



The Harry Gem Project

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“The game of lawn tennis offers as wide a field for controversy as (do) the Vatican decrees...”

Early Lawn Tennis

Royal Leamington Spa – the first club

Until the publication of ‘The Birth of Lawn Tennis’ (2018) by local tennis historian Robert Everitt, in collaboration with American historian Richard Hillway, and Hillway’s recent ‘independent’ paper “The Early Years of Lawn Tennis a Guide for Historians & Researchers”, (see App: 1) it was generally agreed that the first club in the world formed solely for the playing of lawn tennis was The Leamington Club, playing on courts in the grounds of the Manor House Hotel, Avenue Road, Royal Leamington Spa. Major ‘Harry’ Gem, Augurio Perera and Drs Haynes and Tomkins were the founders. The first reference to this club appeared in a letter from Major Gem published in the Field 21st November 1874 (see App: 2) in which he outlined the rules of the club with the heading: ‘Lawn Tennis or Pelota – Laws of the game as played by the Leamington Club.’

Of Gem’s letter to the Field of 21st November 1874, Hillway writes in his paper:

“....In referring to his friend Augurio Perera, Gem wrote, “He introduced the game fifteen years ago...” What game? What game had Perera introduced fifteen years ago in 1859? And to whom had he introduced it? To help one understand the context of that statement, here is the full paragraph in which it occurred.

“The (Leamington) club has for its founder Mr. Perera, a gentleman of Spanish family and well known as a racquet player in the days of John Mitchell, George and Frank Erwood, Sam Young and Patrick Divett (Lord Eglinton’s marker). He first introduced the game fifteen years ago, and it has recently received the name of Pelota, a Spanish word in compliment to its originator (Perera), and signifying any game played with a ball.”

“So what was “the game” in that paragraph. Some think it was a form of lawn tennis, since the last part of the paragraph refers to the 1874 game at the Leamington Club. But no contemporary document has been found to support the claim of a lawn tennis type game in 1859 – no name of the game, no location, no rules, no other players, no court, nothing. And in 1859 Gem and Perera lived not in Leamington but in Birmingham and Edgbaston respectively.

"Could "the game" have been open court rackets? The beginning of the paragraph was all about the game of rackets, and then Gem immediately stated, "He first introduced the game..." Bob Everitt and I both think that they were playing open court rackets. Without more contemporary evidence, neither side can prove its case....."

It is important when considering Hillway's comments to note how Gem's letter begins:

LAWN TENNIS (LEAMINGTON CLUB GAME)

Sir, - Seeing the interest in the game of lawn tennis, and anticipating its rapid increase in popularity, especially in the summer season, I venture to inclose (sic) for publication the laws which have been framed by the Leamington Club, together with some suggestions of laying out the ground,....."

The paragraph quoted by Hillway is the final one of Gem's letter. Gem's penultimate paragraph begins: "The Leamington Club have played the game with racquets of various sizes and makes...."

What was the game?

I may be misreading Hillway but it appears that he thinks that Gem's reference in the final paragraph of his letter to the Field might be a reference to another game altogether? This is not how I would read the letter. Gem's reference throughout must refer to the game the rules of which he states in the letter, and no other. It must be remembered that Gem was a lawyer, careful with his words, precise and of impeccable integrity. He was hardly likely to make any claim which could not be substantiated, leading to severe professional embarrassment. Therefore, he was used to being accurate in anything that he might write, or claim for that matter. If he were to make reference to an earlier/different game then surely he would have been careful to make this clear.

Where was it played?

Everitt and Hillway have cast doubt on the veracity of Eliezer Edward's claim, in his obituary of Harry Gem in Edgbastonia 1881, that:

"Lovers of lawn-tennis will perhaps be surprised to learn that Major Gem was the first to bring the game before the public, but it is an unquestionable fact."

One would agree perhaps that this honour should be assigned to Walter Wingfield, as it is not known when exactly Gem and Perera's Leamington club was formed in 1874 and their game was more of a precursor to lawn tennis, going no further than Leamington as they had no commercial interest.

However, there is no reason surely to doubt Edward's assertion that:

"The first game was played by Messrs. Gem and Perera in the garden attached to the latter Gentleman's residence, "Fairlight," Ampton Road, Edgbaston...."

Much later Frederick Haynes reminisced in the Birmingham Gazette, Monday 24th June 1935 (see App: 3) "How Lawn Tennis began...This account of BIRMINGHAM ORIGINS is by DR. FREDERICK H. HAYNES, now aged Ninety."

"...The historic first game was played in the garden of Fairlight, a residence in Ampton-road (sic), Edgbaston, belonging to Mr. J.B.A. Perera, a Birmingham merchant."

Haynes may have been inaccurate in recalling 1872 as the date of the inauguration of the Leamington Club, as this was the accepted date at the time, but his recall of the location is unlikely to have been wrong. From my own experience at the age of seventy-three I recall clearly where I first played Badminton and Lawn Tennis (over sixty-five years ago) but not the years!

It has been suggested that the pair may have played in a local Birmingham, park. There are several difficulties with this idea, not least of which is that parks local to the men's homes were not opened until after the men had moved to live in Leamington Spa and then there would have been the problem of the transport of equipment: posts, net, etc.

The garden of Gem's house on Moseley Road would have been unsuitable and too small for a court whereas the garden of Perera's home in Ampton Road certainly was large and level enough to accommodate a court.

Why was there no contemporary documentation?

If Gem and Perera had a commercial interest in their game they might have attempted to achieve some publicity for their game. As they did not then it is unsurprising that there was no documentation prior to Gem's letter appearing in the Field, 21st November 1874.

That Gem did not refer to it in other published articles, as Hillway mentions, is perhaps because he regarded it simply as a game he enjoyed playing with his friend Perera and of no particular significance. Like children engaged in a traditional playground game or one of their own making they would have no need of written rules to play the game together. It might be safe to assume that neither man appreciated the 'value' of their game until the arrival and instant popularity of Wingfield's game in 1874. This must have prompted them to create their club, but only for the enjoyment of playing their game among their wider group of friends. They appeared to have no commercial interest in their game and in Gem's letter to the Field, published 5.12.1874 (see App: 4), he indicated that he had no desire for involvement in the codification of the wider game when he wrote:

"I have contented myself with defending our own laws without attacking others; but I hope that when some great and recognised authority shall lay down a code for the guidance of the multitude, the game will be simple and the rules intelligible.....Do not let us have laws that it takes a lifetime to learn, and a game that it takes another lifetime to play."

Until relatively recently it was thought that Leamington Club was formed in 1872 but it is now known to have been established two years later, sometime in 1874. Gem moved to live in Leamington in November 1872 and Perera followed in November 1873. An article in the Leamington Spa Courier of 24th July 1875 (see App: 5) reported on a garden party held at the club with the following key sentence:

"The club, though so recently established, this being only the second year of its existence, is in a very flourishing condition..." The club had various titles: The Leamington Club, The Leamington Pelota Club, The Leamington Lawn Rackets Club and The Leamington Lawn Tennis Club."

The reference to Wingfield's game being set up for members to try:

"...the Club *Setting* and that of Wingfield were arranged in close proximity..."

The Leamington game

It would seem that Everitt and Hillway would like us to believe that Gem, Perera and their associates at the Leamington Club were playing Lawn Rackets, not Lawn Tennis. Ergo the club could not be styled the world's first lawn tennis club. It is undoubtedly true that the Gem/Perera game was grounded in Rackets, as that was the game they played at the Bath Street Rackets club in Birmingham before moving to Leamington Spa. Gem joined the Leamington Tennis Court Club (letter of election dated 30th October 1872) perhaps to play to play Rackets rather than Real Tennis, as there was a Racket court at that club in those days.

An article in the Leamington Spa Courier of 3rd July 1875 shows that the original Leamington Lawn Tennis Club played both codes, Gem and Perera's game alongside the MCC's revised version of Lawn Tennis (see App: 6).

Thus, we know that the Leamington Club were playing the nationally recognised game of lawn tennis in the 1875 season, if not the year before. Inter club competition would have required the members to be playing the Wingfield and/or MCC code.

It could be said that Everitt and Hillway are splitting hairs. There is great similarity between the Gem/Perera game and that of Wingfield. Both played on a court marked out on grass, over a net, hitting a ball with a racquet and with similar scoring – first to fifteen, as in Badminton and Rackets. Even the dissimilarity is of importance: Gem's game played on a rectangular court which prefigured the lawn tennis court finally introduced by the All England Club in 1877. Wingfield's court was hour-glass shaped (see App: 6) similar to a Badminton court (Badminton adopted the rectangular court in 1901). In Gem's game players served from either end. The early version of Wingfield's had a service diamond in one court only, therefore service from one end only. Gem's net was of a uniform height of four feet from side to side. Wingfield's net sagged to four feet eight inches at the centre being much higher at the posts.

In this respect it is interesting to read what John Moyer Heathcote wrote back in 1882 in 'The Classic Guide to Tennis':

"...the main features of lawn tennis, from any or all pastimes that have preceded it, of which the principle has been the striking and returning of a ball or shuttlecock across a net or cord, whether by the agency of the hand, a battledore, or a racket, whether the game be called Pallone, longue paume, handball, tennis, sphairistike, or badminton." (see App: 8).

J.M. Heathcote was a barrister, real tennis player and a member of the MCC committee responsible for the 1875 revision of the rules of lawn tennis. Together with Julian Marshall (also of the MCC) and Henry Jones, Heathcote was a member of the All England Club sub-committee which prepared further revisions to the game, in readiness for the first Championships at Wimbledon in 1877. His definition of lawn tennis is as valid today as it was back in 1882.

There were many variations of the game in the early days the Editor of the Field wrote in response to a letter from WH.Sitwell 5th December 1874 (see App: 9):

"Whatever credit, therefore, may be due to Major Wingfield for spreading the knowledge of the game, and introducing improvements, he can scarcely be said to have "first invented" it. And supposing that he himself knew nothing of what had been done by others, he would be by no means the first person who had unknowingly re-invented what was in existence."

In Ward & Lock's Sixpenny Handbook: Lawn Tennis, Croquet, Racquets of 1881, Captain Rawdon Crawley wrote (see App: 10):

"The introduction of Lawn Tennis into English society is generally, and I think correctly, ascribed to Captain Wingfield. But he certainly did not invent it. On the contrary, it had been played on the lawns of country houses from time immemorial....Lawn Tennis began to attract attention in the spring of 1873. It had been mentioned from time to time as a good sort of outdoor game; but it had not been taken as a fashionable amusement until Croquet had pretty well run its course. As long ago as 1862 I advocated its practice in these words: "I see no reason why a space marked off in a field or playground would not as well serve for Tennis as an elaborately furnished and covered gallery. Let players try and make a game for themselves unencumbered by the restrictive rules which govern this ancient and scientific pastime. Was not that a prevision of lawn Tennis?"

Was not Gem and Perera's game, by the same lights, a prevision of Lawn Tennis?

Wingfield was extremely protective of Sphairistike, with every letter to The Field from a new 'pretender' to the ownership of lawn tennis he would take up his pen and respond. He would be firm in his rebuttal of each new claim of a 'superior' game to protect the precedence of his own, to warn against purchase of inferior imitations and to promote the sale of his own game.

In Gem's case Wingfield neither rejected nor endorsed publicly Harry's statement in his letter to The Field of 21st November 1874. He chose to write a personal and cordial note direct to Harry. His letter of 8th December 1874 (see App: 11) is of interest in that he clearly respected Gem's game but could see that it afforded no competition to his own. He made no attempt to discourage Gem and makes 'derogatory' reference to his other commercial competition:

"Wynnstay
Rhuabon

Tuesday 8th December (1874)

My dear Sir,

I send you my book of Rules which have not been written off in a hurry but are the combined experiences of many good players and judging from the numerous letters I have received The Public seems satisfied with them.

I write no more to the Field which paper I leave for Messrs Hale* and Cavendish to flatter each other's vanity in, and shall remain satisfied with the few people who are good enough to say that my exertions for the past year have afforded them a new and healthy amusement.

Thanking you for your generous and gentlemanly letter in The Field of last week (a striking contrast to the conceit of Messrs Hale and Cavendish).

I remain sincerely

Walter Wingfield

P.S. my address after Thursday will be – Army & Navy Club, London."

*John Hinde Hale introduced his game 'Germain's' in October 1874.

