

PRIVILEGE IN TENNIS AND LAWN TENNIS: THE GEELONG AND ROYAL SOUTH YARRA EXAMPLES BUT NOT FORGETTING THE STORY OF THE FARMER'S WRIST

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I

It is the season. That strange game called lawn tennis infiltrated the Australian colonies in the mid 1870s when the wealthy, in emulation of English cousins, rigged nets in their city gardens or in the grounds of their country estates and invited long skirted ladies and men in cummerbunds, white shirts, and formal ties to tennis parties. The flight of the balls over nets five feet or more from the ground was demure and accompanied by giggles, gasps and gentlemanly shouts. By the 1880s, those whose enjoyment of these physical dashes required for its satisfaction something more codified in the way of a game were beginning to establish clubs for players of like mind.

Their endeavours were guided by the All England Croquet Club at Wimbledon which had incorporated the words Lawn Tennis in-its title, in 1877, and which staged its first Gentlemen's Singles Championship under rules which modified those of the modern game's inventor, Major Wingfield, and allowed for a net still five feet high at the posts, a rectangular court rather than Wingfield's hour glass, and the modern system of scoring. That all occurred about a century ago. So it is the season - for celebrating the birth of the game, for taking stock, for writing the centenary histories of Australia's earliest tennis clubs. In 1878, the Melbourne Cricket Club added an asphalt court and a tennis club as an adjunct to cricket, and laid a grass court in 1880. No history of the MCC Tennis Club has yet been written. But the story of the Geelong Lawn Tennis Club, founded in 1882, has been told in Graeme Kinross Smith's *The Sweet Spot: One Hundred Years of Life and Tennis in Geelong*, and we have had Richard Yallop's history of the Royal South Yarra Lawn Tennis Club.¹ Additionally Ron McLean's *Country Cracks* details three quarters of a century of Country Week tennis played annually since the founding of New South Wales Country Week in 1909.² So it is

the season of the Australian lawn tennis centenary or near centenary, and there will be more as the decade matures.

As I researched and wrote *The Sweet Spot* during 1980 and 1981 it seemed patently clear to me that the story of the Geelong Lawn Tennis Club - indeed the story of any sporting institution - could only be fully told as part of a social tapestry broader by far than the sport itself. It was no accident that the sub-title attempted to reinforce that fact - 'one hundred years of life and tennis in Geelong'. Life comes first. Virginia O'Farrell has since argued cogently for 'a survey of those involved in tennis...with emphasis on the importance of family background, connections with royalty, money, politicians, education and religion in tennis circles'.³

Anyone striving for such insights as they apply to lawn tennis will reach a clearer final picture by studying also the history of the parent of lawn tennis, royal tennis. In looking at that game's Australian connections (and British, French and American connections also) one emerges with a list of characteristics and assumptions which apply closely to lawn tennis also, at least as the game presented itself in its first half century. I would like briefly to allude to some of them here, and then to cross the tennis divide, as it were, to speak about the Geelong Lawn Tennis story and that of the Royal South Yarra Tennis Club on the one hand, and on the other to discuss the avenue to lawn tennis supremacy provided by New South Wales country tennis and, by implication, also by Country Week Tennis in Victoria, and to a lesser extent, other states.

II

Royal tennis, for a start, had its historic connections not only with French and English royalty - Hampton Court was the Court built c.1530 at the behest of Henry VIII, for instance - but with the French clergy. Regal or Vice-Regal patronage remained characteristic not only in Europe and Britain in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries but also in the antipodean clubs founded in Hobart (1875) and Melbourne (1882). Concentrating then on these two colonial clubs, one finds in them characteristics inherited from the European bases of the game. There has also been an assumption of wealth - in fact it is doubly necessary present-day, if one is

to form part of a group who can move between Australia, Britain and the USA for Bathurst Cup matches (the royal tennis equivalent of the Davis Cup) or to be present merely as spectators at national or world championships held in both hemispheres. With this go high joining fees at most clubs, generally followed by court fees paid for each game played.

It used to be traditional that during visits by naval flotillas to Hobart, the officers of the flagship were invited to play at the Hobart Royal Tennis club, to socialise there, and to be shown the town, just as competitors visiting for rowing regattas were made the same invitation. There were also connections with the Colonial Service, with those who had served in India and elsewhere. Similar traditions applied in the Geelong Lawn Tennis Club, closely attached as it was to a major port; sailors and sub-mariners were entertained whenever they were berthed in Geelong - until the Second World War. After that time the range of other activities available to visitors made such automatic invitations a trifle eccentric. Royal tennis has for much of its history been considered as much a pastime as a serious and competitive sport, and that brings other things in its train - such a pastime, whether it draws to itself French clergy of the thirteenth century, or the Colonial Governors of Victoria and Tasmania and their Aides-de-Camp, or the 1980s businessman, stockbroker, land developer, professor or judge, is appealing to those whose social and economic status allows them time to pass in a game of tennis. With that goes certain expectations of social acceptability - admittedly much stronger in the nineteenth century and pre-war, but still applied more informally in the more democratic 1980s. Again, the royal game has had its grounding in many places in gentlemen's social clubs attached to cricket - places where those with leisure time and the money to enjoy it have traditionally gathered. Royal tennis at the New York Raquet and Tennis Club, for instance, is an adjunct to the austere but tasteful rooms where millionaire Wall Street bankers and stockbrokers meet for lunch. And worldwide the game has by and large been the preserve of the professions or the landed gentry. As I have noted elsewhere, and as Michael Garnett spells out in his *A History of Royal Tennis in Australia*, the Hobart Royal Tennis Club's story began with the arrival of the retired London merchant, Samuel

Smith Travers, as an immigrant.⁴ Travers, whose background included London clubland and royal tennis on the Oxford court and at James Street in London's Haymarket, could not imagine a civilised life in the antipodes which lacked the opportunity to play the game. So he built his own court in Davey Street, Hobart, and imported his own professional, Thomas Stone, from Britain. But Travers' forays into land speculation in Queensland failed, and he was forced to sell his court to a group of interested friends and players. Thus began the Hobart Royal Tennis Club in 1875. The story of the Royal Melbourne Tennis Club's beginnings was even more in keeping with the tradition of wealth, social acceptability and the best social, economic and political connections. Again, as I have noted elsewhere and as Garnett's account sets out in a fuller context, the thirty-three gentlemen who gathered in John Burnett Box's chambers in Temple Court, Melbourne, to found the club in 1881, numbered among them fifteen who gave as their address Australia's most select and influential club, the Melbourne Club; three who gave either Temple Court, the home of the offices of Melbourne's leading lawyers, or the Supreme Court; one the Australian Club; and the remainder came variously from Toorak, Queen Street, Collins Street East, William Street, the pastoral property 'Ripple Vale' at Birregurra, Caulfield, Collins Street, Collins Street West, Little Collins Street, Little Collins Street West, Brighton and the Atheneum Club.⁵ Clearly a membership consistent with the law, politics, pastoralism, business, the professions and a modicum of trade. The Club's first committee included Roderick Travers, brother of Samuel Smith Travers of Hobart.

