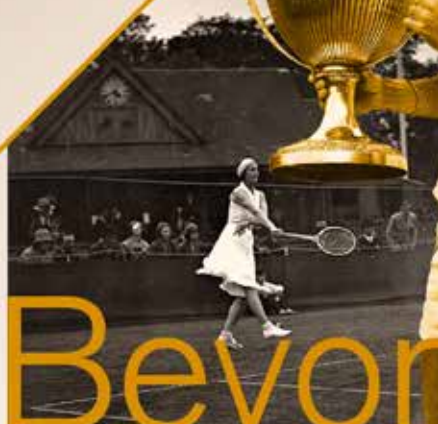


Kevin Jefferys

Beyond

SW
19



**World Class
Tennis in England
since the 1880s**

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Queen's Club

OF ALL the leading tennis locations in England outside of SW19, Queen's Club is the most iconic. The Fever-Tree Championships (as known since 2018, after the name of the current sponsors) sits close to the pinnacle of the modern global circuit, one of a handful of ATP Tour meetings immediately below the level of the grand slams. Many of the world's leading men stars – including Britain's Andy Murray, who holds the record for the number of victories in the singles – regularly vie for honours every June. The tournament is seen as both highly valued in its own right, offering some £2m in prize money, and as a vital warm-up for Wimbledon, which takes place a couple of weeks later. Attracting around 50,000 spectators annually and bolstered by extensive BBC television coverage, the Queen's Championships has several times been voted the ATP Tournament of the Year and has been described by one of its former sponsors, Stella Artois, as a 'shining jewel in the UK tennis crown'.¹

Part of the successful formula of the tournament is its rich heritage and distinctive setting. Queen's Club in Palliser Road, West Kensington, in the heart of London, claims to be the world's oldest multi-sport venue. Founded on a ten-acre site in the mid-1880s, and named after its first patron, Queen Victoria, the club hosted over 20 different sports before becoming more exclusively identified as a playing and administrative hub for lawn tennis (as

well as for real tennis and rackets). For many years marked out by its socially exclusive membership, which included royalty, aristocracy and wealthy businessmen, the club suffered serious damage during the Second World War and was taken over in the 1950s, at a time of financial difficulties, by the LTA, which located its headquarters there until 2007. After that, the governing body moved to the National Training Centre at Roehampton, while also granting to Queen's a long lease, which meant club members once more owned and operated facilities including the instantly recognisable Victorian clubhouse and large numbers of top-quality outdoor and indoor courts, currently around 40 in total.

Many of the great legends of the sport from the 1880s to the present day have displayed their skills at Queen's, which for decades also staged a highly esteemed indoor tournament, the British Covered Court Championships (BCCC). Because the grass-court event is so widely known and revered today, it's easy to assume this has always been the case. But, as this chapter will show, Queen's Club has a more chequered, nuanced tournament past than the glittering present might suggest, with notable low points as well as towering highs. The reputation of both main tournaments at Queen's fluctuated over time and, at certain points, as we shall see, the annual outdoor gathering had its critics and was less well regarded than its indoor counterpoint. Nor should it be forgotten, as we examine the pre-1970s history of the two great flagship meetings in turn, that neither of them actually started life in West Kensington.

The London Grass Court Championships

The London Athletic Tournament, the precursor to the famous Queen's grass-court annual summer gathering, was initially established in the early 1880s at Stamford Bridge, west London, where it remained until the end of the decade. There were some distinguished winners, Wimbledon champions among them, in the early years: Herbert Lawford (a committee member at Queen's)

claimed the men's title three times in succession and Maud Watson was a two-time winner of the women's singles. But the meeting had yet to build a settled, distinct identity. Its timing each summer varied – ranging from early June to mid-July in different years – and entry levels fluctuated in quality and depth. No women's singles event was held in 1882 or 1883, and in 1885 (when it was renamed the London Championships) there were only 15 men and seven ladies in the draw.

In 1890 the tournament was switched to Queen's, where lawn tennis was becoming more fashionable among the various sports on offer. The new, more central location (and the subsequent opening of a nearby underground station at Barons Court) helped to ensure the attendance of many top 'cracks'. Victors on the men's side in the 1890s included stars such as Pim, Mahony and Laurence Doherty, although the great R.F. Doherty never lifted the trophy, losing to Mahony in the 1896 final. That same year Charlotte Cooper claimed the first of what would be five London Championship titles. Some onlookers felt it might have been six, but for bad line calls that went against her when she lost to old adversary Edith Austin 9-7 in the deciding set of the 1899 women's final. Other controversies also received unwelcome publicity. The journal *Pastime* aired complaints by some players that because Queen's hosted other games such as winter football on the same turf the grass courts were of variable quality, and in very hot weather especially could be 'fiery and bumpy'.²

During the Edwardian period the London Championships acquired a more established look. The challenge round was abolished in 1904; a fixed position in the annual calendar (the week before Wimbledon) was finally agreed; and a more international entry became characteristic, at least on the men's side. The singles title went overseas on six out of ten occasions before the First World War. The legendary New Zealander Tony Wilding beat Queen's Club member Major Ritchie comfortably in 1907 and never dropped a set throughout three later campaigns where he retained the title. In 1907 and 08, early illustrations were seen of shock results that

would, in later times, be widely commented upon. The women's title in both of those years went to Wiltshire-born Violet Pinckney, who never progressed beyond the last eight at Wimbledon but who, at Queen's, twice got the better of Dorothea Lambert Chambers, usually unassailable at most tournaments outside of SW19 in which she took part. According to the *Evening Standard*, Miss Pinckney's 'wonderfully safe' game saw her through in 1907,³ while the following year Mrs Chambers was much perturbed by a strong wind blowing across the centre court.

THE WINNERS WHO ALMOST NEVER MADE IT

In 1905 the London Championships was dominated, on the men's side, by players from the American Davis Cup squad. The first overseas winner of the singles was Holcombe Ward, whose opponent in the final – team-mate Beals Wright – conceded without hitting a ball. To the annoyance of organisers at Queen's, both men wanted to preserve energy for Davis Cup encounters ahead after coming through strenuous semi-finals. Ward and Wright did contest, as a pair, the doubles final, where they lost to two further members of the US squad, William Larned and W.J. Clothier. The Larned-Clothier combination had lady luck on their side, and might well not have made it to finals day. Called upon to play a first-round match not long after disembarking from their Atlantic voyage, they came off court after losing two sets to love. When they reported the score, the referee told them it was a best-of-five contest and they needed to finish it properly. Upon returning to action, the Americans won the next three sets; they survived and thrived, going on a few days later to claim the title.

At first sight, the roll of honour for the men's singles between the wars suggests the London Championships had developed into one of the most sought-after titles in world tennis. No fewer than six

QUEEN'S CLUB

Wimbledon champions, five of them American, triumphed in Palliser Road, starting with 'Little Bill' Johnston in 1920. In an era when the USA fully arrived as a pre-eminent force in the sport, other winners at Queen's included 'Big Bill' Tilden, a two-time champion in the late 1920s, Ellsworth Vines, Sidney Wood and Donald Budge. The powerful-hitting Budge beat his compatriot David Jones in straight sets in 1936; this, despite Jones hitting 22 aces, almost half the total number of points he garnered in the whole match. Budge easily retained the title in 1937 when he crushed Britain's Bunny Austin for the loss of just three games.

While any event featuring so many global stars clearly offered 'world-class tennis' (to adopt LTA phraseology), Queen's was not generally regarded around this time as the leading pre-Wimbledon grass-court tournament of the English summer. Criticism of the standard of the courts only subsided when football and rugby departed from the club in the late 1920s, and a few years of poor weather in the 1930s generated some adverse headlines. Above all, it was the scheduling of the meeting, in the week immediately preceding Wimbledon, that held the key to the tournament's ambiguous status. On the one hand, the timing meant serious contenders for honours in SW19 were in London and keen to find good grass-court practice. But on the other hand, journalists and tennis insiders felt Queen's had an air of artificiality. Often entrants were highly anxious to avoid any injury that would prevent them appearing a few days later at the venue that most mattered – the All England Club – so did not always pull out all the stops in West Kensington.

