UNBEATEN LITTLE MO: THE TEEN QUEEN OF WIMBLEDON

A Celebration of Maureen Connolly's "Eighteen Love" SW19 Singles Win Record



by James Harbridge

"Little Mo was Mighty Mo at Wimbledon." - Sue Barker

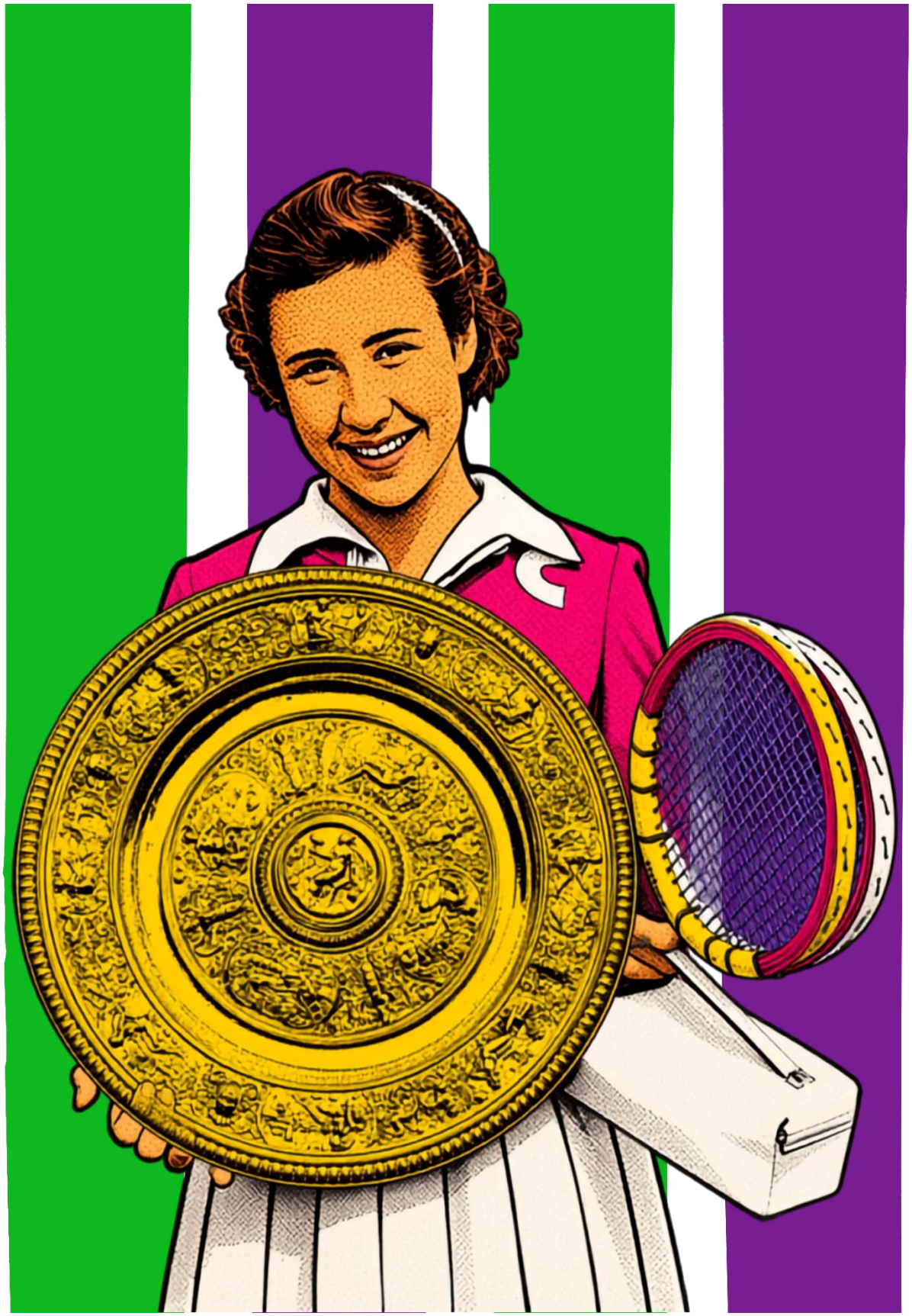
"For Maureen Connolly, Wimbledon was not just an event she won: it was a place she loved." - Billie Jean King and Ilana Kloss

"Little Mo and Centre Court were a perfect combination." - Tim Henman

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO VIRGINIA WADE FOR HER FOREWORD




HISTORY
SERVED
Maureen Connolly, Ladies singles Champion 1952, 53 and 54 was known for her eccentric sense of style. Her final arrival at Wimbledon in 1954 with her handbag – designed as a teapot with Strawberries on top in a nod to Wimbledon



MORE PLAYER QUOTES ABOUT MO …

"Mo's performances at Wimbledon were very inspiring to me."

- Anne Smith

"Tennis should always remember its former greats such as Little Mo."

- Lucie Ahl

"Wimbledon and Maureen Connolly go together like strawberries and cream."

- Sandra Heim-Dopfer

"Mo won three Wimbledons before turning 20. You have to ask yourself: how many more Wimbledons would this iconic woman have won if she hadn't got injured?"

- Meredith McGrath

"Little Mo inspired me, along with generations of girls and boys, to dream big in tennis. Her remarkable story will forever hold a special place in Wimbledon history."

- Fiona Crawley

"Maureen Connolly was the ultimate Wimbledon Champion."

- Ann Grossman Wunderlich

"Mo's story is a reminder that passion, heart and determination can inspire every player."

- Meilen Tu

"I remember seeing a photo of Little Mo when I was young and thinking how exciting she looked on court – what a star! Imagine her today with all the social media!"

- Jo Durie

"When you walk through the gates of Wimbledon, always be inspired by Maureen Connolly's achievements there."

- Ryan Harrison

FOREWORD BY VIRGINIA WADE, LADIES' CHAMPION AT WIMBLEDON 1977

It would be an understatement to say it was a privilege to have been tutored by Maureen Connolly.

The way she approached the game, let alone how she hit the ball, was shockingly brilliant. She was well past retirement when I was lucky enough to spend a week training with her in Texas, but her shots had an accuracy and penetration that I could only marvel at.

Her whole attitude was spellbinding, as was her personality.

I could only be thankful that I was given the chance to become a friend, even for so short a time before she tragically passed away.

PROLOGUE BY MONIQUE JAVER DIAS

As I was born in California but ultimately played Federation Cup and Wightman Cup for GB, I am particularly fascinated by the English grass court seasons of San Diego's Maureen Connolly.

I grew up idolizing "Little Mo" and wanted to be her. It's wonderful to have "Unbeaten" about her winning three consecutive Wimbledon titles.

James' incredible book will be so valuable to all tennis players, including pros, and for tennis fans worldwide.

ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS FROM ...

BRIAN TEACHER:

Even though I never had the chance to meet Maureen, growing up on the exact same public courts in San Diego made her legend feel incredibly real to all of us. She proved that a kid from our local parks could conquer the tennis world, and her story was the ultimate inspiration that gave us the belief to follow in her footsteps.

STACY MARGOLIN POTTER (who reached her career-high WTA singles ranking of No 18 in 1979, the same year she helped the USA beat GB 8-3 in the Maureen Connolly Challenge Trophy, held indoors at the Richard Dunn Sports Centre in Bradford, England):

My Dad was quite the historian of tennis, and I remember him telling me about Wimbledon Champ Maureen Connolly (and Louise Brough, who actually lived on my street in Beverly Hills).

I felt very proud and honoured to represent USA in our Maureen Connolly Challenge Cup competitions against GB.

What I do remember about Maureen was not only her nine Grand Slams, including her Wimbledon wins as a teenager, but her fiery personality. Who knows what she would've accomplished if she hadn't had that tragic horse accident?

ALYCIA MOULTON:

Would Maureen Connolly's tennis have become even better if she'd been able to play beyond her teenage years? I believe so. She had the discipline, passion and competitive spirit."

LIEZEL HUBER:

Maureen Connolly will always be a Wimbledon heroine. Her relentless pursuit of excellence continues to inspire.

MATT EBDEN:

If I'd been playing Wimbledon in Maureen Connolly's era, I would have loved to have partnered her in mixed doubles to try and win that title.

TATJANA MARIA:

When you compete on Wimbledon's Centre Court, you think of the past legends who've played there. Little Mo never lost a singles match on that court. No wonder she loved Wimbledon! She was incredible, the perfect fighter, with utmost courage.

KRISTINA BRANDI:

Little Mo shows us all that life can hold a splash of magic anytime, anywhere – even Wimbledon! I'm honored to have played and won the tournament held in her name!

SUE MAPPIN:

Maureen is definitely one of the GOATs of women's tennis.

ANNE WHITE:

Before winning three Wimbledon singles titles, Little Mo trained with Eleanor "Teach" Tennant at The Beverly Hills Tennis Club while developing her game. Connolly is part of the illustrious history at BHTC, which includes tennis legends Fred Perry, Pancho Segura and Jimmy Connors.

CARRIE CUNNINGHAM:

Maureen was passionate about tennis, but equally, she was passionate about life.

TERRY ROCAVERT (who was born in Australia in 1954, a very significant year for Maureen. And, like Maureen, Terry is part of Wimbledon folklore because in the second round of the Championships in 1980, he was three points away from defeating John McEnroe):

Maureen loved Wimbledon, and in return she played near-perfect tennis on the lawns of the All England Club.

PATTY FENDICK-MCCAIN:

At Wimbledon '54, 19 year-old Maureen dropped only 19 games in winning her third Wimbledon. These stats are both symmetrical and incredible.

DEBBIE GRAHAM SHAFFER:

It is hard to overstate just how dominant Maureen Connolly was. She set a standard of excellence that few Champions in history ever achieve. Only losing two sets in 18 matches at Wimbledon was unmatched by most.

JULIE SALMON:

I will never forget the importance of the people who built the game, especially a legend such as Little Mo, who I respect enormously. I had the privilege of playing in the Maureen Connolly Cup, and I also remember Wimbledon 1984, which was in fact bitter-sweet for me. I was 18, and the sweetness was reaching the last 32 in the singles. But the bitter part, of course, was that Maureen Connolly was not there on the second Monday of the fortnight when they had the Centenary Parade of Women's Champions on Centre Court. I am sure she would have loved that occasion.

VILMARIE CASTELLVI:

As a former professional tennis player who is now a coach, I think Maureen's story gives five great lessons to any junior: stay humble, stay happy, be brave, be hard-working – and always look to improve your game.

SANDY COLLINS-SAUDER:

Maureen Connolly is synonymous with Wimbledon: which other Champion can say they never lost a singles match there? And I was very fortunate to meet Maureen, with her daughter Cindy, when I was 10. I will always remember that time with Mo. She was a very gracious individual, and it was so sad she passed less than a year later.

ANNE HOBBS:

I learned of Little Mo in November 1976, at the age of 17. It was my first ever venture to the USA, playing for GB in the under 21 international team competition known as the Maureen Connolly Trophy. Mo's spirit lived on through the Maureen Connolly Brinker Foundation, and I remember everyone connected with that Foundation very dearly. I understood very quickly about Maureen's grit and determination, along with her expert timing of the ball. She touched so many lives in such a positive way.

PAM CASALE-TELFORD:

Little Mo was truly ahead of her time. She had such poise, greatness and an incredible natural ability on the tennis court. A true legend who left an unforgettable mark on the game.

LISSEY BARNETT:

Little Mo was an icon that achieved more than most ever dare to dream.

TERRY PHELPS:

Beckenham in Kent used to be a traditional English grass court tournament, leading up to Wimbledon. It's nice to have that link with the legendary heroine of tennis, Maureen Connolly – we both won Beckenham as teenagers: she in 1953 and me in 1984. I tried to play aggressively – the Maureen way.

ANGELICA GAVALDON:

Growing up in San Diego and later competing at Wimbledon myself, Maureen Connolly's story has always felt especially significant. Her courage, brilliance and extraordinary record on grass remain an enduring part of tennis history.

LILIA OSTERLOH:

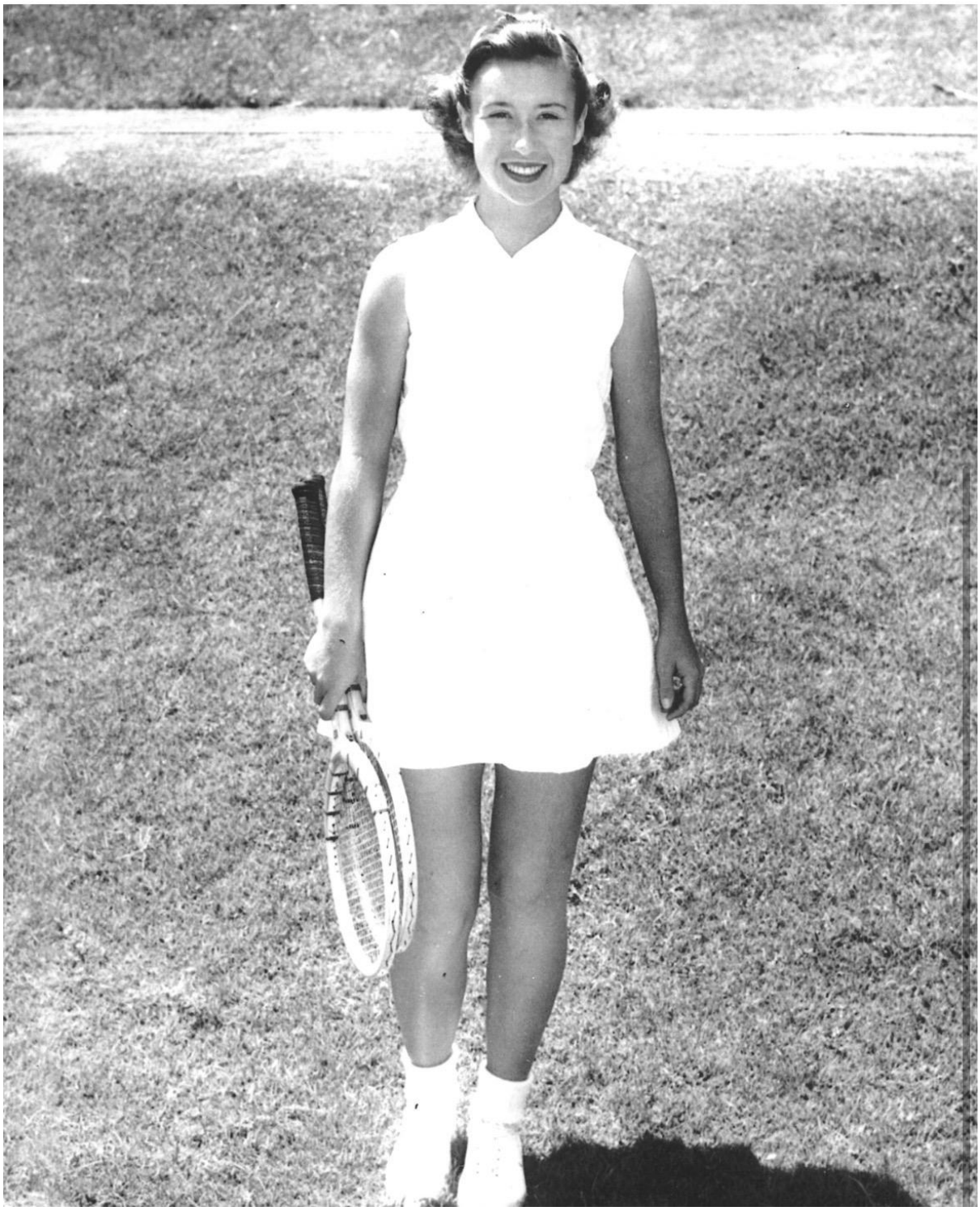
Maureen Connolly did not merely play the game; she mastered its spirit, proving to the world that true greatness is not measured by the length of a career, but by the depths of one's courage. She teaches us that a champion's truest victory is the resilience of her spirit.

JENNIFER SANTROCK:

Like me, Mo was a left-hander. It's incredible to me that she had such stunning success playing right-handed!

IRINA FALCONI HARTMAN:

There are few names in tennis that carry the impact and weight of Maureen Connolly – "Little Mo". The amount of success she achieved and the history she made at such a young age, in such a short amount of time, is nothing short of extraordinary. I chose to end my professional career at Wimbledon because of the history and significance of those hallowed grounds. To know that Little Mo left such a beautiful and lasting mark on the Championships makes me feel even more privileged to have competed on the very same courts she once graced. May her legacy, greatness and kindness live on forever.



INTRODUCTION

I wrote this book for many reasons. First, my mother Jennifer, four years younger than "Little Mo", has always told me that she was (and still is) a HUGE fan of Mo. My mum would go to the newsagents early in the morning to find out Mo's score, if she had somehow missed it (in an era when sports results could be difficult to obtain quickly).

And then, in June 1985, I saw on TV the 1978 movie "Little Mo". It broke my heart; it was so poignant. Glynnis O'Connor was fantastic as Maureen, and took us superbly through the agonies and ecstasies of her lifetime. I was inspired by Mo's desire to be the perfect tennis player in a chaotic world, when often the odds were stacked heavily against her. The truth is that Maureen Connolly motivated me with her passion for life.

I also had one thing in common with Mo – a tremendous love of Wimbledon. I was delighted that, in her memoir "Forehand Drive" (co-authored by Tom Gwynne), she said of the All England Club in Church Road, London SW19:

"***Even from a distance, the massive ivy-covered stadium rises in awesome majesty. The impressive wrought-iron gates were like portals to paradise, and I could scarcely believe they would open for me."***

And now I worry whether the tennis world is forgetting this genius. She never lost a singles match at Wimbledon: her final tally was "Eighteen Love", i.e.: eighteen singles matches won over the three years she competed there. She wielded her Wilson wooden racket like a wand – and, in those days, each ball had to be centred perfectly in the sweet-spot of the strings.

Should there be a "'Little Mo' or 'Connolly'?" coin toss for one match on Wimbledon's Centre Court? And whilst I understand why Andy Murray will have a full-length statue at the All England, I feel that Mo should be afforded the same honour (akin to Rafa being celebrated at Roland Garros).

In "Championship Tennis", her 1954 how-to-play-the-game book, Mo described herself as "*a power hitter*", whose objective is "*to manoeuvre the opponent out of court by hard drives to both sides of the court .. Personally, I do not believe in slicing .. A slicer generally has trouble with a hard hitter ..*" Here was a player who worked like a demon, who was intensely self-critical and who welcomed constructive criticism .. I wish the Wimbledon crowds had been kinder to her, but they seemed to have been intimidated by her dominance. (Yes, Maureen only lost five singles matches on tour in the three years of 1952, 1953 and 1954.)

Maureen was a revolutionary player. She practised against men when it was not the done thing. She worked relentlessly on her game, even though she was the number one. If she was playing nowadays, I believe she would herself be scouting her opponents, and would also watch all the tapes of her own matches with her coaching team, seeking feedback and criticism.

One last thing: Maureen Connolly truly loved tennis. Let's not forget, there was no prize money for her to earn. In the 1950s, a Wimbledon winner received a "prize", not "prize money". She won 15 English pounds for each of her Wimbledon titles, equivalent to 550 English pounds now, or $740. Maureen's motivation was pure and simple: to win.

James Harbridge, September 2025

1952

Monday, 19 May 1952

TWA flight 964 leaves New York, bound for London airport. Maureen Connolly, a young woman from San Diego, is on board – she will not turn 18 until September 17th.

She is accompanied by her mother, Jessamine, and by Eleanor "Teach" Tennant, her tennis coach.

Maureen, despite her youth, hardly ever hears the name "Maureen". Everyone calls her "Mo", apart from Tennant, who uses "Maureen". The truth is that Miss Connolly is very famous. A sports journalist, Nelson Fisher, nicknamed her "Little Mo" before she turned 13, likening her fire-power on a tennis court to the military strength of "Mighty Mo", the battleship USS Missouri. (Memorably, in the 1978 film "Little Mo", it was Leslie "Naked Gun" Nielsen who would perfectly portray Fisher.)

17 year-old Mo is the No 2 tennis player in the world, and the previous autumn, when only 16, had won the US Open (aka the US National Championships) at Forest Hills (having lost there in the second round, aged 14, and in the third round, aged 15). And yet Mo has no confidence, and she is aware of the dark whispers that her US Open triumph was a fluke. Moreover, a few days earlier, she had lost a final in Southern California to her doubles partner and frenemy, 29 year-old Louise Brough from Beverly Hills. (Brough was powerful, had all the shots – but was susceptible to nerves. And she never beat Mo again.)

Coach Tennant, who grew up in San Francisco, has fought with the USA tennis authorities who want Mo to play in the French Open, starting tomorrow. Tennant has won the argument, saying her player's chances of taking the Wimbledon title will be diminished if she first competes on the clay courts of Roland Garros. Accordingly, Mo is about to embark on an extensive English grass court season.

One could say that Miss Tennant resembled Agatha Christie's Miss Marple – a more steely Miss Marple. Ominously, astute tennis journalists have already determined that Teach "has taken over complete control of her pupil's life" – at least as regards tennis.

And although Maureen has confided to friends that she hopes to meet some English boys, this is highly unlikely to happen ..

So, with a long flight ahead of her, Mo may well have reflected on her life up to that point ..

She probably recalled little of her parents' divorce when she was three, but she knew that her estranged father Martin was a lieutenant commander in the US Navy.

The fact was that she, her mother and her great-aunt Gertrude lived in "a modest home in a modest neighbourhood .. Money was far from plentiful." But then, aged 10, life became exciting, as she started playing tennis. Her first coach Wilbur Folsom recommended that she change from being left-handed to right-handed, on the basis that there had been few elite left-handed tennis players (and, in fact, Wimbledon would only see its first left-handed women's singles winner in 1969). The transition for Mo was extremely arduous, but the young girl succeeded (although would she have been *even better* at tennis if allowed to stay a leftie?)