Seeing that it is at least in part a pastime (with nothing of great moment, at times, hanging on adherence to strict rules, court dimensions, uniformity of equipment) as well as being at times much more definitely regarded as a game (greater codification and adherence to rules) or a sport (ultimate codification, etc.) royal tennis at times allows some of the elements of relaxed and ingenious play with racquets or racquet substitute and ball inside a court whose physical niches and penthouses lend themselves to experimentation. Hence the wagers on ability, and the devising of tests of skill, that are common to the royal game but are now most unusual in lawn tennis. For instance, one of the doyens of the Hobart Tennis Club in the 1930s, C.W. Butler, used to wager on his skill against the

famous professional at the Club, Percy Finch, throwing out florins at the far end of the court to see how often the two of them could 'boast' the ball to hit the coins. And traditionally there have been other tests of skill and strength - professionals using boot-backs or bottles rather than a raquet in handicaps against club members; foot races round the steep penthouses from above the grille, to the furthest corner of the dedans; bizarre, and predominantly male-orientated, handicaps in which one player has to contend not only with his opponent and his hazards and chases, but also with gravity - playing with no belt to his white creams or his shorts, so that he must deploy one hand to keep his strides up, and is thus not only handicapped in movement, but forfeits the point if the upper edges of his bags sink lower than his knees!

The royal game also affords other informalities that few other sports today can offer. The first is an awareness of the whole person - not necessarily of his or her professional interest, not necessarily of his or her abilities of the game, but of the member as a social being, raconteur, hobbyist; as a rounded person. As I have noted elsewhere, this element of the game is implicit, particularly in part three, in Chris Ronaldson's account of royal tennis in the latter 1980s.⁶ Second is the opportunity, even in world championship matches, for the participants to acknowledge each other's good shots, and for light-hearted by-play between the player(s) at the serving end and the spectators in the dedans, as the player(s) come to snatch a couple of balls to begin the next rest. Again, there is no general rule about this, but it is warming to see such things possible in a game where as yet there are not thousands of dollars, perhaps, hanging on each point; where the game is still intimate, dealing in relatively small numbers of players, and where, because of the physical nature of the court, the number of spectators who can view a match is limited.

Again, there are a number of links between the royal game and lawn tennis, provided by players who have participated in both games at a high level. Not only did lawn tennis arise in part from royal tennis, but obversely since the turn of the century, and particularly in recent times, a number of royal tennis's more talented players had first shown serious intent and the high level of skill in lawn tennis before taking up the royal sport. Foremost among

them, the present world champion, Chris Ronaldson, came to royal tennis via lawn tennis; and Wayne Davies, his most recent challenger for the world title, came to that eminence through squash and lawn tennis in Geelong, Victoria, as it happens. Similarly, Judy Clarke, the World Ladies Champion of Royal Tennis came to the game via lawn tennis. Davis Cup players of the 1920s such as Gerald Patterson, 'SOS' Wertheim, and Pat O'Hara Wood also were dab hands at the royal game, playing at the Melbourne Royal Tennis Club principally, but also sometimes overseas, while two of today's most skilful royal tennis doubles players, the brothers Tony and Ted Cockran, have also had a distinguished career as lawn tennis players in the Melbourne LTAV and VTA 'A' pennant competition, and both are members of the Royal South Yarra (Lawn) Tennis Club.

There is a most interesting period, still to be fully researched, which lies between the advent of Major Wingfield's game of lawn tennis in Britain in the late 1860s and the early 1870s and the establishment of the first tennis clubs in the Australian colonies - first at Melbourne Cricket Club, and soon after at Sydney Cricket Club, Geelong Lawn Tennis Club, and at centres like Armadale and Goulburn and doubtless at others not yet chronicled. In the period between the two, presumably, varied forms of lawn tennis were played in Australia on spare ground in both city and country. The exact nature of the games is probably hidden in family letters or perhaps in a failed romantic novel or two.

We know that prior to the establishment of the Geelong Lawn Tennis Club in October 1882, a form of tennis had been played at the Recreation Ground, a social club for professional and landed men, to which clearly wives and daughters repaired also during the week. Douglas Sladen, nephew of Sir Charles Sladen, a prominent Geelong citizen who had been Premier of Victoria in the 1860s, visited the Recreation Club in 1880. He wrote:

Life at Geelong revolved around the Recreation Ground
- a sort of club, which had some good tennis courts,
and rooms where people could give receptions and dances.
When it was not too hot the Society girls used the tennis
courts a great deal...they played too well for me to be
welcomed in their games....

Here we have again the Gentlemen's Club nurturing tennis as a pastime, even a game, but not yet a sport, in the eyes of its

devotees. It was a game still regarded as an adjunct provided primarily for the ladies, to be set beside more serious and gentlemanly pursuits. Here it is unlike royal tennis, which was traditionally a male preserve.

When Edward Harewood Lascelles, a partner in the wool-broking firm of Dennys Lascelles and a pastoralist entrepreneur, revived the Geelong Club, a gentlemen's club in 1881, it was a short step to his founding (with interested fellow members of the Gentlemen's Club) the Geelong Lawn Tennis Club on the Customs House Reserve in the following year. Within five years it was clear that this provincial club would assume an importance beyond that of probably any other country club in the colonies and later in the nation.

Of what did this Geelong ascendancy consist, and how did it come about? In summary it consisted of the establishment of the prime asphalt tournament beyond the capitals in an era of asphalt courts. It included an enviable acquaintance, through the Geelong Easter Tournament and via other informal and social connections, with many of the best players not only in Victoria but Australia-wide; and a later close attachment to the fortunes, interstate or overseas, of Australian players of the calibre of Gus Kearney, Norman Brookes, Alfred Dunlop, Bob Schlesinger, Rodney Heath, Gerald Patterson, Jack Hawkes, Pat O'Hara Wood, R. ('SOS') Wertheim, I.D. McInnes, Harry Hasset and among lady players Lily Addison, Misses Batten, Cosgrave, Gyton, Howitt, Schlesinger, Wilcox and MacArthur and Gladys and Eileen Toyne. Geelong's ascendancy also consisted in having early accessibility to members of visiting national tennis teams - the English Davis Cup team came to give an international exhibition on the Geelong croquet green, adjacent to the asphalt courts, against Brookes and Dunlop in January 1913 and visited again in February 1920 to play against Hawkes, Patterson and Pat O'Hara Wood on the Geelong asphalt. Corio Terrace, above the courts, was likened that day by the *Geelong Advertiser* to 'one huge garage filled with valuable cars', as Melbourne and Western District visitors joined the gallery of an estimated one thousand people. By 1921 the Geelong Easter Tournament was acknowledged as the largest asphalt tournament in Australia, and since 1913 had been entitled to conduct the Ladies Asphalt Championship of Victoria. In 1913 Von Bissing of the German National team had

