

# The History of Hamilton

Details of the establishment and early years of Hamilton were provided by the late HEDLEY KENDALL, a lifelong member and former treasurer at Hamilton Tennis Club.

Hamilton's name comes from Hamilton Lodge, the former name of Warwick Lodge, which was the last of the hunting lodges to be built in Melton Mowbray by the second Lord Hamilton of Dalryell in 1908. The club was built as part of the Hamilton Drive development by E. Clarke and Sons when they acquired land known as 'Brewitt's No.1 and No.2 fields' around 1922. In 1925 the land and club passed to his son and daughter Charles and Gladys Clarke for the princely sum of £800 and in 1938 Charles bought his sister's share for £450.

## HLTC – Late 1930's



Hamilton Lawn Tennis Club was established in 1923 and the entries in the club's first membership book were in that year. The entries included a list of honorary members of the club, headed by the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Gloucester and followed by more names of the nobility.

From the outset, six grass courts were created, on two different levels and a small club house was erected for use by the members, together with a bungalow. Originally the bungalow and house were separate from each other and the club house much smaller than now. Over the years the club room was added to and a lean to was built between the bungalow and the club house to house a bar.

There continued to be numerous improvements and extensions and the steward's accommodation was created. The top three grass courts were also converted to tarmac and later replaced by red shale in the 1950s and in 1952 the bar, built by Mr Curt the steward, was re-positioned in the club room. During World War 2 many tennis members were called up and the Home Guard used the club house for meetings. This was the start of purely social members joining the Tennis Club.

In 1954 the late R W Hart bought what we now know as the club from Mr Clarke for £2,250. Initially the club didn't have the option to buy the premises and land but it retained the lease, paying a quarterly rent. On 28 July 1964 the club finally had the opportunity to buy. With great foresight, the club committee went ahead with the purchase and the buildings and land were conveyed to the Club Trustees by Mr Hart at the price of £2750.

Since the purchase of the club in 1964 the committees have continued to work hard to develop the club into the vibrant and successful tennis and social club that it is today, adapting to the changing times and needs of the local community.

In the very dry summer of 1976, members of the club under the direction of Mr John Porter, the Secretary, extended the club to the West, building new cloakrooms and the kitchen. This allowed the club and games room to be extended and the provision of a cellar.

In 1985 the three remaining grass courts were replaced by three all-weather porous concrete courts and floodlights were erected. The courts were opened on August 11<sup>th</sup> 1985 by Mark Cox, the former British Number 1 and Davis Cup player (see picture). This changed tennis at Hamilton to an all-year, any weather activity and tennis flourished. Mark returned five years later to open the three newly laid artificial grass courts which replaced the 1950s shale courts. The courts were opened on 12<sup>th</sup> May 1990 creating some of the best tennis facilities in the county at the time.



Finally in 1991 the old steward's bungalow was knocked down and a new bungalow built at the far end of the club. This gave access to club land which was previously under-used and an additional car park was created. These building works included the addition of a new bar/restaurant area, extra toilets, new side entrance and a new kitchen. The old kitchen was converted into a useful room which has had a variety of uses including a sports shop, physiotherapy room and is currently used for meetings. The basic buildings remain the same since then but with the additional creation of an attractive wooden outside patio area and continued improvements to the kitchen, changing rooms and to the bar.

After almost 100 years Hamilton continues to provide excellent facilities for tennis as well as a comfortable and welcoming place to relax, socialise and take part in a wide range of activities. It remains an important part of the Melton community.