By the age of twelve and a half, she started to be trained by Teach Tennant, a woman who had coached Hollywood stars at the Beverly Hills Tennis Club, as well as Wimbledon Champions such as

Bobby Riggs, Alice Marble and Pauline Betz. The good fortune for Maureen was that, apparently, a wealthy patron paid for much of the tutelage by Teach – and then Perry T. Jones, secretary of the Southern Californian Tennis Association, organized funding for Mo (and that is how she managed to advance and play overseas throughout her career).

The additional good fortune for Maureen was that, from the age of 16, she received free tennis dresses from designer Teddy Tinling, a 6ft 7in Englishman who had played doubles at Wimbledon. (It may well be that Perry Jones organized remuneration for Teddy. In addition, Miss Connolly undertook some fashion promotions to assist Tinling.)

But all is not ideal in Maureen's world. Her mother and Tennant are not getting along, and Maureen herself has doubts about whether to continue with her coach. (At the 1951 US Open, Tennant had told her that her heroine, world No 1 Doris Hart, actually hated her. This dubious tactic ensured Maureen was extra-motivated to defeat Doris in the semi-finals. But then Maureen found out that she had been lied to – and of course she apologised to Doris.)

All in all, Maureen must have been feeling under pressure on the flight to London, especially because Maureen knew that her mother, "a fine horsewoman", had wanted to be a concert pianist, but as her fingers did not grow properly, she could not span an octave, and thus her dream had died. This sad scenario meant Maureen had a heightened need for achievement.

Tuesday, 20 May 1952

Dr John Colin Gregory, 48, would have had good reason to believe the press would be interested in his arrival at London airport in the afternoon. After all, he was returning from Yugoslavia, where he was meant to have been *non-playing* captain of GB's Davis Cup team. It had been more than 20 years since he had last played in the Davis Cup. However, a team injury led to Gregory stepping in and partnering star player Tony Mottram, and they won a five set doubles to put GB 2-1 up in the tie. (In the reverse singles, Yugoslavia levelled at two matches all, but Mottram – a fighter pilot in World War 2 - took the fifth rubber, so GB triumphed 3-2.)

As things happened, Gregory is met only by his mother and wife Phyllis, because the media is actually at the airport to welcome and witness bubbly, outgoing Maureen Connolly. She has six Wilson rackets with her and says that she is here "for the big one" – Wimbledon. What about her chances there? "I hope they're good."

After that, Mo is taken for "a private tea-party in the corner of the airport restaurant." She sips a ginger ale, and tells the "News Chronicle": "I don't drink. I don't smoke. I like parties – oh, yes, and I adore jazz."

Teach then offers the press an alternative reason as to why Mo stopped playing left-handed. The 57 year-old claims the switch to the right hand was made because "she [Mo] realised that she was losing strength in her service and drive."

As regards Teach, her protégé says: "Teach is the only tennis player I know who can wear long nails without them breaking. I'd love to, but I can't with mine. I've followed her around, trying to find out how she manages it, but it's one of the secrets I can't learn."

The “Evening News” says Mo’s “dark-haired” mother Jess was “smart in a pale mauve tweed suit”, adding, erroneously, that she was a widow. But in the same newspaper, 38 year-old Mary Hardwick – a Wimbledon quarter-finalist in 1939 - states correctly: “I do not believe any baseliner .. ever hit an *earlier* ball or had better concentration [than Miss Connolly] .. in 1952, win or lose, she will bring a vital, happy, *joie de vivre* to Wimbledon.”

In the evening, Teach’s friend named C.M “Jimmy” Jones – a tennis writer who had reached Wimbledon’s last 16 in 1936 – took Mo, her mother and Teach to watch a boxing fight at London’s Haringey Arena. This occasion may have had special resonance for Mo, as her father was an ex-US Navy boxer, and she considered herself, too, to be a fighter, albeit on the tennis court. According to the “Yorkshire Evening Post”, the teenager “took a friendly massed hall of wolf calls and whistles on the chin without a blush. Her first grin to the crowd showed her spirit.”

Maureen’s spirit was about to be severely tested during her time in England ..

Wednesday, 21 May 1952

TV cameras and 50 journalists are at Surbiton, south-west London, to capture the teenager’s first day of practice on English soil. This is the famous occasion when Mo apparently asks the picture-hungry 18 photographers: “Are you getting what you want, boys?”

The youngster made time to chat with Charlotte Cooper Sterry, the 81 year-old who had won Wimbledon in 1895 (the year Teach Tennant was born). Mo also glances up at the Honours board in the clubhouse; she spots the names of Helen Wills (eight times Wimbledon Champion) and Elizabeth Ryan (who amassed 19 Wimbledon doubles titles), and says in wonder: “They sure have a distinguished list of past champions.”

Maureen then practises for three hours with Cliff(ord) Hovell, a 34 year-old who has competed at Wimbledon. They play three sets, which Cliff wins 6-1, 6-3, 7-5 (elsewhere reported as 6-2, 6-4, 7-5). But the Briton says: “It wouldn’t have taken very much for me to lose any of those sets. Miss Connolly was very close behind.”

After a 15 minutes’ break for an orange juice, Mo goes back on court for further practice, this time against the diminutive 31 year-old Gem Hoahing, who had reached the women’s fourth round at Wimbledon ’49.

Mo and Gem hit for an hour “in the twilight”.

The 17 year-old explained: “I always play about four hours a day. I love it.”

Maureen Owen of the “Daily News” learns a new word today: *haygab,* meaning a chat with girl friends. The writer asks the teenager if she misses anything about not having a normal life. The player answers: “Well, I do miss the odd haygab.”

Friday, 23 May 1952

Maureen goes to the All England Club, Wimbledon, where she meets the Club Secretary, Colonel Duncan Macaulay. She also hits at the Club for two hours with the coach there, 44 year-old Dan Maskell (who is now best remembered as BBC TV’s stellar tennis commentator, their “Voice of Wimbledon”, from 1951 – 1991). Maskell, writing in the “Sunday Express” in 1957, opined that

Maureen's backhand – obviously in this era a single-hander - was "easily her best shot". In his autobiography "From Where I Sit", he wrote that, on the eve of Wimbledon '52, he helped Teach to improve Mo's flat / "slightly topped" forehand.

Back at Surbiton, Mo played against 45 year-old George Godsell from Gloucestershire (a man who had reached the third round at Wimbledon '37 and '38), and then versus Cliff Hovell, prompting Surbiton tournament organizer, Stanley Hawkins, to plead with her to take a rest. Hawkins said: "It's phenomenal. But we can't have her wearing herself out before the show starts on Monday."

Mo has been drawn against Jean Petchell, 19, from Nottingham, who says: "It will be wonderful playing Miss Connolly, a world class opponent."

In the "Daily Express", Mo's mother claims to Frank Rostron that her 17 year-old daughter is five pounds (2.3 kgs) overweight, adding: 'Those fizzy drinks. There ought to be a law against them. Cokes, ginger ales, lemonades, anything. She puts back the weight as fast as it comes off. And as for chocolate and cream pastries .. she's a terror. Her weight goes up and down alarmingly."

Monday, 26 May 1952

With deep forehands to the corners, Maureen Connolly, clad in a "sleeveless blouse", wins her first ever match in Great Britain, seeing off Jean Petchell 6-0, 6-1 in 38 minutes.

The crowd is in excess of 1,000; interestingly, there is no ball crew.

Petchell, from West Bridgford in Nottinghamshire, says afterwards: "I have never played anybody who hits so hard. The ball came so fast that I could not time it. I thought at first I was playing in the men's singles, the ball came so fast."

Mo, described as being "as firm [on the baseline] as the Statute of Liberty", stated: "It was a wonderful experience to play on real English grass."

She had won 11 games in a row before Jean got herself on the scoreboard, winning the 12th game with an ace. Mo exclaimed: "Yes – a beauty!"

In fact, the challenger only won five points in the first four games of the match. In total, Mo conceded 12 points in the first set, and 17 points in the second set.

The press reported that, three days earlier, Jean had strained her right wrist in practice, but the player herself said it did not impede her.

Not everyone was impressed with Maureen – she had allegedly been "not always certain" on the overhead, and "showed unsteadiness on her backhand in the forecourt." Teach said, "These things will come," and stressed that the teenager was a baseliner whose game would further develop ..

Tuesday, 27 May 1952

Mo, employing her trademark raking, flat drives, defeats 19 year-old Audrey Houseley of Nottingham in 35 minutes, hitting 14 winners in the second set; the score is reported differently in various newspapers, as either 6-1, 6-1, or 6-1, 6-0. (As regards Mo's match durations, we should bear in mind that she was often taking only 5 or 10 seconds between points. Yes, play truly was continuous in the 1950s.)

Mo and Louise Brough then won a doubles, 6-0, 6-0, over Mrs C.B Ince / Mrs C.W Hale. But the 17 year-old is not done for the day; after "a hurried tea", she practises for an hour with 20 year-old Londoner John Horn, the Wimbledon Junior Champion of 1950.

Wednesday, 28 May 1952

A capacity crowd at Surbiton watches Angela Mortimer, the 20 year-old from Torquay, push Mo all the way in the quarters.

The American is pulled back from 5-1 to 5-4 in the second set, but she does get the win, in windy conditions: 6-4, 6-4. Afterwards, Mo tells Angela: "It certainly was tough-going." It is the start of a lifelong friendship between the two players.

Thursday, 29 May 1952

Miss Connolly has a tough semi-final challenge. Thelma Long, a wily Australian, leads her 3-1 in the first set, but Mo survives, 10-8, 6-1, watched by chain-smoking Teach. The first set lasted nearly 50 minutes, and Thelma looked certain to take it when up 5-4, 30-0 on serve. But Maureen was undaunted, and went on to win the last two games of the first set to love.

Friday, 30 May 1952

In the women's doubles semi-finals, Mo and Louise Brough fall to the British duo of Helen Fletcher and Jean Rinkel-Quertier 6-3, 1-6, 6-3. A large crowd was present.

Fletcher, a 20 year-old left-hander, had spent the winter in the USA, where she had in fact received some coaching from Teach Tennant.

Today, Teach admits that: "Maureen was a little bit off form." Mo herself commented: "We were beaten fairly and squarely. We have no alibis. The English pair couldn't do a thing wrong. Perhaps we didn't play as well as we should. But there is no doubt they deserve to go on to the finals."

In the "Daily News", Gerard Walter opines: "It is obvious that Miss Connolly has something to learn of the technique of doubles play."

Perhaps Mo's mind was on tomorrow's singles final. She was overheard saying: "I gotta get that Toddy" – a reference to the world No 9 who had beaten her twice in 1951.

Saturday, 31 May 1952

Mo takes the Surbiton title, overcoming 29 year-old Pat(ricia) Todd 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 in 70 minutes, but only after being 2-4 down in the third set.

The start was delayed by 30 minutes due to some heavy rain – which left the court slippery, and both competitors fell several times. The teenager struggled more – and was soon 1-5 down in the first set.

In the third set, Todd (the 1947 French Open Champion) led 3-0, at which point Maureen took eight consecutive points (four of them with winners which left Todd standing). But the sixth game of that third set consisted of 20 points, and Todd duly moved ahead 4-2, but only after Maureen had taken a fall "in full flight" when leading 40-15.

Maureen then reeled off four games in a row to become the victor – and thereafter went straight to the practice court, whilst Todd was reported to be exhausted. (Incidentally, other female players were apparently learning from what they had seen this week in Surbiton, and were now starting to follow Mo's lead of training with male sparring partners.)

In the mixed doubles final, Todd (partnered by 23 year-old South African Bryan Woodroffe) beat Mo and 22 year-old Australian Ian Ayre 9-7, 4-6, 10-8.

Note: At Surbiton, Mo developed a "small backhand error" – Teach nipped it in the bud by going back to basics, throwing balls for her to hit; in this way, they ironed out the glitch.

Monday, 2 June1952

Maureen plays her first match at the Manchester tournament, held at the Northern Lawn Tennis Club (LTC).

Her 18 year-old opponent, Dorothy Spiers of Middlesex, has been out of action for some time with a back injury, and went for a walk before the match to steady her nerves. On Court, Spiers – the daughter of a Covent Garden fruit and vegetable merchant – confidently won the first three points, but was then foot-faulted, and this unsettled her.

Mo pounces - and it's all over in 25 minutes, with the American moving on, 6-0, 6-1.

Tuesday, 3 June 1952

The US Open Champion dispatches Lancashire's Dorothy Cooper, 6-1, 6-0.

Thursday, 5 June 1952

Rain in Manchester delays Mo's singles match, but then she defeats Helen Fletcher (from Heanor, Derbyshire) in 27 minutes, 6-1, 6-3.

After this quarter-final, Teach whisks Mo away – and Mo apologises to the waiting autograph hunters.

Friday, 6 June 1952

Maureen wins two mixed doubles matches with South African Nigel Cockburn, and then has to play her singles semi against 1951 French Open semi-finalist, Roedean-educated Jean Walker-Smith, aged 27, the world No 5.

The American is severely tested, but ultimately advances to the final with a 6-2, 4-6, 6-0 win. In the second set, Walker-Smith went for her shots, whilst Mo apparently "lost her mathematical accuracy of direction".

In the semi-finals of the women's doubles, Mo and Louise Brough take out Partridge / Rinkel 3-6, 6-4, 6-1.

Saturday, 7 June 1952

It's a second singles title in Great Britain for Little Mo, who sees off Britain's Jean Rinkel-Quertier, a former French Open, Wimbledon and US Open quarter-finalist, 6-3, 6-1.

The final lasts just under 35 minutes. Rinkel, the world No 6, led 3-2, but then Maureen – who was hitting the lines "more frequently than any player since [René] Lacoste" - won eight games in a row, to move ahead by a set and 4-0.

The next day, the "Sunday Mirror" disclosed that Rinkel "had received secret instructions [about how to play Mo]. They failed, but cannot be revealed. They may be used again."

Ironically, Maureen had watched Rinkel's semi-final win the previous day over Louise Brough, and had said after that match: "Jean played inspired tennis. She's very quick. I spotted her best stroke – the one I shall have to watch tomorrow. Which one? I'm not telling."

Mo and Louise Brough also take the women's doubles title, downing Shirley Fry / Doris Hart 1-6, 6-2, 9-7, but Mo and Nigel Cockburn finish as runners-up in the mixed, falling to Hart / Frank Sedgman 6-3, 4-6, 6-1.

The journalists in England are already intrigued by one of Maureen's two lucky chams, namely the silver ring on the third finger of her left hand. The player's explanation was quoted as being: "When I was 10, my uncle [Clarence Schwab] brought me the ring from China and I innocently put it on the third finger, left hand. And it's been so lucky that I've never changed it, in spite of the embarrassment it often causes me."

Decades later, in the anthology book "For The Love Of Tennis", eminent tennis writer Laurie Pignon recounted having a breakfast with Maureen during Manchester '52, who he described as a "chummy, chattering little American in a pinafore dress and a turtle neck sweater – this was before the age of tracksuits". She asked the waiter for maple syrup, but it wasn't available, so she opted for Tiptree's strawberry jam – which she promptly applied to her cooked English breakfast. Laurie said that this "was the only time I saw her compromise with anything, on or off the court .. She was a girl in a hurry .."

It had been the most successful tournament ever at Manchester's Northern LTC. Over 20,000 fans attended during the week; each day there were queues, half a mile long outside the Club. The queue on Finals' Day started to form at 7am. The media reported that the women players were the star attraction.

Thursday, 12 June 1952

It's the day before the ladies' USA v GB Wightman Cup 1952 tie begins, to be played on Court No 1 at Wimbledon. (The following year the Wightman Cup will be played in the USA.)

In the "Daily Mirror", C.M Jones says that he, Clifford Hovell and 1949 French Open mixed doubles finalist Gerald Oakley have been acting as sparring partners for both teams.

It may well have been today, 12 June 1952, that the seemingly small event occurred which was to have subsequent seismic consequences for Mo. In this regard, five years later, in her memoir "Forehand Drive", she would write: " .. when I was practising for the Wightman Cup [1952] matches, I developed a sore shoulder due solely to my own carelessness. I was hot, perspiring, and I stood and talked in chilling weather, without even bothering to put on a sweater."

In her 1954 book "Championship Tennis", Mo counselled her readers: " .. wear a sweater when the match has been completed. PUT IT ON THE MINUTE YOU FINISH PLAYING. Being over-heated is the easiest way to catch a cold and a good case of stiff muscles. Always shower immediately after playing .. sore muscles can make quite a difference in your play for an entire month."

It is reported today that Maureen will play in charity exhibition matches on Sunday evening at the Flamingo Country Club in Durrington, near Worthing. 2,500 fans will attend, and proceeds will go to the National Playing Fields Association.

Friday, 13 June 1952

Anne Campden of the "Kensington News and West London Times" writes a feature based on interviewing Maureen when they took a taxi together from Surbiton and went perfume shopping. Maureen says she loves dancing, jazz music and horse-riding. Asked about her silver ring, the teenager admits "everyone thinks it is a marriage ring", and Anne also quoted her as saying that her uncle brought it back from China "when I was seven". She reiterates it is a "lucky charm", adding that the bracelet she wears was bought by her mother "to go with it – I only hope that they get together and bring me plenty of luck at Wimbledon." (Could it be that her uncle returned from China with the ring when Mo was 7, but only gave it to her three years later, when she started learning tennis?) For the avoidance of any doubt, the youngster was quick to say that, together, the ring and the bracelet together "are my lucky charms".

Today, playing on Wimbledon's Court No 1 in front of 7,000 fans in the Wightman Cup, Mo is all at sea against Jean Walker-Smith from Bournemouth ..

The British player has leads of 2-0 and 4-2 in the third set, but the American somehow escapes, 3-6, 6-1, 7-5, in a match clocked at 80 (or 86 or 89) minutes.

At 5-5 in the third set, Maureen steamed ahead, winning eight points in a row (the last with a smash).

The view of the media is that the youngster found it hard to cope with Walker-Smith playing slow balls down the middle of the court, but eventually Mo started volleying such floaters from the mid-court.

The winner's left foot was apparently "tightly wound in adhesive strapping", though she said: 'The doctor makes me play that way because I had a little bone trouble a time back. But it doesn't bother me at all."

Teach and Jess (Mo's mother) watched courtside. Jess admitted: "I was in exquisite agony most of the time, and died a hundred deaths." (Apparently, during the match, Jess told Tennant: "I told you she shouldn't have come to England. She's too young.")

Mo said: "Jean was a little unlucky. She had me very worried. I was mighty glad to get away with it. It was a close thing – as close as they come. We were both in there, fighting. Jean was terrific, she played wonderfully well – much better than at Manchester last week .. I played dumb tennis most of the time, and I reckon I was lucky to hold out. But that's the way it is with tennis .. The court seemed extra fast today, but I love it that way – and what grass – it's like velvet."

After the match, the 17 year-old signed "scores of autographs", and said: "I guess I'll get worried when they stop asking for my autograph."

Jean also signed autographs, and reflected: "I should have won, but that's the way it is with tennis."

The "Birmingham Daily Gazette" made mention of Mo's main on-court mannerism, namely "a nodding up and down of her head, like an alert bird on a lawn."

Saturday, 14 June 1952

Maureen faces off against GB's Jean Rinkel-Quertier, the 26 year-old who had married Dutch tennis player Ivo Rinkel in February 1952.

In truth, the American star struggles, and loses her serve three times in the first set. Rinkel led 7-6, but drops her own serve in the 15th game, and Mo serves it out in the 16th game.

From there, Maureen takes control, and gets through 9-7, 6-2. Sportswriter Stanley Doust is impressed, saying that this match had "some of the most brilliant women's tennis ever seen at Wimbledon".

Later in the day, with the USA up by six matches to zero, Maureen (who is said to practise habitually against men for five hours per day) and Louise Brough win 6-0, 6-3 over Joy Mottram and Pat Ward in a "light-hearted" encounter.

Sunday, 15 June 1952

Reflecting on USA's 7-0 Wightman Cup victory, Kay Stammers – the St Albans-born left-hander who was Wimbledon runner-up in 1939 – writes that Miss Connolly "has already won us over with her perky, yet natural, ways – and her wonderful determination."

At the Flamingo Country Club, on an afternoon of bright sunshine, Mo - reported to be the only player dressed in shorts - "attracted great attention". She and Louise Brough beat Jean Rinkel-Quertier and 21 year-old British blonde Susan Partridge 8-6, 6-4 (having been behind 1-3 and 2-4 in the first set).

Mo then played two sets, with Australia's Frank Sedgman, against Philippe Chatrier (France) / Thelma Long (Australia), winning the first 6-4, then losing the second, 6-3.

After the matches, the engagement was announced of Susan and Philippe, 24. Little did Mo know, but Susan was soon going to be a real thorn in her side ..

Monday, 16 June 1952

Clifford Webb writes in the "Daily Herald" that, since winning Forest Hills in September 1951, Maureen had "broadened her game considerably, and I think that in the process of developing from a baseliner to an all-court player she has lost a little of her remarkable accuracy. Her service is still a weak spot." But he added that Mo is "capable of fighting her way out of a corner."

Tuesday, 17 June 1952

Mo is seeded No 2 for Wimbledon; defending Champion Doris Hart is No 1. Doris is extremely popular with the fans, especially as she has an impaired right leg, resulting from childhood osteomyelitis. She had nearly lost the leg and at one point her doctors had feared that she would never walk again.

