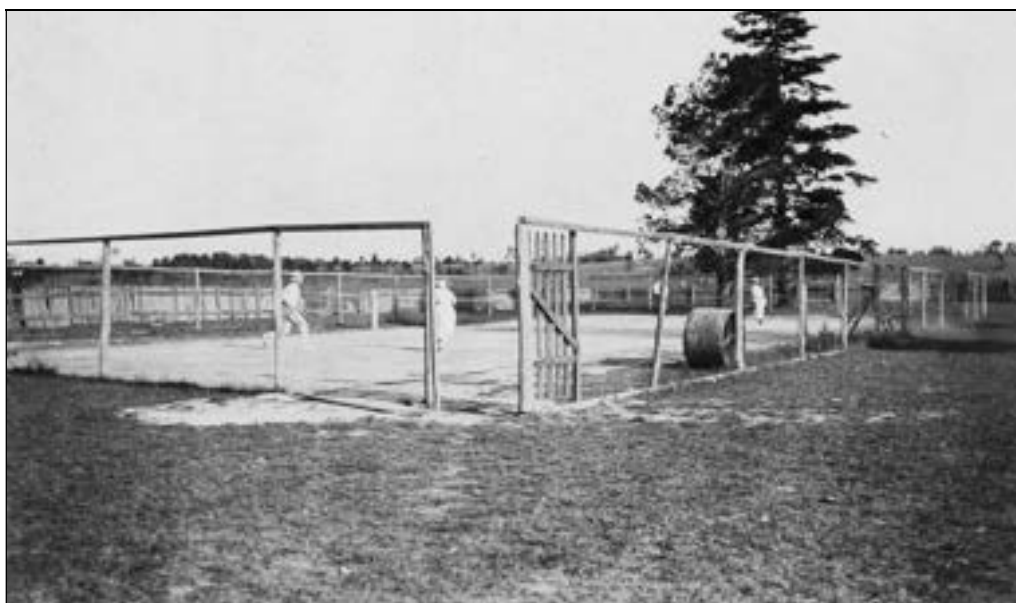




c1905-08. Tennis court in Riverstone.

The label on the back of the photo reads. As far as I can remember this was the first Tennis Court in "Rivo". We made it ourselves outside the fence of one of the churches (C of E or Presbyterian). This was a match between Riverstone and Kogarah. The players in the far court were (1) Myself (Stan Myers) (2) Bob Cruickshank at the net. (3) Sitting down are (4) Dr Blue & I cannot tell you who the girls are. One I think was my sister Evie(?). No 3. Is my father with the boxer hat.

Photo: Stan Meyers - Riverstone Historical Society Collection.



1920s. St Paul's Church of England Tennis Court.

Players at this end are Percy Voysey and Ida Rumery. Photo: Rumery family collection.

Tennis

Clarrie Neal

Articles in the Windsor and Richmond Gazette show that tennis started in Riverstone in the early 1900s. In this article, Clarrie Neal records some of the history of tennis in the district from the 1920s onwards, having interviewed people who's memories went back to that time.

Tennis has always been a popular game in the Riverstone and surrounding districts, particularly during the 1920s and continuing through to the 1960s. There were no community courts as we know them today, but there were many homes on large blocks of land that had their own court. There were more than 50 courts in the district, with many first class, being made of good quality loam, whereas others were formed of metal screenings or in some cases the soil from ant beds. These courts required a lot of attention, having to be regularly watered, rolled with a heavy roller and bagged to evenly spread out the top layer of sand.

Bill Griffin recalled that most of these courts built in the 1920s were hand dug with the spade and mattock. Though the sites chosen were usually near level there was still a lot of work required to clear the area of weeds and to form a good even base for the playing surface.

There were no permanent lines as we know them. Lines were formed with a marker shaped like a golf buggy, the cylinder filled with a mixture of lime and water. As the marker was pushed along, a fine layer of lime was left on the surface, which formed the line. Sometimes the lines were formed using a thin layer of dry lime powder. Most of the tennis played was social but there were many matches played against teams from the surrounding districts.

The *Windsor and Richmond Gazette* records show that teams from Marsden Park and Riverstone played matches against Richmond, Sackville, Wilberforce, Mt. Druitt, Toongabbie, Schofields, Rouse Hill, Annandale and Annangrove. During the 1930s Riverstone and district conducted their own local competitions. In later years many of the courts provided teams for the competitions run by the Hawkesbury and Blacktown District Tennis Associations.

