

History

In India, Mahatma Gandhi was jailed for six years for civil disobedience. In Ireland, fighting breaks out in Dublin. In the U.S. telephone inventor Alexander Graham Bell dies. In Greece King Constantine abdicates. In Italy Mussolini becomes PM. Tutankhamen's tomb was discovered. In England, Colchester, during this same year, moves were afoot among a number of Colcestrians to bring together various Clubs within the Colchester boundary, and to enable them to play against each other in a league.

As a result the

COLCHESTER AND DISTRICT TENNIS LEAGUE

was formed in 1922.

The first AGM took place in 1923. Minutes of that meeting were adopted at the 1924 AGM (held at St. Georges Club) which is the first meeting where we have the actual records. We do however have the actual accounts for 1923 showing that £1.10.3 was carried forward from 1922 and that Clubs affiliating in 1923 were St. Marys Tennis Club, Shrubland, Garrison, Fire Office, Technical, Casuals, Castle, St. Georges, St. Botolphs, Paxmans and Culver St.. Affiliation cost 5/- (five shillings is 25pence), players registration 6d. (2.5pence) and 1/- (5pence) per entry into the Individual Championships.

The first Officers were: Chairman - JH Nunn, Vice Chairman -QMS Hill, Secretaries - F Chignall and LJ Barrell (who also was Treasurer).

Various Cups were donated as the League found it's feet and started to grow. In 1922 Arthur Crowther presented the Crowther Challenge Cup for the Mixed Doubles Club Champions. In 1923 DW Jeffrey presented the Jeffrey Lawn Tennis Challenge Cup for the Open Mens Singles and AJ Waterman presented the Waterman Lawn Tennis Challenge Cup for the Open Ladies Singles. Also in 1923 FA Jacklin presented the Jacklin Cup for the Under 18 Junior Mixed Doubles.

Some 24 people attended the 1924 AGM including WG Death from Brightlingsea who asked that the League be expanded to include Brightlingsea Central Tennis Club. It was, by a 12 to 9 vote, decided to keep the League to within the Colchester boundary. However it was agreed to run

a junior division (division 2). In 1924 more Clubs affiliated including Wimpole Road, Abbeygate, Headgate, Parsons Heath, and Eld Lane. The League also agreed to accept Mr Harper's offer to stage the League's Finals together with his own Harpers Tennis Tournament Finals on his own Grounds.

The 1925 AGM was attended by 32 people and this time Mr WG Death was succesful with his request that the League boundary be extended. It was resolved the boundary be extended to 12 miles from the Town Hall. Later in May following a letter from the Garrison Club it was decided to run a Gents Doubles and Ladies Doubles as an experiment if enough entries were received, alongside the Mixed Doubles, Gents Singles and Ladies Singles. Subsequently 203 entries were received for these Individual Championships (107 in 1924). The minutes record that a Cup value £8 has been donated by Messrs. Lawrence & Co for the division two Club Mixed Doubles and a further cup for the Open Gents Doubles has been donated by Mr. WH Herring. Meetings were often held at Joscelyn Cafe, High Street at a cost of 3/6 for the room, although the Garrison could make a room available free of charge. The Finals on July 23 together with the Finals of Harpers Tournament were held at the Garrison Ground.

The 1926 AGM was held at the Town Hall and resolved unanimously that His Worship the Mayor be invited to become President of the League for the forthcoming season. His Worship the Mayor, Councillor AW Piper was very pleased to accept and donated a Cup known as the Piper Cup which would be presented to the winners of the Restricted Gents Doubles and more recently for the Under 18 Boys Doubles. The Mayor of Colchester has continued to be the President of the Colchester and District Tennis League throughout its history. FH Fieldgate presented the Fieldgate Cup for the winners of the Restricted Ladies Doubles.

Wivenhoe joined the League. Other clubs that have joined include Myland, Hythe Bridge, Colneside, New Mascot, Charleston, and Atalanta although some of the previous clubs mentioned have not affiliated.

During the Season the Committee make a new draw at the semi-final stage of the Individual Championships and this year the semi-finals are to be played by July 15th. Finals Day would be July 22nd. In July the minutes confirm Mrs HD Hearsam presented the League with a cup for the Ladies Doubles on condition it remain the property of the League. It is also recorded that Mr Jeffery donated another vase for the Ladies Singles after

the first was won outright. Funds in hand total £11.5.0 and it is resolved to place £5 on deposit.