John Latouche (the pen name of O.J.F. Crawford) wrote the following in The New Quarterly Magazine 1876 (see App: 11):

“... Lawn Tennis players will remember how when the game was first played in this country, no little anarchy prevailed as to the markings of the court, the rules of the game, and even the sort of balls and racquets to be used. A dozen schemes of play were proposed and fought over by eager correspondents in the columns of the Field, and endless discussion arose whenever players got together who were not accustomed to play on the same kind of court and with the same rules; and it was not till the end of last May (1875) that something like uniformity was introduced by the publication of the Marylebone Club Rules. With that proper respect for law and order which distinguishes our people, we at once gave in our adhesion to the new code of this central authority, and the Marylebone Rules are obeyed at this moment in ninety-nine courts out of hundred.”

It could be argued that Lawn Tennis was not truly born until the All England Club decided to hold its first Championships in 1877 and their sub-committee (John Heathcote, Julian Marshall and Henry Jones) revised the rules to include Real Tennis scoring (Love, 15, 30, 40, Deuce). Thus Gem, Perera and Wingfield would be regarded as Lawn Tennis pioneers. I have no problem with Wingfield being credited as the ‘father’ of the game as it was his version which filtered through revisions by the MCC in 1875 and then on to the All England Club in 1877. Wingfield and French & Co, his agent selling the Sphairistike kits had a financial interest in the spread of their game. Gem and Perera had no such interest and were interested in simply playing their game among friends and so it went no further than Leamington. However, their game was clearly a precursor of lawn tennis. The immediate popularity of lawn tennis must have prompted them to form a club and formalise the rules of their game.

L.H.J. Dorey, Honorary Secretary of the Public Schools Old Boys’ Lawn Tennis Association 1946 – 1958, wrote in his article ‘The Origin and Birth of Lawn Tennis’ published in the Lawn Tennis and Badminton magazine 1st January 1953 (see App: 13)

“Thus lawn tennis had several foster-parents, and three mothers – tennis, rackets and badminton – and was weaned by cricket and croquet – thanks to the intervention of the M.C.C. and the adoption of lawn tennis by the All England Croquet Club.”

In the Leamington Spa Courier, 12th November 1887 (see App: 14), it was reported that the landlords of the Manor House Hotel had given the Leamington Lawn Tennis Club notice to quit. In the same report it was indicated that the Town Council agreed to sub-let to the club some land in River Walk.

On 29th March 1898 all the club property was auctioned off at The Manor House Hotel (see App: 15). On 2nd April 1898 (see App: 16) a Leamington Courier correspondent wrote:

“Many will join me in deploring the breaking up of the Leamington Lawn Tennis Club, and regret the causes which led to it. These, I need not go into, it is too late in the day – the auction of effects has taken place, and the dismemberment is complete.”

Ronald Lerry wrote of the Leamington Lawn Tennis Club in ‘Cradle of Lawn Tennis’ (1946) (see App: 17):

“As a club it seems to have played little part in the county association affairs and apparently it did not have a long life, though the tournament it founded survived for many years in the Jephson Gardens.”

The original Leamington Lawn Tennis Club therefore ceased to exist in 1898 and it would be nearly a quarter of a century later that another lawn tennis club was formed in Leamington but having no connection with the original.

Contenders for earliest lawn tennis club

Hillway writes in his paper:

“The Leamington Club was probably not the first lawn tennis club in the world, since the Prince's Club and the Polo Club at Lillie Bridge, both in London, played lawn tennis in early May of 1874. The exact date that the Leamington Club hosted lawn tennis is unknown, though their game first appeared in The Field in November of 1874. (The Birth of Lawn Tennis, pp. 100-122, pp. 504-505)”

The Prince's Club was formed in 1853 as a rackets and real tennis club, cricket arrived in 1871, followed by croquet and then lawn tennis. It was therefore an existing sports club taking up lawn tennis.

Lillie Bridge was a polo club formed in 1872 so again an existing sports club adopting lawn tennis.

Royal Leamington Spa – what's the connection between the first and the current clubs?

Ronald Lerry wrote in 'Cradle of Lawn Tennis' (1946):

“Two other clubs in the area affiliated before the war were Leamington Y.M.C.A. (founded 1920), and Leamside (1923), while shortly after the war ended a Leamington Lawn Tennis Club was founded...” (see App: 18)

An advertisement appeared in the Royal Leamington Spa Courier and Warwickshire Standard of 3rd May 1946 announcing the opening of the Leamington Lawn Tennis Club. (see App: 19)

An article in the Coventry Evening Telegraph of 11th April 1962 (see App: 20) reported the merger of Warwickshire Croquet Club (incorporating Milverton Lawn Tennis Club) and the Leamington Lawn Tennis Club to be known as the Leamington Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club. In the article it was stated:

“The Leamington Club was formed in 1922 and the same ground in Leam Terrace has always been the venue..... At Milverton, the Milverton Lawn Tennis Club started in 1902, on grounds at the rear of St. Mark's Church, and the Leamington Croquet Club...shared the same ground. But the popularity of croquet was such that in 1928 they bought their own ground in Guy's Cliffe Avenue and became the Warwickshire Croquet Club.”

Milverton LTC moved onto the Guy's Cliffe site in 1948. The Leam Terrace site was sold in 1962 and the two clubs pooled finances on merger. Bill Gibbons published very much the same information in his 'Royal Leamington Spa, The Seeds of Lawn Tennis (1986) (See App: 21)

I and others have been unable to establish any connection between the current the Leamington Lawn Tennis and Squash Club and the original Leamington Lawn Tennis Club of 1874.

Leamington L.T.C. and Edgbaston Archery & L.T.S. – the distinction

It is worth clarifying the distinction between the two clubs as, in certain quarters, there is some confusion regarding their historical, or perhaps even historic, status. Gem and Perera's original Leamington Lawn Tennis Club was the first of its kind to be formed solely for the playing of lawn tennis. The Edgbaston Archery Society (now Edgbaston Archery & Lawn

Tennis Society) was among many existing sports clubs which were early adopters of lawn tennis.

The Edgbaston Archery Society was founded in 1860 with grounds on Hall Hill Road (later Edgbaston Park Road), below the land now occupied by Edgbaston Golf Club. The Society moved to its current location next to the Birmingham Botanical Gardens in 1867. Edgbaston Cricket Club (later Edgbaston Cricket & Lawn Tennis Club, which would merge with the Priory Club in 1964) took over the Hall Hill Road grounds, now occupied by University of Birmingham halls of residence. Major Harry Gem and his wife were members of the Society, Harry between 1864-1867 and his wife 1864-1872, the year they moved to Royal Leamington Spa.

Major Walter Clopton Wingfield launched his Sphairistike game in 1874 and his kits were sold through French & Co of London. French & Co's daybook shows that the first person in Birmingham to purchase a Sphairistike kit was a member of the Calthorpe family, landlords then as now of the Society.

The Society's archive, held at the Library of Birmingham, includes the original minute books and it is clear that Sphairistike/lawn tennis was well established by 1875, when the members were playing in prize competitions. The lawn tennis courts today are in the same position and orientation, occupying the same land where they were laid out 146 years ago. At its annual general meeting of 1877 the Society changed its name to Edgbaston Archery & Lawn Tennis Society, some three weeks before the All England Club included lawn tennis in its title. The All England Club (founded 1868) adopted Sphairistike/lawn tennis in 1875 but moved grounds from Worple Road to Church Road, Wimbledon, in 1922.

Many clubs, which adopted lawn tennis in 1875, have either moved grounds, ceased to exist or no longer play on grass, the result being that no other club can claim Edgbaston Archery & Lawn Tennis Society's unbroken longevity - therefore the Society is the oldest surviving lawn tennis club in the world.

In conclusion

In my opinion Gem and Perera's original Leamington Club may be regarded still as the first club formed solely for the purpose of playing a precursor of lawn tennis. However, in the absence of any proof of a link to the original Gem and Perera club, the current Leamington Lawn Tennis & Squash Club should no longer claim that it is the first or the oldest lawn tennis club.

RMC Holland

Trustee
Edgbaston Archery & Lawn Tennis Society
The oldest lawn tennis club in the world

Founding Trustee
The Harry Gem Project

1st November 2021 Revised: 3rd January 2022

"The game of lawn tennis offers as wide a field for controversy as (do) the Vatican decrees..."
The beginning of J.M. Heathcote's letter published in The Field 5th December 1874.
See page 4 for details of Mr Heathcote.

APPENDIX

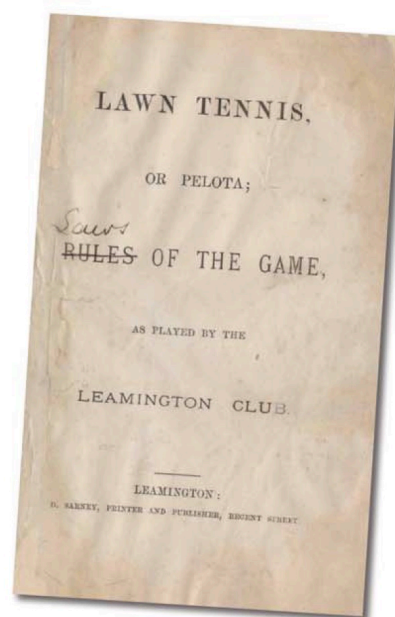
App: 1. Extract: "The Early Years of Lawn Tennis a Guide for Historians & Researchers" (2021) Richard Hillway

14. What was the role of Gem, Perera and the Leamington Club in the beginnings of lawn tennis?

Major Harry Gem and Augurio Perera were friends and sportsmen who became pioneers in lawn tennis by establishing their own form of lawn tennis during 1874, not long after Major Wingfield had invented lawn tennis. Though influenced by Wingfield, as others, they were creative in devising their own particular rules. They borrowed Wingfield's original name of lawn tennis for their own game, but also called it pelota. Gem stated that pelota stood for "any game played with a ball." In early 1875, they changed its name to lawn racquets or pelota. Gem had served as a solicitor and law clerk in Birmingham while Perera was a Spanish merchant who ran a business in Edgbaston. They later both moved their families to Leamington Spa by late 1873. There, along with 2 younger doctors, Frederic Haynes and Arthur Tomkins, in 1874, they founded the Leamington Club, a lawn tennis club at the Manor House Hotel. The club had a single court on its lawn. Their rules differed from those of Wingfield and others. *The Field* of 21 November 1874 printed their rules. Their court was rectangular and large, 90 by 36 feet. Rule 3 stated, "The game may be played with a racquet, five's bat or with the hand." Rule 4 stated that, "The ball should be made of india-rubber or other substance answering the purpose, punctured or not." These rules showed the heavy influence from the games of rackets and fives. The Leamington Club's net was 4 feet high and level all the way across. There were no service lines or special service boxes, but players served into the left and right halves of the court, each of which was 45 by 18 feet. When ladies played, the rackets could be smaller, the balls lighter, and the court smaller. It appears that the Leamington Club's form of lawn tennis, which Gem credited to Perera, was basically private, never spreading to any other clubs, nor having much, if any, influence on the future game.

Two questions arise concerning the games played by Gem and Perera. **First**, what was their 1874 game? **Second**, what game did they play in 1859, fifteen years earlier? That second question will be answered in the next section. Concerning their 1874 game, it is surprising how few contemporary documents have been found that confirm the Leamington game. Not a single document describing it prior to 1874 has been discovered. Only 6 documents from 1874 and early 1875 have surfaced that link Gem and Perera to lawn tennis those years. Two Harry Gem letters describing the Leamington Club's game appeared in *The Field* on 21 November and 5 December 1874. Also, there still exist 2 Leamington Club rulebooks once owned by Gem. One was published in 1874 which offered 15 rules, was 8 pages long, and called their game lawn tennis or pelota. The second was from 1 January 1875, was 12 pages long, including 15 rules, and called their game lawn racquets or pelota. A fifth item was an 8 December 1874 letter from Wingfield to Gem, stating that Wingfield had been working on his game "for the past year and a half." Finally, at the end of the first lawn tennis season at the Leamington Club, on 19 October 1874, Gem wrote his tune, "The Wearing of the Green," reminiscing about the great time members had experienced playing lawn tennis. And that is it - only 6 contemporary documents linking Gem and Perera to lawn tennis, compared to the vast number of documents from that year linking Wingfield with the game.