Mavis Lane and Olga Robshaw Remember

Mavis Lane came to live in the district in 1935 with her husband Sammy and has many fond memories of the tennis in those days. She recalled her first game in Riverstone was played on Hibberds court and she played poorly because it was the first time she had experienced the ant bed surface. She found it difficult to adjust to after playing on the loam courts of Rockdale.

To get to tennis Mavis and Sam would walk from their home in Station St. Schofields along Railway Terrace. and then up Riverstone Rd. to Hibberds court. After the days tennis they would walk down to the town to have tea with Sam's parents in Garfield Rd. and then later that evening walk home to Schofields. Mavis said that as the children came along they would push the pram all the way, with either one or two babes in it.

Olga Robshaw recalled her father Bert Davis building their family court in Grange Av. using a horse and scoop to transport the loam from where he excavated it on his property. She has many wonderful memories of tennis in those days, particularly the round robin tournaments played on different courts. She played with her brother Harris as a partner and sometimes with Hilton



1948. Tennis players at Tom Evans' court, Veron Road at Schofields.
 Photo: Eva Weaver Collection.



Near Sam Mason's court in Crown Road c1940.
 Left to right: Pearl Fisher, Ivy Rumery, Tess Savage, Laurie Hession, Jim Mason,
 Julie Savage, Vince Hession and Fred Rumery.
 Photo: Laurie Hession

Platt, they would use a tandem bike to travel from court to court. The tandem bike was owned by Sammy Lane.

She remembers playing many games on Ted Gallen's court "The Pines" at Marsden Park. The pine trees were very close to the sidelines and she always had problems with them, but the Gallen family never seemed to have any such problems.

Bert Davis did not play tennis and there was a time when Olga and Harris were away that the court fell into disrepair. Olga had just returned home when one day some airmen from the nearby aerodrome called and asked if they could play tennis there. Bert explained that the court was in bad shape and covered with weeds, but they said they were willing to restore it and within a few weeks the court was in top condition again.

These airmen were from the British aircraft carrier "The Indefatigable" and there was a squadron of their planes based at Schofields during the 2nd World War.

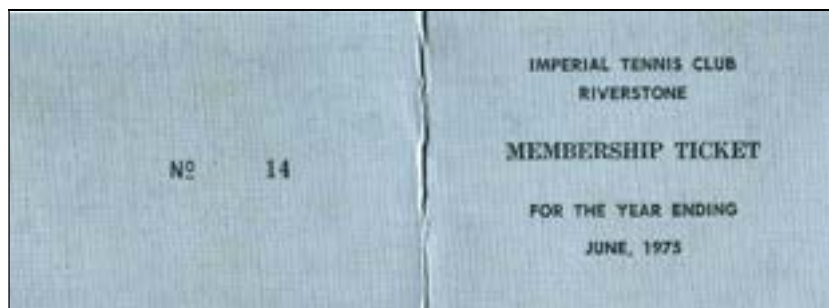
Both Olga and Mavis, along with Joan Moy all have fond memories of the tennis crowd and the dances held in a large room at the back of Tom and Emma Griffins house on Garfield Rd., usually with their daughter Nellie playing the piano. Also providing the music at different times were Tom with his violin, and either Dick Stacy or Phil Cassidy on the piano.

Mavis and Olga really enjoyed their tennis and both believe the afternoon teas that were served in those days were the real highlight of the day. They recalled playing with Rona and Joyce Ransley, Harris Davis, the Griffins, the Gallens, Hector Alcorn, Laurie Moulds, Thelma and Hebe Bliss, Hilton and Lance Platt, Clarrie Neal, Freddie Burden, Ossie Robbins, Arthur (Smoky) Mayhew, Jack Douglass, 'Dinky' and Addie Knight, Jim Armstrong, Lawson Banks, Alf Jefferies, Bill Vaughan, Roy Gavin, Alan Hughes, Trevor Edwards, Jack Powell and Gordon Barker. Olga said their social tennis days were always a lot of fun, - with the likes of Sammy Lane prancing about on the net trying to upset his opponents and Hector Alcorn talking all the time trying to achieve the same result.