The 1927 AGM agreed affiliated clubs could have 2 votes (if two people attended) but more than 2 people per club could attend. Ardleigh and Cossers TC are mentioned. In the League Championship Division, five teams are to play home and away. It appears the Individual Championships are always re-drawn at the semi-final stage. During the year CR Hill, who has been with the League since its inception, presented the Hill Challenge Cup for the then third division League Mixed Doubles, and the Fellowship of Freedom & Reform presented the Fellowship of Freedom & Reform Cup for the Open Mixed Doubles. Later that year Mr Hill resigned as he was leaving Colchester.

Spottiswoods name appears at the 1928 AGM. Shortly afterwards YMCA and Lexden and Wimpole Road seek affiliation. During the Season the possibility of an Inter-league match against the Clacton and District Tennis League is discussed. By this stage it is apparent that the majority of our present day Rules are in place.

In 1929 Clubs seeking to participate were: Casuals, Brightlingsea, Brantham, Garrison, Cheriton, Headgate, Culver St., St Botolphs, Spottiswoods, Myland, New Mascot(2), Hythe Bridge, Colco, Paxmans, Severalls, Wimpole Road, and affiliation only, Technical. In April Mr Oswald Lewis presented a trophy for the Gents Doubles Team competition. In May the Bonner Cup was presented to the League and Parkeston Railway Club was advised that their request to join could not be accepted.

In 1930 further team names appear viz. College Staff, Grammar School, and West Mersea. In 1931 Mr WC Harper who has been involved with the League for some years is the new Mayor. Semi finals would no longer be played together but played on neutral courts individually. The League would be represented in the Colchester Carnival and would provide a tableau for mounting on a lorry. The exhibit won first prize in the Sports section!

In 1932 the radius of the League is raised to 20 miles. It is required that all Clubs must be represented at the AGM, failure to attend would be dealt with by the League. New names seeking to join the League are Lexden Hill, Pembroke, Parkeston, Hillcrest Dovercourt, West Clacton, Wivenhoe, and Coggeshall.

In 1933 Mr A Heasman presents a trophy for the Ladies Team Competition which will run this year. In October Mr WC Harper wrote to the League as he found it impossible to organize the Colchester tournament again as

Colchester Corporation owned Harpers Sports Ground. He suggested the League consider taking over the running of the tournament and added that the donors of all the Cups were happy for 'their' Cups to be handed over to the League. The League took over the running of the annual tournament, and combining some of the events previously run by Mr Harper meant an enlarged tournament and the reallocation of some of the Cups.

Post Office and Kelvedon applied to join in 1934. Finals day would be at West End Sports Ground for the first time. The public would be charged an entry fee of 6d and programmes would be printed. A presentation dance was to be held after the Finals and tickets would cost 2/6.

The principle of promotion and relegation within divisions was discussed and adopted at the 1935 AGM together with the Rule that no Club may concede points without the consent of the League.

During 1936 the Town Council was approached by one of the affiliated clubs for permission to play on Sundays (between 2pm and 6pm) and asked that the League also support the request, although the League felt they would have to seek all Clubs views before adding their support. The Law Clerks Club sought affiliation and the Essex Telegraph carries an excellent article on tennis engineered by Mr JH Nunn, the current Chairman. This year the prizes for Finals day would be displayed in the window of Griffins for the few days before the Finals. Ardleigh TC applied to join for next year.

In 1937 Clubs indicate they wish a standard ball to be used and ask the League to provide and invoice Clubs accordingly.

During 1938 competitors who did not complete their matches would be scratched (subject to any weather considerations). The Carr-Ellison cup was donated. Woods TC name appears. The Essex Newspaper Press Fund Cup is donated for a competition open to the County of Essex and to members of Clubs affiliated to Colchester and District Tennis League. Seeding is used for the first time in the Individual competitions. Funds in hand at the end of the Season amount to £41.18.11. Congratulations are recorded for The Hon. Secretary Mr LJ Barrell upon his appointment as Colchester Borough Treasurer.

Meetings take place in 1939 until June when they cease. Mr JH Nunn who has been Chairman since the League's inception, chairs the June meeting when the Secretary is instructed to make the necessary arrangements for the Finals.

The next meeting in April 1940 records Mr GC Houseby being elected to the Chair and the meeting discussed the question of at least some modified form of activity in order that the League should function, perhaps by asking the Clubs to run their own five tournaments with the winners being notified to the League who would arrange a Finals Day. This proposal would be put to the AGM. Entrance fees would be at the Clubs discretion but could be used for Club purposes or directed to a War-time Charity such as the Red Cross.

At the April 1940 AGM Mr FJ Parsley spoke eloquently and movingly about the passing of the League's late Chairman Mr JH Nunn and the valuable services rendered since the inception of the League. It was hoped that a way would be found whereby the name of JH Nunn would be perpetuated in the realms of tennis. The meeting stood in silence by way of commemoration.