played exhibitions in Geelong and over the years the town saw quite frequently the main aspirants for Australian Davis Cup selection. And in 1924 a Geelong men's team played a touring American Universities team. During the period of Norman Brookes' dominance of world tennis in the early 1900s the Geelong Easter Tournament could count on his entry until overseas commitments drew him away, in which case he sent a letter or telegram of apology and good wishes for the tournament's success. A similar pattern was established during the 1920s when Gerald Patterson was Australia's strongest contender for the Wimbledon Men's Singles. In 1919, while 'SOS' Wertheim won the Geelong Easter Tournament, Patterson went on to his first Wimbledon title. In 1920 he won the Geelong Easter Tournament, in 1922 the Wimbledon Singles and in 1924 and 1926 he came to Geelong to wrest the Geelong Easter Tournament from Geelong's own Davis Cup player, J.B. (Jack) Hawkes, who had won the tournament in 1915, 1921 and 1922, played his Davis debut abroad in 1921) was a member again of the 1923 team, and won his home tournament yet again in 1925, beating Patterson in the final before they set off together in Australia's 1925 Davis Cup team. In 1926 Hawkes became the Australian Men's Singles, Men's Doubles and Mixed Doubles champion, while Patterson won the Geelong Easter Tournament in that year and in 1927 the two played off in the Australian Men's Singles final at the new Kooyong courts in the longest match ever seen there, and in century temperature, Patterson winning 3 - 6, 6 - 4, 18 - 16, 6 - 3. In the same year Hawkes again won the Geelong Easter Singles against his fellow townsman, Harry Hassett, who was to dominate the tournament in his career as a Davis Cup aspirant from 1929 until 1936. The point, in all of this, is that the Geelong Lawn Tennis Club supped at the high table of Australian and even world tennis on many occasions from the time of its inception and of Gus Kearney's best years until the Second World War brought trauma at all levels of society breaking long standing patterns in Australian life and going on to usher in a much greater plurality in general, and amongst those who played lawn tennis just as much as any other segment of society. With these changes came wider opportunities for the promising middle-class male players to travel abroad in Australian teams funded by the Lawn Tennis Association of Australia or other bodies, even though they personally were not necessarily wealthy. Ultimately, such changes in

Australia and overseas tennis gradually provided the soil in which professionalism could take root, professionalism leading in its turn to even greater plurality in Australian tennis and in tennis worldwide. Although in the Kramer-Gonzales-Sturgess-McGregor-Sedgman-Drobny-Rosewall-Hoad-Cooper-Laver era of professionalism Geelong hosted several exhibition visits by such players, it is beyond imagining that even a provincial city with considerable clout could mount an exhibition by 1985's top professionals.

How did Geelong manage its pre-war ascendancy? What does it reflect about changes in tennis as a sport, in Australian society and in the wider world? What connections has it with lawn tennis's progenitor royal tennis? Has it parallels in other Australian lawn tennis clubs?

I have already spelt out my belief that the story of any sporting institution lies embedded in the social matrix of the community of which it forms a part. Many of the answers to questions such as those above can be found in such an analysis of the interaction of sport with its host community. Like many royal tennis clubs in Britain, France and America and like the earliest lawn tennis clubs in the Australian capitals and in the eastern seaboard of the USA, the Geelong Lawn Tennis Club grew out of a gentleman's club, the Geelong Club, although from the outset it was made clear that tennis membership was not restricted to those who belonged to the Geelong Club. We have already seen that the Recreation Club had built courts in Geelong before 1880 for the wives and daughters of its members. The Recreation Club was to become the Yorick Club (the first to issue a tennis challenge to the new Geelong Lawn Tennis Club in 1882) and later the Corio Club, with which the Geelong Club and the Geelong Lawn Tennis Club have shared members and interests for many years. The caste of the men who belong to the Geelong Club is a crucial factor in explaining the ascendancy from 1882 to 1945 and beyond of the Geelong Lawn Tennis Club (GLTC). From their inception and for some twenty years afterwards, both clubs were 'men only' institutions. And their male members were predominantly of the Brahmin-class - people of wealth, social standing, political and economic power, and professional training and expertise. They were WASP. In the case of both clubs there was initially a strong pastoralist background in the members: Witness the names Sladen,

Strachan, Shannon and Lascelles among the members of the Geelong Club who became in addition founders of the GLTC, and others such as Rede, Armytage, Austin, Calvert and Russell who remained active in both clubs and brought their considerable resources to bear for their benefit in a multitude of ways. The Geelong Easter Tournament by the early 1900s had moved beyond its earlier handicap events and could count on the best players in the country to compete in the Mens Singles championships, and who was there to present the not inconsiderable prizes (15 Guineas for the Men's Singles Handicaps in 1887, the first year of the tournament), but perhaps Mr. Philip Russell, of 'Osborne House', Corio, or Mrs. Sidney Austin of 'Laurel Bank', the wife of the MLC for South Western Province in the Victorian Upper House or perhaps Lord Brassey, the Governor of Victoria. Sidney Austin acted as the GLTC President from 1889 to 1903. Later his relative, Frank Austin of 'Avalon', also served as a steward for the tournament each year. Who should be waiting on the gentlemen players as they showered, a towel for each over his arm, but the servant from the Geelong (Gentlemen's) Club, the club having moved in 1889 from Mack's Hotel to the adjacent westerly block, where it had erected its own gracious, white fronted building in Corio Terrace, opposite the tennis courts.

The GLTC clearly had the 'right connections' socially and politically. It also preserved a continuing connection with the life-blood of Geelong as a rail centre and port - that is, with the wool trade. First there was E.H. Lascelles of the wool-broking firm of Dennys Lascelles, and the Strachan family whose woolstore shared the south side of Corio Terrace with the Geelong Club. Both families were active in the GLTC, together with later figures such as the pastoralist, Stanley B. Calvert, of 'Watch Hill' at Beec in the Victorian Western District, with J.S.B. Orr and with Russell B. Keays, a woolclasser with the Dennys Lascelles Company. Both Calvert and Orr served as Club Secretary. Keays followed in their footsteps, serving the GLTC as Secretary from 1907 to 1923. People moving in that circle as administrators had the opportunity for prior knowledge and therefore for forethought in making decisions, as well as the ability, within reasonable constraint, to implement those decisions. Geelong wool-men such as David Strachan, were among the GLTC's inaugural members. The later John Ford Strachan,

a member of another branch of the famous wool-broking family, practised in Melbourne as a solicitor, played pennant tennis for the Royal South Yarra Club and later for Grace Park, and for the GLTC, but also played royal tennis as a staunch member of both the Royal Melbourne Tennis Club, the Geelong Club and the GLTC. It was through such figures that the Geelong pastoral scions had links with their equivalent among the wool-brokers living in millionaires' mansions in Toorak and South Yarra - the group written of by the novelist Martin Boyd. One could go on, but probably the point is made that the fortunes of both the Geelong Club and the GLTC were orchestrated by a select and privileged group who were represented at important gatherings, who had the ear of administrators and officials in Melbourne, who could be confident of cooperation and early information and of being able to finance their ventures during times of economic trial.