Wednesday, 18 June 1952

The "Birmingham Daily Post" says Maureen "seems quite the nicest thing that has happened in lawn tennis for some years."

Her first opponent at Wimbledon will be Yorkshire's Mrs C.G - Evelyn - Moeller, described as a "steady" player from Bradford. Due to the bye system in operation at that time, this will in fact be a second round duel. (Mo also had byes into the second round of the Championships in '53 and '54.)

Thursday, 19 June 1952

In a "Birmingham Daily Gazette" article by Elsie M. Smith, Mo says she's 5 foot 4 inches tall, but Mo's mother says that this is wishful thinking!

There's also a reference in the article to the gold bracelet with a heart on it, gifted to Mo by her mother. (Later, in "Forehand Drive", Mo mentioned that the ring from her uncle featured "two dragons guarding a ball; to me it was a tennis ball, and they were guarding my career". She added that the ring and the "heart-shaped bracelet locket" had both been blessed by a priest at her high school, Cathedral High School in San Diego.)

For whatever reason, body weight seems to have been a big deal with 1950s journalists. Smith's story said that the player weighed 9 stone, 4 pounds (i.e: 130 pounds / 59 kgs) when she arrived in England, but she lost 5 pounds (2.3 kgs) during the Wightman Cup matches, thereby becoming 8 stone, 13 pounds (56.7 kgs). (On 21 May, the media had reported Mo's weight to be 9 stone, 2 pounds.)

Another journalist, Elizabeth Coxhead of the "Liverpool Daily Post", writes that she met Mo the previous day in London, where it seems the teenager was modelling some outfits for designer Teddy Tinling (although the player confessed: "Being a model isn't my line"). Coxhead says Maureen has "an amusing comedienne's face and tip-tilted nose which should make her a Hollywood fortune when her tennis days are done".

Friday, 20 June 1952

In the "Evening News", Teach tells us what Maureen said to her after meeting Marina, the Duchess of Kent (the President of the All England Club): "Teach, she was so natural..and democratic. And, oh boy, isn't she attractive?"

It may have been on this day that Mo and the regal-looking Louise Brough practised at Wimbledon together for the first time. It does not go well for the teenager: apparently, Louise took the occasion extremely seriously, and then she (Louise) won their practice set. (The context was that Louise Brough had lost the La Jolla final 6-2, 6-2 in March 1952, a humbling scoreline, to Maureen. Apparently, since that day, Louise had ceased to be so friendly. Although they were doubles partners, Brough considered Mo to now be a "deadly rival", and acted accordingly.)

Saturday, 21 June 1952

Maureen has been competing this week at Queen's Club – but not in the singles; she is only in the women's doubles and mixed doubles.

During a cold morning, she practises at Wimbledon against Louise Brough – and suddenly, the teenager's sore right shoulder becomes extremely painful – she has to stop the practice. (In fact, Teach didn't want Maureen to play the Queen's Club event, but the teenager had decided to go ahead, "hoping my shoulder might improve".)

As per Teddy Tinling in his memoir "Love and Faults", Mo is rushed immediately by Teach to see the medic recommended by Teddy, namely orthopaedic specialist Dr Hugh Burt, the Director of Physical Medicine at University College Hospital ("UCH") in north-west London, who diagnoses fibrositis (an inflamed muscular condition), and he starts electrical heat treatment for her. (In "Forehand Drive", Mo recalls Burt as being "a soccer trainer, who diagnosed the shoulder as [having] bursitis [inflammation in the bursae] and suggested liniment." It could well be that Tinling's and Mo's recollections are compatible, because Burt may have treated many soccer injuries in the past, and he may have advised the use of liniment, in addition to the electrical treatment.)

The women's doubles final had to be delayed due to Maureen's hospital visit. However, she does play the match, apparently wearing three tops and frequently wincing in pain: she and Louise Brough defeat Miss B Penrose and Miss G Love 6-4, 5-7, 6-3. (Incidentally, current ATP pro James Duckworth is apparently the grandson of Beryl Penrose.)

But, tellingly, Mo cannot play another match that day – she and her partner, left-handed Australian 22 year-old Mervyn Rose (a chip and charge exponent), have to hand their opponents a walkover. The explanation for the media is that Mo has a "painful right shoulder caused through bruised muscles".

Teach insists: "It's nothing serious."

Sunday, 22 June 1952

It may have been on (or about) this day that Maureen and Teach had a difference of opinion about the Wimbledon mixed doubles event, later recounted by Mo in "Forehand Drive", when they "were having tea in the players' tea-room over the No 1 Court at Wimbledon .. I was scheduled to play with Mervyn Rose and Teach wanted me to withdraw. I refused."

Maureen does not play in today's exhibition matches at Hurlingham. She apparently sent a message "that she was indisposed".

Meanwhile, in north-west London, reporters are camped outside the White House apartments (Teach's apartment is on the first floor; Mo and her mum's is on the fifth floor).

Monday, 23 June 1952

Teddy Tinling, in "Love and Faults", recalled: "As I left the underground going to Wimbledon .. the newsboys were all shouting "Little Mo doubtful!""

Indeed, Teddy feels that Maureen only decided to play Wimbledon – her first match would be on Tuesday, i.e.: Ladies' Day - to prove the doubters wrong.

In truth, the position is somewhat confusing, particularly because Frank Rostron in the "Daily Express" quotes Tennant as saying on Sunday night: "Mo is in constant pain. It hurts me to see her like that." In contradiction, in the same article, the player says that the usage of poultices means that she will be "perfectly all right for Wimbledon".

The press know that Maureen did see a doctor on the Monday morning (though Teach denies it, saying "Hospital treatment? Oh, no. We can't afford hospitals"), but they have no details in this regard. The player feels that her injury is minor as her shoulder only hurts when hitting a serve or smash ..

Today, Monday, Teach gives many quotes which seem entirely positive:

(i) "Maureen has been suffering from slight muscular trouble, but she will be in there pitching on Tuesday."

(ii) "It's just a little cold in the shoulder. She will be quite all right to play at Wimbledon."

(iii) "Maureen Connolly is fine. She will be quite fit to play tomorrow."

(iv) "She is fine. There is nothing to worry about. Of course she won't scratch. She will win the singles."

But everyone is surprised that Maureen is not actually at Wimbledon. Teach issues further reassuring words: "It was Maureen's own express wish that she stayed indoors. She would have liked to come [to Wimbledon], but she felt that standing around she might catch cold. Her shoulder is now practically better."

The media reports that Mo is at the White House apartments, near Regent's Park, with her mother, where she is "engaged in correspondence" and resting her shoulder, "but," says Mo, "I wish I had a television set to watch the tennis." At one stage, Mo leaves the Apartments for an hour, apparently to visit a friend and listen to "records of symphony music."

The quotes from Mo align perfectly with Teach's positive words. Mo says:

(i) "I feel fine now. I shall be at Wimbledon for my match."

(ii) "I am OK. I shall rest again today [Monday]."

And yet, behind the scenes, Teach has actually taken Little Mo today to see a celebrity chiropractor/osteopath (known to Teach for many years), named Mr W.F Hugh Dempster. He diagnoses a torn right shoulder muscle – and Mo believes that Dempster's analysis is incorrect. Conversely, Teach is worried, sensing a risk of serious (permanent) injury. The result is that the coach and player are now on an inevitable collision course.

One very interesting aspect in all of this is why was Dempster consulted on Monday? After all, the specialist at UCH had already diagnosed the condition on Saturday, and started the treatment that day. Was Teach perhaps insistent that her preferred medic, Dempster, should be involved? (In 1958, Dempster, in his mid-sixties, would say: "I've had a lot of dealings with tennis players. I used to treat Fred Perry.")

Note: The "Leicester Evening Mail" quotes Maureen as saying that she will have "an injection from my doctor" on Tuesday morning; this quote appears to have been erroneous, given what Mo later said on 25 June 1952. Presumably, the teenager actually said "treatment from my doctor", thus referring to ongoing electrical treatment, which had started on Saturday.

Tuesday, 24 June 1952

Hundreds of fans queued outside the grounds before 10am, waiting to get entrance to the standing room on Court No 1, where Maureen is due to play the second match of the day against Mrs Moeller.

When Miss Connolly arrives at the grounds, she says: 'I feel fine."

But Teach, before the match, tells the media that the situation is completely different. The coach says: "She [Mo] was bluffing, as anyone would. Her shoulder is lousy – to put it the American way. I would not go on today if all hell were a skating rink, with a shoulder like that. I have pleaded with her to scratch in the other matches [women's doubles and mixed doubles], but it is no use talking."

When the players take to Court No 1, Mo is wearing a mauve and white cardigan (apparently made of "English cotton fleece"), and is faced by "a battery of cameras". Teach is there – "in her usual front row position".

After three games, Mrs Moeller has a service break, and leads 2-1. After that, the challenger does not win another game. Maureen, who removed her cardigan when 3-2 up, has secured her first ever Wimbledon victory, 6-2, 6-0, but Teach tells reporter Martin Lee: "The arm is lousy. Maureen and I are sure worried." (The "Dundee Courier" will report that Teach has said Maureen risks irreparable damage to her shoulder, "but Maureen is very stubborn, and even I could not prevent her playing.")

Post-match, Teach put her arms around the shoulders of unsmiling Mo "and led her silently to the dressing rooms", where the player had a right shoulder massage. Teach left the All England Club one hour later, alone, telling the "News Chronicle": "Her doctor has ordered Maureen to eat with the left hand to save the continual movement of her right shoulder muscles. Her shoulder is bad. But Maureen is very stubborn." (The first part of this quote, if accurate, seems a little illogical, because the player is, in any event, a natural left-hander. Frank Rostron confirmed in the "Daily Express" that she "writes, eats and irons with her left hand".)

Maureen's response about her alleged bad shoulder and stubborn attitude was that: "I feel very hurt. Why Miss Tennant should go round saying these things, I don't know. My shoulder is not all that bad, and I'm quite fit to play."

* *

At a certain point after the mauling of Moeller, something totally unprecedented happens at Wimbledon. In this era, there were no formal press conferences, and the few post-match quotes were obtained on an *ad hoc* basis. But Maureen Connolly, 17, goes to the office of All England Club Secretary Duncan Macaulay – and says, of her own volition, she wants to hold a press conference.

Somewhere between 50 - 100 reporters cram into the Secretary's Office. The LTA liaison official who introduces Maureen at the start of the press conference said that it was taking place so that: "Miss Connolly wouldn't be worried by constant inquiries about her shoulder." The player, dressed in her Wightman Cup blazer and white shorts, wants to explain why she is ignoring Teach's advice which, at that point in time, was to withdraw from the women's doubles and mixed doubles (but still play the singles).

Maureen says:

"This is all so silly. I want to get this thing straight. People will think I am making excuses. The fibres of my shoulder muscles are slightly strained, but I am not losing any sleep. I have no pain, and unless something else unforeseen happens, I am certainly not going to scratch from the Championships. I am here to play and win. Naturally my shoulder is a little sore, but when I am on the court I forget about it. Last week I found I had fibrositis or a cold in my shoulder muscles. And on Saturday I pulled a muscle, practising. Nothing serious. I am having heat and massage. I do not feel any great pain – the shoulder is not affecting my play."

Asked why Tennant was saying she was "in agony", Mo answered: "I don't know why Teach is putting these stories around. She is responsible for all my tennis, but is not entitled to talk like that. I shall certainly have a long talk with Teach and endeavour to straighten things out with her tonight."

Although it is stated in some books that, at the press conference, Mo publicly sacked Teach as her coach, this is not what I found from my research of contemporaneous news reports. On the contrary, Mo in fact told the journalists that she would be attempting to *resolve the dispute* with Teach.

Mo's mother explained her feelings to Frank Rostron in the "Daily Express": "I guess Maureen has to be the one to decide about the pain, but you know what 17 year-olds are, and if she insists on playing – well, nobody can stop her."

In the evening, in a bid to break the impasse, Jess (as per "Forehand Drive") calls Perry Jones (who is on his first trip to England), and he then spoke with Dr Gregory – the same Dr Gregory, GB Davis Cupper, who had been at London Airport when Mo arrived on 20 May (and who would later become Wimbledon Chairman in July 1955). According to Jones' recollection of events, Dr Gregory recommended three specialists, and one of them – named Dr Knowland – was chosen to give a third and final medical opinion as regards Mo's shoulder. Both Mo and Jess agreed that Mo would withdraw from Wimbledon if Dr Knowland advised such a course of action.

At the White House Apartments, Teach did not return until after Mo had fallen asleep.

Note: In the "Evening News" on Thursday 26 June 1952, Teach said that she spoke tonight (Tuesday night) to Russell Kingman, president of the United States Lawn Tennis Association ("USLTA"), and it was decided that he and Perry Jones "would consult the Committee of Management at Wimbledon and select a specialist to examine Maureen." It could well be that Jess contacted Jones, and, independently, Teach contacted Kingman.

Wednesday, 25 June 1952

Teach leaves the White House Apartments very early, before Maureen awakens from a good night's sleep.

Mo and her mother then have a pre-breakfast stroll in Regent's Park, but when the youngster sees the newspapers, presumably on her return, she is said to be furious. She apparently confides to a friend: "I am fed up with all this fuss. It's upsetting my opponents and making my friends think I want an alibi when I lose. All I want to do is play tennis."

In the "Daily Express", Teach had told Frank Rostron the previous night that Maureen's press conference remarks have made her look like "a Rolls Royce of a liar. I have a great affection for Maureen, and a tremendous regard for her courage, but I will not be made to appear a liar, and if Maureen is going to disregard my advice, I might as well pack up and go back home. Maureen could not sleep on Saturday owing to pain, and she could not sleep until 3 o'clock this [Tuesday] morning. I have advised her to scratch from the doubles."

In the "Daily Mirror", Teach tells C.M Jones that: "I sure hate to see her running the risk of permanent injury. I'd be happy even if she would scratch from the doubles and serve underarm in the singles until she was licked [defeated]."

In the same article, Jones alleged, via a source, that Mo was taking drug injections to ease her painful shoulder. Jones added that "a bone specialist" had "diagnosed a pulled muscle". (The injection story provided to Jones was erroneous, as explained in due course.)

Apparently, through a closed door at the apartment block, Mo said she would be giving interviews at Wimbledon – where she is first on Centre Court at 2pm, making her Centre Court debut against Angela Mortimer.

In the meantime, Maureen has to go, by official Wimbledon car, to obtain her third medical opinion, which will take place via a consultation at King's College Hospital ("KCH"), Denmark Hill, Camberwell in south-east London. She is accompanied only by her mother, and recalled in "Forehand Drive": "Our trip to the hospital was a 'cops and robbers' chase as we tried vainly to shake off the pursuing journalists."

(Interestingly, writer Norman Cutler says that, at KCH, Mo saw Mr St John Dudley Buxton, a famous orthopaedic surgeon, rather than a "Dr Knowland". It could be that Perry Jones' recollection of the name was wrong – or perhaps Mo did meet two medics at KCH: Buxton *and* Knowland. If so, Knowland, of whom I can find no record, may have been an osteopath.)

Mo was tense and nervous as she entered the hospital, but, after 40 minutes, she emerged looking extremely happy, and told the reporters on the steps of KCH, just after 12 noon: "I am as fit as a fiddle. I shall be playing in all events at Wimbledon. I'm so relaxed and so glad and so relieved. I didn't have an x-ray in there, but a specialist gave my shoulder a thorough examination. He said it was only fibrositis, everything's going to be fine, and that I should do no harm if I played as much as I want to. I have never really had any pain, and all that nonsense in the papers about injections was quite untrue. My shoulder has never been more than sore."

She added: "I just want to play. All this talk about pain and so on is not fair to my opponents and my friends will think I am trying to get an alibi if I get beaten." Maureen would receive mechanical treatments, to break up the congestion in her shoulder, twice per day for the rest of Wimbledon.

But first she had to reach the All England Club, as the Centre Court clash versus Mortimer was in less than two hours' time! Fortunately, the drive from KCH to Wimbledon takes only 45 minutes. Accordingly, Mo is punctual. As regards Teach, the teenager has not seen her since after her match the previous day. Indeed, she does not know where her coach is. In fact, Teach arrives just before the match, and sits in the Centre Court's International Club stand.

One wonders if Maureen might have seen an early edition of the "Evening News" before the match. Therein, Teach states:

"I wish to go on record as Maureen Connolly's tennis teacher, coach and friend that I have asked her to scratch at Wimbledon in all three events. Her stoicism is admirable and she is determined to play at Wimbledon at any cost. But I consider that her health is paramount. Not winning Wimbledon this year does not matter if she can keep her health and win next year. Maureen and I are the best of friends, though we do not see eye to eye in regard to her continuing to play in this year's Championships. We have not, however, had harsh words about it and we respect each other's viewpoint."

The above statement must have annoyed Mo: why was Teach now telling her to pull out of all three events (whereas before it had been only doubles) – and why, moreover, was Teach disclosing this to the public? And why make any statement at all, given that Teach knew, when making the statement, that a third medical opinion was upcoming?

It must therefore have been a mystified Mo who, in a white outfit featuring a petal shaped skirt, took to a packed Centre Court at 2pm, alongside her opponent.

But Mo is unnerved by the famous court and arena: "The backdrops seemed miles away, the space on either side of the court appeared acre-like." Mortimer – who Mo understands is also making her Centre Court debut – is unfazed, captures the first seven points, and soon has a 3-0 lead, with a point for 4-0.

But the teenager makes it 3-3, before being broken in the seventh game. Nonetheless, from 3-4, she reels off three games, to take the first set 6-4 in 29 gruelling minutes.

The second set follows a similar pattern. Mortimer moves ahead 3-1, but Mo retaliates with a run of five games, and is through, 6-4, 6-3. The win has taken 55 minutes in total, but the crowd is lukewarm to Mo, giving her "reluctant cheers".

Afterwards, Teach congratulated Maureen in the dressing room.

The teenager – who still had to make a second visit of the day to hospital for further treatment – said: "I got a little bit of Centre Court jitters right at the beginning, but once I was playing I forgot where I was. It was a grand experience."

Teach was asked about the status of her coaching role with Mo. She replied: "It is ridiculous; there is no split." Asked why they had not arrived together at Wimbledon, the 57 year-old responded: "We always leave for the tournament together, but I must have missed her by two minutes today. I had an important engagement this morning and when I returned, she had gone. She played very well."

Later in the day, Mo and Mervyn Rose from Coffs Harbour, New South Wales win a mixed doubles 6-1, 6-1 over Doreen Wedderburn (South Africa) / Jaime Bartroli (Spain). Teach is pleased that Mo is serving well, and she slips out at 2-0 in the second set to attend a cocktail party hosted by Wimbledon authorities.

Privately, Maureen is angry. After the mixed doubles encounter, she may also have seen the front page of the "News Chronicle", which reads: "MO HAS CLASH WITH TEACH". The story quotes words which Teach gave their reporter at midnight on Tuesday night:

"It is unimportant whether Maureen wins The Championships at 17 or 18. But the world will miss a great player if she continues to play in that condition. The muscles in her shoulder are torn right open. She asked the doctor to put shots in her arm, but he refused. After all this, Maureen stands up at Wimbledon and contradicts everything I say about her shoulder. I'm not thanking her for that. But it doesn't mean we're going to break. Perhaps it will all blow over in the morning. Since Saturday, Maureen has not got to sleep until three in the morning because of the pain. She had dire pain from a muscle spasm after today's game [versus Moeller]. If she goes on at Wimbledon, they're going to blast her. She can't serve with that shoulder. Maureen Connolly is selling herself short. She's selling me short, too. She was a certain winner, but she hasn't a chance now. When you're 17 it's hard to have sense. When you're 57 you know how to sit back and take it. But .. she's still the greatest kid in the world."

This article must have incensed Mo on many levels. First, it portrayed her as entirely foolish, a player desperate to sabotage her own career. Secondly, for some days, Teach had only advised her to withdraw from the doubles events. If the shoulder was, in Teach's opinion, so bad, why did Teach suggest she continue in the singles? Thirdly, was it right for a coach to talk so openly about a 17 year-old's health condition, without getting the prior written consent of the player and her mother?

It may be that, by this evening, Mo had had enough, especially in the circumstances where "the players were a bit cool to me, and certainly the gallery was against me". It seems Perry Jones counselled her to, nonetheless, keep things cordial with Teach, even if the player-coach dynamic was irrevocably shattered. Perhaps this is when the "sham truce", as Mo called it in 1957, truly began. And for a 17 year-old on her first trip to England, the situation must have felt overwhelming and surreal. Amazingly, one photographer burst into her apartment and demanded she pose in the bathtub, nursing her shoulder. In "Teach", biographer Nancy Spain would write: " .. bombarded by the English press in a highly un-English fashion, both Maureen and Teach lost their heads. On one occasion Teach had to thrust a reporter out of her bathroom at the White House, explaining gravely that she had a private life. As for Maureen, she was unable to move an inch without a battery of flash-lights going off in her face."

Note: In "Forehand Drive", Maureen stated, as regards Wimbledon '52, that a doctor was expelled from membership of the All England Club because he fed a story – "an outright lie, without a tissue of truth" - to the press, alleging that she had been receiving novocaine injections into her right shoulder.

Thursday, 26 June 1952

The San Diego star and Teach arrive together at the All England Club. Mo has no matches today, but she and Teach were seen watching some of the Centre Court action.

In any event, two newspapers believe that all is well, now, between the 17 year-old and her coach. The "Daily Herald" has the headline "MO AND 'TEACH' MAKE IT UP", and the "News Chronicle" agrees: "MO MAKES UP WITH TEACH".