Captain Skelton was elected Chairman. A letter had been recently sent to all Clubs advising the War-time Policy of the League as outlined two paragraphs above. All trophies should be retained by the present holders. The League Executive was elected to act for 1940. There is no recorded response to the circular letter.

World Events would dominate everyone's life for the next five years.

The next meeting of the League was held at 114 Shrub End Colchester on January 20th 1947. Nearly all Cups had been returned to the League and consideration was being given to restarting the league that Summer. An immediate advertisement would be inserted concerning the restart and a later one to advertise the AGM at the end of March. It was reported that Mr HE Gunton had resigned as assistant Secretary and thanks are recorded for his long and valuable service since 1925. An invitation had been received from Holland to send a representative team and it was suggested that the Dutch team's return visit to Colchester should coincide with the Finals.

At the 1947 AGM the League took the first tentative steps towards restarting competitions. The committee comprised:- Chairman - Capt.A Skelton, Vice Chairman - Mr GE Housley, Hon Secretary - Mr LJ Barrell, (Mr CH Cranmer became Asst. Hon Sec from May) Hon Auditor - Mr AJ Jennings, and Executives - Messre. RJ Brown, HW Whybrow, P Benham, JE Ogden, and WG

Birtwell. Cosmopolitan TC name appears, as does Barclays Bank and Brantham. It was confirmed that if a Club entered two teams, players registered for one team could not play for the other team. Finals would be at West End Sports Ground, followed by a dance at a hotel. Prizes would be vouchers from Bonner & Sons, Heasman & Sons, Shippey, Poyser, and Harpers.

The visit to the Zwolle Tennis League was scheduled for August with the return visit taking place in 1948 when the Zwolle Tennis League presented a Cup for the winners of the Under 18 Girls Doubles. The minutes of the League between 1948 and 1963 are missing. Can anyone throw any light on their possible whereabouts? If you can help in any way please contact any Committee Member - their names and clubs are on this web site - or click on the e-mail button.

The 1963 AGM was held Jacklins Café on 27 March. Mr. HW Whybrow was in the Chair and the following Clubs were represented:- Lexden Hill, Cosmopolitan, Officers' Club, Clacton, Spottiswoods, Wivenhoe, Westphelians, Whitegates, Rowhedge, Walton, and Colne. Apologies from Park Road and Ardleigh.

Officers elected for the next year were President – The Mayor Elect Counsellor Harrison, Chairman Mr HW Whybrow, Vice-Chairman Mr AJ Shippey, Hon Secretary Mr CH Cranmer, Asst Hon Sec Miss S Cranmer, Hon Auditor Mr K King, and Executive Messrs ET Jacobs, WH Scott, J Kellett, C Wheeler, and Mrs L Miller.

A motion by Lexden Hill to play either one long set or two short sets instead of twelve games was ruled inadmissible as insufficient written notice had not been given for the AGM. Finals Day would be September 7th at the Officers' Club.

During the following twelve months the Secretary of the Officers' Club advised meetings of the League Committee that some competitors and members of the public had used the bar and lounge areas inappropriately dressed. The Committee decided that a reminder be inserted in the Finals Day programme that all visitors to the Officers' Club are guests and must conform with the Club rules as to dress when using the bar or lounge.

Mr Shippey agreed to make enquiries about the loan of a loud-hailer.

At the 1964 AGM Kirby were elected to the League. It was also agreed that 28 days written notice prior the AGM would be required for any proposed

amendment to the Rules. It was also commented that a better balance of the number of teams in each division would be beneficial.

Colco and West Mersea clubs were accepted into the League at the 1965 AGM. Much discussion as to how to treat unplayed matches ensued. Fifty teams were due to compete in the Leagues this year. Mr AJ Shippey was elected Chairman.

At the 1966 AGM it was agreed that members of a lower team could play up once without becoming ineligible for the lower team, and two short sets would be played in League matches. Subsequent committee meetings were much involved in discussing unplayed matches. Finals Day programme adverts would cost £1 and spectators entrance fee to the Finals would be 2/= (10p) to include a programme. The Piper Cup was to be replated. That summer England's footballers won the World Cup.

The 1967 AGM agreed to admit Wimpole Rd Christ Church and University of Essex.

There were some changes at the 1968 AGM. The Chairman Mr AJ Shippey announced his retirement on doctors orders. Mr Cranmer thanked Mr Shippey for his long service to the League which to his knowledge went back to before 1939.

The Hon Sec Mr Cranmer and his assistant Mrs G Chatfield also resigned with special thanks going to Mr CH Cranmer for his 21 years of service to the League.