The consequence was that the London Championships became associated with many difficult-to-explain results. According to Queen's Club historian Roy McKelvie, when Johnston surprised Tilden to win the 1920 men's final, 'there were suggestions that neither player tried his hardest or best'.⁴ Tilden's form was certainly transformed when he proceeded to take the Wimbledon title a

IN A HURRY

Many a jaw dropped at the sight of Gottfried von Cramm crushing Bobby Riggs 6-0, 6-1 in the semi-finals of the London Championships in June 1939. Although the German aristocrat was a three-time Wimbledon finalist, he had not long been released from a spell in prison under Hitler's Nazi regime, whereas the dynamic, up-and-coming American was considered the favourite for Wimbledon that summer. Words like 'thrashing' were bandied about when, instead of a close contest between two accomplished titans, von Cramm barely broke sweat in winning the first 11 games of the match. Riggs held on in the next game, but the German quickly completed the rout. The whole thing was over in less than half an hour. Before long, rumours were circulating that Riggs 'threw' the match in order to get improved betting odds on himself at Wimbledon the week following, and it was later revealed that he had backed himself to win the singles and two doubles events at The Championships. When he duly did so, he pocketed handsome winnings. By contrast, although von Cramm went on to claim the 1939 Queen's title, his fortunes rapidly took a turn for the worse. He was summoned back to Germany and not allowed to compete in SW19, clearing the path for Riggs to achieve his Wimbledon hat-trick of titles.

couple of weeks later. In 1928 it was widely felt that the famous 'Musketeers', Cochet and Lacoste, subsided tamely against their American opponents in the men's doubles at Queen's because the Frenchmen were holding themselves in reserve for a later Davis Cup final against the USA (which they won). Upsets of a similar order were not unknown in the women's singles at Queen's. The legendary Helen Wills Moody, in her second appearance at the meeting (she shared the title in 1933 when rain intervened), suffered an extremely rare defeat at the semi-final stage in 1938, and yet

cruised to her eighth title at Wimbledon a fortnight afterwards. Arguably the most out-of-kilter result yet, however, came in the men's event in 1939 (see *In a Hurry* opposite).

In the two decades after the Second World War, the strongly international flavour of the London Championships continued. The powerful American presence seen prior to 1939 was for a while maintained with victories in the men's singles for Pancho Segura, Bob Falkenburg and Ted Schroeder. On the women's side, every final between 1946 and 1951 was an all-USA affair. Improved air travel, however, facilitated the arrival of much larger numbers than before of Australian men especially (as it did at all the leading English tournaments). In 1952 six of the eight quarter-finalists at Queen's were from down under; the eventual winner was Frank Sedgman, who triumphed without dropping a set all week. The following year, Lew Hoad won the battle of the Aussie teenagers by beating Ken Rosewall in two tight sets. Rosewall turned the tables on his compatriot in 1955, although on this occasion Hoad had the excuse that he got married on the morning of the final. In the 1960s Roy Emerson won at Queen's four years in succession and the last meeting before the arrival of Open tennis, in 1967, was won by another Australian, John Newcombe. He defeated Roger Taylor, the first British player to reach the men's final since the war.

Australian influence also made itself felt, though less overwhelmingly, in the women's singles. The leading Americans often confined themselves to doubles after 1955, leaving room for others to make a mark in the singles, including British winners such as Angela Buxton and Christine Truman. The most successful player during and after the 1960s, however, was Aussie Margaret Smith, who in due course won four times at Queen's. Her most remarkable success came in 1970 when – as Mrs Court – she was firm favourite against Scotland's Winnie Shaw. A major upset looked on the cards when Shaw took the first set 6-2 and then rushed into a 5-1 lead. With service to follow, a home victory looked almost certain. But

Mrs Court called upon all her resourcefulness and determination to break back twice. She edged the set 8-6 and then showed glimpses of her supremely clean ball-striking to take the decider 6-3.

With such an array of talent on display every year, the status of the London Championships had never been higher. And yet the tournament still had its critics, not least some of the overseas arrivals. South Africa's Gordon Forbes wrote in his diary account that he found 'aloof management and damp changing rooms' at the famous old venue in 1962. Lunch and tea tickets were provided by organisers but not the level of expenses which amateurs were permitted under the rules. Forbes noted that the elderly attendants tended to eye competitors suspiciously, handing out towels for showering 'as though they thought the players mightn't return them'.⁵ Mutterings about players being desperate to avoid strains or injuries that would harm their chances at Wimbledon persisted. Two of Roy Emerson's four titles were secured when his opponents in the final granted walkovers and British hopeful Mike Sangster described the atmosphere at the meeting as 'generally light-hearted', albeit laced with occasional 'temperamental eruptions'.⁶

Following the onset of Open tennis, Queen's, like other tournaments, had to find fresh ways of attracting the top contenders, professionals now seeking handsome prize money wherever it was to be found. Sponsorship deals to support what became the Rothmans London Grass Court Championships ensured that, for a few years, the entry lists remained impressive. On the men's side, winners in the late 1960s and early 1970s included well-known greats such as Rod Laver and Stan Smith, as well as Jimmy Connors (and after him Ilie Nastase). Similarly, in the women's singles, the list of champions remained highly distinguished. Britain's Ann Jones triumphed in 1969, crushing Winnie Shaw for the loss of just one game before going on to capture the Wimbledon crown two weeks later. Margaret Court's spell of dominance was followed by success in 1972 and 1973

EARLY BATH

The 1972 London Championships was marked by shocks and alarums. Britain's John Paish, son of Davis Cup stalwart Geoff, distinguished himself by reaching the men's singles final, where he lost to emerging superstar Jimmy Connors, claiming the first main title of his career. Paish made it to finals day after a stunning victory in the last eight over Stan Smith (who went on to claim the Wimbledon title just two weeks later), and a more hollow triumph in the semi-finals over Pancho Gonzales. The veteran American, winner of the US Championships back in the late 1940s before becoming a formidable presence on the pre-1968 pro circuit, was a set up on Paish when he disputed a series of line calls in one of his service games. His vociferous demands for the official to be replaced brought the tournament referee to the court. In Bea Seal, a former British Wightman Cup captain, Gonzales met his match. When he refused to play on, she promptly disqualified him.

respectively for America's soon-to-be world number one Chrissie Evert and for Russia's Olga Morozova.

Morozova's victory over Evonne Goolagong turned out to be the last occasion the world's top women stars appeared in competition at Queen's. The global circuit was in a state of flux in the early Open years, with vying interest groups pushing for generally separate men's and women's tournaments outside of the grand slams. Eastbourne became the preferred location for a major pre-Wimbledon women's meeting after 1973, exacerbating what was already a thorny issue at Queen's: how to ensure the long-term viability of its flagship summer meeting as the support of Rothmans came to an end. In 1974, when key sponsor John Player decided to prioritise a men's gathering in Nottingham, no tournament of any sort – for either men or women – took place in West Kensington. Top-quality international tennis at Queen's was suddenly in limbo, especially as just a few years

before this the club's other main showcase – its long-standing annual indoor meeting – had been wound up altogether.

London Grass Court Championships

Men's Singles

<i>Year</i>	<i>Winner</i>	<i>Runner-up</i>	<i>Score</i>
1881	Frederick Rawson	George Hill	1-6, 6-1, 6-2, 6-3
1882	Herbert Lawford	Otway Woodhouse	6-1, 4-6, 6-2, 6-3
1883	Herbert Lawford	Teddy Williams	6-2, 6-1, 6-0
1884	Herbert Lawford	Frederick Bowlby	6-3, 6-1, 3-6, 6-2
1885	Charles Ross	Ernest Lewis	3-6, 8-6, 1-6, 6-2, 6-3
1886	Ernest Lewis	Charles Ross	7-5, 6-1, 6-3
1887	Ernest Lewis	Herbert Chipp	6-1, 6-4, 6-0
1888	Ernest Lewis	Harry Barlow	6-0, 6-1, 6-2
1889	Harry Barlow	Charles Eames	5-7, 7-5, 3-6, 6-1, 7-5
1890	Harry Barlow	Wilfred Baddeley	3-6, 6-8, 6-1, 6-2, 6-2
1891	Harry Barlow	Joshua Pim	6-4, 2-6, 6-0, 7-5
1892	Ernest Lewis	Joshua Pim	6-4, 6-4, 3-6, 4-6, 6-1
1893	Joshua Pim	Harold Mahony	9-7, 1-6, 6-1, 6-8, 6-3
1894	Harold Mahony	Harry Barlow	6-2, 6-3, 6-3
1895	Harry Barlow	Manliffe Goodbody	6-4, 7-5, 5-7, 5-7, 10-8
1896	Harold Mahony	Reginald Doherty	11-9, 6-4, 6-4
1897	Laurence Doherty	Major Ritchie	6-2, 6-2, 6-2
1898	Laurence Doherty	Harold Mahony	6-3, 6-4, 9-7
1899	Harold Mahony	Arthur Gore	8-10, 6-2, 7-5, 6-1
1900	Arthur Gore	Arthur Lavy	6-0, 6-2, 6-3
1901	Charles Dixon	George Greville	6-1, 6-0, 4-6, 6-4
1902	Major Ritchie	George Simond	6-3, 6-4, 6-0
1903	George Greville	George Simond	6-1, 6-4, 7-9, 5-7, 6-4
1904	Major Ritchie	Harold Mahony	6-3, 6-1, 6-1
1905	Holcombe Ward (USA)	Beals Wright (USA)	walkover
1906	Major Ritchie	John Flavelle	6-0, 6-1, 7-5
1907	Anthony Wilding (NZ)	Major Ritchie	6-2, 6-1, 6-0
1908	Hare William Powell (USA)	Major Ritchie	6-4, 3-3 ret'd
1909	Major Ritchie	Harry Parker (NZ)	11-13, 6-4, 6-1, 6-0
1910	Anthony Wilding (NZ)	Major Ritchie	6-4, 6-3, 2-0 ret'd
1911	Anthony Wilding (NZ)	Alfred Beamish	7-5, 6-2, 6-3
1912	Anthony Wilding (NZ)	Otto Froitzheim (Ger)	walkover