That group became more pluralist as the century turned, as the game of tennis became more widely known and as the nouveau riche in industry and commerce began to make their influence felt. Initially those who were acceptable as members of the Geelong Club and the embryo GLTC were the landed, those attached to the pastoralist industry at a high level, those with political or financial power, and the professions. Bankers, wool-brokers, merchants, doctors, lawyers, dentists, station owners, and even station managers were in; shop-keepers, teachers and others were out.

The theme of wealth, privilege and political and financial clout is the abiding one in understanding the Geelong Lawn Tennis Club then and now. Other factors making for the Geelong ascendancy until 1945 flow from it. The founders knew the benefits to be gained from establishing a 'tennis ground', as they called it, on the land of the Customs House Reserve, and were able to secure it where less privileged, less respected groups might have failed. So the Club gained level ground commanded by a northern banking sculptured by nature for a large spectator gallery, and with a view to the tall-rigged ships on Corio Bay only 75 metres away. A physical venue of such advantages, married to a calm Easter break of holiday weather, and to the romance of travel down Port Phillip Bay by bay steamer to a watering-place offering five days not only of tournament tennis, but perhaps golf, yachting, sauntering along the

shore of Corio Bay, or tripping to the beaches at Point Lonsdale, Queenscliff or Barwon Heads, was well nigh irresistible. And that is not to mention the element in the Geelong Easter Tournament which for many was the equal of all of the foregoing put together - the gaieties, jazz dances, house parties, boating parties and full-dress balls which accompanied the tennis in a swirling-together of Geelong, Melbourne and Western District society. The Geelong Lawn Tennis Club's Easter Tournament had become the banner by which the club was recognized nationwide. Those WASP values already mentioned as part of the background of royal tennis players in Britain, Australia and the USA were clearly very strong also in those who founded the Geelong Club and the GLTC: What did such privilege mean in practice? With those who joined the GLTC at least until 1945 went a concern for public school education, generally at Geelong College among the men and at The Hermitage (Church of England Girls Grammar School) among the ladies. And with WASP values, wealth, family connections and traditions went a financial security which was most important, first in ensuring success as an ambitious lawn tennis player and in ensuring entry to an inner fraternity which dominated Melbourne and interstate tennis as well as tennis at the national and international level. From the time of its first great player, Gus Kearney, the champion of the Australian colonies in 1891, Geelong Lawn Tennis Club had connections with, indeed its own representatives in, this select group. The GLTC's walking with such privilege reached its height, perhaps, in the period from 1914 to 1930, when the Club gained much from having its own Davis Cup representative in J.B. Hawkes.

As was the wont in those days, Jack Hawkes was a schoolboy until twenty years of age at the Geelong College. He dominated the Public Schools Tennis Championships, the nursery for tennis talent in those times, from 1914 to 1918, holding the unique distinction of winning the 'under 19' title five times in successive years. This tradition gave entry to a separate and, by today's standards, rather exclusive 'club' formed by the best tennis players in Victoria, and arguably in Australia. He already knew Brookes. Hawkes had travelled to New Zealand as a thirteen year old with his father and Russell Keays, the GLTC Secretary (and known as 'Uncle' Russell to the Hawkes' family), to see Brookes, Heath and Dunlop play the Americans W.A. Larned, Maurice McLoughlin and Beals Wright

in the 1912 Davis Cup. Brookes's own rising to the heights of tennis prowess had begun in much the same way. He had himself watched the early intercolonial matches not far from his home, 'Brookwood', at Albert Park, Melbourne, and had been coached as a young player by the intercolonial players S.N. Doust and Dr. Eaves. Brookes's father was a wealthy engineer, ship owner and entrepreneur with interests in sheep stations and paper manufacture. The young Norman had in his day played in the Melbourne Public Schools championships for Melbourne Grammar, as Hawkes was later to do for Geelong College, and had taken the Inter-Colonial Men's Singles laurel from Geelong's Gus Kearney. Brookes, on occasion, used to play tennis with the Melbourne businessman T. Patterson. Brookes sometimes coached Patterson's son, Gerald, also a schoolboy champion, in the years before the Great War. So it was that in Patterson and Hawkes the Melbourne and Geelong establishments were united in representing the cream of Australia's tennis challenge to the world at large. But other international players - particularly 'Big Bill' Tilden; the four French Musketeers (Cochet, Brugnon, La Coste, and Borotra); and to a lesser extent the American Bill Johnston and the Frenchman Boussets - had their own ideas about who was worthy to dominate world tennis during the effervescent 1920s.

Perhaps it can be claimed that against such opposition Patterson and Hawkes did no more than hold their own, but Patterson did win the Wimbledon Singles title in 1919 and 1922, and, among many other less illustrious state, national and international titles, he and Hawkes, to whom he was long time friend and mentor, won the Wimbledon Men's Doubles Championship in 1928, the last occasion on which Hawkes could manage to tour abroad - in this case as private individual, rather than as a member of the Davis Cup team.

So the torch could be said to have passed from Kearney to Brookes, from Brookes to Patterson, Hawkes, Wertheim, O'Hara Wood, Schlesinger, and others. Hawkes' companions in that select group were of a kind. Patterson was the son of a Melbourne company director and businessman (and was to become both himself after the Great War), practiced on the family tennis court in his boyhood home in Kew, and swam in their private swimming pool. He was related to the wealthy Mitchell family, whose quarries were near Lilydale and whose daughter, his aunt, was the illustrious Madame

Melba. Patterson was later a member of the Board of Directors of Hawkes Bros. Wertheim, Schlesinger and O'Hara Wood had similar backgrounds. Schlesinger was a Melbourne Grammar boy, Wertheim was an inheritor of his father's piano-selling business, had his own tennis court and a penchant for fast sports cars, and O'Hara Wood, also an old boy of Melbourne Grammar, was a solicitor's son.

The Hawkes family were unusual in coming to the respect of the Geelong Gentlemen's Club, the Geelong community and the Geelong Lawn Tennis Club, from a background not of pastoral landholding or wool-broking, but of the hardware trade, in the form of the family firm of Hawkes Bros. The business had been established by Jack Hawkes' forebears in 1853. Then his father, T.S. Hawkes, saw it grow to a large business with a spread of departments which went far beyond their main business in mild steel, corrugated iron and plain iron products. The Hawkes Bros. warehouse in Clare Street, Geelong, was flanked by a separate iron yard fenced in red brick in Corio Street. As wholesalers, the firm sold general hardware items and sporting goods, although not sports clothing, supplying most stores in Victoria's Western District. There was a Hawkes Bros. branch in Beaufort, and a Melbourne office which directed goods landed at the Melbourne wharfs to Gippsland and other parts of the State. The business employed a steady 120 to 150 workers throughout the 1920s. This was the enterprise which Jack Hawkes and his brother ran from the mid 1920s onwards. It reached a maximum size in the 1940s with 280 employees.