Officers elected for the next year were President – The Mayor Elect, Chairman Mr WH Scott, Vice-Chairman Mr John Kellett, Hon Secretary Mrs P Scott, Hon Treasurer Mr Alan Harper, Hon Auditor Mr Ken King and Committee Mrs Frazer, Messrs Wheeler, Lay-Flurrie, Youngs and Gant. Finals Day was to be Sept 7th at Officers' Club or University of Essex as an alternative venue.

The main officers were all re-elected at the 1969 AGM with the new committee being Mr P Cade, Mr P Jones, Mr R Lay-Flurrie, Mr A Smith and Mr D Youngs. As there were a number of new rules/amendments it was agreed to circulate a copy of the new rules to all Clubs. Three clubs were complaining about the state of their council owned courts and the League was asked to make representations to the Council. A new club St Osyth College Clacton was elected to the League. It was agreed to cease playing the League individual competitions leaving just the main events. Arclight club had folded but 20 clubs later attended the fixture meeting. At the July

committee meeting it was reported a new changing facility had been provided at West End Ground plus new gas rings. The possibility of a coaching scheme was raised and marked forward for discussion at the next AGM.

At the committee meeting in August 1970 it was reported that this coaching scheme had been run very successfully.

At the 1971 AGM the main officers were re-elected with new committee being Mr P Cade, Mr P Pullen, Mr J Ketley, Mr A Smith, and Mrs J Mallinson.

Finals Day could no longer be held at Officers' Club. Mr Jones (who resigned from the committee) was thanked for his work with the juniors but advised that Mr Hassell had moved away from Frinton and it was unlikely this scheme could continue. Mr Scott and Mr Kellett had attended the funeral of Mr Shippey. Mrs Shippey had written in offering a new cup for competition. Mr Kellett Chairman had replied suggesting a 'Married Couples' competition which Mrs Shippey was very taken with. It was presented in the name of John Sheppey and was first competed for in 1972.

Collectively that year the committee meetings had considered the usual questions of unregistered players, unplayed matches, delayed or not played tournament fixtures, organising a raffle for finals day, disputes between clubs, together with efforts to involve clubs in and outside the area (viz. Chelmsford Ipswich Bury and Dovercourt) in an American tournament on Cosmo courts. This had taken considerable effort and was very successful. Finals Day would be on Woods courts and it was proposed a donation of £1 be made to the their groundsman.

The 1972 AGM saw the re-election of the officers with Miss Jill Dyer and Mr Griggs joining the committee. Clacton club, Walton, and Wimpole Rd. had folded but a new club Whitegates may be formed. Eastern Gas, a new club was admitted to the League. It was hoped Woods would stage Finals Day again.

At the 1973 AGM Mrs P Scott resigned and Miss J Dyer became Hon Sec, with Mr A Harper becoming responsible for the individual competitions as well as Treasurer. The U of E had withdrawn as had St Osyth's College and Walton. There were two new clubs Crittalls and Officers' club. As usual the numbers making up each league was established.

The 1974 AGM saw Brantham withdraw as their players had joined Dovercourt who had applied to take their place. Mr Kellett, who was not standing for re-election, would be thanked by letter for all the work he had

done for the league. Mr A Smith was elected vice-chairman. Paxmans had amalgamated with Woods and the new club would be known as GEC Paxwoods. The Committee was Mrs Ford and Messrs. P Pulham, M Griggs, W Wilson, and P Chapman. A new rule was adopted reading: all matches must be played between May 1st and August 31st on a date mutually agreed by both club secretaries.

In 1975 Mr Wilson became vice Chairman and Mr Guernari and Mr Renwick replaced M Griggs and P Chapman. Mr Tyler joined them on the committee. An EGM held a month later decided that clubs would pay an entry fee per team and no separate fee for registering each player. The rule covering how rained off matches would be dealt with, was passed. During the year it was discussed whether vouchers or 'plaques' should be awarded to winners. This was to be left in abeyance for the AGM. The annual subject of unplayed matches was again discussed and thoughts were progressing towards some sort of penalty. Mr Harper advised he could not continue as Tournament Secretary. Mr Wilson stepped in.

D Walker joined the Committee at the 1976 AGM . The 1977 AGM saw 63 teams participating in the league that year and finals day would be at Officers' Club. The proposal that pairs in league matches should play two short sets with a tie-break at 5-5 was adopted. The meeting felt that most players came straight from work and welcomed some form of refreshments after playing. Following the AGM clubs were able to check their fixtures, a policy that had been adopted the previous year. Mr Harper and Miss J Dyer agreed to produce an up-to-date version of the rules so they could be duplicated to clubs.

For the 1978 season Frinton-on-sea and Harwich had affiliated and 64 teams would participate. U.14's events had recently been introduced and it was thought too soon to introduce U.12 events. The rule on tie-breaks was considered successful once players had learned how it operated. Harwich Centre and Dovercourt were now two separate clubs and Benhams was known as QB. At the end of the AGM fixture books were handed out and checked.

