

# 1918 Rothamsted Laboratory Lawn Tennis Club

RLTLC was founded in 1918 despite there being no courts at Rothamsted.

At the invitation of Mrs. Pickering, laboratory staff were allowed to use the grass court at her house "The Granary" in Crabtree Lane, Harpenden.



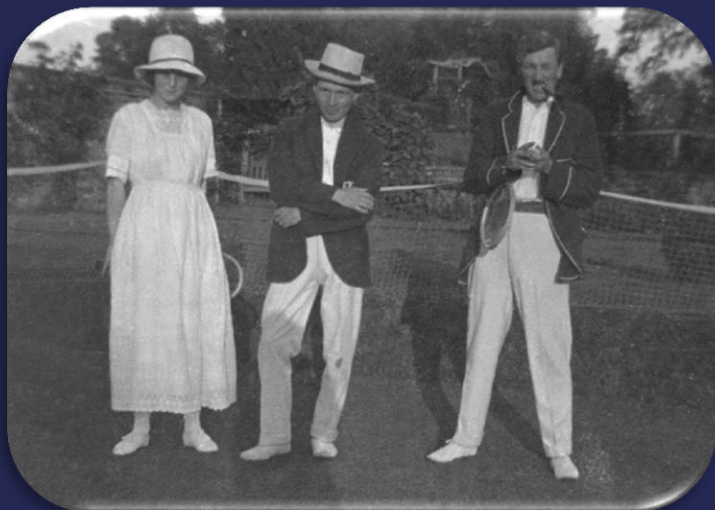
Tennis players, Percival Spencer Umfreville Pickering on right.

Pickering was the Director of the Woburn Experimental Farm. He was also one of five FRS scientists living in Harpenden in 1918. The family had a professional association with Rothamsted scientists as well as a social association through tennis.



Tea after tennis with Mrs Pickering in centre.

# 1918 Rothamsted Laboratory Lawn Tennis Club



Tennis players Mary Glynne



Roach, Glynne, Matthews, Tattersfield & Crowther



Court maintenance  
Roach, Buie & Violet Jackson



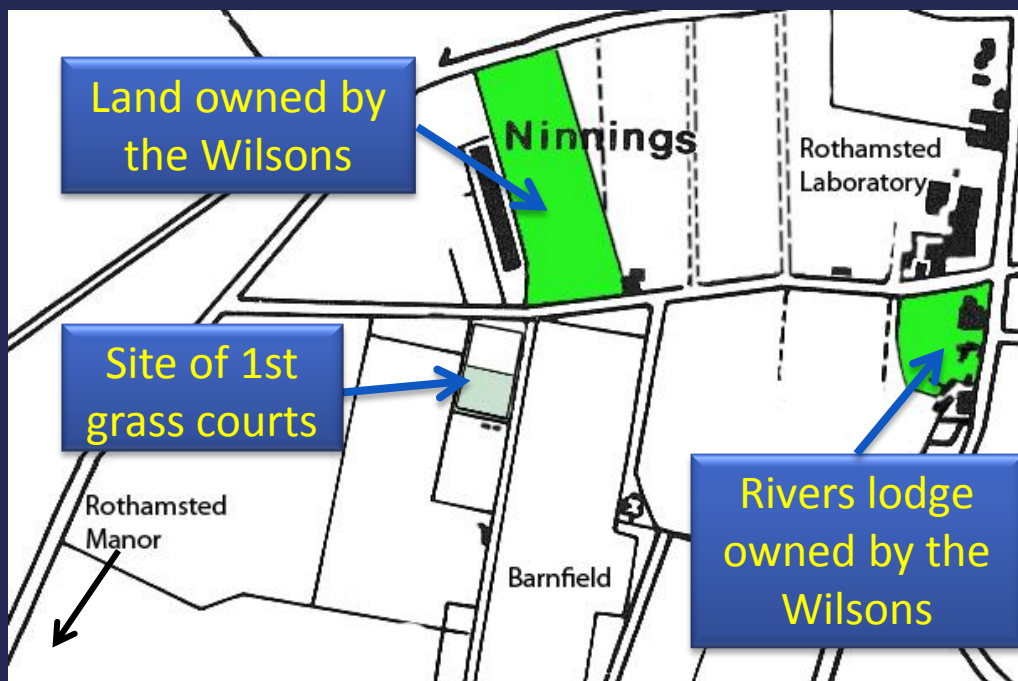
WA Roach



FRS Percival Spencer  
Umfreville Pickering

# 1919 Rothamsted Laboratory Lawn Tennis Club

A short term arrangement was made in 1919 between the tennis club and the Wilsons of Rivers Lodge to rent land they owned (coloured green on map). Once agreed the club marked out a court on which to play tennis.