Along with Hawkes Bros. in its regional economic power, in its influence on the background, lifestyle and social acceptability of T.S. Hawkes and Jack Hawkes (like his father before him, Jack Hawkes has remained a member of the Geelong Gentlemen's Club since his twenty-first birthday) went the family home, 'Llanberis' on the Corio-Bay seafront on Western Beach. The house had its own lawn court and rose garden (the inescapable picture of T.S. Hawkes in his days as Club President was of a man in suit, waistcoat, tie and boater hat, cigarette in mouth and rose from the Llanberis' garden in buttonhole), The family also had a beach house, 'Imbool', overlooking the Barwon estuary and ocean at Barwon Heads, again flanked by an asphalt tennis court. It was on these two courts that 'Uncle Russell' Keays taught the young Jack Hawkes first the

rudiments, later the strategic refinements, of tennis. It was both houses that saw tennis parties and national and international tennis guests. The period of Jack Hawkes' boyhood in the years leading to the Great War and again in the period of relief from trauma in the 1920s was one of expansive relaxation and almost idyllic leisure at times, common to the families in such a social and economic class. It certainly parallels the sort of lifestyle treated by Michael Cannon, with Valerie Hay, in his recent excellent book *The Long Last Summer: Australia's Upper-Class before the Great World War*.⁸

Although from a family at a slightly less exalted level than Cannon's figures, Jack Hawkes reveals, almost as an afterthought, that during his teenage years a big German Benz car followed an early Hupmobile as the family car at 'Llanberis'. It was of the Landulet type, with a canopy that could be pulled back to make it an open tourer. His father never drove; nor did his mother. 'You see', he says; 'we did it properly in those days. We had the whole thing: a chauffeur, in chauffeur's livery and cap. Young Stone drove us everywhere'. Such a background naturally facilitated advancement towards a place in the top rank of tennis. So, too, do social and sporting history enrich each other.

Those who inherited Victorian and Australian lawn tennis supremacy from Patterson, Hawkes, Wertheim, Schlesinger and O'Hara Wood, were of a discernibly different stamp in general: they were the products of a generation who had endured the fires of depression and war, while living under a much tighter financial rein in many cases. Only some of the top few players in the country by the mid to late 1930s could claim to have had their nurturing in prolonged private schooling, wealthy family and the 'right' social connections.

There were other informal connections too, which redounded to the benefit of the GLTC. Dr. Peebles, one of its staunchest members, through his contacts in Melbourne, was able during the late 1880s to organise matches against Melbourne clubs, to arrange Geelong's entry into the Melbourne Men's Pennant Competition (later to become LTAV and then VTA Pennant), to organise exhibitions which would draw the country's best to Geelong, and to smooth the way for state and interstate players to come to the Geelong

Easter Tournament. This was the role that R.B. Keays, T.S. Hawkes and others would assume later in the club's career. There was also a wool-broking and pastoral continuity in the administration of the Club which reflected almost a sense of mission - it began with the Club's founder, E.H. Lascelles, was carried on by the wool-broker J.S.B. Orr, who followed as Secretary in 1883-4, Stanley B. Calvert, pastoralist, in the same role from 1897-1906, and then Russell B. Keays, wool-broker, from 1907-1923, who formed a most effective administrative partnership with Jack Hawkes' father, T.S. Hawkes. As Secretary and President, respectively, they ran the club off and on from 1907 until 1923, and in an unbroken chain of command from 1914 until they both perished in the Yokohama earthquake on a holiday visit to Japan in September 1923.

IV

As soon as we mention again the name of Norman Brookes, of course, his story is seen to entwine with the inception and early fortunes of another club, fifty miles from Geelong and couched beside the Yarra River and its bends as it approaches Melbourne proper. Royal South Yarra was Brookes' own Club, and as its story unfolds the parallels between its development and that of the Geelong Lawn Tennis Club are too strong to ignore. The two clubs could well have been sister institutions. Their standard of play, their social and political clout within and without tennis in their respective communities, were of a kind. Royal South Yarra, on the evidence of Richard Yallop's history, justifies his subtitle - 'One Hundred Years In Australian Tennis'. The Club has indeed cut a figure - in provision of key players, in entrepreneurial skills and conducting of tournaments, and in the social concomitants of the game - in the story of national tennis in this country since the game's beginnings here. The writing of a valid account of such a club, it seems to me, is a matter of striking the delicate balances between individuals and events, between the stages of development in the sport and descriptions of the precise occasion, between Melbourne society at several levels and at different political, economic and sociological times, and the micro-

cosm of those elements represented by a sport which both takes from, and contributes to, them. Yallop's history does it will.

It is inevitable that those tennis clubs able to support the commission of a thorough-going history such as Yallop's will as a matter of course be just those institutions who have boasted a membership among the wealthiest, most influential and most leisured stratum of society. It is not be chance that Royal South Yarra's grass, en-tout-cas, and plexipave and artificial grass courts step down the hill in Williams Road from the solid brick mansions and apartments of South Yarra, only a few riverbends from Kooyong's courts laid out before a similar privileged backdrop of Toorak's large houses. It is not fortuitous that some of the club's earliest members had played on the vice-regal tennis court among the trees in the Government House grounds, yet further riverbends towards the city, or that, on the suggestion first made in 1922 by a committee member, Richard Linton (later Sir Richard, who served as Victoria's Agent-General. London) the Club should seek and receive Royal patronage in 1938. Its list of lady players, for those with long tennis memories, include the names of Howitt, Addison, O'Hara Wood, Molesworth, Boyd, Harper, Hopman, Staley, Nethersole, Smith and Tegart. Among the names of the playing gentlemen over the years have been those of Dunlop, Brookes, Wertheim, O'Hara Wood, Schlesinger, Clemenger, Hopman, Quist, Candy, Sedgman, McGregor, Fraser and McNamee. Little wonder the Richard Yallop recalls the words of Jack McComas, a founding partner of the Club, who orchestrated its move from its original site at Portland Place alongside the Caulfield and Brighton railway line near South Yarra station, to the ultimately more sylvan environs of Glovers Paddock on Williams Road, Toorak. McComas, in proposing a new junior aspirant for membership, told him: 'Just you remember this ... its a privilege, not a right, to be a member of South Yarra!'

Although Yallop does not go into it in these terms it is clear from details of Royal South Yarra's early and continuing membership, its schooling, family background, and place in the professions and business, that this is a story in the WASP tradition by and large, as is the story of most of Australia's long established and prestigious tennis clubs. The Calvinistic caution

endemic to the Melbourne establishment further entrenched among them the Protestant high standards and relative reluctance in the face of change. These things characterize the Royal South Yarra Tennis Club.