We know today that the Leamington Club of Gem and Perera was founded in 1874. So how did the false story, which has been told in so many books, originate that Gem and Perera played lawn tennis at Leamington in 1872, two years prior to Wingfield's introduction of the game? The story came from secondary sources published years later. It probably started with Eliezer Edwards when he published a Harry Gem obituary that appeared in the December 1881 issue of *Edgbastonia*, a monthly magazine in Edgbaston.



Above: Front cover of the Leamington Club's first (eight-page) rules booklet printed in 1874. Proof-read and hand-corrected by T.H.G. - "Harry" Gem.



Above: An illustration executed by Major Harry Gem during 1874 or later. It pictures a men's doubles lawn tennis (or pelota) match on the Leamington Club court at the Manor House Hotel.

family, and well known as a racquet player in the days of John Mitchell, George and Frank Erwood, Sam Young, and Patrick Divett [Lord Eglinton's marker]. He first introduced the game fifteen years ago, and it has recently received the name of Pelota, a Spanish word in compliment to its originator (Perera), and signifying any game played with a ball."

So what was "the game" in that paragraph. Some think it was a form of lawn tennis, since the last part of the paragraph refers to the 1874 game at the Leamington Club. But no contemporary document has been found to support the claim of a lawn tennis type game in 1859 - no name of the game, no location, no rules, no other players, no court, nothing. And in 1859 Gem and Perera lived not in Leamington but in Birmingham and Edgbaston respectively.

Could "the game" have been open court rackets? The beginning of the paragraph was all about the game of rackets, and then Gem immediately stated, "He first introduced the game..." Bob Everitt and I both think that they were playing open court rackets. Without more contemporary evidence, neither side can prove its case. But let's examine the written documents from 1874 that support lawn tennis or rackets as their probable early game.

The first supporting document that argued they were playing early lawn tennis was the Eliezer Edwards' obituary of Gem in December 1881, a secondary source. Edwards wrote that Gem, "although not a resident of Edgbaston (Perera was), was connected with it by so interesting an incident - the invention of Lawn Tennis." Edwards continued that "Major Gem was the first to bring that game before the public,..." and that it was "at first called Pelota." He went on, "The first game was played by Messrs. Gem and Perera in the garden attached to the latter gentleman's residence, 'Fairlight,' Ampton Road, Edgbaston, about fifteen or sixteen years ago (1865 or 1866)." Written 7 years after Wingfield had introduced the game, no other early written documents have been found that back up Edwards' contentions. Nothing from 1874 or earlier indicated that Gem had invented lawn tennis or introduced it to the public. The early documents show that Wingfield did those 2 things. Also, no contemporary documents back up the story that Gem and Perera played their game at Perera's home. Had Perera invented a new game in 1859, it would have likely been described in *The Field* that was always looking for new games. Also, Edwards mentioned 1865 or 1866 as the year for their early game, not 1859 which Gem claimed.

What contemporary documents indicated that Perera had introduced rackets, likely open court rackets, in 1859, probably to Gem and his friends? There are a great number of those. Here are some of them.

1. What do we know for certain happened in 1859? By early 1859, Gem and Perera had become members of the Bath Street Racket Club in Birmingham that had recently opened. They were definitely playing closed court rackets in 1859.

2. During 1859, documents show that Perera was playing competitive open court rackets. It is likely that Perera had introduced that game to Gem by then, and that Gem was playing as well. Of course there would have been no reason for newspapers to publicize Gem being one of thousands of Englishmen playing rackets at that time. It was not a new game.

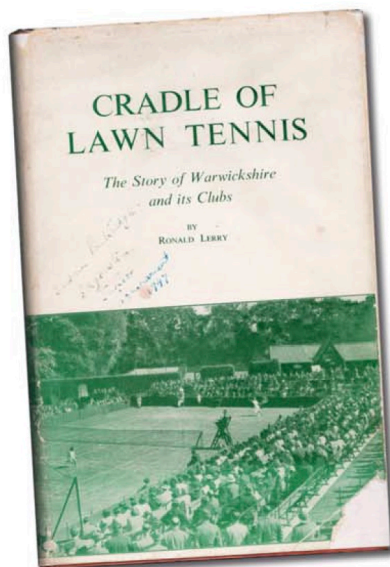
3. In October of 1873, Gem wrote a 6½ page article titled, "Racket Reminiscences," that appeared in print the following year, 1874, in *Baily's Magazine*, Volume 25. Here Gem extolled the benefits of open-court rackets, regretted that its popularity had declined over the years, encouraged its



Above: Originally known as 'Ampton House,' Perera's new residence at 8 Ampton Road, Edgbaston, was eventually given the name 'Fairlight.' The alleged location of a racket game in 1859, despite there being no evidence to support that story.

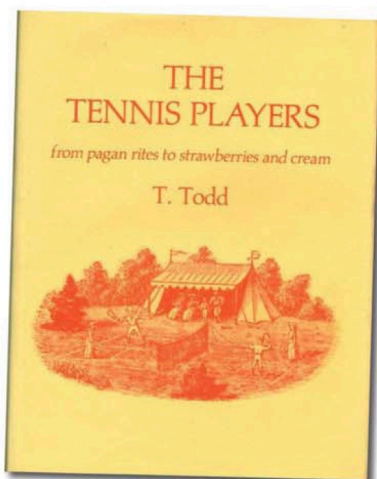


Above: An engraving of the Manor House Hotel in Leamington, printed for the proprietor, Mr. Lamplough, in 1906. From 1874 until 1898 this hotel was the site for the Leamington Club's lawn tennis court.



Above: Ronald Lerry's *Cradle of Lawn Tennis*, published in 1946.

Below: Tom Todd's *The Tennis Players* published in 1979. Both of these books reported the false stories that the Leamington Club was founded in 1872 and that it was the world's first lawn tennis club.



He reported that Gem and Perera had moved to "*Leamington, which was ABOUT 1872*" and had "*established a club there.*" This was the only Gem obituary that mentioned Gem's role in lawn tennis. Three later key lawn tennis books apparently misinterpreted what Edwards had written. First, Ron Lerry's *Cradle of Lawn Tennis* (1946) printed that Gem and Perera "*...in 1872...formed the world's first club, which played on the lawn in the grounds of the Manor House and the name of the game was changed to Lawn Tennis.*" Then Tom Todd in his *The Tennis Players* (1979) wrote that two doctors "*joined with Gem and Perera in forming the Leamington Club, the first lawn tennis club in the world, in the summer of 1872.*" W.G. Gibbons followed in 1986 with his *Royal Leamington Spa, The Seeds of Lawn Tennis*, printing the same false story. The story had changed from Gem and Perera moving to Leamington in "*about 1872*" to their creating a lawn tennis club there "*in 1872.*" Scores of other authors, without any independent research, have carried this untrue story along over the years.

Influenced by these authors, for decades many believed that Gem and Perera had been playing lawn tennis at least as early as 1872 and that they had founded the first lawn tennis club in 1872, the world's first lawn tennis club. It would have been very significant had they founded a lawn tennis club in 1872, two years before Wingfield introduced the game. It would have meant that he was not the inventor. But the 1872 event had never happened. Those pushing the Leamington story had absolutely no proof that the club there had played lawn tennis in 1872. In fact, no one knew when the Leamington Club had been founded or first played their game. That all changed in 2012 when English lawn tennis historian Bob Everitt discovered an article in *The Leamington Spa Courier and Warwickshire Standard* of 24 May 1875 which explained that the Leamington Club "*though recently established, this being only the SECOND YEAR of its existence, is in very flourishing condition.*" That showed the club had begun in 1874, not in 1872. Confirmation came in 2013 when Everitt found another article in the Leamington paper of 2 April 1898. The Leamington Club had recently broken up. The paper noted that the club "*had been in evidence at the Manor House close on a quarter century.*" That meant the club was not quite 25 years old. So Tom Todd and the others who had written the club began in 1872 were wrong. It had started in 1874. The Leamington Club was probably not the first lawn tennis club in the world, since the Prince's Club and the Polo Club at Lillie Bridge, both in London, played lawn tennis in early May of 1874. The exact date that the Leamington Club hosted lawn tennis is unknown, though their game first appeared in *The Field* in November of 1874.

(*The Birth of Lawn Tennis*, pp. 100-122, pp. 504-505)

15. What game had Gem and Perera played in 1859?

I apologize for the length of this answer, but this has been a complex and highly contested topic in the past that is worthy of a full explanation.

The most surprising thing happened regarding the role of Gem and Perera in lawn tennis. Numerous tennis books have portrayed them not just as early pioneers, but as the inventors of lawn tennis who had played the game, or something very similar, as early as 1859. It likely all started with a simple statement made by Harry Gem in his letter printed in *The Field* on 21 November 1874. In referring to his friend Augurio Perera, Gem wrote, "*He introduced the game fifteen years ago...*" What game? What game had Perera introduced fifteen years ago in 1859? And to whom had he introduced it? To help one understand the context of that statement, here is the full paragraph in which it occurred.

"*The (Leamington) club has for its founder Mr. Perera, a gentleman of Spanish*

revival, and stated, "It is not likely that rackets will be numbered with the dead for some time to come..." Gem wrote there about hand-fives, bat-fives, the open-court or Queen's bench game, the English, and the Irish or military game. But no mention was made about lawn tennis, or anything similar to it. Had Gem been playing a form of lawn tennis, it is likely he would have mentioned it here. Also, had lawn tennis existed, there might have been no need to bring back open court rackets.



Above: An amusing 1827 hand-colored image drawn and etched by Theodore Lane picturing open-court rackets played against a wall inside one of London's debtor's prisons. This game was played as early as the 16th century and became popular in prisons.



Above: Thomas Henry "Harry" Gem was a rackets player in Birmingham during 1859 who later became a prominent member of the Leamington (Lawn Tennis) Club during 1874.

4. This is a very significant point. Gem stated that lawn tennis was pelota, and that pelota was "any game played with a ball." To Gem, both lawn tennis and rackets were pelota, games played with a ball. They were different forms of the same game, both played with rackets and a ball. So the Leamington Club's game of lawn tennis, he considered a form of rackets. Logically, it is hard to believe that Gem would not perceive a big difference between rackets where players hit the ball against a wall with both players facing it, and lawn tennis where the players hit a ball over a net while facing each other. Nevertheless, in reading Gem's own written words, this seems to be the case. Remember, lawn tennis was a new game and many did not fully understand what it was at first. Even two years later, an 1876 US newspaper confused lawn tennis with badminton.

5. Here are **four** out of a number of examples from Gem's letter printed in *The Field* of 5 December 1874 that indicate Gem saw lawn tennis as a form of rackets.

5A. Gem wrote that the Leamington game did not distinguish between a "let" or a "fault." He wrote, "A fault is, I believe, more applicable to tennis than to RACQUETS...With us they are synonymous."

5B. Henry "Cavendish" Jones complained that the Leamington court was so large (90 by 36 feet) that "two first rate (lawn tennis) players would never put a ball near each other." Gem wrote that Jones was accusing the Leamington players of having had "few opportunities of seeing in perfection a game (lawn tennis) that is not yet developed..." In response, Gem claimed that "there are those among us who have seen the finest racquet play in the world..." and that they had played against the best men. Where had Gem and others from Leamington seen these fine lawn tennis players? Gem noted, "The groundwork of our system is the OPEN-COURT RACQUET game, as played at Pentonville, Kennington Oval, and in the Queen's Bench and Fleet prisons in former days. We do not profess to be tennis players, and, as 'Cavendish' admits that the game (lawn tennis) is nearer in principle to RACQUETS than tennis, there is no reason to apologize but I humbly beg to indorse his opinion." There was no lawn tennis played at the sites Gem mentioned. They were all centers for the game of rackets, including open court rackets. Gem indicates here that seeing good rackets players in action was the same as seeing good lawn tennis players playing.

5C. In defense of his long tennis court (90 feet) at the Leamington Club, Gem stated, "...for hitting, the court must be a long one, and without it there is no game of RACQUETS worthy of the name." This shows that Gem considered lawn tennis as rackets, or at least a form of rackets.

5D. In discussing his lawn tennis game, Gem wrote, "When we say that a ball must be played into the adversary's list, we mean, what will be understood by any OPEN-COURT RACQUET player, that it must fall from the racquet within the lines, and the player must hit it before it falls again."

