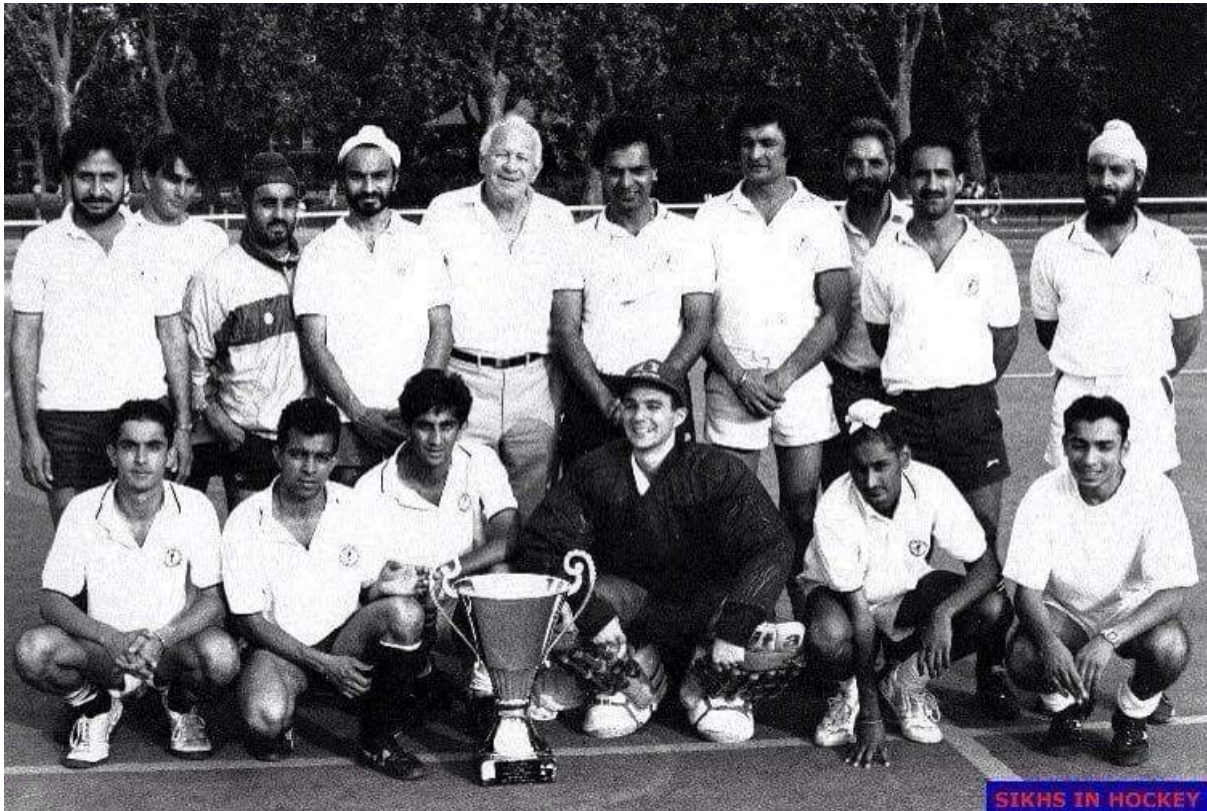


The Westminster Challenge begins



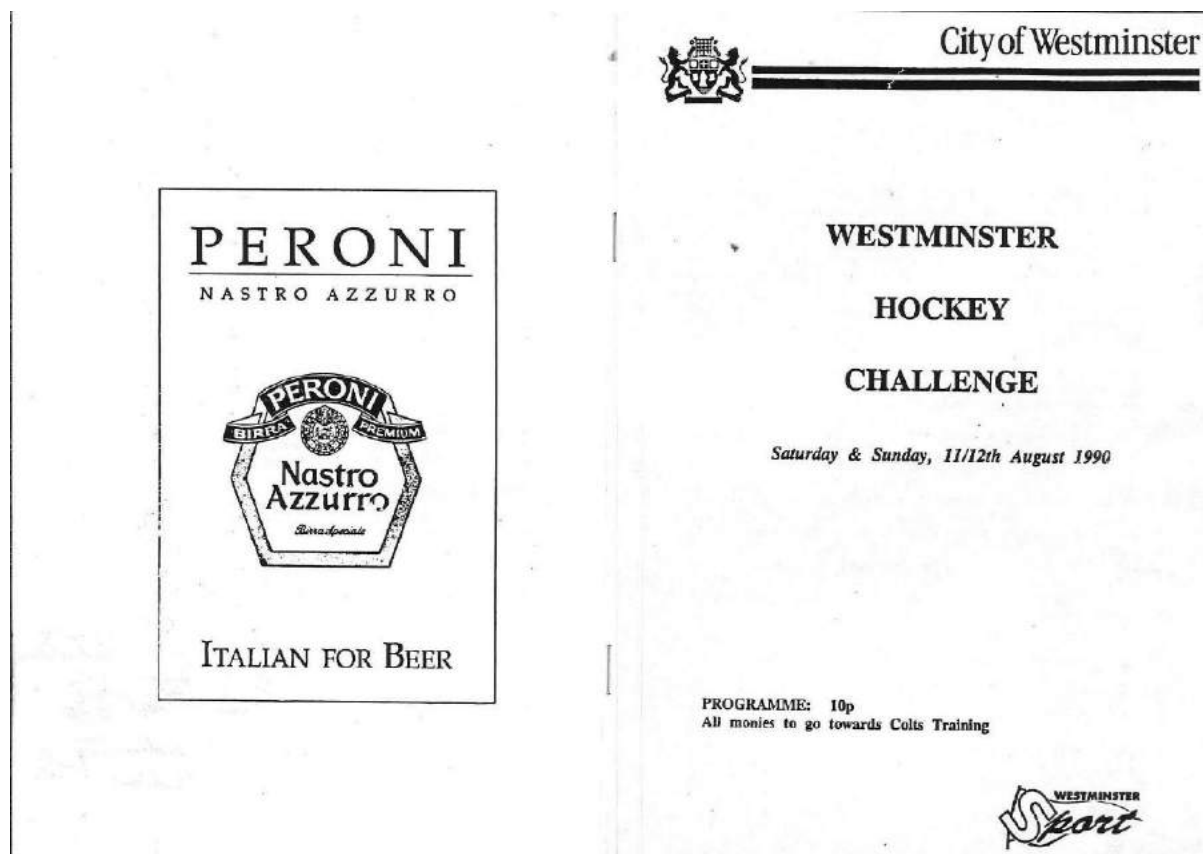
This photograph has rekindled interest in the Westminster Hockey Challenge, as it was then called, that was first played in 1990. It features the Westminster Hockey Challenge Trophy and includes Jimmy James, the long serving manager of the team, fifth from the left on the second row and Club Vice President, Tarlok Mandair, three from the right on the same row. His son, Gulsh, later to be the Club's 1st XI captain at the time of promotion to the National League, is seen first on the left of the front row.