The minutes of the Staff Union (SU), March 1919, record that there was a degree of haggling between Mrs Wilson and the tennis club about the rent. However, it seems likely that the final offer of ten guineas per annum for a membership of not more than 15 Laboratory staff was agreed.

# 1920 Rothamsted Laboratory Lawn Tennis Club

By 1920 members of the tennis club were discussing the possibility of having their own courts constructed at Rothamsted.

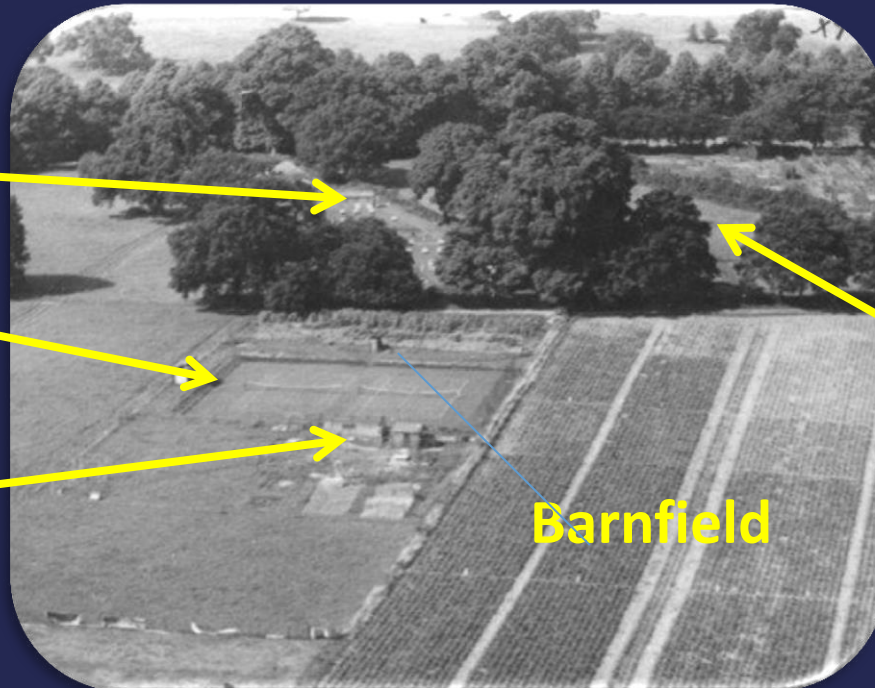
The Lawes Agricultural Trust (LAT) agreed to provide a piece of land to the west of Barnfield, but funds for construction had to be raised by the club.

A debenture scheme was set up and included non-playing members of staff who considered it a worthy cause.

Apiary & sheds

New grass courts

Imperial College  
field plots & sheds



Land owned by  
the Wilsons of  
Rivers Lodge  
until 1926

Barnfield

# 1921 Rothamsted Laboratory Lawn Tennis Club

The 2 grass courts were completed in 1921. A ceremony was arranged and Mrs Russell was invited to open the courts.

The Director John Russell presented a trophy engraved the "Challenge Cup" to be played for each year in a mixed doubles tournament and later referred to as the Russell Cup.



Opening the tennis courts



## Russell Cup winners 1921 -1925

- 1921 ED Harford & HM Morris
- 1922 MD Glynne & HM Morris
- 1923 MD Glynne & HM Morris
- 1924 K Warington & MS DuToit
- 1925 MD Glynne & HM Morris

# 1926 Rothamsted Laboratory Lawn Tennis Club

In 1926 Muriel Roach the tennis club secretary wrote to the Director now Sir John Russell, inviting him to become the 1st president. He recognised the contribution the club could make to the social life of the laboratory staff.



ROTHAMSTED EXPERIMENTAL STATION, HARPENDEN

Director: SIR JOHN RUSSELL, D.Sc., F.R.S.      Telegrams and Telephone: HARPENDEN 21      Head of the Mycological Department: WM. B. BRIERLEY, D.Sc.

Roach  
10<sup>th</sup> May 1926.  
Rothamsted Laboratory Lawn Tennis Club.

