

The Club's Colours

The origins of the light and dark blue colours of the Club have frequently been associated with Oxford and Cambridge Universities.

This link is perhaps reinforced by the resolution at the 1915 Annual General Meeting that “the Captain and Hon. Secretary each year of both University Hockey Clubs and also of Marlborough College, be elected honorary playing members of the Club while at the University and College respectively”.

From its founding in April 1894, when the decision was reached to ask “the permission of the Cricket Club ...for the Hockey Section to control its own affairs.....” the uniform of the Hockey Club was recorded to be that as before, namely, “a shirt of the Cricket Club colours and a dark blue cap”.

The *Short History* of the first 75 years of Hampstead Hockey Club mentions that “the following season (1900/01) contained further notable events. Oxford and Cambridge Universities appeared in the fixture list for the first time - though the club's elaborate dark blue, light blue and white shirts are traditionally supposed to hark back to some long-standing link with the two Universities. It is likely that this link derived from the Cricket Club, where the colours seem to have been inherited.”

Contemporary photography confirms the adherence over the years to shirts of a reasonably consistent pattern of dark and light blue stripes with a white half (being reversed on the back). This team photograph (admittedly monochrome) was taken at the Folkestone Easter Festival of 1910, when the Club sent its strongest team. (Try to spot the two Great Britain internationals!)



In 1878, the Minutes of Hampstead Cricket Club covered the rules of the cricket club and the question of club colours arose. Allegedly those they had adopted were the same as another club. After enquiry it was established that the club in question apparently played no matches although later discovered still to be functioning. Therefore "it was decided that the colours [of Hampstead Cricket Club] would be dark blue, cerise and black". This may partially explain the dark blue cap recorded by the hockey section in 1894. Those colours predominate in the current crest of Hampstead Cricket Club.

One possible explanation, though extremely unlikely, is that the hockey players were unaware of the cricket club colours and thought they were the two blues and white. Colin Greenhalgh, who compiled the Short History, doubts that explanation, since the circumstances of it largely (if not entirely) involved the same people.

Another suggestion is that somewhere between the cricket club giving the new hockey club permission to use their colours and the hockey club becoming active in its own right, the hockey club decided that it did not want to accept the offer. Perhaps they decided it would be to their advantage to concentrate upon an Oxford and Cambridge association. Colin believes that somehow that decision was never recorded, so we may never know.

In the 1920's the viability of producing Club shirts adopting the pattern and colours came into question. In September 1920, the Club minutes record that "owing to the expense of getting Club Colours made, the question of adopting the new Cricket Club colours of all white was discussed." The matter was deferred, but the suggestion was subsequently rejected, as it has been on several occasions since. Tradition has always (rightly, most would say) overcome the exigencies of finance.

But the expense of getting shirts manufactured in our complicated design continued to concern the Committee. Two or three years later, an alternative shirt, supplied by Nuttings, was employed. Nuttings' first batch was delivered just in time for the start of the 1923/24 season. Sadly, after all the effort, the colours had been stitched on to the wrong sides!

In 1965, the General Committee decided to revive the old practice of awarding honorary membership. Unlike in its previous existence, some 60 years earlier, this was to mean really honorary and not just a euphemism for 'reduced subscription because non-playing.'

The list was built up of many others who had helped Hampstead, or the game of hockey generally, in the past, or who had won honours and recognition for the Club on the international field of play. It also incorporated a list of *ex officio* honorary members, appointed while they held particular offices which, by their nature, benefited the club. This included the old Oxford, Cambridge and Marlborough tradition.