

HAMPSTEAD HOCKEY CLUB

Rosemary House,
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TW12 2EG

16th March 1989

Dear Old Member,

This is going to be one of my shorter Newsletters, for two reasons - first, because I have a more-than-average workload just at present, hence not a great deal of time to write (or research) the season's news. Second, because - so far as I can tell from the regular literature, there isn't a great deal to report this year.

Let me begin with an abject apology. As your very generous donations came in last Autumn, I put them on one side, so as to hand over a batch of cheques to the Treasurer in one 'wad'. I then proceeded to forget they were in my file, and have only just come across them. So, they have only just been handed over and they will, presumably, be debited against your accounts in the near future. Many thanks, on behalf of the Club for your generosity and, as I say, my apologies for any embarrassment caused to your bank manager.

Now, a carrot to dangle before you. Last year's 'old tyme' Veterans and Vintage Dinner having been very well received (and, I believe, enjoyed), it will be repeated this year (and, hopefully, every year):

Same venue: Jack Straw's Castle (at the top of Hampstead Hill)
New date: Friday, 21st April
Same time: 7.30 (or earlier) for 8.00 p.m.
Dress: DJ (or lounge suit etc.) - some confusion last year, due to the President changing his mind at a late stage!
Price: £17.50 a head (to include a modest amount of wine at table - excessive quantities to be paid for individually)
Private guests: Probably not (because of shortage of room), but have a word with Stan (Elgar) if you are keen to bring someone.

The Guest of Honour, this year, will be Stephen Baines - Chief Executive of the H.A. - who will respond to the toast of the H.A., and there will be a suitable response to 'the guests'.

Stan is being good enough to organise this function again, so please return the tear-off slip to him - or 'phone him, with your cheque to follow A.S.A.P. By the way, Stan will (won't you, Stan?) arrange for a vegetarian main course for anyone who would prefer it, and for cheese if you would prefer that to 'pudding'. Please indicate on your slip if you have either of those preferences.

Another date to note in your diary, if you are interested, is the Club's A.G.M. Just before the dinner - Tuesday, 18th April - at the Paddington Sports Club (Castellain Rd., near Maida Vale) at 8.00 p.m. This will be the first A.G.M. at Paddington, and it would give you an opportunity to sample the facilities there. More to the point, there will presumably be some discussion about the health of the arrangements with Paddington and their long-term future. (You may remember that the ground is secure for at least 5 years, but the clubhouse - which is a totally separate entity - was a one-year arrangement to be reviewed.) Even more to the point, as far as we Old Members are concerned, I understand there will be a resolution - fore-shadowed at the E.G.M. which approved the move from Hornsey -

to change the name of the Club. Don't be alarmed: this isn't as radical as it sounds. In deference to the wishes of Westminster Council - who have leased us the pitches - the suggestion is that our name should become Hampstead and Westminster Hockey Club. I, personally, quite like it: it has a certain grandeur about it and, I would have thought, could be very good for our 'image' (so important in these days). Old Members don't have a vote at the A.G.M. - except, presumably, those of us who are 'Honorary Life Members' (used to be Vice-Presidents in the days before the Hornsey merger) - but, nevertheless, I am sure the meeting would be pleased to listen to any expressions of opinion from us. And it will be a fairly momentous day for the club - we have become fairly blasé about ground changes, but a name change is something else - so, why not toddle along? (Remember, if you come, to park in the street: the (small) car park is reserved for Paddington's own members.)

By the way, another thing about this A.G.M. which you might be pleased to hear about: it will be the first time the 'Sankey Siffleurs' are awarded (amongst the other seasonal awards). Let me explain: when dear old John Sankey died last year, his daughter - Betsy - was good enough to pass on his old umpiring whistles, which had seen stalwart service for the Club over many years. I thought it would be a nice gesture if they were used to remember John and awarded for something of which he would have approved. So, remembering how loyal and conscientious he was, I suggested to the Committee that they should be awarded to 'the most conscientious player or umpire of the season' (or some such dedication) and I believe that has been agreed. I think John would appreciate that.