6. In January of 1875, Gem and the Leamington Club finally changed the name of their game from lawn tennis to LAWN RACQUETS in their new

rulebook. Gem considered their game a form of racquets. Based upon all these written statements from Gem in 1874, it appears that the game that Gem and Perera played in 1859, introduced by Perera in that year, was rackets, probably open court rackets. (*The Birth of Lawn Tennis*, pp. 106-113)

16. What role did the Marylebone Cricket Club play?

The Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) of London, founded back in 1787, was an important and powerful club in the field of sport during Victorian times. English cricket had thrived after an MCC committee of gentlemen had centralized its regulations. Then in 1872, the MCC Tennis Committee had codified the rules of real tennis. Now, during 1874, lawn tennis appeared to be in trouble. After Wingfield had advertised his lawn tennis, it didn't take long before courts could be spotted throughout the country. But each location seemed to play the game by its own separate rules. An outsider visiting a club for the first time might hear the expression regarding a rule - "Oh! We never do that here." To solve the problem which threatened to lead to the extinction of lawn tennis, the secretary of the MCC, in *The Field* of 28 November 1874, suggested a "properly constituted committee to lay down fixed rules of the game." This seemed strange to some readers since, while a number of London clubs had offered lawn tennis to their members for months and displayed their own courts, the MCC had never offered lawn tennis nor had courts. This changed on 3 March 1875 when the MCC hosted a meeting for all those interested in the future of lawn tennis. Various lawn tennis games were demonstrated on the MCC grounds and then discussed in their Pavilion. Those present with their input included Major Wingfield, John Hale, Henry Jones, John M. Heathcote, and other British lawn tennis leaders. The MCC Tennis Committee, which had revised the real tennis rules 3 years earlier, took the advice given there under consideration and after almost 3 months, announced their new official set of rules on 24 May 1875. Five days later their rules appeared in *The Field* for the public to read. The new MCC rules were titled, *Laws of Lawn Tennis - Revised by the M.C.C.* Prior to the final decision on the MCC rules, on 2 May 1875, Wingfield had mailed a letter to the club secretary, giving the MCC permission to use his hourglass court in its rules. Today that letter is housed in the International Tennis Hall of Fame in Newport. Sadly, many books on tennis history have printed factual errors when describing the MCC rules. Sometimes they have credited the MCC for rules which were actually formulated two years later by the All England Club. This is particularly true in regards to moving from the hourglass court to the rectangular one. Here are some of the MCC's 25 rules, all of which may be found in *The Birth of Lawn Tennis*.

1. The name chosen for the game was "lawn tennis." (Wingfield's original term)
2. The hourglass-shaped court was KEPT. (Wingfield's original shape)
3. The MCC kept the 15 point games of Wingfield and the others in which only the service side could win points. A change was created so now 14-points-all was called deuce, and a player had to win by at least 2 points. (No longer was there a tie-break at 13 or 14-all to 5 or 3 points as in Wingfield's game.)
4. The size of the court was changed to 78 by 30 feet for singles; a doubles court could be larger.
5. The net was now 24 feet wide, an increase from Wingfield's net that had been "about 21 feet wide."



Above: The 1876 M.C.C. rules' booklet which contained their 1875 revised lawn tennis rules. This booklet was one of the very first lawn tennis books with a hard cover, perhaps the first one.

Below: The attractive cover of *Lawn-Tennis* by Jasper Smythe published in 1878, a very early instructional book on lawn tennis.



front man not taking up his position until the returned ball has passed him.
CAVENDISH.

LAWN TENNIS (LEAMINGTON CLUB GAME).

SIR,—Seeing the interest taken in the game of lawn tennis, and anticipating its rapid increase in popularity, especially in the summer season, I venture to inclose for publication the laws which have been framed by the Leamington Club, together with some suggestions on laying out the ground.

LAWN TENNIS OR PELOTA.—LAWS OF THE GAME AS PLAYED BY THE LEAMINGTON CLUB.

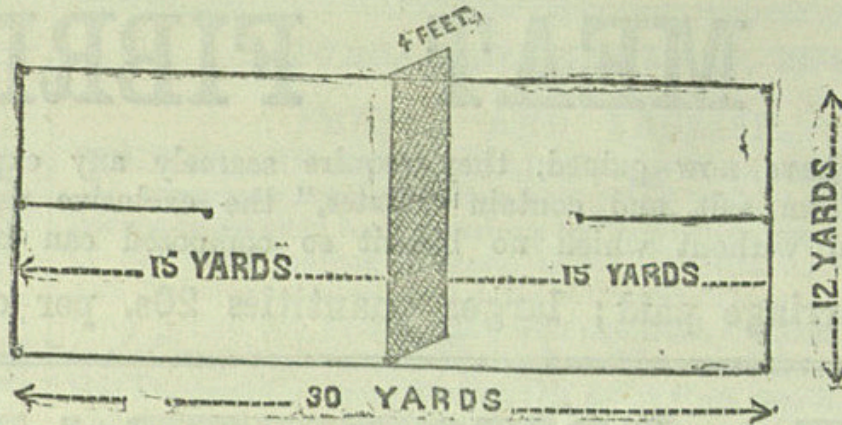
1. The game may be played by two persons, one against the other, and called a single match; by two persons against one, and called a unicorn match; or by four persons, two partners on each side, and called a double match.
2. The ground shall be a right-angled parallelogram marked upon the turf, thirty yards long by twelve yards wide, and divided into two right and two left courts as follows: Across the middle shall be stretched a net four feet high and touching the ground (or nearly so); the division thus formed is called "the lists." The lists shall be centrally divided lengthwise by a line from end to end, forming the right and left courts on either side of the net.
3. The game may be played with a racquet, fives bat, or with the hand.
4. The ball shall be of indiarubber or other substance answering the purpose, punctured or not, as may be agreed upon, or as circumstances require. Its circumference should be about $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches; it must not exceed 8 inches, nor be less than 7; its weight should be about $1\frac{1}{2}$ ounces; it must not exceed $1\frac{1}{4}$ ounces, nor be less than $1\frac{1}{8}$ ounces.
5. Fifteen aces shall be the game, and no setting.
6. The side serving the ball is the inhand, and the inhand only scores.
7. The first inhand and the choice of lists shall be decided by toss; the party winning the toss shall have one first hand only.
8. The ball shall be served by the inhand, with one foot inside and the other outside the boundary line, the inner foot to be within a racquet's length of the line dividing the courts at the time of serving.
9. In serving the ball in unicorn and double matches the inhand shall commence by serving into the court opposite his own proper court, after which he shall serve alternately, first calling "play right" or "play left," according to the court of the player whom he is about to serve; failing to do so or serving the ball into the wrong court is a let. In single matches the inhand may serve into either court, first calling the court into which he is about to serve; failing to do so or serving into the wrong court is a let; two lets to be a hand out. The outland has the option of taking a let ball. If the ball strikes the net, or poles, or does not fall within the lists, the hand is out.
10. The hand is also out if in play he or his partner fail to strike the ball before it shall have touched the ground twice, and return it over, and clear of the net and within the lists.
11. In like manner, he scores an ace if the opposite party do not return the ball over, and clear of the net and poles, and within the lists.
12. If a ball falls on or over any of the boundary lines, or if it touches the net or poles, and then falls into the lists, it is dead, and the point is scored, although the player takes it; but in this case he must call "foul," or the ball will be considered in play.
13. If one partner strikes at a ball the other shall not take it afterwards.
14. The lists shall be changed at the end of each game.
15. The game shall be called on scoring an ace, or putting a hand out.

DIRECTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS.

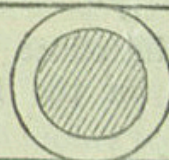
The net, which should be of a light

DIRECTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS.

The net, which should be of a light or conspicuous colour, should be stretched across the ground by means of a strong cord running through rings on the top of five upright poles, standing at equal distances from each other, the outer ones on the lateral lines of the lists, the centre pole on the line dividing the courts, and the other two half-way between the centre and outer poles. The suspending cord should be made fast by a stay or staple, driven into the earth at a sufficient angle to make the structure secure.



TAPE AND



RING

The balls should be white, or as nearly so as they can be obtained, being more visible in an imperfect light than red or any dark colour.

The most serviceable racquet has been found to be the old English or light tennis racquet, the ordinary Irish racquet now in use not possessing weight to give the player a command of the ball.

The ground may be marked by any means the players think proper, either by whitening or by a cord or tape. The objection to whitening is that it disfigures the lawn, and wears out the turf by confining the playground to the same spot. A common hempen cord is ugly, and apt to trip up the players, therefore a white tape such as is used in marking the ground for croquet is recommended. It has the advantage of being moveable, it is more sightly, and defines the ground better than either cord or whitening. The distances may be marked upon it, or there may be a length of tape for each side, so that in laying out the lists, the ground is measured at once, and a parallelogram correctly formed. It can be fastened down by small staples, or common hairpins will answer the purpose. It will not be necessary to lay down the whole length of the longitudinal divisional line, but only so far as shown in the diagram, and that by thinnest possible cord; the eye will be a sufficient guide for the distance unmarked.

The game as prescribed by these rules is more especially adapted to summer and autumn play upon turf by men. For ladies the dimensions of the lists, the weight of the balls, and the size of the racquets may be lessened; but the rules of play will be equally applicable.

The Leamington Club have played the game with racquets of various sizes and make, with balls of different weight and colour, and they have tried nets of other dimensions. They believe they have tested it in all its varieties, and it is on the experience of old racquet players in close and open courts and upon the lawn that they have framed these laws for their own government. In so doing they have endeavoured to simplify the game by leaving it unhampered by unnecessary restrictions, and to give all possible scope to activity and skill.

The club has for its founder Mr Perera, a gentleman of Spanish family, and well known as a racquet player in the days of John Mitche l, George and Frank Erwood, Sam Young, and Patrick Divett (Lord Eglinton's marker). He first introduced the game fifteen years ago, and it has recently received the name of Pelota, a Spanish word adopted in compliment to its originator, and signifying any game played with a ball.

T. H. G.

LAWN TENNIS—LEAMINGTON RULES

SIR,—It was by no means desirable that the laws adopted by the Leamington Lawn Tennis Club should pass without controversy, and I hail with satisfaction the flood of comment which has followed their publication, as conducive to the establishment of a code of rules which shall make this agreeable game intelligible and universal.

Your correspondent, "Cavendish," assumes the office of preceptor, and tells us that we have not mastered the technical terms used in the game, inasmuch as we are unable to distinguish between a "let" and a "fault." A fault is, I believe, more applicable to tennis than to racquets. The origin of these terms is local, and therefore is optional. With us they are synonymous; and, as we have but one class of accidents (*viz.*, in the service), we adopt "let" as the commoner of the two. Your correspondent C. J. L. is less hypercritical, and evidently understands our meaning.

"Cavendish" tells us that in so large a court as 30yds. by 12yds., two first-rate players would never put a ball near each other. Such a result would be singular, to say the least of it, and the play more curious than interesting. It would, however, have the distinction of proving the exception to the generally received rule, that the better the players the better the play. But if "Cavendish" is strong he is merciful, and he gives us a partial pardon on the ground that perhaps we have not witnessed any very fine play. An obscure people, living in the remote fastnesses of Britain, we have had few opportunities of seeing in perfection a game that is not yet developed; but I venture to assert that there are those among us who have seen the finest racquet play in the world, and who, having contended with the best men, are alive to the extraordinary odds of which the game is capable; and, being old stagers, the advice so kindly given by "Cavendish" to the young falls with us in stony places. The groundwork of our system is the open court racquet game, as played at Pentonville, Kennington Oval, and in the Queen's Bench and Fleet prisons in former days. We do not profess to be tennis players; and, as "Cavendish" admits that the game is nearer in principle to racquets than tennis, there is no necessity to apologise, but I humbly beg to indorse his opinion.

One object has been to intersect the court with as few lines as possible, and to enable us to dispense with the service line, we have made striking the net or hitting the ball so as to drop out of bounds a hand out and by allowing only one let we control the server, and compel him to play to a point which the recipient can anticipate.

Your correspondent C. J. L., in alluding to our game, says: "A drop just over the net would be good service." So it would, but as we make the server stand with one foot outside the court, and our lists are fifteen yards apiece, our answer is that it cannot be done. A hard cut service from a good man is difficult to take; but, as a matter of fact, the same ball would travel over a service line, and therefore we consider it useless to have one. The only remedy is raising the net. When we say that a ball must be played into the adversary's list, we mean, what will be understood by any open court racquet player, that it must fall from the racquet within the lines, and the player must hit it before it falls again. We do not allow it to roll, or expect any of those eccentric movements peculiar to the boomerang, and have made no provision for such a contingency. We have ignored the "line ball," because on mathematical principles a ball that is not within a line is without it.

