

A SHORT HISTORY OF BANSTEAD DOWNS LAWN TENNIS CLUB

The Club was formed on 4th May 1933 by a group of local residents and the first Chairman was Les Gurney. The entry fee was 2s. and the annual Subscription 10s.6d. The Club colours were black and orange. Initially one court was rented at The Cutting on Banstead Downs, hence the name of the Club. This was shortly extended to 3 courts. Play took place during spring, summer and autumn with no winter play.

In 1935 the Club affiliated to the Surrey County LTA for a sum of £1 11s 6p.

During the pre-war years the emphasis was very much on the social aspects of the Club. Apart from playing tennis, members went on car treasure hunts, put on plays and pantomimes and went for days out and even holidays abroad.

During the war the Club ran Cigarette fundraisers to send to troops overseas.

After the war the Club continued to operate at The Cutting with high quality tennis and many social activities.

In September 1974 the Club was given Notice to Quit by 31st March 1975. The Club appealed under the Landlord and Tenant Act and was successful at the Epsom County Court and subsequently in the High Court. When the case went to the Court of Appeal the Landlord offered the Club £5,000 if it would vacate the premises voluntarily. The Club was able to negotiate rental of a site on the playing fields off Bolters Lane from the Surrey County Council on a 28 year lease with the rental of £10 per annum, the Club allowing free use to local schools. Members helped to erect a clubhouse and the new site was officially opened on 19th May 1979. Initially there were 3 courts but a 4th court was laid shortly thereafter.

Social activities continued and the Club also focused on high quality tennis, with success in many county competitions. Two members gave up their Saturday mornings to coach the Juniors, and membership began to expand. When they retired from coaching the Club contracted professional coaches and the Junior sections continued to grow.

A company limited by guarantee, Banstead Downs Lawn Tennis Club Limited, was formed in October 1999 in order to purchase the freehold of the Club property from Surrey County Council and manage the affairs of the Club. The purchase of the original land together with additional adjacent land was completed in June 2000 at a cost of £40,000, subsequent to which two additional courts and the kids-zone were built and the Club completed the floodlighting of the four macadam courts.

Over the winter of 2007/8 the Club had a new clubhouse built to replace the original clubhouse built in 1978. The new Clubhouse is now some 194sqm and is 80% bigger than the previous one and provides modern facilities for the members. A bar was opened in 2019.

The Club continued to improve facilities, relaying courts and upgrading floodlights and in November 2025 some additional land was purchased for £25,000 on which 3 Padel courts are being laid. The Club has also ventured into Pickleball.