At the 1979 AGM it was decided that teams from the same club in the same division must play their matches first. Also any player not paying their subscription to their club (there had been an instance) could be banned by the league until the debts were settled. Mrs Turner joined the committee replacing Mrs Dobson. The 'fixtures' were then agreed after the meeting.

In 1980 at the AGM Mr Wilson announced he was relinquishing the post of competition secretary and would be replaced by Mrs Turner. Mr Tyler and Mrs Packer also left the committee and were replaced by Messrs V.Little, G.Hicks and C.Joyce. The entry fee for each team affiliating was raised to £4, and for a club affiliating only would be £3. A player's entry fee for the open tournament events would be 50p. There was discussion about some sort of penalty for clubs cancelling matches.

During the year it was decided to follow last year's policy of awarding trophies (not cash) in the Colchester and District Open tournament.

During committee meetings in 1981 a recurring theme was in respect of how 'better' players were being registered for second or third teams. Complaints had been received and a general feeling that the rules needed tightening prevailed. Additionally there seemed to be more match disputes than usual and ill-feeling in some quarters. A meeting was held in October and new resolutions addressing this matter were to be put before the AGM. It was proposed players could only be registered for a specific team, transfer only being allowed from a lower to a higher team once only, transfer from a third or fourth team could play for a higher team once only, with a second appearance fixing the player to that team only. In the individual championships, tie breaks would operate in the first two sets only, and whilst first named player could choose the venue all players were responsible for playing the match by the due date.

70 teams would compete in 1982 and it was decided which clubs would play in which division and which clubs would be promoted and relegated. The 1982 AGM adopted the rules outlined above and the fixtures meeting followed.

Following a dispute during last season at the 1983 AGM the scoring method was changed from 'winning the highest percentage of games actually played' to 'with the highest number of sets, and if still a tie the highest number of games'. It was also decided that players belonging to more than one club may register and play for more than one club, provided they only play for each club in different competitions. Arclight Bowls Club had agreed to host Finals Day.

For the 1984 season 71 teams would contest the leagues. A new team St Peters House had affiliated. Following difficulties completing the league program in previous years the 1984 AGM resolved that club teams not completing a match by the due date would each have two points deducted.

All clubs were to be reminded that ridged-sole training shoes should not be worn on grass courts.

During 1986 it was decided that a maximum of 5 events could be entered by one player. It was not possible to adopt the table tennis practice of allocating an actual week for clubs to play certain matches. A new event for Over 40 Ladies Doubles was introduced. Also at the AGM A Harper resigned and G Hicks also took on the role of Treasurer. The Committee consisted of Messrs Mangum, Little, Coyne, Jones and Ms Helliwell. A new club Royal Racqueteers joined. During the season Jill Dyer advised she would be retiring as Secretary at the next AGM.

All change at the 1987 AGM. The rules had been retyped and would be distributed with the fixture books at the end of the meeting. The chairman was standing down together with the Secretary. Mr W Wilson was elected Chairman, and D Jones vice-chairman, Treasurer G Hicks. The new secretary was Veronica Owen and Diane Duffett tournament secretary. Committee was Messrs Coyne, Little, Rogers, Crown, and Mrs A Davies-Evans. Dedham joined the League. Competitors winning a restricted event could not enter again until 15 years had passed. Winners of senior events could not enter restricted events. At a later committee meeting it was decided to take a harder line to ensure matches were played by the due dates. Non-compliance would mean being scratched from the event. Clubs using unregistered players would forfeit the sets. The committee felt an EGM should be arranged as they felt they could not manage the teams within existing leagues as they were getting too many. A more structured approach was needed. Late cancellation of matches was causing problems. Clubs were to be asked for their thoughts on shortening matches as many were being affected by bad light. Finals Day went well with matches continuing throughout and as last year no break for lunch. Next year entry fees for adults would be £1.

For 1988 one club complained that foot-faulting was becoming too prevalent. 74 teams would contest the leagues this year. Everyone was re-elected at the AGM. Five tidying-up amendments to the rules were passed. Also introduced were proposals for U12 and U16 Boys & Girls Singles events in the Individual Championships. A claim on the League's insurance had allowed a new cup to be purchased and another repaired. Lancaster Garages, Cubitt & Clarke, and Cliff Richard (yes-the Cliff Richard [real name Harry Webb]) and Kent Blaxill had sent money for new trophies for the new events.

Everyone was re-elected at the 1989 AGM. The rule regarding the playing of matches was tightened as too many matches were not being played on the agreed dates. Teams were to be referred to as A B C etc (not 1,2,3).

