

The Great Ayton & District Tennis Club started in the summer of 1939 as a Tennis & Bowls Club, with one court next to the bowling green, although depleted membership was already causing the Bowls Club problems. The Club was situated on land to the rear of The Tile sheds Inn car park - some of the houses in Wheatlands now occupy the site. There was an old tramcar which acted as a pavilion, very useful for fish and chip suppers on long summer evenings. They were really long days due to double Summer time during the Second world War.

The first Annual General Meeting was held in the W.I. Hall on 2nd April 1940 and the Bowls Club closed in that summer, after which we had two courts. The subscription was 5/- (FIVE SHILLINGS) per annum, with a minimum age of 14 years: in 1941. It was increased to six shillings and sixpence, with a special rate of half that for members of HM Forces.

There were several Whist Drives and dances - all held in the Ambulance Hall, as the other Halls in the village were occupied by HM Forces.

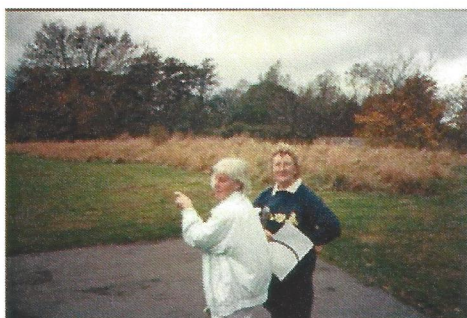
In March 1944 a letter was received from the owner of the land, which we had hoped to purchase, saying the land was required for agricultural purposes. This was a great disappointment to all involved, but it had to be accepted. Fortunately, Sir John Fry agreed to allow the Club to use his courts at Cleveland Lodge. We had many happy years there and more dances and parties were organised, all helping to swell the funds. After the War we held tournaments, a Social Club was started in the Ambulance Hall during the winter months, and in 1947, a Badminton Club was started in the Parochial Hall.

In June 1947, a set of rules was drawn up and presented to an Extraordinary General Meeting. The first rule being the Club should be known as "The Great Ayton & District Tennis Club". We joined the East Cleveland Tennis League travelling to matches at Guisborough, Skelton, Redcar, Carlin How and Hinderwell, usually on public transport!

Around 1949/1950, negotiations commenced to lease the land opposite the Buck Hotel from Nimmo's Brewery. The outcome was satisfactory, with three new courts completed and occupied from 1951.

By 1966 the team was promoted to the top division in the league. The enthusiasm for men's team tennis waned and the team was disbanded in 1985. The men's team was reformed in 1991 and went from strength to strength rising in the year 2000 to the first division and staying up in year 2001. A second men's team was formed in 1996.

A women's team was formed, and was in and out of the first division over the last few years. A second women's team was also formed.



In 1995 an application was made for funding of (a) £65,000 from the National Lottery, (b) £18,000 from Hambleton District council in order to resurface the present courts and to build 2 new courts. The project team was led by Mike Newton and Tim Ryan. Other members of the club committee included Jennifer Roberts (secretary), Don & Wendy Heald, Paul Mannix, & Betty Manton. This funding was agreed in late 1996, with the total project cost being just over £105,000. In order to get the funding it was necessary to

- agree a 20-year lease with the Whitbread brewery
- remove a diseased tree adjacent Levenside
- write a Constitution for the club (see below)
- increase club membership fees to provide for future maintenance of the courts
- appoint a club coach (Ken Gaget)

The project was completed in early 1997, transforming the whole club and with a significant rise of membership.





The social events, organised by the committee, have added to culture of the club, and besides raising money have been very enjoyable. There have been numerous chairman of the club over the years but Jennifer Roberts has remained as the secretary of the club for over 20 years, a real stalwart of the club.

### Arrangement of new courts in 1995