QUEEN'S CLUB

1913	Gordon Lowe	Wallace Johnson (USA)	7-5, 6-4, 4-6, 4-6, 6-4
1914	Gordon Lowe	Percival Davson	6-2, 7-5, 6-4
1915–18	No tournament held		
1919	Pat O'Hara Wood (Aus)	Louis Raymond (SA)	6-4, 6-0, 2-6, 7-5
1920	Bill Johnston (USA)	Bill Tilden (USA)	4-6, 6-2, 6-4
1921	Zenzo Shimidzu (Jpn)	Mohammed Sleem (Ind)	6-2, 6-0
1922	Henry Mayes (Can)	Donald Greig	6-8, 6-2, 6-2, 6-1
1923	Vincent Richards (USA)	Sydney Jacob	6-2, 6-2
1924	Algernon Kingscote	Gordon Lowe	3-6, 8-6, 6-3, 6-2
1925	Gordon Lowe	Henry Mayes (Can)	6-2, 9-7
1926	Henry Mayes (Can)	Gordon Lowe	6-3, 6-2
1927	Henry Mayes (Can)	David Evans	6-3, 6-3
1928	Bill Tilden (USA)	Francis Hunter (USA)	6-3, 6-2, 6-1
1929	Bill Tilden (USA)	Francis Hunter (USA)	title shared
1930	Wilmer Allison (USA)	Gregory Mangin (USA)	6-4, 8-6
1931	John Olliff	Ted Avory	3-6, 6-4, 6-2
1932	Jack Crawford (Aus)	Hendrik Timmer (Ned)	1-6, 6-3, 6-3, 6-4
1933	Ellsworth Vines (USA)	Lester Stoefen (USA)	title shared
1934	Sidney Wood (USA)	Frank Shields (USA)	11-9, 6-0
1935	Wilmer Allison (USA)	David Jones (USA)	title shared
1936	Donald Budge (USA)	David Jones (USA)	6-4, 6-3
1937	Donald Budge (USA)	Bunny Austin	6-1, 6-2
1938	Bunny Austin	Kho Sin-Kie (Chn)	6-2, 6-0
1939	Gottfried von Cramm (Ger)	Ghaus Mohammed	6-1, 6-3
1940–45	No tournament held		
1946	Pancho Segura (USA)	Dinny Pails (Aus)	6-4, 0-6, 6-4
1947	Bob Falkenburg (USA)	Colin Long (Aus)	6-4, 7-5
1948	Bob Falkenburg (USA)	Eric Sturgess (SA)	title shared
1949	Ted Schroeder (USA)	Gardnar Mulloy (USA)	8-6, 6-0
1950	John Bromwich (Aus)	Art Larsen (USA)	6-2, 6-4
1951	Eric Sturgess (SA)	Frank Sedgman (Aus)	6-4, 5-7, 6-2
1952	Frank Sedgman (Aus)	Mervyn Rose (Aus)	10-8, 6-2
1953	Lew Hoad (Aus)	Ken Rosewall (Aus)	8-6, 10-8
1954	Lew Hoad (Aus)	Mervyn Rose (Aus)	8-6, 6-4
1955	Ken Rosewall (Aus)	Lew Hoad (Aus)	6-2, 6-3
1956	Neale Fraser (Aus)	Ken Rosewall (Aus)	7-5, 3-6, 9-7
1957	Ashley Cooper (Aus)	Neale Fraser (Aus)	6-8, 6-2, 6-3
1958	Malcolm Anderson (Aus)	Robert Mark (Aus)	1-6, 11-9, 6-3
1959	Ramanathan Krishnan (Ind)	Neale Fraser (Aus)	6-3, 6-0

BEYOND SW19

1960	Andres Gimeno (Spn)	Roy Emerson (Aus)	8-6, 6-3
1961	Bob Hewitt (Aus)	Robert McKinley (USA)	6-2, 6-3
1962	Rod Laver (Aus)	Roy Emerson (Aus)	6-4, 7-5
1963	Roy Emerson (Aus)	Owen Davidson (Aus)	6-1, 6-2
1964	Roy Emerson (Aus)	Toomas Leius (USSR)	12-10, 6-4
1965	Roy Emerson (Aus)	Dennis Ralston (USA)	walkover
1966	Roy Emerson (Aus)	Tony Roche (Aus)	walkover
1967	John Newcombe (Aus)	Roger Taylor	7-5, 6-3
1968	Clark Graebner (USA)	Tom Okker (Ned)	title shared
1969	Fred Stolle (Aus)	John Newcombe (Aus)	6-3, 22-20
1970	Rod Laver (Aus)	John Newcombe (Aus)	6-4, 6-3
1971	Stan Smith (USA)	John Newcombe (Aus)	8-6, 6-3
1972	Jimmy Connors (USA)	John Paish	6-2, 6-3
1973	Ilie Nastase (Rom)	Roger Taylor	10-8, 6-3
1974–76	No tournament held		

Women's Singles

<i>Year</i>	<i>Winner</i>	<i>Runner-up</i>	<i>Score</i>
1881	M. Raikes	Miss Burleigh	5-0, 5-2
1882–83	No women's tournament held		
1884	Maud Watson	Edith Cole	6-4, 6-2, 2-6, 6-1
1885	Maud Watson	Lilian Watson	6-2, 6-3
1886	Blanche Bingley	Edith Davies	6-1, 6-1
1887	Blanche Bingley	B. James	6-4, 6-3
1888	Blanche Hillyard	May Jacks	6-4, 6-3
1889	May Jacks	Maud Shackle	6-2, 6-2
1890	May Jacks	Maud Shackle	6-2, 6-1
1891	Maud Shackle	May Jacks	6-2, 4-6, 6-3
1892	Edith Austin	Charlotte Cooper	6-4, 8-6
1893	Maud Shackle	Edith Austin	6-2, 6-1
1894	Edith Austin	Charlotte Cooper	8-6, 11-9
1895	Maud Shackle	Edith Austin	6-2, 7-5
1896	Charlotte Cooper	Agatha Templeman	6-3, 6-2
1897	Charlotte Cooper	Edith Austin	2-6, 6-2, 6-2
1898	Charlotte Cooper	Edith Austin	6-4, 3-6, 8-6
1899	Edith Austin	Charlotte Cooper	12-10, 2-6, 9-7
1900	Charlotte Cooper	Edith Greville	6-4, 6-1
1901	Edith Greville	Ethel Thomson	6-1, 6-1
1902	Charlotte Sterry	Ruth Durlacher	6-0, 6-0