I refer with pleasure to the remarks of Major Wingfield, because he is a gentleman from whom we have all taken suggestions; but the cardinal difference between his game and ours is that his court is of the hour-glass shape, while ours is a perfect quadrangle. We contend that the quadrangle is correct; any other shape produces flukes; a billiard table is quadrangular, and so are all racquet courts, except one at Belfast, where the right hand wall is, or was, like the letter S, and the balls flew off at incalculable angles, to Pat Bogan's delight and my discomfiture. The difference between thirty yards and twenty-eight yards in the length of the court is scarcely perceptible; but Major Wingfield's net being 4ft. 4in. and ours 4ft. makes the change considerable, as it lessens the severity of the play; but, as he evidently appreciated the pleasure of a hard low hit, our principles are the same. The elegant drop and the clumsy poke, the sublime and the ridiculous, may be practised with advantage in any court, but for hitting the court must be a long one, and without it there is no game of racquets worthy of the name.

The rule of our court that one partner shall not take a ball which the other has missed seems to have provoked the greatest amount of opposition. It may not be very material, and was not adopted by us until after much discussion. In the days when racquet playing was general different courts had different rules on this point; but the conclusion we arrived at was, that to allow both partners to strike increased the fun but spoiled the play. The same may be said of setting; there are certainly as many arguments against setting as in its favour. We found that it kept outsiders from playing; but the point is not worth disputing as a general rule.

I have contented myself with defending our own laws without attacking others; but I hope that when some great and recognised authority shall lay down a code for the guidance of the multitude, the game will be simple and the rules intelligible, as some I have seen in print are as incomprehensible to me as to those who have laudably endeavoured to carry them out. Do not let us have laws that it takes a lifetime to learn, and a game that it takes another lifetime to play.

Leamington, Dec. 2.

T. H. G.

App: 5. Leamington Spa Courier 24th July 1875

debate was then adjourned for a week.

THE LAWN RACKETS CLUB.

The members of this Club gave a Garden Party on the beautiful grounds of the Manor House Hotel, kindly placed at their disposal by Mrs. Matthew Wise, on Saturday last. The weather fortunately being favourable, over 100 guests assembled, and spent a most enjoyable afternoon. Among those present were—Colonel and Mrs. Greenway, Major and Mrs. Gem, Rev. Dr. and Miss Bickmore, Mrs. and Miss Bedford-Hall, Mrs. and Miss Taite, Hon. E. Burke-Roche, Mr. Edward Seymour, Mr. E. S. and Mrs. Adams, Mr. and Mrs. Bullock, Miss Wilcox, Dr. and Mrs. Thurstfield, Captain Blocka, Mr. E. Greenway, Mr. G. Wyndham-Croze, Mr. Marriott and Miss E. Taylor, the Misses Bellot (2), Dr. James Thompson, Mr. Smallwood, the Misses Dawkes, Mrs. Rich, Mr. H. A. Homer, Dr. and Mrs. A. Wellesley-Tomkins, Miss Hervey, Miss Mills, Rev. F. Haden-Cope, Mrs. and the Misses Cope (2), Rev. — Hayward, Misses Hayward (3), Mr. W. Wise, Mr. and Mrs. Leake, Captain and Mrs. Copeland, Mr. and Mrs. J. Hinks, Mr. H. Greene, Mr. S. C. and Miss Smith, Mr. J. B. Perera, Mr. Edward Wright, Mr. and Mrs. Denn-Young, Mrs. Lennox Power, Dr. and Mrs. Wyer, Miss Barker, Dr. and Miss Haynes, Mr. F. and Mrs. Baker, the Misses Baker (2), Mr. and Miss Peacock, Dr. Wood, Mr. Brocke, Mr. and Miss Ford, Mr. J. Rose, the Misses Baly (3), Mr. J. Copeland, Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Moore, Mr. and Mrs. Philips, Mr. and Mrs. Rowley Miller, Mr. and Miss Blenkinsopp, Mr. J. R. Jeaffreson, Mr. J. Morris, Miss Savage, Mr. Cary, Dr. and Mrs. Tibbits, Miss Foster, &c. The band of the 2nd Warwick Regiment, under the command of Mr. R. Mander, played a capital selection of music, from four to eight o'clock. The club, though so recently established, this being only the second year of its existence, is in a very flourishing condition, and numbers several "crack" players amongst its members. The title Lawn Rackets has been selected advisedly, as the game really approximates much more closely to Rackets than to Tennis, in the important items of the "service" and the scoring. In many matters of detail the Leamington Club game differs from the Wingfield or what is now termed the Marylebone, since a committee of gentlemen met at Lord's Ground to discuss and publish a set of rules, by which many of existing differences of opinion and uncertainty were to be settled. Certainly the Leamington game is a simpler one to understand and—as the Club asserts—a more difficult game to play. —The difference was clearly exemplified on Saturday last, when the Club *Setting* and that of Wingfield were arranged in close proximity, at once the greater size of the court and its uniform width distinguished the former from the egg-glass shape and smaller dimensions of the Wingfield. However, everybody's taste seemed suited on Saturday, and for those ladies who preferred a less fatiguing game, or one more suited to costumes that might have done honor to Royal Ascot itself, badminton, croquet, and boating offered their respective attractions.

The refreshment department was under the control of Mr. Andrews of the Upper Parade, who certainly deserves a word of praise for the excellence of his arrangements. The wines, &c., were supplied by Mr. Walsh, of the Manor House Hotel. Nothing was left undone by the courteous president or the members to make the re-union a pleasant one. The best proof that the efforts were successful being that, although the invitation cards were, nominally, from four till seven o'clock, at least another hour had elapsed before the majority had left.

The following are the laws of the game of the local club:—

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The following are the laws of the game of the local club:—

1. The game to be played by two persons, one against the other, and called a single match: by two persons against one and called a unicorn match; or by four persons, two partners on each side, and called a double match.

2. The ground shall be a right angled parallelogram marked upon the turf, 30 yards long by 12 yards wide, and divided into two right and two left courts as follows. Across the middle shall be stretched a net four feet high and touching the ground (or nearly so), the division thus formed is called "the lists." The lists shall be centrally divided lengthwise by a line from end to end, forming the right and left courts on either side of the net.—3. The game shall be played with a racket, five's bat, or with the hand.—4. The ball shall be of india-rubber or other substance answering the purpose, punctured or not, as may be agreed upon, or as circumstances require. Its circumference should be about 7½ inches,—it must not exceed 8 inches nor be less than 7. Its weight should be about 1½ ounces,—it must not exceed 1½ ounces nor be less than 1½ ounces.—5. Fifteen aces shall be the game and no setting.—6. The side serving the ball is the in-hand, and the in-hand, only, scores.—7. The first in-hand and the choice of lists shall have the first hand only.—8. The ball shall be served by the in-hand with one foot inside and the other outside the boundary line, the inner foot to be within a racket's length of the line dividing the courts at the time of serving.—In serving the ball in unicorn and double matches the in-hand shall commence by serving into the court opposite his own proper court, after which, he shall serve alternately, first calling "play right," or "play left," according to the court of the player whom he is about to serve; failing to do so, or serving the ball into the wrong court is "a let." In single matches the in-hand may serve into either court, first calling the court into which he is about to serve: failing to do so, or serving into the wrong court is a let—two lets to be a hand out. The out-hand has the option of taking a let ball. If the ball strikes the net or poles or does not fall within the lists the hand is out.—10. The hand is also out: if in play he, or his partner fail to strike the ball before it shall have touched the ground twice and return it over and clear of the net and within the lists.—11. In like manner he scores an ace if the opposite party do not return the ball over and clear of the net poles and within the lists.—12. If a ball falls on or over any of the boundary lines, or if it touches the net or poles and then falls into the lists it is dead and the point is scored, although the player takes it, but in this case he must call "foul," or the ball will be considered in play.—13. If one partner strikes at a ball the other shall not take it afterwards.—14. The lists shall be changed at the end of each game.—15. The game shall be called on scoring an ace or putting a hand out.

It may be added that a splendid assortment of the appliances of the game, and of every other fashionable pastime, may be seen at Mr. H. Bown's well-known archery and tennis depot, 8, Victoria terrace.

CORONER'S INQUEST.

Mr. W. S. Poole, district coroner, held an inquest at the George Inn, on the body of George Laton, journeyman

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THE LAWN TENNIS CLUB.

For some time past one of the most healthful and pleasant of lawn pastimes has been practised by a local club on the grounds of the Manor House hotel. Lawn Tennis is one of the newest, and the most popular games of the day. It was evidently suggested by the game of Badminton, which is better adapted for small lawns and ladies, and in fact can be carried out in a parlour or ordinary grass plot; whilst Lawn Tennis belongs to the more active and lissome portion of mankind and requires a larger space. The materials are inexpensive, and our enterprising Mr Bown, of the Archery Depot, has them in store complete. The game has found a home at Hurlingham and for the advantage of those who do not know the game, we append the Hurlingham latest rules for their guidance.

LAWNS OF LAWN TENNIS—REVISED BY THE M.C.C.

The Court and Terms used in the Game.

1. The court shall be divided into two equal parts by a net attached to two posts 7 ft. in height, 24 ft. apart. The height of the net at the posts shall be 5ft., at the centre 4 ft. At a distance of 39 ft. from the net, lines 30 ft. in length shall be marked out parallel to it, called base lines, and also lines from the posts to the extremities of these lines. The court shall also be divided lengthways by a line called the central line into two equal parts, which shall be called right and left courts; and lines shall be marked out parallel to the net at a distance of 26 ft. from it, which shall be called service lines.

2. The players shall occupy the courts on each side of the net. He who serves, i.e., delivers the first stroke, is said to be 'Hand in,' and alone is able to score; if he loses a stroke he shall become 'Hand-out,' and his adversary shall become 'Hand-in,' and serve.

3. The ball shall be served by the 'Hand-in,' who shall stand so that one foot shall be without the base line of the court. He shall serve from the right and left courts alternately, so that the ball shall drop between the net and the service line of the court diagonally opposed to that from which it was delivered.

4. It shall be a fault if the service shall drop in the wrong court or beyond the service line. If the Hand-in serves a fault, he shall serve again from the same court. If the Hand-out shall take or attempt to take a fault, the service shall be treated as good.

5. The service shall not be volleyed by the Hand-out i.e., taken before it shall have touched the ground.

6. To return a ball is to play it back over the net before it has touched the ground a second time.

The balls shall be hollow, made of indiarubber; they shall be 2½ in. in diameter, and 1½ oz. in weight. Balls covered with white cloth shall be used in fine weather.

N.B.—The dimensions of the court are given as they exist at Lord's, but are not laid down arbitrarily. They will be found generally suitable for single matches. The dimensions of the court may be altered to suit the capacity of the players or the state of the ground, provided that the distance from the net to the service line shall be proportionately lengthened or reduced.

The Game.

8. At the beginning of the first game the players shall toss for choice of courts and the right to serve. In subsequent games the winner of the last game shall serve, but courts shall be changed at the end of every game.

9. The Hand-in shall not serve until the Hand-out shall be prepared; but if the Hand-out takes or attempts to return the service it shall be treated as good.

10. The Hand-in shall win a stroke and score one point if the Hand-out fails to return the service or any subsequent stroke; or strikes the ball in play so that it shall drop out of the court; or volleys the service.

11. The Hand-in shall be Hand-out if he fails to serve the ball over the net; or if he serves it so that it shall drop out of the court; [or] if he makes two successive faults; or if he fails to return the ball in play so that it shall drop into the court.

12. Either player shall lose a stroke if the ball in play shall touch his hand, or any other part of his person, or his clothes, or if he shall strike the ball more than once.

13. Lawn Tennis is played by the game. The player who first scores 15 aces shall win the game.

14. But if both players reach 14 the score is called 'Deuce.' Another point called 'Vantage' is then introduced, and a player, in order to score game, must win two points in succession, viz., vantage and game; otherwise though he may have won vantage, if he should lose the next stroke the score returns to deuce.

15. A ball which drops on any line shall be considered to have dropped into the court marked by that line.

16. It is a good service or return, although the ball shall touch the net or either of the posts.

Double Matches.