Richard Yallop's account takes us from the birth of the South Yarra Tennis Club, to its establishment at Portland Place, and its early encounters with other Victorian Pennant Clubs. Some of these other clubs clearly preceded South Yarra in the field, but who is to write the histories of the tennis clubs at the Melbourne University Colleges of Ormond and Trinity, or of Windsor, Kew, the surprising Essendon, South Melbourne, the doughty Bohemians, and the private Mosspennoch Club, whose members played on the court at the private house of the same name? Yallop sketches in the period of the Club's first President, Professor Morris, English-born, Rugby and Oxford educated, former Headmaster of Melbourne Grammar School, who took the Chair in English, French and Germanic Languages at Melbourne University in 1884. Then, as if to prove that with other institutions tennis clubs have always been products of their times, the next incumbent of the South Yarra Presidency was Matthew Henry Davies, land speculator and Parliamentarian during Melbourne's building boom of the 1870s and 1880s. He had amassed forty companies by 1887; by 1892 Davies' bubble was burst and he was charged with conspiracy to defraud by means of a false balance sheet. The charge was never proved, despite several trials, but Davies went bankrupt in 1894.

Two years later, Norman Brookes played for the first time on the Portland place courts. His name henceforth dominates the club's history, first as a player who rose to preeminence in Melbourne and Victorian tennis and then, by 1904, in Australian tennis. Finally, with his victory in the Wimbledon Singles in 1907, and his feats in the 1907 and 1908 Davis Cup matches, Brookes bestrode world tennis. By 1909 he was Club President at South Yarra, and on resigning that position in 1916, became patron of the Club until 1948. Brookes, in Yallop's words, 'played with Counts and conversed with Kings' in his overseas journeys to Britain, Europe and the French Riviera in the years leading up to the Great War. Such contacts were to continue to be his common fare (after his eclipse in 1919 by Gerald Patterson as the number

one player in Australian tennis) in his later roles as tennis administrator, entrepreneur, Davis Cup Captain, President of the LTAA and the LTAV, and Davis Cup selector. There is no space here to detail the story of the other decades and other great players produced by the Royal South Yarra Tennis Club. But if we are looking to the Club's economic, political and social clout, Yallop's matter-of-fact prose couples well with his eye for detail and for the illuminating account in journals like *Australasian Law Tennis* and in Melbourne's society magazine *Table Talk*, which set the details of the story in a wider context. On a new site and based in a new, spacious and finely appointed clubhouse, the club's movement towards the era of modern tennis was heralded by society dances in the Clubhouse while new names, among the Club's membership - Wertheim, O'Hara Wood, Patterson, Schlesinger, Esna Boyd, Mrs. Harper, Mrs. Molesworth - began to make their impression not only on Victorian but on Australian tennis. The first hints of 'professionalism' also were creeping into the game - tennis players acted as agents for ball manufacturers, earned money writing tennis columns, or became tennis coaches. Then came Quist, and Hopman, and their Davis Cup exploits, the deep trough of World War Two and the tentative picking up of threads again in the 1950s, to lead on to the advent of new junior members who carried the club forward in Melbourne 'A' pennant in the 1960s and early 1970s.

From the time of the 'opening' of Wimbledon to professionals in 1968, it was at first as if tennis had burgeoned like a rank flower. Enormously greater purses lured more and more players to devote their whole energies to the game and to play the national and international circuits. Even the most celebrated clubs gasped at the implications for their identity. The final chapter of the Royal South Yarra history elucidates the ways - not generally known - in which a club of such prestige continued to be seen to involve itself in world tennis. South Yarra chose to enter the lists by staging Grand Prix tournaments, a suggestion of Colin Stubs. In 1974, the tennis public came to the stands at Royal South Yarra to watch John Newcombe, Dick Stockton, Cliff Richey, Vijay Amritraj and Iron Tiriatic vie for the singles crown in the South Pacific Championship. In 1975, with the LTAA in partnership, the Club repeated the event. The genius of Melbourne weather showed its

disapproval at such presumption in a Club other than Kooyong hosting such an event by raining heavily on proceedings, while players of the calibre of Harold Solomon, and Brian Gottfried languished in the clubhouse. It was a sign of the resources of the club, that just when all seemed lost it could call in Sir Willis Connolly, one of its members and head of the State Electricity Commission. Could he help with temporary lighting? Night play was the only way in which the half completed tournament could be concluded. With that one phone call, Verdant Avenue began to fill with SEC trucks, lights were in place by 5pm, and matches continued until 11pm, enabling a daylight final on schedule.⁹ The club continued at a slightly less exalted level, as Yallop spells out, in staging further international events, particularly the Toyota Womens Classic, and the 1978 Bonne Bell Junior Womens Competition between Australia and the United States. It also had direct links to both Men's and Ladies International circuits through the involvement of Colin Stubs and Wayne Reid in the highest levels of tennis administration, perpetuating a tradition which had seen the Club provide committee men to the LTAA Council almost without stay from the time of Brookes.

In a sport with the lineage of tennis - male initiated, often an offshoot of male cricket; earliest founded by the powerful and wealthy, or by members of the male atheneums - the history of male assumption and chauvinism is inescapable. To its credit, the meeting which inaugurated the South Yarra Tennis and Bowling Club in November 1884, was 'an influential meeting of the ladies and gentlemen of South Yarra and district'. But the ladies were very much attendant on the men and their interests. Women had always had equal voting rights and the numbers of men and women had been roughly equal since its creation. Nevertheless, as Yallop points out '... it had been very much a men's club. No woman was included on the Club's general committee, and men's requirements tended to be met before those of women'.¹⁰ This extended to inequitable provision of lockers in the new clubhouse, in primacy of men in allocation of courts, and in the sacredness of the men's bar. Women, even unto the 1970s had to wait at a hatch giving onto the men's bar while the stewards served the men on the other side first. Women were admitted to the bar, however, in 1973. Small beer, perhaps? But such things need chronicling - they are integral to the sociology of any sport.

Another sign of the Club's lineage, as Yallop points out, has been its steady insistence that it would not pay A-Grade pennant players to appear for the Club. Its committee has consistently held this view in common with the policy of its parallel institution, the Geelong Lawn Tennis Club. The attitude of both clubs has been one reminiscent of the Gentlemen's and Players dichotomy in English cricket. Both institutions were conceived as clubs for gentlemen - that has meant amateurism over and against the hyper-professionalism of relatively nouveau-riche clubs, some of which for years now have paid a retaining fee for A-Grade players plus a bonus for rubbers won against other clubs.

And movement with the times? 'Before the war', Fred Strickland, a post-war newcomer to the committee had said of Royal South Yarra to Yallop, 'It had been a terrifying place for young people. It was a very small place in ideas...'¹¹ Lamentably, perhaps, most tennis clubs are. What member has not looked for some soul-food that goes beyond tennis in the conversation after the game? But Royal South Yarra may be more privileged than most in this. Yallop's chapter 'People of Royal South Yarra' hints at it. Here is the Sunday morning group dating from 1958 and who now fall into a pattern dictated by age that sees 60% tennis and 40% 'comradeship', and who have also developed a cricket team, and hold an annual match against the Deniliquin Club. This group, too, developed jazz nights at the Club, building from the marquee balls that were traditional in the 1960s. There is also, in a club of some 2,300 members and a long waiting list, a Tuesday group and traditional Thursday group, where Antarctic explorer, Phillip Law, might play with Sir Willis Connolly, or Dr. Ainslie Meares might tussle with Bob Vroland, President of the LTAV. 'It is good to be able to associate with people who are removed from your business life', Ainslie Meares told Yallop. 'Some Clubs are full of groups of the same profession, like lawyers and doctors. Here there is everybody...'¹² Perhaps Royal South Yarra, with its attention to identity, tone, sense of style, its dances, bridge gatherings, jazz nights, and the depth of professional experience in its membership, has managed to point better than most clubs to the Greek ideal - balance in the development of intellectual and physical attributes - but it has been for the privileged few.