The journalists have reached their conclusion on the fact that Mo, her mother and Teach ate a cordial dinner together on Wednesday night at the restaurant in the White House apartments block. Teach told the "Daily Herald" about the three medical opinions which had been sought, adding: "So it's two doctors to one, and I agree now it was all right to play." She added: "It is true that last night [Tuesday night] there was a difference of opinion between us. But it was not a row – there was no personal feeling. We are all too civilised for that. We are good friends." In the "News Chronicle", Teach says: "This third specialist made it 2-1 in favour of Maureen, so I withdrew. But I still think I was right to act in the kid's interests, and to advise her not to play."

It seems Teach was saying that, in her view, it had been reasonable to tell Mo not to play, based on Dempster's opinion on Monday – but the fact remains that his opinion turned out to be erroneous, contradicted by earlier and later opinions, and the player had always felt that she did not have a torn muscle.

In "Forehand Drive", Mo explained that Teach had made six statements in the media which led to her inability to continue with Teach as her coach. Mo did not provide the actual verbatim quotes, but we have seen now the evidence which underpinned Mo's position:

(i) "*she was washing her hands of me*" [Teach said: " .. if Maureen is going to disregard my advice, I might as well pack up and go back home."]

(ii) "*I was headstrong*" [Teach said: "Maureen is very stubborn."]

(iii) "[I*] wouldn't listen to her*" [Teach said: "I would not go on today if all hell were a skating rink, with a shoulder like that .. but it is no use talking."]

(iv) "[I] *now had no chance of winning*" [Teach said: "If she goes on at Wimbledon, they're going to blast her. She was a certain winner, but she hasn't a chance now."]

(v) "[I] *was putting my career in jeopardy*" [Teach said: " .. the world will miss a great player if she continues to play in that condition." And elsewhere: "I sure hate to see her running the risk of permanent injury."]

(vi) "*Teach was quoted as advocating my withdrawal from the singles, while, as a matter of fact, only mixed doubles had been under discussion*." [Teach said in her statement published in the "Evening News" on 25 June that: "I have asked her to scratch at Wimbledon in all three events."]

Mo added in her memoir: "I think the greater share of blame lay with her, but certainly I was not blameless .. In the mind of a young girl, right and wrong are like black and white."

Friday, 27 June 1952

It's a boiling day at Wimbledon (90 degrees Fahrenheit / 32 degrees Celsius).

Maureen (without the presence of Teach) has to play the second match on Court No 1 against a local favourite, 21 year-old Susan Partridge from Edgbaston, who she would later describe as "a beautiful English girl".

Significantly, Miss Partridge has some pedigree, and had been runner-up in the girls' singles at Junior Wimbledon three years earlier.

There are 27,059 fans packed inside the gates of the All England Club, of which approximately 9,000 take their seats to cheer on Susan. Incredibly, their heroine – who received advice before the match from iconic compatriot, three-times Wimbledon Champion Fred Perry - takes a lead of 3-1, 30-0 (on her own serve) in the third set. Miss Connolly, who has been over-hitting, is on the brink of defeat.

But the teenager is not done yet. She digs in, fights from the baseline, and somehow wins three consecutive games, to create a slender 4-3 lead.

However, in the eighth game, nervous Mo is twice foot-faulted – both times on her second serve. Partridge inevitably breaks to make it 4-4, and then serves successfully to reach 5-4. Mo is now four points from disaster.

And yet, she somehow finds a way: first, in a game which defined her career, she struggles on serve, but defies all odds to reach 5-5. Partridge then has a point to go ahead 6-5, but Mo thwarts her with a make-or-break, all-or-nothing forehand winner. The tide has now been turned, and Miss Connolly prevails after 90 minutes, scraping through 6-3, 5-7, 7-5. This compelling fourth-round clash proved the veracity of Little Mo's later self-analysis: "I was a clutch player, more dangerous when I was behind."

Partridge, who had been supported and watched by her fiancé Philippe Chatrier, said afterwards: "The heat was terrible out there, but it was the best game of my life. I suppose I found the right sort of game to play against Maureen. I don't know why I didn't win. I think I should have won. I haven't any excuse – I suppose she was not as tired as I was. On today's play, I can't see her winning this Championship."

In a bid to beat the heat, Maureen had poured water on her wrists at each changeover, but, post-match, she was initially said to be "too exhausted to see the Press". Later, she apparently said she hadn't been aware of her right shoulder whilst playing, and conceded: "Susan certainly had me very worried towards the end."

Earlier, the encounter had started well for Maureen. True, she had had to save break points in the seventh game of the first set, but in the eighth, Susan was up 40-0, but got broken after serving three double-faults. After that, Mo sailed to a commanding lead of a set and 2-0.

It was in the second set that Susan started to hit slow, high, looping, deep drives, especially when the American was leading 5-4. These slow-ball tactics rattled Mo, and she started missing the lines with her groundstrokes, and also mis-timed some mid-court volleys.

On a day when 200 people had to be treated at Wimbledon due to the extreme weather conditions, the one positive for Maureen was that she had survived – but only just.

* *

In "Forehand Drive", Mo would reveal several points about the Partridge battle:

a) in 1951, Mo had beaten her 8-6, 8-6 at East Hampton, New York, believing that the close scoreline was due to an off-day, but: "Never have I been more wrong, never have I underrated a girl so much." (Interestingly, the records appear to show that this earlier match had actually taken place in East Hampton in *July 1950*, with the scoreline being *6-4, 7-5* in Mo's favour.)

b) By the time she faced Partridge at Wimbledon, she "had broken" with Teach and "was on the edge of an emotional collapse .. I was attacked in the London Press, hounded night and day by journalists and photographers .. A section of both Press and players believed the fibrositis to be fictional." (However, Teach was still, physically at least, in Mo's camp during the second week of Wimbledon, albeit that we don't know what the 17 year-old's state of mind was about this scenario.)

c) Mo remembered: " .. the crowd worked towards a crescendo of partisanship" - which aligns with the contemporaneous "New York Times" report that "the gallery was giving its encouragement so wholeheartedly to her opponent". But, post-match, Maureen tried to exude poise: "It didn't worry me because I always concentrate too hard on my play to bother who is cheering what." Mo's mother (described in the press as "attractive" and "soft-spoken") was similarly resolute: "It doesn't worry us at all. It's perfectly natural for the crowd to shout for the home girl."

d) As the second set wore on: "I started serving double faults. The crowd cheered each one .. Of course, I could understand why the crowd wanted Susan to win, why she deserved to be the heroine. But I could not cast myself as the villain."

e) During a changeover in the third set, she looked at the players' section, hoping to see Teach: "I needed a miracle to win and only Teach could manufacture my miracles .. But as my eyes ranged the rows of faces .. I saw my mother, and she smiled, then shook her head slightly, reading my mind."

f) In that third set, Partridge had led 5-4. In the tenth game, Mo was down 15-30 on serve, and then served a first serve fault. Despite feeling "ill with a nausea which threatened to choke me," Mo's second serve was in - and she won the point for 30 all.

g) Then: "The crowd leaned forward, the moment was tense, there was a hush, when suddenly, piercing the silence, a young voice rang out clear and bold, "Give 'em hell, Mo!" I stood stunned, paused, looked and saw a US Air Force boy. His face was a flash of youth, shining and glowing with friendliness. I did not know him. I have never met him. But truly, in that second I was lifted to the heights by a stranger. I smiled and said, "Thank you," in a fervent whisper."

Monday, 30 June 1952

In her column in the "Evening News", Teach says she missed Maureen's contest against Partridge because "I had to go to Liverpool [docks] to meet Mrs Ethel Gray, a friend of the Connollys and myself, who has come [via ship] from Los Angeles to see Maureen play at her first Wimbledon."

On Court No 2, Mo and Louise Brough are watched by 2,000 fans when they play against two Brits, Mrs H.R Phillips and Mrs R.W Stone. After four games, it's all level at 2-2, but then the Americans pull away, and cruise onwards, 6-2, 6-1 in 28 minutes.

On another hot day at the Championships, it's reported that: "Most men were in shirt sleeves and one man caused a stir in a loose beach shirt, patterned with green palm trees."

Tuesday, 1 July 1952

The Championships remain difficult for Maureen: in the quarter-finals, she is up against the Australian No 1, Thelma Long from Sydney, a seasoned campaigner in her early thirties, who had won the Australian Open in January. (That said, Mo had of course beaten Thelma at Surbiton.)

Before the match, Nelson Fisher – described as tennis and racing correspondent for the "San Diego Union" - arrives, and tells the teenager: "I didn't fly all the way over here to see you lose!" (Elsewhere, his exact words are reported to be: "I haven't come all this way to tip losers, Mo. And I haven't come here to see you beaten by an Australian, so get in there and whack the ball." Mo apparently reassured Nelson: "I've got over all my nerves and troubles now, and I feel I can just get in there and concentrate on playing.")

The contest is the first of the day on Centre Court, played in sweltering conditions. Long is known for her clever tactics, and she decides to hit slow balls, right down the middle of the court. Maureen leads 5-4, but then over-hits and loses the last three games of the set, claiming only three points in those three games. After 35 minutes, Long has secured the first set, 7-5.

But her 17 year-old opponent is a warrior, totally unaffected by the heat. The match ends after 1 hour, 10 mins – and the American has prevailed 5-7, 6-2, 6-0. Afterwards, she says: "I think I have finally run into the kind of groove I wanted. I felt more on top of my game than at any time since I arrived in England. I know I had a bad first week at Wimbledon, but all that is behind me now."

Thursday, 3 July 1952

In the "Daily Mirror", Tom Phillips says that Maureen Connolly does not let partisan crowds affect her.

She is scheduled to play her semi-final versus 25 year-old Shirley Fry from Akron, Ohio as the third match on Centre, but the day is a washout, due to relentless rain. The 17 year-old passed the time by playing her favourite card game, rummy, with a dressing room attendant, losing the first round, but apparently the girl from San Diego "triumphed in the end".

Fry was a great retriever, and had a Maria Sakkari-esque smile. (A young Billie Jean King idolised Shirley.)

In the evening, Teddy Tinling, with the help of Queen's Club Secretary Dickie Ritchie, was able to take Mo to Queen's Club. Ted hits with her, indoors on wood, for 45 minutes. It's expected that Fry will be tough to beat, and will be determined to avenge her three-sets loss to Mo in the '51 US Open final.

Friday, 4 July 1952

Playing the second match on Centre Court, it's a disastrous start for Mo, who wins only one point in the first two games, and soon trails 1-4.

But Mo recovers superbly to win the set 6-4 in 21 minutes. There are, however, some difficult moments in the second set, as Mo's 3-1 lead evaporates, with Fry levelling at 3-3. But in the end the 17 year-old triumphs 6-4, 6-3, completing her success with a backhand winner.

The following day, in "The Evening News", Teach would write: "Maureen told me she was glad she won, but was sorry for Shirley because she thought her opponent was tired and could not play her best tennis. So you see the killers and great champions can still be sensitive and sympathetic."

Saturday, 5 July 1952

12 noon: at the All England Club, the gates open; within 10 minutes, the Centre Court standing areas are full with thousands of fans. Also, a van arrives at the Club, "laden with bouquets of roses and carnations" for Maureen and her opponent, Louise Brough.

Meanwhile, Teddy Tinling arrives at the White House apartment suite of Mo and her mother. He presents the teenager with her ballgown for the evening's Wimbledon Ball. He later recalled in his memoir, "Love and Faults", that Maureen held the dress in front of her, inspected it in a full-length mirror, and said: "If I don't make the Champion's speech in this dress tonight, I SHALL TEAR IT TO PIECES."

For her part, 29 year-old Louise must have been feeling very confident, given she'd won the Wimbledon title in '48, '49 and '50 – plus, of course, she had the memory of that three-set win over Mo in May. In addition, four days earlier, she'd beaten Mo in the mixed doubles quarters: she and Ken McGregor, the 1951 Wimbledon runner-up from Adelaide, had triumphed 2-6, 9-7, 7-5 over Mo and Mervyn Rose. Conversely, Louise was acutely aware that her adversary hit very hard, "was all business" and rarely made an error ..

* *

2 pm: on a warm afternoon (78 degrees Fahrenheit / 26 degrees Celsius), both players walked on to Centre Court, and – by the umpire's chair – they curtsied as the Duchess of Kent, a keen tennis fan, entered the Royal Box, wearing "a grey and white striped organza dress with side drapery and white accessories, and a white felt hat with white straw trimmings". (The fashion reporting of the 1950s was incredibly complex and intricate!)

80 year-old Lottie Dod, who had won her first Wimbledon aged 15 years, 10 months in 1887, listened to the final on the radio in her Wimbledon flat, whilst Queen Mary watched on TV in her residence, Marlborough House .. 17,000 spectators were present in Centre Court .. Teach sat courtside, smoking.

Set 1 unfolded like this:

- Game 5: Mo is broken, to trail 2-3, when she puts a backhand volley long.
- Game 6: Mo breaks back (to love), making it 3-3.
- They move to 4-4.
- Brough breaks to lead 5-4.
- Game 10: Louise starts the game with a double-fault. After several deuces, Mo breaks, to go level at 5-5.
- After half an hour, the 17 year-old has her first set-point, at 6-5 (Brough serving at 30-40, having again started the game with a double-fault). Brough then puts an awkward forehand slice beyond the baseline. First set to Maureen, 7-5.

Set 2 was equally full of drama:

- As per Maureen, her foe was "masterful with the drop .. deadly at the net .. her service is usually powerful." It was unsurprising, then, that Louise built up a 2-0 lead.
- But Mo recalls: "Then my game caught fire, I gambled, shot for the lines and 'went for broke'." A sizzling backhand crosscourt winner made it 3-2, Mo.
- Mo made it 5-2 and led 40-0 on Brough's serve in the 8th game, thus having 3 Championship points. But Brough fights back and wins the game..
- Things look tense for the 17 year-old in the 9th game, when she puts a lob long, meaning she can't convert a 4th Championship point. (Ironically, Mo would say Brough, presumably via doubles, "taught me the art of the lob".)
- A crosscourt forehand volley winner brings up a 5th Championship point. Unbelievably, the archive footage appears to show Mo reacting with a discreet fist-pump!
- Finally, on the next point, Louise nets a sliced backhand approach – Maureen Connolly has become the Wimbledon Champion.

Press reports varied: some said Maureen's 7-5, 6-3 win had taken 66 minutes, but elsewhere the duration was stated to be 75 minutes. The Champion shed some tears when it was over, and – down on court – the Duchess of Kent, flanked by Club Chairman Sir Louis Greig and Secretary Macaulay, presented Little Mo with the Venus Rosewater Dish.

In his book "Inside Tennis", Norman Cutler would write:

- "there were only seven points between the two players at the end"
- " .. her [Mo's] ability to hit the ball within an inch of the lines with speed will always bring her success"
- "The most unfortunate aspect of Maureen's triumph was the attitude of the British public. The ardent desire of many spectators, especially among the women, to see her lose was deplorable. Some of them attended Wimbledon with this hope in mind; it did not matter who won, as long as it was not Maureen Connolly. How they were disappointed! Why was she condemned? Because she was too young? Or because of her attractive personality?"

The last observation was one which was echoed in the "Irish Independent" by J.P Nicoll, who wrote: "the one-sidedness of the Wimbledon crowd, frequently and unpleasantly apparent, was never more so in the matches played by the young American star."

But Maureen vowed: "I will be back here many years to come. This is the greatest day of my life."

After the final, a significant moment took place in the Wimbledon dressing room. An emotionally exhausted Maureen was congratulated by 43 year-old Nell Hopman, the wife of Australian Davis Cup captain, Harry "The Fox" Hopman. Harry (also known as "The Miracle Man") and Nell had together won the Australian Open mixed doubles in 1930, 1936, 1937 and 1939. The Hopmans were, in due course, to become a major part of the Connolly story ..

In the meantime, Mo received bouquets, telegrams and cables from friends in America, but her immediate thoughts were about her serve – which she did not think had been good enough. In fact, she wanted to go to Queen's Club and practise her serve. But, after the men's doubles final, she had

to go back on Centre Court, to partner her rival Louise, as they were up against Shirley Fry / Doris Hart in the women's doubles final. The result didn't go Mo's way – she and Louise lost 8-6, 6-3.

It was time for Mo to think about the Wimbledon Ball that evening. Asked how she felt about the prospect of dancing with the men's Champion, 24 year-old Aussie Frank Sedgman, she replied: "The thought of that makes me more nervous than *anything*."

According to Teddy Tinling, the truth about that evening is that Maureen went to the Ball on her own, because, apparently, she "was not on speaking terms with her mother", and also the situation with Teach was not good. Maureen made no mention of Teach in her victory speech, but – according to Teach – Mo told her after the final: "Isn't it wonderful? We did it again."

Five years later, in "Forehand Drive", Mo wrote: "Eleanor Tennant is the greatest tennis teacher in the world. The fact that we .. no longer are friends does not diminish in the least my respect for her genius or lessen the gratitude I feel."

Sunday, 6 July 1952

At Northolt airport, after a 20 minutes' delay due to mechanical trouble, Maureen flies with Teach and her mother to Dublin for the Irish Championships. The Champion says: "I was fortunate. You just don't know how I feel about winning. I'll be back at Wimbledon again next year, and for many years to come. It is an honour and a privilege to be able to play at Wimbledon."

In due course, it seems that the reality is that there was a continuation of the "sham truce" with Teach, but – on this day – the "Sunday Express" has a front page photo of Mo (she has a spoon in her left hand) with Teach, clicked the previous day in the players' tea-room at Wimbledon. The headline reads: "Little Mo sips victory tea". The paper says that Mo sipped tea without milk from a dessert spoon. Asked about her plans, the 17 year-old had replied: "Well, I've got a job on the "San Diego Union" – that's a daily paper. I'm a copy girl [messenger]. People shout, "Hey, copy," and I come running. Right now I'm going on with my tennis."

Monday, 7 July 1952

Reaction continues to Maureen Connolly's Wimbledon triumph, where her groundstrokes had been "like a rocket".

In the "Daily Express", the player says: "After the Ball I went to a private party with tennis friends in the West End. It was so late I don't really know where it was held – but I was up early and had the best breakfast of all since my arrival. I feel on top of cloud 17. In other words, I feel great." She also said the Ball has been "wonderful. I don't think I sat out one dance."

The "Daily Mirror" had a photo of Mo signing an autograph, left-handed as always, for 14 year-old Michael Brown who had "waited five hours outside her London flat yesterday". In the same paper, C.M Jones wrote that Mo had shown her fortitude in London when a taxi driver tried to charge her 4 shillings and 6 pence for a trip that had, many times previously, only cost her 2 shillings and 6 pence. The teenager told the cabbie: "I'll not pay you a penny more than 4 shillings."

In the "Western Mail", John Ballantine declared: ""Little Mo" is in a class of her own and will go on winning at Wimbledon and breaking records until she retires for lack of opposition."

In the "Evening News", Teach is strident: "I am making a first statement that she is the greatest tennis player the world has ever known. At tea after she had won, she told me that she was not satisfied with some of her strokes. That is what I call a champion."

* *

During the Irish Championships, Maureen receives a telegram – she has been promoted from the role of messenger. The telegram reads: "You are now a cub reporter on the San Diego Union". This news is important, because writing for the paper helps offset the fact that she is earning zero from her tennis .. whilst on court, she takes the Irish title, defeating Jean Walker-Smith 6-1, 6-1 in 35 minutes. Then, she and Walker-Smith win the women's doubles. After that, Mo and Australian Ian Ayre beat Walker-Smith and Bryan Woodroffe in the mixed final.

After this tournament, it's said that Maureen and Teach go their separate ways ..

In early August, just before the US Open (aka the US National Championships at Forest Hills), Maureen suffers a somewhat predictable setback, after the excitement of winning Wimbledon. She loses in three sets to Doris Hart in the semi-finals of the US Eastern grass court Championships in South Orange, New Jersey.

The US Open begins on 29 August and, during the tournament, there is, apparently, an astonishing, brief, final, transitory *rapprochement* between Mo and Teach. It takes place in the 10 minute interval which was allowed when players split sets. Mo had taken the second set to draw level, in the semi-final, with Shirley Fry. Teach gave Mo some advice, and Mo won the third set 6-1, and then vanquished Doris Hart 6-3, 7-5 in the final, to retain her US Open crown.

Back in San Diego, in Balboa Park, Maureen is felicitated by the local Junior Chamber of Commerce, who decide to gift her a horse. She chooses a Tennessee walking horse, Colonel Merryboy, "a gentle and sweet animal", with a gait "so smooth, so steady, you might be riding on a cloud". It's a beautiful moment for the teenager, because: "For as long as I can remember, I had wanted a horse, but never could I afford one .."

Maureen is riding in the mornings at Mission Valley, and, thanks to her Uncle Clarence and his wife, she meets 21 year-old Norman Brinker, the youngest member of the US equestrian team, and a Navy man. The two fall in love.

Meanwhile, Perry T. Jones had plans for an Australian tour for Maureen, to commence in Sydney in the first week of November '52 – and the player agrees to it, primarily because she would be coached by tough disciplinarian Harry Hopman, with Nell Hopman acting as her "chaperone".

As an aside, the teenager may have had in mind the greatness of the Hopman couple, who had reached the final of the 1935 Wimbledon mixed doubles, only falling to the British pair of Fred Perry and Dorothy Round 7-5, 4-6, 6-2. (Perry, of course, turned pro in 1937 after having won his three consecutive Wimbledon men's singles titles. Round won the women's singles at SW19 in 1934 and 1937.)

1953

Was it Mo's natural development which led her, in 1953, to become the first woman to achieve the Calendar Grand Slam – or did Harry and Nell Hopman play key roles in this regard?