17. The above rules shall also apply to the four-handed game, with the following additions:—

18. At the commencement of the game, one partner only of the side that is Hand-in shall serve; when he or his partner shall have lost a stroke the other side shall be Hand-in.

19. During the remainder of the game, when the Hand-in who first serves shall have been put out, his partner shall serve, so that before the side is Hand-out both partners shall have been put out.

20. The Hand-in shall deliver the service in accordance with Rules 3, 4, and 5, and his adversaries shall return the service alternately, but in subsequent strokes the partners may occupy any position in the court they may find advisable.

21. If the service be delivered in the wrong court, it may be taken by either adversary.

N.B.—If one player plays against two adversaries, he will be Hand-in twice, except at the commencement of the game.

Handicaps.

22. HALF COURT. The giver of odds may elect into which half court he will play. He will lose the stroke if he play the ball so that it fail to drop into that half court.

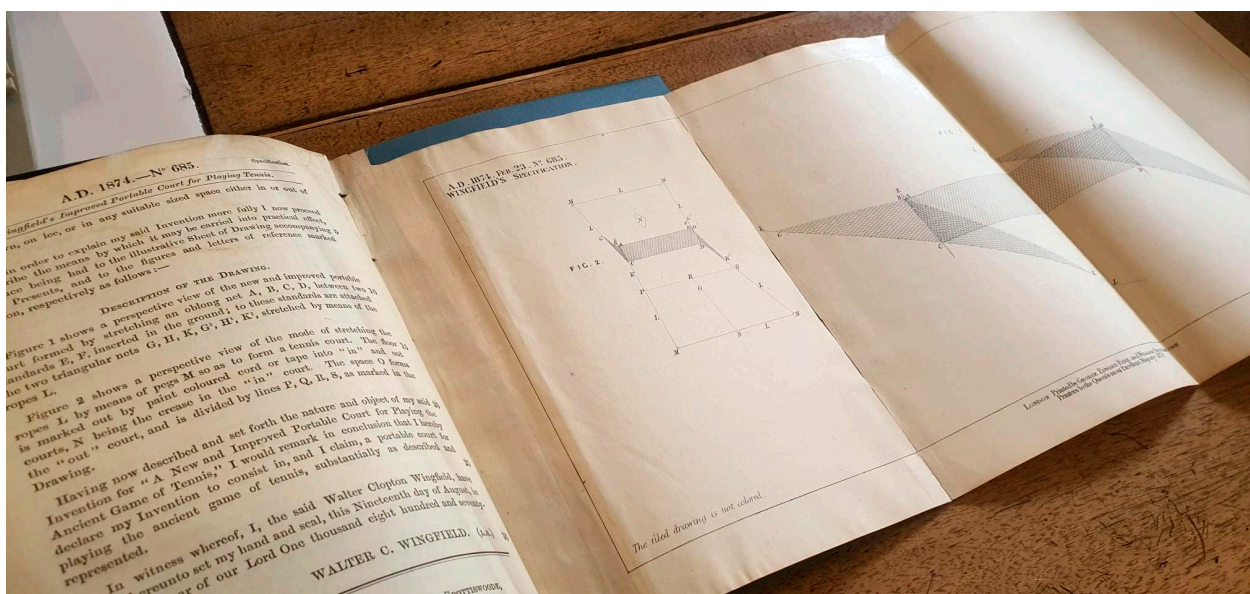
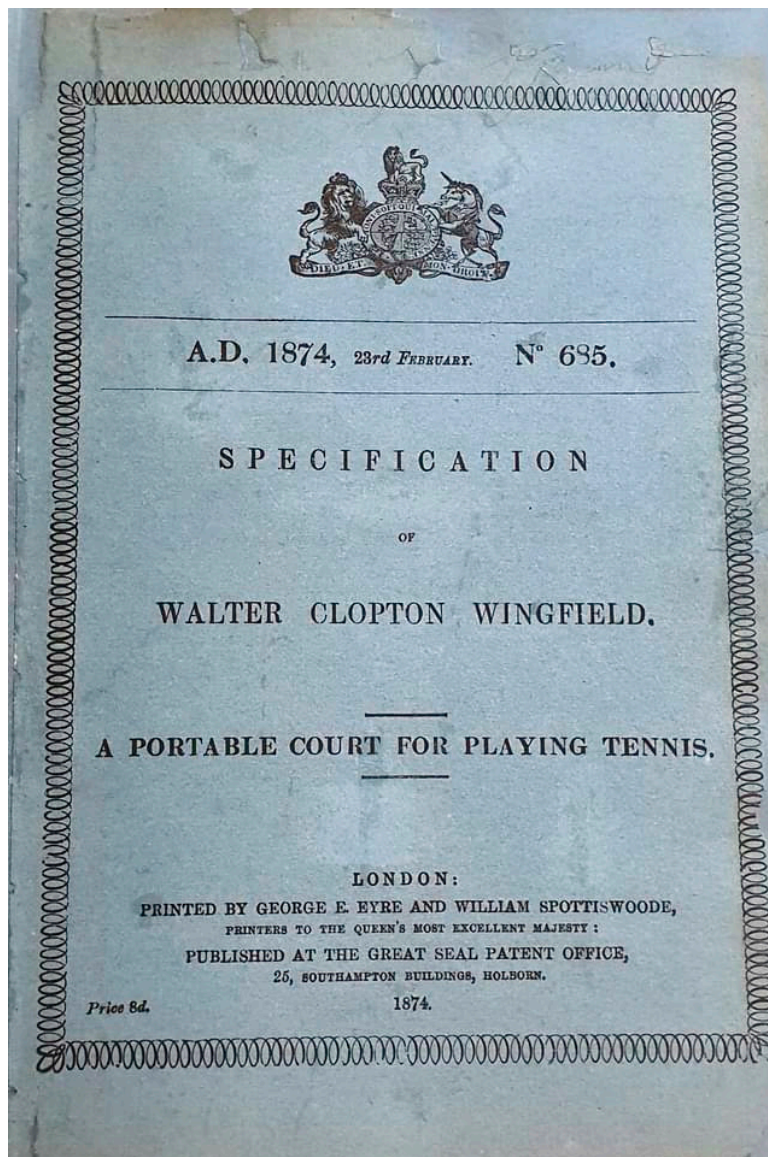
23. A cord may be stretched between the posts at a height of 7 ft., or any other height agreed upon, and the giver of odds shall play every ball over the cord or lose a stroke.

24. A player may give his adversary points.

25. A player may concede to his adversary the privilege of being Hand-in two or more times.

As lawn tennis can be played by ladies as well as gentlemen, it appears likely to supersede most of our outdoor amusements, besides, it is of the great novelties of the season and fashionable; therefore, it is likely to be taken up in most country houses during the summer months.

App: 7. Wingfield's Portable Court for Playing Tennis.
Letters Patent A.D. 1874, 23rd February. N° 685



App: 8. "The Classic Guide to Tennis" 1882 J.M. Heathcote

the local but very vulnerable Achilles, amid the plaudits of his village, drags down to the dust the reputation of a previously unconquerable Hector. But this stage also is transitory, and as it has been in history, so in lawn tennis it is followed by the monarchic period. The people will have a king to reign over them. The tribes, by conquest, mutual attraction, or otherwise, are compelled to coalesce. The longing for a settled government, as well as for easier means of intercourse with neighbours, creates a nation, and the nation, when created, bows down at the feet of the most powerful agent within itself, be it individual or association. So the scattered tribes and families of lawn tennis submitted themselves in the first instance to the Marylebone Cricket Club, and afterwards to other associations that will be described in their several places; and so this epoch also comes to an end, and the reign of law and order is inaugurated. But the march of intellect continues. The yearning for independence, the impatience of control not self-imposed, and the jealousy that autocratic power, though it be that of the Antonines, inspires, leads in time to an irresistible demand for representative government.

It is not home rule that is demanded, but federalism, in order to secure an equality of rights and a better adjustment of power, and thus the polity of lawn tennis passes at last into its final stage, and a republic of equal and co-ordinate clubs meeting in association is the supreme realisation of the aspirations that have swayed and directed the minds of lawn tennis players throughout the mythical, the legendary, the anarchic and the despotic eras in succession.

So far as this analogy holds good in respect to lawn tennis, the title of earliest lawgiver, as well as much of the credit of civilizing the game by introducing it to the notice of the public, is undoubtedly due to Major Wingfield, who in the year 1874, patented a game to which he gave the name of sphairistike; but the root must be sought much deeper, and conjecture may amuse itself by deriving the germs of Major Wingfield's game, and the main features of lawn tennis, from any or all of the pastimes that have preceded it, of which the principle has been the striking and returning of a ball or shuttlecock across a net or cord, whether by the agency of the hand, a battledore, or a racket, whether the game be called pallone, longue paume, handball, tennis,

sphairistike, or badminton. The earlier notices of tennis would seem to indicate that it was played in the open air, and that the erection of courts was the invention of a later age. If this is so, lawn tennis may claim a higher dignity and a longer pedigree, while it loses the right to any merit on the ground of originality. Some form of out-of-door tennis seems to have been played almost from time immemorial, though the notices of it are so few and scattered as to suggest that its sporadic reappearances were experimental only, and failed to attract general interest. Towards the close of the last century, however, some such revival proved so popular that 'field tennis' is mentioned in the *Sporting Magazine* of September 1793, as a dangerous rival even to cricket. There are records of a similar game dating from around the year 1834, described under the name of 'long tennis' in a book entitled *Games and Sports*, being an appendix to *Manly Exercises and Exercises for Ladies*, by Donald Walker (Thomas Hurst, St Paul's churchyard, 1837). The Leamington Club claimed to have been acquainted with it for fifteen years before the revival by Major Wingfield, while it is said to have been played at Sir W. Scott's country seat, Ancrum in Roxburghshire, around the year 1864, as well as near Leyton around 1868. Lord Arthur Hervey, now Bishop of Bath and Wells, when the exigencies of his profession debarred him from his favourite game of tennis, had with his family and guests for many years played a substitute founded on tennis, and scored in tennis fashion, on the lawn of his rectory in Suffolk.

In more remote antiquity, even the patronage of Royalty is not wanting, for it is recorded that 'when Queen Elizabeth was entertained at Elvetham in Hampshire, by the Earl of Hertford, after dinner, about three o'clock, ten of his servants, Somersetshire men, in a square green court, before her Majesty's windows, did hangup lines, squaring out the form of a tennis court, and making a cross line in the middle; in this square they played, five to five, with handball, with bord and cord, as they tearme it, to the great liking of Her Highness' (Nicoll's *Progress of Queen Elizabeth*). It is probable that these instances might be largely increased by a diligent inquirer who should consider the search to be worth making. However that may be, it is certain that a species of lawn tennis, closely resembling in principle, if not in detail, that of the

THE INVENTION OF LAWN TENNIS.

SIR,—I think it but fair and right you should know the game of lawn tennis was first invented, patented, brought out, and christened "Sphairistiké" by my friend Major Wingfield; also, that he has compiled and published the rules of the game, of the which those published by "Cavendish" and T. H. G. in your paper of the 21st inst. are but imitations, and likely to mislead the public into taking the said "Cavendish" and T. H. G. to be the inventors of lawn tennis and its rules.

W. H. SITWELL.

Ferney Hall, Craven Arms, Shropshire, Nov. 27.

[We insert Mr Sitwell's letter, but are unable to reconcile it with several other letters we have published, and which we conclude he cannot have read. Major Wingfield undoubtedly, at the beginning of the present year, took out a patent for certain appliances for playing lawn tennis; and, by the energetic way in which he has pushed the game, under the name of "Sphairistiké," he has caused it to be very widely adopted. Nevertheless, it would appear that the game was known for years before Major Wingfield took out his patent, although doubtless Mr Sitwell was unaware of the fact, as were we and many others. Shortly after we published a description of the game of "Sphairistiké," G. C. C. wrote (*Field*, July 4) objecting to the game being called a new one, saying, "It has been played in my neighbourhood (Leyton, Essex) for upwards of six years." T. H. G., whose letter with the rules of the Leamington Club appeared in our impression of Nov. 21, said that Mr Perera, the founder of that club, introduced the game fifteen years ago. Capt. G. Peter Moore, in a letter we published on Oct. 31, showed that the game, although differing somewhat in details, had been known for a much longer period, as he accompanied his letter by a drawing copied from Walker's "Sports and Pastimes," a book printed in 1837, showing how the game was played in those days. Whatever credit, therefore, may be due to Major Wingfield for spreading the knowledge of the game, and introducing improvements, he can scarcely be said to have "*first* invented" it. And supposing that he himself knew nothing of what had been done by others, he would be by no means the first person who had unknowingly re-invented what was in existence.—ED.]