QUEEN'S CLUB

1903	Agnes Morton	Edith Greville	6-4, 5-7, 6-0
1904	Agnes Morton	Ellen Stawell-Brown	6-2, 6-3
1905	Ethel Thomson	Edith Greville	6-3, 6-4
1906	Ethel Thomson	Mildred Coles	6-2, 6-1
1907	Violet Pinckney	Dorothea Lambert Chambers	2-6, 6-3, 6-4
1908	Violet Pinckney	Dorothea Lambert Chambers	6-3, 6-2
1909	Aurea Edgington	Madeline O'Neill	6-2, 1-6, 6-3
1910	Gladys Lamplough	Edith Johnson	6-2, 6-0
1911	Dorothea Lambert Chambers	Mildred Coles	6-2, 6-0
1912	Ethel Larcombe	Dorothy Holman	6-1, 6-0
1913	Ethel Larcombe	Aurea Edgington	6-2, 10-8
1914	Ethel Larcombe	Beryl Tulloch	6-1, 6-2
1915-18	No tournament held		
1919	Ethel Larcombe	Dorothy Holman	6-4, 8-6
1920	Dorothy Holman	Ethel Larcombe	walkover
1921	Mabel Clayton	Dorothy Holman	6-4, 8-6
1922	Mabel Clayton	Winifred Keays	6-3, 6-4
1923	Elizabeth Ryan (USA)	Geraldine Beamish	6-2, 1-6, 6-2
1924	Elizabeth Ryan (USA)	Doris Craddock	6-1, 6-1
1925	Elizabeth Ryan (USA)	Ermynttrude Harvey	6-0, 6-1
1926	Doris Kemmis-Betty	Eileen Bennett	7-5, 6-2
1927	Doris Kemmis-Betty	Enid Broadbridge	6-0, 6-1
1928	Joan Ridley	Helene Contostavios (Gre)	4-6, 6-1, 6-0
1929	Elizabeth Ryan (USA)	Elsie Goldsack	6-2, 2-6, 6-2
1930	Madge List	Margaret Stocks	6-1, 6-3
1931	Elsie Pittman	Kitty Godfree	9-7, 6-4
1932	Dorothy Burke (USA)	Jadwiga Jedrzejowska (Pol)	1-6, 7-5, 6-4
1933	Helen Wills Moody (USA)	Elsie Pittman	title shared
1934	Jacqueline Goldschmidt (Fra)	Dorothy Burke (USA)	5-7, 6-2, 6-0
1935	Anita Lizana (Chl)	Sylvie Henrotin (Fra)	title shared
1936	Jadwiga Jedrzejowska (Pol)	Susan Noel	6-2, 6-4
1937	Jadwiga Jedrzejowska (Pol)	Kay Stammers	6-3, 6-0
1938	Jadwiga Jedrzejowska (Pol)	Hilde Sperling (Ger/Den)	6-3, 6-0
1939	Jadwiga Jedrzejowska (Pol)	Hilde Sperling (Ger/Den)	6-1, 6-4
1940-45	No tournament held		
1946	Pauline Betz (USA)	Margaret Osborne (USA)	6-8, 6-3, 6-3
1947	Louise Brough (USA)	Margaret Osborne (USA)	6-4, 6-0
1948	Doris Hart (USA)	Margaret du Pont (USA)	title shared
1949	Louise Brough (USA)	Margaret du Pont (USA)	3-6, 6-1, 6-3

BEYOND SW19

1950	Doris Hart (USA)	Margaret du Pont (USA)	4-6, 6-4, 6-4
1951	Shirley Fry (USA)	Nancy Chaffee (USA)	6-3, 8-6
1952	Hazel Redick-Smith (SA)	Elizabeth Wilford	7-5, 6-1
1953	Jean Rinkel-Quertier	Heather Nicholls (Ber)	6-1, 4-6, 6-2
1954	Louise Brough (USA)	Shirley Fry (USA)	6-1, 6-4
1955	Louise Brough (USA)	Jean Forbes (SA)	6-3, 6-1
1956	Angela Buxton	Pat Ward	6-4, 6-0
1957	Mimi Arnold (USA)	Suzie Kormoczy (Hun)	6-1, 5-7, 6-3
1958	Bernice Carr (SA)	Margaret Varner (USA)	6-4, 5-7, 8-6
1959	Yola Ramirez (Mex)	Christiane Mercelis (Bel)	2-6, 6-1, 6-3
1960	Christine Truman	Karen Susman (USA)	6-4, 6-3
1961	Margaret Smith (Aus)	Nancy Richey (USA)	6-0, 4-6, 6-2
1962	Rita Bentley	Lorna Cawthorn	7-5, 7-5
1963	Robyn Ebbern (Aus)	Rita Bentley	6-3, 6-3
1964	Margaret Smith (Aus)	Ann Jones	6-3, 6-2
1965	Annette Van Zyl (SA)	Christine Truman	6-3, 4-6, 6-4
1966	Francoise Durr (Fra)	Judy Tegart (Aus)	4-6, 6-3, 7-5
1967	Nancy Richey (USA)	Kerry Melville (Aus)	2-6, 6-2, 6-4
1968	Nancy Richey (USA)	Ann Jones	title shared
1969	Ann Jones	Winnie Shaw	6-0, 6-1
1970	Margaret Court (Aus)	Winnie Shaw	2-6, 8-6, 6-2
1971	Margaret Court (Aus)	Billie Jean King (USA)	6-3, 3-6, 6-3
1972	Chris Evert (USA)	Karen Krantzcke (Aus)	6-4, 6-0
1973	Olga Morozova (USSR)	Evonne Goolagong (Aus)	6-2, 6-3

The British Covered Court Championships

As pioneer of the new pastime of lawn tennis in the Victorian period, it was fitting that England should stage the world's first regular indoor (or 'covered', in the parlance of the day) tournament. The inaugural meeting of the BCCC was held in 1885 at the Hyde Park Club in Porchester Square, London, and consisted of men's singles only. The winner was the energetic Herbert Lawford, credited with developing topspin as standard in the forehand groundstroke.

When organisers looked to expand the meeting, introducing women's singles and men's doubles in 1890, Queen's was selected for these additional events on the basis of the extra capacity it provided;

the club's two inter-connected East and West Courts were opened in 1888. The men's singles, meanwhile, remained at Hyde Park for a decade until the tournament was consolidated into a single spring gathering at Queen's. The 1896 men's final in West Kensington saw a dramatic last-gasp win for Ernest Lewis, who beat Wilberforce Eaves despite temporarily collapsing when 5-1 ahead in the fifth set; he lost four games in a row, but then recovered to clinch victory 7-5.

UNDERRATED CHAMPION

Ernest Lewis won the Covered Court Championships seven times between 1887 and 1896 and belonged to that small band of players who – with better fortune – might have become Wimbledon champions and achieved greater lasting recognition. His pedigree was evident in his two triumphs in 1890 and 1981 at the highly competitive Irish Championships. Lewis took many of his opponents by surprise with his persistent use of the half-volley, especially on fast wooden courts such as those at Queen's. Players tended to resort to this shot when caught in the wrong position, with the ball dipping at their feet. But Lewis, gifted with tremendous hand-to-eye coordination, deliberately employed it as an attacking weapon, pushing opponents on to the defensive and enabling him to reach the net to put away winning volleys. There were those who, when seeing Lewis using the shot initially, thought it must have been unplanned or a fluke. But they soon realised it was a key ingredient of his strategy. On grass he employed the half-volley less frequently, knowing that the bounce was less reliable than indoors and therefore the margin for error higher. Even so, his record outdoors at Queen's was impressive: Lewis won the Grass Court Championships four times.

The entry for the BCCC was mixed in size and quality in the formative years, but its reputation soared as it increasingly attracted top amateurs keen to find good spring-time competition. Although

beaten early in his career in the 1898 final (by Eaves, a three-time champion), the peerless Laurie Doherty took advantage of the challenge round provision in use to claim six successive men's titles between 1901 and 1906. The Doherty brothers won the men's doubles seven times and the elder sibling, Reginald, also triumphed in the mixed doubles – introduced in 1898 – on four occasions. On the women's side, four pre-1914 BCCC winners were also Wimbledon champions. The ultra-competitive Dorothea Lambert Chambers established what would be a women's record of seven victories; this might have been eight but for a sprained ankle that prevented her taking part in the challenge round in 1914.

The prestige of the meeting was further enhanced in the Edwardian period when overseas contenders began to challenge for honours, particularly in the men's singles. Anthony Wilding, the talented New Zealander, became the first winner from outside the UK in 1907, although he was surprisingly beaten in four sets by home-favourite Arthur Gore the following year. Until after the First World War, most leading lights from beyond Europe did not arrive to compete in England until the start of the summer grass-court season; Wilding was an exception, someone who studied and worked in the country. There were, however, rising numbers of entrants from the continent, especially from France, willing and able to make the short trip across the Channel to London. The men's final in 1912 was the first to be an all-overseas affair (see *Memorable Match* opposite).