Tennis as physical release from, or physical integration with, the detailed and stressful work of modern business and the professions, even more so in the years from 1970 when tennis has burgeoned as a sport - and a panacea? - is strong in Yallop's account. The principles of operation of Royal South Yarra sit well with that role, and there are questions for deeper probing by the sociologist, even the psychologist. It has remained a club, in the words of its founders, 'where men and women of like mind (and generally background) could congregate and play tennis in civilised surroundings'.¹³ True, even if at the cost of a considerable measure of elitism.

V

So, it becomes apparent that Australian lawn tennis in its early years - allowing for additions, subtractions and substitutions according to locale in a vast continent - shared, by and large, with its parent game, royal tennis, quite a number of the indices of privilege: financial security if not strength in the individual; an emphasis on high or privileged birth, family, social acceptability and contacts; often a sense of colonial swagger that harked back to the well-bred jackaroo, even the new chum colonial experimenter; connections with the Colonial Service, with Empire, possibly with the Indian Colonial Service or other areas of experience where Public-School-educated men might gather and where there might be common knowledge of rackets, of royal tennis (even if it were not possible to play it in tropical colonial outposts) and where lawn tennis might be at the least a social pastime even in hot climates; quite often an informal link with the occupiers of the Vice-Regal office and their Aides-de-camp; a membership holding in common private schooling and a calling to the professions; an ascendancy, in Australia at least, of the landed, the squatter, the entrepreneur; and an assumption of common ground with the officer class in the armed services, (most particularly the Navy, but also Army and Airforce), who were to be welcomed as social or playing guests, even if not skilful at either of the games we are considering.

VI

The avenue to Australian lawn tennis prowess at state, national and international level for players like Brookes, Hawkes, Patterson and others lay through a landscape, a lifestyle, supported by the common factors of social assumption mentioned immediately above, but implicit also in the Geelong and Royal South Yarra stories in general. But if Jack Hawkes was an exemplar of that tradition when he boarded ship in 1921 to make his first tour abroad in an Australian Davis Cup Team, his team-mate at the ship's rail came from a different apprenticeship. His name was Clarrie Todd. He hailed from the Trundle district, close to the geographical centre of New South Wales. He was one of the 'country cracks' nurtured by the dry mid-Western courts of New South Wales, by New South Wales Country Week tennis, and by country tournaments. While Hawkes had been achieving the unbelievable in the Melbourne Public Schools Championships, Todd had paired with Horrie Rice to win the Australasian Men's Doubles title and the Queensland Doubles in 1915. He became the first winner of the New South Wales Hardcourt Championships held in Dubbo before the Great War consumed him, and many others like him, in New South Wales country tennis. The war spat him out with a badly wounded lower leg in 1917. Invalided home he was unable to play competition tennis until 1920, but entered the City of Sydney Championships in 1921 and won the singles, doubles and mixed doubles titles. The performance ensured him a place as the fourth member of the 1921 Davis Cup team. He was twenty-nine years old.

It is the story of men like Todd, and (from the inception in 1912 of women's country team championships) of women players like Marjorie Cox from Narrandera, Edie Butcherine from Trangie and Esme Ashford from the Upper Hunter Valley, that is told in *Country Cracks*, Ron McLean's history of New South Wales Country Week tennis.

We have much for which to thank Ron McLean - for his research, his interviewing of old country stalwarts, for his unearthing of early photographs. And what a contrast his story makes to the one we have followed, tentatively establishing links between the royal game and early lawn tennis and then following the gilded careers of the Geelong Lawn Tennis Club and Royal South Yarra. For McLean's

enquiries pick up the spirit left in the air by those early and largely undocumented games played on country properties between the early 1870s and the establishment of the first colonial tennis clubs in the early 1880s - games in which the players probably employed the 'tennis implements' of Major Wingfield's 'tennis kits'. The actors in the New South Wales Country Week story which begins some thirty years later, were the direct descendents of those players - often taciturn, self-effacing gents with a quiet determination, whose childhood tennis was a hypnotic hitting of a dusty ball against weatherboard or brick on station properties or small farms until they were skilful enough to join adult games on ant bed courts in the breaks between farm work, or in the long summer evenings. Set against the chauffeur-driven business worlds of members of the Geelong and Royal South Yarra fraternities is a Mary Grant Bruce patina, a Patersonian golden rurality of outlook in McLean's figures as they step on centre stage in the wider world of New South Wales or national tennis for the time allotted them according to youth, ability and fighting qualities. They come of stock accustomed to travelling long distances if necessary for a game - as people did for cricket and football also, in times when pastoral and cropping work was labour-intensive and station properties could field their own teams, or combine with small country settlements to do so. 'Austral' of the sports journal, *The Referee*, gives us a picture of such antecedents in country tennis in his book, *Lawn Tennis in Australia*, published in 1912, some three years after the inauguration of New South Wales Country Week. It is a study in sun-drenched idealism, an application of some of the aspects of the Australian bush myth to the sport (the game? the pastime?) of Australian tennis and couched in fascinatingly archaic language. How 'the woods ring with enjoyment' indeed! And note the patronising tone of the author as he relates his city-bred meting out of a tennis lesson to the hapless country crack with the American service! Nevertheless it is social history which thinks of how the game was played, the distances travelled, and the family nature of the games, and is cast in the language and the presuppositions of its time:

"It is a fine day, let's have a game of tennis," says Bill Williams of Onkaparinka Station, "who can we get? There's you and Mary can play well enough, but we want six. Ring up Balubri and see if Wilson can ride across. He can easily do the eight miles by three o'clock. Then the McPhillamy girls can possibly get across from 'Overflow.' Get Mary to ring them up - we'll send the car if they will - its only a twenty-mile run."

On many a hundred outback stations many a pleasant afternoon is just as hastily patched up, and how the woods ring with enjoyment.

