15-Jul 18). Work commences on the new courts. The club plays on temporary Astroturf™ courts between March and October. League matches are played away from home. On October 2, the club celebrates the inauguration of twelve acrylic courts with an exhibition match by club coaches.

2005: To attract up-and-coming players the club abandons its *tennis whites* rule, but decrees that "recognizable tennis wear should be worn . . . no beachwear." As part of the club's 125th anniversary celebrations, Teresa and Graham Dunbar hold the club Christmas party at Bradbys.

2006: The gentlemen's singles, ladies' singles and gentlemen's doubles cups are re-silvered.

2007: Pete Rutland returns to coach the club. Umpire's chairs are acquired. Membership exceeds four-hundred, and a waiting list is introduced.

¹²<http://www.tc-blau-weiss-kassel.de/>

The Gentlemen's Team wins the Middlesex Cup for the first and only time. The club enters into the Middlesex NW League five gentlemen's and five ladies' teams. The Ladies' 1st Team, captained by Vivien Mrowiec, wins promotion to the Middlesex League Intermediate Division.

2008: An extraordinary committee convenes to investigate allegations of gamesmanship.

2009: The committee purchases WaterHOGs™ after it receives complaints about birdbath puddles on the courts. The committee comprises Wendy Driver (President), Enid Silverstone (Hon. Sec.), Bernadette O'Connell (Hon. Treas.) and Carole Bellringer (Chairperson).

2010: The WaterHOGs™ are re-sponged after birds peck at them for nesting material.

2011: The club receives best-practice accreditation, called Tennis Clubmark, from the LTA on March 3.