Having witnessed many encounters featuring the world's best, as in the 1912 final, the long-time secretary at Queen's, E.B. Noel, claimed that the BCCC was the more important of the two annual meetings hosted by the club. It certainly got into its stride quickly after the Great War. The gathering of April 1919 was the first leading tournament staged in England after the end of hostilities, and the large crowds that flocked to Barons Court were once again treated to world-class tennis on home shores. Adding to his two pre-war wins,

MEMORABLE MATCH

The 1912 final was one of the most thrilling in the history of the Covered Court Championships. Three-time Wimbledon champion Tony Wilding, powerful and fluent in his all-court play, had not dropped a set en route to the final. His opponent there was young Frenchman André Gobert, winner of the BCCC the previous year and an outstanding exponent of covered court tennis (in due course a five-time winner at Queen's). Gobert's serve was so strong that opponents were forced almost into the back netting to return it, and off the ground he generated fearsome pace from his exquisite timing. Wilding was the favourite having won when they last met, and for the first two sets he was in irresistible form, displaying a customary mix of fine attack and sound defence. Gobert's weakness was a sometimes suspect temperament, and Wilding may have miscalculated in thinking a 'safety first' approach would suffice to finish things off. But as he eased up slightly, the Frenchman's confidence grew. Gobert's deep drives and sharp volleying allowed him to level the match at two sets each. The packed gallery witnessed further twists and turns in the final set. Gobert squandered a 4-0 lead, and at 4-4 it looked as though Wilding had regained the initiative. Instead, the Frenchman took the next two games to retain his title amid loud cheering. He fully deserved his win, one reporter observed, by virtue of the variety of his shot-making, the penetration of his serving, and the 'enterprise and audacity of his generalship'.⁷

André Gobert claimed a hat-trick of victories; the last of these, in 1922, saw him beat South Africa's Brian Norton, despite travelling overnight from Paris and arriving in time for only the briefest of knock-ups. Dorothea Lambert Chambers demonstrated she was still a force to be reckoned with by triumphing in 1919, but the following year she retired on medical advice, thereby ensuring that

the winner of the all-comers, California's Elizabeth Ryan, became the first overseas player to claim the women's singles.

The entry in 1923 (the year the challenge round was abolished) was felt to be the weakest for a while and there was concern that, on the women's side especially, top stars from outside Europe were reluctant to attend because of the spring timing. This prompted the first of what would be several switches of date. For several years the BCCC was moved to October, though without significantly altering the mostly all-British nature of the women's singles. Fortunately, renewed energy was injected into the BCCC by the regular appearance of the stylish Musketeer – and two-time Wimbledon champion – Jean Borotra. In 1928 the charismatic beret-wearing Frenchman, renowned for catching the eye of female spectators during play and bounding across the net at the conclusion of his matches, embarked on a six-year winning streak, emulating – without the benefit of often having to play only one challenge round match – the Edwardian record set by Laurie Doherty. The profile of the tournament benefited considerably from the duelling for several seasons between the 'Bounding Basque' and one of the rising stars of British tennis (and another figure with matinee idol looks), Bunny Austin.

By the end of the inter-war period, E.B. Noel's claim that the covered-court event was the superior of the two Queen's tournaments was more difficult to sustain. It could not, like the London Grass Court Championships, claim a string of Wimbledon champions (on the men's side) among its post-1918 winners. On the other hand, the BCCC remained distinctive – if no longer unique, following the start of the Wembley professional gathering in 1934 – in providing international-standard competition indoors. In 1934 women's doubles was added to the portfolio of individual titles contested, and the following year the LTA sanctioned the Barons Court meeting as one of its official championships; it was sometimes thereafter referred to as the National Covered Court Championships. This confirmed

THE WILY FRENCH CHAMPION

Between 1930 and 1934 Borotra and Austin played out three long, close indoor finals at Queen's. The French crowd-pleaser deployed his acrobatic volleying skills to edge the first of these in five sets, and repeated the feat in 1933, but only after a controversial ending. Austin looked to be cruising to the title at 4-0 in the deciding set, at which point his exhausted-looking opponent fell over bending for a low volley. After crashing into the net post, the Frenchman lay prone on the court amid gasps from the crowd. Austin rushed to help Borotra to his seat, where – unusually for that era – he was allowed to recuperate quietly for several minutes. The Englishman thought an imminent retirement was on the cards, but instead Borotra not only returned to the court but claimed the point on a technicality. The Englishman conceded, thinking that victory was close. Instead, he never won another game. The wily old champion was revitalised and transformed, capturing 12 of the last 14 points. Austin, it seems, resolved not to be fooled again. The following year he won 6-2 in the decider to break Borotra's stranglehold on the title.

its place as the acknowledged indoor leg of a trio of senior English tournaments held on different surfaces during the 1930s, alongside Wimbledon and the hard-court championships held annually in Bournemouth.⁸

Partly as a result of bomb damage in Palliser Road during the Second World War, the BCCC had to wait until 1947 to resume, but it then gave every appearance of picking up where it left off. Despite controversy surrounding his wartime activities, Jean Borotra was as popular as ever among spectators when he returned to claim his tenth and 11th titles at Queen's in 1948 and 1949; at the latter point he was aged 51, the oldest winner of a men's singles title at any of the tournaments featured in this book. After losing in three successive finals, Surrey's Geoff Paish got his hands on the trophy

in 1951 (a year when he also won the men's and mixed doubles), but he was the only British winner of the men's event in ten years. The Borotra ascendancy was replaced by a spell of dominance by another global star, grand slam-winning Jaroslav Drobny, whose swinging left-hand serve was well suited to the green-stained wooden courts in West Kensington, where he triumphed four years out of five in the first half of the 1950s.

Behind the scenes, however, all was not well. Indeed, the BCCC was among the first of the frontline meetings discussed in these pages to experience a notable fall from grace, declining both in its strength of entry and its reputation. At the heart of the problem was the need to adapt to circumstances in which top amateurs could more easily travel across the world than in the past. In choosing what tournaments to attend (and which, in consequence, drew large crowds and remained profitable), star players were influenced by the extent to which generous expenses were on offer, often contravening the limits specified in amateur regulations. As breaches of the rules rose year-on-year, with organisers desperate to attract the *crème de la crème*, the BCCC suffered; the LTA was extremely wary of being accused of supporting one of its official championships with expenses in excess of the International Lawn Tennis Federation (ILTF) rules. Another cause of malaise was that tennis fans looking for an alternative autumn meeting to patronise in the capital turned in increasing numbers to the London Professional at Wembley, which during the late 1950s featured many of the acknowledged legends of the men's game.

In the face of such challenges, Queen's was unable to stage the BCCC in 1957. When it resumed, and in the years that followed, the number of overseas contenders dwindled markedly, leaving the tournament mostly as the preserve of established or aspiring British competitors. Angela Mortimer, having secured a hat-trick of women's singles titles from 1952 to 1954, repeated the feat between 1959 and 1961; in each of her six finals her opponents were home-based.

The men's event became mainly a showcase for those looking to burnish their Davis Cup credentials. Bobby Wilson was a four-time champion between 1959 and 1965 and also lost in two further finals in that period. He was beaten in 1964 by Mike Sangster, who said a break of serve in the first game of the match gave him an important psychological edge. Sangster admitted this was a rare indoor victory for him over Wilson, whom he described as 'the uncrowned king of British covered court tennis'.⁹

In the mid-1960s attempts were made to breathe new life into the BCCC, but to little avail. The LTA offered subsidies to make it financially viable; additional indoor facilities were provided; and further changes of timing were introduced, from autumn to spring and vice versa. But attendances remained low other than for finals and a decision was made not to go ahead in 1966, the second cancellation within a decade. Such was the diminished status of the tournament that the following year the LTA – despite negotiating reasonable terms with sponsors and securing approval for TV coverage – still struggled to attract international stars. Tennis commentator Jimmy Jones, who long before warned of the 'slow death' of the BCCC, pointed out that the need for generous expenses to draw in leading names from overseas had never been faced. In the view of Jones, 'The appeal of London in February at only £5 per day plus travel expenses was simply non-existent.'¹⁰ With top British players also absent, training and competing in warmer climes abroad, the tournament committee had no option but to scrap the meeting again.