Dear Sir John,

I am writing on behalf of the Committee of the Tennis Club to invite you to become our first President. We have been making an effort to enlist the sympathetic interest of those members of the Staff who for various reasons do not feel that they can become playing members of the Club, and we have received quite a generous response to our appeal. Six non-playing members of the Staff have agreed to become Vice-Presidents or Subscribers; and with the additional income thus available we hope to be able to establish the Club on a firm basis and to run it in a more satisfactory manner than was possible last season, thus making it more attractive to playing members and increasing the membership.

We should be most grateful if we might add your name to the list of those who, appreciating the beneficial influence of a Club of this kind on the social life of the Station, are willing to express their interest in a concrete form.

Yours sincerely,  
B. Muriel Roach —  
(Hon. Sec.)

# *1927 Rothamsted Laboratory Lawn Tennis Club*

## Russell Cup winners 1927 -1940

1927  
1928 K Warington & CG Akhurst  
1929 JE Schofield & W Barnicot  
1930 AG Norman & SH Jenkins  
1931 JE Taudevin & LL Lee  
1932 JT Martin & DJ Watson  
1933 GR Orchard & BM North  
1934 J Marshall & G Nagelschmidt  
1935 JAT Anderson & AG Norman  
1936 MM Barnard & AG Norman  
1937 FC Bawden & JR Moffatt  
1938 MP Martin & TS Sadasivan  
1939  
1940 ME Bawden & GH Cashen

## Russell Cup winners 1941-1954

1941 No play  
1942 No play  
1943 No play  
1944 EM Wace & NS Bamji  
1945 JE Mollison & MJ Way  
1946 NA Hart & PW Arnold  
1947 MY Yates & RT Eddison  
1948 DM Tucker & ML Puri  
1949 BJ Bushell & BN Singh  
1950 BJ Bushell & RA French  
1951 JP Quirk & J Sampson  
1952 GN Thorne & L Evans  
1953 GN Thorne & F Raw  
1954 E Tyndale Biscoe & BM Church

# 1945 Rothamsted Laboratory Lawn Tennis Club

After the war the staff at Rothamsted increased rapidly as did the tennis club membership. By 1947-48 there had been a twofold increase.

The existing two grass courts were heavily used and even with regular maintenance were worn out before the end of each season. The fence was broken and both the apiary and the Imperial College sheds used by the tennis club for storing equipment and making tea were in need of repair, also a tap was needed for watering the courts.

Club members rolled up their sleeves repaired the fencing, dug a trench two feet deep across from the apiary to the courts and installed a tap.



1945 Group of tennis club members



# 1950 Rothamsted Laboratory Lawn Tennis Club

A report was sent to the SU, the Director and the LAT outlining the need for more courts (note the incorrect foundation date).

The LAT donated £450 for the construction of two semi hard courts to be built on land adjacent to the existing grass courts, with a condition that the club meet all additional costs.

By 1951 the two new red shale courts were completed thus offering a choice of playing surfaces and relieving the pressure on the grass courts.

## Rothamsted Laboratory Lawn Tennis Club

(Report of the Club on the need for more tennis courts)