"By jove that was a 'oner'" they'll call when Williams raises the chalk with a wholly unorthodox backhand fluke. All these chaps are "one-shatters" Their's not to reason why, their's but to get the ball over or bust, and they know nothing of a backhand, or perchance on the contrary, have no other stroke, but the recollection of a successful passing stroke, or a fine smash, or a fluke volley, will stay in their memory for quite a while, and will come back in many a strenuous burst of speed in rounding up a steer, or bringing in a mob of sheep, on a dusty track, when the heavy haze of heat tires their senses, and the sequel of such a pleasant interlude naturally, out-back, where hospitality is complete, is that all stay to tea and spend a pleasant evening in song and perchance in dance, and then ring up over the "wire fence bush telephones" that they are going to stay all night at Onkaparinka and come home in the morning. And then one of them will acquire a fame for 50 miles around as the local crack, and that fame will be just as intense as the wider one of Brookes in the wider arena. His station will win match after match through his skill. At Yetman, on the Queensland border, I saw a player whose service they told me, was untakable, and, to my astonishment, found he had originally developed the true American service. He would not play for months after I stepped in and, waiting till it hopped high, smote it clean. I was a deliberate image-breaker, I confess, but he did fancy himself overmuch.

Then the local champion has aspirations and he journeys many a mile to meet in a set match some other local celebrity, and corners are rubbed off. Later, perchance, such as these will develop into a Crossman or a Windeyer or, to come to more recent times still, a Todd.

But all the while the game goes on on the stations. Each has its court; nearly always chip and level spots are the rule, the trees only having to be disposed of. Often they lay the courts out "east and west," only to be necessarily promptly altered, as the glare is too intense.

In the summer tennis is mostly out of the question, and cricket, of course, has still full sway. But the old unfounded prejudice against tennis has died. It is no longer considered a girl's game.

True, they can play it, and play well; but so also can they play cricket. Tennis is more social. Fewer players are required, and an hour in the evening will do, and the balls have not to be chased so far. Moreover, the game is played alongside the station itself, where the older folk or those tired out with hard work, can look on and enjoy at close range. Amongst them will be found many a retired or possible champion, and they can appreciate justly the superiority of a cleverly-placed stroke as against a mere *tour de force*, and give unstinted praise to the play of a casual crack visitor.

Then every country town has its local club, and every afternoon in the cool winter - for our Australian winter is ideal, rain seldom interfering - the local doctor and dentist and one or two solicitors step out for a game. Out here in Australia we luckily have no class distinctions. All that is asked of a player is that he shall be a pleasant fellow and a good partner or opponent. On the courts or on the cricket field Jack is not as good as his master - there is no master there. All are equal, save as their skill in the game grades them.¹⁴

In *Country Cracks* McLean draws our attention to the same untutored quality among country players stressed by 'Austral'. Speaking of Bob, one of the Spencer brothers from Barraba, and his later doubles partner, Fred Kalms, from West Wyalong, McLean notes that both were 'off the land, no specialised coaching, too far away from regular top class competition'. And yet it was Fred Kalms, with his massively developed 'farmer's wrist' and right arm who sits in place of Jack Hawkes in a picture of the 1924 Australian Davis Cup team, ranged alongside Pat O'Hara Wood, Gerald Patterson and Bob Schlesinger. Hawkes was occupied fully with the family business and with tennis administration in Geelong and did not contest the state or national championships nor offer himself for Davis Cup selection. As McLean notes, players like Clarrie Todd and Fred Kalms, even after extended layoffs, could command their best form quickly. In 1927, Kalms had a particularly successful year, becoming New South Wales Singles champion, dominating in interstate matches, selected to tour New Zealand and coming close to selection in the 1928 Davis Cup team, having recently accounted for both Patterson and Hawkes in singles matches and, with Bob Schlesinger, for the same duo as a double pair. But at the time of the Victorian championships Kalms was out in the sun-glazed paddocks at West Wyalong getting in his wheat crop! It is clear that some of the players who came to prominence through this vast, informal

country network came from well-established station properties which could withstand their absence for what became 'the country fortnight' ('... it is not Country Week any longer', wrote the tennis correspondent for *Australasian Lawn Tennis* in 1923, 'but Country Fortnight, and it is played at a season altogether too hot for ordinary mortals who are not salamanders'). But others detailed in McLean's account came often from average-size and struggling farms where large families were of the normal order and perhaps the chipped-gravel court was indeed a form of social control as well as a form of occupation for the errant energies of youth. Others came from the stilled, sunbaked streets of country towns large and small. Jack Pollard in his forward to *Country Cracks*, claims that 'the Country has produced more champions, on a population basis, than anywhere else in the world'. The list of such players goes to support his contention - Clarrie Todd, J.O. Anderson, Fred Kalms, Jack Crawford, Viv McGrath, Marjorie Cox, Edie Butcherine, Esme Ashford, Cynthia Sieler (Doerner), Cliff Sproule, Geoff Brown, Bob Howe, Jan Lehane, Margaret Court, Tony Roche, Evonne Goolagong (Cawley), Mark Edmondson, Chris Kachel, Diane Fromholtz (Ballestrat), Rex Hartwig, Jim Matthews, Bob Mark and others.

VII

This article is meant primarily as a survey which might prompt lines of further enquiry. Interviews, perusal of family letters, dipping into records will refine our knowledge of the sources that have fed into Australian tennis as we know it, not forgetting the subject's pertinence to social history in general, not forgetting that it could issue in fiction. There's always that thin line between reportage and myth-making. Who will write the short story that comes from the picture of Fred Kalms given by his son to Ron McLean, and cited in *Country Cracks*. Again, that country taciturnity, understatement and disarming humility:

He used to hop on the train or fuel up the Chevrolet and go away to tournaments. If anyone asked him how he went, he used to say, "not bad". Mum often found cups lying on the back seat of the car a few days after he'd come home from a tournament.¹⁵

There's folk art and fable in that as well as history.

NOTES:

1. G. Kinross Smith, *The Sweet Spot: One Hundred Years of Life and Tennis in Geelong* (Melbourne, 1982); R. Yallop, *Royal South Yarra Lawn Tennis Club: One Hundred Years in Australian Tennis* (Melbourne, 1984).
2. R. McLean, *Country Cracks: The Story of New South Wales Country Tennis* (Gunnedah, 1983).
3. V. O'Farrell, 'The Unasked Questions in Australian Tennis', *Sporting Traditions* 1.2 (1985), 81-82.
4. G. Kinross Smith, 'Chase Better Than a Yard, Worse Than Last Gallery: Royal Tennis in the Antipodes', *Sporting Traditions* 1.2 (1985), 91-95; M.P. Garnett, *A History of Royal Tennis in Australia* (Melbourne, 1983).
5. G. Kinross Smith (1985), *loc.cit.*, 94.
6. C. Ronaldson, *Tennis: A Cut Above the Rest* (Oxford, 1985).
7. D. Sladen, *MY Long Life* (London, 1939), 57.
8. M. Cannon (with V. Hay), *The Long Last Summer: Australia's Upper-Class Before the Great War* (Sydney, 1985).
9. Yallop, *op.cit.*, 105.
10. *Ibid.*, 115.
11. *Ibid.*, 83.
12. *Ibid.*, 125.
13. *Ibid.*, 109.
14. 'Austral', *Lawn Tennis in Australasia* (Sydney, 1912), 186-192.
15. McLean, *op.cit.*, 25.