In 1990 Minet provided a trophy for a new event 'Mens Over 40 Singles'. Messrs F Thorpe and N Crown replaced Messrs Coyne and Rogers on the Committee. The AGM passed an amendment as to how the scoring should work in matches affected by bad light or bad weather making it more clear. Nick Crown took on the role of Press Officer.

At the 1991 AGM Mr Wilson did not stand for re-election. The new committee was Mr D Jones Chairman, Mr K Mangum Vice-Chairman, Mrs V Owen Secretary, Mr G Hicks Treasurer, Mrs D Duffett Tournament Secretary, and committee Messrs N Crown, P Cook, L Lamb, P York and Mrs A Davies-Evans. John Rice had donated a trophy, in memory of his brother, for a new event 'Mens Doubles Over 40'. A presentation was made to Mr Wilson for 17 years service to the league in various roles. Peter Cook had set up a junior league to run during the season and the winners presentation would also be on Finals Day. In spite of tournament fees being doubled there had been an 'incredible' number of entries this year. The league purchased an answerphone for the tournament secretary to help in gathering results. Finals Day would be at Frinton on Sea for the first time.

Diane Duffett and Alison Davies-Evans did not stand in 1992 and their places on the committee were taken by John Andrews and Cathy Humphries. Peter Cook would run the junior section again and Finals day would again be at Frinton following the success of the venue last year. Formalised guidance notes on allocating weeks for league matches was adopted by clubs and put into practice. The committee was asked to investigate perhaps limiting each league to say, 5, and perhaps playing H and A. There were 172 tournament entries.

An EGM was held to discuss the possible ways of restructuring the league. The favoured proposals were to be carried forward and put to the AGM. At the 1993 AGM Mrs V Owen was standing down and Mr J Andrews became Secretary. One proposal from the EGM was accepted viz:- matches would be one professional set – first to eight by two clear games – tie break at eight all. If play stopped before the second round was completed the match would be rearranged unless sets were conceded to complete second round.

During the year the problem of foot-faulting was raised again. It was decided the matter should/could be raised in a 'reasonable' way. A new copy of the rules was in the process of being produced. Results were not being

received by the cut-off date. J Andrews would prepare finals day programme to include final league tables. In view of continuing problems it was decided to propose new rules to include:- No extensions except under exceptional circumstances etc., Evening matches to start at 6.30pm etc., protests must be received within 48 hours of match., Captain of home team to be responsible for completing the card and getting opposing captain's signature etc., the competition to be known as the "COLCHESTER & DISTRICT TENNIS LEAGUE" (to include sponsor's name when league is sponsored),. The current committee were all prepared to stand again except tournament secretary Cathy Humphrey who would be prepared to stand for Secretary after J Andrews. P Cook was prepared to act as tournament secretary if necessary. Phoenix had proposed for the 1994 AGM that first named player should have choice of venue and be responsible for arranging the match. All players jointly responsible for playing the match by due date. This would be put to the AGM. (Unfortunately the AGM minutes are missing).

During 1995 the committee agreed to give clubs copies of the fixture lists before the AGM so clubs could see whether any changes needed to be made. L Lamb was standing down together with C Humphrey, P Cook, and P York. The committee would propose at the 1995 AGM that a rule change be made to enable vacant officer's posts to be filled by a draw if no volunteers were found. 1995 finals day was rained off.

At the 1996 AGM K Mangum was thanked for stepping into post of Secretary although he said he was unable to stand again. N Crown was also relinquishing the post of Tournament Secretary. A Simpson I Parker (Secretary) J Crown, G Duthie, D Hassell had joined the committee. D Jones was Chairman, J Andrews was still results secretary and G Hicks was still Treasurer. During the year it was apparent some players were being registered for 'lower' teams meaning some 'lower' teams were stronger than the first team. This would have to be addressed.

At the 1998 AGM N Crown stood down. G Hicks (Lexden Hill) had proposed (with other details) that from the 1999 season the league competitions should be conducted in leagues of 5 teams on a home and away basis. Cosmopolitan Club proposed matches should consist of one professional set with a tie break at 8-8. D Jones proposed officer's posts be filled by ballot if no volunteers. These changes were all adopted at the AGM. N Crown's proposal of 2 points for a win, 1 point for a draw was also passed. The new committee was:- Chairman A Simpson, Vice Chairman M Jarvis, Secretary to be drawn by ballot, Treasurer G Hicks, Tournament Secretary A Knights, Match Records Secretary J Andrews, Committee Members I Parker, G

Duthie, J Crown. A Simpson thanked D Jones for all his years of hard work and presented him with an engraved silver salver.