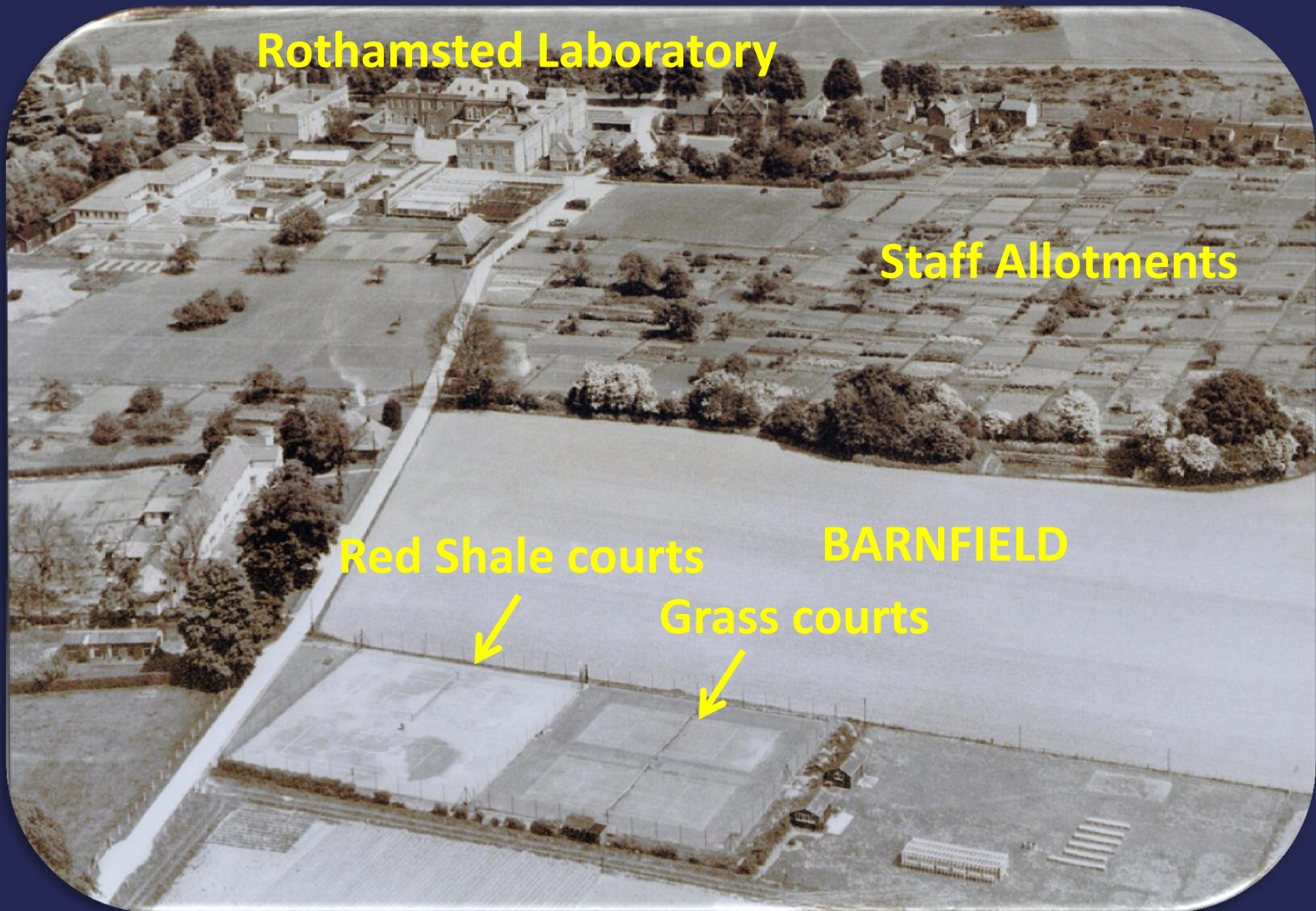
The Club started in 1920 and up to 1943 the membership was below 30 each year. Two grass courts provided by the Staff Union were adequate for the workers of Rothamsted to play tennis. Due to a large increase in the membership of the Staff Union in recent years, the membership of the Tennis Club has gone up very considerably. During the years 1944-49 between 50 - 60 people joined the Club every year. Although it appears at first sight that the Club is flourishing, this large increase in membership has made it exceedingly difficult to run the club successfully. The gradual deterioration of the courts due to excessive play and the overcrowding of the club have led some of our better players to join another club. Unless some financial help is given by the Institute at this stage in order to provide more tennis courts and to get the existing ones reconditioned, the club may gradually come to an end.

The Tennis Club Committee feels that two more hard courts are badly needed due to the increased membership of the club. Even one court in the near future may ease the situation quite considerably. We should like to have En-Tout-Cas type of red hard courts because it is more pleasant to play tennis on them and they are comparatively cheaper to make. Two courts of this type would cost approximately £500 provided a levelled piece of ground is selected. One court would cost far more in proportion than two courts. It is essential that the existing grass courts be resurfaced if they are to be satisfactory and it is estimated that this will cost £100 per court approximately.

It is a matter for the Institute to decide the site of the hard courts. The Tennis Club Committee would like to suggest that the courts should be made near our existing ones. There is space for one court between the orchard and the tennis courts. As this piece of ground is not levelled, it would cost more money to make a court there than on a piece of ground in Great Field near our existing tennis courts.

Hon. Secretary,  
2nd January, 1950.

# 1952 Rothamsted Laboratory Lawn Tennis Club



# *1953 Rothamsted Laboratory Lawn Tennis Club*

Through the 1950s the courts continued to need regular maintenance to the point that Mrs. Bawden, now the President, instigated a rota for this work involving all club members.