Certainly, we should not under-estimate what these two individuals did for Maureen. She herself was to say: " .. under Hop's training, I became so fit that I could play all day .. Hop often said I was a perfectionist .. it is true I never became satisfied with my game .. I considered myself a warrior more than anything else." (Whilst Mo was ice-cool on court, it is somewhat amusing that Harry would also go on to coach the mercurial 11 year-old John McEnroe, in 1970, as by then Harry was settled in America. Harry did, of course, also mentor Aussie players such as Lew Hoad, Ken Rosewall, Mervyn Rose, Rod Laver and Ken McGregor.)

As for Nell, she chatted with Maureen for hours in a hotel suite in Sydney, Australia, probably on 21 November 1952, and the result was that the player stopped competing with hate and fear, and instead actually began to enjoy her duels against her opponents. Up until this point, Maureen felt that, to be liked and to have friends, she needed to win on court. Simultaneously, she feared losing, and she believed that she could only win matches by hating her opposition.

Maureen was eternally grateful to her chaperone for helping her adjust her attitude, stating: "Nell will never outlive my devotion and gratitude." (Nell was never all about tennis; for instance, she had obtained "her licentiate and teaching diploma at the Royal College of Music, London".)

Buoyed by her new mindset, Mo won the New South Wales Championships on 22 November 1952, beating her friend, 18 year-old Julie Sampson from Pasadena, 6-3, 6-2. Then, two months later, in January 1953, she captured the Australian Open title, beating Julie by the exact same scoreline. To put the icing on a perfect cake, Mo and Julie also won the Australian Open women's doubles.

In the spring, before leaving the States to play in Italy, France and at Wimbledon, Norman gave Mo "a large amethyst ring", and they agreed to marry. Mo would later recall: "We planned to make a formal announcement when I returned from Wimbledon in July." But this is not what transpired ..

Meanwhile, during the European tour, it happened that Mo, despite being accompanied by Nell, was somewhat lonely, missing Norman, as well as her horse, Colonel Merryboy.

And perhaps Mo was human after all – because it seems that her emotions at the time may have affected her game. In Rome, in the final of the Italian Open, she led Doris Hart by a set and 3-0, only to lose 4-6, 9-7, 6-3. It was said that, in that match, Mo was tentative, tired – and made many errors.

The upshot was that Maureen sought some advice from Fred Perry, and had some gruelling evening practices with him. She knew that her true goal remained the French Open.

Teddy Tinling recalls Maureen stayed at the Hôtel Napoléon in Paris – he had long discussions there with her about her outfits.

But, on court in the quarter-finals, Mo was error-strewn and near to defeat. Her nemesis Susan Partridge (now newly-wed Mrs Philippe Chatrier) led her 6-3, 2-0, but somehow Maureen found a way to ultimately advance, 3-6, 6-2, 6-2. In the "Daily Express", Frank Rostron wrote that Mo's recovery occurred because she became "businesslike", and "settled down to something like her usual

sergeant-major-on-parade precision." A rueful Susan told Rostron: "I had the right tactics. I slowed Maureen up and cramped her style by keeping the ball straight at her. But, oh, I got so tired. On these slow courts you have to keep the ball going all day to beat Maureen."

Having survived the Partridge test, Maureen didn't look back, and in the final she claimed her second Grand Slam title of 1953, overcoming Doris Hart 6-2, 6-4. It was clear that Mo was eyeing the Calendar Grand Slam, because post-match she told Peter Wilson of the "Daily Mirror": "All four in the same year is what matters."

The 18 year-old was doing everything she could to play her best and achieve her objective. She had cut out any chocolates and pastries from her diet, and it was reported that she had lost half a stone in 12 months, with her weight now being 8 stones, 12 pounds (56.3 kgs). The "Nottingham Journal" told its readers that Mo was an inch taller and an inch smaller around the waist, compared with 1952, adding that she was playing 3 – 4 hours of tennis per day, and was doing skipping.

Norman Cutler, in his book "Inside Tennis", would write that when Mo returned to Britain in June 1953, "she had grown up .. Her outward demeanour had completely changed, but beneath the quiet dignity, and very often pensiveness, she was still the likeable, laughing Maureen .."

Tuesday, 2 June 1953

It's Coronation Day in London for Queen Elizabeth II. Luckily for Mo, it happened that Nell Hopman had managed to obtain tickets, as a gift, from a rich tennis enthusiast.

Nell got Maureen out of bed at 5.30am. Their seats "from the ledge of a department store" overlooked the Queen's route from Westminster Abbey to Buckingham Palace. Maureen had her camera and an extra supply of film. As the Queen's coach drew near, the rain stopped and Mo "got some truly wonderful snaps".

But that night Mo had a "sickening thought". The previous year a prominent journalist had said that a meeting with the then Princess Elizabeth could be arranged, but it would have to be at 11am. Mo knew "that would have meant no practice .. So I had declined .. That night of the Coronation I never regretted a childish decision more."

Note: From June 1 – July 4, the All England Club was floodlit every night in honour of the Coronation.

Wednesday, 3 June 1953

Mo is now at the Northern LTC for the Manchester tournament, where play is washed out for the day, owing to heavy rain. She tells the press: "No singles for me this week. I have been playing in Paris and I don't want to go on the grass in singles without a few days' practice. I don't want to play a bad game and let the public down."

Thursday, 4 June 1953

Maureen chats with Fred Perry before going on court to practise. In addition, she tells a reporter of the "Manchester Evening News" that she plans to write about Manchester in her column for the "San Diego Union". As regards the Coronation in London, she says enthusiastically to the same reporter: "It was swell [excellent]. I guess only the British could put on such a show."

In her opening women's doubles match, Mo and Julie Sampson, an excellent volleyer, defeat Mrs D Green and Mrs S Youatt 6-1, 6-1.

Friday, 5 June 1953

In the "Nottingham Journal", British Davis Cupper Tony Mottram praises Mo's "self-confidence and determination" and intense work ethic. He makes the point that she "does not come from a wealthy family", and gave his overall verdict: ""Little Mo" is destined, in my view, to become the greatest woman player of all time."

Saturday, 6 June 1953

In the women's doubles final, Shirley Fry and Doris Hart beat Mo and the tall, ice-cool Julie Sampson 6-4, 7-9, 6-4. Doris teams up with Bryan Woodroffe to take the mixed title as well, overcoming Mo and Mervyn Rose 8-6, 6-4.

A photo in the "Manchester Evening News" shows Fred Perry feeding cake to Mo at the opening of a new restaurant in Manchester, the Normandie Room at Finnigan's Store, Deansgate. Mervyn Rose, the No 1 male player from Australia, and Helen Fletcher, were also present.

Sunday, 7 June 1953

In the "Sunday Express", Dan Maskell states: "I see no reason why Maureen Connolly should not win the women's [Wimbledon] title .. she has the champion's knack of always playing better when the odds are greatest."

Monday, 8 June 1953

It's time for Maureen's second grass court event in Britain in 1953: Beckenham in Kent. Mo is back in singles action.

First up is 17 year-old Valerie Pitt from Birmingham, the British junior champion. It's all over in 32 minutes, with Mo triumphing 6-1, 6-2 (though some reports say 6-1, 6-3).

Valerie reflected afterwards: "I felt in the mood to play well, but Maureen just wouldn't let me."

The victor's next opponent is Nell Hopman. Referring to the fact that Nell was her chaperone, 18 year-old Mo said, perhaps a little wryly and tongue-in-cheek: "I still need somebody to look after me."

Tuesday, 9 June 1953

Although Nell had been a top player in yester-years, she loses 6-0, 6-1 to Mo. Interestingly, she had married Harry in (March) 1934 – the year of Mo's birth.

Wednesday, 10 June 1953

The "Manchester Evening News" printed a letter from reader R.H Astles of Flixton, who bemoaned the fact that the crowds at Wimbledon '52 had, regrettably, been somewhat negative to Maureen. The letter continued:

"This [hostility] reached a climax during the Ladies' Singles Final when it was very apparent that almost all the spectators were pulling for Louise Brough .. I have seen Maureen Connolly on both her

visits to Manchester and I am sure the general opinion is that she is a most charming personality on and off the courts. I sincerely hope that she should eventually pass the wonderful record of eight wins by Mrs Helen Wills-Moody, at Wimbledon. "Little Mo" will be as popular here as in her own country."

Friday, 12 June 1953

A good day for Mo. She beats the South African junior champion, Lucille van der Westhuizen, 6-0, 6-1, attacking all the time. Later the same day, she overcomes Helen Fletcher 6-2, 6-2 in the semi-finals, perhaps benefitting from some wild hitting by her opponent.

Fletcher had led 2-0 in the second set.

Saturday, 13 June 1953

It's finals' day at the Kent Championships in Beckenham.

5,000 fans watch Maureen win the title, beating her doubles partner, friend and travelling companion Julie Sampson 6-2, 6-3.

Sampson, the blonde US No 10 with a wide range of shots, was repeatedly passed by Maureen at the net. But Connolly / Sampson joined forces to seize the doubles title, edging out Helen Fletcher and Jean Rinkel 2-6, 7-5, 9-7.

Sunday, 14 June 1953

Mo participates in a Coronation exhibition tennis event at Wimbledon, as do Julie Sampson, Doris Hart – and male players Jean Borotra (Wimbledon Champion in 1924 and 1926), Vic Seixas (who would win Wimbledon the following month), left-hander Jaroslav Drobny (who would win Wimbledon in 1954) and Ken "Muscles" Rosewall (four times a Wimbledon runner-up between 1954 – 1974 –and whose nickname arose due to his lack of muscles!)

Records state that Mo and Rosewall were level with Seixas / Hart 6-4, 3-6, 7-7 at the end of play.

Thursday, 18 June 1953

Writing in the "Coventry Evening Telegraph", Tony Mottram insists: " .. the [Wimbledon] ladies event is cut and dried. There can be only one player to win and that, of course, is Maureen Connolly."

Friday, 19 June 1953

Maureen is playing doubles at the London Grass Court Championships at Queen's Club, where she also chats with Sadler's Wells' ballerina, Violetta Elvin.

It's a busy day: Mo and Julie Sampson win their women's doubles semi-final 6-0, 5-7, 12-10 over Pat Ward / Rosemary Bulleid, having recovered from 3-5 down in the third set. Off court, Maureen attends a London fashion show.

Meanwhile, the "Daily Express" is running an instructional picture series, showcasing each of Maureen's main shots, with words by Frank Rostron and photos by George Stroud. On this day, the

focus is Mo's serve. Interestingly, modest Mo says her serve is "still not all it should be. There are lots of better servers than I."

The "Manchester Evening News" goes for a fashion angle, with a photo of Mo wearing a Coronation-themed tennis dress, designed by Teddy Tinling, which incorporated flowers, and the initial "M", and also a crown. Tinling used the following flowers in recognition of the major titles which had been won by Maureen:

- The Rose of England
- The Australian Wattle
- The American Beauty Rose
- The Lily of France
- The Irish Shamrock.

Saturday, 20 June 1953

On a day when a press article claims that Mo likes Chanel No 5 perfume, she and Julie Sampson win the Queen's Club title, defeating Helen Fletcher and Jean Rinkel 6-4, 10-8. Pat Reekie wrote in the "Weekly Dispatch": "Little Mo marched around the court, head nodding as though in deep, private thought. Perfect manners, mark you, perfect poise."

In the mixed doubles, 5 ft 7 in Ken Rosewall and Mo reach the final against Rex Hartwig and Dorothy Knode, but the match does not take place, as Hartwig had already played three matches earlier in the day.

"The Londonderry Sentinel" publishes a free-ranging interview which Maureen had given to reporter Louise Reid. The 18 year-old said: "I don't have to worry about anything but playing tennis. I get up at half past nine, have a big breakfast – fruit juice and plenty of eggs. Then over to Wimbledon for three hours' practice. After that a light lunch, usually a sandwich. Then a match in the afternoon. I'm back in the hotel for dinner by eight most nights. I'm in bed by 10 o'clock and sleep 11 hours. No parties during tournaments. Not that I don't like parties, I'm mad about dancing."

Maureen also revealed to Reid that, in the last year, she had sipped her first glass of champagne: "I didn't mind it. I rather liked it, in fact. There's no harm in an occasional drink. But not during a tournament. It's hard enough seeing the ball as it is."

Reid's article also explained what purportedly happened when Maureen first met Norman Brinker, a member of the US 1952 Olympic equestrian team. Apparently, he was riding, and Mo told him: "I wish I could ride like that." He replied: "I wish I could play tennis like you."

All in all, life was looking good for Maureen in London. The USLTA and the Southern California Lawn Tennis Association had provided the finance for her and Nell to have a suite at the Grosvenor House hotel on Park Lane – and these same two institutions were granting Mo a total pocket money allowance of two English pounds per day for "the sort of incidentals a girl might want".

Fred Perry has no doubts that Mo will triumph at the All England Club. He tells the "Manchester Evening News": "Maureen Connolly stands out head and shoulders above the rest .. Miss Connolly hits the ball too hard for the rest of them."

Sunday, 21 June 1953

Hundreds of fans pay one English pound each to see Maureen and other players compete in exhibition matches at the Hurlingham Club in south-west London.

Monday, 22 June 1953

The "Belfast News" says that, to beat Maureen, it will "take a great player – or an accident".

Mo seems brimming with confidence. The "Daily Express" is today analyzing her backhand, and she confides to Frank Rostron: "It's the easiest and pleasantest shot of all once you get the hang of it. It's my favourite."

Around this time, Maureen answered a question about her nickname: "No, I don't mind them calling me "Little Mo" still. But perhaps they'll start calling me "Big Mo" one day."

Tuesday, 23 June 1953

It's time for Maureen to defend her Wimbledon title: she opens the Centre Court programme for the day.

She arrives at the grounds in a car with Julie Sampson. "Hello, everybody!" she exclaims to the crowds thronging outside the members' entrance at the main Club building. Mo stands on the steps, swinging her racket, carrying her white dress for the match and a green sweater/cardigan. The "Evening News" puts her photo on their front page that evening.

The media breathlessly reports what Mo wears when arriving at the All England, telling their readers it was a simple black and white check cotton frock, no stockings, and high-heeled black court shoes.

And, on a sunny afternoon, Mo - with a green ribbon in her hair - is up against a South African, brunette Dora Killian, who is six months younger than her.

Dora, the daughter of a policeman, is extremely tense as they take to Centre Court. Maureen reassures her: "Don't be nervous. Just hit the ball in the usual way, it's only a game."

After the match, Dora – who was making her first trip outside South Africa – reported: " She [Maureen] was so sweet to me. She patted me on the back and said: "Don't worry. You'll be all right once you start playing. I went through all this last year. It was a terrible ordeal, but I enjoyed it in the end.""

That said, Maureen triumphs 6-0, 6-0 in 20 minutes, losing only 19 points. She then went to an outside court and practised with Harry Hopman for 1 hour, 20 minutes; she hit ball after ball, seeking perfection.

The members of the press were impressed by Maureen – by her flared skirt, her volleying and her judicious dropshots. Peter Wilson went even further in the "Daily Mirror", declaring: "I cannot ever remember a display of such controlled ferocious hitting from ANY woman at Wimbledon – and it's twenty-four years since I saw my first final."

Dora, who described Mo as "marvellous", had made the trip to Britain with fellow-player Lucille van der Westhuizen, thanks to "the proceeds of raffles and sales of needlework" organized by their chaperone, Mrs Doreen Malcolm of Johannesburg, a pre-War Wimbledon player.

On a frenetic day, journalists did not forget to ask Mo about her private life. She denies that she is engaged to Norman Brinker, but at this point of time was willing to admit he is "awfully nice", adding: "We are very great friends."

And, in the "Daily Mirror", there was an insight into Maureen, away from the courts. Apparently, a week earlier she had been at the home of tennis writer C.M Jones, where she insisted on helping with the washing up, and was happiest when playing with his children.

Thursday, 25 June 1953

It's perhaps surprising that Mo, the world No 1, was scheduled to play on Court No 2, especially as it was against a British challenger, Jean Petchell, the 20 year-old Nottinghamshire county champion.

It's also surprising that Maureen, the No 1 seed, reached Court No 2 before Jean did. Mo, wearing an emerald green cardigan and matching ribbon in her hair, waited patiently for several minutes before Petchell arrived, flanked by "a burly steward".

Despite the packed gallery being on Jean's side – there were repeated cries of "Bravo" and "Good girl" to encourage her - she manages to garner only two games, going down 6-1, 6-1, despite putting up a courageous fight.

Whilst Maureen would have been worried that the two games she lost were both when her own serve was broken, the press had an equal interest in Maureen's fashion game. Teddy Tinling was reported as saying that, this year, Maureen favoured tennis dresses which were "tight round the waist and full over the hips."

As for Petchell, she drew plaudits from the "Nottingham Evening Post" because she "once carried the war into her opponent's camp by going up to the net when 4-0 down in the first set". Petchell would say after the match: "It was a great thrill to play Maureen again. I was not as nervous as I expected to be. It is good practice, playing against Miss Connolly. She hits the ball so hard and gets such amazing angles."

Saturday, 27 June 1953

It's another outing on Court No 2 for Mo; she loses only her third game of the Championships, conquering Ann Shilcock (newly promoted to GB's Wightman Cup team) 6-0, 6-1. The United Kingdom's former Prime Minister, 70 year-old Clement Attlee, tells C.M Jones on this day that he is certain Maureen Connolly will recapture the SW19 title this year.

Monday, 29 June 1953

Bill McGowran of the "Evening News" feels that Nancy Spain's recently published biography of Teach Tennant is unsympathetic to Mo. (Indeed, it includes the very interesting sentence: "For various reasons, Teach forecasts that Maureen will lose in every major championship this year [1953].")

Spain also asserted in the same book: "At the age of 13 Maureen was as little able to keep her big mouth shut as she is today."

Accordingly, McGowran writes as follows about Maureen in the "Evening News":

" .. I have met her several times and, in the course of my job, I have interviewed her and cross-questioned her. I can only say that I have always found her a polite, modest and not over-talkative young lady .. Little Mo has always been self-possessed, articulate and well-mannered .."

Lance Tingay, in his 1977 book "100 Years of Wimbledon", made a similar observation: "When she won a point she gave a little nod of the head as she turned to resume her position at the back. It was a little gesture that tended to make spectators assume she was contemptuous of the opposition. She was less popular than was warranted, for few players so charming and generous hearted had appeared on the green swards of Wimbledon."

Tuesday, 30 June 1953

On Centre Court, Maureen's quarter-final is watched by the Duke of Edinburgh and the Duchess of Kent.

The contest looks tight at 3-3 in the first set, but, after that, Maureen accelerates away from her German opponent, Erika Vollmer, recording a 6-3, 6-0 victory.

Vollmer, reported to be the wife of a Hamburg doctor and the mother of a small child, was playing in her first Wimbledon. It was Maureen's backhand which proved the difference between the two combatants.

Thursday, 2 July 1953

Semi-finals day, and the standing room section of the Centre Court is entirely full. In total, 17,000 spectators are crammed in the stadium.

Maureen, clad in a sleeveless dress featuring a pleated skirt, disposes of the No 3 seed, Shirley Fry, 6-1, 6-1, but would later opine in "Forehand Drive" that: "Shirley was playing the worst tennis of her career."

That said, Mo was relentless, hitting "deep to the corners", leaving Fry defensive on the baseline. And Mo's game was full of variety. Moreover, she no longer seemed troubled by soft balls hit down the middle of the court.

After losing the opening game of the contest, Mo wasted no time, winning the first set in 14 minutes, at which point the Duchess of Kent and her daughter Princess Alexandra took their seats in the Royal Box.

But set two was even quicker: although Mo had to save three break points when serving at 3-1 up, it took only 11 minutes, although some sources clocked the match duration as 31 minutes, rather than 25.

Either way, it was a heavyweight performance by Maureen in which she out-hit Fry, and she was congratulated afterwards by two courtside Irish priests, Father Bill Sheridan and Father Philip Finnegan, from Navan, near Dublin. Father Philip explained: "Maureen and her mother are Catholics, and we met them when we went to California."

The consensus was that Maureen was a far more complete player, compared with her Wimbledon '52 performances. She told C.M Jones of the "Daily Mirror": "I owe so much to Hopman, who has

taught me how to volley and smash. I played better today than ever before in my life, but Shirley was off form."

Every facet of Maureen's game seemed to be on fire: she was hitting the lines; her crosscourt backhands were imperious, and she wasn't afraid to bring Fry up to the net, then hit a lob winner.

Seasoned Connolly watchers also took note of her confident body language, typified by her "complete calmness of demeanour and expression .. the doll-like nodding of her head .. [and the] smart marching to take up position after every point."

However, sadly, Norman Cutler would write in "Inside Tennis" that the SW19 crowds were irritated by Mo's natural "head-nodding habit", which they erroneously perceived to be a sign of arrogance.

Friday, 3 July 1953

Teddy Tinling and Mo spend part of the morning at Grosvenor House, discussing her outfit for the final. They decide it will be a high-necked dress.

However, after a practice later in the day at Wimbledon, Maureen determines that she will be too hot in a high-neck garment. As a result, Teddy has to work through the night, using "an odd strip of white satin" to make the necessary adjustments to the dress.

Note: It is reported today that Julie Sampson and her parents have been given a tour of the Houses of Parliament by Cyril Osborne, Member of Parliament for Louth.

Saturday, 4 July 1953

One of the huge advantages of having Harry Hopman in her corner was that Mo could regularly train with the top Australian male players.