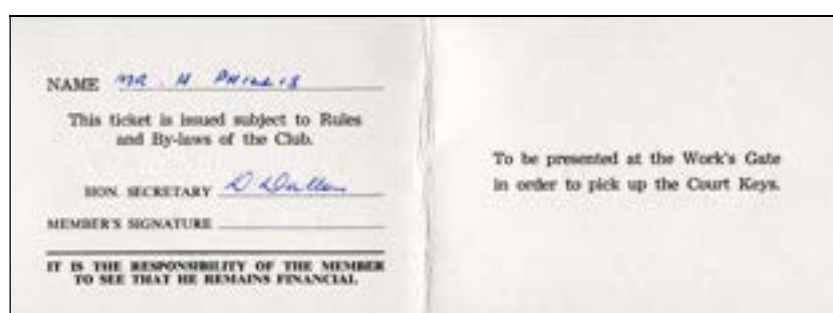
There were never any champions amongst them but Freddie Burden and Clarrie Neal did win a Blacktown District Men's Doubles Championship in 1941. Mavis said she always remembers Freddie Burden in his latter years at the Bowling Club, even when on his walking frame he would always greet her with "Come on Mavis, lets go for our game of tennis."

Probably one of the best courts in the area was Platt's. During the late 40s early 50s it was usual for some of the better players in the district to play there on a Thursday night, often attracting a group of spectators. I remember Bernie Rosa who had just opened his shop at that time, would arrive with a box of ice creams to sell to the spectators. Some of the players were Lawson Banks, Alan Hughes, Clarrie Neal, Jack Douglass, and Bobby Tate.

As a child I can remember walking from Crown Rd. Riverstone all the way to Bert Davis's court at Schofields to watch my father Clarrie Neal play tennis, and we would often walk back home if the tennis finished late. The children always enjoyed these days because there was always somewhere to explore with the other children. We would climb up onto the umpires box which was built on top of the tennis shed and then 'help' Bert collect the eggs from the poultry sheds and watch him milk the cow.



**1975 Imperial Tennis Club Ticket belonging to Harold Phillis.
The Imperial Tennis Club was associated with the Riverstone Meatworks.**



**"Hillcrest," the 1969 A Grade Premiers. Left to right: Harry Phillis, Mrs M. Cross, Colin Crouch, Mrs B. Webb, Laurie Shepherd and Phillip Shepherd.
Windsor and Richmond Gazette 6 August 1969.**

And as I was reminded by Olga, we loved to wander around the cow paddocks stomping on the cow pats, much to our parents disgust. And of course, we always made sure we were near the tennis shed when the afternoon tea was served.

Kaye Crawford and Wendy Drayton

In 1971 the Riverstone High School team won their way through to the final of the Florence Conway Shield. It was a state-wide competition for High School girls in tennis. The Riverstone team played right through in the draw and met Caringbah in the final on the centre court at White City. At the end of the match the two teams were tied and the two schools became joint holders, each holding the shield for 6 months. The two outstanding players for Riverstone were Kaye Crawford and Wendy Drayton. (Wendy also played tennis at State level, won the Coca Cola Little Masters' whilst at primary school and represented N.S.W. high schools against Queensland.

Compiled by Clarrie Neal in May 1999, from photos and information provided by Mavis Lane, Olga Robshaw, Laurie Hessian, Joan Moy, Bill Griffin, George Drayton, Ron Mason, Phyllis Knight, Rosemary Phillis, Marion Bottles, and Merv Rothwell. Apologies to any people who owned courts and I have failed to mention.



April 1973. The tennis courts at Riverstone High School.

Photo: Riverstone Historical Society Collection.

Tennis Courts located in the Riverstone area included -

Hibberds	Cnr. Riverstone Rd. and McCulloch St. opposite the present High School.
Felix Ward	McCulloch St.
Keith McKenzie	At the Baker's Flat end of Riverstone Rd.
Riverstone High School	McCulloch St. 2 courts opened in 1970.
Riverstone Public School	2 courts in Elizabeth St. The library is now built on the site.
Ray Vaughan	Garfield Rd. near Oxford St.
Vidlers	Opposite the Terraces in Garfield Rd. just along from Pitt St, alongside Vidler's.
Frank Parkes	Between Wellington St. and Hobart St.
Tom Allison -	Campbell St. this court was originally known as 'La- Basse' (French for the base) but this was later changed to 'Avondale'.
Ossie Robbins	Oxford St just past the intersection of Regent St. - it was on this court that Ossie's daughter Joan learnt to play, going on to win the Under 19 Australian Doubles Championship with Beryl Penrose in 1949. Heather Smith comments: The red sandy loam used to top dress the court was obtained from council owned land on the corner of Bourke St Richmond. The only remaining evidence of this is the large hole now a the water hazard on the Richmond Golf course.
Sam Mason	Crown Rd. Built before 1920 and was played on by Sam, his daughter Kath and Jenny Schoffel.
Garnet Shepherd	On the corner of Piccadilly and Sydney Sts. Built with the help of the Schofields family.
Hilton Platt	Cnr of Garfield Rd and McCulloch Sts.
Henry Cook	Piccadilly St., just along from Elizabeth St.
'Prince' Greentree	Garfield Rd. opposite the Catholic church.
Reg Egan	On the corner of Crown Rd and Hamilton St.
Gordon Martin	Crown Rd. near Hamilton St.
Keith Martin	Hamilton St. known as 'Wilmar'.