In August 1990, the Club agreed to host the competition at PRG. It was to coincide with the refurbishment of PRG and had been discussed by the City of Westminster with Club representatives in 1989 to be part of the Sports Events initiative to increase sporting awareness within London, one of 30 events throughout the year.

It was intended as a high-profile trophy tournament, open to clubs within London boroughs and to promote the high quality of hockey played in London. The stated aims were to provide media coverage, a perpetual trophy, accredited umpires and entry to an international tournament with top European teams, in the following May.

Initial invitations were submitted to National League and London League clubs within London and for teams of 1st and 2nd XI level standard. It was hoped this would provide a welcome pre-season commitment to top level teams. Another objective was to provide access for the Club's 1st XI to higher level National League opposition in furtherance of the goal of eventual promotion to that League.

The first event was held in sweltering weather on the weekend of 11-12 August 1990. It attracted teams from Blackheath, Richmond, Spencer, London Indians, Wimbledon, Bromley, Harrow, Mid-Surrey, Purley and Southgate. Matches were played in two groups.



Hockey Digest reported that most of the London League sides were represented by 2nd XI teams but this did not detract from a high standard of play. In pool matches, two halves of 20 minutes' duration were played, with a two-minute interval. The final was played with 25-minute halves and a five-minute break at half time.

Three points were awarded for a win and one for a draw and in each case an additional point was awarded for each goal scored. At semi-final stage, if the result was a draw, the team with the greater aggregate of short corners and penalty strokes was to be declared the winner. If still not determined, the result was to be governed by five penalty strokes for each side.

Although not required, had the final been drawn after 50 minutes, extra time of ten minute each was prescribed and was to be followed, if necessary, by penalty strokes.

In Pool A, Spencer came out on top and met Bromley, the runners up in Pool B in the first semi-final. That contest had to be determined by penalty strokes. Southgate were the winners of Pool B. They faced London Indians, who won 3-1. The latter's efficiency at converting chances stood out. In the final, London Indians defeated Bromley 5-1, in convincing style.

Pool A

Blackheath 0 Richmond 0
Spencer 0 London Indians 2
Wimbledon 1 Blackheath 0
Spencer 2 Richmond 0
London Indians 3 Blackheath 0
Spencer 3 Wimbledon 2
London Indians 0 Richmond 1
Spencer 3 Blackheath 0
Wimbledon 1 Richmond 1
London Indians 1 Wimbledon 1

Pool B

Hampstead 0 Bromley 0
Harrow 2 Mid Surrey 0
Purley 1 Southgate 7
Mid Surrey 0 Bromley 0
Hampstead 1 Southgate 1
Purley 0 Harrow 2
Bromley 1 Southgate 1
Purley 1 Hampstead 0
Bromley 7 Harrow 0
Hampstead 8 Mid Surrey 0
Southgate 3 Harrow 0
Bromley 2 Purley 0
Southgate 3 Mid Surrey 0
Hampstead 1 Harrow 0
Purley w/o Mid Surrey

3-4th: Spencer 0 Southgate 0
5-6th: Wimbledon 3 Hampstead 2
7-8th: Richmond 3 Harrow 2

There was also an exhibition women's match, in which Hampstead took on leading club Ealing. The game ended in a goalless draw.

The *Fair Play* award, donated by the City of Westminster and decided by the votes of the umpires, was presented to Mike Pell, the captain of Harrow, by Andy Halliday.