

N.B. Please don't miss the enclosed notice re the (surprise) Boizot Dinner:
look forward to seeing you there.

HAMPSTEAD AND WESTMINSTER HOCKEY CLUB

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21st October 1989

Dear Old Member,

The start of another season (our 96th - only another 5 years to the Centenary!). What's new? Not a great deal this year: the most significant is probably our name-change (or, at least, augmentation). Most of you will know the reason for that from last year's newsletters. For the benefit of recent recruits: it all derives from our tenancy of the superb artificial pitches at Paddington Recreation Ground, which belong to Westminster City Council. Understandably, and wanting to encourage hockey as a 'gentlemanly' sport, they hoped we would incorporate 'Westminster' into the club's name, and the members approved the new name at the A.G.M. last April. As I said before, I quite like it - it has quite a 'smart' ring to it, don't you think?

As for the pitches and clubhouse: I understand the arrangements are un-altered from last season. We still have the two pitches (one floodlit) from 11.30 till 4 o'clock, i.e. enough for six home matches; changing accommodation (recently re-furbished) at the ground; and tea/bar facilities at the nearby Paddington Sports Club. (If you visit, remember, please, the very small car park is reserved for their own members - parking, therefore, in the streets nearby).

What of last year? The new Secretary (Nick Openshaw) has been good enough to let me have the full resume of the season's results - enclosed. Let me expand a little by saying that the 1st XI were going very well until about February: then it all fell apart in the last few weeks of the season and, as you can see, they finished about halfway down (or halfway up) the London League (oops! the PizzaExpress London League) table. Only the winner of the league is in line for promotion to the (Poundstretcher) National League - and then, I believe, only after a play-off against the winners of other leagues. So, it's going to be tough getting up into that National League.

The other London League XI's (there are four divisions nowadays) also finished in the middle reaches of their respective tables. As usual over recent years, the lower XI's turned in the best results: the good old Barnard Cup shifted from the Veterans to the 6th XI, with 18 wins and 4 losses. Actually, the 5th XI turned in 19 wins and 4 losses, but they notched up a couple more draws than the 6th. (I seem to remember, we used to award the Cup jointly if two teams were only separated by a percentage point or two, to allow for the inevitable piece of bad luck somewhere along the line.) Incidentally, notice how many games they all got last season - an average of 23 per team - reflecting the fine winter and the advantage of artificial pitches.

The brightest spot in the results, however, was provided by the ladies - who, as you can see, put out three XI's for the full season, and their 1st and 2nd

XI's were both promoted, to the 1st and 2nd Divisions of the Middlesex League respectively. And also by the Veterans' Wednesday team, who play in a floodlit 'masters' league and won it, against some very tough opposition.

The Veterans, too, had further triumphs at either end of the Summer. In May they won an international veterans' tournament in Paris, and followed that with an even greater triumph in September, when they won the EuroVets 'Beaujolais Trophy' in Lyons. Next Autumn they are planning to travel even further afield: as a result of hosting one of the pools in the Veterans' World Cup 3 years ago (at Hornsey), they have been invited to play in Malaysia - by the Sultan himself, I believe. They sure get about!

Now, to the current season. Well, it's hardly underway as yet, but not a bad start for the 1st XI. A victory against Old Kingstonians, 1-0, and a draw against Purley, 1-1. (That last may not seem a very impressive result for a team which hopes to challenge for the league, but it's the first time for several years that Purley haven't surprised - and beaten - us.) One very good piece of news is that former 1st XI Captain David Dixon - who left us several years ago to join the powerful Hounslow team - has re-joined. With our Australian coach, Gregg Carr, and new Captain, Mike Hick, that's a promising nucleus for this year's team.

Incidentally, the 1st XI play their 1st Round match in the National Cup against NatWest Bank this Sunday, 22nd October. I won't manage to get this to you in time to enlist your support, but it would, of course, be very welcome in subsequent rounds - as, indeed, it would be at any of their League matches. You have no excuse for not knowing when, where, and whom they are playing - your copy of this year's fixture card is enclosed. Under our new arrangements, there is no 'charge' or 'sub' for this but, as usual, the Club would not say 'no' to modest donations to cover the extra cost of printing and of these mailings. (I know that donations received in recent seasons have been very gratefully received - even if they haven't been paid in to the bank as promptly as all that!)