Accordingly the leagues went home and away in 1999 when John Andrews was match records secretary. Around 1998 John Andrews offered to try and devise a computer program for the season (based on his programme for table tennis). It was adopted and passed to Andrew Knights when he took over as Match Records Secretary in 2000. He was Match Secretary for two years. Graham Hicks became Match Records Secretary (as well as Treasurer) at the 2002 AGM. J Bolingbroke was elected to the Committee.

From 2001 – 2002 G Hicks was exploring the concept of a web site for the Colchester and District Tennis League. The website went “live” in September 2002.

As he was holding two posts (Match Records Secretary and Treasurer) G Hicks stood down as Treasurer the following year and at the 2003 AGM Peter Digby was elected treasurer.

The next available minutes show the League Committee of 2008 to be:- Chairman A Simpson; Vice-Chairman Kay Mansfield; Lge Sec Mandy Kerr; Treas Peter Digby; Match Records Sec Graham Hicks; Tournament Sec (The Committee); and Committee members Jill Crown, Karen Capon, Andrew Knights, Hilary Lewis. It had been proposed and passed that there would be 3 points for a win and 1 for a draw.

In 2008 following a successful ‘Framlingham’ summer open tournament using a new LTA tennis program G Hicks investigated whether this software program would be of any benefit for the League’s tournament. The program could not be purchased and was only available through licensing arrangements with the LTA, (plus various other conditions). The League met all the conditions and the LTA granted the League the relative licence with a copy of the software so G Hicks could trial it offline over the winter. Kay Mansfield as the Tournament Secretary for the previous two years would be the first to use the program for the 2009 tournament.

Several members resigned at the 2009 AGM and the following were elected. League Sec David Hall, Treasurer Robert Lewis, Committee Jane Kirk. A tie-break would operate at 6-6 in all tournament sets. During 2009 the Tournament results were shown on the website which was regarded as very successful.

Everyone was re-elected at the 2010 AGM. It was requested a copy of the Rules be placed on the website. Events for Over 55's were to be introduced this season.

At the 2011 AGM (at the Drury Arms) Karen Capon stood down and Roger Payne and Leon Jennings joined the Committee. Everyone else was re-elected.

Roger Parker had resigned in 2012 and Andrew Simpson became Treasurer. In 2013 Jo-Anne Ainger replaced David Hall as League Secretary. Leon Jennings was happy to take over the providing of newspaper reports from Jill Crown and Kay Mansfield would be stepping down from Tournament Secretary.

At the 2014 AGM Kay Mansfield, Jo-Anne Ainger and the vice chairman had resigned and clubs were balloted as to who would need to provide new officers. Other officers were all re-elected. Lynn Lennard-Jones would be Vice-Chairman, Carol Ketchley would be Lge. Sec., Catherine Humphrey would be Tournament Secretary. Heather Barnard joined the Committee. In matches a tie-break would occur at 7-7 in future. The website continued to grow – 6500 visitors visited over 11000 pages (for the year).

In 2015 Leon Jennings and Catherine Humphreys had resigned. Tournament entries would be addressed to Andrew Simpson. Spring Lane and Phoenix clubs had merged. Lynn Lennard-Jones became Tournament Secretary. Peter Richmond joined the Committee. Bob Smith of 'Stringers World' had expressed interest in sponsoring the League.

For 2016 Dovercourt are no longer taking part. Lexden Hill LTC and Colchester Lawn TC are merging and Colchester Tennis Centre will be playing as East Bergholt. The whole Committee was re-elected.

At the 2017 AGM David Lloyd Club joined the League. Peter Richmond resigned. Late notification of a new match date to the Match Secretary was still a problem so the proposal that the penalty for non-advice would change and in future would be a one point deduction for both teams, per day overdue, was passed. A further resolution was also passed that any team conceding two walkovers in a season would be relegated and their record expunged. East Bergholt did not affiliate this year. Tom Perry joined the Committee, which was the only change.

It was announced at the 2018 AGM that competitors in the Open Tournament would be able to enter 'on-line' and payment made at the same time. The Committee was re-elected apart from Roger Payne who had

resigned. Hilary Cairns joined the Committee. During the year discussions took place regarding awarding points for matches that could not take place (i.e. where clubs both played with only 2 pairs).

At the 2019 AGM it was resolved that where clubs each only provided 2 pairs for the match, then no points would be awarded for the unplayed rounds. Registration before start of season could be by email or in writing. After start of season registrations could only be by email (to provide confirmation of date and time). Following her own experience Kate Mansfield spoke of the necessity for Clubs to consider having defibrillators to help with any emergencies.