After dormancy for a couple of years, the BCCC returned in 1968 as part of the Dewar Cup indoor initiative (discussed in more detail in chapter 10). But there was to be no fairytale revival. Although a three-year sponsorship deal was in due course agreed with Wills, critics argued that, in the unfolding Open era, facilities for indoor competition at Queen's were outdated and in desperate need of modernisation. It was agreed that the 1969 meeting would start in West Kensington

and then relocate to Wembley Arena for finals, and this proved a prelude – for the remainder of the Wills-sponsored years – to a full relocation which saw Wembley rather than Queen’s as the setting for leading professionals to ply their trade. Australian legend Rod Laver claimed the rebranded Embassy Championships twice (and was narrowly denied a trio of wins when defeated by Ilie Nastase in 1971), and his achievement was matched on the women’s side by Billie Jean King, who triumphed in 1970 and 1971. The following year, when leading men attached to the influential World Championship Tennis (WCT) group of professionals were contracted to play elsewhere, Wills declined to provide any further sponsorship and the Covered Court Championships – once the flagship of the tournament portfolio at Queen’s – finally lost its rearguard battle for survival.

RECORD BREAKERS: BCCC

Most titles – Men: Jean Borotra (11), Ernest Lewis (7), Laurence Doherty (6), André Gobert (5), Jaroslav Drobný (4), Bobby Wilson (4)

Most titles – Women: Dorothea Lambert Chambers (7 – twice as Dorothea Douglass), Angela Mortimer (6), Edith Austin (5), Dorothy Holman (4), Ann Jones (4 – once as Ann Haydon)

Number of Covered Court champions who also won Wimbledon singles

Men: 7; Women: 9; Total: 16

British Covered Court Championships

Men’s Singles

<i>Year</i>	<i>Winner</i>	<i>Runner-up</i>	<i>Score</i>
1885	Herbert Lawford	Charles Ross	7-5, 6-3, 6-0
1886	Teddy Williams	Herbert Lawford	6-2, 1-6, 5-7, 6-4, 6-4
1887	Ernest Lewis	Teddy Williams	6-2, 6-2, 6-1
1888	Ernest Lewis	Ernest Meers	6-3, 6-0, 6-0
1889	Ernest Lewis	James Crispe	6-1, 6-1, 6-1
1890	Ernest Lewis	Ernest Meers	6-2, 6-3, 6-2

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1891	Ernest Lewis	Ernest Meers	6-4, 8-6, 6-3
1892	Ernest Meers	Ernest Lewis	6-3, 3-6, 6-1, 6-2
1893	Harold Mahony	Ernest Meers	6-2, 6-2, 6-4
1894	Harold Mahony	Ernest Meers	6-4, 6-4, 6-3
1895	Ernest Lewis	Wilberforce Eaves	8-6, 7-5, 6-3
1896	Ernest Lewis	Wilberforce Eaves	6-4, 6-1, 6-8, 4-6, 7-5
1897	Wilberforce Eaves	Ernest Lewis	6-3, 6-3, 7-5
1898	Wilberforce Eaves	Laurence Doherty	6-4, 7-5, 6-3
1899	Wilberforce Eaves	Harold Mahony	6-2, 6-4, 6-8, 3-6, 6-4
1900	Arthur Gore	Major Ritchie	6-1, 7-5, 6-3
1901	Laurence Doherty	Arthur Gore	6-3, 6-1, 6-1
1902	Laurence Doherty	Major Ritchie	6-4, 6-3, 5-7, 6-3
1903	Laurence Doherty	George Hillyard	6-1, 4-6, 6-4, 6-2
1904	Laurence Doherty	Major Ritchie	6-2, 8-10, 5-7, 6-4, 6-3
1905	Laurence Doherty	Major Ritchie	6-1, 8-6, 6-2
1906	Laurence Doherty	Arthur Gore	6-2, 6-4, 8-6
1907	Anthony Wilding (NZ)	George Carida	6-2, 6-3, 6-2
1908	Arthur Gore	Anthony Wilding (NZ)	4-6, 8-6, 6-0, 8-6
1909	Major Ritchie	Arthur Gore	7-5, 8-6, 6-3
1910	Gordon Lowe	Arthur Lowe	6-4, 6-0, 6-1
1911	André Gobert (Fra)	Gordon Lowe	6-3, 7-5, 6-3
1912	André Gobert (Fra)	Anthony Wilding (NZ)	3-6, 5-7, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4
1913	Percival Davson	Erik Larsen (Den)	5-7, 6-2, 6-3, 6-2
1914	Major Ritchie	Percival Davson	8-6, 6-3, 6-1
1915-18	No tournament held		
1919	Percival Davson	Major Ritchie	6-2, 6-3, 8-6
1920	André Gobert (Fra)	Percival Davson	6-4, 7-5, 6-2
1921	André Gobert (Fra)	Walter Crawley	6-2, 6-4, 4-6, 0-6, 7-5
1922	André Gobert (Fra)	Brian Norton (SA)	4-6, 6-1, 6-8, 6-4, 6-2
1923	Patrick Wheatley	Hassan Ali Fyzee (Ind)	1-6, 6-2, 6-4, 6-4
1924	Patrick Spence (SA)	Patrick Wheatley	6-2, 6-2, 4-6, 6-1
1925	Sydney Jacob	Patrick Spence (SA)	3-6, 7-5, 6-0, 3-6, 6-3
1926	Jean Borotra (Fra)	Donald Greig	6-3, 6-2, 6-4
1927	Edward Higgs	Gordon Crole-Rees	6-4, 6-3, 6-4
1928	Jean Borotra (Fra)	Gordon Crole-Rees	4-6, 6-1, 6-2, 6-3
1929	Jean Borotra (Fra)	Nigel Sharpe	7-5, 6-2, 6-2
1930	Jean Borotra (Fra)	Bunny Austin	6-1, 0-6, 2-6, 6-2, 6-4
1931	Jean Borotra (Fra)	Jiro Satoh (Jpn)	10-8, 6-3, 0-6, 6-3

BEYOND SW19

1932	Jean Borotra (Fra)	Harry Lee	6-2, 6-3, 6-3
1933	Jean Borotra (Fra)	Bunny Austin	6-3, 5-7, 6-4, 1-6, 6-4
1934	Bunny Austin	Jean Borotra (Fra)	6-2, 4-6, 6-0, 6-8, 6-2
1935	Jean Borotra (Fra)	Nigel Sharpe	6-0, 6-2, 6-0
1936	Karl Schroeder (Swe)	Jean Borotra (Fra)	8-6, 6-1, 9-7
1937	Bunny Austin	Karl Schroeder (Swe)	6-2, 3-6, 7-5, 6-2
1938	Jean Borotra (Fra)	Don Butler	6-0, 4-6, 6-4, 6-2
1939–46	No tournament held		
1947	Ivo Rinkel (Ned)	Ernest Wittman (Pol)	3-6, 7-5, 7-5
1948	Jean Borotra (Fra)	Geoff Paish	6-3, 6-3, 6-2
1949	Jean Borotra (Fra)	Geoff Paish	6-4, 6-3, 6-3
1950	Jaroslav Drobny (Egy)	Geoff Paish	6-3, 6-2, 6-0
1951	Geoff Paish	Ignacy Tloczynski (Pol)	6-4, 6-4, 6-1
1952	Jaroslav Drobny (Egy)	Tony Mottram	6-3, 6-4, 8-6
1953	Jaroslav Drobny (Egy)	Bobby Wilson	6-2, 7-5, 6-2
1954	Jaroslav Drobny (Egy)	Wladyslaw Skonecki (Pol)	7-5, 7-5, 7-9, 6-4
1955	Wladyslaw Skonecki (Pol)	Billy Knight	5-7, 7-5, 6-4, 9-7
1956	Alfred Huber (Aut)	Geoff Paish	7-5, 7-5, 7-9, 6-4
1957	No tournament held		
1958	Mike Davies	Sven Davidson (Swe)	5-7, 6-1, 6-2, 6-2
1959	Bobby Wilson	Kurt Nielsen (Den)	6-3, 8-6, 6-2
1960	Billy Knight	Bobby Wilson	6-3, 6-4, 8-6
1961	Tony Pickard	Manuel Santana (Spa)	6-1, 6-3, 6-3
1962	Bobby Wilson	Billy Knight	3-6, 6-3, 8-6, 2-6, 6-2
1963	Bobby Wilson	Roger Taylor	16-14, 6-2, 9-7
1964	Mike Sangster	Bobby Wilson	6-3, 8-6, 6-4
1965	Bobby Wilson	Mark Cox	6-3, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4
1966–67	No tournament held		
1968	Bob Hewitt (SA)	Robert Lutz (USA)	4-6, 6-2, 6-4, 10-8
1969	Rod Laver (Aus)	Tony Roche (Aus)	6-4, 6-1, 6-3
1970	Rod Laver (Aus)	Cliff Richey (USA)	6-3, 6-4, 7-5
1971	Ilie Nastase (Rom)	Rod Laver (Aus)	3-6, 6-3, 3-6, 6-4, 6-4