LAWN TENNIS.

I. INTRODUCTORY.

OF the absolute *Origin of Lawn Tennis* little or nothing is known. It cannot be said to have sprung directly from Court Tennis—the game described in all the books—but is rather, as I take it, a return to the ancient game, antecedent to the Side and End Walls, the Pent-house, the Dedans, and, above all, to the Chases which belong especially to Tennis proper, of which I shall have something to say by-and-bye.

The introduction of Lawn Tennis into English society is generally, and I think correctly, ascribed to Captain Wingfield. But he certainly did not invent it. On the contrary, it has been played on the lawns of country houses from time immemorial. It is,

there can be little doubt, a modification of the well-known French game, which, in its turn, is a modification of the Greek and Roman ball-play so frequently mentioned, and so little understood, by all the writers who undertake to enlighten us on the occupations and amusements of the ancients.

Lawn Tennis began to attract attention in the spring of 1873. It had been mentioned from time to time as a good sort of outdoor game; but it had not been taken as a fashionable amusement till Croquet had pretty well run its course. As long ago as 1862 I advocated its practice in these words: "I see no reason why a space marked off in a field or playground would not as well serve for Tennis as an elaborately furnished and covered gallery. Let players try and make a game for themselves, unencumbered by the restrictive rules which govern this ancient and scientific pastime."

Was not that a prevision of Lawn Tennis?

In France, even as early as the times of Louis XIV., Lawn Tennis was occasionally played as an open-air game. To Captain Wingfield, however, is due the merit of reviving a game which, according to a respectable old writer, was not unfamiliar to our ancestors. He tells us that when, in 1591, the Earl of Hertford entertained Queen Bess at Elveham,

Wynnstay
Rhynabon

Tuesday 8th Dec^r

My dear Sir.

I send you my book of
Rules. which have not been
written off in a hurry but are
the combined experiences of
many good players. and
judging from the numerous
letters I now receive the Public
seem satisfied with them.

I write no more to the
Field

October 19th, 1874.

W.H.G.

which paper I leave for
Messrs Hale & Cawendish to
flatter each others vanity
in. and shall remain
satisfied with the few
people who are good enough
to say that my exertions
for the past year and
half have afforded them

a new and healthy
amusement.

Thanking you for your generous
& gentlemanly letter in the field
of last week (a striking
contrast to the conceit of
Messrs Hale & Cawendish)

I remain
Yours truly
Wat Wingfield

October 19th, 1874.

P.S. My address after Thursday
will be - Army & Navy Club. London.

purpose. It was the happy conjunction, therefore, of the india-rubber ball and of the ingenious Captain Wingfield which resulted in the game known as Lawn Tennis.*

Lawn Tennis players will remember how when the game was first played in this country, no little anarchy prevailed as to the markings of the court, the rules of the game, and even the sort of balls and racquets to be used. A dozen schemes of play were proposed and fought over by eager correspondents in the columns of the *Field*, and endless discussion arose whenever players got together who were not accustomed to play on the same kind of court and with the same rules; and it was not till the end of last May that something like uniformity was introduced by the publication of the Marylebone Club Rules. With that proper respect for law and order which distinguishes our people, we at once gave in our adhesion to the new code of this central authority, and the Marylebone Rules are obeyed at this moment in ninety-nine courts out of a hundred. Nevertheless, I suppose no intelligent person but knows that these new regulations are

The Origin and Birth of Lawn Tennis

BY L. H. J. DOREY

PART III

The rules of Mr. J. H. Hales, one of many inventors of lawn tennis, provided that the ball must bounce *twice* within the court as "modern dress prevents ladies from running backwards and forwards." This suggestion evidently incensed Major Wingfield who defended "his" game in the columns of "The Field" as follows: "The necessity of my rules is evident from the many letters I receive asking questions how the game should be played. I have no wish to threaten with these rules, but I have to do my duty as a father, and see that this child of my brain is properly brought up, and not played by the laws of tennis or rackets. I myself think my present half-dozen rules simple and good: but if other people do not, I should be greatly obliged if they would make suggestions to improve them in my new edition of my rules."

* * *

The rule-makers were not slow in coming forward with suggestions for improving Wingfield's game. Here is a selection from the contemporary Press:

"I do not think any lady can or will ever be able to play the game, as it is very hard work for a man, and dress is such a drag. Badminton is more adapted for ladies." Or again, "Ladies should serve from the centre of the court and men from the baseline." "A lady should be allowed to refuse as many services as she likes."

Others contended that net-cords should count against the striker as "they are flukes." The first knotty point was: "Is it allowable to catch and balance a ball upon the battledore and carry it thereon up to the net, and then hit it over? Sometimes the ball does not bound sufficiently to be hit properly over the net, but is able to be balanced on the battledore."

In November, 1874, came intervention by public bodies. The secretary of the M.C.C. suggested that the many varieties of the new game be submitted to the "Tennis Court Committee at Lord's Ground," and he convened a public exhibition at Lords in March, 1875, when all interested were invited to attend.

All parties pressed their case. The main discussion centred round the bound of the ball and whether a perforated ball should be used or an unperforated one. In the outcome Major Wingfield obtained adoption of his hour-glass-shaped court and first bounce rule: the size of the court and service from the baseline (rather than from the service line) was adopted from Hales's game. Apparently the Edgbaston interests were not represented, though when a sub-committee came to draft rules, some of Gem's rules were adopted.

* * *

Thus lawn tennis had several foster-parents, and three mothers—tennis, rackets and badminton—and was weaned by cricket and croquet—thanks to the intervention of the M.C.C. and the adoption of lawn tennis by the All England Croquet Club.

So in May, 1876, appeared the first official code of rules under the auspices of the M.C.C. Briefly these rules provided for:—

The net 5ft. high at posts and 4ft. at centre.

Length of court 78ft. Baselines 30ft.

Width at net 24ft. (i.e. hour-glass shaped).

Service with one foot outside the baseline.

Faults may be taken.

Ace up to 15. Deuceing the game at 14-all.

The player handicapped plays into a half court or over a 7ft. cord.

The dimension of the court may be altered to suit the capability of the players or the state of the ground.

The most epoch-making feature of the M.C.C. rules was that the service should drop between the net and the service line rather than between service line and baseline as originally laid down in Wingfield's and other inventors' rules. It is of interest to note that Indian badminton has a court 39ft. long; it is possible that the idea of lawn tennis being double the strength of badminton needed a court double the length.

The First Championship

The All England Croquet Club was formed in July, 1868. The original idea was to procure and lay out grounds near London. It was found, however, that the expense of such a procedure would be large, while the supporters of the game were few, and for some time it seemed probable that the club would have to dispense with a local habitation.

In 1869 the club was offered a lease upon favourable terms of grounds at Wimbledon, then a rough field with a slope downwards towards the railway. The club failed to attract members in sufficient numbers and its finances fell into a lamentably low condition, and but for the generosity of a few individuals who came to the rescue it would within a short time have expired.

As a last resource it was decided in 1875 to allow one of the 12 lawns to be set aside for lawn tennis—a momentous step destined to revolutionise the club. The game of lawn tennis was, as we have indicated, in its infancy, the rules varying in different localities according to the fancies of individual players. The immediate effect of the decision was to bring in new members who joined for lawn tennis only. A single lawn soon became insufficient to satisfy the demand and in 1876 an entire terrace was laid out for the game. Concurrently the title of the club was altered by adding the "Lawn Tennis" to its name. In 1882 the word "Croquet" was erased from the club's title but was restored at a later date.

* * *

In 1877 the lawn tennis element had progressed so rapidly that the institution of a lawn tennis championship had become imperative, but instead of adopting M.C.C. rules, the club appointed Henry Jones, Julian Marshall and E. G. Heathcote as a sub-committee to frame special rules for the event. The result was a rectangular court, 78ft. by 27ft.—a mean between the 30ft. court of Hales and the 24ft. hour-glass court of Wingfield—and with scoring as in real tennis. The net was 5ft. at the posts and 3ft 3in. at the centre. Singles only were played and there were 22 competitors.

(To be continued)

—ON THE MOTION OF ALDERMAN GILBERT, seconded by Councillor BURGIS, the matter was left in the hands of the Town Clerk.

THE LAWN TENNIS CLUB.—The TOWN CLERK said that the Leamington Lawn Tennis Club had forwarded a memorial, stating that the club, which was the oldest one of its kind in England, had ever since its commencement had the privilege, through Mrs Wise and the different

12, 1887.

landlords of the Manor House Hotel, of playing in the grounds attached to the hotel, but owing to the present landlord requiring the ground for the use of his family and visitors, the club had received notice to quit. They therefore asked the Council to sublet about an acre of the field adjoining the River Walk, which they understood was leased by the Corporation from Mrs Wise. The club, whose existence was now threatened through want of a ground, might be classed as one of the attractions of a fashionable town like Leamington, and, therefore, trusted that the Corporation would not only see their way to assist the club in its present difficulty, but in the event of the application being granted, would give the matter their earliest possible attention, in order that the ground might be forthwith got in readiness for next season's play.—Alderman GILBERT said he thought it would not be advisable for the Council to sublet any portion of the ground, and he would suggest that the club should be requested to treat directly with Mrs Wise.—The TOWN CLERK said he did not see any difficulty in the way of the Town Council subletting the land. Mrs Wise had leased it to them for 21 years, and they could, with her consent, sublet to the club any portion of it.—Councillor BURGIS moved that the Corporation should grant the prayer of the memorial, as the club was doing a great deal towards popularising Leamington, which was a thing they all desired to see accomplished.—Councillor Dr. EARDLEY-WILMOT seconded and Councillor WARING supported the proposition.—The TOWN CLERK said it was desirable that this matter should be settled at an early date, because unless this was done the club would not be able to lay down the land so that it could be played upon during the ensuing season.—Councillor JOHNSON said he thought the Council should sublet the land at the same rent as they paid. (Applause.)—After some discussion the MAYOR suggested that the Council should let the land to the club at the same rental as they paid to Mrs Wise, on the understanding that the Corporation should not spend any money on it.—This suggestion was adopted on the proposition of Dr. EARDLEY-WILMOT seconded by Councillor BURGIS.

THE IMPERIAL INSTITUTE.—A letter was received from

LEAMINGTON, WARWICK & DISTRICT

Daily Circular.

NON-POLITICAL AND UN-SECTARIAN.

LEAMINGTON TUESDAY, MARCH 22, 1898.
[GUARANTEE]

Auction Sales.

Telegrams : "Collins, Auctioneer, Leamington.

WALTER COLLINS,
AUCTIONER, VALUER, ESTATE AND
HOUSE AGENT,
47, THE PARADE, LEAMINGTON SPA.

Valuations for Probate and Succession Duty
receive personal attention

PRELIMINARY.

Sale of Superior **HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE**,
Oil Paintings, Wines, Books, and General Effects.
removed from Residences in Leamington and Kenil-
worth to the "Central" Sale Rooms, 47, Parade.

WALTER COLLINS
HAS been instructed to **SELL BY AUCTION**,
at an early date, a quantity of useful Household
FURNITURE, etc., as above.

Full particulars in future advertisements.
N.B.—A few more Lots can be included, if
received on or before Thursday next, the 24th inst.

LEAMINGTON AND SUBURBS.

Auction Sales.

Established 1855.
MR. J. HAWKES,
AUCTIONER & VALUER, ESTATE & HOUSE
AGENT.
APPRAISEMENTS FOR PROBATE.
20, THE PARADE, ROYAL LEAMINGTON SPA.
Agent to the Phoenix Fire and Pelican Life Insurance
Companies. 4-7

By **MR. CHAS. FESSEY.**

LEAMINGTON LAWN TENNIS CLUB.

CHAS. FESSEY
Will **SELL BY AUCTION** the whole of the
Property, belonging to the above Club,
ON **TUESDAY, MARCH 29TH, 1898,**
at
THE MANOR HOUSE HOTEL GROUNDS.
Particulars in Catalogues. 29 3

Trade.