At the 1954 AGM it was reported to have worked well!

## *1960*

The construction of a sports pavilion funded by the SU began. It was completed in 1962 and provided much needed facilities for the use of all staff union clubs.

The SU paid £300 in 1963 to replace the tennis courts' perimeter fencing. Unfortunately several of the support posts broke in high winds, so all posts were replaced with more robust ones.

Court maintenance was the most important issue at committee meetings and it was put to the members at the 1967-68 AGM that quotes for alternative court surfaces should be sought. It was decided 9 votes to 3 to convert the two remaining grass courts to hard, all-weather ones.

# 1970 Rothamsted Laboratory Lawn Tennis Club

In 1970 the SU awarded the tennis club £1200 towards the cost of building 2 all-weather courts. The club raised another £500, including £330 in the form of loans. The courts were built and ready for use in 1971. At the same time the shale courts were given a face lift with new line tapes and nets.

The membership at the beginning of the 1973 season was at a record high of 115, with 87 internal staff and the rest external members.

All the outstanding loans had been repaid.

The sports pavilion  
opened 1962

The 2 red shale and the  
2 all-weather courts



# 1975 Rothamsted Laboratory Lawn Tennis Club

In 1975 the shale courts still required regular maintenance; they were almost unplayable at times. The club could not afford to convert them to all-weather courts similar to the rear ones. Instead it was decided to have them resurfaced converting them to semi hard grey-green grit. Funds were again raised by the club through pledges, an interest free loan from the SU and a low interest loan from the ARC. The conversion was completed in 1977.

Over the following years the removal of weeds around the perimeter fencing and rolling the courts using a pedestrian roller kept the ground sub-committee busy.

However, by 1985 the state of the semi hard courts was again giving concern.



# 1985 Rothamsted Laboratory Lawn Tennis Club

An estimate of £10,000 - £18,000 to rebuild the 2 grey green grit courts to the standard of the all-weather courts came as a shock.

To meet this challenge the resourceful committee came up with new ideas for fund raising such as paper recycling, BBQs, book sales, music evenings etc.

With £6,000 in the bank and a loan of £3,000 from the LAT the project was given the go ahead. The courts were built up to the level of the rear courts and by the following spring the courts were ready for play.



The 4 all-weather  
hard courts

# *1988 Rothamsted Laboratory Lawn Tennis Club*

In 1988 enough funds were available to have the two rear courts resurfaced and the following years saw the repayment of all the loans.

At the 1991 AGM thanks were given to club members for the considerable efforts undertaken in raising funds. A special thank you went to Avis Evans who over several years had taken an enthusiastic leading role in many of the events.

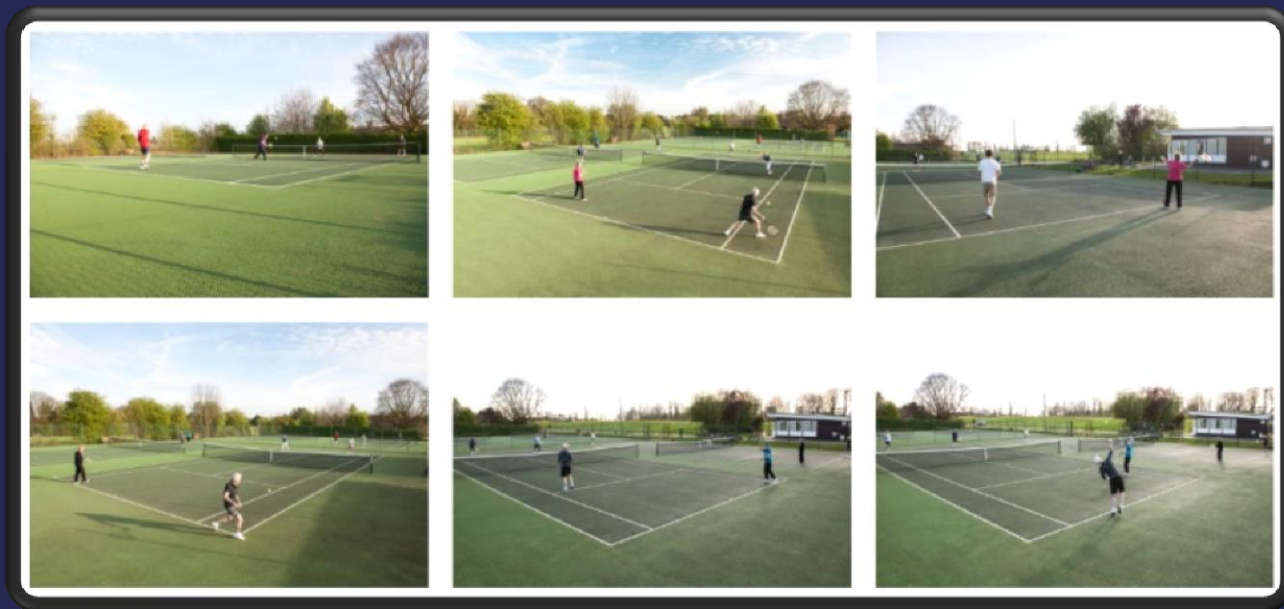
The club now had four hard all-weather courts, that in the future would require much less maintenance.