Women's Singles

<i>Year</i>	<i>Winner</i>	<i>Runner-up</i>	<i>Score</i>
1890	May Jacks	Maud Shackle	6-0, 6-1
1891	Maud Shackle	May Jacks	7-5, 6-2
1892	Maud Shackle	May Arbuthnot	6-3, 3-6, 6-2

QUEEN'S CLUB

1893	Maud Shackle	May Arbuthnot	6-2, 1-6, 7-5
1894	Edith Austin	May Arbuthnot	2-6, 6-4, 7-5
1895	Charlotte Cooper	Edith Austin	6-4, 3-6, 6-1
1896	Edith Austin	Charlotte Cooper	6-2, 3-6, 6-3
1897	Edith Austin	Ruth Dyas	9-11, 6-4, 12-10
1898	Edith Austin	Ruth Pennington-Legh	6-3, 2-6, 6-2
1899	Edith Austin	Charlotte Cooper	6-2, 6-4
1900	Toupie Lowther	Edith Greville	2-6, 7-5, 6-4
1901	Blanche Hillyard	Toupie Lowther	6-2, 6-3
1902	Toupie Lowther	Blanche Duddell	6-3, 6-1
1903	Toupie Lowther	Adine Masson (Fra)	6-1, 6-0
1904	Dorothea Douglass	Edith Greville	6-2, 6-3
1905	Hilda Lane	Gladys Eastlake-Smith	6-4, 8-6
1906	Dorothea Douglass	Hilda Lane	6-2, 6-0
1907	Gladys Eastlake-Smith	Mildred Coles	6-3, 6-3
1908	Dorothea Lambert Chambers	Gladys Eastlake-Smith	6-3, 6-3
1909	Dora Boothby	Madeline O'Neill	6-1, 6-3
1910	Dorothea Lambert Chambers	Madeline O'Neill	6-4, 6-3
1911	Dorothea Lambert Chambers	Helen Aitchison	6-3, 6-1
1912	Dorothy Holman	Aurea Edgington	6-2, 6-0
1913	Dorothea Lambert Chambers	Dorothy Holman	6-2, 6-3
1914	Dorothy Holman	Dorothea Lambert Chambers	walkover
1915-18	No tournament held		
1919	Dorothea Lambert Chambers	Dorothy Holman	6-3, 6-3
1920	Elizabeth Ryan (USA)	Dorothea Lambert Chambers	walkover
1921	Dorothy Holman	Irene Peacock (SA)	6-1, 3-6, 6-4
1922	Dorothy Holman	Doris Craddock	6-2, 6-1
1923	Mabel Clayton	Aurea Edgington	6-3, 6-2
1924	Geraldine Beamish	Doris Craddock	6-4, 6-4
1925	Joan Reid-Thomas	Blanche Colston	6-2, 7-5
1926	Peggy Saunders	Betty Dix	6-4, 6-2
1927	Eileen Bennett	Cristobel Hardie	6-4, 6-0
1928	Kitty Godfree	Eileen Bennett	6-1, 6-2
1929	Peggy Michell	Joan Ridley	6-4, 6-4
1930	Joan Ridley	Joan Fry	6-2, 6-2
1931	Mary Heeley	Jeanette Morfey	6-1, 6-0
1932	Peggy Scriven	Kay Stammers	6-2, 6-4
1933	Phyllis King	Kay Stammers	10-12, 6-1, 6-3

BEYOND SW19

1934	Phyllis King	Mary Hardwick	6-3, 4-6, 6-2
1935	Peggy Scriven	Ermyntrude Harvey	6-2, 6-2
1936	Anita Lizana (Chl)	Mary Hardwick	6-3, 6-0
1937	Peggy Scriven	Phyllis King	6-1, 6-2
1938	Peggy Scriven	Alexandra McKelvie	6-3, 4-6, 6-1
1939–46	No tournament held		
1947	Gem Hoahing	Peggy Dawson-Scott	8-6, 6-3
1948	Gem Hoahing	Joan Curry	1-6, 6-3, 7-5
1949	Joan Curry	Jean Quertier	6-1, 6-0
1950	Jean Quertier	Joan Curry	3-6, 7-5, 6-3
1951	Susan Partridge	Jean Walker-Smith	6-4, 6-4
1952	Angela Mortimer	Susan Partridge	6-3, 3-6, 6-3
1953	Angela Mortimer	Georgie Woodgate	6-3, 6-2
1954	Angela Mortimer	Shirley Bloomer	6-2, 6-3
1955	Anne Shilcock	Pat Ward	6-2, 6-4
1956	Angela Buxton	Anne Shilcock	6-2, 6-2
1957	No tournament held		
1958	Anne Shilcock	Christine Truman	6-2, 6-2
1959	Angela Mortimer	Pat Ward	6-2, 6-3
1960	Angela Mortimer	Ann Haydon	7-5 retd
1961	Angela Mortimer	Christine Truman	2-6, 6-1, 6-4
1962	Ann Haydon	Christine Truman	6-4, 4-6, 9-7
1963	Deidre Catt	Renee Schuurman (SA)	4-6, 6-3, 6-3
1964	Ann Jones	Fay Toyne (Aus)	6-3, 6-3
1965	Ann Jones	Fay Toyne (Aus)	6-2, 6-1
1966–67	No tournament held		
1968	Margaret Court (Aus)	Virginia Wade	10-8, 6-1
1969	Ann Jones	Billie Jean King (USA)	9-11, 6-2, 9-7
1970	Billie Jean King (USA)	Ann Jones	8-6, 3-6, 6-1
1971	Billie Jean King (USA)	Francoise Durr (Fra)	6-1, 5-7, 7-5

The Grass Court Championships since the 1970s

The demise of the BCCC, combined with the uncertainty facing the Grass Court Championships, meant the future for world-class tennis at Queen's Club looked perilous in the mid-1970s. Unable to offer a showcase summer meeting for three successive seasons, between

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1974 and 1976, club chairman Clive Bernstein worked tirelessly to find a sponsor generous enough to ensure top players would attend and with enough clout to ensure Queen's would be included as part of the Grand Prix, the generic name used in the early Open era for the top-tier circuit below the grand slams. Bernstein – with backing from the LTA – eventually secured his goal (courtesy of Rawlings, the soft drinks section of Whitbread Brewery), allowing a men's event to return in 1977. The tournament was not an unbridled success. Many leading stars were absent and poor weather took its toll on attendances. But the sponsors were happy enough to support the gathering for another year; the renamed Queen's Club Championship was back in business.

The next couple of years proved crucial in catapulting Queen's from near oblivion to the top of the pre-Wimbledon tournament tree. A shift in start date to earlier in June meant the revived meeting quickly established a firm sense of identity; more a top-drawer event in its own right, rather than, as in the case of the earlier London Championships, last-minute practice before moving on to SW19. In 1978, the BBC, looking to expand its summer tennis portfolio, began regular coverage from Queen's, thereby significantly raising the profile of the club and the tournament. The following year a substantial, long-term sponsorship deal was secured, helping to ensure that the Stella Artois Championships became embedded within the men's Grand Prix circuit. Finally, although Bjorn Borg never competed, the Stella – as many called it – found favour with household-name performers who kept the turnstiles ticking over and the TV viewers watching in large numbers. The stand-out figure in this regard was the immensely talented but controversial John McEnroe, who first reached the final in 1978, where he was narrowly beaten by Australia's Tony Roche.