MADAME PEERLESS
Has much pleasure in announcing her first

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all the Sce
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direction
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THUR
Mr. Piercy
pen
CE
GRE

Many will join me in deploring the breaking up of the Leamington Lawn Tennis Club, and regret the causes which led to it. These, I need not go into, it is too late in the day—the auction of effects has taken place, and the dismemberment is complete. I am aware that amongst other reasons it may be said that counter attractions such as golf and the cycling of which I have been speaking, have caused tennis "To pale its ineffectual fire," nevertheless it is sad to reflect that Leamington was one of the earliest, if not the earliest places to start a Club in promotion of the game. The Club has been in evidence at the Manor House for close upon a quarter of a century, and has produced some good players, besides initiating the Leamington Lawn Tennis Tournament.

App: 17. 'Cradle of Lawn Tennis' (1946) Ronald Lerry

in a match, he found the two side by side courts joined by one side-line! It was the left-hand side-line for the court on the right, and the right-hand side-line for the neighbouring court. What collisions and explosions there must have been in those happy, hectic days! As an added variation, to give spice to the rallies, there was an apple tree near one net-post overhanging the court. If you hit the tree during a rally it was a let; a cunning lob over the top of its branches was allowed as in play. The late Percy Wood, of Priory Club, was one of the first to bring in the American service and, according to H. W. Payne, when he first played it at the club in question they stopped the match to know if his service was in order!

For the information that follows the writer is indebted to many secretaries, officials and old supporters of clubs, and, by outlining all clubs in the 1939 list, a general idea may be gathered of the county body as it stood at the half-century of its life.

Leamington, as recounted in the opening chapters, claimed to be not only the first lawn tennis club in the county but in the world, and there is no doubt the Royal Spa town played an important part in the development of the game in its early days. The Leamington Club's annual tournament was as important as the Midland Counties Championship meeting; the open championships of Warwickshire were played there, and, generally, it was a lively centre. As a club it seems to have played little part in the county association affairs and apparently did not have a long life, though the tournament it founded survived for many years in the Jephson Gardens. Now there is a new Leamington club founded only this year.

After Leamington the first club in the county to take up the game appears to have been the **Edgbaston Archery and Lawn Tennis Society** (founded 1860), although Edgbaston Cricket and Lawn Tennis Club, and the Solihull Lawn Tennis Club (1873) must run it fairly close. As to clubs formed exclusively for the playing of lawn tennis, Solihull (1873) appears to come next to Leamington, followed by the Priory and Rugby clubs (1876). Edgbaston Archery and Croquet Society, as Edgbaston Archery and Lawn Tennis Society was originally called—now invariably known as "The Gardens" because of its home in the Botanical Gardens—seems to have adopted lawn tennis at least before the year 1875 (two years before Wimbledon started) seeing that a circular of that year contained the following announcement:

"Weekly meetings are held during the summer for archery, croquet and lawn tennis, at which numerous prizes are distributed".

The society had been started for the practice of archery fifteen years earlier, with Mr. George L. Aston, of Augustus Road, as first secretary. It apparently ran competitive meetings in style and used to have a military band from Great Brook Street where there was a barracks. There are several references in the minutes—long carefully preserved by Percy Stone, for years associated with the

App: 18. 'Cradle of Lawn Tennis' (1946) Ronald Lerry

in 1911, and included in the company present were R. C. Heath and G. F. Squires—two of the original members.

During the first Great War the club, by strict economy, sub-letting some of the courts to the Girls' High School, and accepting officers and cadets in the neighbourhood, as short term temporary members, managed to weather the storm. The club lost five members of the 38 who served. The years that followed were prosperous and for some years the tournament brought in money so that hard courts could be laid down and improvements made. Two lady captains of the county team, Mrs. Pratt and Mrs. Nelson Smith, were members.

Among those to whom this historic club is indebted are the following: R. C. Heath, 1861, first president and founder of the club; the Rev. H. G. Willacy, captain, 1884, who saved the club from extinction; James Plucknett, secretary, 1899-1906, responsible for planning and erecting the pavilion, forming the club into a limited company and arranging a lease with the Warwick estate, and organising the first open tournament; W. Glover, tournament organiser, 1907-1922; W. Cooke, a member for 52 years, assistant secretary to the tournament for many years and one who spent many leisure hours improving the flower beds and layout of the club; A. V. C. Dunsford, 1907-1935, who was by turns (and sometimes simultaneously) assistant secretary and/or assistant treasurer, secretary and/or treasurer, organised the tournament from 1922 until 1935 when ill-health compelled him to retire from office; G. A. L. Bradford, captain, 1938, devoted many hours to improving the courts. Many others, too, can claim to have had a share over the years in converting what was once an unsightly marsh into one of the beauty spots of Warwick.

The club had the good fortune to prosper during the second Great War when the playing membership rose from 114 to nearly 200 with the admission of members of the Forces and civil servants quartered in the district, all of whom were allowed in without entrance fee. Where the stay was short, weekly and monthly subscriptions were accepted, with the result that many new friends and members in all parts were made. Play was confined largely to the week-ends. During 1943 and 1944 large sums were raised by exhibition matches and wounded soldiers were entertained. Against this must be set the fact that there were hardly any river-worthy boats, tennis nets were in a parlous condition and the motor mower was on its last cylinder; but the club was in good heart and looking forward to many years of prosperity.

Two other clubs in the area affiliated before the war were **Leamington Y.M.C.A.** (founded 1920), and **Leamside** (1923), while shortly after the war ended a **Leamington Lawn Tennis Club** was founded and the **Lockheed Sports Club** also joined the Association.

Stratford-on-Avon is another of the old centres where a club was in being long before the county association was formed. Its membership

<p>MEMBERS: Mr. J. C. Stille, A. Carter, Dr. F. M. Hirsch, Dr. E. Clayton, Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Buck-Crosby (head postmaster) and Keen (rep. the G.P.O.), Mr. Home (rep. the Lillingston), Mr. H. A. M. Lewis (rep. Red Ambulance Division), Davey, Mr. D. V. Tandy, Mrs. M. P. Ponce, Mr. G. (rep. the N.U.T.), Mrs. S. W. Brannan, Mrs. W. H. Edith Rosser, Miss E. Lyth, Miss C. Bird, Mrs. A. Raynor, Mrs. Hobson, Sister Mr. G. J. Ireland, Mrs. A. Mary Benedict, Sister Mary Mr. John Lawler, Mrs. B. G. Middleton, Mrs. A. Hal-Thomas Norton, Mrs. A. S. G. N. Hunter, Miss May, Mrs. E. Proxitt, Mr. and Mrs. A. Miss L. Butler, Miss Davies, wards, Mr. J. Griffin, Mrs. E. Grady, Miss Stella John, Mrs. (rep. the National Pro-), Mrs. R. Crammore, Miss F. H. Ward, Miss Coyne, Mr. Godfrey, Mrs. B. Roach, Mr. Mrs. H. Wilkinson, Miss J. Kennedy, Mr. D. A. Ken-Sumner, Mr. W. Bromley, Mrs. Miss Wells (rep. Mrs. C. H. R. Haynes Miss A. Griffin, T. C. Hughes, Miss M. Adams, Sister, Mrs. J. K. Tonkin, Mrs. Miss Maher, Mrs. Prue, Mrs. E. F. Clemons, Mrs. B. Muldoon, Adams. ent was a large number of from the Roman Catholic</p>	<p>TRANSFER OF FOOD REGISTRATIONS</p> <p>In consequence of a change of owner-ship, persons registered with Mr. R. H. THOMAS, Pratts Farm, Lighthorne, nr. Warwick, for MILK, will have their registrations automatically transferred after May 11th, 1946, to the new proprietors.</p> <p>HYGIENIC DAIRIES. Leamington Spa, unless application for transfer to another milk retailer is made to Southern Food Office before Wednes-day, 5th May, 1946.</p> <p>Announcement by the Ministry of Food.</p> <p>LEAMINGTON LAWN TENNIS CLUB</p> <p>The OFFICIAL OPENING of the Club will take place on SATURDAY, MAY 4th, at 3 p.m.</p> <p>INTERNATIONAL MAY DAY RALLY to VICTORIA PARK.</p> <p>Speakers: SEAN McKEOWN (Chairman, Humber Strike Committee), BERNARD MOORE (Convener, Lockhead), Chairman: Bernard Banning (Shop Steward, A.E.U.). THIS SUNDAY, 3 p.m. Organised by Leamington Communist Party.</p>	<p>SCHOOL</p> <p>28, CLARENDON</p> <p>Pupils received from: to prepare for Public School dual attention and car</p> <p>SOUTHLANDS</p> <p>140, RADFORD ROAD, LE Phone 1</p> <p>Preparatory Day Se garden for Boys and Girls. Small classes. Individual attention, exp and Arithmetic. Food Large Garden. Playg Principals: Mr. and M</p> <p>EDUCATION</p> <p>WRIGHT'S SCHOOL 21, PARK</p> <p>Principals: ERIC WRIGHT, Mem M.M.A.T.D. (B. GILBERT WRIGHT, Fe B. Comm. Adv. M.N.A. M.M.A.T.D. (B.B. GORDON LOW, Mem M.M.A.T. and MARY POLLOCK</p> <p>CLASSICAL</p> <p>Monday: BEGINNER Friday: BEGINNERS 7.30-9.30; 2s PRIVATE LESSONS 8</p>
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Leamington Clubs' Merger Achieved

THE merger between the Warwickshire Croquet Club (incorporating Milverton Lawn Tennis Club) and the Leamington Lawn Tennis Club is now an accomplished fact after some months of negotiations.

The new name will be the Leamington Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club and with a playing strength of 200 every effort will be made to raise the standard of play.

Croquet claims only a small playing membership and there is a Bridge section of 40 members.

FORMED IN 1922

The Leamington Club was formed in 1922, and the same ground in Leam Terrace has always been the venue. Although owning the ground on which two of the four courts stand, a part has had to be rented on a yearly tenancy and there has always been the uncertainty of renewal.

Mr. Brian Pilling, their chairman, said last night that this uncertainty had been one of the reasons for the decision. Although some of the older members were reluctant to say good-bye to the courts they had known and played on for so many years, 75 per cent. were happy to go on with the merger.

At Milverton, the Milverton Lawn Tennis Club started in 1902, on grounds at the rear of St. Mark's Church, and the Leamington Croquet Club was founded several years later and shared the same ground.

But the popularity of croquet was such that in 1928 they bought their own ground in Guy's Cliffe Avenue and became the Warwickshire Croquet Club.

STRONG JUNIOR TEAMS

In 1948 the circumstances of Milverton L.T.C. changed and once more they joined with the croquet club and moved to Guy's Cliffe Avenue.

Now there is a trinity of the local clubs, and although croquet may be said to be on the decline, it is considered that with a strong junior tennis membership future standards of this game will move upwards.

Mr. H. R. Watson, chairman of the Guy's Cliffe Club, said the merger was welcomed by the majority of their members and there had been a happy atmosphere prevailing at all the negotiations.

He said they had six grass courts and two hard courts and two more hard courts were to be constructed. Two further hard courts would be constructed later on.

FINANCES TO BE POOLED

The finances of the two clubs will be pooled and it is considered that there will be an income sufficient to make improvements to ground and pavilion.

The Leam Terrace property will be sold. Although standing in the books at an almost nominal sum the Guy's Cliffe grounds would be worth many thousands of pounds on the market.

Mr. Watson said "both existing clubs hold the view that only by combining can we offer first-class facilities and build up a single club which will be worthy of Leamington in every way."

The new club will open its tennis season in May. Bridge and croquet will continue as before with a build-up of the social side for all members.

It is not certain just how long Gem's original Leamington Club lasted but it would seem that it was less than 15 years.

The present **Leamington Lawn Tennis Club** at Guyscliffe Avenue, Milverton, had its beginnings at the Milverton Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club which was established in 1902 on lawns at the rear of St. Marks Church. The croquet section of this Club moved to the present Guyscliffe Avenue ground in 1928 and became known as the Warwickshire Croquet Club.

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Following this, in 1948, the two clubs joined together again and tennis has remained on the site ever since.

Leamington's Leamside Tennis Club, of Leam Terrace East (affiliated in 1923), amalgamated in 1962 with Guyscliffe Avenue Club which then became known as the Leamington Lawn Tennis Club. At the moment the Club has 7 grass and 6 hard courts, while 3 of the grass courts will shortly be replaced by new synthetic grass ones. There is also a flourishing Squash Club which started in 1973. This vigorous Club happily proves that lawn tennis is still very much alive in Leamington and not just a past event in the history books. No doubt Harry Gem would be indeed satisfied.

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