# *1996 Rothamsted Laboratory Lawn Tennis Club*

For some years the club had no lawn courts and at the 1996 AGM the name was changed from Rothamsted Laboratory Lawn Tennis Club to

## *Rothamsted Tennis Club*





# *2018 Rothamsted Tennis Club*

This short history has been put together to highlight the considerable efforts made by the tennis club committee and its sub-committees over the past 100 years.

They have ensured the continuation of a tennis club and facilities at Rothamsted where players of all standard are welcome.

The details were extracted from the tennis club records specifically regarding construction of the courts, together with some photographs from the Rothamsted heritage group. If any relevant details have been missed or misunderstood please accept my apologies.

Jean Devonshire

# *Russell Cup winners 1955- 1986*

1955	GN Thorne & WW Emerson	1971	P Whitehead & A Nuttall
1956	J George & WW Emerson	1972	E Minter & P Fuller
1957	GN Thorne & C Potter	1973	P Legg & P Fuller
1958	J George & C Potter	1974	E Minter & D Mackney
1959	M Collins & A Weir	1975	M Gratwick & A Whitehead
1960	P Gibbs & O Talibudeen	1976	J George & P Morris
1961	E Greet & O Talibudeen	1977	KJ Gadd & GF Rogers
1962	E Greet & K George	1978	J Bailey & GF Rogers
1963	E Greet & AG Whitehead	1979	M Gratwick & MJ Emerson
1964	R Meek & A Weir	1980	FN Farnham & GF Rogers
1965	J Snell & A Weir	1981	M Gratwick & SWJ Bright
1966	E Greet & A Weir	1982	M Gratwick & MP Smith
1967	M Gratwick & DB Arkoll	1983	JM Bailey & MP Smith
1968	M Gratwick & DB Arkoll	1984	J Hennessy & GA Manning
1969	J Caldicott & DB Arkoll	1985	GM Wilson & SL Fietta
1970	E Greet & RD Prew	1986	M Gratwick & SL Fietta

# *Russell Cup winners 1987 - 2018*

1987	CD Price & GA Fietta	2003	BA Sweeting GD Moores
1988	CD Price & SJ Trevanion	2004	SY Dewhirst & HD Jones
1989	J Hennessy & GD Moores	2005	KE Hammond-Kosak & B Godfrey
1990	M Gratwick & CJ Dyer	2006	SY Dewhirst & M Hammond-Kosak
1991	J Hennessy & FJ Byrne	2007	R Lyons & M Hammond-Kosak
1992	R Stevenson & FJ Byrne	2008	MD Guygusuz & HD Jones
1993	MMA Kalff & GA Fietta	2009	SY Dewhirst & M Durenkamp
1994	JM Steed & Kasaoka	2010	G Jing & HD Jones
1995	SA Riley & GD Moores	2011	SY Dewhirst & GD Moores
1996	JS Knights & FJ Byrne	2012	D Dawkins M Durenkamp
1997	SA Riley & SJ Travanion	2013	JM Tuck & M Durenkamp
1998	JM Tuck & GD Moores	2014	DM Johnson & M Durenkamp
1999	JM Steed & JJ Tuck	2015	L Bandy & M Durenkamp
2000	M Moore & N Magan	2016	K Simmons & N Magan
2001	GD Lorimer & GD Moores	2017	L Bandy & P Cohen
2002	J Mottteram & JJ Tuck	2018	BA Sweeting & N Magan