As a result of a mixture of hard graft and good fortune, Queen's was therefore able to establish itself in the 1980s as *the* key pre-Wimbledon men's warm-up tournament – a position it

has not since relinquished – although not without some further bumps in the road. The weather in the following few years was frequently disruptive and occasioned grumbling from players and also broadcasters looking to fill their schedules. On court, the early 1980s witnessed some fine-quality tennis as well as renewed ructions (the latter welcomed by much of the media, which regarded it as good box office). Despite winning three times in succession, John McEnroe's volatile temper was never far from the surface. His hat-trick of wins was secured in 1981 when, in the process of beating fellow American Brian Gottfried in straight sets, McEnroe spent much time sniping about the positioning of a linesman. Gottfried, not best pleased, told him to stop baiting the female umpire and questioning so many line calls.

In 1982 and 1983 McEnroe accepted defeat in the final quite calmly, by his standards, both times losing to his great rival Jimmy Connors, another leading crowd-puller in his own right. In 1984 the top three world-ranked men – Connors, McEnroe and Lendl – all competed at the Stella Artois, and the tournament's profile was sharpened by fresh uproar. Lendl, having beaten McEnroe at the French Open days before to win his first grand slam title, lost in the first round to American Leif Shiras, who despite being outside the world top 100 worked his way through one side of the draw to reach the final. McEnroe, putting the setback in Paris behind him, beat Connors in the last four to reach his seventh final in a row at Queen's. He easily won the first set against Shiras, but then at 4-1 down in the second he exploded after the umpire overruled a line call, leading to a lengthy delay during which the American called the official a 'moron'. McEnroe lost the set but recovered to win in three; front as well as back-page headlines the following day were again dominated by discussion of the New Yorker's antics.

In 1985 – when McEnroe stayed away prior to Wimbledon, citing media 'harassment' – the spotlight fortuitously fell on another

big tennis personality, 17-year-old West German Boris Becker. The talented newcomer stole the show by storming through to become the youngest man to take the Stella title, a feat he repeated in SW19 a few weeks later. With club membership at a record high and tournament profits soaring, Queen's went from strength to strength. Becker went on to triumph four times, and was followed on the winner's rostrum by a string of fellow grand slam champions including Lendl, Edberg, Stich and Sampras.

The roll call of illustrious victors continued between 2000 and 2007 when Lleyton Hewitt and Andy Roddick matched McEnroe's record by each winning four times. Roddick praised the grass surface at Queen's as possibly the best in the world and, for good measure, he sent down in 2004 what was then a world record for the fastest serve, timed at 153mph.

A final factor underpinning the rise and rise of the Stella Artois (after 2009 the Aegon, and currently the Fever-Tree) Championships was the sustained level of British interest. Tim Henman came close in three finals between 1999 and 2002, but was thwarted by Pete Sampras and by Lleyton Hewitt (twice). Andy Murray burst into public consciousness when, as an 18-year-old newly turned professional, he memorably won through two rounds at Queen's in 2005. When he lifted the trophy four years later, beating America's James Blake in the final, he became the first home man to do so since Bunny Austin in 1938. Murray proceeded to claim the title five times over eight years. His win over Canada's Milos Raonic in 2016 meant he became the only man in the history of the famous event thus far – stretching all the way back to its original form in the 1880s – to become a five-time singles champion. The capacity crowd at Queen's cheered Murray more loudly than ever when, after hip surgery and agonisingly long spells out through injury, he returned to West Kensington in 2019 to win the men's doubles alongside his Spanish partner (and winner of the singles that year), Feliciano Lopez.

RECORD BREAKERS: GRASS COURT CHAMPIONSHIPS SINCE 1881

Most titles – Men: Andy Murray (5), Ernest Lewis (4), Harry Barlow (4), Major Ritchie (4), Anthony Wilding (4), Roy Emerson (4), John McEnroe (4), Boris Becker (4), Lleyton Hewitt (4), Andy Roddick (4)

Most titles – Women: Ethel Larcombe (6 – twice as Ethel Thomson), Charlotte Sterry (5 – four as Charlotte Cooper), Edith Greville (4 – three as Edith Austin), Elizabeth Ryan (4), Jadwiga Jedrzejowska (4), Louise Brough (4), Margaret Court (4 – twice as Margaret Smith)

Number of Grass Court/Queen's champions who also won Wimbledon singles

Men: 23 (1881–1973), 8 (1977–2020); Women: 13; Total: 44

Queen's Grass Court Championships

<i>Year</i>	<i>Winner</i>	<i>Runner-up</i>	<i>Score</i>
1977	Raul Ramirez (Mex)	Mark Cox	9-7, 7-5
1978	Tony Roche (Aus)	John McEnroe (USA)	8-6, 9-7
1979	John McEnroe (USA)	Victor Pecci (Par)	6-7, 6-1, 6-1
1980	John McEnroe (USA)	Kim Warwick (Aus)	6-3, 6-1
1981	John McEnroe (USA)	Brian Gottfried (USA)	7-6, 7-5
1982	Jimmy Connors (USA)	John McEnroe (USA)	7-5, 6-3
1983	Jimmy Connors (USA)	John McEnroe (USA)	6-3, 6-3
1984	John McEnroe (USA)	Leif Shiras (USA)	6-1, 3-6, 6-2
1985	Boris Becker (WG)	Johan Kriek (USA)	6-2, 6-3
1986	Tim Mayotte (USA)	Jimmy Connors (USA)	6-4, 2-1 ret'd
1987	Boris Becker (WG)	Jimmy Connors (USA)	6-7, 6-3, 6-4
1988	Boris Becker (WG)	Stefan Edberg (Swe)	6-1, 3-6, 6-3
1989	Ivan Lendl (Czh)	Christo van Rensburg (SA)	4-6, 6-3, 6-4
1990	Ivan Lendl (Czh)	Boris Becker (WG)	6-3, 6-2
1991	Stefan Edberg (Swe)	David Wheaton (USA)	6-2, 6-3
1992	Wayne Ferreira (SA)	Shuzo Matsuoka (Jpn)	6-3, 6-4
1993	Michael Stich (Ger)	Wayne Ferreira (SA)	6-3, 6-4

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1994	Todd Martin (USA)	Pete Sampras (USA)	7-6, 7-6
1995	Pete Sampras (USA)	Guy Forget (Fra)	7-6, 7-6
1996	Boris Becker (Ger)	Stefan Edberg (Swe)	6-4, 7-6
1997	Mark Philippoussis (Aus)	Goran Ivanisevic (Cro)	7-5, 6-3
1998	Scott Draper (Aus)	Laurence Tieleman (Ita)	7-6, 6-4
1999	Pete Sampras (USA)	Tim Henman	6-7, 6-4, 7-6
2000	Lleyton Hewitt (Aus)	Pete Sampras (USA)	6-4, 6-4
2001	Lleyton Hewitt (Aus)	Tim Henman	7-6, 7-6
2002	Lleyton Hewitt (Aus)	Tim Henman	4-6, 6-1, 6-4
2003	Andy Roddick (USA)	Sebastien Grosjean (Fra)	6-3, 6-3
2004	Andy Roddick (USA)	Sebastien Grosjean (Fra)	7-6, 6-4
2005	Andy Roddick (USA)	Ivo Karlovic (Cro)	7-6, 7-6
2006	Lleyton Hewitt (Aus)	James Blake (USA)	6-4, 6-4
2007	Andy Roddick (USA)	Nicolas Mahut (Fra)	4-6, 7-6, 7-6
2008	Rafael Nadal (Spn)	Novak Djokovic (Srb)	7-6, 7-5
2009	Andy Murray	James Blake (USA)	7-5, 6-4
2010	Sam Querrey (USA)	Mardy Fish (USA)	7-6, 7-5
2011	Andy Murray	Jo-Wilfried Tsonga (Fra)	3-6, 7-6, 6-4
2012	Marin Cilic (Cro)	David Nalbandian (Arg)	6-7, 4-3 default
2013	Andy Murray	Marin Cilic (Cro)	5-7, 7-5, 6-3
2014	Grigor Dimitrov (Bul)	Feliciano Lopez (Spn)	6-7, 7-6, 7-6
2015	Andy Murray	Kevin Anderson (SA)	6-3, 6-4
2016	Andy Murray	Milos Raonic (Can)	6-7, 6-4, 6-3
2017	Feliciano Lopez (Spn)	Marin Cilic (Cro)	4-6, 7-6, 7-6
2018	Marin Cilic (Cro)	Novak Djokovic (Srb)	5-7, 7-6, 6-3
2019	Feliciano Lopez (Spn)	Gilles Simon (Fra)	6-2, 6-7, 7-6
2020	No tournament held		