Guidance had been requested from the league regarding 'Facebook'. Although the aim of publicising their club was laudable it was felt by some to be 'not right'. Guidance from on high was very difficult to obtain so our League's response was that :- 1 signatures should never be put on internet/Facebook 2 photographs only uploaded with the individuals permission 3 scorecards only uploaded with ALL individuals permission.

COVID was beginning to make the news at the time of the 2020 AGM where a new rule would be proposed requiring Committee Members to attend at least a third of the meetings or retire from the Committee at the next AGM.

It very quickly became apparent that covid was rampant. Consequently the whole League Program and the Cup Competitions were cancelled for 2020.

A "VIRTUAL" Committee Meeting was held in March 2021 and it was decided that it was not possible to hold the 2021 AGM. However the League would investigate whether half a league program could be run for the latter part of the season as the Covid problem was receding. A VIRTUAL Committee meeting in June records that this half-program was up and running. The idea of a Centenary Year Dinner next year seemed appropriate given it was 100 years since the Colchester League started.

In October the Committee met in person and discussed the idea and arrangements for the Centenary Dinner. Clubs would be 'canvassed' for their opinions.

At the Committee meeting in February 2022 this years leagues were established. As there were no promotions/relegations from last year the only changes were new teams and those not entering this year.

At the AGM in March the Chairman and Committee were all re-elected (A Simpson, L Lennard-Jones, H Barnard, G Hicks, H Cairns, J Crown, A Knights, and C Ketchley), and John Russel joined the Committee. The

'carried forward' proposal from 2020 was passed unanimously. It was decided to present the League Trophies after the Centenary dinner in October. The Cup Trophies would be presented on Finals Day.

The August Committee Meeting were advised there was not much interest in the Centenary Dinner, so the decision was taken to cancel and forfeit the deposit already paid. At the next meeting in November Lynn Lennard-Jones advised she had not been successful in finding someone to take on the role of Tournament Secretary. Jill Crown advised she was thinking of resigning from Press Secretary.

At the 2023 AGM a resolution was passed unanimously, restricting the use of Saturdays as a match day as many club members did not wish to play matches at weekends. Additionally matches would consist of sets played to 6 all before playing a tiebreak (previously 8). Bill Greeno joined the Committee as Tournament Secretary. Later Mark Partridge joined the Committee as League Secretary following on from Carol Ketchley.

For 2024 it was decided Junior entries for the Open events would be free as an incentive for Juniors to enter. At the AGM Lynn Lennard-Jones advised she would be standing down soon. Bill Greeno was willing to take on the position of Tournament Secretary when the position was vacated. Heartfelt thanks were given to Jill Crown for her contribution to the League over a period of 24 years and to Andrew Knights who had contributed over 20 years. Bill Greeno would be handling the registrations of players. Concern was expressed to the Committee members about the safety of players as some spectators were watching from positions close to the playing areas. Discussions over junior participation were continuing to encourage greater interest, including holding a junior competition on Finals Day in 2025.

In February 2025 Bill Greeno would continue dealing with all registrations assisting the League Match Secretary. Bill Greeno would ask Tom Perry to assist in developing the junior side of the Open Tournament.

At the 2025 AGM John Russel followed Lynn Lennard-Jones as Vice Chairman, and Tom Perry and Jamie Champion were replaced by Steve Baines and Richard Arrell. A resolution was passed advising Clubs that 'whilst spectators are encouraged, they must not be allowed on court during matches and must view from outside the playing area. Langham Tennis Club had expressed an interest in our League as they were having a third court built. They would come back when completed.

Finals Day went well although there were problems beforehand regarding the non-return of trophies/cups by the winners last year which meant they

could not be presented to the new winners. At the end of the year the Committee was also concerned about non-attendance at meetings. Both these points would be addressed at the next AGM.

The 2026 AGM was held on March 19th at the Colchester Officers' Club. Chairman Andrew Simpson was unanimously re-elected. He advised that Graham Hicks and Richard Arrell were both retiring.

Graham had served on the Committee for 46 years (Mar 1980 – Mar 2026 including 17 years as Treasurer and 24 years as League Match Secretary) and for now will continue to administer the website. Bill Greeno will become League Match Records Secretary, but a new Tournament Secretary will need to be found. After a short discussion about the role of Tournament Secretary, Andrew Simpson agreed to undertake the role for one year. Mark Wallington joined the Committee. To fill the one remaining position Catherine Karr [Essex G & C] volunteered to join the committee.

A couple of rules were amended regarding required attendance at Committee Meetings and strong penalties were also introduced regarding the timely return of trophies (so they can be presented again at the following Finals Day to the new winners).

The final event of the evening was the presentation of a gift to Graham Hicks in recognition of his 46 years of service to the league. He thanked all those who had helped him over the years.

***All the above 'extracted and summarised from the available minutes
by GR Hicks'***