In the morning, she practised on wood at Queen's Club with Harry and left-hander Mervyn Rose, from 11.45 am – 12.15pm. Hopman urged her: "Go for your shots," and Maureen would later say in "Forehand Drive": " .. he was absolutely right .. my whole game was centred upon a hard, daring offensive, shooting for the lines and corners." She added that her idea of playing a perfect match would mean: "I hit each ball within one inch of the line." (In "Championship Tennis", Maureen again made it clear that she did not advocate hitting down the middle of the court – instead, she recommending hitting deep crosscourt, or deep down the line, or executing a short, angled crosscourt ball.)

After that practice, Maureen soaked in a hot tub for five minutes ..

At 1.30pm, she had a 15 minutes' practice with Sydney's Ken Rosewall.

And so it became time for Maureen, with a pink ribbon in her hair, to face off against tall, laconic 28 year-old Doris Hart: "my idol – the nicest and most charming girl in tennis and my dear friend."

The sun shone on Centre Court as the players, with customary bouquets, emerged in front of a capacity crowd in excess of 18,000 spectators, which included several hundred who had queued overnight. At 5.15am, Wimbledon officials had issued 400 tickets to those individuals, instructing them to return by 10.30am.

Happily, the fans were treated to an absolute classic. In the "Weekly Dispatch", J.L. Manning would write: "There never will be perfection in sport, but I was near to seeing it yesterday at Wimbledon .. Maureen Connolly and Doris Hart showed hardly an error of judgement, a slackening of concentration, or a weakening of effort in a never-to-be forgotten lawn tennis match."

The final consisted of 187 points, and Maureen later stated: " .. the difference between us was so marginal as to be non-existent". It was true: only one point separated them in the first set, and only one point separated them in the second set.

After a thrilling battle, lasting 70 minutes, it was Miss Connolly who prevailed 8-6, 7-5, and she told Jack Peart of the "Sunday Mirror" that it had been: "The best game I ever played in my life." The archive footage shows that Mo hit to a great depth and showed amazing mobility that day – she never seemed out of position.

In "The Weekly Dispatch", J.L Manning quoted her thus:

"Doris Hart made it so awfully tough for me, but I was always confident that I would get a few points when I needed them, and that I would win.

But I'm worried. Harry Hopman has taught me a lot, and we have practised for hours and hours together, but, you know, my service and volleying are not good enough.

No, there's a lot wrong with me yet.

I'll have to have much more practice .. I shall be playing tennis for as long as I can plan ahead .. Tournaments and hard practice. I still have a lot to learn.

I shall not turn professional. I want to return to Wimbledon.

It's so exciting at Wimbledon. There is where hard work can get you. I'll be back next year and I'll do my best to be a better player. There's room for improvement."

Rather than savour being Wimbledon Champion for a second consecutive year, Mo instead went straight to an outside court to practise. As always, she was determined to better herself, especially as regards her service and her volleying. She still had to play in the women's doubles' final later that day, but only after the best of five sets men's doubles final had taken place, which featured Lew Hoad / Ken Rosewall versus Rex Hartwig / Mervyn Rose. (Doris Hart, in the meantime, was saying that she and Shirley Fry would "murder" Mo and Julie!)

Ironically, in "Forehand Drive", looking back on the Hart encounter four years later, Mo was far less self-critical, asserting that the Wimbledon '53 singles final "was the closest I was ever to come to my 'perfect game'." She added: "And I had won the title without hate, without fear."

For her part, Doris, who hailed from St Louis in Missouri, told the press: "I played as best I could. But you cannot make mistakes against Maureen. You are under a strain all the time."

And yet Maureen herself had been tested emotionally, saying: "I was under great nervous tension. Doris played very well and I could not afford to make mistakes against her." (The teenager confided to Maurice Smith of "The People": "Boy, it gets you this Centre Court – my knees are still knocking!")

It was the Duchess of Kent who presented the Venus Rosewater Dish to Maureen. At last the victor smiled broadly, although some onlookers felt that she struggled under the weight of the "big shield", and many eyes gazed at Mo's ring on the third finger of her left hand .. In truth, she was overcome by her emotions, explaining: "I'm tired, really tired. I'm going to the Wimbledon ball tonight. Maybe I won't get to bed at all." And she revealed to Alan Hoby of the "Sunday Express": "I can't stop shaking. I'm still all keyed up."

Hoby probably felt the same way. The next day he wrote that: "It was inhuman stuff" from Maureen .. "a match magnificent beyond all description" .. "The rallies were so tense, so taut" – and he concluded that "pace plus power is the Connolly key weapon".

The fact was that Hart was a fluid shotmaker, but Mo's positivity was relentless: at one point, the 18 year-old hit a cool diagonal lob, and she was constantly taking the ball whilst it was still rising or at the height of the bounce; additionally, she was also willing to come to the net to finish points.

An x-ray analysis of the final would look something like this:

- It was a 70 minute match. Each set lasted 35 minutes.

Set 1:

- Mo broke Doris in the 8th game to lead 5-3.
- 9th game: Mo is broken after serving two double-faults and netting a simple volley.
- Doris then levelled at 5-5. Mo sticks her thumb in her mouth.
- At the changeover when Mo led 7-6, she poured water over her wrists.
- 14th game: Hart went down 0-40 on serve, mainly due to immaculate backhands from Mo. The server then saves the first two set points, but loses the third when she put a forehand long.

Set 2:

- Mo is broken in the first game, but then pulls ahead 3-1.
- Mo has a point for 4-1, but Doris scrambles brilliantly to 3-3.
- At 4-4, Hart had two break points, but could not capitalise on either of them. Mo held her nerve and her serve.
- Serving at 5-6, Doris was broken to love:
- Connolly hit a crosscourt pass. 0-15.
- A Connolly winner. 0-30.
- Connolly's disguised forehand dropshot brings up three Championship points.
- Hart puts a ball out on the sideline. Connolly says later: "It feels wonderful [to win Wimbledon again], believe me."

Hart had a fabulous all-court game, and whilst her main tactic had been to hit down the middle, "waiting for the opening", she also tried dropshots, lobs and service variations. She said: "It was the best I've ever played against 'Little Mo' ... but it wasn't enough. I still couldn't touch her."

At some point after the singles final, whilst the men's doubles was presumably still ongoing, Mo was paged for an overseas 'phone call, which she took in the office of Duncan Macaulay, the Secretary of

the All England Club. It was Nelson Fisher from San Diego who congratulated her and then, at the end of the call, he told Mo that Norman was being "shipped out", meaning he would not be there in San Diego upon her return. Mo cried into a coat, which was concerning for Marie Bumpus, the assistant to Macaulay, as it was the coat of the Duchess of Kent!

Perhaps inevitably, Mo and Julie Sampson then lose the doubles final to Doris Hart / Shirley Fry, but the scoreline of 6-0, 6-0 remains a surprise. "I was no help to Julie at all," was Maureen's recollection, whilst Julie told her: "I don't know whether we should laugh or cry." Typically, Mo was overly modest in "Forehand Drive", stating: "Doris and Shirley could have beaten us easily on the best day we ever had." (The mixed doubles had also been a slight disappointment: Mo and Mervyn Rose were seeded 2, but succumbed in the fourth round to George Worthington and Pat Ward.)

Back at the Grosvenor House hotel with Nell, it was inevitable that Maureen called Norman and her mum. Norman says he will be at sea for five months.

It was a poignant time for Maureen, which contrasts with an anecdote about the first time Norman watched her in competition. On arrival during the match, he shouted across the court: "Hi, Maureen!", blissfully unaware that he was supposed to be keeping silent. Maureen would recall: "I lost four games in a row. Somehow I couldn't hit a ball until he was gone." It was said that he never watched a match of hers after that episode!

However, despite her sadness that evening due to the news from San Diego, there was no possibility of Maureen missing the Wimbledon ball, held at Grosvenor House, and at midnight she danced there with the men's Champion, Vic Seixas.

Sunday, 5 July 1953

Maureen, who understandably had had little sleep, was just in time to catch a flight to Amsterdam; she was hurried through Customs and went straight on the 'plane. She was to play exhibition matches later that day in Noordwijk-on-Sea. (Mo did not play the Irish Championships in '53.)

* *

Fortunately, when Maureen got back to San Diego, Norman was there. He had managed to get a delay in his shipping out orders. The night before he left, he drove Mo to Balboa Park and put a "twinkling ring" on her finger, which was probably what would later be described in the British media some months later as "a neat square solitaire diamond". Mo would remember: " .. a devoted kiss served as my acceptance .. I knew Norman had worked nights to earn the money for it .. He sailed and my heart sailed with him."

There was still the small matter of a Calendar Grand Slam to be won. On 7 September 1953, Maureen achieved her goal in front of 12,000 people (as per Allison Danzig of the "New York Times"), beating Doris Hart 6-2, 6-4 in the final of Forest Hills / the US Open. Mo had led 6-2, 5-2, but Doris closed the gap. Finally, as per the 18 year-old's recollection, she served out to love, winning the last point with an unplayable forehand crosscourt: "That slashing drive was to be my Forest Hills swan song."

Only two women since Mo have achieved a Calendar Grand Slam: Margaret Court in 1970, and Stefanie (Steffi) Graf in 1988.

During Forest Hills in 1953, where, incidentally, Maureen beat Althea Gibson 6-2, 6-3 in the quarters, C.M Jones reported in the "Daily Mirror" that Maureen had turned down an invitation to return to Australia in the winter of 53/54. He believed she had therefore decided to turn pro within the next month: "This means that England has seen the last of her as an amateur," he wrote.

On the romantic front, Norman duly returned, and in November 1953 he and Mo announced – in the "San Diego Union" - their engagement. In addition, C.M Jones' worries were proven to be unfounded, as Mo also stated that she planned to play another year as an amateur – meaning she would definitely be at Wimbledon in 1954.

Note 1: Maureen dropped only one set in the four Grand Slams of 1953, thereby winning 44 of the 45 sets she played; in other words, her success rate was an impressive 97.78%. The corresponding percentage for Margaret Court (1970) was 93.88% (she dropped three sets), and 96.55% for Stefanie Graf (1988) (the German conceded two sets).

Note 2: Inevitably, Maureen was drained after achieving her Calendar Grand Slam - and so, on 20 September 1953, Shirley Fry beat her 6-2, 7-5 in the semis of the Pacific Southwest tournament. However, a week later, Mo restored order, beating Fry 6-0, 9-7 in the Pacific Coast final.

1954

Monday, 31 May 1954

Earlier in the year, Maureen and Norman had been enduring a turbulent phase in their relationship, "both wanting their own way", as per "Forehand Drive". Perhaps this emotional stress was why, in mid-March 1954, in the semi-finals of the La Jolla Beach tournament in California, ambidextrous Beverly Fleitz from Rhode Island, the world's No 3 by the end of 1954, blitzed Mo 6-0, 6-4.

But after that blip, Mo appeared to be getting better and better: with Harry Hopman there to guide her, she has just won three titles at the French Open: the singles, women's doubles (with Nell Hopman) and mixed doubles (with 19 year-old Australian Lew Hoad, a blond power-force who could hit a 110 mph serve).

Today, from Paris, she flies in to Ringway airport in Manchester, carrying eight Wilson rackets. 19 year-old Ken Rosewall and Rex Hartwig are on the same flight. At the same time, a strange rumour had started circulating in Paris during the French Open, namely that Maureen may be set to walk away from elite championship tennis in the near future ..

Tuesday, 1 June 1954

In the Manchester tournament, Mo is off to a flying start, crushing 40 year-old Bea Walter, 6-0, 6-0. The match lasts barely 20 minutes; the winner only concedes 16 points. In the second round, Mo defeats Pat Hird of Derby 6-1, 6-3.

Thursday, 3 June 1954

Another win for Miss Connolly: 6-3, 6-1 over Ann Shilcock of Sussex, in a duel of long rallies.

The media reports today that, at the Birmingham tournament the following Monday, Maureen will play exhibition matches with Doris Hart, Shirley Fry and Louise Brough, whilst Vic Seixas and 1953 US Open Champion Tony Trabert will play in the men's event.

The demand for tickets in Birmingham is so great that two extra stands were being constructed. The Tournament Chairman, Mr E.J Jackson, told the press that the box office interest was "undoubtedly" due to the appearance of Maureen Connolly, whom he described as "the biggest draw".

Friday, 4 June 1954

Mo plays an interesting contest against the non-playing Wightman Cup Captain, 36 year-old Margaret Osborne Dupont, who had won Wimbledon in 1947. Mrs Dupont – making a comeback after giving birth to a son - led 3-2 in the second set, but the 19 year-old marches on, 6-1, 6-4.

Saturday, 5 June 1954

It's a glittering day for Maureen in Manchester: she takes the women's title (6-3, 6-2 over Louise Brough), and then she and Ken Rosewall win their mixed final, 6-4, 7-5 (elsewhere reported as 6-1, 7-5), over Betty Pratt and Rex Hartwig. (Mo did not play the women's doubles.)

All the signs show Mo is a more complete player now: volleys, smashes, her doubles game – everything seemed to have gone up a notch. In the "Sunday Express", Frank Shaw lauded her "superb

pace" versus Brough (the Wimbledon Champion of 1948, 1949 and 1950), including "a remarkable backhand passing shot from nine paces outside the court".

Connolly's improvements were to be expected, given her mantra: "One thing about tennis – you can never stop learning." As a result, Hopman had been concentrating on her volleys and smashes, whilst 43 year-old Lester Stoefen, the 6 ft 6 in (or 6ft 4 in) pro at La Jolla Beach and Tennis Club, worked on her service. (Stoefen had an accurate and powerful serve, which was clocked at 131.4 mph, and had won the men's doubles at Wimbledon in 1934.)

The 1954 Wightman Cup tie is imminent. Tony Mottram says in the "Manchester Evening News": "Britain's Wightman Cup team will undergo its annual massacre .. on No 1 Court of the All England Club at Wimbledon."

The main reason for his pessimism was that he considered Maureen's "form this year is even more devastating than last." In the "Daily Mail", Roy McKelvie echoed this sentiment: "There will be no-one capable of giving Miss Connolly a match at Wimbledon."

"The Torbay Express and South Devon Echo" revealed that, earlier in the week, Mo arrived early one evening at the Northern LTC, and immediately went to a back court to practise. Within a few minutes, the number of fans watching her was more than those watching the actual tournament matches.

Monday, 7 June 1954

At the Priory Club in Edgbaston, the Centre Court turf is sodden due to overnight rain, despite having a canvas covering.

Doris Hart and Mo take to a treacherous surface, wearing woollen socks over their tennis shoes to prevent slipping. They play two sets: Hart wins the first 6-0, then Mo retaliates by taking the second set, 6-1.

Later in the day, with the sun having dried the turf, Mo practised for half an hour, hitting with several sparring partners. And the press pack was keen to report that the teenager's skirt was embroidered with rabbits, cats and dogs.

Thursday, 10 June 1954

The USA and GB Wightman Cup teams are each permitted one hour to practise on Wimbledon's Court No 1. Maureen will play two singles matches only (no doubles).

Friday, 11 June 1954

The fans, including many schoolgirls, waited patiently in the rain, and finally, at 6.30pm, Mo played her Wightman Cup match versus GB's left-hander Helen Fletcher, who had been out of action for a month, owing to a viral condition (mumps).

The evening is cold and overcast; Court No 1 at SW19 is slippery. And it's a bad start for the American, who is broken in the first game ...

But, unsurprisingly, Mo hangs tough – and her serve improves greatly as she records a 6-1, 6-3 win for the USA.

Saturday, 12 June 1954

Ann Shilcock loses again to Maureen – this time it's 6-2, 6-2, though some papers reported it as 6-2, 6-1.

The all-important fact is that it was an "easy win", and an LTA official said of Maureen: "She's playing better than ever."

And Tony Mottram was right – GB loses all six matches of the 1954 Wightman Cup. (The seventh match is not played, due to rain.)

Wednesday, 16 June 1954

In the "Manchester Evening News", Tony Mottram declares: "'Little Mo' Connolly now in a class of her own .. is probably the biggest favourite for a Wimbledon singles title there has ever been. I have watched her play recently and without a doubt her service, volley, and net game, are far stronger than a year ago. I cannot see anyone getting within a set of defeating her."

Saturday, 19 June 1954

There are news reports that Maureen, wearing her diamond engagement ring, has posed for photographers at a Mayfair hotel, sporting one of her Wimbledon outfits, designed by Teddy Tinling. She exuded "the nonchalance of a fashion model", according to journalist Jean Stead.

It also seems that Mo was happy to field many questions, thereby allowing the public to know much more about her:

1. she said her marriage to Norman would take place in February 1955.

2. She added that the gold ring with an amethyst, which she had been wearing during Wimbledon '53, was actually Norman's: "He usually wears it now."

3. She revealed that she was taking care to ensure her weight did not go above 9 stones (126 pounds / 57.2 kgs), adding: "I can't touch pastries for that reason." She continued: "I rarely drink – just a glass of beer or a little wine occasionally. When I am in England I only have one cup of coffee a day, with breakfast, and the rest of the time I drink tea."

4. Mo denied that she would give up top-flight tennis after she married.

5. Apparently, Norman was helping her to perfect her horse-riding, whilst she was doing the same for his tennis. (Norman had been on his high school tennis team in New Mexico, but Mo "ran him ragged with dropshots and lobs" when they first took to the court together!)

6. Tennis had "meant a lot of sacrifices, but I think anyone can manage to give up something for a sport they love."

Sunday, 20 June 1954

Writing in the "Sunday Express", Frank Shaw gives his prediction: "When the Doherty gates swing closed in a fortnight's time, Miss Connolly will almost certainly have joined the select few women to win the title three times in succession."

Mo is at Hurlingham today, wearing an outfit showcasing embroidered poodles. (In "Forehand Drive", Maureen said her favourite tennis dress was Tinling's design that had "a string of woolly poodles .. Each poodle had a rhinestone eye. I still wear it on special occasions.")

Today is sunny and relatively relaxed for Maureen, and she even tries some golf putting. On court, she and Nell Hopman won an exhibition match against Pat Hird and Angela Mortimer. Thereafter, Lew Hoad and Mo played for some time against Pat Ward and John Barrett (John would marry Angela in 1967).

4,000 fans are also present – together with many journalists. Asked about Wimbledon, Maureen said with dry humour: "Someone wins and the others lose. Nerves? I never have them." In response, Ken Rosewall quipped: "Nerves? Oh no. But all this autograph signing is quite alarming."

The press wanted more from Mo, specifically about her impending married life, especially as they'd heard that Norman was due to leave the Navy in November '54, paving the way for a February 1955 wedding. "I can hardly even boil water," said the 19 year-old. "No, that's not true. I can get a meal together from the book, but I wouldn't call myself a good cook. I hate housework, but I shall have to do it, I guess."

Monday, 21 June 1954

Wimbledon '54 starts, but as Mo is not playing today, she finds time for a walk on Park Lane. If she stopped to see the newspapers, she would have been delighted.

In the "Daily Mirror", C.M Jones is strident: "Only flood, fire, tempest, or plain, honest injury can stop her [Mo] winning [Wimbledon] for the third year running."

In the "Scotsman", Lance Tingay concurs: "Short of an accident, it is difficult to see anything holding back the relentless tide of her success."

But was Miss Connolly entirely match fit? The previous week, at Queen's Club, she had decided to only play the mixed doubles. That said, she and Lew Hoad duly captured the title.

Off court, Mo had so far seen seven theatre shows in London during this trip, with three more to come. However, tennis was her priority: throughout the Wimbledon '54 fortnight, she would invariably practise at Queen's Club every morning and evening ...

Tuesday, 22 June 1954

Maureen Connolly (seeded No 1; Hart is the No 2 seed) wins the first match of the day on Wimbledon's Centre Court against 26 year-old South African, Joan Scott, 6-0, 6-3.

The defending Champion, wearing a short white dress and with a pink ribbon in her hair, was deemed to be hitting with more pace than the previous year.

The duel lasted 31 minutes, and Mo was moving like a ballerina. There was also praise for her pink cardigan, which was embroidered with a white dog.

In fact, it really seems that Mo, off court, was very different to her on court persona. Joan Scott told C.M Jones of the "Daily Mirror": "All the way to the umpire's chair we talked about her handbag, but from the moment we tossed up she changed completely and was all concentration."

Interestingly, Maureen had elected not to compete in the women's doubles at Wimbledon '54. Could it be that she was haunted by the double bagel she suffered in the women's doubles final of Wimbledon '53?

Thursday, 24 June 1954

Out on Court No 2, Maureen survives a tricky test in the form of Buenos Aires-based Edda Buding, a 17 year-old hard-hitting baseliner, whose family had emigrated from Romania to Argentina in 1948.

The score was 6-2, 6-3, and 19 year-old Mo said afterwards: "I was surprised by her play – it was much better than I expected. She has an extremely good service, and she used her head, which is what most of the younger players don't do."

Saturday, 26 June 1954

Despite a journalist erroneously accusing Mo of treating "tennis as such a grim affair", this was in fact a happy day, as further news outlets reported the fact that Mo planned to marry Norman in February 1955. Said Maureen, "It's been a wonderful life. I am grateful to tennis for letting me see five continents."

Monday, 28 June 1954

Court No 2 was proving a happy hunting ground for Mo, as she sailed past the hapless Angela Buxton, 6-0, 6-0 in the 4th round, conceding only 23 points.

But, true to form, the Champion was not best pleased when she double-faulted in the fourth game of the match; it was reported that "she showed visible signs of self disgust, even at this one small lapse."

Nonetheless, in this last 16 battle, the victor mixed power with finesse.

Earlier, over the weekend, Maureen had practised relentlessly with Harry Hopman, "working like a tiger", ready to face Buxton, a 19 year-old from Liverpool (who would go on to be Wimbledon runner-up in 1956).

