

HAMPSTEAD AND WESTMINSTER HOCKEY CLUB

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27th April 1992

Dear Old Member,

My usual end-of-season newsletter. First of all, news of the 1st XI's further attempt to gain promotion into the PizzaExpress National League. Well, bad news again, I'm afraid! You'll remember I invited you to support them against the O.K.'s - which, if we'd won, would have given us just a chance of overtaking them to win the London League and get into the play-offs for promotion. Frankly, they didn't play very well. Half-way through the second half, the O.K.'s centre-forward (or 'striker', or whatever he was) broke into our circle. There was a mix-up between the backs and goalkeeper and their man fell over. But his final touch of the ball - you couldn't call it a shot - gently rolled over the line and between the posts! We threw everything into attack for the remainder of the game: there were some close shaves and their goalie made some excellent saves, so they were home-and-dry, 1 - 0. As a result, we finished as runners-up in the League for the third year running, and missed out on the promotion play-offs again.

Incidentally, the O.K.'s did get through into the National League, but by the closest possible margin: they won the 3rd place play-off match (against the winners of other leagues) by the odd goal in a penalty shoot-out after extra time. But isn't life ironic? You'll remember we were within 5 minutes of beating Surbiton to promotion in the crucial match last year. This year they went straight to the top of the National League Div. II, so they have already won promotion to Div. I - could have been us!

So, it's back to the drawing-board for another attempt at promotion next year. However, I am afraid it's going to be harder from now on. The London League having lost several clubs (Surbiton and O.K.'s by promotion, Mid-Surrey having dropped out), the powers-that-be have decided to merge it with the Peroni South League (also sponsored by our inimitable President). That league covers Surrey, Kent, Sussex and Hampshire (I think), so there's going to be a lot more competition to win through. Let's just hope that the 1st XI can raise themselves to even greater efforts, after three years of getting so close yet so far.

The day after that crucial O.K.'s match, the 1st XI took on an invited XI at the 'President's Day' at Paddington. The President's XI included several of the Oxford and London University teams - some of whom might be available to join us next year - and the 1st XI beat them 5 - 4, after a very open and fluid game. The whole was then nicely topped off by Roquefort and port in the clubhouse! It was pleasant to see ex-President Kip Stafford in the 'crowd', together with old-timer Tarlok Mandair (1st/2nd XI's in the 60's), who was there to support his son, playing for the present-day 1st XI.

Sadly, the 1st XI Coach and/or Captain for the last three years - Greg Carr - is now returning to Australia, with his wife Melanie (former Ladies' Captain) and young daughter, born during last season. Our very best wishes for their future go with them, together with our thanks for what Greg achieved for the

1st XI, lifting them from comparative obscurity to being so close to promotion. What a pity that his efforts weren't crowned by success, but that's sport!

The other XI I usually tell you about is the Veterans. They have, for once, had a very poor season: I think they only won two games, at the end of the season. However, Veterans are so young nowadays, that the Club has also started a 'Super Veterans' XI - loosely defined as 50+. They played several games over the course of the season and produced rather better results than the 'young Vets' (I umpired one 0 - 0 draw, against Polytechnic, but they won most of their other games). Guy Mayers is organising that new XI: David Lowden and Berry Bermingham (in better form than ever!) have come out of the woodwork to play, and I'm sure Guy would be pleased to hear from you (on 071-727 7742) if you feel like getting your stick down from the loft.

I'll mention just two other events from the latter part of the season. The whole club held a 'Club Day' at Paddington on 11th April. All the members available (some 130 of them!) were divided into twelve teams, drawn from all the XI's of the club, each consisting of 7 - 8 men, 2 -3 ladies and one colt, and they played off over the day, with suitable refreshment during and after. I don't know who won - anyway, 11 names wouldn't mean any more to you than to me! But I believe a good day was had by all.

The Club also held its first Golf Day on 30th March, at Muswell Hill G.C., organised by (Dr.) Ali Alibhai. I understand about 40 members took part: they played 18 holes Stableford and 18 holes Greensomes, followed by dinner and, again, I understand everyone enjoyed themselves.

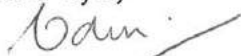
Finally, news of two imminent events at which Old members would be very welcome. In reverse chronological order, there is the A.G.M. at the Clubhouse (Paddington Sports Club) on Tuesday, 19th May at 6.45 p.m. I don't believe there is anything extraordinary on the agenda, but you'd be welcome to attend (and have a jar) - though not, you realise, to vote.

But shortly before that is the Annual Dinner, at Lord's Banqueting Suite on Saturday, 16th May. Tickets are only £20 this year and, after last year's very enjoyable function, I said I'd try to encourage enough of you to come along and make up an Old Members' table. How about it? Remember this function (as all others) is mixed nowadays, so you'd be welcome to bring along a spouse, or partner, if you wish. There will be dancing after the dinner, but also the usual speeches and - a new departure - the presentation of the long list of Club awards (Barnard Cup, Woodpecker Trophy, Sankey's Siffleurs, and several more nowadays.) So it should be a good evening.

If you want to join us, please apply to me on the attached tear-off slip with your cheque - by 11th May if possible. That way, I can ensure that we do get an Old Members' table (or tables - or, maybe, join up with the Super Vets.)

Don't forget to let me know (with addresses) of any old members you come across who would be 'good chaps' to have on the list. I recruited Tarlok Mandair when we met at the President's Day: but it's hard work waiting until one bumps into old members, so any contacts you have would be very useful.

Yours aye,



COLIN GREENHALGH