Tennis Courts located in the Riverstone area continued -

Jack Weaver	Sydney St. known as 'Quinty' with the name derived from Uranquinty, an Air Force base in the Riverina area where Jack was stationed during the war.
Norm Brown	Known as "Amity", on the corner of Edward St. and Riverstone Parade.
Gordon Hook	Sydney St.
Ted Hurley	Melbourne St.
Eric Conway	On the corner of Garfield Rd. and Riverstone Pde, hardly used as the site was sold.
'Ned' Leeson	The manager of the Meatworks during the 30s/40s had built alongside his residence in Richards Ave.
Royal Hotel	Garfield Rd. Bill East was the publican. Between the hotel and Harry Williams blacksmiths. Looked after by Ossie Robbins and Roy Gavin.
Vic Knight	2 courts at the rear of the garage on the corner of Garfield Rd and Carlton St.
Wally Andrews	West Parade.
Wood family	Surrounded only by a low fence.
Charlie Knight	Castlereagh St.
Charles Strange-Mure	Piccadilly Street opposite Park Street.
Jack Martz	McCulloch St.
The Presbyterian Church	On the corner of Oxford St. and Garfield Rd.
Church of England	2 courts in Elizabeth St, behind the church.
Catholic Church	2 courts on the corner of Garfield Rd. and McCullough St. Laurie Hessian helped build these courts.
Riverstone Meat Co	Built 3 courts in the 1950s on their land opposite the railway station. Named 'Imperial', after the brand name of their bacon and smallgoods. Two were fitted with lights to allow night tennis. Other courts with lights: Tom Allison, Fred Browning, Henry Cook, Reg Egan, & Hilton Platt.
Council Tennis Courts	Corner of Garfield Road and Carlton Street.

Courts located in the Schofields area included-

Merv Rothwell	Corner of Junction Rd. & Schofields Rd. Built 1940s. 'Wimbledon'.
Martha and Fred Rothwell	Lot 59 Junction Rd Built after the first World War. "Millford".
Tom Evans	Veron Rd known as Veron Court.
Cec Currie	Station Rd. now Bridge St.
Bert Davis	Grange Ave. known as "Woodbrook".
Bliss's -	"Hebe Cottage" midway between Riverstone and Schofields.
Fred and Win Browning	Argowan Rd. known as "Larrasal Sue", named after their 3 children.
Vic McWilliam	Kensington Park Rd.
Henry Saundercock	On the corner of St. Albans Rd. & Railway Tce.

Courts located in the Marsden Park area included-

Snowy Griffin	Garfield Rd. West, near Carnarvon Rd. built by Tom Griffin, sons Joe, Ernie, Snowy, and Billy. Also helping were Stan Mangold, Bill and Ron Carr.
Bob Beer	Richmond Rd.
Clarrie Wilkes	Delaware Road.
Pat Mason	On his poultry farm in Garfield Rd. West.
Ted and Lillian Gallen	South St. known as "The Pines". Built c1926 for their children.
Jack Judge	Cleveland St.
Marsden Park School	Built in the late 40s.

Courts located in the Rouse Hill area included

Vince Hessian	Nelson Rd.
Frank Hessian	Hessian Rd.
Coopers	Rear of the Post Office, cnr Mile End Rd & Windsor Rd.
Frank Lester	Blind Rd. Nelson.
Hughie Mason	Nelson Rd.
Tom Peterson	Windsor Rd near the Royal Oak, now "The Mean Fiddler".
Terry's Estate	This court was built early this century.
Box Hill-Nelson Progress Association	Had a court built in the 1940s.
The Evans family	Mile End Rd.
Rouse Hill School	Windsor Rd. probably built in the 1930's.