And, once the encounter – played in front of packed stands - was over, a relieved Maureen told C.M Jones of the "Daily Mirror": "That is the best tennis I've played this year."

Tuesday, 29 June 1954

Quarter-finals day for Mo, who is clad in a short, flared dress – with a blue ribbon in her hair.

The Duchess of Kent is present, together with her daughter, Princess Alexandra, who wears a "geranium pink coat" and a matching hat.

The standing room sections around Centre Court are full to their 4,000 capacity. Hopeful fans congregate outside, ready to take the place of anyone who leaves ..

The reigning Wimbledon Champion barely makes a mistake, and eliminates Margaret Dupont 6-1, 6-1 in 32 minutes. It could have been even more one-sided if Margaret hadn't saved match points at 0-5 down in the second set. When Mo lost that sixth game, the crowd were quick to cheer the challenger – and Maureen appeared to smile. However, as if hurt inwardly by the fans' reaction, the 19 year-old then won her serve to love, to complete the rout.

Yes, Maureen was so dominant that "she got scarcely a ripple of applause," according to Frank Rostron of the "Daily Express". But Tom Phillips of the "Daily Herald" wrote of the teenager that "both on and off the court, she is such a nice kid. Her manners are perfect." His headline read: MERCILESS MO HAS LAST LAUGH ON THE FANS.

Peter Wilson, in the "Daily Mirror", felt that there was no chance of Mo losing her Wimbledon crown in '54, saying it was only a question of "how many games, almost how many points, she will drop." He added: "She is no longer Little Mo – she is almost Old Mo .. if it were not for Maureen Connolly's perfection, I do not believe that you could sell any tickets for women's tennis."

However, Maureen never felt invincible. She would say in due course: "I had no feeling of supreme confidence, not even when I was at the pinnacle of my game."

Thursday, 1 July 1954

Semi-finals day. Many fans had queued overnight in order to get a place in the standing room areas.

Mo's Centre Court opponent is a 29 year-old American who resides mainly in Jamaica, namely Betty Pratt, a graduate from Florida's Rollins College, a player who utilised "chops and slices".

The first set passes in a blink of an eye: 6-1, in 12 minutes, to Connolly, albeit that she was broken in the first game.

Just before the second set gets underway, the Duke of Edinburgh – after his lunch – takes his seat in the Royal Box, alongside LTA President Lord Templewood. The Duke is wearing sunglasses; both players curtsy to him. He is joined later in the Royal Box by the Duchess of Kent.

Mo looks a little embarrassed when she falls on court, just after the Duke arrives, when endeavouring to reach a drop shot. However, despite her serve again being broken, the Champion secures a 6-1, 6-1 victory on her third match point, in an encounter that lasted, at most, 32 minutes in total.

The longest rally had a duration of 17 seconds. The overall feeling was that Mo's serves, as well as her volleys, had "improved beyond recognition". In the "Daily Herald", Tom Phillips concluded that Mo was a "dead cert" to beat the 31 year-old tall, blonde Louise Brough in the Wimbledon final, "unless she breaks a leg". Louise, asked what her tactics would be against Connolly, would only offer: "I am certainly not going to give up."

The final word went to Betty, who explained to Jean Stead of the "Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer": "I played Maureen only once before – in Philadelphia in 1951. Then she beat me 7-5 in the third set, but my! How she's improved since then. I was doing all I could, but I hadn't a chance. She's really terrific now."

Friday, 2 July 1954

On Centre Court, in the mixed doubles semi-final, Margaret Dupont exacts some kind of revenge on Maureen; the 36 year-old and partner Ken Rosewall, 19, beat Mo and Lew Hoad 6-8, 6-4, 6-4.

One wonders whether this loss was what put Maureen on edge that evening; at the Grosvenor House hotel, she and Nell ate dinner at 9.30pm. The teenager was nervous, and so: "I drank a tall glass of beer, which has the effect of calming me down."

The two women played gin rummy in their suite till midnight.

Saturday, 3 July 1954

Mo, finding it hard to sleep, wrote letters until 12.30 am ..

.. but when sleep finally came, it triggered a nightmare. The world's No 1 player dreamt that she was trapped in the Centre Court players' waiting room, under the Royal Box, screaming to be let out, to be allowed to compete in the final. In her nightmare, members of the Royal family are asking themselves: "Where is she?" And then tournament referee Colonel John Legge and Club Secretary Duncan Macaulay decide to default her - and give the title to Louise Brough.

It was only at 2 am that Maureen finally managed some stress-free sleep ..

9.30am: She is woken by a waiter's knock on the door, bringing her the large breakfast she had ordered of two eggs, a bowl of fruit, orange juice, toast, coffee cake and coffee.

She then went to Nell's room and they talked for a few minutes.

Next, she went to Queen's Club to practise with Harry Hopman and Ken Rosewall. Worryingly, Mo can't get keyed up for the final. At the end of the practice, a concerned Harry Hopman urges her to go for her shots when the battle commences.

At some point in the morning, Mo reads a wire from Norman, wishing her luck ..

A blustery wind sweeps across Centre Court as Connolly and Brough enter the arena, each carrying a bouquet of pink and red roses. The 19 year-old's dress includes some satin, because, as she would say later to Martin Lee of "The Star Green 'Un": "When I won my two previous Wimbledons, I was wearing dresses with satin trimmings, so I just had to have the same again."

The first set was relatively straightforward. Brough, serving, won the first game, but soon fell behind 1-5, although she served successfully to love, to make it 2-5. In the eighth game, Maureen's beautiful, free-flowing, graceful service action was very much evident, and she secured the set 6-2 with a backhand winner.

But set two is a completely different story. Brough storms ahead 5-2, and yet Maureen immediately found a way to put extra mustard on her shots, win all the long rallies and rattle off the next five games (in 11 minutes). How did she do it?

The teenager told the media in a press conference all about her 6-2, 7-5 triumph (which took 51 minutes in total):

"It feels good. It was a terrific fight and I am very lucky to have pulled it off. Things started to go wrong and there was nothing to do but hit. I got mad with myself and keyed myself up. I was lucky it came off. Fortunately for me, the shots went in. I thought the second [set] was a goner, so I just hit out. Caution doesn't do any good when you are in a spot like that – you've got to hit your way out of trouble. I was very disappointed with my service. It was very poor, the worst it's ever been." (It's worth mentioning here that the teenager's game was still a work-in-progress as at 3 July 1954; without a doubt, year-on-year, she would have perfected her serve, for instance, and made it a true weapon.)

Maureen's third Wimbledon singles title sparked off so many facts, emotions, questions and issues:

a) Maureen won 67 points, compared with Brough's 54 points.

b) Asked if she could equal Helen Wills' record of winning Wimbledon eight times, Mo said: "I have no hope .. I don't think anyone will ever do that." (In 1990, 33 year-old Martina Navratilova would win her 9th and final Wimbledon singles title, having won her first in 1978, aged 21.)

c) Maureen also said that the best male player in the world "would murder me. The men have so much more speed and power."

d) About the Championships, Mo declared: "Wimbledon grass is the best there is, and Wimbledon is the finest tournament in the world."

e) Asked about the future, Mo said: "I'll always be coming back to Wimbledon. I will be back for many more years to come." (*Note*: I believe Maureen was telling the truth, and that, when she said these words, she fully intended to compete at SW19 in 1955 and in the subsequent years.)

It had been a momentous day, and no-one knew, at that time, that, tragically, Maureen Connolly would never compete at Wimbledon ever again. Fittingly, her 1954 Championship point epitomised her extravagant skills and courageous spirit: she served to the ad court, gets a short return ball, and hits a forehand approach shot *en route* to the net, and when Louise Brough tried to pass her with a backhand down-the-line, Maureen was there to athletically hit (with both feet off the ground) an impressive forehand stop volley winner. No wonder she was all smiles when she accepted the iconic Venus Rosewater Dish from the Duchess of Kent.

But – and there is always a *but* – writer Jean Stead observed: "The applause she [Mo] received was less than she deserved." Robert Stevens, of "The People", agreed: "Miss Connolly received the most lukewarm reception I have ever heard accorded a Wimbledon winner."

Maureen was paying the price, unfairly, for being *just too good*. The "Liverpool Daily Post" commented: "Miss Maureen Connolly should have little difficulty in reigning supreme for as long as she likes to remain in top class competition." And Jack Peart wrote in the "Sunday Mirror": "I am tempted to ask if Miss Connolly has killed all the real interest in women's tennis for the next few years. There just isn't anyone to touch her, and it seems that she could go on winning the title as long as she pleased."

At the Wimbledon ball that night, held at the ballroom at Grosvenor House, men's Champion Jaroslav Drobny was "a wonderful dancing partner" according to Mo, although he was less impressed with his own moves, stating in his autobiography "Champion In Exile": "somehow I steered Miss Connolly round the room." They danced a waltz. Later, after Mo had enjoyed about 100 dances "and five glasses of champagne", she slept in bed for a restorative 12 hours.

Sunday, 4 July 1954

It's American Independence Day. Maureen flies to Berlin to play an exhibition match for the Armed Forces, where she overcomes the Italian 21 year-old Silvana Lazzarino 7-5, 6-3.

Monday, 5 July 1954

Mo returns to London.

Tuesday, 6 July 1954

It's time for the Irish Championships, so Miss Connolly flies to Dublin. In a week where the stress levels were less, Mo nonetheless stays disciplined. At the end of the tournament, she takes another singles title, defeating 28 year-old Frenchwoman Ginette Bucaille, 6-2, 6-1, in the final. Ginette would end the year ranked No 10 in the world, as per Lance Tingay's rankings.

Nell and Mo win the women's doubles. Mervyn Rose - the Australian Open '54 Champion - and Mo do likewise in the mixed. (Incidentally, 10 years later, Mervyn coached Billie Jean King for three months, working primarily on her serve.)

Saturday, 17 July 1954

Speculation is growing that Maureen may turn professional, meaning she could play for money, but would no longer be an amateur, and thus would be ineligible to play tournaments such as the Grand Slams. (And, even if she later revoked her pro status, and became a reinstated amateur, she would still be prohibited from playing Wimbledon and all other events which fell under the auspices of the International Lawn Tennis Federation. This is the fate that befell Britain's Dorothy Round, the Wimbledon winner of 1934 and 1937. She turned pro in the early 1940s, and was later reinstated as an amateur (in 1945), but could never return to play at the Grand Slams.

Ironically, two people involved in Maureen's career progression had benefitted from a time when the rules were less stringent, in an earlier era. Miss Tennant was considered a professional as she had been paid to coach tennis circa 1915-1918, but the USLTA then allowed her to subsequently become an amateur, and so she was able to compete at the US National Championships (aka US Open). And the brilliant French player Paul Féret, who in the early 1950s would help Mo to perfect her dropshot, had turned pro in 1926 to go on an American pro tour, as a diversion to overcome the death of his 19 year-old wife. In February 1929, he was reinstated as an amateur, after he paid over to the French Tennis Federation the entire amount he had earned as a pro. This was a truly exceptional case: Féret was treated as a victim of emotional distress. Incredibly, and impressively, even many years later in 1953, at the age of 51, he played in the singles at the French Open!)

In Melbourne, Frank Sedgman, himself a professional player, remarked on 17 July 1954: "I know 'Little Mo' will be interested [in going professional]. She is getting married next year and most young couples can do with a little money."

It must have been a very confusing time for Mo, still a teenager. In the aftermath of her Wimbledon victory, the press was dispiriting, basically saying that there was little point in her continuing as an amateur, as there was no real competition, and yet the pro tour meant very much the same: which professionals could actually challenge her? There was no doubt that player-turned-promoter Jack Kramer wanted Mo to join his group of professionals – he envisaged that she would compete singles-wise against Pauline Betz, the Wimbledon winner of 1946 who turned professional in 1947 (and who later went on to wear leopard print coloured shorts for a match at Madison Square Garden).

In "Forehand Drive", written in 1957, Maureen says that by the morning of 3 July 1954 (the day of the Wimbledon final), she had already decided to turn pro in October 1954 and join Kramer's troupe, *so long as she first passed a two-tier test, i.e: winning Wimbledon that day and then, in September 1954, Forest Hills as well*. It could be that, by 1957, Mo's memories of the summer of '54 were a little scrambled, because her post-match words at the All England Club on 3 July 1954 strongly point, on the balance of probabilities, to her conditional decision to turn pro being made on a date *after* 3 July 1954, but *before* the fateful 20 July.

Tellingly, in another part of "Forehand Drive", Maureen simply wrote: "I had decided definitely to turn professional before the accident ..", which would be commensurate with her conditional decision being made between 4 – 19 July (inclusive).

The fact is that Mo *does* seem, in "Forehand Drive", to have struggled a little with some time-lines. For instance, she says in her memoir that the "Daily Mail" approached her, *whilst she was on honeymoon*, with an offer to write for the 'paper during Wimbledon '55, which means that the approach would have been made *after* 11 June 1955. But, as we will see in due course in this book, the arrangements instead appear to have been firmed up a month earlier, by mid-May 1955.

We should bear in mind that Maureen did not come from a rich family – and, after Wimbledon '54, she may have felt some mounting pressure *over the following days* to turn pro and start earning some money from her tennis, rather than continuing as an amateur, even though she adored competing at Wimbledon, Forest Hills and Roland Garros.

Sunday, 18 July 1954

Poignantly, though nobody knew it at the time, Maureen plays her last ever tournament tennis match, destroying Doris Hart 6-3, 6-1 in the final of the US clay court Championships in Chicago.

Monday, 19 July 1954

Maureen returned to San Diego, to her mother, and to Aunt Gertrude and Colonel Merryboy. (At this point in time, Mo's relationship with Norman is under pressure – they had been communicating by letters, and one of them did not reach him on time, meaning the previous week Norman had waited alone at New York airport, whereas Maureen and Nell had actually flown from London straight to Chicago.)

Tuesday, 20 July 1954

It was the awful day which irrevocably changed Maureen Connolly's life.

It was supposed to have been a day of leisurely horse-riding in San Diego, but a cement-mixer truck approached Mo, her friend Mimi Stieler and Linda Thornton, a house guest of Mimi's. All three women were on horseback. The truck came towards them "without slackening speed. We all waved and shouted to the driver in an effort to get him to slow down or stop, but he did neither. He set his course in the centre of the road." Mimi's horse – on the opposite side of the road from Mo – acted up. "The driver swerved the truck towards me .. Colonel Merryboy wheeled .. I remember the sharp sensation of stinging pain .. I rolled up my trouser leg and saw my leg slashed to the bone." Colonel Merryboy did not even have a scratch.

Maureen was in surgery for four hours, and later recollected: "All my right leg and calf muscles had been severed, the fibula bone broken, and, of course, a lot of skin on my leg had been ripped away."

On Friday, 23 July 1954, despite still being under heavy sedation, she announced from her sick-bed that she intended to play at Wimbledon and Forest Hills in 1955, meaning she would now not become a professional until 1956 at the earliest.

Before her discharge, which was on or about 29 July, her father came to the hospital; they were reunited and it was "a new and wonderful relationship".

The on-off engagement was back on after Norman suffered a serious shoulder injury in a riding competition in Budapest; his horse miscalculated a jump, but Norman, in intense pain, remounted the horse and took him over the last three jumps without a fault.

August 1954 was an exceptionally difficult month for Maureen - "after long deliberation and with considerable hesitancy" she filed a court case on 20 August against the company who owned the truck, Pre-Mix Concrete Company, seeking monetary damages. There was no prospect of her being fit to play Forest Hills (which was to start on 28 August).

On 23 September, Mo bravely went back on court for the first time since the accident, to hit for 30 minutes with South African male player, Abe Segal, at La Jolla. Reports mentioned that she had "a scar above her right ankle and limped perceptibly", but she remained upbeat: "It will take time to recover. I won't be in shape for competitive play until February [1955] and won't tackle a tournament until March [1955]. I've got my timing, but I will have to learn to stop favouring [protecting] my [right] leg."

Yes, Maureen's new plan as of late September 1954 (reiterated in "Forehand Drive") was that she would stay an amateur and try to win Wimbledon and Forest Hills in 1955, *and then turn pro in 1956*. She picked up marbles with her toes, and did ballet: "I would have done anything and everything to reach the top again." She worked tirelessly on muscle strengthening exercises, but – ominously - when she put pressure on her right leg, the scar would turn blue and she had terrible leg cramps.

What would happen in 1955?

POST-MATCH

1955

In January, Maureen began to feel she would never play top-flight tennis again.

The following month, when playing points against Les Stoefen at the La Jolla Beach and Tennis Club, she tried to push off to reach a drop shot – "but a terrible shooting pain stopped me in my tracks".

She knew she could never be a top player again. (Bizarrely, some critics have alleged that Maureen could have returned to tournaments, but simply chose not to do so. This allegation surely has to be wrong, especially as 1950s world No 1 men's player Pancho Gonzales said: "I still hit with Maureen after the accident. She didn't move as well.") Norman told her that he would not allow her to torture herself. They would get married.

Just before the end of February, Mo publicly announced her retirement, citing the main reason as being: "I just do not enjoy tennis anymore. I have lost that old spark." But, later, in "Forehand Drive", she confessed that this had of course been a lie, triggered by the fact she did not want sympathy, and that: "Telling the simple truth would have been far better." The truth was stark: "I could no longer play championship tennis."

To be fair to Maureen, she did also say, during that retirement announcement, that she was not satisfied with the recovery status of her right leg.

The news took Teddy Tinling by surprise, and he said: "I cannot understand it. She ordered a dozen new outfits for Wimbledon only the other day."

A Wimbledon official commented: "She was a perfect competitor. We shall miss her dreadfully." The All England Club's secretary, Duncan Macaulay, remarked: "I have not received the news myself. I last heard from her at Christmas when she thought that her leg injury was getting on quite well. Everybody will be sorry to lose such a wonderful player."

But on 24 February 1955, a day or two after the retirement news, the "Daily Express" ran an article by an enterprising journalist Henry Lowrie, who had 'phoned Maureen. He was told by the 20 year-old:

"It is true that I am through with competitive tennis, but only for the time being. I am coming back, I hope, in two or possibly three years, and if my husband's job allows, I'll be back in Europe and playing again at Wimbledon.

I am really truly sorry to miss Wimbledon. It is the greatest tournament in the world and it gives you a chance you get nowhere else in the world. Tell the people I am looking forward to returning."

So, if she was quoted correctly, it appears that Maureen's mindset, at the end of February 1955, was that her injury had prevented her from turning pro in October 1954 and earning resultant income as a professional for, say, a couple of years. Equally, it seems that, as at late February 1955, she saw no chance of being fit enough to turn pro at the start of the 1956 season, thereby negating the opportunity to earn pro money in '56 and '57. In short, as things stood, she was, in any event, currently physically incapable of playing amateur tennis or pro tennis.

But we do know that Mo had relentless optimism. It could be that, at the end of February 1955, she held out some residual hope that, possibly, with advances in medicine being made year-on-year, her leg might become strengthened sufficiently to enable her to play competitively, starting from February 1958, or later. Now, as the opportunity to be a pro for two years, from October '54 – October '56 had passed, and such a possibility for '56 and '57 looked non-existent, it seemed that she was telling the journalist Lowrie that she had adjusted her sights to competing again, still as an amateur, beginning, perhaps, with the 1958 season. Mo, in February 1955, might have thought this was possible, especially as the accident meant that she in fact had never actually turned professional – her amateur status was, on paper at least, intact. That said, would the International Lawn Tennis Federation have taken the view that a player had, by conduct, revoked her amateur status if she received the equivalent of pro player earnings via a court litigation?

It was equally fascinating that, on 25 February 1955, Doris Hart revealed that she and Mo had made a plan – perhaps in September 1954? - to play the women's doubles together at Wimbledon '55. Indeed, Doris said: "I wouldn't be surprised if she plays yet [at Wimbledon '55]. I am waiting to hear from her."

But sadly, in early May, Doris received a confirmatory letter from Mo, which said Mo would be at Wimbledon '55, but only as a journalist.

In the meantime, Teddy Tinling designed and made Maureen's wedding dress, and he roped in the Queen's milliner, Aage Thaarup, to make the head-dress. The entire creation was then flown from London to Los Angeles.

On 11 June 1955, Mo married 24 year-old Norman Brinker at St Patrick's Church in San Diego. The bride felt some nerves, and joked with the media: "This is worse than a Wimbledon final."

Sure enough, Mo was soon back at Wimbledon, where the Championships began on 20 June. On that day, the "Evening News" headline read "Little Mo Is Still Idol Of Wimbledon", with Bill McGowran writing: "Little Mo .. was mobbed by her loyal fans as, in a pink and white cotton two-piece, she made her way to the Press seats on her husband's arm."

As mentioned earlier, she had a column in the "Daily Mail", but: "I discovered at once I was too critical a tennis writer .. I had a sudden loss of popularity among some of the top women players .. As a player, I had been anxious for Hop to dissect my game, analyse the mistakes .. just as I gained by reading stories by top tennis writers who had pointed out flaws in my play .. any criticism I made of a player was in the spirit of lending a hand to her game."

Can we conclude that Mo was misunderstood? Every elite tennis player should be willing to accept constructive criticism from a legend of the game: correct?

On another note, decades later, in November 2024, the "Daily Mail" published its own list of what it considered to be the top 25 all-time greats of tennis. It was a combined list of men and women (14 men and 11 women). Helen Wills and Suzanne Lenglen were the 4th and 9th ranked women, respectively. Remarkably, Maureen was not on the list of 25. How can that be?

