

Bridgewater Tennis Club

The Bridgewater Tennis Club has the honour of being the second oldest tennis club in Canada. Residents of the town formed the club in 1889 with 120 members and others waiting to join. Tennis enthusiasts played the game on grass courts at the corner of Maple and Alexandra, where an apartment building now stands. Players continued to use grass courts until 1910 when the management committee installed clay courts.

These improvements to the facility on the old Judge Mather B. DesBrisay property cost the club \$600 which added to the \$600 owed to Judge DesBrisay, for purchase of the property in 1902. To pay the debt, the Bridgewater Tennis Company Limited was formed. Shares were available for purchase, and enough were sold to pay off the \$1200 debt. Once the company owned the property it rented it to the club. The company was so successful the club was never in need and the shareholders always received a dividend.

A year after incorporation in 1911, the club hosted the Annual Tournament of the Nova Scotia Provincial Tennis Association and has hosted many subsequent provincial tournaments. In the late '40s and early 50s, social activities became part of the club such as dances and corn boils in conjunction with the Bridgewater Water Carnival.

In 1964, the Bridgewater Tennis Company decided to sell the property and offered it to the tennis club for \$4500 with the provision that it be used for tennis. Within a month, the club voted to purchase the property provided a mortgage for the \$4500 could be secured.

The club was eventually relocated to its current location on the Kinsmen Field, on Maple Street. Unfortunately this meant they were now down to two courts and the money was becoming a bit of an issue. However, with the help of the M.L.A., the Kinsmen and several members of the club, they were back on track and held the official opening of the new location in July of 1974.

More renovations were done in 2007 and there are now three courts which all have lights for night play. Over the years the club has held instructional clinics and various provincial level tournaments. Many of the young players who have come from the club are doing well in the sport and with the determination of dedicated players who refused to give up, many more fine players will have the opportunity to develop their skills in Bridgewater.

By Kara Marchildon, Katimavik May 2010

Bibliography

“Second oldest tennis club in Canada” The Bulletin 100th Anniversary Special, Wednesday, August 3, 1988, Page 117

“TENNIS ANYONE?” ONE HUNDRED YEARS, Published by the Friends Society 1999, Page 117

Bridgewater Tennis Club Pamphlet, 2007