I am in a bit of a quandary knowing what to do about renewing 'membership' of the Old Members' list. It's not realistic to strike off those who didn't get around to returning a 'tear-off slip' last year: on the other hand, I can't send fixture cards and letters year after year to people who may have moved away, or lost interest. I think what I'll do is this: I'll leave you on the list for a couple of years even if I don't hear from you but, after 3 or 4 years of total silence I'll strike you off. Is that a reasonable compromise?

Incidentally, some new 'old' members have been traced and have enlisted since last year: Tony Henman (mid-60's), Simon Jamieson (about the same time), Mike Patton (mid-70's?), David Ratcliffe (who kept goal in - literally - the first-ever London League match - us against Hounslow - in 1969), Alastair Vartan (mid-50's), and Luther Vye (who also kept goal - for Great Britain amongst others - in the early 50's). That brings us up to about 45 'members' on the list, but there's plenty of room for more - particularly, perhaps, from the 1970's and 80's where representation is very slim. So, if you have an address for any old members who were 'decent chaps', let me know and I'll mail them.

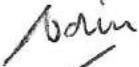
I must tell you that the traditional Veterans and Vintage Dinner (well, a tradition can be two years' old!) was very successful and enjoyable again. I think the following attended: Andrew Alexander, Tony Bailey, Peter Bell, Berry Bermingham, John Chaumeton, Dick Cheston, Stan Elgar, Bill Fletcher, Robin Henderson, David Lowden, Donald Meacock, Don Morphew, Geoff Porter, Beaker Saunders, David Smyth, Kip Stafford, Alastair Stormont (dropping in from New Zealand), Tony Swing, Alastair Vartan, Hugh Wickham and myself - as well as half-a-dozen youngsters from the Veterans XI and 4 or 5 guests, including our chief guest, Stephen Baines, the Chief Executive of the H.A., who regaled us with an amusing, yet insightful, review of the H.A. and of the current prosperity of the game.

Now, one other item to tell you about: our annual 'Old Members' Day'. As usual, that will be on Saturday, 2nd December, when 'John Haynes' International XI' plays the Veterans - or, according to the fixture card, the 'SuperVets' - then back to the clubhouse for a little tea, a jar or two, and some congenial reminiscence. But, my difficulty this year, is in telling you exactly when to turn up. First of all, the 1st and 2nd XI's are definitely playing Oxford University and the Occasionals, in league matches, starting at the prime time of 2.30 p.m. - so those are games you definitely might feel like watching. Then, according to the card, the Haynes/SuperVets game is at 11.30 a.m., to be followed by the Vets v. East Grinstead at 1.00 p.m. But I believe there is some doubt about East Grinstead, in which case there will be just the one Veterans game against the Haynes XI and - presumably - that will move back to 1 o'clock. I think the safest thing to say is that, if you turn up at 1 o'clock, you will definitely see a Veterans' match, and you will definitely be able to stay on and watch the Oxford games. But, if you want to be more definite than that, then 'phone me much closer to that date to see what's what.

Because of the artificial pitches, it is highly unlikely that there will be cancellations. But, if the weather is appalling - snow or something - and you don't want to risk a wasted journey, ring me on that morning and I'll give you the latest news.

I think that's it for now. I hope you enjoy all the news - moderately encouraging, as it is. Another newsletter at the end of the season - but I hope to see plenty of you at functions before then.

Yours aye,



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HAMPSTEAD AND WESTMINSTER HOCKEY CLUB: 1989-90

* DELETE AS APPROPRIATE

* Yes, please, I would like to continue to receive a fixture card and newsletters in future seasons.

* I enclose a donation of £.... (cheques made out to the Club, please)

Name:.....

Address:.....

..... Tel. No:.....

(NO NEED FOR AN ADDRESS IF YOU ARE ALREADY A 'MEMBER' OF THE LIST AND YOUR ADDRESS HASN'T CHANGED. OTHERWISE, PLEASE DO COMPLETE IT SO THE LIST IS UP-TO-DATE - WITH POST-CODES ETC.)