At least we know, from "Forehand Drive", that Maureen enjoyed every minute of writing for the "Daily Mail" in 1955. She recalled "sitting in the members' box, scribbling notes, trying not to miss a thing,"

and her daily "race around to all the courts, trying to get everything in my stories." ("But," she added in an amusing aside, "the really good tennis writers can turn out wonderful stories from the bar.")

Away from the courts, Mo and Norman were presumably impressed by their accommodation in London, which was the honeymoon suite on the sixth floor of the Dorchester Hotel, the impressive five star establishment overlooking Hyde Park. It is a safe assumption that the "Daily Mail" footed the bill.

After Wimbledon, there was a harsh reality for Maureen to face. In October '55, in a San Diego courtroom, medical experts Dr Paul Shea and Dr Thomas O'Connell told the jury (of seven men and five women) that she "might be forced to have part of her leg amputated if further circulatory trouble developed in the right foot. She had suffered a 40 per cent loss of circulation in her right foot."

Richard Kilian of the "Daily Express" spoke to Mo about the situation. From her home in Mission Valley, she said stoically : "I am a very healthy girl .. Of course, if it happens .. well .. let's not even think about it. Tell my friends in England not to worry about me. I am very, very happy." However, by now, it must have become apparent to her that she definitely would not return to elite tennis as an amateur, or pro, in 1957, or 1958, or ever. And in fact, that is exactly what transpired – as mentioned earlier, the Chicago final on 18 July 1954 proved to be her last tournament match.

Just before the end of October 1955, Mo was awarded damages of $95,000 via the jury's decision (a 9-3 decision reached after six hours' deliberation), but she received no money at this time as the judgment was appealed by Pre-Mix, and in the meantime her popularity nose-dived in San Diego, with some people feeling she should not have been riding a horse (even though she was the victim of a defective, noisy truck which had been negligently driven).

Harry Hopman's deposition, read in court during the trial, stated that Mo could have earned $150,000 by being a pro for two years. Accordingly, $95,000 (if she was going to receive it) equated to about 15 months' loss of earnings, theoretically vis-a-vis October 1954 – December 1955 (inclusive), which means the amount seems a little on the low side, if one takes the view that Mo planned a pro career of two years' duration.

In passing, it should be mentioned that other witnesses, including Jack Kramer, testified about Mo's possible earnings. Under cross-examination, Kramer said he himself earned $140,000 in the first 15 months after he became a pro in 1947. Tom Harmon, NFL player turned sports commentator, said Mo could have made $75,000 per year. And Nelson Fisher testified that he had been approached in 1952 by promoter Ross O'Leno who offered to pay the player $100,000 in respect of a pro tour.

Mo was, typically, staying positive, working in San Diego as a tennis coach, but it must have been a torrid time. Her world had been turned upside down or, as she put it succinctly in "Forehand Drive": "I had given up my kingdom for a horse."

1956

The Court case drags on, and remained ongoing, even at the end of '56.

But in the interim, in February '56, Mo joined the advisory staff of Wilson Sporting Goods Company. She would be making tours with Wilson to give tennis instruction at schools and playgrounds, and "in general to promote tennis among the youth of America."

On their wedding anniversary, 11 June, Norman and Mo arrived at London Airport, from New York. Mo commented: "Probably it will just be a quiet evening out somewhere. I am very, very happy."

At Wimbledon, the 21 year-old again worked for the "Daily Mail" and also did TV commentary. Leslie Ayre, writing in the "Evening News", loved her broadcast work, saying her "vast first-hand knowledge of the tactics and psychology of the game has been conveyed without any sense of talking down to us. Instead, she has given us the impression of a friend meeting us on level terms."

There was joyous news, reported in the "Daily Mirror" on 17 November: Maureen was pregnant.

1957

In May, at San Diego's Sharp Memorial Hospital, Cindy Brinker is born, weighing 6 pounds, 9 ounces.

"Forehand Drive" is published on 24 June 1957, the first day of Wimbledon (Mo is there to write for the "Daily Mail"), and the nuggets disclosed in the memoir include the following:

(a) "The hard, forcing game, 'going for broke', shooting for the lines is usually the winning one."
(b) "I tried to know everything about my opponent before the match started."
(c) As regards Wimbledon's Centre Court: "Perhaps I shall be there always – in spirit. It's hard, I suppose, to hobble a war-horse."
(d) Maureen had met Pope Pius XII in 1953, just a few days before his serious illness. He asked about her tennis and said he was glad that she could be at the Vatican.
(e) Maureen met actress Grace Kelly on the sets of Alfred Hitchcock's 1954 thriller "Dial M for Murder". Grace told Mo that she (Grace) thought she had been a disappointment to her family as she hadn't turned out to be a great athlete.
(f) "It may have been that I played a 'gambler's game', going for the lines .."
(g) As regards how fans should conduct themselves: "applauding errors is poor form".

In the States, 24 June 1957 was also the day when the Appeal Court issued its judgment in the Pre-Mix case, and – in short – it's a bad verdict for Mo. The Appeal Court refuses to uphold the $95,000 award, adjudging that the jury had been wrongly instructed that Albert Stevens, the truck driver, had a "last clear chance" to avoid the accident if he had used ordinary care.

A perusal of the Appeal Court judgment reveals the following:

- The accident occurred at 4.45pm on 20 July 1954 on Friars Road in San Diego.
- Maureen was in the lead on the dirt shoulder of the north side of the road. Miss Linda Thornton was about one length behind her.
- Miss Steiler was on the shoulder on the south side of the road.
- The shoulders were each four feet in width (meaning the riders were keeping off the actual road).
- Stevens turned off Colusa Street, on to Friars Road.
- "The truck had a defective exhaust system and made considerable noise."

- Stevens conceded: "It would have been easy enough to stop in 20 feet, a considerable distance from the horses." He said he saw all three women waving their arms, but he could not hear what they were saying. He 'speculated' they wanted him to stop, but in fact he kept moving towards them. This was an odd decision because, as he himself testified, when he turned the corner from Colusa Street, the horses "started dancing, prancing around, and moving in and off the road, off the shoulder, back and forth .."

- Maureen testified that, when the truck turned the corner, it swerved towards the middle of the road. "We all looked at it, we all shouted and raised our hands and did everything in our power to slow him down and make him stop because the horses were practically frantic." As the truck passed, Maureen and Colonel Merryboy were still on the dirt shoulder off the road, but Colonel Merryboy whirled round, and the left rear mudguard of the truck caught Mo's right leg.

- Kathryn Walker, a registered nurse who witnessed the accident, said that the truck, having turned the corner, picked up speed (which contrasted with Stevens saying that he had continued down the middle of the road at a reduced speed). Ms Walker also said that Maureen bled profusely; there was a "real jagged laceration and you could see the bone". Ms Walker applied a tourniquet until the ambulance arrived.

- The Court of Appeal said the trial court had made a prejudicial error in instructing the jury on the "last clear chance" doctrine. Maureen, as per the Court of Appeal, was in a position of danger when her horse suddenly wheeled around, and it cannot be said that the truck driver then had a clear chance to avoid the accident.

- The Court of Appeal did, however, rule that Maureen was not negligent.

And so the litigation continued, now bound for the State Supreme Court in San Francisco ..

Maureen kept busy, reporting for the "Daily Mail" in August on the 1957 Wightman Cup. The event was held at the Edgeworth Club in Sewickley, a suburb of Pittsburgh. In her 1971 autobiography "A Game to Love", Britain's Ann Haydon Jones recalled meeting Mo there. Whilst Mo "complimented me on my match temperament and tactical appreciation", she also said, in essence, that Ann's backhand was not fit for purpose. Over the following years, Mo helped Ann with her game – and, says Ann, the American "spent hours attempting to change that backhand!" (In the '57 Wightman Cup, USA won by 6 matches to 1; GB's only win was Ann's triumph over that year's Wimbledon runner-up, Darlene Hard, in three sets.)

Having helped Ann Jones, perhaps Mo had generated good karma, because the case versus Pre-Mix ended on 17 December 1957 with the Supreme Court handing down a final, non-appealable judgment in favour of the tennis star, upholding the original $95,000 award.

The Supreme Court judgment included the following points:

- The thrust of Pre-Mix's argument had been that, allegedly, Maureen could have dismounted at any time, up until an instant before the accident occurred.

- However, the Supreme Court cited Section 532 of the Vehicle Code which stated that a driver of a vehicle, approaching a ridden animal, shall reduce speed or stop, as may appear necessary, or as may be requested in order to ensure the safety of the rider. Against that statutory backdrop, it appears that the Supreme Court impliedly took the view that Stevens did have a last clear chance to avoid the accident by the exercise of ordinary care.

- The Supreme Court's wording intimates that the judicial view was that Stevens knew, or ought to have known, that Mo "was unable to escape from her peril", and that, additionally, perhaps it would have been foolhardy for her to dismount from a frightened horse when a truck was approaching. In any event, Pre-Mix's position was doubtless compromised fatally by the fact that Stevens, by his own admission, could have stopped his (defective, loud) truck a considerable distance ahead of the horses. *Why didn't he do so, given all the circumstances?*

- When Stevens turned on to Friars Road, the women on horseback were 250 - 350 feet away.

- As he drove forward, Maureen was on his left, and he swerved on to her side of the road, because he was worried that Ms Steiler's horse might go over a bank on that right-hand side of the road.

- The Supreme Court stated that Maureen had planned to turn professional in October 1954 and go on a three months' professional tennis tour, adding:

"As a result of the accident, considerable muscle tissue in Plaintiff's right leg was destroyed, and she suffered a loss of about 40 per cent of the blood supply to her right foot. The pulse in the artery at the top of her right foot was markedly weak and was absent part of the time, indicating that the circulation was impaired and that a major blood vessel was blocked. When there is such an impairment and the muscles are exercised, an aching or cramping type of pain or weakness usually results. In the opinion of a specialist who treated her, she will have difficulty with her leg and foot in middle and older age."

Years later, Mo would explain: "After the accident, I could still hit hard, but I couldn't go get the ball. So I gave up the game."

Note: during the Court case, there was a specific insight into the sort of pressures operating upon Maureen. The lawyers for Pre-Mix challenged her on the fact that, pre-accident, she had never disclosed publicly that she was going to turn professional. In reply, she said that no amateur player would ever make public the fact that they *might* turn pro, because to do so may result in the player being banned from amateur play with immediate effect.

1958

It's disclosed in the media on 17 January that a cheque for $110,700 was being sent by Pre-Mix Concrete Company to Maureen. This sum included 7% per annum interest referable to the appeal period. Maureen ended up with approximately $80,700, as her lawyers' contingency fees were $30,000. She must have been relieved for this chapter to close, and for the ability to move on as best as possible, in the exacting circumstances.

A few months later, on 22 April, the "Daily Express" reported that Teach Tennant, now in her early sixties, had undergone an eye operation (perhaps for cataracts) at La Jolla hospital – it was said that she wanted to get back to the nearby Bishop's School for Girls, where she was spending eight hours per day, six days per week, coaching 95 students.

1959

For Mo, it's a great year. In January, she gives birth at Sharp Memorial Hospital to her second daughter, Brenda. And tennis-wise, Mo has found time to give "constant coaching" to 16 year-old Karen Hantze of San Diego. The former world No 1 says: "I don't see how she can keep from being the best." (Karen would go on to win Wimbledon in 1962. Teach Tennant had also been involved in Karen's tennis development.)

1960

In his memoir "Love and Faults", Teddy Tinling says that Teach Tennant told him that there was a brief meeting in 1960 between her and Mo, which appears to have been initiated by Mo.

Tennant told Tinling that she (Tennant) received a small cheque from Mo. Tinling appears to believe that this meeting was prompted by the settlement monies which Mo had received in January 1958.

Earlier, in the autumn or late 1952, Teach had written to Mo, saying: "Your winning without me being with you gives me personal and professional satisfaction."

Teach went on to live until her late seventies, and died at her La Jolla home in May 1974. The "New York Times" reported that, sadly, she had been arthritic and nearly blind.

1963

Mo is reported to be coaching for up to 12 hours per week, alongside 15 other women, helping 1,000 young hopefuls. Mo said: "We call ourselves the housewives' league."

In the "Sunday Express" during Wimbledon, Alan Hoby recalls that Mo never went to bed early, quoting her as saying: "I love dancing or going to the theatre and films far too much." Hoby wrote: " .. "Little Mo" was the greatest woman player ever to hold a racket .. greater even than Suzanne Lenglen and certainly greater than Helen Wills."

1965

The tennis world is still in awe of "Little Mo".

She starts the year by coaching the USA team (which includes Billie Jean King) in the Federation Cup, held in Australia. The USA reaches the final, but loses to Australia. On the same trip, Mo does some TV commentary for certain matches, and takes time to help some of the Australian women with their games.

Wimbledon '54 men's Champion Jaroslav Drobny writes in the "Newcastle Evening Chronicle" that Maureen was "the greatest woman player I have ever seen", adding that she "practised harder than any girl I have ever known." This was definitely true: Mo spent, for instance, hundreds of hours working on just one stroke alone: the dropshot.

Just after Wimbledon, Billy Knight, a former French Open quarter-finalist, states in his column in the "Hull Daily Mail": "We should all .. find mutual agreement on one point – that the unfortunate riding accident that ended Maureen Connolly's career, robbed the world of the greatest woman player of all time."

On a very positive note for British tennis, Maureen is enlisted to help Team GB for the upcoming Wightman Cup contest in Cleveland versus USA. It seems to follow a suggestion by Ann Jones and Angela Mortimer. It also seems that Mo is looking forward to being of assistance, as she says: "I'm thrilled to bits. I'll do anything to help the girls. I've always liked the British girls and their captain, Angela Mortimer, is one of my greatest friends. We met in the first English tournament [Surbiton 1952] that I ever played in."

Mo works magic on Jones' game. Although USA wins the Cup by 5 matches to 2, it was telling that Ann Jones won both her singles matches, over Billie Jean King and Nancy Richey, without dropping a set. Ann said: "I hit it off so well with Maureen Connolly that I not only struck peak form, but she revived my enthusiasm. Little Mo feels she can put me in shape." The outcome is that Ann starts going to Dallas from time to time, to be coached there by Mo. In this way, they built on their original connection which had started at the 1957 Wightman Cup.

In Dallas, Mo has built a happy life – in addition to Norman, Cindy and Brenda, there are two dogs: a chocolate poodle, Tallyrand, and Max, a German Shepherd. It's said that Mo's three replicas of Wimbledon's Venus Rosewater Dish were modestly displayed in her living room.

1966

Ann Jones loses in the Wimbledon semi-finals to Maria Bueno. Maureen is there (and does some TV commentary), and she then goes back to Ann's home in Edgbaston, Birmingham and stays a couple of days. The "Birmingham Daily Post" published a picture of the two women relaxing in the garden of Ann's Westfield Road home.

As per Ann's autobiography, she (Ann) takes Mo to Warwick Castle "and the Shakespearean shrines, most of which I had never seen". (Edgbaston is close to Shakespeare's birthplace, Stratford-upon-Avon.)

But the end of August brings sinister news: Maureen has undergone a major operation at Baylor Medical Centre in Dallas. The nature of the surgery is not disclosed. And months later, on 24 December 1966, the "Birmingham Daily Post" says Maureen is back in hospital, seriously ill.

1967

Britain's Virginia Wade, who would win Wimbledon 10 years later, and her compatriot Ann, see Maureen for a day in Dallas, and spend the time horse-riding. By now, those in certain tennis circles know Maureen has some type of cancer, but she shows her courage, and – as per Ann's memoir – was "quite happy and chatty .. She had the will to fight .."

Maureen again goes to Wimbledon, where she sees Ann overcome 18 year-old Rosie Casals in the semis. (Afterwards, Maureen describes Rosie as "the most gifted player ever".) In the final, Billie Jean King defeats Ann in straight sets.

In mid-August, at the Wightman Cup in Cleveland, Teddy Tinling sees Mo for the last time, and notes that she is lacking her usual *joie de vivre*. Ann tells him the next day that Mo has cancer.

Nonetheless, in Dallas, Mo prepares Ann for the US Open, especially as regards approach shots and service. Ann would later recollect: "Just being with Maureen was a great mental boost. She was so interested in life in general. She took me outside tennis so much." Billie Jean again beats Ann in the final, 11-9, 6-4.

Virginia Wade, years later, in her own autobiography "Courting Triumph", would also say how much she (Virginia) had been touched by having Maureen in her life, and that Maureen had coached her, too – even from the sidelines when she was too ill to play. Virginia wrote: "There was more energy and positive wherewithal in those five feet two inches than I'd ever encountered." (Perhaps Virginia didn't know that Mo considered herself to be five feet four inches!)

1968

In January, Nell Hopman tragically dies after a long illness (having earlier had a brain operation in late 1966). She was 58 years-old.

Although Mo again attends Wimbledon, where Lance Tingay felt she "looked surprisingly fit and well", her health is, in fact, deteriorating. She is being immensely strong, trying to put on a brave face. Hopefully, she gained some solace from being elected to the International Tennis Hall of Fame.

She continues to help others; she sets up the Maureen Connolly Brinker Tennis Foundation ("MCB") with her friend Nancy Jeffett. Decades later, with the MCB still thriving to this day, Maureen's elder daughter, Cindy, would say: "They both wanted to give back to the grand sport of tennis by offering travel grants, conducting clinics and organizing tournaments and international programs that would not only be a platform for outstanding competition, but would also encourage fair play, good sportsmanship, integrity, and kindness." Mo's younger daughter Brenda says her mother "would be thrilled, absolutely thrilled, to see the impact MCB has had on junior tennis."

1969

In the States, Ann Jones sees Maureen - who "was in very poor shape by this stage" – for the last time.

Sometime later, during the French Open, where Ann loses a three-sets final to Margaret Court, she reads in a newspaper that Maureen has had another operation. She telephones Norman, who says his wife "pulled through all right".

But Mo, 34 years-old, seemingly knows her time on earth is nearly over. In an interview, she says: 'What more could I want? I've had a wonderful life. If I should leave it tomorrow, I've had the experience of 20 people."

In hospital, she called her friend Ben Press to say good-bye. Ben would later tell the "San Diego Union-Tribune": "She said she had a great life, a great family and a great career. She didn't have any regrets, didn't once say: "Why me?" It had to bring tears to your eyes, somebody that young, that good, to have no bitterness in her voice at all."

On Saturday 21 June 1969, two days before the start of Wimbledon, Maureen Connolly-Brinker dies at the Baylor Medical Centre, Dallas, due to ovarian cancer.

Ann Jones' instinct was to fly to Dallas "but I knew Maureen would have wanted me to play at Wimbledon". Ann not only plays Wimbledon - she wins it, becoming the first leftie women's singles Champion at SW19. In "The People", Ann's friend Wendy Cooper wrote that Ann had told her (Wendy) that meeting Maureen "was a turning point, not only in my whole approach to tennis, but to the whole of life. She changed my game and my mental outlook."

Virginia Wade had also wanted to win the title for Mo – one could say that she did that eight years later, in 1977.

In the meantime, on Tuesday 24 June 1969, all flags at the All England Club, Wimbledon are lowered to half-mast because Maureen's funeral takes place this day at Hillcrest Memorial Park, Dallas.

The pallbearers include Nelson Fisher and Ben Press.

Mo's family ask for all memorial donations to go to the American Cancer Society. Her mother says: "This is the way Maureen would have wanted it. She was so courageous and thought she was going to win. She had rallied through so many times, and thought she was going to be with us all for a long, long time."

Lance Tingay writes: "I .. would rank her not only as the greatest woman player I have ever seen, but far and away the nicest; everyone who knew her, loved her."

The abundant affection for Mo was very obvious in February 1970, when the best women tennis players in the world, including Ann Jones, played in Dallas for free to raise funds for the MCB, to help juniors in Texas. The amount collected was $25,000. Ann wrote in her autobiography: "There could have been no greater tribute to this wonderful person."

In her 2023 book "Restored: Reconnecting Life's Broken Pieces", Cindy tells us that Tallyrand, the family's poodle, died within a year of Mo's demise: "I'm convinced of a broken heart."



Mo with her family in December 1966

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Finally, I wish to express my most sincere thanks to Cindy and Brenda, and to Carol Weyman of the Maureen Connolly Brinker Tennis Foundation. Your unwavering support, and provision of photos, has made this book a reality!

"When I watch tennis on Wimbledon's Centre/Center Court, I wish I could travel back in time to the early 1950s and witness Maureen Connolly triumph in that stadium. And yes! I would have loved to have been her doubles partner!" **- VANIA KING**

"Growing up in Santa Monica, I always heard about the phenomenon, Maureen Connolly. She was a mythic character to me, given her stellar teenage success – and a tragic figure to have lost her career to a horse-riding accident, and her life to cancer, both at such young ages. James Harbridge has done the tennis world a great courtesy to bring her to the forefront again - and not let her be a forgotten footnote in tennis history." **- JULIE ANTHONY PhD**

"Maureen Connolly was flawless at Wimbledon. Her positive, brave tennis remains inspirational, all these decades later. I am so glad we have something in common – both winners at Surbiton, but with a 65 year gap!" **- MAGDALENA RYBARIKOVA**



"Queen Maureen ruled courts and captured hearts. For so many of us, Little Mo's legacy remains larger than life." **- INGRID NEEL**

"Maureen Connolly set the bar in women's tennis by being the first to win the Grand Slam in a calendar year. In this way, she has inspired many young tennis hopefuls, decade after decade. She gave those who followed a standard to aim for ... such as the 10 year-old Chris Evert, with whom she once hit. Maureen's legacy continues: her Little Mo junior tennis events pave the way for US stars to emerge. Maureen's legacy endures and continues, so many years after her passing in 1969." **- KATHY JORDAN**