What of the season drawing to a close? So far as I know, the tenure at Paddington is going well and there is every intention of staying. Not surprisingly, on Astro-Turf (or whatever trademark the surface has), home games are never cancelled - and that is a tremendous boon. The facilities at the clubhouse are, I think, very satisfactory and, from my only experience of a Saturday visit, the bar is well-stocked and congenial.

That one experience was at the 'Old Members' Day' in November, when 'John Haynes' International XI' traditionally plays the Veterans. Regrettably, I had something of a crisis that day, so I couldn't turn up in time for the game, but I joined the assembled company in the clubhouse - in time for the port and Stilton. Amongst those present I remember the usual stalwarts - Andrew Alexander, Berry Bermingham, Hugh Wickham, and Hon. Old Member, Dick Cheston. The result of the match? I'm not sure that I ever asked, but I think the Vets won this year, since John was let down by some of his 'international' stars at a late stage.

By the way, several more Old Members have been tracked down and have joined the list since last year: Tony Bailey, Brian Guest, John Haynes and Robin Henderson (both still active, to some extent), Arfon Jones, Neil Worman - and this Newsletter is going to several other possibles - Paul Bowden, Tim Stringer, Alastair Vartan, Luther Vye etc. But I can only put a limited amount of time into researching old members and their whereabouts, so don't hesitate to let me know if you have an address for any likely 'candidates'.

What of the 1st XI? Well, it's not too easy to tell you in detail because 'The Bobbler' (of which more, in a moment) was singularly short of 1st (and 2nd) XI results in its last edition. Until a month or so ago, they were motoring along quite nicely and, I believe, lay something like 5th in the Pizza Express (plug for the President!) London League - with victories against Spencer, Tulse Hill and Wimbledon since I last wrote. (Must be some time since we took Spencer and Tulse Hill in the same season!) But I notice, from the national press, some slippage in recent weeks. We have suddenly come up against contenders for promotion to the National League - Beckenham, Blackheath and St. Albans (who, I

believe, are within an ace of the title) - hence three defeats, by the odd goal or two. So, I suppose we are now heading for something like halfway up the table - still a vast improvement on recent years, and much to be applauded. By the way, I mentioned in my last letter that the 1st XI had been drawn against Isca (from Exeter), who are in the National League Div. I, in the 3rd Round of the H.A. Cup. Well, they went down 2-0, but Isca went as far as a Semi-Final against Hounslow, so that's not too bad a result. All-in-all, then, a much more promising season than for some years: let's hope for a real chance of promotion within a year or two.

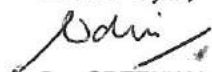
The other XI's? They continue to win more than they lose: the 6th XI (with only 3 losses in 18 games at the last count) is well on target for the Barnard Cup. Some of those lower XI's may be involved in the play-offs (the top four) of their respective divisions of the London League. Whether they are or not, those play-offs will be held at the Paddington ground on Sunday, 16th April - an excellent opportunity for you to inspect the ground if you are interested.

Oops, I nearly forgot the Ladies! They continue to go from strength to strength. The 1st XI gained promotion to the 1st Division of the Middlesex League - and they were shortly followed by the 2nd XI. Excellent: keep up the good work!

Finally, I mentioned 'The Bobbler'. I'm not sure if you are now receiving it or not: your names/addresses have been passed on, but I have a feeling that some/all of you may be missing out. If so, don't fret too much. It's rather 'chattier' (shall we say) than I had anticipated, and with less hard news about results, league positions etc. Nevertheless, if it isn't coming to you, I'll continue to nag on your behalf, and hope that we can get a newsworthy 'Bobbler' to you regularly.

I think that's all the news I have to impart. I do look forward to seeing you at the Dinner, and can promise you an enjoyable evening. (Remember, only 5 years to our Centenary!)

Yours aye,



C. GREENHALGH

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HAMPSTEAD H.C. VINTAGE AND VETERANS' DINNER: 21 APRIL

I would like to attend and enclose a cheque for £17.50 (payable to S.N. Elgar)

I would prefer a vegetarian main course /I would prefer cheese instead of a sweet (Please tick)

Name:..... Address (for ticket):.....
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